

Wisdom through trials and tribulations

[Short Word Meditation (12)]

James Kim

There shouldn't be any staggering burden in my heart, but...

Lord,

Please keep me from having the staggering burden in my heart

In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen

(1 Sam. 25:26, 31).

The word planted in the heart

Because God has brought us forth by the word of truth, according to His will,

we should receive with meekness the implanted word

which is able to save our souls and become doers of the word

(James 1:18; 21, 22).

The one with a humble heart

Looking down on others as inferior to oneself is due to a proud heart.

The one with a humble heart regards others as better than oneself

(Phil. 2:3).

Our hearts melted.

In the land of Canaan, Rahab, a prostitute,
heard about the miraculous events that God performed for the Israelites.
She heard about the parting of the Red Sea as the Israelites left Egypt
and the destruction of the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og,
on the east side of the Jordan River (Num. 21:21-35).
Upon hearing these events, Rahab's heart melted,
and the people of Canaan lost their courage (Josh. 2:10-11).

Later, when all the kings west of the Jordan
and the Canaanite kings along the coast heard about the Israelites crossing the Jordan River,
their hearts melted, and they lost their courage because of the Israelites (5:1).

When the Israelites, about 3,000 men, went up to the city of Ai,
they were defeated because of Achan's disobedience.
When they fled before the men of Ai, their hearts melted like water
(7:1, 11-12; 4-5).

While Rahab, the foreigner, and all the kings of the Amorites and Canaanites
were humbled and awed by what God had done for the Israelites,
the Israelites themselves, on the other hand, experienced their hearts melting like water
due to the actions of the foreigner Achan and the defeat at Ai.

Lessons learned through blocked paths and open road

Lately, the road in front of our church is under construction.

The name of the road is Monroe, and at the intersection,
there is a large and wide road called Vermont,
and a smaller and narrower one named Madison.

Typically, people coming from the city to work
on the construction block the entrance from Vermont Road to Monroe Road entirely,
and they partially block the entrance from Madison Road to Monroe Road.

So, when I usually come to the church,
driving and getting off the highway, I take Vermont Road.
Knowing that the entrance to Monroe Road in front of our church is blocked,
I either make a right turn before that road or make a left turn from Madison Road
through the half-open entrance to Monroe Road, and then enter the church parking lot.

However, a couple of times, I forgot and continued on Vermont Road,
only to realize that Monroe Road was blocked.
In those instances, I had to pass it, make a U-turn at the next street,
turn left onto Madison Road, make a right turn onto Monroe Road,
and finally enter the church parking lot. Haha!

Today during the early morning prayer meeting,
this illustration came to my mind. I was preaching from Acts 16:6-10. Haha.

As I shared about the Holy Spirit preventing Paul and his companions
from preaching in Asia and not allowing them to go to Bithynia (vv. 6, 7),
it seemed like a fitting illustration for our church members.

The lesson I derived from this was that just as Paul had to change his plans
according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
I, too, should be willing to alter my course when faced with roadblocks in life.

If, for example, I encounter a roadblock at the intersection

where Vermont Road meets Monroe Road
and workers from the city are blocking the path,
it would be foolish to persist in waiting and trying to enter the blocked road.
In a similar vein, when the Holy Spirit blocks the path
I intend to take (even if my motives are as righteous and purposeful as Paul's
in spreading the glory of God and the gospel),
I should not persist in stubbornly pursuing my own desires.

Instead, I should humble myself and pray, echoing the prayer of Jesus,
"Yet not as I will, but as You will" (Mt. 26:39).
This lesson reminded me that
I should offer this prayer to the Lord when faced with obstacles,
trusting in His guidance rather than stubbornly insisting on my own way.

Furthermore, the lesson extended to the idea that
when I see the road blocked on Vermont Road,
I should immediately turn and come to the church parking lot through Madison Road.
Similarly, when the Holy Spirit redirects my path,
leading me in a different direction (Exod. 13:17-18),
I should promptly obey,
even if I don't fully understand the reasons behind the redirection.
I realized that,
despite not comprehending the purpose with my own understanding,
I should trust in the Lord with all my heart (Prov. 3:5-6)
and obediently follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

“The King of kings” but referred to as “the King of the Jews”...

When Jesus, who is "the King of kings" (Rev. 17:14), was nailed to the cross and died, there was a sign attached to the cross, stating "the King of the Jews" (Jn. 19:19).

The fact that Jesus, who is the King of kings, was born in a manger (Lk. 2:7) is also beyond our human understanding. From a Jewish perspective, the idea that he, born in a humble stable, would be crucified on the accursed tree, the cross (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13), is perplexing. Pilate, ordering the inscription "the King of the Jews" on the cross, adds another layer of confusion (Jn. 19:13). It is truly an immeasurable demonstration of the Lord's redemptive love.

If my spouse has fallen into the temptation of Satan ...

Satan, permitted by God, strikes our bones and flesh, aiming to weaken our integrity, leading us to eventually fail in guarding our wholeness. Additionally, he seeks to make us blaspheme against the Lord. In such moments, like Job, we should refrain from sinning with our lips, acknowledging, "Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" However, if our beloved spouse, witnessing our severe suffering, were to say, "Curse God and die, maintaining your integrity, will you?" – how would we react? Satan intended to make me blaspheme against the Lord, but if my spouse were to encourage me to blaspheme against God ...? (Job 2:4-10)

If we intentionally commit sin ...

If we intentionally commit sin,
it is despising God and disregarding His word
(Num. 15:30, 31).

If our reverence for God is because of the blessings we receive from Him...?

If our reverence for God is because God has blessed everything we do,
resulting in abundance in our homes and possessions,
then surely Satan (within God's permission) will attempt
to take away all our possessions (material wealth and children).
Would we still, like Job, endure all these trials without sinning or resenting God,
but instead say, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return.
The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord"
(Job 1:9-22)?

If we disobey God's commandments ...

If we disobey God's commandments,
what we do will not prosper
(Num. 14:41).

Having more ...

We Christians are sinning against God all the more

when we have many pastors (Hos. 4:7).

Our saints are sinning against God all the more

when we have abundance in material possessions (10:1).

As God calls us more, we are increasingly distancing ourselves from God,
serving idols, and sinning against the holy God (11:2).

It seems that having more is not always a good thing.

The Word + Prayer = Prosperity

As we diligently seek God and clearly understand His Word,

God will make us prosper

(Ref.: 2 Chron. 26:5).

The purpose of delivering the message

The purpose of God conveying His word to us is

to teach us to fear God during our days on earth and to instruct our children in the same way

(Deut. 4:10).

The God who acts according to His spoken word

God acts according to what God has spoken, at the time God has spoken, to us.

Therefore, we must act according to what God has commanded

(Gen. 21:1-2, 4).

Must be very cautious

We must be very cautious about
receiving exaltation and great glory from a person in a high position
(Eccle. 5:11).

Extremely dangerous jealousy

The fury of a fool is nothing compared to jealousy
(Prov. 27:3-4).

A friend who rebukes me

“Better is open rebuke than hidden love.
Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses”
(Prov. 27:5-6).

When I am sinning, going beyond the scope of God's recorded word,
I do not want to listen to words like lip service from those around me.
Also, when I am in the midst of sinning,
I would rather be a person who prefers a friend
that, instead of covering my sin with expressions of love,
helps me walk the right path by rebuking my sins through God's love.
Even though the absolution from that friend might hurt my feelings,
those wounds are trustworthy, and I want to be transformed through those wounds.

When everyone is encouraged to put forth their strength to do this good deed..."

When Nehemiah and the people of Israel said,
'Let us rise up and build (the ruined walls of Jerusalem),'
and all were encouraged to put forth their strength to do this good deed
(Neh. 2:18), their adversaries heard these words, they ridiculed and despised them (vv. 19; 4:1, 4).
While Nehemiah and the Israelites were working with all their heart (4:6),
their enemies, upon hearing that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored
and the gaps were being closed, became extremely angry and conspired to go to Jerusalem,
create an uproar, and attack the city (vv. 7-8).
Therefore, Nehemiah and the people of Israel prayed to God,
set a watch against them day and night while continuing the construction (v. 9).
They did not fear their adversaries but rather remembered the great and awesome Lord (v. 14).
With faith that "our God will fight for us," they persevered in the work (vv. 20-21).

The purpose of everything working together to do good?

In our lives, everything works together to do good,
working to make us resemble Christ
(Rom. 8:28-29).

Let's exercise restraint in all things.

Let's exercise restraint in all things for the sake of Jesus Christ and the Gospel
(Mk. 8:35; 1 Cor. 9:25).

“Moses” “drawn out”

The meaning of the name "Moses" is "drawn out" (Exod. 2:10).

During his 40 years in Egypt, after reaching maturity,

Moses rescued one of his Hebrew brothers from a cruelly treated Egyptian, striking and killing the Egyptian (vv. 11-12).

However, the Hebrew whom Moses rescued was the one in the wrong (v. 13).

In other words, the Hebrew was engaged in a fight with another Hebrew, and Moses intervened, considering the rescued Hebrew as the one at fault (v. 13).

The rescued Hebrew questioned Moses, asking,

"Who made you a prince and a judge over us?" (v. 14).

The words of the rescued Hebrew seem justified

because God did not appoint Moses as a ruler or judge over the Israelites,

nor did the Israelites themselves acknowledge Moses as such.

Moses took it upon himself to intervene and rescue his brother.

As a result, trouble arose, and Pharaoh sought to kill Moses (v. 15).

Consequently, Moses fled from Pharaoh and found refuge in the land of Midian.

There, God trained Moses for 40 years, preparing him to fulfill the meaning of his name by becoming the instrument of God's salvation

to draw the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt (chs. 3-4).

Moses became the chosen vessel through which

God brought about the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt.

Gathering to listen, learn, and then diligently practicing what should be observed ...

We should gather together, listen to God's word, learn to fear God,
and diligently practice all of God's commandments
(Deut. 31:11-13).

The pastor ...

The pastor is considered more as a subject of intercession rather than a target of criticism.
The servant anointed by the Lord should entrust himself to the Lord through prayer.

The pastor must obey as God has commanded (Lev. 10:1).
When not obedient, the pastor will face discipline from God (v. 2).
The pastor should manifest God's holiness and glory (v. 3).
The pastor should never steal God's glory.
The pastor should be wholly devoted to the Lord's work (v. 4).
(When Aaron's two sons died, it was not immediate family members
but Aaron's uncle's sons who carried the bodies out of the camp.
Dr. Yoon-seon Park mentioned this.)

The pastor should be fully devoted to the Lord's work,
even in the midst of personal grief over the death of close family members
[(v. 6) "Do not let your hair become unkempt, and do not tear your clothes ..."] (Park).
The pastor must avoid consuming intoxicating beverages that can impair discernment (vv. 9-10).

Pastor, are you fattening yourself?

Is it possible that a pastor is intentionally fattening himself with the best offerings to God,
considering himself as precious and honorable child of God,
in accordance with what is highly valued by our Heavenly Father right now?
(1 Sam. 2:29)

Trust in the pastor...

Trust in the pastor is possible
when one hears the words that the Lord speaks to the pastor
(Exod. 19:9).

The pastor (1)

The pastor should not yield to the temptation of wealth,
disobeying the word of God and acting according to his own desires
(Num. 24:13).

The pastor (2)

The pastor must be zealous for God on behalf of God's jealousy
(Num. 25:11, 13).

Congregants opposing the pastor?

The congregants
who oppose the church leaders
consider themselves to be above all.
They also attempt to elevate themselves
while speaking critically of the church leaders,
accusing them of exceeding their authority
and promoting self-elevation
(Num. 16:3, 7).

Even if it is like an arrow that is shot unintentionally, the word of God pierces my conscience...

The true prophet Micah,
who said, "I will speak only what my God says" (2 Chron. 18:13),
was a genuine prophet.
However, King Ahab of Israel
despised the true prophet Micah because, in Ahab's view,
Micah always prophesied unfavorable things about him (vv. 7, 17).
This indicated that King Ahab, in the eyes of God, was persistently disobedient to God's word.
Instead, he was accustomed to listening to false prophets
who prophesied only favorable things about him (vv. 5, 9-11).

When Ahab, in alliance with King Jehoshaphat of Judah,
planned to attack Ramoth Gilead (vv. 1-2),
he did not only heed the words of the 400 false prophets
but also listened to Micah, who prophesied unfavorable things about him,
due to Jehoshaphat's insistence (vv. 14-23).
Later, when he went up to Ramoth Gilead with Jehoshaphat,
he disguised himself while entering the battlefield,
and Jehoshaphat wore his royal attire (vv. 28-29).
It seems that Ahab did this to avoid the fulfillment of the prophecy of the true prophet Micah,
fearing the impending disaster (v. 22).
However, God brought about the fulfillment of Micah's prophecy in a surprising way.
A random arrow shot by a soldier hit Ahab between the scale armor and the breastplate (v. 33).
As a result, Ahab struggled to stay upright in his chariot during the fierce battle,
managing to hold off the Arameans until the evening when he died as the sun set (v. 34).

It raises the question whether Ahab, in the moments before his death,
recognized that the words of the true prophet Micah,
who had prophesied negative things about him, were coming true.
Did he realize that the random arrow, seemingly shot unintentionally,

was the means by which God's word through Micah was being fulfilled?
Simultaneously, did he come to the understanding
that the positive prophecies spoken by the false prophets were, in fact, lies?

What lesson does this message teach us?

We must heed the words of God's truth,
whether they are pleasant or unpleasant to our ears.
Regardless of our personal feelings toward His words,
we are obligated to listen to God's message.
If we find ourselves averse to hearing His words,
it may serve as evidence of our disobedience to God's commands.

At this moment,
our familiarity with the false teachings of false pastors
through their deceitful sermons may also be indicative of our state.
We should become accustomed to hearing God's words
conveyed faithfully through His true servants.
Even if His words, like an arrow shot unintentionally by His servant, pierce our conscience,
we are to listen and obey them.

What are you content with?

It seems that our old nature is inclined to prefer being satisfied with the past,
free from the pain caused by the consequences of disobedience that come during the process,
rather than finding satisfaction in the fulfillment of God's promised word
(Josh. 7:7).

What to discard and what to choose?

We need to know what to discard and what to choose.

The foolish person abandons the path of righteousness they were walking on and chooses the path of folly, ultimately leading to destruction (Prov. 9:14-15, 18).

On the contrary, the wise person discards their foolishness, choosing the path of understanding, and in the end, obtains life (v. 6).

What to see and take responsibility for?

In the book of Ruth, Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, initially expressed his willingness to fulfill the responsibility of the kinsman-redeemer when he saw Ruth, a capable woman (Ruth 3:11, 13).

However, when he found out that there was a closer relative who had the right of redemption (verse 12) and saw the field, which was the property of Naomi's deceased husband Elimelech (v. 3), Boaz, upon realizing the potential loss to his own estate, said he could not redeem it himself (v. 6).

Later, he directed Ruth to the closer relative, stating that this relative must redeem the property in the name of the deceased and take responsibility for it (v. 5).

Boaz's decision was influenced by the concern for his own estate and the legal rights of the closer relative.

How should one live with a foolish husband?

The wise woman Abigail knew that her husband Nabal was a foolish man
(1 Sam. 25:25, 33).

How does a wise wife live with a foolish husband?

At least, from what we can gather from the Bible,
a wise wife not only thinks about what to do but also acts promptly,
seeming to be slow in speaking to her foolish husband (Ref.: Jam. 1:19).
She humbly prostrates herself before God,
taking on the burden of her foolish husband's wrongdoing
and pouring out her heart before the Lord
(vv. 17-19, 23-24, 36, 41).

The insult I received from the foolish person.

The Lord will repay the insult I received from the foolish person
(1 Sam. 25:39).

The grace of God who makes us a lowly.

The grace of God who makes us a lowly (Ezek. 29:14-15).
So that He makes us rely solely on Him and may not remember our sins (v. 16).
Thanks be to God.

Reasons for hating/Reasons for receiving hatred

The reason those in darkness hate the children of light is that the lives of the children of light, who obey God's commandments, expose their fruitless deeds of darkness and rebuke them (Eph. 5:11).

If we believe ...

We can receive instruction if we believe (Ps. 19:66).

The relationship between faith and obedience?

The Bible states that faith without obedience is dead (Jam. 2:14, 17, 20, 26). It also emphasizes that without faith, one cannot be obedient to God (Jere. 42:6, 14, 21) and cannot please God (Heb. 11:6).

Therefore, if we truly believe in Jesus Christ, we must obey His commandment to love one another (Mt. 22:39; 1 Jn. 3:23).

Let's obey in faith!

Even if we do not fully understand God's command with our own understanding,
let us obey through faith (Prov. 3:1).

When we obey,

God's lovingkindness and truth will be deeply engraved on the tablet of our hearts (v. 3).

As a result, with all our heart, we will trust in God and acknowledge Him in all our ways (vv. 5-6).

Furthermore, God will guide our paths (v. 6).

We should not hurt the conscience of the person with weak faith.

Causing harm to the conscience of the person with weak faith
is tantamount to sinning against Christ and sinning against our brothers and sisters in Christ
(1 Cor. 8:12).

Is Jesus a greater sinner than Barabbas?

How did those crowds demand the release of Barabbas,
a prisoner condemned for rioting and murder, from the Roman governor Pontius Pilate,
and insist with such loud voices for Jesus to be crucified on the cursed cross
(Lk. 23:23, 25)?

From their perspective,

the Jewish people considered Jesus of Nazareth to be a greater sinner than Barabbas.

In their eyes, Barabbas was guilty of rioting and murder,

while Jesus was charged with blasphemy against God (Jn. 5:21; Mt. 11:27; 27:43)

and the desecration of the holy sanctuary (Jn. 2:19).

Their unbelief in Jesus led to the ignorance that played a role in crucifying the sinless Jesus,
who came to bear our sins, die on the cross, and save us from our sins.

Words that carry away like the wind

A friend who only thinks of reproaching me,
I, disappointed by the righteous words of that friend,
my disappointed words to that reproaching friend
are like words that carry away by the wind (Job 6:25, 26).

A pastor like a Pharisee?

A pastor like a Pharisee,
a pastor who loves money,
a pastor who self-righteously declares himself in front of people,
a pastor who seeks praise among people
— why do we not realize that these things are hated by God?
(Lk. 16:14-15)

Is he a president like King Cyrus of Persia?

Just as God moved the heart of King Cyrus of Persia
and commanded him to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem for the people of Judah (Ezra 1),
could it be that even now God is using the president of our country
as an instrument to establish the Church of the Lord and the kingdom of God?

We will definitely achieve victory!

The one who remains humble even before those who seek to harm them,
obeys God's word without seeking revenge,
and values the life of even their enemy,
will be blessed, accomplish great things,
and surely achieve victory
(1 Sam. 26:20-25).

When there is a rebellious heart and anxiety

In times of great calamity, even if there is a rebellious heart and anxiety,
even if one cannot find God no matter how much they seek,
yet saying, "I go forward, but He is not there"
and also believing, "He knows the way that I take"
and that "what He has determined, He will do,"
I will hold His spoken words in high esteem, f
ollow in His footsteps, and not deviate from His path
(Job 23:2-3, 8-14).

We need to turn back.

We need to reflect on our actions and turn our steps toward the Lord's word.
Moreover, we should be prompt in keeping the Lord's commandments and not delay
(Ps. 119:59-60).

Knowing when to listen to your spouse and when not to?

When Abraham told his wife Sarah to go to his servant Hagar to have children, he should not have listened to her (Gen. 16:2).
Instead, he should have waited in faith until God's promise,
"One who will come from your own body will be your heir" (15:4),
was fulfilled through the birth of Isaac (21:2-3).

Interestingly, when Sarah saw Ishmael, the son of Hagar, mocking Isaac as he grew, and she told Abraham to cast out Hagar and Ishmael,
God spoke to Abraham, saying, "Listen to whatever Sarah tells you
because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned" (21:12).
God gave this instruction to Abraham because the promised seed,
through whom Abraham's descendants would be named,
was to come through Isaac (vv. 8-12).

Do not learn.

As Christians, we should not learn the empty practices and ways of the nations (Jere. 10:2-3, 5) and should not be afraid of them.

Miserable comforters

Rather than comforting, there are friends who distress our hearts (Job 19:2).

They break us with their words (v. 2). They rebuke us (v. 3).

They do not see their own faults but point out ours (v. 4).

They even exalt themselves in our presence (v. 5).

They are all miserable comforters who distress us (16:2).

Abraham handed the sacrificial wood to the burnt offering Issac?

Interesting.

According to the word of God,

Abraham took his beloved son Isaac to the land of Moriah, as God instructed, to offer him as a burnt offering on the mountain revealed by God.

On the way to offer Isaac as a burnt offering,

Abraham brought sacrificial wood and had his son Isaac carry it (Gen. 22:1-6).

Why did Abraham instruct Isaac

to carry the sacrificial wood on the way to offer him as a burnt offering?

Could this be related to Jesus being asked to carry the cross for His crucifixion?

The principles of marital relationships learned from Boaz and Ruth

Despite Ruth being a foreign woman (from Moab),
Boaz constantly showed his love and kindness (Ruth 2:5-9, 20).
Husbands should continuously love and show grace to their wives,
even if they are different in nationality.
The reason is that, just as the Lord Jesus, who was once an enemy of God,
loves and shows grace to His eternal spouse, the husband.

After hearing Boaz's comforting and delightful words,
Ruth humbly sought even more grace, saying,
"May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord.
I am not even as worthy as one of your maidservants" (vv. 2, 13).
Wives should humbly seek even more grace and love from their husbands.
The reason is that those who understand God's love and grace in salvation
can only humbly admire and seek more of God's abundant grace and love.

While sharing a meal with Ruth,
Boaz not only showed his love
to the extent that she ate her fill and there was food left over,
but he also instructed his servants not to rebuke or scold her.
He protected her, assisted her, and took care of her (vv. 14-16, 19).
Husbands should be with their beloved wives,
protecting, assisting, and caring for them.
The reason is that Immanuel, the Lord, is with them,
protecting, helping, and caring for them.

Ruth was a diligent woman
who respected and served her widowed mother-in-law (vv. 7, 11, 17-18).
Wives should be diligent and serve their mothers-in-law with respect.
The reason is that Jesus Himself honored and served His mother Mary,
going so far as to wash the disciples' feet.

Ruth showed even greater kindness to Boaz than at first (3:10).

Wives should show even greater kindness to their husbands.

The reason is that our Lord of love bestows even greater kindness than at first.

Recognizing Ruth as a wise woman,

Boaz made a promise to fulfill her desire to be the kinsman-redeemer,
and he kept his promise (vv. 11-13; 4:1-13).

Husbands should recognize their wives as wise women,
make promises to fulfill their desires, and faithfully keep those promises.

The reason is that the Lord faithfully fulfills His promises to them.

Becoming guarantors for debts

Promising to personally assume the responsibility of repaying a debt,
even knowing that the other person has incurred an amount
beyond their ability to repay and has defaulted,
is considered foolish behavior (MacArthur).

The Bible warns against being a surety for someone,
especially in the presence of neighbors (Prov. 17:18).

Furthermore, the Bible advises not to be a guarantor for someone else's debt (22:26).

I saw scenes I shouldn't have seen.

David saw a scene he shouldn't have seen.

He witnessed a woman bathing, and she appeared to him as very beautiful
(2 Sam. 11:2).

David was led by the lust of his eyes (v. 2).

"The eyes of man are never satisfied" (Prov. 27:20).

We must guard our eyes and make a covenant with them.

"I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?"
(Job 31:1).

David sent someone to find out who the woman was,
and it is clear that he knew she was Uriah's wife Bathsheba.

In other words, David was well aware that Bathsheba was a married woman.

Nevertheless, despite this knowledge,
he brought her to himself and committed adultery with her
(2 Sam. 11:3-4).

David was led by the lust of the flesh (1 Jn. 2:16).

He not only violated the seventh commandment of the Ten Commandments,

"You shall not commit adultery" (Exod. 20:14),

but also transgressed the tenth commandment,

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house ...

nor anything that is your neighbor's" (v. 17).

We have already crucified the lust of the flesh and covetousness on the cross.

"And those who belong to Christ Jesus
have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires"
(Gal. 5:24).

We should neither look nor take away.

Do not look at a beautiful married woman (2 Sam. 11:2).

Do not inquire about her (v. 3).

Do not take her away from her husband (12:9).

The blessed person and the wicked

The blessed person walks in the way of the righteous acknowledged by God.

Therefore, everything they do prospers.

However, the wicked individuals, like chaff blown away by the wind,
do not prosper in all they do. Instead, the way of the wicked will perish
(Ps. 1).

The way to enjoy blessings

The way for us and our descendants to enjoy blessings is
to do what is right and just in the eyes of God,
to act with righteousness and justice before God
(Deut. 12:25, 28).

For the sake of the gospel!

For the sake of the gospel,
a preacher who does everything becomes various things to various people.
The reason is to save as many as possible
(1 Cor. 9:22, 23).

If I submit ...

If I submit my thoughts, which I think are better,
to the words of a person of God,
I will receive the grace of restoration
(2 Kgs. 5:11, 14).

Pontius Pilate and the Apostle Peter

While the Roman governor Pontius Pilate
stated three times that he found no guilt in Jesus (Lk. 23:14, 15, 22),
the Apostle Peter denied Jesus three times (22:57, 58, 60).

We must show an example.

We must not go beyond what is written but show an example.
We should demonstrate the example of not having a proud heart
(1 Cor. 4:6).

When suffering unjustly

When you endure grief from unjust suffering for doing good,
and endure it patiently, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.
For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you,
leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps"
(1 Pet. 2:19-21).

The sins of children known to parents

The sins of children known to parents,
and if parents do not restrain them,
could not the judgment of God be inevitable,
especially when the children willingly bring a curse upon themselves?
(1 Sam. 3:13).

Parents don't know well.

Samson's father Manoah “did not know that he was the angel of the Lord” (Judg. 13:16).

Samson's parents "did not know that this was from the Lord" (14:4).

Samson did not reveal to his parents,
saying, "I have not told them,"
and again, "I have not told them,"
and also, "I have not told you" (vv. 6, 9, 16).

Parents not only may not know God and His will well but also their children.

A father and a son should not lie with a woman ...

King David,
although he should not have had relations with the married woman Bathsheba
(2 Sam. 11:4),
his son Amnon also had relations with his half-sister Tamar,
which he should not have done (13:14).

"If that had been too little," it is God who gives even more...

Our God is the One who,
if what God graciously gave us seemed “too little” or insufficient,
would give us even more...
Yet, we, not satisfied and content with it,
driven by the desires of the flesh and the lust of the eyes (1 Jn. 2:16),
covet others' possessions, taking them for ourselves (2 Sam. 12:2-4, 9-10; cf. Exodus 20:17).
In doing so, we disregard God and His Word (2 Sam. 12:9, 10),
committing evil in the sight of God (1:27)."

I shall not want.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want (Ps. 23:1).
Those who fear the Lord lack no good thing (34:9).
The ones who seek the Lord lack no good thing (v. 10).

Anger control

It is better to dwell with a wise person who knows how to control anger
than to live with a foolish person who reveals all his anger
(Prov. 29:11).

“until my wrath against you has subsided”

"... you will not be clean again until my wrath against you has subsided" (Ezek. 24:13).

Jesus Christ took upon Himself all our sins and died on the cross,
and as a result, God's wrath toward us has been completely poured out.
The reason is that the divine wrath that should have been directed towards us
was poured out on the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.
Therefore, we have been cleansed from all impurities of sin.

The reason to discard anger and complaints

Anger and complaint only lead to evil!
Cease and abandon them!
(Ps. 37:8).

"you evildoers!"

Even if we approach the Lord in prayer saying,
'Lord, Lord, in Your name, I have served as a pastor/elder/deacon
and have done many things in Your name,'
what if the Lord says,
"I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers!"
(Mt. 7:22-23).

When faced with the great storm of life due to disobedience?

When faced with a great storm in life due to disobedience to God's command,
where the ship was 'about to break up,'
how could the prophet Jonah 'go down to the lower deck,' lie down, and fall into a deep sleep?
If the ship was about to break up,
shouldn't he have gone up to the upper deck rather than down to the lower deck?
Shouldn't Jonah, like the unbelieving pagan sailors, have cried out to God in fear?
(Jonah 1:1-5)

Due to the pastor who is in disobedience ...

If, because of my disobedience to the Lord as a pastor,
those who are with me, including unbelievers, are suffering great harm ...?
(Jonah 1:12)

While in disobedience...

God is currently saying that the church is in disobedience to Him,
but we are claiming to be obedient to God's Word.
At this moment, even though we are disobedient to God's Word,
we say that we are offering the best worship to God.
However, God tells us that listening to and obeying His Word
is better than sacrifice or worship
(Ref.: 1 Sam. 15:18-22).

Values of the disobedient.

God's command was to utterly destroy everything,
but the disobedient and arrogant ones choose to preserve
what they perceive as the best while annihilating only the worthless and insignificant.
The values of such disobedient individuals prioritized what they consider best in their own eyes,
often oblivious to the fact that this best may be extremely harmful to themselves.
They are unaware that true importance lies in obedience to God's command
(1 Sam. 15:3, 9, 22).

Unhappy person?

Not only is the person who cannot enjoy the blessings God has given unhappy,
but also the one who is not satisfied (Eccle. 6:2-6).

Certainty in uncertainty or assurance amidst uncertainty

As uncertainty about the future grows,
we should live not by sight but by faith,
trusting and relying completely on the unwavering faithfulness of our certain Lord each day
(Ref.: 2 Cor. 5:7).

Do not slander ...

We should not go around slandering people.

In other words, we should not speak evil of others and make extreme judgments, spreading rumors (Lev. 19:16).

The consequences of choosing non-biblical leaders?

When the Lord causes the church to prosper,
the pastor, unable to handle the burdens and struggles of the congregation alone,
should choose wise and knowledgeable individuals,
recognized for their abilities, to share the load.
These individuals should not judge based on appearances,
listen without discrimination, and not fear the faces of people
(Deut. 1:9-18).

The problem is that currently,
church leaders are chosen based on foolish and misguided criteria,
discriminating in their hearing and fearing the faces of people.
As a result,
the church is now experiencing the bitter taste
of the consequences of our non-biblical choices.

It is a time when the wicked freely strut.

'It is a time when the wicked freely strut' (Ps. 12:8).

The devout are vanishing,
faithful individuals are disappearing from life (v. 1).
Meanwhile, those who speak falsehoods, flatter,
and speak with double hearts are increasing (vv. 2-3).
As a result, the afflicted are oppressed,
and the needy are sighing (v. 5).
At that time, the pure words of God will refine them (v. 6).
Moreover, God will place the afflicted and needy in a secure place (v. 5).
And God will keep and preserve them forever (v. 7).

Taken away

When one hears and does not understand the word of God,
the seed sown in their heart can be taken away by the evil one, Satan
(Mt. 13:19).

Because there are no roots

There is joy in receiving the word of God,
but because there are no roots,
one cannot endure for a long time and is bound to fall away
(Mt. 13:20-21).

Twisted mother's love?

How can a mother who took her own money to Micah say,
"May my son receive a blessing from the Lord"?
How can that mother, after carving an idol for her son
and dedicating her money to the Lord for making a cast image,
later give the money back to Micah (Judg. 17:1-3)?
It is a twisted love of a mother that ruins the soul of her child.

What does “the power of the resurrection” (Phil. 3:10) means?

In the past, “the power of the resurrection” (Phil. 3:10) was already manifested
when God made us alive together with Christ
after we were spiritually dead due to disobedience and sin
(Eph. 2:1, 5; Ref.: Jn. 4:9).

In the future, “the power of the resurrection” will be evident at the last trumpet
when, at the sound of the trumpet, Christ will descend from heaven with a cry of command,
the voice of an archangel, and the sound of God's trumpet.
Those who have died believing in Christ will be the first to rise ("resurrect")
(1 Thess. 4:16; Ref.: 1 Cor. 15:52).

In the present, “the power of the resurrection” is experienced
by those who, despite any hardship, seek to attain the resurrection from the dead
by sharing in the sufferings of Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:10-11).
Recognizing that the present sufferings are incomparable
to the future glory that will be revealed (Rom. 8:18),
the believers consider themselves as dying daily (1 Cor. 15:31)
in order to experience the transformative power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ
(Phil. 3:10).

When facing rejection from people

When we face rejection even from those we love,
let us consider Jesus, who not only experienced rejection from us
but also faced rejection from God the Father on the cross
(Isa. 53:3).

Those who ignore people ...

Those who ignores people is not fearing God
(Lk. 18:4).

Better than trusting people!

Seeking refuge in the God who is on my side and helps me
is better than trusting people
(Ps. 118:6-9).

A freeman who wins people

A freeman who wins people is seeking to win even more,
becoming all things to all people,
yet paradoxically becoming a servant to all
(1 Cor. 9:19).

The pain of not being loved

The pain of a wife not being loved by her husband ...
Jacob loved Rachel, who was beautiful and lovely,
more than Leah, who had weak eyes (Gen. 29:17, 18, 30).
Leah, not being loved by her husband Jacob (v. 31),
suffered because of it (v. 32). God saw her situation (v. 31).

Love and Truth

Following the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
God the Father, who is Love (1 Jn. 4:8, 16),
and Jesus Christ, the Son of God who is Truth (Jn. 14:6),
those who have fellowship with God (1 Jn. 1:3) as His children (3:1, 2)
love one another as brothers and sisters in true love within the Lord (v. 18).
Furthermore, they speak the truth in love
(Eph. 4:15).

Lovesick

I want to fall in love again (Song of Songs 2:5).

I want to sit in the shadow of Jesus, my bridegroom,
and hear the words of redemption from Jesus Christ (v. 3).

Entering the house of the wedding feast of the Lamb,

I want to fully experience God's redeeming love
while listening to the words of redemption from Jesus Christ (v. 4).

I want to gain strength and be refreshed by the words of Jesus, my bridegroom (v. 5).

From love to jealousy ...

King Saul, who greatly loved David (1 Sam. 16:21),
became jealous of David when the women sang upon his return after slaying Goliath,
"Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands" (1 Sam. 18:6-9).
However, because God was with David, and he acted wisely in all his ways,
King Saul, consumed by fear, became David's lifelong adversary,
even attempting to kill him on multiple occasions (vv. 18:12-15, 25, 28).

The Purpose of Love

The purpose of God's love towards us
is our salvation (Eph. 1:3-6).

If we hate rather than love ...

If we hate each other rather than loving each other
according to the Lord's command (1 Jn. 3:23),
there should be a sense of discomfort within us (Rom. 2:10),
and also our conscience should rebuke us (1 Jn. 3:20-21).

When refusing to love

Though the Lord's command is 'Love one another' (1 Jn. 3:23),
if we are not practicing love,
it's like a tiger crouching and waiting to devour its prey,
sin crouches in front of the door of our hearts, refusing love
(Ref.: Gen. 4:7; 1 Jn. 3:14), lurking and waiting
(Ref.: Neh. 4:3), and, at the slightest opportunity,
inserting thoughts of hatred towards our brothers (Jn. 13:2),
ultimately leading us to commit the sin of murder,
making us guilty of hating that brother (1 Jn. 3:15).

To draw near to the loving God ...

If we love God, we will keep His commandments (Jn. 14:21).
Keeping God's commandments means
drawing near to God (Deut. 22:5).

Because the Lord loves us ...

The Lord, because He loves us,
speaks to us about what we still lack
(Mk. 10:21).

He loved women he shouldn't have loved

Even though Solomon, known for his wisdom, disobeyed God's word,
he loved women he shouldn't have loved
(1 Kgs. 11:1-8, remembering Samson).

The consequence of his disobedience was,
as God had warned him early on (vv. 2, 9) and twice (v. 9),
that these women turned Solomon's heart away (vv. 2, 4, 9)
to follow the gods of the foreign women,
and God became angry with Solomon (v. 9).

The wisdom given by God is wisdom within the truth.
Outside of God's truth, that wisdom becomes
worldly, sensual, and devilish (Jam. 3:15),
no longer heavenly in origin.

Death vs. Eternal life

Through one man, Adam, sin entered the world,
and death came through sin (Rom. 5:12).
The wages of sin is death (6:23).

Here, "death" refers to:

1. Spiritual death, separation from God.
2. Physical death, the separation of body and soul.
3. Eternal death, being completely separated from God and facing eternal damnation.

However, through one man, Jesus Christ,
we have been justified and received the gift of eternal life (v. 18, 6:23).
The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (6:23).

Here, "eternal life" means:

1. Being connected to God through Jesus Christ.
2. Knowing the one true God and Jesus Christ (Jn. 17:3).
3. At the Lord's return, experiencing a transformation of the body (if still alive)
or resurrection (if deceased), being united with the soul,
and entering the new heaven and new earth,
which is the eternal kingdom, to dwell with God forever.

Is death 'separation' from God, and eternal life 'connection' with God?

Through the disobedience of the first Adam,
sin entered the world, and death came through sin (Rom. 5:12).
Death means being "separated" from God.

Through the obedience of the last Adam, Jesus Christ,
until His death on the cross (Phil. 2:8),
we received the gift of eternal life (Rom. 5:15, 18; 6:23).
Eternal life means being "connected" with God.

Being connected with God through Jesus Christ,
the eternal life, means having "fellowship" with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ
(1 Jn. 1:2, 3).

This fellowship involves "fellowship with the Holy Spirit" (Phil. 2:1),
which is also "fellowship in faith" (Phil. 1:6),
and "fellowship with one another" guided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:42; 1 Jn. 1:7).
It is the 'fellowship of love'
(1 Pet. 4:8; Jn. 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17; 1 Jn. 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12; 1 Jn. 1:5).

In this fellowship, God's love is truly perfected within us (1 Jn. 2:5),
and there is "fullness of joy" (Jn. 1:4).

Being connected with God through Jesus Christ,
and being connected with our neighbors,
when we wholeheartedly love our Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind
and also love our neighbor as ourselves (Mt. 22:37, 39),
we are, as citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20),
experiencing a heavenly life on earth in partial fulfillment of the kingdom life in heaven.

This is the salvation life happening in the present (Phil. 2:12),
This is the life partially enjoying eternal life on earth.

Samuel and Jesus?

Samuel,

as the son obtained through the supplication of his mother Hannah to God,
was dedicated to God.

In contrast,

as a response to the request of Hannah and her husband,
God blessed them with three sons and two daughters
(1 Sam. 2:20-21).

On the other hand, Jesus,

after praying to His God and Father,
offered Himself on the cross as a sacrifice,
substituting for each of us before God.

Ministries are diverse ...

Ministries are diverse

(family ministry, church ministry, online ministry),

but the one who accomplishes everything among all people is only "God
(1 Cor. 12:6).

Being deceived by Satan

The one who is deceived by Satan
does not forgive the person who has caused him anxiety;
therefore, they are not reflecting God's love
(2 Cor. 2:5-11).

Satan ... (1)

Satan takes away the word we have heard from our hearts,
preventing us from believing in Jesus and obtaining salvation
(Lk. 8:12).

Satan prevents the roots of the word received with joy from going deep into our hearts,
so when faced with trials,
we may briefly believe but fall away, betraying Jesus (v. 13).

Satan hinders us, who have heard the word,
from bearing fruit completely
by being choked with the cares, riches, and pleasures of life (v.14).

But the Lord, with kindness and a good heart,
enables us to hear and keep the word,
producing patience and fruitful endurance in us (v. 15).

Satan ... (2)

Satan makes us focus
on human concerns rather than God's concerns.

Satan causes us
to not think about the suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus.

Satan leads us
to acknowledge ourselves in following Jesus
rather than denying ourselves,
to carry a decorative cross instead of bearing our own cross of suffering.

Satan persuades us
to save our lives instead of losing them
for the sake of Jesus and the gospel
(Mk. 8:31-36).

Satan ... (3)

Satan made Peter
focus on human thoughts rather than God's thoughts
(Mt. 16:23).

Satan filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira,
deceiving them and causing them
to conceal a portion of the proceeds from the sale of their land
(Acts 5:1-3).

Satan deceives our hearts.

Satan deceives our hearts.

Satan seeks to deceive us,

making our hearts toward Christ untrue and false, impure and defiled

(2 Cor. 11:3).

Satan's temptation

Firstly, Satan's temptation is turmoil (Acts 21:30).

Ultimately, Jews from Asia, relying on unfounded speculations,

stirred up the whole city of Jerusalem by seizing Paul and making false accusations against him,

leading to a commotion within the temple, causing a disturbance.

Satan stirs up turmoil within the church.

Secondly, Satan's temptation is rumors (v. 31).

When the crowd tried to kill Paul by dragging him out of the temple,

the tumult reached the ears of the Roman commander,

and rumors of the disturbance spread throughout Jerusalem.

As a result, the commander hurriedly took soldiers and centurions

and went down to quell the disturbance, ordering Paul to be bound with two chains.

Satan spreads malicious rumors.

Thirdly, Satan's temptation is violence (v. 35).

As Paul was being led to the stairs, he was seized by the soldiers,

who discerned the violent intentions of the crowd and took him into custody.

Satan instigates violence even within the church.

The relentless attacks of Satan

How could the Philistine leaders capture Samson, the judge?
They conducted a quiet overnight ambush.
They bribed a woman named Delilah, whom Samson loved,
with silver to find out the source of his strength.
Thus, they laid an ambush, even within her chamber, to bind Samson.
Delilah repeatedly asked Samson to reveal the secret of his strength,
saying, "Tell me," "Speak," and "Tell me" three times.
Despite her persistent questioning,
Samson did not disclose the source of his great strength.
Frustrated, Delilah pressed him daily until his soul was vexed unto death.
Eventually, Samson revealed the true source of his strength to Delilah.
As a result, he lost his strength,
yet he did not realize that God had departed from him
(Judg. 16:1-21).

We must recognize the relentless attacks of Satan.
Satan, without sparing any means,
persistently and continuously assaults the source of our strength.
As Christians, our source of strength is the Lord (Ps. 18:1),
but Satan hinders us from growing in knowledge of Jesus Christ, making us weak.
He influences us to love the Lord half-heartedly
rather than with all our heart, soul, and mind,
leading us to repeatedly disobey God's word.
Satan also manipulates us to express love for our neighbors only in words,
preventing us from doing so in truth and deed.
As a result,
even though the power of knowledge of God and the power of love are greatly weakened,
we often fail to realize it.

The wise actions of Satan ...

The wise actions of Satan's servants towards our believers, who are servants of God,
involve burdening us heavily, causing us distress, and tormenting us
by troubling our lives with difficult labor,
ultimately preventing us from receiving salvation
(Exod. 1:10-14).

Having paid a considerable price, we are worthless ...

God the Father, in His immense love and joy,
paid a considerable price that we cannot even imagine,
through the death of His beloved Son Jesus,
redeeming us from all sins,
so that we may enjoy freedom from sin solely through God's abundant grace,
without any cost to ourselves (Rom. 3:24).

Please heal the wounds, Lord.

Lord,
Please bind up the wounds of the brokenhearted.

Lord,
Please uphold the humble
(Ps. 147:3, 6).

Spiritual battle in the realm of thought

We must fight and overcome in the realm of thought with the Word of God.

To do so, we must listen to and hear the Word of God.

And we must keep and obey the Word of God that we have heard.

However, like the people of Israel,

we are forsaking the law of God

(Jere. 6:19).

We are not behaving according to the Word of God (v. 16).

We are not listening to the Word of God (v. 19).

No, we are not even able to hear the Word of God (v. 10).

We consider the Word of God's reproof as an insult to us (v. 10).

Instead, we delight in hearing the false words of the false prophets saying,

"Peace, peace" (v. 14).

In the realm of our thoughts,

we are bringing forth evil like a spring brings forth its water (v. 7).

We are bringing forth evil thoughts of greed and falsehood (v. 13).

Yet, despite this, we are not even slightly ashamed;

our faces do not even blush (v. 15).

As a result, we encounter obstacles (v. 21).

We encounter calamity (v. 19).

What should we do?

We must receive the instruction of God (v. 8).

We must listen to the reproof of God (v. 10).

And we must forsake our greed and falsehood (v. 13).

And we must be ashamed of the abominations we have committed (v. 15).

And we must look for the ancient paths, where the good way is,

and walk in it (v. 16).

When we do so,

our souls will find the true peace that God gives (v. 16).

The outcome of our thoughts obstacle

The outcome of our thoughts, as we refuse to listen to God's Word
and reject His commandments,
is that there are obstacles before us,
causing our families to stumble and fall together
(Jere. 6:19, 21).

To the Holy Spirit, who is the giver of life ...

The Holy Spirit, who is the giver of life,
has already brought us back to life,
even though we were dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1)
(regeneration) (past resurrection),
and when the Lord comes again,
He will make us live forever (Rom. 8:13; 1 Cor. 15:52-53; 1 Thess. 4:16)
(eternal life) (future resurrection).
This Spirit dwells within us (Rom. 8:9),
bringing us into fellowship with the Father God and the Holy Son Jesus (1 Jn. 1:3)
and guiding us into understanding (Jn. 17:3),
producing the fruit of the Spirit, which is love (Gal. 5:22),
so that we may fulfill Jesus' twofold commandment:
"To love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind,"
and also, "To love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt. 22:37, 39),
thus, as those who are now living between 'already regeneration'
and 'not yet (perfect) eternal life' on this earth,
He enables us to partially enjoy and live in the eternal life and peace of heaven (Rom. 8:6)
(life) (current resurrection).

The secret of survival

The secret of survival for a Christian is
to cling to the Lord God, and not depart from him
(Deut. 4:4).

Mixed faith

A faith like dross and clutter (Isa. 1:25), mixed faith...

Faith that believes in God on Sundays but believes in the world and oneself on weekdays,
Faith that professes love for God with lips but loves the world and possessions in the heart,
Faith that is familiar with religious rituals but is not accustomed to recognizing one's own sins,

Our countless possessions that are of no benefit in the sight of God and do not bring Him joy (v. 11),
Our footsteps that only tread in places of worship (v. 12),
Our gatherings and assemblies that are detestable to God (v. 13),
Our festivals and worship that God despises
and considers burdensome and wearisome to endure (v. 14),

Our mixed faith needs to be purified through the furnace of affliction.

David and his men who treated well

David,
treated King Saul, who persecuted him, well (1 Sam. 24:17),
and David's men (25:12)
treated the servants of Nabal,
who was foolish (v. 25) and wicked (v. 17)
who insulted them (v. 14).

Those who have tasted the goodness of God (Ps. 34:8),
who, in all things, works for the good of those who love Him (Rom. 8:28),
of turning persecution or insult into good (Gen. 50:20),
can treat others well.

The good God does good as He pleases.

After hearing the message of God's judgment through Samuel,
Eli the priest said:
"This is indeed the Lord; let Him do what seems good to Him"
(1 Sam. 3:18).

Good words vs. evil words

If we are careful to love our God and draw near to Him,
then all the good words that God has spoken to us will come upon us.

However, if we love and draw near to idols more than to God,
then all the evil words that God has spoken will come upon us.

If we obey, all the good words, if we disobey, all the evil words
will faithfully come upon us
(Josh. 23:7-15, especially v. 15).

Our Lord who is the good shepherd ...

Our Lord, who is the good shepherd,
feeds us, who are His sheep,
gathers us in His arms, and gently leads us
(Isa. 40:11).

Exerting a positive influence

Those who believe in the good God (Mk. 10:18),
those who live according to God's good will (Rom. 12:2),
and those who taste the goodness of God (Ps. 34:8),
as God works all things together for good (Rom. 8:28),
does good to others (Eph. 2:10), exerting a positive influence.

A good steward

We, as good stewards entrusted with various gifts of God,
suffer hardships according to God's will
as we act with a good conscience to do good
(1 Pet. 3:16-17; 4:10).

Must be stopped by doing good

We, as saints, with a good conscience, by doing good,
must stop the mouths of those who slander us or revile us,
and silence the ignorant talk of foolish people,
making them feel ashamed of their slanderous and reviling actions,
so that they may glorify God on the day of His second coming
(1 Pet. 2:12, 15; 3:16).

The life of a saint

The life of a saint is a separated life
(Neh. 13:3).

May the Holy Spirit move our children ...

May God bless our children
and may the Spirit of God, who is the Holy Spirit, move our children
(Judg. 13:24-25).

The work of the Holy Spirit is ...

The work of the Holy Spirit is
to make us seek God's word even more fervently
when we are in great distress,
to humbly receive that word with joy,
and to understand God's will through it,
so that we may obediently act according to His will.
As a result, the Holy Spirit molds us with God's word in times of distress,
sanctifying us and conforming us to the likeness of the Lord.

Fellowship according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit

If we are truly having fellowship with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ,
following the guidance of the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 1:3),
then we will believe in Jesus Christ, who is the truth (Jn. 14:6),
according to the will of the loving God the Father (1 Jn. 2:17), who is love (4:8, 16).
Additionally, we will love one another,
not just with words and speech, but with actions and in truth (1 Jn. 3:23, 18).

One must become a Bible teacher who is familiar with the sword of the Spirit.

We must become Bible teachers (pastors)
who are familiar with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God
(Eph. 6:17).

We should diligently study God's word, obey it,
and be determined to teach it to the saints (v. 10).

May we receive the help of God's good hand
so that we can handle this responsibility faithfully and well (v. 9).

The life of a Spirit-filled Christian

The life of a Christian is living between the advents of Jesus,
obediently living by faith in Jesus' twofold commandment.

A Spirit-filled life is living between regeneration and full eternal life,
loving God and loving neighbor according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The life of a Spirit-filled Christian, a vibrant life,
is living partially on this earth, yet reproducing a life of complete love in eternal heaven,
following the eschatological guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**As we enjoy communion with the triune God,
we must receive the blessings of obedience.**

Through the Holy Spirit who dwells within us (1 Jn. 3:24),
we enjoy communion with the loving Father God
who has bestowed great love upon us (v. 1),
and with Jesus Christ, God's Son who laid down His life
as an atoning sacrifice for our sins on the cross (2:2; 3:16),
and therefore, we experience intimate fellowship (1:3).
As a result, we are filled with joy (v. 4)
and should obey the commandments of the Lord and love one another (3:11, 23, 24).

In doing so, we receive four blessings of obedience:

- (1) We know that we belong to the truth (v. 19),
- (2) Our hearts are strengthened before the Lord (v. 19).
Our hearts do not condemn us, so we have confidence before God (v. 21),
- (3) We receive whatever we ask from God (v. 22),
- (4) We know that we abide in Him and He in us by the Spirit who dwells within us (v.24).

In summary,

Through the Holy Spirit who dwells within us,
we enjoy fellowship with the Father God and Jesus Christ (1:3),
and therefore, we must receive the blessings of obedience (3:19-24).

As everything believed in the world falls away ...

We Christians, as everything believed in the world falls away,
stand even more firmly on the promise of the Lord's word,
and our hope in the Lord grows even greater,
for we are those who are in the Lord
(Ps. 71:5).

A life that seems to lack nothing in the world?

We would highly esteem a life
that appears to lack nothing in the eyes of people,
enjoying wealth, free from any worry or concern,
feeling calm, peaceful, and secure in abundance
(Judg. 18:7, 9, 10).

Therefore, we would pray to God for such a life.

Additionally, we learned from preaching by the pastor whom "Micah" hired,
that such a life is a blessed life (17:10; 18:4).

However, that pastor succumbed to worldly temptations,
becoming a pastor filled with ambition and greed,
also serving God and wealth (18:19-20),
thereby idolizing money (Mt. 6:24).

Despite knowing this,
we still receive grace through the preaching of such a pastor,
rejoicing, and seeking after such a life.

As a result,
we also find ourselves committing the sin
of serving God and wealth amid ambition and greed.

The woman who had lost hope

Naomi, the woman who had lost hope (Ruth 1:12),
left her hometown of Judah, Bethlehem, and went to the land of Moab (v. 1).
Losing her husband and both sons (v. 3), she had no hope left.
She was too old to marry again (v. 12),
and therefore, she couldn't bear any more sons (v. 12).

However, eventually,
Naomi became the caregiver of the child born to Ruth, her daughter-in-law,
who was more precious to her than seven sons.
Naomi held the baby in her arms and became his caregiver.
The neighboring women named the baby, saying,
"A son has been born to Naomi!" and they named him Obed (4:15-17).

To the woman who had lost hope
and couldn't bear any more sons (1:12),
a son was born (4:17).

Those who deceive and tempt through deceit.

We must oppose those who tempt us with deceit
(Num. 15:17-18)

The one who is eager to get rich quickly ...

The one who is eager to get rich quickly has an evil eye,
and is in a hurry to acquire wealth;
they do not know that poverty will come upon them
(Prov. 28:20, 22)

Without even making an effort ...

‘I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build;
and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant’
(Josh. 24:13)

Therefore, do not be angry or resentful
if what you received without effort and what bore fruit without planting is lost.
Do not regret it.
Losing it, you should cherish the souls cherished by God
(Jon. 4:6-11)

The four blessings of obedience

If we love one another according to the Lord's commandment (1 Jn. 3:11, 23, 24),
there are four blessings of obedience:

- (1) We know that we belong to the truth (v. 19).
- (2) Our hearts are assured before God (v. 19).
We gain confidence before God because our hearts do not condemn us (v. 21).
- (3) We receive whatever we ask from God (v. 22).
- (4) We know that we live in Him and He in us because He has given us of His Spirit (v. 24).

I should humble myself, but ...

I should humble myself,
but instead of humbling myself before God,
I am committing even more sins ...
(2 Chron. 33:23)

We must not defile ourselves.

We must not defile ourselves
by following the customs of this world
that are detestable in the sight of God
(Lev. 18:30).

They are causing great harm to themselves.

Among those who come up to worship in the house of the Lord,
there are still those who walk in wickedness and continue to commit evil deeds.
Though God sends His servants consistently
to speak His word and call for obedience, they refuse to obey.
Instead, they harbor hatred for God's servants.
They are guilty of the sin of murder in their hearts.
Therefore, they are causing great harm to themselves
(Jere. 26:2-5, 8, 11, 19; 1 Jn. 3:15)

A church that boasts about its own deeds.

Perhaps the Lord may say to the church that boasts about its own deeds in opposition to Him,
"Your church has too many members."
Therefore, even though they have reduced the number of members,
the Lord might still say, "The number of members is still too many," ...
(Judg. 7:2-4)

We must be careful to love God ourselves.

We must be careful to love our God ourselves.
We should only draw near to our God
and not associate with the people of this world among us,
serving their gods or mingling with them
(Josh. 23:7-12).

Is it not something that is preventing restoration?

Right now, we may be crying out restoration with our lips,
but could it be that with our hearts and actions,
we are actually preventing restoration?
(2 Chron. 36:16)

If at this moment our hearts are not humble before God,
if we stubbornly refuse to repent and instead harden our hearts,
if we persist in sinning greatly against God without turning back to Him,
or if we defile the temple of God by following all the abominations of the world,
even when God sends His servants diligently to speak His word,
if we mock and insult His servants, despise His word, and disregard it,
then we are indeed preventing our own restoration
(2 Chron. 36:12-16)

Victory, then defeat, then victory.

After the victory at Jericho,
due to the disobedience of Achan,
only about 3,000 men were sent to Ai,
resulting in defeat with about 36 men killed
(Josh. 7:4-5).

After resolving the issue of Achan in the Valley of Achor (Trouble Valley),
when they went to war with Ai again,
they sent about ten times as many soldiers, 30,000 (8:3),
obeying God's strategy,
and the Israelites won the battle (vv. 4-29).

If there is jealousy and strife ...

If there is bitter jealousy and strife in our hearts,
then there will be disorder and every evil practice
(Jam. 3:14-18).

A daughter-in-law who loves her mother-in-law and is more precious than seven sons ...

To Naomi, who had no hope (Ruth 1:12),
there was a daughter-in-law, Ruth, a Moabite woman,
who decided to stay with her mother-in-law without a husband (v. 13),
and firmly resolved to go with her mother-in-law to Judah Bethlehem,
her mother-in-law's homeland (v. 18),
who sought favor from someone (2:2).

The women would refer to Ruth as "your daughter-in-law,
who loves you and is better to you than seven sons" (4:15).

The mother-in-law's painful heart

Naomi, an elderly widow and mother-in-law who could no longer have a husband,
felt even more pain when she saw her two young widowed daughters-in-law
determined to live without husbands.

A brief meditation on Psalms 69

The peace of those who hate and slander the servants of the Lord without cause can become a snare to themselves (Ps. 69:4, 14, 19, 20, 22).

The slander of those who hate me without cause
can deeply distress and fill my heart with sorrow,
but the Lord, who unconditionally loves and saves me,
will surely deliver me from those who hate me with mercy and compassion
(vv. 4, 13, 14, 20).

Pouring out my foolishness, relying more on people than on God, before the Lord,
is much better than exposing my foolishness before people (v. 5).
The one who trusts in the Lord pours out their heart like water before God (142:2),
but the one who relies on people pours out complaints and resentment before them.

Though I may conceal my sin before people,
I can never hide it from the Lord (69:5).

As my sin is not hidden from the Lord,
neither is His face hidden from me (vv. 5, 17).

When our enemies and those who hate us,
while trusting in the Lord, mock, insult, and shame us, even defaming the Lord,
our hearts should burn even more fervently for the Lord's church (vv. 6-12).
In the midst of severe suffering,
even my loved ones (friends) may treat me as a stranger (v. 8),
and then we experience profound loneliness.

In times of distress, we need to painfully realize two things:

- (1) People are not to be relied upon.
- (2) The Lord will turn to me (v. 13).

When I pray to God in my distress,
feeling His love as He turns to me,
I confess and repent of my sinful folly in His presence,
and I end up loving God even more than before.
This love for God ultimately manifests as zeal for the Lord's church,
as we strive for its well-being (vv. 6, 9, 13-14, 16-17; 2 Cor. 11:2).

When I become a stranger even to my brothers,
and an alien to my own family,
my plea is, "Lord, draw near to my soul" (vv. 8, 18).
Profound loneliness presents a wonderful opportunity to experience God's presence deeply.

Even in suffering, the Christian who delights the Lord the most
is the one who, amidst pleading to God, praises Him,
acknowledging His response with abundant love, mercy, and the truth of salvation (vv. 13, 16, 30).

The Christian whose heart aligns with God's heart
finds favor not only in times of calm but also in times of distress,
thus pleasing God even more (vv. 30-31; Acts 13:22).

Insight through trials and tribulations?

Through various trials and tests of faith,
I realize how lacking I am, how my faith is deficient,
as I harbor two minds towards God in prayer—
(one mind believing that God hears my prayers,
while the other is filled with doubt),
that is the insight gained
(Jam. 1:2-8).

Training through trials and tribulations?

Through various trials and tests of faith,
we come to realize how lacking we are in ourselves, especially in wisdom.
In this process, we seem to undergo training in seeking wisdom through faith from God,
who generously provides it without reproach
(Jam. 1:2-5).

When we are misunderstood by our family members ...

David's eldest brother, Eliab, misunderstood his youngest brother David.
Clearly, David obeyed his father Jesse's instructions and went to the battlefield
to check on his three brothers - Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah –
who were fighting alongside King Saul.
David was carrying roasted grain, loaves of bread, and cheese for them,
intending to give them to his brothers and their commanders and to inquire about their welfare.
However, Eliab misunderstood David's intentions,
accusing him of coming to the battlefield merely to watch the spectacle of war.
Moreover, Eliab rebuked David, questioning him about who was taking care of the sheep
and accusing him of arrogance and wickedness of heart.
In response, David said, "What have I done now? Can't I even speak?"
(1 Sam. 17:13, 17-20, 28-29).

Facing misunderstandings from beloved family members may not be easy,
but if we are obedient to the word of our Heavenly Father,
we must strive to overcome such misunderstandings.
Because our Heavenly Father understands us completely.

Faith-action harmony

Faith and action must come together ... (John Calvin)

Claiming to believe in Jesus but not acting in accordance with that faith is dead faith (Jam. 2:26).

There is no stumbling.

The steps of the righteous, who have God's law in their hearts,
do not stumble (Ps. 37:31)

When crying out to God in severe poverty ...

When we cry out to God in severe poverty,
God speaks to us through His servants
(Judg. 6:6-8).

Perhaps the essence of His words is:

- (1) "I am the Lord your God,"
- (2) "Do not be afraid,"
- (3) "You have not listened to my voice" (v. 10).

Although severe epidemic is dangerous ...

Although severe epidemic is dangerous (Ps. 91:3),
we must be very cautious of the snares of Satan,
which amidst this plague that stalks in darkness (v. 6),
which we often fail to recognize (v. 3).
Satan particularly deceives the simple-hearted believers,
leading them astray with lies (Ps. 32:7; Jn. 8:44) and enticing them (1 Chron. 21:1)
into his snares (Ps. 140:5; 1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:26).
His aim is our destruction (Ps. 91:6).

Tithe

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?'
In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me.
Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.
Test me in this,' says the LORD Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven
and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it'" (Mal. 3:8-10).

- (1) Not tithing and giving offerings to God is considered robbing God in His sight.
- (2) Not tithing to God is not just an economic issue but a matter of faith.

This is because of the failure (inability) to believe in the promise of God's word written in Malachi 3:10.

**Even after tasting bitterness,
I still want to experience the joy of God.**

Naomi, whose name means "my joy,"
experienced bitterness ("Mara" means bitterness) in the land of Moab (Ruth 1:20).
Like her, even if we taste bitterness, it would be good if we could return to God.

Naomi lost everything (her husband and two sons, Mahlon and Chilion)
and became a widow (v. 3).

However, she gained a devoted daughter-in-law, Ruth,
who was more precious to her than seven sons (4:15).

Through Ruth, Naomi also acquired a wealthy kinsman redeemer, Boaz (vv. 21-22),
who married Ruth and became the grandfather of David (v. 17).

Eventually, through David's lineage, Jesus the Messiah came (Mt. 1:5).

Thus, despite tasting bitterness in the land of Moab,

Naomi returned to the land of Judah and experienced joy.

Even after tasting bitterness, she still wanted to experience the joy of God.