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Bereans Webzine - Blessing Channel #33

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# The Children of Light





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## The Children of Light

(Ephesians 5:8-10)

Sermon by Overseer Sung-Hyun Kim

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01

# The Children of Light

## 1 Now You Are Light in the Lord

(Ephesians 5:8)



A man was trapped inside a cave that felt like a maze. In complete darkness, he struggled to find an exit, but it was no use. Time passed, and he gradually adjusted to life in the darkness. How long had it been? Months, or maybe even years? Then, one day, a faint glimmer of light appeared. He moved toward it, finally reaching the exit. As he stepped outside at last, the bright sunlight pierced his eyes. It hurt. Nothing could be seen, which was no different from his time inside the cave. **“What should I do?”** He weighed the life in the cave against a life that he would face outside. Looking back, though it had been hard, life in the cave was not always bad. Even the memory of playing with mice felt newly beautiful. Finally, he made his way back into the cave.

This story is fictional, but it reflects a genuine aspect of our lives. Even if the light caused him temporary pain, he should have endured it instead of mistaking what he was accustomed to as good and returning to old ways, which ultimately mirrors a portrait of ourselves. God shines His light on us to save us. What He desires is for us to recognize our situation and say, **“I was completely darkness! I was unable to escape eternal punishment!”** Only then will we desire to turn back to God.

However, people are hardly willing to receive the light. They resist having their hearts tainted by sin, thoughts tainted by sin, behaviors tainted by sin, and reality tainted by sin exposed before the light. Even believers are not excluded. The Lord said, **“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil**

hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed” (John 3:19-20). The light is the righteousness of God, and it is God’s attack to reveal sin and unrighteousness by shining on each person.

If we are to break free from Satan’s authority and turn back to God—not only seeking forgiveness but also a holy inheritance—we must accept the attack of the light. We were once darkness. We were not merely victims of the system ruled by Satan; we were workers actively driving that system forward. Yet we believed we were free. Though deceived by lies—Satan’s most powerful weapon—and acting as his puppets, we did not even realize that we were imitating his actions exactly as he did.

However, we are now the light in the Lord. This Word is what the One who came into the world as light Himself said: “You are the light of the world” (Matt 5:14). This means that we are not merely people who belong to the light; we ourselves are light. Therefore, our character must now reflect the dignity, direction, and righteousness of the Lord, who came to the world for salvation. Simply saying, “**I am surrounded by the light.**” or “**I attend the church.**” is not enough. Let us become those who shine the light toward the world. Having received the new identity as children of light by grace, let us now fulfill the responsibilities and duties that come with it.

*Sermon by Overseer Sung-Hyun Kim*  
*Lord’s Day Service on November 3, 2024*



2

## Goodness as the Fruit of the Light

(Ephesians 5:9)



“Was I really that selfish? Did I truly lack consideration for others? Does that even matter? I’ve accomplished so many important things!” To this, the Lord responds, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me!” (Matt 25:45). “I’ve been diligent in my faith! Surely, Lord, You know that, don’t You?” But He says, “I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity!” (Luke 13:27). “Lord, have I not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?” Yet He declares, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!” (Matt 7:23).

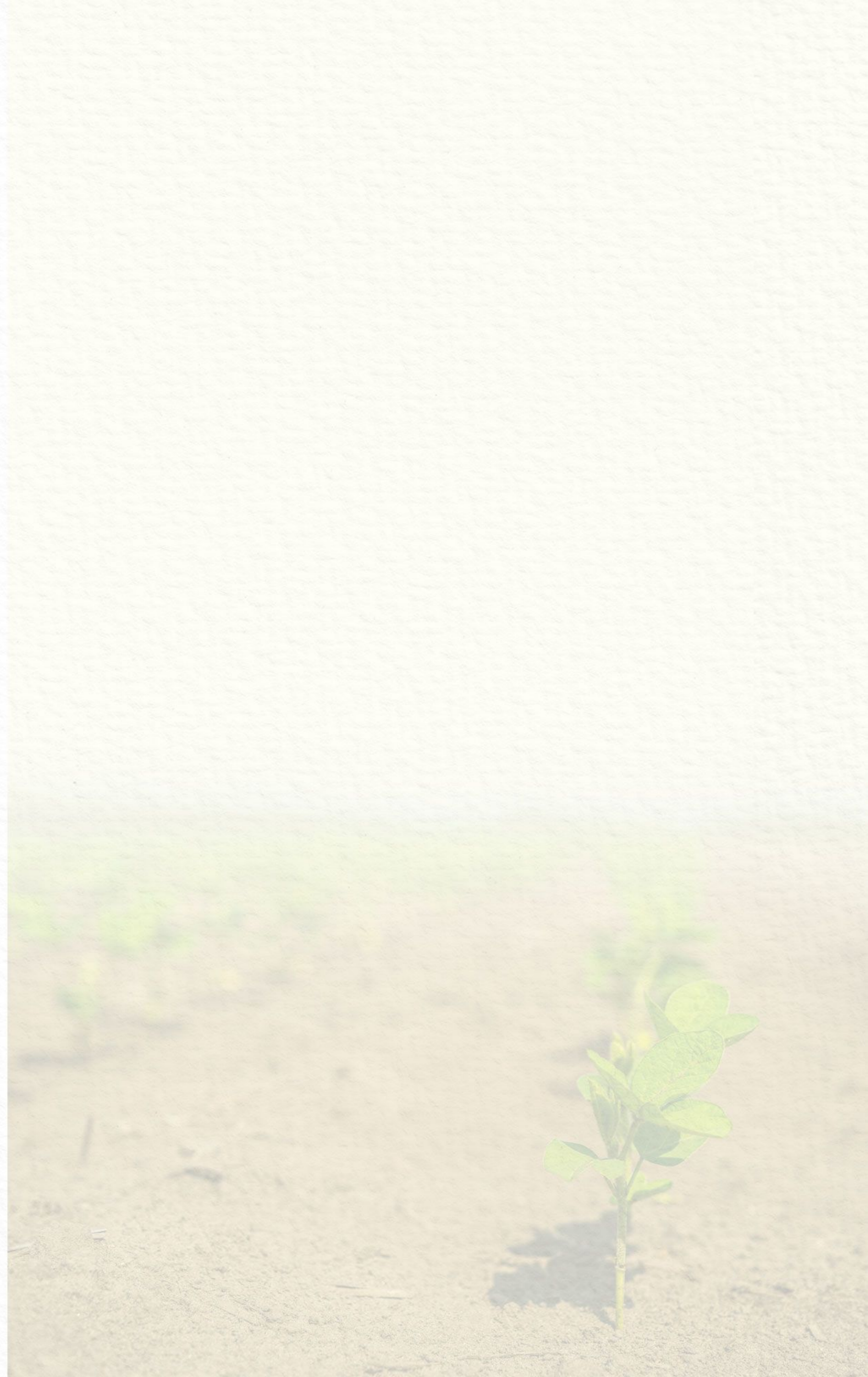
There are those who regard the pursuits of goodness as irrelevant to faith, or worse, as something that disrupts it. They may think of themselves as spiritual, yet their lives, which oppose God’s will, will ultimately bear evil fruit. They will not escape the judgment on the last day. Of course, the condition by which one can draw near to God is faith. However, how does God confirm the truth of that faith? Is it the depth of knowledge or the magnitude of accomplishment? What God looks for is a good heart and the good deeds that flow from it.

When we say that God saved us from sin, it does not only mean that He saved us from the punishment of sin. God saved us from evil hearts, unrighteous deeds, and a life characterized by lies. From us, who have become children of the light through this, what God desires is “all goodness, righteousness, and truth” (Eph 5:9). These are the fruits of the light, that is, the fruit of the Holy Spirit. These three are the most reliable spiritual evidence of whether we are truly saved, especially as “all goodness” serves as the basis and the most important element that supports the other two.

Why is goodness described as “all goodness”? The virtue of goodness takes on various forms of attitudes and actions, expressed in differing degrees and scopes. However, the attitudes and actions that Christians must possess all originate from the same foundation: a good heart. If people do not have a good heart, even if they pretend to be good, they cannot help but reveal their evil deeds over time because of their covetousness and lies, and their selfishness and self-centeredness. In contrast, those with a good heart fulfill their responsibilities and duties, even at personal cost. They cherish the grace they have received and remain faithful to the end. Thus, while having the willingness to do what is right and to carry out what must be done is important, what is even more important is possessing a good heart.

The Holy Spirit fundamentally works to change our hearts to be good. We, who were once greedy, harsh, and selfish, are made good in the Lord because the light shines on our conscience. When our shameful flaws are exposed by this light, if we persist in ignoring them, there will come a point when we no longer sense the light. On the other hand, when the light reveals our evils, if we acknowledge them and strive to change, the very foundation of our hearts will begin to resemble God, who is good. As this happens, beautiful deeds will appear from us. Therefore, let us open our hearts fully and receive the light. Let us welcome the work of the Holy Spirit to bear the fruit of the light, which is goodness.

*Sermon by Overseer Sung-Hyun Kim*  
*Lord's Day Service on November 10, 2024*



3

## Righteousness as the Fruit of the Light

(Ephesians 5:9)



There are those who criticize the church by applying worldly standards to judge righteousness and unrighteousness. Some even betray the duties entrusted to them by the church under the principle of trust and good faith, forcing their church into worldly courts by asserting their own subjective interpretations of righteousness based on personal interests. In the world, every culture and individual interprets righteousness differently. Such worldly laws cannot possibly understand a church that operates with God's will as its standard of righteousness. Yet, some who call themselves believers hand over what belongs to God to the world and take delight in it.

This demonstrates that they have a distorted understanding of righteousness and unrighteousness, despite their long years in the church. What is righteousness? Even the world understands righteousness as doing what is morally right and being just. However, strangely, there have long been those in the church who seek to remove the moral elements from the concept of righteousness. They often regard righteousness as a kind of secret knowledge hidden from humanity and claim, "Moral behavior does nothing to help one attain righteousness." Those who have been taught such ideas feel no guilt in their conscience when they see the church being torn apart by worldly laws.

Righteousness is the fruit of the light. "For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth" (Eph 5:9, NIV). If we have been given by God's light, we will bear the fruit of righteousness along with the fruit of goodness. This does not refer to "justification," where we, as sinners, are considered righteous through the merit of the blood. Those upon whom the light shines are truly changed into righteous people. Of course, humans cannot achieve the level of righteousness of God while on this

earth. Furthermore, even if one reaches the highest level of righteousness possible, it is impossible to maintain it perfectly. However, if we do not give up on obeying God's commandments, we will increasingly come to resemble God's nature.

Obedience is following the salvation ministry of God. God's work of salvation is not complete simply because we have been forgiven. Until the Lord comes again, we must overcome the evil one. "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:7-8). Those who sin belong to the devil, but those who practice righteousness through obedience are righteous, just as God is righteous, and they are participants in the Lord's salvation ministry, who came to destroy the devil.

The fact that we are used by God confirms that we, who were once used by the devil, have broken away from our past unrighteous ways. "And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God" (Rom 6:13). When we were born again, God's nature was given to us. However, that nature is constrained by the flesh. Now, let us activate the nature through discipline. Let us offer ourselves as instruments of righteousness to God. Let us strive to resemble God's nature and devote ourselves to fulfilling His work.

*Sermon by Overseer Sung-Hyun Kim  
Lord's Day Service on November 17, 2024*





4

## Truth as the Fruit of the Light

(Ephesians 5:9)



“Who doesn’t lie in this world? Truthfulness? Sure, it’s important. But do you really think living truthfully is some walk in the park? You only say that because you have no clue about life. That’s not how reality works. Even God said, “There is none righteous, no, not one.” Do you really think humans can manage to be completely truthful, no matter how hard they try? Everyone is a sinner before God. That’s why He gave us the truth. Pushing truthfulness on sinners is pointless. What actually matters is knowing the truth.”

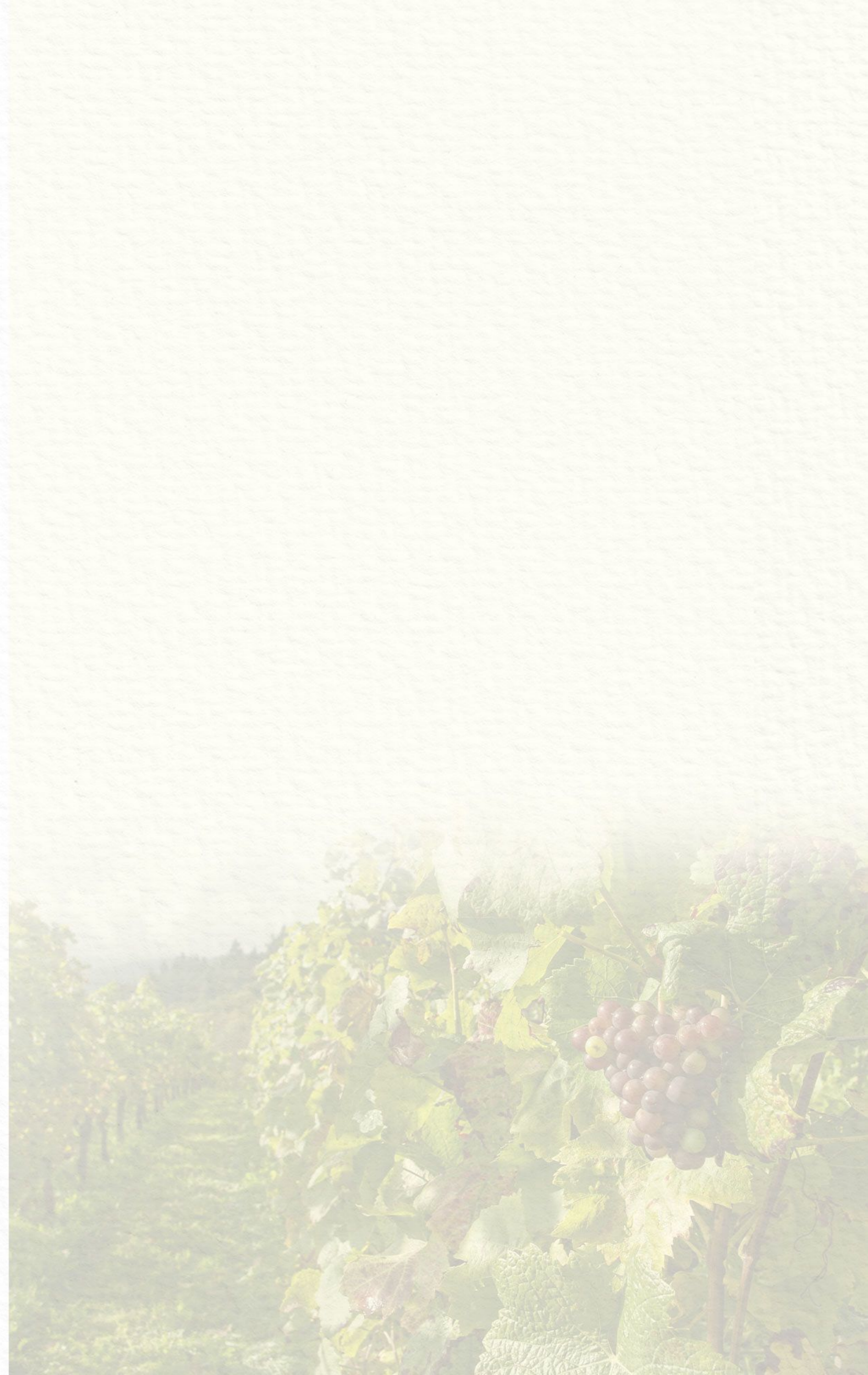
Is that really true? Can truth really be separated from truthfulness? In the world, people often define truth as an unchanging principle and try to treat it as something distinct from truthfulness. However, in the Bible, truth and truthfulness are inseparable—truth inherently carries the meaning of being truthful. If truth does not lead to truthfulness or stand against evil, then it is not truth to begin with. If truth fails to produce good and instead allows evil to thrive, ignores it, or does nothing to oppose it, then what is the point of teaching truth so passionately?

Truthfulness is an absolute nature of God. Why did the psalmist sing, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!”? He declares, “For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!” (Ps 117:1-2). With amazement, he confessed that there is no one among the gods of the world as truthful as God. Praising the truthful God is not limited to the Israelites alone. Even King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, though a Gentile, discovered that there is no one as truthful as God. He praised, glorified, and declared his respect for Him.

The truthful God is unchangeable. This is why the Israelites found comfort and could rely on Him. Although we strive to live truthfully, we sometimes face harm or experience unfairness. Yet, we do not lose hope because we know that the truthful God will repay all things. The Lord is so truthful that He is called “Faithful and True.” He desires us to be truthful like Him. In particular, He said that those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth, emphasizing worship with truthfulness from the whole heart.

There may be no one who never lies. However, there is a difference between those who lie unintentionally due to weakness and those who lie deliberately to commit crimes. Lying is one of the defining traits that emerged after humanity’s fall. Therefore, if you are part of the ministry of restoration that began in Christ, you must hate falsehood and discipline yourself to overcome its temptations. Those who strive to be truthful and those who do not even make an effort will face entirely different outcomes on the day of judgment. Let us strive for goodness, righteousness, and truth. This is our duty as those who identify as the body of Christ and the bare minimum requirement for preserving the church. Let the fruits of the redemption accomplished on the cross flow through us.

*Sermon by Overseer Sung-Hyun Kim*  
*Lord’s Day Service on November 24, 2024*



5

## Find Out What Is Pleasing to the Lord

(Ephesians 5:10)



“I never really had any intention of going to church. Honestly, I’ve seen too many Christians act without conscience. There were times I thought, “Maybe I should try going to church,” but then I’d think, “Why would I associate with people like that?” But that person is different. He’s so truthful. When he invited me to church, for the first time, I actually felt like I wanted to go.” This confession shows how deeply the life of a good, righteous, and truthful Christian can impact those around them. It is not just a key to opening the door to preaching the Gospel—it is a life that pleases God in itself.

“How can we please God?” Since the day we became Christians, we have been seeking the answer to this question by listening to the Word of Truth. But we must not treat the truth as mere knowledge. The knowledge of truth should be transformed into the ability to discern how our actions are viewed by God. If a believer lacks this ability, it may be because they have not learned enough of the truth or never prioritized listening to the Word in the first place. For such a person, the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in their life will inevitably be limited.

The Holy Spirit changes believers and makes them bear the fruit of the light in their lives. However, God respects our willingness and does not compel us to act; instead, He desires that we exercise our will. This is why God gives us the knowledge of truth. He desires that it can serve as the foundation for holy actions in our lives. These actions do not happen automatically through knowledge alone. We must accept the knowledge, use it as a standard to make decisions, and act accordingly. We are called to continually test whether our deeds are pleasing to the Lord, but we

but we must do so persistently until He returns. Through this process, we gain the ability to judge our own state.

If believers restrain their actions and show their changed lives, it manifests that the work of the Holy Spirit is active in them. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—each of these fruits of the Spirit is reflected as a moral outcome. However, if a believer continues to engage in evil deeds instead of bearing these fruits, it is because the work of the Holy Spirit has ceased in their life. This is the result of their persistent rejection and disregard of the truth that God has continually spoken to them through the church.

The world constantly creates confusion to keep believers from receiving the truth. It does this by calling evil good and good evil, putting darkness for light and light for darkness, and making bitter seem sweet and sweet seem bitter (Is 5:20). This is why we need the light of Christ. Through the knowledge of the truth, we must learn what pleases the Lord and let it guide our actions. If we continue this throughout our lives, we will be changed into people who bear the fruit of the light. In the end, with God's guidance, we will be pleased with the Lord as we discover ourselves standing in the glory of heaven.

*Sermon by Overseer Sung-Hyun Kim*  
*Lord's Day Service on December 1, 2024*



02

# The Truth That Brightens the Soul

in *Let Us Know Jesus*

Chapter 6 "The Omniscient Word."



The truth never changes. The truth spoken of in this world will someday change. God's truth will never change. The Word of God alone is His wisdom and knowledge. This is why the Bible says the fear and knowledge of God are the foundation of knowledge (Prov 1:7). It also says that the fear and knowledge of God are the foundation of wisdom (Ps 111:10). We must know the truth.

Jesus prayed to the Father, saying, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (Jn 17:17). God's knowledge knows all things. When the knowledge of God closely examines us, we will also be sanctified. When we believe God's Word is His eyes and He examines everything we have, when we believe God's Word is the truth and knows everything we possess, we will be sanctified before the Word. On the other hand, the person who rejects the Word of God will never be sanctified.

We can naturally feel afraid when we read God's word. This is because God's word examines us and tests us closely. When I first read the Bible, I trembled with shame and fear. God's word becomes His eyes and carefully examines our souls. This word becomes the standard of righteousness. Because the word reveals the unrighteousness in our hearts and deeds, we instantly feel ashamed before God's word and this leads us to repent. We must be sanctified by God's word.

God's word possesses the knowledge of God and the knowledge of His Will. God's word reveals these to us. If a person knows God's word, he knows God, he possesses God's wisdom and knowledge, and he knows the truth. When this

truth comes into us, our spirits know God.

Proverbs 20:27 says, “The spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, Searching all the inner depths of his heart.” When God made man, He made his flesh and mind. God breathed the breath of life into him, and man became ‘a living soul.’ In other words, while man’s flesh and mind were created on earth, his spirit came from heaven. The spirit came and dwelt inside man’s body. It united with his mind and became ‘a soul.’ This soul is the lamp God put inside us. Just as a lamp lights up a dark room, the soul God put inside us reveals the deeds we do. No deception is possible before this lamp. Even if a person says to himself, “Be peaceful! Be peaceful!” to comfort himself, God’s lamp inside him examines his thoughts and actions and reports them to God. It is impossible for man to escape God’s judgment.

Someone will ask, “Is having a spirit a bad thing?” Not at all. If there is no spirit inside man, he is no different from the animals of the earth. Because we have a spirit, we can repent, change our ways, and become holy. There must be oil in a lamp for it to continue burning. The Bible talks about the golden lampstand inside the tabernacle. Olive oil is needed to keep the golden lampstand lit. This olive oil refers to the word of Jesus Christ. This word is the truth. Just as oil is needed to brighten the light of a lamp, we need God’s word to brighten up our souls. The word of the Omniscient God is His knowledge and wisdom. When this is poured into our souls, our souls brighten up. All our actions are clearly revealed before God. The deeds belonging to darkness cannot continue in God’s presence.

There is a lamp also inside an unbeliever, but no oil to light it. An unbeliever’s soul will remain dark. Since an unbeliever’s soul is dark, his thoughts will be dark, as will his way of life. Matthew 6:22-23 says, “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.” In a huge soccer stadium, you see players actively moving across the field and chasing the ball. The eyes of the players are focused on the ball. Their arms and legs work in harmony, moving the ball across the field and putting it into the back of the net. In the same way, the eyes of man are the lamp of his body. If his eyes are brightened, the whole body will move in harmony. If his eyes are darkened, the body will be restrained. If God’s lamp (which is the soul) is darkened, everything will be dark. If a person’s soul is darkened, he will commit sins, become corrupt, and be cursed in his soul.

God’s Word is the oil which brightens the soul. This Word became flesh. Jesus is the wisdom and knowledge of the Omniscient God. He knows the Father and the Father knows Him. He came to us and said, “Eat My flesh and drink My blood.” By saying this, He poured oil into our lamps. These lamps are our souls. As our souls are brightened, we discover the deep things of God through Jesus Christ.

When the people of Israel came out of Egypt, God commanded them to eat the sacrificed lamb. They could eat the meat but not break the bones. Jesus commanded, “Eat My flesh and drink My blood.” When He was crucified on the cross, the legs of the two criminals next to Him were broken. Jesus’ legs

remained unharmed. When it comes to the truth, we must not accept some parts and reject others. Jesus came into the world, accepted death, and accepted the resurrection. In a similar way, when it concerns God's word, we must accept all of it and not reject any. In the way that a lamp is filled with oil to give light, our souls will be brightened if they are filled with God's word. When the soul is brightened, it will receive God's love.

If a person's soul is darkened, he may think he is very intelligent, but he is actually living foolishly. Some unbelievers think believers of Jesus are very flawed people. They say, "Look buddy, does believing in Jesus mean you can't drink beer? Does it mean you can't smoke? Try some!" They think believers are very foolish and stubborn. Yet we know the truth and know what will happen in the Last Days. God will say, "This one will be judged! That one will be judged!" God knows who these unbelievers are and has already condemned them. We know this for sure. We do not follow the ways of unbelievers because we know what their end will be. Because unbelievers do not know God, they continue to do things which God detests.

Worldly people do not know that God knows all things. Believers do know that God knows all things. This is why we live in both the physical world and the spiritual world. The reason we do not behave like unbelievers is not because we are ignorant. Rather, we know something they do not. God brightens our souls by the truth and continues to guide our souls so we will always live in the light. God sent Jesus Christ to brighten our souls by the truth.

John 14:26 says that when the Holy Spirit comes, He will teach us all things and bring to our remembrance all things Jesus said to us. 1 Corinthians 12:8 says that the Holy Spirit gives us the words of wisdom and knowledge. Jesus is the wisdom and knowledge of God. If the Holy Spirit reminds us of the words of Jesus, consider how brightened our souls will be? Do you lack any inspiration from God? If you do, it is because the word of God does not dwell in your soul. The soul is God's lamp. Our souls must be brightened by God's inspiration.

Lord! Brighten my soul with God's wisdom and knowledge!  
Brighten my soul with God's wonderful truth!

*in Let Us Know Jesus*  
*Chapter 6 "The Omniscient Word."*

03

# Testimony of Blessing

*From Kenya, Nepal, China, Sierra Leone*



## "The One and Only Solution"

Dear Overseer, Greetings to you!

I am deeply grateful for every word of God that you preach,  
and I truly believe in its truth.

It seems that theft has become a global culture.  
It appears to be widespread in every aspect of  
human society—politics, education, and more.

The most concerning part is that  
such things are happening within the Lord's Church.

I firmly believe that the only way to resolve this issue  
is for the Church to cherish and follow the standard of  
salvation through Jesus Christ, which God has given us.

Only by doing so can the Lord's church be preserved.

I am deeply thankful for Overseer's nurturing and guidance.

Reflections on the Lord's Day sermon  
by Overseer Sung-Hyun Kim of Sungrak Church,

With gratitude,

*Pastor Ghombo from Sierra Leone*

*September 13, 2024*



## "Like a Ray of Light"

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! I have been deeply encouraged by the ministry and warm heart of Sungrak Church. The unwavering dedication of Sungrak Church to uphold the truth of God's Word and to teach His plans is truly inspiring. As someone who seeks to deeply understand the Bible and live according to God's will, the ministry of Sungrak Church feels like a ray of light to me during challenging times.

I am especially grateful for the sermons of Sungrak Church. In a world where the true essence of Christianity is often misunderstood or distorted, I find the messages that lead us to a God-centered faith to be very timely and fundamental.

I agree that we must return to the foundation of faith, where God's Word is at the center of our lives, enabling us to clearly understand His love and share it with others. I am confident that the teachings of Sungrak Church will not only enrich my spiritual life but also equip me to serve God's people much better.

The spiritual environment here in Nepal is confusing, and there is an urgent need for solid, biblical teaching. The insights shared through the sermons of Sungrak Church will be of tremendous help to believers in Nepal. As I strive to serve others in my community, I earnestly request to continue receiving guidance from Sungrak Church.

The teachings of Sungrak Church provide clarity and serve as a guiding light in our ministry. Please convey my gratitude to Overseer Sung-Hyun Kim. I pray that God's abundant blessings will be with Sungrak Church as it faithfully leads and nurtures God's people. May God continue to strengthen and guide Sungrak Church in all its endeavors. Once again, I sincerely thank Sungrak Church for conveying God's love into my life through its kindness.

*Pastor H. Thomas from Nepal  
August 21, 2024*

## "May More People Experience This Blessing"

As I am guided by the messages from Sungrak Church and experience change, everything that happens in the church now brings me happiness and joy.

I want to share the book you sent with more people because I want to awaken the people here spiritually. My motivation for doing this isn't from any sense of obligation or duty. I genuinely want them to receive a blessing, so I do this joyfully.

One of my college friends had briefly attended church but eventually stopped and found herself unable to pray. However, after reading the book I shared with her, she confessed that she now feels assured of her salvation. She even expressed a desire to serve in church, and her face is filled with joy.

Whenever she encounters parts of the book that she doesn't understand, she reaches out to me with questions. Recently, I explained to her about the deceiving spirits. She also shared the book with a pastor friend who recently started a new church.

I hope more people come to know the truth I have received. While I may not be able to do much for God's Kingdom, I am overjoyed to share the message of Christ with others and, when given the chance, to distribute the books. My hope is that many more will experience the blessing I have received.

*Geonalee from Kenya  
October 3, 2024*

# "The Person Who Belongs to Heaven"

Hello, today is Friday. There was no gathering in the morning, so when I was on my way to drop my child off at school, I met two groups of officials. Some were from the village and others from the government. About six or seven people arrived at my house by car. This time, they brought a box of milk and noodles.

Then they told me to fill out some documents. There were several papers, and the first page was a reminder of what happened on the 23rd. The next one required my signature, saying that they confiscated six books and they told me to sign. After signing, they requested my thumbprint, but I refused to do it.

Afterward, the village officials started saying various things, so I could no longer bear it and asked various questions. They suggested we talk after the senior officials leave. I asked if they had time to talk with me after they left. I then said, "You allow people to make fires on mountains but why do you not allow people to light their lamps? Whenever I am and whatever I learn, I have one purpose, that is, believing Jesus faithfully. I have never been involved in politics, and the bible makes it clear. In the beginning, Jesus had enough power to overthrow the Roman government, but He chose not to. You may have heard one of Jesus' teachings on His governance philosophy. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants

would fight." Now, I say to you again, whenever I am and whatever I learn I learn, I only believe in Jesus. This has nothing to do with any government."

At that moment, I was a little angry, and they left my home. Afterward, two village officials stayed behind to talk with me. Later, they all came back to my home again and repeated the same situation. They told me once again to sign the documents to confirm that I had received their notices. I signed two documents, but I did not provide a thumbprint. They warned me gently and also showed a firm stance, which was likely part of their duty. Around 11 o'clock, they all left.

I am not sure when I might lose the ability to contact the mother church. If that day comes and even though I cannot send letters for a while, please do not worry. Just pray for us, please. What we need is spiritual support and help. I also have confidence that we will become tools for the harvest. The high mountains and hills will crumble into dust. Jesus had already fulfilled it and has given us His power. We are victorious Christians. Amen! Hallelujah! Amen!

*Minister Chang from China*

*October 18, 2024*

# "A House Built of Straw"

Two months have passed since the persecution stormed in, and thankfully, there has been no significant incident since. Compared to other churches, what we experienced was minimal. I am sincerely joyful as I witness pastors and believers across the land standing strong amidst persecution, glorifying the name of the Lord. I wholeheartedly support and bless them!

Today, I want to share how persecution has brought change to me and our church. Although we can no longer use our previous social media, we have found new ways to listen to Overseer Sung-Hyun Kim's messages, share our reflections, and pray. Now, instead of listening to multiple sermons a week, I focus on one sermon, meditating on it repeatedly.

The most significant difference is that we no longer have the usual active exchanges in our chat rooms. In the past, we had various groups within the church—new believers, elders, and young adults—where we were busy every day with Bible reading and prayer relay activities. Looking back, I realize that many of these activities were driven by a need to keep doing something outwardly. While they may have encouraged regular habits, they did not truly communicate the heart of the Lord to people. We were busy daily, yet the level of change was minimal.

When these activities were initially suspended, none of us adapted easily. We were all accustomed to schedules, demands, and constant reminders. Suddenly, without these activities, all of us, myself included, found ourselves letting go, becoming entangled in daily routines and our phones. It wasn't that I had no time to

constant reminders. Suddenly, without these activities, all of us, myself included, found ourselves letting go, becoming entangled in daily routines and our phones. It wasn't that I had no time to write reflections—it was that my heart lacked strength, weakening and losing direction.

Through this persecution, I have seen it clearly: what my church and I built before was like a house of straw. It was like a house built on sand that collapsed and was uprooted when the flood came. Initially, I was deeply discouraged. Was I really this weak? Others felt the same. The church seemed to lose its unity, and I worried, "Can I continue with the Berea movement? Could I end up being left behind?"

However, worry changes nothing. We must repent and act. In the past, everything was polished on the outside, but now we must become truly strong. Everyone has realized that without inward change and voluntary commitment to our faith, we will all fall when persecution comes. Even if it's slow, what matters most is genuine repentance.

When I cast off my self-centered despair and resolved to rise again to fulfill the mission of the Berea movement, an unbeliever came to our church. After attending a service, he was captivated by the message. A few days ago, I provided him with teachings for new members. I am truly grateful for the Lord's comfort through this fruit. I will grow stronger. I am a Berean with a mission.

For the past three weeks, we have listened to Overseer Sung-Hyun

Kim's sermons—"Christians Who Put Off the Old Man," "Christians Who Are Being Renewed in Their Spirits," and "Put On the New Man"—and we have been deeply moved, experiencing that we ourselves are being renewed. Through these sermons, I have realized that God has not only saved me through Jesus Christ but also recreated me in His image. This new man is my true self, bearing the righteousness and holiness of the truth, embodying all the natures of Jesus Christ.

In the past, I thought I was gradually becoming a new man, but through these sermons, I realized that the new man already exists within me. Nevertheless, the reason it doesn't manifest is that I hadn't resolved to cast off the old man. Without an inner commitment to obedience and change, the old man continued to influence the new man. I thought I loved myself, but in truth, I didn't even fully understand who I was. I only tried to suppress my old man outwardly without any real inward change.

The Overseer emphasized that those who put on the new man must increasingly resemble the Lord, with changes in character and behavior. Those who wear the new man must be renewed in knowledge, following the image of the Lord who created them. Amen! This new man must be more sincere in relationships with both people and God, demonstrating humility, gentleness, respect, kindness, and consideration toward others. We must love the Lord and love the church. Yes, this is the essence of the new man. I earnestly desire inner change. I hope that as I make my resolve, the Lord will bring about even greater change.

*Minister Ryu from China*

*October 10, 2024*

## "The Process of Cleanness"

For the past few years, amidst the church's continuous persecution, what has comforted us is the steadfast faith my fellow workers and saints continue to uphold in the face of such adversity. Upon my arrest as a pastor, my fellow workers stepped in and took on the responsibilities. This is the fruit nurtured by the Mother Church through blood and sweat. I, too, have gained much from this.

The public security officers have persecuted the church five times and searched my home three times. During the first two searches, they took a computer and a few books, but in the third, they took everything they could—desks, chairs, television, computer, copier, clothing, and more. Last week alone, there were three instances of interrogation and threats, and both my fellow workers and saints were also threatened in their homes. Their actions seemed like the final, desperate struggle of those facing imminent destruction.

It would be a lie to say I was not afraid during the interrogations. I am a woman, not someone strong like a hero in a movie. Yet I have Jesus, the Holy Spirit promised by God, and the hope of heaven. I desire to participate in the Berea Movement, and I long to stand with Jesus and the Mother Church. Even during interrogation, I reminded myself that, as a child of God and a pastor of the church, I must not allow myself to be afraid or intimidated. I resolved that they could not disregard God's children and His servants. I reminded myself not to bring shame to Jesus and became filled with the hope of victory through the Lord's strength. Through this, I found the courage to stand boldly.

Despite the challenging environment, worship has not stopped. I cannot allow the sheep entrusted to me by the Lord to be lost, failing to fulfill my responsibility to Him. My fellow workers and saints have been interrogated multiple times, but, if anything, their love for the Lord, the church, and their pastor has only deepened. Still, there were about ten who could not worship out of fear of persecution. However, we visited each of them, serving and encouraging them one by one, and gradually, they began to turn back to their faith lives. Even so, a few have left due to this persecution.

Once, during a sermon at the Mother Church, I heard the words, “If persecution comes, endure it; if you die, then die.” At first, I wondered if my Mother Church truly understood the situation in China. However, through this teaching, the path of faith became even clearer. The Mother Church is well aware of the suffering of Jesus, His disciples, and Paul, and both the overseer and believers have already set an example for us. I came to understand that what was taught to us is the very principle of following the path of Jesus.

This teaching has set me on a path of holiness, enabling me to be used by the Lord. In times of persecution, Jesus seeks His bride, who truly loves Him. Truthful faith is revealed in the midst of persecution. The Lord said, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Those who are martyred for the Lord are blessed, and they will partake in the first resurrection. Death has worth only when it is a death used by the Lord. The Lord also said, “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

It has been nearly 20 years since I encountered the Berea Movement in China, and it has brought me true happiness. Yet, I have also had concerns. Many who encountered Berea severed their connection with the Mother Church for personal gain. I have wondered what Berea will look like in the years to come. Much like the division at the Mother Church that has led to its purification, the widespread persecution in China now seems to be purifying the Bereans and the church. Though painful, there is joy in this process.

God knows that many Berean pastors and saints are enduring persecution, and this is permitted by Him. I pray that the Lord will grant His children the power of faith to overcome this world. We will be victorious in the name of Jesus. Since everything is in God’s hands, I trust that His will is being fulfilled.

Lord, please protect our faith and protect the saints and pastors who are dedicated to You. Please purify us and the church so that we may be used as servants of the Berea Movement.

*Pastor Xiachahong from China*

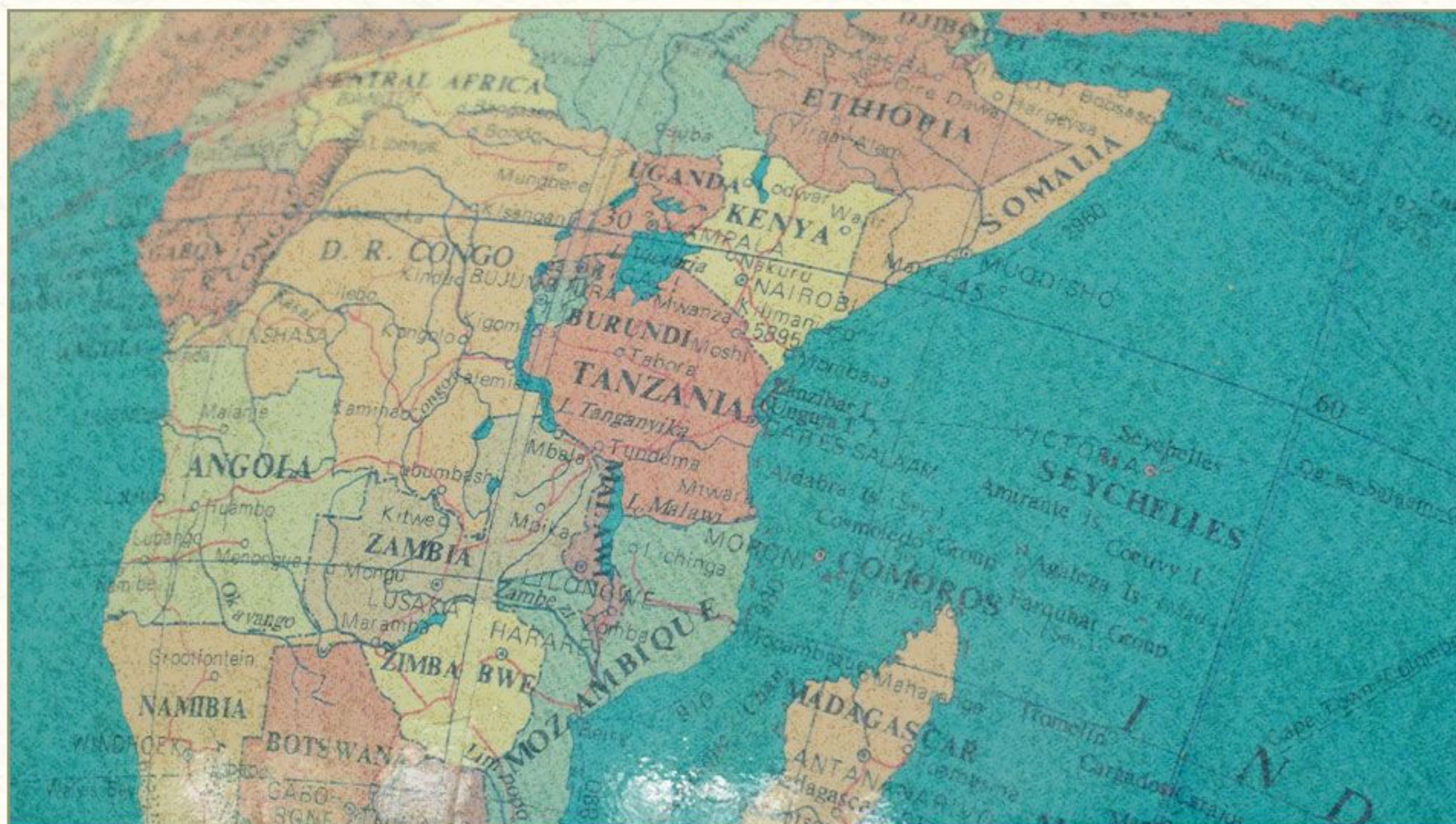
*October 4, 2024*

04

# The Calling to Bless All Nations

(Genesis 12:1-3)

in 'The Messenger Running in Hurry'  
Sermon Series 3



*"Now the Lord had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'" (Genesis 12:1-3, NKJV)*

Abraham was called a missionary. He was sent as God's messenger. We normally think of angels as God's messengers. However, a messenger does not only refer to angels; anyone who is used by God is His messenger, whether angel or man. A messenger is called to a mission. He is called to fulfill the task with all his life. The duty must be carried out with all of one's life, yet angels do not have life. Therefore, only a man who has flesh can carry out the mission with all his life.

The idea of being faithful unto death does not apply to angels. Hence, being able to remain faithful unto death is a glorious thing to do. Only the Son of God was able to do that. But now, by being in the Son of God, we humans who have flesh are able to serve faithfully unto death. Here is the mystery. Angels do not know what it means to be faithful unto death. Hence, they cannot have the glory that follows. It is promised that whoever is faithful unto death will be given a crown. Since angels cannot be faithful unto death, they cannot have the crown. God rewards those who obey to the point of death with the resurrection and glory, but the angels will never know the glory of the resurrection.

We have to understand that having the ability to serve faithfully unto death is the greatest glory granted to man. Of course, there is no need to go around trying to die intentionally. It does not mean you should go to countries like Indonesia or the Middle East so you could purposely die. Because being faithful unto death is something that the only flesh can do, it means to be faithful to the end of your flesh. Until the life of your flesh ends. Anyone who is not faithful till death will expect to retire one day. They will make plans about how they will enjoy the latter years of their life. Needless to say, such a person is not faithful to death.

One has to have the willingness to work until his flesh ends. Therefore, a person who is faithful to death will strive to work until his very last breath. Of course, it is for God to judge in the end, but a person's faithfulness is quite evident in the eyes of men also to a certain degree. The person with a calling will be faithful unto death. He will be used until the day he dies. Some people expect to retire and be paid termination payments because they worked hard at church. They want to take a rest after retirement. This shows that they were not called. If a person will work only if there is compensation, this means he does not have the calling.

Abraham fulfilled his calling very well. It was Abraham who chose to leave his home country, but God sent him. Why would he want to leave his homeland and have a hard time? Even if traveling is enjoyable, why would he want to go on a journey where he would be in danger of losing his wife? He almost lost his own life. Why would anyone want to do that voluntarily? He

did not want to leave. But God sent him.

He crossed the river and became a stranger/wayfarer. He became a Hebrew. After he left, his goal was not to live in a foreign land. What was the mission given him? Be blessed. Blessing. God said, "I will make your name great. I will make a great nation through you." It was truly a great blessing. But that was not all. God promised, "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you." That is it. The mission God gave Abraham was for him to be a blessing so that all nations are blessed through him. If Abraham successfully carries out his duty, all nations will be blessed through him. Otherwise, they will not. So how important was it for him to persevere and fulfill his mission?

He was a man of faith. And it was not just ordinary faith he had. All of this did not happen randomly out of nowhere; Abraham already knew about it. He anticipated it. God revealed it to Him through inspiration. Hence, he saw what was going to happen in the future. He was longing for it - the time of life - and finally saw it and was glad. When he saw the birth of his son Isaac, he did not rejoice because he had a son at his old age. Rather, he witnessed God's promise fulfilled to him. And by this, he saw that through him, the Messiah, the Seed of God, would later come to possess the gates of the enemies. He also saw that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through him. Therefore, he believed and endured to the end.

The blessing we have all received in the present did not originate from us, nor did it just drop out of heaven. It was that which God promised Abraham, and because Abraham kept his

faith and endured to the end, we were able to receive the blessing finally. We are grateful to Abraham. For this reason, God imprinted the name of Abraham on all the saints in the New Testament Church. Even the beginning of the New Testament writes, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." Some sneery people who are jealous of Abraham might argue, "Is it Abraham we believe in? We believe in Jesus! Do you have to talk about Abraham?" I am sure a lot of people would have disdained him if he lived in the same generation. It is only because Abraham is a man of ancient times that everyone respects him. God made us remember Abraham and how he fulfilled his duty, and He acknowledges that every believer of Jesus possesses Abraham's blessing and is a descendant of his faith.

So through Jesus Christ, we received Abraham's blessing. Thus, we received the promise of the Holy Spirit, as it is written in Galatians 3:14. This means anyone who received the Holy Spirit received the blessing God gave Abraham. In other words, each of our faith is identical to that of Abraham. What is the reason God called and appointed us? It is not that we somehow came to meet God ourselves or choose Him. As Jesus said, "You did not choose Me but I chose you and appointed you." If He chose and appointed us, He has expectations. He did not choose us for no reason. He has expectations of us.

So what are His expectations? He wants the word that was given to Abraham to be fulfilled in us as well. He wants us to be blessed. But it is not just us whom He wants to be blessed. He wants us to become a blessing who can bless not only our families, not

only the members of the church you are ministering but all the nations on earth.

This is the promise He made. The duty which God assigned to Abraham has been assigned to us also. Whoever received the Holy Spirit has been assigned this duty to be a blessing to all nations. What must we do to bless the nations? We have to let them know God.

Those who received the Holy Spirit are anointed. In the Old Testament times, there were three anointed offices - king, priest, and prophet. By sending the Holy Spirit to us, God bestowed royal authority upon us. As Jesus said, "All authority of heaven and earth has been given to Me. Go therefore," we have been sent by the King. Therefore, we have to go by the King's authority and His power.

Therefore, we must bring forth the authority of the King's kingdom. He said, "If I cast out demons by the Holy Spirit, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." So we have to go with the royal authority and heal those who are oppressed by the devil and let them receive forgiveness of sins. We have to do the work of driving out demons from the oppressed, help them receive forgiveness of sins, and liberate them from the devil's hold. Wherever we go, the King's authority is displayed so that demons are cast out and the sick are healed.

Next, we need to fulfill our roles as priests. In the Old Testament times, to whom did the sick have to present themselves in order to be declared clean? The priest. As Jesus



said, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them," we have to fulfill this duty of forgiving the sins of others as a mediator so that they are reconciled to God.

After that, we have the duty of the prophet. A prophet taught the people of God's will. A prophet revealed God to them and of His works. This means we should not be satisfied with people being saved only but have to let them know God in depth. We need to teach them God's will. For this reason, God sent us the Holy Spirit and anointed us.

He has called us to be royal priests and prophets. Therefore, Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit, He will guide us into the truth, teach us to understand God in depth, and even receive the power to perform miracles and signs. He also said then when we receive the Holy Spirit, we can forgive anyone their sins and they will be forgiven.

After the resurrection, He spoke to the disciples saying, "I am sending you." Then He breathed on them 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." He sent us as royal priests and as prophets.

This is the role we have to fulfill when we are making disciples of people in the world. Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." We have to go out into the world and fulfill this duty. Let us say a person met God when he was a young student. When asked at church if anyone wants to be a missionary, he raises his hand. He does not even know what mission involves



yet puts his hand up for mission. He thinks he first has to go to another country to do a mission, but he has no clue what the mission is about.

This person never studied Berea nor read the Bible. However, he goes on a mission trip. When asked the reason he is going, his answer is, "Because I have compassion for the souls." Something is not right. One does not go on mission trips because he feels sorry for the souls. With that kind of mindset, the person is bound to return home in less than a year.

People say they have pity for the Chinese souls and go on mission trips to China, but wait till they interact with Chinese people for about a year. Will they still be compassionate towards them? The Chinese people will make them shudder with loathing. This is really true. They can give you a hard time. Some of you who grew up in China may not think this is true. But that is because you grew up among your own people and they are generally nice to you. Therefore all Chinese people might seem nice to you. But if you meet people out on the streets, they are preying on you, ready to take everything from you.

Once when I was in China, a team of missionaries and I needed to take a bus to go to a particular city. It was a long journey and there was only one bus running each day from that rural town to the city. We headed to the bus stop in the morning and found out the bus was departing at 6 in the evening and traveling all night. Since we were at the bus stop in the morning and there was nowhere else for us to go in the meantime, we

decided to wait there. The bus terminal conductor informed us that the bus would be leaving at 6 and we answered we would wait there until the bus arrived. He therefore saw us waiting there the whole day. There were not any decent restaurants to go there as well, so we just ate some snacks and waited in the sun all day. We wanted to make sure we did not miss the bus. Finally, the bus came around 6 pm and people boarded. We saw that people were paying 15 yuan each. But when we tried to get on the bus, the conductor told us to pay 25 yuan.

We just saw other people before us paying 15 yuan so why should we pay 25 yuan? We had been waiting there since morning. But the conductor insisted we pay 25 yuan. Do you know why? The other passengers came nearly around the departure time and therefore paid 15 yuan. But he said, seeing that we waited from morning to catch this bus, he knew we had to get on this bus no matter what. He figured out we had no choice but to ride that bus and took advantage of us by raising the fare to 25 yuan.

We bit the bullet and paid 25 yuan. There was no use in arguing. One of us ended up in a heated argument with him, but it was no use. We had no choice but to pay the amount. We were burning with anger. While we were on the bus, somebody was drinking cola but the cola spilled and got on somebody else. And an argument arose between them. "Why can't you drink it properly? You got it all over me!" Everybody looked at them. Then suddenly someone shouted, "I won!" The person who had the cola spilled on him was sitting next to this man and he got excited too. He was saying, "You earned so hundreds of

thousands of yuan!” People were exclaiming, “Good for you!”

Then suddenly someone said, “Sell it to me!” He offered 20,000,000 yuan which is equivalent to 20000 won. And another person told him to sell it to him. They were both telling the man to sell it to them. Then one of us, who was an interpreter, also joined them in the heat of the moment, “Sell it to me!” In the end, he bought it. He gave them a lot of money, actually all of the mission allowance we got.

We tried to deter him from buying it, but he did. Later, all of those people got off the bus. When we rang up the number for the prize, it turned out all a scam. There was no such prize. We found out that the group of people who got on the bus, as well as those who spilled the cola and the others who acted as decoys, were all working together. Do you know how we found out? Afterward, we caught the train, and there were other people doing the same act on the train. We saw this several times. These are real Chinese people. You get caught like a sitting duck.

Once my wife had cash in her wallet while she was getting groceries at the market. Some people followed behind her and were trying to pickpocket her when they got caught. When she asked them what they were doing, they just smiled and walked off. And the shopkeepers around her just looked on while smiling. Nobody was saying anything about it. Nobody bothered to shout, “Thief!” That is what Chinese people are like.

What is there to love about them? Do you think you can love

them? It is not just one or two days these things happen. Every day is like that. On the train, you sit facing other passengers. And as people walk past you, some of them spit on the ground but they aim it so that the spit lands right next to your feet. These things happen on a daily basis.

So the moment you step outside your home, there is so much that stresses you, gets on your nerves and irritates you. And actually, Korea is not much different. Strangely enough, the minute you step off the plane at the airport and get in the car, you feel annoyed. There are a series of events and rude behavior that irritate you.

Even this morning, I was walking here and while everyone was walking straight, this lady decided to walk right in front of me so that I could feel her breath at the tip of my nose. She kept walking as if nothing was wrong. She simply had to walk right in front of me. It is like I am invisible to her. I am not a human being to her.

We encounter such things on a daily basis. Hence, I do not like Koreans. I do not like Chinese. I do not like everyone. I do not like people in general. I have not been to the US but what I have heard is that people are very courteous. Probably varies between different regions, but even in movies we see people saying “Hi” with a smile to strangers while they go for a walk in the morning.

In this way, although we get put off by such people, why do we still go to them? We want them to be blessed. This disposition

did not arise from man. It is from the commandment of God because it is a duty, and also by the Holy Spirit. Such a disposition cannot arise out of our emotions.

Therefore, one cannot go on missions out of pity for souls. To go on a mission, one needs to be sent. As a priest and a prophet, one needs to know God well first and then go. When he goes, he needs to make the people know God also and reconcile them to God. He must heal those who are oppressed by the devil. All these things must be done at the command of God, not by one's own choosing or because he feels pity for the souls.

Let us earnestly pray that we may truly become a blessing, as Abraham was called to be. Likewise, let us pray that we do not become satisfied at receiving the blessings ourselves but become the blessing so that even those detestable people can all be blessed through us.

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