Sermons by Paul C. Jong

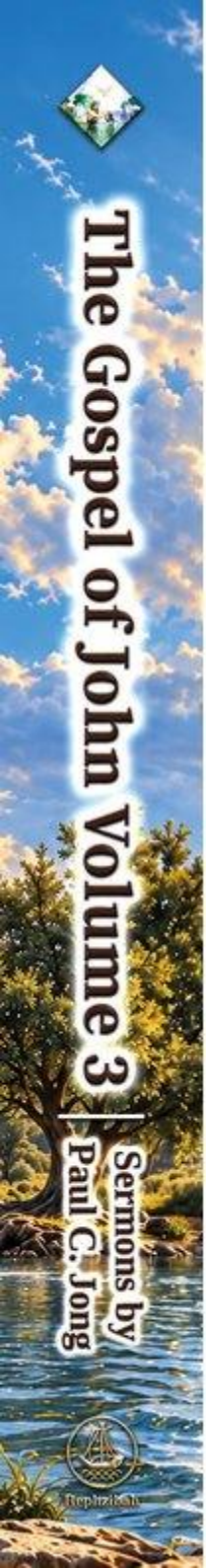
*The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit*

# The Gospel of John Volume 3

Chapters 14–21



PAUL C. JONG




**“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” (John 20:31)**

**This book clearly proclaims the gospel of the water and the Spirit through the work of Jesus shown in the Gospel of John. Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death and gave eternal life to those who believe. Whoever believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and, though weak, can live a life of walking with the Lord, enjoying peace and hope in Christ.**

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***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 Gospel of John

# Volume 3

## Chapters 14–21

**PAUL C. JONG**



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

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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

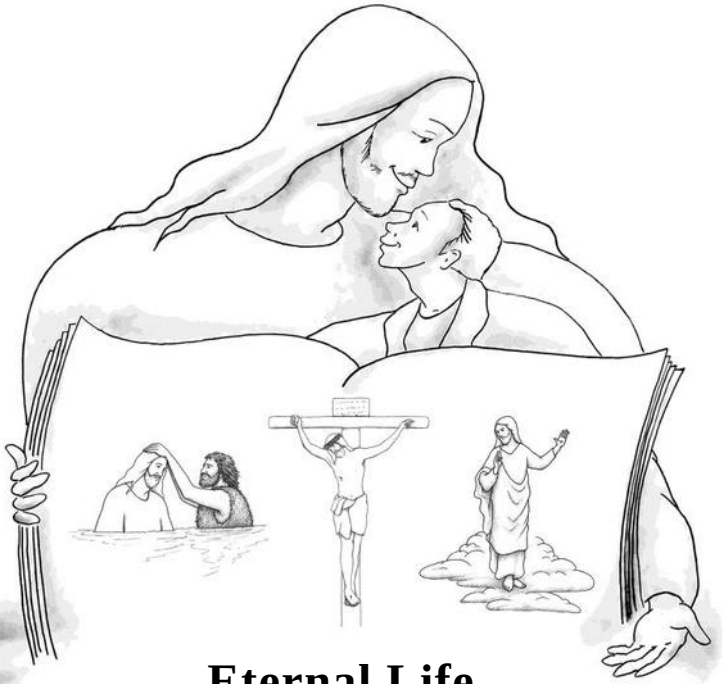
I would also like to thank God's servants and brothers and sisters for their invaluable service in publishing this book. We all worked hard to write this book.

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

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

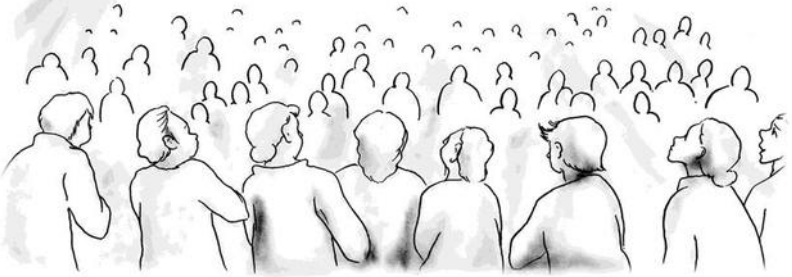
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# Eternal Life

# Remission of Sin



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# Preface

## Jesus Christ, who has given us eternal life

In the words Jesus left with His disciples before the Cross, there is love that cares even for the rest of their lives. To the disciples, who were troubled by the word that the Lord was going to leave, Jesus said, *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14:1)*. And He promised that He would prepare a place for them and come again and have them be with Him. That night, Jesus was looking beyond the disciples' anxiety, to the day when those who have been saved would live with Him forever.

We, too, need this faith. In a heart that has not resolved the problem of sin, there is fear of standing before God, and even after receiving the remission of sins, there are times when we are anxious over our own weakness and over what lies ahead. To us, who are like that, Jesus lets us know who He is and what He has accomplished for us. The word of John chapters 14 through 21 contained in this book tells that very story.

## God, who came to save us

Jesus is God, equal to the Father. The One who was with the Father from the beginning and made all things took on a human body and came among us. How certain our salvation is becomes clear when we know who it is that saved us. For us, who cannot deliver ourselves in the face of sin and death, God, the Lord of life, came Himself.

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Jesus is the One who opens the way to the Father and leads those who believe along that way. The Lord Himself said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).*

People try to find within themselves the qualification to come before God. On days when they have lived a good life, they feel at ease, and when a wrong comes to light, they become afraid again. Counting how much they have prayed and how sincerely they have repented, they wait for the time when their hearts will feel at peace. But the basis on which we can come to God lies not in us but in Jesus Christ. Only when He removes our sins is the wall of sin that stood between God and us torn down.

God loved us, who were in sin, and sent His Son. According to the Father's will, Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Just as, in the sacrifices of the Old Testament, a sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed on his sins to it, when John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus, all the sin of the world was passed on to Him. The reason the sinless One received baptism from John was precisely to have all the sin of mankind transferred onto His body. The sins we have already committed, and even the sins we will commit as we go on living—all the sins of our whole lifetime were included in that sin of the world. Jesus went to the Cross bearing that sin on His body.

To believe in Jesus is to accept in our hearts what He did for us. It is to believe, as our Savior, in Jesus, who bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, who shed His blood and died on the Cross because of those sins, and who rose again from death.

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## The peace that comes from the salvation He has fully accomplished

Jesus, though He knew all that was going to happen to Him, went forward before those who had come to arrest Him. Being interrogated and mocked, and even being crucified, He accomplished the work the Father had entrusted to Him. The One to whom our sins had been passed on also received, in our place, the punishment for those sins. Therefore, when we think of the sufferings of Jesus, we must believe that the punishment inflicted on His body was the judgment He received in our place because He had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist.

John recorded that last moment like this: *"So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit" (John 19:30)*.

Jesus did not leave the price of sin for us to finish paying. He received, with the blood of the Cross, the whole judgment for all the sins that had been transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. And He was buried, and in three days He rose again from death, revealing that He is God, whom even death could not hold, and became our perfect Savior. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe. Those who believe this gospel in their hearts receive the remission of all their sins once and for all, and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift and become the children of God.

If we think that every time a sin comes to light we must become clean again by our own efforts, there is no peace in our hearts. The sins Jesus bore include even the sin that came to light today. Even when we admit our wrong and turn our hearts back to God, what we are to rely on is the work of Jesus, who has already washed away that sin. There is no need to hide our sins,

and no need to find within ourselves any merit to wash those sins away.

That is why the Lord promised His disciples a peace that the world cannot give. *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27)*.

This peace is given by Jesus, who received the judgment for our sins in our place and reconciled us to God. Even when our circumstances become difficult and our hearts are shaken, the salvation He accomplished remains as it is. The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus sent after fully accomplishing salvation, dwells in those who believe in this salvation. The Holy Spirit does not work as He pleases, but according to the written word He lets us know what Jesus did, and helps us to live by faith. The reason we can ask the Father in the name of Jesus is also that He, who bore our sins and received the whole judgment for them, has made us the children of God.

The Lord said that when the Holy Spirit comes, He will convict the world of sin, and said, *"Of sin, because they do not believe in Me" (John 16:9)*. What leaves a person under judgment in the end is not believing in this salvation Jesus accomplished. If you are still suffering because of sin, confirm through the word what sin was passed on to Jesus and in whose place He received the judgment. If you accept that salvation in your heart now, as you hear the gospel, in that faith there is the joy of the remission of sins.

## The hope given by Jesus, who rose from the dead

Jesus did not remain in the tomb. He rose again from death and met Mary, who was weeping outside the tomb, and He came

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to the disciples, who had shut the doors out of fear. He who showed them His hands and His side was the very Jesus who had died on the Cross, and the disciples rejoiced to see the living Lord. The One who gave them peace and entrusted them with the gospel was the Savior who had overcome sin and death.

The resurrection of Jesus is the news of life for us today as well. Jesus washed away our sins in order to make us, who believe, live forever. We are people who wait for the Savior who will raise us again even after we finish the life of this body. The Lord, who rose again, will raise us up again as well and have us be with Him forever. This is the hope given to those who have received the remission of sins.

This hope enables us to endure the sorrow and toil we are going through now. Even when the body grows weak and we feel death drawing near, the life Jesus promised does not disappear. When we think of the grace that God has made us His children and let us live with Him forever, the reason to give thanks even in this short life on earth becomes clear.

We do not live in the same age as the disciples who saw the risen Jesus with their own eyes. But the testimony of what they saw and heard has been given to us as the word. The apostle John made clear the purpose for which he recorded this word, like this: *"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" (John 20:31)*.

Through the written word we know who Jesus is, and we believe how He removed our sins. On days when our feelings run hot and on days when they have cooled, that word testifies of the same salvation. Therefore, our faith and assurance stand not on the feelings of each day but on this unchanging word.

## A life of following Jesus with the love we first received

Jesus also cares for the lives of those who have been saved. He came to the disciples, who had caught no fish all night, told them where to cast the net, and had them eat bread and fish. The Lord, who saved us from sin, also knows the circumstances in which we live today, and helps us.

There, Jesus asked Peter about his love and entrusted His sheep to him. Peter was a man who had boasted that he would lay down his life for Jesus and then had denied Him three times. Jesus, who knew all about that failure, came to him after He rose again. The reason Peter could follow Jesus again was the love that had borne even his sins. Now that he could no longer boast of his loyalty, he came to care for the sheep, relying on the Lord, who knew him.

We, too, having received that love, can follow the word of Jesus even on days when our shortcomings are exposed. The more our faith grows, the more we lay down the heart that relied on ourselves and come to rely on the Lord. Jesus said to His disciples, *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5)*.

A branch, attached to the tree, is supplied with life. We, too, keep in our hearts the word of the gospel that has made us clean, and live attached to the living Jesus. Because He loved us first, we treasure those who have received the same love, and care for the faith of the weak. To those who have not yet received the remission of sins, we preach the salvation Jesus accomplished. Sharing together the life we have received in this way is the work Jesus has entrusted to us.

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The labor of serving the gospel is not a price paid to obtain salvation. Because we know the love of Jesus, who has already given His own life, we serve with thanksgiving. The more deeply we know that love, the more we find that we cannot take His will lightly. The Lord, who saved us, wants us to abide in the word and follow Him even now. When we join hearts with fellow believers and carry out the work entrusted to us, even our small labor is used so that other souls may obtain life.

Jesus, who bore our sins, rose again from death, is with us through the Holy Spirit, and will at last lead us to the place where He is. Those weighed down by the burden of sin can receive the remission of sins He has granted, and those who are discouraged can rise again, relying on the living Savior. I hope that all of you who read this word will obtain eternal life in Jesus Christ and live in the joy of being with Him. ✉

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# CHAPTER

# 14

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

# God the Father and Jesus Christ are equal

**< John 14:1–7 >**

**"'Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.' Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.'"**

## *"Let not your heart be troubled"*

Jesus spoke as follows: *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1–3).*

Because the time had come for the Lord to be nailed to the Cross and die, He earnestly gave this word to His disciples. He

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told the disciples not to let their hearts be troubled on account of His being nailed to the Cross and dying, rising again, and going to God the Father. In this word, the Lord is saying that, having come to this earth, He would fully accomplish the work of saving mankind from sin, and once He had been hung on the Cross and died and risen again, He would go to God the Father; so the disciples should not be troubled because of the Lord but live well by faith, and when the Lord comes again, He will receive them and take them to where the Lord is, so that they may be with Him.

## The Lord, who is the way, the truth, and the life

But the word I especially want to preach is the one that follows. *"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him'" (John 14:6–7).* It means that Jesus Himself is the way, the truth, and the life. It means that no one can come to the Father except through Jesus.

If we listen to the words of Jesus, we can know what He is saying. Our Lord is, in Himself, the Savior. Jesus is the way to enter the kingdom of God. Also, it is the truth that the Lord came to this earth, had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross and died, rose again, and became our Savior. And if we believe this, we obtain new life. But there is something we must surely keep in mind. The Bible records that, after hearing this word, *"Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us'" (John 14:8).*

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From here the Lord speaks as follows. When Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, the Bible records, *"Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves'" (John 14:9–11).*

So, since Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus, this means that the Father and the Son are equal. *"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves" (John 14:10–11)*. If we sum up this word in a word, it means that Jesus and God the Father are equal. Jesus is in the Father, and the Father speaks in Jesus. Whether Jesus says, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)*, or says, *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:1–2)*, all the words He spoke to the disciples are the words of Jesus and, at the same time, the words that God the Father speaks through Jesus.

## God, who is equal to the Father

It is saying that the Father and the Son are equal and are one. What I want to say is this. We have been saved by believing in Jesus Christ. He was born on this earth through the body of a

woman, and at about thirty years of age He received baptism from John the Baptist, had the sin of mankind transferred to Him and washed it away clean, was judged on the Cross and died, and rose again, and so He saved us. By believing this, we have become people who can enter the kingdom of heaven. We believe this.

But the One who caused this work to be done is God the Father. The One who caused this work to be done through His own Son is God the Father. Yet people think that, although God the Father is the Father of Jesus and Jesus is also God, there is a difference in rank between the two. They think that Jesus Christ is inferior to God the Father, someone a little lower. Such a thought is not true faith. The Father and the Son are equal. That is why Jesus said, *"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:13–14)*. Before He died on the Cross, Jesus for the first time says, *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14:1)*. This means that He is equal to the Father.

The disciples are now meeting Jesus and hearing His words, but in fact those words are not words that Jesus speaks by Himself alone, but words that God the Father speaks in Jesus. Therefore, He is telling them not to be troubled or anxious even if Jesus is hung on the Cross and dies, rises again, ascends to heaven, and is no longer on this earth. He is saying that the Lord will come again and take them to where the Lord is.

Because the Lord is equal to the Father, He says that if we believe in the Father as God, we should believe in the Lord as God also. As for what He had in mind when He spoke this word, the Jews believe only in Yahweh God, that is, in the LORD God alone. They believe only in the one and only God. But from the very beginning the Bible records, *"Then God said, 'Let Us make*

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*man in Our image, according to Our likeness'" (Genesis 1:26)*, and so it speaks of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in the plural. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are the same one God to us. Although Jesus did not speak of the Holy Spirit here, this means that God the Father and Jesus are the same God. It means that Jesus created us, made all things by the Word, and was with God the Father from before the foundation of the world, planning together, working together, and doing everything together.

## Prayer offered in the name of Jesus

What I want to say to you is that we have obtained salvation by believing in Jesus Christ and we believe in Him and follow Him, and that believing in God the Father and believing in Jesus Christ are equal. Believing in Jesus Christ, praying to Him, and following Him is equal to praying to God the Father. So when we pray, praying, "God the Father, please help me," and praying, "Jesus, please help me," are equal. Yet because people still try to make a distinction between the two, the Lord, in order to correct that thought, said, *"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24)*.

It means that from now on, if we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord will bring it about. Since He is God who is equal to the Father, it means that if we pray to God the Father, we are answered, and if we pray to Jesus Christ, we are also answered. Why is that? Because the two are equal. We must understand this. This word is not an ordinary word; it is a word He spoke in order to plant in us, through faith, that greatness of Jesus Christ

being God, equal to God the Father. Therefore, we must know it that way and believe it that way.

But when you are praying and you say "God the Father" and then say "Lord," does it seem as if the rank somehow drops? To believe is to rely. Do we not also rely on someone as we live in this world? Faith is relying on the one we are to rely on. So relying on God the Father and relying on Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God and our Savior, are the same. Their effect is the same. This is what Jesus is saying. Now the age of the Old Testament has passed and the age of grace has come. Because the Son of God the Father came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist, had our sins transferred to Him and washed away our sins, received on the Cross the punishment for our sins in our place, shed His blood and died, and rose again and became our Savior, this means that now it has become the age of Jesus Christ.

## The age of grace

In the Book of Revelation, the One who sits on the white throne and judges is Jesus Christ. God the Father is the God who sent His own Son to this earth and wants that Son to be honored by all people just as He Himself is, and to be acknowledged as God, equal to God the Father. We must know this. And even the work of judging this world is not something the Father does; He has committed it to the Son. The Bible records, *"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father" (John 5:22–23)*. The judgment of the white throne is also carried out by Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, even judgment is all done by Jesus Christ. That is why it is the age of grace.

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God revealed Himself. Through His own Son He revealed that He is the God of love. God is the God of love and the God of salvation. This means that He sent His own Son and, through that Son, revealed Himself as the Savior who saves mankind from sin and destruction. And He gave eternal life to those who believe. The reason Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)*, is that Jesus Christ is God and the Savior. Because He had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and received all the judgment for those sins, and so accomplished the work of saving us from sin, we are saved by faith and obtain new life by faith.

So for us who live in the age of the New Testament, the age of grace, Jesus Christ, whom God the Father sent, that is, God who is equal to the Father, has become our God. We have come to know God the Father through Jesus. So believing in Jesus is exactly the same as believing in God the Father. Why is that? Because the Father revealed His love through the Son, gave through the Son the new life He wanted to give, and does even the work of judging not directly but through the Son. So we have now become people who live in the age of the New Testament, the age of grace, and people who live in Jesus Christ. Because this word is saying this, it demands faith of us.

Though this age is gloomy, the Lord says, *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14:1)*. He also said, *"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13)*. Even now, the Jews do not believe in Jesus as God, equal to God the Father. So they do not pray in the name of Jesus. They pray in the name of Yahweh God.

But Jesus Christ came to this earth two thousand years ago. And at about thirty years of age He received baptism from John the Baptist, had our sins transferred to Him and washed away

our sins, received the judgment for sin in our place, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again, and so He revealed Himself as our eternal God, our shepherd, our God of love, the God who protects us, the God who judges the devil, and the God who takes us to the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, we must believe in Jesus Christ as God, equal to God the Father, and live firmly by that faith. Even now, when it has become the last days, we must live by such faith.

Those who have received the remission of sins understand this easily, but to those who have not received the remission of sins it may sound difficult. Those who are not born again pass over this word carelessly. But did Jesus speak the word *"Let not your heart be troubled" (John 14:1)* only to the disciples of that time? No. It is a word He speaks to us now as well. Jesus is telling us that He is the almighty God just like God the Father, the God of love, our Savior God, the God who is our shepherd, the God who protects us, the God who judges, and the God who hears our prayers.

The word *"you believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14:1)* is a word that means Jesus is God, equal to the Father, and is our God. Is this a forced, contrived statement? No. Is it a lie? No. Then does it mean that the Son is trying to put Himself on a par with the Father? Not at all. To help your understanding, let me give an example.

When we are young, we think our father is strong and a very big person. But as we grow older, we come to know, "My father, too, was like this when he was my age." Then later, when the father grows old and the son grows up, we realize, "Ah, so this is what a person is!" This is only one example given to explain.

God the Father is unchanging forever, and Jesus Christ, that God, is also to us the almighty God who never changes. Therefore, we can believe in the Father and the Son as equal, and

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we must believe so. *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14:1)*. This is because Jesus is our God.

## The word given in an uncertain age

The present age is gloomy. Do you know what dreams people have in this age? They have no dreams. They have no dream for the future, and they cannot take hold of a dream. Now that the age of artificial intelligence has come, what dream could there be? We must face and live in an uncertain age from now on. We do not know what will become of the future of our flesh. People are placing their hope in such things, wondering whether, by implanting a chip in the head, removing a person's heart and attaching an artificial heart, and connecting other tubes in place of blood vessels, they might become people who do not even get sick and live very long like robots. Would that be good?

A person's joy does not come from such things. When we eat food that a cook has made with devotion, we feel these things one by one: "A lot of devotion went into this; a lot of care was taken; it is really delicious. It was made like this for my health." The person who makes the food makes it that way, and the person who eats it eats it that way. In doing so, the heart becomes full and content. "It was done for me." So after eating good food, we feel good and our hearts feel really good. When the thought comes, "That cook did this for me, for my health," we feel really good.

Jesus says to us in this age, *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14:1)*. This means that Jesus Christ is our God. He is not One who saved us only from sin; He is the One who delivered us from judgment, and

the One who delivers us even from destruction and takes us to the Lord's kingdom.

He is the God who hears our prayers and helps us even when we are in difficulty. He is not only the One who saves us from sin; He is the God who has become our God and walks with us, who is with us to the end of the world, and who blesses us. This word is saying that. We must believe this fact. We must believe that Jesus is our God, and we must believe the fact that Jesus, our God, helps us. Therefore, we must pray to Him, rely on Him, and live by faith. We must live with faith in all the words He has spoken.

Theologians commonly say that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have ranks, with higher and lower, but are all the same God. But that is wrong. We must believe that the three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are equally God to us. That is the right faith. So when we look at this word after knowing the word of the Bible and receiving the remission of sins, we come to know that people's theology is wrong. We come to know that piecing together doctrines with human thoughts is wrong. And when we listen to sermons preached according to such doctrines, we come to know that they are speaking of things entirely removed from the word.

How uncertain an age is the age we are living in now! It is an age in which we do not know how even the circumstances between nations may change overnight. It is an age in which a powerful nation demands that another nation hand over its land, and a weak nation cannot know its future. It is an age in which the future is this uncertain. There are even ideas emerging of implanting a chip in a person's head to make the person move like a machine. If powerful nations try to do so, it could really happen.

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The young people of the world do not know how they should live from now on. They cannot know for what purpose they should live. “What occupation should I take up?” In the past, people said that if you had an occupation like judge, lawyer, or doctor, you had succeeded. But in the future, perhaps neither judges nor lawyers will be needed anymore. They say that if you enter into an artificial intelligence what has happened and ask, “I am in this situation now; what sentence would I get?” the artificial intelligence gathers and analyzes all the precedents up to now and tells you exactly how many years of imprisonment one receives for committing such a crime.

So they say that in the future even judges will ask artificial intelligence and refer to it when they pass judgment. How unsettling an age it is! That is why Jesus says, *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me” (John 14:1)*. Since Jesus is God and has saved us, this means that He not only saved us but is also the same God as our Father and the almighty God who protects us. So He is strongly telling us to believe in the Lord, pray to the Lord, and rely on the Lord.

## *“You believe in God, believe also in Me”*

Who among people can say, “Believe in me and follow me with certainty”? Even I, when it comes to the work of serving the gospel, can say, “Trust and follow in this matter. This is the will of God. Serving the gospel in this way is the will of God.” But is there anyone who can say, “Entrust everything to me; I will do it all for you”? There is no one so confident. No person of power in the world can say that. If there is someone who boasts loudly that people should believe only in him, that is nothing but empty words.

But Jesus says so. The Lord is the One who said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)*; He is the God of resurrection, and the God who raises even the dead. That is why He can say, *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14:1)*. It is just that we read this word absentmindedly; in fact, this is a tremendous word. If we look into it, it is an enormous word. That is why this Bible is tremendous.

Scriptures made by gathering human thoughts, however thick they may be, have no truth in them. Some people say that man was originally born as a god, born as a perfect being, and so if one looks carefully into oneself, one comes to realize that one is a god. But the One who created is God. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are God. How can a man become a god? How can a person who has to go to the bathroom several times a day and who says he will die if he does not eat even for one day become a god?

That is why we must believe in Jesus as God. We must believe in Him not only as the Savior who saved us from sin but as God. He is the God who created the universe and all things. The Bible records, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1)*. Jesus created by the Word. The Bible records, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1)*.

He was the same God as the Father. When the time came, in obedience to the Father's will, He put on human flesh and was born on this earth through the body of Mary. And at about thirty years of age He received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and received in our place death, which is the punishment for our sins, and rose again, and so He truly became our God. This means that we should believe so and pray to Jesus Christ whatever we may

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face. It means that we should pray to that God, who not only saved us from sin but also wanted to become our God. We believe in Jesus Christ as our God. We believe in Him as God, equal to the Father. I hope that you will live believing and praying in this way. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

# The faith that keeps the word of perfect salvation

**< John 14:1–24 >**

**“‘Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.’ Thomas said to Him, ‘Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.’ Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, “Show us the Father”? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My**

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**name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.' Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.'"**

## Jesus, who leads us to the Father's house

The disciples, who heard the word that the Lord was leaving, did not know what would become of them. When they heard that the Teacher they had followed for three years was leaving their side, their hearts were filled with anxiety. Jesus told such disciples not to be troubled but to believe in God and to believe in Him. Who among men could say, "Believe in Me as you

believe in God"? It was a word that only Jesus could say, because He is God, equal to the Father.

Let us read verses 1 through 3.

*"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1–3).*

The word *"if it were not so, I would have told you"* means that if there had been no place to dwell, He would have told them already, and so He was clearly saying that there is plenty of room in the Father's house for the people of God to dwell. The Lord said that He was going to prepare that place. What kind of way was that? At the age of thirty, Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and while bearing that sin, He was nailed to the Cross, paid the price of that sin, and died, saying, *"It is finished!"* On the third day He rose again, ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father. The way the Lord went to prepare a place was none other than this way of salvation.

That it takes time until the Lord comes again is not because He lacks the strength to prepare it. It is because there are still many people who have not yet believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and still have sin in their hearts, and so He is waiting until they, too, are saved. When the time is fulfilled, the Lord will come again as He promised and take us. We cannot know when that time will be, but one thing is certain: we, too, are going to the place where the Lord has gone.

There are many things ahead of us, too, that could trouble us. But the Lord, who saved us, is the One who even prepares the place where we will dwell in the future. That is why a person

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who has received the remission of sins, even in the face of death, holds the hope, "Now the time has come for me to go to the Lord's kingdom."

When the Lord said, *"Where I go you know, and the way you know,"* Thomas asked Him how they could know the way when they did not even know where He was going. His question, in which he honestly said that he did not know what he did not know, is our question as well. The way the Lord was going was the way of bearing our sins, which had been passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, and receiving the judgment for them with the blood of the Cross, thereby washing us, and it was the way of paving the road to the kingdom of heaven for us. To that question, Jesus answered that He Himself was that very way. Let us read verse 6.

*"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'" (John 14:6).*

Jesus Himself said, "I am the way." People each try to find the way by themselves through their own efforts and good deeds. But Jesus becomes the way to the kingdom of heaven only for those who believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished. To those who do not believe in that work, He becomes a stumbling stone.

Jesus is also the truth. Everything the Lord said and everything He did is true. That He removed our sins is true, and His promise to prepare a place and come again is also true. And Jesus is the life. Through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, He caused us to be born again and gave us a new life that never dies.

We must also clearly understand the word *"except through Me."* All people were born as sinners. Unless one believes in his heart that Jesus came to this earth and had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, that He bore those sins and received the judgment for them with the blood of

the Cross, thereby washing us clean, and that He rose again from death, no one can go to the Father.

## A life of knowing the Father through the Son and asking in His name

When Jesus said that if they had known Him, they would have known His Father also, Philip said that it would be sufficient if He showed them the Father. He wanted to confirm it with his eyes. Even though he had been with the Lord for a long time, he had not yet realized that one knows the Father through Jesus.

Let us read verses 9 through 11.

*"Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves'" (John 14:9–11).*

Jesus did not come to this earth as He pleased or work according to His own will. When He received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, and when He taught the disciples on this night, He was doing the work the Father had told Him to do.

Then by what can we know that Jesus is God? In verse 11, the Lord told them to see the works He does and believe. Above all, look at the work of His willingly giving up His own body to the Cross at the age of thirty-three. Even though He knew in advance that Judas would betray Him, He did not avoid that path.

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Could a created being choose such a death of his own accord for all mankind? Through this work we come to know that the Father is in Jesus, and we also come to know how great in love and how righteous the Father is.

Following this word, the Lord spoke of the work the disciples were to do, and He gave the promise of prayer to those who were entrusted with that work. Until Jesus spoke this word, no one had ever asked in the name of Jesus. But now the Lord told them to ask in His name, and to ask Him.

Let us read verses 12 through 14.

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:12–14).*

*"Most assuredly"* means "Truly, truly, I say to you." While He was in the flesh, the Lord was in one place, but after He went to the Father, He is with those who believe, as God who is everywhere. That is why those who believe in the Lord also do the work of saving souls, just as the Lord did. It is not because the disciples were greater than the Lord, but because the Lord, who had gone to the Father, worked together with them.

The word *"that I will do"* means that the Lord Himself moves and puts it into action. We ask, and the Lord does what we have asked. There is no need to dress up our prayers elaborately. Just as a child says to his parents, "Give me this, help me," speak specifically to Jesus, who saved us. We ask Him to open the way for us to preach the gospel, to hold up a brother whose faith is weak, and to supply what we need in our daily lives.

The ground on which we say, "I pray in the name of Jesus," when we finish our prayers is found in this very word. It is

because Jesus is God, and He is the One who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross, rose again from death, and completed our salvation. These words are a confession of faith that Jesus is alive even now and is the God who helps us. When we believe in Jesus as God and ask in His name, the Father is glorified in the Son.

## A person who loves the Lord keeps the perfect gospel

Following the promise of prayer, the Lord said that whoever loves Him will keep His commandments. Let us read verse 15.

*"If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).*

What is the evidence that we love the Lord? It is to believe the word the Lord has spoken, and for our faith in that word not to change. Not departing from the word that saved us even when many storms come and many temptations come is what it is to keep the Lord's word. If the Lord says that He has washed away all our sins, but we turn that salvation into something incomplete with our own thoughts, that is not keeping His word.

In chapter 13, right before this word, the Lord loved His own to the end and washed the disciples' feet. Through that work He taught them that He had washed away even the sins they would commit on this earth. The Lord, who showed that perfect gospel in chapter 13, tells us in chapter 14 to keep it. If we believe in Jesus without knowing the perfect gospel, we are always anxious. It is because every time our wrongs are revealed, we come to regard ourselves as sinners again.

Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the

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representative of mankind. The Lord, who bore that sin, received the judgment for all those sins by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and He rose again from death and became the perfect Savior of those who believe.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament were entrusted only until the Lord came and offered the perfect sacrifice. Jesus accomplished the atonement once and for all, just as the word says, *"With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12)*. The Book of Hebrews testifies of the result of that salvation as follows.

*"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).*

This salvation is perfect not because our conduct is perfect, but because Jesus offered once and for all His own body, onto which the sin of the world had been passed, and received the judgment for that sin. If sins could have been removed through prayers of repentance, there would have been no reason for Jesus to come to this earth, receive baptism from John, and die on the Cross. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and in the Cross on which He received the judgment for sin.

Therefore, when thoughts that shake your faith arise, confirm the word of salvation once again. Satan digs up our weaknesses and shakes our faith. At such times, do not try to put forward your own conduct, but hold on to the word that says, *"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18)*. The weaker we are, the more our faith in this word becomes an anchor that holds our souls so that they are not shaken.

This faith is also necessary for caring for others. A person who thinks that sin still remains in his heart cannot boldly tell

others to believe in Jesus. But a person who believes that the Lord has washed away all his sins, when he sees a brother's fault, preaches to him the gospel that the Lord took away even that sin. Helping the other person in this way to truly receive the remission of sins and follow the Lord is what it is to love that soul.

## The Lord, who does not leave us as orphans but is with us through the Holy Spirit

The Lord did not merely tell His disciples to keep His word and then leave. He promised to give them another Helper, who would be with them forever. Let us read verses 16 through 18.

*"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:16–18).*

The word "*another Helper*" contains the meaning that the work Jesus had done while He was with the disciples would now be done by the Holy Spirit. Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the punishment for that sin on the Cross, and, after rising again and going to the Father, gave the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who believed in that work and received the remission of sins. In this passage, since it was still before the Cross, He spoke of it as something He would give in the future, but for us who believe the gospel today, it is the Holy Spirit who has already been given.

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He is the Spirit of truth. He is the Spirit who comes upon the heart of a person who acknowledges and believes the word of God just as it is. When we acknowledge that we are sinners who can only go to hell and accept Jesus, who came by water and blood, as our Savior, God gives us the Holy Spirit together with salvation. On the contrary, if we put our own desires ahead of believing the word and believe in Jesus only through a religious life, we cannot receive the Spirit of truth.

We, too, cannot see the Holy Spirit with our eyes. The Holy Spirit does not come through some sensation felt in the body, but comes quietly into the faith that believes the written word. Whenever we hear the word of salvation that the Lord accomplished through the baptism He received from John and the Cross, He testifies within us, "Yes, the Lord saved you in that way," and He testifies that there is no sin in the heart of the person who believes that word. That is why, even though we cannot know it through the senses of the flesh, we know in our hearts that the Holy Spirit is there.

Also, when we do not know what choice to make in real life, the Holy Spirit helps us to make the right decision. When we go in the wrong direction, the Holy Spirit who is within us feels uncomfortable, so do not pass over that discomfort lightly.

In verse 18, the Lord said that He would not leave us as orphans. An orphan is a person who receives no one's protection or guidance. If the Lord had left nothing behind after He ascended, the disciples would have been in such a situation. But the Lord sent the Holy Spirit, gave us the Church so that it would keep and guide us, and promised that He would come again when the time comes.

Let us read verses 19 and 20.

*"A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day*

*you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (John 14:19–20).*

The Lord was not One who would remain in death. Just as He rose on the third day, He will also raise again the souls and bodies of us who believe in Him, and cause us to live together with Him in the Lord's kingdom. From the day the Lord ascended, the Holy Spirit has let us know that we are people who belong to the Lord. He lets us know that the Father of Jesus Christ is our Father, that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are also our God, and that we are the people of that God.

## A life of caring for people with the love we have received and doing the Lord's work

The Lord said that the person who has His commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Him, and that the Father will love him, and that He, too, will love him and manifest Himself to him. Then Judas (not Iscariot) asked Him why He would manifest Himself to them and not to the world. Let us read verses 23 and 24.

*"Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me'" (John 14:23–24).*

A person who loves the Lord keeps the word the Lord has spoken, and a person who does not love the Lord does not keep that word. The word we hear is the word of the Father who sent the Son. The confession that we love the Lord is revealed through a life lived according to that word, not according to our own will.

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What are the Lord's commandments? The first part of the Ten Commandments is the commandment to love God, and the latter part is the commandment to love people. Put the two together, and it is the commandment to love. Because the Lord loved us first, we also love the Lord and treat people with that love. Love is caring for that person. If someone has sin in his heart, we preach the gospel to him so that he may receive the remission of sins, and if someone is having a hard time in life, we also look after his circumstances.

Repeatedly digging up a brother's weaknesses and plunging him into a sense of inferiority is not love. That person already knows his own shortcomings. Find what he does well and encourage him, saying, "You are really working hard," and help him take courage and follow the Lord. Being indifferent to the brother beside you is, in fact, the same as hating him.

A person who keeps the word that saved him also keeps the Lord's command to preach that word to all the world. A person who loves the Lord preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit and serves the work of causing people to believe that gospel. This work is not the portion of a few pastors. It is a work that we, who have received the same love of salvation, carry out together, praying together and gathering our hearts as one.

The Lord manifests Himself in this way to those who love Him and follow His word. Through such a person He preaches the gospel and saves souls, and when that person meets difficulties on that path, He helps him and supplies what he needs in due season. The world does not see this, but a person who loves the Lord and serves His will meets the Lord in his life.

In verse 23, the Lord said that the Father and the Son would come to the person who keeps His word and make Their home with him. God, who now dwells through the Holy Spirit in us

who believe the Lord's word, will on the last day prepare a place for us to dwell together, come to take us, and live with us forever.

There are times when shortcomings are revealed in our conduct. Do not give up your faith just because your conduct falls short. Believe in Jesus, who had all our sins and weaknesses transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for them with the blood of the Cross, and care for your brothers and serve the gospel with the love you have received. Let us keep the word of the Lord, who has prepared our place in the Father's house and now makes His home with us, with a faith that does not change no matter what storms come. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

# Believe in Jesus as the almighty God

**< John 14:1–14 >**

**“‘Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.’ Thomas said to Him, ‘Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.’ Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, “Show us the Father”? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My**

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**name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.'"**

## The word He left before He departed

We have read the word of John chapter 14. When the Lord spoke this word, He had already received baptism from John at the Jordan River and had all the sin of the world transferred to Him, and He was soon to bear that sin, shed His blood and receive the judgment on the Cross, and rise again from death three days later. Since the time had now come for Him to go to the Father, what the Lord spoke of as the things the children of God must surely know after He ascended is precisely this word we have read today.

*"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1–3)*. The very first thing the Lord said was that if they believed in God, they should also believe in Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus is the Son of God the Father, and at the same time, to us He is God, the same as the Father. When the Lord said to the disciples, *"Believe also in Me" (John 14:1)*, it was a word by which He let them know that He Himself is the same God as the Father. The disciples truly needed this word. That is why the Lord taught them this and also urged them to believe.

We believe in Jesus as the Savior. We believe that Jesus Christ came to this earth and saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We believe that, to save us who are lacking, the Lord received baptism from John and had our sins

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transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and thus saved us. But even while we believe in the Lord, do we know exactly who Jesus really is and believe in Him accordingly? So the Lord spoke this word in order to teach our hearts what the faith that believes in God is. The word *"you believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14:1)* means that we should believe that Jesus is our God. The Lord is saying that He Himself is none other than God.

## The same God as the Father

When the Lord said, *"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him" (John 14:7),* the Bible records, *"Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us'" (John 14:8)*. Then Jesus answered, *"Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves" (John 14:9–11).* Jesus was telling Philip and the disciples that He is the same God as God the Father. Jesus, before dying on the Cross, rising again three days later, and ascending, made it clear to the disciples that He is God, and He is making it clear to us today as well.

When we pray, we pray saying, "I pray in the name of Jesus Christ." But there are also many people who do not pray that way. There are many cases where they simply end their prayer with "God bless," but such faith is in fact not the right faith. To

believe in Jesus as the Savior is to believe that Jesus is God and is the God of salvation who has saved us from sin. Do you believe that Jesus, who is God, has saved us? Jesus is equal to God the Father. This word tells us the fact that Jesus is, to us, the same God as the Father.

In coming to know Jesus, this word that Jesus spoke before He died on the Cross has an extremely great significance. If we cannot believe that Jesus is God, our faith is shaken and ends up coming to nothing. Therefore, it is extremely important to believe this word. We were saved by believing that Jesus saved us from sin by the water, the blood, and the Spirit. But if we do not have the faith that believes that the Lord who saved us is the same God as God the Father, our faith is shaken. If that happens, we are anxious even when we pray and anxious even when we believe, so that at times we seem to believe and at other times we seem unable to believe. Our faith comes to be shaken this way and that according to our own feelings.

In fact, our salvation does not depend on us. Because the Lord saved us from sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we were saved by faith. Our salvation depended on Jesus. Because He saved us from sin, we were saved by faith.

## *"If you ask anything in My name"*

In this word the Lord makes clear that He is the same God as God the Father. When we finish our prayers, we end with, "I pray in the name of Jesus Christ." We sometimes pray to God the Father in the name of Jesus, and sometimes we pray directly to the Lord. Now the Lord, while saying, *"Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me" (John 14:11)*, also said, *"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the*

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*Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:13–14).* This means that if we ask Jesus for help in the name of Jesus Christ, Jesus Himself accomplishes that work. Why is that? It is because Jesus is God, who has the same power and the same status as the Father. So when we pray to Jesus and pray in the name of Jesus, Jesus receives that prayer, answers it, and actually brings it to pass.

This word is a word the Lord spoke looking ahead to the fact that He would die on the Cross, rise again, and go up to the kingdom of heaven. Knowing that the disciples would be troubled, He told them to believe in the Lord just as they believed in God the Father, and to believe that the Lord is their God. According to the Father's will, to save us, the Lord came to this earth clothed in human flesh, had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, rose again from death, and went up to heaven. And He is coming again to take us. *"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2–3).* The Lord is now speaking with the death of the Cross in mind, and the fact that He would rise again from death, testify for forty days, and go up to the kingdom of heaven. It is a word that is almost like a last will.

When Jesus asked the disciples, *"But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15),* the Bible records, *"Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven'" (Matthew 16:16–17).* The Lord, who would soon die on the Cross, rise again from death, ascend, and come again, said that He was going to prepare a place where we would be. And He would come to take us and let us live

together with Him in the place the Lord has prepared. The One who can do this is none other than Jesus Christ. The name Jesus means "Savior," and the word Christ refers to the Anointed One, that is, the One who is King. And that Jesus Christ is none other than God. It means that Jesus, who is God, has saved us from sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In status, Jesus Christ is the Son of God the Father, but to us He is the God and Savior who lacks nothing at all. For us, according to the Father's will, the Lord had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was crucified for us, rose again from death for us, and went to prepare a place. And when He has prepared the place, He will come again, take us, and let us also be where the Lord is. With this word, Jesus has revealed to us today who He is.

And Jesus said, *"If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:14)*. This means that Jesus Himself will accomplish it. When we pray, we naturally take it that God the Father answers. Of course, God the Father also answers. Whether the Father answers, or Jesus Christ answers, or the Triune God answers, it is in fact all the same. Yet we are apt to narrow our thinking of Jesus down to only the Savior who saved us from sin. But He is the same God as God the Father. The only difference is that, according to the Father's will, to save us, He became a man for a while, received baptism from John and had our sins transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and thus accomplished the work of salvation. God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are to us the same one God. He is the God of power, the God of salvation, our shepherd, and the One who went to prepare the place in the kingdom of heaven where we will be. And when He has prepared that place, He will come to take us and let us also be in the kingdom of heaven where He is. Who is it that can do so? It is Jesus Christ. Who is

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it that entrusted that work to Him? It is God the Father. God the Father alone receives glory, but so that His Son, too, might obtain glory through us, He entrusted to the Son the work of saving us from all sins. And when Jesus had accomplished all that work, He caused us to take Jesus Christ as our true God and shepherd. He caused us to be saved by believing in Jesus Christ, who came through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When, after being saved, we pray to Jesus Christ, the Lord hears our prayers and answers because He is the living God. In that way, He caused the Son, too, to obtain the same glory as the Father. Therefore, we must not think little of Jesus Christ in our hearts. We must not regard His power, might, and sovereignty as inferior to God the Father's, or regard Him as a weak Son who is nothing at all.

So we must not think of Jesus Christ only as the Savior who saved us from sin; it is right to know and believe in Him as God, who hears and answers our prayers, and to pray to Him. So we have no need to shrink back when we pray. When praying, we sometimes say, "Lord, help us," and sometimes, "God the Father, help us," but either one is fine. Would it be wrong to pray to the Father? Absolutely not. The Father of Jesus Christ is God, who is also our Father, and Jesus Christ is the same God as that God. He is the Savior who came to this earth for us and saved us from sin through His life of thirty-three years. This word the Lord spoke says that Jesus is the same God as God the Father. We, too, must know it so and believe it so. If we go wrong on this point, our faith can shrink back greatly and be shaken. If Jesus Christ were not God, if He were not the God of power who has the same might as the Father and hears and answers our prayers, our faith could not help but shrink back and be shaken.

## *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father"*

Before dying on the Cross, Jesus Christ urges this one last thing. The Lord let the disciples know that He is the same God as the Father. When Philip said that it would be sufficient if He showed them the Father, the Lord asked in return whether, when the disciples had seen the Lord, they still had to see the Father as well. He said, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" (John 14:9–10).*

Is there anyone among us who has seen God the Father with his eyes? There is no one. But Jesus Christ came to this earth clothed in human flesh and saved us from sin, and we have come to know that Jesus Christ by faith. The person who has come to know Jesus Christ has come to know God the Father. Jesus, too, says that among the words He spoke on this earth there is not a single one He spoke on His own, and that He spoke just as the Father said.

The Lord is God, who saved us from all sins. Because the Lord is God, we were saved from sin. He is God, who created us, and God, who saved us. He said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6)*. Because the Lord is God, only God can lead us to the kingdom of heaven. Only God can save us from all sins, make us children of God, and let us enter the kingdom of heaven and live in the kingdom of God. This is precisely what this word says.

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## Firm faith

We were saved by believing in Jesus Christ with our hearts. Therefore, we must not forget that He who saved us from sin is the true God. We must never forget that God saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that He thereby made us children of God. If this is not complete, we cannot keep our faith to the end. In the last days, if we clearly believe that Jesus Christ is our Savior but have a weak faith that does not believe that He is the same God as God the Father and does not know the truth, then every time Satan the devil shakes us, we cannot help but fall because of our own weakness. The almighty God saved us through His almighty power and His almighty love, that is, through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and we were saved by believing it. We were saved simply by believing with our hearts. If there is just one thing added to the salvation we have received besides what the Lord did for us, it is only that we believed.

Jesus, who saved us, is the almighty God who has the same power as God the Father, and I cannot tell you how perfect a God He is. He is truly the Lord of life, and the Savior who saved us from sin and gave us new life. His words are all truth. Jesus, who has the same power as God the Father, became our Savior, saved us from sin, and made us the people of God. When we believe this with our hearts, our faith becomes firm. In these last days, even though we are weak, as long as our faith is firm we will not fall. He is God, who has the same power as the Father, and He saved us from sin. So even though we are lacking, because we believe in Him and believe in His power, we can stand firm before God, stand firm even in the face of Satan the devil and drive Satan the devil away by faith, and stand before

the Lord to the end and fulfill the Lord's will. This is truly a tremendously important matter.

This word is a word the Lord spoke to the disciples with His coming death on the Cross in mind. In the future, a time will come when tribulation comes upon this world, natural disasters occur, the Antichrist appears, and Satan the devil divides those who believe from those who do not believe and persecutes them. At that time, if we have the faith that the almighty God has saved us, we become people of very firm faith. But if we do not, and instead look at our own weakness and our lacking deeds, we cannot help but fall. How complete our salvation is depends on how powerful and how perfect Jesus Christ is. Salvation does not depend on us but on the power of Jesus Christ. Our happiness also depends on His power, and where we will go also depends on Him. Everything depends on Him. So, according to what kind of God He is and what kind of power He has, it is decided whether we have been saved or not, and it is determined where we will go after being saved.

I do not think that many days remain until the Lord comes. This year, too, there have been many natural disasters in our country. Will they not come next year? They will come just the same. Next year they will be worse, and the year after that they will be worse still. You may think, "How do you know that?" We who believe the word of the Bible can know what will happen in the future. We can know it by believing the word written in the Bible. We can know more accurately than scientists that such things will actually happen before long. Just as such things happened in the past, they are happening now too, and this is not a time to think that things will get better. This age is not that kind of age. The Bible has recorded the things that will happen at the end, and the age in which we can see them with our eyes is this very age, right now. Looking at the world

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situation and the climate of this age, we can know that what is to come is coming. All we need to do is preach the gospel fully and then stand before God. Therefore, we must have the knowledge that Jesus Christ is God and the Savior, and we need the faith that knows and believes this knowledge. Without this faith, it is harder to live in this age. The closer the end draws, and the more difficult our circumstances become, the more our shortcomings are bound to be exposed. So this age demands greater faith of us, and we strive to keep our faith.

Do you think, "I am not like that. It seems my faith gets better the more difficult my circumstances are"? The more difficult our circumstances are, it is not that our faith gets better but that we come to cling to God more. We cannot say that faith is good just because one clings earnestly to God. Faith is believing even when nothing is happening. Faith is always, consistently, following the will of God the Father, believing in the almighty God, asking, believing that it will surely come to pass, and taking on challenges by faith. A faith that clings only in hard times is not good faith. That is only clinging for a moment. Like immature children who cling when things are hard but fall away again as soon as things get a little better, such faith is a momentary faith. It is not true faith.

## The Lord, who held on to Peter

Now we must know who God is. Jesus Christ saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When Jesus spoke this word, He had already had all the sin of all mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. As Jesus was about to wash Peter's feet, He said, *"If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me" (John 13:8)*. Peter, who at

first refused, had no choice but to hold out his feet. The Lord said, *"What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this" (John 13:7)*, but when did Peter come to know why the Lord had washed his feet? It was when he had denied Jesus three times and heard the rooster crow. At that moment he remembered the Lord's word, *"Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times" (Matthew 26:75)*. "So that is why He washed my feet. That is why He washed the disciples' feet. The Lord did that because He knew that I am such a lacking person that I would do a thing like this." Only then did Peter finally come to understand the Lord.

After Jesus rose again, He came to visit the disciples. When the risen Lord came to the disciples at the Sea of Galilee, He asked Peter, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*. Peter answered, *"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*. When the Lord asked the third time, he confessed, *"Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You" (John 21:17)*. In this confession of Peter's was contained the faith that the Lord knew all his weakness and also knew that he believed in the Lord as God and as the Savior. The only thing Peter could truly confess was faith.

The Lord knows all things. The Lord is the true God, and the almighty God, the same as the Father. Jesus walked on the sea, and when He said to the storm, *"Peace, be still!" (Mark 4:39)*, the storm became calm. The Lord, who made all things in the universe and made all the stars of heaven, is God, who has existed from the very beginning of Genesis. That faith was in Peter's heart. That is why he could make such a confession. Peter was lacking and weak, but he did not fall because of his weakness. It was because he knew who Jesus truly is. Because he knew that the Lord is equal to the almighty God the Father, he did not fall even though he was lacking.

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Peter denied Jesus three times, and at the end he even cursed and swore, saying, *"I do not know the Man!" (Matthew 26:74)*. Could we ordinarily say such a thing? It is hard even to say that we absolutely do not know Jesus. Yet Peter denied Jesus in the face of danger. Seeing this, we must know that it was Jesus who made Peter the Apostle Peter, and that it was not because Peter's will was strong. When we know and believe how powerful the Lord is, how He removed our sins and became our true Savior, and what a happy future He has promised us, everything comes to pass according to that faith.

## Look to the almighty Savior

*"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14:1)*. In this word is contained the meaning that we should know and believe that Jesus is the same God as God the Father. Do you believe that Jesus is the same God as God the Father? I am small, I have nothing, and I am lacking, but because I believe in God, I have been serving the Lord until now. Without such faith, we can neither serve the Lord nor follow Him. I know all too well that without such faith we cannot stand before the Lord to the end. If we do not have the faith that believes that Jesus is equal to God the Father and is the almighty God, we cannot believe in, keep, and spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the end, and we cannot stand before the Lord until the end of the world. Even when we are so lacking that we are too ashamed to stand before God, we must look to and believe in God, who has become our almighty Savior. I hope that you, too, will believe in that Savior. I believe in Him as well.

This word says that when we pray in the name of Jesus, Jesus hears and brings it to pass. If so, is there any need for us to

hesitate when we pray? None at all. There are many cases where people think along the lines of entrusting big matters to the Father and small matters to the Son, and that is because the concept is not clearly established in their thinking. The Lord is God, who has the same power as the Father. The Lord clearly saved us by the water and the Spirit. Yet we have planted Jesus in our hearts as a small God. Since the Lord has saved us, all we have to do is go forward in the name of the Lord. We think of God the Father alone as the God who hears and answers our prayers and regard the Lord as a God smaller than Him, but we must know that God entrusted all authority to the Son so that His Son might obtain glory. Just as God the Father is treated as God by us and receives glory, the Son, too, wants to receive glory and be treated as God by us in the same way. There is nothing wrong at all in our treating Him so.

When we pray, we pray in the name of the Lord. And when we pray to the Lord, we must pray believing that the Lord is the almighty God. We must believe that as long as our prayer is not wrong, the Lord grants it all. If it is a matter done with one heart with the Church and a matter for the gospel, we receive an answer when we pray with the faith that believes the Lord hears and will surely answer. The Lord sees such faith and brings it to pass, and He does greater things than what we prayed for.

Who is Jesus to us? He is the same God as God the Father. Jesus is the same God as God the Father, and at the same time He is the God of salvation who truly loved us and saved us. To save us, He gave up His life and gave us the truth of the salvation of the water and the Spirit. And He went to prepare a place for us. That He prepares a place means that He will come again to take us, bring us to the place where the almighty God is, give us the privilege of God's children and transform us into the status of God's children, and let us live clothed in the glory of God

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forever. We must believe this. No matter how lacking we are, the almighty Jesus, who has the same power as God the Father, has saved us from sin, and Jesus, who has become our God, takes responsibility for our future. Knowing and believing this, we must follow the Lord until the end of the world.

God has saved us. We must look to God. If we look at ourselves, we are in a sorry state. Only when we look to God do our hearts become clean and can we live rightly. I hope that you will believe in Jesus, who saved us, as the almighty God, equal to the Father, and keep your faith to the end, looking to Him. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

# Peace comes upon the heart of him who loves the Lord

**< John 14:15–31 >**

**“‘If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.’ Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, ‘Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give**

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**to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard Me say to you, "I am going away and coming back to you." If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, "I am going to the Father," for My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.'"**

## *"If you love Me, keep My commandments"*

Now, among the words the Lord spoke to His disciples like a last will while He was on this earth, I will share the word of John chapter 14, verses 15 through 31. The words the Lord spoke to the disciples have all been fulfilled. The Lord said to the disciples, *"If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15)*. The Lord's commandment is to have no other gods before God, to love God first of all, and also to love people. When we read this word, we are reminded of the word that says, *"You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3)*. I believe that if we truly love the Lord, we will become disciples who have no other gods besides the Lord and who love the Lord most, more than anything in this world. If a person loves the Lord, he loves the Lord more than anything else in this world, and he comes to do the work of spreading this gospel, which the Lord has entrusted to us, to the whole world and saving souls.

If we love the Lord, we cannot help but keep the Lord's commandments. The proof that we love the Lord is that we keep the Lord's commandments. There are many things in this world,

but if we truly believe in and love the Lord, we come to love the Lord more than anything else, to serve Him, and to preach Him.

There is no one who, while saying that he loves the Lord, does not keep the Lord's commandments. Even before we were born again, the Lord's commandment was to love God and to love our neighbors. Even after we are born again, the Lord is unchanging. The Lord tells His disciples, and also those who are born again, to keep His commands if they love Him. Whether we love the Lord or not can be known by looking at whether we keep the Lord's commandments or not.

This word the Lord spoke comes home to us today. We come to know that a person who truly loves the Lord cannot help but love the gospel and cannot help but serve the gospel. Now, because we love the Lord more than anything else, even if we lack other things, we come to devote ourselves all the more to the work of serving the gospel.

## *"Another Helper"*

The Lord said, *"I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:16–17).*

In a little while, Jesus would leave the disciples on this earth and go ahead of them. In a little while, the Lord would die on the Cross, rise again from death, and sit at the right hand of the Father's throne. The word of chapter 14 is like a last will that the Lord Himself left to the disciples. The Lord said that He would pray the Father for the disciples, for those who believe in God.

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As for what that was, it was that the Lord would send the Holy Spirit, just as He said, *"He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16)*. Jesus Christ said that He would send the Holy Spirit to those who believe in Him as the Savior so that He would be with them forever, and that the Holy Spirit would dwell in the hearts of God's people so that they would receive help through the Holy Spirit. And after Jesus Christ died on the Cross, rose again, and ascended to heaven, on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples like fire, just as this word says. And this word has been fulfilled just as it is for us today as well.

The Lord said of the Holy Spirit, *"Whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him" (John 14:17)*. It means that although the Holy Spirit, the gift of God, has come upon the hearts of us who have received the remission of sins and been saved through the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit cannot come upon the people of this world, and the Holy Spirit is only in those who are born again. The Holy Spirit dwells with us who have been born again of water and the Spirit, and also dwells in us forever.

The Lord said that He would send the Holy Spirit to the disciples, and indeed, to us who have received the remission of sins today, the Lord has also sent the Holy Spirit and made the Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts. Through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit is in our hearts, but the people of the world do not know this. Just as the Lord said that He would send the Helper, the Holy Spirit has actually come upon the hearts of us who have received the remission of sins. We know that the Holy Spirit is in our hearts. The Holy Spirit is with us and leads us. It was said that God gives the Holy Spirit to those who have received the remission of sins, and that word has actually been fulfilled.

## *"I will not leave you orphans"*

Before He received the judgment on the Cross, the Lord said, *"I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18)*. After the Lord ascended, Jesus' disciples suffered hardships and much persecution and were martyred. But just as He said in this word spoken like a last will, the Lord did not leave the disciples, and He does the same for us.

As I look at this word, I think about this. The Lord said that He would not leave us and would come again, so what will we be doing when we welcome the Lord as we live in this world? What will we be doing when we meet the Lord when the last tribulation comes?

When I think about it, there is also fear in my heart. I cannot say there is no human fear of how evil and frightening natural disasters or the work of Satan the devil might be. But does that mean we should welcome the Lord while hiding and running away in fear, like cowards? No. Since the Lord said, *"I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18)*, I think that if we are going to be martyred anyway, we can serve the Lord diligently, do all that we have to do, and then go when the Lord comes to take us. I also think that even if my life is long and I go through hardships and am martyred in the last tribulation, I can go in that way when the Lord comes. Either way, just as the Lord said that He would come, the Lord will not leave us as orphans but will surely come to take us.

What will we be doing when we meet the Lord? Will we meet the Lord while making all kinds of excuses and only calculating? Or will we go when the Lord tells us to come, while working diligently? In any case, I have a desire to meet the Lord while serving the Lord together with the saints. Just as He said, *"If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15)*, if we

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truly love the Lord, how can we not serve the gospel, how can we not do the work of God, and how can we not work with all our strength and with our very lives? If we say we love Him and yet do not serve the Lord, that is like a hell we go through while alive. It is right for us, who have been born again of water and the Spirit, to do something for the Lord.

Just as the Lord told the disciples that He would come on the last day, the Lord will come to us on the last day. I think about what we will look like when we welcome the Lord at that time. My heart is set on meeting the Lord while living a life that keeps the Lord's commandments.

Once, when I could not sleep at night, I thought, "The Lord will come to take me, so what will I be doing when I meet the Lord?" At that time, I thought that I must meet the Lord while diligently doing the work entrusted to me. I thought that I must preach the gospel to the whole world.

There are truly many people who want to know the gospel. I have a desire to send the books of the gospel to those who want them, as they want, and so to preach the gospel to the entire world. Since the Lord said that He would not leave us but would come to take us, we want to meet the Lord while diligently doing the work of the gospel until then.

I think about going to live in the Lord's kingdom when the Lord comes, and I am thankful that He says He will not leave us. And I think it is only natural that a person who loves the Lord keeps the Lord's commandments. Love is not divided equally. Depending on what we love more, we lean more toward that side. I think that keeping the Lord's commandments, serving the Lord's gospel, and devoting all our strength to that work because we love the Lord may seem wrong in human terms, may seem to have many faults, and may even look as if we are failing to fulfill our duties as human beings. So in human terms, I also feel

sorry. But since the Lord said, *"If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15)*, if we actually love the Lord, isn't living a life of keeping the Lord's commandments the natural life? Because we love the Lord, we come to do the Lord's work even more and to do much of the work of preaching the gospel to people. That is the natural life. It is good for us to live our lives leaning more toward the work of God.

When we have done all this work, when will the Lord come to take us? The Lord will come at the time when we have preached the gospel fully and when it is fitting for the Lord to come. After natural disasters come, famines and plagues occur, the age of the pale horse comes and the Antichrist appears, and martyrdom takes place, the Lord will come to take us. This word, *"I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18)*, was fulfilled for the disciples and will also be fulfilled for us. When we think that we will meet the Lord at that time, we are thankful, and at that time we will give the utmost thanks to the Lord, who has come to take us.

## The Lord, who manifests Himself to those who love Him

The Lord said, *"A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19)*. In a little while, the Lord would die on the Cross and then ascend to heaven, and though the people of the world would not see Jesus Christ, we come to see Jesus Christ by faith. And just as Jesus Christ died and lived again, our souls also live again by faith, and in the end even our mortal bodies will be made alive by the Lord and live. This has actually been fulfilled for us.

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The Lord goes on to say, *"At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (John 14:20)*. It means that when the Lord rises again and ascends to heaven, we will come to know that Jesus Christ is in the Father, that we are in the Lord, and that the Lord is in us. This word was fulfilled for Jesus' disciples, and it has also been fulfilled for us. This is something the people of the world cannot know. And they do not even want to know.

The Lord says, *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21)*. What is the Lord's commandment? It is to have no other gods besides God and to love the almighty Lord God most of all. How about you? Do you have no other gods before the Lord? Do you love the Lord most of all? We love the Lord most of all. Because we love the Lord most of all, we follow and serve the Lord today, even though we are lacking. If we did not love the Lord, we would come to love the world. And if we love the world, we cannot serve the Lord. So it makes no sense to say that we love the Lord and yet not do the Lord's work. If a person says he loves the Lord and yet does not rejoice in the Lord's work but finds it burdensome, that person does not love the Lord.

To have no other gods besides the Lord means that the Lord alone is the true God and the Lord alone is our true Savior. The Lord had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He removed our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And He is the God who saved us, made us children of God, made us His workers, and gave us the riches and glory of the world to come.

Since the Lord has given us the greatest love, given us the greatest blessing, and given us a love that cannot be compared

with anything in this world, a person who has experienced this cannot help but keep the Lord's commandments and cannot help but love the Lord most of all. So whether we are truly people who keep the Lord's commandments or not, and whether we are people who love the Lord or not, can be known right away by looking at ourselves.

The person who keeps the Lord's commandments is the person who loves the Lord God, and that person comes to experience the word that says, *"He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21)*. A person who loves the Lord is truly loved by the Father. And he comes to experience in his heart that God loves him.

Sometimes, even when there is nothing in particular to rejoice about outwardly, I feel deeply in my heart that God loves me very much. So there are many times when my heart is joyful and glad. I know it is the same for you. Because we, though lacking, love the Lord more, even though we are sometimes persecuted and sometimes ignored in the world, we follow the Lord more because we love the Lord more in our hearts. Then I know that you, too, experience the Lord coming to you and comforting you, saying, "My beloved," giving you strength, making you testify of the word more, and wrapping you in His love. Such things are very common.

We are not alone; we have the Holy Spirit in our hearts. So we keep the Lord's commandments, love God the most, and do the work of God the most. And as we live in this world in that way, when we want to be comforted or when our hearts are weary, we receive true comfort from God. The Holy Spirit moves our hearts and comforts us. So we live receiving a comfort that cannot be received from the world.

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The Lord is now speaking words of a last will and of prophecy in the face of death. This word, *"He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21)*, has actually been fulfilled for us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, for those who love the Lord and follow Him. So they are loved by the Father. Although Jesus Christ does not appear visibly to our eyes, He makes it strongly manifest in our hearts that He has saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

This word the Lord spoke is a word like a last will and like a prophecy, and it has all been fulfilled for Jesus' disciples and for us as well. If in the past we thought that the word of the Bible was merely the word of truth and a very good word, now we must believe that the word of God is real and that it has all been fulfilled for us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The word of God is an unchanging truth of which not one jot or one tittle changes, and a truth that will be fulfilled just as it is.

## Those who love the Lord and those who do not

When the Lord spoke in this way, the Bible records, *"Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?'" (John 14:22)*. It was another Judas, not Judas Iscariot who sold Jesus, who asked the Lord. Then the Lord answered, *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" (John 14:23)*. This means that if we believe in the almighty Lord God, that is, Jesus Christ, who is our Savior, believe in the salvation He has given, and love

Him, the Lord will protect us. This word, too, is a word that will all be fulfilled in the last days.

The Lord went on to say, *"He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me" (John 14:24)*. A person who does not love the Lord does not keep the Lord's word. He does not keep it because he does not love the Lord, and he dislikes serving because he does not love Him. He simply likes the world more than the Lord.

Long ago, when I went to school, good notebooks were not common. If I bought even one new notebook, I cannot tell you how good it felt to the touch. When I fitted a shortened pencil into the barrel of a ballpoint pen and wrote on clean paper, I cannot tell you how good it felt. Even if the handwriting was crooked when I had finished, it felt so good while I was writing, and that pleasure made buying notebooks enjoyable. Such memories come back to me. I think that loving the world is also something like that. How many good things there are in the world to love! But when we meet the Lord and come to love Him, we come to know that such things are nothing special. However, just as the Lord said that a person who does not love Him does not keep His word, a person who does not love the Lord is captivated by the things in the world because they look good.

No matter how good the things in this world are, and even if there are riches and honor, beautiful houses, and attractive people, if we know and believe in the Lord's love, they all look trivial. Because the Lord is One who is worthy to be loved, and there is no one more precious than He, no one more almighty than He, and no one more beautiful than He, to a person who has met the Lord and loves Him, everything else looks insignificant. From the moment we are born again of water and the Spirit, from the time we come to love the Lord, the greed and the feelings of

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our hearts that clung to the world are cleared away, just as in autumn the leaves fall and only bare branches remain. Of course, it does not happen overnight. As time passes, the more we come to know the Lord, the more they are cleared away in that way.

The Lord says repeatedly, *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word… He who does not love Me does not keep My words" (John 14:23–24)*, *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me" (John 14:21)*. A person who believes in the Lord loves the Lord. He cannot help but love Him, even if he tried not to. Even if he once loved the world, as he sees and hears the Lord's word and has fellowship, he comes to love the Lord. Without even realizing it, his heart is captured by the Lord, and he falls deeply into that love. Falling into that love, he no longer sees other things; he comes to love the Lord, to follow Him more, to exalt Him more, to glorify Him more, to serve Him more, and to sacrifice more.

But a person who does not love the Lord, or a person who does not know that the Lord loved him and saved him from sin, cannot bring his heart to it even if he wants to love the Lord. Because what comes into his sight right now is good to him and the pleasures the world gives are good to him, he cannot love the Lord even if he tries. We must know that if we have no heart to love the almighty Lord God, there is a problem. It is because we are not keeping the Lord's commandment. The Lord's telling us to have no other gods before Him was a charge He gave because people can fail to love the Lord most of all and serve idols instead. Both those who believe and those who do not believe must repent. Where is there anyone to fear other than God, and where is there anyone more lovable? Even thinking objectively, the Lord is far more beautiful. The Lord loved us, made our lives worthwhile, and made them glorious.

## Look ahead to the outcome of your life

If we do not love the Lord but love this world, where will we go in the end? It is written, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. This means that if we have sin, we die. It means that if we have sin, we enter into eternal destruction. To enter into destruction means to enjoy pleasure for a moment and then be cursed forever, so if our lives, our souls, and our very being end up entering eternal destruction, would we be happy? There is no one as unhappy as that. The Bible says, *"She who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives" (1 Timothy 5:6)*. The person who looks ahead to the outcome of his future, is loved by the Lord, and has received the salvation the Lord has given is a happy person.

Before you die, before your end comes, you must meet the Lord quickly. You must look ahead to your own future, examine yourselves as to whether you have sin or not and whether you love the Lord or not, and honestly know what kind of person you are. You must confess, "I am nothing. I am a person who is sad because of sin. God, have mercy on me and save me," believe the gospel in your heart, and obtain salvation. You must make up your mind before God. Such a person is a happy person. However we may have lived on this earth, if the outcome is bad, it is bad. However we live today, if, when we finally stand before God, the place we go to in the end is a sad place, a place of destruction, we are sad people.

On the other hand, if the Lord is to come to take us and our home is to be with the Lord, we are happy people. Since it is written, *"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1)*, we must think carefully and believe. The Lord says, *"Which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has*

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*enough to finish it" (Luke 14:28)*. It means that even in this world people make a budget before building a house, so how much more should we, as we live in this world, count the outcome of our lives thoroughly and live the present by faith. And He also said that if one cannot oppose twenty thousand soldiers with ten thousand, *"while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace" (Luke 14:32)*. For the outcome of our lives to be happy, we must believe in the Lord quickly. We must quickly take hold of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is a word I offer to those who are not yet born again.

Even if we live, how long will we live? From fifteen to twenty, time seems to pass slowly. Then, when we become adults and the time comes when we think, "Now I must come to my senses," from then on the years pass quickly, like a squirrel running on a wheel. A little later we get married, and as we go through this and that, we turn thirty and then forty, and as we send our children to school, we pass forty and turn fifty. After fifty, each year is different. One year feels like ten years, like a hundred years. From then on, we feel our whole body rapidly growing weak, and even our thinking begins to change completely. Time goes by quickly.

It seems like only the other day that I was a young man, but before I knew it, I have grown old and reached the time when I feel the weakness of the flesh. I feel that life passes by that quickly. Everyone is born in a moment and goes in a moment. The young people of today will also soon become elderly adults and receive the greetings of the young. At weddings, people commonly give the blessing to live together until your hair turns white, and that word is being fulfilled for us. That blessing is being fulfilled. As for me, too, that word is being fulfilled right now, so my hair is turning white.

Each person must take responsibility for his own life. You must know where your life will go and what the outcome of your life will be, and quickly believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and become a person who loves the Lord. You must become a person who keeps the Lord's commandments. You must know that the commandment to have no other gods before the Lord is truly a fitting command, that the Lord is truly One worthy to be loved, that He is almighty, that He is beautiful, that He truly loves us, and that He has saved us. And you must decide quickly and believe quickly. You may end up receiving destruction while leisurely enjoying pleasure.

One may live a life that pursues pleasure even while believing in the Lord. But if one does not even believe in the Lord and pursues only pleasure, it is a serious matter. We do not know when the Lord will come to take us. It is because the Lord said, *"I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18)*. In fact, aren't we like orphans? Because this world is not the place where we are to live, we are in the position of orphans. It is just that right now we have met the Lord and are living well; but since the time will soon come when the Antichrist appears and chases after us to seize and kill us, we are in fact like orphans.

## The peace the Lord gives

The Lord said, *"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:25–27)*.

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The Lord promised that the Helper, the Holy Spirit, would *"bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26)*. Does the Holy Spirit bring all things to our remembrance? Yes, He does. When does He bring them to our remembrance? Does He bring them to our remembrance only when we travel alone? Even when our hearts have gone out to the world, when we worship and hear the word, the flow of our hearts, our feelings, and everything return from the world to the Lord again. That is why worship is absolutely necessary for a person who is born again.

The Lord helps us by sending the Helper, the Holy Spirit, who is the One who helps us. The Holy Spirit is in the heart of a person who has received the remission of sins. So the difference between a person who is born again and a person who is not born again is as great as that between heaven and earth. There is a great difference between a person who has become a child of God and a person who has not.

The Lord said, *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27)*. Before we were born again, we tried hard to enjoy peace on our own, but that was not true peace.

The Lord said that the peace He gives is not like what the world gives. The Lord said that He gives us peace and leaves it with us. The Lord has given us peace through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the gospel of the remission of sins, through the word of truth, and through His almighty power and protection. Truly, this peace the Lord has given is different from the peace the world gives.

What is the peace the Lord gives? The Lord received baptism from John and had our sins transferred to Him, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death,

and so He removed all our sins. The Lord is almighty God; He has completely removed our sins and has perfectly made us children of God. So we have no need to fear. We are perfect children of God, and the Lord is with us until the end of the world. Since the Lord said, *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33)*, the Lord takes responsibility for our lives. In that way, the Lord continues to give us peace. He leaves His peace with us.

We have been saved from all our sins and have become children of God, and we have also received God's promises of blessing. Yet, even while enjoying the peace the Lord has given us, we often become restless and stir up unnecessary trouble. Thinking, "Why is it so boring? Why is there so little fun?" we look around for something to do among *"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16)*. Since the Lord has given us peace, all we have to do is receive it by faith and enjoy it. Since the Lord has removed all our sins, in that peace we rather come to thank the Lord and think of the Lord's grace. There is now no need for prayers of repentance in which we say that we will keep the Lord's commandments and live rightly before the Lord. In the past, we gained at least some sense of accomplishment by offering prayers of repentance, but since the word of God tells us not to do that but simply to believe the word, there is no longer any need to do so. In this way, the Lord has given us true peace. If we have obtained peace, we must also share this peace with others. We must have a good influence on the whole world.

We must think about how we should live before God. Have you experienced the peace the Lord gives? Are you experiencing it even now? Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have received the remission of sins before God

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have peace in their hearts. A person who has no peace is so because there is sin in his heart. The Lord has already solved both the problem of sin in our souls and the problem of our future, and has given us true peace.

Those who have received the peace the Lord has given are those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If there is anything that we, being such people, worry about as we live on this earth, it is how we can preach this gospel to others. These days we worry about how to preach the gospel to those who cannot see. On the contrary, those whose two eyes are wide open only stir up controversy over what is right and what is wrong. If they do not want to believe, they could simply not believe, but they strive to teach it as their own. And I cannot tell you how loudly those who have not even learned the truth talk big.

Not long ago, a pastor contacted us to say that he had read our books, come to know and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, and was so happy. I thought to myself, "I knew that something like this would happen. You, too, taste the peace the Lord gives. I, too, tasted it, and it was so good. I have been at peace until now. If there is one concern in my heart, it is how to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit quickly to the whole world." There are billions of people living in the whole world, and though it is still feeble now, before long we will have preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to everyone in the whole world. When God works, it is no problem at all. It is very simple: we share the writings of the gospel through the Internet, and those who will believe, believe, and those who will not believe, do not.

God has truly given us, through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, a heavenly peace that cannot be fully expressed in

words. Have you received that peace? Is that peace with you even now?

## There is nothing more precious than this

The words the Lord spoke to the disciples have all been fulfilled, and everything He promised us has all been fulfilled. The Lord said, *"I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming… Arise, let us go from here" (John 14:30–31)*.

When I think about how I came to meet and believe in this gospel, I consider it a miracle. I met the Lord by seeing the word of Matthew chapter 3, verses 13 through 17. Because this gospel of the water and the Spirit revealed in Matthew is so precious, I could not help but hold on to it. People ask why we make such a fuss over something that is nothing more than the basics, but I want to say this to such a person: "What philosophy could you learn in order to know this? Could you know this by going to a mountain and praying? Could you learn this by selling everything you have and offering it to God? Where in this world does anyone teach this truth?" To regard this gospel as trivial is the same as regarding one's own life as trivial. Isn't a person's life precious? Isn't a person's life of great worth? And yet would you say that it is nothing? Is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is, the fact that Jesus received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, nothing? He is almighty God, and yet, to save us, He had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and died on the Cross for us. Is this a truth that is nothing? God has given us everything in this gospel. In it are all the gifts, all the blessings,

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and all the treasures. I believe that there is nothing more precious than this.

Even when we go to the kingdom of heaven, we will testify that the Lord came to this earth and saved me, saved us, and glorified us. We will compose poems and praise Him, saying that it was the truth of this gospel of the water and the Spirit that made us dwell and live in the kingdom of God, and that through this truth we have become righteous. And I want to say this to the angels: "Listen. Do you know how I have become your master today? In fact, I was a created being lower than you. Though I was created in honor, I was a person who lived on a dunghill. But your God has made me like this. You do not have such an opportunity, but at least know this."

The Lord said, *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you" (John 14:27)*. When we live too buried in work, this and that happens, but I am glad that I have met and believed in such a powerful, such a beautiful, and such a perfect truth and have been born again. I first saw in this word of the Bible the truth by which we can receive and enjoy all the treasures and all the blessings of heaven. We believe it and spread it. The truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that you believe in is the one and only truth that cannot be found anywhere else in this world. It can never be found among religious people. This truth can be heard from those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and this peace can be obtained from them. You have obtained this peace by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So I, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, am so much at peace and so thankful.

Now I hope that you will think about what the work the Lord has entrusted to us is, and what the right way to live before God is. The righteous must live believing in the Lord, who said that He would not leave us as orphans but would come to take us and

make His home with us, looking ahead to all the things that will happen to us in the future, and doing the work of God.

We must pray for the gospel, use our faith, and become people who love the Lord more than anyone else. Blessed is the person who keeps the Lord's commandments. A person who loves God and loves people is truly a child of God. A person who keeps the Lord's commandments is a person who loves the Lord, and a person who does not keep the Lord's commandments is a person who does not love the Lord. Almighty God has saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has given us peace. And the Lord has given us the eternal remission of sins, made us eternal children of God, made us His workers, and blessed us. So we truly do not know how to express our thanks before God. We truly give thanks to God. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

# The peace of the Lord that the world cannot give

**< John 14:25–31 >**

**"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here."**

## The Holy Spirit, who teaches the Lord's word and brings it to remembrance

Not much time remained before He would be nailed to the Cross. On the last night He was with His disciples, Jesus left this word like a last will. It was a word He had to speak without fail before He departed, a word such that, if the disciples did not hear

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it, they could not help but fall. At the very beginning of it, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit so that the teaching would not be cut off even after He departed.

Let us read verses 25 and 26.

*"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:25–26).*

The words *"while being present with you"* in verse 25 and *"the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send"* in verse 26 form a pair. What Jesus said while He was beside them, the Holy Spirit teaches and brings to remembrance after He has departed. The Holy Spirit brings to mind the word the Lord has already spoken, that word which we have heard, and sets our thoughts right. Since He teaches us what is right and what is wrong, and what this word says, we are not taken in by people who tell plausible lies.

Who receives this Holy Spirit? He said that the Father would send Him *"in My name."* Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had our sins transferred to Him, received the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross, and rose again from death. God gives the Holy Spirit into the heart of the person who has believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins. Without having received the remission of sins, no matter how diligently a person lives a religious life, it amounts to nothing more than his own striving alone. By nature, people have no strength to obey God on their own. But a person who has received the Holy Spirit comes to follow as the Holy Spirit who dwells within him leads.

The Holy Spirit works in the places where we live our lives. When we meet with some problem, the word we had ordinarily heard comes to mind—that is His work. If we stubbornly insist

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on doing things our own way, He rebukes us from within, saying, "You are not right." On the contrary, when we are misunderstood while working according to the Lord's will and our hearts grow weak, He assures us, saying, "What you are doing is right." In this way, the word that we at first knew only in our heads is experienced in our lives, and our faith grows. Even when we suffer hardship because of our faith, the Holy Spirit brings to mind the word suited to that situation and makes us stand against it with the word.

Since the Holy Spirit works mainly through the word we have heard, regard as precious the place where you hear the word. Let us hear the word together in the church and give ear to the voice God lets us hear through that word. The reason we have not departed from the path of faith until now is also that the Holy Spirit has held us fast through the word.

## The peace given by the Lord, who bore all sins and the judgment

Jesus, who promised the Holy Spirit, then said that He would give peace to His disciples. Let us read verse 27.

*"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).*

Here, the expression "Peace I leave with you" means that the Lord leaves His own peace with us. The peace He gives also has a profound effect on our hearts. And yet Jesus called that peace *"My peace."* The Lord is neither afraid nor troubled. He is the One who overcomes all things and rules over all things. Such a Lord gives us the peace He Himself has. Just as a baby who has drunk its fill of its mother's milk falls into a deep sleep, the

Lord's peace clears away anxieties and worries and lets our hearts rest at ease.

The world also gives peace. When it gives money, gives power, and gives material things, the heart is at ease for a moment. But soon comes the anxiety of what to do if they are taken away. In the world, even peace is something one has to make by one's own efforts, so even if a person puts on a peaceful face outwardly, inside he is still shaken. Above all, the problem of sin is not solved just because one's circumstances improve. The sin that remains in the heart is a heavy burden that must be resolved without fail.

The peace the Lord gives comes from Jesus' having resolved that sin. Jesus did not leave us as we were with our sins and tell us just to put our hearts at ease. He Himself resolved the sin that had tormented us and the judgment for that sin. This is the word Jesus spoke when He came to John to receive baptism.

*"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

In order to fulfill all righteousness, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River. And He gave up to the Cross the body in which He bore that sin, and received in our place the judgment we should have received. The work of His taking away sin and the work of His receiving the punishment for that sin—we must believe these two together. Jesus, who rose again from death, has become our living Savior. Therefore our hearts are at peace. Even the faults that are revealed because of our shortcomings the Lord has already borne.

Look back once at how much we worried and were anxious as we lived before we believed the gospel. The Lord delivered us, who were bound to sin and in torment, and made those who

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had been avoiding God into children who call Him Father. This peace cannot be obtained with money or position, nor does it arise because people evaluate us favorably. We only receive by faith what God gives.

## The worries that a person called to be the Lord's can entrust to Him

Even after we have received the remission of sins, there are difficulties in the work we are responsible for and in our lives. There are times when what we need is lacking, when we are worried about what lies ahead, and when we are misunderstood by people. Even though the Lord said, *"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,"* the things we must deal with still remain. What is important is whom we trust as we deal with them.

The Apostle Paul says who believers belong to in the following words.

*"Among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:6).*

We belong to Jesus Christ. Would the One who bore all sins and even received the judgment in order to gain us treat what is His own lightly? Jesus regards His people as precious, and He takes responsibility for them and protects them. If we try to take upon ourselves our future by our own strength alone, as if it had nothing to do with the Lord, worries pile up in our hearts. If we believe the word that we belong to the Lord and that the Lord cares for us, we can entrust our problems to the Lord instead of letting them grow in our hearts.

Would the Lord be anxious? The One who can solve anything has no anxiety. Since that Lord said, *"Ask,"* the One

who spoke takes upon Himself the affairs of the one who asks. Therefore entrust all your worries to the Lord and ask. The disciples also worried, and Jesus gave this word to exactly such disciples. Whenever worry comes, rather than blaming yourself for having no faith, you can simply bring that worry and come to the Lord.

However, if your heart is not at peace, also examine what kind of desire has taken root inside you. You cannot enjoy peace while going against the Lord's word for the reason that things do not go your way. A person who does not go against the Lord's will is at peace. And knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believing it are different. If you have no peace, check again whether you really believe this gospel. So that useless thoughts and the desires of the flesh do not disturb the peace the Lord has given, let us believe in the Lord, who loved us, and serve His will.

## The Lord, who accomplishes salvation just as He said beforehand and goes to the Father

Jesus did not want His disciples only to grieve over His departure. Let us read verses 28 and 29.

*"You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe" (John 14:28–29).*

The words *"I am going away and coming back to you"* are words the disciples had already heard several times this night. The disciples wanted the Lord to stay beside them, but Jesus' going to the Father was not a matter of abandoning them. It was

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the way of fully accomplishing the work of salvation the Father had entrusted to Him and going to the Father. If the disciples had loved the Lord and known His will, they would have rejoiced over the salvation the Lord would accomplish rather than grieving that they would no longer see the Lord before their eyes.

Jesus came to this earth, having been sent by the Father, and gives up His body according to the Father's will. The word *"My Father is greater than I"* was also a word spoken at this point, where He was going to the Father who sent Him, in obedience to Him. Jesus, who was heading toward the Cross, is almighty God, and He is the Son of God, who humbled Himself to save us. The Apostle Paul testifies of that obedience of the Son as follows.

*"And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8).*

Jesus spoke this word first, before all these things came to pass. After He spoke this word, Jesus was hung on the Cross and died, rose again from death, and ascended to the Father. Then the disciples came to know, "The Lord said so at that time, and He has accomplished it in this way." He spoke beforehand so that they would not regard the suffering of the Cross as something the Lord suffered without knowing anything, and so that they would see what had come to pass and believe.

Therefore, if we judge the Lord's love by looking only at what is right in front of us, our hearts are shaken. When we recall the word the Lord spoke beforehand, we see what the Lord has accomplished and what He has promised. Since He is the One who did exactly as He said, He will also fulfill exactly as He said the promises that have not yet been fulfilled.

## Jesus, who received all the judgment for sin and overcame the ruler of this world

Let us read verses 30 and 31.

*"I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here" (John 14:30–31).*

The ruler of this world is Satan the devil. He said that he was coming. The devil incited people's hearts and made them arrest Jesus, mock Him, and nail Him to the Cross. Outwardly, it seems that the enemy won. But Jesus said that this ruler had nothing to do with Him. Then why does Jesus go down that road? It is so that the world may know that He loves the Father and does as the Father commanded.

The devil thought that if he killed the Son of God, he would win. But Jesus was the One who had already had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John. When He died, the judgment for all that sin would come to an end. The devil's plan to make people fall into sin and build a wall between them and God was, on the contrary, brought down by that very Cross which he himself had incited and brought about. Let us read John chapter 19, verse 30.

*"So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit" (John 19:30).*

In the eyes of the world, the Cross looked like the end, but Jesus accomplished salvation completely there. What was accomplished on the Cross was the Father's will. Instead of the way of crushing the devil by force, Jesus took the way of personally receiving the curse, the shame, and the punishment

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that we should have received and paying the price of sin justly, without leaving anything out. Therefore this salvation is a salvation that fulfilled the righteousness of God, and the one who believes can stand boldly before God. By doing as the Father commanded, He also proved His love for us not by words but by His deeds. And by rising again from death, He gave us, who believe in Him, the right to become children of God.

This is the reason we can believe the peace the Lord gives. The One who left peace with us is none other than Jesus, who accomplished this work. Having finished this word, Jesus said, *"Arise, let us go from here,"* and rose from His seat.

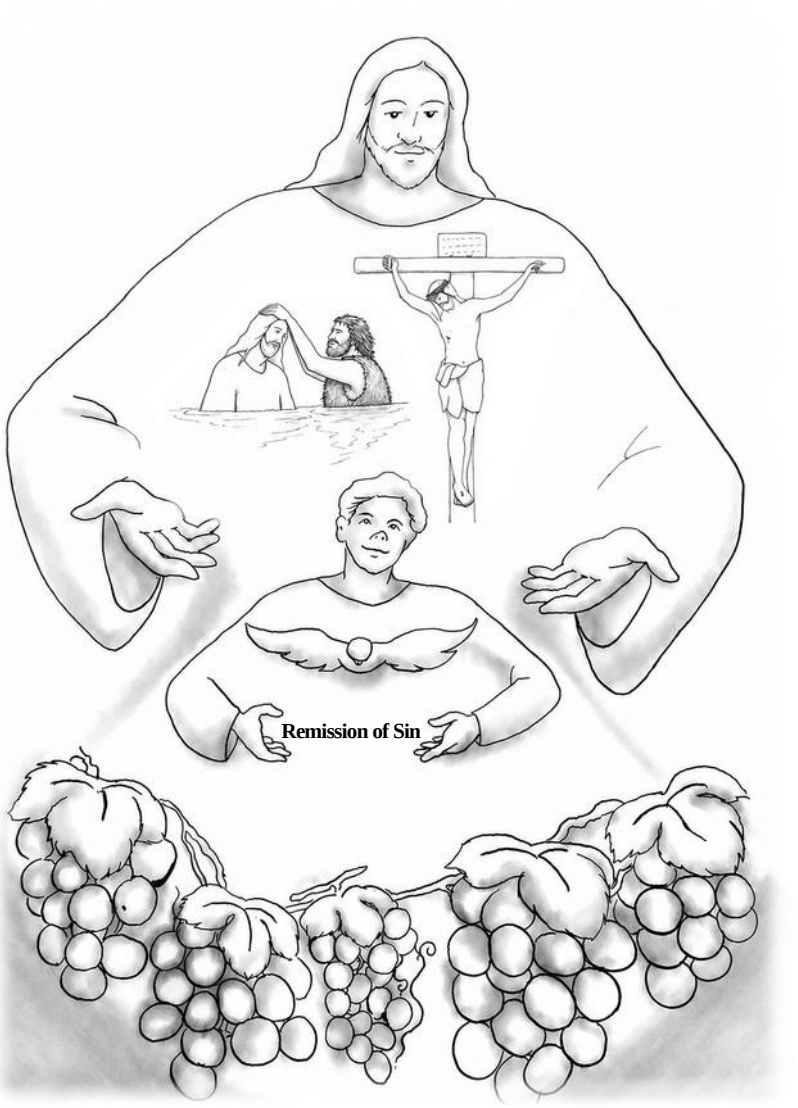
When worry arises in your heart, think of what the Lord has done. The more often we think of the Lord, the less our shortcomings loom large. Since the Lord, who said, *"It is finished!"* has left with us His own peace, which the world cannot give, I hope that you will keep that peace in your hearts. ✉

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# CHAPTER

# 15

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

# The eternal fruit we bear by abiding in the Lord

**< John 15:1–27 >**

**“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant**

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**does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.' But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning."**

## The word of the Lord, who has made us clean

A branch is supplied with life from the tree. Even though fruit hangs on the branch, the root of that life is in the tree. With

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the Cross before Him, Jesus spoke of Himself as the true vine and of His disciples as the branches. It means that Jesus, who has saved us, will now bear fruit through us. Therefore, the first thing a person who has received the remission of sins must examine is what kind of relationship he is now living in with the Lord.

Let us read verses 3 through 5.

*"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:3–5).*

Jesus first said, *"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you" (John 15:3),* and then He said, *"Abide in Me" (John 15:4)*. We must not miss this order. It is easy to think that we must first make our lives clean in order to become the Lord's branches, but we have already been made clean by the word the Lord has spoken to us, and from that place He tells us to abide in Him. When we received by faith the word of the gospel that the Lord has already removed our sins, our hearts were made clean.

What is that word the Lord has spoken to us? God, who is the Word, came to this earth clothed in flesh. When this Jesus was thirty years old, He had the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River; bearing that sin, He received the judgment for sin in our place with the blood of the Cross; and He rose again from death and delivered us who believe from judgment. It is this very word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that makes our hearts clean. The Holy Spirit comes and dwells in the person who believes this word in his heart. Our cleanness does

not come from resolutions we have made on our own or from merits we have piled up. It comes from the fact that the Lord bore our sins and received all of that judgment.

Let us read John chapter 1, verse 29.

*"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29).*

John the Baptist testified of Jesus as *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)*. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had even all the sins we commit throughout our lives transferred to Him. Therefore, when your shortcomings are exposed, do not hide them, but acknowledge before God what you have done wrong. And hold on to the word of the Lord, who has already taken away even those sins. The person who does so is the person who abides in the Lord.

Then why do we hear again every day the gospel we already know? One might think that once we have believed, that is enough. But as we live in this world, there are times when our thoughts go wrong, times when our hearts follow their own desires, and times when weakness is revealed in our actions. Each time that happens, we must ruminate, through the word, on how Jesus saved us. It is to engrave again on our hearts, by faith, the remission of sins the Lord has already accomplished. When we hold on to the word in this way, our life of faith does not dry up but is renewed like spring.

Even if our bodies are in the church, our hearts can grow distant from the Lord. As we live a life of faith for a long time, it can happen that the Lord goes His way and we go ours, living separately. If you look at a tree, a newly grown branch is attached to a thick branch, the thick branch to the trunk, and the trunk to the roots. Only when they are connected in this way does

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fruit form even on the new branch at the very end. We, too, are branches attached to the Lord only when we are holding on by faith to the word Jesus spoke. As verse 5 says, only when we are attached to the Lord are we supplied with the life of the soul and do we bear the fruit of the gospel.

## The fruit the Father delights in and the warning to the branches

Let us read verses 1 and 2.

*"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:1–2).*

The Father is the vinedresser. The purpose for which a vinedresser tends the vine is to obtain fruit. There is also such a purpose in God's saving us and letting us live on this earth. God causes the fruit of love and longsuffering to be borne in our character, and furthermore, He wants the fruit of other people hearing the gospel of the water and the Spirit through us and receiving the remission of sins. When we know this will, it becomes clear what we must live for after receiving the remission of sins. If the goal is blurry, our life of faith ends up beating the air.

This fruit is not fruit that one person bears alone. How could one person take on all the work of explaining the gospel, putting the word into writing, and sending it to many countries? That is why Jesus has established us together as members of the Church. When those who preach the word, those who translate that word and compile it into books, and those who take on the necessary tasks and support the spread of the gospel believe the same

gospel and serve with one heart, the gospel spread through the Church leads many people to life. A person who is united with the Lord upholds the Lord's will by faith, and then he naturally becomes one with the Church as well.

Even if a person we have never met in person hears the gospel and receives the remission of sins, if we served together so that the gospel would be spread, we, too, have taken part in bearing that fruit. When the work you have been given seems small, look at what the Lord is doing through the Church rather than at the work before your eyes. When we join our hearts to the Lord's will to preach the gospel and carry out the work we have been given, the Lord accomplishes His will through us.

Verse 2 says that the Father *"prunes"* the branch that bears fruit. It means that when we fall short, He restores us and raises us up at any time, and gives us more nourishment so that we bear more fruit. Through the word He exposes our wrong thoughts and makes us stand again by faith. Therefore, if, while hearing the word, you come to know that your thinking was wrong, lay down your stubbornness and acknowledge that the Lord is right. There are also members whose bodies have grown weak and whose strength has declined. Even when things do not go well because such a member has no strength, he is still a member of the Church, and God carries out His work even in the midst of that. Let that member, rather than sitting down in discouragement looking only at his own shortcomings, hold on to the Lord and ask for help, and let the other members pray for him and care for him together.

But there is also a stern warning in this word. Let us read verse 6.

*"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:6).*

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A branch that does not abide in the Lord is cast out, withers, and is thrown into the fire. If someone says that he has received the remission of sins yet has no heart for the Lord's will, and thinks that now that he is saved, he can live carelessly and then just meet the Lord, that is a great delusion. To refuse to bear fruit and to live only for oneself is the way of leaving the Lord. Let us not regard the word that the Father takes away the branch that does not bear fruit as someone else's story, but let us hear it as a word spoken to us ourselves.

Even so, this warning does not mean that the remission of sins we have received is canceled. To abide in the Lord is to ruminate every day on the word that Jesus took away our sins once and for all and to hold on to it by faith, and the way of being cast out is to leave that faith and go one's own way. Fruit, too, is not evidence that boasts of our strength but the result of the Lord's having worked in us. Therefore, the more we hear this warning, the more we must stay attached to Jesus.

## Love one another in the love of the Lord, who gave up His life

A life of abiding in the Lord is a life of abiding in the Lord's love. Jesus said that He had loved the disciples just as the Father had loved Him, and then He said, *"Just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:10)*. What was the Father's commandment that the Son kept? It was the command to come to this earth clothed in a human body, to receive baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and so have the sin of mankind passed on to Him, and to receive in His own body on the Cross the punishment that all sinners were to receive and become the sacrificial offering of

atonement. Jesus obeyed that command, and three days after He died He rose again and became our Savior.

To us who have received that love, the Lord says, *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love" (John 15:10)*. This word is not speaking of a condition for obtaining salvation. He is commanding us, whom He has already saved, now to practice His love and to testify of that love to the whole world.

Let us read verses 11 through 13.

*"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:11–13).*

The Lord wants His joy to be in us so that our joy may be full. Where does that joy come from? It is because the Lord loved us and made our hearts to have no sin. This joy is not something we obtained by our own striving; because the Lord freely gave us the joy that He Himself has, it is always in us. The joy of the world fades away the moment one gets what one wanted, but the joy the Lord has given remains in the inner man.

The commandment of verse 12 flows out of this joy. The Lord loved each of us, and He loved not only us but our brothers and sisters as well. Unlike love that is done because one is pushed by duty, we love one another because we want to share that joy. All of us are people who have received the remission of sins from the Lord, and every one of us has obtained salvation by grace in the same way. If we, who have received the same love, despise one another and put only our own interests first, we grow distant from the Lord's heart.

In verse 13, Jesus said that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. The Lord did exactly that for

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us, who have become His friends. According to the Father's commandment we saw above, He received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sins of His friends passed on to Him, and He saved us by receiving the punishment for sin in place of His friends and being put to death. If the Lord had not gone to the Jordan River and had shown His love only by giving bread and becoming king, as people wanted, our sins would have remained as they were. Therefore, the love the Lord speaks of is a love that makes the other person truly well. It is a love that helps the soul gain benefit and, when necessary, also looks after the circumstances of the flesh.

As we serve the gospel together, we see the shortcomings of our brothers and sisters. There are those who judge differently from the way we think, and there are those whose strength to carry out the work is weak. At such times, think of how Jesus treated you. You, too, fall short, but the Lord saved you and established you as a member of the Church. When we remember that love, we come to correct wrongs before the word, share difficulties together, and lend strength to the person who is bearing a burden alone. The work of preaching the gospel that saves souls and the work of loving the member beside us go together in this way.

Let us read verses 14 and 15.

*"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:14–15).*

Jesus no longer called the disciples servants but called them friends. A servant does only what he is told to do and stops there. A friend considers the other person's heart and works in accordance with that person's will. Since the Lord has made

known to us all that He heard from the Father, we know the Lord's will. That the gospel be spread to the whole world—that is the Father's will and the Lord's will. Of course, the word "friend" does not mean that the Lord and we stand in the same place. It means that we are that close, just as parents and children, though their places differ, know and embrace each other's hearts.

A person who has become a friend of the Lord does not first set up his own ideas and then demand that the Lord follow him. He listens to what the One who gave up even His life for him wants, and follows it. When we abide in the Lord's love and love one another in this way, we enjoy joy even in the midst of toil. It is because it is clear whom we are living with and what we are living for.

## A life of asking in faith from the Lord, who appointed us

Let us read verse 16.

*"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you" (John 15:16).*

It was not the disciples who first chose Jesus; it was Jesus who chose them and appointed them. The same is true of us. The Lord chose each one of us to make us His children, saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and appointed us as God's workers. So we belong to God. And God loves us more than we cherish ourselves.

We easily lose heart as we look at our insufficient abilities and at problems that are not immediately solved. But the Lord, who chose us and appointed us, provides what we need in due

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season and supplies it, so that we keep on bearing fruit. He is not One who entrusts us with work and then looks the other way. That is why at the end of verse 16 He attached the promise, *"whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you" (John 15:16).*

Let us read verses 7 and 8.

*"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples" (John 15:7–8).*

The prayer of verse 7 has a basis. The word *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you" (John 15:7)* is that basis. To abide in the Lord is to abide in the gospel by which Jesus saved us, having our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and receiving the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross. Because the word says that Jesus did this, holding on to that word and asking is right faith. Saying, "I just believe unconditionally," without any basis is merely believing as one pleases.

Therefore, prayer is a privilege enjoyed by those who have received the remission of sins. We can place this problem and that problem in our two hands and ask the Lord for help. Ask for the way for the gospel to be spread, for the wisdom and health to carry out the work you have been given, and for the members whose hearts have grown weak and for the guides of the Church. We ask, and the One who brings it to pass is the Lord. But the Lord knows fully what we are asking for. The Lord fulfills the prayer that asks according to His will and for His glory.

Verse 8 says that by that fruit the Father is glorified. If we could do everything well by ourselves, there would be no reason to thank God or give Him glory. Because the Lord accomplishes the work we cannot carry out by our own strength, the glory goes

to the Father. And the Lord calls us, who bear fruit in this way, *"My disciples."* A disciple is a person who follows in the footsteps of his teacher. The work Jesus was doing on this earth, namely, the work of loving people and preaching the gospel, we are now carrying on.

In this way, prayer comes out of the faith that abides in the Lord, and fruit is borne from prayer. The Lord is not trying merely to make us busy; He leads us so that, as verse 16 says, *"your fruit should remain" (John 15:16)*.

## Live as those who belong to the Lord even amid the hatred of the world

Even though the Lord loves us, the world may hate us. Jesus spoke in advance of the hatred the disciples would receive. Let us read verses 18 and 19.

*"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:18–19).*

The Lord makes clear the reason the world hates the disciples in terms of to whom they belong. A person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart is not of the world but belongs to God. Verse 18 says that this hatred was directed at the Lord before it was directed at us. Those who hate us hated God first, before they hated us. Therefore, if we are hated without reason while believing the gospel and following the Lord's will, that is not a sign that the Lord has forsaken us but a sign that we belong to God. If we clearly remember this one thing alone, we can bear that hatred.

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There are times when we expect that if we treat people well and deal with them faithfully, everyone will recognize our hearts. But those who hate the gospel sometimes oppose us for the very reason that we serve the gospel. We cannot abandon the gospel because of that hatred, nor make being accepted by the world the goal of our faith. Rather, let us have hearts that pity those who hate us without knowing the Lord.

In verse 20, Jesus said that since He Himself had been persecuted, the disciples would also be persecuted. But in the same verse He said that those who had kept the Lord's word would keep the disciples' word also. When we preach the gospel, there are those who oppose us, but there are also those who accept the word. So we cannot stop testifying just because we are hated. Let us serve the gospel, thinking of the people on the way the Lord has sent us who will hear the word and believe.

Verse 21 says that people do all these things *"because they do not know Him who sent Me" (John 15:21)*. Just as Jesus said to the woman at the well, *"If you knew … who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink'" (John 4:10)*, a person who does not recognize who the Lord is misses the life that has come before his eyes. Jesus came to this earth and said repeatedly that the Father had sent Him and that He and the Father are one. And He did among them the works that no one else had done. The work that no human being can do and only Jesus can do, namely, the work of having the sin of mankind passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He also did in front of many people. Since they did not believe even after hearing those words and seeing those works, they now have no excuse for their sin.

One cannot hate Jesus and claim to love the Father. It is because the Son revealed the Father's will. Verse 25 makes clear that even their hating the Lord without a cause took place

according to the word written in their law. By rejecting the Lord even after seeing His words and works, they only revealed their own unbelief, and the Lord's righteousness stands firm from beginning to end.

We must also look back at our own hearts. Examine whether you rejoice that the gospel is being spread, or whether you are only pretending to believe on the outside while pushing the gospel away on the inside. If a person has not accepted the gospel in his heart, that person does not yet belong to God. Acknowledge your unbelief, turn to the Lord, and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit in your heart. Only when we belong to the Lord can we know the Lord's love and live according to His will.

We are not people who have entrusted our lives to the approval of others; we are people who belong to the Lord, who saved us from sin. If we believe this fact, we can settle our hearts even in the face of hatred. The love of the Lord, who holds on to us, is greater than the hatred we receive from the world.

## The fruit we bear together with the Holy Spirit, who testifies of Jesus

At the end of all these words, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come. Let us read verses 26 and 27.

*"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning" (John 15:26–27).*

In verse 26, the Lord said that when the Spirit of truth comes, *"He will testify of Me" (John 15:26)*. The Holy Spirit comes to those who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and

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testifies of Jesus. That He testifies of Jesus as the Savior means that He testifies that Jesus bore your sins and mine. The Holy Spirit testifies in the hearts of believers that Jesus had the sins of mankind passed on to Him through His baptism by John the Baptist at the Jordan River, bore the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead. He also enables believers to recognize that Jesus is God and our Savior.

Verse 27 says that the disciples also bear witness because they have been with the Lord from the beginning. The disciples saw and heard at His side the words Jesus spoke and the works He did. After the Lord was hung on the Cross and died, rose again, and ascended to the Father, we have become those who make known that Jesus is the Savior of mankind by believing and preaching this gospel that the apostles believed. Therefore, the Church of God must continue to testify of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and spread it to the whole world. We have the responsibility to make this gospel known to those who do not yet know the meaning of the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist. We preach it to those who do not yet believe, and we who already believe also engrave that word on our hearts every day.

A branch attached to the tree bears fruit with the life supplied from the tree. We, too, believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and are supplied with life from that word. When we discover our own weakness, we return to the word; we treat our brothers and sisters with the Lord's love; and we serve the gospel together. We ask the Lord for help in our difficulties, and in the face of the world's hatred we remember that we belong to the Lord. This is the life of abiding in the Lord.

The Father wants to obtain fruit through us. Jesus loved us, made us His friends, and let us know His will. He who appointed us told us to ask for what we need. Therefore, let us not give up

the work entrusted to us. Let us pray together for weak members, ask for the way for the gospel to be spread, and believe the Lord's word and serve with one heart. If we think only of our own strength, the way is blocked, but we who are attached to the Lord, who is the true vine, have His help. The Lord, who has made us clean, causes us to live by the word today as well, and causes us to bear fruit that brings glory to the Father. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

# Abide in the Lord

**< John 15:1–9 >**

**“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.”**

## *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.”*

We have read John chapter 15. In John chapter 15, the Lord is speaking the word we must surely know in order to live a life of faith, the word that we can bear fruit only if we know it. Jesus said, *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser” (John 15:1)*. He says that He is the vine and God the Father is

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the vinedresser. And He said, *"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:2–5).*

Here the Lord uses the word *"in"* a great many times. Jesus says that He Himself is the vine, we are the branches, and God the Father is the vinedresser. And He says that if a branch attached to the vine does not bear fruit, the Father cuts it off, and if it bears fruit, He makes it clean so that it may bear more fruit. *"Abide in Me, and I in you" (John 15:4)*. The Lord speaks the word *"Abide in Me" (John 15:4)* this often. Why does the Lord speak this word? It is because we can live only if we abide in the Lord and can bear fruit only if we abide in the Lord that the Lord Himself speaks this word in John chapter 15.

## Why we must abide in the Lord

In one way of looking at it, the vinedresser who cuts off the branches that do not bear fruit, that is, the Father, may seem like a very cold-hearted vinedresser. But it is not so. People may be like that, but God is not. The reason the Lord says to us again and again, *"Abide in Me" (John 15:4)*, is that this word is absolutely necessary for us. Then what does it mean for us to abide in the Lord? Why must we abide in the Lord? And why do we bear fruit only when we abide in the Lord?

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The reason we must abide in the Lord is that we can live only if we abide in the Lord. The Lord said, *"Abide in Me" (John 15:4)*, and our Lord has removed all our sins. Our Lord has saved us. If, having received the remission of sins, we want to live in God, and if we want to enjoy the blessings God gives, we must believe what the Lord has done for us and live by faith in it. That is what the Lord is saying.

But there are people who, after receiving the remission of sins, think, "Now this is finished. Isn't there something new and different next?" and do not abide in the Lord. They do not abide in that salvation by which God saved them, but go around looking for something different. If our hearts, souls, and faith do not remain in the Lord, who removed our sins, and if we remain not in the faith that believes what the Lord has done but in human thoughts and our own efforts, we do not bear fruit.

I see many such people in this world. I see people who have clearly received the remission of sins withering away. I see them being taken away before God. Why is that? It is because they do not abide in this word that says, *"Abide in Me" (John 15:4)*.

## Salvation, too, in the Lord

First, we must abide in the Lord in our salvation as well. Jesus Christ saved us by the water, the blood, and the Holy Spirit. The Lord received baptism from John and had all our sins transferred to Him, received the judgment on the Cross in our place because of those sins, and rose again from death, and so He saved us. If our faith and souls do not abide in this salvation that God has accomplished, we cannot receive salvation.

If a person, even after receiving salvation, thinks, "Does it really have to be only this? We can be saved with the blood of

Jesus alone," from that moment he comes to depart from abiding in the Lord. The Lord says again and again, *"Abide in Me" (John 15:4)*. He is saying that if we abide in the Lord, we bear much fruit. There are people who, though they have clearly received salvation, are so soft-hearted that they are dragged along by what others say. The Lord clearly saved us by the baptism of water and the blood of the Cross. Yet, having received the remission of sins, they think, "Salvation is possible even without the water, even without the baptism." From the moment they think so and believe so, they come to break away from the Lord.

The Lord said, *"I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5)*, and He also said, *"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2)*. And He said, *"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you" (John 15:3–4)*. This means that the Lord first of all wants us to abide in the Lord. If we abide in the word by which the Lord saved us and are in the faith that believes that word just as it is, we obtain everlasting life and bear much fruit.

But if, even after receiving the remission of sins, a person casts aside the faith that believes the way the Lord saved us just as it is, and frames his own framework of salvation and his own doctrine in his own way, and thinks, "We are saved by the Cross alone," from that moment that person becomes a person without fruit. From that moment he is taken away.

In the word *"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away" (John 15:2)*, this branch refers to none other than us. What kind of person does not bear fruit? The person who does not abide in the Lord does not bear fruit. The person who abides in the Lord bears fruit. When do our hearts enjoy peace? When we remain by faith in the salvation and redemption the

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Lord has accomplished for us, in that word, our souls obtain peace. Then when are our hearts anxious? When do they wander, and when do they fall into confusion?

From the moment a person does not believe the word by which the Lord saved us just as it is, but falls into his own thoughts and thinks, "No, it is not only that. We can be saved by this one thing alone," he comes to fall into confusion. In our salvation, too, we must set our hearts and abide in that salvation by which the Lord saved us, in that method, in the work the Lord did, and in the word of the Lord. Our faith must abide in that word.

## Our life, too, in the Lord

Second, we must abide in the Lord in our daily life as well. Our lives, too, must abide in the Lord. Having received the remission of sins, aren't you worried about how you are to live from now on? People are born of their parents, and each lives by carving out his own life in his own way. They worry, thinking, "I have received the remission of sins, but this is a stroke of luck that I happened to get. I have seized a great fortune. But how am I to live from now on?" But if we have received salvation in the Lord yet try to live our lives separately, not in the Lord, then we wither away and are taken away.

So we must become one with the Lord and hold on to the word of God's promise: *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7), "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).* And we must pray as follows: "God, I do not know how I should live from now on. Please keep me. God the

Father, did You not become my Lord? Did You not become my God? Did You not tell me to pray? Did You not tell me to ask? Did You not say that then You would give? Please teach me how I should live and guide my way ahead."

When we pray to God in this way, hold on through the word to the fact that God makes us live, and live by faith in that word, God causes us to bear fruit and makes us live. If we receive salvation in the Lord and also enjoy peace of heart in the Lord, then we must live our daily lives in the Lord as well. Only then can we live receiving God's guidance, help, and blessing.

I cannot tell you how important it is to live in the Lord. A branch that has fallen off is thrown away. A flower, too, is beautiful while it is attached to the branch, but once it is plucked off and thrown away, nothing is as unsightly as that flower. When we have received salvation and live by faith in the Lord, we must abide in the faith that the Lord, who saved us, will clothe us and feed us, make us happy, bless us, guide us, and make us live for the rest of our lives in this world. We must live in that faith. It must not be that we receive salvation by believing in the Lord but then live our lives as we please and set the purpose of our lives as we please.

## The branch has only to stay attached

A Christian, no matter how lacking he may be, must surely abide in the Lord. As long as we just abide in the Lord, the Lord causes us to bloom in season and Himself causes us to bear fruit. Does a branch of the vine bear grapes by its own strength? The branch has only to stay attached to the vine. We have only to stay attached to the Lord. To stay attached to the Lord is to

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believe the word by which He saved us just as it is, neither adding to it nor taking away from it.

If we realize this, we realize all there is to know about how to live our lives. We used to wander about without any purpose in life, and at that time the Lord saved us. From the time we are born, we do not know well the way ahead from day to day. Our lives are something no one knows. People say that they carve out their own lives, but in fact there is little that they carve out themselves. Our lives are like a boat without a sail floating on the sea. Our lives cannot help but go wherever the current flows.

God has set our lives in the Lord, that is, in the Lord's salvation, in order to guide us, to bear fruit through us, to receive glory, and to make us blessed. We who have received salvation must live in the Lord. A person who has not received salvation cannot live in the Lord. This parable of the vine in John chapter 15 is a word of reality. All the words are so, but this word is truly a word of reality. If a person, even after receiving the remission of sins, tries to carve out his own life by himself, that person comes to leave the Lord. He is not in the Lord but goes outside the Lord.

*"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (John 15:4).* As long as we are in the Lord, there is nothing to worry about.

If we are in the Lord, there is nothing to worry about, but no matter how clever we are, if we are not in the Lord and go outside the Lord, from that moment worries pile up like a mountain. That cleverness is of no use at all. The word that the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine means exactly that. No matter how clever, nimble, and good-looking a branch may be, once it is cut off and falls away from the trunk of the tree, it is finished. No matter how beautiful a

flower is, it must first stay attached to the branch; once it falls off, it is finished. While it was attached, it may have been prettier than a yellow flower or a white flower, but once it falls off, from then on it is worse than anything else. We must know this.

It is not that the saints who have received the remission of sins do something because they themselves are outstanding in something; rather, when we are in the Lord, in the faith that believes the word of the Lord, everything God has promised comes upon us. How do you intend to live after receiving the remission of sins? Are you not trying to live your life by your own strength? There is a way to live, a path to live, before God. Jesus said, *"I am the way" (John 14:6)*. Jesus is the way.

The way to happiness, the way to receive blessing, is to be in the Lord. It is to believe the word of the Lord and live. To believe the word of the Lord and live is to unite our hearts with the word of the gospel and live by faith. This is exactly what the Lord meant when He said, *"Abide in Me" (John 15:4)*. Do you design your life alone? Or do you design it together with the Lord, in the Lord? Do you design it by faith, or are you designing your life all by yourself? We must design our lives in the Lord.

## The life of the vine is its fruit

This is how important it is: a branch of the vine can do nothing by itself. Is the vine a useful tree or a useless tree? The vine is of no use for building a house, and it is not even much used as kindling. Once the vine has died, it cannot be cut and used for construction, and it cannot be used anywhere. Its inside is completely hollow, too. It is good for nothing at all. The most that can be done is to burn it as firewood.

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The life of the vine lies in bearing fruit. If the vine bears grapes well, the farmer gives it plenty of fertilizer. He fertilizes it, sprays it, and tends it. And if it bears fruit well in season, he opens up a way for it to stretch out further so that it may bear more fruit. The owner does everything for it: he sets up a trellis for the vine to climb and lets it spread, gives fertilizer below, and props up supports so that the branches do not droop too much.

The vine does nothing by itself. The vine does not bear fruit well on its own. If it is just left alone, it comes to a sorry state. It definitely needs care. As long as the vine bears fruit, the owner takes good care of it. Then who causes the fruit to be borne? As long as we abide in the Lord—as long as we truly believe that the Lord has actually removed our sins and abide in that—the Lord surely causes us to bear fruit.

Have you seen a vine that does not bear fruit? Jesus said that He Himself is the true vine. The true vine means that it is not a wild vine that has grown as it pleases. A branch attached to the true vine bears true grapes. It has only to stay attached, only to be in it. If we live clearly knowing what it is to abide in the Lord as we go about our daily lives, there is nothing more blessed and beautiful than this after receiving the remission of sins. To abide in the Lord is truly blessed and truly happy.

But some people do not know this well. If a person receives the remission of sins and lives knowing this, he has truly received a great blessing, but there are people who, not knowing this, strive to do something well on their own. There are people who, after receiving the remission of sins, try to bear fruit by doing something well themselves and try to succeed by doing something well themselves.

Doing so does not work out well. If we try to prosper by doing something well on our own, it is already over. The branch has only to stay quietly attached to the main trunk of the tree.

"Do with me as You will. If You make me bloom, I will bloom; if You supply nourishment so that I may bear fruit, I will bear fruit; I will do just as You want." In this way we stay firmly attached and entrust everything completely to Him. We do not try to do anything on our own. We do not try to develop well the little bit of nourishment in our own branch and succeed in that direction.

No matter how much sap a branch draws up on its own, it cannot bear a single cluster of grapes. Even if it squeezed out all its sap and bore one cluster, after that the branch would die. But if it stays attached in the Lord, it bears fruit naturally in season. It cannot be done alone. It cannot be done by oneself. If we are in the Lord, fruit is possible. We bear fruit, our leaves are green, our stems stretch out, and the path of our lives opens wide.

## The Lord, who causes us to bear fruit

But people are all too fond of leaving God. So the Lord is saying to the saints who have received the remission of sins, *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit" (John 15:5)*, and *"Abide in Me, and I in you" (John 15:4)*.

What is it that we do when we gather together? It is nothing other than praising at the time of praise, praying together at the time of prayer, listening to the word at the time of hearing the word, and, if there is something to pray about personally, praying and reading the Bible. God causes us to hear the word through this place where we gather and hear the word. And if we abide in this word, God causes us to bear fruit in due season.

It is not that we bear fruit by our own striving. It is not that we bear fruit by going out to the people of the neighborhood and

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pestering them, saying, “Believe in Jesus; please believe just once.” When we are in the Lord and say, “Lord, I believe. So this is how God has saved us. Lord, thank You,” and our hearts enjoy rest in the Lord, and we believe that the Lord has actually removed our sins, and also believe that He has actually removed the sins of those people too, and speak to the people we meet as much as God allows, and pray, “God, please save those souls,” then God causes us to bear fruit.

I cannot tell you how important this is. *“He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5)*. If we are in the Lord—that is, if each one of us, the churches, the brothers and sisters, and the servants of God say, “Lord, You have actually become our God. You have actually removed our sins,” and abide by faith in what the Lord has done and in the word that the Lord has become our God—then God blesses us and works through us.

This is the life of abiding in the Lord. If we live in it, we are not taken away. If we only stay quietly attached, believing what the Lord has done for us and believing what He will do in the future, our Lord works in us. For some trees, there are times when only a lot of fertilizer is given. Some trees are only grown for a while. They are not made to bear fruit but are just left alone and continually given only fertilizer. Then, when the time comes to bear fruit, from that time the Lord causes them to bear fruit, supplies them so that they bear, and works. This means that our lives have depended on God since before we were born. Our salvation, our lives, our success, our blessing, and our happiness all belong to God.

We must know and believe this. As long as we are in the Lord, we bear much fruit, and the Father receives glory through us. But if we do not abide in the Lord—that is, if we do not believe the word of God and do not abide in this word the Lord

has spoken as a promise, and in the Church of God—nothing comes of it. If God has borne much fruit through you, it is because you were in the Lord.

But the moment we go outside the Lord, it is over. The vine is our Lord, the owner of the vine is God, and the vineyard is the church. As long as a person is in the church and in the Lord, that person surely bears fruit. But if he is not in the Lord and strays from the word, saying, "The word says so, but a certain theologian says this," that person withers overnight.

Are there no such cases? There are many. That is why the Lord said, *"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away" (John 15:2)*. It is not that He takes us away because we are lacking. If we are in the Lord, the Lord causes us to bear fruit in due season. Sometimes He grows us, sometimes He prunes the branches, and sometimes He sprays and disinfects, doing everything. As long as we are in the Lord, He causes us to bear fruit, but if we are not in the Lord, from that moment we are severed and cut off.

## The Lord, who is the true vine

When I first went to a certain city, I believed that the Lord is my Lord and the One who actually removed my sins, that He is my shepherd, and that God would work through me. Because the Lord promised that if we are in the Lord we will surely bear fruit, I believed it. And the Lord actually caused fruit to be borne.

In the meantime there were also many temptations. What kind of temptations were they? It was the temptation that said, "There are many people who do believe in Jesus and, even if they do not believe the word just as it is the way you do, believe in a way similar to the word. There are also people who believe

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only in the blood of Jesus, and still there are many people who believe in Jesus." Such people wanted to associate with me, and I, too, wanted to associate with them. If I had gone along with that and said, "Yes, that is right. Does one really have to believe exactly according to that word? Could I alone have been saved? You, too, have been saved," from that moment I would have been finished. Jesus is clearly the vine. A person is not the vine.

Among those who claim to preach the gospel today, there are even some who say that they themselves are the vine. So they say that whoever leaves them will die. But that is a statement that does not agree with the word at all. The true vine is Jesus, who said, *"I am the true vine" (John 15:1)*. Our Lord has saved us and has removed all our sins. Our Lord has become our shepherd and has become our God.

The Lord has become the shepherd who guides our way ahead. He keeps us; we have become the Lord's sheep, and the Lord has become our shepherd. When the sheep follow where the shepherd leads, they come to green pastures and still waters, where they graze to their hearts' content, lie down in the fields and rest comfortably, and give birth to their young in season.

If we only follow the shepherd, there is no worry. If we only follow the Lord—if we believe and follow only the word, what and how He has promised through the word, what He says to us and how He guides us—God surely causes us to bear fruit and makes us live. The One who takes responsibility for everything of ours and surely guides us to a beautiful place, to still waters, is our Lord.

If we abide in the Lord, we receive such blessings. If we do not abide in the Lord, we are taken away. This means that even a person who has received the remission of sins is taken away. Then what does it mean to abide in the Lord? It is to believe the word. It is to believe the word as the word is. It is to believe in

Jesus Christ, who saved us by the water and the blood, neither adding to it nor taking away from it. That is, it is to believe in the Lord, who had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and received the judgment on the Cross, and rose again, and so saved us. It is also to believe the fact that the Lord has become our shepherd, and to believe that God the Father gives us strength and power and causes us to bear much fruit. When we abide in the Lord and in the word with the faith that Paul confessed, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13),* God works in us, accomplishes all His will, and makes us blessed. I hope that all of us will abide in the Lord and live bearing much fruit. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

# What is the commandment of God?

**< John 15:1–10 >**

**“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”**

## The center of the word is the Lord

We have read the word of the parable of the vine. The Lord said, *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser”*

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*(John 15:1)*, and went on to say, *"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2)*. It means that our Lord is the true vine and God the Father is the vinedresser, and that He takes away the branch that does not bear fruit and makes clean the branch that bears fruit.

We ought to deal with this word verse by verse, but today I will place the emphasis on the word of the last verse. *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:10)*. Here we come to wonder what the commandment is. What is the commandment of the Father, and what is the commandment of our Lord? This commandment is to love God and to *"love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39)*. In conclusion, this commandment is all contained in love.

And our Lord said that He Himself is the vine, and that the person who is attached to the Lord bears fruit, while the person who is separated from Him withers like a branch. He is speaking of how we should live our life of faith, and of what we should live our life of faith on as its foundation. How should we live our life of faith? What exactly is a life of faith? The Lord says that a life of faith is one that is founded on Him. The Lord speaks the word *"Abide in Me" (John 15:4)* many times. *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples" (John 15:7–8)*. So this means that the center of everything is the Lord.

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## The faith that sets its heart on the Lord

What is most necessary for us in living our life of faith? It is necessary to live with the Lord as the center. On what basis should we live our life of faith? We should live our life of faith through the Lord. While we live on this earth, we think of the word of God, the work of God, and God; we also think of the Holy Spirit, think of the church, think of the saints, and think of the work of God. But the place where we should set our hearts most of all is the Lord. We should live our life of faith with our hearts set on the Lord. At times we do all kinds of complicated things, fall into our own thoughts, and get caught up in society and in all kinds of events, so that we are so busy that we really cannot come to our senses. There are many things in the world of God, too. But if someone asks, "Fundamentally, though, where should our hearts be, and in what should they be absorbed?" it is clear that we should set our hearts on our Lord and be absorbed in our Lord.

The Lord caused us to be born on this earth. Jesus Christ caused us to be born on this earth. And our Lord came to this earth to save us from all sins. Jesus received baptism from John for us, died on the Cross for us, and rose again after three days, and so He saved us. If it were not for the Lord, how could we be saved, how could we live a life of faith, and how could we set our hearts before God? The Father of Jesus Christ is our Father, and the Holy Spirit, too, is equally our God. But unless we are in that salvation of love, by which our Lord loved us and saved us, we can neither live a life of faith nor follow the Lord. Therefore the Lord must be in our hearts. The Lord made us, loved us, had all our sins transferred to Him when He received baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross in our place, and rose again, and so He became our true God. We have this faith.

Only when we are in the faith that loves the Lord, thinks of the Lord, and believes in the Lord can we live our life of faith rightly and completely. *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7), "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).*

In fact, we cannot live a life of faith without the Lord. If we take something other than the Lord as the focal point of our hearts and put it at the center, we simply cannot live. However important some work or some event may be, if it is not the Lord, it is nothing. In reality our Lord made us; in reality He had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and removed them; in reality He went to the Cross, was nailed to it, and died for us, and so He saved us; and in reality He rose again from death and became our true guarantee. Without the Lord our faith is nothing, and without the Lord we cannot live a life of faith. Because the Lord removed our sins through the baptism He received from John, He could go to the Cross and die, and because the Lord saved us in that way, we have truly received the remission of sins in our hearts and have come to be able to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Now, the way for us to forgive people, love them, and do all the work of God is to preach this gospel to all people. If this gospel of the Lord were not in our lives, how could we love people? How could we forgive? How could we do the work of God? How could we fight against Satan the devil and win? How could we follow our Lord? We could not. If the Lord is not in our hearts, we can do nothing.

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## Always think of the Lord

We were born on this earth because of the Lord. We received the remission of sins because of the Lord. Therefore we must think of the Lord at all times. We must always think of the Lord, who received baptism from John in our place, died on the Cross in our place, and rose again from death. The Lord made us and caused us to be born on this earth, and He made this vast universe. We must think of that Lord at all times. Only then does our faith stand rightly. It is when we think of the Lord that we come to live with hope centered on the kingdom of heaven, live with faith, live a life of giving rather than being selfish, and live a life of understanding rather than being understood.

Think of the Lord's salvation. It is because the Lord saved us that true salvation has come into our hearts. The Lord and the salvation the Lord has given us come into us and cause us to love people, to understand them, and also to give to them. In fact, it is because of the Lord. It is not because our character is excellent that we give much love. No human being is able to do that. We do it simply because of the Lord, who is in our hearts. Because the Lord actually gave us His love, remitted all our sins, and saved us, we also do the same. Therefore, the Lord must not be absent from our lives.

Even if we fail to think of everything else, if we think of the Lord, we can do the Lord's work, love the Lord, follow the Lord, and obey the Lord's word. And we can overcome the world. We can do so because of the Lord. At the very moment we are saved from the sin of the world, we need to be saved from the world as well. In fact, we have been delivered from the complicated world, from all the evil of the world, from the temptations of the world, and from the midst of the wickedness of the world. At the same time that we believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and

received the remission of sins in our hearts, the Spirit of God came upon our hearts. Because the Spirit desires what is different from what the flesh desires, if we follow the Spirit, we come to go against the world, which is the master of the flesh. Therefore, at the very moment we believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit came upon us together with the remission of sins, and because the Holy Spirit is the Lord and God, He holds on to us when we try to go out into the world. This is an extremely practical life of faith.

The Lord said, *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire" (John 15:7)*. The Lord made us, received baptism from John and had all our sins transferred to Him, took away the sin of the world and died on the Cross for us, and rose again three days after He died, and so He became our eternal Savior. If we think of that eternal Lord in our hearts, our actions, the goals of our lives, and everything else come to follow the Lord. It is because the Lord said, *"By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples" (John 15:8)*. Our Lord is our teacher, our God, and the Savior who saved us from sin. That is why we must think of the Lord in our hearts without ceasing.

A task, once it is finished, is forgotten. Whatever the task, once we finish it, we forget it all. But the Lord is not like that. Although the Lord has fully accomplished our salvation, He does not forget us. As for the Lord alone, we, too, cannot forget Him. The Lord must not be absent from our lives, our thoughts, our hearts, and our plans. We absolutely need the Lord. It is because we are a flock of sheep that needs a shepherd. Our Lord must set the direction for us, guide us as to how we should live and what we should do, and be with us and supply us with strength so that we can do all things. That is why we must think of the Lord.

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In the life of faith, Jesus Christ is everything. The Lord called God the Father the vinedresser. The vinedresser is the One who gives fertilizer to those who think of the Lord and believe in and follow the Lord. Jesus is the vine. If we are attached to that vine, we bear much fruit, and if we fall away from it, we wither. Even if we fail to think of everything else, we must think of Jesus. Each one of us must not forget but always think of the Lord, who made us and saved us. Then our life of faith comes about of itself, we become able to do righteous works, and we can do the Lord's work by receiving strength from God the Father.

Does your life of faith seem too formal, with no focal point in your heart? Are you unable to live by faith? Are you perhaps leading yourself on your own, saying, "This is to be done this way, and that is to be done that way"? At such times, look back at your own heart—to see whether the Lord has fully taken His place in it as its Master. Since our hearts have been saved, the Lord has come upon us as the Holy Spirit, and the Lord becomes the focal point of our hearts and guides us on the way we should go.

## The parents who left Jesus behind

This is something that happened when Jesus was twelve years old. His mother in the flesh, Mary, and His father in the flesh, Joseph, went up to Jerusalem with Jesus to keep the Passover. On their way home after they had finished keeping the feast, there were so many people that Joseph and Mary walked along mixed in among the crowd, each talking with others. Mary probably mingled with the women and talked with them, saying, "At this feast such and such happened, and so and so happened."

To put it in our terms, they were on their way out from worship, chatting about this and that as they went.

Joseph, among the men, probably went along the road absorbed in conversation, saying, "How have you been?" and talking about business and talking about their children. Then, only after they had gone a day's journey, they realized that the twelve-year-old Jesus, who they had taken for granted would be following them, had not followed. The parents were startled and, wondering where the child had gone, called Jesus' name countless times as they went back the way they had come, until they reached the temple. But what was this? The Bible records, *"Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions" (Luke 2:46)*. When His mother, greatly astonished, said, *"Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously" (Luke 2:48)*, Jesus, who was twelve years old, answered, *"Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49)*. But the Bible records, *"But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart" (Luke 2:50–51)*.

So it is with us: as we live our life of faith, there are many times when we do it halfheartedly, just thinking it is a matter of course. We must truly think of the Lord in our hearts. The Lord saved us so that we have no sin; He received baptism from John in our place and died on the Cross in our place, and so He took away our sins; and after taking upon Himself the death that was ours, He rose again from death, ascended to the kingdom of heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of God. We must live our life of faith with that Lord in our hearts. But because we fail to do so and live our life of faith halfheartedly, we really have

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no strength and really cannot do anything. Why is it that we want to follow the Lord, and it is only right to do so, and yet we cannot follow Him? It is because we have not held the Lord in our hearts. It is because we do not think of the Lord and simply think that we ourselves are all set that it does not work. If the Lord is not inside, the inside is an empty shell with nothing in it, like a scarecrow. How many times do we return home without the Lord in our hearts! That the parents of Jesus in the flesh, as they returned home from the temple, took it for granted that Jesus would follow them when in fact He did not, is just like the appearance of a halfhearted faith that does not hold the Lord in its heart. Because we do not truly follow Him with all our heart and mind, we do not know where the Lord is and just go our own way. All the strength to follow the Lord also comes from the Lord.

But if we always think of the Lord and hold Him in our hearts, we naturally come to love the people the Lord tells us to love, naturally come to stand against the things the Lord tells us to stand against, and come to set as the goal of our own lives the goal the Lord tells us to live for, and live by it. When we have the Lord in our hearts, it comes about naturally. If we live our life of faith halfheartedly without the Lord in our hearts, it does not go well. We may have done well up to now, but our life of faith from now on will not go well. To put it the other way around, that our life of faith is not going well means that we are not thinking of the Lord in our hearts. If someone thinks that, since he has received the remission of sins, Jesus has of course become his God, God the Father has become his Father, and the Holy Spirit is in him, and so everything is settled with that, it is a great miscalculation. We must go to church and hear the word, serve, preach the gospel, and fight against those who oppose us and win, and the reason these things that should be a matter of

course are not happening is that we do not think of the Lord and have forgotten Him. The reason things went well up to now but suddenly do not go well, and the reason that, though we try hard, what we know in our heads does not actually work, is that we have not held the Lord in our hearts. It is because we call on God the Father with our mouths but do not hold the Lord in our hearts. Therefore we must have the Lord, who is King, in our hearts. I hope you will know that if we say, "The Lord has become our Savior, so that is enough," and treat the Lord lightly, our life of faith will not work.

To let go of everything, saying, "Since we have been saved, this is settled and that is settled, and everything is settled," is not a good thing to do. It would be different if we went straight to the kingdom of heaven as soon as we received the remission of sins, but even though we have received the remission of sins, our flesh is still on this earth, and so we must live our life of faith in this world. Just as it says, *"We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians 4:7)*, we must live with the Lord in these earthen vessels.

## *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love"*

We must think of the Lord, and think of the fact that the Lord made us, made this world, and received baptism from John in our place and had our sins transferred to Him. And we must also think of the fact that the Lord died on the Cross and rose again. When we think of the fact that the Lord saved us by the water and the Spirit, we come to follow the Lord, come to resemble the Lord's character, become the Lord's people, and become the Lord's disciples. And so, by faith, we come to bear much fruit

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that pleases the Lord. Receiving strength from the Lord, we naturally bear much fruit. That is how we live as true disciples of the Lord.

The greatest problem in living the life of faith is not holding the Lord in our own hearts. The reason we want to live our life of faith well but it does not go well is that we do not hold the Lord in our hearts. This means that it is so because, even though the Lord has actually come into our hearts, we are not aware of it. It is only that we are not aware of it; in fact, the Lord is in our hearts at all times. The Holy Spirit is in our hearts, and the Lord is in that Holy Spirit. Just as the Lord said, *"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" (John 14:10)*, the Triune God, that is, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, lives in our hearts. It is only that we speak of them separately; the Triune God is the same God. We must always live with God in our hearts. When we pray, we call on the God we love, and in our lives, too, we need only think of God and call on God at all times.

The Lord said, *"I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5)*, and if we are to bear much fruit, we must be in the Lord. Just as a branch that is firmly attached to the vine bears much fruit, a person who abides well in the Lord bears much fruit of righteousness. And when we bear much fruit, it brings glory to the Father, and we become true disciples of Jesus. *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:10)*. This commandment is to love that Lord, who made us and saved us, and to hold the Lord in our hearts. If we keep such a commandment of the Lord, we come to love the Lord and come to love people.

## When we think of the Lord, we gain strength

Not long ago, there was a time when I was so seriously ill that I wondered whether I might be leaving this world. I think it was the first time I had ever been that sick. It was not a slight illness; it was to the point that I thought I would surely die. So I had an earnest desire to leave my last words. "What if I should go? I really must say these things. I must put everything in order and hand down everything I have to hand down before I go." I had thoughts like these as well. They say that when the time comes for a person to go, he knows it himself, and I, too, felt, "Ah, I am going."

Thinking that it was not yet time, I struggled with all my might not to go, and God made me better little by little, and I have recovered enough to be able to preach again like this. Since I was born into this world and have been born again, if I could not preach, it would be the same as being dead. Perhaps that is why God has made me well like this. While I was ill, I thought a great deal, but I simply could not do anything. I could only manage to answer when someone asked me a few words, and later I could not even think, so I lay there and thought of the Lord. When I thought of the Lord, strength came, and when I thought of other things, I felt irritated. In any case, God made me well.

I hope that you, too, will take good care of your health. Only then can you follow the Lord to the end. Also, to follow the Lord to the end, we must believe in our Lord deep in our hearts. I hope you will think of that Lord, who received baptism from John in your place, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death, and of that Jesus, who made you and made all things in this universe. When we think of that Lord, we can live our life of faith to the very end. And while we live, we can do the things that please the Lord. We can love souls, and we can do all things

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through the Lord. But if we do not think of the Lord, we reach our limit. And we cannot do anything. We have no strength. If we run into our limit while running, we cannot help but collapse. But if we look to the Lord and think of the Lord, we can run to the end. The Bible says, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13)*. The Lord gives us all power. That is why we can do all things and run to the end. That is why we must think of the Lord.

Do not think of doing anything well by yourselves. If you try to do something well while leaving out the Lord, when your strength reaches its limit, you can do nothing. Whether your strength has run out or you still have strength, if you must continue your life of faith and go forward, think of the Lord. If you think of the Lord, then when you have no strength, the Lord will give you strength, and when you have no ability, He will supply you with ability. The Lord will give you everything. Even if you cannot handle something, the Lord will enable you to handle it. Even if you have no blessing, the Lord will bless you, because He is the source of blessing. Even if something cannot be done by your own strength, the Lord will make it happen. The Lord will cause you to bear much fruit until the end of this world. All of this is in the Lord. Therefore, we need only hold the Lord in our hearts, think of the Lord, and believe in the Lord.

I hope that you will not live your life of faith halfheartedly. The word we read in John chapter 15 was precisely this kind of word.

## Jesus, the God who saved us

Is the Lord in your hearts? Who is it that actually saved us? God the Father planned it and the Holy Spirit guaranteed it—and

who is it that actually came and saved us? It is Jesus. Is Jesus merely a man? No. Do you know who made these mountains and seas, the birds and fish, human beings and all the animals, and this world of the Milky Way? It is none other than Jesus. The Lord, who is God with such power and the Creator, came as a man for a while to save us from sin, and became the Savior. That is why He was named Jesus. The Bible records, *"You shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*. This is the meaning of the name Jesus.

The fact that God came as the Savior clothed in the lowly flesh of a man does not change the fact that He is God. We simply call Him who is our Savior and God, Jesus. Let us think of the fact that this Jesus is that great God. And let us live our life of faith with strength, with Jesus in our hearts. It is not that everything works out just because we muster our strength. When your strength is exhausted, when your strength has run out, when your heart is weary, and when your flesh is weary, think of Jesus. When you think of Jesus, strength comes again, your heart calms down, and you become humble and gentle. Think of Jesus. Do not try to do everything with only what you have. Always receive new strength from Jesus and do it with the strength you have been supplied. Let us live by the strength Jesus gives. And when we have no strength, let us live asking for help. "God, please do this for me." When we ask for help like that, our Lord gives us help. This means that if we pray to that Jesus and think of that Jesus, God the Father gives according to our need.

God the Father is the vinedresser. Therefore, even if we pray to the Father, it is the same as praying to Jesus. The point is only that we should not lose Jesus in our lives. Did not Jesus save you? It was Jesus who saved you—was it God the Father who came down to the world, received baptism, and was nailed to the Cross to save us? Therefore we must think of Jesus.

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Everything in the world is used once and thrown away, but Jesus is not like that. Jesus is the One we need forever. I hope that all of us will hold Jesus in our hearts and live our life of faith that way until Jesus comes. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

# I, who have become a friend of the Lord

**< John 15:11–17 >**

**“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another.”**

## God, who made us His friends

God has established us as His friends. That is, God did not leave us as created beings, sinners, or slaves, but made us His own friends. God made us His friends and told us all the plans He intends to carry out. He told us, who have become His friends, in detail what work He will do in the future and in what way He works. What a master is doing is not made known to servants or slaves, but it can be made known to friends. That is why our

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Lord made us His friends. In order to make us His friends, God raised our status. The Lord raised us up and made us His own friends, and so He became the God who reveals to us everything He intends to do and walks together with us.

In fact, having become friends with God is a tremendous thing. How can a human being, who is a created being, become a friend of God? Usually, people can become friends only when their status is similar to each other. A person with a lot of money becomes friends with a person with a lot of money, and a person of position becomes friends with a person of similar position. Therefore, that God has made us, who are human beings, His friends cannot but be a tremendous thing. The Lord has given us a tremendous blessing and a tremendous status.

Originally, we were created beings that God had made, and we were sinners who could not help but commit sin. We were utterly useless beings who were born from dust and would return to dust, who were born as human beings and lived under the curse of God, and who could not help but be cursed. But God saved us by water and blood. The Lord had our sins 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 He saved us. And He made us children of God, and also friends of God. That we have come into such a close relationship with God is a truly astonishing, miracle-like thing. The Lord said, *"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends" (John 15:15)*, and made us His friends. He also made us children of God, so that we became people who receive that promise about which the Bible says, *"that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4)*. That we have become children of God and friends of God is a tremendous blessing that God has given us. God made us His friends, made us children of

God, and, telling us everything, said that He would consult and work together with His friends. The Lord has made us such people.

## *"I have called you friends"*

Because our God has become a friend to us and has made known to us all His plans, we know God, who is our friend, and we follow that God, who is our shepherd. Now we have come far away from the status of slaves who would be destroyed or of a people who would be cursed. Now what are we to God? We have become friends of God. We are God's friends. As friends, we are living in company with God.

God entrusted work to His friends and made a request of them. It is just as if He were saying, "My friend, I want to do this work. I want to save more people and make them My children and also our friends. My friend, could you do that work for Me?" That is, the Lord has asked us to do the work of God. And when we make a request in the name of our friend, the Lord grants it. That is why, when we pray, we pray in the name of Jesus, who has become our friend.

Even in this world, a matter that one would just let pass if someone else asked for it, one sometimes attends to with care and grants when a friend asks, precisely because he is a friend. Because Jesus is the friend of those who have been saved and become children of God, when we, the children of God, make a request, He grants it. The Lord has become God to us and has become our friend, and so when we pray to the Lord God, the Lord hears it all and answers, and He causes us to bear much fruit. Therefore, we must know that Jesus is our friend. That Jesus is not only God to us but is also the Savior and also our

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friend is a tremendous strength to us. Therefore, we must become people who clearly know and believe that Jesus has become our friend, who keep company with Him as a friend, walk with Him, and carry out the work that our friend has entrusted to us.

In fact, it is good to have met a good friend. If one's friend has a very high status and great authority, that person has a great supporter. Our friend named Jesus has great power, and so when we, His friends, pray asking for help, He gladly grants it. As long as it is not something that leads His friend down a bad path, as long as it is not something by which His friend goes wrong, and as long as His friend is not doing something that goes against the Father's will and is not fitting, He helps His friend.

## The best friend

We have been saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which the Lord accomplished by having our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rising again from death. But it did not end with our being saved. As soon as we were saved, our Lord wanted to become a friend to His people who are in the Church of God, and He actually became their friend. So we have a tremendously good friend.

I do not know how many friends you have in this world, but is there any better friend than that friend who saved you and made you His friend? I believe there is no such friend. Jesus, once He has formed a bond of friendship, is not One who cuts off the relationship of friendship, no matter how lacking His friends may be. Rather, once Jesus has made a friend, He remains a friend endlessly, understands him, and helps him if

there is anything to help with. The Lord delights in helping with what His friend has asked of Him, and on His part He never cuts off this relationship of friendship for all eternity. So the friend named Jesus is a tremendously good friend to us.

Even among those who have been saved, the Lord has made His friends those who live a life of faith attached to the vine. Jesus has become a friend to anyone who is attached to the vine. The One who treats us as friends, hears our prayers as a friend, and grants our requests as a friend is none other than Jesus. Jesus is not only our Savior but is also our friend. Come to think of it, those who have been saved and are attached to the church can be said to be people who share a deep friendship with the Lord.

We are the Lord's friends. How does it feel to have such a tremendous friend? The friends of Jesus Christ, who have been saved, been chosen by the Lord as friends, formed a relationship of friendship with Him, and live in the church, are deeply moved. As we live in this world, we receive help every day from the friend named Jesus. Jesus especially fulfills His duty as a friend to those who abide in the word of God and to those who abide in the Church of God. Jesus gives help in order to show His friendship, and because He wants an unchanging relationship, He gives many blessings throughout our lives to us who have been saved and are in the church.

When Jesus asked His disciples who people said He was, the disciples answered, *"Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets" (Matthew 16:14)*. But Peter confessed, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*. We, too, make the same confession as Peter. And we confess that the Lord is our shepherd and that we are the Lord's sheep. But now our faith has gone up one more step, and we have come into a relationship of friendship with Jesus Christ. Now we are not only the saved people of God, but

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we have also become children of God, and furthermore friends of Jesus Christ.

We have now become friends with the Lord. Now we live in this world as His friends. Now we are not sinners, nor people who will be destroyed, nor people who will be cursed because we are lacking; we live in this world as the Lord's friends. We can see that our status has been raised so greatly that we can be friends with Jesus. We, the Lord's friends, walk together with the Lord, live according to the Lord's will, and receive encouragement from the Lord. While receiving the blessing of being born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we have at the same time gained a new status and come to have a tremendous friend. We have heard personally from the Lord who we are, why we are in the church, for what reason we live like this, why we must serve the gospel, and why we must live this way, and we have made up our minds to share our destiny with that friend.

## A friend's request

Those who have become friends with Jesus Christ must live laboring for the spread of the gospel that Jesus Christ has asked of them. Because Jesus Himself made the request of us, who have become His friends, we must live that way for that friend. We live this way because the Lord has granted our requests and we, too, have granted the Lord's request. If we had not listened to our friend's request, we would not have lived this way. But we have granted that friend's request. His request that we preach the gospel was in fact a great consideration meant to let us live in glory.

In fact, that we have become God's workers, that we have become the Lord's friends, and that we have become the righteous—none of all this came about because we loved God. It was possible because the Lord, who has become our friend, first loved us. The Bible says, *"We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19)*. It is also the Lord who first chose us, proposing that we become friends. Because we have become His friends, we want to live within His commandments. Because Jesus Christ has become our friend, the Father of Jesus Christ has become our Father, and we have become His people, we come to live loving one another and loving God within the love of God.

What we must clearly know is that God has made us His friends. It is that God has entrusted work to us. It is that God has loved us. We must know that we have become His friends because He first loved us. We must know that He has made us His friends and that, in order to continue carrying on the relationship of friendship with us, He has placed the Church of God on this earth. We must surely know that through the Church of God He has made it so that our relationship with our friend is not cut off.

What we must know today is that God, who saved us, has made us His friends. Bearing that in mind, we should always pray to the Lord, who has become our friend. The point is that, while Jesus and we continually carry on our relationship of friendship, we should do the will of our friend's Father, and, having become children of one Father, keep close company with one another and live upholding the Father's will. For us to uphold the Father's will, we must have the faith that believes that we are God's friends and that we have become friends of Jesus Christ.

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## Not as servants but as friends

The Lord said, *"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15)*. God tells us that He has become God to us but has also become our friend. So we must live keeping company with God as a friend, walking with Him as a friend, and treating Him as a friend.

We do not remain forever in a relationship in which we are only far away from God. Now we have been saved through the water and the Spirit and become children of God, and we have become friends with Jesus Christ, the Son of the one Father. Now we come to live strolling through endless fields hand in hand with our friend. We should know everything that the friend named the Lord wants, uphold that friend's will and also help Him, and, when things are hard and difficult, ask the friend who has a Father of great power and authority for help, and thus fulfill all of God's will. We must have the faith to live in this world as friends of Jesus, who has a solid backing. We are friends of Jesus Christ. We are friends who talk with Christ and share our hearts with Him, not merely servants.

What about friends in the world, too? Between friends, they tell each other everything. They even tell each other the things they are ashamed of. There are things one cannot easily say to one's father or mother but does say to a friend. Such a relationship between friends is really good. We have gained such a close friend. We tell Jesus all sorts of things. It is because Jesus is our friend. If we tell these things to people who are not saved, they do not understand. It is because people who are not saved are bound to the Lord only as created beings. But we are not in such a relationship. We are friends. So we ask our friend named

Jesus for anything. When we need help, we must ask in the name of our friend. Then our friend Jesus intercedes for what we ask of the Father, and so He makes it so that we receive it all. It is as if Jesus were asking the Father, "This person is My friend. It is fitting for You, Father, to help him. Please do something for My friend." In that way, we come to obtain everything we need. Therefore, we must live as friends of Jesus while we live in this world.

Is your faith a faith that lives as a friend of Jesus, or is it a faith that lives merely in a subordinate relationship between a created being and God? Are you and the Lord friends? Or do you live in a relationship in which Jesus is God and you are merely a created being? If you were not in a relationship of friendship with Jesus but only in the relationship of a created being, how far apart you and Jesus would be! How distant, fearful, and stifling it would be! Our Lord did not put us in such a distant, subordinate relationship. The Lord has made us His friends. The reason the Lord did not call us servants but made us His friends is that a servant does not know his master's will, but a friend does. Jesus has become our God, but that God treats us as friends. So we must talk with Jesus with the status of friends of Jesus, and live with the friendship of a friend.

If we were not His friends, how could we come before Him at any time? If it were not the relationship of a friend but that of a servant, it would be a distant relationship in which one cannot approach unless the master calls. That is why the Lord made us His friends in order to keep us by His side. Friends, even if they sulk, soon reconcile; even if they misunderstand each other, they resolve it through conversation; and even if they have shortcomings or things they do not like about each other, they speak frankly, saying, "How could you do that?" and reconcile again. Friends are close to each other without reserve.

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I think of the fellow workers and saints who serve the gospel together with me as my friends. So I talk about all sorts of things very freely with those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and been born again. It is because true friends are in a relationship in which they can talk about everything.

Jesus has become our friend. Our Lord tells us everything. Our Lord accepts everything. That is what a true friend is.

Is your relationship with Jesus that of friends? It is. So even after you have done wrong, you can tell Jesus everything, and you can draw near before Him, giving thanks by faith that the Lord, who has great power, has solved all your problems, and you carry on the relationship of friendship to the end.

## A friend like family

I am your friend, and you are also my friends. But just as, even though you and I seem to be without reserve with each other, there is a courtesy we must keep toward each other, so too, even though Jesus and we seem to be without reserve because we are friends, there is a tremendously great difference between us. This can be said to be the point that differs from friendships in the world. I believe that all are friends, whether they are elderly or young. All those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and become one family are friends.

I believe that Jesus is my friend. I believe it just as the Lord said it. And I believe that the Lord is also your friend. Friends understand each other. True friends want each other to do well. Are we strangers to Jesus Christ and to God? We are not strangers. We are family. Jesus said that He is the vine of life and we are the branches. Therefore, we are one family. He is a

friend, yes, but a friend like family—a friend who is very close to us without reserve and yet whom we respect with all courtesy.

It is truly good that we have such a friend. We give thanks that Jesus has made us His friends. We will live forever as friends of Jesus, doing the work that Jesus has asked of us as a friend. And we will live asking the Lord for help as a friend. I believe that Jesus Christ and I are friends. You, too, are friends with Jesus Christ. And the Father of Jesus is our Father. Let us all live in this world with such faith.

The Lord said, *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you" (John 15:16)*. Jesus has made us His friends. Therefore, Jesus hears all our prayers. And He conveys them to God and makes it so that we are granted everything. Jesus hears the requests of His friends and helps with them all. We give thanks to the Lord, who has thus become our good friend. ✉

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# CHAPTER

# 16

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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

# The help of the Holy Spirit and the joy that the Lord gives

**< John 16:1–24 >**

**"These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. 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. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His**

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**own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you. A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father. Then some of His disciples said among themselves, 'What is this that He says to us, "A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me"; and, "because I go to the Father"?' They said therefore, 'What is this that He says, "A little while"? We do not know what He is saying.' Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, 'Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, "A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me"? Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.'"**

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## The Helper promised to the sorrowful disciples

Jesus told His disciples that He would go away. Until then, the disciples had been able to hear the Lord's word, see the things He did, and ask the Lord right away whenever they met with a difficult matter. But when the Lord said that He was going to the Father, their hearts were filled with sorrow. The disciples thought only of the fact that they would no longer see the Lord before their eyes, but the Lord knew the benefit He would give them through His departure.

Let us read verses 1 through 3.

*"These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me" (John 16:1–3).*

The world the disciples would meet from then on was not a place that welcomed faith in the Lord. People would put them out of the synagogue and drive them away, and when the time came they would kill them, and yet regard it as serving God. The word for being put out of the synagogue also appears in chapter 12. Many among the rulers believed in Jesus, but *"lest they should be put out of the synagogue" (John 12:42)*, they could not speak of it openly. Verse 3 makes clear in a word why people do such things. It is because they do not know the Father and Jesus. If people do not know the Son whom God sent and regard only their own zeal as right, they come to be under the delusion that they are serving God even while persecuting the Lord's people. The standard of faith does not lie in the size of one's zeal, but in knowing Jesus, whom God sent, and believing what He has done.

The purpose for which the Lord let them know this in advance is in verse 4. It is *"that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them" (John 16:4)*. It was not to frighten the disciples, but so that when that time came they would remember the Lord's word and not stumble. The One who brings the word they heard in advance to mind in their hearts at that time is the Holy Spirit. The fact that we meet with suffering and are hated does not mean that the Lord's word is wrong. It is being fulfilled exactly as the Lord said in advance.

As we, too, live believing the gospel, there are times when we are not understood and go through hardships. At such times, do not let your heart be taken captive by what people say, but look to the Lord, who washed away our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we know clearly who it is that saved us, the Lord's word we heard in advance holds us up at that time. While speaking of the suffering the disciples would receive from then on, the Lord also promised the One who would help them.

If we look at verses 5 and 6, even though the Lord said that He was going to Him who sent Him, there was no disciple who asked where He was going, and their hearts were only filled with sorrow. To such disciples the Lord told the truth. Let us read verse 7.

*"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. 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).*

The *"Helper"* means one who helps, and it refers to God the Holy Spirit. The Lord's departure was not an act of abandoning the disciples. When Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross while bearing that sin, rose again from death, and went to the Father, He would send the Holy Spirit He had promised. Why is His going away an advantage? It is because, having

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accomplished salvation completely and gone up, He sends the One who helps. Even though we cannot see the Lord with the eyes of the flesh, the Spirit of truth dwells in those who believe, makes them realize how Jesus saved us, and holds them up so that their faith will not be shaken.

Where does the Holy Spirit dwell? He dwells in the heart that has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to the person who has received the remission of sins, and that Holy Spirit makes him know the salvation the Lord accomplished and helps him to believe that truth and live by it. The Helper is the One who supports and helps us according to what we believe. Therefore, even when your heart is filled with sorrow, think of the One who helps, who is within us.

## The sin, righteousness, and judgment that the Holy Spirit makes clear

What does the Holy Spirit do when He comes? Jesus specifically made known the work the Holy Spirit would do. Let us read verses 8 through 11.

*"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:8–11).*

Jesus came to this earth and did the work of saving us, and after He went up, the Holy Spirit comes and convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. These three are different from the meanings people commonly know. Through the written

word, and through the people who preach that word, the Holy Spirit makes clear what true sin, righteousness, and judgment are.

First, the Holy Spirit convicts of sin. When people think of sin, the first thing that comes to their minds is the wrong deeds they have done. And then they think that if they correct their wrongs a little and add good deeds, they can stand before God. Of course, failing to live according to the Ten Commandments is also sin. But the Lord said, *"Of sin, because they do not believe in Me" (John 16:9)*. The sin that God regards as the greatest, the sin that in the end leads a person to judgment, is not believing in the Son whom God sent.

Believing in Jesus does not end with knowing His name. It is believing that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior who came to save us, and believing what He actually did for us. The Son of God came clothed in a human body, and through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He had all the sins of the world transferred onto His own body. By being hung on the Cross, shedding His blood, and dying while bearing that sin, He received in our place the punishment we were to receive, and He was buried and rose again from death three days later, completing our salvation. He took away not only original sin but even the sins we will commit throughout our lives. Believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit in the heart is the faith that believes in the Lord.

This is the word Jesus spoke when He received baptism from John.

*"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

The Lord is not One who only promised in words to remove sin and stopped there. Through the baptism He received from John, He actually had our sins transferred to Him, and on the

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Cross He actually paid the price of those sins. If, even so, people do not believe this work and try to become righteous by their own deeds, they are refusing the salvation God has given. The Holy Spirit convicts of this unbelief through the word of the gospel. He asks why you do not believe, when the Lord had all your sins passed on to Him at the Jordan River and received that judgment for you with the blood of the Cross. When you hear this conviction, do not stubbornly insist that your own thoughts are right, but accept the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

Next, the Holy Spirit convicts of righteousness. The Lord said, *"Because I go to My Father and you see Me no more" (John 16:10)*. The Lord goes to the Father because He has completely accomplished the work of salvation that He came to this earth to take on. Since the Lord, who had sin passed on to Him and even received the judgment for it, rose again from death and goes to the Father, nothing remains to be added to that salvation. The *"all righteousness"* of Matthew chapter 3, verse 15, which we read earlier, is none other than this righteousness. The Holy Spirit testifies of this righteousness that the Lord has accomplished.

The righteousness of God is not a righteousness that we have produced by living a religious life well. It is the righteousness by which God saved sinners while judging sin righteously. Because the Son had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and received the punishment for them on the Cross, the righteousness of God was fulfilled, and because God made sinners live through that Son, the love of God was also fulfilled. The Lord became the sacrificial offering of atonement for us. When we believe this work, we become righteous people without sin through the merit of the Lord.

The Lord does not work in such a way as to remove a little of our sins today and a little more tomorrow; He has washed

away all sins once and for all. That salvation is still in effect even now. What we need is the faith that believes, just as the word says, what the Lord has already done. Just because our feelings or today's conduct have changed, the Lord's salvation does not change as well.

In addition, the Holy Spirit convicts of judgment. The Lord said that the ruler of this world is judged. The ruler of this world is the devil. Ever since the devil enticed Adam and Eve and made them sin, he has reigned over people with sin and death. But when Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and received that judgment for us with the blood of the Cross, the ruler of this world was also judged. The Lord solved the problem of sin and death that the devil had held in his grip.

The Apostle Paul testifies of this victory as follows.

*"The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:56–57).*

The reason death was able to sting people was sin. Since the Lord has removed that sin, death can no longer sting us. It is not because we are strong that we have overcome the devil; because the Lord solved the problem of sin and death, we who believe in Him have also obtained the victory. Even when we meet with the death of the flesh, we are people who have eternal life and the hope of the resurrection. That is why a believer can look to God, who makes us live, without being held captive by the fear of death and denying the Lord.

On the other hand, a person who does not believe this salvation cannot escape from sin and judgment. If he refuses that righteousness even though the Lord has completely accomplished the work of salvation, he belongs to the devil, who has already been judged, and comes to be judged together with

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him. Do not take the conviction of the Holy Spirit lightly. When we rightly know the sin, righteousness, and judgment that the Holy Spirit makes clear, we come to know clearly what we must cast away and what we must believe.

## The Spirit of truth, who guides us through the word of Christ

Let us read verses 12 through 15.

*"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 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. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:12–15).*

The disciples could not yet bear all the things the Lord had to say. It was because it was before the Lord was hung on the Cross and rose again. But the Lord did not leave them as they were; He promised that the Spirit of truth would come and guide them into all truth. The Holy Spirit does not speak on His own authority, but speaks only what He hears. Verse 14 says of this, *"He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14)*. It means that the Holy Spirit illuminates what Jesus said and did in our hearts and explains it. As the word of verse 15 says, all things that the Father has are the Son's, so the word Jesus spoke is none other than the word the Father spoke to us. The Holy Spirit does not separate the will of the Father from the salvation the Son accomplished and lead us down a different path.

Therefore, to know the work of the Holy Spirit, we must see what that work testifies of. The Holy Spirit is not One who makes people boast or stirs up their hearts with experiences that have nothing to do with the word, but One who makes us know how Jesus had our sins passed on to Him and how He received the judgment for them. When a person who has received the remission of sins hears the word, He makes him know in his heart, "That is right," that the word is right, and He makes him discern teachings that differ from the word. It is not because we are clever, but because the Spirit of truth holds on to us.

The truth that the Holy Spirit testifies of is always this gospel, that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and received that judgment for us with the blood of the Cross. If people put forward only strange experiences that have nothing to do with this gospel, they cannot know the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The word the Lord spoke and the work He accomplished are the ground of our faith.

The word that says the Holy Spirit will tell us things to come is also within the same truth. The Lord had already let the disciples know the persecution that would come. According to the word, the Holy Spirit lets us know together both the suffering we will go through and the glory we will receive in the future. We are not people who will live in this world forever, but people who will meet the Lord on the day He calls us and be with Him forever. That is why the Holy Spirit helps us to hold on to that hope even in the midst of suffering and to carry out the work entrusted to us.

In addition, the Holy Spirit gives gifts to those who have received the remission of sins, so that each may serve the Lord's work together according to the gift he has received. There is the work of teaching the word, there is the work of caring for and guiding the members, and there is the work of supporting the

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spread of the gospel. Even though not everyone takes on the same work, all serve in order to preach the same salvation of the Lord. That God has given us workers to guide us by the word is also something to be thankful for. When we learn what we should learn, carry out by faith the work entrusted to us, and serve the gospel together with the Church, we come to live following the help of the Holy Spirit.

A person who is guided by the Holy Spirit does not give glory to himself. It is because he knows that the Father planned salvation, the Son accomplished it, and the Holy Spirit testifies of that truth. Just as the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus, the One whom we exalt and give thanks to is also our Savior Jesus Christ.

## The joy that the Lord gives, which no one can take away

When Jesus said, *"A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me" (John 16:16)*, the disciples did not understand what He meant. From verse 16 through verse 19, the expression *"a little while"* appears as many as seven times. The disciples asked one another what He meant, and then said, *"We do not know what He is saying" (John 16:18)*. Only after the Cross and the resurrection had passed and the Holy Spirit had come did they realize this word. The Lord knew their hearts, which desired to ask Him, and spoke as follows. Let us read verses 20 through 22.

*"Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish,*

*for joy that a human being has been born into the world. Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you" (John 16:20–22).*

To the disciples, the death of Jesus was something to lament over. They would weep as they saw the One they loved and followed die hung on the Cross like a heinous criminal. At that time, the world would rejoice. But that death was not a death of helpless defeat. Because the Lord had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, He went to the Cross to receive the judgment for those sins in our place. It was the death of the sacrificial offering of atonement in our place, and it was a death in which He gave Himself up in order to give us life.

When we know the reason the Lord suffered, we obtain the joy of salvation in the face of His death. Unlike the disciples, who lamented that day, we who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit today rejoice, knowing that through His death the judgment for our sins has ended. Now nothing remains for God to judge us for. Because we know how great the sacrifice is that the Lord paid for us, we give thanks and rejoice.

Jesus gave the parable of a woman giving birth to a child. He said that when a woman is in labor she has anguish, but once the child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. This parable is a word spoken first of all to the disciples. The sorrow they were going through for a short while now would pass like the anguish of childbirth, and it would be turned into great joy when they saw the Lord again. In this parable, the Lord's own heart is also contained. The Lord knew that through the suffering He would receive many people would receive the remission of sins and

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obtain life, and when He sees people who believe and obtain salvation, He rejoices so much that He forgets that anguish.

The Lord promised that He would see the disciples again, and according to that promise, Jesus, who rose again from death, appeared to the disciples. Let us read John chapter 20, verse 20.

*"When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord" (John 20:20).*

That death the disciples had lamented was not the end. The One who showed them His hands and His side was the very same Lord who had been hung on the Cross. The disciples' joy did not come from people's good opinion of them, but from the fact that the Lord, who overcame death, is alive and that He had saved them. That is why the Lord said that no one would take that joy from them.

We, too, have this joy. The circumstances of the world change and our flesh is also weak, but the remission of sins Jesus accomplished does not change. Because the Lord sent the Holy Spirit to us, we have become children of God. When sorrow arises, do not look only at your own circumstances, but look to Jesus, who died for you and rose again. If you know the life and love He has given, you can give thanks even in the midst of hardships.

## The joy we enjoy as we ask in the name of Jesus

The Lord carried the word about joy on into a promise concerning prayer. Let us read verses 23 and 24.

*"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give*

*you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:23–24).*

In verse 24 there is the word *"Until now you have asked nothing in My name" (John 16:24)*. Before Jesus came, neither the people who believed in God nor the disciples up to that time had ever prayed in the name of Jesus. The people of faith in the Old Testament called out, "O LORD," and asked for help. But after Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment for us with the blood of the Cross, rose again from death, went up to the Father, and sent the Holy Spirit, things changed. Now whoever has received the remission of sins by believing this salvation can come to the Father and ask in the name of Jesus.

Praying in the name of Jesus does not mean merely the habit of adding that name at the end of a prayer. Within that one phrase, a confession is contained. It is the confession that Jesus is our Savior, that He received all the judgment for our sins in our place, and that through Him we have become children of God. We, who lack so many things, could not come before the holy God by ourselves. But Jesus, who removed our sins, tore down the wall of sin that had blocked the way between God and us. Therefore, prayer is not a matter of putting forward our own goodness or labor, but a matter of believing in the Lord, who saved us, and asking the Father.

God saved us through His own Son and accepted us as His children. Therefore, we can call God Father and ask Him for help. Prayer begins with first believing this fact. Faith comes first, and then asking follows. Rather than repeating prayers with a heart that does not know whether He will hear or not, ask with the faith that the Father, who saved you, hears.

When we meet with a matter that we cannot resolve by our own strength, our hearts grow heavy. There are times when, no

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matter how much we think it over, no way can be seen. At such times, hold on to this promise and tell the Father about it, whether it is a matter of your family, a matter of the church, or a matter of your own. Even if the answer is not seen right away, do not be discouraged. We can also ask in the name of Jesus for our family members and neighbors who have not yet heard the gospel.

A person who has prayed comes to know how God helped him, and comes to give thanks to the Father. He does not boast that he obtained it because he did well, but acknowledges that God heard his prayer. When we see the promise *"Ask, and you will receive" (John 16:24)* being fulfilled in our lives, the joy that the Lord has saved us is joined by the joy that He cares for us even now. The full joy that verse 24 speaks of is filled in this way.

To the sorrowful disciples, the Lord promised the Helper, let them know that the Holy Spirit would make clear sin, righteousness, and judgment, told them that their sorrow would be turned into joy, and told them to ask in His name. Therefore, let us not hold on to our worries alone. Let us firmly believe in the salvation of Jesus that the Holy Spirit testifies of. And ask the Father, who gives whatever we ask in that name, and taste the full joy the Lord has promised. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

# The Lord convicts concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment

**< John 16:1–11 >**

**“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. 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. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”**

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Not long ago, I met one of my family members and preached the gospel. This person had been bound by the law, but after hearing the gospel, this person received the remission of sins.

## *"Of sin"*

The Lord said, *"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me" (John 16:8–9)*. As for what the sin we commit against God is, God says that not believing in the Lord is sin.

People, looking at the word of God, think that if they commit sins by failing to keep the law, they go to hell because of those sins. But the Lord said that as for sin, it is not believing in Him. What is it that they do not believe? It is not believing that the Lord has removed all our sins. Jesus came to this earth to save us human beings from all sins. When our Lord came to this earth in the flesh of a man and stood before John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. What this all righteousness means is that He did the work of having the sin of all people transferred to Him through baptism and making all people sinless. Not believing in that baptism, which Jesus received from John in order to remove all sins, is sin.

The Bible says, *"They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3)*. What is truly righteous is the righteousness of God, and the righteousness of God is revealed in this word that He spoke: *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus had the

sin of the world transferred to Him. John the Baptist gave Jesus the baptism of the laying on of hands and transferred all sins to Him. Making all people sinless in this way was the righteousness of God. Our Lord had all our sins transferred to Him through baptism, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment in our place, rose again from death, and gave us new life. We had to believe that. That Jesus Christ saved us from all sins and judgment through the baptism He received from John and the blood He shed on the Cross is the righteousness of God, and not believing in Jesus, who saved us completely and fulfilled righteousness for us, is the sin that people commit against God. Do you know that not believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that the Lord, who is the Alpha and the Omega, took away all the sin of all people until the day this world ends, is sin? As for sin, it is not believing and not accepting that the Lord has become our Savior.

The Holy Spirit convicts people of not believing it, even though the Lord had all our sins transferred to Him and removed them through the baptism He received from John for us. He convicts people of believing that the Lord took away only original sin, or of believing that He did not take away the sins we will commit in the future.

The Lord said, *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (Revelation 22:13)*. The Bible testifies of Him as follows: *"But with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12)*. He was God and also man. The Lord had both of these aspects. The Lord is God, yet He came to this earth in the flesh of a man and had all the sins of us human beings transferred to Him. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sin of the world transferred onto His own body and made all people sinless. And

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He received the judgment for all that sin. Because Jesus is God, He was able to accomplish the eternal remission of sins.

Why does God convict people? Of what does He convict them? That we do not accept and do not believe that the Lord became our Savior and took away all sins becomes a great sin before God and becomes the sin that leads to hell. It means that He convicts us of that. The Lord took away even all the sins of our stumbling over the law. So God did not tell us to live according to the law and receive the remission of sins; rather, He told us to realize and know our sins through the law and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The law said not to serve other gods, but how many gods do people serve? What comes out of a person's heart is nothing but the things the law said not to do—evil thoughts, murder, adultery, theft, envy, strife, and so on. The law says not to commit adultery, but do people commit adultery or not? They do. It is because people commit adultery that God said not to commit adultery. If you attach the word "sinner" after every commandment of the law, it fits exactly. "Honor your parents. You are a sinner who fails to honor your parents. Do not murder. You are a sinner who murders. Do not steal. You are a sinner who steals." That is what it is. It is because we commit such sins that the Lord told us not to do them. He said not to commit adultery in order to teach us that we are sinners who commit adultery. It means that God gave us the law so that we would realize this and know our own fundamental nature. Therefore, the value of the law lies in making us realize that, although we ought to live holy and clean lives in our daily lives, we are unable to live that way. We ought to keep the commandments of the law, commonly said to be 613 in number, but we fail to keep them; we must believe that our Lord had all those sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan

River, received all the judgment on the Cross, and saved us. This is precisely the righteousness of God and the righteousness of our Lord. The Lord saved us in this way.

When the Holy Spirit comes, what does He say is sin first of all? If the Holy Spirit were to say that some wrong we have done is sin, we would be people who must bear enormous sins and go to hell. Jesus took away those sins, but there is sin because people do not accept that the Lord has saved us completely. The Lord convicts us of our not believing in Him, calling it sin. It is just as if He were convicting us, saying, "You are committing the sin that leads to hell. Believe in Jesus Christ and receive Him into your heart!"

Our Lord is not in the flesh now. Our Lord rose again and ascended to the kingdom of heaven. And then He sent the Holy Spirit to this earth. Through the word written by the Holy Spirit, we come to hear the voice of God. People were born with twelve kinds of sins from birth, and what did God give first of all to people who were born with sin? He gave them the law. So through the law He made them realize and know their sins. The Lord taught us through the law that we are such sinners. Next, when we had become sinners through the law, our Lord came to remit these sins. Our Lord Himself came to this earth in the flesh of a man. And by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River, He fulfilled all righteousness. In the most appropriate and most fitting way, Jesus had all our sins transferred onto His own body. The Lord had the sin of the world transferred to Him for us and shed His blood as the price of that sin. And the Lord went to the Cross, said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, and died. The Lord gave up His own life for us and rose again three days later.

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## *"Of righteousness"*

*"Of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more" (John 16:10)*. A person who has received the remission of sins goes to the kingdom of heaven before God. This is the righteousness of God. That He saved us from all sins is the righteousness of God. That alone is the right thing. God loved us, and He loved us to the end. So He made it so that we could enter the Father's kingdom completely. Jesus Christ said that as for righteousness, it is that He goes to the Father. We receive the remission of sins and enter the kingdom of God the Father. This is the love of God and the righteousness of God. We have come to go to the kingdom of heaven entirely by the righteousness of God that God gave us, by accepting it through faith. The righteousness of God is the free salvation, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

## *"Of judgment"*

*"Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:11)*. The ruler of this world is the devil. In Genesis, God said, *"He shall bruise your head" (Genesis 3:15)*. According to that promise, the Lord, who came as the Seed of the woman, judged Satan the devil. Jesus was born through the Virgin Mary, and not only did He have all the sins of this world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, but by receiving the judgment for sin on the Cross, He put to death the power of Satan the devil.

Therefore, now there is no longer any judgment against us or any power of Satan the devil. Since our Lord had sin transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and shed His

blood on the Cross, Satan the devil cannot condemn and judge us, who have been born again, just because we are weak and lacking. The Holy Spirit comes and says precisely this.

Do you believe in Jesus? Do you believe that Jesus has become your Savior? Do you believe that you go to the kingdom of heaven by believing in Jesus? Have you become a righteous person? Do you believe that Jesus received in your place all the judgment you should have received? Believing this is faith. The Holy Spirit testifies of this and delights in those who believe this. Even among the people of the world there are those who hear this gospel of the water and the Spirit and acknowledge that it is right, but they are still caught up in the law. That is, there are many people who, even after receiving the remission of sins, try to live according to the law. God did not give the law so that people would live according to the law and receive the remission of sins. He gave the law so that people would realize and know their sins. So if people try to receive the remission of sins by living according to the law, they fall every day. Then, because it does not work no matter how hard they try, they give up even believing in Jesus. As for what the function of the law is, it is to point out our sins.

If God told us to receive the remission of sins by keeping the law, and that were the will of God, where would there be anyone who could carry out the will of God? The Bible says, *"Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10)*, so is there anyone who can keep the law? If we were to receive the remission of sins by keeping the law, there would have been no need for Jesus to come to this earth. When we realized our sins through the law and had become utter sinners, God the Father sent His Son and transferred all the sins of the world, that is, all our sins revealed

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by the law, to His Son, and by that Son's receiving the judgment for these sins, He made us sinless.

God has made us children of God—us who realized through the law that we were sinners and received by faith into our hearts the Son whom He had appointed. Do you understand that this is why God gave the law? That is exactly why He also gave the tabernacle system together with the law without fail. God gave the law to the people of Israel who had come out of Egypt, made their descendants realize and know their sins through the law, and when the fullness of the time had come, He sent Jesus Christ and removed all the sin of all people who had become sinners. Do you think there is anyone in this world who has no sin because he has not committed sin? There is no such person. We must truly become sinners in order to be saved. We must know our own fundamental nature through the law. Only when we know the law of God and think according to the law of God can we know that we are sinners and receive the remission of sins.

And when we become sinners according to the law, we come to be saved by believing in another law of God, that is, the law of God's love, the law of salvation. So the Bible says, *"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" (Ephesians 2:8–9)*. In other words, it means that our being saved is not by works but by faith that believes in grace. By the righteousness obtained through faith in Jesus Christ, we receive the remission of sins and go to the kingdom of heaven.

In the Book of Job, there is a passage where Job's friend says, *"If you were pure and upright, Surely now He would awake for you, And prosper your rightful dwelling place" (Job 8:6)*. But Job did not speak that way; instead he said, *"If He takes away, who can hinder Him? Who can say to Him, 'What are You doing?'" (Job 9:12)*. That is to say, we can only believe as God

has determined and as God does—what can a human being do? The dimension of faith is different. The faith of Job and the faith of Job's three friends were on vastly different levels.

In this world, those who, while believing in Jesus, try to receive the remission of sins by keeping all of God's law and to become righteous people by living according to God's will and reaching sanctification, and those who try to receive blessings before God by keeping the law well, are people like Cain. That is, a person who does not know the righteousness of God but establishes his own righteousness and boasts of it before God is like Cain, who offered a sacrifice to God with the crops he himself had grown. You know well that God did not accept Cain's sacrifice. Those who try to go to the kingdom of heaven by their own righteousness become sinners before God. Do you want to remain sinners? I sincerely hope that all of you will go to the kingdom of heaven by faith. By faith we have become righteous people, by faith we go to the kingdom of heaven, and by faith we are not judged. The Lord spoke of these three things.

It is as if the Holy Spirit comes and testifies to us as follows. "Jesus received in your place the judgment you were to receive. You go to the kingdom of heaven because Jesus bore all your sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross in your place, rose again three days after He died, and went to the kingdom of heaven. If you believe in that Jesus, you will go to the kingdom of heaven. And you receive the remission of sins because you believe that Jesus has saved you. Your not becoming a sinner comes about by faith. But if you do not believe, you cannot help but remain a sinner." This is precisely the meaning that the word conveys to us.

There are many people in this world who believe in Jesus, but there are people who have not yet received the remission of sins. That is, there are many people who, while believing in

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Jesus, try to go before God by keeping the law. That is precisely the sanctification that Christianity speaks of. Before God, if you do well a hundred times and then do wrong once, you have sin. We must know the perfect law of God. People seem to think that God is like themselves. People are lenient toward someone who does well ten times and then does wrong once. God is not like that. Even if a person does well a hundred million times, if he does wrong once, He calls it sin, and He sends anyone who has even a speck of sin to hell. God is that holy and perfect. The law of God is that perfect and holy, so if someone thinks in his own mind, "Oh, God will surely let it slide. Since I believe in Jesus, He will let it slide even if I have a little sin," that is a great delusion. That is his own thinking.

When we believe in God, we must believe according to the truth. We must believe according to the law of God. As for the law of God, the law is not all there is; there is also the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

When we pray alone, "Lord, please save sinners," there are times when we have no strength. But just as the Lord said, *"If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven" (Matthew 18:19)*, if we believe whatever the Lord said as He said it and follow as He said, strength arises in our hearts. Through the Holy Spirit, the Helper, who has come into us, our faith is encouraged all the more. We must not think as we please, believe in Jesus as we please, and try to receive the remission of sins in our own way. That is only man's way, not God's way. God is the One who fulfills things as He promised. We are beings who cannot help but stumble over the law and who are always lacking and only make mistakes, but the Lord had compassion on us and settled our sins all at once through the baptism He received from John,

the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection. By believing that, we have become righteous people without even a speck of sin.

As for sin, it is our not believing in the Lord. Not believing what the Lord has done is sin. We must obtain righteousness by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which the Lord has fulfilled for us. We must be saved by believing in the righteousness of God. Everyone who knows what he is through the law knows how to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Truly, our Lord has become our Savior, and we have become righteous people by believing in our Lord. In the future, we go to the kingdom of heaven before God. And through faith we are not judged before God. Both in this world and in the world to come, we are guided by God and follow God. Through faith we have become a blessed people before God.

God acknowledges the salvation of us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit acknowledges it. It is not works but faith that believes what the Lord has done that makes a person righteous. A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a person who has received the remission of sins and is a child of God. He will go to the kingdom of heaven in the future. This is the law of salvation that God has established. I give thanks that the Lord has saved us. I give thanks that God has thus determined concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment, and that according to these three things, our Lord has saved us completely. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

# How the Holy Spirit works

**< John 16:5–11 >**

**"But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. 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. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."**

Many churches in the world look at their members as if they were money. In the old days, it was said that when taxi drivers saw a person standing on the street, they would look at him and think, "That one is a 1,000-won passenger, and that one is a 600-won passenger." That is a story from the time when the base fare of a large taxi was 1,000 won and the base fare of a small taxi was 600 won. That is what the professional mindset of those people was like. But the church is not a place that looks at people in terms of how much they are worth. Even if people say they believe in Jesus, if those who gather there have sin in their hearts, that place is a church in name only. The church is the people who have been saved from all the sins of the world, like the people who were delivered and brought out of Egypt. Even if a

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person believes in Jesus, if there is sin in his heart, that person is neither a saint nor the church.

## The Holy Spirit, who testifies of what Jesus did

Now I am going to speak about the work of the Holy Spirit, that is, how the Holy Spirit appears and works. The Holy Spirit is the One who helps us, and He is God, who testifies of the salvation of the truth that Jesus Christ has accomplished. The Holy Spirit is God, the third Person of the Triune God. But that does not mean that He is inferior to the Father and the Son. The first Person of the Triune God is God the Father, and He is the Father of Jesus Christ. God the Father is the One who planned to send His Son to this earth so that the Son would accomplish the righteous judgment for all sins and the righteous salvation through the baptism He would receive from John and the blood He would shed on the Cross.

God the Father also made it so that all mankind would receive the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Then how does the work of the Holy Spirit appear? Let us look into this word together. Of whom does the Holy Spirit testify? He is the One who testifies of what Jesus did when He came to this earth.

This is who the Holy Spirit is. God the Father sent His only Son Jesus to this earth, and Jesus received baptism from John and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him, bore the sin of the world and was crucified and died, and rose again from death, and so He removed all our sins. The Holy Spirit is the One who testifies of precisely this.

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## The Holy Spirit, who caused the Bible to be written

It has now been two thousand years since Jesus came to this earth. Two thousand years have passed, so have we seen Jesus directly? Have we heard Him directly? We do not know. The only reason we can know Jesus is because of the work of the Holy Spirit. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we have come to know Jesus and believe in Him, and by believing we were able to be saved.

Then what did the Holy Spirit do? All the things that God the Father and the Son did—planning and determining to save us, promising the work They had determined, and accomplishing the work They had promised—the Holy Spirit caused to be written down by moving the hearts of people. He caused this Bible to be written. The Bible was written by human hands; some forty people wrote it over a period of about 1,500 years.

Although it was written over 1,500 years, to whom does this Bible point from beginning to end? It points to Jesus Christ. *"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).* Who caused all this to be written? It was the Holy Spirit who did it.

The reason we today have come to know who Jesus is, to believe in Him, and to receive the remission of sins by believing with our hearts is that Jesus Christ came to this earth, had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross and received the judgment for all our sins, and saved us from sin. And the Holy Spirit had people write down the things the Lord did when He came to this earth, and had them preserved until today, so that by looking at this word

of the Bible we could come to know that God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, saved us from all sins.

Who is it that made this known to us? It is the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit made us know Jesus Christ and believe in Him. God the Holy Spirit caused this Bible to be written, and He moved the hearts of God's servants to preserve it. In ancient times, the Bible was written on parchment and scrolls. Because it had to be written in large letters on sheepskin and rolled up, even the Book of Isaiah alone made a huge scroll. God's servants wrote this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and they also wrote on papyrus, which was made by beating reeds flat, and rolled it up. Then they put it in jars, sealed them, and kept them in a place without moisture so that the word of God would not be lost.

Because the Bible was written in this way by human hands over a period of about 1,500 years, God's help was needed to preserve it through those long years. God the Holy Spirit moved the hearts of God's servants so that they wrote with hearts that loved the word of God, and He made people in every age strive to preserve the written Bible. Preserved and preserved again in this way, it has been handed down to us today. Ancient manuscripts, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, were found mainly in the region of Palestine, and some were even found in jars inside caves. When the manuscripts found in this way were gathered and compared, the word had been passed down intact.

The word that has been passed down in this way was printed with today's advanced printing technology, and that is how a single volume of the Bible came out. So if it were not for God the Holy Spirit, if it were not for the living Triune God, this Bible could not have been placed in the hands of people all over the world today. Who could preserve a book written 1,500 years ago intact so that people of later generations could see it? In this

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present age it might be possible, but in ancient times it would all have rotted away.

But God did exactly that. We must know the fact that the One who caused the Bible to be written is the Holy Spirit. The New Testament records, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16)*. Through the prophet Moses, God caused the five books of Moses, beginning with Genesis, to be written. And from then on, He had God's servants such as Isaiah continue to write down what God spoke and did at each time. And as for who did that work, it was God the Holy Spirit.

It is none other than God the Holy Spirit who testifies, through the word that He caused to be written by His servants, that Jesus Christ was sent by God the Father and came to this earth, received baptism from John and had our sins transferred to Him, bore the sin of the world and died on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

So today, through the work of the Holy Spirit, we have believed in Jesus Christ and become children of God. We have been saved from sin and become people without sin, children of God. Through whom were we, who have received the remission of sins, able to believe in Jesus Christ like this? We were able to believe through the work of the Holy Spirit.

## *"It is to your advantage that I go away"*

Our Lord sent us this Holy Spirit. When the Lord was on this earth, the Holy Spirit had not yet come down into people's hearts. So the Lord says as follows: *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. 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)*. This means that while the Lord was on this earth, the Holy Spirit had not come. Then one may ask whether the work of the Holy Spirit that appears in the Old Testament, or Jesus' sending out the seventy to cast out demons, was not a work done together with the Holy Spirit. Of course, it was a work done together with the Holy Spirit.

Nevertheless, we come to know the fact that until Jesus Christ died on the Cross, rose again from death, and ascended, the Holy Spirit was not in the hearts of the disciples. So Jesus Christ told the disciples that in a little while He would depart. He said that He would be hated by the religious leaders of Judea and the Roman soldiers, be crucified and die, rise again from death, and before long leave the disciples.

But He told the disciples not to feel disappointed. He said that when He departed, He would send the Helper to the disciples. The Helper means the One who helps, and it refers to God the Holy Spirit. When the disciples heard this word, they were very disappointed. Their hearts were saying, "Why must the Lord go up, and why must He die on the Cross like that?" But our Lord promised that, in any case, when He departed He would send the Helper.

Then what does the Holy Spirit do when He comes to this earth? How does the work of the Holy Spirit appear? People today think that shouting while claiming to cast out demons, trembling in the body, falling down foaming at the mouth, and clapping hands and screaming strange cries are the work of the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is the holy God. The Holy Spirit never does such things.

The Holy Spirit is God, a personal being who clearly has intellect, emotion, and will. Even when the heavens and the earth and the universe were created, the Father, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit were together. And when our first ancestors

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Adam and Eve were made, the Holy Spirit was there too. The word says, *"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness'" (Genesis 1:26)*. Man is a being who resembles the image of God. His heart also resembles the image of God, and man has a soul. In this way, the Holy Spirit is God.

## *"Of sin"*

Then what work does the Holy Spirit manifest when He comes to this earth? How does He work, and how can we know that the Holy Spirit has appeared? Let us look into this part. It is written as follows about what the Holy Spirit does when He comes to this earth: *"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8)*. The Holy Spirit tells what sin is and convicts all the people of the world. Although the Holy Spirit is One who cannot be seen with the eyes, He does this work. He convicts the world of these three things.

First, as for what it means that He convicts of sin, it is not my word, but the Bible says as follows: *"Of sin, because they do not believe in Me" (John 16:9)*. What kind of sin is the sin that truly leads to hell? God the Holy Spirit has told us which sin, among the sins people commit, is the sin that truly leads to hell. It is not believing in the Lord.

To save sinners, the Lord put on human flesh and was born through the body of the Virgin Mary. Just as in the Old Testament age the sacrificial offering received the laying on of hands and had sin transferred to it, and just as, when the high priest, who took up the office of priest at thirty years of age, laid his hands on the offering and passed sin on to it, that offering had the sin transferred to it and died on the altar of burnt offering,

and thereby the sinner's sin was remitted, so Jesus Christ came to this earth and, when He was about thirty years old, went to the Jordan River according to God's promise.

He went to the Jordan River and, through the baptism He received from John, the representative of mankind, had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all. John is the man of whom the Lord said, *"Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11)*. At that time the Lord said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. After the baptism, when Jesus came up out of the water, heaven was opened, and God the Father said, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17)*. Even though He was His own Son, God the Father sent His only Son Jesus Christ to this earth to wash away all the sin of mankind.

Jesus Christ had the sins we commit throughout our lives, and all the sins that all mankind commits from Adam until the end of this world, all transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. And bearing the sin of the world, He went to the Cross. When He was crucified and died shedding His blood, He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*. In that way He completely removed the sin of mankind. And three days later He rose again from death and for forty days testified to the disciples and to people.

And the Bible records, *"Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up" (Acts 1:9)*. And just as it says, *"This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11)*, the Lord will come to this earth again, and He will make those who believe in Jesus Christ live together with Him in His kingdom, and to those who do not believe He will come as the Lord of judgment.

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Our Lord came to this earth, and by receiving baptism from John and dying on the Cross, He had the sin of all people, including us, all transferred to Him, washed it away, and made us people without sin. By bearing the sin of the world and receiving in His own body the judgment and punishment for sin on the Cross, Jesus Christ saved us from sin and punishment, washed us clean from all sins, and made us people without sin.

Yet even though that Jesus Christ rose again from death, ascended, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, there are people who do not believe in that Jesus as their Savior. This means that such people are convicted, being told that they are sinners, that they are sinners who will go to hell, and that they are servants of the devil. Who does this work? Jesus Christ has saved us, so who convicts the person who does not believe this? The Holy Spirit convicts him.

Even though Jesus Christ, the Son of God, left the throne of God's glory and came to this earth to save people, and through the baptism He received from John had original sin, actual sins, and even the sins to be committed in the future all transferred to Him, people regard it as something that has nothing to do with them. The Holy Spirit convicts precisely that. *"Of sin, because they do not believe in Me" (John 16:9)*. Jesus Christ came to this earth, removed all our sins, and saved us.

But the word that God speaks when He comes to the hearts of those who do not believe in that Jesus Christ is like this: "You fell into the enticement of Satan the devil and sinned before Me, and because of that sin you left Me. But I sent My Son to this earth to give you life, to remove your sins and give you true happiness so that you could live with Me in the kingdom of heaven. And I passed all your sins on to My Son through baptism and had Him die on the Cross, and so I saved you. And yet does My love have no effect on you at all? Were you born by yourself,

without God? Do you not need My love? Do you like the devil that much?"

From the beginning, God made us in order to make us, mankind, His children. However, God made both animals and man alike as created beings. If from the beginning, without any reason, He had divided them, saying, "You are a child of God, and you are merely a created being," God's righteousness would not have been revealed, and so God did not do that. Instead, in order to make man His child in Jesus Christ, He made man as the same kind of created being, and He decided that when man was tempted by Satan the devil and fell into sin, He would remove all those sins through Jesus Christ, washing away the sins of those who believe in Jesus Christ and making them His children and blessing them; and so He planned and worked accordingly.

He did so because only then would those who believe in Jesus Christ be people who have been bought and saved through the baptism of Jesus Christ and the blood of the Cross, that is, by the payment of the price of life, so that even if He made them children of God, no created being could say anything about it one way or the other. So the wisdom of Jesus Christ is without limit. It is just as the Bible says, *"His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God" (Isaiah 9:6)*.

Jesus Christ has all authority. But so as not to give Satan the devil any ground for accusation, and in order to save us in God's righteous way when we fell into the temptation of Satan the devil, broke the word of God, and fell into sin, Jesus Himself came to this earth and, through the baptism He received from John and the blood He shed on the Cross, removed all our sins and delivered us from judgment. Thus He made it so that whoever believes in Jesus Christ receives the remission of sins.

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When we believe in that Jesus Christ with our hearts, the Holy Spirit confirms that faith. When we hear this word, it makes perfect sense, and because this is the word of God, we believe it. Because we believe, there is no sin in our hearts. The Bible says, *"In whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13).*

What is sin? Being born with original sin, committing sins, and dying is also sin, but that is not the sin that leads to hell. The Holy Spirit testifies that people's not believing with their hearts in Jesus as their Savior and in the salvation of the water and the blood that Jesus has given, their not believing in the love of Jesus Christ and in the salvation that Jesus Christ has given—that is precisely the sin that leads to hell. And when a person believes in Jesus as his Savior, as the One who saved him by the water and the Spirit, by the water and the blood, God the Holy Spirit seals him, saying, "You are a child of God."

And that Holy Spirit has come into our hearts and dwells there. Therefore, according to the word that says, *"We cry out, 'Abba, Father'" (Romans 8:15)*, we come to call God Father. Because we have no sin, we have come to call God Father, we have been clothed with the image of God, and we have been saved. This is precisely the work the Holy Spirit does when He comes to this earth.

## *"Of righteousness"*

And as for what He does in the second place, He said, *"Of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more" (John 16:10)*. The Holy Spirit testifies of the righteousness of God. What is this righteousness? Who is the righteousness of God? Jesus is the righteousness of God.

Righteousness means being right. Who is the One who is truly right? Who is the One who is most good, most loving, and most right? Who is the Savior of mankind? It is Jesus. Jesus is the righteousness of God. The Bible says, *"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (Romans 1:17)*. In the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed.

The One who did this right work of removing the sin of mankind is Jesus. Jesus came to this earth and removed all our sins by the water and the blood. That *"water"* is Jesus' coming to this earth and having all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and then the *"blood"* is His bearing the sin of the world and giving up His own life for us by being crucified.

That is how our Lord saved us. This is precisely the righteousness of God. It is the love and the salvation by which Jesus saved us. The Holy Spirit lets us know that Jesus is truly our Savior, that He has made us sinless, and that the love of God the Father has been testified to through Jesus. God the Holy Spirit testifies, through Jesus, to who God is and how He has truly saved us, as the righteousness of God.

That the work of the Holy Spirit appears means, in other words, that God the Holy Spirit testifies that Jesus came to this earth and, in order to save us, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again, and so saved us. When we hold on to this word and believe it, God the Holy Spirit acknowledges that faith as right. Then what happens to the heart that was empty? It is filled with fullness and satisfaction.

Because the heart and soul of man originally resemble the image of God, until the love and salvation of Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father come into the heart, a person feels so empty that he cannot live. He feels empty, as if he has done something wrong and as if something is lacking. But God the

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Holy Spirit testifies that Jesus Christ has saved us. God the Holy Spirit testifies through this word to the fact that, by the righteousness of God, the love of God, and the salvation God has given—that is, by the salvation of the water, the blood, and the Spirit through Jesus Christ—He has made us completely His children and made us righteous, and He testifies in the hearts of those who believe this word, saying, "You have truly been saved."

This is how the work of the Holy Spirit appears. Feeling electricity flow down from above and tingle in your arms while praying, trembling in the body, feeling as if the body is floating, and weeping and wailing are not the work of the Holy Spirit. That is the work of the devil. God the Holy Spirit attests to and testifies of Jesus Christ. God the Father planned in Jesus Christ to save us, and Jesus, in obedience to the will of God the Father, came to this earth as a man, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, rose again from death, and ascended, and so became our Savior. God the Holy Spirit remains in this age and testifies of all that the Father and the Son have done, that is, of the salvation and love They have bestowed on us.

This is the work in which the Holy Spirit appears. The Holy Spirit makes us realize and know this word of the Bible and makes us believe it. When we believe this word, the Holy Spirit immediately teaches us that this faith is right and that there is no sin in our hearts. So a person who has believed this gospel knows that he has no sin. Is there sin in your hearts? You have clearly believed this word. You heard the word that Jesus saved us by the water and the blood and believed it just as it is. Then is there sin in your hearts, or not? There is not.

That is precisely the work the Holy Spirit does. In the work of saving us, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Triune God, worked together. The Father planned, the Son saved

us by the water and the blood, and God the Holy Spirit testified to us of that salvation of Jesus Christ. Speaking of sin, not believing in Jesus is sin, and it is the sin that leads to hell. And believing with our hearts that God has saved us by the water and the blood is the righteousness of God, and by believing in this righteousness of God with our hearts, we become people who are without sin before God, just like God.

## *"Of judgment"*

Third, He said, *"Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:11)*. Concerning this judgment, the Holy Spirit testifies that Satan the devil has been judged by the salvation with which Jesus Christ saved us.

Through Jesus Christ, all the devils of this world have been judged. How did that come about? Jesus came to this earth and put on human flesh, borrowing the body of the Virgin Mary. Some seven hundred years earlier, the prophet Isaiah had prophesied, *"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14)*, and the Gospel of Matthew explains this as *"which is translated, 'God with us'" (Matthew 1:23)*. God the Holy Spirit testifies of this, and Jesus, just as that word said, was born on this earth borrowing the body of a virgin.

Jesus Christ, who came to this earth in this way, had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and as He was crucified and died He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*. But until Jesus had the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, Satan the devil did not pay much attention. Jesus

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went to John the Baptist and said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*.

That was like saying, "You pass all the sin of mankind on to Me through baptism, and I will have all that sin transferred to Me and die on the Cross to save people." Until then, Satan the devil did not interfere. But the devil knew who Jesus was. He knew that He was the Son of God. So the Bible records that the demon-possessed men who came out from among the tombs cried out, *"What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" (Matthew 8:29)*. The devil knew that Jesus was the Son of God.

Because He was the Son of God, the devil hated Jesus. Out of hatred, he entered people's hearts and incited them. Just as the desire to kill someone you hate rises up from within, the devil entered people's hearts and breathed into them the thought, "Seize that Jesus and kill Him!" In this way he caused hatred for Jesus to rise up in people's hearts.

When such hatred arose, people seized Jesus and handed Him over to the Roman governor to be put on trial. They tried Him, but He had no guilt. Because He had no guilt, the people cried out, *"If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar" (John 19:12)*. They were saying that if he was the governor who had come to this country and was truly a servant of the Roman emperor, then this Man, who called Himself the Son of God and claimed to be the King of the Jews, was a traitor and must be killed.

So Pilate, having no other choice, asked the crowd whether they wanted Him crucified. Then they cried out, *"Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" (John 19:15)*. In Pilate's eyes, no matter how he looked at it, there was no guilt in Him, but since his own position was about to be put in danger if things

went wrong, he said, *"I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it" (Matthew 27:24)*, and handed Him over to be crucified.

In the end, it was the Roman soldiers who drove in the nails, but the people who handed Him over to be crucified were the very crowd that had been following Jesus around until a few days before. The people who had waved palm branches before Jesus, shouting, *"Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!" (John 12:13)*, now shouted that Jesus should be crucified.

The devil entered the hearts of that crowd and made them say, "Crucify Him, kill Him." So they crucified Jesus. Jesus Christ was crucified and shed His blood. Being so thirsty, He said, *"I thirst!" (John 19:28)*, and then He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*. At that moment the devil must have said, "I have won!"

But Jesus rose again three days after He died. The devil must have said, "I have been deceived! I have been deceived by God!" He thought it would all be over if he killed Him, but what was the meaning of His saying, *"It is finished!"* at the moment of His death? What does it mean that He had finished everything? It means that all those sins, which the devil had made people commit by making them disobey the word of God, Jesus Christ had all transferred to Him through His baptism, and by receiving all the judgment for the sin of all mankind, He brought it all to an end.

It is said, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. God's righteous law is that a person who has sin must surely die. But when mankind fell into sin, Jesus Christ came to this earth, had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and by giving up His body on the Cross and dying, He received all the punishment and judgment for all the sin of mankind. As a result, Satan the devil can no longer

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condemn or judge people, saying, “You now have sin. You have a judgment for sin to receive.” Jesus Christ saved us in that way.

Of course, we are lacking and always weak, so we commit sins, and from time to time Satan the devil accuses us, saying, “You sinned, didn’t you?” But we hold on to the word that Jesus Christ had the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received at the Jordan River, and that He bore that sin and was crucified and removed it all. Through His work of testifying of what Jesus Christ did, God the Holy Spirit makes us realize the word of God, brings to our remembrance the written word of God and the things Jesus Christ did, makes us realize them again and believe, and so He teaches us, guides us, becomes our teacher, and blesses us until we go to the kingdom of heaven. This is the work in which the Holy Spirit appears. What God the Holy Spirit is concerned with is not noisy experiences, but that this gospel of salvation, by which our Lord came to this earth and saved us, is spread throughout the whole world.

That the work of the Holy Spirit appears means that the work of God the Holy Spirit testifying of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment appears. To a person who believes in Jesus Christ, believes in the water and the blood, and has accepted the remission of sins in his heart, it is as if God the Holy Spirit testifies, saying, “You believe completely and rightly. Therefore you have been saved. You are a child of God.” And He enters and takes His seat in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins, and He guards it so that the devil can never again enter our hearts.

This means that the Holy Spirit protects us. God the Holy Spirit sits on the throne of our hearts and keeps Satan the devil from moving an inch.

If we sum up the gospel simply, it all ends in one sentence: Jesus was born, received baptism from John at the Jordan River and had our sins transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved us. It takes just three seconds. But how much of God's love is contained in it, and how much truth is held in it!

## False signs and the work of the Holy Spirit

Right now, in the whole world, there are not many people who believe in Jesus Christ through the work by which the Holy Spirit testifies. The work of Satan appears with power, signs, and lying wonders. Claiming to believe in Jesus while still having sin in the heart, and receiving tongues, casting out demons, and healing diseases—all this is the work of the devil. Believing in Jesus while still having sin in the heart is the work of the devil.

Even now, it is as if the devil says to people as follows: "Believe in Jesus. Believe, yes, but do not receive the remission of sins in your heart. Believe while keeping sin in your heart. You must not believe without sin. If you believe while still having sin, I will back you up." So even people who do not believe in Jesus say, when a person who believes in Jesus quits drinking and smoking and lives a good life, "He believes in Jesus, has become a good person, and goes to church." But believing in Jesus is not believing in order to quit drinking and smoking. The reason Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so saved us, was to make us righteous people and take us to the kingdom of heaven.

Right now, people all over the world do not believe in Jesus Christ through the work in which the Holy Spirit appears;

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instead, they receive the power of Satan and cast out demons, receive the power to tell lies, and receive the power of tongues, deceiving people and doing nothing but making money. And no matter how much they believe in Jesus, the sin in their hearts does not disappear. Sin does not disappear by believing only in the blood of the Cross. If Jesus had died on the Cross without having all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, what would we have to do with Jesus?

Jesus is One who originally has no sin, so even if He had died on the Cross a hundred times without having our sins transferred to Him, that would be, to us, pie in the sky. Jesus came to this earth to remove our sins, had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and died on the Cross and received the punishment for those sins. So this salvation is not pie in the sky, but our own salvation.

For this reason, if the whole world now claims to believe in Jesus while believing only in the blood of the Cross, they must offer prayers of repentance every day, every time they commit sins. They offer prayers of repentance every day because of original sin and actual sins, they still repent now of sins committed ten years ago, they must still offer prayers of repentance even after believing for fifty years, and even after believing for fifty years, they have sin in their hearts. On the contrary, the longer they believe, the more sins pile up in proportion to how long they have believed.

If there is anything such a faith gives, it is only things like tongues that no one can understand and vibrations in which the body suddenly trembles. Such phenomena—the body trembling, pouring out unintelligible words, and the eyes rolling back—are not personal in nature. Intellect and emotion disappear, and only the will remains. When the work of the Holy Spirit appears, the Holy Spirit testifies through the word of what sin is, what

righteousness is, what the salvation by which God has saved us is, what God's judgment is, what kind of person goes to hell, what gospel one must believe to be saved, and what kind of person receives the judgment that leads to hell.

## The faith that holds on to the word

Therefore, when we read the word of God verse by verse, even if we do not know the whole Bible, if we hold on with our hearts to the words of promise in the Bible, the words that have been testified to us, and believe them, that in itself becomes faith. What is faith? Believing what is visible to the eyes is not faith. Who could fail to believe what is visible to the eyes?

The Bible says, *"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1)*. Believing what is not visible to the eyes as if seeing it is faith. Then how do we believe what is not seen? Has God not spoken? Is the Bible not what people wrote down of what God spoke? When we read this written word with our eyes and hear it with our ears, we hold on to it with our hearts. And we believe that word.

By believing that word, within that word there is your remission of sins, there is salvation, there is eternal life, there is blessing, and there is faith. Therefore, when you believe this word, you come to see the world of God. You come to know who God is, and you come to know and believe how Jesus Christ saved us. That is why faith is reading this word, hearing this word, holding on to this word, and believing this word. People do not really know what faith is. They think that faith is the body vibrating and the hair standing on end when praying. But if such vibrations occur in your body, you must know that it is the work of the devil and command, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ

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I command you, Satan the devil, get away!" When you command in the name of Jesus, Satan the devil cannot move an inch.

This is precisely what faith is. Where is the evidence that you have been saved? Were you not saved by believing this word? You were saved by believing the word. The evidence of being saved is that the word of God is in your hearts and that you believe it with your hearts.

To put the word of God simply, we can say as much as we like that Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, but do you believe this written word? When you believe this word, the Holy Spirit acknowledges it. You must not set the word aside and just blindly say, "I believe." Then what happens after a little while? It is like suddenly entering a bitterly cold country: regardless of what you believe, you say, "Oh, it's so cold," and all your thoughts go to the cold.

Then the devil comes along and gives you a little nudge. "Do you have sin, or not?" "I have been saved." "When were you saved? How were you saved?" Then the person who has set the word aside has nothing to say except, "I'm telling you, I was just saved." Without the word about how he was saved, he cannot answer. When people who have not been born again argue, "People commit sins, so how can you have no sin?" with what will you explain?

"In the word of God there is this word, and I believe this word. Because I believe, the sin in my heart has actually disappeared, and I have no sin. This word testifies of me, and the Holy Spirit testifies of me. There is no sin in my heart. Is there sin in your heart? So there is sin in your heart." If there is sin, one has not been saved, and if there is no sin, one has been saved.

The evidence of being saved is that the word of God is within that person.

That is why Jesus said to the Jews, *"You seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you" (John 8:37)*. When Jesus came to this earth, where was He born? He was born in a place where animals were kept. Why does the Bible record it that way? *"And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7)*. At that time, there were so many guests at the inn-like place that received guests, gave them lodging for the night, and took money, that there was no place to accommodate Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus, and so she had no choice but to go into that place and give birth to the baby.

So you must empty your heart and hold on to the word of God. You must hold on to that word which promised that Jesus Christ would come to this earth and save us, this word that He has saved us, the word of the water and the blood. When you hold on to that word, you receive eternal salvation. You are acknowledged by God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit can dwell in your hearts, hearts without sin, believing hearts.

Those of you who have received the remission of sins, listen carefully. If you do not believe the word of God, you become a sinner again. Do we commit sins again, or not? We cannot help but commit sins. Do we commit them on purpose? No. We commit them because we are weak. When a person goes hungry for a long time, he tries to eat even if he has to steal. It is a human instinct for survival. But does that mean stealing food is not a sin? It is a sin. But without the word, we, being like that, cannot say that we have received the remission of sins.

That is why the Bible says, *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism… through the resurrection of Jesus*

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*Christ" (1 Peter 3:21)*, and it says, *"Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:23)*. Therefore, this word that we have is extremely precious.

I am truly thankful that I can see this word with my own eyes. Because I have eyes, I can read the word of 2 Thessalonians, *"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish" (2 Thessalonians 2:9–10)*, and know, "So this is how the devil works." I once touched the braille that blind people use. I could not make out anything. There were only little raised dots here and there.

But people who read braille know that those are letters. When they put their fingers on it and run them across once, they know the whole word, *"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)*. It is truly amazing.

I am very thankful just for the fact that God gave me eyes, just for the fact that these two eyes can still see well. I am also thankful that I can walk and run on my two legs. I am thankful for everything God has given me. Isn't it the same for you?

For the rest of your life of faith, believe with your hearts and hold on to the word of salvation, the word that God will work in you, and all those words. An age is coming in which you cannot live unless you hold on to the word. It is because the lying wonders and work of Satan the devil will appear powerfully. The Bible says that in the future there will even be such things as this: *"He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men" (Revelation 13:13)*.

Therefore, it is extremely important to hold tightly to the word and believe it with your hearts. It is important to spread the word by faith, to testify by faith, to live by faith, and to wait for the Lord by faith. I must do so, too. I hope that you will hold on to this word, of which the Holy Spirit testifies, and live by faith to the end. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

# The peace we enjoy together with the Lord, who has overcome the world

**< John 16:25–33 >**

**“These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father. His disciples said to Him, ‘See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.’ Jesus answered them, ‘Do you now believe? Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.’”**

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## The people whom the Father Himself loves

The long word that Jesus began after washing the disciples' feet at the place where He was eating supper before the Passover comes to an end in today's passage. That night the Lord prayed to the Father, went out to the garden, and was arrested. Let us listen to what the One who knew that He would soon be hung on the Cross told, last of all, the disciples who would remain in the world.

Let us read verses 25 through 28.

*"These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father" (John 16:25–28).*

*"Figurative language"* is speech that is spoken by way of comparison. Until now Jesus had spoken by way of comparison, but He said that when the time came, He would tell them plainly about the Father. Verse 26 calls that time *"that day."* This day, which also appears in verse 23, is the day that comes after Jesus died on the Cross, rose again, and went up to the Father. When that day comes, the disciples will ask the Father in the name of Jesus.

But the Lord goes on to say, *"I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you" (John 16:26)*. The reason is in verse 27. It is because the Father Himself loves them. There are times when we feel close to Jesus but regard God the Father as hard to approach. We picture a Father who barely opens His heart only

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after the Son, at His side, has pleaded with Him again and again. But the Father Himself loves the person who loves the Lord and believes that the Lord came forth from God.

It is also the Father who sent the Son. When mankind sinned, the Father loved people and sent His own Son. Saving sinners was the Father's will from the beginning, and the Son came to accomplish that will. So the love of the Father and the love of the Son are one.

In verse 28, the Lord spoke in one sentence of the way He had come and the way He would go. *"I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father" (John 16:28)*. The Son of God put on a human body and came into the world. When He turned thirty, He received baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, who represented mankind, and had all the sins of the world transferred onto His body. Bearing that sin, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and so He received the judgment for sin in our place, and three days later He rose again from death. And just as He had come from the Father, He had to go up to the Father again. He went to the Father in order to save us completely, and from there He sent the Holy Spirit. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart has all his sins washed away and becomes a child of God.

Therefore, the person who comes to the Father in the name of Jesus is a child who believes in the Son, who washed away his sins, and who stands before the Father, who Himself loves him. God speaks to us, who are weak, as follows.

*"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly*

*to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14–16).*

This High Priest is the very Son who, as verse 28 says, left the world and went to the Father. The High Priest who sympathizes with our weaknesses has ascended and is there, and the Father, who sent that Son, Himself loves us. So we come boldly to the throne of grace, seeking mercy.

## The Lord, who knew the disciples' weakness in advance

Hearing the word that He had come from the Father and would go to the Father again, the disciples answered. Let us read verses 29 through 31.

*"His disciples said to Him, 'See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.' Jesus answered them, 'Do you now believe?'" (John 16:29–31).*

The disciples said, *"Now You are speaking plainly" (John 16:29)*. A little earlier, Jesus had said that when the time came, *"I will tell you plainly about the Father" (John 16:25)*, and the disciples thought that time had already come. A little before, when they were asking one another, there had also been an occasion when the Lord knew beforehand their desire to ask and answered them. So the disciples knew that the Lord knew all things and did not wait for anyone to question Him, and they confessed that they believed He had come forth from God.

To that confession Jesus asked back, *"Do you now believe?" (John 16:31)*. And He went on to say what they would do. They would be scattered, each of them, and leave the Lord alone. The

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Lord, who knows all things, knew, along with the disciples' confession, even the weakness they themselves did not know and the fear that would soon come upon them.

For three years Jesus had told them beforehand and taught them as each occasion came. Even so, when that very thing actually came upon them, the disciples were greatly startled and bewildered. The Bible records what happened that night as follows.

*"But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled" (Matthew 26:56).*

We, too, when we hear the word, feel as if we understand everything and can handle anything. Then, when we suffer loss, or are persecuted, or our own life is in danger, we show that we have no strength to keep what we said before. The human will is broken. So do not make your resolve the firm ground of your faith, and do not turn your confession that you believe in the Lord into a boast that you are strong.

The Lord, knowing full well that the disciples would be scattered, let them know the Father's love, told them the way to ask in His name, and intended for them to have peace in Him. What we have to lean on is not how long our resolve lasts, but Jesus, who knew our weakness and yet saved us.

Therefore, when your weakness is exposed, do not keep looking only at your own shortcomings until you lose even the heart to rely on the Lord. Acknowledge your wrongs before God, but confirm again through the word how Jesus removed our sins. Our righteousness is in Jesus, who had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received that punishment on the Cross, and rose again from death. The Lord knows us better than we know ourselves. The person who

accepts that word returns to the Lord and stands again by faith even in the place where his own thoughts have collapsed.

## The presence of God, who does not leave us alone

Let us read verse 32.

*"Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John 16:32).*

In this one verse the word *"alone"* appears twice. The disciples leave Jesus alone, but Jesus is not alone. It is because the Father is with Him. Jesus said the same thing in chapter 8 as well. He made clear the reason His judgment is true, saying, *"I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me" (John 8:16)*, and He also said that the Father *"has not left Me alone" (John 8:29)*. Because the Father was with Him, the Son's words and judgment were always true. The Father was with the Son not only when the disciples were at His side, but also when everyone had left and the way of the Cross was right before Him.

The time of which He said *"has now come" (John 16:32)* is the time when Jesus goes to the Cross. The disciples were scattered, each to his own, but the Lord's way did not stop. The Lord, who had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, went to the Cross to receive the judgment for that sin. He was left alone by people, but He went that way to the end within the Father's will.

Then what does this word tell us today? Just as the Father was with the Son, the Lord is with us. Anyone who has received the remission of sins is a person who is with the Lord. He gave the Holy Spirit to us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and made us children of God. The Lord is not One

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who, after saving us, merely watches from afar. He is with us, guides us by the word, and has us serve the Lord's work.

Still, at times we ourselves feel as if we are alone. Sometimes we are not understood by those who have been with us, and sometimes it seems as if we are bearing alone a problem we must solve. At such times, believe the Lord's word rather than that feeling. Even though He cannot be seen with the eyes, the Lord is in us, and He opens a way even in the place where we could not find one. The One who saved us guides us and helps us.

The faith that we live with the Lord also holds us up in our daily lives. Even when Jesus was on this earth, there were many people who disregarded Him and tried to kill Him. So even when people do not recognize us, there is no reason to be discouraged. The grace we have received from God remains as it is, regardless of people's evaluation. Thinking of the Lord, who is with us, let us go on doing the work that pleases the Lord, knowing one another's weaknesses and helping one another.

## The peace we enjoy in the Lord, who has overcome the world

Let us read verse 33.

*"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).*

Verse 33 makes clear why Jesus spoke all these words in advance. It was so that the disciples might have peace in the Lord. Yet in the same verse, peace and tribulation appear together. As He said at the beginning of chapter 16, they would be put out of the synagogue and even their lives would be threatened. Even though outward circumstances are painful, the peace enjoyed in

the Lord does not depend on those circumstances. It is the peace enjoyed when one believes that the Lord, who has overcome the world, is with him.

The ground on which the Lord said *"be of good cheer" (John 16:33)* was not in the disciples' strength. Just before, He had said that they would be scattered. The Lord said, *"I have overcome the world" (John 16:33)*, and gave Himself as the ground of their good cheer. Therefore, when you meet tribulation, do not stay measuring your own strength, but think of who our Savior is.

The world opposed Jesus and nailed Him to the Cross, but it could not stop the Lord's salvation. Jesus bore all our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, became the sacrificial offering of atonement, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death. Sin and death could not hold the Lord, and the Lord overcame the power of sin and death and saved us.

The Apostle John also testifies of how we overcome the world.

*"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4–5).*

The devil, who holds the world in his grip, accuses and condemns those who believe. At that time the Lord asks us as follows: "I have paid the price of your sins in full, so do you still have sin? Do you believe in Me?" The faith that believes in this salvation accomplished by the Son of God is the victory that has overcome the world.

The Lord told them to have peace *"in Me."* Since the Lord is in us and we are in the Lord, we are not lonely people even in the midst of tribulation. The word that He had overcome the world was also a word meant to give us this peace. That peace is

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the blessing enjoyed by those who have been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which gives everlasting life. So that even when we suffer tribulation we will not lose heart and surrender to the world, the Holy Spirit is in our hearts and works. The world may frighten our hearts, but the remission of sins and the eternal life that the Lord has accomplished remain ours as they are.

So let us not lay down all the work we must do just because difficulty has come. There are people who need to hear the gospel, and there are brothers and sisters who serve together with us. When our strength is lacking, all we need to do is ask the Father, and when our hearts waver, hold on to the Lord's word again. Because Jesus is with us, we walk following His will with peaceful hearts.

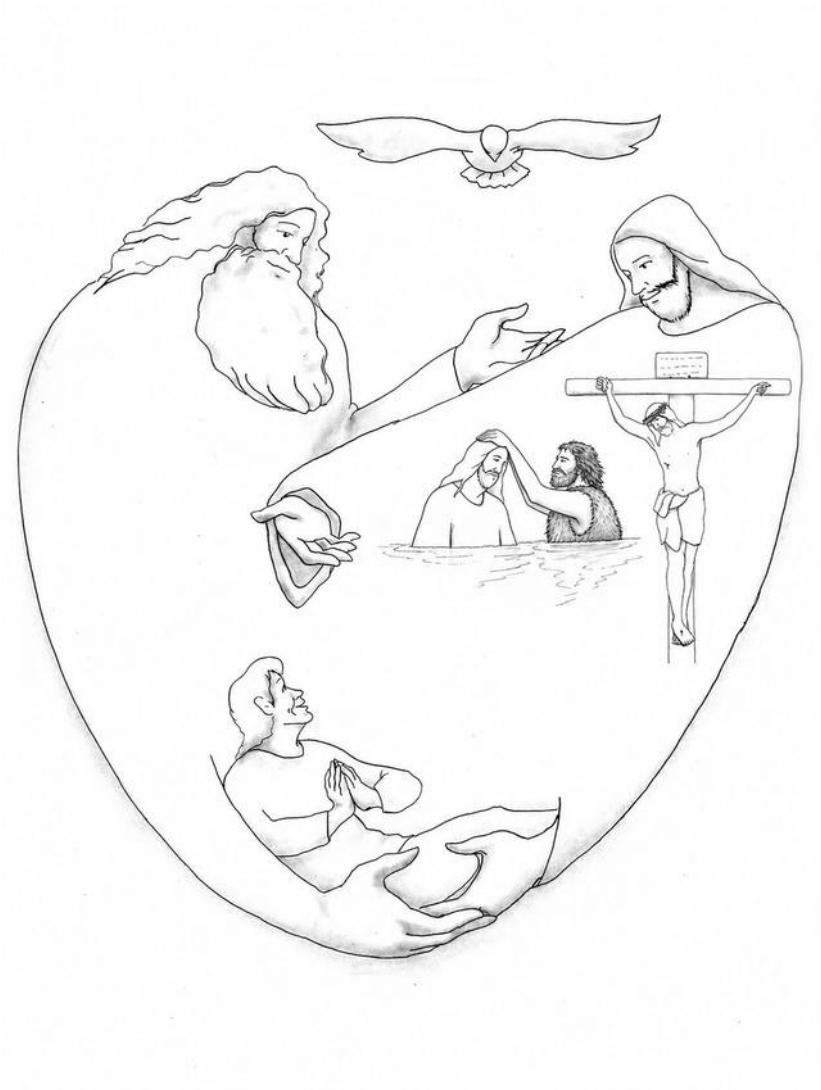
The disciples' confession was shaken in the face of the fear of that night, but the Father's being with the Son was not shaken. We have the Father, who Himself loves us, and Jesus, who saved us, is with us. Therefore, even in this world where there is tribulation, we are people who enjoy peace in that Lord, who has overcome the world. ✉

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# CHAPTER

# 17

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

# The love of the Lord, who gives eternal life and is with us

**< John 17:1–26 >**

**"Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: 'Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come**

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**to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.'"**

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The whole of John chapter 17 is Jesus' prayer. It is the prayer He offered to the Father for the last time before He was arrested, after He had finished saying all that He had to say to the disciples. So this chapter is also a word like a last will left behind by One who is departing. The Lord asked to glorify the Father by accomplishing the work of salvation the Father had entrusted to Him, He entrusted to the Father the disciples who would remain in the world, and He prayed even for those who would hear their word and come to believe.

When we read this prayer, it becomes clear how we must know Jesus and what we must rely on to live after we have been saved. The Lord, who loved us and washed away our sins, does not leave His people alone. He keeps them in the Father's name, makes them one with Himself, and finally lets them see His glory in the place where He is.

## The Son, who accomplished the Father's will in order to give eternal life

Let us read verses 1 through 3.

*"Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: 'Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent'" (John 17:1–3).*

Jesus said that the hour had come. What hour? The hour when He would be hung on the Cross. Jesus had already had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River. Now the

time had come when He had to receive the judgment for that sin on the Cross. The Lord knew all about what kind of death He would meet and how He would rise again three days later.

In the face of that hour, Jesus asked, *"Glorify Your Son" (John 17:1)*. If we read this as a prayer asking to be exalted by people, we misread this word. It is a prayer asking to be enabled to accomplish to the end the last work the Father had entrusted to Him. Because the Creator had come in a human body for a time, the pain of being nailed and shedding blood was real pain to Him as well. The Lord prayed that, even in the face of that pain, He might go all the way to the Cross and exalt the Father, without any sign of cowardly retreat.

In verses 4 and 5, Jesus says that He has glorified the Father by finishing the work the Father gave Him to do, and asks for the glory He had with the Father before the world was. Even though the Cross and the resurrection still lay ahead of Him, He spoke as if the work had already been done. It is because the Lord had already set His heart and obeyed the Father, and had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. He offered this prayer on the premise of that work. The will of the Father and the will of the Son to save sinners were one.

The Father gave the Son authority over all people. The Son of God was manifested *"that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8)*, and the Father accomplished that work not by the way of sweeping those works away by force, but by the righteous way of passing sin on to the Son and judging it. The Son, who thus accomplished salvation completely, sat down at the right hand of the Father's throne, and on the last day He is the Judge who will judge all people. And with that authority He gives eternal life to those who have been given to Him. Jesus has

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the authority to give life to sinners and make them children of God.

Eternal life is life that never dies. The way to obtain that eternal life is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. The word *"only"* means that there is no other God besides this God. People serve this and that as gods, but there is only one true God. And the One whom that God sent to reveal Himself to us is Jesus Christ. Jesus is God, who was with the Father from before the foundation of the world and made all things, and He is the Savior, who came wearing a human body to deliver us from sin.

Therefore, knowing Jesus does not end with having heard His name. It is to know properly and believe who He is and what He has done for us. Through the baptism He received from John, the Son of God had the sins we have had from birth and the sins we commit as we live, all the sins of our whole lives, transferred to Him once and for all. While bearing those sins, He received the judgment on the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and three days later He rose again from death. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart has all his sins washed away, and the Holy Spirit comes into his heart and testifies that he is a child of God.

Let us read, in chapter 1, verse 29, the word John testified when he saw Jesus.

*"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).*

The Lamb of God, who bore the sin of the world, also bore our sins. If we say that we believe in Jesus yet leave out the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, there is no way to know when and how Jesus had our sins passed on to Him. The blood of the Cross is the blood by which Jesus received the

judgment for that sin that was passed on to Him. We know and believe this salvation. It is to lay down the toil of trying to obtain eternal life by washing away our sins with our own deeds, and to believe in the righteousness the Lord has accomplished.

The faith that knows Christ properly brings thanksgiving and reverence into our hearts. The One who created us bore our sin and even received the judgment for it, so how could we take Him lightly? If someone knows what He has done and yet does not accept it and considers his own thoughts more right, that is to stand in the place of opposing God. Believe in the Lord, who has given eternal life, as your Savior and Master, and follow His word.

## Jesus, who manifested the Father's name

In verses 6 through 8, Jesus said in His prayer that He had manifested the Father's name to the disciples and had given them the words He received from the Father. The words Jesus spoke were not words He spoke as He pleased. He heard the words the Father told Him to speak and preached them just as they were. The disciples received those words, and they truly knew and believed that Jesus had come from the Father.

Then how did Jesus manifest the Father's name? He came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He showed what true salvation is. We can know what kind of God the invisible God is by looking at what Jesus did. It was the Father's will to send the Son and have Him bear our sins, and that the Son received the judgment for that sin with the blood of the Cross was the Father's love, which sought to make us live.

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A person who believes this gospel comes to confess in his heart as follows: "Ah, He truly was One who loved me. Because He loved me, He came wearing a human body; because He loved me, He had my sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John; and because He loved me, He shed His blood on the Cross." Through Jesus we have come to know that God is a God of love, and that the Father of Jesus Christ has become our Father.

Even while saying that we believe in God, we can doubt that love whenever life becomes hard. When things go well, we feel as if we are loved, and when difficulties arise, we feel as if we have been abandoned. But the Father's love is more certain than our circumstances, which change from moment to moment. It is because it is a love He has already revealed to us by sending the Son and through the Son's name. The more your circumstances are shaken, the more you should look to that work accomplished on the Cross.

Let us read verses 9 and 10.

*"I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them" (John 17:9–10).*

Jesus says that the disciples are the Father's. A person who belongs to Jesus is a person who belongs to the Father. The Lord prays for them and says that He has been glorified through them. The disciples still had many shortcomings. Even so, the Lord, speaking of the word and the faith they had received, entrusted them to the Father.

The ground on which we stand boldly before God, too, is not something to be found in ourselves. Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received all the judgment for that sin with the blood of the Cross,

and rose again from death, and so He made us righteous. We who have become children of God by believing this fact can pray to the Father, and even when life is hard, we rely on that love and gain strength again.

## The Lord, who keeps His people who remain in the world

Let us read verse 11.

*"Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are" (John 17:11).*

Jesus goes to the Father, but the disciples are to remain in the world. So the Lord prayed that the Father would keep them through His name. The word *"keep"* appears three times in this prayer. In verse 11 He asked that they be kept; in verse 12 He said of the time He was with them, *"I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept" (John 17:12)*; and in verse 15 He asked again that they be kept from falling into evil. The Lord's departure was not the end of His love for the disciples. The Lord was thinking even of the days they would live in the world.

In verse 12, the Lord says that while He was with the disciples He kept them in the Father's name, and that none of them was lost except the son of perdition. The One who will keep them even after the Lord departs is the Father. The Lord has now entrusted into the Father's hands that work He Himself had been doing.

In verse 13, Jesus desires that His joy may be full in the disciples. That the Lord offered this prayer where the disciples

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could hear it was not meant to make them live only in anxiety. It was to make them know to whom they belonged and whose care they were under, and rejoice. The faith that the Lord knows us and has entrusted us to the Father holds us even in the midst of tribulation.

If we look at verses 14 through 16, the reason the disciples are hated by the world comes out. It is because they received the Father's word and, like Jesus, were not of the world. The saying that they are not of the world is repeated twice each in verses 14 and 16, as many as four times. On the path of believing the word and serving the gospel, the opposition of the world follows. So do not think that the Lord has left us because we have met with opposition. The Lord prayed for the disciples knowing that they would be in such a world.

What the Lord asked for was not that they be taken out of the world right away, but that they be kept from falling into evil. We still have work left to do on this earth. It is the work of those who have obtained eternal life preaching the gospel to those who do not yet know that life. The Lord wants us to carry out that work without being dragged along by the thoughts and lies of the world. The One who keeps us on that path is the Father.

According to this prayer, we are the Father's, and we are people who belong to the Lord. Therefore we can tell our difficulties to the Father, hear the word, and walk today's steps with the strength the Lord gives.

## Those who have been sanctified by the truth and sent into the world

Let us read verses 17 through 19.

*"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth" (John 17:17–19).*

Jesus said that the Father's word is truth. What sanctifies us is the truth of God. Sin does not disappear just because a person claims that he himself is clean. However strictly one disciplines oneself, the sins already committed remain as they are. When we believe the word of salvation God has accomplished for us, we receive the remission of sins and become people who belong to God.

Jesus said that He sanctifies Himself for the sake of the disciples. It means that He gives Himself wholly to the work of salvation the Father entrusted to Him. The Lord, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment with the blood of the Cross and rose again from death, and so He caused those who believe to be truly washed from sin. Our holiness stands on the sacrifice the Lord paid. Therefore, what a saved person must hold on to is not his own righteousness, but the word of the Lord, who accomplished this work.

Just as the Father sent the Son into the world, the Son also sent the disciples into the world. The word "send" appears seven times in this prayer. In the life of a saved person there is this sending. The Lord has placed us in the position of preaching the gospel and serving, so that others too may come to know who Jesus is and how He washed away sin.

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Jesus walked that path first. To follow the Father's will, Jesus denied Himself again and again and went all the way to the Cross. We too must deny ourselves if we are to serve the gospel. If we insist on our own way and care only about showing that we are right, we fail to preach step by step the word that the person actually needs. Speak so that the hearer can understand, at his level, and wait for him. Even if we denied ourselves yesterday, there is something to deny again today.

Do the same for the brothers and sisters who serve the gospel together with you. Think first not of your own convenience, but of what is beneficial to that person's faith and what helps the gospel. The one who serves ahead looks after the faith of the one who comes behind, attends to what he needs, and leads him by the word so that they may do together the work the Lord delights in. Since our talents and strength have limits, let us keep learning from the Lord and asking for His help. It is because the One who sent us into the world is the Lord.

## The church that becomes one by believing the same word

Let us read verses 20 and 21.

*"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:20–21).*

Jesus did not pray only for the disciples who were with Him at that time. He prayed also for those who would hear their word and come to believe in Jesus. He was looking ahead to the gospel being spread and to those who hear that word obtaining eternal

life through faith. The faith we have today, too, has been handed down from that word the disciples preached. So this prayer is not a story only about the disciples of old; it is also a prayer for us, who have heard the word and believed in the Lord.

The words "become one" appear five times in this prayer. The oneness the Lord asked for is connected with the Father and the Son being one. Just as the Father was in Jesus, the Lord is in those who have received the remission of sins. So those who belong to the same Savior and believe the same truth become one in the Lord. With only a heart of liking one another, while each puts his own thoughts first, we cannot stay together long. The One who makes us one is the Lord, who washed away our sins, and it is the word He has given.

In verses 22 and 23, Jesus says that He has given the disciples the glory He received, and asks that through their being one the world may know the Father's sending and love. Those who belong to the Lord are people who have received the love of God together. The brother or sister beside us is also a person who believes the same gospel and has been saved by the Lord, and the same Lord is in that person too. Therefore, let us not try to move one another according to our own will, but let us follow the Lord's will together.

When the church becomes one and preaches the gospel, those who do not yet know the Lord come to hear of the Father's love. What we must show is not one person's ability and fame, but the fact that Jesus, whom the Father sent, has saved sinners. The labor of preaching the word and the service that supports that work continue within this purpose. Even work that seems small is precious when we gather our hearts and carry it out for that gospel.

A person who believes that he is one with the Lord does not try to display his own authority by pressing down others. It is

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because he knows the purpose for which the Lord, who is in us, sent us. Preaching the gospel toward the world, and living together within the church while helping one another's faith—this is what it looks like to enjoy the grace by which the Lord has made us one.

## The hope that looks to the glory we will enjoy with the Lord

Let us read verse 24.

*"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).*

Jesus wanted His people to be with Him where He is. He asked that they too might behold the glory of the Son, whom the Father had loved before the foundation of the world. He was asking that those who believe might now also see that glory from before the world was, which the Lord asked for in verse 5. This is the future of us who have been saved. The toil and tribulation of this earth are not the final form of our lives. We have the hope of living with the Lord forever and enjoying that glory.

Without this hope, the days of living on this earth would be too hard. It is because, when a hard thing happens right now, it feels as if that is everything. But the life the Lord has given us is longer than that difficulty, and the glory the Lord has prepared is greater than the present suffering. The Apostle Paul also testified of this hope.

*"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).*

Because there is hope, we can endure and persevere even when hard things come. Just as Jesus finished all the Father's work and went to the Father, we who have been born again will also enter that glorious kingdom when we have finished all the Lord's work on this earth. We are not paying the price of salvation with today's toil. We are taking part in the work of accomplishing His will while giving thanks to the Lord, who has already saved us. In a little while we will stand before the Lord.

In verses 25 and 26, Jesus says that even though the world has not known the Father, the disciples have known that the Father sent the Son, and He promises that He has made the Father's name known and will make it known. It is so that the love with which the Father loved the Son may be in those who believe, and that the Lord Himself may also be in them. This love flows through all these works: giving eternal life, keeping in the Father's name, making one, and letting them see the glory.

Jesus, who saved us, prayed for us in this way. Through Him we have come to know the Father's love, and in that love we have come to live as children of God. I hope that you will believe in the Lord, who has placed in us the love with which the Father loved the Son, and live looking forward to the day when you will see that glory where He is. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

# Jesus,
# who gave us the authority
# to obtain eternal life

**< John 17:1–8 >**

**“Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.’”**

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## The word He gave in advance to the disciples who would be scattered

At the end of chapter 16, Jesus said to the disciples as follows: *"Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:32–33).*

The Lord, knowing that He would be arrested and die at the feast of the Passover, spoke this word in advance in order to give the disciples peace and faith. When something happens to a person suddenly, he is greatly bewildered. If the disciples, who had been following Jesus, suddenly saw one day that Jesus was arrested by the Jews and was hung on the Cross and died at the hands of the Roman soldiers, how shocked they would be! How disheartened and discouraged they would be, and how they would lose their faith! That is why Jesus told them in advance that the time had come when the disciples would all be scattered, and when He Himself would be hung on the Cross and fulfill the will of the Father.

Before His death on the Cross, the Lord spoke to the disciples sufficiently and many times, and when the time He had told them of in advance came, He suffered that very thing just as He had said. The Lord was nailed to the Cross and died, rose again from death and appeared again, and after testifying for forty days, He ascended to heaven. The disciples followed Jesus for the short period of three years. Even though Jesus had spoken in advance, taught them, and guided them at each appropriate time, when that event actually came upon them in reality, the disciples were terrified out of their wits. But the Lord said clearly, *"In the world*

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*you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33)*. This means that just as the Lord was victorious, we, too, overcome by faith in the Lord. A saint is not a person who is defeated by the world but a person who overcomes the world. Whatever may come upon us, it is because of the Lord that we overcome and are victorious in the end.

After praying in the garden, the Lord was taken away by the Roman soldiers through the hands of Judas and his company and was put on trial. The Lord had no sin at all. But because He had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, He died on the Cross, and three days after He died, He rose again just as He had prophesied and became our true Savior.

Therefore, chapters 16 and 17 are the word the Lord left to His disciples. It is like a father gathering all his children just before he leaves this world and saying as follows: "Children, my land is in such and such places. Eldest son, listen carefully. In the land I will give you, there is treasure. If you dig there, water will come out, and I have hidden treasure there. What I want from you is this, and what I will leave to you is this. As you live from now on, in such matters live with faith, and in such matters you must be careful." This is a last will. In the same way, the Lord also spoke the word He would leave to His disciples. The heart of the Lord, who was leaving His word in that way, was by no means light.

The Lord gathered His disciples and told them that He would be hung on the Cross and die. And He said, *"I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father" (John 16:28)*, and told them to ask the Father in the Lord's name from then on. *"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24)*. He told them sufficiently that the

Lord was their true Savior and Mediator. In this way, the Lord made clear to all mankind, to those who believe and to those who do not believe alike, who He is, and told them how to obtain eternal life. Now let us read the word of that prayer together.

*"Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: 'Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent'" (John 17:1–3).*

## The Lord, who knows fully who will believe

The Lord knew fully who would betray Him and who would believe in Him. The Bible records, *"For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him" (John 6:64)*.

In Genesis, when Jacob and Esau were in Rebekah's womb, God said to Rebekah, *"The older shall serve the younger" (Genesis 25:23)*. God speaks knowing everything. He knows fully who among mankind will believe in Jesus as the Savior. But this does not mean that God chose some and did not choose others; it means that He knows in advance who will believe. There are at times theologians who teach that He chose some and rejected others, but that is a thought that makes light of the righteousness of God.

The word God spoke concerning Esau and Jacob, that Esau, the older, would come to serve Jacob, the younger, was revealed just as it was in the lives they lived after being born into this world. Why did Esau come to serve Jacob, and why did Jacob

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come to receive and enjoy all the blessings of God that Isaac prayed for? It was because Esau trusted only in his own strength rather than relying on God. God knew in advance that Esau would despise his birthright and lose the blessing through his own choices. Esau's example shows how dangerous it is to take God's promises lightly and place one's own thoughts above them.

Among all people, those who trust only in their own strength, trust only in their own stubbornness, and have a strong will of their own never accept Jesus Christ as the Savior. No matter how much such people are urged to believe in Jesus, as if it were put right into their mouths, they spit it out, saying they do not need it. Then what kind of person accepts the love and blessing of God and lives blessedly, and also obtains salvation, obtains eternal life, and goes to the kingdom of heaven? It is a person like Jacob. The Bible records, *"Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents" (Genesis 25:27)*. Jacob was weak. His mind and understanding were outstanding, but his physical strength was like a child's. In those days, hunting and farming were the means of livelihood, but Jacob, having no strength, could neither hunt well nor farm well. So he believed in and relied on the God whom his father and mother believed in, and sought His help. He carried on the faith of his parents just as it was. That is why he came to inherit all the blessings. Just as God had spoken of that in advance, Jesus, too, knew fully how He would soon die, and so He prayed, *"The hour has come" (John 17:1)*.

Jesus was born on this earth and grew up beside His father and mother in the flesh until He was thirty years old. And when He turned thirty, He received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him once and for all, and fulfilled all the righteousness of God once

and for all. Because Jesus received baptism on His own head and had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him, He was able to die on the Cross, and He rose again from death after three days and completed that salvation. For three years until He died on the Cross, the Lord did His work.

The very first thing Jesus did in the work of salvation was to receive baptism from John the Baptist and have all the sin of all mankind transferred to Him. After that, Jesus called together the twelve disciples and taught and trained them. He taught them who He was, what kind of being God the Father is, and what salvation is, and He also told them that He must soon be hung on the Cross and die. That is, now was that very time.

## *"Glorify Your Son"*

*"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You" (John 17:1)*. This prayer is a prayer asking to be enabled to carry out to the end the work of salvation that the Father had entrusted to Him. That is, it is the work of bearing the sin of mankind that had been transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment on the Cross and dying, and rising again after three days to save mankind. That work is something only Jesus can accomplish. Because the Lord, too, was clothed in the weak flesh of a man, He prayed to the Father in this way in the face of that suffering.

If we were to be dragged to the place of execution because of our faith, we, too, could pray in this way. When the time of tribulation comes before the Lord comes, we, too, will come to pray in this way. We will call on God the Father and ask, "The time to be martyred has come; please let us keep our faith without being cowardly, and give us the faith to show our faith

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with dignity to the end and to reveal the Lord." Just as the heart of our Lord was like that, our hearts at that time will also be like that.

This prayer of the Lord was not like the prayers of people today who regard faith as nothing more than a religious life. They ask for the blessings and peace of the flesh, and for things to go well for themselves and their families. But our Lord is the Savior who came to save mankind from sin, and He prayed in order to save our souls from sin and make us the people of God, in order to accomplish all that work of salvation.

## Faith is not putting God to the test

In the last chapter of Mark, while speaking of the signs that follow those who believe, the Lord said, *"They will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them" (Mark 16:18)*. So there were people who, saying they would see whether they had faith or not, picked up poisonous snakes and deliberately let themselves be bitten, and regarded it as having faith if they did not die. There are also people who poured poison into their mouths, saying, "I believe in Jesus and my faith is good, so I will not die," and then lost their lives. That is not faith.

In Matthew chapter 4, after the baptism He received from John, our Lord was tempted for forty days in the wilderness. At the pinnacle of the temple, the devil said, *"If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down" (Matthew 4:6)*, and asked whether it was not written in the Scriptures that the angels would bear Him up in their hands. Then Jesus answered, *"It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God'" (Matthew 4:7)*. God makes His will known through the whole of His word. There is

a word saying that the Lord protects us, but there is also a word saying that we must not put God to the test. To think, "Even if I do this, the Lord will surely protect me," is not right. We must work carefully. To say, "I am a person who believes in the Lord, so it is all right," is a reckless act of putting God to the test.

If a person driving a car thinks, "I am a person who believes in God, so it will be all right," will it be all right? If a big truck is rushing toward him and he does not get out of the way, saying, "I am a person who believes in God, so even if I crash, I will not die," only when he is on the verge of death will he say, "Am I a person without faith?" A person must ask the Lord to protect him while keeping the traffic laws well and doing everything he can. To say that God will protect us without doing all that is our duty on man's side is putting God to the test. People must think of every danger in advance and prepare for it, and ask God for what cannot be done on man's side. An accident that results from something a person simply did while knowing he could die is not God taking him away, but a disaster that results from man's own fault. God receives that soul, but He is not pleased with that accident.

Let us return to the Lord, who is praying. The Lord prayed in that way because He was going to suffer truly great suffering on the Cross. On the Cross, Jesus said, *"I thirst!" (John 19:28)*. Having shed so much blood that the water had drained out of His body, He could not help but be thirsty. And after receiving a little sour wine, He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, and died on the Cross. It is said that a certain movie depicted a story in which Jesus, on the Cross, falls into a fantasy of escaping the Cross and living with a woman, and then returns to the Cross again. That is only man's thinking. Though there is no way to stop a novelist from making up a story as he pleases, what is not so is not so.

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## The authority of the Lamb who was slain

In this prayer, the Lord prayed, *"As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him" (John 17:2)*. The Book of Revelation shows what that authority is. In Revelation there is this word: *"And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?' And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it" (Revelation 5:1–3)*. There was no one in heaven or on earth who could open that scroll and save and judge as it was written. Then who is it? The word appears that the Lamb of God, who was slain, receives that scroll from the hand of the Father, opens its seals Himself, and has the authority to do what is written in it and to judge. The host of heaven sang, *"You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9)*.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God and our Savior. He received baptism from John at the Jordan River, had our sins transferred to Him, and took away all the sins we commit throughout our lives once and for all. Through that baptism, Jesus had even all the sins of your ancestors and descendants transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved us. Therefore, whoever believes that Jesus Christ is our Savior obtains salvation from sin and obtains eternal life. Who gives that eternal life? Jesus Christ gives it. Jesus has given us who believe the authority to obtain eternal life.

Have you thought about eternal life? If we believe that we have eternal life by believing in Jesus Christ, and that when the Lord comes we will never die but live forever, there is no greater peace than that. In order to give us peace, our Lord said that He had overcome the world, and that peace was accomplished through the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit, which has given us eternal life.

When a person dies, nothing he had in this world is his own. That is why the Lord said, *"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life" (John 6:27)*. When we apply this word to our lives, it means that we are to do the work of enabling people's souls to receive the remission of sins, become children of God, and obtain eternal life, that is, the work of saving souls. We really must do the work of saving souls, but because we are too close to the flesh, there are many times when we live without knowing this well.

## The knowledge of the Lord, who is the High Priest

The Lord prayed as follows: *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3)*. Jesus Christ came with all three offices: King, Priest, and Prophet. As God, as the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven, and as the Prophet, He knows everything about us. We must know that the Lord, who is the High Priest, had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment in our place on the Cross and died, and so gave us salvation. We must know that He is the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven, that He knows everything about us, and that He is the Prophet.

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Therefore, to obtain eternal life is to know God and to know Jesus Christ, whom God sent, and in knowing Him, to know and believe that He came to this earth, received baptism from John for us and had our sins transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and rose again from death. Those who have believed in this gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins have already obtained eternal life.

The Bible says, *"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)*. Man is nothing. Only when a person is born on this earth, comes to know God, knows and believes in Jesus Christ, and receives the remission of sins does he obtain eternal life in the future. Then all the riches and glory of heaven become yours. This is not a story from a fairy-tale book or a movie, but reality.

Man resembles the image of God. This means that man is a being who can live together with God. Man is a created being, but he is not like the beasts, nor like all the things of the world. He is a being who can live forever enjoying riches and glory together with God, and a precious being who can rule over all created things. So you must look back on yourself to see whether you have eternal life, and have the faith that obtains eternal life. And if you have eternal life, you must not stop at living a good life, but must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that others, too, may receive the remission of sins. It is because what Jesus did for us is none other than the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

## Those who run to the end

As people who have already obtained eternal life, we will live in this way until the day the Lord comes. People are

impatient by nature, and so they sometimes fret and quarrel over the things right in front of them, but a person who will do great things looks far ahead. What must be seen with a long view must be seen with a long view. What would happen if a marathon runner ran like a sprinter? He would collapse without even finishing the course. A marathon runner must run the whole course to the end, even if he comes in last. I hope that we, too, as people who have obtained eternal life, will carry out to the end the work of preaching this gospel so that many people may obtain eternal life. ✉

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# CHAPTER

# 18

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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 Lord, who was arrested for us, and true faith

**< John 18:1–11 >**

**“When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, ‘Whom are you seeking?’ They answered Him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am He.’ And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, ‘I am He,’ they drew back and fell to the ground. Then He asked them again, ‘Whom are you seeking?’ And they said, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus answered, ‘I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,’ that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, ‘Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.’ Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter,**

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**'Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?'"**

Jesus entered the garden on the other side of the Brook Kidron with His disciples. Because it was a place where the Lord and His disciples often met, Judas also knew that place. That night Judas was not among the disciples. He came to that garden bringing the soldiers, and the officers he had obtained from the chief priests and Pharisees, holding lanterns, torches, and weapons.

Judas was a disciple who had followed Jesus for about three years. However, Scripture shows that he did not receive Jesus with genuine faith and eventually betrayed the Lord. So this scene does not end as the story of one man, Judas. It also asks us who hear this word whom we believe in and on whose side we are standing right now. And it lets us know why the Lord was arrested in this garden without resisting, and what relation that event has to our sins.

## Judas, who opposed the Lord with his knowledge of the Lord

Let us read verses 1 through 3.

*"When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons" (John 18:1–3).*

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Judas knew where he could go to meet Jesus. It was because that was a place where the Lord often met with His disciples. But he did not come to that garden to hear the word. He came leading the people who were trying to arrest the Lord. The knowledge he had gained at the Lord's side was used to hand over the Lord.

Judas saw at His side Jesus healing the sick and raising the dead. Where in this world is there a person who raises the dead? From that work alone, he could know that Jesus is the Son of God. Can it be said that he failed to recognize Him because Jesus' appearance was shabby? His word was the truth, and there was nothing evil in Him. Even after seeing all those things, Judas did not believe in Jesus as the Son of God and as his own Savior, and his heart had gone over to the side of the chief priests. Of that heart, John writes, *"The devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him" (John 13:2)*.

Let us read John chapter 6, verse 64.

*"'But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him" (John 6:64).*

Jesus knew from the beginning who did not believe and who would betray Him. It was not because the Lord hid Himself that Judas betrayed the Lord. The Lord fully revealed Himself through His words and the works He did. So if we regard this as a momentary mistake, we are reading the text lightly. An unbelieving heart was finally revealed in the act of handing over the Lord.

Then why did it have to be Judas, of all people? Since Jesus had already had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, He would have had to go to the Cross even if it had not been Judas. The chief priests and the Pharisees, too, were already plotting to kill the Lord. Yet the

handing over of the Lord was carried out by the hand of Judas, who had been the Lord's disciple. The reason is that Judas did not have the faith that believes in Jesus as God.

In this way, faith determines where a person is used. Judas told them where the Lord was and brought the crowd. He used everything he had come to know while living as a disciple to hand over the Lord. If we, too, believe in something else more than in the Lord and set our hearts on it, we will be dragged into things we did not want. We are people who are born once, live for a little while, and then depart. For whose will we end up spending those days depends on what we believe. Where is your faith leading you right now?

## God, who gave Himself up while knowing all things

Let us read verses 4 through 6.

*"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, 'Whom are you seeking?' They answered Him, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus said to them, 'I am He.' And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, 'I am He,' they drew back and fell to the ground" (John 18:4–6).*

Jesus knew all the things that would come upon Him. He knew whom Judas was bringing, what they intended to do, and even that this night would lead to the interrogation and the Cross. So He did not hide Himself but went forward first and asked whom they were seeking. When they said they were seeking Jesus of Nazareth, He revealed that He Himself was that very person. Of that place, John writes, *"Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them" (John 18:5)*. The disciple who had been

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at the Lord's side for three years was now standing beside the crowd that had come to arrest the Lord.

When the Lord revealed Himself, the crowd that had come with weapons drew back and fell to the ground. They collapsed before that authority, majesty, and power. Had Jesus only made up His mind, He could have taken their lives and left that garden. It is because He is the Lord of life.

The Book of Philippians speaks of who He is as follows.

*"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).*

The One who is God in His very essence emptied Himself and took the form of a servant. He laid down that loftiness and majesty to save us from sin. In the garden that majesty was revealed for a moment, but the Lord did not use it to protect His own body. Again He asked those who had fallen down whom they were seeking.

Jesus had already spoken about His own life. Let us read chapter 10, verse 18.

*"No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father" (John 10:18).*

The Cross was not the end of a life that people forcibly took from the Lord. The Lord laid down His life of Himself according to the command He had received from the Father, and He also had the power to take that life again. Even at the moment He was being arrested, the Lord was going of His own accord the way He had to go, in obedience to the Father's will. He withdrew the power He could have used to protect His own body, and He let Himself be arrested for us.

## The love that protected the disciples while He Himself was being arrested

Let us read verses 7 through 9.

*"Then He asked them again, 'Whom are you seeking?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,' that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, 'Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none'" (John 18:7–9).*

Jesus asked again, and after hearing the same answer, He said that if they were seeking Him, they should let these people go. It means that if they were going to arrest anyone, they should take only Him and release the disciples who were with Him. He gave Himself up and left the way open for the disciples to go. And He willingly entrusted Himself into their hands.

John records that this was what fulfilled the word He had spoken, *"Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none" (John 18:9)*. In chapter 17, the Lord prayed to the Father concerning the disciples, *"None of them is lost except the son of perdition" (John 17:12)*. The one person He spoke of separately in that prayer was, on this night, in the place of handing over the Lord. But not one of the people the Father had entrusted to the Lord was lost.

Jesus' protection did not stop at keeping the disciples from being arrested on the spot. To protect them from sin and judgment, the Lord will soon go to drink the cup the Father has given Him. Our salvation is also like this. The Lord stepped forward ahead of us, who had to receive judgment, and thanks to that, we were set free.

Even when you see your own weakness, look to this Lord, who stepped forward in front of the disciples. The One who held out His own body to let us go free is our Savior.

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## The Lord, who stopped Peter's sword and received the Father's cup

Let us read verses 10 and 11.

*"Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?'" (John 18:10–11).*

Simon Peter drew his sword and struck Malchus, the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. Peter did not stay still when he saw the crowd that had come to arrest the Lord. In the face of a crowd holding weapons, he tried to protect the Lord at the risk of his own life. Had the Lord not stopped him, he could have lost his life on the spot. In the same garden, Judas stood with the crowd that had come to arrest the Lord, and Peter stood on the Lord's side. What divided the two was faith.

Peter's heart was truly directed toward the Lord. But Jesus told Peter to put his sword into the sheath. Even with Peter's loyalty, the work the Father had entrusted could not be accomplished. The way the Lord had to go did not lie in driving off those who had come to arrest Him, but in drinking the cup the Father had given Him.

In the Gospel of Matthew, too, which records what happened on the same night, the Lord says why He did not escape by force.

*"Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" (Matthew 26:53–54).*

Jesus was One who could pray to the Father and call more than twelve legions of angels. But if He had done so, the salvation written in the Scriptures could not have been fulfilled.

If we do not know the Lord's will, we, too, like Peter, may step forward saying that we will help the Lord with our own zeal, and instead end up standing in the way of the work the Lord intends to do. True faith, rather than putting our own zeal first, listens to and accepts what the Lord intends to do.

Then what was the cup the Father had given Him? Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, who represented mankind, at the Jordan River and had all the sins of the world transferred to Him. What remained for the One who bore that sin was death, the price of that sin, and the cup the Lord had to drink was that very death. That is why the Lord stopped Peter's sword and said that He would drink that cup. It is because only when He drank that cup, that is, only when He died on the Cross and rose again, could all mankind be saved from sin.

If we know the baptism the Lord received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection only as separate things, one by one, and pass on, we end up not knowing what those things have to do with us. The Lord drank this cup precisely because of our sins. How heavy our sins were is revealed in the fact that the Son of God had to be hung on the Cross.

Jesus drank that cup to the end. He died on the Cross in our place and rose again from death three days later. In this way He became our true Savior and broke the power of Satan the devil, which had been holding us. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit has all his sins washed away. God makes him His child and sends the Holy Spirit so that he calls God Abba, Father.

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## Do not deceive yourself but turn to the faith that believes in the Savior

In the same garden, Judas was on the side of handing over the Lord, and Jesus gave Himself up to save sinners. Now let us look at ourselves in the light of this word. Do you believe what the Lord has done for you, or are you covering an unbelieving heart with the claim that you know?

Do not cover over your heart with the fact that you are in the church, that you have heard the word for a long time, or that you have a job entrusted to you. Whether you truly believe in Jesus as the Savior or believe in something else more, you yourself know before anyone else does. A person who does not deceive himself can acknowledge what is wrong as wrong.

Do not hear the matter of Judas only as a story about people outside the church. Those who preach the word, those who serve, and those who work at the forefront must all hear this word as a warning given to themselves. A person who does not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and does not accept Jesus as the Savior becomes a person like Judas, no matter how close he is to the Lord. If someone, while at the Lord's side, hands over the Lord with an unbelieving heart, the end of it is destruction. This warning is a word given to those who are now in the same place as Judas, telling them to get out of there. To the person who sees Judas' path and turns back from that path, this word becomes a great benefit.

If you have not been able to believe in Jesus as the Savior until now, believe now. If you have been relying more on something else, acknowledge it and turn to the Lord. Jesus is not someone who has nothing to do with you. He is God, who came for you clothed in a human body; He had your sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John; and He is

the Savior who received that judgment for you with the blood of the Cross and rose again from death.

A person who has believed in the Lord in this way is a person who has entered into a good relationship with the Lord. He has become one of God's people and has now been called to God's work. There are those who preach the word and those who hear it, and there are those who lend their strength so that the gospel continues to be spread. Those who believe in the same Lord join their hearts together and serve that work. Judas was used for the most evil deed, but those who believe in the Lord are used in the work of preaching the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

Do not exalt yourself, looking at Judas and saying, "I am not like that," but examine on whose side your heart is standing right now. And believe in Jesus, who of His own accord went forward in the garden that night and received the Father's cup, as your Savior. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

# The authority of the Lord, who was bound, and the salvation for us

**< John 18:12–14 >**

**"Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people."**

## Jesus, who is the Lord of all things even though He was bound

The soldiers, the captain, and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. The Roman soldiers, the captain who commanded those soldiers, and the officers sent by the Jewish religious leaders surrounded one Person. If we look only at what is visible to the eyes, it seems that those arresting Him have strength and that Jesus, who was arrested, has no strength. So there are also people who, as they read this scene, stop at pitying Jesus. But in this scene we must first know who the One who has true authority is.

Let us read verses 12 and 13.

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*"Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year" (John 18:12–13).*

They led Jesus away to Annas first. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Since the soldiers and the captain took the One they had arrested to the father-in-law of the high priest to have Him questioned, his authority was that great. The text records that Jesus was led away *"first"* to a religious leader before He stood before the Roman governor. The people who hated Jesus the most and drove Him to death were the very religious leaders who claimed to serve God.

But just because their hands had the strength to bind Jesus, that does not mean that they became the masters of Jesus. Jesus is God, who made all things. The soldiers who arrested Him and the father-in-law of the high priest who was waiting to question Him were also people whom the Lord had made. Created beings were laying their hands on the One who had made them. Even being alive and breathing is, to begin with, the grace of God, yet those who live under that grace led away the One who had given them life as if He were a sinner.

The authority of the high priest that they put forward is the same. The priests whom God established were the descendants of Aaron, and John the Baptist was a descendant of Aaron, born of the priest Zacharias and Elizabeth, a descendant of Aaron. That John the Baptist, representing mankind, baptized Jesus at the Jordan River. The high priest of the earth was John the Baptist, and the High Priest of heaven is Jesus. The authority of Annas and Caiaphas looked great, but the work of passing on the sin of mankind to Jesus had already been accomplished at the Jordan River through John the Baptist.

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Then why was Jesus, the Lord of all things, bound? It is because He had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. For that one reason alone, the Lord was arrested and taken away. The reason the One who has no sin was bound like a sinner is that, since He had already borne our sins, He had to die on the Cross because of those sins. The people who came to arrest Him thought that they were devising things according to their own will, but in reality they were being used in the way of salvation that God had ordained.

Therefore, in the face of the Lord's suffering, have faith rather than pity. The Lord knew that we needed salvation, and He gave Himself up with the power and the love to save us. The One we are to rely on is this Lord, who, even though He was arrested, went the way of salvation to the end. People bound Jesus, but they could not bind the will of God to save sinners.

## The calculation to kill one man and the will to save the people

After revealing the relationship between Annas and Caiaphas, the text adds in one verse what kind of person Caiaphas was. Let us read verse 14.

*"Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people" (John 18:14).*

Caiaphas was a person who, even ordinarily, advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. In his eyes Jesus was always like a thorn, and he thought that the nation would be at ease only if this Man were gotten rid of. When the council gathered in John chapter 11, this was also what he put forward before the people who were worried that everyone would believe in Jesus and the Romans would come and take

away their land and their nation. It was a calculation to protect their own positions and their own peace under the rule of Rome.

The Gospel of John makes us recall that word of Caiaphas at this very place where Jesus is arrested and led away. The person who will question Jesus first is the father-in-law of the one who said that word, and the person to whom Annas will send Jesus is Caiaphas himself, who said that word. John chapter 11, verse 53 says that from the day Caiaphas said that word, they plotted to kill Jesus. Jesus came to stand before people who had already determined to kill Him.

But chapter 11, verses 51 and 52 reveal the meaning of that word, which even Caiaphas himself did not know.

*"Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad" (John 11:51–52).*

The Lord, heading to the house of Annas, was walking the way of death in order to gather together the scattered children of God, just as this word says. But that does not mean that the sin of those who opposed the Lord disappears. By their own will, they tried to kill the One who had no sin.

There was only One who could stand in the place of the *"one man"* that Caiaphas spoke of. Because the Son of God, who has no sin, had our sins passed on to Him at the Jordan River, the death of Him alone became the judgment for sin for all of us.

People led the Lord away to Annas, and by that road the Lord went toward the Cross that saves us.

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## The thanksgiving of faith offered to the Lord, who bore our sins

The fact that Jesus' being bound was for us becomes clear when we know how the Lord had our sins passed on to Him. The Lord came to this earth clothed in human flesh. And when He came to the Jordan River and received baptism from John, He said as follows.

*"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

The Lord fulfilled all righteousness in this way. He had the sin of the world transferred to Him at the Jordan River, and He paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. According to the righteousness of God, He saved us justly. And He rose again from death and overcame the power of death, and He sent the Holy Spirit to us who believe this gospel. This is the salvation that Jesus accomplished for us, and it is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe.

The prophet Isaiah testified in advance, as follows, for whose sins the Lord would receive that suffering.

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

All of us, like sheep, went each to our own way. It seemed that we were bound to no one and went as we pleased, but the sins we committed on that way were keeping us bound before the judgment of God. The LORD caused Jesus to bear all those iniquities through the baptism He received from John. So, in

place of us, who went our own way, the Lord, who has no sin, was bound, and because He received for us the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross, we enjoy peace with God.

Therefore, when we think of Jesus' suffering, the first thing we must do is to believe in the salvation the Lord accomplished. In the face of the Lord's suffering, it is easy to think as if we, too, had to endure and put up with something and add it to that suffering. But the salvation the Lord accomplished is complete, without a single thing for us to fill in. A person who believes in the remission of sins accomplished by the water and the blood, that is, by the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, does not try to add his own merit. He only believes, just as it is, in the salvation that has already been accomplished.

Our serving the Lord also comes from thanksgiving for this salvation. Since the Lord first paid the price and delivered us from sin, we now give our hearts, our time, and our strength for His gospel. Our labor cannot become the price of salvation. If we forget that order, instead of enjoying the Lord's grace, we begin to count our own labor. What befits a saved person is thanksgiving offered to the Lord, who has saved us completely, rather than a heart that exalts its own labor.

## Do not despise the Lord's longsuffering

Those who arrested Jesus thought that they held high authority. Today, too, there are people who reject the gospel and look down on those who believe, acting as if they had great strength. But not believing is not power. Believing is power. John chapter 1, verse 12 says that He gave the right to become children of God to those who believe in His name. True authority

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belongs to God and His Son Jesus Christ, and to those who believe in Him.

That Jesus tells sinners to believe and receive salvation is not because the Lord lacks anything. It is because sinners need the remission of sins. If a person thinks that God is helped only when he does God the favor of believing, he has the places of the Savior and the sinner backwards. The Lord is God, who shows mercy to us.

Is Jesus, who was bound by the hands of people, still bound now? The Lord, who died on the Cross, rose again from death three days later. He is the Savior and the Judge. Because the One who is the Lord of all things is now sparing sinners and waiting for them, people are still getting the chance to go on living somehow. To the person who takes this patience of God lightly, the Bible asks, *"Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering?" (Romans 2:4)*. Do not mistake the Lord's longsuffering for your own strength. Today, while you can hear the gospel, believe in the Lord's salvation.

The Bible also clearly speaks of the judgment that will come upon those who reject the gospel.

*"In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thessalonians 1:8–9).*

Time passes quickly. On the day one stands before God after spending one's days rejecting the Lord's salvation, neither worldly status, nor people's recognition, nor the mouth that boasted of not believing can ward off that judgment. That the Lord is now letting the gospel of the water and the Spirit be heard is grace intended to let sinners be delivered from that judgment.

We who believe the gospel also have no reason to shrink back in the face of people's opposition. There are times when we are looked down on by family or friends because we believe. Even so, the remission of sins and the eternal life we have received remain as they are, and the gospel is still true. It is because the One who saved us is alive even now.

That is why we preach the gospel even to the people who look down on us. It is not because our faith becomes right only when we gain that person's approval. It is because he, too, is a person who must be saved from sin. If we are people who know the judgment that will come upon those who do not believe, can we keep the salvation the Lord has given only to ourselves? Have compassion on him, and preach to him the gospel that Jesus washed away even his sins through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. Caiaphas said that it was expedient for one man to die, but what is truly expedient for that person who looks down on us is to believe this gospel, receive the remission of sins, and become a child of God.

The Lord, who was bound for us, has released us from the bonds of sin. Let us believe in the salvation this Lord accomplished and live boldly even before people. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

# The Lord, who washed His weak disciple and accomplished salvation

**< John 18:15–32 >**

**“And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, ‘You are not also one of this Man’s disciples, are you?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself. The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine. Jesus answered him, ‘I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.’ And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, ‘Do You answer the high priest like that?’ Jesus answered him, ‘If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?’ Then Annas sent**

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**Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, 'You are not also one of His disciples, are you?' He denied it and said, 'I am not!' One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of him whose ear Peter cut off, said, 'Did I not see you in the garden with Him?' Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed. Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this Man?' They answered and said to him, 'If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.' Then Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and judge Him according to your law.' Therefore the Jews said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,' that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die."**

## The Lord's word, which was more accurate than Peter's confident declaration

When Jesus was arrested and taken away, Simon Peter and another disciple followed behind Him. That other disciple was known to the high priest, so he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, and Peter, who was standing outside the door, also came inside, thanks to that disciple going out and speaking to the woman who kept the door. Peter came as far as that courtyard, following the Lord. But what he showed there was different from what he had confidently declared earlier that night. Let us read verse 17.

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*"Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, 'You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?' He said, 'I am not'" (John 18:17).*

The first person to question Peter was the servant girl who kept the door. It was a short question, whether he, too, was not a disciple of this Man. Faced with that question, Peter answered, *"I am not" (John 18:17)*. The man who had said he would lay down his life for the Lord denied before people even the fact that he was His disciple.

Since it was cold, the servants and officers had made a fire of coals and were warming themselves, and Peter, too, stood among them and warmed himself at the fire. The Lord was being interrogated inside, and His disciple was standing at the same fire as the officers who had arrested the Lord and brought Him there. There people asked him again, and Peter denied it again. Then one of the servants of the high priest said that he had seen him in the garden. He was a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off. When Peter denied it again, immediately a rooster crowed.

Jesus already knew about this. That night, when Peter made his confident declaration, the Lord answered, *"The rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times" (John 13:38)*. Peter spoke of what he could do for the Lord, and the Lord spoke of what kind of person Peter was. Jesus knew everything, even in what circumstances Peter would come to deny the Lord. What collapsed that night was Peter's confident declaration, and what did not deviate by a single word was the word of the Lord.

We, too, when our hearts are fervent, feel as if we could overcome any difficulty and as if we would stand beside the Lord to the end. But when something disadvantageous comes upon them, people step back to protect themselves, even though they know what is right. The weakness that was in Peter is in us

as well. What we must do in the face of Peter's denial is not to make an even greater confident declaration. It is for each of us to acknowledge, before the word of the Lord, who knows us, "I am this kind of person." Faith begins there.

## The love of the Lord, who knew Peter's failure and yet washed him

Before He foretold the denial, on that very night, Jesus washed the disciples' feet. Peter was unwilling to accept that his Teacher would wash his feet. Then the Lord said clearly how much Peter needed the washing He gives. Let us read chapter 13, verse 8.

*"Peter said to Him, 'You shall never wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me'" (John 13:8).*

What joined Peter and the Lord together was not some great thing that Peter would do for the Lord. It was the Lord's washing him. Jesus, knowing full well how Peter would act that night in the courtyard of the high priest, washed his feet in advance and made him believe in the washing He Himself gives. The Lord, who saves us, is the One who began our salvation knowing fully even the weakness we would reveal later. In that courtyard Peter said, *"I am not!" (John 18:25)* and of his own accord denied his relationship with the Lord. But the relationship formed by the Lord's washing him did not depend on Peter's lips.

When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He had the sin of the world transferred to Him, which included even the denial Peter would make in the courtyard that night. And by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, He received the judgment for that sin, and three days

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later He rose again from death. To the person who believes this, He sends the Holy Spirit and causes Him to dwell in that heart. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe is the salvation of the Lord, who washed away all our sins in this way.

If salvation were maintained only when a person's righteousness is kept to the end, Peter's hope would have been cut off at that dawn when the rooster crowed. But Jesus is the Savior of those who are lacking like this. He came to save people who cannot but be judged because of sin. A person like Peter needs the Lord, and people like us need the Lord as well.

When your sins are revealed, do not make excuses and draw away from the Lord. You need only acknowledge that you are a person who commits such sins, and look to Jesus, who bore even those sins. What held Peter to the end was not his own strength but the love of the Lord, who washed him. The reason we give thanks, too, is that the Lord completely saved us, who were full of faults and full of sins. There is still weakness in the flesh, but we who believe in this salvation are righteous people who have received the remission of all sins.

## The Lord, who testified clearly even in the face of an unjust interrogation

At that very time, while Peter was denying in the courtyard that he was a disciple, Jesus was being interrogated by the high priest. The high priest asked about Jesus' disciples and His doctrine. It was not a question asked in order to learn His teaching. It was a question that sought to find guilt in the One they had arrested and brought in order to kill Him. Jesus answered as follows. Let us read verses 20 and 21.

*"Jesus answered him, 'I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said'" (John 18:20–21).*

Jesus always taught in the synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews meet. He never once spoke as if plotting something in hiding. So if anyone wants to know what He taught, he need only ask those who heard Him. Even before the high priest, Jesus was not intimidated, and He made clear what He had to say.

Then one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with his hand. He was asking whether that was how Jesus answered the high priest. Without being able to point out a single wrong in Jesus' words, he found fault with the manner of His answer and struck Jesus. Let us read verse 23.

*"Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?'" (John 18:23).*

He said that if He had spoken wrongly, they should bear witness of that wrong, but no one could bear witness of any such wrong. Annas, unable to establish any crime, sent Jesus to Caiaphas bound, just as He was. Jesus was One in whom no fault could be found, however closely anyone looked. And yet the reason He received the blow of the officer's hand was our sins, which were on His body. They were the sins that had been passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John. Because He was on His way to receive the judgment for those sins, the Lord went that way to the very end, even while being struck unjustly.

We who believe the gospel set our hearts on the word of the Lord rather than on people's loud voices. Raising a hand first, without being able to bear witness of any wrong, is only force;

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it cannot be rightness. Our faith stands on the salvation the Lord accomplished, rather than on the bluster of people. If we try to gain people's approval by casting aside the truth, we draw away from the path of following the Lord, who is the very One who gave us life.

## The people who opposed the Savior while keeping the rituals

When dawn came, they led Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's Praetorium. Let us read verse 28.

*"Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover" (John 18:28).*

They stayed outside the Praetorium so as not to be defiled, in order to eat the Passover feast. It was carefulness to keep the Passover ritual without blemish. Yet at that very dawn, they were the people who had dragged in the sinless One in order to kill Him. While they were so careful about crossing the threshold of the Praetorium, they did not look back at their own hearts, which sought to kill the Savior whom God had sent. This scene shows how different the appearance of outwardly keeping the ordinances and the faith that believes in God can be.

Pilate came outside and asked on what grounds they were accusing this Man. They could not state any charge. Instead, they said, *"If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you" (John 18:30)*, putting forward the fact that they themselves had brought Him as if it were evidence. When Pilate told them to judge Him according to their own law, they

answered that they had no authority to put anyone to death. From the beginning, they wanted Jesus' death rather than a trial.

Even if one has the appearance of serving God, one can still reject God's salvation. Even if one has religious zeal, one can still oppose the word of the remission of sins. Just as the cleanness they tried to keep outside the door of the Praetorium could not remove a single sin of the heart, so the years of our life of faith and the rituals we have kept cannot remove our sins.

The way to remove sins lay elsewhere. John the Baptist testified of Jesus as *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)*. Because that Lamb, who bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, passed through the Praetorium that dawn and went to the Cross, we who believe in Him have been made clean. Unlike those who, even with the Savior right before their eyes, held on only to the forms and authority of their own religion, we accept in our hearts the salvation of the Lord, who made us clean.

## The word of salvation that was fulfilled even amid people's opposition

The Jews answered that they had no authority to put anyone to death. But John added the following after that answer. Let us read verse 32.

*"That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die" (John 18:32).*

By the law, they could not find in Jesus any sin deserving death. So they handed Him over to the Roman governor. Now, under Roman law there was a death penalty in which the most wicked criminals were nailed to a wooden cross and killed. They handed Jesus over to Rome according to their own calculations,

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but through that very thing, the word Jesus had spoken beforehand was being fulfilled. The Lord had spoken as follows about by what death He would die. Let us read chapter 12, verses 32 and 33.

*"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself. This He said, signifying by what death He would die" (John 12:32–33).*

It was a death of being lifted up from the earth, that is, a death of being hung on a tree. The law says, *"He who is hanged is accursed of God" (Deuteronomy 21:23)*. The reason Jesus had to die that accursed death was that He had the sin of all the people of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. Because He had our sins on His body, He had to receive the curse on behalf of all people.

The Lord, who knew Peter's denial in advance, also knew by what death He would die. And by that death He would save sinners and draw them to Himself. Neither the disciple's failure, nor the accusation of the religious leaders, nor His being dragged to the Praetorium could bring down the salvation the Lord would accomplish. At last, with the blood of the Cross, the Lord fully received the judgment for our sins, and He rose again from death and gave life to us who believe.

Our hope lies neither in a heart that makes strong confident declarations like Peter, nor in the pride of having kept the ordinances like the people outside the door of the Praetorium. It lies in Jesus Christ, who removed our sins and made us His own people. Since we are people who have believed the same gospel of the water and the Spirit and been saved, rather than condemning a brother whose weakness has been revealed, let us love one another and hold one another up.

The One whom we, who are weak, believe in and rely on is not ourselves, but the Lord, who knows us and has washed away

all our sins. Since that Lord, just as He said, was lifted up from the earth and drew us to Himself, I hope that you will always remain in the faith that believes in that Lord. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

# The people who hear the voice of the King, who is the truth

**< John 18:33–40 >**

**"Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.' Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.' Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, 'I find no fault in Him at all. But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?' Then they all cried again, saying, 'Not this Man, but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a robber."**

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## The King of the kingdom of God, who stood before Pilate

Pilate entered the Praetorium, called Jesus, and asked Him, *"Are You the King of the Jews?" (John 18:33)*. To the governor sent by the Roman emperor, this was a question on which Jesus' life depended. Israel was a nation under the rule of Rome, and the king of Rome was the emperor alone. If Jesus answered yes, He would at once become a person who had rebelled against Rome and would receive the death sentence. That was also why the chief priests put forward this charge when they accused Jesus. Since many people had followed Jesus around and wanted to make Him king, they seized on that and tried to brand Him as a rebel.

But Jesus did not answer that question right away with a yes or a no. He asked in return whether it was something Pilate was saying for himself, or something others had said about Jesus. It was because it was a charge that people had pinned on One who had never claimed to be the King of the Jews. Jesus was boundlessly gentle toward the poor and the sick, but before the judge, He saw through the cunning interrogation and boldly asked in return.

Pilate retorted, *"Am I a Jew?" (John 18:35)*. What he meant was that he himself did not know the affairs of the Jews; it was only that Jesus' own nation and the chief priests had delivered Him to him, so what on earth had He done? All that Jesus had done was to save, heal, and help pitiful people. That was why many people followed Him and tried to make Him king, and the chief priests seized on that and laid on Him the charge of being *"the King of the Jews."* To this question, Jesus made clear what kind of kingdom His kingdom is. Let us read verse 36.

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

The kingdom Pilate was speaking of was a kingdom of this earth, subject to Rome. The kingdom Jesus was speaking of was a different one. Jesus lived on this earth, but He was not One who came to reign as a king of this earth. If His kingdom had been of this world, His servants would have fought so that the Lord would not be arrested. The reason the Lord was delivered up without fighting was that He chose that path Himself in order to save us from sin.

Even in this Praetorium, where He was being held under arrest, Jesus is the King of the kingdom of heaven. Now He was being tried by a man, but the One who will finally judge all people is none other than He. Pilate saw the prisoner before his eyes, but the One standing before him was the One who had made him.

## Jesus Himself and the salvation He accomplished are the truth

Pilate asked again, *"Are You a king then?" (John 18:37)*. This time Jesus answered clearly, and He even told him the purpose for which He had come into this world. Let us read verse 37.

*"Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice'" (John 18:37).*

Seen by the law of the world, this was a statement admitting treason of His own accord. But the king Jesus spoke of was a king of an entirely different dimension. He was not a king ruling over one vassal state of Rome, but the King of the kingdom of God and the King of kings of the whole universe. And as for the reason that King was born in a human body, He answered, *"that I should bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37).*

The truth is what is true, not false. Jesus did not merely explain that truth from a distance; He testified that He Himself is the truth. Let us read chapter 14, verse 6.

*"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'" (John 14:6).*

In the word that He is the Creator, the King of kings, the One who saved us, and the One who will judge at the last, there is not a single falsehood. Therefore, to know Jesus rightly is to know the truth, and to believe in what He came to this earth and did for us is to believe in the truth. The Lord is One who came not only to preach in words this truth that saves sinners, but to actually accomplish salvation and show it plainly before our eyes.

Then what is that work Jesus came to testify of? The Lord was born on this earth through the body of a virgin. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He had all the sins of the world transferred onto His own body. Now He was being tried in Pilate's court, and soon He would shed His blood and die on the Cross, and rise again from death three days later. The reason He did all these things lay in His intent to testify of the truth. That God, who so loved the world, removed all our sins through all these things the Son did is the truth Jesus testified of, and this is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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Because it is a salvation obtained by paying His life as the price, the person who believes this truth obtains the right to live in His kingdom. That kingdom, which is not of this world, has become our kingdom as believers. And the person who has believed this truth receives the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in that heart and lets us know that we are the children of God.

Pilate, having heard this word, asked, *"What is truth?" (John 18:38)*. With the One who is the truth right before his eyes, and even after hearing the word that came from His mouth, he did not know the truth. It was because his interest lay in the things of this earth, while Jesus was speaking of the things of heaven. He went outside without asking anything further. Today, too, many people ask where the way to heaven is and where the way to wash away sins is. There are also many who live without thinking deeply about why man was born, what he lives for, and where he goes. But people made according to the image of God must know the genuine truth. The One who is the answer to that question has already come and accomplished everything.

## A person who is of the truth accepts the Lord's word

Jesus said, *"Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (John 18:37)*. Pilate, too, heard the Lord's word with his ears. But it cannot be said that he heard the Lord's voice. A person who is of the truth is a person who understands the word the Lord spoke and truly accepts that word. Jesus really has His own kingdom and is the King of that kingdom. Those who believe that truth hear the Lord's word.

We, too, were formerly people who could only ask, like Pilate, what truth is. But we met Jesus, who removed our sins through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the truth that saved us, and once we believed that truth, we became people who understand the word the Lord spoke. Faith is nothing greatly different. It is accepting in our hearts what Jesus said in His word. The Lord is more pleased with this than with any labor we do.

Let us read chapter 8, verses 31 and 32.

*"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free'" (John 8:31–32).*

The truth saves us from sin. We are saved from sin because Jesus rescued us when we could only die because of sin.

But in our hearts, two different hearts exist together. There is a heart that believes the word, and there is also a heart that raises its head, saying that our own thoughts are more right than the word. When such a heart rises up, we follow Jesus with the faith that says, "Lord, only the word You have spoken is the truth. Only You are right." Pilate heard the word *"I am a king,"* but he did not accept it and turned away. If we put our own thoughts ahead of the word, we, too, come to stand in the same place as he did.

Also, a person who is of the truth knows to whom he belongs. Just as the Lord's kingdom is not of this world, we who believe in Him, though we live on this earth just the same, are people who belong to heaven. Therefore, we do not measure ourselves by what we have gained on this earth. Even if we seem to be pushed back and to lose on this earth, we are people who belong to the truth of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever we encounter,

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if we judge by the standard, "I am a person who belongs to God," we can live discerning the will of God.

## The people who cast aside Jesus, who had no sin, and demanded Barabbas

Pilate went outside and said to the Jews, *"I find no fault in Him at all" (John 18:38)*. When he interrogated Him, this Man said that He had a kingdom of His own. He was not a person aiming at the throne of this earth; rather, what He had done appeared to be matters belonging to faith and religious belief. Even in the eyes of the Roman governor, Jesus was One who had no sin.

So Pilate put forward one way out. The Passover was a great feast commemorating the day Israel was saved from Egypt, and at that feast there was a custom of releasing one person. Citing that custom, Pilate asked whether they wanted him to release the King of the Jews. Since the crowd was demanding that Jesus be killed, his intention was to set Jesus free as well while keeping up the appearance of granting their request. How did they answer then? Let us read verses 39 and 40.

*"'But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?' Then they all cried again, saying, 'Not this Man, but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a robber" (John 18:39–40).*

Earlier, they had called Jesus "*an evildoer*" and delivered Him to Pilate. But now they cried out to release Barabbas, a robber among robbers, a true evildoer. In the end, as they demanded, Barabbas was released, and Jesus came to be nailed

to the Cross. Barabbas lived because of Jesus. A robber who could only die obtained life through Jesus.

Barabbas is not a stranger to us. We, too, seen by our deeds, were people like Barabbas. We were born with all kinds of evil in our hearts and lived committing sins every day. If we were judged before God every time we committed a sin, we were all people who could only be cursed and nailed to a cross like Barabbas.

Jesus was One who, three years before He came to Pilate's court, had already had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. So He received instead the punishment of the Cross that the robber was to receive, as the punishment for the sin of mankind, and passing through that unjust trial, He rather testified of the truth. This event, in which He let Barabbas live and died in his place, shows the love of Jesus, who received all the judgment for the sin of the world and saved sinners. And the Lord rose again from death and gave new life to us, who were like Barabbas. The answer to Pilate's question of what truth is was being accomplished right there in that court.

Therefore, before the Lord, who died in our place to release us, who were like Barabbas, we simply believe and accept that love.

## The hope we enjoy together with the King, who saved us

Jesus is the King of a kingdom that is not of this world. Even though this world is in confusion and people's circumstances change every day, the Lord, who is the King of that kingdom, will take us, His people. On that day, as the Lord promised, we

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will live together with Him in a new kingdom. This is the hope that a person who is of the truth has.

There is a work the Lord has entrusted to us who have that hope. The Lord came to testify of the truth, and after saving us with that truth, He has now told us to testify of Him. That is the work of preaching the gospel. It is still a time when the gospel can be preached. Blessed is the labor of preaching, to those who still ask what truth is, who Jesus is and how He washed away our sins through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. Even when we grow weary in that work, what gives our hearts rest is the work the Lord came to this earth and did, that is, the truth He testified of.

Pilate asked what truth is before the One who is the truth, and turned away. But we, who have understood the voice of that King, are the people of His kingdom, which is not of this world. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

# Ruminate on the truth of God

**< John 18:28–40 >**

**"Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this Man?' They answered and said to him, 'If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.' Then Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and judge Him according to your law.' Therefore the Jews said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,' that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die. Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.' Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.' Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews,**

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**and said to them, ‘I find no fault in Him at all. But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?’ Then they all cried again, saying, ‘Not this Man, but Barabbas!’ Now Barabbas was a robber.”**

## Bring your busy heart before the truth

We are living very complicated lives in this world. There are many complicated incidents, many tasks, and many thoughts. That is why, when we worship, we offer our hearts before the Lord. Living in this world takes a great deal of effort. Since there is much to do, there is also much to think about, and that is why it is hard. People are just like trees standing in the wind. Like a tree that sways differently depending on where the wind blows from and where it blows to, people are swayed by their surroundings, swayed by their thoughts, and swayed by their circumstances. As people live in this world, they are shaken this way and that by the many affairs of the world.

For example, if a person who runs a business has been attending to his business and then suddenly tries to worship, thoughts of his business come into his head. So keeping one’s faith is not an easy thing. But we must collect our hearts again and quiet down all other matters. Only when we gather and collect our hearts before God can we worship.

We, too, know well that when we are tied up with some matter, that thought keeps going around in our heads the whole time. Since we live in this age, which is changing in so many ways, our heads are also very complicated. It may be that things are actually not complicated, but we are seeing them as complicated. For people, once the problems of eating, clothing,

and living are solved, the rest is nothing much, yet we may be solving those problems, which could be solved simply, in a difficult way.

I know that for us who live in these last days, it is difficult and hard to keep our faith. Nevertheless, we must gather our hearts before the Lord, lend our ears to the truth, and gather our hearts to live our lives of faith well.

## The Lord, who was handed over to Pilate

The word we have read is about something that happened about two thousand years ago. At that time, Jesus was taken to the high priest Caiaphas and interrogated, but Jesus had no sin. Since the Jews did not even have the authority to put anyone to death, Caiaphas handed Jesus over to Pilate, the governor sent from Rome.

Many people followed Jesus around, and the crowd that saw the miracle in which Jesus fed them with bread even tried to make Him their king. The Bible records, *"Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone" (John 6:15)*. In a country ruled by Rome, if someone was called a king, that was treason under Roman law. That is also why the Jews later cried out to Pilate, *"Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar" (John 19:12)*.

The word we have read is the scene in which Jesus, who came to this earth about two thousand years ago, is tried for the last time. As we face the word of truth that records what happened very long ago, we return before God. We had many thoughts, but as our hearts return before the truth through this word of truth and come under its rule, we gain strength, and this

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truth comes to fill our hearts. We are seeing what happened long ago through this word, and through this word we have come to revere our Lord.

Pilate went out of the Praetorium and asked the Jews, *"What accusation do you bring against this Man?" (John 18:29)*. The Jews answered, *"If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you" (John 18:30)*. To Pilate, this matter looked like a religious issue. The Bible records, *"Then Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and judge Him according to your law.' Therefore the Jews said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death'" (John 18:31)*. The Bible records that this happened *"that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die" (John 18:32)*. Jesus had said before, *"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself. This He said, signifying by what death He would die" (John 12:32–33)*. The word of God was being fulfilled just as it was.

The Jews did not even go into Pilate's Praetorium. The Bible records that they *"did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover" (John 18:28)*.

## *"My kingdom is not of this world"*

*"Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?'" (John 18:33)*. Jesus asked him in return, *"Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" (John 18:34)*. Pilate answered, *"Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" (John 18:35)*. Then Jesus said: *"My kingdom is not of this world. If My*

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

When Pilate asked again, *"Are You a king then?" (John 18:37)*, Jesus answered, *"You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (John 18:37)*.

Pilate asked whether He was the King of the Jews, what He had done, and whether He was a king then. Jesus answered these questions all at once. This answer, *"You say rightly that I am a king" (John 18:37)*, meant that He had been born on this earth to save not only this people and this nation but all people, and that He had come into the world to bear witness to the truth. And He said that those who are of the truth hear the Lord's voice. Pilate, who heard this answer, then asked what truth was.

The interests of the people of the world and our interests are different. The people of the world are interested only in the things of the flesh, while those who are born again are interested in the things of the Spirit. Now it is becoming an age that puts weight on visible material things, so people's interest is drifting further and further away from the things of the Spirit. Pilate asked about earthly things, and Jesus answered with heavenly things. In fact, Jesus was the King of the Jews. That means that He is the King of the spiritual Jews. The Jews are the descendants of Abraham, and God chose Abraham and his descendants. God called them a chosen people and said that He Himself was their God. Jesus was the King of the spiritual Jews, that is, the King of those who have lost their way in this world.

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## *"What is truth?"*

Jesus came to bear witness to the truth. What is that truth? The Bible 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)*.

To save us, the Lord was born on this earth borrowing the body of a virgin, received baptism from John at the Jordan River and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was sentenced to death and died on the Cross, and rose again from death. That is the truth. We must believe this truth of God.

Pilate asked, *"What is truth?" (John 18:38)*. How could Pilate have known what truth was? Even now, people ask what truth is. There are also many schools that present themselves as places that seek the truth. Those are fine words. Then what is truth? The truth is that Jesus Christ came to this earth and saved us. The truth is that God the Father saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but just as Pilate asked what truth was, people do not know this truth.

## *"Not this Man, but Barabbas!"*

Even after interrogating Jesus, Pilate found no fault in Him, and he went out again to the Jews and said: *"'I find no fault in Him at all. But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?' Then they all cried again, saying, 'Not this Man, but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a robber" (John 18:38–40)*. The Passover was the greatest feast of the people of Israel.

Here is the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Jews demanded that Jesus be killed and asked that Barabbas be released instead. The robber, who could only have died, was released, and in his place Jesus went to the Cross. We, too, are no different from that robber. Even the fact that Jesus died at the demand of the Jews was the will of God. Since Jesus had already had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, He had to pay the price of that sin on the Cross. Jesus received all the judgment for the sin of the world on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us. This is the truth of salvation.

## The truth we must always ruminate on

We are now examining and hearing again this real truth, which took place about two thousand years ago. We live going through many things in this world, but in living our lives of faith, we must turn our hearts back before that truth, which never changes. We must make our hearts solemn, believe this truth and give thanks, and once again collect our hearts and give glory to God. And with hearts thankful for that grace by which He saved us, we must live lives of faith that preach this gospel of truth.

We are now living in this age. How is it? Our hearts are very busy. Students will be busy in their own way, and those who run businesses in their own way. Everyone's circumstances will also be different. But what is the truth that never changes? It is the truth that Jesus Christ has saved us. According to that truth, Jesus Christ will come again before long. We must quickly place our hearts again before the gospel of the water and the Spirit and live by faith. This is the life of faith. Faith is looking up to and believing in God, who has saved us. Religion is man making a

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god and holding on to it, whereas faith is believing in the Lord, who has saved us, and always meditating on, thinking of, and believing in the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which never changes. No matter how busy we are, always thinking of and believing in this gospel of truth that the Lord has given us is the true life of faith.

We are examining the word that tells how, very long ago, the Lord came to this earth and saved us, who are like Barabbas. We are now facing and hearing again the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus Christ, who came to this earth and gave His own body for us, has brought us to life. I know that we must never lose this truth but hold on to it and believe it forever, revere, love, and praise the Lord, live seeking help from and receiving help from Him, who is the King of kings, and preach Jesus Christ to the whole world until we meet our Lord in the future.

When our thoughts are complicated, we must return to that truth, which the Lord spoke long ago but which never changes—that is, we must return before the Lord. Only then do our hearts regain their composure and become full of the truth. How is it, now that you have heard again the word that the Lord came to this earth, bore witness to the truth, and saved us from sin? Has your busy heart become calm? You might ask why I keep telling a story you already know. I tell it again because our hearts frequently leave faith and go out into the world. Even if we were to talk, what would we talk about? We talk about what the Lord has done. With what are our souls satisfied? They are satisfied in this word of truth. To whom does everything in this world belong? It belongs to the Lord, having been made through the Lord. We, too, belong to the Lord. Where are we living now? We are living in the Lord. No matter how complicated and

varied the changes of the world may be, the conclusion is all in the word the Lord has spoken.

## Those who live testifying of the truth

I hope that the gospel of the water and the Spirit will quickly spread throughout the whole world and that Jesus will quickly come to this earth. So we always think of Jesus, and there is nothing more joyful than doing the work of Jesus. We love the Lord most of all, and we love doing the Lord's work most of all. When our hearts are complicated, if we do the Lord's work, we come to experience the Holy Spirit filling our hearts with joy. Thinking about the complicated affairs of the world only gives us a headache, but when we do the work of the Spirit, our hearts are full of joy. This world will not stay as it is forever, so we must work while we can work.

In these last days, what do the people throughout the whole world who believe in Jesus want? They want to receive the Holy Spirit. They want the Holy Spirit to dwell in their hearts. Concerning the last days, the Bible says, *"On My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days" (Acts 2:18)*. This age is the age of the Holy Spirit, the age in which people believe in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit. That is why the people of the world want the Holy Spirit.

All over the world, people who have read the books that preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit are accepting this gospel as the truth that is the foundation of faith. And they are opening their hearts to the word that to receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit one must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and they are ruminating on this gospel again. If each of them does the work of God in his own country, more souls in

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many countries will believe this truth, receive the remission of sins, and receive the Holy Spirit.

Until the day the Lord comes, we will continue to testify of the truth. When the Lord stood in Pilate's court, Pilate asked what truth was, the Lord said that He had come to bear witness to the truth, and Barabbas was released while Jesus was crucified in his place. By receiving baptism from John and having the sin of the world transferred to Him, dying on the Cross, and rising again from death, the Lord completely removed the sin of the whole world and enabled those who believe to escape judgment. Through this truth we gain new strength every day. So let us keep well to the end the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which we have been saved, revere God while we live on this earth, live to preach this gospel, and collect our hearts by faith and live well.

Let us diligently preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In whom do we obtain riches? We obtain them in the Lord. Where do we obtain the strength to live in this world? We obtain it in Jesus. Everything is in the Lord. All things are what the Lord has given, and material things and blessings, too, are what the Lord has given. The Bible says, *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17)*. The good things in the world are what the Lord has given, and the worst things have come from Satan the devil.

In the future, we will preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit fully to all the world. We must keep our hearts before God. Bring your hearts, which have been busy in the world, before the Lord, who is the truth. And I hope that our hearts will be ruled by the truth. For that, we must see and hear the word of God, return to the work of God, and look to God. The Bible says,

*"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2)*. We must look to Jesus Christ.

We bow our heads and give thanks to the Lord, who bore witness to the truth and gave us the truth of salvation. To bring us, who could only have died, to life, the Lord had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross in our place, rose again from death, and saved us. We give thanks to that Lord. ✉

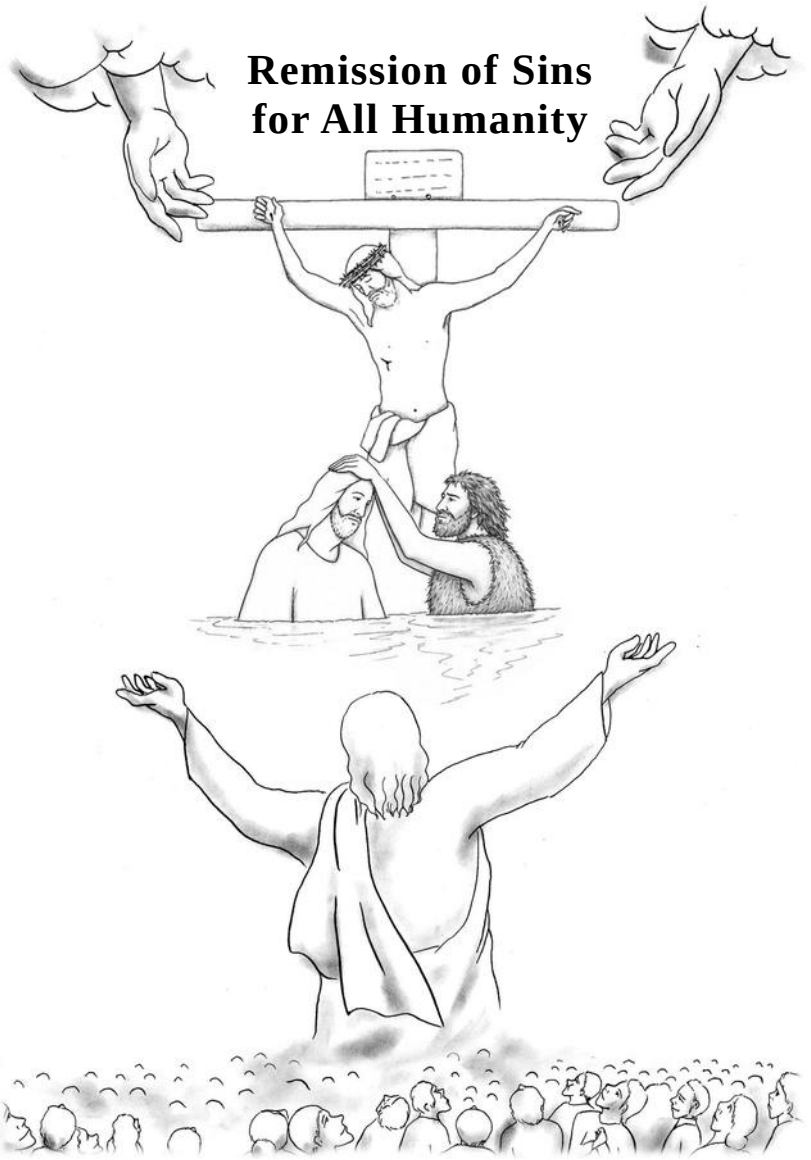
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# CHAPTER

# 19

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# Remission of Sins for All Humanity



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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

# The true King, who suffered for His own people

**< John 19:1–16 >**

**“So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ And they struck Him with their hands. Pilate then went out again, and said to them, ‘Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.’ Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, ‘Behold the Man!’ Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, ‘Crucify Him, crucify Him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.’ The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.’ Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, ‘Where are You from?’ But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?’ Jesus answered, ‘You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered**

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**Me to you has the greater sin.' From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, 'If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.' When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, 'Behold your King!' But they cried out, 'Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!' Pilate said to them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but Caesar!' Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified."**

A crown of thorns was put on Jesus' head. The soldiers put a purple robe on Him, called Him king, and struck His face with their hands. The King, who should have received honor, was mocked, and the Son of God, who should have received glory, suffered shame. Yet in that place, Jesus did not plead with Pilate to release Him. Though He was held in the hands of people, the Lord knew why He had to receive that suffering.

When we read this word, the first thing that comes to our hearts is how much Jesus must have hurt. But if we stop at that feeling, this scene remains nothing more than an unjust thing that happened in some courtroom two thousand years ago. So today we must ask as follows. What does this Jesus, who was scourged and wore the crown of thorns, have to do with us? Why did He, who has no sin, give Himself up? When we know the answer to these questions, we do not stop at pitying the Lord, but come to believe in Him as the King who saved us and to give thanks.

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## The mockery and scourging poured out on Jesus, who has no sin

Let us read verses 1 through 3.

*"So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And they struck Him with their hands" (John 19:1–3).*

Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. The body of the Lord, who was scourged, became covered in blood. The soldiers twisted a crown of thorns, pressed it down on His head, and put on Him the purple robe that kings wear. It was because the charge brought against Him was *"the King of the Jews."* Then they struck Him with their hands, saying, *"Hail, King of the Jews!" (John 19:3)*. With their mouths they called Him king, while with their hands they struck Him. It was a sneer that said, if You are a king, try getting out of this predicament.

Because man is a precious being made according to the image of God, at times he finds shame harder to bear than death. Yet the One who made the whole world was stripped of His clothes and slapped in the face before the created beings He Himself had made. The Lord of life, who healed the sick and raised the dead, was being beaten by people. When we know who He is and look at this scene, we realize how great His humbling of Himself was.

Then what sin did Jesus have? Pilate himself answers. He had interrogated Jesus one on one. Jesus had never stood against Rome, never incited a crowd to start a riot, and never taken up weapons and fought. So in verse 4 Pilate brought Jesus out and said, *"That you may know that I find no fault in Him" (John 19:4)*, and in verse 6 he made it clear again, saying, *"I find no fault in Him" (John 19:6)*. Even so, when the chief priests and

officers saw Jesus coming out wearing the crown of thorns, they cried out to have Him crucified.

The word given through the prophet Isaiah makes clear on whose account that suffering came.

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

The scourge that struck the Lord in Pilate's courtyard was originally the beating we should have received. It was we who left God and went our own way, and it was we who regarded our own thoughts as more right than God's will. The punishment and shame He received were the punishment and shame we should have received. When we know this, the sight of the Lord wearing the crown of thorns no longer looks like someone else's affair.

## Because He bore our sins, He did not avoid the suffering

Why did Jesus, who has no sin, have to receive the punishment of a sinner? It was because, through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, He had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body. Jesus, who stood before Pilate, was already the One who bore the sin of the world. The One who had sin passed on to Him was standing in the courtroom in order to receive the judgment for that sin.

When John the Baptist tried to stop Him, Jesus answered as follows.

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*"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

The righteousness of God is not a matter of telling us that it is all right while leaving our sins as they are. It is that, in order to save sinners, Jesus bears all those sins and even receives the judgment for those sins. At that time, not only the sins we have committed until now but also the sins we will commit for the rest of our lives were passed on to Jesus. Therefore, to know why Jesus was scourged and went to the Cross, we must first know what He accomplished at the Jordan River.

When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him, he cried out 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).*

That Lamb is now standing in Pilate's courtyard. Pilate was afraid and tried hard to release Jesus. But because the Lord was the One who had the sin of the world transferred to Him, He had to be crucified. Pilate tried to release Him, and Jesus intended to go to the Cross. The scourge, the crown of thorns, and the mockery were the road that lay between the baptism He received from John and the Cross of Golgotha.

Therefore, this suffering is not a sacrifice He paid reluctantly because we asked Him first. God loved us. To save us, who would perish because of sin, He sent His Son, and the Son, according to the Father's will, had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. And He received the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross, was buried, and three days later rose again from death. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart has

all his sins washed away once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and obtains the right to become children of God.

## The Lord, who fulfilled the Father's will even under human authority

Those who opposed Him insisted that Jesus had to die because He had made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid. He had already been sensing that Jesus was no ordinary person, and he was frightened at what would happen if he was really treating the Son of God in this way. He went again into the Praetorium and asked, *"Where are You from?" (John 19:9)*. But Jesus did not answer. Then Pilate spoke.

Let us read verses 10 and 11.

*"Then Pilate said to Him, 'Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?' Jesus answered, 'You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin'" (John 19:10–11).*

These words of Pilate were both a threat and an enticement. He meant that if Jesus would just bow His head a little and say one word that He was being wronged, he would release Him. An ordinary person would have trembled and pleaded before the judge who held his life in his hands. But Jesus neither bowed His head low nor bargained for leniency. Though He could have been released if He had said just one word, He remained silent to the end. It was for you and me.

The Lord's silence was not because He had nothing to say, nor because He had no strength. In the garden, when He said, *"I*

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*am He" (John 18:6)*, those who had come to arrest Him drew back and fell to the ground. Such a One silently received the scourge and the mockery. Isaiah spoke of Him in advance, saying, *"As a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7)*. Since Jesus had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, He Himself also had to receive the judgment for those sins. So, without making any protest, He silently went to the Cross in order to receive that judgment.

And the Lord made clear the source of power. As Pilate saw it, whether Jesus lived or died was in his own hands. But unless it had been given from above, Pilate would have had no power to harm the Lord. Above everything that happened in the courtroom was the Father's will. Jesus was not One who, pushed by human power, lost the will of salvation, but One who knew the Father's will and entrusted Himself to that will.

The Lord also said that the one who delivered Him to Pilate, that is, those who accused Jesus and dragged Him there, had the greater sin. Just because God accomplishes salvation through this event, the sin of hating and delivering up the One who has no sin does not become any lighter. The Bible exposes the unrighteousness of people as it is, and in the midst of it shows the love of the Lord, who saves us.

We easily regard as great only the people who shout loudly right before our eyes and the people who wield power right now. At such times, look at Jesus, who stood before Pilate. The One who has true power is silently receiving suffering. It was not because He was weak that He suffered it, but because He loved us that He gave Himself up. Even on the days when the threats of the world look great, the One who is above us is the Father, who gave that power to Pilate.

## The people who rejected the true King, putting forward Caesar

Pilate sought to release Jesus. Then the Jews cried out. *"If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend" (John 19:12)*. What they meant was that whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar, so if Pilate let this Man go, he, the governor, would also be siding with treason. To the judge who had found no fault in Jesus, this time they thrust loyalty to Caesar. In the end, Pilate, pushed by that outcry, passed judgment as they demanded.

Let us read verses 14 through 16.

*"Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, 'Behold your King!' But they cried out, 'Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!' Pilate said to them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but Caesar!' Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified" (John 19:14–16).*

Pilate sat down in the judgment seat in a place called The Pavement and asked for the last time, saying, "*Behold your King!" (John 19:14)*. Then the chief priests answered that they had no king but Caesar. Those who had been given the office of serving God called the Roman emperor their king and claimed of their own accord to be the people of Rome. They did not accept the One who had come to save them, but cried out to have Him done away with. In the end, Jesus received the death sentence on that charge of being "*the King of the Jews"* and was delivered to be crucified.

Even so, Jesus is still King. It is not that He became King because we made Him our King. He is our true King, who made all things and saved us from sin, and He is God and our shepherd. Even amid the mockery and rejection of people, His identity

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remains the same. Even at that time, when the chief priests called Caesar their king, Jesus was the true King, who bore suffering in order to give life to His own people.

Then the question is put to us today. Is Caesar your king, or is Jesus your King? To a person who does not believe in Jesus, what is visible to the eyes is everything, so visible power is his king. If we live with such a heart, we come to regard people's evaluations and immediate gain as greater than the word of God. Saying that we believe in God and serving the Son of God as King are not the same. The chief priests of that time also said that they served God, but they rejected Jesus. The person who has served Him as King is not the one with a religious name and zeal, but the one who believes in his heart the truth that Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for them with the blood of the Cross.

## The gratitude of the person who believes in the salvation He accomplished righteously

Pilate told Jesus that he had *"power to release You" (John 19:10)*. He was a judge who would let Him off if He said just one word. What would have happened if God had saved us in that way? If He had covered over our sins with words alone, saying, "Because I love you, I will count your sins as nonexistent," on our side we might be thankful, but that would be a salvation that is not righteous. Moreover, such a salvation always leaves us uneasy. The fear of what would happen if God saw how unworthy we are and His heart changed would never leave us.

But the Lord did not turn a blind eye to our sins. He had all the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and He Himself received the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross. He suffered in full the death, shame, and pain that we were to suffer. If it had been a salvation that specially let us off while leaving other people behind, we would always have been ashamed in the face of that salvation. But since the Lord dealt with the sin of all mankind righteously in this way, the salvation we have received is a salvation of which we have no need to be ashamed. It is because the ground on which our sins were washed away lies not in our feelings or today's conduct, but in the baptism the Lord received from John at the Jordan River and in the blood of the Cross. That is why we can believe in the righteousness of God and stand boldly.

Even after we have received salvation, the shortcomings of the flesh are revealed. There are times when we think self-centered thoughts, neglect what we ought to do, and our hearts waver. If each time this happens we step forward to wash our sins away again ourselves, we end up narrowing by ourselves the range of sins the Lord bore. If we think that the Lord washed away the sins up to yesterday and that we must wash away today's sins ourselves, the work the Lord did ends up being only half a work. The chief priests chose Caesar as king over Jesus. Trying to add our own repentance and effort on top of the salvation the Lord accomplished is likewise a failure to serve Him as the perfect Savior and the perfect King.

It is right to acknowledge our wrongs before the word and to turn our hearts to God. Only, do not make that act of repentance the power that washes away sins. If you clearly believe who it is that has made you righteous, you can give thanks to the Lord while acknowledging your shortcomings without hiding them.

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You can rise again, leaning on the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has already washed away all your sins.

Still, there may be some who say that the sacrifice was so great that their hearts are heavy. They say that they are not worth that much, and that, though they are thankful that He suffered that much for someone like them, it is a burden to them. But the Lord's sacrifice was not given so that we would be laden with a debt we cannot repay and be tormented. Since He bore our sins, it was right for Him to receive the judgment for them, and when we see by faith that He did all of this because He loved us, the burden turns into thanksgiving. It is the thanksgiving that says, how much He must have loved us to go that far! The Lord wanted to make us His own people and live together with us forever. The word given at the time of Jesus' coming makes that will clear.

*"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).*

To save His people from their sins—this was the purpose for which the King wearing the crown of thorns came. And the Lord is not One for whom everything ended with death. He rose again from death and is alive, and He cares for us whom He has saved. Do not step back in the face of that love, calculating how much you are worth; you only need to believe and accept as it is the will of the Lord, who loved you.

## Let us live remembering the King, who loved us

The text ends with Pilate delivering Jesus to be crucified. The Lord did not turn back from that road. Because He loved us, He received baptism from John at the Jordan River, and He gave

Himself up in order to receive the judgment for the sins that had been passed on to Him. Even amid the voices mocking the King, the Lord, as the true King, was carrying out the work of saving His own people.

Is there any other king in the world who sacrificed himself for his own people, bore the sin of his people, received the punishment for those sins in their place and died, and then rose again and saved his people? The person who knows this King comes to think of those who do not yet know the love we have received. There are people who suffer because of sin, not knowing why Jesus received baptism from John and why He suffered on the Cross. Preaching this gospel together is not a price paid to wash away sins, but thanks offered to the King, who loved us first and saved us.

Whether circumstances are good or hard, let us remember the Lord, who was scourged for us. Even if people's recognition dwindles, the Lord's love remains the same, and even if our weakness is revealed, the salvation the Lord accomplished stands firm. That King, who wore the crown of thorns and went to receive the judgment for our sins, is our King. Do not be ashamed of the faith that believes in that King. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

# The King, who gave Himself for us

**< John 19:17–22 >**

**"And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews," but, "He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'"' Pilate answered, 'What I have written, I have written.'"**

The name of a king was put up on the Cross. It was the writing "*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*" A king should protect and rule his own people, yet that King was crucified between two men. The soldiers took Jesus, led Him away, and drove nails into His body. What first catches the eye in that scene is the cruelty of the people. But what today's passage shows us is who the One hanging there is and for whom He suffered that suffering. The One who made us gave His own body to save us.

We have heard so many times that Jesus was hung on the Cross that it is easy to just say that He was hung there and move

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on. But that event was the price Jesus paid so that we would not receive the judgment for our sins. How great that price is can be seen only when we know who the One who paid it is. Today, following that name written on the placard above the Cross, let us think about who the One who gave Himself for us is, and what kind of people we, who have been saved by that price, have become.

## Jesus, who bore sin, bore the Cross

Let us read verses 17 and 18.

*"And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center" (John 19:17–18).*

Jesus, bearing His own Cross, went out to the Place of a Skull, Golgotha. The cross was an instrument of execution of curse and disgrace. There Jesus was crucified together with two other men, and He was in the center of them. If we look only at the sight of the execution, it seems as if the three men were placed in the same situation. But even one of the evildoers crucified with Him said that they themselves were receiving the punishment they deserved, but *"this Man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23:41)*. Earlier, Pilate, too, had interrogated Him several times and had found no sin in Jesus. The reason Jesus, who had no sin, died among sinners is that He bore our sins.

Before He was hung on the Cross, Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River. The sins each one of us commits as we live our lives, all those sins that we cannot wash away by ourselves—Jesus bore them at that time. Therefore, the

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baptism He received from John and the blood He shed at Golgotha are joined together as one work that saves us. In order to receive the judgment for that sin that had been passed on to Him, Jesus could not but be hung on the Cross, and in order to pay the price of that sin, He poured out all His blood.

Let us read John chapter 1, verse 29.

*"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29).*

That Lamb whom John the Baptist pointed to is now hanging between two men at Golgotha. Therefore, before the Cross, we cannot remain as spectators looking on at the sad death of someone else. Our sins are in the sin of the world that was passed on to Jesus. The judgment Jesus received is the judgment we should have received. To save us, the Son of God, who had no sin, received that punishment.

When we honestly examine our own sins, we have nothing to put forward in claiming that we ourselves are righteous. In addition to the deeds that appear on the outside, even the evil thoughts we harbor in our hearts are all exposed before God. Think of how many those sins are and how heavy the judgment we must receive is. Yet the Lord suffered for us that judgment that we were to suffer. He did not tell us to become clean first and then come; He Himself had our sins passed on to Him and received the judgment. The faith that looks to the Cross is the faith that, knowing how heavy the punishment of sin is, holds on to the grace of the Lord, who received that punishment in our place.

The prophet Isaiah spoke of the suffering the Savior would receive as follows.

*"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was*

*upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:5–6).*

Behind the peace we enjoy are the wounding and the bruising of Jesus. We received salvation without paying anything, but the Lord paid that price in our place. Jesus, who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, gave His own life as that price. If we believe this fact, the Cross does not end as a scene that only makes us shed tears, but becomes the ground on which we come boldly before God through the Savior, who bore our sins and our judgment.

## Jesus Christ, who is the true King even on the Cross

Let us read verses 19 and 20.

*"Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin" (John 19:19–20).*

Pilate wrote a placard and put it on the Cross. That placard was the charge announcing for what crime Jesus was dying. Because calling oneself a king in a land ruled by the Roman emperor was treason, the people pinned the charge of treason on Jesus with the words *"the King of the Jews."* The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, so many of the Jews read that placard. The writing was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.

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But that writing, which the people put up as a charge, was true. Jesus came as a descendant of David, was born in Bethlehem, and grew up in Nazareth. The name *"Jesus of Nazareth"* holds His life, in which He put on a human body and lived among us. And He is the Creator, who made heaven and earth, and the true King, who does not rule by force. The people drove nails into Jesus' hands and feet, but they could not change who He is.

The chief priests saw that placard and demanded of Pilate, *"Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews"'" (John 19:21)*. If only the one word *"He said"* were added, His being King would end up as a claim Jesus alone had made. To the very end, they would not accept Jesus as King. But Pilate did not change it, saying, *"What I have written, I have written" (John 19:22)*. Even amid the people's rejection, the writing that Jesus is King remained as it was on the Cross. God, who governs all of history, kept that writing.

The One hanging under that placard was a King whom the whole world could not break even if it all rushed upon Him. Even so, Jesus did not use that authority. The passage records that Jesus went out bearing His own Cross. In order to receive the judgment for our sins according to the Father's will, the Lord laid down that authority, and to save us, He gave Himself even to the point of death. The salvation we can rely on is in this very giving of Himself.

Then what does it mean to believe in this King? It is to accept that Jesus Christ is the Lord of our lives. The reason we also call Him "Lord" when we pray is that He is our Master. The One who made us, who had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, who received the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross, and who rose again from death after three days is our King. We who have believed this

gospel of the water and the Spirit have had our sins washed away once and for all and have become children of God who have no sin in their hearts, and the Holy Spirit is in us. Now we know clearly who the One is to whom we entrust our lives and our future.

People cannot live as they have resolved to, and in the face of something they firmly resolved on yesterday, they sometimes waver today. But the fact that the Lord is King does not change according to our feelings and circumstances. The Lord, who saved us, is alive even now. We come to God not because we believe in our own strength, but because we believe in the King, who gave Himself on the Cross.

## Think of the price of salvation that the Creator paid

Who died for us? If a person like us died as the price of his own sins, that would be only natural. But the One who was hung on the Cross is God the Son, the Lord of life. One whose essence is entirely different from ours came in a human body and paid the price for us, who are created beings. That price cannot be measured by the money we have or by our labor, and even if all the riches of the world were gathered together, they could not be exchanged for that life. Since the One who is so precious paid the price for us, who are lowly, that price was greater than our sins. That is why our sins have disappeared forever.

Therefore, even when we see our own shortcomings, look also at that price the Lord paid. The weakness of the flesh is revealed even after we have been saved. At such times, it is easy to bear again in our hearts the sin that was passed on to the Lord and to sit down in despair, saying that we are people who will

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never make it in the end. But that price is greater than our sins, so it is more than enough to cover even the weakness revealed today. Believe in Jesus, who had all our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and received that judgment with the blood of the Cross.

Sometimes we take it to be humility to chew over our own shortcomings for a long time. But if we do not look at what the Lord has done for us and look only at our own faults, our hearts become full of discouragement instead of thanksgiving. Right faith is to accept the fact that we are weak but the One who saved us is perfect. We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can follow the Lord by that faith no matter how lacking we are.

A person who has been saved by this price is precious. It is not because we have many qualifications of our own to boast of, but because the precious Jesus saved us and made us children of God. Then how can we treat carelessly a person who has been saved by the same price? He is a person the Lord obtained by giving up His own life. If we know this grace, we lay down the heart that wants only to exalt itself and come to regard as precious those who have received the same salvation.

The placard above the Cross was not changed in the end, despite the demands of the chief priests. The words written on that placard are true for us today as well. Jesus is not a King who first demanded that we offer up our lives, but the King who first gave His own life and saved us. His love is holding us fast. Thinking deeply of that price the One who made us paid for us, let us follow the Lord, our King, as befits children of God who have been made precious by that price. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

# Receive God who is the Word

**< John 19:17–35 >**

**"And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews," but, "He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'"' Pilate answered, 'What I have written, I have written.' Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,' that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.' Therefore the soldiers did these things. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing**

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**that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!' Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe."**

## The final confirmation of salvation

We were people who would go to hell because of sin, but the Lord came to this earth as the sacrificial offering for us. And, as this word says, He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood, and at the last He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, and died.

What is the final confirmation of the work by which the Lord saved us? The Bible records, *"But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe" (John 19:34–35)*. That day was the day before the Sabbath. In order to keep the Sabbath holy, the Jews finished in advance

everything that had to be done before it. If a person hung on the cross had not yet died, they had to break his legs so that he would die, and take the body down, bury it, and put things in order. So they asked that the legs be broken and the bodies taken away, and the soldiers broke the legs of the two men who had been crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He had already died, they did not break His legs, and one soldier pierced His side with a spear. Then blood and water came out. This blood and water are the confirmation of our salvation. It means that the fact that Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and the blood He shed on the Cross, are the evidence of our salvation. The Apostle John, who recorded this, testified, *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ –ASV" (1 John 5:6).*

When we think about the fact that we believe in God, it is truly an amazing thing. How can we believe in God, who cannot be seen with the eyes? How can we believe in Jesus as our Savior? It is all recorded in the word. So we must acknowledge the word, acknowledge our own sins, and acknowledge that Jesus received baptism from John in order to become our sacrificial offering, died on the Cross, and rose again, and so became our Savior. It is truly difficult to reach the point of acknowledging this.

We must know the word of God, then believe it, and, believing the other words as well, have our faith put in order in our hearts. The one who put this in order properly is the Apostle John. The Apostle John recorded this matter step by step in the first eighteen verses of the Gospel of John. He truly did something that a person who had not met the Lord could never do. How can we believe in God, who created the universe, and how can we believe that He became our sacrificial offering and saved us? Through that word the Apostle John recorded, we can confirm this and have faith.

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## *"In the beginning was the Word"*

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:1–3).*

How can we believe in our hearts that God made the universe, that is, the heavens and the earth and us human beings? The Apostle John speaks of this through this word, and through this word we can have faith. In the beginning was the Word, and this Word was with God, that is, with His own Father. And this Word was God. When Jesus came to us as the Savior, His name was Jesus Christ, but in essence He is God, who made the universe, and the Bible calls Him the Word. Through that Word all things in the universe were made.

Let us read the word of Genesis. *"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. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day" (Genesis 1:1–5).*

Who is the God who says here, *"Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3)*? That Word, who was with the Father, that is, the Word who is God, said that there should be light, and there was light, and that Word divided the light from the darkness. Who is that Word? He is God, who made all things in the universe and made the light. Without the Word, all things in the universe would not have been made. Through the Word all things in the universe were made.

If we are to believe in our hearts, if we are to put our thoughts in order, there must be a basis. To put it simply, there must be information. Without information, faith does not arise. In the beginning was the Word, and that Word is God. We must come to know it as follows: "Ah, so that is why Jesus is called God who is the Word. Since Jesus is God who is the Word, He also records the Bible as the word and shows it to us. And this Word comes to us." All things in the universe, which were made through the Word, are now visible to our eyes and can be touched with our hands. The Word who made all those things is God, and He is none other than our God.

On what basis can we believe that the universe and this earth were made? If there is no basis, we cannot say so. We cannot tell people to just believe unconditionally. Some scientists speak of the theory of evolution, saying that life began from very tiny microorganisms and that these gradually changed and became human beings. But that does not make sense. If they changed into human beings, they would have to keep on changing into something else in the future as well. God said, "*Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind" (Genesis 1:24)*. Because God made the beasts and the birds each according to its kind and also made man as man, all are born according to their own kind. Their bodies may be bigger or smaller under the influence of their environment, but their kind does not change. Since God says that in the beginning He made all things in the universe, and that He made this earth we are now looking at, where could there be a more certain basis than this? There is no basis more certain than the word.

God made the world of the stars in the heavens: "*the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also" (Genesis 1:16)*. Where in this universe is there a book that speaks of this? Only the Bible tells everything

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about how all things were made, who made them, and whom He told to rule over them. Because He made them Himself, He can speak of them.

Therefore, we must know and believe just as it is that God who is the Word made all things in the universe and the earth, and that this God who is the Word is none other than Jesus Christ. When we do, our faith stands firm. No matter how much we think with our heads, if there is no basis in the word, certain faith does not arise. But when we hold on to the word, we come to believe, "Ah, God who is the Word is the God who made the universe," and we come to believe in God and also come to believe how the universe was made. Fundamental faith starts from here. The Apostle John recorded it in this way because he himself knew it in this way and believed it in this way, and was led by the Holy Spirit. God, who created us, is none other than that Word.

## *"In Him was life"*

*"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe" (John 1:4–7).*

Here is the second faith we must have. In God who is the Word there was life. Among the things He made, minerals such as lumps of iron, even when they are made, are merely matter without life. Things that have life move, think, grow, and bear young. But although God had made all things in the universe, Satan the devil enticed us human beings to listen to his words, made us fall into sin, and kept us from keeping the word of God

and from believing it. At that time, God who is the Word, who made all things in the universe, came as our Savior. The life that is in Him became the light of men.

God who is the Word put on human flesh and came to this earth. He is Jesus Christ. Who is the One who came to give us life? He is Jesus Christ. What is His origin? He is God who is the Word, that is, the Creator. The Creator, in obedience to the will of the Father, put on human flesh and came to save us from sin, and shone the light on us. What is that light? It is the light of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has saved us from sin. It is the light of the gospel, which has completely removed our sins.

When our ancestor had fallen into sin, and we, too, born as the descendants of sinners, could not help but go to hell, Jesus came to save us from sin. We must believe in Jesus as that kind of Savior. Jesus came as the Savior. The angel said, *"She will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*. Jesus Christ saved us with the three offices of king, priest, and prophet. Faith that believes without the basis of the word lasts only for a moment. But if we believe, holding on to the word in our hearts on the basis of the word, that faith lasts forever. That is why, when we believe the word, our sins disappear. This God who is the Word made all things, and He knows everything He made. Among them are human beings as well. When human beings fell into sin, He came as the Savior, and He came to this earth to bear our sins. The Apostle John is clearly saying this much.

*"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John" (John 1:6)*. God who is the Word came to this earth as our Savior, and although He could have saved us unilaterally, God sent one representative in order to make a link connecting Him with human beings. His name is John. God who is the Word is true,

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and is the truth, and is life, and is the Savior, and He sent John the Baptist. Without John the Baptist, we cannot understand the work that God who is the Word does. Those who do not know John the Baptist can never understand the Bible, no matter how much of the Bible they know.

God sent John. Six months before Jesus was conceived in the body of Mary, God caused John to be conceived in the body of Elizabeth, the wife of the elderly Zacharias. The angel Gabriel said to the priest Zacharias, *"Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John" (Luke 1:13)*. Hearing these words, the elderly Zacharias was astonished and dumbfounded. The angel said that John *"will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:16–17)*. We see John as the one who played the role of the high priest of mankind between God and human beings.

## John, who came to testify of the Light

If we are to believe in Jesus, we must know John well. In the Bible there are many words about the role of John. Whenever Jesus is spoken of, John is always spoken of. John came to testify of Jesus, just as the word says, *"This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe" (John 1:7)*. He came to testify that this One is God who is the Word, the One who made all things in the universe, and the Savior who came to save human beings from sin.

When John was giving the baptism of repentance to people at the Jordan River, Jesus came and told him to give Him baptism. John tried to stop Him, saying that He was the Son of God and he himself was a created being, and asking how he could give Him baptism. *"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" (Matthew 3:14–15)*. To fulfill all righteousness means to make all people without sin. When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, He had the sin of all people transferred onto His body, and bearing that sin He died on the Cross, and by rising again from death He removed all the sins of the world.

And, as the word of John chapter 19 says, Jesus came as the sacrificial offering and was crucified. The soldiers came to break His legs, but seeing that He had already died, one soldier pierced His side with a spear, and blood and water poured out. The Apostle John saw that scene himself and recorded, *"He who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true" (John 19:35)*.

*"He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light" (John 1:8)*. John is not the Savior. John was appointed as the representative of mankind, and by giving baptism to Jesus he passed on the sin of mankind. At this time our sins were passed on to Jesus. The Creator, who is God who is the Word, put on human flesh and came to this earth and saved us. Because John the Baptist testified, we, too, can know Jesus, and because John the Baptist gave baptism to Jesus, our sins could be passed on. We receive salvation by believing that fact; it is not something we can do by ourselves.

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## *"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name"*

*"That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. 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. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:9–13).*

Why is He called the true Light? God who is the Word, in obedience to the will of the Father, borrowed the body of Mary, put on human flesh, and was born on this earth. When He was thirty years old, He received baptism from John and had our sins transferred to Him, and bearing those sins He was crucified and died shedding His blood, and He poured out water and blood and died, and then rose again. In this way God, who is the true Light, removed all the sins that the devil had breathed into the people He had made. It is because He is the One who did that work that He is called the true Light.

That true Light came into the world. The Bible records that He was born in Bethlehem, went about everywhere in Jerusalem and around the Sea of Galilee, and there called together the twelve disciples and did His work. Although the Creator made this world, people did not know Him. Although He came to the land He Himself had made, borrowing the body of a woman and putting on human flesh, people did not know Him as the true God and the true Savior, and did not accept Him.

It says, *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His*

*name" (John 1:12)*. "Ah, Jesus, who is God who is the Word, was my Savior! That God received baptism from John the Baptist for me and had my sins transferred to Him, was hung on the Cross and died, and rose again and saved me!" To the person who accepts this, that is, to the person who believes in His name, He gave the right to become children of God. Because He is God, He gave the right to become children of God to those who believe what He came to this earth and did.

Jesus is, in essence, God who is the Word and the Creator. He is the One who created all things in the universe, your ancestors, and you. That God made man in His own image to make him His own people, but when man fell into sin, He came to us. And through the baptism He received from John He had our sins transferred to Him, was hung on the Cross and died, and rose again from death and saved us.

*"Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13)*. If we believe that God, who made the universe through the Word, is the God who made us, and is the God who came as Jesus Christ and saved us from sin, God makes us His children and sets us apart from the other created beings. The natural world and the angels are merely created beings. But if we believe that God who is the Word came and saved us, we become children of God and obtain that right. This is a blessing. This is not something that comes about by blood, nor is it something that comes about by the will of man. Nor does it come about because people acknowledge that you are a child of God. He gave the right to become children of God to those who believe and accept the fact that God who is the Word, who made the universe, has become their God, and the word that He put on flesh and came to save us from sin, had our sins transferred to Him through baptism, died on the Cross, and rose again, and so became our Savior.

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## *"Grace for grace"*

*"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 bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, 'This was He of whom I said, "He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me."' And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace" (John 1:14–16).*

Since God who is the Word made all things in the universe through the Word, He is the Creator. We call the Creator, who made all things in the universe, God. That God who is the Word put on human flesh and dwelt among us. According to the will of the Father He came to this earth and was born, borrowing the body of Mary, and when He was thirty years old He received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sins of us human beings transferred to Him, and on the Cross He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, and died. When His body was pierced with a spear, blood and water poured out. And after three days He rose again from death. The reason Jesus could become the sacrificial offering for our sins is that He had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. His death on the Cross was because of our sins and transgressions.

*"Full of grace and truth" (John 1:14)*. Grace is a gift. It is the gift obtained by faith, that is, salvation. Truth is the true Light, which is not false. To be full means to be filled and overflowing. Believing does not require emotion, or our will, or cleverness. All we need to do is to understand the word of God in our own language. We cannot come to believe by what we feel with our emotions, by what we do with our thoughts, or by stubbornly insisting that we believe. Since He is God who is the Word,

when we hold on to the written word in our hearts just as it is written, that becomes our faith and becomes our life. Since God who is the Word has come to us through this word, to face the holy word the disciples recorded is to face God who is the Word.

God who is the Word put on human flesh and came, bore our sins, rose again from death, and made us the people of God. So if we accept that God who is the Word just as the written word says, if we receive this word, we receive salvation and also receive grace upon grace. Being saved is itself a blessing, and yet we have also become children of God, and have come to enter the kingdom of God and enjoy riches and glory forever and enjoy eternal life together with God. This is grace upon grace, the fullness of grace.

*"For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17)*. Moses is the representative of the law. The law teaches us that we were born sinners, that we are committing sins, and what sin is. But grace and truth, that is, the gift of salvation, came through Jesus Christ. Just as God who is the Word promised in the Old Testament, "I will bear your sins in this way," He came in the New Testament and received baptism from John and had sin transferred onto His body, and offered His body as the sacrificial offering and shed His blood on the Cross. Because He received baptism from John in our place, He received the punishment for sin on the Cross in our place, and He rose again in order to make us rise again from death.

"*No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (John 1:18)*. No one has seen God. God who is the Word, the only Son of God the Father, has revealed to us who God is. He has revealed that God who is the Word is the God of truth, the God of mercy, the righteous God, the God who has given us eternal

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life, and the God who drives away Satan the devil for us and washes away our sins completely. To receive this word into our hearts is to receive God who is the Word, and that is salvation.

In the Old Testament era, a person who had committed sin laid his hands on the sacrificial offering, killed it, and put its blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest first made atonement for himself and his household with a bull, and for the people he killed a goat and took its blood inside the Most Holy Place and sprinkled it on the mercy seat. The Bible also records, *"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)*. In this way the sins of the people were removed. The reality of this is that Jesus Christ came to this earth, had our sins transferred to Him through baptism, died on the Cross, and rose again, and saved us from sin. Even without explaining all the sacrifices of the Old Testament, this word the Apostle John recorded says it all.

To believe the word is to believe in God, and to believe the word is to obtain life and to become light out of darkness. A person who would go to hell becomes a child of God, a child of light, a holy child, and becomes a person without any sin, one of the people of God, a righteous person. The Bible says this. If someone were to completely wipe out the word of the Bible from this earth, no one on this earth would be able to meet God.

Long ago, in the Old Testament era, people sometimes spread out papyrus, a reed that grows in Egypt, and wrote on it, and sometimes they spread out sheepskin or goatskin, fixed it in place, dried it in the shade, and recorded the word of God on it. There were also people who copied the original just as it was. When the servants of God recorded the word they had received,

there was also someone like Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, who burned the scroll, saying it was something he did not want to hear. But God preserved His word. There was even a case where scrolls on which the word had been recorded, having been put in jars and placed in caves in the wilderness, were discovered after nearly two thousand years, and these are what are called the Dead Sea Scrolls today. Because without the word no one can know God, and what is handed down by word of mouth cannot be trusted, God had His people keep and preserve the word of the Old and New Testaments, and so He speaks to us today. Those who understand this word and receive it into their hearts become the people of God.

Those who have become the people of God have received the remission of sins, but their own desires still follow after them. Because people are born with a body of flesh, they have the desires of the flesh, and they have a heart that wants to follow those desires. This must be denied. We have received the remission of sins through the word, and we also live our lives of faith by following what the word says. Since the Word is God, when we obey and obey again, denying our own thoughts and yielding our own hearts according to the word, the word becomes full in us and the Holy Spirit becomes full in us. And we receive even more of God's blessings, live as God's people, and then go to the kingdom of God and enjoy riches and glory forever. This is the life of faith.

## *"JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS"*

*"Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE*

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*JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin" (John 19:19–20)*. Pilate was the governor who ruled Judea. In a country under the rule of Rome the only king was the Roman emperor, so they said, "You tried to become king—is that not treason?" and put Him to death on the charge of treason. So a placard was put on the Cross, and on it was written *"THE KING OF THE JEWS"* in three languages: Hebrew, the language of Rome (Latin), and Greek.

Jesus is God who is the Word. That He received the punishment of the Cross was because of the price of our sins. The Bible says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5)*. Because Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through baptism, He was crucified and became the sacrificial offering for our sins. He was the King of the Jews at that time, but He is our King, who saved us from sin. If a person who has become one of His people, because his feelings are hurt, goes against the word of Him who is King and lifts up his head and opposes Him, that person ends up being pushed out of his place among the people. But because God knows that human beings are weak and, having flesh, commit sins as if by habit, He bore all the sins we were born with from the root through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so saved us sinful people completely. It is as if He is saying, "I have already borne and removed those sins as well, and so you are My people." That is why we live by the mercy of God, and live receiving grace upon grace.

## *"I thirst!"*

*"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!'" (John 19:28)*. God who is the Word put on human flesh and came to this earth to save His people from sin, and through the baptism He received from John at the age of thirty He had our sins transferred to Him, and at the age of thirty-three, as He was crucified and dying, He said at the last, *"I thirst!"* Having shed so much blood, His chest was parched and burning.

With the words *"I thirst!"* it is as if the Lord is asking us as follows: "I came to save you and I love you like this, but do you love Me? Do you receive Me? I am God who is the Word and your Master, and yet, to become your Savior, I was born borrowing the body of a woman as promised, and to bear your sins I received baptism from John the Baptist and had all those sins transferred to Me, and to receive the judgment for those sins I was crucified and have now come to death. I am thirsty. I love you like this, but how much do you love Me?" And this Lord rose again from death after three days.

When Jesus was arrested, Peter, finding himself at a disadvantage, denied Him, saying that he did not know that Man. Later, after Jesus rose again, He asked Peter, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*. Peter could make no excuse and answered, *"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*. This is a confession that, since the Lord loved him and removed even this sin he had committed, he could not help but love the Lord. Jesus said to Peter, *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)*. This is a word telling him to preach this gospel to the world just as he believes. The Lord asked a second and a third time whether he loved Him, and each time Peter answered that the Lord knew. He did not lean on his own will

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and faith, but leaned on the Lord. He confessed that, since the Lord loved all people and saved them in this way, the Lord surely knew it well, and that he could not help but love the Lord.

God loved us so perfectly and so fully that no one can deny the love with which He loved us. He gave us full salvation and full blessing. Even so, there are people who do not accept it and refuse it. The Bible says, *"Love is as strong as death, Jealousy as cruel as the grave" (Song of Solomon 8:6)*. For those who refuse the love of God to the end, there is punishment. That is hell.

The Lord said, *"I thirst!"* Love blossoms only when it is given and received by both sides. If only one side loves, it is unrequited love, and unrequited love is a sad thing. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)*. When we accept that love which God has given from His side, and we, too, love God, the heart of God can be glad instead of thirsting. I hope that we will become people who make God glad.

*"So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit" (John 19:30)*. This word means that He has finished the work of removing all those sins for which you, having fallen into sin, would go to hell, the work of saving you. The Lord said this and died. And, just as He had promised that He would rise again after three days, He rose again, testified for forty days, and went up to heaven as the disciples watched. Two men in white apparel said, *"This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11)*. God who is the Word lives forever. He is alive even now, and when we have finished preaching this gospel, He will come to take us.

*"But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out" (John 19:34)*. The Bible says, *"The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11)*. In order to save our lives, the Lord bore our sins, received the punishment for those sins, and shed His blood to pay the price of sin. And the reason the Lord could shed that blood is that He had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and became the sacrificial offering. The blood and water that poured out of the Lord's body at the last testify of this salvation.

Therefore Jesus, who is God who is the Word, is even now the eternal God and the eternal Savior. The person who accepts and believes this fact is the one who receives Him, and God acknowledges the faith of the person who receives the word. So that person becomes one of the people of God. Once a person becomes one of the people of God, from then on he can pray to God, live a life that gives glory to God through his church life, live receiving God's help every day, and, when the time comes, go to the Lord's kingdom and live forever.

This is the salvation by which God has saved us. This is the word He gives us at this time when we remember the sufferings of the Lord. The Lord said, *"I thirst!"* It is as if the Lord is saying this to all the people of the world even now: "I love you, but do you believe in Me? Do not try to do anything else, but accept My love. In that love, let us have fellowship with one another through faith, and live forever enjoying eternal life in happiness." The Bible says, *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10)*. This is the meaning of the word that God speaks to us.

As we do the work of God, we get absorbed in the work and our senses grow dull. There are even times when we do not know

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for sure whether we believe or not. That is why, when we gather in the church, He has the one who preaches the word preach the word. Through this word, we confirm the love of the Lord once again, recover our hearts, renew our hearts again, and come to follow God. God has given us this blessing. I hope that you will all believe this word. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

# The love He entrusted beside the Cross

**< John 19:23–27 >**

**“Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,’ that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: ‘They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.’ Therefore the soldiers did these things. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.”**

The soldiers were dividing Jesus’ garments. Beneath Jesus, who was hung on the Cross, each of them took the share he would get, and they cast lots for who would have the tunic. Beside Him stood Jesus’ mother and the people who loved Jesus. They were beside the same Cross, but what the people were doing was different. On one side, they were trying to get the

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garments, while Jesus entrusted the mother who would be left behind to the disciple whom He loved.

Before this scene, we, too, come to look back on what we treasure as we live. Jesus, who was hung on the Cross, looked after His mother standing beside Him even while He was suffering to save us. The love we have received is a love as concrete as that.

## The word that is fulfilled even among the people dividing the garments

Let us read verses 23 and 24.

*"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,' that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.' Therefore the soldiers did these things" (John 19:23–24).*

The soldiers divided Jesus' garments into four parts, and each of them got a part. The tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece, so they said not to tear it but to cast lots for who would get it. Jesus' suffering went as far as the shame of even the garments on His body being divided up as people's shares. The Son of God, who came to save people, suffered this before people.

Yet the Apostle John, as he records this thing the soldiers did, testifies that the Scripture was fulfilled. There is this word in the Psalms.

*"They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots" (Psalm 22:18).*

The psalm spoke of the outer garment and the tunic separately. It said that the outer garment would be divided and that lots would be cast for the tunic, and what the soldiers did was exactly that. They merely took their own shares, yet through their hands the word God had spoken beforehand was fulfilled. The things that happened beside the Cross were fulfilled one by one in this way, according to the word of prophecy.

God is the One who surely fulfills the word He has promised. Through the prophet Malachi He promised that He would send Elijah, and according to that promise He sent John the Baptist. Through the baptism He received from that John at the Jordan River, Jesus had our sins passed on to Him, and in order to receive the judgment for those sins, He was hung on the Cross as it is written in the Scriptures. The Lord was not One who merely pitied us from afar and offered us kind words. Even while the soldiers were dividing His garments, Jesus did not come down to escape that place but kept bearing our sin and shame to the end.

When we believe this love, our heart toward the Lord changes. The soldiers, beneath the Cross, took only what they could get from Jesus, but we know what the Lord bore in order to save us. There are times when serving the gospel feels like a waste and looking after others feels like a bother. At such times, rather than counting how much you have to spare, think of the grace you have received from Jesus. What the Lord gave us was not a few leftover things but His own life.

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## Jesus, who cared for His mother even in the midst of suffering

Let us read verses 25 and 26.

*"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!'" (John 19:25–26).*

Beside the Cross stood Jesus' mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. The disciple whom Jesus loved, namely the Apostle John, was also there beside it. The many disciples and people who usually followed Jesus around were not there. It was a time when one could lose much by openly showing that one believed in Jesus, and only a few people kept their place beside the Cross. With this scene, the Scripture shows that a true disciple is a person who remains beside the Lord at the hardest time, believes in Him from the heart, and offers himself.

Jesus, seeing His mother and the disciple, said to His mother, *"Woman, behold your son!" (John 19:26)*. He looked after His mother at a time when even His own pain alone was hard to bear. When people meet with hardship, their hearts are easily held captive by their own circumstances. There are even times when they look only for someone who will recognize how hard it is for them and are unwilling to listen to the pain of others. But Jesus, even in the midst of the suffering of the Cross, thought of the mother who would be left behind, and He entrusted her to the disciple so that she would be cared for. The Lord did not only speak of love; He practiced that love.

At that very place, where He was bearing the sin of all mankind and receiving the judgment for it, the thing Jesus

Himself entrusted was the task of taking care of one person, His mother. The great work for the gospel and the work of looking after the needs of one person are precious together before the Lord. If we say that we love the Lord yet are indifferent to the person He has entrusted to us, let us look back on our hearts.

Following the Lord's love, let us look at what the people beside us need. Speaking the word to a person whose faith has grown weak, taking on together a task that is hard to bear alone, and knowing the circumstances of a person whose body is weak and caring for him—these take attention and effort. If we only say in words that we care and yet look after nothing, that person's need remains as it is. Love is conveyed to the other person when it is put into action with our hands and feet.

We also know our own limits well. We do not always treat people generously, and sometimes we put off what we must do, on the grounds that we are busy. When we see ourselves like that, we want to step back, saying that we are not qualified to love. But the Lord is the One who sympathizes with all our weaknesses. He loved us first, weak as we were, and after He departed, He sent us the Holy Spirit, and within us who have received the remission of sins, He holds us up and helps us. All we have to do is turn our hearts to that Lord and do the work entrusted to us today. A person who knows the Lord, who loved him even in his weakness, can also look after the weakness of others.

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## The obedience that continued on into the disciple's home

Let us read verse 27.

*"Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home" (John 19:27).*

The disciple who heard Jesus' word took the Lord's mother to his own home from that time on. The text says, *"From that hour."* The word he heard beside the Cross was not put off until later but became the disciple's daily life from that day on. The word *"Behold your mother!"* was a request that he should now serve her, and taking care of His mother became the task that the disciple himself had taken on.

To take a person into one's home is to accept that person into one's own life. It does not stop at giving the person a place to stay together; it is a matter of knowing that person's circumstances and caring about him differently from before. The disciple accepted that responsibility according to Jesus' word. In that, we see how faith that loves Jesus appears in daily life.

In our life of faith, too, saying who should take on what task and actually taking it on are different. Even when everyone knows that care is needed, if each person waits for someone else to do it, that task is left undone in the end. If it is a task entrusted to you, whether it is a large and visible one or a small and quiet one, receive it by faith. What the Lord wants is more important than people's praise.

There are also things that a person who serves must be careful about. If, because we have labored, we treat the other person however we please, or we keep exposing the weakness of the person receiving care and shame him, or we try to make him depend on us so as to hold on to him, that is far from love.

The one whom that disciple took into his home was also the mother whom the Lord had entrusted to him. A person who serves with the love learned from the Lord hopes that the other will stand by faith, and treats that person as one whom the Lord has entrusted to him.

Also, what comes before serving is the salvation the Lord has accomplished. Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him; with the blood of the Cross He received for us the judgment for that sin; and He rose again from death and became the perfect Savior of those who believe. A person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit has all his sins washed away once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit, and becomes a child of God. Therefore, our caring for people is a matter of following the Lord's will out of gratitude for the love we have already received.

If we forget this order, serving quickly turns into a heavy calculation. We think that since we have done this much, God, too, ought to give us something, and if others do not recognize it, we regard all our labor as having been in vain. But if we remember the grace the Lord bestowed first, we can serve regardless of people's response. It is something the Lord, who loved us, knows, and it is the work of looking after a person He regards as precious, so that labor is never in vain.

## Let us look after one another according to the love we have received

Before He was hung on the Cross, Jesus gave His disciples the commandment to love one another. Let us read John chapter 13, verses 34 and 35.

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*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34–35).*

Jesus told them to love one another *"as I have loved you" (John 13:34)*. Both the basis of love and the way to love are found in the Lord. Jesus, who gave that commandment, showed that love in person on the Cross. Loving one another is not a decoration added on when there is room to spare in church life; it is the life of the disciples who believe in and follow Jesus. Because we know how great the grace of the remission of sins is, we treasure those who have received the same love.

Beside the Cross, where the soldiers were dividing the garments, Jesus entrusted one person to another. In the soldiers' hands were the divided garments, but to the disciple was entrusted a mother whom he had to take care of. These two hearts can exist together even within one person. Let us lay down the heart that counts only what it has gained, and let us serve the people entrusted to us according to the love we have received from the Lord.

That disciple took the Lord's mother to his own home from that time on. Let us, too, not leave love only as a good intention for some later day, but look after the circumstances of the people beside us now and accept the labor entrusted to us. I hope that the love of Jesus, who loved us to the end and beside the Cross entrusted His mother to the disciple, will also appear in our homes and churches as a love that takes care of and looks after one another. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

# Have faith in the resurrection

**< John 19:38–20:31 >**

**“After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews’ Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby. Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.’ Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other**

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**disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.' Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?' She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, 'Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!' (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God."' Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, '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.' Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, 'We have seen the Lord.' So he said to them, 'Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.' And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, 'Peace to you!' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.' And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.' And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 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."**

We have also read the word of 1 Corinthians together. *"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' 'O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your*

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*victory?' The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:51–58).*

## Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus

Our Lord was crucified and died on Friday. Since He died on Friday, there was no time to spare to move the body.

Joseph of Arimathea was a man who believed in Jesus as his Savior. This man had not ordinarily revealed himself, but when Jesus died on the Cross and the disciples and everyone else had scattered in all directions, he appeared and asked Pilate to give him the body of Jesus so that he could bury it. Having received permission, Joseph took the body of Jesus down from the Cross. Nicodemus also came at this time. The Bible records, *"And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury" (John 19:39–40).* And they laid Jesus in a new tomb in a garden near the place where He was crucified.

Friday is, for the Jews, the day of preparing for the Sabbath. For the Jews, the Sabbath is from sunset on Friday until sunset on Saturday. Because no work was allowed to be done on that holy day, there was no time to spare. Also, in order to fulfill the word of God, our Lord was the first to be buried in a tomb that no one had ever used. In some places, people dig the ground, bury a coffin, and heap up earth to make a grave, but the Jews

dug into rock where no water came out, made a cave, and placed the body inside it as a tomb. If a family was rich, they would prepare a family tomb, and when the grandfather died, they would lay him there, and they would lay the grandmother there as well. Then all the flesh would decay and only the bones would remain, so that everything from the grandfather's bones to the grandson's bones would be kept there.

Jesus was buried in a new tomb in which no one had ever been buried. Joseph and Nicodemus wrapped Jesus in linen cloths and laid Him there. Normally, a body decays by itself inside there until only the bones remain. Joseph and Nicodemus held Jesus' funeral in that way on Friday, and they blocked the entrance of the cave with a stone so that neither animals nor people could get in.

## The empty tomb

*"Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.' Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in" (John 20:1–5).* The stone that had blocked the door of the tomb was not a stone that one or two people could move but an enormous stone, yet it had been moved. It seems that the reason the other disciple, who arrived first, did not go in was that he was afraid. Peter, who

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came after him, went into the tomb. *"Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself" (John 20:6–7).*

Jesus' disciples did not know that Jesus would rise again. Jesus had spoken of it many times, and it was also spoken of in the Old Testament, but the Bible records, *"For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead" (John 20:9)*.

In some places, people clothe the dead in burial clothes, but the Jews wrapped the head with cloth and wound up the arms, the legs, and the whole body tightly. Yet the linen cloths that had wrapped Jesus' body were lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head was folded separately. Mary thought that someone had taken Jesus' body away. But if someone had taken the body away, how could the cloths that had wrapped Jesus have remained so neatly in place?

## The Lord, who called out, "*Mary!*"

This Mary Magdalene is the woman who is introduced in the Bible as *"Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons" (Luke 8:2)*. This woman came to Jesus' tomb, saw that Jesus' body was not there, and wept aloud. *"But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.' Now when she had*

*said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?' She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, 'Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!' (which is to say, Teacher)" (John 20:11–16).*

At that time, the two disciples had already gone back to their own homes. Mary, who saw Jesus first, did not know that it was Jesus and, thinking that He was the gardener, asked Him to tell her if He had carried the body away. Then Jesus called Mary's name. When Mary looked in surprise, that voice and that figure were truly Jesus. Jesus said, *"Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father" (John 20:17)*. And *"Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her" (John 20:18).*

That evening, Jesus appeared to the disciples. *"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, '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 20:19–23)*. The disciples were trembling with fear. It was because the Jews had seized their Teacher and crucified Him to death, so they thought that the Jews would seize and kill all of them, too, saying that they belonged to that group. Even though the doors were shut, Jesus appeared in their midst. Jesus could appear in that way

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because He had a resurrected spiritual body. Although Jesus' disciples believed in Jesus, since they believed after seeing Him appear, their faith was not a perfect faith; it was a faith that half believed and half did not. To such disciples the Lord said to receive the Holy Spirit, and He spoke of the authority to remit sins.

## The Lord, who rose again to make us live again

The Lord has risen again. We believe that it was for our salvation that Jesus received baptism from John, had all our sins transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and rose again.

Jesus' physical body was nailed to the Cross and died completely. When a soldier pierced the side of Jesus, who had already died, with a spear, blood and water came out. So there can be no such claim that the Lord fainted and then woke up.

Today is the Lord's Day. In the old days there was only the Sabbath, a day of resting comfortably and worshiping, but now there is the Lord's Day. The day Jesus rose again in three days was none other than Sunday morning. It is called the Lord's Day because it is the day the Lord lived again. On the Lord's Day the Lord rose again.

If we look at the Gospel of Matthew, while Jesus was in the tomb, Roman soldiers were guarding the tomb. Jesus had said, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19)*. This One displayed His power even while He was alive, when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, and when Judas came and took Jesus away. When Peter drew his sword and struck the ear of the high priest's servant, the Bible records that Jesus *"touched his ear and healed him" (Luke 22:51)*. Jesus was the Lord of power who raised the dead and healed the sick. Jesus'

words were the truth, and there were no empty words in them. Because the work of life took place in those words and there was power in them, the disciples did not expect much, but the Pharisees and the chief priests were worried that it might turn out just as He had said. So they asked Pilate, *"Command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first" (Matthew 27:64)*. And *the Bible records, "So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard" (Matthew 27:66)*. They kept an ironclad guard so that no one could get in.

But *"there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men" (Matthew 28:2–4)*. The soldiers who were keeping guard were so shocked that they fell to the ground and could not move at all. Inside the tomb, the linen cloths were lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head was folded separately. The Bible does not say who folded it that way, but perhaps the angel did so. The Lord rose again. The Lord came back to life.

The Lord's resurrection was the victory of our Lord Himself. Our Lord was God. He who is God came as a man to save all sinners, had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received all the judgment for all sins on the Cross and died, and rose again from death. God raised His Son again. God had Jesus live on this earth in the form of a man for thirty-three years, had Him suffer the sufferings that people suffer, and had Him bear all the sin of

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mankind and die in place of mankind, and so He saved us. And our Lord rose again from death.

That the Lord has risen again means that He has completely saved us. The Bible says, *"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20)*. Even if our bodies leave this earth and decay in the ground, when the Lord comes again, we, too, will come back to life like the Lord.

## The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep

The Lord spoke of a saint's leaving this earth as sleeping. When Jesus was on this earth, there was a family He loved; it was the family of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. But even after hearing the news that Lazarus was sick and dying, Jesus did not go to him right away. Then, when Lazarus had breathed his last, He said, *"Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up" (John 11:11)*. A person who is asleep can wake up again. Our Lord does not regard the saints as dead.

Even when the day comes that our breath stops, it is only falling asleep; it is not the end. Just as Jesus Christ rose again, we, too, will rise again clothed in new bodies. We will come back to life in spiritual bodies that do not decay, that are not restricted by any barrier, that enjoy the pleasure of eating and drinking and every other pleasure and yet suffer no harm, and that never die for all eternity. Not only I but you, too, will come back to life. All who have been born again will come back to life.

Those who have not been born again will also all come back to life on the last day. But just as there is an order in all things, there is an order in the resurrection as well. Sinners cannot rise again together with the righteous. First Corinthians says, *"Each*

*one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (1 Corinthians 15:23)*. The firstfruits is Jesus; next are the righteous who are Christ's; and sinners rise again after them. To the righteous, who rise again first, eternal life, rewards, and blessings are given, but the sinners who rise again later will come back to life and suffer torment in the fire that is never quenched for all eternity.

Our Lord had our sins transferred to Him on this earth through the baptism He received from John, received all the judgment for them on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved us. And He testified for forty days and went up to heaven before the eyes of many people. Our Lord will come to this earth again. The Bible says, *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17)*. The righteous who sleep in the tombs will rise again first, and at this time the rapture will take place. So the rapture is something that takes place at the very last edge of the end of the world. It means that the rapture comes right before the final period is put down, after all the writing is finished. When the Lord comes to this earth, this world will come to an end, and together with the resurrection and the rapture, the Millennial Kingdom will begin.

People who do not know the rapture well think that the rapture is only the living going up, while those in the tombs are left as they are. That is a mistaken understanding. Whether the rapture has really taken place can be known only by going to the tombs where the righteous sleep and seeing whether the doors of the tombs have been opened. If the doors of the tombs are tightly

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shut, any claim that the rapture has taken place is nothing but a lie. The rapture is our Lord's catching up His own children who have been born again. This word says that He first catches up those who have received the remission of sins and are sleeping in the tombs, and then catches up those who are alive. At this time we will see the end and a new beginning.

Those who will be together in the Millennial Kingdom are the righteous. If, when the Lord comes to this earth, there is anyone among us who has fallen asleep, that person will rise again. Those who have been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit will at that time be clothed in spiritual bodies and be caught up. The righteous, like Jesus, can eat the food of this earth with relish if it is given to them, and if they want to meet someone, they can go in even if the doors are shut. They receive bodies that are not subject to the restrictions of the created world that God made, bodies that resemble the image of God, bodies that are perfect and flawless. It is a body indeed, but the body they receive is not a body of dust but a spiritual body.

## The remission of sins is the beginning of blessings

Think of how great the remission of sins is. For a person who has received the remission of sins, there is the resurrection of coming back to life, and, according to the word that says he *"shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6)*, he will reign for a thousand years and then enter the kingdom of heaven, where there is no more suffering or destruction. For a person who has not received the remission of sins there is also a resurrection, but it is a bad resurrection of coming back to life in order to be judged. The remission of sins is the beginning of blessings. By receiving the remission of sins, one becomes a

child of God and a righteous person, comes back to life with a good new life, and enjoys riches and glory forever. Through this remission of sins, all blessings are given.

Therefore, we must keep firmly in mind that for a person who has received the remission of sins there is the resurrection of life. We must keep firmly in mind that everything on this earth is not all there is, and that we are sojourners who live in this world for a little while and then leave. A sojourner, whether the house is good or bad, stays for a little while, eats, sleeps, and then departs again for his own destination. A person who has received the remission of sins is fundamentally such a sojourner.

Our Lord said to the disciples, *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:23)*. When a person who has received the remission of sins preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, those who hear that gospel and believe it receive the remission of sins.

We must surely keep in mind that there is a resurrection to come. The Lord said, *"Those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29)*. It means that those who have received the remission of sins and fallen asleep come forth to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil come forth to the resurrection of condemnation. That there is a resurrection of condemnation means that living in this world is not all there is. If there is anyone who has not received the remission of sins, no matter how well he ate and lived on this earth, when the Lord comes he will come back to life in a body that suffers torment in the fire that is never quenched. For the one reason alone that he did not receive the remission of sins, he must receive torment and curses. But for the one reason alone

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that he has received the remission of sins, a person receives every blessing, love, and grace.

Is there perhaps anyone who regards the salvation he has received as nothing special? If, because his circumstances in the flesh have not improved much after receiving the remission of sins, someone thinks, "It makes no difference whether I received this trifling thing or not," he is thinking very wrongly. I cannot tell you how blessed and happy a thing it is just to have received the remission of sins. Having received the remission of sins, one obtains eternal life through the good resurrection. A person who has not received the remission of sins comes back to life in order to be judged.

## *"Do not be unbelieving, but believing"*

Among Jesus' disciples there was a man named Thomas. Even among the disciples, he was a man whose faith was very slow. Still, he is incomparably better than Judas, who sold Jesus. Judas will also rise again, but he rises again in order to go into the fire that is never quenched.

Jesus appeared to the disciples and showed them His hands and His side. Since large nails had been driven in, no matter how much the flesh had healed, the marks must have remained clearly. Not only on His hands, but there were also the mark of the spear in His side and the marks of the nails in His feet, and Jesus showed them those marks. As if to say that He had risen again just as He had said and had come before them, so they should not be afraid, Jesus thus comforted the disciples and gave them strength.

But Thomas was not there. "*Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other*

*disciples therefore said to him, 'We have seen the Lord.' So he said to them, 'Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe'" (John 20:24–25)*. Thomas could not believe in the risen Jesus. He must have doubted, thinking, "Is it really Jesus? Isn't it someone with a similar face going around claiming to be Jesus?" When Jesus appeared again after eight days had passed, Thomas was with them, too. Jesus said to Thomas, *"Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing" (John 20:27)*. On the Lord's body the mark of the spear was there just as it was. It was not an illusion. Thomas's lack of faith was exposed. How lacking in faith Thomas must have been for Jesus to hold out His hands and His side and tell him to put his finger and hand into them! Thomas was ashamed. And he confessed, *"My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28)*. Among Jesus' disciples, a person like Thomas barely believed only after going through this.

The Bible says, *"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 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" (John 20:30–31)*. He had this word written so that we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ, that is, our Savior.

## Those who believe that they will come back to life

We who have been born again of water and the Spirit, however we die, only fall asleep for a little while, and we will

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wake up and live forever. A person who believes in this resurrection in his heart can preach the word of the resurrection.

We are people who have been greatly blessed. We have received so many blessings that a day would not be enough if we were to list the blessings we have received one by one. We thought that receiving just the remission of sins was nothing much, but how great a blessing it is that the good resurrection of coming back to life is waiting for us! To come back to life in a spiritual body resembling the image of God, to live together with God and have fellowship with God, and to live in a body that can see God, is truly a great blessing.

When we received the remission of sins, we probably did not even think that such blessings would be waiting. But we believe. We will come back to life. Our sick bodies will come back to life as bodies that will never be sick again. Everything is faith. *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1)*. Everything God has promised comes true. God gives every blessing to those who believe. I hope that all of you will become not unbelieving but believing. Let us live the rest of our lives by faith.

Before long, our Lord will come to this earth. If perhaps we fall asleep first before the Lord comes, the Lord will come and wake us from our sleep. Those who have not received the remission of sins will not come back to life during the thousand years that we live after rising again. Only after we have enjoyed blessings together with the Lord for a thousand years will they rise again in order to be judged. There are sufferings we have gone through on this earth because of the Lord. For a thousand years the Lord will fully compensate us for those sufferings. After that, the judgment of the eternal kingdom of heaven and eternal hell will be handed down. When we enter the eternal

kingdom of heaven, on the other side they will go to hell, beating their breasts and crying out in anguish.

At that time, when we recall what we did on this earth, everyone will have so very much to talk about. We believe that just as the Lord rose again, we, too, will rise again. We give thanks to God, who has given us new life. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

# Jesus, who fully accomplished the promised salvation

**< John 19:28–37 >**

**“After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ‘Not one of His bones shall be broken.’ And again another Scripture says, ‘They shall look on Him whom they pierced.’”**

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On the Cross, Jesus said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*. This was not a groan that burst out because He could no longer endure the pain. It is the declaration of the One who accomplished to the end the work of salvation that God had promised. As John recounts the death of Jesus, he makes clear again and again the fact that the Scripture was fulfilled. His saying that He thirsted, His receiving the sour wine, His legs not being broken, and even His side being pierced—John testifies of all of these in connection with God's promise. Within these short ten verses, the word *"Scripture"* appears three times.

The old promise of the Old Testament and the fulfillment of that promise in the New Testament form a pair. Our faith stands on that work which God promised and accomplished. A person who feels as if he has been saved when his heart is fervent, and as if his salvation has also disappeared when his heart grows cold, is always shaken. But the work Jesus accomplished does not change according to our feelings.

## Jesus, who fulfilled the Scripture until the last moment

Let us read verses 28 and 29.

*"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!' Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth" (John 19:28–29).*

Jesus, knowing that all things were already accomplished, said, *"I thirst!" (John 19:28)*. He knew that the time had now come to bring the work of salvation to its conclusion. This word, too, was so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. The Lord was

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not One who met death without knowing what was happening to Him. He knew the work the Father had entrusted to Him and carried it out, and He fulfilled the word until just before He breathed His last.

In a psalm written by David, there is this word, which the Holy Spirit caused him to speak beforehand.

*"They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (Psalm 69:21).*

Beside the Cross there was sour wine, and people filled a sponge with it, put it on hyssop, and put it to Jesus' mouth. The *"vinegar"* that the psalm speaks of is none other than this sour wine. The word given long ago was fulfilled exactly as it was in the midst of Jesus' suffering. In this way, the Son of God came in the body of a man and actually fulfilled what had been spoken beforehand through the mouth of David.

Jesus' thirst was the thirst of a body that had been nailed through the hands and feet and had shed all its blood. The Lord went through that thirst in order to give us life. Even in the midst of that suffering, the mockery and violence of people could not stop the salvation that God was accomplishing.

Let us not regard the word of God as words that comfort us only when our circumstances are good. The Lord fulfilled that word even in the face of death. God is the One who promises and fulfills that promise. The word in which He promised the remission of sins and everlasting life is fulfilled in the same way. The power of the word does not diminish because the circumstances before our eyes are difficult. Rather than your own judgment, which changes according to your circumstances, hold on to the Lord, who has already fulfilled His promise.

## We cannot add our merit to the remission of sins He has fully accomplished

Let us read verse 30.

*"So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit" (John 19:30).*

After Jesus had received the sour wine, He said that it was finished, and bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. What did He finish? It is that God the Son, who came clothed in the body of a man, fully accomplished the work of saving us, the work of receiving in our place the judgment that removes all our sins. For that work, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River. And now, with the blood of the Cross, He received for us the judgment for that sin. When we believe together in the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, we come to know what this declaration means for us.

The word *"It is finished!"* means that there is no price of sin whatsoever that has been left as our share. What was passed on to Jesus through the baptism He received from John is all the sins of the world. The sins before we believed, the sins we commit out of weakness after we have believed—the sins of our whole lives are all in it. Jesus bore all those sins, was hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and thereby paid that price in full. Therefore, the work of salvation is a work the Lord has finished, and no share remains that people must complete.

Jesus said that it was finished, so what is lacking that we should add our own strength? To put forward tearful prayers of repentance or religious zeal as the price of the remission of sins is the same as saying that since the Lord did not finish it all, we will add our own strength. Even if there is a heart that grieves

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over its wrongs, that grief cannot take the place of the price of sin. The authority to wash away sins belongs to Jesus Christ. By believing in that gospel which the Lord accomplished, we have all our sins washed away once and for all.

And Jesus was buried, and then, as He had promised, He rose again from death three days later. The Savior, who gave up His life, came back to life and gives everlasting life to us who believe in Him. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of sins, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God. We have become righteous people not because our lives have changed to be without blemish, but because we have believed in the work the Lord fully accomplished.

## The salvation testified of by the unbroken bones and the pierced side

Let us read verses 31 through 34.

*"Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out" (John 19:31–34).*

That day was the Preparation Day, and when the sun set, the Sabbath, which was a high day, was about to begin. The Jews, saying that bodies could not be left hanging on the cross on a holy day, asked Pilate that the legs be broken and the bodies

taken away. The soldiers broke the legs of the two men who were crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that He was already dead and did not break His legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. John clearly conveys the fact that Jesus truly died. The claim that Jesus merely fainted for a while and then woke up has no place to stand in the light of this record.

John also makes clear that this fulfilled the Scripture. Let us read verse 36.

*"For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken'" (John 19:36).*

When God gave the people of Israel the ordinance for eating the Passover lamb, He told them not to break its bones.

*"In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones" (Exodus 12:46).*

The Passover lamb was the lamb that the people of Israel killed on the night they came out of Egypt and whose blood they put on the doorposts. That lamb points to Jesus, who was to come. Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, and now He was sacrificed like the Passover lamb. Even while the soldiers were breaking the legs of the two men, not one of Jesus' bones was broken. That ordinance given through Moses was fulfilled exactly as it was in the body of Jesus.

Verse 37 cites another Scripture, which says, *"They shall look on Him whom they pierced" (John 19:37)*. The prophet Zechariah said beforehand, *"Then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son" (Zechariah 12:10)*. From His thirst to the mark of the spear in His side, all these things testify that the One who died on the Cross is the Savior whom God promised.

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After Jesus had finished everything and breathed His last, blood and water came out of His side. What remained as the result of the love He had fully accomplished was none other than blood and water. Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and while bearing those sins, He received the judgment for us with the blood of the Cross.

The Apostle Peter also said of the water, *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism… through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21)*, and so the water that saves us is the baptism Jesus received from John. The water is the sign that washed away our sins, and the blood is the sign that He received the judgment for those sins and gave us new life. The Apostle John testified of Jesus Christ as follows.

*"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 5:6–8).*

The water, the blood, and the Spirit—these three agree in one. The salvation we believe in is not a way made up by human thinking, but the truth that Jesus Christ accomplished with the water and the blood and that the Holy Spirit testifies of. Therefore, if one holds on only to the blood of the Cross and leaves out the baptism Jesus received from John, this testimony is not complete. The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who believes together in the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the Lord, who rose again from death, and testifies of that salvation.

## Believe the true testimony and rise up from discouragement

Let us read verse 35.

*"And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe" (John 19:35).*

Who is the one who saw this? It is that disciple who was standing beside the Cross, namely the Apostle John himself, who wrote this Gospel. Instead of his own name, he writes *"he who has seen,"* presents as evidence the blood and water that he saw with his own eyes, and says that his testimony is true. And he makes his purpose clear. It is not merely to inform us in detail of the Lord's suffering, but to cause us to believe.

If, even while reading the Bible, one regards his own thoughts as more right, it is difficult to accept this testimony. Do not push away the work of God because it cannot be explained by your own experience. The person who accepts the Apostle John's testimony just as it is obtains salvation.

Just as God's promise is true, so God's warning is also true. Just as the word that He will give everlasting life to those who believe is fulfilled exactly as it is, so the word that He will judge those who reject the Savior to the end is not in vain. Therefore, if you have heard this grace, do not take the grace lightly, but follow the word of the Lord, who has saved us.

On the other hand, if you have collapsed because of your own weakness, look at the labor the Lord did for us. Even the labor that one person does for another has its effect; how great, then, must the labor that God the Son did for us be! Therefore, the person who believes in Him abundantly obtains the remission of sins and abundantly obtains everlasting life. Do not conclude on your own, "I am lacking, so I cannot walk the way of faith."

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When we believe in the Lord, who gave us life, and listen to the word and follow Him, we can walk again by the strength of that grace.

Jesus is not One who left behind only a promise. He came according to the Scriptures, had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, received for us the judgment for them with the blood of the Cross, and then said that it was finished. And that Jesus rose again from death. Rather than struggling to hold on to your wavering self, set your heart on that salvation which has already been accomplished. Let us hold on to that one word He spoke, *"It is finished!"* and rise up from discouragement and run on by faith. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

# The people who served Jesus, overcoming their fear

**< John 19:38–42 >**

**"After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby."**

After Jesus died on the Cross, someone was needed to take His body down and bury it. The one who stepped forward at that time was not one of the disciples who had always followed Jesus around. Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate. He was a disciple of Jesus, but he had been hiding that fact for fear of the Jews. John records his fear without concealing it. A disciple who had believed in hiding now stepped forward to the work of serving Jesus.

Nicodemus also came with him. He was the one who had once come to Jesus by night and heard the word of being born

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again. He brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. The two of them wrapped the body of Jesus in linen cloths with the spices and laid Him in a new tomb nearby. In the face of Jesus' death, these men did not stop at grieving inwardly; they offered their own bodies and possessions and took on the work that was absolutely necessary at that time.

We, too, are given work with which to serve the Lord. But there are many times when fear stands in the way between cherishing something in our hearts and actually taking on that work. We are bothered by how people look at us, we worry about suffering loss, and we also hesitate at the thought that we are inadequate. Joseph, too, was afraid of people. But when the time came for Jesus to be buried, he went forward, saying that he would take His body into his care. This word shows that even we who are weak can stand in the place of serving through faith that believes in Jesus.

## Joseph, who had been afraid, went to Pilate

Let us read verse 38.

*"After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus" (John 19:38).*

Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but for fear of the Jews he was a disciple "*secretly*"; that is, he was hiding it without revealing it. At that time, if one revealed that he believed in Jesus, there was much to lose. He could be pushed out of his official position and also be driven out of Judaism. John had also recorded earlier that many among the rulers believed in Jesus, but "*they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the*

*synagogue" (John 12:42)*. Joseph's fear, too, had come from such circumstances. This Joseph went to Pilate, who had handed Jesus over to be executed, and asked that he himself might take His body.

The time when Joseph stepped forward was not after the hatred toward Jesus had died down. Jesus had just been executed on the Cross, and in people's eyes He was a sinner who had been condemned and put to death. It was a time when anyone who took the side of such a person would be despised along with Him. At that very time, Joseph asked that the body of Jesus be given to him. Without waiting for circumstances to improve, he did what had to be done right then. The Bible does not leave Joseph only as a man who hid in fear. It records him as a man who went forward to serve Jesus at the time when it was most needed.

The Gospel of Mark relates that event as follows.

*"Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus" (Mark 15:43).*

John says that Joseph hid in fear, and Mark says that he *"taking courage, went in to Pilate" (Mark 15:43)* and asked for the body. The man who had been afraid went in boldly. He was a prominent council member, and he had a position to protect and relationships among people. But he did not turn away from the burial of Jesus while weighing those things. He regarded Jesus, in whom he believed, as more precious than his own status known to people.

We, too, often step back from the work entrusted to us today, using our past weakness as an excuse. We decide for ourselves that since we were not bold before, we will not be bold in the future either. But look at Joseph. The man who had believed in hiding stood before Pilate. If we think again through the word

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about who the Lord is and believe in the grace we have received from Him, we, too, can accept the work we must do today. Just as Joseph went forward at that time when the burial of Jesus was needed, let us, too, recognize the service that is needed now and carry it out by faith.

If we look only for work that everyone around us approves of and that involves no loss at all, we easily come to a stop on the path of following the Lord. Faith does not come from the expectation that people's opinion of us will improve, but from the conviction that the One we serve is the true Savior. Because we have that conviction, we can lay down the heart that was conscious of people's eyes and do the work entrusted to us.

## Nicodemus, too, came bringing spices

Let us read verses 39 and 40.

*"And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury" (John 19:39–40).*

Joseph asked Pilate for permission, and Nicodemus came having prepared a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Together the two of them took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices. One obtained the permission, and the other provided the spices. It was not one person who did everything. Each took part with what he could do, and so they carried out the burial that was absolutely necessary that day.

John introduces Nicodemus again as the one *"who at first came to Jesus by night."* At that time he had come to Jesus

knowing Him as a teacher come from God. When Jesus said that one must be born again, he was the one who asked in return, *"Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (John 3:4)*. To such a man, Jesus answered as follows.

*"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'" (John 3:5).*

Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, but with his position and learning he could not enter the kingdom of God. He had to be born again of water and the Spirit. The way of being born again that Jesus had spoken of that night was now accomplished through Jesus' own body. Through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him; with the blood of the Cross, He received the judgment for that sin; and He was buried and rose again from death three days later. Whoever believes in this Jesus has all his sins washed away once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and is born again as a child of God.

Nicodemus, who had come by night and asked how a man could be born again, now came to take the body of Jesus, who had died on the Cross. He gave his possessions and his labor to that work. The heart that regarded Jesus as precious, as the true Savior, is revealed in that action. It was not the hundred pounds of spices that saved him. Because he believed that Jesus is the Savior, he gave his own things without reserve in serving Him.

In the work of serving the gospel, too, each person's assigned part is different. There are those who preach the word, and there are those who help and prepare for that work. Some provide what is needed, and some set aside their time and take on the work entrusted to them. If we compare one another's parts and argue over who stands out more, we cannot work together. Just as Joseph and Nicodemus together wrapped the one body in

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linen cloths, we serve united in one heart that regards as precious the Lord, who saved us.

## The One who was buried in the new tomb is the Lord of life

Let us read verses 41 and 42.

*"Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby" (John 19:41–42).*

In the place where Jesus was crucified there was a garden, and in it there was a new tomb in which no one had yet been buried. Jesus was the first to be buried in that tomb, in which no one had ever lain. That day was the Jews' Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath. Because the burial had to be finished before the Sabbath began, the two of them laid Jesus in that tomb nearby. From bringing the body, to wrapping it with the spices and linen cloths, to laying it in the tomb, they did not put off what was needed. Their loving hearts were shown in such concrete labor.

The record that His whole body was wrapped in linen cloths according to the burial custom of the Jews and laid in the tomb shows that Jesus truly died. It was not that He lost consciousness for a while and then woke up. Jesus, who had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, actually suffered death, the wages of that sin, and lay in the tomb. Therefore, before we speak of the joy of the resurrection, we first believe in the death of the Savior, who gave up His own life for us.

But let us also look at who it was that lay in that tomb. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; He is the One who made all things and the Lord of life, who raises the dead. The One who first entered that new tomb, in which no one had been buried, was not One who would remain in the tomb. The One who said before the tomb of Lazarus that He Himself is the resurrection and the life was none other than this One.

That tomb could not hold Jesus. Jesus rose again from death three days later, just as He had said. Therefore, our serving Him whom Joseph and Nicodemus buried is not a matter of commemorating a teacher who has gone away. It is serving the Christ, who is alive even now and gives eternal life to those who believe.

This faith enables us to overcome fear. What made Joseph hide was the fear of people, and what makes us hesitate is also the worry that we might lose something. But the Lord of our lives is Jesus Christ. The life He has given to those who believe in the Lord does not end with the death of the flesh. That is why a person who believes does not have his heart completely taken over by fear but takes on the work entrusted to him while he is alive. This is not the nerve to grit one's teeth and endure, but faith that relies on the Lord, who raises us up again.

## The faith that offers oneself when it is needed

Through what these two men did, the Bible shows that the one who offers himself at the time when it is most needed is a disciple of the Lord. Service is not accomplished merely by having known the Lord for a long time. Joseph and Nicodemus did not leave the burial of Jesus to someone else. They themselves came forward, and they themselves made the

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preparations and laid the body of Jesus to rest. Their service, which was absolutely necessary at that time, is now recorded in the Bible and handed down to us.

We, too, have times when, while saying that we believe in the Lord, we spend all our hearts on protecting our own circumstances. The more our worries increase, the more the work of serving the gospel is pushed back, and only what we ourselves need looms large. But when we think deeply of the Lord, who saved us, it becomes clear what we must live for. Instead of spending the life we have been given only for ourselves until it ends, offering it to serving the gospel of the One who made us alive is our response to that love.

A heart that will follow only when circumstances are good easily retreats when difficulty comes. But our Lord is the One who knows all our weakness and holds us up. Even though we are inadequate, let us set our hearts on the Savior, who gave up His body for us, not deny the love we have received, and serve His gospel not according to our circumstances but until the day the Lord comes. More precious than the boast that one will take on everything alone is the faith that recognizes the service needed today and takes it on together.

Joseph came out from where he had been hiding, and Nicodemus came bringing spices. Jesus, whom the two of them wrapped in linen cloths and laid in the new tomb, rose again from death three days later, and He calls us today as the living Christ. Is there faith you have kept hidden because of people's eyes, and service you have kept putting off? The faith that made Joseph, who had hidden in fear, stand before Pilate also makes us today step forward to the place of serving the Lord. ✉

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# CHAPTER

# 20–21

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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

# Faith that looks to new life in front of the empty tomb

**< John 20:1–10 >**

**“Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.’ Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.”**

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## On the morning they thought they had lost the Lord, the resurrection had already taken place

Dear beloved saints, on the first day of the week, early in the morning while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb of Jesus. It was after Jesus had died on the Cross and been buried in the tomb. Going to a tomb in the darkness of early dawn was frightening, but Mary came all the way to the tomb. Because the grace she had received from the Lord while He was alive was great, she treasured Him even after He had died.

But the large stone that had blocked the entrance of the tomb had been moved away. What first came to Mary's mind when she saw it was not the resurrection. She thought that someone had taken the body of Jesus away to another place. So she ran to Simon Peter and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and told them, *"They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him" (John 20:2)*.

Mary loved Jesus, but she did not yet know what had happened that morning. Having a heart that loved the Lord did not mean that she realized the resurrection right away. So, in front of the empty tomb, rather than rejoicing, she was first startled and bewildered, and she ran.

In Mary's heart there was the sorrow of having lost the Lord, but Jesus had already risen from death. While people's thoughts were still lingering in the face of death, God had already accomplished the work of life. We, too, are apt to think that the Lord's work is accomplished only as much as we understand. When our hearts are discouraged, we feel as if our hope has also disappeared, and when we cannot see the way, we regard even what God has done as something dim. But the Lord's resurrection is not an event that came about according to the disciples' feelings or understanding. Because the Lord actually

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rose again from death, the disciples, who had not known that fact, now come to believe in Him and rejoice.

The starting point of our faith also lies here. Before examining how firm your heart is, first see in the word what God has done for you. When we believe in what He has accomplished, our thoughts and hearts are also made new. This morning, which began while it was still dark, was a morning that sorrow could not rule to the end.

## The Lord's resurrection, to which the linen cloths left in the tomb point

In these ten verses, the word *"tomb"* appears seven times. The steps of Mary and of the two disciples all headed toward the tomb, but that tomb was empty. Peter and the other disciple, who had heard the news, ran together. The other disciple ran faster and arrived first, but he only stooped down and saw the linen cloths lying there and did not go in. Simon Peter, who came following him, went straight into the tomb. More important than who arrived first is what they saw there. Let us read verses 6 through 8.

*"Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed" (John 20:6–8).*

Inside the tomb, the body of Jesus was not there. Only the linen cloths were lying there—the linen cloths of which it says that Joseph and Nicodemus, according to the burial custom, *"bound it in strips of linen" (John 19:40)*—and the handkerchief

that had been around His head was folded together in a place by itself, apart from the linen cloths. It had been folded up neatly, just as one folds laundry and puts it away.

Mary thought that people had taken the Lord away. But if someone had carried the body away, he would have taken it just as it was, wrapped in the cloth. Would there be any reason for a person taking a body away to unwrap the cloth and even fold up the handkerchief for the head separately and leave it there? The folded handkerchief was evidence that Jesus had risen again. The other disciple, who had come to the tomb first, went inside, saw this, and believed.

The resurrection means that the One who had died came back to life. It is entirely different from saying that a person who left behind a good legacy lives on in our memory. The Lord was truly buried, and He truly rose again. The word that follows testifies that the risen Lord came to the disciples and met them.

To believe in the Lord, who rose again from death, means to rely on the Savior, who is alive even now. The reason we give thanks to Him today, hear the word, and carry out the work He has entrusted to us is also that He is alive.

## The disciples, who come to know what they saw within the word of the Scriptures

But after the word that the disciple saw and believed, the Scripture adds one thing. Let us read verse 9.

*"For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead" (John 20:9).*

The disciple saw inside the tomb and believed, but he did not yet know the word of the Scripture that Jesus must rise again from the dead. The disciples were people who had not even

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imagined that the Lord would die. Seeing a fact before one's eyes and realizing that matter within the word of God are two different things.

The Gospel of John had already written as follows earlier: *"Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said" (John 2:22)*. The faith that began in front of the empty tomb grew into a faith that believes the Scripture, as they met the risen Lord and heard His word.

We, too, cannot say that we fully know the meaning of the resurrection just because we have heard the news of it many times. Even if we know the saying that Jesus rose again, we may not know what relation it has to our remission of sins and our life. If we hold the resurrection merely as a doctrine and as knowledge to explain to others, then in the face of our own death we will still think that everything comes to an end. The resurrection is the work that the Lord, who saved us, accomplished, and it is also our own rising again in the future.

The reason Jesus put on a human body and came to this earth was to save us, who were in sin. Through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him, and, while bearing that sin, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and so received the judgment for sin. Then He was buried, and three days later He rose again from death and gave new life to us who believe. All of this was for you and me. Whoever believes this gospel is washed of all sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and is born again as a child of God. The baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection are the one work of the Lord that saves sinners.

If we look only at the suffering of the Cross while leaving out the baptism He received from John, we cannot clearly know why Jesus had to die. Also, if we stop our thinking at the Cross, the hope of salvation by which He raises us again grows dim. The gospel of the water and the Spirit makes us believe in Jesus, who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and received for us the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross, and in the Lord, who rose again from death. The power that makes us clean and brings us to life does not lie in our resolve but in this Savior.

The disciples saw the folded handkerchief with their eyes and believed. Today we hear of that event through the word of the Scriptures. Even so, to a person who has been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the word of the resurrection is believable. The reason it is believed in the heart even though we cannot fully grasp it with our heads is that the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart that has received the remission of sins. What we are to hold on to first, rather than momentary feelings, is the word of the Lord. Believe in the resurrection that God accomplished, just as the word of the Scriptures says, and accept that this grace has been given to you.

## The Lord, who rose again, raises us again as well

People grow old, fall ill, and meet death. While we have strength, it sounds like a distant story, but when our bodies grow weak and we send off those close to us, we come to know how heavy a thing death is. If a life of toil were to end entirely in death, how futile it would be! But the word that the Lord rose again from death brings us the news that for us, too, who have received the remission of sins, there is a life of living again.

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Let us think about the word that Jesus Himself spoke. Let us read John chapter 11, verses 25 and 26.

*"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?'" (John 11:25–26).*

Jesus is not merely One who explains life to us; He Himself is the resurrection and the life. Just as He rose again, He also raises us who believe in Him. Just as the sin in our hearts actually disappeared when we believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the resurrection of living again is also actually accomplished for the person who has received the remission of sins. Therefore our hope is different from the hope one gains by keeping the body alive for a long time. Because the Lord raises us again, death cannot take us away forever.

Even with this hope, when our bodies are sick, we suffer, and when we send off those we love, we grieve. But even in that sorrow we have the living Lord. On the day of the resurrection we rise again with bodies that never die again and never fall ill. Our present frailty cannot be our final form. Because we look to that life, we do not give our whole hearts over to discouragement, and we carry out today's toil. The days in which we care for the saints who believe with us and carry out the work He has entrusted to us are also the life of a person who looks to the Lord, who will raise us again. Let us not regard as something common the grace of the Savior, who gave us new life.

The two disciples saw the tomb and went back to their own homes, but what began with the resurrection of Jesus did not stop there. The risen Lord soon comes to meet them again. We, too, have the same Lord. Jesus, who received for us the judgment for our sins with the blood of the Cross and was buried in the tomb, rose again, leaving behind only the linen cloths and the folded

handkerchief. Even on the day when, in the face of death, everything seems to have come to an end, look to that empty tomb and believe in Jesus, who will raise us again. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

# The living Lord, who came to us in the midst of sorrow

**< John 20:11–18 >**

**“But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.’ Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?’ She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, ‘Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to Him, ‘Rabboni!’ (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, “I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.”’ Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.”**

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## Mary, who stayed by the tomb because she treasured the Lord

Dear beloved saints, even after the two disciples had gone back to their own homes, Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. That she could not know where the body of Jesus was pained her heart. As she wept, she stooped down and looked into the tomb, and two angels in white were sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and the other at the feet. The angels asked, *"Woman, why are you weeping?" (John 20:13)*, but Mary's answer was still that she did not know where people had laid her Lord.

To Mary, Jesus was not merely someone from whom she had once received help. The Gospel of Luke introduces her as *"Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons" (Luke 8:2)*. She was a person who had met Jesus and been set free from a suffering she could not escape by her own strength. That is why Mary, even speaking of Jesus, who had become a corpse, called Him *"my Lord."* In her earnest desire to find even that body, a heart that treasured the Lord above all else is revealed.

If we forget grace, the Savior feels distant. If we forget what state we were in because of sin, even the remission of sins sounds like a commonplace word. We, who could not stand before God, have been made clean through Jesus. The life given to us was not obtained by any qualification we had, but obtained by the grace of the Lord, who came to us first. When we engrave that grace on our hearts, we come to know how precious the Lord is.

But what Mary was looking for was still the body of Jesus. Between verses 11 and 15, words referring to Mary's weeping appear four times. An earnest heart alone did not stop those tears.

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Together with earnestness toward the Lord, there must be faith that believes the word He makes known.

## The word of the Lord, who called Mary

When Mary had said this and turned around, Jesus was standing there. But she did not know that it was Jesus. The risen Jesus was not in the haggard and gruesome state He had been in when He was hung on the Cross. Even when Jesus asked, *"Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" (John 20:15),* she thought He was the gardener and asked Him to tell her where He had laid the body if He had carried it away. She even said that she herself would take it away. Mary was looking for the body of the dead Lord even with the living Lord before her eyes.

Let us read verse 16.

*"Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!' (which is to say, Teacher)" (John 20:16).*

Jesus called Mary by name. It was the very voice she had heard when He was alive. At that one word, Mary turned, recognized Jesus, and called Him Teacher. The sorrow that had not been resolved however much she looked into the tomb changed before the call of the living Lord. The risen Lord came to her, met her, and spoke to her.

Jesus knew where Mary was and why she was weeping. Peter and the other disciple had been to the tomb first, but the person to whom the risen Lord first revealed Himself was Mary, who was weeping outside the tomb. The Lord reveals Himself to those who love Him. The salvation we have received also began from the grace of the Lord, who comes to us in this way. To us, who were suffering because we did not know how to wash away

our sins, the Lord made known what He had done through the word of the gospel, and when we believed that word, we received the remission of sins and life.

Today, too, the word that testifies of the Lord has been given to us. If we wait only to be moved in the way we want, it is easy to miss the grace of the gospel that has already been given. The Lord has made known to us through the word what He accomplished for us. Set your heart on that word.

Jesus, who appeared to Mary, is not a figure in memories one only hears about, but the living Savior. Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, received the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross, and rose again from death. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit has all his sins washed away once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit, and is born again. Therefore, the remission of sins we have received does not end as a momentary comfort that ceases in the face of death, but leads to eternal life in the living Lord.

## He called the disciples brethren and conveyed the news about the Father

Mary met Jesus again. But Jesus did not leave this meeting as the joy of Mary alone; He gave her a word to go and convey to the disciples. Let us read verse 17.

*"Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God."'" (John 20:17).*

Jesus told Mary not to touch Him, and said that He had not yet ascended to the Father. And then He immediately entrusted

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her with a task. It was to go to the brethren and convey the news that Jesus was ascending to the Father. That we love the Lord is also revealed in this way, in treasuring the word the Lord has entrusted to us and following it just as it is.

Look here at the word Jesus used to call the disciples. He said, "*My brethren.*" The disciples were people who had exposed their own weakness in the face of the Lord's suffering. Nevertheless, the risen Jesus called them brethren and said, *"to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God" (John 20:17)*. Jesus, the Son of God, spoke of the disciples and Mary as people standing in the same place as Himself. How great a grace this is! Those who were in sin have become able to call God Father and come before Him.

How could Jesus say such a thing? Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, received the judgment for that sin with the blood of the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He removed all the sins of those who believe. Therefore, when the risen Jesus faced Mary, Mary was no longer a sinner but a child of God. The Lord did not just give us a good title while leaving our sins as they were. Those who have received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit have come to call Jesus' Father their own Father. Whenever you see your own shortcomings, do not turn this grace back as if it had never happened.

Let us read John chapter 1, verse 12.

*"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).*

The right to become children of God is given to those who receive Jesus and believe in His name. It is not a title obtained by doing more work than others, but a grace received by

believing in Jesus Christ, who washed away our sins. Therefore, even while doing the work entrusted to them, saints do not try to buy the place of a child by proving themselves. As children in the Father's love, they follow His will.

Since Jesus called the disciples brethren, our hearts toward fellow believers also change. Can we carelessly despise as inferior to ourselves a person whom the Lord calls brother? Because the grace we have received is the same, we treasure one another. Though our tasks and responsibilities differ, the Lord who gave us life is one. Both those who teach the word up front and those who help with what is needed behind the scenes are people whom the Lord has called brethren. So let us not try to stand above one another, but respect the labor we bear together.

## A heart that treasures the Lord leads to obedience

Mary went to the disciples and told them that *"she had seen the Lord" (John 20:18)*, and she also conveyed the word the Lord had spoken to her. The one who, in verse 13, wept, saying, "Someone has taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have laid Him," says in verse 18 that *"she had seen the Lord."* The One who turned Mary's sorrow into joy was Jesus. The risen Lord met her, called her by name, and even gave her news to convey.

What Mary conveyed was not the story she had hoped for but the word she had heard from the Lord. A person who says he serves the Lord does not put his own thoughts before His will. He knows clearly the gospel he has received and preaches the word the Lord has spoken just as he heard it.

A heart that treasures the Lord is not revealed by words alone. If the heart is full of other things, the word of the Lord keeps

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getting pushed back. When we ruminate on the grace we have received from the Lord and set our hearts on that word, we come to care for weak brothers, share the burdens of those who labor with us, and give our strength to the work of serving the gospel. Such a life comes from knowing how precious the Lord's grace is. The Lord saved us first, and it is because of that very grace that we serve Him. Examine yourself so that you do not take the salvation you have received for granted and become indifferent to the Lord's will.

Mary met the living Lord and went to the disciples with His word. We, too, have the living Lord and the word He has given. Right now, because of sorrow, that grace may feel distant. All the more at such times, look back on who Jesus is and what He has done for us. He is the Lord, who washed away our sins and enabled us to call God Father. Where is there anyone more precious than He? Like Mary, who conveyed that *"she had seen the Lord,"* I hope that you will hold on to the word of Jesus, who called us *"My brethren,"* and follow Him. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

# There is a new life for the righteous

**< John 20:1–31 >**

**"Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.' Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where**

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**they have laid Him.' Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?' She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, 'Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!' (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God."' Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, '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.' Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, 'We have seen the Lord.' So he said to them, 'Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.' And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, 'Peace to you!' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach your**

**finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.' And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.' And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 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."**

Today is Easter Sunday. For the righteous, that is, for those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, a new life is waiting. That is, what is waiting for them is not the life that is lived once on this earth, but a new life in which the body comes back to life and lives once again. So we have expectation, and hope arises. Hope is said to be something one looks forward to, and if there is something we look forward to, it is this. Having lived in this world once, we found that there were many things we regretted and many things we felt sorry about. But if a new life, an eternal life, is given to us once again, then we have the desire to live, at that time, a life that truly has no more regrets.

What we desire in our hearts at that time, what we desire spiritually, and how fully we will enjoy by faith the blessings of God that we always speak of—we should meditate on these things and think about them deeply.

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## Mary Magdalene, who went to the tomb

Jesus cherished Mary Magdalene very much. Mary Magdalene, too, was a person who had met the Lord and received great grace. When Jesus died on the Cross and was laid in the tomb, one of the women who went to that tomb was Mary Magdalene.

Mary Magdalene went to the tomb to put spices on the body of Jesus, but the stone had been taken away from the tomb. The Bible records, *"But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?'" (John 20:11–13)*. The Bible goes on to record, *"Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?' She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, 'Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away'" (John 20:15)*. Then it says, *"Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!' (which is to say, Teacher)" (John 20:16)*. And it says, *"Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God."' Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her" (John 20:17–18)*.

We can easily think, as people customarily do, that Mary the mother of Jesus went to the tomb. But whether she went or not, I do not know. This word speaks of Mary Magdalene, so I will speak only of that. When Jesus was hung on the Cross, it says, *"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene"*

*(John 19:25)*, so it seems that the name Mary was common in that country.

The Apostle John records the matter of Mary Magdalene in particular detail in the Gospel of John. Mary Magdalene took Jesus for the gardener and said that if He told her where He had laid the body of Jesus, she would take it away. At that moment, Jesus called Mary by name.

When Jesus called Mary by name, Mary turned around and answered, "Teacher." Mary did not recognize the risen Jesus right away. It was the dim light of dawn, so it must have been all the more so. Do you know what the dim light of dawn is? When you walk along a pitch-dark road in the early morning, some light seeps in very faintly, and the road becomes visible little by little, and later people also begin to come into view. The time when it grows light very faintly like this is called the dim light of dawn. That seems to be why Mary did not recognize Jesus at once. And Mary Magdalene, as the Lord had told her, went to the disciples and testified that she had seen the Lord.

## The righteous, who are waiting for a new life

I believe it as an established fact that the Lord rose again. It is because if the Lord had not risen again, your salvation and mine could not be fully completed either. And, as I say again and again, the Lord rose again and now lives a new life. He lives a new life—not the life He lived on this earth, that is, the life in which He was miserably ostracized and mocked by people, but a new life. Having risen again, He began such a new life. And I believe that this has become your life and mine.

Just as the Apostle Paul said, "*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared*

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*with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18)*, I believe that this new life is a truly good and satisfying life. So I truly look forward to it. This is not something to think about for a moment and then be done with, but a new blessing to think about over and over again as we go on living.

When the righteous who live in these last days wait, thinking of the fact that a new life is waiting for them, joy, patience, and boldness arise in our hearts. I hope that you, too, will know that a new life of living again is waiting for you and me, and will think of it, dream of it, and wait for it.

## *"Peace be with you"*

Jesus first showed Himself to those who had come to the tomb. That is, at dawn that day, Mary Magdalene met Jesus. And the second time, He appeared to the disciples on Sunday evening. The Bible records, *"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews" (John 20:19)*. The disciples had gathered and were discussing with one another. The women who had gone to the tomb would have been saying that they had seen Jesus and that He had really risen again, and Peter and John would have been saying that when they went to the tomb the body was not there, and so they would have been talking with one another. But they had all the doors closed—perhaps they had even locked them. Since it says "doors," it seems that there was not just one door but several. While they had all the doors closed like this, Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst.

The first word the risen Lord spoke, standing in the midst of the disciples, was the greeting *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*.

Peace is a tremendously good thing. Being free from danger, having joy, and having a heart that is at ease and settled—this is called peace. A heart that is peaceful and has no worries at all is peace. It was very fitting that our Lord greeted the disciples in this way. It was because the disciples were feeling anxious. How anxious they must have been at that time! People had left alone the disciples who believed in Jesus and had seized only Jesus, nailed Him to the Cross, and killed Him, so the disciples, too, were anxious.

The disciples had followed and believed in Jesus. But what would happen if the matter grew bigger and an order was given to seize and kill all those who had followed Jesus as well? So the disciples of Jesus were anxious, fearing that they might suffer such a thing just as Jesus had. But with all the doors closed, Jesus suddenly appeared right in the middle of the room where the disciples were talking and said, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*. And the Bible says, *"When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord" (John 20:20)*. The disciples saw the marks of the nails in Jesus' hands and the mark of the spear in His side and rejoiced greatly.

## The Holy Spirit, whom He gave as He breathed on them

The word goes on to record, *"So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, '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 20:21–23)*. The Lord appeared in the midst of the disciples,

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showed them the marks of the nails in His hands and the mark of the spear in His side, gave them peace, and sent the disciples into the world, and He breathed on them and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*. In fact, this word "Spirit" is pneuma (πνεῦμα) in Greek, and that word contains precisely the meaning of breath. Just as the Bible says, *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7)*, the risen Jesus breathed on the disciples and gave them the Holy Spirit.

Our Lord, in obedience to the will of God the Father, was born on this earth through the body of Mary. And when He turned thirty, He received baptism from John the Baptist and had all the sin of mankind transferred onto His own body once and for all. And bearing that sin of the world, He was hung and nailed on the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and three days after He was laid in the tomb, He rose again. And He appeared to the disciples and said, *"Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)*. In other words, the Lord came to this earth to save mankind from sin and saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and after accomplishing all that work and rising again, He appeared to the disciples; it is just as if He commanded the disciples to do the work of preaching this gospel in this world and saving souls, just as the Lord had done when He came to this earth.

And He said, "*Receive the Holy Spirit,*" and said that if you remit the sins of people, those sins are remitted, and if you do not remit them, they remain. The Lord removed our sins with the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and then rose again and spoke this fact, and whoever knows and believes this fact receives the remission of sins. And all those who receive the remission of sins receive salvation as a gift. They receive

salvation freely in their hearts by faith. And those who have received salvation as a gift also receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. They receive the Spirit of God as a gift and become children of God. The Holy Spirit is not something received by praying hard, nor something received by speaking in tongues and praying noisily. And the disciples of Jesus who have received the remission of sins have the authority to remit the sins of people.

## The authority to remit sins

The Lord gave this authority. He said, *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:23)*. Why do the disciples of Jesus have this authority? It is because Jesus, at the age of thirty, received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him, bore that sin and went to the Cross and received the judgment for sin in place of us, mankind, and rose again from death and became our Savior. Because the disciples knew and believed that fact accurately, when they preach the faith that is in their hearts to people and the people accept it, those people receive the remission of sins. But if the disciples are wicked and do not preach this gospel to people, those people do not receive the remission of sins.

Then who has the authority to remit sins? Jesus Christ has it. And the disciples of Jesus who believe in Jesus Christ, who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, have it just the same. Therefore, those who have not heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit through you and me do not receive the remission of sins, and those who hear and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit through you and me receive the remission of sins. So the authority of the disciples of Jesus is a tremendous thing.

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When Peter, a disciple of Jesus, said to the lame man, *"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)*, that lame man rose up and walked. In this way, when the disciples of Jesus gave people what was in their faith, people received such a change.

Today, what change can you and I bring to people? We are people who have the authority to remit the sins of people through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and who can bring such a change. These words cannot be repeated too often. You and I have tremendous authority. Therefore, if anyone tries to harm you and me viciously, hates us, and tries to kill us, that is doing so to God and is opposing God. God has given you and me such authority, and you and I are ambassadors of God.

## Ambassadors of God

In every country, ambassadors from other countries are stationed. If the country that sent an ambassador does something wrong, the country where the ambassador is stationed can summon that ambassador and protest and press him, asking whether facts should not be treated as facts. Conversely, the ambassador is not only pressed; representing his own country, he can tell the country where he is stationed not to do such a thing, and that if it does, measures will be taken. In this way, the ambassador has the authority to represent his own country. He is called an ambassador because he carries out his duties on behalf of his country.

The saints who have received the remission of sins are people who represent Jesus Christ and carry out His duties on His behalf. That is why they do this work. Therefore, those who make light

of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that you and I preach and do not believe it do not receive the remission of sins for all eternity. Those who bless the people who have received the remission of sins will receive blessings, and those who slander, despise, and torment the people who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins receive judgment from our God the Father and from the Savior Jesus Christ, who has become our shepherd. They receive retribution. The Lord has given such authority. Since a human being has the authority to remit the sins of another human being, this authority is a tremendous thing.

## The gospel preached at the final moment

No one in this world has such authority as you and I, who have become disciples of Jesus Christ, have. Only we have this. Not long ago, the brother-in-law of a brother in our church passed away from liver cancer. He passed away within a few weeks after the illness was discovered, and I was told that the brother went to the hospital and preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to him. His brother-in-law kept regaining consciousness and losing it again, but even so, I was told, he kept on preaching the gospel.

To his brother-in-law, who could hardly even open his eyes, the brother preached as follows. He told him that when Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, through that baptism the sin of mankind, the sin of all people, and his brother-in-law's sins too were passed on to Jesus. His brother-in-law had believed, in the church he used to attend, that one receives the remission of sins by simply offering prayers of repentance, so the brother asked him whether his sins had disappeared by doing so, and

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whether there was not sin in his heart right now. And he told him that when Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, He had the sin of mankind transferred to Him, and at that time He had his brother-in-law's sins transferred to Him as well; that Jesus bore our sins and went to the Cross and was nailed to it, and rose again from death and became our Savior; and that we are saved only by believing in our hearts, not by doing something. When he asked, "Do you understand?" his brother-in-law could not speak but only nodded his head slightly, he said. And in less than a week, word came that he had passed away.

The brother came back after holding the funeral and told us this story. I believe that his brother-in-law received the remission of sins. When a person is faced with death, he becomes extremely honest. When does a faith purer than a child's arise? It is when one is faced with death. When a person is faced with death, his state of mind at that time is that if he believes, he believes for certain, and if not, he rejects for certain. There was also an elderly man who heard the gospel from that brother and said that he believed, and that man believed too. Even if he can do nothing, he will receive the remission of sins by accepting and believing that fact. Who has the authority to remit the sins of people and wash them away? Today, you and I, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, have it. This authority to remit sins is not with the pope, nor with a priest, nor with the title of pastor. It is with you and me, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Therefore, when the students of our church go to school and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to their friends, a friend who recognizes that student well and listens well to what he says receives blessings. But if someone ignores it and, thinking that he himself believes correctly on the basis of doctrinally mistaken knowledge, looks down on the person who

believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that person moves further and further away from blessings. God said to Abraham, *"And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you" (Genesis 12:2–3)*. The source of blessing is Jesus Christ. And on this earth, those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins are sources of blessing. Those who bless these people, understand them, and treat them well receive blessings.

If people listen well to our words, understand us, and bless us, not only will their souls receive the remission of sins and live a new life, a blessed life, but they will also receive blessings on this earth. If people knew who we are, they would not be able to treat the righteous carelessly. I have that kind of spiritual pride. A person who makes light of the Church of God and the people of God and torments them is fine if he repents, but if he does not repent, he receives eternal curses. God has actually given us this authority to remit sins and also to leave them as they are. That is why we must preach the gospel. But we do not preach the gospel to those who do not fear God and oppose Him. Even if we preach the gospel to someone, if he does not believe our words, he receives curses. God has given us such a great blessing. Now I will sum up the word.

## *"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed"*

There was a disciple of Jesus named Thomas, called the Twin, and he was not there when Jesus appeared. So Thomas said, *"Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His*

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*side, I will not believe" (John 20:25)*. But after eight days, Jesus appeared again. At that time, too, all the doors were shut, but Jesus appeared in the midst of the disciples and said, *"Peace to you!" (John 20:26)*, and said to Thomas, *"Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing" (John 20:27)*. Then Thomas answered, *"My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28)*. Jesus said, *"Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29)*. Jesus rose again. He rose again in that very form, began a new life, and went up to the kingdom of heaven. Such a new life is waiting for you and me as well.

The Bible records that the signs Jesus performed, apart from rising again from death, were not just one or two. *"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 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" (John 20:30–31)*. These things were written so that we might obtain new life and live a new life. Jesus Christ is the Son of God the Father, but He is, in essence, God.

Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25)*. If the Lord were to tell all things in the universe to vanish even right now, they would all vanish. And just as the Bible says, *"Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5)*, the Lord said that He will make a new world, cause us to live there, and cause us to begin a new life. We are now learning about that Lord, coming to know Him, and believing in Him. There are those who have already believed, those who know, those whose faith is growing, and those who have heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit but do not yet understand it well—there are people in all sorts of circumstances.

Some people have received the remission of sins spiritually, but their thoughts are captivated by the flesh and they are sleeping spiritually. It is because they do not know well how precious this gospel is, and what position they hold and what work they must do within this Church and within this gospel. Therefore, when we know that there is a duty given to us in the position we hold within the Church, know that it is a duty God has given, set our hearts on carrying out that work well, and try to carry it out with great faith and a sense of duty and responsibility, we can become people who are awake in both body and spirit. On this Easter Sunday, my heart is truly blessed. If it were not Easter Sunday, there would not be many occasions to speak separately about the resurrection, so I am thankful that Easter Sunday has come. Above all, I have a thankful heart for the fact that a new life is waiting for me and waiting for you. So I give thanks to God.

Dear fellow believers, I hope that you will be awake in both body and spirit. Do not regard the sermon as merely a way to pass the time. Listening carefully to what God is saying to you during the sermon is your job. Conveying the will of God to you is my job, and this is extremely important. If you listen with interest to what God is saying to you through the sermon time, no matter how hard it is for your body and no matter how hard it is for your soul, you become wide awake. But if you only try to somehow fill up an hour, it is so tedious that you cannot bear it. A person who is not awake finds it tedious. Even though it may seem that the same story is being repeated, if you look at the recorded sermons, they seem similar, but each is a little different. While I preach a little differently each time so that people's hearts may be changed, in the end I preach the whole essence, which is the main trunk. I hope that God will give you

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faith, bless you in both body and spirit, and enable you to live with a faith that is awake. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

# The Lord, who gives peace and the Holy Spirit and sends us

**< John 20:19–23 >**

**“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘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.’”**

## The peace given to the disciples who had shut the doors in fear

On the evening of the first day of the week, the disciples had shut the doors of the place where they were assembled, for fear of the Jews. They were trembling, wondering whether the people who had handed their Teacher over to death would now seek

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them out and kill them as well. Right in the midst of that room, Jesus, who had risen again from death that day, came and stood.

The first thing Jesus said was *"Peace be with you."* Peace is the peace of the heart, its stillness, and its rest. This word did not stop at being a greeting that contained a wish; it was a command that there should be peace in the hearts of the disciples, who were trembling with fear. Just as, in the beginning, when God said, *"Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3)*, there was light, so when the risen Jesus said that there should be peace, the pounding hearts of the disciples grew still.

Then Jesus showed them His hands and His side. In His hands the marks of the nails, and in His side the mark of the spear, were still there just as they were. That He did not hide the wounds He had received on the Cross but showed the marks on His body just as they were was in order to have the disciples see with their own eyes and believe that He had come to life again. The disciples rejoiced to see that the very Lord who had died on the Cross had come to life again and was standing before them.

Let us read verses 19 and 20.

*"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord" (John 20:19–20).*

This peace has a clear basis. In order to save sinners, Jesus came in the body of a man, and through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, He had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him. Bearing that sin, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and He was buried and then rose again from death. The One who received the judgment for sin in our place and accomplished all of salvation stood in the midst of the room

whose doors were shut and proclaimed peace. Whoever believes this gospel has all his sins washed away once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit, is born again, and becomes a child of God.

A person who says he believes in the Lord but thinks that his sins still remain unwashed cannot be at peace before God. When he thinks of his sins he is afraid, and he endlessly calculates how much more he must repent and strive. Jesus is not One who took our sins upon Himself after our resolve had become sufficient, but One who accomplished all the work of salvation when we were weak sinners. When we believe that He had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross, our hearts turn from ourselves to the Lord, and our noisy hearts grow still.

Therefore, the peace the Lord gives is different from the contentment that stays only while one's circumstances are comfortable. Outside the door the Jews were still there, and the world in which the disciples would live had not suddenly become easy either. Even believers are shaken for a moment at times because of outward circumstances, but the stillness of a heart whose sin is gone remains as it is beneath that shaking. Strengthen your hearts with the word that Jesus, who washed away sin, is alive and is with us.

## The Lord, who was sent by the Father, sends the disciples

Jesus spoke of peace again and gave the disciples a mission. Let us read verse 21.

*"So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you'" (John 20:21).*

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His speaking of peace once more was to plant in the disciples' hearts the faith that, since the problem of their sins had been completely resolved, they should no longer be afraid. The Father sent the Son in order to give new life to the world. The Son accomplished all of salvation according to the Father's will, and now He entrusts that work to the disciples and sends them into the world. The work the Lord entrusts is not the work of establishing the religion the disciples want, but the work of preaching to people the salvation the Lord has already accomplished.

What matters to a person who is sent is the will of the One who sent him. Whether he has properly fulfilled the work entrusted to him depends not on his eloquence or on the number of people gathered, but on whether he has preached, just as it is, the work that the One who sent him accomplished. If one leaves out the fact that Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and preaches only the blood of the Cross, one ends up preaching only the judgment, with where the sin Jesus bore came from left out.

There is a reason Jesus sent the disciples after He rose again. The Lord would soon go up to the Father, and He intended now to make known to the world, through the disciples, the work by which He had saved all mankind from sin. He entrusted the news to be preached to the whole world to a few people who had shut the doors and were trembling. That work has been carried on even to us who believe the gospel today. The purpose for which the Lord sent us lies in having those who have not yet heard the gospel receive the remission of sins and obtain new life. When we do not forget that purpose, our labor, too, gains direction.

## The Holy Spirit is a gift given by the Lord, who washed away sin

When Jesus sent the disciples, He did not leave everything to their own strength. Let us read verse 22.

*"And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:22).*

Jesus breathed on the disciples and told them to receive the Holy Spirit. Breath is a sign that there is life. Genesis records that after God formed man of the dust, He *"breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7).* In this scene, too, in which the risen Lord breathed on the disciples, there is the intention of giving new life. The soul that was dead because of sin obtains the life the Lord gives. At this time the disciples received the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not a power that a person obtains by creating a religious atmosphere, but a gift given by the risen Jesus. One cannot judge that one has received the Holy Spirit merely because one has shed many tears or gone through a special feeling. First, one must clearly know what gospel one believes. Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross, and rose again from death. To those who believe this gospel and have received the remission of sins, the Lord gives the Holy Spirit. According to His word, *"Receive,"* when we take hold by faith of this work the Lord has accomplished, we receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit together.

The remission of sins and the Holy Spirit are not received separately. If a person thinks he has received the Holy Spirit because of some intense experience while sin remains as it is in his heart, the truth of the salvation the Lord accomplished

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becomes blurred. The Holy Spirit comes into the heart of the person who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has had all his sins washed away, and He seals it and dwells there. That the heart is clean is the very evidence that one has received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes us know that the Lord's salvation is true, and He causes us to call God Father and to follow His will.

Nor is the Holy Spirit a reward that one earns by building up higher qualifications after receiving the remission of sins. He is not something received by clinging and asking for a long time, but a gift given without cost when one receives the remission of sins. Therefore, a person who has received the Holy Spirit does not boast of the grace the Lord has given as if it were the fruit of his own zeal, but regards those who believe the same gospel as precious, as the Lord's people.

Even while we follow the Lord, the shortcomings of the flesh are revealed. Our thinking becomes narrow, and when we are tired, our hearts also become clouded. Each time that happens, there is no need to look at our own condition and doubt even the truth of the gospel. Return to the word and believe again the remission of sins the Lord accomplished. Each time we hear the word, the Holy Spirit teaches us its meaning one by one, causes us to lay down our stubbornness, and causes us to accept the exhortation of those who believe together with us.

## The authority and responsibility of those entrusted with the gospel of the remission of sins

After telling them to receive the Holy Spirit, Jesus spoke of the authority to remit sins. Let us read verse 23.

*"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:23).*

This authority is truly great. Jesus entrusted the gospel that gives life to people to the disciples, who had received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit. When they go into the world and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and people believe that word, they receive the remission of sins. But if they do not preach the gospel and leave people as they are, people remain in sin without having heard the truth of salvation. This word lets us know how precious a duty those entrusted with the gospel have been given.

Then how can a person remit another person's sins? The One who removed sin is not a person but Jesus. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all, even the sin of the last person yet to be born. Bearing that sin, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and thereby paid the price of that sin in full, and He rose again from death and became our Savior. The authority entrusted to the disciples is the authority to preach this work. The one who hears receives the remission of sins not because he believes the one who preaches, but because he believes in Jesus, of whom he has heard.

What would happen if we, even though we know the true gospel, feared the reaction of the hearer, and so hid the truth of the baptism Jesus received from John and spoke only words that are easy to hear? That person could remain without knowing when and how Jesus took away his sins. Weigh more heavily the fact that that soul is still in sin than the relief of not having said anything unpleasant. The one who preaches the gospel preaches with all his heart until the hearer clearly knows and believes how his sins have been removed.

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We ourselves also need the same question. Do we know this gospel only in our heads, or have we believed it in our hearts and received the remission of sins? When a person who has first received the remission of sins and has the Holy Spirit in his heart preaches exactly as he believes, the person who believes those words also receives the remission of sins in the same way. Moreover, this authority is not a fleshly authority that oppresses or frightens people, but a spiritual authority that gives life to souls and an authority that conveys blessing. To preach to a person suffering because of sin the news that Jesus has already removed that sin, with a heart that asks, "Is there peace in your heart?"—that is the way to use this authority rightly.

## Let us fulfill the work entrusted to us with the peace we have received from the Lord

Jesus came to the disciples, who had been afraid, gave them peace, sent them into the world, breathed on them and gave them the Holy Spirit, and entrusted them with the gospel of the remission of sins. These four words all came together from the salvation completed by the resurrection. The basis on which He sent the disciples was not that they were strong and perfect by nature, but that the Lord had accomplished salvation and entrusted them with that gospel. We who preach the gospel also stand by the grace we have received from the Lord, and we only preach the word we have received.

Even so, we cannot treat the work entrusted to us lightly, using our own shortcomings as an excuse. Before stepping back, saying, "What word could someone like me preach?" think about who it is that sends us. Jesus, who rose again from death, has entrusted His own gospel to us. The sins of the person who

believes that word are washed away, and the Holy Spirit comes upon his heart. Even if the scale visible to the eye is small, one person's receiving the remission of sins is a great work that changes that person's eternity.

Before the Lord sent us, He first gave us peace. That peace is the stillness of heart that comes from believing that all our sins are gone, and the news we are to preach is exactly that. Jesus, who spoke peace twice to the disciples who had shut the doors and were trembling, and who breathed on them and gave them the Holy Spirit, sends us today. Even on days when we are afraid in front of people, we fulfill the work entrusted to us with the peace and the Holy Spirit we have received from Him. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

# Jesus Christ, who gave us the calling of the resurrection

**< John 20:19–23 >**

**"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, '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.'"**

On Easter Sunday people eat eggs. An egg hatching and becoming a chick is not exactly the same as Jesus dying and coming back to life, but because it is similar, people eat eggs in order to symbolize that. Since Easter comes around once a year, in many countries Christmas and Easter are celebrated the most. Some people fast during Lent, which comes before Easter, and especially during the one week right before Easter, saying that they are taking part in the sufferings of Jesus. Then, when Easter comes, they prepare a lot of food, eat abundantly, and rejoice.

When a good day in their own religion comes around, the Christians of the world and those who believe in other religions

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want to do something meaningful. So they do a lot of charity work and help other people. But we put more effort into what is inward than into such outward things, and we listen to the word that preaches the gospel and eat the food of our souls.

People often say that they are strong on introductions, overviews, and general outlines but weak on the main point. When they are told to talk about something, they rattle on without hesitation, but when they are told to say concretely what it is, from that moment on they close their mouths and shut the book. This means that they are weak on the main point.

Even though people believe in Jesus, when they are told to talk about the resurrection, they are weak on that main point of what the resurrection means. So when Easter Sunday comes, they mainly carry out social campaigns, saying that we should help the people of starving countries, save the children of poor countries, or send medicine to countries at war. They are very strong at the start, but there is no conclusion and no substance. That is really how it is.

## The peace the resurrection has given

For us who are celebrating Easter, the main point of the resurrection is this. Jesus had the sin of the whole world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, and bearing that sin, He died on the Cross. So His death solved the problem of our death. And His resurrection gave new life to you and me. That we are crucified together with Jesus Christ and become one with Him means that our thoughts, our hearts, our bodies, and everything become completely one with Jesus. In this way Jesus Christ and we become one, and that Jesus Christ rose again means that He has given new life to you and me.

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Jesus rose again, appeared to His disciples, and said, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*. What is it that our Lord, having risen again, has given us? That the Lord came to this world, received baptism from John and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and rose again from death means that He completed the salvation of you and me. He finally completed the salvation of you and me. That is why the very first thing He said when He appeared to His disciples was *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*. It means that, since the Lord received all the judgment for all our sins, solved the problem of our death, and gave us new life, we have now obtained peace. In this way the Lord gave peace to His disciples and to you and me. The ease of heart that is within our hearts, that is peace.

Through whom was this peace in our hearts given? It was given through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ gave you and me this peace, that is, ease of heart. Because Jesus Christ came to this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so completed our salvation, through our believing this, the peace the Lord gives has come into our hearts. Is there peace in your heart? It is truly an amazing thing. On Easter we could think of other things, but when we get to the main point, what the Lord, who rose again from death, has given to you and me is peace and new life.

The greatest meaning this Easter gives to you and me is that the Lord perfectly accomplished the work of removing all our sins and gave salvation and true peace to you and me. This is the greatest meaning and the greatest purpose of the resurrection. After Jesus rose again, He appeared to people. First, the Bible records, *"Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb" (John 20:1)*, and the body

of Jesus was not inside the tomb. And the Lord appeared to that Mary Magdalene, who was weeping outside the tomb.

## The disciples, who shut the doors and were trembling

Next, the Bible records the Lord's appearing to His disciples as follows: *"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews" (John 20:19)*. The disciples of Jesus were so afraid of the Jews that they had locked the doors tight. They locked every door there was, windows and front doors alike; some of them may even have nailed them shut; they hooked latches at the top, at the sides, and at the bottom; and, still feeling uneasy, they may even have tied a rope from a hook on one side to a post on the other. That is how anxious they were. But then Jesus appeared. Just think about it. They were scared to death, and suddenly Jesus stood in the midst of the gathered disciples and said, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*. If we think of it in terms of the flesh, it is an utterly bewildering thing, and if we think of it spiritually, it is a truly amazing, miraculous thing. And it is a very welcome and joyful thing.

The disciples kept following the Lord while He was on this earth. But one day Judas Iscariot sold Jesus, and the Jewish religious leaders, such as the chief priests and the Pharisees, tried to kill Jesus. They framed Jesus with two great charges—the charge that He was one who disturbed the nation of Judea, incited the people, and opposed Caesar, the Roman emperor, and, to the Jews, the charge that He was one who blasphemed God—and they bound Him and put Him to death.

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The disciples of Jesus had truly believed in Jesus and followed Him. While they were following Him, Jesus raised the dead, healed the deaf, and opened the eyes of the blind. In a wide field He performed the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, and the Bible says, *"Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children" (Matthew 14:21)*, and *"filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten" (John 6:13)*. The disciples had lived receiving such amazing miracles, works, and protection, when one day Jesus was falsely accused of a terrible crime and died on the Cross. They even knew that Jesus had been buried in a rock tomb, so how afraid they must have been! Jesus died at about three o'clock on Friday afternoon. The Sabbath of the Jews is from sunset on Friday until sunset the next day, Saturday, and they set that day apart and keep it as the Sabbath. So they had to hurry and bury Him before the Sabbath began.

When Jesus died on the Cross, it was not the twelve disciples but Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus who had kept it hidden for fear of the Jews, who asked Pilate for the body of Jesus, and Nicodemus also came forward. Nicodemus was the man who had earlier come to Jesus by night and said, *"Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God" (John 3:2)*, and asked, *"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (John 3:4)*. He was a ruler of the Jews, that is, a member of the council. The Bible records what happened after Jesus died: *"And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds" (John 19:39)*. After Nicodemus met Jesus, he was changed, and so he came forward like that. They laid the body of Jesus in that tomb of which the Bible says there was *"in the garden a new tomb in*

*which no one had yet been laid" (John 19:41)*. Counting the days, on the third day—Friday, Saturday, Sunday—that is, at dawn on Sunday, when Mary Magdalene went to the tomb, the body of Jesus was not there. Jesus had risen again. The disciples of Jesus had been so afraid, but when Jesus appeared, they were overjoyed. Jesus said to His disciples, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*.

## *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you"*

Spiritually, this word means the following. The Lord said this word because He came to this earth and completed the work of saving you and me, because He remitted all our sins and washed away the sins of our hearts, and because He gave true peace, the remission of sins, and new life to our hearts and made us children of God. So we have obtained peace through the Lord. The Bible says, *"When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord" (John 20:20)*. And Jesus said again, *"Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)*. Jesus was speaking to His disciples, but because He had removed the sin of all people, and in particular had completed the work of removing all the sins of the disciples and the sin of all mankind, as soon as He met them He said, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*, and a little later He said again, *"Peace to you!" (John 20:21)*. Since the Lord had solved the whole problem of the disciples' sins, He planted in them the faith that the disciples now had nothing to fear in their hearts, that they had no sin, and that the Lord had completely saved them.

And just as Jesus Christ came from the kingdom of heaven to this earth and, as the ambassador of God the Father, revealed

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to us the will of God and saved us, Jesus also sent His disciples into this world, saying to them, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)*. It was in order to save people through them. This means that He has entrusted to us the work of preaching the gospel. In fact, the disciples of Jesus carried out all of this work, and today you and I are carrying out this work. And the Bible says, *"And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:22)*. This word, too, is the same. That the Lord rose again and said, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*, said, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)*, and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*, are all words in the same context.

## The One in charge of salvation, who prepared the feast

Because the Lord came to this earth and completed the work of removing all the sins of you and me, because He has now put the final period on it, everyone who believes this truth can receive the Holy Spirit, and that is why He said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*. In fact, if the Lord had not been born on this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist at the age of thirty and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all, died on the Cross, and risen again from death, there could be no peace for us, we could not become the workers of God, and there could be no Holy Spirit for us either. Because the Lord has completed the salvation of mankind, whoever believes the gospel of the truth of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has given could receive the remission of sins by faith and, at the same time as receiving the remission of sins, could receive the Holy Spirit that God has given as a gift.

Look at the words the Lord spoke to His disciples after He rose again. He said, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*, and *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*. That is, because the Lord had completely accomplished the work of removing all our sins, He could give us true peace of heart and could give us the Holy Spirit. Because the Lord actually gave them, we have become people who have received them. The One in charge of this salvation is not we ourselves but God. Because God is the One in charge of salvation, the Lord did this work. When someone prepares a feast, the one in charge of that feast is not the guests but the person who prepares and presides over the feast. In the same way, our salvation, too, is something the Lord presides over, the Lord planned, and the Lord has given to us.

Because the Lord had removed all our sins, He could give the remission of sins, peace, and the Holy Spirit to our hearts. That is why He said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*. This word is not so much a command to receive something right there and then, as a word spoken about what happens when one looks at the fact that Jesus Christ has risen again. Those who truly believe, seeing the risen Lord, realize, "Jesus really is the Son of God and was our Savior. Just as He said, He really saved us from sin, and just as He said, He really rose again. And so He has given us new life." Those who know this have received the Holy Spirit. That is why 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)*. When we receive the remission of sins, we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. So the apostles preached that, because Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, He died on the Cross and rose again from death and gave us salvation, and that those who believe the gospel of

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salvation of the Lord, who removed all our sins in this way, receive the Holy Spirit as a gift.

That the Lord rose again means that He finally completed our salvation. Because He completed salvation, He gave us the Holy Spirit as a gift. That is why He said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*.

## The spiritual authority to remit sins

And the Lord also said, *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:23)*. This is the authority given to those who have received the remission of sins. It means that when we preach this gospel to people and they believe, the remission of their sins is in our hands. That is, if we do not preach the gospel, those people cannot receive the remission of sins, and if we preach the gospel, those people receive the remission of sins. That said, this authority God has given is not an authority of the flesh. It is a spiritual authority. It means that if we have believed in God, who saved us, and have received the remission of sins through that truth we believe, then through this gospel we preach, others can also receive the remission of sins. And it means that they surely do receive it. If you and I have truly received the remission of sins, then when you preach to others with that faith by which you received the remission of sins, those people, too, clearly and certainly receive the remission of sins. Therefore, what the Lord said is right.

The resurrection of Jesus has a very deep spiritual meaning. If someone has understood this wrongly and cannot believe in the resurrection of Jesus in his heart, he must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit again. That Jesus rose again means

that He gave new life to you and me and made you and me alive again. That Jesus Christ died on the Cross means that He died in place of the death of you and me. The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He had all the sins of you and me transferred to Him through John the Baptist. That Jesus was born on this earth means that He came as the Savior to save you and me from sin. And the reason Jesus Christ is God is that He made you and me. There can be no other theory here. When people believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit that we preach, they receive the remission of sins. Whether in Cambodia, or in Britain, Germany, or France, or in Russia, Europe, or Africa, anywhere in the whole world across the five oceans and six continents, if people receive this gospel we preach in the form of books, read it, and just believe it in their hearts, they truly receive the remission of sins. And they truly receive the Holy Spirit, and truly receive peace of heart. But today people interpret the word of God in strange ways and try to enjoy authority.

In the Catholic Church, they think that the pope has the authority to remit sins, and they think that the priests under him also have the authority to remit the sins of the church members, so they have them go to confession. They put up a partition with a small hole in it so that they cannot see each other's faces well, and when a church member lists the sins he has committed, the priest says, "I remit your sins," and hands down a ruling that he should do a few corresponding good deeds. Then let us say that the priest in turn confesses to the bishop, the bishop to the archbishop, and the archbishop to the pope. But if a human being listens to another human being's sins and remits them, then who will remit that person's own sins? This sounds like a joke, but spiritually it is the truth. In human terms, it would amount to criticizing another's religion, so I try not to do it as far as

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possible. But this is not criticism; it is discernment. Discerning is the best thing. Without discernment, one is just like a spiritually blind person.

## The first resurrection and the second resurrection

The Lord has truly risen again. The Lord has given us new life. If there were no dying and living again with Christ, if there were no resurrection, we would be the most pitiable people. The Bible says, *"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Corinthians 15:19)*. If a person believes only as far as that we, too, died together with Jesus because of our sins, and does not reach the point that we were raised to life together with Him, that person is a pitiable person. With such a dead faith one cannot do any spiritual work. It is living faith that can do all things and can live and move. The Apostle Paul spoke of the glory of the resurrection by taking as a parable the seed a farmer sows, and by citing celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies. He said, *"There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another" (1 Corinthians 15:40)*, and *"It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power" (1 Corinthians 15:43)*. The resurrection is not something the Lord alone did; you and I have done it as well. Just as Jesus died on the Cross and His body came back to life, our bodies, too, will come back to life in the future. Just as the Lord was the perfect Son of God, who had no sin in His heart, you and I also have no sin in our hearts, and we are the sons of God and the people of God, whose spirits are perfect. The bodies of you and me will come back to life. If our bodies died and that were the end of it, it would be nothing. If there were no living again, there would

be no difference between believing in Jesus and not believing in Him. But there is an order in the resurrection, too. The Bible says, *"But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (1 Corinthians 15:23)*.

In terms of order, the good resurrection is the first resurrection. Jesus Christ rose again from death and became the firstfruits of the resurrection. The person who has believed in Jesus Christ, the firstfruits of that resurrection, and so has received the remission of sins and obtained new life, the person who believes in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, has himself already been raised to life, and when the Lord comes again to this earth, he will rise again just as the word says that our bodies, too, will rise again in a moment. But there is a second resurrection. The righteous who take part in the first resurrection live reigning for a thousand years, just as the word says that they *"shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6)*, and after the thousand years have passed, there is the second resurrection. At that time He raises again those who did not believe in the salvation the Lord has given, those who died without believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Having raised them in that second resurrection, He casts them into the hell that burns forever, just as it is said, *"And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15)*. That is the second resurrection. Among Christians, there are many who believe that there is a resurrection. But whether you and I are people who take part in the first resurrection or not—this is a matter of that much importance in the resurrection. Those who take part in the first resurrection come back to life in the resurrection of eternal life, the resurrection of blessing. Those who take part in the second resurrection rise again in order to receive eternal punishment and eternal judgment. God raises them again in that way.

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Therefore, that you and I have received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that God uses us, lacking as we are, as His workers, that He has given you and me the Holy Spirit as a gift, and that He has given us the authority both to bring people's souls to life and to leave them as they are, both to send them to the kingdom of heaven and to let them go to hell—all of this is a very weighty responsibility and a truly great authority and blessing. It makes me feel that there is no one who has been blessed as much as we have.

Once, when I was watching a Christian broadcast, a certain pastor came on and preached, and I cannot tell you how much he shouted. In the days when I first preached the gospel, I, too, could not have fellowship with each and every person one by one, so from the pulpit I preached the gospel for two hours at the shortest, and usually for more than two and a half hours. Since I had to clear up on the spot even the questions that were likely to come up later, I preached very carefully and concretely. Because doubt and unbelief kept raising their heads among the people, even if it was tiresome to listen to, I also shouted a great deal without ceasing. My throat cracked and the inside of my mouth got sores in about fifteen places, so I kept a jar of honey under the pulpit. When I poured honey into my mouth, it stung so much that tears streamed down, but still, this gospel had to be preached, so I would have them sing a hymn, lie prostrate for a while, and then get up again and preach, shouting. But that pastor shouted far more than I did. If I shouted like that here, everyone would probably think their ears were being split, pack up their Bible bags, and leave. But even if we do not do that, the Lord rose again and finally completed the salvation of you and me. And He gave you and me the Holy Spirit as a gift, made us the people of God and the workers of God, and gave us the authority to

bring people's souls to life. Having risen again, He appeared to His disciples and said this.

## The resurrection that is believed

The Lord has risen again. Have you and I also believed in this resurrection and obtained new life? The resurrection of the Lord is not something that ends with the one day of Easter; it means that He has actually given new life to you and me. The bodies of you and me will die someday. But when we die, the Lord will raise us again. Our souls have already been made alive, and He will raise our bodies again, too. So we must celebrate this Easter believing and giving thanks that the Lord has given new life to you and me. I have received eternal life from God. But in the past, what happened at Easter or at Christmas was sometimes believable to me and sometimes not. The house I lived in was a prayer house, and once, on the morning of a holiday, I woke up from sleep and there was no one around.

My mother was nowhere to be seen either, so I went outside, and people were just coming out all together from the chapel right above our house, having finished worship. I do not know whether it was Christmas or Easter, but since it had not snowed, I think it was Easter. It was when I was going to school, and I think I had not been able to sleep at night because of some assignment, and so I had slept until that hour. But although they said that Jesus had risen again, in my heart the question arose, "Did He really die and come back to life?" and I could not believe it. But after I came to know the truth of the water and the Spirit, things changed. It is not a matter of thinking about whether to believe or not; it is simply believed.

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I believe that Jesus had all my sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and I believe that when Jesus died on the Cross, His death was my death. I believe that I was crucified with Christ and was raised to life again with Christ, and I believe that when Jesus rose again He gave me new life, and that God will raise my body again, too. Do you believe it, too? This is the power of God. We believe this because God has come into us as the Holy Spirit, has Himself fulfilled the word He spoke to us, and has given us faith. Earlier I spoke of the One in charge of salvation; the Lord is the One in charge of the salvation of you and me, and He is also the One in charge of the work of giving new life to you and me.

We are thankful just for the fact that our souls have received the remission of sins, but what if there were no coming back to life for our bodies, no dying and living again? It would be a truly pitiable thing. Even if we preach the gospel so that the souls of other people may receive the remission of sins, you and I, too, will die once someday. But if there were no such thing as our bodies coming back to life as spiritual bodies, being clothed in glory, and living forever, and if it all just ended with our believing, preaching the gospel to others, and then dying and being annihilated, then even though we would have lived well, would we not be pitiable people if we think of it in terms of the flesh? Even if there were no such thing, we would still be thankful, but it clearly does exist. We will come back to life, reign for a thousand years, and enjoy wealth and glory forever in the eternal kingdom of God.

The condition for being able to receive and enjoy all these blessings that God will give in the future is that you and I have obtained new life through God. This resurrection is important and meaningful because there is a coming back to life in the future, because God has made us alive, and because we will live

together with God forever. This is not a mere religious doctrine. Ordinary Christians think of this as if it were a doctrine. When Easter comes, they write letters on white cloth and set it up here and there together with crosses, but rather than that, how good it would be to capture in a picture the sight of Jesus receiving baptism from John, dying on the Cross, and rising again, and to write and put up, "Jesus has risen again; He has given us new life"! The cross is not something to be fond of merely as a decoration. The Cross is the place where the Lord took upon Himself all curses and all contempt. It is the Cross of curse. The Lord died there, went into the tomb, and rose again after three days. He came back to life. Therefore He appeared to you and me and said, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*, and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them" (John 20:22–23)*, and said, *"I also send you" (John 20:21)*.

The Lord has truly given us the final completion of salvation and its blessing. The faith of you and me must not end at death. Faith starts from here: from having obtained new life, from having received the remission of sins and become a new creation. The Bible says, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17)*. God has given us new life. He will raise our bodies again, too, make us live forever, and let us enjoy wealth and honor forever in the kingdom of God. I believe this. There are many things I would like to say, but I will cut it short.

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## A work not just anyone can do

Is not the meaning of celebrating this Easter profound? Which resurrection do you and I take part in? We take part in the first resurrection. What is the difference between those who take part in the first resurrection and those who take part in the second resurrection? One side enjoys wealth and honor, and the other side suffers curse and destruction forever. Through whom was this decided? It was decided through God. Even when I think about it myself, it is so amazing that I believe this truth. Are you not amazed, too, that you yourselves believe this truth? Did we want this? Did we know it? Did we seek it? All we did was suffer a little because of sin, and yet, after receiving the remission of sins, just when we thought it was all over, there is far more to receive after that. The remission of sins is only the beginning. It is like becoming the adopted son of the president of a country, which in itself is a great privilege and a good thing, and then actually going inside the official residence and finding it carpeted in red and full of things adorned with gold. The difference is enormous.

You and I have now received the remission of sins and are serving and preaching the gospel on this earth. This is not a work that just anyone can do. Not everyone serves this gospel just because he has received the remission of sins.

You, too, will know that there are people who heard the gospel and yet could not serve it and left. I cannot tell you how great this work is. The Bible says, *"If indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:17)*. This is suffering endured for the sake of others. In the past we suffered in order to make a living for ourselves, but now we suffer for the sake of others. God has entrusted this work to you and me. This, too, is a very glorious thing. It is because there is a reward for it

in the Millennial Kingdom. I know there are some who say, "I do not need to receive a reward, so I will just live as I please." Please do not do that. The Lord said, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)*, and Jesus has placed and sent you and me to every corner of the Church to work, so if you say you do not want to and do not live for the gospel, where will you end up? You will end up somewhere else, like a bar or a gambling den. This is not a work that just anyone does. Are you happy doing the work of God? Yes, you are.

Our serving this gospel is a truly precious thing. We gain far more than we labor for, and we gain eternal life. On this Easter, I hope that the workers of God will each do their own work and serve this gospel. I do my own work before God, you do the work you have to do, and we are all people who serve the Lord. In our Church there is no one who is not a worker, down to the little children. Everyone is a worker. What are you in charge of? What part are you in charge of and working on? Be faithful in the part you have been given. Only then will He entrust you with other work, more precious work. The thought "I will quit this work and do something better" is absolutely out of the question. One does not rise to a high position overnight. I hope that you will live as workers of God who are faithful in the work the risen Lord has entrusted to you. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

# Believe in Jesus, who rose again

**< John 20:19–31 >**

**"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, '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.' Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, 'We have seen the Lord.' So he said to them, 'Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.' And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, 'Peace to you!' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.' And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and**

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**yet have believed.' And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 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."**

Every year, one week is observed as the Easter season. For forty days, in what is called Lent, people think about the sufferings of Jesus, and they call the week in which Jesus died on the Cross and rose again three days later Easter. That is how people observe the season.

We do not keep the dates of the season separately, but when this time comes, we think about the meaning of Jesus' resurrection and make our faith firmer. When Easter comes, people write words celebrating the resurrection on eggshells, and then they peel the eggs and eat them. Those who eat a lot eat as many as four, and some people are said to eat as many as thirty. As for me, even when I eat a lot, two and a half are plenty. But above all, since we have read the word about the resurrection of Jesus, I would like to share with you the meaning of the resurrection.

## The baptism He received from John and the Cross

Jesus received the death sentence in Pilate's court, was nailed to the Cross, and died on it. The reason Jesus Christ, who had no sin, could suffer in Pilate's court, be found guilty, and be hung on the Cross was the baptism He received from John after coming to this earth. Our Lord came to this earth clothed in human flesh to save us human beings. And the very first thing

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He did to remove our sins was the baptism He received from John.

With that baptism, our Lord fulfilled all the righteousness of God. Through the baptism He received from John, He had all the sins of the world transferred onto His own body. And bearing that sin of the world, where did He go? He went to the Cross. He was nailed to the Cross, and He wore the crown of thorns on His head, so that blood flowed down. He was struck all over His body with leather whips that had sharp pieces attached to their ends, so that His flesh was torn to shreds.

In that way, with nails driven through both His hands and both His feet, He died on the Cross. The Bible says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5)*. That Jesus Christ was born on this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again was to save you and me from sin.

Just as the Bible says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5)*, the reason Jesus could be nailed to the Cross and die was that He had all your iniquities and mine, that is, the sin of all the people in the whole world, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. That is why Jesus could be nailed to the Cross and could die so miserably. That was, just as the Bible says, *"For He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*, to make you and me free of sin. So our Lord was nailed to the Cross and died in our place.

Therefore, do not weep because Easter Sunday has come, and do not weep because Lent has come. You must have faith; shedding tears does not make it happen. Even if we gathered our tears and brought them before Jesus, the Lord would not be pleased with those salty tears. The Lord was not nailed to the Cross and did not die in order to make us weep like this.

Instead of doing that, we must have the faith that believes that the Lord's receiving baptism from John and being nailed to the Cross and dying for us was to save you and me from sin. God is pleased when we believe in this way.

## The Lord, who rose again three days later

Jesus Christ rose again from death. He rose again at dawn after the Sabbath had passed. By the Jewish reckoning of days, from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday is the day on which the Sabbath is kept according to the law. Jesus died at three o'clock on Friday afternoon. Because the Sabbath was about to begin, the Jews could not leave the body of Jesus as it was. The Bible records, *"Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away" (John 19:31)*. Then Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus and, together with Nicodemus, laid it in a new tomb. They laid the body in a tomb hewn out of rock and blocked the entrance with a large stone.

A night passed, and the sun set on Saturday. And at dawn on Sunday, the Lord rose again. Because the Lord rose again on this day, this day is called the Lord's Day, that is, Sunday.

Jesus rose again. This means that Jesus rose again after bearing all the sins of this world, together with the judgment and the curse that come from those sins, and settling them all. In other words, it means that He completed our salvation.

Jesus Christ rose again. He came back to life. Because our Lord came back to life, those who believe in the Lord have come to be able to receive salvation. Therefore, the faith that believes

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that the Lord rose again from death is very important. If it had ended with Jesus' dying on the Cross, this could not have become the word of resurrection, the word of life. Because Jesus came back to life, He could become our Savior, and any sinner has come to be able to obtain salvation from sin and obtain new life by believing in Jesus Christ. So in our hearts there must be this faith that Jesus overcame death and came back to life.

Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again three days later. When we have the faith that believes that Jesus came back to life, you and I come to have the faith that, even if we face death, it is not the end but falling asleep, and that just as Jesus came back to life, we too will come back to life. A person who believes that Jesus rose again from death comes to have the faith that he too, after dying, will come back to life. This is very important.

So you and I, who believe that the Lord died on the Cross and rose again from death, believe that when the Lord comes again and takes us away, our souls have already come to life and our bodies, too, will come back to life. We come to have this kind of faith.

## The peace He gave behind the shut doors

Jesus rose again from death and appeared to the disciples. At that time, the disciples were trembling with fear. When Jesus died on the Cross, they thought that everything was over, and they were in the situation that the Bible records: *"When the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews" (John 20:19)*. The disciples were agonizing over what to do. They must have worried, "They arrested and killed even

Jesus, so won't they arrest and kill us too?" At that time, Peter may have confided what he had gone through, saying, "When Jesus was being questioned in the courtyard of the high priest's house, I followed Him in and very nearly got into serious trouble."

It is said that Mark, who wrote the Gospel of Mark, was the young man who was following behind when Jesus was taken away under arrest. The Bible records, *"Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked" (Mark 14:51–52).* How frightened he must have been to flee naked!

Mark, too, may have said, "I very nearly died, too. Jesus was truly a precious person and was our Teacher. While He was alive, He kept saying that He would die and come back to life, and it has turned out just as He said." In this way, the disciples, who had no faith, were gathered together, trembling with fear.

At that time, the doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood in the midst of the disciples. The disciples were all astonished. The Bible records, *"Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord" (John 20:19–20).* And the Lord said again, *"Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21).* Our Lord rose again and made His disciples preach this word.

What did our Lord give us when He rose again? He gave us peace. When Jesus Christ rose again, the very first thing He did was to give peace to the hearts of those who believe in Jesus Christ. So in our hearts, which believe in Jesus Christ, there is peace. Even when the waves of wicked sin are fierce, our hearts are always at peace.

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In the flesh and in the world, sin seethes and there is every kind of weakness. But because Jesus Christ said, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*, and a little later spoke the same word again, and because He removed all our sins and gave rest and peace to our hearts, your hearts and mine are at peace. What our Lord gave first of all after He rose again is peace. In the hearts of those who rightly know and believe in Jesus Christ, there is peace. Whatever else they may not know, there is no sin in their hearts, so their hearts are glad and truly good—such peace has come into being in their hearts.

## The Holy Spirit given by the risen Lord

Secondly, what did our Lord give? He gave the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If we look at the word, it says, *"When He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:22)*. In this way, our Lord rose again and gave the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was at Pentecost that the Holy Spirit came in fullness upon this earth. On the day of Pentecost, about fifty days after Jesus Christ was nailed to the Cross, the baptism of the Holy Spirit came upon the place where the disciples were gathered. He poured out the Holy Spirit just as one pours water from a jar over a person's head.

After the Lord rose again, He gave the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the disciples of Jesus and to us. This word contains a very important meaning. Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to the disciples after He had all the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death. This is an important clue that teaches us that, after Jesus removed the sin of the world with His baptism and the blood of the Cross, the Holy Spirit comes upon those

who have received the remission of sins in their hearts by believing in Jesus Christ.

In fact, what were the disciples of Jesus like? They were strong only in their will. Even Peter, who on the night Jesus was arrested had boasted, *"Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble" (Matthew 26:33)* and *"Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" (Matthew 26:35)*, in the end had that will of his broken.

Jesus died on the Cross and rose again from death. And having risen again, He appeared to the disciples and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*. This means that after our Lord was born on this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, rose again, and triumphed, He poured out new life, that is, the Spirit of God, on those who believe in Jesus Christ. It means that He gave them salvation.

Therefore, the person who believes that Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and removed all sins on the Cross, and who believes that Jesus' death is his own death and Jesus' resurrection is his own resurrection, receives the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus rose again, the very first thing He did was to appear to the disciples and say, *"'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:21–22)*. In this way, our Lord gave the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who came to believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior by believing in the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. The reason Jesus Christ received baptism from John was to have our iniquities transferred to Him. The reason He was nailed to the Cross, was scourged, shed His blood, and died was because of your iniquities and mine. And the reason He rose again was to give us

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salvation and give us new life. God removed all the sins of the lives that had died because of sin, poured new life into them, and made them live forever in the kingdom of heaven.

The Lord gave us the baptism of the Holy Spirit. So the baptism of the Holy Spirit has come upon all those who have received the remission of sins, that is, those who believe this gospel. The baptism of the Holy Spirit means that one has received the Holy Spirit. Baptism has the spiritual meaning of transfer, that is, of passing on. But today there are many people who misunderstand the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

If we examine the meaning of Jesus' resurrection and look within the word of the Bible at how the baptism of the Holy Spirit comes, we can see that the baptism of the Holy Spirit came upon those who believe as follows. That is, they are those who believe that Jesus Christ's being nailed to the Cross was because of our sins, just as the word says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5)*, and who believe that His dying and rising again was to save us and give us new life.

Have you received the Holy Spirit? Is the Holy Spirit in your heart? Have you received the remission of sins? If there is no sin in your heart, the Holy Spirit is in it. Jesus appeared to the disciples, who had received the remission of sins, and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*. The disciples of Jesus had received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus, but before Jesus died on the Cross and rose again, the Holy Spirit was not in their hearts. They knew, because Jesus had taught them, but the Holy Spirit was not yet in them.

Then when did this Holy Spirit officially come upon this earth? It was after Jesus died on the Cross and rose again. Before that, God came down from time to time and spoke to the servants of God, and He spoke by moving people's hearts.

To put it simply, at that time the Holy Spirit was moving outside of people. He spoke from outside, and after accomplishing all His work, He departed. Then, after Jesus rose again, the Holy Spirit formally came into the hearts of the people of this earth.

So if we look at the Old Testament, King Saul, who can be regarded as a representative of the flesh, met the prophets and prophesied himself. Then the people wondered, *"Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Samuel 10:11)*. But God only moved his heart for a moment and made him prophesy; it was not that the Holy Spirit remained in his heart continually. In the end, the word says, *"But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him" (1 Samuel 16:14)*, and from then on Saul came to oppose God.

## The Holy Spirit is for those who have received the remission of sins

What about those who have received the remission of sins? Is there any difference between the disciples of Jesus and us? There is no difference. What the disciples of Jesus believed and what we have believed are exactly the same. So to those who believe in Jesus Christ, that is, who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and who believe in their hearts the fact that Jesus has removed all their sins, our Jesus gave the Holy Spirit as a gift.

It is not that Jesus appeared to just anyone and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*.

That Jesus appeared to the disciples and spoke this word shows that those disciples believed in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. Jesus is the Son of God,

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and He is the Son of the living God. The Bible says, *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism… through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21)*, and it says, *"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27)*. The disciples of Jesus all believed in the baptism Jesus received from John. They believed that Jesus' death on the Cross was their own death, and that Jesus' resurrection was a resurrection to give them new life. Therefore, we can conclude that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is given only to those who have received the remission of sins.

All the words of God are important, but this word that Jesus spoke when He rose again is especially important. This word teaches us exactly what kind of person has received the Holy Spirit, and it also lets us know exactly what our Lord gave us after He saved us.

Regarding the Holy Spirit's coming at Pentecost, about fifty days after Jesus died on the Cross, people think that the Holy Spirit came because the disciples gathered together and prayed. So they think that if we, too, want to receive the Holy Spirit, all we have to do is gather together and pray earnestly. Also, since the disciples spoke in tongues when the Holy Spirit came at that time, they think that speaking in tongues is the evidence that the Holy Spirit has come.

But that is not so. Our Lord promised in the Old Testament that He would pour out the Holy Spirit on this earth. According to that promise, after Jesus rose again, He appeared to the disciples and first said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*. Even the disciples of Jesus were bewildered.

Jesus showed many proofs. He told them to put their hands into His side, and He also ate food with the disciples. He went to find the disciples who had left home and gone fishing, and said, *"Children, have you any food?… Cast the net on the right*

*side of the boat, and you will find some" (John 21:5–6)*. When the disciples cast the net, many fish were caught, and only then did they know that He was our Lord. The Lord also ate breakfast with the disciples. In this way, just as it is said, *"being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3)*, after He had testified much and spoken much, He went up to heaven. And on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came.

What is clear is the fact that Jesus appeared to those who had received the remission of sins and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*. Jesus came to this earth and received baptism from John, and thereby had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him. All the sins and transgressions we commit in this world—the sins committed out of weakness, the sins committed out of pride, the sins committed because of the flesh, all the sins committed inwardly and outwardly in thought and in deed, and even the sins we will commit in the future—our Lord had them all transferred to Him through that baptism. Just as it is said, *"He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5)*, the Lord bore all the sin of mankind all at once, died on the Cross once and for all, and rose again from death once and for all. With that, He saved us. The Holy Spirit came upon those who believe this.

Then why did God give tongues? Tongues are originally the languages spoken by people of other regions and other countries. The disciples of Jesus were people who had not learned much. God gave tongues specially so that such disciples could preach the gospel to people of other regions. The Bible records that when the disciples spoke, those who heard them were amazed, saying, *"And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?" (Acts 2:8)*. Therefore, it is not that one has received the Holy Spirit just because one speaks in tongues,

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making sounds that no one can understand. Those who believe in Jesus rightly are not clamorous.

I cannot tell you everything, but the conclusion is clear. Jesus gave the baptism of the Holy Spirit to those who had received the remission of sins.

People are very interested in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and so there are many who have written books about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But a person who has not received the remission of sins in his heart cannot write rightly about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, no matter how confidently he picks up his pen. When it is all written out, it becomes evident that it is not the real thing. It is because they have never been disciples of Jesus.

## The authority to remit sins

What else did our Lord give to those who have received the remission of sins? He gave them the authority to remit people's sins. Look at the word: *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:23)*. In this way, Jesus gave the disciples the authority to remit sins.

First, what did He give? He gave peace. Second, what did He give? He gave the Holy Spirit. Third, what did He give? He gave the authority to remit people's sins. It is the authority to let those who want to receive the remission of sins receive it, and to leave as they are the sins of those who refuse to receive it to the end.

Do you know what it means that He gave the authority to remit sins? Authority is power. Authority is the power to make something come about just as it is spoken, with a single word.

Jesus not only gave the Holy Spirit, but He also gave those who have the Holy Spirit in their hearts the authority to remit the sins of others or to leave them as they are. So we preach Jesus' gospel of the water and the Spirit to people. We preach that even if they have sins, Jesus has taken all those sins away, and that He has taken away even all the many sins they will commit in the future. We preach that when Jesus came to this earth and received baptism from John, He had all the sin of the world transferred to Him; that bearing that sin of the world, He died on the Cross, saying, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*; and that He rose again three days later and saved us. When people hear and believe that word, all their sins, which were as thick as fog, disappear.

But when we preach the word to people and they do not believe but act conceited and treat us rudely, the desire to preach to them sometimes disappears. There are even people who, knowing nothing, say, "Our pastor does not say such things. From what I can see, you do not seem to have much education either." Then it is upsetting. Even so, we must preach to them. But there are people who do not believe even when we preach to them, and who do not believe but oppose us even when we meet them several times and explain it to them.

To us who have received the remission of sins, God has given, along with the authority to remit sins, the authority by which, if we leave a person alone, that person ends up going to hell. That is why we preach the gospel to people.

When we preach the gospel, people's sins are remitted. Then what happens if we do not preach the gospel to someone? That person goes to hell. It is because without knowing the truth, one cannot receive the remission of sins. There are times when we feel, "Do you want to go to hell that badly? What a pity," but

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even so, we do not tell them to go to hell; instead, we urge them to hear the gospel once more.

To those who have received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit and who have the Holy Spirit in them, Jesus Christ has given this kind of authority. Therefore, those who, even after hearing the word of this gospel, reject it to the very end will go to hell.

We have sent books containing this gospel to Christians in many countries around the world. One person sent us a letter saying that he had been greatly surprised after reading the book. He said that he had not known why Jesus Christ had to be nailed to the Cross or why the Bible says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5)*, but that he had come to know the fact that Jesus could die on the Cross because He had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. And he asked whether, since he could not keep it to himself alone, we could send the book to the people he knew as well, saying that he would give us their addresses. We gladly send it.

Another person attacked this gospel, saying that if this were the truth, shouldn't it appear more clearly in the Bible? Then he became confused himself, and in the end he sent only his name, leaving nothing but the remark that he did not like it.

Apart from the apostolic age, we are the first to preach this gospel in this way. The person who translated our book into German said that although there are so many people in Germany who believe in Christianity, this gospel was being heard for the first time. The person who reviewed the French translation said, after reading this book, that it was not what he had known, and that he would have to think again about his own faith.

Jesus clearly appeared and said, *"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)*. We have received the remission of sins through God. Since we have such great authority, should we use this authority to send people to hell? We must not. So we should lower our hearts and humbly accept people, saying, "Oh, is that so?"; if there are people who do not know, we should teach them, and sometimes send them books; and if there are people who attack us, we should accept them, saying, "You are doing that because you do not know. I will teach you."

There are people who say that sins disappear if one believes in Jesus and believes only in the blood of the Cross, or who say that it is right that one has sin in one's heart even though one believes in Jesus. This is insisting, of their own accord, on the way that leads to hell. How could that be the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and how could it be the word of the Bible? We can rebuke and judge such wrongs with the word.

If we who have received the remission of sins say to someone, "You are going to hell," that person will surely go to hell. It happens that way not because we do so as we please, but because it is a word spoken through the word of God.

## *"Do not be unbelieving, but believing"*

And Jesus told us to become people who believe in the resurrection of Jesus. Thomas, a disciple of Jesus, said that he would believe only if he put his hand into Jesus' side, even though the other disciples said, *"We have seen the Lord" (John 20:25)*. Eight days later, Jesus came again and said to Thomas, *"Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing" (John 20:27)*.

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Thomas was a person of very little faith. Even though, as one of the twelve disciples, he had followed Jesus with difficulty for three years and had seen all His miracles and power, he could not believe that Jesus had risen again. Even when he heard that Jesus had appeared to the disciples and given them peace, given them the Holy Spirit, and given them authority, Thomas could not believe it. But when Jesus said, *"Reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing" (John 20:27)*, Thomas believed, saying, *"My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28)*. Then Jesus said, *"Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29)*.

Our Lord told us not to be people who cannot believe that He removed all our sins and rose again from death, but to be people who believe. And the Bible reveals the reason it recorded this event 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" (John 20:31)*.

Our Lord has given us new life. To us, whose hearts were empty and confused before we believed in Jesus, so that life had no savor, He gave the remission of sins and made us obtain everlasting life. Our Lord has given you and me peace, authority, and everlasting life, that is, eternal life. We must have the faith that believes this.

## The faith that follows the Lord with heart and mind

Our hearts must be spiritual. Our flesh runs endlessly toward the things of the flesh. But those who have received the remission of sins must always think spiritual thoughts. We must

think spiritual thoughts, have spiritual faith, become people who believe the word of the Lord, become people who follow the Lord by faith, become people who serve the Lord by faith, and become people who obtain all things by faith. To become like that, we must believe with our minds and hearts and become people who follow by faith.

People's thoughts become corrupt before even a day has passed. They rot away before even a week has passed. If a person sinks into fleshly thoughts and follows the flesh, he comes to live like a person who has nothing to do with Jesus.

But there is one thing that is clear. Jesus has saved you and me. He removed our sins, gave us peace, gave us the authority to remit sins and the Holy Spirit, and gave us everlasting life and new life. Following this word by faith is faith, and it is a life of faith. If we believe and follow with our hearts and minds, the body follows behind, even though it does not want to. But if, because the body follows the world, even our minds and hearts follow the flesh, we will die. We become people without faith. That is why our Lord told us to be people who believe. With our hearts and minds, we must become people who think about the fact that the Lord has become our Savior, that we have no sin, and that we must preach the gospel, and who think about all the works of God.

Does your flesh perhaps run out toward the world? But rather than making an issue of that, what is important is whether you believe in your heart that the Lord has given us peace, the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, everlasting life, and new life. If we believe and think about this and go forward following the faith that believes in God, we become people of faith and workers of the Lord. Having obtained new life, we become workers of righteousness who save souls every day.

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Easter has come. Formality is not what matters. What matters is what the Lord gave us when He rose again. The Lord gave us the remission of sins, gave us peace, gave us the Holy Spirit, gave us the authority to remit sins, and gave us everlasting life and new life. We must live with the faith that believes this, then meet the Lord, and live enjoying glory forever in the kingdom of heaven.

I hope that you will live with the faith that believes that the Lord has surely come back to life, and that we too will come back to life. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

# We must follow the Lord by faith

**< John 21:13–25 >**

**"Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.' This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me.' Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, 'Lord, who is the one who betrays You?' Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, 'But Lord, what about this man?' Jesus said to him, 'If I will that he**

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**remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.' Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, 'If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?' This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen."**

A life of faith is, literally, believing in God and following God in the midst of life. Faith shows itself in life. In this gospel, in which we believe in and follow the righteousness of God, faith actually shows itself through our bodies and our deeds.

That we come to know and believe in the righteousness of God and receive the remission of sins means that we believe in the righteousness that Jesus accomplished by having our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, bearing those sins and shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rising again from death. From the time we receive the remission of sins in this way, our faith grows. That faith grows does not mean that we do many outward forms or church ceremonies. That our faith grows and that we live a life of faith means that we live for the Lord in our actual lives.

## A disciple who follows the example of the Lord

The Bible says, *"And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me'" (John 21:19)*. And to Peter, who asked about

the disciple whom Jesus loved, He also said, *"You follow Me" (John 21:22)*. A life of faith is not theory but reality. Faith is following the Lord well.

What is a disciple of Jesus Christ? A disciple is a person who learns exactly what his teacher does and follows the example of that teacher. The Lord told us to follow Him, but what does it mean for us to follow the Lord? The Lord gave Himself to us in order to save us from sin and give us new life. For us He lived thirty-three years on this earth, had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again. In the same way, we, too, after we have believed in the Lord, work for these things: leading souls to salvation, and feeding our brothers and sisters, giving them life, and making them prosper. That is following the Lord.

The twelve disciples of Jesus all showed this as an example. And those who have gone ahead in faith gave up their youth and their lives and believed in the righteousness of God and lived in order to spread the righteousness of God, and they are still living that way now. The Lord said, *"A tree is known by its fruit" (Matthew 12:33)*. Those who truly follow God do these things. Preaching the gospel of God to the sheep is feeding the sheep the food of life. It is not something that comes from knowing many forms, nor is it something that comes from knowing the know-how. Because this is not something that comes from outward appearance but something that comes from the center of the heart, the Lord demands fruit. When He demands fruit, we must bring it forth.

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## Human righteousness and the righteousness of God

Those who believe in the righteousness of God follow the righteousness of God. They put their strength into preaching the righteousness of God to all people. They do not want to do their own work but want to do the work of God. They do not put forward their own human righteousness. They have nothing to put forward. The Bible says, *"But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6)*. Human righteousness is like a filthy rag, so there is nothing to put forward. They do not want to be exalted in this world, nor do they try to show off, nor do they try to be recognized by people. Those who follow the righteousness of God do not put forward human righteousness.

Within human righteousness there is a righteousness that looks very lofty. It is understanding and embracing the pain of others. Some time ago, a certain missionary became widely known for preaching about healing the wounds of the heart. It was a program in which people repented of the sins they had committed, brought out the wounds they had received, listened to the wounds others had received because of them, and so came to understand and embrace one another. But that is establishing human righteousness. If people believe in such things and do ministry that way, in the end the church does not follow the righteousness of God but puts human righteousness in the highest place within the Church of God. Then, later on, it becomes a church without the righteousness of God. Human righteousness seems very lofty, but in fact it is nothing. Human righteousness cannot bear the fruit of true righteousness. Understanding and accepting others to some degree cannot be

placed higher than believing in and following the righteousness of God.

## Christianity that has lost its substance

The Lord said to follow Him, and Peter followed the Lord. The twelve disciples of Jesus followed, and all the others who have gone ahead in faith also followed. After the apostles went before God, the disciples who had heard this gospel from the apostles and believed became the leaders of the church. But after that, among those who became the elders of the church, there were many who abandoned the righteousness of God and put forward human righteousness. Through such people, who, though they were church leaders, abandoned the righteousness of God and put forward human righteousness, the Dark Ages came. As the age of the early Church passed, the work of the gospel came to a stop, and after that the Dark Ages continued for nearly a thousand years.

The reason it came to be so is as follows. Until the Roman emperor declared freedom of religion in A.D. 313, those who believed in Christianity in Rome were persecuted and sometimes even put to death. But from the time that edict was issued, people could freely believe in Christianity within Rome. Yet people changed the righteousness of God into human righteousness. As a result, the gospel came to an end.

A long time passed after that, and a little light appeared through the Reformation. It was that the wrong contradictions of Catholicism had to be changed. But the Reformers did not discover the righteousness of God as we have; they knew only to the extent that salvation is obtained by faith, not by works. And Luther carried on from Catholicism many teachings about

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ceremonies such as infant baptism and about the Lord's Supper. After Luther, people like Calvin and John Knox came out, and they all cried out that the errors of Catholicism should be corrected, but they fell short in putting forward and following the righteousness of God. After that, the thinking that exalted God changed into thinking that exalts the will of man, and it became an age in which human righteousness was exalted higher than the righteousness of God. Within Catholicism, for a long time, those who lived a monastic life that was good in human terms, lived holy lives, and sacrificed themselves for others have been the most highly honored.

Therefore, we must listen to the word of the Lord, who said, *"Follow Me" (John 21:19)*. When the Lord told us to follow Him, He told us to follow Him believing in the righteousness of God, spreading the righteousness of God, and feeding others the food of the righteousness of God. He cannot tell us to follow Him while putting forward human righteousness. Those who follow the Lord are those who actually feed the sheep. They are those who teach and lead others and labor for those who have not yet heard the gospel. This is a very simple truth, but it is a truth that never changes.

The church is not a place where one's rank goes up as one's office goes up. When I was attending seminary some time ago, the president of the denomination's general assembly came to give a congratulatory address at the graduate school graduation ceremony. But from the very way he walked up to the platform, he put on an air of authority, like someone who sits in a high position. I thought to myself, "According to the word of the Bible, that is not how it should be; what on earth is so high about him that he acts like that?" What would those who had studied for three years and were graduating learn from seeing that?

Would they not learn that this is what one does when one becomes a pastor? That is not following the Lord.

There are a great many things we have learned wrongly, and there are very many things of which we do not know the substance. The substance is this. Because we know and believe in the righteousness of God, we cannot help loving the Lord and cannot help following Him. Because there are still many people in this world who do not know the righteousness of God, we cannot help preaching the gospel to souls, and we cannot help serving the work of preaching the gospel. To follow the Lord is not to follow Him only with the heart or only with the lips, but to actually follow Him, devoting all of our body, heart, and possessions. But Christianity today has lost this substance, and only its outward appearance remains.

## People who are waiting for the gospel

The Lord told us to follow Him. The reason we follow the Lord is that, although we could very well live differently after meeting the Lord, the righteousness of God that the Lord has given us is so great and we believe in it. This word is simple and we are lacking, but if the Lord wants it, we have the heart that wants to follow Him. So we believe in the righteousness of God, spread the righteousness of God, and serve the righteousness of God.

In the world there are many people who have not yet heard the gospel. We have sent the books containing this gospel free of charge, right to the homes of those who wanted them, and now we are sending them to many countries around the world. This is following the Lord. How many flocks of sheep there are that must be fed! How many people there are who have not yet

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tasted the gospel! Since the Lord said, *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)*, we must feed them.

Those many people are asking for this gospel, just as baby sparrows open their mouths wide and beg for food when their mother returns. A certain pastor in Pakistan sent a letter saying that he had received great grace from reading this book, that he was distributing the book to his church members and many other people and teaching them, and that he was having those who learned it teach still others. Pastors who minister in prisons also sent letters saying that this book is exactly the right book for prisoners. One person said that he had read many books while studying theology, but no book had had a greater influence on him than this book. And a certain person who had believed in Catholicism and knew much of its doctrine and philosophy said that this book had been very helpful to him in building up his faith in the Holy Spirit and following the Lord. I am sure there are also an enormous number of people who have not sent letters like these.

There are so many people who must be fed. The Bible 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)*. God sent His only begotten Son, and through the baptism that Son received from John and the blood of the Cross, He removed the sin of all people. In God's sight, everyone is a person who can be saved. Because He has completely removed the sin of all people, anyone who only believes in this gospel, that is, the righteousness of God, receives the remission of sins. And when a person comes to know how to discern between the righteousness of God and human righteousness, he comes to exalt the righteousness of God and to know that human righteousness is nothing, and so he can preach the gospel to others as well and feed the sheep with fodder.

## God's company, which never goes bankrupt

There are so many places to work. A certain businessman said that the world is wide and there is much to do. But even the big companies of the world sometimes end up going bankrupt and disappearing. God's company does not disappear. It does not go bankrupt. God's company deals with all the people of the whole world. It gives the righteousness of God free of charge, causes people to obtain eternal life, and causes them to receive the remission of sins. The Lord, while telling us to follow Him, tells us to do this work. Those who follow the Lord do this work.

In fact, a person who does not serve the gospel ends up suffering terribly in the world. If a person likes the world that much, he has to go into the world and live there, but if he goes out and lives in the world, he barely makes a living by working seven or eight hours a day until he is exhausted. It is because we are in the gospel that we live without knowing such hardship; if we go out and live in the world, we really have to work until we are exhausted just to live. Only after going through such hardship does one come to say, "It is really good to come into the gospel and serve the gospel."

## God, who called the people out of the hard labor of Egypt

That is how it was when the people of Israel lived in Egypt. The Bible says, *"And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor" (Exodus 1:14)*. They put in straw and poured in water and kneaded the hard clay until it was soft and mushy; try doing all

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day long a job in which your legs sink deep into the mud. If you eat only a little food and do that work all day long, your skin cracks all over and you are hungry. After suffering like that for four hundred and thirty years, they did not want to live there any longer, and so they prayed for a savior to be sent. For all the people of Israel, the one and only wish was that a savior be sent.

At that time, Moses was born into a family formed by a marriage within the tribe of Levi. At that time the king of Egypt had commanded that the Hebrew baby boys be killed, and the baby that Moses' parents bore was a boy. But in the hearts of those parents there was faith. The Bible says, *"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command" (Hebrews 11:23)*. When the baby's crying grew so loud that they could no longer hide him, they prayed to God, entrusted the baby to Him, put him in a basket of reeds, and set it among the reeds by the riverbank. Pharaoh's daughter drew that baby out. Moses' sister, who had been hiding and watching, told Pharaoh's daughter that she would call a nurse from among the Hebrew women, and so Moses' mother became his nurse and raised her own son. While raising Moses, his mother taught him, "You are a Hebrew." So after Moses had grown up, he knew that he was one of the Hebrew people, and, just as the Bible says, *"esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Hebrews 11:26)*, he gave up the glory of Egypt. Following the Lord is like that. It is following for the sake of the kingdom of God, in order to follow the will of God. In this way Moses became a man of faith.

But there are people who do not serve the Lord because they are too comfortable. Having received the remission of sins, they are so comfortable that they do not come into the church. Such

a person really does not know how happy, how secure, and how good it is to come into the church, hear the word, believe in God, serve the gospel, and serve the righteousness of God. Of course, serving the gospel is hard work. One cannot even do it alone. The word "church," that is, ekklesia (ἐκκλησία), means "those who have been called out." Just as God delivered the people of Israel out of Egypt, they are people whom He has called out of the world and delivered. The church is the place where those whom He has delivered in this way and caused to serve God are gathered together.

If a person who says he has received the remission of sins likes the world that much, that person is someone who has never truly tasted the righteousness of God by believing in it before God. He is someone who knows it only in theory. He is someone who does not know how precious and good this is, and how good a thing it is to serve this. Of course, how much one realizes this differs according to the measure of one's faith.

## This world, which is not eternal

We do not have much time left to serve the gospel. The world will not go on like this forever. The Lord is coming again. When the Lord comes, there is no need to worry that we might have no place to go. Besides this sun and this galaxy that we are now seeing with our eyes, there are countless other suns and other galaxies in this universe. That is what scientists say. They say it is enormous. And the Lord said, *"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2–3).*

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We think in terms of dividing countries this way and that within this small lump of earth, but we must not think that way. The world of God is enormous. Even the stars exist for a while and then all disappear. Scientists say that even that sun will someday lose its light and vanish. The moon, too, and this earth as well will disappear. These are not eternal. People who do not know the universe well think that this world is eternal. Seen through the eyes of a person who lives day by day, it seems eternal, but seen within eternal time, it is not eternal and has its limits. Everything disappears. But God does not disappear. God is still eternal, exists forever, and rules over all those things. He is the One who has governed all these things from the beginning. When the Lord has prepared the place where we will be, He will come to take us. Therefore, the range of our thinking must be different.

## The history of Israel, which left the Lord

Look at the thickly piled-up history of the people of Israel. They did not serve God as the Absolute One, but carved wood to make idols and prayed, “O Baal, O Asherah, make our farming go well. Let us bear many children.” God raised up the kings of nations such as Assyria and Babylon to strike Israel, and they mercilessly killed the people of Israel. Only after they had been beaten almost to death did the people of Israel plead, “God, we have done wrong. You are the true God, yet we served the wrong things and incurred Your wrath.” Then God, through the prophets, told them never to do so again, and from the king down to the people they said they understood, and they got rid of the Asherahs and the Baals, repented, and fasted. Then, when the nation became a little more peaceful and life became bearable

again, they made themselves a god that suited their own hearts and prayed to it again.

So God caused them to be carried away to Babylon, and they lived as slaves for seventy years. God said, *"After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place" (Jeremiah 29:10)*. Those seventy years were literally seventy years. In Babylon they dug ditches and labored, and they were deeply sorrowful. But the Babylonians who were working them mocked them, telling them to try singing a song with which they served God. The Bible records, *"By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down, yea, we wept When we remembered Zion. We hung our harps Upon the willows in the midst of it. For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, And those who plundered us requested mirth, Saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!'" (Psalm 137:1–3)*. They repented thoroughly, saying, "If only we are set free from this life of slavery and return to Israel, we will go into the temple of the LORD and praise God alone and serve God alone." Then God caused them to return again, but even after they returned, they did the same thing again. The long history of the people of Israel was a history of being beaten every day. The times when they lived in a little peace were when there was a leader, and they followed that leader's words and followed his guidance.

The life of each one of us, who live seventy or eighty years, is the same. If we follow when the Lord tells us to follow, we receive blessings in both body and spirit. Our souls are at peace, our lives are worthwhile, we are truly joyful, and we come to walk together with the Lord. When things are hard, the Lord helps us; when we are lacking, the Lord helps us and blesses us; and when the enemy opposes us, He protects us. But if we do not follow the Lord, we end up living miserably in the world.

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We get beaten in the world and end up living in vain, sunk in drink. Therefore, when we hear this word, we must believe according to the realization the Holy Spirit gives us, saying, "That is really so. This is what I must do." God said, *"You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3)*.

When you and I hear this word, we must follow by faith and pursue by faith. We must keep our wits about us, not follow human righteousness, abandon human righteousness and think about and believe in the righteousness of God, and follow the Lord by faith with a new heart, with a heart that sets no other god before God, and with a humble heart. This is faith. This is belief. We have much work to do. I have much work to do, and you also have much work to do. Let us go together. I hope that we will serve the Lord together so that the righteousness of God—that is, this righteousness that the Lord accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection—may be spread throughout the whole world, and so that all people may come to know and believe in the righteousness of God, receive the remission of sins, eat the food of eternal life, and obtain eternal life. ✉

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

# Who is a person of true faith?

**< John 21:15–19 >**

**"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.' This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me.'"**

Jesus received baptism from John and had our sins transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and entered the tomb and rose again. The risen Lord appeared many times. He met the women on the road and said, *"Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me" (Matthew 28:10)*; on the evening of the first day of the week He appeared to the disciples, just as the Bible says, *"When the doors were*

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*shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you'" (John 20:19)*; and eight days later He told Thomas to put his hand into His side and so made Thomas believe. And concerning His appearing by the Sea of Tiberias, the Bible says, *"This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead" (John 21:14)*.

## One hundred and fifty-three fish

But the disciples went back to their old livelihood. When the hot-tempered Peter said, *"I am going fishing" (John 21:3)*, several disciples, including James and John, went fishing together on the Sea of Tiberias. They must have had this in mind: "We followed Him for three years, but we have ended up empty-handed. Let us catch a lot of fish again and make a living." They diligently cast their nets all night, but no fish were caught.

Then Jesus appeared on the shore, and the Bible says, "*Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some. So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish" (John 21:6)*. The Bible records, *"Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken" (John 21:11)*. When we think of it now, one hundred and fifty-three fish does not seem like a great number. Today, large ships go out to sea, cast an enormous net once, and haul up countless fish. But in those days, to cast a net by human hands and catch one hundred and fifty-three fish at one time was a miracle. We must surely think about the situation at that time.

The disciples caught many fish. But Jesus spoke from the shore, and, thinking that the disciples might be hungry when

they came out, He had made a fire, was roasting fish on it, and had prepared bread. And He also took the fish the disciples had caught, roasted them, and ate a meal together with them all.

## We who have not seen and yet believe

What if it had been you and me? If Jesus had died and risen again, and had appeared twice inside a house whose doors were shut and shown that He was alive, would we go fishing even after seeing the risen Jesus twice with the eyes of the flesh? It seems we would not go. We have seen Jesus only in pictures, and yet we believe so well now. Seen in that light, our faith is really good. Jesus said, *"Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29)*. We do not even know what Jesus' face looked like, but we believe well.

But that is not because we are great; it is because the Holy Spirit is in us and leads us. If the Holy Spirit were not there, we, too, would not have been able to believe well, and we would have set out first of all to find a way to make a living right away.

## The faith of a monk and true faith

Jesus ate breakfast with the disciples and spoke to Peter. *"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs'" (John 21:15)*. What kind of person is a person who truly has good faith? A person who loves people, too, but loves the Lord more than people is a person who has good faith.

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When Jesus was arrested, Peter secretly followed behind and, in a corner of the courtyard of the high priest's house, warmed his hands and feet at the fire the people had made and watched Jesus. At that time, *"Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, 'You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?' He said, 'I am not'" (John 18:17)*; he also denied it when the people asked again, and the third time he cursed and said that he did not know that Man. Peter was a man who had earlier boasted, *"Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble" (Matthew 26:33)*. Such a Peter collapsed so miserably. Then what kind of faith is the true faith the Lord asked about? It is not a faith that cuts off people, but a faith that loves the Lord more than people.

On this earth there are many people who practice spiritual discipline. In Catholicism there are monks who leave the world and lead a monastic life. They say that they will cut off their relationships with people completely and love only God. They say that they go on retreats, facing God one on one. But loving only God while building a wall against people and cutting them off completely is something that anyone who has a fair amount of faith and loves God even a little can do. Of course, there are people who cannot even do that, but usually people can do it.

But between us and God, do really only God and we exist, one on one? While we live on this earth, beside us there are saints, there are the people we love, and there are many people. That is, between God and us there are also people. A person who loves people, too, but loves our Lord more than people is a person who truly has right faith and is the possessor of true faith. A person who loves the Lord more is a person of faith, and that is the faith of a true person of faith.

## A person who loves the Lord more in the midst of the world

We must love people, too. In fact, rather than saying that we must love them, those who have received the remission of sins have the Holy Spirit in them and so cannot hate people. They do hate wrongdoing or what is not right in itself. But they cannot hate the person himself. It is because the Holy Spirit, who is the source of love, is in us. Then, is the Lord not in us because we love people? Do we not love God because we love people? That is not so. When we come to love a person, we sometimes fall deeply for that person, but in fact the One we love more than the object of that love is Jesus Christ.

But in this world we cannot live without any relationship with people, money, or material things. So we often fall into and get bound by the material world or by people. It is not that someone binds us; it is that we ourselves fall into them. Then, it is not that the world and we are nowhere to be seen and only the Lord who redeemed us is seen; rather, the Lord who redeemed us is not seen, and only we ourselves and people are seen. Then we become anxious. We become anxious, thinking, "What is going on here? This is serious trouble." In this way, you and I, too, are torn between material things, people, and God in this world. The Lord did not tell us not to love people but told us to love people; yet when we love people, the Lord seems to grow distant, and when we love the Lord, people seem to grow distant, and so we go back and forth from one side to the other and are torn. Our Lord resolved all of this conflict with this one question, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*.

Therefore, even while we love people, love one another, and preach the gospel, we live following the will of the Lord because we love the Lord more. And in doing so, we become workers of

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the Lord. If Christians interpreted the word *"You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3)* to mean that they should cut off this world completely, they would have to leave this world, go into the mountains, and live like monks, looking only to God and gazing only up at the sky. Then they could not do the work of forming a church in this world, going out to find souls, and loving, understanding, and guiding them. Even if we love people, as long as we have the heart that loves the Lord more, it is not a problem. What becomes a problem is when we love people more than the Lord. God gave us the commandment, *"You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3)*. This is a word He gave as the law, but the law of the Spirit also says that loving anything more than God is sin.

In Christianity, loving people is not a bad thing. It is a commandment God has given. Jesus said, *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34)*. Yet people think that if they love people they are committing a great sin before God, and so they are confused, unable to do one thing or the other. Loving a person who is not born again is loving that soul, and brothers and sisters are loved as brothers and sisters, and workers are loved as workers. The love is the same. Only, if we love them more than the Lord, it becomes a problem. If we love the Lord more than these people, it is all right.

## The Lord, who made us and saved us

Concerning this word, in which the Lord asked Peter whether he loved Him, people sometimes say that in the original language it is agape (ἀγαπάω) love, or that it is phileo (φιλέω)

love. Of course, one may say so. But the Lord is our Creator and our Savior. The One who made Peter is our Lord.

It is easy to think only that God made us and later sent His Son to save us, but that is not so. The three, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, took counsel together and created the heavens and the earth, and, just as it is said, *"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (Genesis 1:26)*, the three took counsel together and made us in the likeness of Their own image. Who was there? That very Jesus, who came to this earth and lived thirty-three years loving you and me, removed all the sins of you and me through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us, existed as the Creator before He came to this earth. After He had said, let there be light, let there be a firmament, let the waters be divided from the waters, let grass and fruit come forth, let there be the sun and the moon, let there be the birds of the air and the fish in the waters, and let there be all the beasts, Jesus Christ formed man of the dust and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and man became a being that lives forever. The Bible says, *"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:3)*. The One who made us in this way is none other than Jesus.

Jesus is the Christ, that is, the King. God came as Jesus. He came as the Savior. Our Lord made you and me, and He came to save you and me from sin. That is why the Lord knows everything about us. That is also why Peter confessed, *"Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You" (John 21:17)*.

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## The martyrdom of Peter

The Lord said to Peter, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish" (John 21:18)*. After He had spoken this word, Peter became a guide of the early Church. People asked Peter about faith and belief and about Jesus Christ, and they followed him.

There is a story that has been handed down about the time of persecution in Rome. In the days of Emperor Nero, a great fire broke out in the city of Rome, and a rumor spread that Nero had set the fire in order to build a new Rome. When the people's resentment grew, Nero accused the Christians of having set the fire and made them the scapegoats. So the Christians were nailed to crosses and killed, or were put into the arena, where wild beasts were let loose to bite them to death. It is said that at that time Peter said, "The Lord was nailed to the cross upright and died, so how can I die in the same way as the Lord? Nail me to the cross upside down," and that he was nailed upside down and died. And it is said that because Peter died in that way, the saints of the early Church kept their faith. The Bible says, *"This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God" (John 21:19)*.

## The Lord, who goes on even when we fold our wings

There must be many things that you like, too. Young people very much like songs such as rap. When I see them lifting one leg and then the other, it is exactly like the way girls used to play

jump rope in the old days. In those days it was that kind of play culture, and now it is rap culture; that is the only difference. Dear fellow believers, do you love the Lord more than rap? Then that is enough. You can do rap for a good while and then stop. Do you love the Lord more than the opposite sex? Do you love the Lord more than money? Do you love the Lord more than yourself? Even though we cannot do so one hundred percent in our deeds, confessing in our hearts, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*—this is real faith. This faith is not a faith that is forced out, but a faith that follows the Lord, welling up from the heart because we love the Lord more.

I am lacking, and so I fall very often. Like a dog walking along the road, I keep glancing sideways and sometimes even rummage through trash cans. But even when I rummage through a trash can, I love the Lord more. In my life of faith, after receiving the remission of sins, while following only the Lord, I have also at times been drawn by the smell of filth lying beside the road, gone that way, and forgotten the Lord for a moment. But even at such times, it is not that the Lord has departed from our hearts. Still, when the Lord asks, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, we come to answer that we love the Lord more than anything else. Even if we have often gone off onto side paths, that is not the end. It is not that our Lord has left us. When the Lord saved us, He set a seal in our hearts forever. The Bible says, *"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13)*. That He set a seal means that He stamped us with a seal. It means that the Lord is firmly fixed in our hearts like a seal. That is why, even when we die, we go with the Lord, and we are guaranteed even the eternal kingdom and walk together with Him.

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Adults, children, and I myself—everyone often goes off onto side paths like this. When we ourselves are weak and keep going this way and that, we calculate on our own, "I will live a life of faith only a little longer, and when all my strength runs out, I will not be able to do it." We reckon on our own, "It has worked until now, but seeing that things I love more keep coming up and my heart sinks deeper into them, it seems it will not work much longer." And when we reach a certain point, we fold our wings, saying, "That is enough now. I have come as far as I can go. I cannot go any further." But even if you fold your wings, the Lord is in you. The Lord is the engine. When the Lord leads, we move forward even though we have folded our wings. The Lord is in your hearts and mine.

## The one heart that loves the Lord more

Therefore, do not calculate on your own. What the Lord always asks is, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*. The Lord demands the greatest love. If you love the Lord more, what is there to worry about? Are you perhaps weighing your own faith and belief, thinking, "I have lived a life of faith until now, but it seems it will not work from now on"? Even if you cannot do it in your deeds, the Lord, who is in your hearts, causes you to love the Lord more.

If in our hearts and souls there is a heart that loves the Lord more, the Lord embraces us in His arms, acknowledges our faith, and blesses us. And He loves us. The Lord came to this earth for us and received baptism from John, died on the Cross for us and rose again, and gave us life. The Lord loves us more than life and loves us forever. We, too, love the Lord. This is the bond

that has been tied in the Lord. It is a love bound together by the truth. Our Lord does not forsake us.

Dear fellow believers, I hope that you will have this faith. Do not remain in a faith that cuts off people and the world as if living a monastic life; I hope that you will shed a layer and grow out of such a faith. Legalistic faith does not last long. We love the Lord more than anything in this world.

If we love the Lord more, we can rule over all the rest. We can rule over ourselves, we can rule over the people we love, we can rule over material things, and we can rule over everything. Because we have the one heart that loves the Lord more, we live in this world and are still continuing our life of faith even now. Because we have the one heart that loves the Lord more, all the rest is covered. The Bible says, *"Love will cover a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8)*. Because we have that one heart that loves the Lord more than these people, the Lord covers our faults and shortcomings and loves us.

It is not that we are loved or hated by the Lord because we do something well or poorly. Because of that one heart that loves the Lord, we are loved and blessed by the Lord. The true faith that is acknowledged before God, the faith and belief that can make us workers of God, is the confession, "I love the Lord more than these." I want to ask you. Do you have a heart that loves the Lord more?

The Lord saved us through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and He rose again and gave us the Holy Spirit. We are people who sometimes fall into this world and who cannot help but live together with this world. But in such people as we are, the Holy Spirit raises up a heart that loves the Lord more. I give thanks to God. I hope that you will believe that God has given this faith to you and me. ✉

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Sermon 9 by Paul C. Jong

# My Lord and my God, whom I meet through the word

**< John 20:24–29 >**

**“Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ So he said to them, ‘Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’”**

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## The heart of Thomas, who said he would believe only if he confirmed it himself

On the evening of the day He rose again, when Jesus came to the place where the disciples were gathered, Thomas, one of the twelve disciples, was not there with them. The other disciples told him, *"We have seen the Lord,"* but Thomas did not accept their words. He said that he would not believe unless he saw the print of the nails in His hands, put his finger into the print of the nails, and put his hand into His side. When faced with the news of the resurrection that his companions brought him, he set up his own conditions.

Thomas wanted to be sure only of what he had seen with his eyes and experienced with his hands. As we read about Thomas, we easily judge him to be a person who lacked faith. But in fact, we, too, are people just like Thomas. Judging by the thoughts of the flesh, the claim that One who had died rose again is not easily believed, and so we wish that, if the Lord is really alive, He would let us feel it clearly. We think that if we heard His voice directly or met the Lord in a dream, we could believe without wavering. Even after hearing the word, we try to leave the final verdict to our own eyes and senses.

We cannot set Thomas apart as a person entirely different from the other disciples. The other disciples, too, were gathered with the doors shut for fear of the Jews. They, too, saw the Lord and were glad only after He had shown them His hands and His side. They had the grace of meeting Jesus first, and Thomas simply was not there at that time. Rather than boasting of our own faith as we look at Thomas, let us examine the unbelief that is in us as well.

The problem is the heart that regards our own feelings as more certain than the word the Lord has given. Feelings change

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many times even in a single day. When we sing praises, the Lord seems near, but when we are alone, He feels far away; when things go well, we are sure of the Lord's love, but when we meet with hardship, we doubt it. If we make feelings our standard, our assurance of salvation is shaken along with them. Who Jesus is and what He has accomplished for us are things we know and believe from the word.

## The Lord, who came to the doubting disciple and caused him to believe

After eight days, when the disciples were again inside the house, Thomas was with them. That day, too, the doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood in the midst. The Lord said, *"Peace to you!"* and then immediately spoke to Thomas. Let us read verse 27.

*"Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing'" (John 20:27).*

Jesus knew what Thomas had said. Thomas had said, *"Put my finger into the print of the nails,"* and Jesus said, *"Reach your finger here."* The Lord took the very condition Thomas had laid down before the other disciples and set it before Thomas just as it was. The purpose for which the Lord came to Thomas was not to leave his doubt as it was. It was to establish him as a person who believes.

This is the grace of the Lord. Jesus did not abandon the doubting disciple but came to him. At the same time, He did not acknowledge unbelief as though it were good faith, either. The word of the Lord led Thomas out of his own stubbornness and made him stand before the living Savior. We, too, have a heart

that welcomes the word that the Lord accepts us, while putting off the word that tells us to believe. The Lord comes to us in grace and leads us to faith.

The word *"Do not be unbelieving, but believing"* is a word that calls the person who believes at some times and doubts at other times. To believe is to be certain, and to hold on to that certainty steadily. The person who holds on without wavering to what Jesus accomplished for our sins is the one who believes.

The One who stood before Thomas was the very Jesus who had died on the Cross. The hands that had been nailed and the side that had been pierced by the spear were telling who He was. The Lord came to Thomas with those wounds still on Him and revealed that He Himself was the One who had suffered on the Cross. That death, over which the disciples had grieved, was not the end. The Lord rose again from death. If we confine His power within human limits, we cannot understand this fact. Jesus is not a man bound by sin and death like us, but God, who came to save us.

God made man and gave him life. That God came to save sinners and accomplished what He had promised. If we know who Jesus is, there is no reason to struggle to believe in the resurrection by forcing ourselves to imagine it. The word that the Lord of life rose again from death is believed just as it is. The power to make us live is in Him.

## I confess God, who made me and saved me

How did Thomas, who saw Jesus, answer? Let us read verse 28.

*"And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!'" (John 20:28).*

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Thomas confessed Jesus as his Lord and his God. He did not stop at saying that he had seen an amazing man who had died and come back to life. He stood before God, who made him, gave him life, and saves him. From the mouth that had said, *"Unless I see … I will not believe,"* came the confession *"My Lord and my God!"* Contained in this one phrase is a heart that gave up its own thoughts and believed in the Lord.

The word 'Lord' means master. Who do we know and believe Jesus to be? If we know Him merely as someone who helps us when we are in difficulty, we cannot know the depth of this confession. Before He is the One who helps us achieve what we want, the Lord is our Master. He is the Creator, who made us, and the Savior, who delivered us from sin. He is not One to be acknowledged only when He suits our judgment, but God, whose word we must follow.

The Gospel of John testifies from the very beginning of who He is. Let us read John chapter 1, verses 1 through 3.

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:1–3).*

God, who is the Word, made all things, and He came among us clothed in a human body. He did not merely look at sinners from afar, but Himself bore our sins and saved us. That Thomas confessed *"my God"* before the risen Jesus was precisely a confession of this One's true identity.

The person who believes in Jesus as God also believes in the salvation He accomplished. That Jesus, who had no sin, received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River was not because of His own sins. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him; bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross; and He rose again

from death and completed our salvation. This was a work that only God, the Lord of life, could do. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has all his sins washed away once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit, is born again, and becomes a child of God. Therefore, we do not place Jesus among the many teachers of the world, but believe in Him as our Savior and our God.

To the person who knows how heavy his sins are, this is truly good news. What could you add to the salvation that God Himself accomplished, to make it complete? Do not take your sins lightly, but do not regard what the Lord has done as insufficient, either. You need only believe, just as it is, in the salvation of Jesus, who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross. Because He is alive, our salvation and our hope are not in vain, either.

## The person who believes without seeing believes on the basis of the word

After the Lord heard Thomas' confession, He also gave a precious word to us, who would hear this testimony in the future. Let us read verse 29.

*"Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'" (John 20:29).*

To believe without seeing does not mean to imagine as one pleases without any basis. If we could believe only by seeing with our eyes, how could we, who never see Jesus with our eyes in our whole lives, believe? The testimony of what the apostles saw and heard is written down, and that word tells us who the

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Lord is and what He did. Through that word we meet Jesus Christ and receive the remission of sins.

We also know through the word that we are sinners. If we know sin only when we recall some wrong and our hearts ache, it is easy to regard the sins that have faded from memory as though they did not exist. But when we stand before the word of God, we come to know that there is sin in the human heart and that we cannot become righteous by our own strength. Just because our conscience is at ease does not mean that we are without sin before God as well. When we know our own condition through the word, the reason we need the Savior also becomes clear.

Likewise, we know the remission of sins through the word rather than through feelings. We confirm through the word how Jesus bore our sins and how He received the judgment for them. We cannot make the experience of feeling relieved for a while after praying and then becoming distressed again the standard of salvation. What washes away our sins is not emotions that change from moment to moment, but the salvation the Lord accomplished.

Look at the word Jesus spoke when He received baptism from John the Baptist.

*"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

Jesus received baptism from John in order to fulfill all righteousness. And John the Baptist, seeing Jesus coming toward him, testified as follows. Let us read John chapter 1, verse 29.

*"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29).*

We believe this word. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and our sins, too, are included in that sin of the world. Bearing that sin, Jesus received the judgment for that sin with the blood of the Cross. There is no reason to wait for a special vision or some other voice in order to know that our sins have been washed away. Let us believe, according to the word, in the remission of sins that the Lord accomplished.

Therefore, do not be discouraged, thinking that your faith is lacking, when you see people who say they have had experiences. A marvelous scene that someone claims to have seen cannot be more certain evidence of salvation than the word of the Bible. Visible experiences sometimes even deceive people instead. If it is a voice that speaks of salvation, examine through the word whether its content agrees with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Lord makes Himself known through the word and gives life to those who believe the word.

## The assurance of believing in the Lord upholds our life today

Faith is not a heart that agrees for a moment only while the atmosphere of worship is good. It is accepting what God has said as true and holding on to it. Let us not believe yesterday that He is our Savior and then today, just because our mood has sunk, regard the Lord's salvation as though it had never happened. The word remains as it is, and what the Lord accomplished also remains as it is. Jesus, who saved us from sin, is the living God.

A life of fearing and following the Lord also comes from the word. We do not try to move the Lord in order to obtain the experiences we want, but set our hearts on the will He has

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already spoken. We treasure the work the Lord has entrusted to us, and correct before the word what we had thought wrongly. To those who have not received the remission of sins, we preach the salvation of the Lord. Faith that knows who the Lord is keeps us from treating His word lightly.

The One who stood before Thomas was Jesus, who had risen again with the marks of the nails still on Him. That Jesus rose again from death is not an old event that has nothing to do with us. Since the Lord has risen again, we who believe in Him also live again. So we do not regard our toil and weakness on this earth as all there is to us, but hold on to the word of the Lord.

Thomas moved on from the thought that he would believe only if he confirmed it with his hands to the faith that confesses the living God. We, too, turn from the heart that set up our own senses as the final judge. The person who knows the Lord through the word, is sure of the remission of sins through the word, and lives according to the word is the one whom Jesus called *"Blessed."* We, too, who have not seen Jesus with our eyes, have met Him through the written word. So, like Thomas, you, too, confess to the Lord, *"My Lord and my God!"* ✉

Sermon 10 by Paul C. Jong

# Life obtained by believing through the written word

**< John 20:30–31 >**

**“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 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 purpose of recording these things among many signs

In the Gospel of John, the amazing works that Jesus did are recorded. He made wine out of water, healed the sick, and called the dead Lazarus out of the tomb. It is also recorded that Jesus, who died on the Cross, rose again and showed Himself to His disciples. But today’s passage says that there were also many other signs which are not written in this book. John did not write down everything Jesus did without omission, but recorded only *“these”* from among them.

Those signs were works done *“in the presence of His disciples.”* The disciples were witnesses who saw and heard those works at His side, and John, as one of them, recorded what he had seen and heard. We were not there, but through the record he left behind, we meet today the Jesus whom the disciples met at that time.

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Then why were these things recorded? It is not to make us know many marvelous stories. It is so that we may believe who Jesus is and obtain life in Him. The turning of water into wine and the raising of Lazarus all point to one Person. He is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Even while reading the Bible, there are times when our hearts are captivated only by the amazing scenes. Reading the word that Lazarus came back to life, we wish that we, too, could see such a thing, and reading the word that a sick person was healed, we set our hearts only on our own circumstances getting better. But the amazing event passes, and people soon look for yet another event. If we look only at what happened, without knowing who it was that did the signs, we miss the purpose of the written word. Today's passage turns our eyes from the number or size of the signs to Jesus Christ, who did those signs.

## Jesus is the Son of God, who came in a human body

Let us read verse 31 again.

*"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" (John 20:31).*

The first thing John wants us to believe is that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is not someone who was especially outstanding among people and was later exalted as God. He who is originally God the Son and the Master who made all things in the universe came to this earth in a human body to save us.

Let us read John chapter 1, verse 14.

*"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).*

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. God, knowing the circumstances of us who are human, came to deliver us from sin and death. The One whom John introduced in chapter 1 as *"the only begotten of the Father,"* he calls *"the Son of God"* when he reaches chapter 20, and he makes clear that he wrote this book so that we may believe in Him. Because He is the One who made life, He raised the dead Lazarus, and He Himself also rose again from death.

Believing in Jesus as God is not a difficult piece of knowledge added on to faith. It is knowing from whom our salvation came. If we know Jesus only as a teacher who taught good deeds, we come to think that we must become righteous by our own strength by following His teaching. But Jesus came to accomplish the salvation that sinners cannot achieve by themselves, and He did not stop at showing us an example but Himself bore our sins and received the judgment for them on our behalf.

Believe this fact that the Son of God came for us. This salvation is not bound to the small zeal of sinners, but stands on what God planned and accomplished Himself. The reason we give thanks to the Lord and worship Him also lies here.

## Christ accomplished the work of king, priest, and prophet

The passage says that it was written so that we may believe that Jesus is not only the Son of God but also *"the Christ."* Christ means the anointed one, and it tells us of the office Jesus

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took on for us. Jesus is our King, the High Priest who removed our sins, and the prophet who taught us the truth of God. Who He is and what He did cannot be separated.

Jesus is the King of kings. The life of people is in Him, and the world, too, is under His rule. This King Himself accomplished the work of salvation for us, who could do nothing in the face of sin and death, and He rose again from death and reigns even now. Therefore, our future, too, is in His hands.

Also, Jesus is the High Priest who removed our sins. He came in a human body to carry out the duty of the High Priest, and He gave up His own sinless body as the sacrificial offering. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him, and while bearing that sin, He shed His blood and died on the Cross and thereby received the judgment for sin in our place. Therefore, a person who believes in the Lord's work does not put forward his own labor as the sacrificial offering of atonement.

The One of whom John the Baptist testified, saying, *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)*, is none other than this High Priest. My sins and your sins were also included in that sin of the world. Since the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross together accomplished our salvation, when we speak of how our sins were removed, we speak of these two together.

Jesus is the prophet who makes this salvation known to us. He did not leave us to find out for ourselves the way to come to God, but He spoke and taught and revealed who He is. Now we hear that truth through the word John recorded. The Son of God came in a human body, had all the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin through the blood of the Cross, and was buried and rose again from death, thus completing salvation. A

person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit has all his sins washed away once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and is born again as a child of God. This is the news of life that the Lord has made known to us.

## The life obtained in His name

Verse 31 says the word *"you"* twice. It says that it is so that you may believe, and also that believing you may have life. John recorded it so that we who read this word today may believe, and he recorded it so that we may have life through that faith. So the purpose of this record does not end with memorizing the right answer about Jesus or coming to worship calling on His name. It reaches the point of obtaining life by believing with the heart the salvation the Lord accomplished.

To rely on His name is to depend on Jesus Himself, who is testified of by that name, and on the salvation He accomplished. The name "Jesus" means Savior. A person who relies on that name believes the word that Christ, the Son of God, bore his sins, received the judgment for them on his behalf, and gave him life, and through that faith he receives the remission of sins and is clothed with new life. We do not obtain life through any qualification we have, but we obtain it through the Lord.

People try to find the ground of salvation within themselves. They look back at how sincerely they prayed, how good a life they lived, and how deeply moved they were. But the One who washed away sins is the Lord, and the salvation He accomplished through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross is the ground of our faith. Even on the day you discover your own shortcomings, return to that salvation the Lord accomplished.

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The life obtained in His name is the new life obtained by being united with the Lord. The life of this body will one day be cut off, but the life received in Christ is not cut off there but continues again. The risen Lord will raise us again and cause us to live with Him forever. This is the hope given to us.

Let us read John chapter 5, verse 24.

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24).*

The Lord spoke of it as something already accomplished, saying that he who believes "*has everlasting life"* and "*has passed"* from death into life. So a person who believes the word does not regard everlasting life as a story of the distant future, but lives today as one who has already obtained life. That we wait for the day when the Lord will raise us again in the future is also because we believe His promise.

## A person who has obtained life lives with confidence in the word

The word John recorded does not change according to our mood. Even on a day when our hearts waver, that record testifies just the same that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. So faith is being sure of this record and holding on to it steadily. A person who believes that the Lord is God and the Christ also believes in the salvation and life He promised and entrusts himself to them. Open the word again and engrave on your heart what He accomplished.

A person who has obtained this life serves the Lord, who is King, and lives according to His will. When a person who has

received the remission of sins preaches the gospel, others, too, hear of the Lord's salvation and believe. What is precious at that time is, more than eloquence, that the sin that was in the heart of the hearer is actually removed. The purpose of the Gospel of John, which is to have people believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and obtain life in His name, is also the purpose for which we preach the gospel.

If you still remain in a religious life without knowing how your sins were washed away, listen to the written word. Know and believe what Jesus had passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, why He died on the Cross, and why He rose again from death. The One we need is Jesus Christ, who gives life.

Let us who have already believed this gospel also not regard the life we have received as a small thing. Just as the risen Jesus went up to the Father, when we finish our life on this earth, the Lord will also take us to His kingdom and cause us to live with Him. Do not measure that eternal hope by your present brief circumstances.

Starting from the empty tomb, chapter 20 told the stories of those who met the risen Jesus—from Mary Magdalene, who was weeping outside the tomb, and the disciples, who were gathered with the doors shut, to Thomas, who confessed, *"My Lord and my God!"* And at its end, it makes clear the reason all these things were recorded. It is so that you may believe, and that believing you may have life in His name. Let us who have believed through this written word and obtained life preach the life obtained in His name to those who do not yet know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. ✉

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Sermon 11 by Paul C. Jong

# The risen Lord, who cares for our lives

**< John 21:1–14 >**

**"After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We are going with you also.' They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, 'Children, have you any food?' They answered Him, 'No.' And He said to them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.' Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and**

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**although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, 'Come and eat breakfast.' Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, 'Who are You?'—knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead."**

Though they cast the net all night, nothing was left in the disciples' hands. They knew that Jesus had risen again from death. They had already met the risen Lord twice, and they had also seen His hands and His side. But the Lord appeared and then soon could no longer be seen, and He did not go about with them at their side every day as in the old days. The disciples did not know where to set their hearts. So on that night when they went out to catch fish, they did not know how the risen Lord was caring for their lives. Even when the Lord stood on the shore as the day was dawning, they did not recognize Him. In the disciples' eyes only the empty net could be seen, but the Lord, who had come to find them, was already near.

We, too, sometimes show this kind of appearance after we have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins. While we clearly believe that the Lord has saved us, we live like people who have to handle everything by themselves, driven by the things that confront us. When things go well, we regard it as the fruit of our own labor, and when things get hard, we first count up the strength and the money we have. Our confession that the Lord is alive and our life today are separated from each other. The risen Lord showed Himself to the disciples, filled the empty net, and set food before them. The Lord, who saved us, cares for our lives even now.

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## The Lord, who came to the disciples as they were drawing in an empty net

Let us read verses 3 and 4.

*"Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We are going with you also.' They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus" (John 21:3–4).*

When Peter said he was going fishing, the disciples who were with him also went along. Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples—there were seven of them. For Peter, fishing was the work he had done before he followed Jesus. He knew that the Lord had risen again, but since the Lord was not at his side now, he went back to the old days. They cast the net all night but caught nothing. Even though they went back to the work their hands were used to, that work could not fill their empty hands, and they could not find satisfaction in their old life either.

What is worth noticing is that no one sought the Lord as they set out on that path. They thought that something like catching fish was something they could do even without the Lord's help. They got into the boat without taking the Lord with them, and they cast the net without asking the Lord. People are very accustomed to managing their affairs by their own strength without the Lord. Even the disciples, who had eaten and lived together with the Lord for three years, were like that, so we are no different.

Even a person whose sins have been washed away through the gospel of the water and the Spirit passes through a time like this at least once. It is clear that he has received the remission of sins, but he wanders, not knowing where to go after that. Old

thoughts keep coming to mind, and he tries to lead himself. But a person who has been born again cannot make himself his own guide, nor can he entrust himself to the people of the world. If he lives holding on to his own thoughts alone, his heart becomes distressed again, and he loses sight of what he should live for.

When that night had passed and the day was dawning, the Lord stood on the shore. Before the disciples recognized the Lord and called to Him, the Lord had come to that place first. They did not imagine that the Lord would have come looking for them all the way to this seashore. Even so, Jesus stood there, watching over them. Even when the disciples were disappointed, He was still beside them. Even when our eyes are slow to recognize the Lord, the Lord's care does not stop.

Look back on the days you have passed through. Are you not regarding all the help you have received so far as the result of your own ability? We easily forget how the Lord held our hearts fast with His word, how He let us receive the help we needed, and how He let us work together by faith within the church. As soon as one problem is solved, we cling to the next problem and forget the grace He gave before. If we live like that, we always see only what is lacking, and the thanks we should offer to the Lord disappears. When we look back, it is not by our own strength that we have come this far. We have come this far because the Lord cared for us, led us, and kept us.

## The Lord's power that we come to know when we follow the Lord's word

Let us read verses 5 and 6.

*"Then Jesus said to them, 'Children, have you any food?' They answered Him, 'No.' And He said to them, 'Cast the net on*

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*the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish" (John 21:5–6).*

On the shore the Lord called the grown fishermen, *"Children."* Before the Creator who made them and the Lord who saved them, the disciples were like little children who needed to be cared for. The disciples answered that they had no fish. They did not hide the result of their night-long labor. The Lord told them to cast the net on the right side of the boat. The Lord knew exactly where the fish in the sea were. When the disciples cast the net according to that word, there were so many fish that they could not draw the net in. It was a net cast by the same people from the same boat into the same sea. The only thing that was different was that they had obeyed the Lord's word.

The Lord did not just hear the answer that they had none and leave. He taught them what to do, and to those who followed that word He actually gave something to gain. The living Lord is not One who entrusts a task and then withdraws, saying, "Do it on your own." He guides us, is with us, and helps us. Whatever you do, first tell it to the Lord. When we bring the Lord into that work, entrust it to Him, and then do as He tells us to do, we too taste His power.

To live by faith is not to erase, by our own judgment, the work the Lord told us to do. Even if, by our own experience, it seems useless to try, and even if, by the strength we have now, it seems not enough, it is to believe that the Lord's word is right and to do as that word says. A person who has tasted the Lord's help does not boast of his own wisdom after the work is accomplished, but gives thanks to the Lord, who guided him.

We, too, have tasks entrusted to us. There is the work of preaching the gospel, and there is also the work of laboring to

support that work. If we regard these tasks merely as chores to be dealt with, we come to count only weariness and profit and loss. But if we do them with the heart that this is the Lord's work, we come to know by experience that the Lord is with us in the midst of that work. It also becomes clear whom we should rely on in the face of difficulties. We come to ask the Lord for wisdom, consult together with the church, and carry out the work entrusted to us by faith.

## Even after receiving the remission of sins, we need the Lord's guidance

Let us read verse 7.

*"Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea" (John 21:7).*

The disciple whom Jesus loved recognized the Lord first and told Peter, *"It is the Lord!"* When he heard that, Peter wrapped his outer garment around his bare body and plunged into the sea. He did not even say, "Let us check whether it is really the Lord." He plunged straight into the water and went to the Lord. That is how much his heart thirsted. What the man who had spent the night holding on to an empty net needed was the Lord who fills the net, the Lord who would lead his life once again.

We, who have received the remission of sins, must also have this kind of resolve in our hearts. If we say that we are thankful that He saved us, but from now on we will live our lives according to our own will, our hearts waver every time something difficult happens. When our circumstances are good we follow the Lord, but as soon as something happens that does

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not suit our will, we look for another path. That is because we have not yet accepted that we are people who must receive the Lord's guidance. Ask yourself. After receiving the remission of sins, have you really resolved in your heart? Are you not following the Lord because of your circumstances?

Resolving in our hearts is different from guaranteeing that there is no flaw in our conduct. It is believing that the word of the Lord, who saved us, is right, and that He is the One who will guide us rightly. It is turning toward the Lord even when our shortcomings are exposed, and not letting go of the Lord's word even when there are things that do not go as we wish. A person who has resolved in his heart like that does not follow as if being dragged along by force. He follows willingly, because he loves the Lord and because the Lord's word is right.

Peter's wrapping himself in his outer garment and plunging in was not something he did because someone told him to. At the one word that the Lord was there, his heart ran ahead first. We, too, know Jesus, who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for those sins in our place with the blood of the Cross, and so we can go to Him even on the days when our shortcomings are exposed. The weaker the day, the closer you should keep the Lord's word. With the love with which He saved our souls, the Lord leads us today as well.

## The care of the Lord, who gives fish and bread

The other disciples came to land in the little boat, dragging the net with the fish. When they came up, there was a fire of coals, with fish laid on it, and bread. The Lord had prepared food in advance and was waiting for them. The Lord also told them

to bring some of the fish they had just caught. When Peter dragged the net up to land, there were one hundred and fifty-three large fish, and although there were so many, the net was not broken. The disciples, who had gotten nothing all night, obtained abundantly through the Lord's word, and now they came to receive the meal the Lord set before them.

Let us read verses 12 and 13.

*"Jesus said to them, 'Come and eat breakfast.' Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, 'Who are You?'—knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish" (John 21:12–13).*

The Lord said, *"Come and eat breakfast,"* and He took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise gave them the fish. In His risen body He stood beside the disciples and shared out food to them with His own hands. The Lord's care was a practical love that knew their circumstances and supplied what they needed.

At that place there was no disciple who dared to ask, *"Who are You?"* It was because they knew that it was the Lord. He was not someone seen in a dream, nor someone dimly glimpsed through a mist. The One who had built a fire of coals, grilled fish, prepared bread, and told them to eat was right before their eyes. When a fact is all too clear, people lose the words to ask. Even while they felt abashed as they saw the Lord, they were deeply moved by the Lord, who had come to find them just as they were.

Our remission of sins is just as clear as this. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River and had all our sins transferred to Him. He received the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross, and He rose again from death and saved us. The Holy Spirit comes and dwells in the heart of a person who believes this. Because the word makes this so clear, a person who believes cannot ask back, "Is this really right?" A

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person who is unclear about whether his sins are gone always asks and tries to confirm again, but in a person who believes what the Lord has done just as it is, that question ceases.

Yet there are times when we, while being thankful for the grace by which He washed away our sins, take for granted the grace by which He gives us the strength to live today and food to eat. Even after receiving the help we needed while doing the Lord's work, as time passes we think of it as something we obtained because we did well. But both our souls and our daily lives are receiving the Lord's care. When a little money has been saved up, it is easy to regard it as more reliable than the Lord, and when experience accumulates, it is easy to live as if we no longer need to ask the Lord. But the things in our hands are also what the Lord has given, and the wisdom to use them we also receive from the Lord.

I hope that those who are going through hard times now will also look to this Lord. When your heart is sad, when the things you must handle are too heavy for you, and when you do not know what to do from now on, you can ask the Lord for help. The Lord, who first came to the side of the empty net, is not indifferent to our circumstances either. A person who believes in the Lord's care is freed from the thought that he must solve everything alone, and he prays to Him.

## A life of believing in and giving thanks to the Lord, who is with us even now

Let us read verse 14.

*"This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead" (John 21:14).*

The One who appeared to the disciples on the shore is Jesus, who rose from the dead. This was the third time. Because He is the Lord of life, He rose again from the tomb, and He is alive even now. Because the Lord is alive, the salvation we have received is also effective. If the One who removed our sins were still in the tomb, our faith would be nothing more than a religion that commemorates a dead man. But the risen Lord is even now giving salvation to those who hear and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A person who believes in Him obtains new life.

The disciples went fishing even after they had met the risen Lord twice. We, too, sometimes find that our hearts have gone back to the old days after we have received the remission of sins. Since the Lord has risen again, there must also be a resurrection in our faith. Receive the risen Lord in your heart, too, as the Lord who is alive.

Even after the Lord went up to heaven, the disciples were not left alone. Jesus promised the disciples the Helper. Let us read John chapter 14, verses 16 through 18.

*"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:16–18).*

The Lord does not leave His people as orphans but comes to them. The Holy Spirit, who is in us, makes us understand when we look at the word, comforts our discouraged hearts, rebukes our wrong thoughts, and exhorts us toward the way we should walk by faith. When the Lord's word corrects your thinking, accept that word. The Lord's guidance reaches even to the point

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of turning our wrong hearts around and making us do by faith the things that please the Lord.

Those who know that the Lord is with them remember the grace of the past. Just as earnestly as they asked for help, they also give thanks for the grace by which He helped them. When difficulties arise while they serve the gospel, they ask the Lord for what they need, help one another, and get through them by the wisdom the Lord gives. It is because the Lord, who entrusted the work to them, is with them in the midst of that work. The apostle Paul exhorted believers as follows.

*"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).*

Let us rejoice in the salvation we have received, ask in prayer for the help we need now, and remember the grace He has already given and give thanks. Even at that dawn when the disciples did not recognize Him, the Lord was standing on the shore. He called those who were drawing in an empty net, *"Children,"* filled the net with His word, and prepared bread and fish on the fire of coals. That Lord, who washed away our sins through the baptism He received from John and through the Cross and rose again, stands beside our empty nets today as well. ✉

Sermon 12 by Paul C. Jong

# Let us live boldly as instruments of righteousness

**< John 21:15–19 >**

**“So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.’ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’”**

The point I want to tell you is this. I have the heart and the goal to preach the gospel to the whole world. What I am asking

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is that we unite together toward this goal and serve the gospel. This is a spiritual request.

We have served the gospel until now, but the years have passed and it has been more than ten years. Having run so busily all this time, it cannot be denied that in some respects we have lost much of the heart we had when we first set out. We have run toward the work of preaching the gospel to the whole world, but some have run knowing this purpose, and some have simply followed along. But whether one has run with this purpose from the beginning or has simply followed along, now we must once again ruminate on this purpose of preaching the gospel to the whole world, gather our wills together, and run toward that goal.

We must know what the person who leads us is aiming at and in which direction he is leading us, and then follow. Is the goal to build a large chapel, is the goal for us to eat well and live well among ourselves, or is the goal to spread the gospel to the whole world and uphold the will of the Lord? Only when we know this and follow can we unite with the same heart and the same will and serve the Lord. This is extremely important. If you accept it by faith, the word will work in your hearts and cause you to uphold the will of the Lord well. But if you do not uphold it by faith and merely know it and file it away in theory, it becomes knowledge without power, and it becomes words that vanish the moment you step out the chapel door.

## The heart that wants to preach the gospel to the whole world

I want to preach the gospel to the whole world completely. It is because that is the will of the Lord. The Lord blesses everything we do, is with us, protects us, and is helping and

guiding us in great detail. He will continue to do so in the future as well. Because the Lord wants to spread the gospel to the whole world through us and wants to use you and me in this work, He has given us this heart and has entrusted this work to us. I give thanks to God.

When I first met the Lord through the word, I once prayed as follows: "Lord, as far as I know, there is no one who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. Give me the strength to preach this gospel to the whole world." And time passed. Because making a living was so pressing, I also had useless thoughts. There were even times when I thought that I should give up devoting my body to the work and just do the work of serving from behind so that the gospel would be spread to the whole world. But my mouth would not stay shut. I kept on preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When people began to receive the remission of sins, one or two at a time, a commotion arose, and there were also people who rejected me. Even so, my lips would not stay shut, and I preached without ceasing. Through many such processes, God caused me to meet you.

When I went to a small city, there was even a time when I grumbled to the Lord as follows: "God, why did You send me here? Am I Your servant, or am I not? If I am the Lord's servant, why did You put me in a remote corner of the countryside like this? If You want me to preach the gospel, You should at least give me the material means to build a chapel, but all I have is one small bag and a little money that must be used for bus fare, so I cannot even buy myself a single lunch. God, what is this?" It was a protest that was not quite a protest, made to the Lord. "Just tell me this one thing, whether I am the Lord's servant or not. However I think about it, I have never left the path of preaching the gospel and turned back to the world, nor have I

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compromised with false people, and because of that I have also gone through many hardships. Even now I like preaching the gospel more than eating, so why must I fall into a situation like this, in which I cannot serve the gospel?" When I prayed like that, a question rose in my heart: "Is there any place in this region that preaches the gospel?" So I went around the churches in that region and listened to their sermons, but even those who called themselves evangelicals did not preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In that region there was no place that preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Preaching the gospel to the world is my purpose. I have no other purpose at all. I have lived that way until now, and that purpose is still unchanged. What I am worried about is this. When we do the work of serving the gospel and our years of faith accumulate and we grow a little, we may each think and judge on our own and fall into the thoughts of the flesh. So what would happen if we, content among ourselves with whatever is comfortable, ate well and lived well and only pretended to serve the gospel without serving it with all our hearts? Would the Lord still let us keep preaching the gospel, or would we come to disappear like certain denominations of the past? That is my worry. I hope that my purpose will become your purpose, and that your purpose will become the Lord's purpose. There is nothing else.

Only when the will of the Lord becomes my will and my will becomes your will can we unite with one heart and serve. I want to preach the gospel to the whole world completely, together with you. And I hope that you will live blessedly until the day the Lord comes. If you serve the Lord and uphold the will of the Lord, you live blessedly. That is basic. Until the Lord tells us to come, we will spread this gospel to the whole world completely.

If the gospel can be spread well, I will yield on this and yield on that. It is because that is the purpose.

## The disciples who went fishing again

This word records that Jesus asked Peter three times whether he loved the Lord, and when Peter answered yes all three times, He entrusted him with feeding His lambs, tending His sheep, and feeding His sheep. And He said, *"When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish" (John 21:18),* and He said to Peter, *"Follow Me" (John 21:19)*.

Before that happened, the disciples of Jesus were fishing in the Sea of Tiberias in Galilee. They had met the Lord and followed Him, and they had heard with their ears and even seen with their eyes that the Lord had died on the Cross and risen again from death, and that the risen Lord had already appeared to the disciples twice. At that time, the Bible says, *"Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We are going with you also.' They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing" (John 21:3)*. They cast the net all night long, but they caught nothing.

At that time Jesus stood on the shore, and the Bible says, *"'Children, have you any food?' They answered Him, 'No.' And He said to them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish" (John 21:5–6)*. When one disciple told Peter that it was the Lord, the Bible records, *"Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the*

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*sea" (John 21:7)*. Peter, who had been a fisherman, had been working with his upper garment off, and he put on his outer garment, jumped into the sea, and came out to the shore. When he came out and looked, a fire of coals had been made, fish was laid on it, and bread was also prepared. The Lord said, *"Come and eat breakfast" (John 21:12)*.

## Peter, who denied the Lord three times

When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane and taken away, a few disciples followed behind, and the one who followed all the way into the courtyard of the high priest's house was Peter. But there Peter denied Jesus three times. It was not merely a matter of saying, "I do not know Him." When people said, *"Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you" (Matthew 26:73)*, Peter denied it strongly, even cursing and swearing. When he denied Him the third time, the rooster crowed. And the Bible records, *"And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So Peter went out and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:61–62)*.

After that, Jesus was interrogated before the Roman governor Pilate. Jesus, who had no sin, was scourged until His whole body was covered in blood. The Bible says, *"And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And they struck Him with their hands" (John 19:2–3)*. The Teacher whom Peter had believed in and followed, his own God, his own Savior, had been made bloody like that, and yet Peter himself had denied the Lord three times. He was so

cowardly and pathetic that he could not lift up his face. Then he heard the news that Jesus had been nailed to the Cross and died.

Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin of all mankind, that is, the sin of the world, transferred to Him. And bearing that sin of the world, He was nailed to the Cross, suffered contempt, tribulation, and death, shed all the blood of His heart and died, and rose again from death and saved the disciples.

## *"Do you love Me more than these?"*

After they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Peter: *"'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs'" (John 21:15)*. That Jesus called Peter Simon, son of Jonah, was to point out Peter's original human self.

The second time, when Jesus said, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" (John 21:16)*, Peter again answered that the Lord knew that he loved Him, and Jesus said, *"Tend My sheep" (John 21:16)*. And He asked yet a third time. I do not know whether Jesus asked three times because Peter had denied Him three times. The Bible says, *"Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep'" (John 21:17)*.

What about you and me today? While we follow the Lord, are we upholding the will of the Lord well and following Him purely, so that the heart of the Lord is satisfied? Just as Peter had many human faults, do you also have such faults? There must be many. Such faults bind us heavily.

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## A calculating heart, a hardened faith

That is why the writer of Hebrews says, *"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1–2).* Our faith must get better as the days go by. The Apostle Paul said, *"Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16).* Our inward man must be renewed day by day, but there are times when, far from being renewed, it grows slack and fades away. We have faith, but we must follow with a pure heart, as when we first met the Lord, as at the time when we confessed that we would follow the Lord, boldly saying like young people, "I will do as You command," and yet we do not. We calculate: "If I do this, what will the person who leads say? In this situation, doing this would be a loss. I must not do this." And we also fall into our own weakness and act like Peter. That is, there are such times as we follow the Lord.

We do love the Lord, but there are times when our steps in following the Lord are heavy. Since the truth is the truth, we must follow it, but our feet will not move. Spiritual strength should increase as time goes on, but instead we lose spiritual strength and harden like fallow ground. When we come to church, we greet people well, and we are very well versed in the procedures of church affairs and in reading the mood. We know well what to do when we meet someone, how to behave when we get together, and that when we play sports, even if we could score the goal ourselves, we should pass the ball to the person who leads and make him feel good. But the fact is that, even though we do follow the Lord, we have no spiritual strength and

no purity. That is, when such shortcomings pile up one by one and we come to look back at ourselves, we become embarrassed.

You and I are also people like Peter. Peter also confessed his faith well, saying, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*. If Jesus had not been put to death, he would have kept on loving Him and following Him well. But when the Lord came to be hung on the Cross and die, he lost all hope. Even though he was at the scene at the most difficult time, when Jesus was being tried, he could not stand beside Jesus and say, "Crucify me together with Him." On the contrary, when people said that he, too, was one of Jesus' party, he cursed and said that he did not know that Man.

## The faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The gospel of the water and the Spirit that such a Peter and we believe in is this. The water means that Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him when He received baptism from John the Baptist, and it is believing this. Believing that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death and saved us is believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And the Spirit is God. It is believing that God came to this earth clothed in human flesh, received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death and saved us.

Is there anyone among you who is depressed because of your own shortcomings and weakness? There must be many. When we look into our own character, I cannot tell you how well we

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calculate our own interests. When some command comes down, we calculate in our heads: this one this way, that one that way. All of this is sin. Scheming with human means and methods is also sin, and doing ministry that way is also sin. Failing to make others into people of faith and making them into people of the flesh is also sin. But the Lord had even such sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment on the Cross.

## People who live as instruments of righteousness

You can follow the Lord. Even though you are lacking, you can pray before the Lord, and even though you are lacking, when you pray, the Lord answers. And you can live as instruments of righteousness. Living anew every day, always like the rising sun, is the life of us, the righteous. This is the blessing God has given to you and me.

There may also be those who say, “I am so lacking that I cannot do the work of God.” There are several hymns whose lyrics were written by a brother of our church. I have hardly ever spent time with that brother, nor have I talked with him much. But as I looked at the hymn lyrics that brother had written, I thought, “There is truly much that is spiritual in this brother. This is what God has done for this brother.” I do not look at people by their outward appearance alone. I know who wrote each and every hymn. When I look at the lyrics, I can see what that person’s heart is like and what his faith is like. That is why hymns come to be written. I want to work together as fellow workers not only with that brother but with all of you.

The Lord loved us, removed our sins, made us children of God, gave us eternal life, gave us the kingdom of God, and

works together with us. Therefore we lack nothing at all for living as workers of God. You are servants of righteousness who can abundantly carry out the work of the Lord by faith, obey His commands, and please Him. Do not be bound by your own weakness and follow the direction that Satan the devil likes. Satan the devil works with human things, saying, "What can someone like you do?" But we are fundamentally different from Satan the devil. We are people who belong to God. You can follow the Lord by faith. You need only believe in what the Lord has given you and follow. That is a servant of righteousness. The Bible says, *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)*. I give thanks to our Lord.

I know the weaknesses of our ministers, our brothers and sisters, and our fellow workers overseas—not as much as the Lord does, but I know them all. But that does not matter at all. Only remember the blessing the Lord has given you. And uphold the will of the Lord. Then you become workers of the Lord. You can become instruments of righteousness. Having come into the Lord, you can live as much as you want the life that pleases the Lord. I think that all of you are instruments of righteousness and can all become workers. Do not be bound by your own weakness and sit down in despair. If we sit down like that, the Lord grieves.

## A person who received a box of diamonds

Let us suppose that someone gave you a box of diamonds. But if you went around looking shabby, what would the person who gave you the box of diamonds think? He would be ashamed of you, thinking, "Was what I gave you worth no more than that?" What the Lord has given to you and me is a gift as precious as that. We have nothing to be ashamed of. We are servants of

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righteousness and instruments of righteousness. The blessings we will receive in the future, the rich blessings of the earth and the rich blessings of heaven, still remain in indescribable abundance. I hope that while you live on this earth you will live by faith as instruments of righteousness, follow the Lord boldly, and then meet the Lord. ✉

Sermon 13 by Paul C. Jong

# A life that loves the Lord and cares for His sheep

**< John 21:15–23 >**

**"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.' This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me.' Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, 'Lord, who is the one who betrays You?' Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, 'But Lord, what about this man?' Jesus said to him, 'If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.' Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not**

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**say to him that he would not die, but, 'If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?'"**

What Jesus asked Peter after they had eaten breakfast was not a question about how great a work he could accomplish in the future. The Lord asked whether Peter loved Him. And to him, who answered that he loved Him, He entrusted His sheep. The heart that loves the Lord and the work of caring for His sheep are joined together as one. The person who knows the love he has received from the Lord feeds and leads souls with that love.

But the person who received this question was not someone who could put forward his own loyalty. Peter had said that he would even lay down his life for the Lord, and then, on the night Jesus was arrested, he said three times that he did not know Him. Jesus knew all of that. Nevertheless, after He rose again, He came to him, who had gone back to fishing, and after He had fed him breakfast, He asked him about his love. If He had not loved him, there would have been no reason for Him to come to him.

Today we, too, stand before this question. Where does our confession that we love the Lord come from? Is it something we say while counting up the things we have done well, or is it a confession we make because we know the righteousness of God, who washed away our sins, and have received that love? A life that follows the Lord comes from the faith that knows the salvation He has given, and that faith leads to a life of feeding and caring for the Lord's sheep.

## The love of the Lord, which is greater than Peter's wrong

Let us read verse 15.

*"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs'" (John 21:15).*

Jesus asked, *"Do you love Me more than these?"* It is a question of whether he loved the Lord more than the fellow disciples who were beside him, and more than all the people Peter held dear. If He had asked, "Do you not have even the slightest heart that loves the world?" Peter would not have been able to answer at all. Jesus asked about *"more."* He knew that Peter, too, had a heart that loved people and held himself dear.

In fact, it was also because of that heart that Peter denied the Lord. He could not endure being hated by people, and above all he held his own life dear. Let us read what he said in chapter 13.

*"Peter said to Him, 'Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.' Jesus answered him, 'Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times'" (John 13:37–38).*

Peter's words were impressive. But the Lord knew Peter more accurately than those words. That night he denied that he was a disciple of Jesus, and *"immediately a rooster crowed" (John 18:27)*. The man who had held on to his own resolve and been so sure of himself had his own weakness exposed.

Such a Peter now answers, *"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."* He does not list the things he has done. Where did this confession come from? It was because the Lord's love for Peter was greater than the wrong Peter had done. Because the Lord

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had removed all his sins, he could say that he loved the Lord more than all people. With this question the Lord raised up again the heart of Peter, which had collapsed. Peter's love did not come first. The righteousness God accomplished came first.

We, too, love the things that are in the world. If we say that we do not have even the slightest such heart, we are deceiving ourselves. Rather than striving to hide that heart, acknowledge it honestly. And place the things of the world side by side with the Lord and weigh them. People, possessions, and honor are good, but they cannot be exchanged for the Lord. When we think about who has loved us more, the answer is clear. The Apostle John made clear as follows the reason we love.

*"We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).*

The heart that loves the Lord springs up from the love it has received. The person who has received much love loves much. Because that love remains the same even now, the person who has been loved stays by the Lord's side. Then how did the Lord love us? He did not merely say in words that He loved us; through the baptism He received from John, He actually had our sins passed on to Him, and with the blood of the Cross He received the judgment for them.

## We believe in the righteousness of God, who bore even the sin of Peter's denial

The righteousness of God is not some excellent deed that we have offered to God. It is the right thing God did in order to save us from sin. The Son of God left the throne of glory and came clothed in a human body. And through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, He had the sin of the world transferred onto His body once and for all. Because of that sin,

He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and so He received the judgment in our place, and three days later He rose again from death and saved us. This is the righteousness God accomplished for us. The Holy Spirit comes upon the heart of the person who believes in this righteousness, and the Holy Spirit leads that person and causes him to bear good fruit.

Within that sin of the world were all the sins Peter would commit throughout his life. The sin of that night, when he cursed and denied Him, saying that he did not know the Lord, was there too. After Jesus had received with the blood of the Cross even the judgment for that sin, He rose again, came to him at the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, and asked him about his love. John recorded this love of the Lord as follows.

*"Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end" (John 13:1).*

Jesus loved Peter while knowing how he would fall in the future, and He loved him to the end. He also took upon Himself the sins of our whole lives in that same way. So the sin into which we fell today because of our weakness is also a sin that the Lord already had passed on to Him at the Jordan River.

The person who believes only in the blood of the Cross, separating it off by itself, is shaken at this point. At first his heart is glad because his sins seem to have disappeared, but when he commits sin again as he goes on living, he tries to wash away those sins every day with prayers of repentance. To us who have fallen, the devil whispers, "How can someone like you say you have no sin?" Only when we believe as one bundle both the fact that Jesus had all our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross do we receive the remission of sins and not collapse even in the face of that

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accusation. Since the Lord removed our sins with the water and the blood, there is no place for sin to remain even in us who are lacking.

Therefore, whenever your weakness is exposed, hold on to this faith again. If you have done wrong, you have only to acknowledge the wrong and turn your heart around. But there is no reason to load onto your heart again the sins the Lord has already washed away and try to resolve them by your own deeds. The person who believes in the righteousness of God knows his own shortcomings, and he also knows the salvation of the Lord, who bore even the sins he commits out of weakness. So, without covering over his wrongs, he can come to the Lord and follow His word again.

## Feed and care for the sheep with a heart that loves the Lord

Let us read verses 16 and 17.

*"He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep'" (John 21:16–17).*

In the second and third questions, the words *"more than these"* were left out. Now it is a question in which the Lord and Peter face each other one on one. When the same question continued a third time, Peter was grieved. It must have seemed to him that the Lord kept touching a sore spot. His answer, *"Lord,*

*You know all things,"* contains this heart: "You know everything—that I denied You because I was weak, and what will become of me in the future. I cannot make bold promises as I did before. Yet You know that I love You." The man who had loudly declared that even if everyone else abandoned the Lord, he would not, now confesses with his own righteousness broken down. The Lord had already resolved Peter's sin problem completely, and the repeated question was also a question confirming whether he knew that love. The Lord had made him into a person who could not help but love the Lord.

Each time Jesus asked about love, He entrusted His sheep. Those sheep were not Peter's sheep but the Lord's sheep. The Lord entrusted His own sheep to the person who had received His love, and who therefore loved the Lord more. The three words He spoke—feed, tend, feed—are the work a shepherd must do.

The first is the work of feeding the sheep. The food a soul needs is the word of God. To those who have not yet received the remission of sins, we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit and let them know the salvation the Lord has accomplished. To those who received the remission of sins later than we did and whose faith is still young, we feed pure fodder and cause them to grow.

The second is the work of tending the sheep. To tend means to rule. It is the work of awakening with the word the soul that is running after the thoughts of the flesh and leading it onto the right path, and at times it also includes rebuking. But suppressing is not ruling. To rule is to teach that person so that he grows up rightly, to wait for him, and to be patient with him. So treat the souls entrusted to you as people who have been saved just as you have, as your equals. If we try to stand above people by putting forward our office or our knowledge, we

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depart from the purpose of caring for the Lord's sheep, and the more our pride grows, the more the gospel that souls must eat is hidden.

The third, *"Feed,"* is the work of feeding that soul the food suited to it according to the stage at which its faith is growing. Caring does not end just because we have preached the gospel once. Nor is this work the share of only a few people. Within the Church of God, everyone has received the same command. Those who teach the word, those who pray for souls, and those who help with the work of the gospel in places that are not easily noticed are all workers of the Lord and little shepherds. Only the fields entrusted to them differ. Rather than moving only when someone tells you to, look at what work you can help with right now.

## From the path one wants for oneself to the path of following the Lord

Let us read verses 18 and 19.

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish. This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me'" (John 21:18–19).*

When he was younger, Peter girded himself and walked where he wished. But the Lord said that when he was old, another would gird him and take him where he did not wish. John makes clear that this word signifies by what death Peter would glorify God. After letting him know that path, the Lord said, *"Follow Me."*

Peter was a man who had denied the Lord in order to protect his own life. Such a man is now established as one who feeds the Lord's sheep, and in the end he will glorify God by his death. The Lord established him as a guide of the church, and He also established the disciples who were with him as workers of God. The rest of the life of this man, who had gone about as he pleased, became a life of leading people to Jesus Christ, who had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River.

That faith grows does not mean becoming accustomed to the forms of faith; it means coming to know more deeply how great the righteousness of God is and that human righteousness is like a piece of rag. When faith grows in this way, our lives also change. When our faith is young, we have many thoughts for ourselves—what we will eat, what we will wear. But when we are led by the Holy Spirit, who is in our hearts, we move on to a life lived for the souls of others. Our hearts grow wide, so that we think of those who have not heard the gospel, and we come to give up our own time and strength for those whose faith is weak. When we serve the Lord, we do not end up doing only what we like. There are times when we must go to places we do not want to go, and times when we take on work that does not suit our hearts. The person who has received the Lord's love can say "Yes" and obey even at those times.

Even so, if we hold out by our own resolve alone, we soon run into our limits. Peter, too, declared confidently that he would lay down his life, but he could not keep that word. The ground on which we can follow the Lord is not our will. It is because the Lord had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for those sins with the blood of the Cross, rose again, and made us people without

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sin. Even on the day our shortcomings are exposed, the Lord's grace is more than enough to cover those shortcomings.

We do not serve in order to obtain the remission of sins through this service; we serve because we believe in the salvation He has already accomplished and are thankful. Therefore, we cannot make our own labor a merit for salvation, nor can we say that, since we have received the remission of sins, the Lord's will no longer matters. If we refuse to the end the word in which the Lord told us to follow Him, that is disobeying that word, and if we leave that heart as it is, we eventually end up in the place of opposing the work of the gospel. If there is anything in our hearts that we have placed higher than the Lord, let us acknowledge that wrong and turn back. When we believe again in the righteousness of God, who washed away all our sins, our weakness cannot become an excuse to push away His word.

## Hold on to the word He spoke to you rather than to the future of others

Let us read verses 20 through 22.

*"Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, 'Lord, who is the one who betrays You?' Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, 'But Lord, what about this man?' Jesus said to him, 'If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me'" (John 21:20–22).*

After hearing the Lord's word, Peter turned around and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved. And he asked, *"Lord, what about this man?"* Jesus said that even if He willed that disciple to remain till He came, what was that to Peter? And He spoke the word of verse 19 again, but this time He pointed it out, saying,

*"You"—"You follow Me."* It was not that Peter could obey only if he knew the future of the other disciple. What was clearly given to Peter was the word to follow the Lord.

When we look back at ourselves while listening to Peter's question, we, too, often turn our eyes to other people after taking on the Lord's work. We compare: what work He entrusts to that person, how much that person labors, and why only we have to walk such a path. As we do so, the grace the Lord has given us and the work He has entrusted to us become blurred. How He will guide each person depends on the Lord. The word *"You follow Me"* that He spoke to Peter is a word He spoke to all of us.

Just before this, the Lord had said to feed and tend the sheep. Let us look after one another and serve the gospel together, but let us not make what others do the condition for our following the Lord.

Let us read verse 23.

*"Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, 'If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?'" (John 21:23).*

While the Lord's word was being spread among the brethren, the saying spread that that disciple would not die. But the word the Lord spoke was not a promise that he would not die. The Bible corrects that difference. If we add human thoughts to the Lord's word, we come to believe even what the Lord did not say as if it were the Lord's promise. We must listen with discernment, distinguishing between the talk that circulates among people and the word the Lord actually spoke. Even when Peter's eyes turned toward the other disciple, the Lord turned him back toward Himself. The word the Lord gave Peter was

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one and the same to the end. It was to feed and care for His sheep and follow the Lord.

The Lord, who had even the sin of Peter, who denied Him three times, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin with the blood of the Cross, and rose again and came to him, asks us today as well, *"Do you love Me?"* We who have received that love, though we are lacking, can answer, *"You know that I love You."* The work of preaching the righteousness of God to those who have not yet heard the gospel and feeding those whose faith is weak the word they need is beyond our strength alone, but if we do it together, we can manage it. Let us not peer into the paths of others, but follow the Lord, who loved us first and said, *"You follow Me."* ✉

Sermon 14 by Paul C. Jong

# The true testimony that leads us to life

**< John 21:24–25 >**

**“This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.”**

The Gospel of John ends with these two verses. The one standing in the last place is a disciple who testified of and recorded the things Jesus did. And the assurance that this testimony is true is written there together with it. We are not people who walked that road together with Jesus when He was on this earth. Nevertheless, by reading the record that disciple left behind, we have come to know who the Lord is and what He did for us. The Lord has given us a word to believe.

Many people think that their faith will become certain only when they see something with their own eyes or have a special experience. They suppose that if they met Jesus in person and heard His voice, they would not be shaken. But what makes us certain of our salvation is the word testifying of what the Lord did. On days when our hearts are fervent and on days when we feel nothing at all, the salvation the Lord accomplished is the same salvation, and the word that records that fact is before us.

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## The true record that testified of what the Lord did

Let us read verse 24.

*"This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true" (John 21:24).*

*"This is the disciple"* refers to the disciple who appeared in verse 20, just before this, that is, the disciple whom Jesus loved. He is the one who, at the supper, leaned on Jesus' breast and asked who it was that would betray the Lord. He was not someone who had heard rumors from afar. He testified of what he saw and heard at the Lord's side and left it in writing. And he says that this record is true.

The Gospel of John says the same thing in the passage where Jesus died on the Cross. When a soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear, blood and water came out, and after recording that event, it adds as follows.

*"And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe" (John 19:35).*

*"He who has seen"* in chapter 19 and *"this is the disciple"* in chapter 21 are the same disciple, that is, the Apostle John, who wrote the Gospel of John. In both places he does not reveal his own name. He only makes clear that he testified of what he himself saw, and that his testimony is true. What he testified to be true was the blood and water that poured out from the Lord's side. This apostle also testified in 1 John of Jesus as the One who came by water and blood. That water points to the fact that Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, and that blood points to the fact that He received the judgment for those sins through the blood He shed on the Cross. That water, by which He had our sins

passed on to Him, and that blood, by which He received the judgment for those sins—this is the confirmation of our salvation. John recorded that testimony and thereby made us, today, believe.

Therefore, the Lord's death and resurrection are things the Lord actually did, and the one who saw them testified of them. We hear of those things and believe them through the written testimony. Even when we open the Bible, if we draw a picture of the Lord as we want to believe Him to be and look only for words that fit that idea, we end up believing our own thoughts. Read carefully what the Lord said and what He did, and accept the Lord just as He is revealed in the word. The standard of faith is the true word that testifies of the Lord.

If verse 23, just before this, distinguished between the saying that had spread among the brethren and what the Lord actually said, verse 24 nails down that the written testimony is true.

## The purpose for which this record was given is that people may believe and obtain life

The Gospel of John already made clear in chapter 20 the purpose for which it left this record. It is so that people may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and also, it said, *"that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31)*. The assurance of verse 24 that the testimony is true also, in the end, points toward this purpose. It is because only when the testimony is true does the one who believes it obtain life.

The Lord recorded this word so that we might believe in Him, receive the remission of sins, and obtain new life. So if we know many verses and yet do not know how the Lord removed our

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sins, we have missed the purpose for which we received this record.

The word first makes us see ourselves. We are not people who are good by nature and can stand before God with just a little effort. Usually, people know that they are sinners only when they have committed sins and their hearts are troubled. But when we stand before the Bible, we see more deeply. The law makes us realize sin, and the word says that the wages of sin is death. In the light of that, we come to know that we are people who cannot keep God's law completely, people who must be delivered from sin. That is why we need a Savior.

That Savior is Jesus Christ. The word testifies of Him as God, who made the world, and as the One who came among us clothed in a human body. And it reveals that He is the Savior who bore the sin of the world. The one who saw Jesus coming toward him and cried out, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*, was John the Baptist, who, just as he himself testified in chapter 1, verses 32 and 33, had given baptism to that very One. The Bible records the word spoken when Jesus received baptism from John as follows.

*"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" (Matthew 3:13–15).*

When Jesus was thirty years old, He received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and had the sin of the world transferred to Him. This is what the word about fulfilling all righteousness means. Bearing our sins in that way, He was hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and so received the judgment for those sins, and three days later He rose

again from death and became our eternal Savior, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. We met this Jesus through the written word, believed that word and received the remission of sins, obtained the assurance of salvation, and received the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

So the assurance of salvation also comes from the word. It is different from a conclusion reached because one's heart felt relieved for a moment while praying. What the Lord did for us is recorded in the word, and because we believe that record, we are sure of our salvation. What the Lord accomplished comes before how strongly our hearts feel. The Lord did not tell us to wash away our sins by our own deeds; He made us believe the salvation He accomplished. It was not our resolve and good deeds that saved us; Jesus Christ saved us. Therefore, having lived a life of faith for a long time is no reason to put forward one's own deeds. The longer a person has believed, the more deeply he comes to know and give thanks for the righteousness the Lord has bestowed.

## The works of the Lord, too many to be written down in full, and the word He gave us

Let us read verse 25.

*"And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen" (John 21:25).*

The things Jesus did are many, apart from those that were written. If they were written one by one, even the world would not have enough room to hold those books. This Gospel introduced Him in its first chapter as follows: *"The world was*

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*made through Him" (John 1:10)*. The Gospel of John ends with the word that the world cannot fully contain what He who made the world did when He came to this earth. The testimony we have read is true, but what the Lord did is far more than the amount we have read. We believe in that great Lord. Rather than making us search for stories we do not have, the last verse makes us look at how great the works are that the Lord we believe in has done.

If we say we will believe in the Lord only when we can fully grasp Him with our own minds, we remain endlessly bound to our own judgment. Before the word, we learn who the Lord is. The Lord, who made all things, came clothed in a human body, bore our sins, and paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and He who rose again from death has given us life. Do not try to confine the Lord within your own thoughts, but believe the word that testifies of what He has done. Our thoughts often have to be overturned and gathered up again, but the written word remains as it is.

Also, lay down the attitude that you already know the whole Bible. Even when we read the same verse, we come to know more deeply the grace the Lord has bestowed, and we realize our own thoughts that we had not seen before. The closer we draw to the Bible, the clearer it becomes how completely the Lord has saved us, and our faith grows and we come to fear the Lord. Our memory is weak. If you have forgotten, open the Bible again and check, and write out a few times the verses you do not remember well. The word of the Lord who saved us will come to mind when it is needed.

## The person who believes the written word and follows that Lord

Because the disciple who saw the Lord with his eyes and testified of Him left this record, we who have not seen the Lord have come to believe through that record. In chapter 20, the Lord said to Thomas, *"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29)*. That blessing is a blessing given also to us who read this record and believe today.

We, too, sometimes want to believe only after hearing Jesus' voice and experiencing Him appearing and working. But the person the Lord called blessed is the one who believes through the word of God. After Jesus had accomplished all that He was to do on this earth and ascended to heaven, He left us the word. The person who sees the written word and believes this fact, even though Jesus does not appear in person, is the person who has faith, and the blessed person.

So do not try to make a special dream or voice, or a form appearing before your eyes, the evidence of your salvation. If you think that you must have such an experience in order to have met the Lord, the person who has no such experience will always doubt himself, and even the person who has had one will be shaken when that feeling fades. Satan, too, can imitate forms or voices as much as he likes. The One who saved us is Jesus Christ, who is testified of in the word. To know and believe through the word how the Lord bore our sins and how He received the judgment for them is our blessing.

The person who believes the word lives according to that word. In the heart of the person who has met the Lord through the word and received the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit dwells, and that person becomes a disciple of the Lord and follows Him. The person who treasures the righteousness the

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Lord accomplished wants other souls to know that salvation too. So, rather than putting forward his own moving experiences, he preaches what the Lord did for sinners, just as it is in the written word. The One we must preach is not ourselves but Jesus Christ.

The record of the Gospel of John ends here, but the lives of us who believe that testimony continue from here. We had no righteousness to save ourselves, but we have the righteousness the Lord accomplished. We did not see the Lord with our eyes, but we received the true word that testifies of Him, and by believing the salvation of the water and the blood that this word testifies of, we obtained the remission of sins and life. The Lord, who is so great that all His works cannot be written down, has given us a testimony to believe. I hope that you will hold fast to that true testimony and live meeting the Lord every day in the word, as blessed people who have not seen and yet believe. ✉

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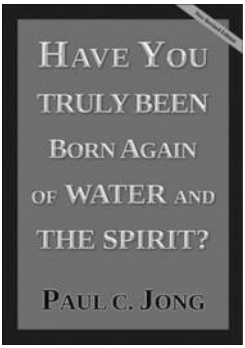
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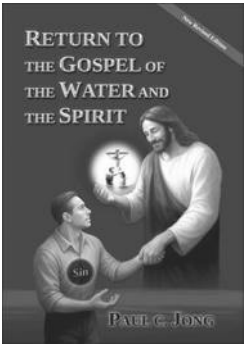
## *Paul C. Jong's Sermons*

**HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]**




Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that a sinner is saved from all his lifelong sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood of the Cross. Let's believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the righteous who have no sin.

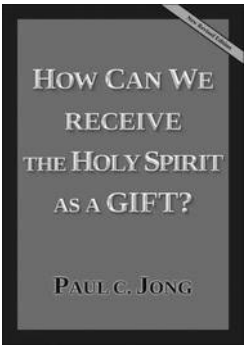
**RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]**




Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

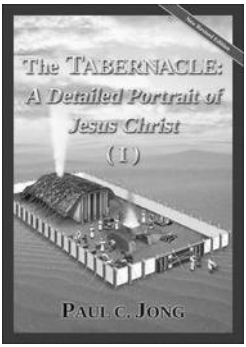
## HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]




In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

## The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]



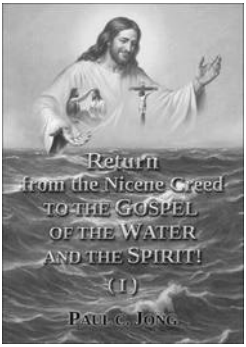

How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

## Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)




-Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit? –

The gospel that the early church preached was precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That gospel was the gospel that Jesus actually shouldered and washed away the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John.

The baptism Jesus received from John was to fulfill the law of the sacrificial system found in Leviticus. That is, just as sin was transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, the substance of that sacrificial law was fulfilled through Jesus's baptism.

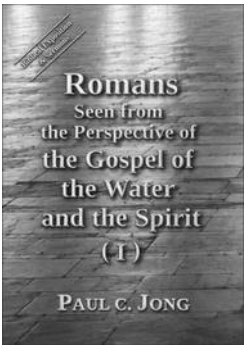
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching the present day.

Today, many people are struggling to receive the removal of their sins without knowing when their sins were transferred to Jesus. Because of this, even while saying they believe in the gospel of the cross, they fail to reach true assurance of salvation and live amidst repetitive repentance and the pangs of conscience.

The reason we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit is clear. This is because only this gospel allows us to meet the Jesus who became the sacrificial offering as the sin of the world was transferred to His body, and thereby have assurance of salvation.

## *Paul C. Jong's Biblical Exposition & Sermons*

### Romans seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)




When Looking at Romans from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit,

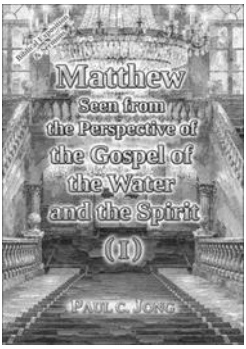
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of those sins on the cross, and resurrected, it finally begins to be seen why Paul introduced himself as a "debtor to the gospel" and so boldly declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

The Apostle Paul, after revealing the sins of the Gentiles and the hypocrisy of religious people in turn, proclaims the righteousness of God manifested apart from the law. That righteousness is not a righteousness built up by human moral effort, but the righteousness completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the cross, and the resurrection. The righteousness Abraham received when he was uncircumcised is the evidence of it, and the "blessing of not imputing sin" that David sang of is the result of it.

A person who believes this gospel knows that he is one who has already been justified. Only upon that conviction does peace with God reside, and the path opens where even tribulation leads to perseverance, character, and hope. This mystery—that a life which was placed under the reign of death over sin through one man, Adam, has received the removal of sins through one person, Jesus Christ, and has been transferred under the reign of righteousness—takes its place within us.

Salvation has already been completed at once. Now, what remains is the matter of receiving that gospel with the heart and living as a righteous person.

### Matthew seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)



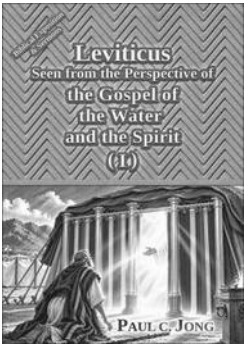

Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Tracing Jesus' birth and the wise men's worship, the ministry of John the Baptist as the last high priest, the saving work Jesus began with His baptism in the Jordan, the temptation in the wilderness, and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, this book testifies that through His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself, was judged and died on the cross, and rose from the dead, overcoming sin and death.

If you know the blood of the cross but not when and where your sins were passed on to Jesus, look to the unchanging word of salvation rather than your feelings. In the Bible-based gospel of the water and the Spirit, see what the 'all righteousness' God fulfilled truly is.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

**Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)**

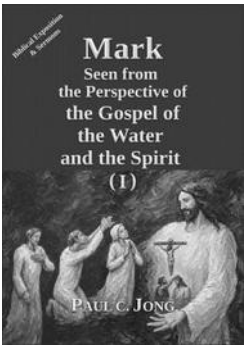



*Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I)* examines how the Old Testament law of sacrifice prefigures the salvation of Jesus Christ, looking at the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering, as well as the consecration ceremony of the priests, Aaron's first sacrifice, and the incident of Nadab and Abihu.

The author, Pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and in this book, he also explains the eternal atonement Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, connecting it to the sacrifices of Leviticus.

How can a sinner be made sinless? This book gives a clear answer to that question through the Bible.

**Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)**



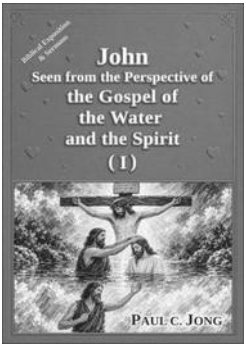

Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed onto Him, bore the punishment for those sins in our place on the Cross, and rose from the dead and gave us eternal life. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins at once and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Do not read this book merely to add to your knowledge. Examine what kind of ground your own heart is, and lay down your own righteousness and religious stubbornness. Receive the Word of life just as it is and enjoy true rest, and relying on the Lord even in the storms of life, bear the fruit of faith.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

**John Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)**

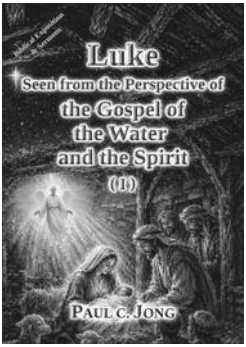



*John seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I)* is a book that examines, through the entire Gospel of John, how the Word, who is God, came to this earth clothed in flesh and saved sinners from sin.

The author, pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached, through the word of the Bible, "the gospel of the water and the Spirit" that Jesus Christ completed with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. This book does not explain the signs and words of the Gospel of John as mere knowledge of the Bible or records of miracles, but guides readers to the faith by which they are saved from sin and obtain everlasting life by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

May everyone who opens this book meet Jesus Christ, of whom the Bible testifies, and obtain true life.

**Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)**

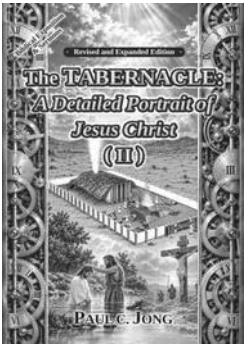



*"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)"* expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central message conveyed by this book is clear. Salvation is not accomplished by human goodness or merit. Rather, Jesus, who is God, received the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross to pay the price for those sins, and rose from the dead, thereby giving complete salvation from all sins to those who believe in this truth.

Pastor Paul C. Jong of The New Life Mission is a servant of God who has devoted his life to preaching the true gospel. Through the Word he preaches, this book will lead souls held captive by sin to the joy of the remission of sins and to eternal life in Jesus.

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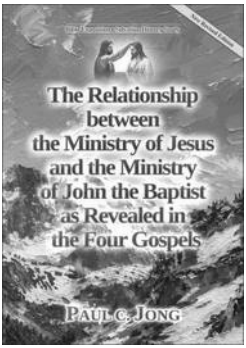
## The TABERNACLE: A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (3-Volume Series)




God had the tabernacle set up in the wilderness in order to dwell among the people He had delivered out of Egypt.

Through the Biblical Exposition of Exodus chapters 25–31 and the sermons on the tabernacle, this book conveys the heart of God, who wants to make His sinful people holy and keep them near. The promise of salvation contained in the tabernacle was fulfilled when Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again. Looking into the utensils and sacrifices of the tabernacle and the office of the high priest, we come to know the meaning of the remission of sins received by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and of the eternal atonement. Through the tabernacle, we seek to know God's love for us and to share the joy of living together as His people.

## The Relationship between the Ministry of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptist as Revealed in the Four Gospels [New Revised Edition]




The Ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist — Preparation and Fulfillment: The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit, Believed in the Order the Bible Records It

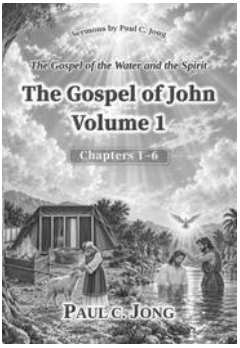
Why do the four Gospels introduce John the Baptist before speaking of Jesus' public ministry? Matthew records the baptism by which He fulfilled all righteousness; Mark, the messenger who prepared the way; Luke, the birth into a priestly family; and John, the testimony of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. These four books of the Bible—the four Gospels—together shed light on the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist.

This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete our salvation.

We must believe in the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist exactly as the Bible records them, receive the remission of sins, abide in the assurance of this completed salvation, and live as witnesses to it.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

## The Gospel of Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of John (3-Volume Series)



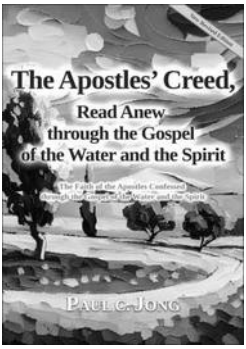

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

John chapters 1–6 reveal who Jesus is. He is the Savior—the God who created all things, who Himself came in the flesh, received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, bore the sin of the world, received its judgment on the Cross, and rose from the dead, thereby saving us perfectly once and for all. The testimony of John the Baptist, the wedding feast at Cana, Jesus' words to Nicodemus about being born again, the Samaritan woman, the sick man at Bethesda, and the bread of life all point to the same One, and the Word is unfolded in light of the salvation accomplished by Christ Jesus. Those who believe in the work of salvation accomplished by Jesus, who is God, are born again of water and the Spirit and receive eternal life.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

# *Paul C. Jong's Special Features*

## The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]

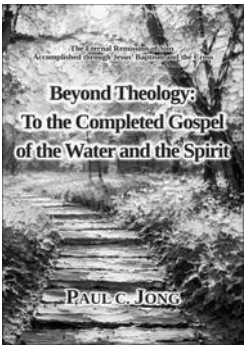



As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission of sins and been born again.

This book examines this confession of faith, shaped and refined by people, article by article in the light of the "gospel of the water and the Spirit" to which Scripture testifies. In the light of this gospel—the gospel in which Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by being baptized by John, bore the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead on the third day—this book points out what the Apostles' Creed leaves out.

The aim of this book is not to help the reader recite the Creed more skillfully. "Have I truly been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit?" When we come to answer this question through the Word, we will at last offer a living confession as those who have received the remission of sins and been born again.

## Beyond Theology: To the Completed Gospel of the Water and the Spirit




Even as we confess that we have been saved, why does the weight of sin still remain in one corner of our hearts?

Countless saints live carrying this question. Each denomination has a different answer, but the Bible testifies to one story from beginning to end.

This book does not belong to any denomination. It sets out what each tradition—Calvinism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Catholicism, and others—teaches, acknowledges their contributions, and then brings them all before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the gospel by which Jesus bore the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and completed our eternal salvation through His resurrection from death.

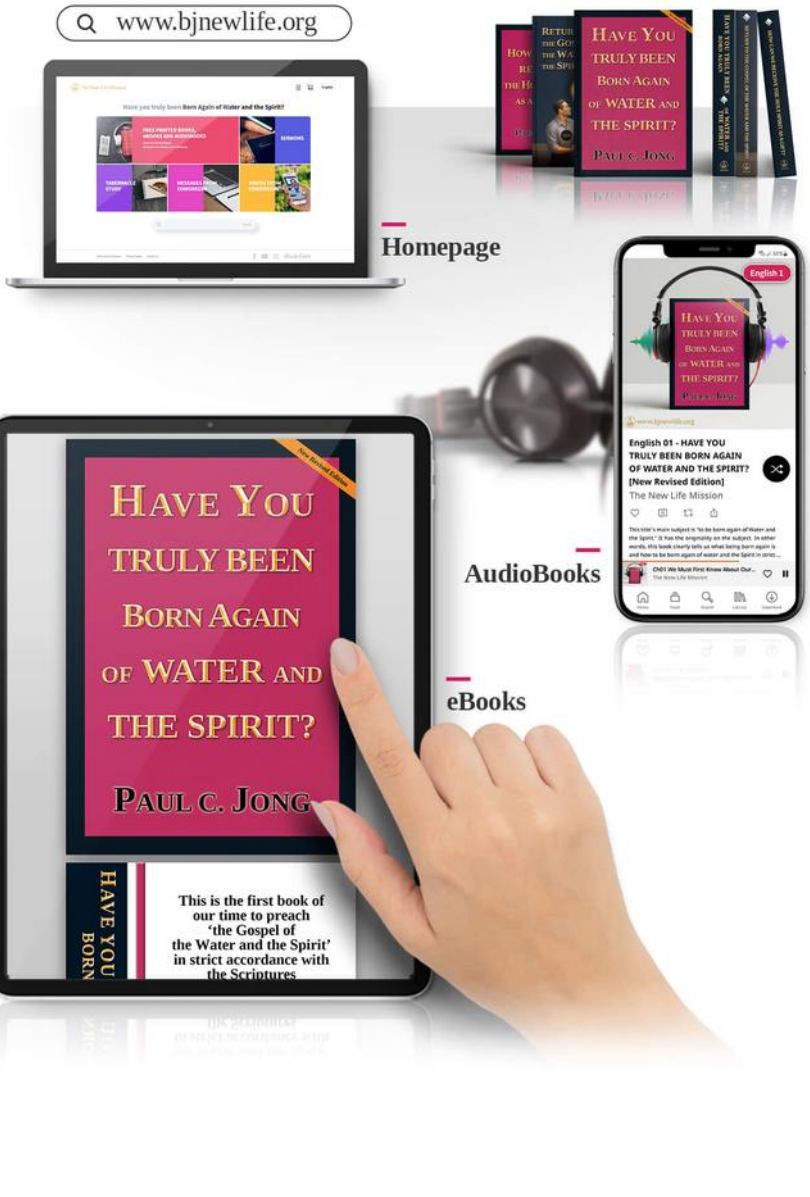
This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

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# Pastor PAUL C. JONG

**Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.**

**Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he suffered for a long time because his problem of sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this agony, he came to believe that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through His baptism by John the Baptist, and subsequently bore the judgment in our place on the cross.**

**For 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.

# Faith that enjoys life and peace in Jesus, who has overcome the world

Jesus Christ, the King of kings, is the way, the truth, and the life that leads us to God. He does not leave those who believe like orphans, but sends the Holy Spirit, the Helper, to guide them into the truth. Like a branch attached to the true vine, whoever abides in the Lord's word of truth bears fruit by faith.

To give this life and peace, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received that judgment in our place with the blood of the Cross, and then rose again from death. Those who have obtained eternal life by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit rely on Jesus, who has overcome the world, even in the midst of tribulation. Jesus prayed that we would be sanctified by the truth and become one, and at last enjoy His glory together with Him.

The love contained in that prayer continued even after He rose again. The Lord gave peace to the disciples, who had been afraid, and sent them into the world, and He came again to Peter, who had denied Him, and entrusted His sheep to him. This book tells who Jesus is, and what those who believe in Him and love Him rely on, and how they live in life and peace.

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