

March 2025

Bereans Webzine - Blessing Channel #34

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the
Holy Spirit?

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Being Filled with the Holy Spirit



1 Be Filled with the Spirit

(Ephesians 5:18)

“Be filled with the Holy Spirit!” This does not mean receiving the Holy Spirit. This commandment is given to those who have already received the Holy Spirit, that is, those who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. As it is written, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Cor 12:13), being baptized in the Holy Spirit means entering the body of Christ and becoming a member of the church. The command to be filled with the Holy Spirit is given to such people. **“Then, I won’t seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit. As long as I can go to heaven, that’s enough for me. I don’t need any rewards.”** If someone rejects the Lord’s command in this way, can their faith truly be recognized by the Lord? Those who have faith worthy of salvation must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Some people interpret the command “Be filled with the Holy Spirit” to mean, “Seek more of the Holy Spirit so that any lack of spiritual inspiration and power may be filled.” They believe that each time they are filled with more of the Holy Spirit, they become energized, their level of inspiration increases, and they reach a state of deeply affected inspiration. Just as an injection revitalizes a weakened body, they think that being filled with the Holy Spirit is necessary to energize a powerless spiritual life. However, seeking the fullness of the Holy Spirit as merely a way to compensate for a lack of spiritual energy is a misguided idea.

Such misconceptions about the fullness of the Holy Spirit lead to other theological misunderstandings in succession, ultimately causing people to stray into a misguided path of faith. The root of these misconceptions lies in a self-centered attitude. Even when God reveals His eternal will, people often judge it based on certain questions in their hearts: “Is this beneficial to me?” “Does it align with my knowledge?” “Is it safe for me?” When someone approaches

the fullness of the Holy Spirit with such a mindset, how can they truly understand it? They simply regard it as a temporary experience meant to benefit themselves.

God has given us the Holy Spirit—not in part, but without measure (John 3:34). The Holy Spirit dwells within us. And yet, we must understand that being filled with the Holy Spirit does not mean seeking additional portions of Him to fill ourselves. Those who have received salvation and have been baptized in the Holy Spirit should not seek for more of the Holy Spirit to come upon them, as if they have only received a part of Him. Nor should they long for the Holy Spirit to come again to fill any remaining emptiness within them. Rather, those who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit—who have entered into the body of Christ—must have complete trust in the Holy Spirit.

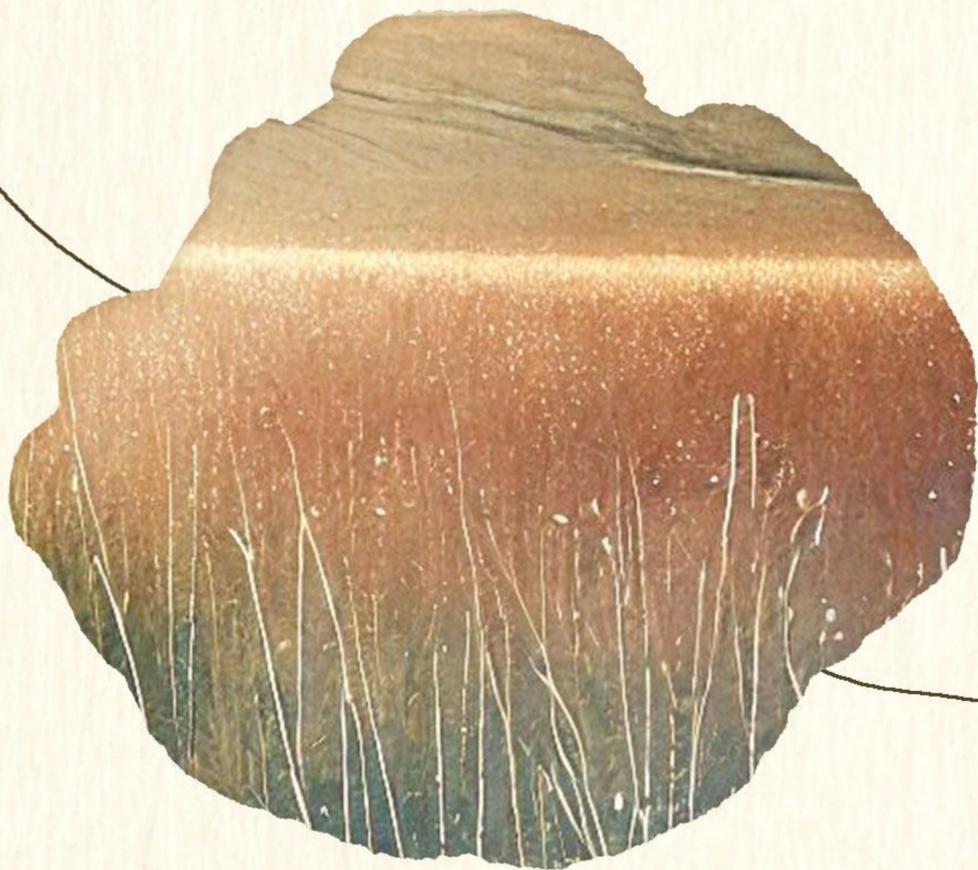
This is true. Being filled with the Holy Spirit means having a heart that submits to His guidance and control. When we have this attitude, the words Jesus promised can be fulfilled through us. Of course, being filled with the Holy Spirit is entirely His work. However, the Holy Spirit does not work unilaterally, apart from our willingness. First, we must have a heart that submits to Him. Let us maintain a heart that submits to the Holy Spirit at every moment we call “today.” Let us be prepared in faith to welcome the work of the Holy Spirit so that God’s will may be fulfilled through us.

*Sermon by Overseer Sung-Hyun Kim
Lord’s Day Service on January 19, 2025*

2

Recognizing the Lord Personally Present in Me

(Ephesians 5:18)



Whether it was the mountains or the sea, Galilee or Sidon, wherever Jesus went, Peter was almost always there. Among the disciples, Peter stood out for his power, inspiration, and boldness. He relied on the Lord's word and walked on water. While others saw Jesus as merely one of the prophets, he boldly confessed, **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."** And when the Lord was seized, he alone drew a sword, ready to fight the Roman soldiers. Yet, there was something striking about Peter—his power, inspiration, and boldness only surfaced when Jesus was by his side.

After being separated from Jesus, Peter became even more cowardly and powerless than ordinary people. He was so afraid that he denied Jesus three times—even before a servant girl. But later, another change came upon him. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter boldly testified about Jesus before the very Jews who had fiercely opposed Him. He commanded a lame beggar to walk in the name of Jesus, and when the man was healed, he preached the gospel to the astonished crowd. And before the Sanhedrin, who sought to intimidate him, he fearlessly declared, **"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge!"**

What happened to Peter when he was filled with the Holy Spirit? What restored him to the powerful, inspirational, and bold man he once was? By being filled with the Holy Spirit, he began to aware that Jesus was with him. Living with the consciousness of Jesus' personal presence—this is the very heart of being filled with the Holy Spirit. A life that is conscious of Jesus' presence! A life filled with His words! A life filled with the Holy Spirit means that Jesus' thoughts become our thoughts, Jesus' vision becomes our vision, Jesus' standard becomes our standard, and Jesus' ministry becomes our ministry.

Those who are conscious of Jesus' presence! They come to do what they could never accomplish by their own strength—just as a ship is carried along by the wind filling its sails. In their thoughts, words, and actions, the character of Jesus is manifested, just as salt permeates and flavors aged meat! They are controlled by Jesus' words, just as a glove moves only at the command of the hand! As Jesus' words move them, Jesus' words permeate them, and Jesus' words govern them; they walk step by step along the path led by the Holy Spirit.

The fullness of the Holy Spirit is not granted to only a special few. Anyone who chooses to accept Jesus' words and obey Him can receive it. Losing the fullness of the Holy Spirit is like returning to one's old way of life. First, let us cast aside selfishness and fleshly desires within us. Let us grieve over our inability to decisively turn away from sin. Let us lay down our self-centered way of living and lift our hearts to Jesus, who is with us. We are not separated from Jesus. Even now, Jesus is guiding us, speaking to us, and walking with us step by step.

*Sermon by Overseer Sung-Hyun Kim
Lord's Day Service on January 26, 2025*

3

Sing to the Lord and Speak to One Another

(Ephesians 5:19)



Before the descendants of Israel had crossed through the walls of water in the Red Sea, the Egyptian chariots rushed in after them. They were completely trapped, with no way out. But then, God threw the Egyptians into confusion, and as Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, the water overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. This is how the Israelites were saved. What was the first thing they did after experiencing this incredible event? It was this—they sang. Filled with joy, they lifted their voices together, taking pride in being God’s people. It was powerful enough to break the spirits of their enemies who had sought to stand in their way.

Praise is the natural response of those who are saved by Christ’s grace. In a life filled with the Holy Spirit, the first and most evident sign is a heart overflowing with joy, expressed together with others. God not only puts spiritual songs in their mouths but also commands them to sing: **“speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph 5:19)**. This song, given by God to the new creation, is a spiritual song that the world cannot imitate—a new song that has never existed before.

“Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, And His praise in the assembly of saints” (Ps 149:1). What matters when we sing this new song is not simply being moved and singing alone, regardless of who is around, but rather singing together with the saints in the church. Of course, praise is ultimately offered to God, but singing together and blessing one another is a command from Him. It is a work commanded by God for saints to praise together and bless one another. When the saints lift their voices in unity, they remind one another of God’s grace and His will, confirm their hearts in obedience to the truth, and encourage and exhort one

another. This is what God has entrusted to His people as He pours out the power of blessing upon them.

It is not something to be taken for granted that saints have the opportunity to sing praises to God together. In the Middle Ages, only trained specialists were allowed to sing in the church. But with the Reformation, all believers were able to lift their voices in praise to God. As these songs spread widely, the gospel finally took root in the hearts of the saints. Wherever the gospel was preached, the joy of salvation was expressed through various forms of music. As believers encouraged and exhorted one another through song, the Christian faith grew stronger and stronger—allowing us to inherit this legacy of faith today.

We do not know how long we will have the opportunity to sing together. Therefore, while we still have the chance, let us sing together. Let us not limit this precious opportunity by clinging to our personal preferences in musical style, but instead, let us sing together in the power to bless that God pours out upon us. The songs of the world will all fade away in time, but the praises we offer to bless one another will continue forever in heaven. When we sing, the Lord sings with us. Therefore, let us sing together, speaking to one another with gratitude and joy. Let the praise the Lord sings within us never cease.

*Sermon by Overseer Sung-Hyun Kim
Lord's Day Service on February 2, 2025*

4

Give Thanks Always for All Things

(Ephesians 5:20)



The king of Judah, Jehoshaphat, was disheartened when he heard that the Moabites, Ammonites, and other nations had united to attack. It was evident that there was no way to defeat such a powerful enemy. At that moment, Jahaziel, moved by the Spirit of the Lord, declared, **“Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you.”** The king trusted these words, sent his soldiers to the battlefield, and ordered the singers to go before them, singing, **“Praise the LORD, For His mercy endures forever.”** In this way, before the battle had even begun, the king was already certain of victory and gave thanks. And indeed, they were victorious.

If Jehoshaphat had given thanks only after gaining victory, his gratitude would not have shone so brightly. Of course, there are people in the world who remain ungrateful even after winning. They take victory for granted and see no reason to give thanks. A person who believes they are entitled to victory could never truly give thanks to God. In contrast, those who acknowledge that their victory comes from God and give thanks are blessed. But there is someone even more blessed than this—the one who, like King Jehoshaphat, gives thanks in faith, believing in victory even before it is received.

However, there is an even higher level of thanksgiving. It is the gratitude offered not in victory, but in the midst of suffering or defeat. This is true maturity—the kind of gratitude that God the Father desires from His children. Even when our lives are in the depths of despair, God remains worthy of our thanksgiving. Even if our earnest desires remain unfulfilled, everything will unfold according to God’s will, and He will be glorified. Gratitude is not a matter of choice. God is worthy of thanksgiving in any and every circumstance.

Everything comes from God. It is the same whether it brings us joy or suffering. Therefore, we can give thanks in all things. Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit trust that God will ultimately work for good through every circumstance. No matter what trials or hardships they face, they do not doubt that God, in His wisdom and love, takes care of them. That is why they can give thanks even in suffering. They are grateful even when their health fails, and even when a loved one loses their life—just as Job gave thanks when he lost all his children in a single day.

Everything we experience will ultimately be revealed as good in Christ. We have become heirs with Him and are already partakers of His glory. Since He intercedes for us before God, everything we go through—whether joy or sorrow—will ultimately become a reason for praise and thanksgiving. Because we are in Him, the thanksgiving we offer, in the end, is Christ Himself giving thanks to God the Father. Let us glorify God the Father, the source of every good gift and every perfect gift. No matter what we face, in every situation and circumstance, let us give thanks to God the Father in Christ.

*Sermon by Overseer Sung-Hyun Kim
Lord's Day Service on February 9, 2025*



2

Ruled by the Holy Spirit in Thought, Heart, and Action

in Let Us Know the Holy Spirit

Chapter 8 “The Fullness of the Holy Spirit”

One of the most common phrases we use in our Christian lives is probably, “filled with the Holy Spirit” or “fullness of the Holy Spirit.” Jesus commanded His disciples to be filled with the Holy Spirit. So it was important to the Christians of the early church for everyone to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Consequently, having a correct understanding of “the fullness of the Holy Spirit” is essential to having a complete faith.

To be “filled with the Holy Spirit,” our hearts must completely be submitted to Him. Man can actually limit the Holy Spirit. If just one small part of our heart is not being offered to the Holy Spirit, He cannot fully reign over us. The Fullness of the Holy Spirit is when He can fully reign in our hearts.

People accomplish things through actions. To put anything into action, three steps must happen. Initially, there must be the thoughts to do the action. These thoughts are powerful because enough of them settling in our hearts will definitely convince us to do the action. For example, enough thoughts about praying will convict the heart to pray. The thoughts will convince the heart to choose. When the heart has decided, the actions then follow automatically. In this way, thoughts, hearts, and actions are connected. Paul made a commitment before God to testify of the good news of God’s grace everywhere he went. He clearly knew that prison and hardships were awaiting him. But that did not stop him. He still took actions according to his decisions before God. If it were someone else who heard the Holy Spirit telling him that prison and hardships were facing him, then he would have gladly thought, ‘Since the Holy Spirit has warned me, it must mean that I don’t have to go to Jerusalem! The Holy Spirit warned me to spare my life!’ However, Paul did not change the decision he had made before God.

Paul revealed his true heart to the Holy Spirit when he spoke to the church of Ephesus. He was ready not only to suffer for the Gospel but also to die for Lord. Just like Paul, we need to rely on the Holy Spirit so our thoughts, heart, and actions can totally submit to God's will. This is the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

A crazy person is someone who cannot seem to align his thoughts, heart and actions. He seems out of focus with life and reality. All three elements (thoughts, heart, and actions) are divided and independent, so it is very hard to predict his actions. Even if he were predictable, he cannot be reliable. It is difficult to develop a concrete relationship with such people.

Holy Spirit-filled Christians are those whose thoughts, hearts, and actions are ruled by the Holy Spirit. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength," ultimately means that the Holy Spirit should rule all your thoughts, hearts, and actions. A person can think, I should be doing this. But his heart might be deciding, but I don't want to. Forget it. Eventually this person would be immobile in his spiritual walk before God. This tension and struggle can lead to much confusion and chaos in his spiritual life.

In my ministry, I notice many Holy Spirit-filled Christians serving God joyfully in the church. Their thoughts, hearts, and actions are all in harmony with the leading of the Holy Spirit. However, when they fall into temptation, they become divided from within. Eventually, they will become ineffective for God's kingdom. The fullness of the Holy Spirit can be maintained when these three elements are completely ruled by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit cannot be cheated. God is not mocked! People who are filled with the Holy Spirit do not overstep Him. They submit all of their thoughts, hearts, and actions to the Holy Spirit. Jesus warned that personal moral sins might be forgiven, but sins against the Holy Spirit are different in nature. If a man decides to become a loyal deacon, he needs to become a faithful deacon in words, heart and actions.

When your thoughts, heart, and actions are aligned. It is like focusing on an image before taking a picture. Some people speak in tongues, but their thoughts, hearts, and actions are divided. No matter how much you speak in tongues, no matter what you feel, your whole being must be aligned with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit must rule over you.

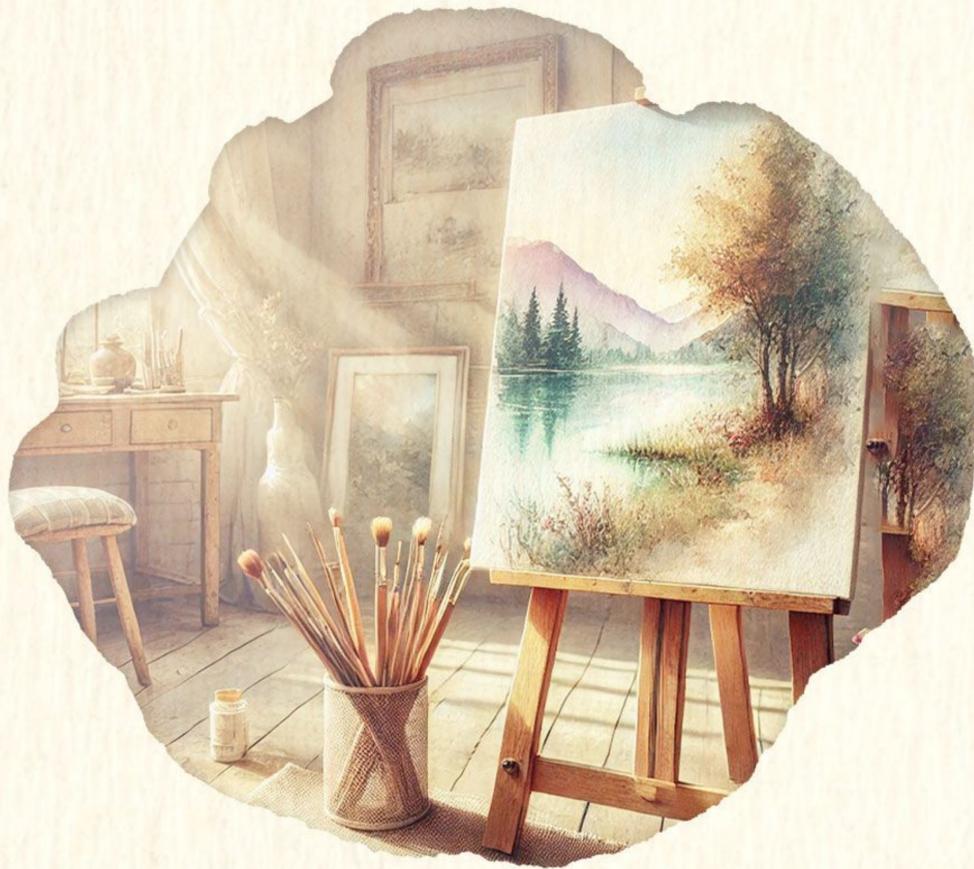
The Holy Spirit tested Paul several times, but Paul was always focused before God. Paul said to the elders in Ephesus, "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."

in *Let Us Know the Holy Spirit*
Chapter 8 "The Fullness of the Holy Spirit"

3

Testimony of Blessing

From Nigeria, Malawi, Zambia, and China



The Outcome of Taking Part in the Work of Blessing

I was deeply moved by Sungrak Church's dedication to spreading the Word of Life to more people in Nigeria. As someone who serves in ministry here, I wanted to take part in your mission in any way I could.

However, after receiving the books you sent and reviewing the list of recipients and the required quantities, I was surprised to find that the shipping costs were much higher than I had expected. I hesitated for a moment, wondering what to do, but I decided to take responsibility for it.

Then, something amazing happened after I sent just two sets of books. Unexpectedly, financial support came from an unforeseen source, allowing me to send all the books.

I supported this mission purely for its spiritual benefit, but God not only blessed me spiritually but also provided material blessings.

Ever since I began this ministry of distributing books, church members have continuously provided financial support, even though I never requested any assistance. Witnessing how God provides in this way has been deeply moving.

It is a great blessing for me to be able to participate in the work that God is accomplishing through Sungrak Church. I now truly understand the Lord's words: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). My heart is overflowing with joy, and that joy is spreading throughout our church. It is not just me who is being blessed—our church members are also experiencing this blessing together. It is truly amazing, and all of this is the result of participating in the ministry of Sungrak Church.

I humbly ask your permission to continue participating in the ministry of distributing the Word in Nigeria.

May God strengthen Sungrak Church and protect it so that this precious ministry can be carried out to the very end.

Pastor Maduakor from Nigeria

January 20, 2025

Your Love Saved Him

I am writing to share with you an incredible testimony I experienced through the book you sent.

As you know, I have been leading a gathering where we read the book together and share in God's grace. One of the brothers in our group recently came to me in tears. He told me that he had just been holding poison in his hand, about to drink it, but at the last moment, he put it down and ran to me. This brother was in deep despair due to a severe financial crisis and had attempted to take his own life.

However, just as he was about to put the poison into his mouth, a phrase suddenly came to his mind: "Strengthen your will. Without willpower, there is no future." These words were from the book *Pure Luck Does Not Exist, God Signs Do*, which we had recently read together. I embraced him as he wept and prayed earnestly for him. I reminded him once again that God loves him.

He is now doing well. Your love saved his life. Hallelujah!

Please pray for me. There are many people here who cannot read English. That is why I am translating the book you sent into the local language. I want those who cannot read English to also experience God's love through this book. As you know, translation is not an easy task, and lately, I have often stayed up late to work through the night. My family is also enduring this hardship with me. But we will not stop. We want even more people to know God's love and receive salvation.

May God bless you.

Pastor Kachepa from Malawi
December 26, 2024

My Life Without Peace, Transformed

Shalom, may Sungrak Church be filled with abundant blessings.

I was deeply moved by the sermon, so I would like to share my testimony. As I listened to the message, I was reminded of the time when I was still in the world. Back then, I was deeply depressed and often thought about ending my own life. After being abandoned by my parents, I endured a difficult life, and peace seemed entirely absent from my existence. However, after accepting Jesus Christ, my life changed completely. In Christ, I found a true family, and as I came to understand my relationship with God the Father, I experienced overwhelming joy. Reflecting on how I, once so miserable, have been transformed into a happy person now, I felt immense gratitude. You mentioned, "Only those who realize and acknowledge that the kind of sinner they once were can understand God's grace more deeply," and I couldn't agree more.

I praise the Lord and give thanks from the bottom of my heart. Please continue to share the Word with me.

Pastor Jeremiah from Zambia
December 13, 2024

Now, Even When It's Difficult, It's No Longer Painful

Thank you for giving me the courage to bring forth my longing for inner truth in a world where efficiency and personal gain are valued more than sincerity and truth. I was once again reminded of the importance of reflecting on the essence of things rather than just their outward appearances.

When facing a problem, I have come to realize that making an effort to understand its fundamental causes and background, rather than just addressing its surface aspects, is crucial in truly perceiving and resolving it. As I go through life, I want to adopt an attitude of not avoiding thoughts but instead examining the reasons and backgrounds behind occurrences before taking action.

What have I been learning all this time? And what have I been teaching within the church? Surely, I have learned more than just knowledge—I have learned various emotions as well. Yet, the knowledge I acquired and the feelings that seemed like truth could neither persuade nor transform me.

When I discover a world filled with despair and see nothing but sin within myself, I begin to contemplate the truth. My tangled and polluted mind, shaped by worldly ideologies, tells me to feel grateful and reassured when I see those who are poorer and more miserable than I am. It tells me that death is an inevitable reality for all, so I should set aside my questions about life and simply focus on the present.

However, as my mind became overwhelmed with relentless questions, I found that avoiding them did not resolve the sorrow that I physically felt. Each day, as I woke up, I realized that I was inching closer to an unknown end, my powerless existence became evident. Watching people laugh and carry on as if life were good, I began to see them as if they were insane.

Every moment of life felt sorrowful. No matter how much power or wealth a person possessed, it all seemed meaningless before death. And so, every human experience felt drenched in sadness.

But then, I discovered a joy that is eternal and unchanging—one that removes all fear of death. I found it in the One who created me, in the covenant I share with Him. No teaching, no worldly wisdom, and nothing deemed "good" by this world could ever resolve the sorrow in my heart. However, the eternal and unchanging truth has allowed me to leave my sorrow behind and live with the hope of true joy.

Moreover, when God's sincere heart was conveyed through the genuine obedience of another, it did not just change my heart—it led to a transformation in my actions.

When I was forced to conform to a framework set by someone else, without knowing why, it felt difficult and painful. But now, after experiencing a change of heart, my actions have followed naturally. The difficulty remains the same, yet it no longer feels burdensome. Now, I have the motivation to act with joy, even while carrying a heavy heart.

Thank you for teaching me the truth, which has motivated me. Because of this teaching, my life has been transformed. Now that I have come to know an essential truth about life, I have nothing but gratitude for all that has been given to me.

There are still many who remain in sorrow because they do not know God. I want to share with them the unchanging and eternal truth that I have come to know and experience—our God.

Just as I was transformed through the sincere obedience of another, I hope that those who encounter me will also come to discover the God who is true, faithful, and full of love. To fulfill this, I desire to continue changing into someone who is worthy of carrying God's truth without shame.

*Kim from Sungrak Church
January 12, 2025*

Not Merely Proving the Existence of God

I have come to realize that the mission of the Berea Movement is not merely to proclaim God's existence, enable people to experience healing and miracles or help them live healthier and more comfortable lives in this world. Rather, the core of the Berea Movement is to understand God's will and dedicate one's life fully to fulfilling it.

Even demons and unclean spirits acknowledge the existence of God, but they neither love Him nor seek to understand His will. Their nature is completely opposed to God's character, and they strive to destroy His plans and hinder His purpose.

Furthermore, I have realized that Jesus Christ performed miracles not simply to prove the existence of God, but to testify that He was sent by God and to lead people to hear His teachings and understand God's will. The religious leaders of the time merely taught knowledge about God, which did not lead to life but rather fostered pride and contempt for others.

However, Jesus' teachings were entirely different. The God whom Jesus revealed was not the strict, cold, and partial God who favored the strong and took pleasure in the survival of the fittest, as people had previously perceived. Through the teachings of Jesus Christ, people began to experience true repentance, love God sincerely, dedicate everything to Him, and gradually become more like Jesus.

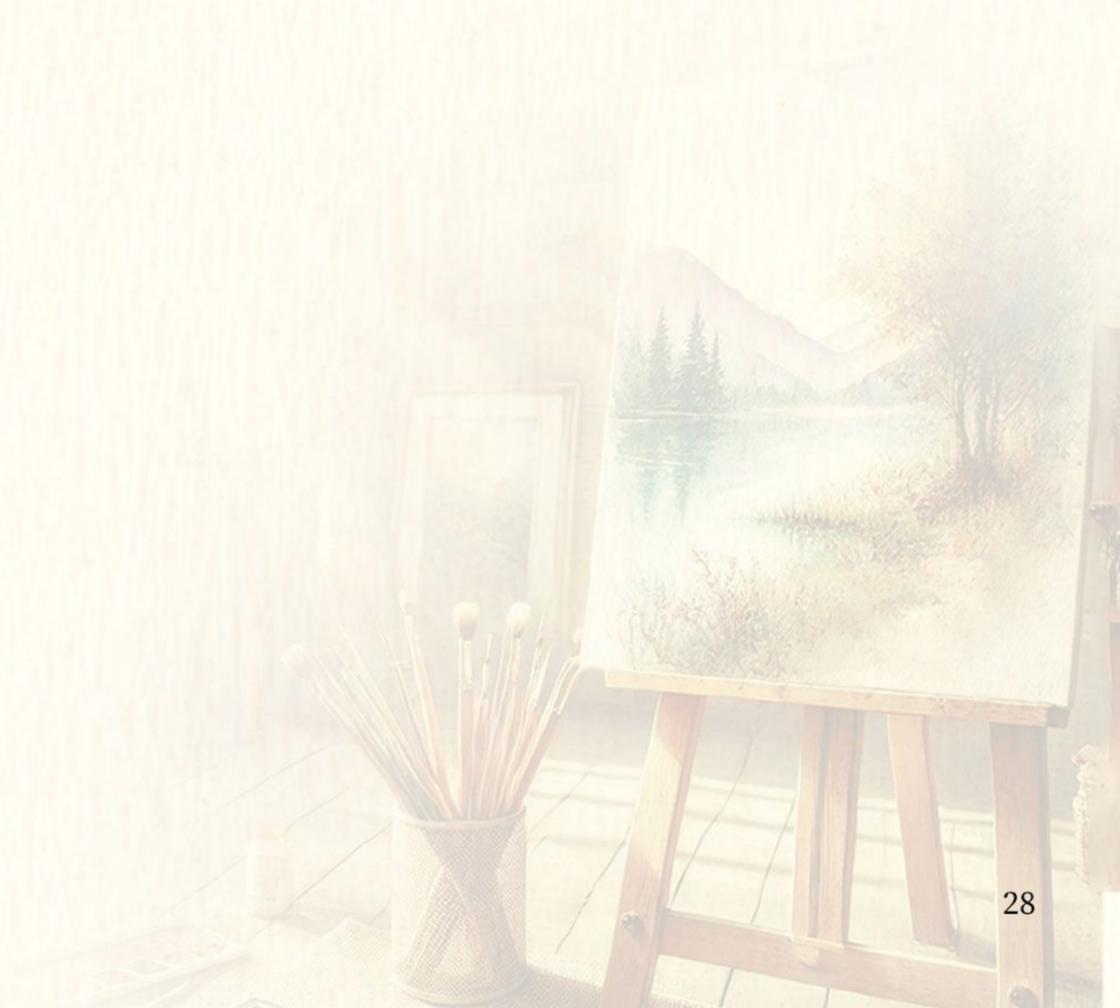
As a missionary of the Berea Movement, I have learned that my mission is not just to proclaim the existence of God but to know His heart and will and strive to understand them. I have come to realize

that no matter how much work is done if they do not understand God's will, rely on His guidance, and follow His ways, everything becomes meaningless. I have also understood that to fulfill God's will, I must completely dedicate myself, deny myself, and be willing to endure any sacrifice.

My goal in ministry is to ensure that my heart is more deeply connected with the Lord's heart. I earnestly desire that those whom I serve may also connect their hearts more deeply with the Lord and with the heart of the Church. In doing so, may they receive the Word with passion, meditate on it, share their gracious experiences, and abundantly experience the grace that follows. May the joy and happiness of knowing God overflow in all members in the church! Amen!

Immanuel!

Evangelist Hui from China
January 20, 2025





4 A Kingdom of Priests

(Exodus 19:1-6)

in The Messenger Running in Hurry
Sermon Series 4

"In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai. For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain. And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel" (Exodus 19:1-6).

I have been speaking on the topic of calling/mission since the past few sessions. A calling is what a messenger sent forth has to do according to the ministry he has been called to. The one sent forth does not do the work with his own authority but by that of the one who sent him. We are therefore the ones sent by the King and working with the King's authority. When God sent Abraham, He entrusted him with a certain task in order that through him, all nations on earth might be blessed. And he carried out his ministry well so that many people including us have been blessed.

Later, God chose the people of Israel. He brought them out of Egypt so that He might dwell among them and be their God and also do His works through them. However because the Israelites lived in Egypt for a long time, they did not know God too well and had even followed the customs of Egypt. They had worshipped idols, offered their children as sacrifices, and committed sexual immorality, and they continued in those practices.

For God to be with them and be their God, a change was necessary. God proposed the Law to them. He proposed the Ten Commandments and told them that they ought to keep them in order for Him to be with them. And in this passage God is speaking to them about that and what would happen to them if God was to be with them.

In verse 5 of chapter 19, He says, "If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine."

He said to them that He will give them His commands and if they obey them and keep His covenant, they will be His above all peoples. We can see here that God has all peoples on earth in mind. He said, "You shall be a special treasure to Me and you shall be a kingdom of priests." Priests. This is an important point. They will be a kingdom of priests. Originally priests were chosen from the people. But there is also a kingdom of priests out of the many nations. He is telling them that they are a nation that will fulfill the ministry of priesthood.

What is the role of a priest? The priest was the mediator for the Israelites so that they may be able to meet God. The priest's role was to have the unclean person forgiven of his sin and sanctified so that he may go before God and be reconciled to him. Without the priest, the Israelites could not meet God. In the same way, without a kingdom of priests, many people on earth will not be able to meet God. Thus God told them that they would become a kingdom of priests.

He said several times, "I will be your God and you will be My people." What is the reason for God to become their King and establish His kingdom? To make them a kingdom of priests. So the blessing was not given to Abraham only to cease with him. Rather,

establish His kingdom? To make them a kingdom of priests. So the blessing was not given to Abraham only to cease with him. Rather, just as God said to Abraham, "You will be a blessing so that all nations on earth are blessed through you," His intention to be with them to be their God and His people was not to prosper that one nation only but to make them a kingdom of priests so that all peoples may know God and encounter Him. He was speaking to them of this plan.

During the time of David, the covenant was fulfilled and Israel became a great kingdom. They did well. At that time, other neighboring nations respected and feared them, but also served and feared Jehovah because Israel was a powerful nation and was compelled to worship the God of Israel too.

In the days of Solomon, his fame was so great that even the Queen of Sheba from the South came to Israel to witness his glory. It is similar to how people come here to behold the Christian World Mission Centre and are amazed and in awe of what God has done and leave with a determination to become Bereans too. Neighboring nations beheld the temple that Solomon had built and the works God had accomplished and were in awe. They acknowledged that it was truly God's doing and were so amazed that they desired to become a nation that worships Jehovah, the God of Israel.

Many came from different countries to hear Solomon's words of wisdom from God and became convinced that they too should worship Jehovah. So at that time, many Gentile nations started to worship Jehovah. The Queen of Sheba returned to her country and since that time there are still Jews living in Ethiopia. They worship Jehovah. The faith from that time continues to this day. In this way, when the kingdom of Israel was well established and strong, many nations were blessed as a result. And they should have continued in

this way but they did not.

Their nation became corrupted and was divided into two kingdoms, each asserting that they ought to worship on the mountain while the other insisting worshipping in Jerusalem. The former argued that faith was more important than location and that it was not necessary to go to the temple as long as they followed God's word.

As they conflicted, they became corrupt, drifting away from God which obviously led to their moral corruption. Moreover, they neglected their calling, their ministry. They lost sight of their duty as a kingdom of priests who must bless all the nations on earth. As a result, they began to perceive other nations as uncivilized and barbaric people and Gentiles. Later on, they even forbid people from traveling on the roads of the Gentiles.

So they did not travel on Samaritan roads but took another route around them. They did not even associate with Samaritans and treated them like dogs and pigs. Even after the disciples were changed by the gospel, they were ashamed of eating together with Gentiles. Yet Jesus talked to the Gentiles and ate with the sinners and tax collectors, and the Jews argued why He was doing that. In this way, these people had already neglected their calling and were filled with pride.

When a person loses sight of his calling, his pride increases. He starts to feel superior above others. For this reason, people who have received God's word and a calling ought to be very careful. When one becomes less conscious of his calling and duty, he becomes proud. "I received something better than others."

He might have received something better but that does not mean he is better than others. What would be the reason that God gave

something so good to someone not so good like me or us? Did He reveal Berea to us because we had been good all this time? Was it because we truly loved the truth that He revealed Berea to us? Or is it that we had an honest and good heart that He gave us the truth whereas the others were calloused in their hearts and did not deserve to know the truth? Is that it?

The moment one harbours that in his mind, his work as a called missionary is over. And since his role is over and cannot carry out his duty anymore, what would become of him? He has no reason for existence. That is why Israel perished around 720 BC. Israel was destroyed and people scattered all over the world. It remained that way until recently about 50 or 60 years ago, when they were restored again. So they were scattered for thousands of years. Because they could not fulfill their task, they were fruitless.

Similarly, we received the word of truth - The Picture of God's Will - from God, which is a big deal. It is worth feeling proud and superior. But then, what is our duty?

We have a mission. Our duty is that of priests. We have been assigned with the task of making this known to all the nations. This is not optional. In the Scripture Paul says, "Woe is me, if I do not preach the gospel." He says woe is on him if he does not fulfill the mission assigned to him. He goes on to say that God will reward him if fulfills his task. Nevertheless, even if he is not rewarded, a necessity is laid on him to carry out his duty because it is a stewardship that God entrusted him with. Therefore he says, "Woe is me if I don't fulfill my duty!" Paul was a commissioned minister.

We are supplying the word we have received to others, but we are not to be commended for doing this work effectively because if the

commissioned servants do not carry it out, woe will be on them. They are expected to do the work. Hence having the idea that we have a choice to either give the word or not is the beginning of sin. We will begin to disappoint God. If we give the word because we want to and not when we do not want to, that idea itself is the onset of sin. We will begin to disappoint God. If we dispense this word only when we want, and not if we do not want to, what can happen is that we may start to share the word only with those who submit to us.

What is the philosophy behind Sungrak Mission Center's ministry? It is to reject such practice. We have been fighting against that. All this time, that was the manner/flow of mission work that used to be carried out in our church. One person was appointed and full power was entrusted to him to be in charge of a particular country or region.

Do you know who benefits from such practice? It is less hassle for our church. For example, there is a country that we never heard about before. Let us say, Puerto Rico. Somebody there came to now Berea. From our position, we would be grateful that even one person knows Berea since there is no Berean in that country. So our church would start supporting that person and give him full power for that country.

That makes it easy for us because none of us can speak the language, and this person can work for us. In this situation, if we either teach Berea to that person only if he will listen to us, or not even introduce to him if he will not listen to us, the chances of the people of Puerto Rican receiving this word will be close to none. Mission work cannot flourish then. It is less problematic if the country is relatively small. But for big countries like China, it is not going to work if we select and appoint one particular person and give

him full power to be in charge of the whole country.

It may work if he had a large vessel like Semuon with a great calling to understand his mission. But if he does not have such responsibility and chooses to introduce this teaching only to the people who are willing to listen to him, then this work is not going to succeed. Therefore we denounce such practice.

If we have the wrong mindset, it is likely that the people we are trying to teach in other countries will also adopt the same mindset. How will they have a sense of calling if we do not have it either? A person without a calling cannot raise another person to have a calling. In order for us to raise Berean missionaries in other countries, all of us here first have to become missionaries with a calling. Otherwise, no missionaries will be produced. They are going to follow the same spiritual flow of our church.

After attending the recent World Bereans Convention, some people were filled with determination and decided to follow the spiritual flow of Sungrak Church as the mother church. However, not everyone came to that conclusion. Even amongst the Chinese souls, such response came only from the souls who had been nurtured by us and our translated works of Semuon's books. People who had not received this nurturing did receive grace also.

However, their response at the end of the convention was something like this. "I will pray hard like Pastor Ki-Dong Kim, read the Bible more, and evangelize diligently so that I can be used greater." This was the predominant response. That is a great response of course but that was not what we were aiming to achieve through this convention.

Many of them even shed tears but their response was, "I will work

fervently. I was really moved. I will go and achieve something like Semuon. I will read the Bible diligently." When they were asked to speak of their resolution, they said, "I will also read the Bible a hundred times." However, that is not the reaction we were aiming for. Our aim was for them to preserve the purity of the word and maintain our spiritual position along with Sungrak Church at their center.

Some of those that we nurtured responded like this. "From now on, I will not only be concerned about my ministry but be mindful of Berea World Mission. Furthermore, I will go out to many churches and teach the word. And I will guide those fruits of my ministry to Sungrak Church so that they may also become branch churches of Sungrak Church."

What led them to such a determination? Of course, it was through the convention that their determination was solidified, but for more than ten years, we had been teaching them this message. Whenever we taught them and spoke on the phone with them, it was on the basis of this idea that we counseled them. That is how this response came from them. On the other hand, others who were not nurtured in this way responded, "I will read the Bible more and heal more sick people." Such people cannot become missionaries.

For this reason, we have to first become ministers with a calling. For that, we must not regard sharing the word as a task we do because we want to do it, but rather as our calling. In the past, we may not have shared the word if we did not feel like it or if our circumstances did not allow to. However, from now on, we ought to acknowledge that it is not by our doing but that God showed us our calling and charged us with the ministry. Hence, we should not show off.

When I was in China, my co-workers and I had the job of handing

out Bibles which we got from Hong Kong. All we did was hand them out because we were told to do so. But do you know how the people reacted when we handed them out? They were so grateful. They bowed to us saying, "Thank you. Thank you." But what am I? I am nothing but just handing out what I was given. They did not need to thank me but the pastor who told us to. So I told them, "You don't need to thank me. I am only handing them out." Yet those who received, they were very grateful that we were handing them out to them. Some of them were elderly grandpas. The Bibles we handed out had commentary which were hard to come by so they were very grateful.

A few Chinese brothers and sisters were with us handing them out. But they had never done this sort of work before. And I apologise for saying this but Chinese people love going on a power trip. In communist and socialist societies, once a person is delegated with some power, they start bossing around acting arrogantly like they are something. So when these brothers and sisters were given the Bibles to hand out, they had their noses in the air and acted snobbish, since the people were bowing and saying "Thank you" to them. It was embarrassing to watch. They were acting as though the Bible was coming from them. That was wrong.

The same happened to the Israelites. God entrusted them with the duty to share with the other nations what they received. However, instead of humbly dispensing what they received, they acted pridefully as though it was theirs from the beginning. It is like how Korean people today might say, "What's with your attitude? You should receive it with two hands. You have no respect!" That is what the Chinese brothers and sisters were doing when they handed out the Bible. People that have never been put in charge tend to be worse. Similar things happened in South Korea during the Korean War.

Therefore, we, the Bereans who received the truth should not go on a power trip. We are priests appointed to serve so that the whole world may receive this word. It does not belong to us. We have to serve humbly and patiently. When priests carried out their duties in that way, God permitted them to take a portion of the offering brought to God as their food. So likewise we have to recognise our place and serve humbly. It will be frustrating.

Imagine people bringing sheep every day and asking the priests to slaughter them. The priest cannot tell them to do it themselves. The priest has to do it. Everyone who sinned comes to the priest with a sheep. You might think the priest's job is prestigious but actually his main job is to slaughter the sheep, remove the entrails, pour out the blood, cut the meat, and burn it. So the priest would always be covered in blood, fat, and the smell of lamb all the time. How annoying would it be if you had to slaughter sheep all day long?

When the people come, the priest would say, "You sinned again? Just bring it up here." He would feel frustrated. But he must not do that. In the same way, we have to remember that God is concerned for those people and has a humble attitude to serve them. We do well at first, but as time goes by, we do not do so well.

A while ago, when the Full Gospel Church had many foreigners go to their church, our church did not have many foreigners. So if ever a foreigner came to our church, let us say Chinese or someone from Hong Kong, we would approach them and try to help them. We asked them if they needed anything and offered our books to them. However, they were not very interested in our church. They said they wanted to go to Full Gospel Church. Because I wanted to serve them, I called Osanri Prayer House and asked them if it was possible for these people to go to their church and see the church building. But they said they could not. So I told them that these were not visitors of

our church but their church, and we somehow came across them and wanted to guide them to their church.

However, they answered that they will not accept those people. They were not interested. I explained that these people were from a certain denomination and so on. Yet their answer was, "We get it, but we have too many people like them here so we're not interested." And they hung up. I called several times, and in the end, they asked, "What church are you from?" I said, "Sungrak Church." They said, "Isn't that a sect? We don't associate with sects. Don't call us again," and hung up.

I got the impression that because they have so many foreigners come and learn from them, their attitude towards them changed. I am sure they were not like that at first. And I thought, 'We might be hospitable to the foreigners now, but later when there are many of them, we might do the same as the Full Gospel Church.' We should not ever do that. If we do that, God's work will cease because we will not be discharging our ministry as priests.

Already people's hearts are filled with a sense of entitlement and pride. But that was not the case when they first started. Currently, we do not have a lot of foreigners, so we are diligently and kindly replying to their questions and inquiries. In the past, our church was even asking those in other places to become our branch church. But just because more and more people are turning to our church, we should not take on a prideful attitude to them saying, "I'll see if I should let you be our branch church."

We must never think that what we have is ours but that God entrusted us with it to share it with others. We are appointed as the middleman to share what God has given. So I hope you will not go on a power trip but humbly serve them. Never lose that attitude. There

were times when I spoke a bit harshly and shouted at the Chinese souls but do not take after such things. I do that to people that I know I can, with all things considered. At other times, I endeavor to serve them in the best manner possible.

Some say I did not answer the phone call from Pastor 00 but do not take after those things. Plus, I am not purposely ignoring his call. When I feel that I should not let it get too far, I ring him first and talk with a humble attitude. I am trying to maintain a healthy relationship; I am not ignoring him out of disrespect or feeling bothered. Even yesterday I spoke with him on the phone for nearly two hours. I am trying to figure out the best way to help him grow. I am not ignoring him. He knows that too. Otherwise, he would have already cut off contact with me. Yet since he knows I am not ignoring him, he continues to contact me.

I receive a lot of emails these days and I endeavor to reply to every single one of them. I can say that I have replied to 99.9% of all emails. I think there are still 100 emails waiting for me to reply. But I need to reply to them nevertheless. I may need to request your help in the future because I can manage them all by myself alone. I am contemplating how I can distribute the work to you.

Let us not be high-nosed, but take on the humble attitude to fulfil our tasks as priests and share this word. Those souls belong to God, not us. It is God who loves them and wants to give them the word. We are not sharing what is ours. This word is for everyone in the world and we are priests. So let us pray, Lord help us to fulfil our duty as priests.

Pastor Ki-Taek Lee
The Director of Sungrak Mission Center