

**Jesus Christ is the true God
and eternal life.**

[1 John]

James Kim

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Introduction

At the beginning of 2019, about three years ago, I set the motto of Victory Presbyterian Church, which I serve as the senior pastor, “Love each other,” and set three small goals: Gratitude, Forgiveness, Sacrifice. The motto bible verse was John 15:12 – “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” Focusing on this New Year’s motto, small goals, and Bible verse, I thought about which Bible book out of the 66 books of the Bible would be suitable to preach. And then I chose the Book of 1 John and began to preach from 1 John 1:1-4 (sermon title: The Gospel of Jesus Christ we preach) to the last sermon on 1 John 5:13-21 (sermon title: You have eternal life) on Sunday, December 26, 2021. It took me about two years and nine months in preaching the Book of 1 John. Looking back, within few weeks of starting to preach on 1 John, I thought the the Book of 1 John was not an appropriate fit for the motto “Love one another”. But after I finished preaching 1 John, I realized that the thought I had before was not exactly right. The reason is because even in 1 John chapter 1, the author, the Apostle John, is speaking of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is God and eternal life (1:1-3). But what was really interesting was that last week's sermon on 1 John, the Apostle John was talking about the true God and eternal life, the Son of God, Jesus Christ again in 1 John 5:20. After all, the beginning and the end of the Book of 1 John is speaking of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is God and eternal life. That's why I titled this first book of 1 John, “Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life.” I hope and pray that as we read this book, we will all come to know more and more who Jesus Christ is and the love that He gave His life for us (3:16), so that we can be able to love one another according to His commandment (v. 23).

“More about Jesus would I know, More of His grace to others show; More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me. More, more about Jesus, More, more about Jesus; More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me” (Hymn “More About Jesus Would I Know” verse 1 and refrain),

James Kim

[December 30, 2021, “But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, ...” (Phil. 3:7-8)]

The gospel of Jesus Christ we proclaim

[1 John 1:1-4]

Our church's motto for 2019 is “Love each other.” And the motto Bible verse is John 15:12 – “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.” The commandment Jesus gave us is to love one another as Jesus loved us. How did Jesus love us? Jesus considers us as His friends and gave His life for us on the cross. There is no greater love than this (v. 13). The Lord, who loves us with this great love, tells us, “You are My friends if you do what I command you” (v. 14). So, since we wanted to become those who love each other according to this commandment of Jesus, this year's motto is “Love one another.”

And the Bible that I wanted to meditate on with you is “1 John.” The reason is because I thought that there are many words about “love” in 1 John, written by the Apostle John, who wrote John 15:12, the motto verse for this year. For example, in 1 John 4:7-8, the apostle John said: “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” Also, in 1 John 4:11, the apostle John said, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” And one of my personal favorites, 1 John 4:18 says: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.” So, as I meditate on 1 John from today, my goal is to meditate on all of 2 John and 3 John, if it is the Lord's will. As we meditate on this word of God, I pray that the Lord will grant us all precious grace.

The book of 1 John that we are going to meditate on from today is a letter written by the Apostle John. The Apostle John was the son of Zebedee and, as the brother of the Apostle James, the apostle who served Jesus closest along with the apostle Peter. He was a fisherman in Galilee and one of the 12 disciples of Jesus who witnessed the deeds, sufferings, and resurrection of Jesus. And he wrote not only 1 John but also 2 John, 3 John, the Gospel of John and Revelation. The Apostle John's purpose in writing the 1 John is stated in the New Version of the Bible in two ways:

- (1) The first purpose is to establish the church, which has suffered a serious crisis by various cults including Gnosticism, on the foundation of truth.

Here, “Gnosticism” is a mixture of Eastern religions that follow gnosis, Greek philosophy, theosophy, and Christian faith, the most powerful and threatening movement that competed with the Early Church between

AD 80 and 150 AD (Internet). Gnosticism, influenced by philosophers such as Plato, is based on two false premises. One of those two false premises is the dualism of mind and matter. Gnostics argue that matter is inherently evil and spirit is good. This spiritual and physical dualism ultimately denies the incarnation of Jesus and cannot accept the suffering and death of Jesus. In the New Testament, the mode of faith that deceives Christians the most is pointed to as the Gnosticism of spiritual and physical dualism. We can find traces in the Bible that show that Gnostic ideas infiltrated the church and became a heretical force that seriously threatened early Christianity. Among the contents of the letter Jesus Christ sent to the church in Pergamum, it is said that there are those who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:15). This is a trace related to the Gnosticism that penetrated the early church. The word 'Nicolaitans' is derived from the name of Nicolas, the leader of early Gnosticism. As one of the seven deacons in Acts 6, Nicholas was a convert from Antioch, he passed on the faith from the apostles and received the office of a deacon. But it is said that he eventually fell into heresy (Internet). In addition, in the book of 1 John, the apostle John speaks alluding to heretical forces that seriously threaten Christianity: (1 Jn. 2:22) "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son," (4:1-3) "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world." So, the Apostle John wrote this letter of 1 John in an attempt to build the church, which has been in serious crisis due to Gnosticism and other cults, on the foundation of the truth.

I think that the purpose of the apostle John writing this letter of 1 John is sufficiently applicable to the modern church today. How many different cults have the church faced a serious crisis now? If we have this sense of crisis, we also know that the Lord's church must stand firm on the foundation of the Lord's truth. Therefore, we must reject syncretism in all its forms and return to the Word alone, faith alone, Jesus alone, grace alone, and the glory of God alone. Therefore, I think it is appropriate and important for us to meditate on 1 John. As we meditate on the book of 1 John, we must listen to Jesus Christ and His gospel preached by the Apostle John, and must preach the right word and the right gospel.

(2) The second purpose is to maintain a personal relationship with God by emphasizing God's love.

Apostle John emphasizes that the church must not only stand firm on the foundation of truth, but also love one another with God's love in a personal relationship with God. Therefore, the Apostle John wanted the Lord's church to abide in the power to overcome any false knowledge and fears through fellowship of true love with God in the Lord's truth (Revised Bible explanation). I think this is a really important purpose. How important is it to maintain a personal relationship with God? How important is the fellowship of true love in the truth of God in maintaining this personal relationship. Isn't one of the serious problems of the

church right now is the lack of fellowship with the Lord and, above all, the failure to meet the Lord personally?

So, I will focus on 1 John 1:1–4, under the title “The gospel of Jesus Christ we proclaim”, and think about what is the gospel of Jesus Christ that the Apostle John preaches to us through the words of the Bible, and think about what is the twofold purpose that this gospel is being preached to us. By doing so I hope and pray that we can receive grace and lessons from God.

First, I want to think about what the gospel of Jesus Christ is that the Apostle John proclaims to us. The Bible 1 John 1:1-2 speaks in two ways:

First, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the Word of life which was from the beginning.

Look at 1 John 1:1 – “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.” When we think of the phrase “That which was from the beginning” that the Apostle John is talking about here, two Bible verses can come to mind. Those two Bible verses are Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” and John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The word “the beginning” in these two verses doesn’t refer to the same beginning. ‘The beginning’ in Genesis 1:1 refers to the beginning [“the beginning of time and space” (Internet)] when God created the heavens and the earth, whereas ‘the beginning’ in John 1:1 refers to the super-temporal and eternal beginning (Internet). Then, to which beginning does the Apostle John refer to “the beginning” in 1 John 1:1? It speaks of the eternal beginning. We know this by looking at verse 2b: “... which was with the Father and has appeared to us.” This verse says that Jesus Christ was with God the Father from eternity before the foundation of the world. So the phrase “from the beginning” (v. 1) spoken of by the apostle John refers to the eternal beginning before the creation of the heavens and the earth. In other words, the apostle John is speaking of the eternity of Christ. This speaks of the divinity of Christ. And he described the eternal Christ as ‘the Word of life from the beginning.’ Here the “Word of life” spoken of by the Apostle John refers to Jesus Christ based on the word of John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” and the word of 1 John 1:2, “which was with the Father.” Jesus Christ is the Word of life. Look at John 14:6 – “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” The eternal Jesus Christ is not only the “Word” (Logos) and “God” (Jn. 1:1) but also “the life” (Eternal Life) (14:6). That is, the gospel of Jesus Christ is eternal God Jesus Christ, not only who is eternal life, but also who gives eternal life. The Apostle John is proclaiming this gospel to us as well (1 Jn. 1:3).

Second, the gospel of Jesus Christ is “eternal life” appeared on this world.

Look at 1 John 1:2a – “The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life,” Here, the Apostle John is saying that “the eternal life” appeared, which means that God the Son,

Jesus Christ, who is the Word (Logos) and eternal life, came to this earth in the flesh (The Outline Bible). This refers to the humanity of Christ. The Apostle John described this in John 1:14 this way: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” With reference to this fact, we say that Jesus was “incarnated.” Here, “incarnate” means that the Son Jesus, who is the second person of the Holy Trinity, took on flesh and became a man. That is, the Son became a true man who took on the perfect humanity, that is, a body and soul including a spirit (Lloyd-Jones). Pastor Lloyd Jones said: ‘What Jesus Christ took on was a real body. What the Second Person of the Trinity assumed was not a mere appearance or form, but a true incarnation. Jesus actually came in the flesh. But the Gnostic heretics maintained that Jesus was merely in the form of a physical body. They said that there was only a body shape that is like a ghost. But that’s not true. Jesus came in real flesh. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us’ (Lloyd-Jones). How this was made possible is that the Holy Spirit gave birth to the Son Jesus through the virgin Mary, so that the humanity He took on was sinless [“the holy (sinless and pure) one to be born” (Lk. 1:35) (Lloyd)]. The Apostle John not only heard of this incarnate eternal life, Christ, but also had seen and touched with his hands repeatedly in 1 John 1:1, 2, 3. And the Apostle John says, “we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life” (v. 2), “what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you” (v. 3).

What we need to be clear and certain here is what is the gospel of Jesus Christ preached and testified by the Apostle John. The gospel of Jesus Christ he preached was that Jesus Christ is the Word of Life who existed from the beginning (v. 1) and this eternal life (v. 2) that was manifested on this earth, which is the divinity of Christ and the humanity of Christ. The reason why the Apostle John preached not only the divinity of Jesus but also the humanity of Jesus was because the heretical Gnostics at that time acknowledge only the divinity of Jesus and denied the humanity of Jesus. They thought that all matter was evil and that God was completely holy so that he who had divinity could not be real matter. So they said that the physical essence of Jesus' humanity was not real, but merely a hallucination and illusion that appeared and disappeared. One of these heresies is “Doceticism,” which denies the fact that Christ came in a human body. They argued that the body of Christ was not actually made of flesh and blood, but merely a hallucination or illusion that appeared and disappeared (Internet). How absurd is this claim? This is a lie and the lie of those who deceived the early church. So the Apostle John said in 2 John 1:7 – “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh This is the deceiver and the antichrist.” Many deceivers in this world deny that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. In other words, they deny the humanity of Jesus. So, for a while, the topic of debate in the theological circles was the historical Jesus. As I understand it, I remember that there were some theologians who denied that Jesus was a historical figure and went further and claimed that Jesus was a myth. In order to do this, they must deny the virgin birth of Jesus. This was also the argument of the Gnostics, a heretical force in the early church. Naturally, they opposed the virgin birth of Christ (Internet). However, as we profess our faith in the Apostles' Creed during our weekly Sunday worship, we believe in the fact that ‘I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.’ Not only that, but we believe that Jesus Christ came to this earth in a sinless body and that He is the Son of God. That is, we believe in the divinity of Jesus and the humanity of Jesus. And as the Apostle Paul said in Romans 1:3-4, the gospel of Jesus Christ we believe in is that Jesus “was

born of a descendant of David according to the flesh” and “was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.” The truth we believe is that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

The word of God we believe is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you and your household will be saved” (Acts 16:31). We, who have been saved by believing in the Lord Jesus by God’s total grace, must testify and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the Word of Life” and eternal life, like the apostle John (1 Jn. 1:1-3). We must preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we hear and personally meet and believe. We must desire to preach the gospel as much as we can (Rom. 1:15) while “not moved from the hope held out in the gospel” (Col. 1:23). We must live worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27), preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and make many disciples of Jesus Christ (Acts 14:21). We must all labor for the gospel of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:22).

The second and last thing I want to think about is what the Apostle John's purpose is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to us.

In 1 John 1:3-4 tells us that the Apostle John had twofold purpose for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. It can be said that the purpose is the vertical purpose and the horizontal purpose (Outline Bible commentary):

First, the vertical purpose is to have fellowship God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ.

Look at 1 John 1:3 – “what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” The Apostle John, whom he heard, saw with his eyes, and touched with his own hands (vv. 1, 2), was the Word of Life from the beginning (v. 1) and the eternal life (v. 2) manifested in this world. The first purpose of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God was “so that you too may have fellowship with us” (v. 3).

What is “fellowship”? In my personal opinion, one of the overused Christian terms in the church is “fellowship.” How the word fellowship is overused is many Christians seem to think of fellowship as “socializing” or an “activity”. “Fellowship is a relationship, but not an activity,” says Jerry Bridges, author of several best-sellers in addition to the book “The Pursuit of Holiness”.

In 1 John 1:3, the Apostle John said that the purpose of preaching Jesus Christ (the divinity and humanity) was “so that you too may have fellowship with us” (NASB). He said that “our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (NASB) (v. 3). The ultimate purpose of “fellowship” spoken of by the Apostle John here is to have fellowship with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. In other words, the purpose of the Apostle John preaching Jesus Christ and His gospel was so that those who heard Jesus Christ and His gospel through him could believe in Jesus and have fellowship with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Why did the Apostle

John want the people who heard the gospel of Jesus Christ to believe in Jesus and have fellowship with God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ? The reason is because they too may enjoy “eternal life” like him. Look at 1 John 5:11-13: “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” If you believe in Jesus Christ, you have life. You have eternal life. If you hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is “the Word of Life” and is “eternal life” (1:1, 2) and believes in Jesus Christ, then you have eternal life, which God the Father has given you as a gift of grace (Rom. 6:23; 1 Jn. 5:11-13). You have life. The Apostle John, who had this eternal life, preached Jesus Christ, who is the eternal life and the Word of Life, so that everyone who hears His gospel believes in Jesus Christ, and they have fellowship with God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ just like himself. But by the grace of God the Father He longed to enjoy the gift of “eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23) (Word Studies in the NT commentary). So he preached Jesus Christ and His gospel. This should be the purpose of us preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

First of all, under the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit by believing in Jesus, we, who are enjoying the blessing of eternal life while having fellowship with Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, are the Word of Life and eternal life, Jesus Christ and His Gospel (The purpose of preaching the good news) is so that those who hear the gospel of Jesus Christ through us can have fellowship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ just like us, and receive the blessing of eternal life. I hope and pray that you and I will work hard in this gospel ministry.

Second, the horizontal purpose is to make our joy complete.

Look at 1 John 1:4 – “These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.” Not only did the Apostle John preach Christ, the Word of Life, which existed before the world was created, and this Christ, who is eternal life, and was made manifest in the world, the purpose of writing this letter of 1 John was that “our joy” may be made complete also to the recipients of the letter of 1 John (vv. 1-4). Isn't it a bit interesting that the purpose of the Apostle John preaching Jesus Christ and His gospel was “fellowship with us” (v. 3) and “our joy” (v. 4)? From these two purposes, it can be inferred that the Apostle John was full of joy while enjoying fellowship with God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. So, he wanted the brothers and sisters in Christ of the early church to receive and enjoy the fullness of joy that the Holy Spirit gives horizontally in this vertical fellowship with God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ.

Isn't this the true fellowship, and the life worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ? (Phil 1:27) In other words, living worthy of the gospel of Christians who have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and believe in Him is to enjoy eternal life in the vertical fellowship with the Holy Trinity, and to enjoy the fullness of joy together in the horizontal fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ. And the fullness of joy we will enjoy while enjoying this eternal life is the fullness of joy of the Lord is us by loving each other with the love of the Holy Trinity, which is the commandment of the kingdom of heaven (Jn. 15:9-12). I am reminded of the lyrics of the hymn “Jesus Comes With Pow'r to Gladden” (verses 1, 4 and chorus): (v. 1) “Jesus comes with pow'r to gladden, When love shines in, Ev'-ry

life that woe can sadden, When love shines in. Love will teach us how to pray, Love will drive the gloom away, Turn our darkness into day,” (v. 4) “We may have un-fading splendor, When love shines in, And a friendship true and tender, When love shines in. When earth vic-t'ries shall be won, And our life in heaven begun, There will be no need of sun,” (chorus) “When love shines in. When love shines in, When love shines in, How the heart is tuned to singing, When love shines in, When love shines in, When love shines in, Joy and peace to others bringing When love shines in.”

Even in this age we are living in now, we are faced with a serious crisis due to various heresies just like the time of the early church where the Apostle John and the disciples of Jesus lived. People are denying Jesus Christ spoken of in the Scriptures, and preaching and receiving other gospels, mixed gospels, and false gospels here and there. Also, as Jesus said, many of us, Christians, have grown cold in love (Mt. 24:12). And we no longer have a personal relationship with the Lord. Considering our seriousness problem, the Book of 1 John written by the Apostle John is fully applicable to us as well. Therefore, we must devote ourselves to building the Lord's Church on the foundation of truth through the words of 1 John. Also, we need to deepen our personal relationship with God while realizing and getting to know God's love. In particular, we must devote ourselves to knowing more and more what the gospel of Jesus Christ is. The gospel of Jesus Christ preached by the Apostle John is the Word of Life from the beginning and eternal life revealed on this earth (1 Jn. 1:1, 2). In other words, the Apostle John speaks of the divinity of Christ and the humanity of Christ. The twofold purpose of proclaiming this gospel is to have fellowship with God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ (vertical purpose) and to make our joy complete (horizontal purpose) (vv. 3-4). Like the Apostle John, we should live worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ and preach His gospel with this clear twofold purpose.

Hoping and praying that I want to be an evangelist with the burning love of Jesus Christ,

James Kim

(March 31, 2019, Only Jesus!)

Purpose of writing this letter

“These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. ... My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ... These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 1:4; 2:1; 5:13).

In 2015 this year, my wife and I prepared and sent our family Christmas cards separately. My wife sent Christmas cards to relatives, church family and friends in the United States, college/seminary alumni, etc. And I wrote a short note along with Christmas cards to my friends in Korea, the churches I served, and the members I got to know through the Internet ministry. During the Christmas season to celebrate and rejoice in the birth of the baby Jesus, I sent our family Christmas cards like this, and I was grateful for it as I write letters and memos. The reason is because many of them put pictures of our family Christmas card that I sent and put it on the refrigerator or on the wall and they are praying for our family and church. One day, when I visited my church member last year, late Grandma Bun-nam Choi, I saw a picture of our family Christmas card on the wall near the hospital bed in her living room. Late Grandma Bong-hee Lim and late Deacon Dong-yoon Kim also used to put my family Christmas card on the wall of their beds when they were in the nursing home. Also, some of the Seohyun Church members whom I know put our family Christmas card on the refrigerator and pray for our families and churches whenever the Holy Spirit reminds them. So, with a grateful heart, I sent our Christmas card with a letter and memo again this year. At the same time, I and my wife sent the card with the hope that they would continue to pray for our family and church. And I sent our family Christmas card to many people by e-mail, and also put it all over my personal websites because I wanted to celebrate and rejoice with the birth of the baby Jesus.

In 1 John 1:4, 2:1, 5:13 tells the purpose of the Apostle John writing the letter of 1 John. There are three purposes:

The first purpose is that those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, may know that they have eternal life.

Look at 1 John 5:13 – “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” The first purpose of the Apostle John in writing 1 John is to make known that those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, have eternal life. Here is something we should keep in mind. We should remember that when we believe in Jesus, we have eternal life. And that eternal life isn’t just life in heaven forever. It is because we are partially enjoying eternal life in this earth right now. The place where the word “eternal life” appears intensively is the Gospel of John. The word “eternal life” in Greek is “zoe” (life) plus “aionion” (eternal). In other words, the word “eternal life” has two meanings literally (Internet): This means, first of all, "life that lasts endlessly" in time, Second, qualitatively means "a divine life different from human life." Therefore, the term “eternal life” includes both the meaning of the eternal life in time, And divine life that we enjoy in God. In particular, when we look at the Gospel of John, the term “eternal life” means ‘the eternal blessings that we will enjoy in the future’ as in the Synoptic Gospel but more than that it emphasizes the blessings of the present. The Gospel of John says that those who believe in the Lord have eternal life, And that the blessing of eternal life can be enjoyed even in present reality in the Lord. Then what are the blessings of eternal life that we enjoy in present? They are the blessings of the afterlife that we receive in sharing intimate fellowship with eternal God and His Son Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (J. 17:3). A typical example is to participate in God’s divine character. In other words, the blessing of eternal life that we now partially enjoy in the present reality is to imitate Jesus Christ in the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. Another, the blessing of eternal life that we now enjoy partially is love. When we love our God and our neighbors with the love of God that has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, we partially taste the joy of heaven. Also, the blessing of eternal life is peace. Although we live in the world without peace, We who believe in Jesus partially enjoy the blessing of eternal life, that is peace, While living in this world.

The Bible 1 John 5:13 says that the purpose of the Apostle John's writing of 1 John is to show that those who believe in Jesus Christ have eternal life. Interestingly, the purpose of the Gospel of John, written by the Apostle John, is to “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” and “that by believing you may have life in his name” (Jn. 20:31). Comparing these two verses, the purpose of the Apostle John's writing the Gospel of John is to have eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ, while the purpose of writing 1 John is that those who believe in Jesus Christ already have eternal life. Another interesting point is that “Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life” (1 Jn. 5:20). It is also the fact that Jesus Christ is “the Word of Life” (1:1) and “eternal life” (v. 2). In a word, Jesus Christ is the Word of eternal life. The Bible says that those who believe in Jesus Christ already have eternal life through the truth of Jesus Christ. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you have eternal life.

The second purpose is to prevent those who believe in Jesus Christ from sinning.

Look at 1 John 2:1 – “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” The second purpose of the Apostle John's writings in 1 John is to prevent those who believe in Jesus Christ from sinning. What we need to keep in mind here is that sin is not keeping the commandments of God (v. 4). What is God's commandment here? It is

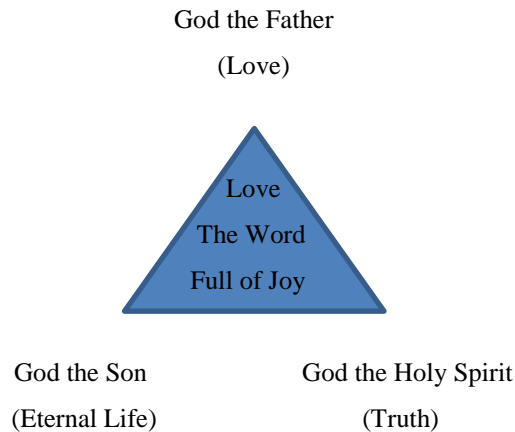
believing in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and loving one another just as He commanded us (3:23). But whoever doesn't keep the commandments of God is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (2:4). Those who keep God's commandments are those who know God (v. 3) and who love God (5:3; Note: Jn. 14:21). And those who don't keep His commandments don't really know God, and love God. The reason is because God is love (1 Jn. 4:16). But "whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected By this we know that we are in Him" (2:5). "God is Light" (1:5). "The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now" (2:9). Anyone who doesn't love his brother isn't a child of God (3:10). "Anyone who does not love remains in death" (v. 14). "Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer" (v. 15). And "no murderer has eternal life in him" (v. 15). But whoever has eternal life abides in Him loves his brother. He who loves his brother belongs to the truth (v. 19). And "Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble" (2:10). Those who love their brother find no condemnation, so they have confidence before God (3:21). And they will receive from Him anything they ask (v. 22). The reason is because they obey His commands and do what pleases Him (v. 22). They who obey His commands live in Him, and He in them (v. 24). "And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us" (v. 24). "We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit" (4:13).

Although the purpose of the Apostle John in writing 1 John was to prevent us from sinning, he wanted to let us know before the Father that we have Jesus Christ the righteous as our Advocate (2:1). He wrote this letter to let us know that our sins have already been forgiven for His name's sake through the name of Jesus Christ (v. 12), who is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world (v. 2). This is love. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (4:10). "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness" (v. 4). But the sinless Jesus "appeared in order to take away sins" (v. 5), and "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1:7). And "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (v. 9).

The third purpose is that our joy may be made complete.

Look at 1 John 1:4 – "These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete." The third purpose of the Apostle John's writing of 1 John is that our joy may be made complete. In order for our joy to be made complete, we must have fellowship with our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ (v. 3). The Heavenly Father we have fellowship with here is love (4:8, 16). To have fellowship with a loving God is to love one another with the love that is from God (v. 7). If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (v. 11). That is, as He laid down His life for us, "we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren" (3:16). We are to love our neighbor in deed and in truth with compassionate heart (vv. 17-18). There is no fear in love. But perfect love casts out fear (4:18). "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (v. 20). Jesus Christ with whom we have fellowship is "the true God and eternal life" (5:20). Jesus, who is this "eternal life," is "the Word of Life" (1:1-2). And God the Holy

Spirit, who brings us into fellowship with God the Father and Jesus the Son, is “the truth” (5:6).



The Apostle John says in 1 John that ‘God the Father is love’, ‘Jesus the Son is eternal life’ and ‘God the Holy Spirit is the truth.’ Speaking of the Triune God, he says that the third purpose of writing 1 John is “that our joy may be made complete” (1:4). This complete joy is due to fellowship with God the Father who is love and Jesus the Son who is eternal life. And this fellowship between God the Father and Jesus the Son is fellowship through God the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. God the Holy Spirit produces love, which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, in us (Gal. 5:22), making us obey the twofold commandment of Jesus, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” and “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt. 22:37, 39), that is the commandments of heaven. Therefore, we must abide in the love of Jesus by keeping His twofold command, just as Jesus has kept His Father’s commandments and abide in His love (Jn. 15:10). Jesus has told us this so that His joy may be in us and that our joy may be complete (v. 11). In this way, the Holy Spirit fills us with the joy of the Lord, our joy, by allowing us to partly enjoy eternal life of heaven on this earth.

The purpose of the Apostle John writing 1 John is so that we who believe in Jesus Christ may know that we have eternal life. It is also to prevent us from sinning. And the purpose of this letter is that our joy may be made complete.

With gratitude that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, writes the letter of Christ on tablets of our hearts (2 Cor. 3:3),

James Kim

[December 22, 2015, The purpose of God the Holy Spirit writing Christ's letter was to make us “holy and blameless in His sight” so that we, who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, “predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ” and “in order that we ... might be for the praise of His will” (Eph. 1:4-5, 12)]

“God is light”

[1 John 1:5-10]

As far as I can remember, in the 39-year history of our church, at least once in the history of our church, the electricity went out and we lit a candle at the early Morning Prayer meeting. At that time, the candles in our church were not the long candlesticks we used in Korea, but rather wide and small candlesticks that were placed as decorations on the table at banquets. So I vaguely remember that I lit several candles but didn't light up this dark parish.

In Matthew 5:14, Jesus tells us, “You are the light of the world.” And Jesus is telling us, “In the same way, let your light shine before men” (v. 16). “In this way” means “no one will light a lamp and cover with a vessel.” Rather, we put it on a lampstand and make it shine on everyone in the house (v. 15). Then, as the light of the world, we want to think about three things, focusing on Proverbs 13, how we should shine not only in our homes and in the church, but especially in this dark world:

First, we must light the world with our mouths.

How should we light the world with our mouths? We must light the world by hating lies (Prov. 13:5) and rejoicing in the truth. By speaking the truth with our mouths, we must light the world. God detests lying lips (12:22). But God delights those who do the truth, that is, those who are truthful (v. 22). Therefore, we must speak the truth. And by speaking the truth, we must light the righteousness in this false world. Also, our truthful tongue should bring healing (v. 18), and our kind word should cheer others up (v. 25). Furthermore, we must even rescue people with our upright lips (v. 6). We should receive God's blessing by teaching others the life-giving words of God in His wisdom, giving them spiritual benefit, to the salvation of their souls, and being the guides of their souls. We must guard our lives by guarding our lips. Look at Proverbs 13:3 – “He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin.” We must guard our own mouth. We must be careful with our words. Look at Proverbs 10:19 – “When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.” Because God gives us wisdom, we must control our lips with God's given wisdom.

Second, we must light the world with our lives.

We must be diligent in order to light the world with our lives (13:4). What matters is not whether we are

rich or poor, but whether we are diligent or lazy. The teaching of the Bible is that we should light the world with diligence. Also, we must light the world with integrity (v. 6). We should seek integrity by fearing God. That is, we must fear and honor God's commandments (v. 13). Also, we must obey God's word, so that all our work should be done in faithfulness (Ps. 33:4). We must light the world by acting wisely. We must walk with knowledge (Prov. 13:16). We must turn aside from the snares of death by teaching them lessons that are the fountain of life (v. 14).

Third, we must light the world by fulfilling our hope and desire.

Look at Proverbs 13:12 – “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.” We can be heartbroken when the fulfillment of our hope is deferred. However, we must witness and experience the fulfillment of the hope that God has given us in God's time while praying, expecting and waiting in faith in the faithful God of the covenant. Our God grants our desires so that we may shine in this hopeless world.

The Bible 1 John 1:5 says “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.” These are the words the Apostle John heard from Jesus Christ, and the Apostle John tells the twofold truth about God. The twofold truth is (1) “God is light,” and (2) In God, who is light, there is no darkness at all.

First, when I thought of the words “God is light,” I was reminded of what Jesus said in John 9:5, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” The apostle John, who heard that Jesus referred to himself as “the light of the world” and recorded it in John 9:5, wrote in 1 John 1:5 that “God is light.” What lesson does this teach us? When God the Father, who is the light, sent the Son Jesus into this world, Jesus came as the light of the world. After the Apostle John, who came as the light of this world, said in John 1 that He was the Word in the beginning, God and Creator (Jn. 1:1-3), there was “life” in Him and “that life was the light of men” ” (v. 4). The Apostle John said in John 1:4 that there is life in Jesus Christ and that life is the light of men. And he said in 1 John 1 that Jesus Christ is the Word of Life from the beginning (1 Jn. 1:1) and “eternal life” (v.2). We can summarize that Jesus Christ is the Word of Life, eternal life, and the light of men. Regarding this fact, the Apostle John also spoke in John 1, who said that John the Baptist was the one who came only as a witness to the light Jesus Christ, who is the true light that gives light to every man in this world (Jn. 1:8-9). The Apostle John also says that John the Baptist came to testify concerning that light, Jesus Christ, so that through Him all men might believe (v. 7). In this way, the Apostle John talked about “the light” not only in the Gospel of John but also in 1 John. God is Light. Jesus is the true light, the light of the world and the light of men. When John the Baptist came into the world, he testified about Jesus Christ, the true light that shines on each person, the light of the world, and the light of people, so that everyone can believe in Jesus.

In this way, the Apostle John tells us, “God is light” in 1 John 1:5, the first half of today’s text, and then comes to the second half of verse 5, saying, “In him there is no darkness at all.” What does it mean to say that God, who is light, has no darkness at all? The Apostle John contrasts light and darkness, emphasizing that God, who is light, can never have any darkness. What is light and what is darkness?

First, since the Apostle John said, “that life is the light of men” in John 1:4, and “the Word of Life” and “eternal life” in 1 John 1:1-2, what he meant “light” and “darkness” in “God is the Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all” (v. 5) is that light refers to life or eternal life, and darkness refers to death or eternal death. Also, light is the truth and darkness is lie when we think based on 1 John 1:6, “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.” The Bible 1 John 2:22 tells us that a liar is one who denies that Jesus is the Christ and one who denies the Father and the Son (Jesus). Also, in 1 John 2:9, since the Apostle John said, “He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness,” I think in the words “God is light”, light means ‘love’ and darkness is ‘hate’. Look at 1 John 2:9, 11: “The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. ... But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” Here, to give an example of one who hates his brother, that is, one who walks in darkness, we can take Cain, whom the Apostle John spoke of in 1 John 3:12 – “not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.” If we consider what light and darkness is based on this word, we can say that light is “righteous” and darkness is “evil”.

First, the children of light have fellowship with God who is light.

In this way, the Apostle John spoke the twofold truth about God in 1 John 1:5. He said in John 12:36 that those who believe in Jesus Christ, who is the light, are also referred to as “sons of Light.” In other words, those who believe in Jesus Christ, who is the true light, the light of the world, and the light of men, are children of light. Then how do the children of light live? I would like to receive a lesson from today's text by meditating on 3 things focusing on 1 John 1:6-10.

Look at 1 John 1:6-7: “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” Do you have a fellowship with God? What is “fellowship”? What is “fellowship” in the Bible? I found the answer in Acts 2:42 – “They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship” The Greek word for “fellowship” here is “koinonia”. The word “koinonia” has two meanings: (1) It means sharing and (2) giving what you have to others. Interestingly, in Acts 2:4, looking at the original Greek word that says “the fellowship” has the definite article is attached before the word “fellowship”, that is, “the fellowship.” Here, “the fellowship” refers to “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.” If we use the words of 1 John 1:6, we can say that the fellowship is the fellowship with God the Holy Spirit. In the full work of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, what about 3,000 new believers shared with them was the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Therefore, the early Jerusalem church was devoted to the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. We too must devote ourselves to the fellowship with the God the Holy Spirit. Then, what is the fellowship with God that the Apostle John is talking about in 1 John 1:6-7? We can think of it in two ways. The Apostle John begins these two ways with “if”:

- (1) The first “if” is “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness . . . ” (v. 6).

In fact, as children of God who is light, if we are having fellowship with Him as children of light, we must walk in the light (v. 7), but there are times when we walk in the darkness. For example, we often lie, hate, do injustice, and sin. If we do that, the Apostle John is telling us that we are lying and don't practice the truth (v. 6b).

- (2) The second “if” is “if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light . . . ’ (v. 7).

Here what does “we walk in the Light” mean? Based on verse 6, I think the meaning of the word that we walk in the light is to practice the truth without telling lies (v. 6b). The Apostle John says that if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin (v. 7b).

In order for us to have fellowship with each other in the Lord, we must first have fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, as the Apostle John said in 1 John 1:3 (vertical fellowship). We need to have this vertical fellowship first in order for us to have a fellowship with each other (horizontal fellowship). The priority of fellowship is that we must first have fellowship with the Holy Triune God. We should have fellowship with each other naturally, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. What is important in twofold fellowship is “the fellowship”. Here, the fellowship refers to the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, what is very important in this twofold fellowship is that the Holy Spirit allows us to share the truth in our relationship with God the Father and the Son, and in the Lord we give the truth to each other. Therefore, the important thing in this twofold fellowship is that we do not lie and practice the truth (v. 6).

The Apostle John says in 1 John 1:7 that if we walk in the Light as Jesus Himself is in the Light, not only we have fellowship with one another, but the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin (v. 7b). What does it mean when he says “the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin”? Haven't we already been forgiven of all our sins by the blood of Jesus' shed on the cross? Look at 1 John 2:12 – “I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.” In this verse, the Apostle John says that we, the children of light who believe in Jesus, have our sins forgiven in the name of Jesus. In other words, we who believe in Jesus have already been forgiven of our sins. But the Apostle John says in 1 John 1:7 that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sins of those who believe in Jesus, who walk in the light. Doesn't that mean that we still need a remission of our sins? The reason is because we are still sinning. The reason is because there are times when we don't live like children of light and walk in darkness. For example, the Apostle John says in 1 John 2:9 – “The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.” According to this word, we still need to receive forgiveness of sins in Jesus name because we are still committing the sin of hating our brothers. If we walk in the Light as Jesus was in the light, the blood of Jesus, the Son of God, cleanses us from all sin (1:7). Not only do we have fellowship with one another, but the Holy Spirit enables us to have fellowship with God the Father and the

Son Jesus. Also, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sins if we confess our sins and repent of all the things we do in darkness that aren't worthy of fellowship with God the Father and the Son.

Second, the children of light do not deceive themselves.

Look at 1 John 1:8 – “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.” We must be truthful people. We must avoid lies and live a life that seeks the truth. But the problem is now we are deceiving each other. In loving our neighbor with the love of the Lord, we should show each other our true side. But now we are busy hiding it from each other. We are hiding our sinful hearts. And we are pretending to be holy on the outside. Now we are double-minded that God hates (Ps. 119:113). We speak with a double two heart (12:2). In this way, we who are two faced are always confused and shaken by what we do (Jam. 1:8). Also, the serious problem we are facing now is that we lie lightly and deceive ourselves. Now we are deceiving ourselves because we only hear the word of God and don't put it into practice. Look at James 1:22 – “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” The Bible says that to listen to God's word without putting it into practice is to deceive ourselves. And the Bible also tells us not to deceive ourselves.

In 1 John 1:8, the Apostle John says: “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.” Who in this world can say that he has no sin (v. 8)? Who in this world can say that he has never sinned? (v. 10) Only God, who is light without any darkness (v. 5), has never sinned and has no sin at all. Look at 1 John 3:5 – “You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.” The Apostle John says that only Jesus is without sin. But we cannot say that we have no sin. This is what Romans 3:23 says: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Look at Romans 5:12 – “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--.” The Bible Psalms 51:5 says, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” Clearly, the Bible says that we had a sinful nature from the moment our mother conceived us and are sinners from birth. Also, the Bible clearly states that everyone has sinned. Therefore, there is no one in this world who can say, 'I have no sin'. The Apostle John says in 1 John 1:8 that we are deceiving ourselves if we say that we have no sin. How can we who believe in God say that we have no sin? Clearly, the Bible says, “God is light” (v. 5) and if we who believe in God who is light walk in darkness (v. 6), that is, if we continue in the dark life of sin, how can the darkness (sin) not be revealed before God who is the light? God, who is light, exposes our sins when we walk not in the light, but in the darkness. Then if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (v. 8).

This is what 1 John 1:10 says: “If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.” If we say, “We have not sinned,” we are making God a “liar”. The Apostle John says in John 8:44 that the devil is “a liar and the father of lies.” But God is never a liar. But the Bible says that if we say we have not sinned, we are making God a liar. Also, the Bible 1 John 1:10 says, “His word is not in us” if we say, “we have not sinned.” The Apostle John said in the second half of verse 8, “The truth is not in us,” but in the second half of verse 10 he says, “His word is not in us.” The Bible says that if we say that we have no sin, or we have not sinned, then the truth, the Word of God, is not in us. The Apostle John says in John 8:44 that there is no truth in the devil. However, the

Apostle John says in 1 John 1:8, 10 that if we say that we have no sin, then the truth (the Word of God) is not in us. The Apostle John says that not only the truth is not in the devil, but also there is no truth in he who says that he has not sinned. We who believe in God who is Light are children of light. And the children of light don't deceive themselves. And the truth (the Word of God) is in us (v. 8). The children of light hear God's word of truth and put it into practice (Jam. 1:22). And the children of light don't lie and practice the truth (1 Jn. 1:6).

We who believe in the Lord who is Light are children of light. As children of light, we must not deceive ourselves. We should not say, 'I have no sin' or 'I have not sinned' while realizing our sins and the dark things that are revealed in our fellowship with the Lord who is the Light. Rather, we must confess our sins. Then the faithful and righteous God will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (v. 9).

Third and last, the children of light confess their sins.

Look at 1 John 1:9 – “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I will never forget this word. The first time I memorized this word was when I was in college when a pastor came to my university campus and led a disciple training Bible study. At that time, as he was teaching the Bible study with me and other seniors, the first thing that pastor taught us was five assurances. Those five assurances are the assurance of salvation, the assurance of answered prayer, the assurance of guidance, the assurance of victory, and the assurance of the forgiveness of sin. I think these five assurances are very important. After I first encountered and learned these five assurances in college, I am actually feeling more and more in my life that each verse is so important as I have been living my life of faith until now:

(1) Assurance of salvation:

“And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.” (1 Jn. 5:11-12)

(2) Assurance of answered prayer:

“Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.” (Jn. 16:24)

(3) Assurance of victory:

“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” (1 Cor. 10:13)

(4) Assurance of guidance:

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” (Prov. 3:5-6)

(5) Assurance of forgiveness of sin:

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 Jn. 1:9)

Among these five words of assurance, the one that I was most struggled with while meditating recently was Proverbs 3:5-6, which is “Assurance of guidance.” And what I realized while meditating and struggling is that the biggest obstacle to trusting in God with all my heart is relying on my own understanding. In particular, I have come to realize that the more I live the habit (instinct) of relying on my understanding, the more I run the risk of being wise in my own eyes (v. 7). For example, if I pursue these and other things according to my own thoughts, plans, and methods, and things go as planned, I will definitely rely more on myself (my understanding) (that means I don’t trust in God) and I will develop a proud thought that I am wise. At that point, I will never, nor will I ever be able to fully trust God. So, I wrote down the heart’s resolution I heard in my wrestling with this word (2015. 7. 9.): ‘Today, without relying on my understanding, I accept with gratitude the things that are not done according to my thoughts, my plans, my way, and my time. The reason is because the more I do that, the more I have no choice but to trust in the Lord. I hope and pray that I will accomplish the Lord’s will in His time, according to His thought, His plan, and His method, relying on and trusting only in the Lord.’ In this way, I have struggled with, and learned about, “Assurance of guidance” recently. But when I learned these five words of assurance in college, the assurance that make me to struggle a lot was “Assurance of salvation” (1 Jn. 5:11-12). Although the Bible says, “He who has the Son has life” (1 Jn. 5:12), for a long time I was not sure whether or not I believed in Jesus, the Son of God. The biggest reason was because I kept committing the same sin against God. So naturally, I must have memorized 1 Corinthians 10:13, the Bible verse of “Assurance of victory,” countless times in my heart. The reason was because I wanted to win the battle against my own habitual sin. But as I continued to lose in my own fight against sin, the assurance of victory in the Bible verses was also a big concern for me. At the same time, I didn’t have “Assurance of answers to prayer”. The reason is because I prayed countless times to God to rescue me from my habitual and sinful life, but my prayers were not answered. As a result, I had no “Assurance of forgiveness of sin.” And since I was not sure of the forgiveness of my sin, I would always struggle with guilt and shame after committing a sin. That “Assurance of forgiveness of sin” is 1 John 1:9 – “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

The Apostle John said, “If we confess our sins . . .”, but what does he mean by “our sins” here? Of course, when we think of “our sins” in the Bible, we think of all the sins that break God’s commandments. But what sin did the Apostle John have in mind when he wrote “our sins” when he wrote the letter of 1 John? I was curious about this, so as I read and read 1 John 1:5-10 again, and I meditated on the Apostle John starting with “if” in verses 6, 8, and 10 as well: (v. 6) “If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth,” (v. 8) “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us,” (v. 10) “If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.” When I meditate on these three verses in connection with verse 9, “our sins” that the Apostle John said is to walk in darkness while saying that we have fellowship with God (v. 6). This is a sin of lying and also of not practicing the truth (v. 6). Also, when the

Apostle John said “our sins”, to say that we have not sinned (v. 10) or to say that we have no sin (v. 8) is also “our sins”. It is also “our sin” to deny one’s sins rather than admit them.

What keeps us from acknowledging the sins we have committed and forcing us to deny them over and over again? Why don’t we “confess” our sins? I found the answer in 1 John 2:11 – “But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.” The reason we don’t confess our sins is because darkness has blinded our eyes. For example, the Bible tells us to love our brothers. But if we break and disobey it, we are in darkness and we are doing darkness. And we don’t know where to go because we are blinded by the dark sin of hate. Just as we lose our ability to see when we are blind, so when we walk in darkness we lose our ability to acknowledge sin as sin. That is why we say that we have not sinned even though we did sin, and don’t feel the need to confess because we think we have no sin. Then, when the Apostle John said that “our sins” were walking in darkness even though we say that we had fellowship with God (v. 6), what does it mean to walk in darkness? It is not keeping the commandments of God. Look at 1 John 2:4 – “The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” More specifically, to walk in darkness is to hate our brothers. Look at 1 John 2:9, 11: “Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. ... But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.” He who walks in darkness like this is sinning against God, breaking the commandments of God, and yet he doesn’t confess his sin. But he who walks in the light confesses his sin (v. 7). The reason is because he who walks in the light realizes his sin in the light, unlike he who walks in darkness. And the reason he acknowledges and confesses the sin he realizes is because he has the assurance of the forgiveness of his sin. That is, he confesses his sin because he believes that the blood of Jesus, the Son of God, will cleanse him from all sin (unrighteousness) (vv. 7, 9). Also, the reason why he who walks in the light confesses his sin is because he believes and has assurance in the word of 1 John 1:9 – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” He who walks in the light confesses his sin because he believes that God is faithful and righteous to forgive his sin (v. 9). The reason why God cleanses us from all unrighteousness when we confess our sins is because Jesus Christ, the righteous has become the propitiation for our sins (2:1, 2). Look at 1 John 4:10 – “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” And God has reconciled us to God through the physical death of Jesus Christ, so that we may be holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation (Col. 1:22).

God is light. In God who is light, there is no darkness at all. We who believe in Jesus Christ are children of God. In other words, we are children of light. As children of light, we have fellowship with God. And if we have fellowship with God who is light, then of course we must walk in the light. Also, as children of light, we don’t deceive ourselves by saying that we are without sin. If we, the children of light, say that we have fellowship with God and walk in darkness, it is a sin of lying and also of not practicing the truth. Therefore, as children of light, we confess our sins to God. The reason is because we, the children of light, believe that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. I hope and pray that we will live like

the children of God, who is the light.

A child of God who is light,

James Kim

(June 30, 2019, Desiring to live like child of light)

We must walk as Jesus did.

[1 John 2:1-6]

What does it mean for us who believe in Jesus to “live as Christians”? Thomas A. Kempis said this about living as Christians in his book “Imitation of Christ”: “Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness” (see Jn. 8:12). In this word, the Lord exhorts us to follow the life of Christ and the way He walked if we truly want to be taught and set free from our senseless heart. Therefore, the first thing we should do is to reflect deeply on the life of Jesus Christ’ (Internet). What do you think of when you deeply reflect on the life of Jesus Christ, the first thing we must do to live uprightly as Christians, according to the counsel of Thomas A. Kempis? I was reminded of the gospel song “The Way My Lord Took On” that I enjoyed sang a long time ago. Verse 1 lyrics are: ‘The way of the Lord, the way of the cross, the lonely and heavy way The rough hill way of Golgotha The tired appearance of the Lord Oh my Lord forgive me You suffered for sinners The way you so desperately wanted to give life to this world.’ Perhaps the reason this gospel song came to mind is because when I look back on the life of Jesus, the way of the cross that Jesus walked is engraved in my heart a little bit. I believe that believing in Jesus means that we must also walk the way of the cross that Jesus walked. If we say it in the Bible, I think what Jesus said in Matthew 7:13 is appropriate: “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.” We each have to walk the narrow path, the path of suffering, following Jesus, taking up our own cross and denying ourselves.

In 1 John 2:6, the Bible says: “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.” I would like to receive a lesson from meditating on 1 John 2:1-6 in two ways under the heading, “We must walk as Jesus did” focusing on this verse 6:

**First, the Apostle John said, “Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.”
What kind of person is he who claims to live in Him here?**

There is a song called “Abide in Me” among the Korean gospel songs that we sang often in our church before. Here's a summary of that song's lyrics: “For I am the Lord your God, so abide in Me/ Your Deliverer and Protector, a Shelter from the storm/ Don't tremble with fear. Surely I will help you/ I am holding your hand, so do not be afraid/ I have called you by name; you are Mine/ You are Mine and I am the Lord your God/ You are precious in My sight and you are highly honored/ I, the Lord your God love you/ I the Lord your God love you.”

The reason I liked to give this praise to God is because it reminded me of two Bible verses, and those two Bible verses gave me strength and comfort. Those two Bible verses are Isaiah 41:10 and Isaiah 43:1, 4 first half: (1) (Isa.41:10) “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” When I think about this Bible verse and the gospel song “Abide in Me,” the reason why this song and the words gave me strength and comfort is because my God is with me, He helps me, He strengthens me and He upholds me with His righteous right hand. (2) (Isa. 43:1, 4a) “But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. ... Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you,” When I think about this Bible verse and the gospel song “Abide in Me,” the reason why this song and the words gave me strength and comfort is because the lyrics of the song “I have called you by name; you are Mine/ You are Mine and I am the Lord your God/ You are precious in My sight and you are highly honored/ I, the Lord your God love you” seems to be based on Isaiah 43:1, 4a. The reason why these words comfort and strength me is because God has called me by name, and ‘I am His’ and I am precious and honored in God’s sight. In particular, when I see myself I am not precious and honored in my sight, it is comforting and empowering to know that God sees me as I am precious and honored, because I am bought by the atoning death of his only begotten Son, Jesus, on the cross.

In 1 John 2:6, the Apostle John said, “Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.” What does ‘living in Him’ mean here? As I meditated on this word, I was reminded of Jesus’ “The parable of the vine” in John 15, written by the same author, the Apostle John. In particular, I remembered verses 4-5: “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” Here in John 15:4, the Apostle John said, “Abide in me,” and in 1 John 2:6, he said, “live in Him.” Here, the words “Abide” and “live” have the same meaning. In other words, the Apostle John said in two verses to ‘live in the Lord/abide in the Lord’. Therefore, in 1 John 2:6, ‘living in Him’ means to abide in the Lord. Then, when we think about the word abiding in the Lord based on John 15:4-5, it means that just as a branch is attached to the vine, so living/abiding in the Lord means being attached to the Lord, never leaving the Lord and being with the Lord. The reason this is important for the Apostle John is because we can bear much fruit when we abide in the Lord as His disciples. In other words, we cannot do anything apart from Him unless we live (abide) in Him (v. 5).

Do you know why fish try to jump out of the tank? There are three reasons (Internet Hankook Ilbo): (1) First is when there is not enough dissolved oxygen in the water. At this time, most of the fish come out of the water to breathe, stick their babies out of the water and pout their mouths. (2) Second, they come to the surface to catch prey or escape from predators. (3) Third, it is said that even when the fish has a skin disease or a foreign object is on its skin, the fish flies out of the water. However, as in the well-known Korean saying, “A fish cannot live apart from a fish tank,” we cannot do anything apart from the Lord (v. 5). Conversely, if we abide in the Lord, we can do all things. If we say it in a bible verse, it is Philippians 4:13 – “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” The important thing here is not to say “I can do everything”. What is important here is “through him who gives me

strength” (v. 13). When the Lord gives us strength, we can live contentedly with Him alone, whether we are in abundance or in need (vv. 11-12). Therefore, “Whoever claims to live in Him” mentioned in 1 John 2:6 is the one who abides in the Lord. Then how can we know if we are abiding in the Lord? Look at 1 John 2:5 – “But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him.” How can we know whether we are the ones who say we live (abide) in the Lord, we can know if we are the ones who keep the Lord's word or not. In other words, if we keep the word of the Lord, we can know that we are in Him. In other words, those who claim to live in the Lord (v. 6) are those who keep the words of the Lord. And those who keep the words of the Lord, the Bible says, that God's love is truly made complete in them (v. 5). That is, those who live (those who abide in) the Lord refer to those in whom God's love is truly made complete. To put this a little differently with the words of John 15:9-10, those who live (those who abide in) the Lord are those who live in the love of God. Look at John 15:9-10: “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.” In these verses, the Apostle John says that those who live in the Lord, that is, those who abide in the Lord, keep the word of the Lord, and those who keep the Word of the Lord are those who abide in the love of the Lord. Looking at this, the Apostle John seems to be talking about these three things: ‘abiding in the Lord’, ‘keeping the word of the Lord’, and ‘abiding in the love of the Lord’. In other words, the Apostle John seems to equate ‘those who abide in the Lord’ with ‘those who keep the word of the Lord’ and ‘those who abide in the love of the Lord’. Those who abide in the Lord keep the word of the Lord, and those who keep the word of the Lord abide in the love of the Lord. Those who abide in the Lord keep His word, and the Lord's love made complete in them (1 Jn. 2:5-6). And by keeping the word of the Lord in this way, the joy of the Lord is full (abundant) in the disciples of Jesus, whose love is made complete in them (Jn. 15:11).

One of the purposes (horizontal purpose) of the Apostle John's writing of 1 John is that in 1 John 1:4, which we have already meditated on, he said: “These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.” And the vertical purpose of the Apostle John writing 1 John is to have fellowship with God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ (v. 3). In other words, the purpose of the Apostle John preaching Jesus Christ and His gospel was so that those who heard Jesus Christ and His gospel through him could believe in Jesus and have fellowship with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ and that they too may enjoy eternal life like him. If the purpose of the Apostle John preaching Jesus Christ and His gospel was “fellowship with us” (v. 3) and “our joy” (v. 4), the Apostle John wanted the saints of the early church to receive and enjoy the fullness of joy that God the Holy Spirit gives horizontally from their vertical fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. Therefore, in 1 John 2:6, “Whoever claims to live in Him” is he who abides in the Lord and keeps His word while having fellowship with God the Father and Jesus the Son. Therefore, those who live (those who abide in) the Lord are full of the joy of the Lord because the love of God is truly made complete in them. I hope and pray that we live (abide) in the Lord who lives a life filled with the joy of the Lord.

Second and last, the Apostle John said, “Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.” What does it mean to walk as Jesus did here?

One of my personal favorite phrases is “The kind of person you are is far more important than the kind of work you do”. It teaches us that “being” is far more important than “doing.” And we are taught that actions should flow naturally from existence. So, I want to pursue a life of faith that focuses on being rather than doing. Rather than focusing on the question of what I am doing for the Lord and for the saints, I want to live my life of faith by focusing on the question of who I am before God. And I want to have pain in my heart when there is only talk and no action. For example, if I love God and love my neighbor only with words, but don’t obey God’s word in real life and hate my neighbor, I want my heart to be in pain. As I was reading Psalms 23 to 31 at the last Morning Prayer meeting, I meditated on Psalms 23:4 in connection with Psalms 22:1 – (Ps. 23:4) “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me,” (Ps. 22:1) “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?” As I meditated on these two Bible verses in connection, I remembered the words of Matthew 27:46 when Jesus said, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” on the cross. And as I meditated on Matthew 27:46, I meditated in connection with Psalms 23:4, and the question I posed at that time was to ask myself what was the comfort that Jesus received before he was crucified and died on the cross, like the one who is in “the valley of the shadow of death,” and who had been forsaken by His own Father God. In other words, I wondered what kind of comfort Jesus had in the midst of the excruciating pain of being abandoned by Heavenly Father on the cross. At that time, the word that came to mind was Isaiah 53:11 that I preached the previous Sunday: “After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied” That is, God the Father was “satisfied” when he saw “the suffering of his soul” that his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, who bore all our iniquities, who suffered and died on the cross. I thought that this was the comfort Jesus received on the cross. In other words, it was thought that the comfort that Jesus received in the midst of the extreme pain of being abandoned by God the Father on the cross was to satisfy God the Father by obeying the Father God’s will even to the point of death on the cross.

In 1 John 2:6, the Apostle John said, “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did”. Here, the phrase “... must walk as Jesus did” is the lesson that ‘We must also do as Jesus did’. Then, in order for us to do as Jesus did, we must first know what Jesus did. What did Jesus do? We can think of two things, one is what Jesus did in the past and the other is what Jesus is doing now:

(1) What Jesus did in the past was to die on the cross as a propitiation for our sins.

Look at 1 John 2:2 – “and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” Here, the word “propitiation” means “satisfaction.” Jesus died on the cross as the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, which satisfies God’s holy requirement to punish sin (MacArthur). The Apostle John said this not only in 1 John 2:2 but also in 4:10 – “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” He said that God sent His Son Jesus into this world as the propitiation for our sins. Why did He do that? The Bible says that it was because God loves us. The Bible says this is love. Therefore, if we put into practice the lesson that we should do as Jesus did, we must love as Jesus loved us and took on all our sins as the propitiation for our sins. We must

love God. To love God means to obey our Heavenly Father's will, like His Son Jesus did. Also, we must love our neighbor according to the twofold commandment of Jesus. We must faithfully carry out the "ministry of reconciliation" that God has given us (2 Cor. 5:18). We must share with our neighbors the "words of reconciliation" (v. 19) that God has entrusted to us. And we must be reconciled to one another (1 Thess. 5:13).

(2) What Jesus is still doing is defending us before God the Father if we sin.

Look at 1 John 2:1 – "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The word "Advocate" here is translated "Helper" in John 16:7. Its literal meaning is "one called alongside" (MacArthur), and it means a divine being who is with the saints by their side. Its eschatological meaning means 'a lawyer who helps the defendant' in God's judgment (Internet). In modern language, it means 'defense attorney' (MacArthur). Can you imagine us standing before God's court, and Satan prosecutes us to our Judge, our holy and righteous Heavenly Father? (MacArthur) In Revelation 12:10, the Apostle John refers to Satan as "the accuser of our brothers". Even though our faithful and righteous God has forgiven us and cleansed us from all unrighteousness since we have already confessed our sins (1 Jn. 1:9), Satan pretends that we are sinners and accuses us to the Judge God (accusation). At that time, the righteous Jesus Christ, who becomes our High Priest, becomes our lawyer and defends us before God, our Judge.

How will Jesus defend us? Will He not show the nail marks and a spear mark when He died on the cross, bearing all our sins in our place, before our holy and just Judge, Heavenly Father? (Jn. 20:27; Rev. 5:9, 13: 8) Where can we find such clear and convincing evidence? Can our Heavenly Father condemn us by looking at the solid evidence? That is why the Apostle Paul not only said in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" but also said this in Romans 8:33-34 first half: "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? ..." Therefore, when we sin, we must confess our sins (1 Jn. 1:9) by believing that the righteous Jesus Christ, who is our Advocate before God the Father (2:1), became the propitiation for our sins (v. 2). Then the faithful and righteous God will forgive us our sins and will cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1:9). And we must keep God's commandments (2:3). If we confess our sins and don't keep the commandments of God again, we are liars and the truth is not in us (v. 4). But if we keep the commandments of God, "by this we shall know that we know him" (v. 3). In other words, we come to know God more clearly or experientially by obeying God's commandments. And the Bible says that if we obey God's word, God's love will truly be perfected in us (v. 5).

We who say we live in Jesus must do as Jesus does. Just as branches are attached to the vine, we must abide in the Lord and never leave Him and be with Him. He who abides in the Lord keeps His word. And he who keeps His word will truly have the love of God perfected in him. In a word, he who lives in the Lord keeps the word of the Lord, and he who keeps the word of the Lord abides in the love of the Lord. And the joy of the Lord is full in the disciple of Jesus, whose love is perfected in him by keeping the word of the Lord in this way. Therefore, such a

person bears much fruit. Then the Bible says that he who says he lives in Jesus, he does what Jesus did. What did Jesus do? What Jesus did in the past was to die on the cross as the propitiation for our sins. Because God loves us, He paid the penalty for our sins by having Jesus died on the cross as the sacrifice of the Passover lamb. Therefore, God's holy requirements were satisfied. We who know this love of God obey the twofold commandment of Jesus and love God and also love his neighbor. And we faithfully carry out the ministry of reconciliation that the Lord has given us with the word of reconciliation. What Jesus is still doing is defending us before our Heavenly Father when we sin. When we stand before God's court, when Satan prosecutes us to our Judge, holy and just, Heavenly Father, that is, when Satan pretends that we are sinful and tells that to God, Jesus, who is the defendant's lawyer, is defending us before God. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. It is God who justifies us, who can condemn us?

As the one who lives in Jesus Christ, and who wants to obey His word and abide in His love,

James Kim

(August 4, 2019, with gratitude for the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross as the propitiation for my sins, rose from the grave and ascended into heaven, who is still defending me at the right hand of God)

The darkness is passing away And the true Light is already shining.

[1 John 2:7-11]

Do you think our church is a church of love? Do you feel the love of the Lord in our church? As we start the year 2019, under the motto “Love one another,” we set three goals: Gratitude, Forgiveness and Sacrifice. And up to now, while we worship God every Sunday, we have chosen the gospel song “Love is always patient” as the offering song, and are offering it to God every Sunday when we do offering to God. The reason I chose this song as the offering song is to dedicate and devote ourselves to love before God while giving offering to God during worship. This is how the song goes: “Love is always patient, love is always kind. Love does not envy, Love does not boast, Love is not proud. Love is not rude, Love is not self-seeking, Love is not easily angered, Love rejoices with the truth. Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of faith, hope and love is love.” This song is based on 1 Corinthians 13, the “love chapter” of the Bible. That is, when we give this praise to God every Sunday, we need a dedicated heart and attitude that we will obey God's word of 1 Corinthians 13. This is important because, as Jesus said in Matthew 24:12, “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.” Even today, while praising this offering song during the Sunday worship service, the lyrics, “Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres,” comes to my mind over and over again. In particular, the lyrics of ‘Love hope and trust’ seem to be comforting and encouraging. Maybe the reason is because I am praying to God for giving stronger and firm faith to my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ around me who are suffering, even if they are in a situation where they can no longer hope, so that they may believe against all hope like Abraham, the father of faith (Rom. 4:18).

In 1 John 2:8, the Apostle John says: “On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.” As I read this verse, I became interested in the Korean Modern Bible translation: ‘The darkness has passed away and the true Light is already shining.’ And I divided into two main parts to meditate on.

**The first thing that came to my mind is the question of what does it mean to say,
“The darkness has passed and the true Light is already shining.”**

I came to think of the meaning by dividing it into two parts. First, what is “the true light” and “darkness” that the apostle John is talking about? When we say “the true Light” here, we can think of God who is the Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all, which the Apostle John spoke of in 1 John 1:5. But when the Apostle John says that this true Light is already shining (2:8), I think that true Light that the Apostle John is talking about here refers to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Bible verse that further confirms this is John 1:9 – “There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.” Looking at this word, I think that “the true Light” in 1 John 2:8 refers to Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came into this world. Then, in 1 John 2:8, when the Apostle John spoke of “the true Light,” why did he say “the true Light” instead of just ‘the light’? I found the reason in 2 Corinthians 11:14 – “No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.” In other words, the reason the Apostle John wrote the letter of 1 John and said that God, who has no darkness at all, is “the true Light” is because of Satan who disguises himself as an angel of light. I think the Apostle John said that God was “the true Light” because there is a false light. Here, “the true Light” refers to the Son Jesus Christ, while the false light refers to Satan and the Antichrist. Look at 1 John 2:18, 22: “Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. ... Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.” As the Apostle John thought of the recipients of the letter when he was writing the letter of 1 John, he knew that many antichrists had already arisen among them. That was why I think he said God as “the true Light” in 1 John 2:8. Another thing, when I think of “the true Light” and “the darkness” of 1 John 2:8, I remembered the 4 light and darkness that we had already meditated on based on 1 John 1:5-10: (1) The light is life/eternal life and the darkness is death/eternal death (Jn. 1:4; 1 Jn. 1:1, 2), (b) The light is the truth and the darkness is lie (1 Jn. 1:6), (c) The light is love and the darkness is hate (2:9, 11), (d) The light is righteousness and the darkness is unrighteousness or evil (1:9; 3:12). And when I meditate on today's text, I think that when the Apostle John spoke of “the true Light” and “the darkness,” I think he had “love” and “hate” in mind. The reason I think so is because in 1 John 2:9-11, the Apostle John is talking about love and hate.

Another thing to think about is, what does the Apostle John mean when the darkness is “passing away” and the true Light “already shining”? First of all, what does the verb “passing away” mean here? The same verb is found in 1 John 2:17: “The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” Looking at this verse, the meaning of the word “the darkness is passing away” in 1 John 2:8 means that the world and its lusts are all passing away (the verb ‘passing away’ is present progressive). The world and its lust here refer to the things from the world that is, “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life,” which the Apostle John said in verse 16. Then, “the darkness is passing away” means I think that this world, the kingdom of Satan ruled by Satan and the Antichrist, who is the false light, also has its lusts: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the boastful pride of life, and death/eternal death, lies, hate, unrighteousness/evil, are passing away. Then why is it all passing away? This is because Jesus Christ, who is “the true Light,” is already shining as the Apostle John said in 1 John 2:8. Isn't that obvious? Doesn't darkness go away when the light shines? Then, what does the phrase ‘the true Light is already shining’ mean? (v. 8) Look at John 1:4-5: “In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” Jesus Christ,

who is the true Light, came into this dark world about 2,000 years ago already as “the light of men” (v/ 4) and “the light of the world” (9:5). The Apostle John said of this in 1 John 1:2, “and the life was manifested.” In other words, Jesus Christ, the true Light and eternal life, was with God the Father and was manifested. In other words, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is eternal life, came to the dark world of sinners who had to die forever because of the sin of the first Adam. The Apostle John spoke of this fact in 1 John 2:8 saying, “the true Light is already shining.” Here, the verb “already shining” is in the present tense like the verb “the darkness is passing away.” In other words, just as the darkness is passing by now, Jesus, who came to this world about 2,000 years ago as the Light of man and of the world, not only shone the light of eternal life, but is also shining it now.

The second and last thing that came to my mind is the question of who are the 'those in the light' and the 'those in the darkness'.

Look at 1 John 2:9-11: “The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” In this word, the Apostle John told the Jewish Christians to whom he wrote his letter that “an old commandment” they had from the beginning and had already heard is “a new commandment” (vv. 7, 8), distinguishing between those in the light and those in the darkness. The reason he did this was because he wanted the Jewish Christians who received his letter to live a life of loving each other like the children of light because the darkness was passing away and Jesus, the true Light, was already shining until now (3:23). Then why did the Apostle John want them to live a life of loving each other as the children of light? The reason was because he wanted those who believe in Jesus Christ, who is the true Light and eternal life, have fellowship with God (1:6), and those who keep the Lord's commandments (2:3, 5) love their neighbors as themselves according to the twofold commandment of Jesus so that God's love to be perfected in them (v. 5) and the joy of God to be made complete in them (1:4). Because this is how they should live, partly enjoying eternal life in heaven on earth as well (1:4), the Apostle John rewrote the new commandment (“an old commandment”) to the Jewish Christians who received his letter of 1 John. And because this was what they must do as Jesus did (v. 6), the Apostle John exhorted them to live a life of loving their brothers, as the new commandment said. But what was the problem? Look at 1 John 2:9 – “Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.” I am reminded of 1 John 2:6, which we have already meditated on: “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.” The reason I remembered this word is because in 1 John 2:9, the Bible says, “Anyone who claims to be in the light” In other words, those who claim to live in Jesus Christ (v. 6) are those who claim to live in the light (v. 9). And whoever says he lives in the light must also do as Jesus Christ did (v. 6). What does it mean to do as Jesus Christ did? To ask otherwise, did Jesus Christ love His brother or did He hate him? You may think that this is a very obvious question. Jesus loved His brother. Then, we who say we live in Jesus, and we who say we live in the Light, what should we do? Shouldn't we also love our brothers like Jesus did? But, perhaps, among the Jewish Christians who received the Apostle John's letter of 1 John, there were those who said they lived in the Light and hated their brother (v. 9).

If we say that we live in the Lord and obey His commandments like the children of light, but if we live by hating our neighbors rather than loving them, 1 John 2:7-11 teaches us two things:

(1) He who says he is in the Light and hates his brother is a man who is still in the darkness” (v. 9).

Not only that, he who says he is in the Light and hates his brother is still walking in the darkness. Look at v. 11: “But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; ...” If we look again at 1 John 1:5-6, which we have already meditated on, the Bible says that God is light, and God has no darkness at all. So if we say that we have a relationship with that God and walk in the darkness, then we are lying and aren’t practice the truth. If we relate this to 1 John 2:9, 11, if we say that we are in the Light and don’t love our brother but rather hate him, then we are still in the darkness and still walking in the darkness. And this is a lie and we aren’t practicing the truth. Look at 1 John 4:20 – “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.”

(2) He who says he is in the Light and hates his brother, doesn’t know where he is going because the darkness has blinded him.

Look at 1 John 2:11b – “... he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.” What if we blind our eyes? Can we really walk without sight? If we lose our sight, it is difficult to walk straight towards our destination with the right sense of direction. It’s not easy without anyone’s help. The Apostle John said in John 1:5, “The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.” And he said in 1 John 2:11, “...he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.” When we think of these two words in connection, he who claims to be in the Light but hates his brother, the darkness blinded his eyes, which means that he doesn’t really know Jesus who is the Light. More specifically, he who says he is in Jesus who is the Light and hates his brother doesn’t realize the “life” (eternal life) that is in Jesus (Jn. 1:4-5). That is, he who is in Jesus has eternal life because he understands the eternal life that is in Jesus, and he loves his neighbor as himself. But he who says he is in the Light and hates his brother doesn’t understand the eternal life that is in Jesus who is the Light, because darkness has blinded him (1 Jn. 2:11). However, if we say that we live in the Lord and are living in obedience to the commandments of Jesus as the children of light and loving our neighbors, then we live in the light and there is nothing in us to make us stumble. Look at 1 John 2:10 – “Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.” If we say that we believe in Jesus and abide (live) in Jesus, but don’t love our brothers and sisters in Christ, but rather hate them, then don’t we have something that makes us stumble? Not only the church brothers and sisters in Christ, if we don’t love our spouse and our children who are the closest neighbors with the Lord’s love, then don’t we have something that makes us to stumble? If we don’t even have this stumbling in us, isn’t it a proof that our hearts are hardened right

now? In 1 John 2:10, the Apostle John says, "Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble." Here, what does it mean by 'nothing makes him stumble'? There are at least 3 Bible verses that help us to understanding its meaning: (1) (Jn. 6:61) "But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble?" (2) (Jn. 11:9) "Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light." (3) (Jn. 16:1) ""These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling." If we look at these three verses from the Gospel of John written by the same author, the Apostle John, the meaning of the word 'nothing makes him stumble' in 1 John 2:10 means, I think, 'no stumbling blocks' or 'not stumbling'. In other words, he who loves his brother abides in the Light, and doesn't stumble in himself. What do you think? Do we have no stumbling in our hearts now? Are we living in Jesus who is the true Light? Is there no stumbling in us because we love our brothers and sisters in Christ? Or is there something that makes us stumble in us because we hate someone now even though we say we are in the Light? Don't we have a stumbling block in our hearts right now? Are we not stumbling because we don't love but hate our brothers in Christ?

Jesus Christ, who is the true Light, was with God the Father and came to this dark world and appeared to us. As a result, the darkness is passing. This dark world and all its lusts are passing away. In other words, because the true Light, Jesus Christ, is already shining, this world, the kingdom of Satan, ruled by Satan and the antichrist, which is the false light, and its lusts - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the boasting of what he has and does, and (eternal) death, lie, hate, unrighteousness and evil, are all passing away. Therefore, we who believe in Jesus Christ, the children of light, must love our neighbor as Jesus commanded. When we, who believe in Jesus Christ and receive eternal life, love our neighbors as obedience to His commandment, not only that we will be filled with God's joy in us, but also live on this earth partially enjoying eternal life of heaven. But if we say we are in the Light and hate our brothers and sisters in Christ, then we are still in the darkness. If we hate them, we are still in the darkness and are walking in the darkness, and this is lying and not practicing the truth. Also, because the darkness has blinded us, we don't know where we are going. In other words, we don't really know Jesus who is the Light. If we truly know Jesus, we must love. If we say we live in Jesus, then we must do as Jesus did. In other words, we must love our neighbors to the point of our death, just as Jesus loved us to the point of dying on the cross. Then there will be nothing in us that make us stumble.

Wanting to love my neighbor as Jesus loves me,

James Kim

(September 8, 2019, Praying for loving others without anything that makes me stumble)

Brotherly love without stumbling

“The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.” (1 John 2:10)

How often do you go up to your church on Sunday to worship and praise God, knowing that “your brother has something against you” (Mt. 5:23), and that you aren’t reconciled to him yet? Even when we go up to the church on a Sunday morning, there seem to be times when we give praise and worship God in a rather difficult relationship with each other, such as couple argue with each other, and parents argues even with their children, and church members argue with each other. That’s why Jesus tells us first to go and be reconciled to our brother, then come and offering worship to Him (v. 24). Are we really obeying this word of Jesus?

For some reason, even within the community of the church, I think there are some people who have a difficult relationship with each other. Even though they have a difficult relationship with each other, on the surface, they come up to the church and shake hands or greet each other while sitting in one place to worship the Holy God. Indeed, it is certain that human love is fragile, scarce, and unreliable. Therefore, we must love each other only with the love of God. When we do so by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us and produces the fruit of the Spirit, that is love, then we can keep the unity of the church. Regarding this kind of brotherly love, I would like to say that it is ‘Brotherly love without stumbling’ based on 1 John 2:10.

But if there is stumbling to the brotherly love that exists within us, why is there stumbling? The reason is because we hate our brother (1 Jn. 2:11). So I want to think about three things and receive lessons regarding the sin of hating our brother in Christ with our hearts even though we may say we love him with our lips.

First, he who hates his brother is in darkness.

Look at 1 John 2:11 – “But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” God is Light. And there is no darkness in Him (1:5). Therefore, if we say that we have fellowship with God, but do not love our brother but hate him, we are lying because we are walking in darkness (v. 6). The Bible says that such liars walk in darkness and don’t know where we are going (2:11). The darkness has blinded us who hate our brother (v. 11). As a result, because we cannot see or feel the love of God, not only we don’t walk in the truth, but also we cannot do so. Though our heads we know that we should love our brother, but our hearts not only love our brother but refuse to

even receive our brother's love because our dark hearts are filled with hatred. We who say we are in the Light and hate our brother are still in the darkness (2:9). The love of God has not truly been perfected in us (v. 5). We aren't living a worthy life as children of the Light. Rather, they are committing the sin of obscuring the glory of God.

Second, he who hates his brother is a murderer.

Look at 1 John 3:15 – “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” It's no wonder the world hates us (3:13). In a way, I think this is perfectly normal. But what is strange is that brothers in Christ hating each other, even though it is perfectly normal for them to love each other. When the brothers hate each other like this, the Bible says, ‘They are murderers’ (v. 15). Isn't that surprising? Usually when we think of murder, we think of killing people with a knife, a gun, etc. But the Apostle John says that hating a brother is a murderer. Among the Ten Commandments we know, the 7th commandment, “You shall not murder” (Exod. 20:13), comes in the New Testament and is Jesus' second commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mk. 12:31). When we think about it, if we don't love our brother and hate him, we aren't loving our neighbor, but killing our brother. Even though we are committing such a great sin, I think we consider hating our brother a light sin. Therefore, I think that we are slow to repent of committing the sin of murder before God by hardening our hearts.

The Bible says that since Jesus laid down His life for us, we also ought to lay down our lives for our brother (1 Jn. 3:16). Also, the Bible says, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (Jn. 15:13). God demonstrates His own love for us is this: While we were still powerless, sinners, and enemies, Christ died for us on the cross (Rom. 8:6, 8, 10). Therefore, we also must demonstrate God's love by loving our brother with His love. We should never commit the sin of murder by hating our brother.

Third and last, he who hates his brother cannot love God.

Look at 1 John 4:20 – “If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.” I think this truth is very common sense. How can we say that we love God whom we cannot see when we don't love our brother whom we see? However, I think we are committing a number of actions that go beyond this very common sense. In other words, while praising and worshiping God whom we cannot see and professing our love for Him countless times, we hate our brother so easily whom we can see. I think we have a tendency to judge and criticize our brother too easily, and to take too lightly to forgive our brother. As a result, we see both sides that seem to love the invisible God so much, but don't love the visible brother. This is by no means the love of God (vertical love) or the neighbor love (horizontal love) taught in the Bible.

The love taught in the Bible is to love our neighbor because we love God, and to love God because we love our neighbor. In other words, love for God and love for neighbor are inextricably linked. If we love God, we must love our neighbor. And to love our neighbor is to express (demonstrate) our love for God. Therefore, to hate the

brother we see is not loving God. In other words, it could also be said that to hate our brother is to hate God. He who hates his brother doesn't love God and cannot love Him.

We have entered an age when the love of many will grow cold because iniquity has increased (Mt. 24:12). Human love inevitably decreases over time, but God's love cannot but increase (Ps. 117:2). Our hearts and consciences will be free from stumbling when we love our brother with the ever-increasing great love of God. I hope and pray that we will never come to the Lord to give praise and worship to Him with a stumbling block in our hearts because we hate our brother.

Pursuing brotherly love without stumbling,

James Kim

(On November 14, 2008, Thinking of my beloved father-in-law who first sent his older brother to heaven today)

The one who does the will of God

[1 John 2:12-17]

If you are a Christian living a life of faith, there is no one who hasn't thought about what God's will is. That is why the will of God is very important to the Christians who live life of faith. But the problem is that our hearts know and understand God's will and wants to live according to His will, but our fragile body keeps pursuing "my will" and wants to live according to "my will". What should we do when 'my will' and 'God's will' collide like this? For example, if God's will is to love our neighbor as ourselves, but my will is to hate our neighbor, what should we do? We must also pray to God the prayer that Jesus offered to His Father on the Mount of Olives the night before His crucifixion: "... My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Mt. 26:39). So, like Jesus, who obeyed the will of God the Father even to death on the cross (Phil 2:8), I hope and pray that we too will submit to the will of the Lord even to death.

In 1 John 2:17, the Apostle John says: "The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever." I would like to receive five lessons from 1 John 2:12-17 based on verse 17 under the title "The one who does the will of God".

First, the one who does the will of God knows Jesus Christ.

Look at 1 John 2:13, 14: "I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning ... I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning" Who is the world saying Jesus is? A great teacher? A founder of Christianity? Or is Jesus just a myth created by Christians? Who do you think Jesus is? In Matthew 16, when Jesus came to the region of Caesarea in Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (Mt. 16:13). Then the disciples answered, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others say Jeremiah or one of the prophets" (v. 14). Then Jesus asked the disciples again, "Who do you say I am?" (v. 15) Then Simon Peter answered: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16). This confession of Peter's faith was revealed to him by God the Father in heaven (v. 17). Then who is Jesus, whom God the Father has revealed to you and made known to you?

In 1 John 2:13, 14, the Apostle John repeats the same words twice. The content of the same word is, 'I am writing (I have written) to you because you know Him who has been from the beginning.' Who is the One who has been from the beginning that the Apostle John is talking about here? In 1 John 1:1-2, which we have already

meditated on, the Apostle John refers to Jesus Christ as the Word of Life who was from the beginning, who was manifested to us. The Apostle John says that the reason he is writing the letter to 1 John is that among the recipients of his letter, the believers who are spiritually mature, like the physical parents, know Jesus Christ (MacArthur). Who is this Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins (2:2). In other words, Jesus Christ died on the cross as the sacrifice of the Passover lamb for our sins, thereby satisfying God's holy requirement of punishing our sins. Also, Jesus Christ is the righteous Advocate who defends us before God the Father (v. 1). When we stand before God's court and Satan prosecutes us to our holy and righteous Heavenly Father, who is our Judge, Jesus, who has become the defense attorney, defends us before God who is the Judge. Satan, the accuser of our brethren (Rev. 12:10), is the one who pretends that we have sin and accuses us before the Judge Heavenly Father God even though we have already confessed our sins, and God, who is faithful and righteous, has already forgiven us and cleansed us from all unrighteousness (1: 9). So whenever Satan does it, Jesus, who is our Advocate, defending us before God.

The one who does the will of God know this Jesus Christ. And he who knows this Jesus Christ and does the will of God enjoys fellowship with this Jesus Christ (1:3). In other words, the one who does the will of God have fellowship with Jesus Christ and believe that the blood of Jesus the Son of God cleanses him from all sin (v. 7). Moreover, the one who does the will of God proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ (v. 5). And the one who does the will of God keeps the commandments of Jesus (2:3). That is, the one who does the will of God loves the Lord God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his mind, and love his neighbor as himself (Mt. 22:37, 39). Therefore, his heart is full of joy (1 Jn. 1:4).

Second, the one who does the will of God knows the Father God.

Look at 1 John 2:14a – “Little children, I write to you because you know the Father. ...” (CEB). Do you not want to see Heavenly Father? Philip, one of Jesus' 12 disciples, wanted to see Heavenly Father. So he said to Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us” (Jn. 14:8). Then Jesus said to Philip, “Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?” (v. 9) In verse 7 He said: “If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

If we look again at the first half of 1 John 2:13 and the middle of verse 14, which we have already meditated on, the Apostle John said, “because you know Him who has been from the beginning.” That is, the recipients of the Apostle John's letter knew Jesus Christ, who had been from the beginning. That means they knew God the Father, the Father of Jesus Christ. In 1 John 2:14, the apostle John said “Little children, I write to you because you know the Father” (CEB). This means that Jewish Christians, the recipients of the Apostle John's letter, not only knew Jesus Christ, but also knew God the Father, the Father of Jesus Christ. So, who did the Apostle John say who God the Father is 1 John? He says two things:

(1) In 1 John 1:5, the Apostle Paul said that “God is Light.”

The Apostle John said that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all (v. 5). For reference, in John 8:12 and John 9:5, Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” or “I am the light of the world while I am in the world.”

(2) In 1 John 4:8, 16, the Apostle John said that “God is love.”

The Apostle John said in 1 John 4:9-10 that God sent His Son, Jesus, into this world as the propitiation sacrifice. The reason is to make an atoning sacrifice for our sins (v. 10). A similar word is found in John 3:16. The Apostle John said that God loves us so much, that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus. The reason is so that everyone who believes in Jesus might have eternal life (v. 16).

The one who does the will of God know this Heavenly Father. And he who knows his Heavenly Father and does the will of God enjoys fellowship with his Heavenly Father (1:3). And he walks in the light “as he is in the light” (v. 7), as he is having fellowship with God. In other words, he who does the will of God has nothing in him to make him stumble, because he abides in the light and loves his brother (2:10). And because he loves his brother, his heart is full of joy (1:4).

Third, the one who does the will of God overcomes the evil one.

Look at 1 John 2:13b, 14b – “... young men, because you have overcome the evil one I have written to you, ... young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.” The name of our church is “Victory Presbyterian Church”. And as the name of the church, our church prays that all of our members will be victorious in the fight against ourselves, sin, the world, Satan, and death. Our church has to live a militant Christian life with the assurance of victory because Jesus Christ fought and triumphed over Satan and death on the cross. We must have a spiritual struggle. Then, the church is a group of militant Christians who fight spiritual warfare with the victorious Jesus as our Commander.

So what should we do to live a militant Christian life? As soldiers of the militant cross in this spiritual warfare, what we need is the full armor of God. Look at Ephesians 6:11-13: “Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” Here, “the full armor of God” is mentioned from Ephesians 6:14, and it is “the belt of the truth,” “the breastplate of righteousness,” and “having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace,” “the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one” and “the sword of the Holy Spirit, which is the word of God” (vv. 14-17). Then, the Bible emphasizes prayer and petition, praying all the times in the Spirit, and urges us to always be alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints (v. 18).

There is a hymn that we do not sing that many times, but are familiar with. It is called “Up and Fight Against the Devil.” If we look at verses 1 and 2 of the hymn, it says: (v. 1) “Up and fight against the devil, You whose sins are wash'd away! Bold against the host of evil come and gather for the fray. See the judgment coming closer, And perdition's awful Day, The Day is almost here!” (v. 2) “Up and fight against the devil, You whose sins are wash'd away! Ever nearer comes the tumult of the foe's immense array. Cast our own offenses from us And the sins that so betray; Trust God and cast out fear!” Looking at the lyrics of this hymn, we can think of the words of James 4:7: “... Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Who is “the devil” here? Look at John 8:44 – “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

In 1 John 2:13, 14, the Apostle John said: “...young men, because you have overcome the evil one I have written to you ... young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.” The Apostle John said that he was writing to the Jewish Christians to whom he received his letters, not only because they knew Jesus Christ, who had been from the beginning, and knew God the Father, but also because they had overcome the evil one. Here, the modern Korean Bible translates “the evil one” as “the devil”. In fact, in 1 John 3:8, 10, the Apostle John spoke of “the devil”: “He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. ... This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.” Looking at these words, the Apostle John distinguished “the children of God” and “the children of the devil” and exhorted the children of God “do not let anyone lead you astray” in verse 7. And then in verses 8-10, the Apostle John said that those who belonged to the devil, that is, the children of the devil, were sinners and didn't practice righteousness. Here, the children of the devil who don't practice righteousness means that they don't love their brother. But the children of God are “the one who practice righteousness” (v. 7). And they don't continue to sin (v. 9). That means that the children of God don't continue to commit the sin of hating their brother. This means that even though the children of God sometimes fall into the delusion of the devil and hate their brother, they don't continue to hate their brother, but confess their sins of hating their brother (1:9). By doing so, their sin is forgiven in the name of Jesus (2:12) and love their brother again (v. 10).

How, then, can the children of God fight and overcome the devil? How can we fight and overcome the devil's temptation of hating our brother? Look at 1 John 2:14 – “... young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.” According to this word, the secret that we, the children of God, can fight and overcome the devil's temptation of hating our brothers is by being strong and the word of God dwells in us. Here, the word “you are strong” means that we are strong because the powerful word of God abides in us. And the fact that the word of God dwells in us is proof that our faith in it is so strong and firm. So the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:4 – “for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.” The hymn “Encamped Along the Hills of Light” comes to my mind:

- (v. 1) Encamped along the hills of light, Ye Christian soldiers, rise,
 And press the battle ere the night Shall veil the glowing skies.
 Against the foe in vales below Let all our strength be hurled;
 Faith is the victory, we know, That overcomes the world.
- (v. 2) On ev-'ry hand the foe we find Drawn up in dread array;
 Let tents of ease be left behind, And onward to the fray.
 Salvation's hel-met on each head, With truth all girt about,
 The earth shall tremble 'neath our tread, And echo with our shout.
- (v. 3) To him that overcomes the foe White raiment shall be given
 Before the angels he shall know His name confess'd in heaven.
 Then onward from the hills of light, Our hearts with love aflame,
 We'll vanquish all the hosts of night In Jesus' con-qu'ring name.

[Chorus]

Faith is the victory! Faith is the victory!
 Oh, glorious victory, That overcomes the world.

Faith is the victory. Faith in the Lord Jesus fights and overcomes this sinful world and the devil. Although the devil tempts us to make us to hate our brothers and sisters in Christ over and over again, faith is the victory over that temptation (1 Jn. 5:4). And because the God in us, the object of our faith, is greater than “those who are in the world” [more powerful than the devil (Modern Bible)] (4:4), we will win in fighting against this sinful world and the devil. May our hearts be filled with joy as we all stand firm in the faith and love our neighbor as ourselves, as Jesus commanded (1:4).

Fourth, the one who does the will of God doesn't love the world and the things in the world.

Look at 1 John 2:15 – “Do not love the world nor the things in the world If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The world we live in is not an object of love, but an object of evangelism. We must not love this sinful world. We are not supposed to be friends with this world. The reason is because when we become friends with the world, we ourselves become enemies of God (Jam. 4:4). As we are those who belong to God, we must preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to those of this world. The reason is because those who belong to this world received eternal punishment because they don't believe in Jesus Christ.

In 1 John 2:15, the Apostle John says: “Do not love the world nor the things in the world If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The Apostle John said not to love the world and the things in the world. What is the reason? Look at 1 John 5:19 – “We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.” The reason we shouldn't love the world or the things in it is because we belong to God and the world is under the control of the devil. Then what are the things in the world that we shouldn't love?

Look at 1 John 2:16 – “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.” The things of this world under the control of the devil are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. That’s why we, as those who belong to God, must not love all these things. Also, since the world and its lusts are passing away (v. 17), we, as lovers of God the Father, must not love the world or the things in this world (v. 15). The Bible says that if we love all these things in this world, the love of our Heavenly Father is not in us (v. 15). That means, because the love of God the Father is in us, we don’t love the world or the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the boastful pride of life in this world. Rather, we live according to the twofold commandment of Jesus, loving the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul, and with all our mind and loving our neighbor as ourselves (Mt. 22:37-39). By doing so, God’s love will truly be perfected in us (1 Jn. 2:5).

We must not love the world or the things in this world. Everything in this world is passing away, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. Because the love of Heavenly Father is in us, we must not love this world, but must do the will of God. The will of God is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, which is the twofold commandment of Jesus. Therefore, may our hearts be filled with joy (1:4).

Fifth and last, the one who does the will of God knows that his sins have been forgiven for Jesus’ name’s sake.

Look at 1 John 2:12 – “I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake.” If we say that we have fellowship with God and hate our brothers, we are walking in the darkness. And this is a sin of lying and also of not practicing the truth. To walk in the darkness is not keeping the commandment of God (v. 4). To walk in the darkness is to hate our brother (vv. 9, 11). He who walks in the darkness is violating God’s commandment and sins against God. Yet he doesn’t confess his sin. But he who walks in the light confesses his sin. The reason is because he who walks in the light realizes his sin in the light, unlike he who walks in the darkness. And the reason why he admits and confesses the sin he has realized is because he has the assurance of the forgiveness of the sin. That is, he confesses his sin because he believes that the blood of Jesus, the Son of God, will cleanse him from all sin. Also, the reason why he who walks in the light confesses his sin is because he believes and has assurance in the word of 1 John 1:9. In other words, the reason he who walks in the light confesses his sin is because he believes that God is faithful and just and will forgive him his sin. This is because the righteous Jesus Christ became the propitiation for our sins (2:1, 2).

In 1 John 2:12, the Apostle John says: “I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake.” The Apostle John said that the reason he was writing to the Jewish Christians was because they not only knew Jesus Christ and God the Father, but also stood firm in the word of God by faith and overcame the devil (vv. 13-14). And the Apostle John exhorted them not to love the world or the things in the world. The reason is because the Jewish Christians who receive his letter have love for God the Father, and because

all that is in this world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, does not come from the Father, but from the world (vv. 15-16). And because the world and its lusts are passing away (v. 17), he said not to love the world or the things in the world (v. 15). In this way, the Apostle John, telling the recipients of the reason for writing this letter of 1 John, said in verse 12, "I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake." God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into this world as the propitiation for our sins (4:10). Jesus Christ, the propitiation for our sins (2:2), is our defense before our Heavenly Father even when we sin (v. 1). Therefore, the Apostle John said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1:9).

Our sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus. As a sinless person, Jesus came to this world to take away our sins (3:5) and actually took on all our sins and died on the cross for the forgiveness of all our sins. Therefore, we Christians who believe in Jesus have the assurance of the forgiveness of sins and keep the Lord's commandment. We are dedicated to loving our neighbors as Jesus loves us. But the problem is that there are times when we break the commandments of the Lord and hate our brothers and sisters in Christ. That means we are in the darkness (v. 9) even though we say we are in the light. Also, we are lying, aren't practicing the truth and walking in the darkness even though we say that we have fellowship with God (1:6). But if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1:9). We receive forgiveness of sins through the name of Jesus (2:12). And we love our brothers and sisters in obedience to the Lord's commandment as evidence of our genuine repentance. Therefore, our hearts will be full of joy.

It reminds me of the hymn "My Jesus, as Thou Wilt": (v. 1) My Jesus, as Thou wilt! O may Thy will be mine; Into Thy hand of love I would my all resign. Through sorrow, or thro' joy, Conduct me as Thine own; And help me still to say, My Lord, Thy will be done. (v. 2) My Jesus, as Thou wilt! Though seen through many a tear, Let not my star of hope Grow dim or disappear. Since Thou on earth hast wept, And sorrowed oft alone, If I must weep with Thee, My Lord, Thy will be done. (v. 3) My Jesus, as Thou wilt! All shall be well for me; Each changing future scene I gladly trust with Thee. Straight to my home above I travel calmly on; And sing, in life or death, My Lord, Thy will be done. Amen. The Bible 1 John 2:17 says, "The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever." Focusing on this verse, I meditated on five things about "The one who does the will of God": The one who does the will of God (1) knows Jesus Christ, (2) knows the Father God, (3) overcomes the evil one, (4) doesn't love the world and the things in the world, and (5) knows that his sins have been forgiven for Jesus' name's sake. I hope and pray that we are the ones who do the will of God.

Desiring to continue to be broken and built up as the one who does the will of the Lord,

James Kim

(October 20, 2019, As I get to know the Holy Triune God, I hope and pray that I will live a victorious life in the fight against the devil, the sinful world, myself, and death)

“This is how we know it is the last hour.”

[1 John 2:18-25]

You, too, may have heard the term “the end of the world.” A teenager said he was offended by a conversation with his mom and dad. After that, he texted his friend ‘c’ and ‘b’. Do you know what those two alphabets means? They mean ‘crazy’ and ‘bullshit’. That’s what the teenager sent the text message to his friend. It is an unimaginable age (the state and condition of the world as seen in people's daily life, customs, etc.), and there is no choice but to say, ‘The end of the world really is the end of the world!’ (Internet) Even among us Christians, it seems that we often say, ‘It's really the end of the world!’ In particular, ‘Looking at the way the world is going, it’s really the end of the world. We seem to say that the time has come for Jesus to come. When we say so, “the end of the world” assumes that the second coming of Jesus is almost near (Internet).

Do you actually think that the second coming of Jesus is almost near? To ask otherwise, do you now believe in “the last days”? Personally, when I think of the word “the last days”, 2 Timothy 3:1-5 comes to mind: “But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God -- having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.” If we look at these verses, there are 19 signs that will appear in the last days: (1) People will be lovers of themselves, (2) Lovers of money, (3) Boastful, (4) Proud, (5) Abusive, (6) Disobedient to their parents, (7) Ungrateful, (8) Unholy, (9) Without love, (10) Unforgiving, (11) Slanderous, (12) Without self-control, (13) Brutal, (14) Not lovers of the good, (15) Treacherous, (16) Rash, (17) Conceited, (18) Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, and (19) Having a form of godliness but denying its power. And when I think of these 19 signs that will appear in the last days, I mainly thought of three things: “People will be lovers of themselves,” “lovers of money,” and “Disobedient to their parents.” I don't think it can be denied that the 19 signs of the last days are already appearing. In fact, how many of us are living in a form of godliness, denying the power of godliness? Are we now unholy, without self-control and lovers of pleasure? Aren't we proud, arrogant, and boastful now? Aren't we without love, ungrateful, and unforgiving? Aren't we not lovers of the good, treacherous and rash? I think the time that we are living in is the last days and the second coming of Jesus is almost near. I saw an article on the Internet that summarized the signs of Jesus' second coming into 5 points based on the Bible in their own way: (1) The gospel is preached to all peoples, (2)

The full number of Jews enters and fills the church, (3) Apostasy occurs among those who believed in the gospel and churches, (4) People of lawlessness appear and aggravate confusion, (5) Earthquakes and wars occur all over the world and the Great Tribulation this will happen (Internet).

In 1 John 2:18, the Apostle John said: “Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.” In this verse, the Apostle John said two things to himself or to the Christians who received his letter:

First, the Apostle John said about “the last hour.”

Looking back at 1 John 2:18, the Apostle John mentioned “the last hour” twice as “this is the last hour” and “it is the last hour” to the Christians to who received his letter. Here, “the last hour” that the Apostle John was talking about refers to “the last days” that we mainly think about and speak of. Then, I think if that time when the Apostle John wrote this letter of 1 John in the first century A.D. was already “the last hour,” the time that we are living in is about 2,000 years later, we can be confused about “the last days.” The Bible says that the last days or the last hours began when Jesus first came to this world. Look at 1 Peter 1:20 – “He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.” And the Bible Hebrews 1:1-2a says: “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” What does it mean? It means that in the Old Covenant Age, which is the Old Testament, God continued to speak the revelation of God’s salvation through prophets, but in the New Covenant Age, the New Testament, God finally sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to this earth, and in these last days, God has spoken to us by his Son Jesus (Internet). In this way, with Jesus, these last days have begun, and the end times will end when Jesus comes back to the world. In other words, the end times begin when Jesus came into this world and will end when Jesus returns. Therefore, in 1 John 2:18, “the last hour” spoken of by the Apostle John in 1 John 2:18 refers to the period between the first and second coming of Jesus. Then why did the Apostle John speak twice about “the last hours” to the Christian recipients of his letter in 1 John 2:18? The reason is precisely because of “the antichrist”. This is the second thing the Apostle John said in verse 18.

Second, the Apostle John said about “the antichrist.”

Look at 1 John 2:18 – “Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.” The Apostle John told the recipients of his letter that they too had heard that the antichrist was coming, saying that “even now many antichrists have come.” That is, when the Apostle John wrote this letter of 1 John, he told the recipients of the letter that as they had already heard, many antichrists had already appeared. Here we have to think about three things:

- (1) When we think about what the Apostle John said in 1 John 2:18, “this is the last hour” and then “even now many antichrists have come,” the Apostle John wrote this letter in the first century, the age of the apostles, after Jesus died, rose and ascended into heaven, and said that that was the last hour, and that

many antichrists had already appeared at that time. That being said, when we mainly say “the antichrist”, we seem to think that the antichrist will appear in this age when the second coming of Jesus is nearer. However, today's Bible is the fact that the antichrists had already appeared in the first century A.D. when the New Testament was written.

- (2) The Apostle John mentioned “the antichrist” twice in 1 John 2:18. Once he said “the antichrist” in the singular, but the other time he said “the antichrists” in the plural. This tells us that the Apostle John, when he first used the singular word “the antichrist,” he was referring to a particular person prophesied in the Bible, while when he used the plural word “the antichrists,” he was referring to those who deceived Christians who believed in Jesus in the days of the Apostle John as “the antichrists” (many individuals). Those who deceive Christians who believe in Jesus here are, for example, “false teachers” and “deceivers” (MacArthur).
- (3) Then, who are the “the antichrist” and “the antichrists” that the Apostle John spoke of in 1 John 2:18? The Bible 1 John 2:18-25 tells us two things:
 - (a) First, look at 1 John 2:19 – “They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.” When the Apostle John said that the antichrists “went out from us, but they did not really belong to us,” it means that the antichrists were formerly believers in Jesus Christ, like the apostle John or the recipients of the letter to 1 John, but no longer believe in Jesus Christ. It refers to those who have departed from Jesus and from the believers. Therefore, the Apostle John said that the antichrists “did not really belong to us,” because they no longer belong to Jesus Christ. When I meditated on this word, I thought of ‘the false prophets’. The reason is because even though God didn’t send the false prophets, they prophesied lies in His name (Jere. 14:14; 28:15). Another thing that comes to mind is “Satan”. What we learned growing up in the church is that Satan was originally an angel, but because of his pride in trying to become like God, he sinned against God and fell, and became Satan. So it was learned that Satan was a fallen angel who was cast out by God and came down into the world, and the Bible verse that is the basis of that doctrine was known as “Lucifer” when translated into Latin for “a morning star” in Isaiah 14:12 (Internet). It is said that this Lucifer fell to the ground. This Satan and the false prophets don’t belong to God, nor are they sent by God, just as the antichrist didn’t belong to the Apostle John or the recipient Christians to the letter of 1 John.
 - (b) Then the antichrist is spoken of in 1 John 2:22 – “Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son.” If we look at this verse, the Bible says that the antichrist is one who denies God the Father and the Son Jesus. And verse 23 says, “No one who denies the Son has the Father.” Isn’t it obvious to say that those

who deny Jesus, the Son of God, don't have the Father? If we look again at verse 22, the Bible says that the antichrist is one who denies that the Jesus is the Christ. Such a person, the antichrist, is said to be "a liar." The Apostle John also said this about the antichrist in 1 John 4:3 – "but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world." The Bible says that the spirit of the antichrist is the spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus and that this spirit of antichrist doesn't belong to God. However, this spirit of antichrist already existed in the world in the first century AD when the Apostle John was writing the letter of 1 John. And this spirit of the antichrist is still here. In other words, the spirit of the antichrist is from the first coming of Jesus to the second coming in the last days (the end times). Thus, after the Apostle John spoke about the antichrist and the spirit of antichrist in 1 John 2:22 and 4:3, he mentioned the antichrist again in 2 John 1:7 – "Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist." In this verse, the Apostle John speaks twice about 'deceiver(s)'. And the deceiver that he refers to is the one who don't acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. In other words, the deceiver is the one who denies the incarnation of Jesus Christ. And the one who denies the incarnation of Jesus Christ is the antichrist.

Considering these verses written by the Apostle John, the antichrist that the Apostle John spoke of is the liar and the deceiver who doesn't acknowledge Jesus, but denies that Jesus is the Christ, denies Jesus Christ came in the flesh (incarnation), and denies the Father God. To sum it up in one word, the antichrist is one who denies Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The antichrist who thus denies Jesus Christ, the Son of God, does not have the Father God (v. 23).

In this way, the Apostle John speaks of "the last hour" and "the antichrist" in 1 John 2:18, and then he speaks to the recipients of his letter, 1 John, in four ways:

First, the Apostle John said to the recipients of his letter 1 John, 'Since you have an anointing from the Holy One, all of you know the truth.'

Look at 1 John 2:20 – "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth." What do you think is the mark of a true Christian? In other words, what is the hypothetical evidence that we are Christians? Francis Schaeffer, in his book "The Mark of the Christian," says that the world will know that we are Christians only when we love one another. In other words, the hypothetical evidence that we are Christians is that we love God with all our heart, strength, mind, and soul, and our neighbor as ourselves, according to the twofold commandment of Jesus. The Bible not only says that by loving one another we can show that we are of Jesus Christ, but it also says that it is a sign that God sent Jesus Christ. In particular, in John 17:21, Jesus said, "... May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me" and it means that only when we are all one in the

Lord will the world believe that God has sent Jesus Christ (Internet).

In 1 John 2:20, the Apostle John speaks of who the true Christian is in contrast to the antichrist. In other words, he speaks of one characteristic mark of the true Christian. The distinctive mark of the true Christian is that he knows the truth by having the anointing from the Holy God. This reminds me of Romans 5:5 – “And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” When we came to believe in Jesus Christ by the grace of God, God gave us the Holy Spirit and poured out His love into our hearts. The true Christian is one who has received the Holy Spirit from God. And the Apostle John said that the true Christian who has received the Holy Spirit knows the truth, Here, what does “the truth” mean? In verses 18-19, which are close to the word of 1 John 2:20, “the truth” that the Apostle John said seems to refer to the truth that “this is the last hour” and that “many antichrists have come” (v. 18). And the true Christian knows that many of the antichrists who appeared in the last hour don’t belong to Jesus Christ, nor do they belong to Christians (v. 19). If we think of “the truth” based on the broader context of 1 John 2:1-17, I think it means that we know the righteous Jesus Christ, the Advocate and the propitiation for our sins (vv. 1-2). And since the true Christian, who truly knows Jesus Christ, keeps the commandments of Jesus (vv. 3-5) and loves his brother (v. 10) so that the love of God is truly perfected in him (v. 5). The true Christian also knows the Father God and overcomes the devil because the powerful word of God dwells in him (vv. 13-14). And he doesn’t love the world or the things in the world (v. 15). Rather, he only does the will of God (v. 17). Broadly speaking, in 1 John 2:20, the truth that the true Christian receives and knows by the Holy Spirit refers to all that the Holy Spirit teaches him (v. 27). Look at verse 27: “As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things” So what is the “all thing” that the Holy Spirit teaches us? If we look at the Gospel of John written by the Apostle John, we can understand it a little. Look at John 14:26 – “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” If we look at this word, all things that the Holy Spirit teaches us is all that Jesus told His disciples.

We who believe in Jesus have received the Holy Spirit from the Holy God. The Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, teaches us everything that that Jesus said. I hope and pray that all of us will humbly learn and obey all the words of Jesus taught by the Holy Spirit.

Second, the Apostle John said to the recipients of his letter 1 John, ‘You know the truth.’

Look at 1 John 2:21 – “I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth.” The second mark of the true Christian, the hypothetical evidence that we are Christians, is that we know the truth. Personally, when I think of the word “the truth,” two Bible verses from the Gospel of John come to mind. One is John 8:32, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” The other one is John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” If we relate these two Bible verses, it is that Jesus is

the truth, and knowing Jesus who is the truth will set us free. As we have already meditated on, one of the four the light and the darkness spoken of in the Apostle John is that the truth is the light and the lie is the darkness. If the Apostle John applies the phrase “God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all” in 1 John 1:5, it means that God is the truth and that in God who is the truth there is no lie that is the darkness. Then, since we, as the children of God, have fellowship with God (v. 6), we must walk in the light as God is the Light (v. 7). And when we walk in the light, we walk in the truth (v. 6). That is, the true Christian not only knows the truth, but he also practices the truth. Look at 3 John 1:4 – “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” And to practice the truth in this way means that the truth is in us (1 Jn. 18) [But the devil cannot stand in the truth, because the truth is not in him (Jn. 8:44)]. And if the truth is in us, we don’t lie while walking in the darkness. The reason is because he who knows the truth and practice the truth knows that the lie doesn’t come from the truth (1 Jn. 2:21). When the Apostle John said to the Christians who received the letter of 1 John, ‘You know the truth,’ he was saying that they were keeping the commandments of the Lord. Look at 1 John 2:4 – “The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” If we meditate on this word differently, it means that the disciples of Jesus whose truth is in them are not liars because they keep the Lord’s commandments (v. 4). Not only that, but those who keep the commandments of the Lord know that the love of God is truly perfected in him, and by this they know that they are in the Lord (v. 5).

The Holy Spirit teaches us all things and reminds us of everything Jesus said (Jn. 14:26). Not only that, the Spirit of truth guides us into all truth. Look at John 16:13 – “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.” The Holy Spirit guides us into “all truth.” We must walk in all truth under the guidance of this Holy Spirit. When we become doers of the truth according to the commandments we have received from the Lord, the Lord will see and be very pleased (Cf.: 2 Jn. 1:4).

Third, the Apostle John said to the recipients of his letter 1 John, ‘Let what you heard from the beginning remain in you.’

Look at 1 John 2:24 – “See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.” What can we do to make the word of God we hear our own? One of the Psalms that I cannot forget while meditating on the entire Psalm is Psalms 119:56 – “This has become mine, That I observe Your precepts.” The more I meditate on this word, the more I learn that like the psalmist, who kept the Lord’s laws and thus the words became his own, I also must keep the word of God so that I may live a life of faith where the word of God becomes personified. Also, as I meditate on this word, I have learned 3 lessons from the context of Psalms 119:56:

(1) The first lesson is that the psalmist did not forget the promise the Lord had given him.

Look at Psalms 119:49 – “Remember the word to Your servant,” The reason the psalmist prayed to God in this way was because the Lord gave him hope through the word of His promise (v. 49). As I

meditated on this word, I was reminded of Abraham in Romans 4:18. He was able to hope and believe against all hope because he remembered the word of God's promise and was fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised (v. 21). In other words, the promised word-driven life is the secret to living a life that is personified by the word of God and the secret to having the word of God to be my possession.

(2) The second lesson is that the psalmist was comforted by the word of God.

Look at Psalms 119:50 – “This is my comfort in my affliction, ...” In a state where no one can comfort us in our affliction, and we have no choice but to refuse anyone's comfort, we need to cry out with tears in solitude in order to seek the comfort of the Lord. At that time, the Lord will comfort us with His word of promise. For me, John 6:1-15, the promise of two fish and five breads miracle is the greatest comfort. When I fall down and become discouraged, when no one can help me, or when I am in a spiritual state where I have no choice but to refuse anyone's comfort, the word of promise of John 6:1-15 restores my soul (Ps. 119:50) and raises me up so that I am living thus far. The reason the psalmist lived with His word of promise comforting him was because he experienced revival that saved him. When we live a life of experiencing spiritual revival with such a word of God, our obedience to His word cannot but be my possession.

(3) The third lesson is that the psalmist lived a life that didn't leave the word of God.

Look at Psalms 119:51 – “... Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.” Although the proud mocked the psalmist bitterly, he didn't depart from the law of the Lord. When I think of this principle, the words of John 6:68 come to mind. When the Lord's teaching was so difficult that many of His disciples left him and never walked with Him again (Jn. 6:66). So Jesus asked the Twelve, “You do not want to leave too, do you?” (v. 67) Then Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go?” (v. 68). How amazing is this confession? Many of Christians are leaving the Lord and His Church because the word of the Lord is so difficult and unbelievable. Because we cannot taste the Lord's word of eternal life like Apostle Peter, we are listening to Satan's instantaneous fake 'gospel' rather than hearing the gospel of Christ, which gives eternal life. It seems that even the pastors and members of the church are proclaiming and listening to the 'words of this life' rather than the words of eternal life. However, the psalmist didn't leave the word of the Lord's promise, no matter what the situation was, no matter what anyone said. He didn't even listen to anything else. The reason is because the word of promise of the Lord gave him hope when he had no hope and revived him with comfort in his troubles.

In 1 John 2:24, the Apostle John says, “See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you ...” What did the recipient Christians who received the letter of 1 John here “heard from the beginning”? Look at 1 John 1:1-2, which we have already meditated on: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the

Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.” These verses tell us what the recipients of the letter of 1 John had heard from the beginning. It is the Word of life which was from the beginning, the Son Jesus Christ, who was with the Father God as eternal life, and had appeared to us. That is, what those Christians heard from the beginning was about Jesus Christ, and in a word, Jesus Christ and His gospel. The Apostle John exhorted the recipients of his letters to let Jesus Christ and His gospel dwell in them.

We must let Jesus Christ and His gospel dwell in us. How can we make Jesus Christ dwell in us? It reminds me of Jesus' parable of the vine in John 15. In the parable of the vine, Jesus said, “I am the vine, and you are the branches; if he abides in me and I in him, a man bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (v. 5). Also, He said that as the Father God abides in Jesus and Jesus in the Father God, we Christians as branches must abide in the Lord who is the vine in order to bear fruit. Apart from Him, we can do nothing (v. 5). Then the Lord said, “If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (v. 7). Looking at these words, the way we can make Jesus dwell in us is to let the word of Jesus, that is, the gospel of Jesus, dwell in us. And in order for the gospel of Jesus Christ that we have heard to dwell in us, we must live a life worthy of His gospel (Phil. 1:27) and preach His gospel to the world (1 Cor. 1:7). When we let Jesus Christ and His gospel abide in us, the Bible 1 John 2:24 says that we will abide in Jesus the Son and in the Father God.

Fourth and last, the Apostle John said to the recipients of his letter 1 John, ‘What the Lord has promised us is eternal life.’

Look at 1 John 2:25 – “And this is what he promised us--even eternal life.” The Bible says in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” And the Bible Romans 6:23 says, “The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” We who believe in Jesus Christ have eternal life, the free gift of God. So, what is eternal life? Look at John 17:3 – “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” I wrote, ‘We should live partly enjoying eternal life on this earth’ (July 8, 2019): ‘I believe that eternal life should not be enjoyed only in heaven, which is the coming world, but also in this world. In other words, eternal life is fully enjoyed in heaven, but must be enjoyed partially on this earth as well. How can we partly enjoy eternal life on this earth? When we live in the Lord (1 Jn. 2:6) and keep His word, so that God's love is perfected in us (v. 5), our hearts are filled with the joy of the Lord (Jn. 15:11). Eternal life is also partly possible on this earth.’ In 1 John 2:25, the Bible says that the Lord has promised us eternal life. This eternal life spoken of by the Apostle John refers to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is the Word of life from the beginning in 1 John 1:1-2: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.” What the Lord has promised us who believe in Jesus is eternal life, and Jesus Christ is the eternal life.

Among the five words of assurance that I learned in my Bible study class in college, the assurance of salvation Bible verse comes to mind. That Bible verse is 1 John 5:11-12: “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” The assurance of salvation we can have in this word is that (1) God has given us eternal life, (2) Eternal life is in Jesus, the Son of God, and (3) Those who have (believe in) Jesus have eternal life, but those who don’t have (believe in) Jesus have no life. If we believe in Jesus, God has given us the promised eternal life. Even the Apostle Paul was “once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man” (1 Tim. 1:13) and “sinners – of whom I am the worst” (v. 15), he received eternal life by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 16). No matter what terrible sinners you have in the past, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ like Paul did, you will have eternal life. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?

This is the last hour. Now many antichrists have come. Many of these antichrists are liars and deceivers, not only denying that Jesus is the Christ, but also denying the Father God, denying the Son Jesus, and denying that Jesus came in the flesh (incarnation). Unlike these antichrists, true Christians have received the Holy Spirit from God and know all things. They know the truth of God. Also, they let the truth of God that they heard from the beginning to remain in them. That is, the true Christians have Jesus Christ abiding in them. And they have eternal life. I hope and pray that even in this last hour when many antichrists have appeared and proclaim a different Jesus, a different gospel through false pastors and false teachers, and make people to receive a different spirit, we who are true Christians who believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God, and in His incarnation will understand the truth and obey the word of God according to the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit. I hope and pray that as we all obey the twofold commandment of Jesus, may God's love will be perfected in us, so that our hearts will be filled with joy and will partly enjoy eternal life on this earth.

Wanting to live only for Jesus Christ and His gospel as I grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ in this last hour,

James Kim

(December 9, 2019, Believing that the Lord will protect His church from the antichrist and the antichrists)

We must always live in the Lord.

[1 John 2:26-29]

As I read the book “Like a Kingfisher on Fire” by Pastor Eugene Peterson, ‘The Pastor of Pastors,’ I thought of one thing that is essential in our Christian life. And I wrote this: ‘One thing that is absolutely necessary in our life of faith, what we must do to the extent that we are completely immersed in it, is to meditate on the word of God. When we meditate on the word of God, we must have breath of mind. The reason is because we cannot properly meditate on the Word of God with an impatient heart. We should rejoice in meditating on the word of God without haste (Ps. 1:3).’ Personally, I think it is very important to enjoy meditating on the word of God in our Christian life. And while we meditate on the word of God, we must strive to live a life of obedience to it. If we keep the word of God, God’s love is truly perfected in us. By this we know that we are in the Lord (1 Jn. 2:5).

In 1 John 2:27, the Bible says, “... -just as it has taught you, remain in him.” The modern Korean Bible translates this word ‘... You must always live in Christ.’ Focusing on this word, I want to receive lessons by meditating on what it means to live in the Lord and the consequences of living that life in the Lord.

First, we want to think about what it means to live in the Lord. To live in the Lord means to live as the Holy Spirit teaches us.

Look at 1 John 2:27 – “As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit--just as it has taught you, remain in him.” When we came to believe in Jesus Christ by the grace of God, God gave us the Holy Spirit and poured out His love into our hearts (Rom. 5:5). In other words, if we are true Christians, we have received the Holy Spirit from God (1 Jn. 2:20). So, what does the Bible say about the role of the Holy Spirit? Look at John 15:26 – “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.” According to the word of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father.” And He said that the Spirit of truth testifies about Jesus. And Jesus said in John 16:13 – “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.” The Spirit of truth who dwells in us, who believe in Jesus, not only testifies about Jesus, but also guides us into “all truth.” The reason is because the Holy Spirit is the truth (1 Jn. 5:6). And the Spirit of truth not only speaks only what he hears, but also

tells us the “what is yet to come.”

The Apostle John said in 1 John 2:20, which we have already meditated on, “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.” The Apostle John told the recipients of his letter that the true Christians were those who received the Holy Spirit from God, unlike the many antichrists who appeared at that time. And the true Christians who have received the Holy Spirit know all these things, said the Apostle John (v. 20). That is, the true Christians know that these are the last hour and that many antichrists have appeared (v. 18). And the true Christians who have received the Holy Spirit know the righteous Jesus Christ, the Advocate and the propitiation for our sins (vv. 1-2). And because they kept the commandments of Jesus (vv. 3-5) and loved their brothers and sisters in Christ (v. 10), the love of God was truly perfected in them (v. 5). The true Christians also know the Father God and overcome the devil because the powerful word of God dwells in them (vv. 13-14). And they don’t love the world or the things in the world (v. 15). Rather, they only do the will of God (v. 17). Broadly speaking, all this that the true Christians who have received the Holy Spirit know is all that the Holy Spirit teaches them (v. 27). All that the Holy Spirit teaches them is everything that Jesus said to His disciples (Jn. 14:26). That is, the Spirit teaches them everything Jesus said.

In 1 John 2:27, the Apostle John says: “As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.” From this verse, I think we should learn three important biblical teachings:

(1) Since the Holy Spirit dwells in us, we have no need for anyone to teach us.

This is not to say that there is no need for God-given Bible teachers in the church. The reason for this is clearly because 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11 in the Bible say that God has appointed “pastors” and “teachers” in the church. I think there is a reason why the Apostle John said that we don’t need anyone to teach us because the Holy Spirit dwells in us. That’s why 1 John 2:26 says: “These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.” That is, the reason is because there were people who deceived or tried to deceive the believers who believed in Jesus. They are antichrists (v. 18) and the liars (v. 22). In this last hour, the lying antichrists appeared not only to deny the Father God and the Son Jesus (v. 22), but also to deny that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (v. 23) and His incarnation (2 Jn. 1:7). So I think the Apostle John said that we don’t need anyone to teach us because the Holy Spirit dwells in us to guard against the teachings of these deceivers.

The Holy Spirit dwells in us who believe in Jesus. Therefore, we have no need for anyone to to teach us. Since pastors and teachers teach us the Bible because the Holy Spirit who dwells in them teaches us through them, so we don’t need to receive any other teaching outside of the truth than the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

(2) The Holy Spirit who dwells in us teaches us everything. And the Spirit's teaching is true and not a lie.

The apostle John already said in verse 20, "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know." In other words, we know all these things because the Holy Spirit who dwells in us who believes in Jesus teaches us all things (v. 27). And the important thing is that everything the Holy Spirit teaches us is true and not a lie (v. 27). That is, all that the Antichrists say and teach through the liars and the deceivers is not true but the lie. Why do the antichrists deceive us by telling lies? The Bible John 8:44 says: "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies." Therefore, the Apostle John exhorted the recipients of his letter of 1 John to not be deceived by the false words and teachings of the antichrists, but to receive the true teachings of the Holy Spirit who dwells in them.

The Holy Spirit, who dwells in us who believe in Jesus, teaches us all truth. The reason is because the Holy Spirit is the truth (5:6). This Spirit of truth guides us into all truth (16:13). The indwelling Holy Spirit testifies to us (15:26) that Jesus is the truth (14:26). Therefore, we believers humbly learn all the words of truth taught to us by Jesus and the Holy Spirit, testified by the Holy Spirit of truth who dwells in us, so that in the progress and steadfastness of our faith, we can overcome all lies and false teachings of the devil and antichrists and don't fall for the delusion. In other words, we must listen to and learn the teachings of the truth by the Holy Spirit who indwells us more and more so that we don't fall for the lies and the false teachings of the antichrists, children of the devil, and liars who deceive us and that we stand firm on the rock of faith.

(3) We must always live in the Lord as the Holy Spirit teaches us.

What does that mean? To live in the Lord means to practice righteousness. Look at 1 John 2:29 – "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him." Here, in the phrase "is born of Him", the verb "born" is also found in Jesus' word to Nicodemus in John 3:7 – "You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'" That is, when the Apostle John said, "... you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him" (1 Jn. 2:29), he was talking about those who have been born again who have believed in Jesus, and who are righteous just as God is righteous, because they too are justified by believing in Jesus' death and resurrection (Rom. 4:25). Therefore, it means that the righteous must practice what is right at some point as the indwelling Holy Spirit teaches them. This is what it means to live in the Lord. Then what does it mean to practice righteousness? In Matthew 6:33, as we are familiar with it, Jesus said: "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." What is the life of seeking God's kingdom and God's righteousness here? It means to seek the kingdom of God and its King, the righteous Jesus. And I

think that the life of seeking the righteousness of Jesus is a life of obedience to the word of God with faith, giving up even one's life for Jesus and the gospel while being ruled by the Lord, the King of the kingdom of God (Mk. 8:35; Rom. 1:17). And it is to teach and preach the word of God, which we must obey, boldly and without hesitation, all about the kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ (Lk. 9:2; Acts 28:31).

So, what does it mean to practice righteousness in 1 John 2:29? If we look at the context of that word, we can guess a bit. In verse 27 the second half, the Bible says, "Abide in Him" and in verse 28 the first half says, "abide in Him." And in verse 6, the Bible says, "the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked." In other words, the meaning of the word 'practicing righteousness' in verse 29 means that we do what the righteous Jesus Christ does (vv. 1, 6). So what does the righteous Jesus Christ do? As we have already learned from 1 John 2:1-2, Jesus Christ became the propitiation for our sins (v. 2) and also defends us before the Father God when we, who have been reconciled to God, sin. Why did Jesus Christ do this for us (v. 2) and still do (v. 1)? The reason is because He loves us. Therefore, as those who live in Jesus Christ, what we do as Jesus Christ does (v. 6) means to live in obedience to Jesus' commandment (vv. 7-11). That is why the Apostle John said in verse 10, "The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him." And the Apostle John said in verse 5 that by this we know that we are in the Lord, because the love of God has truly been perfected in those who love their brothers according to the commandment of Jesus. To summarize, in 1 John 2:29, those who practice righteousness are those who are in the Lord Jesus Christ who love their brothers according to Jesus' commandment. And loving their brothers as Jesus' commanded is practicing righteousness. We must not forget that those who practice righteousness in this way are born of Him and are the righteous children of God. Look at 1 John 2:29 – "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him." We believers who have been justified by believing in Jesus Christ know that God is righteous, so we must live by doing what is right. To live by practicing righteousness in this way is "abide in Him" (vv, 27-28).

Second and last, we want to think about is what it means to live in the Lord and what the result of living in the Lord is.

It is, in a word, that when Christ Jesus comes again, we will see Him with confidence and without being ashamed. Look at 1 John 2:28 – "Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." The Apostle John says that when we abide in the Lord (vv. 27, 28), that is, when we live in the Lord, the result is that when the Lord comes, we have confidence so that we will not be ashamed before the Lord (v. 28). How can we see the Lord with confidence without being ashamed when He comes again? How can we have the confidence to not be ashamed before the Lord? The reason is because the believers who live and abide in the Lord live holy and blameless life (MacArthur). Look at Colossians 1:22 – "yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach." The Apostle John says in 1 John 2:2 that Jesus Christ is the

propitiation for our sins. By dying on the cross as the propitiation sacrifice, Jesus Christ reconciled us, who were enemies with God, to God. The purpose is to present us before the Lord as holy, blameless and beyond reproach (Col. 1:22). Therefore, those who abide in the Lord, we Christians who live in the Lord, keep the word of God (1 Jn. 2:5), so that we can purify ourselves to love our brothers with sincere love (1 Pet. 1:22) and that His love has been perfected in us (1 Jn. 2:5). Therefore, when Jesus, the Bridegroom, comes back to this world, we Christians who are brides will be presented ourselves as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless (Eph. 5:27). Therefore, we will have confidence and not shrink away from Him at the coming of the Lord, so that we will not be ashamed before the Lord (1 Jn. 2:28).

We must abide in the Lord as the Holy Spirit who dwells in us has taught us (1 Jn. 2:27). We must always live in the Lord (v. 27). The Spirit of truth bears witness to Jesus (Jn. 15:26) and guides us into all truth (16:13). Therefore, there is no need for anyone to teach us (1 Jn. 2:27). The reason is because there are those who deceive us (those who want to deceive us) who believe in Jesus. Because there are false pastors and false Bible teachers who deny the Father God and the Son Jesus (v. 22) and deny that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (v. 23) and that He came in the flesh (2 Jn. 1:7). We must keep in mind that the Holy Spirit who dwells within us teaches us everything (1 Jn. 2:27). And the teachings of the Holy Spirit are true and not a lie (v. 27). Because the indwelling Spirit is the truth (Jn. 5:6), he teaches us all truth. The Spirit of truth testifies to us (15:26) about Jesus who is the truth (14:26). Therefore, we believers humbly learn all the words of truth taught to us by Jesus and the Holy Spirit, testified by the Holy Spirit of truth who dwells in us, so that in the progress and steadfastness of our faith, we can overcome all lies and false teachings of the devil and antichrists and don't fall for the delusion. We must listen to the teachings of the indwelling Holy Spirit more and more and learn the teachings of the true Word of truth so that we can stand firm on the rock of faith. Also, we must practice righteousness (1 Jn. 2:29). As those who have believed in Jesus by the grace of God and have been born again, as the Lord is righteous (v. 1) and practices righteousness, we must also practice righteousness (v. 6). We must live in obedience to the Lord's commandment (vv. 7-11). If we love our brothers and sisters in Christ according to the Lord's commandment, then God's love is truly perfected in us, so that we know that we are in the Lord (v. 5). The purpose of living in the Lord in this way is that when Christ Jesus comes again, we will have confidence and will not be ashamed (v. 28). As we all abide in the Lord and live a holy life without blemish, I hope and pray that we will be established as a glorious church before the Lord when Jesus, the Bridegroom, comes again (Eph. 5:27).

Desiring to abide in the Lord as the indwelling Spirit teaches,

James Kim

(February 2, 2020, Earnestly praying that our church will be established as a glorious church before the Lord who will again)

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us

[1 John 3:1-10]

In order to live this empty life, a life that is truly worthwhile in the eyes of God, we must live a life that is satisfied with the Lord's unfailing love (Ps. 90:14). God has given us a heart to long for eternity (Eccle. 3:11). Therefore, as new creations in Jesus, we can live a satisfying life when we love each other with God's eternal love. To do that, we must realize God's love for us. The love of God is the love that He gave His only begotten Son Jesus to die on the cross for us (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:6, 8, 10). I thought of God's great love for us until He gave up His only begotten Son Jesus on the cross in three ways: (1) God's love is for the 'helpless' (Rom. 5: 6). At the time when God's love would be revealed as He had predestined before eternity ["just as the right time" (v. 6), Park], Jesus Christ died for the ungodly (v. 6). (2) God's love is love for the sinners (v. 8). Look at 1 John 4:9-10: "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (3) God's love is love for 'enemies' (v. 10). While we were still helpless (v. 6), that is, when we were still sinners (v. 8), we were enemies with God (v. 10). But Jesus reconciled us to God by dying on the cross. The more we realize and know this great love of God, the more we will not be able to help but praise God for the hymn "The Love of God is Greater": (v. 1 and chorus) The love of God is greater far Than tongue or pen can ever tell; It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell; The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win; His erring child He reconciled, And pardoned from His sin. Oh love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forever more endure, The saints' and angels' song. But doubting this great love of God toward us is the root of all spiritual problems (Mal. 1:2). A heart that has not personally experienced the perfect love of God revealed through the atoning death of Jesus on the cross is bound to fall into various temptations.

In 1 John 3:1, the Bible says: "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him." The modern Korean Bible translates: 'Just think of how great our Heavenly Father's love for us is. With that great love, we became children of God. But the world does not know us, because they do not know the Father.' We also need to think about how great our Heavenly Father's love for us is. When I think about it, I remembered the words of Genesis about Joseph that came to mind while meditating at the early Morning Prayer meeting two weeks ago. In

other words, when Joseph was 17 years old, he was hated by his older brothers and was nearly killed (Gen. 37), and became a slave to Potiphar, the captain of the guard, the servant of Pharaoh, king of Egypt (Ch. 39). Then he became the prime minister of Egypt by interpreting the king Pharaoh's dream (Ch. 41). As I meditated on these words again, I thought again about this wonderful change of status: Joseph, a Hebrew youth, who was a slave in Egypt, became the prime minister of that country Egypt. At that time, I was reminded of Romans chapter 5, which our church retired pastor preached a long time ago. I remember that the retired pastor emphasized the three verses in Romans 5 while preaching: (1) "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly" (v. 6), (2) "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (v. 8), (3) "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (v. 10). As I remembered these verses, I meditated on how amazing our standing in Jesus is rather than the change in the identity of the person named Joseph in the Book of Genesis. In other words, we were helpless sinners who were enemies of God, but Jesus Christ died for us so that we are reconciled to God. Therefore, it is the fact that we are no longer enemies of God, but children of God. Considering this fact, I couldn't help but be grateful that God's grace and love are so great and amazing that we are the ones who have undergone such a remarkable change of status.

In 1 John 3:1, the Apostle John continued to write his letter, saying: "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are" Now, the Apostle John exhorts Jewish Christians, who are the recipients of his letter of 1 John, to think for a moment how great the love our Heavenly Father has for us, and says, 'By that great love we became children of God.' What does it mean? In a word, the fact that we become children of God makes us think about how great our Heavenly Father's love for us is. To that extent, the Apostle John now says that we must realize how great God's love is that we who believe in Jesus have become the children of God. That is why the Apostle John again says in 1 John 3:2, the first half: "Beloved, now we are the children of God," How do we become children of God? How could we, who were enemies of God, become children of God? Theologically speaking, it can be described as "the order of salvation." Here, "the order of salvation" refers to the method of salvation. That is, a term that describes the process by which the work of salvation done in Christ is subjectively realized (applied) in the hearts and lives of sinners (Internet). There are 9 orders or methods of this salvation: (1) Predestination/Election, (2) Calling, (3) Regeneration, (4) Conversion, (5) Justification, (6) Adoption, (7) Sanctification, (8) Perseverance of Saints, (9) Glorification. The sixth of these nine orders refers to "adoption," that is, we become children of God. This "adoption" is also mentioned in the Bible. Look at Romans 8:15 – "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" According to this word, before we believed in Jesus, we had received the "spirit that makes you a slave again to fear" (v. 15). Here, the spirit that makes us the slave again to fear means that before we believed in Jesus, we were slaves to sin (6:17, 20). The Apostle John says in John 8:34 that we were sinners and slaves to sin. When we were slaves to sin, we were slaves to sin (Rom. 6:6). Then we had sinful passions working within us, making us bear fruit for death (7:5). The Apostle John says that our father at that time was the Devil: "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks

his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (Jn. 8:44). In a word, before we believed in Jesus by the grace of God, we were the children of the devil, “the father of lies”, and were slaves to sin, committing sins according to the devil’s desire. And, as we have already learned from Romans 6:23, “the wages of sin is death,” so we were slaves to sin and had no choice but to die forever. That’s how we got to live forever. The Apostle John said in 1 John 2:17 – “The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” How did this become possible? Look at what the Apostle John said in John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” As children of our father the devil, we were forced to die forever as slaves to sin. But it is through faith in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son that God loved and gave us, that we have eternal life. And the Apostle John said in John 1:12 that those who believe in Jesus Christ have been given the right to become children of God: “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

In 1 John 2:29, which we have already meditated on, the Apostle John said that “If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.” Here, the word “everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him” means those who have been born again by believing in Jesus, just as God is righteous, and are justified by believing in Jesus’ death and resurrection (Rom. 4: 25). Therefore, those who are justified must practice righteousness at some point as the indwelling Holy Spirit teaches them. That is, we must do as Jesus Christ, the righteous does (1 Jn. 2:1, 6). We must live in obedience to Jesus’ commandment (vv. 7-11). To summarize, in 1 John 2:29, those who practice righteousness that the Apostle John speaks of are those who are in the Lord Jesus Christ, who love their brothers according to the commandment of Jesus. And those who love their neighbor in obedience to Jesus’ commandment are the ones who practice righteousness. Those who practice righteousness in this way are born of Him, and they are the righteous children of God. Therefore, the Apostle John is admonishing us to think about how great our Heavenly Father’s love for us is through the fact that we are children of God (3:1). This reminds me the hymn “The Love of God is Greater Far”:

- (v. 1) The love of God is greater far Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell;
The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled, And pardoned from His sin.
 - (v. 2) When hoary time shall pass away, And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall;
When men who here refuse to pray, On rocks and hills and mountains call;
God’s love, so sure, shall still endure, All measureless and strong;
Redeeming grace to Adam’s race The saints’ and angels’ song.
 - (v. 3) Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Tho’ stretched from sky to sky.
- (Chorus) Oh love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong!

It shall forever more endure, The saints' and angels' song.

Then, how should we live as children of God through the great love that God has given us? In other words, as we have already learned in 1 John 2:27, 28, how should we, as children of God, to live “in Christ”? I would like to receive few lessons from 1 John 3:1-10 by meditating on 5 things:

First, as children of God by God's great love, we must know that the world does not know us because they do not know our Father.

Look at 1 John 3:1 – “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.” The people of this world who don’t believe in Jesus don’t know us. For example, the people of this world don’t know that we are children of God (vv. 1, 2). They don’t understand, nor can they understand that we cry out “Abba! Father!” since we have received the spirit of adoption as sons (Rom. 8:15). What is the reason? If we look at the second half of 1 John 3:1, the reason is because they don’t know the Father. Isn’t that obvious? Since the people of this world don’t know the Father God because they don’t believe in Jesus, the Son of God, how can they know us, the children of God? In fact, in the first century, when the Apostle John wrote this letter of 1 John, many lying antichrists appeared and deceived the saints. They not only denied the Father God and the Son Jesus (2:22), but also denied that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (v. 23) and that He came in the flesh (2 Jn. 1:7). In this last hour (2:18), how can unbelievers who deny and say they don’t know the Father God and the Son of God (v. 22) know us as children of God who believe in Jesus (3:1, 2)?

The Bible 1 Corinthians 2:14 says: “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.” This word is a part of the Apostle Paul's letter to the church in Corinth. And in the context of the content, Paul addressed the Corinthian church members as "natural men" (v. 14), contrasting the “spiritual man” (v. 15). Paul said that even though the spiritual man has the wisdom of God (v. 7) and knows the Lord of glory (v. 8), the natural man (the unregenerate natural man) don’t know the wisdom of God but have only the wisdom of this age (v. 6). That was why they crucified the Lord of glory (v. 8). And Paul said that even though the mind of man had not conceive of the Lord of glory (v. 9), only God had revealed it to us by the Holy Spirit (v. 10). And he said, “We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us” (v. 12). If we apply these words to us, it means that we who believe in Jesus didn’t receive the spirit of the world, but only the Holy Spirit from God, so that we can know the things that God has given us by grace. However, it also means that people in this world who don’t believe in Jesus have not received the Holy Spirit from God, but the spirit of the world, so they cannot know what God has given us by grace. So the natural unregenerate unbelievers not only don’t receive the things of the Holy Spirit, but they seem foolish to them. Also they can't know them. The reason is because they lack spiritual discernment (v. 14). Therefore, natural, unregenerate unbelievers without spiritual discernment don’t know the Father God (1 Jn. 3:1). Therefore, they cannot know us, the children

of our Heavenly Father (v. 1).

Like our fathers of faith in Hebrews 11, we must bear witness to “aliens and strangers” on this earth. Look at Hebrews 11:13 – “All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.” Who is “aliens”? The aliens are citizen of another country (Dictionary). In other words, we are citizens of the kingdom of God. So the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:20 – “But our citizenship is in heaven.” We also have to live on this earth and testify that we are “strangers.” Who are the strangers? The strangers are the people who live away from their hometown or place of life (Bible Dictionary). We are the people who are looking for a country of our own (Heb. 11:14). Like the fathers of faith in Hebrews 11, we have a different hometown that we are looking for. Now we are longing for a better country – a heavenly one (v. 16). In other words, we are hoping for the city of heaven as the people of God who have the citizenship of the kingdom of heaven (v. 10).

- (v. 1) I'm pressing on the upward way, New heights I'm gaining ev-'ry day;
Still praying as I'm onward bound, "Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."
Lord, lift me up and let me stand.
- (v. 4) I want to scale the utmost height, And catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I'll pray till heaven I've found, "Lord, lead me on to higher ground."
Lord, lift me up and let me stand.
- (Chorus) By faith on Heaven's tableland, A higher plane than I have found;
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.
- [Hymn “I’m Pressing on the Upward Way”]

Second, as children of God by God's great love, we will be like Jesus because we will see Him just as He is when He appears.

Look at 1 John 3:2 – “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” Our hope is the second coming of Jesus. And the patience of our hope is to pray, expect, and wait for His second coming. Do we really have this waiting? The believers who are waiting for the second coming of Jesus don’t grieve like the hopeless unbelievers when they face the death of the saints (1 Thess. 5:13). The reason is because the believers who are preparing for Jesus’ second coming believe that Jesus died and rose again (v. 14). Furthermore, the reason why the saints preparing for His second coming didn’t grieve in anticipation of the second coming is because they believe that God will bring them with him even those who sleep (the dead) in Jesus (v. 14). Therefore, as we await the return of Jesus, we rejoice in hope and endure in tribulation (Rom. 12:12).

When I think of the church that waited for the second coming of Jesus, I think of the Thessalonian church. The reason is because the Thessalonian church community was a community of hope that waited for the second coming of Jesus. Look at 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10: “for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us.

They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.” The Thessalonian church members were Gentiles who worshiped idols before they heard the gospel through Paul and believed in Jesus. They led a sexually promiscuous life, a religious life of drinking a lot and partying frequently (Sae-yoon Kim). The Thessalonians, who worshiped idols while leading such a religious life, heard the gospel of Christ through Paul, believed in Jesus, abandoned their idols, returned to God, worshiped the living and true God, and obeyed God's word (Kim). Not only that, but they waited for the second coming of Jesus (v. 10). In the midst of this, the Thessalonian church members welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit in spite of severe suffering, and became imitators of the Lord as well as Paul and his co-workers (Silas and Timothy) (v. 6). It was the word of God that allowed them to imitate Paul, his co-workers, and the Lord. In other words, they became imitators of the Lord because they accepted the word of God with the joy of the Holy Spirit amid many afflictions.

The work of the Holy Spirit makes us yearn for the word of God more and more and receive it humbly when we are in a lot of trouble and suffering. Not only that, but the Holy Spirit makes us obey the will of God that we have realized through the word of God. As a result, the Holy Spirit molds us into His word in our sufferings, sanctifies us and makes us like the Lord. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 8:29, “Those whom God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.” According to the Korean modern Bible, those whom God foreknew were destined to be made in the likeness of His Son. The three important words here are ‘foreknew’, ‘predetermined’, and ‘to be conformed to the image of his Son’ (Internet). The reason these three acts of God are recorded in Romans 8:29 is that when we meditate in connection with the preceding verses, verses 28 and 18, all things work together for our good (v. 28) and the present suffering is so that we can be more certain that it is incomparable with the glory that is to be revealed to us (v. 18). So, what is the meaning of these three acts of God?

- (1) First, as John Stott and John Murray said that ‘foreknowledge’ means that the word ‘know’ is used in practically the same sense as ‘love’.

In other words, those whom God foreknew refer to those whom God loved in advance. In other words, this first act of God means that God chooses His own people and loves them. Therefore, the Bible says that all things work together for good to those who are called according to the will of God (v. 28).

- (2) Second, ‘predetermined’ refers to predestination.

In other words, this second act of God, predetermined means that God has foreordained or ordered our destiny. And that determined or commanded our destiny is that we are destined to be like Jesus. In other words, all things in our lives work together for good because all things work together to make us like Christ. For this we are loved and for this we are destined.

- (3) Third, ‘to be conformed to the image of his Son’ is the ultimate purpose of God’s two acts of ‘foreknowledge’ (predetermined love) and ‘predetermined’ (predestination).

The purpose of God's love for us, choosing us and foreordaining our destiny, is so that we may be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Internet).

In 1 John 3:2, the Apostle John says: “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” The Apostle John speaks of our hope toward the Lord (v. 3) after he has said twice that the great love the Father God has for us is that we become children of God (vv. 1, 2). The message of hope is that ‘When Jesus appears in the future, we will be conformed to the image of Jesus and see the face of Jesus (v. 2). Interestingly, the Apostle John already said in 1 John 2:28 that as a result of our living in the Lord, “... when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.” In other words, it is interesting that the Apostle John already mentioned the appearance of the Lord in 1 John 2:28, that is, the coming of the Lord, and again in 3:2. In particular, when I meditate on these two Bible verses in connection, I think that the Apostle John is giving us a lesson as he writes the letter 1 John with the hope of the second coming of Jesus to the recipients of that letter: The purpose of our lives of obedience to Jesus' commandment of doing righteousness in the Lord is that when Jesus comes back into this world, we should all be conformed to Jesus' image so that we may have confidence and not be ashamed before the Lord. And the Apostle John said that when Jesus appears in the future, we will see Him as He really is (v. 2).

As I meditated on these words, I was reminded of 1 Corinthians 13:12 – “Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” When the Lord comes back to this world, we will be suddenly transformed (1 Cor. 15:51) and conformed to the image of Jesus (1 Jn. 3:2). And we will see Jesus face to face (v. 2, 1 Cor. 13:12). We have this hope in the Lord (1 Jn. 3:3) because of God's total grace and the great love that Heavenly Father has bestowed upon us (v. 1). Therefore, as we pray, anticipate, and wait for that moment, our earnest prayer should be to resemble Jesus. The hymn “Oh, to be like Thee” verse 1 and the chorus lyrics come to mind: “Oh, to be like Thee! blessed Redeemer, This is my constant longing and prayer. Gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures, Seeking Thy perfect likeness to wear. Oh, to be like Thee! Oh, to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art! Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness; Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.”

Are you washing your hands properly these days? Why should we wash our hands properly? According to an Internet article, researchers at the University of New South Wales in Australia conducted a small experiment on medical students in 2015, and as a result, the students touched their faces 23 times an hour on average. Among them, 44% of people touched the mucous membranes of the face, such as the mouth, nose, and eyes. The reason why this is so dangerous is because the mouth and nose are key passageways for bacteria and viruses to enter our body. Although it's best not to touch our faces, since we tend to touch our faces a lot unconsciously, it's very important to wash our hands properly. The 'Harvard Health Letter' issued by Harvard University School of Medicine says that 90% of bacteria are removed by washing our hands evenly during the two hours of singing Happy Birthday with tap water and soap. So I am also trying to wash my hands according to the proper hand washing method that my wife

told me last week and I posted the paper about how to wash our hands properly she gave me in the kitchen and bathroom at church. The method is to wash our hands while singing “Jesus loves me this I know” rather than “Happy Birthday song”.

Third, as children of God by God's great love, we must purify ourselves just as Jesus is pure.

Look at 1 John 3:3 – “Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.” Do you know how to remove the dross from the silver? (Prov. 25:4) The silver can be placed in a furnace and heated to remove the impure dross. However, it is said that the impure dross doesn’t come off easily. Therefore, it is said that to obtain the pure silver, it must be smelted at high heat several times. It is said that for this work, the blacksmith must fight high heat and sweat a lot to obtain the pure silver. However, it is said that the blacksmith doesn’t hesitate to do this kind of hard work to get the pure silver he wants (Internet). Look at Proverbs 17:3 – “The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.” What does it mean? Just as the blacksmith smelts the silver with high heat many times to obtain the pure silver, God makes us pass through “the furnace of affliction” to refine our hearts (Isa. 48:10). In other words, God allows us to go through trials and tribulations, the fire of refinement, in order to remove these things from us and free us from them when the physical and earthly impurities that remain like dross is contained as impurities (Internet). A good example of this is Job in the Old Testament. Look at Job 23:10 – “But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.” Why does God make us go through the furnace of affliction to remove the dross from the silver? Look at Proverbs 25:4 – “Take away the dross from the silver, And there comes out a vessel for the smith.” What does it mean? It means that the dross is removed from the silver to make it a usable vessel. In the same way, God wants us to pass through the furnace of affliction so that we may eventually come out as pure gold. What is its purpose? Why does God make us come out as pure gold? Look at 2 Timothy 2:21 – “If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.” The purpose is that the Lord cleanses us and prepares us for His use, so that we may become vessels for the Lord's use. The Lord, who wants to use us in this way, purifies us with the pure word of God (Prov. 30:5). The Bible Psalm 12:6 says, “And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times.” The Lord purifies us with His pure words.

In 1 John 3:3, the Apostle John says: “Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.” What does it mean? It means that since we, who received great love from our Heavenly Father and became children of God, have this hope toward the Lord that when Jesus returns to this world, we will be like Him and will see Him as He is, we must purify ourselves just as He is pure (vv. 2-3). Then what does it mean to purify ourselves just as Jesus is pure? Look at 1 John 3:4-5: “Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.” If we look at these words, we can see what the purity of Jesus is. That is, “in him is no sin,” that is, in Jesus there is no sin. In other words, the saying that there is no sin in Jesus (v. 5) means that Jesus is pure (v. 3).

Our Jesus is without sin (1 Jn. 3:5). Look at Hebrews 4:15 – “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.” Look at 1 Peter 2:22 – “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” Look at 2 Corinthians 5:21 – “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” Since we will become like Jesus and we will see Him as He is (1 Jn. 3:2) when the sinless Jesus, who knew no sin and committed no sin, appears in the future, the Bible says that everyone who has this hope in the Lord purifies himself, just as Jesus is pure (v. 3).

I have thought of these verses in three ways: (1) What this verse implies is that when Jesus appears (when He comes back to this world), we will not only not sin like Jesus, but we will be also sinless who don't even know what sin is. This is our hope for the future in the Lord (v. 3). When the last trumpet sounds, we are all changed in an instant (1 Cor. 15:51). The Lord will transform our lowly bodies into His glorious body (Phil. 3:21). That glorious body is a glorious body that doesn't sin and knows no sin like Jesus. (2) We believers (saints) who believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ were already united with the death of Christ Jesus and were buried with Him through baptism into death (Rom. 6:4) and died to sin (v. 2). This has already happened in the past, and since we died with Christ in His death (v. 5), we are already dead to sin (v. 2). More specifically, our old self was crucified with Jesus so that the body of sin is put to death, and we are no longer slaves to sin (v. 6). The Apostle Paul said this in Romans 6:7 – “because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.” (3) Although we are already dead to sin because we were buried with Jesus in union with His death in the past (vv. 4-5), we should live in the Lord until Jesus comes back and we are suddenly transformed and become sinless people like Jesus (1 Cor. 15:51; Phil. 3:21; 1 Jn. 3:2). In other words, it is the question of how we should live in the present, living between this future hope we have and the fact that we were already buried with Jesus' death on the cross in the past. I think this question is very important. In Pauline theological terms, this is a question of how the people of God should live in the Church Age between “already” (past) and “not yet” (future). It seems to me that many Christians believe that since they believe in Jesus and have already been saved, and once they are saved, they will not lose salvation, they disobey the word of God and not afraid to sin but sin boldly. Look at Philippians 2:12 – “Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” Here, the meaning of the word “work out your salvation” is never to be saved by works (good works) (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 8:22-24). Salvation is past, present, and future tense. The past of salvation means that when we believe in Jesus Christ by the grace of God, we are already saved (1 Jn. 5:12-13). The future of salvation is that we will be saved on the day Jesus returns (Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9). The present of salvation is “work out your salvation” (Phil. 2:12). Then, what is the meaning of the word “work out your salvation” in the present between the salvation of the past and the salvation of the future? Here, “salvation” means eternal life. In other words, Paul told the Philippian church members to ‘work out your eternal life’ (you live like those who have eternal life). And to live like those who have eternal life (the people of the kingdom of heaven), it is to obey the twofold commandment of Jesus, the commandment of heaven, to love God and love our neighbor (Mt. 22:37-39). It is God who works in us to will to act according to His good purpose (Phil. 2:13). He gives the believer the will to do good, and also the strength to do it. God the Holy Spirit produces in us love, the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23),

so that we can love God and also love our neighbors.

Then how should we live in the Lord now as we were buried with Jesus on the cross, and we are already dead to sin (Rom. 6:4-5), and we will be suddenly transformed and become sinless people like Jesus when He comes back (1 Cor. 15:51; Phil. 3:21; 1 Jn. 3:2)? As 1 John 2:29, which we have already meditated on, says, we must live by practicing righteousness. Look at 1 John 2:29 – “If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.” Here, everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him means that those who have been born again who believe in Jesus are justified by faith in Jesus’ death and resurrection, so we too are righteous (Rom. 4:25). Therefore, the righteous must always practice righteousness as the indwelling Holy Spirit teaches them. This is what it means to live in the Lord. So what does it mean to practice righteousness? As we, who are already dead to sin and are living in this Church Age until we become sinless people like Jesus in the future, we must first seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt. 6:33). We must seek the kingdom of God and its King, the righteous Jesus. In other words, we must walk in the same manner as “Jesus Christ the righteous” walked (1 Jn. 2:1, 6). As those who live in Jesus Christ, we must do as Jesus Christ did (v. 6), that is to live in obedience to Jesus’ twofold commandment (vv. 7-11). The twofold commandment of Jesus is stated in Matthew 22:37-40: “Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” To practice righteousness first is to love the Lord God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, according to the first of Jesus’ twofold commandment. If we say this commandment from the perspective of 1 John, we obey 1 John 2:15-17: “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” Here, the meaning of doing the will of God is not living according to the passing world or the things of this world, “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life.” In other words, the meaning of purifying ourselves as Jesus is pure (3:3) means that we practice righteousness. And practicing righteousness means, first of all, we don’t live according to the things of this world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, that is passing away, but live by doing the will of God (2:15-17). Then, practicing righteousness means to love our neighbor as ourselves, according to second commandment of the twofold command of Jesus. To put this commandment in the perspective of 1 John, it is to obey the words of 1 John 2:3-11. To summarize it, it is to love and not hate our brother in Christ. Thus, when we obey Jesus’ commandment and love our brother, then “in him the love of God has truly been perfected” (v. 5). And since he abides in the Light, there is no cause for stumbling block in him (v. 10).

However, the problem is that since we aren’t filled with the Holy Spirit, there are times when we don’t love our neighbors, but rather hate them (v. 11) because we aren’t filled with the Holy Spirit. Then we must confess our sins to God. Look at 1 John 1:9, the assurance of forgiveness: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” We must confess our sins (1:9) by believing that the

righteous Jesus Christ, our Advocate before God the Father (2:1), became the propitiation for our sins (v. 2). Here, the word “propitiation” means “satisfaction.” Jesus died on the cross as the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, so that God’s holy requirement to punish sin was satisfied (MacArthur). Then the faithful and righteous God will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (v. 9). But I think there is a really dangerous point here. Although we have already confessed our sins, and even though our faithful and righteous God has forgiven us and cleansed us from all unrighteousness (v. 9), Satan makes up that we are sinful and tells God, the Judge that we are sinners. It may be helpful to imagine that we stand before God’s court, and Satan prosecutes us to the Judge, our holy and righteous Heavenly Father (MacArthur). Satan makes a false charge against us (Rev. 12:10). At that time, we should not be shaken in our assurance of the forgiveness of sins by hearing Satan’s accusation. Rather, we should let the words of 1 John 1:9 speak to us, looking in faith to Jesus Christ, who is our Advocate before the Father God: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

(v. 1) Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing pow'r? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?

(v. 4) Lay aside the garments that are stained with sin. Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

There's a fountain flowing for the soul unclean.

(Chorus) Are you washed in the blood, In the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb?

Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

(Hymn, “Have You Been to Jesus”)

Fourth, as children of God by God's great love, we should make sure that no one deceives us.

Look at 1 John 3:7a – “Little children, make sure no one deceives you;” Now in the church, we see the blind leading the blind (Mt. 15:14). The spiritually blind pastors, who have forsaken the knowledge of God and forgot His commandment (Hos. 4:6), interpret and teach the Bible unbiblically, brainwashing their followers and making them follow them blindly.

The reason these blind leaders and followers are dangerous is that they seem to have a zeal for God, but their zeal is not according to correct knowledge (Rom. 10:2). It is because we can only go wrong in haste (Prov. 19:2). Both the leader and the follower are bound to sin against God. All of them sin against God by breaking and disobeying God’s word. Both those who lead and those who follow say that they serve God passionately with faith and confidence in unbiblical teachings, but their God is not the God of the Bible, but the God of the unbiblical world, so they are committing the sin of worshiping idols (Isa. 10:11). I think the most serious of these sins is pride. That pride is our boasting, “I have understanding” (v. 13). It is boasting that “By the power of my hand and by my wisdom I did this” (v. 13). Although we are merely the Lord’s instruments, we boast of ourselves before the Lord and exalt ourselves (v. 15). This is what the Lord is saying to us: “Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chops

with it? Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it? That would be like a club wielding those who lift it, Or like a rod lifting him who is not wood.” Although we, as the Lord’s instruments, should be thankful if the Lord uses us or not, we are now pouring out complaints and criticism with dissatisfied hearts and hypocritical lips (Cf.: v. 17). As a result, God is angry with us (Isa. 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4, 25) and will punish us. God will raise up our enemies and the enemies will be against us (9:11). God will beat us with a rod and lift up a club against us (10:24). Nevertheless, because we don’t return to the God who beat us, nor seek Him (9:13), God will cut off the deceitful spiritually blind leaders (vv. 14, 16).

We must beware of leaders who deceive (Mk. 13:5). We need to be on the lookout for pastors who preach and teach by interpreting the Bible unbiblically. We must beware of the delusion of many false prophets (pastors?) (Mt. 24:11). We must never be led by them and be perished (Isa. 9:16). We must never depart from the truth (Jam. 5:19). Let our hearts not become corrupt, departing from the truth and purity of Christ (2 Cor. 11:3).

In 1 John 3:7, the Apostle John says: “Little children, make sure no one deceives you” The Apostle John already said to the recipients of his letter in 1 John 2:26 – “These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.” Here, who are “those who are trying to deceive you”? They are “the liar” (v. 22). And these liars are antichrists who not only deny that Jesus is the Christ, but also deny the Father and the Son (v. 22). Because of these many antichrists appeared, the Apostle John said, “from this we know that it is the last hour” (v. 18). Also, these deceivers are “the evil one” (vv. 13, 14). And this evil one is “the devil.” Look at 1 John 3:8, 10: “the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. ... By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.” Looking at these words, the Apostle John distinguishes “the children of God” and “the children of the devil” and exhorts the children of God in verse 7, “make sure no one deceive you,” and then in verses 8-10, the children of the devil are sinners and don’t practice righteousness. Here, not practicing righteousness means not loving our brother.

As I meditate on these verses, I think that ultimately the the purpose of the deceiver deceiving us is to make us sin. And that sin is to make us not love our brothers, but rather hate them. So, in 1 John 3:10, the Apostle John spoke not only about “the one who does not love his brother” but also “Everyone who hates his brother” in verse 15. The Apostle John has already spoken in verses 9 and 11 about the one who hates his brother. The point is that the one who hates his brother is still in darkness and lives in darkness and doesn’t know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes (v. 12). If we walk in darkness like this, even though we are saying, ‘We have fellowship with God,’ and are living the dark life of sinning and telling lies (1:6). Apostle John said that this kind of life is just a liar who doesn’t practice the truth” (v. 6).

We must not be liars. We must no longer live the dark life of sinning. We should no longer commit the sin of hating our brothers and sisters in Christ while claiming to be in fellowship with God. This is what the devil likes. The devil likes us to commit the sin of not loving and hating our brother by disobeying God’s commandment (3:8). This is not living in the Lord. This is the act of denying Jesus (cf. 2:22). This is what the deceivers want from us (v.

26). They want us to deny Jesus and live contrary to the teachings of the Holy Spirit (v. 27) and the love commandment of Jesus (vv. 7-9). Therefore, we must be very wary of Satan's delusion of our hearts. Satan deceives us to make our hearts toward Christ untrue and deceitful, unclean and defiled (2 Cor. 11:3). And when our hearts are deceived, we don't know the way of God (Ps. 95:10). We must always stand firm in the word of God and fight and overcome Satan's delusions (2:14). To do this, we must know and experience Christ, who is the Word of life from the beginning (1:1, 2). And we must have fellowship with Jesus Christ, who is eternal life (vv. 2-3). And we are to live in the Light and have fellowship with our brothers and sisters in the Lord (v. 7). As the indwelling Holy Spirit teaches us, we must obey the commandment of Jesus and love our neighbors, our brothers and sisters in Christ. Therefore, we must live as children of God (3:1, 2). This is to live as one who has received the great love that Heavenly Father has bestowed on us.

Fifth and last, as children of God by God's great love, we must practice righteousness.

Look at 1 John 3:7b – "... the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous." Jesus also told us not to worry, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" (Mt. 6:31) When Jesus said, "For the pagans run after all these things and your heavenly Father knows that you need them" (v. 32). After saying that, Jesus said, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (v. 33). Our priority is to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

What is the Kingdom of God? It refers to the reign of God. The Bible says this about "the kingdom of God": "But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you" (Lk. 11:20; Mt. 12:28). If we look at this word, we can see that the kingdom of God "already" came to Jesus' disciples when Jesus came to this earth about 2,000 years ago and cast out demons with the power of God. In other words, to say that the kingdom of God has already come is in the past tense. That's why Jesus said in Luke 17:21, "... the kingdom of God is within you." But the Bible also speaks of the kingdom of God in the future tense. In Luke 10:9, 11, the Bible says, "... The kingdom of God is near you ..." (v. 9), "... Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near" (v. 11). Also, Luke 22:18 says, "For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." In this way, the Bible speaks of the kingdom of God in both the past tense and the future tense. In other words, the kingdom of God has come "already" and at the same time "not yet" has not come. This is the word in the Bible that we who believe in Jesus are already saved (1 Jn .5:13) and that we will be saved in the future (Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:12-14), along with the words to work out your salvation (Phil. 2:12), which is similar to the past, present, and future tense. In other words, the Bible speaks of the kingdom of God in the past, present, and future tenses. The kingdom of God has not only come within us, but will come. Then, when we ask how we should live now, living between "already" and "not-yet" tension, we must first seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness according to Matthew 6:33. Then, what does it mean to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness? The word to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness means to obey the Lord's word while being ruled by the Lord, the King of the kingdom, and to live by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In 1 John 3:7b, the Apostle John says, "...the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous." The Apostle John already spoke of "everyone also who practices righteousness." And then in this way, 1 Jn. 3:7 again speaks about "the one who practices righteousness." He says that those who practices righteousness are righteous, just as Jesus was righteous. As I meditate on this word, I receive a lesson that we, who have become children of God through the great love that God has bestowed on us, must become doers of righteousness. So what does it mean to do righteousness? It is what we do (2:6) as "the righteous Jesus Christ" (v. 1) does. It is to live in obedience to the commandment of Jesus (vv. 7-11). In other words, we must love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and love our neighbors as ourselves, according to the twofold commandment of Jesus (Mt. 22:37-40). I have already meditated on this twofold commandment of Jesus in two ways from the perspective of 1 John: (1) First, the practice of righteousness is not living according to the passing world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, or the boastful pride of life in this world, but only doing the will of God (2:15-17). The Apostle Paul said, "This is the will of God, that your sanctification..." (1 Thess. 4:3). (2) Second, the practice of righteousness is to love and not hate our brother. When we love our brothers according to the Lord's commandment, God's love is truly perfected in us (1 Jn. 2:5). And we will know that we are in the Lord (v. 5). But he who doesn't practice righteousness, that is, whoever doesn't love his brother, is not of God [not a child of God] (3:10).

We become children of God because of the great love our Heavenly Father has bestowed on us (v. 1). As children of God, we are to imitate the righteous Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to do as Jesus Christ did (2:1, 6). Jesus was obedient to the Father God. He took our sins upon Him and became obedient to the point of dying on the cross. The reason is because Jesus loves His Father with all His heart, with all His soul, and with all His mind and also because He loves us. In this way, Jesus gave us the twofold commandment because He himself obeyed that commandment. Therefore, by obeying the twofold commandment of Jesus, I hope and pray that we all become children of God who practice righteousness.

We became children of God because of God's great love. Therefore we must know that the world doesn't know us because they don't know our Father. Also, we must believe that when Jesus appears in the future, we will be conformed to the image of Jesus and see Jesus face to face. And, like Jesus, we must purify ourselves. We must make sure no one deceives us. We, who have become children of God through the great love that God has bestowed on us, must do what is right. I hope and pray that we may all love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and also love our neighbor as ourselves, according to the twofold commandment of Jesus.

Thanking God for the great love of God who sent his Son Jesus and made Him the propitiation sacrifice for us and thus forgave all my sins and saved me,

James Kim

(May 3, 2020, Praying that I may live as a child of God as I think about God's great love that cannot be measured)

Love one another

[1 John 3:11-24]

Don't you want to love each other with a transforming love, not a changing love? A bride and a groom who believe in Jesus make a vow in front of God, the witness, and their guests during the wedding service to God. Then, even though the couple has an obligation to live before God according to the vow they made, their love for each other is deteriorating, and thus they are disloyal to that vow. At the time of marriage, they loved each other and greatly with passion. But now that love is getting smaller (cooling). What is the reason? The reason is because the couple didn't live a Lord-centered life. If the couple is living the Lord-centered life, they will gradually understand the love of the Lord more and more, and naturally love their spouse with the Lord's love. Therefore, as the years go by, the couple will gradually change into the love of the Lord, and they will love each other with the love of the Lord that grows more and more abundantly. It's one of the two. As the couple experience the Lord's faithful covenant love, they either love each other as they pledged to each other (a gradual transforming love), or they love each other with worldly love that will eventually deteriorated because they don't know the Lord's love in their hearts but only their heads. I hope and pray that they will become the loving couple not with love that deteriorates gradually, but with love that transforms gradually.

We have already thought about how great our Heavenly Father's love for us is in 1 John 3:1-10. In a word, we learned that we became children of God through the great love of our Heavenly Father (vv. 1, 2). And we have already been taught five things how to live in Christ as children of God: (1) We should know that the world does not know us because they do not know our Father (v. 1). (2) We will be like Jesus because we will see Him just as He is when He appears (v. 2). (3) We must purify ourselves just as Jesus is pure (v. 3). (4) We must let no one deceive us (v. 7). (5) We must practice righteousness (v. 7). Here, when we say that we must practice righteousness, we must also do as "the righteous Jesus Christ" does (2:1, 6). It is to live in obedience to the commandment of Jesus (vv. 7-11). In other words, we must love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and love our neighbors as ourselves, according to the twofold commandment of Jesus (Mt. 22:37-40).

After the Apostle John wrote this letter, he said in 1 John 3:11, "... We should love one another," in verse 18, "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth" and then in verse 23, "... and to love one another as he commanded us." What this fact tells us is that the Apostle John exhorts us to love one another (vv. 11, 18, 23) as those who received great love from God (v. 1). I think that the exhortation can be

structurally divided into two main parts: (1) First, 1 John 3:12-15 talks about those who don't love each other and hate their brother (v. 15), (2) and secondly, verses 16-24 talks about those who obey His commands (v. 24), that is, those who believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as He commanded us (v. 23). Look at 1 John 3:23 – “And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.” From this word we can guess that believing in Jesus Christ and obeying His command is related. In other words, the Apostle John is speaking in connection with faith and obedience. This connection reminds us of the words of James in the Bible: “What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?” (Jam. 2:14), “In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (v. 17), “You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?” (v. 20), “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead” (v. 26). The Bible says that faith without obedience is dead. Also, the Bible tells us that without faith we cannot obey God (Jere. 42:6, 14, 21) and cannot please Him (Heb. 11:6). Therefore, if we truly believe in Jesus Christ, we must obey His command, ‘Love one another’ (1 Jn. 3:23).

Then, first, let us consider four things, centering on 1 John 3:11-15, about those who don't love each other as the Lord commanded but hate their brother:

First, those who don't love one another according to the Lord's command and hate their brother are like Cain.

Look at 1 John 3:12 – “Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.” What kind of person should we really be? Perhaps this is the question we mostly ask ourselves. But we need to ask the opposite question as well at least once. In other words, we need to ask ourselves the question, ‘What kind of person should we not be?’ Under the heading ‘I shouldn't be like this ...’, I once wrote like this: ‘I shouldn't be a person who misunderstands too quickly rather than to understand, who is quick to criticize rather than sincerely praise, who gets angry too easily rather than to be patient, who is too busy to assert himself rather than listen to what others have to say.’ In 1 John 3:12, the Apostle John says, “Do not be like Cain.” In other words, the Bible says, ‘You shall not be like Cain.’

Who is the biblical character “Cain”? Cain is the eldest son of Adam, the first man in Genesis. The Bible says he worked the soil (Gen. 4:1-2). He had a younger brother, Abel, who kept flocks (v. 2). When the harvest time came, Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord, and Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. “The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor” (vv. 3-5). This incident caused Cain to become very angry that his face was downcast (v. 5). And in the end, while he was in the field with Abel, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him (v. 8). In this way, Cain was the first man to kill a human being, and he was also the first murderer who killed his own younger brother. In addition to these words based on Genesis 4, 1 John 3:12, where the Apostle John explains the reason why the recipients of his letters should not be like Cain: “Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were

righteous.” he reason why the Apostle John tells us not to be like Cain is because Cain “belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother (Abel)” (v. 12). Here, the Korean modern Bible translates the phrase “the evil one” as “the devil.” In other words, the reason Cain killed his younger brother Abel was because Cain belonged to the devil. Cain's deeds were evil because he belonged to the devil. So he killed his brother Abel, whose actions were righteous (v. 12). Therefore, the Apostle John exhorts us not to be like Cain in loving one another by believing in Jesus Christ and obeying His command.

As I meditated on this word, I thought again about why Cain did not love his brother Abel and killed him. Of course, as the word of 1 John 3:12 says, it is because Cain belonged to the devil and Cain's own actions were evil. Along with this verse, I meditated in connection with the word of Genesis 4:7 – “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.” Sin was crouching at the door of Cain's heart, as if a tiger was crouching down to eat while staring at its prey. God said this to Cain because God accepted Cain's brother Abel and his offering (v. 4), but didn't accept Cain and his offering (v. 5). That was why Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast (v. 5). God, who knew it, told Cain, “sin is crouching at your door,” and said, “it desires to have you, but you must master it” (v. 7). Sin was crouching at the door of Cain's heart and longing for Cain. So God told Cain to master it. However, Cain could not master it and killed his brother Abel (v. 8). As a result, Cain was defeated by his enemy, the devil, who was prowling around like a roaring lion and was looking for some to devour (1 Pet. 5:8), and thus wasn't able to master his sinful desire but rather mastered by his sinful desire and eventually killed his brother Abel. In the end, Cain became the prey of Satan, who was like the crouching lion. In other words, Cain belonged to the devil (1 Jn. 3:12). And the devil put into the heart of Cain to kill his brother Abel (Jn. 13:2).

When I think about “the devil,” the Bible John 8:44 comes to my mind: “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” From this word of the Apostle John, we can see that the devil acts according to his desire. Actually Cain, who actually belonged to the devil, was a possessive and envious man, as his name meant ‘acquired’ or ‘possessed’ (Hee-bo Kim). That was why, when God accepted only Abel's offering and didn't accept Cain's offering, Cain was very angry that his face was downcast. Thus he became jealous and struck down his brother Abel and killed him. He followed the desire of his father the devil and became the first murderer of his brother Abel. Therefore, the Apostle John said that believers who believe in Jesus and love one another according to the Lord's command should not become like Cain. We must not belong to the evil one the devil like Cain, and become jealous murderers of our brothers.

As I meditated on the saying “Do not be like Cain” (1 Jn. 3:12), I remembered the lesson: ‘Do not be a Corinthian.’ Here, the phrase ‘Do not be a Corinthian’ means not fornication and not licentiousness (Internet). However, in 1 John 3:12, when the Bible tells us not to be like Cain, as those who believe in Jesus Christ and obey Him, we must love one another according to the Lord's command. And we must not commit the sin of being greedy and killing each other. The Apostle John already said in 1 John 3:8, “He who does what is sinful is of the devil,

because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.” We must not sin because we belong to the devil like Cain. The Bible Jude 1:11 says: “Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain” We should not walk in the evil way of Cain, but rather walk in the righteous way of righteous Abel (1 Jn. 3:12). Like Abel, we must offer better sacrifices or better worship to God by faith (Heb. 11:4). In order for us to worship God better, we must not ignore Matthew 5:23-24: “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.” The Bible instructs us first to be reconciled first to our brother if our brother has something against us and then come and offer our worship to God. In other words, we should worship God in harmony while loving our brothers and sisters in Christ. However, if we worship God as if we loved God without loving our neighbors, such as not being reconciled with our brothers and sisters, quarreling and fighting, I think that is not the true worship the Lord wants. Therefore, we must worship God with a heart that loves God while loving our neighbors. I hope and pray that we do as Jesus does (1 Jn. 2:6) by practicing righteousness (3:10). That is, we must love our brothers. He who belongs to God loves his brother (v. 10).

Second, those who don’t love one another according to the Lord’s command and hate their brother are the ones the world loves.

Look at 1 John 3:13 – “Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.” What do you think of people in the world who don’t believe in Jesus hate you who believe in Jesus? I am sure no one wants to be hated by the world. We will all want to be loved by everyone, whether we are believers or non-believers. But the Bible seems to say that people in the world who don’t believe in Jesus can hate (or hate, or have to hate) us who believe in Jesus. For example, the Apostle John said in John 15:18, 23: “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ... He who hates me hates my Father as well.” When the world hates us, the believers, it means that they hate our Lord first. To hate the Lord means they hate the Father God. But from the point of view of the world, the reason they hate Jesus and hate the Father God is because they deny that Jesus is the Christ and the Father God and Jesus, the Son of God, as the Apostle John already in 1 John 2:22. That is why the world hates us who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. That is why the Apostle John is telling us in 1 John 3:13, “Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.” If we apply this word a little differently, we who believe in Jesus should not be surprised if the people of this world who don’t believe in Jesus hate us. Rather, I think it’s natural for the world to hate us. What is the reason? The Apostle John explains the reason well in John 15:19 – “If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.” Also, look at John 17:14, 16: “I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ... They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.”

If we look at the word of the Apostle John, we can understand the reason why the Apostle John said in 1 John 3:13, “Brothers, do not be surprised that the world hates you.” In one word, the reason the world hates us is because we are no longer of the world. In other words, the world hates us because we are now chosen by the Lord

and belong to the Lord. The Apostle John describes this fact in two ways in 1 John chapter 2. In other words, the Apostle John describes those who belong to the Lord and those who belong to the world in two ways in 1 John chapter 2.

(1) The Apostle John said that the truth is in those who belong to the Lord, and those who belong to the world are liars.

Look at 1 John 2:4 – “The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” First, let us consider the fact that those who are of the world are liars. The Apostle John said in John 8:44 that the devil is a liar and the father of lies. However, he said in 1 John 2:4 that the liar refers to the man who claims to know God and doesn’t to what He command. When we meditate on these two verses in connection, we can conclude that people who are born of the devil, who is the liar and the father of lies, are people who say they know God and don’t keep God’s commands. Those who truly know God keep His commands. But those who know God falsely don’t keep His commands. They are liars who belong to this world. In contrast, the truth is those who belong to the Lord. In other words, those who don’t belong to the world but belong to the Lord are those who truly know the Lord and obey His commands (1 Jn. 2:3). And those who obey the commands of the Lord have the truth in them. And those who obey Lord’s commands, and thus the truth is in them know that God’s love is truly made complete in them and by this we know that they are in Him (v. 5)..

(2) The Apostle John said that those who belong to the Lord are in the light, and those who belong to the world are in the darkness.

Look at 1 John 2:9 – “Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.” In 1 John 2:4, the Apostle John speaks about a man who claims to know God, but doesn’t do what He commands, and then in verse 9 he speaks about a man who claims to be in the light but hates his brother. Looking at these two verses, among the recipients of this letter of 1 John from the Apostle John, those who disobey God’s commands while saying, ‘I know God’ and ‘I am in the light’, didn’t love and hated their brothers in Christ. In fact, even in the modern church, how many of the church members say, ‘I know the Lord’ and ‘I love the Lord’, but actually break the Lord’s commands and hate their neighbors instead of loving them? Don’t we do that countless times? In particular, even though we know the Bible verse Ephesians 5:8, “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light,” we don’t live as children of light but live like those who are still in the darkness like when we were non-believers? Then what does it mean to live like those who are in the darkness? According to the Apostle John, that is hating their brother (1 Jn. 2:9). Look at 1 John 2:11 – “But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.” Those who are in the darkness who hate their brother are the ones the world loves (3:13).

In 1 John 3:13, the Apostle John says: “Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.” Applying this verse, it is natural that people in the world who don’t believe in Jesus hate us who believe in Jesus. Why do the unbelievers hate the believers? Look at 1 John 3:19 – “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.” The reason the unbelievers hate the believers is because they love the darkness more than the Light. Also, the reason the darkness-loving world hates the believers who are children of the Light is that the children of the Light’s obedience to God’s commands “expose” “the unfruitful deeds of darkness” (Eph. 5:11). Isn’t that obvious? When the Light shines on the darkness, don’t the dark deeds expose? In this way, the light life of believers, the children of the Light, reveals the dark deeds of this world. Therefore, those in the darkness must hate the children of the Light. The Apostle John tells us not to be surprised about it (1 Jn. 3:13). Therefore, the ones who hate his brother (v. 15), who don’t love one another as the Lord commanded, is the ones whom the world loves (v. 13). The reason the world loves the ones who hate his brother is because he who doesn’t love his brother is not a child of God (v. 10). In other words, the people of the world hate us (3:13), the children of God (vv. 1, 2), because they aren’t God’s children (v. 10). According to 1 John 3:10, the people of the world are “the children of the devil,” so the children of the devil hate “the children of God.” And the children of the devil don’t do what is right and don’t love their brother (v. 10). That is why they hate the children of God who do what is right and who love their brothers. But, on the contrary, those who don’t do what is right and hate their brother are the ones whom the world loves.

We are God’s loved ones. We are the ones who became children of God through the great love that God has bestowed on us (vv. 1, 2). Therefore, as the children of God, we are to love one another according to God’s commandment (v. 11). Although the world hates us when we love each other, we shouldn’t be surprised at it. Although the people of this world hate us, who are the children of God, when we love one another according to God’s commandment, we need to take it as a natural result rather than surprised at it. I hope and pray that we, who became the children of God by receiving God’s great love, love each other according to God’s commandment, so that the world hates us.

Third, those who don’t love one another according to the Lord’s command and hate their brother are the ones who abide in death.

Look at 1 John 3:14 – “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.” Do you know what the minimum wage is in California, where we live? As of January 2020, \$12 per hour for fewer than 25 employees, and \$13 per hour for more than 26 employees (Internet). In the 1980s, when I was working part-time, the minimum wage was \$3.10 (Internet). So it has increased by almost \$9-10 in about 40 years. Naturally, an employee must be paid in return for the work they do. However, the Bible Deuteronomy 24:15 says to pay the employee his wages each day before sunset. What is the reason? The reason is because “he is poor and is counting on it” (v. 15). Look at Deuteronomy 24:15 – “Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and is counting on it. Otherwise he may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.” In the New Testament, it is said that in the days of the Apostle Paul, Roman soldiers had a salary

just as the soldiers still have a salary paid by the government. It is said that in the first century, the salaries of the Roman soldiers were a day's food, clothes, and money. It is said that the Roman soldiers or those received as compensation or remuneration for their work at that time were called "wages" (Internet).

The Apostle Paul, who was aware of this fact, said, "The wages of sin is death" in Romans 6:23. Here we need to consider what the word "death" means in the Bible. The Bible uses the word "death" in three different senses:

(1) 'Death' means 'spiritual death.'

Spiritual death here refers to separation from God. Adam, the first man of mankind in Genesis, disobeyed God's command of the covenant and died spiritually and was separated from God. That is, he was spiritually dead. And the Bible says that sin entered the world through this one man, Adam, and death through sin (Rom. 5:12). And the Bible says, "... and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned" (v. 12). That is, because of Adam's original sin, all people of mankind sinned, and death, that is, spiritual death, came to all men. We were all separated from God. In Romans 5, the Apostle Paul described the condition of these separated ones in three ways: (a) "when we were still powerless" (Rom. 5:6), (b) "While we were still sinners" (v. 8), (c) "when we were God's enemies" (v. 10). In Ephesians 2:1, the Bible speaks of us in this state as "dead in your transgressions and sins."

(2) 'Death' means 'physical death.'

Physical death here refers to the separation of body and soul when we die. From the medical point of view of this world, when we think of physical death, we seem to say that death is when our breathing and heart stop. However, from the Biblical point of view, physical death is the departure of our soul from the body. A good example is that before Jesus died on the cross, he prayed aloud to God the Father: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last" (Lk. 23:46). In this way, the physical death spoken of in the Bible is not simply the cessation of breathing and the heart stop, but the separation of our soul from the body. Then, our souls go to heaven and our bodies return to dust.

(3) 'Death' means 'eternal death.'

Here, "eternal death" refers to the "The second death" (Rev. 20:6, 11, 14; 21:8). Then, what is the "The second death" spoken of in the book of Revelation? It refers to the final state of death that all human beings who don't believe in Jesus Christ and disobey the will of God will face forever. This final state of death refers to the eternal and complete separation from God as the final judgment and eternal death (Internet).

When the Apostle Paul said, "The wages of sin is death" in Romans 6:23, the meaning of "death" includes

all three biblical meanings. In other words, the word that the wages of sin is death means that the wages of sin are spiritual death, physical death, and eternal death.

In 1 John 3:14, the Bible says: “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.” In the context of this word, the Apostle John distinguishes between two groups of people. One group is “the children of God” who do what is right (v. 10) of loving one another (3:11) as Jesus did (2:6), the command of the Lord (2:3, 4), the other group is “the children of the devil” who don’t do what is right and don’t love their brothers (v. 10). The Apostle John said that the children of God in the first group know that they have passed out of death into life by loving their brother, whereas the children of the devil who belong to the second group, who don’t belong to God and are not the children of God, are those who don’t love their brother and abide in death (v. 14). This verse can be briefly summarized and contrasted: the children of God who have eternal life love their brothers, but the children of the devil, who abide in death, don’t love their brothers (v. 14). Rather, the children of the devil, who abide in death, hate their brothers (v. 15). Therefore, as the Lord commanded, those who don’t love one another, don’t love their brother but hate their brother are those who still abide in death. That is, they are spiritually dead, physically dead, and will die eternally.

The Bible says that the wages of sin is death, but the (free) gift of God is eternal life in our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23). Although sin entered the world through the disobedience of one man, the first Adam, and death through sin reached all men (5:12), yet another man, the second Adam, or the last Adam Jesus Christ was obedient to the point of death on the cross. As a result, God’s free gift of eternal life that is in our Lord Jesus Christ “overflow to many” (v. 15). We, as the children of God who have this eternal life, must work out our salvation with fear and trembling while we live on this earth (Phil. 2:12). In other words, what the Apostle Paul meant when he said to the Philippian church members, “Work out your salvation,” was to ‘Work out your eternal life’ (you must live as those who have eternal life). Then, what does it mean to live as those who have eternal life? Since those who have eternal life are the citizens of the kingdom of heaven (Phil. 3:20), they must live as the citizens of the kingdom of heaven. To live like the people of the kingdom of heaven is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves, according to the twofold commandment of Jesus, the heavenly commandment (Mt. 22:37-39). The Bible Philippians 2:13 tells us that God works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure. That is, God gives us, the believers, the will to do good, and also the strength to work. The Holy Spirit produces love, which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, in us (Gal. 5:22-23) so that we can love God and love our neighbors. I hope and pray that all of us maybe able to prove that we already have eternal life, free from death by loving our brothers and sisters in Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 3:14).

Fourth, those who don’t love one another according to the Lord’s command and hate their brother are murderers.

Look at 1 John 3:15 – “Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has

eternal life in him.” Whether you are a family member or a member of the church, do you have no qualms in your conscience in terms of loving your neighbor with the Lord's love? Do you also come up to the Sunday chapel to praise and worship God, and even though you know “Your brother has something against you” (Mt. 5:23), don't you have time to worship God without first being reconciled to your brother? Although there are times when a couple argues with each other and they get angry with their children even when they go up to the chapel on a Sunday morning, and have difficult relationship with church members, don't you just praise and worship God without reconcile with them? Before worship, Jesus tells us to “go and first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering” (Mt. 5:24). Are we really obeying this word of Jesus? For some reason, even within the community of the church, I think there are some people who have a difficult relationship with each other. Even though they have the difficult relationship with each other, on the surface, they come up to the chapel and shake hands or greet each other while sitting in one place worshipping the Holy God. Therefore, we must love each other only with the love of God. Because the Holy Spirit who dwells in us produces the fruit of the Spirit, that is love, when brothers and sisters in Christ love each other with the love of God, we can keep the unity of the church. This kind of brotherly love is referred to in 1 John 2:10 as ‘the love that doesn't make us stumble. But if there is any stumbling that exists within us in terms of loving our brother or sister in Christ, why is there a stumbling? The reason is because we hate our brother in Christ (v. 11).

The Bible says that he who hates his brother is in the darkness. Look at 1 John 2:11 – “But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.” God is the Light. There is no darkness in Him (1:5). Therefore, if he says that he has fellowship with God, but doesn't love his brother but hates him, then he is lying and is walking in the darkness (v. 6). The Bible says that such liar walks in the darkness and doesn't know where he is going (2:11). The darkness has blinded his eyes who hates his brother (v. 11). As a result, because he cannot see or feel the love of God, not only he doesn't walk in the truth, but he also cannot do so. Though his head knows that he should love his brother, his dark heart that is filled with hatred not only does not love his brother, but also refuses to even receive his brother's love. He who says he is in the Light and hates his brother is still in the darkness (2:9). The love of God is truly not perfected in him (v. 5). As the child of Light, he isn't living a worthy life. Rather, he is committing the sin of obscuring the glory of God.

In 1 John 3:15, the Bible says: “Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.” The Bible says that everyone who hates his brother is “a murderer.” It's no wonder the world hates us (3:13). In a way, I think this is perfectly normal that the world hates us. But what is strange is that brothers hate each other, even though it is perfectly normal for brothers to love each other. The Bible says that when brothers hate each other, it is murder. Isn't that surprising? Usually when we think of murder, we think of killing people with a knife, a gun, etc. But the fact is that the Apostle John says that hating a brother is murder. The seventh commandment of the Ten Commandments say, “You shall not murder” (Exod. 20:13). But when we think about this word in connection with Jesus' second commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mk. 12:31), not loving your brother but hating him isn't loving your neighbor but murdering your brother.

As I meditated on these words, I remembered what Jesus said in Matthew 5:28 – “but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Jesus said that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. In fact, he had already committed adultery with her in his heart when he saw her with “A spirit of prostitution” (Hos. 5:4) or his ‘adulterous heart’ (Ezek. 6:9), rather than he actually (or physically) committed adultery with her. In this way, the heart that hates brothers is a murderous heart’ (1 Jn. 3:15). And having the heart that hates the brother in Christ like this is a murderer’s heart can actually kill that brother in the end. That is why the Apostle John said, “Do not be like Cain,” in 1 John 3:12, speaking of Cain who actually killed Abel, his own younger brother. The Bible says that he who hates his brother like this is the murderer, and the murderer has no eternal life (v. 15).

The saints who have already received eternal life by believing in Jesus love the Lord their God with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their mind, and love their neighbors as themselves (Mt. 22:37-39). However, we must also know that those who don’t love their brothers as themselves but hate their brother as they do in disobedience to the Lord’s commandment, and commit the sin of murder in their hearts, don’t have eternal life (1 Jn. 3:15). Those who don’t have eternal life hate their brother and commit murder not only in heart but also in reality. We who don’t love one another as the Lord commands but hate our brother is the murderers (v. 15). We who don’t love but hate our brother who kills in this way even in our hearts is still remain in death (v. 14), loved by the world (v. 13), and our actions are evil (v. 12). Therefore, we should not take the sin of hating our brother lightly. And we must not harden our hearts and be slow to repent of our sins of murder even in our hearts before God. We must immediately confess and repent our sins to God. We must hold on to the promise of 1 John 1:9 and confess our sin: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” And we are to love one another as the Lord commands. This is the righteousness we ought to do as the children of God (3:10). When we love our brother and sister in Christ, we will know that we already have eternal life (v. 14).

Then, focusing on 1 John 3:16-18, let’s think about those who obey His commands (1 Jn. 3:24), that is, those who love one other according to His commands in three ways:

First, those who love one another as the Lord commands lay down their lives for their brother.

Look at 1 John 3:16 – “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” What is love? Of course, when we Christians say “love,” we will refer to the famous love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13. In particular, when we say “love,” we seem to think of verses 4-7: “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. But when I meditate on 1 John 3:16, I remember John 15:12-14 more than 1 Corinthians 13: “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.” He is telling us to love one another as Jesus loved us. In order for us to obey these words of Jesus, we must first know how Jesus loved us. Jesus laid down his life for us on the cross. Jesus, who was without sin, took all our sins and died on the cross to pay for our sins. The more we realize the breadth, length, height, and depth of the love of Jesus' atoning death on the cross (Eph. 3:19), we can love each other with the Lord's love. In 1 John 3:16, the Bible says: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” In this verse, the Apostle John says that we first came to know love, because Jesus Christ laid down His life for us (v. 16). This reminds me of Romans 5:8 – “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Jesus Christ took on all our sins (original sin, past sins, present sins, future sins) and took on the eternal punishment we deserve. Therefore, “God demonstrates his own love for us” (v. 8). The holy and righteous God, who hates and destroys sin, demonstrated his love to the sinners who supposed to suffer eternal punishment and had to die forever clearly through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross (Chang Seh Kim). Also, in 1 John 3:16, the Apostle John says that those who love one another according to the Lord's commandment lay down their lives for their brother.

To love each other is to sacrifice for each other. Look at Ephesians 5:2 – “and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” Jesus sacrificed his life on the cross for our salvation. Why? The reason is because Jesus, the Good Shepherd, loves us. Look at John 10:11, 15, 17 – “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ... and I lay down my life for the sheep. ... I lay down my life ...” Of course, not only the Father God wanted the Son Jesus Christ to be crushed and to suffer (Isa. 53:10), but Jesus the Son also wanted to lay down his life for the sheep (Jn. 10:11, 15, 17, 18). So, while the Son Jesus obeyed the will of the Father God, whom He loved, even to death on the cross (Phil 2:8; Jn. 14:21), at the same time, Jesus laid down His own life (Jn. 10:11, 15, 17, 18). Jesus did this because He had the power to lay down His life (v. 18). As the Good Shepherd, the reason Jesus laid down His life for the sheep (v. 11) that the Father God had given him (v. 29) was so that they may have life, and have it to the full (v. 10). In a word, the reason Jesus, the Good Shepherd, laid down His life, was to give eternal life to the sheep (v. 11) so that they would not perish forever (v. 28).

As the Lord commands, those who love one another lay down their lives for their brother (1 Jn. 3:16). Just as Jesus laid down His life on the cross for us, we ought to lay down our lives for our brother (v. 16). Jesus said, “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn. 15:13). Let's all make sacrifices for our dear brothers and sisters in Christ, starting with small things. May we all be willing to make sacrifices willingly, humbly, and even with joy.

Second, those who love one another as the Lord commands help their brother in need with their material possessions.

Look at 1 John 3:17 – “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on

him, how can the love of God be in him?” Is it wrong for us to ask God for the blessing of wealth and possessions? Are we really happy if we have a lot of wealth and possessions? In Ecclesiastes 6:3, 6, the word “prosperity” appears in the Bible: “A man may have a hundred children and live many years; yet no matter how long he lives, if he cannot enjoy his prosperity ...” (v. 3), “even if he lives a thousand years twice over but fails to enjoy his prosperity ...” (v. 6). If we look at these verses, the word “prosperity” is the wealth and possessions that God gives (v. 2). In other words, the blessing of wealth and possessions that God gives us is our happiness [However, that doesn’t mean that a person is unhappy because he didn’t receive the blessings of wealth and possessions from God. The important thing is not whether we receive the blessing of wealth or possessions, but rather that God is with us because that is prosperity and happiness (Gen. 39)]. When we receive the blessing of wealth and possessions from God, we are happy people. But let us not forget that there is something more important than the blessings of wealth and possessions. It is the blessing of receiving and enjoying the blessing of wealth and possessions. Look at Ecclesiastes 5:19 – “Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work--this is a gift of God.” Here, King Solomon talks about four things: (1) God blesses us with wealth and riches; (2) God gives blessings of wealth and riches through our laboring; (3) God makes us to enjoy his blessing of wealth and riches, and (4) It is God's gift that we can enjoy the blessings of his wealth and riches. But in Ecclesiastes 6:1, King Solomon talks about “another evil” that weights heavily on men. And the “another evil” is that people are not able to see their own happiness and are not satisfied with their happiness. Who are the ones who are not see their own happiness and are not satisfied with their happiness? They are those who received the blessing of wealth and riches from God, but are not allowed to enjoy it (v. 2). Although we may have a hundred children (v. 3) and live a thousand years twice over (v. 6), how can we say that we are happy people if we can not enjoy the blessings of wealth and riches we have received from God? They are an unhappy people. Therefore, more important than the blessings of wealth and riches is the blessing of enjoying those blessings.

I think that the most foolish people in the world are those who have abundant wealth but cannot enjoy it. How foolish are those who use their wealth for vain pleasures, even if they do enjoy it? Why can’t they foolishly enjoy abundant wealth? I found the reason in Ecclesiastes 5:13 – “I have seen a grievous evil under the sun: wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner.” Why can’t they enjoy their abundant wealth? The reason is because the owner of the wealth is keeping it from harm to himself. How foolish is this? Why are they protecting their wealth to such an extent that it harms them? The root reason is because they love money (wealth) more than themselves. How can money be more precious than a person's life? This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘It is harmful to give life to something that you will not have forever’ (Park). This surely is the grievous evil. King Solomon saw that “wealth lost through some misfortune, so that when he has a son there is nothing left for him” (v. 14). So King Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 5:15-16: “Naked a man comes from his mother's womb, and as he comes, so he departs. He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand. This too is a grievous evil: As a man comes, so he departs, and what does he gain, since he toils for the wind?” After all, this world comes empty-handed and goes empty-handed. No matter how much we work and how much money we accumulate, we have nothing we can take with us when we die. What do you do with those who have accumulated wealth in such a way that they harmed themselves? What's the use of not enjoying it and losing all the wealth you've accumulated due to a disaster? As a result, the

Bible says, “All his days he eats in darkness, with great frustration, affliction and anger” (v. 17). In the end, the foolish rich man is nothing more than a lifelong effort in vain to catch the wind. But to those who love God, or to those whom God loves, God gives riches and wealth so that they can enjoy it. Here is an important truth we need to keep in mind. When God grants us the power of wealth, we can not only obtain riches in abundance, but we can enjoy them only when God allows us to enjoy those riches.

Then, how should believers who have been blessed with wealth and riches enjoy those blessings? We are to love one another according to the commandment of the Lord. We must use our means to help our brothers in need. Look at 1 John 3:17 – “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?” The Apostle John said ‘How can you say you love God if you have a lot of money and see your brother in need and don’t help him?’ The Bible says that the man who has so much wealth but sees a poor brother and does not help him is not rich toward God (Lk. 12:21). Such a man is the man who stores up wealth only for himself (v. 21). And in Proverbs 28:22, the modern Korean Bible says, ‘The selfish man is in a hurry to accumulate wealth.’ On the other hand, the unselfish man, or more specifically, the believer who knows the love of Jesus Christ who laid down His life for us (1 Jn. 3:16), use God-given material blessings to love his neighbor. Hear this letter from the Apostle Paul to the saints in the church in Corinth. Look at 2 Corinthians 12:15 – “So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well. If I love you more, will you love me less?” Since Paul rejoiced greatly for the souls of the Corinthian church members whom he loved with the love of the Lord, he not only used his possessions but also gave himself up for them. In other words, he was willing to give not only his means but also his own body for the sake of his beloved brothers. In this way, the Apostle Paul loved the Corinthian church members and used what he had. He was also loved by the Philippian church members and received help from them when Paul was in mission trip (Phil. 4:14). The members of the Philippian church not only helped Paul when he left Macedonia in the beginning of the gospel, but also sent him something to write twice while he was in Thessalonica (vv. 15-16). Not only that, when the church members in Jerusalem were in trouble, the Gentile brothers, Macedonians and Achaia brothers, gathered a relief offering with joy and gave it to Paul (vv. 25, 31). Look at Psalms 112:9 – “He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor, his righteousness endures forever; his horn will be lifted high in honor.” The Roman army centurion in the Italian Regiment in Acts 10 gave generously to those in need (Acts 10:1-2). The Bible says that these gifts to the poor had come up as a memorial offering before God (v. 4). Therefore, the Bible says that Cornelius “is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people” (v. 22). A certain centurion in Luke 7 loved the Jewish people and built a synagogue for them (Lk. 7:2, 5).

As the Lord commanded, we should love one another, and help our brother in need with our material possessions (1 Jn. 3:17). Look at Proverbs 14:24 – “The wealth of the wise is their crown, but the folly of fools yields folly.” We should use the wealth God has given us wisely by helping our brothers and sisters in Christ who are in need around us with material possessions. Then it will become our crown.

Third, those who love one another as the Lord commands love their brother with

actions and in truth.

Look at 1 John 3:18 – “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.” Personally, there are times when I make the hymn “Lord, I Want to be a Christian” as the subject of my earnest prayer and praise. According to the lyrics of the hymn, “I want to become a Christian”, “I want to be more loving”, “I want to be more holy”, “I want to be like Jesus” “In a my heart, in a my heart” are the subject of my earnest prayer. I am sure you have the same heart with me. To do that, we must first become true Christians. At the end of October 2018, I wrote this short writing under the title “I want to be a true Christian”: ‘It is far better for me to tell the truth and to be hated, excluded, insulted, and rejected my name as evil by telling the truth than to lie and be praised by everyone (Lk. 6:22, 26).’ However, I think that we pastors are not sincere and have a habit of telling lies. There is an article about this in the book ‘Suffering is a gift’ written by a man named Jung-min Jo: ‘It is difficult to find a sincere person among those who want to reveal their name, and it is difficult to find a humble person among those who want to teach anywhere’ (Jo).

Have you ever shed ‘tears of true love’ while thinking of the person you love? I wrote this short writing at the end of December 2018 under the title “Tears of True Love”: ‘Today, I saw tears in her eyes. I may not fully understand the meaning of those tears, but at least I know that they are tears of true love. Among the mother’s tears for her beloved child, the tears of fervent prayer will surely fulfill God’s will in God’s time and in God’s way. So we don’t give up. Rather, we pray, expect and have hope.’ When we pray for our children or loved ones, all of us must have prayed with earnestness and tears in our hearts. The tears of that earnest prayer of love cannot be a lie. In other words, we should shed tears of sincere prayer to God for those we love.

In 1 John 3:18, the Apostle John says: “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.” Why did the Apostle John continue to write to his recipients, saying, “Let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth”? Could it be that the reason was because of the recipients of 1 John’s letter, as mentioned in verse 17, which is a close context, there were saints who have many material possessions and see poor brother in need and don’t help him? (v. 17) Could it be that some of the saints don’t love their brother (v. 10) or that there were people who hated their brother? (v. 15, cf. 2:11) Furthermore, I think the reason why the Apostle John exhorted us to love in actions and in truth is because Jesus Christ, who is the Word of life from the beginning was revealed (1:1-2) and came in the flesh (2 Jn. 1:7), died on the cross as the propitiation sacrifice for our sins (1 Jn. 2:2), only to do the will of God (2:17), because He loved us first until He died on the cross (4:11). That is why the Apostle John said, “We also ought to love one another” (v. 11). As I meditated on these words, I was reminded of the words of the Apostle James in the book of James that faith without works is dead faith (Jam. 2:14, 17, 20, 26). Likewise, I thought that love without works is dead love. In other words, disobeying the Lord’s commandment to “love one another” (1 Jn. 3:11) and yet love only with words (v. 18) is dead love. In other words, just as faith without obedience is false faith, so love without obedience is false love. Just as faith without works is dead faith and false faith, so love without truthful actions is dead love and false love.

First, we must be true Christians. We must be honest. We must not lie to each other. We must not deceive

each other. We must be truthful not only before God, but also with each other. To the extent of being truthful in front of each other, we must be sincere enough to be able to say to each other, 'God is my witness' (Phil. 1:8). God sees us all. Also, God knows all our thoughts. Therefore, just as we are true to God, we must also be true to our loved ones. To do that, we need to have candid, clear and transparent conversations with our loved ones. We need to have an 'opponent-centered' conversation rather than a 'me-centered' conversation. That means we should speak because we want to do something to the person we love, rather because we want something from him. That's the word to build up the one we love. And our love must have actions. There must be a practice of love that comes from our truthful hearts. If we say 'I love you' with only words and then don't do it, there must be pain in our hearts (Prov. 14:23). For example, if we love God and love our neighbors only in words, but don't obey God's word in real life and hate our neighbor, we must have pain in our hearts.

Let us all love one another in actions and in truth. Let us no longer love each other only with words, but with sincerity in deeds. If we don't love in actions and in truth, but only in word and tongue, we cannot know that we are of the truth, nor can we rest in His presence (1 Jn. 3:18-19). I hope and pray that we can all imitate Jesus' true love with actions so that we can love each other with true love through deeds.

Lastly, in 1 John 3:19-24, the Apostle John speaks in two ways about the results of obedience when we love one another according to the Lord's commandment, or the blessings we receive when we obey the command to love one another.

First, if we love one another according to the Lord's commandment, we know that we belong to the truth and also set our hearts rest in His presence.

Look at 1 John 3:19 – “This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence.” Can a man who doesn't worry about the problem of sin really be called a saint? This is because the word 'saint' means one who is separated from the sinful world. We must faithfully bear our responsibilities as saints. That responsibility is to cut off from the sinful world. In other words, we the believers must live a life separate from sin. Just as water and oil cannot mix, the saints who are the children of the Light must not live in harmony with the dark world. In order to live like that, we must have a clear sense of belonging. We must never forget that we don't belong to this world (Jn. 17:16), but to the Lord who is the Light. We must make our affiliation clear. And we must live a life of faith with this certain and clear sense of belonging. The Apostle John contrasted the fact that we belong to one of the two in his letter, 1 John, in four ways: (1) The Light vs. the darkness (1 Jn. 1:5), (2) The truth vs. lie (v. 6), (3) Love vs. hate (2:9) and (4) Righteousness vs. evil or unrighteousness (3:12). These words are that we the saints belong to the Light, the truth, the love, and the righteousness. In other words, we don't belong to the darkness, the lie, hatred, evil or unrighteousness. Therefore, as the children of the Light, we must abide in the truth, do righteousness, and love one another.

The Apostle John said in 1 John 3:19, “This then is how we know that we belong to the truth ...,” and the

word “then” refers to those who love not just with word or tongue but with actions and in truth as verse 18 says. In other words, only those who truly love by their actions will know that they belong to the truth. And the saints who belong to the truth are the true disciples of Jesus. The reason is because the saints who belong to the truth belong to Jesus who is the Truth. The saints who belong to Jesus who is the Truth set their hearts at rest in His presence because they love not only with words and tongue, but also with actions and in truth. What is the reason? Why can we set our hearts at rest in His presence? The reason is because before God who is greater than our hearts and knows everything (v. 20), we have confidence before God because our hearts don’t condemn us (v. 21). This is the love without any stumbling in us, which the Apostle John already spoke of in 1 John 2:10. Not only that, the saints who love their brothers in actions and in truth according to the Lord's commands receive from God whatever they ask (3:22). What is the reason? The reason is because they obey His commands and do what pleases Him (v. 22). And “his commands, that is the Lord’s commands is “to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us” (v. 23).

We must believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and love one another according to the commands of the Lord. Then the blessing God gives us is that we know that we belong to the truth and also set our hearts at rest in His presence (v. 19). When we obey the Lord's commands, we have confidence before God, because our hearts don’t condemn us (v. 21). And with that confidence, we come before God, and whatever we ask of Him, we receive from Him (v. 22). The reason is because we love one another according to the Lord's commands by believing in the Lord, which pleases the Lord (vv. 22, 23). I hope and pray that this blessing of obedience may be upon us.

Second and last, if we love one another according to the Lord's commandment, we know that we live in the Lord and the Lord lives in us.

Look at 1 John 3:24 – “Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.” The lyrics of the gospel song “Abide in Me” are like this: “For I am the Lord your God, so abide in Me/ Your Deliverer and Protector, a Shelter from the storm/ Don’t tremble with fear. Surely I will help you/ I am holding your hand, so do not be afraid/ I have called you by name; you are Mine/ You are Mine and I am the Lord your God/ You are precious in My sight and you are highly honored/ I, the Lord your God love you/ I the Lord your God love you.” The lesson we receive when we think of this gospel song is that we are the Lord’s and we must abide in Him. Because when we abide in the Lord, the Lord will keep us, help us, and hold our hand. When we meditate on what the Apostle John said in 1 John 3:24, “Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them,” we read the gospel of John 15, written by the same author, the Apostle John, “The parable of the vine.” In particular, I was reminded of John 15:4-5: “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” Here the Apostle John said, “Abide in me,” and in 1 John 2:6, he said, “Whoever claims to live in him.” Here, the words “Abide” and “live” have the same meaning. That is, the Apostle John said in two verses, ‘live in the Lord/abide in the Lord.’ Therefore, in 1 John 2:6, ‘living in Him’ means to abide in the Lord. Then, the word ‘abide

in the Lord' means to be attached to the Lord as a branch is to the vine, based on John 15:4-5, and be with the Lord without leaving Him. The reason this is important to the Apostle John is because we can bear much fruit when we abide in the Lord as His disciples. In other words, we cannot do anything apart from Him unless we live (abide) in Him (Jn. 15:5).

In 1 John 2:5, which we have already meditated on, the Apostle John said: "But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him." How can we know if we are those who say we live (abide) in the Lord, we can know if we are those who keep the word of the Lord or not. In other words, if we keep the word of the Lord, we can know that we are in Him. That is, those who say that they live in the Lord (v. 6) are those who keep His word, and those who keep His word are truly made perfect in God's love (v. 5). That is, those who live (abide) in the Lord refer to those in whom the love of God is truly made perfect. To put this a little differently with the words of John 15:9-10, those who live (abide) in the Lord are those who live in the love of God. Look at John 15:9-10: "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." In this verse, the Apostle John says that those who live in the Lord, that is, those who abide in the Lord, keep His word, and those who keep His word are those who abide in His love. Looking at this, the Apostle John seems to be talking about these three things: 'abiding in the Lord', 'keeping the word of the Lord', and 'abiding in the love of the Lord'. In other words, the Apostle John seems to equate 'those who abide in the Lord' and 'those who keep the word of the Lord' and 'those who abide in the love of the Lord'. In other words, those who abide in the Lord keep the word of the Lord, and those who keep the word of the Lord abide in the love of the Lord. Those who abide in the Lord keep His word, and the Lord's love has truly been perfected (1 Jn. 2:5-6). And by keeping the word of the Lord in this way, the joy of the Lord is full (abounding) in the disciples of Jesus, whose love is perfected in them (Jn. 15:11).

How, then, do we know that the Lord lives in us? Look at 1 John 3:24 – "Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us." Looking at this verse, we can know that the Lord lives in us by the Holy Spirit God gave us. According to 1 John 4:2, the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of God" who lives in us, who makes us to confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh and is "from God." And in verse 4, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God "is in you." In other words, by the Holy Spirit whom God gave us is in us, we know that the Lord lives in us.

The Holy Spirit, whom God gave us, lives in us and bears the fruit of love (Gal. 5:22). And the Holy Spirit makes us to obey the Lord's command to love one another. If we love one another as the Holy Spirit leads us, we will know that we abide in the Lord and the Lord abides in us. This is the blessing we receive and enjoy as we obey the Lord's command to love one another.

As those who have received great love from God, we must love one another according to the Lord's command. We must not become those who don't love one another and hate our brother, and disobey the Lord's command. We must not be like Cain who killed his own brother Abel. If we don't love one another as the Lord

commanded, but hate our brother, we are the world's beloved. Also, we are still in death. If we hate our brother, we are murderers. As believers in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we are to love one another as the Lord has given us His command. We must lay down our lives for our beloved brother, just as Jesus laid down His life on the cross for us. Also, we need to help the poor and needy brother and sister in Christ with the material possessions that God has given us. And we must love one another, not in word or in tongue, but in actions and in truth. Then we can know that we belong to the truth and can set our hearts rest in His presence. Also, we will receive anything we ask of our Heavenly Father. And we will know that we abide in the Lord and the Lord abides in us by the Holy Spirit whom God gave us. May you be blessed with obedience to this precious command of the Lord.

He who became a child of God through the love of the Father God and through the love of Jesus Christ, who gave up his life on the cross,

James Kim

(On July 19, 2020, Pray that we will be filled with joy while enjoying fellowship with the Father God and Jesus the Son by the guidance of the Holy Spirit)

How do we know that we already have eternal life?

“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.” (1 John 3:14)

“Death” in the Bible is “spiritual death” that separates us from God, “physical death” that separates the body and soul, and “eternal death” that results in eternal and complete separation from God and eternal death (Chang She Kim). However, “eternal life” means being connected to God (reconciliation) through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:10-11), knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ (Jn. 17:3), or having fellowship with the Father God and eternal life Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 1:2-3), and whether the body is changed (if alive until then) or resurrected (if dead) and united with the soul when the Lord returns and entering the new heaven and new earth and living there with God forever. The Apostle John frequently uses the word “eternal life” in the Gospel of John, which literally means two things: (1) eternal life not only means temporally ‘endless life,’ but also (2) qualitatively ‘divine life that is different from human life’ (Internet). Therefore, the word “eternal life” includes both the meaning of eternal life (endless life) in time and the divine life enjoyed in God. In particular, in the Gospel of John, “eternal life” means ‘eternal blessings to be enjoyed in the hereafter’ like the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), but rather emphasizes the ‘blessings of the present.’

The Bible says that those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, already have eternal life (1 Jn. 5:12). This is because they have in their hearts Jesus Christ (v. 12) who is the eternal life (1:2; 5:20). And the Bible tells us that those who have eternal life by having Jesus Christ in their hearts (3:14) love one another according to His command, just as Jesus loved us (v. 23; Jn. 15:12). And the Bible says that loving one another (1 Jn. 3:23) is what pleases God (v. 22), according to the command of Jesus Christ, who is eternal life (1:2; 5:20). And the Bible says, “Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us” (3:24). That is, if we love one another as the command of Jesus Christ, we will know that we abide in the Lord and that the Lord abide in us through the Holy Spirit, whom God has given us. And the Bible says that if we abide in the Lord and the Lord in us, we bear much fruit (Jn. 15:5). What does “fruit” mean here? If we ask ourselves again, what is the “fruit” that we bear when we love one another as Jesus loved us, according to the command of Jesus Christ, who is eternal life? I think the “fruit” is two things. Those two things, the twofold fruit, are that we become like Jesus and bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. In other words, when we, who already have eternal life by believing in Jesus, love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, according to the twofold command of Jesus, and love our neighbors as ourselves (Mt. 22:37, 39), the twofold fruit we bear is that we are ‘partakers of the divine nature’ (2 Pet. 1:4), which means that we become like Jesus through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit and also bear the fruit of the Spirit, “love, joy, peace,

longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23). And the Bible says that if we bear much fruit, the Father God will be glorified, and we show that we are disciples of Jesus (v. 8).

As true disciples of Jesus who believe in Jesus and already have eternal life partially enjoy the blessings of the afterlife in the present are through intimate personal fellowship with the eternal God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit (Jn. 17:3; 1 Jn. 1:3). A typical example is participation in God's divine character. In other words, the blessing of eternal life that we partly enjoy in Jesus Christ while we live on this earth is to become like Jesus in the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. In the midst of this, the blessings of the hereafter that we partly enjoy now are God's love. We became the children of God because of the great love that our loving Heavenly Father (1 Jn. 4:8, 16) has bestowed on us (3:1, 2). That is, the Father God first loved us (4:19) and sent His Son Jesus Christ as the propitiation for our sins (v. 10) so that we might live through Him (v. 9) and become the children of God (3:1, 2). Also, through the love of Jesus, who laid down his life for us and became the propitiation for our sins on the cross (2:2; 3:16), our sins were taken away (3:5). Even now, the righteous Jesus Christ is our Advocate, defending us before our Heavenly Father, even if we sin (2:1, 2). And we not only have the Holy Spirit regenerated us [“born of God” (3:9; 5:1, 4)] so that we might live through Him (4:9), but also to partially enjoy eternal life that God has given us on this earth as well (5:11). The Holy Spirit enables us to do what is right (2:29; 3:10) by enabling us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, according to the twofold command of Jesus, and love our neighbors as ourselves (Mt. 22:37, 39) by bearing the fruit of the love of God that has been poured out in us (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22) so that we can partly enjoy eternal life, that is heavenly life, and partially taste (Rom. 14:17) the fulness of the joy of heaven (1 Jn. 1:4) and wonderful peace (Jn. 20:19; Col. 3:15).

In this way, we who are loved by the Holy Triune God, “we also ought to love one another” (1 Jn. 4:11). Love comes from God. All who love are born of God and know God. But those who don't love don't know God. The reason is because God is love (vv. 7-8). In other words, if we truly say ‘I know God’ or ‘I love God’, then we ought to love one another (v. 11). If we have fellowship with the eternal Father God and Jesus Christ who is eternal life through the Holy Spirit (1:3) (vertical love fellowship), we ought to love our brothers and sisters in Christ (4:11), whom we are one in Christ through the Holy Spirit with the love of God, the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) (horizontal fellowship of love). Because we love our brothers and sisters in Christ in this way, we know that we have passed from death and already have eternal life (3:14). In other words, the way we know that we have eternal life is through loving our brothers and sisters in Christ with the love of God. If we truly are the children of God who have eternal life, “we also ought to lay down our lives for our brothers,” because we know what love is: “Jesus Christ laid down his life for us” (v. 16). Also, if we are the children of God who have eternal life, we love our brothers and sisters in Christ not only in words or tongue but with actions and in truth (v. 18). Then we know that we belong to the truth, and set our hearts at rest in His presence (v. 19). Also, when we do this, the love of God will be truly perfected in us (2:5), there will be no cause for stumbling in us (v. 10), and our heart will not condemn us because we have confidence before God and will receive from Him anything we ask (3:21-22). But if we say, ‘I know God’ or ‘I love God’ and don't love each other, then we never know God and we don't love Him. How can we say we love God if we have a lot of money and see a poor brother or sister in Christ and don't help him? (v. 17)

Those who don't love their brothers or sisters in Christ don't belong to God (3:10) and still remain in death (v. 14). In other words, those who don't love their brothers or sisters in Christ are still living a life that is not connected to the Lord (is separated from Him), who is love and eternal life, which is the state of the old man and living like unbelievers who are spiritual dead and thus have no choice but to die forever. Even the Bible says that everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and a murderer has no eternal life (v. 15). So the Bible says, "Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous" (v. 12).

The purpose of the Apostle John's letter of 1 John is "so that you may not sin" (2:1). The "sin" that the Apostle John is talking about here is 'walking in the darkness' (1:6), 'lying' (v. 6; 2:4), 'doing evil (is unrighteous) (3:12). In a word, the "sin" the Apostle John is talking about is 'hating his brother' (2:9). The Bible says that those who hate their brothers or sisters in Christ are still in the darkness and are living in the darkness (v. 11). Also, the Bible says, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth" (1:6). That is, the Bible says, if we love our brothers and sisters in Christ with words or tongue (3:18), but hate them in our hearts, then we aren't doing what is right or doing unrighteousness (v. 10), our actions are evil (v. 12), and we are murderers and there is no eternal life in us (v. 15). But the Bible says, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers" (3:14). The way to know that we already have eternal life is to see if we love our brothers and sisters in Christ with the love of God. If we are saved by the love of the Triune God and have eternal life, if we are sharing love through the Holy Spirit with the eternal Father God and His Son Jesus Christ who is eternal life (vertical love fellowship), we will be sharing the fellowship of love with our brothers and sisters in Christ with the love of God (horizontal fellowship of love). In other words, we who have eternal life will become channels of eternal love of the Holy Triune God, and we will have no choice but to love our brothers and sisters in Christ with His love. If we truly believe in Jesus by the grace of God and already have eternal life, then we will be bearing the twofold fruit, that is we become like Jesus through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, and by obeying the twofold command of Jesus by loving our God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind and love our neighbors as ourselves (Mt. 22:37, 39), and we bear the fruit of the Spirit, that is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23). By this twofold fruit, we can know if we truly have eternal life (cf. Matt. 7:16).

Wanting to do the Lord's will according to His word, "the one who does the will of God lives forever" (1 Jn. 2:17),

James Kim

[On August 9, 2021, Praying for me to live for Jesus Christ and His gospel as I enjoy eternal joy and perfect peace of the heavenly eternal life partially on this earth by having fellowship with the eternal Father God and the eternal life Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, and love my brothers and sisters in Christ with His love as I continue to know and understand how wide and long and high and deep the love of Christ is (Eph. 3:18), and then wanting to live forever in heaven with the Lord when He calls me to His home]

You must test the spirits!

[1 John 4:1-6]

What does the Bible mean when it says to be “wise as serpents”? Jesus said in Matthew 10:16 – “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.” Here, the serpent is a symbol of wisdom. The Lord speaks of the wisdom of the serpent, above all else, that the serpent avoids the difficulties by carefully coping with various difficulties that come to him. And that the serpent is wise means careful discernment. The serpent's wisdom is the ability to discern and judge all things. We must be as wise as serpents because the Lord has sent us into this world, and there are many false prophets, outwardly clothed in sheep's clothing, but inwardly ravenous wolves (Mt. 7:15; 10:16). When Jesus told His disciples to beware of the false prophets, and He also spoke of “sheep” and “wolves” (7:15). The Bible says that the false prophets come to us in sheep's clothing. What it means is that the false prophets act like sheep in the sheep's clothing. So, on the surface, the false prophets appear like sheep and do no harm to us. But we need to be on the lookout for the false prophets because they come to us in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. The Greek word for “ravenous” here has the connotation of extremely greedy, like a robber or a deceiver. Therefore, we must be wise as serpents and innocent as doves (10:16).

In 1 John 4:1, the Bible says this: “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” As I meditate 1 John 4:1-6 based on this verse 1, I would like to receive 4 lessons:

First, the Bible tells us to test the spirits.

Look at 1 John 4:1 again: “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” Here, the word ‘test’ is said to be a metallurgical term used to analyze metals to determine their purity and value (MacArthur). So I searched the internet for a method of dividing metals to determine the purity and quality of metals. Although there are many articles, I couldn't understand them because there are a lot of technical terms. However, there was an article written by Pastor Ki-Jong Park of the Eastern Pohang Church under the title ‘The difference between solid gold and pure gold,’ so I read it. There was this writing: ‘Pure gold (24K) also contains impurities. The highest value of the purity label is 100% minus 0.1% and is expressed as 99.9%. Once the ore comes in, it is melted in a furnace. Go through 3 furnaces until you get gold. You have to overcome hardships of 3000 degrees or more by 1,000 degrees or more

to become pure gold. The company that produces the best gold in Korea is LS-NIKKO Copper Smelting, located in Ulju-gun, Ulsan-si. Yong-sil Choi (34), who is making gold in the company's precious metals team, said: 'In the smelting process, even if impurities as small as dust enter, it is impossible to make pure gold. ... There is a lesson in making pure gold that you must not stop the refinement until your face looks like a mirror. ... In particular, those who make gold should value faith, trust, and love that cannot be shaken by the temptations of the world more than life.' Then, Pastor Ki-Jong Park said, 'Just as wastes are removed from the furnace to become pure gold, so suffering removes the remnants of sin that remain within us and makes us holy. Jesus' furnace makes pure gold. The furnace of the smelter makes pure gold, but the furnace of Jesus makes "pure gold." Job's confession of faith, who did not lose his faith in the face of many difficulties, is the highlight of my heart's emotion' (Internet). Look at Job 23:10 – "But He knows the way I take; When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Also, look at Proverbs 17:3 – "The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But the LORD tests hearts."

God looks at our hearts (1 Sam. 16:7). And God desires truth in our hearts (Ps. 51:6). Therefore, God refines our hearts (Prov. 17:3). God wants to purify our hearts by refining our hearts (Mal. 3:3). Then how does God refine our hearts? In Isaiah 48:10, the Bible says that God tests us in the furnace of affliction. So the Apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 4:12-13: "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed."

In 1 John 4:1, the Apostle John says, "test" which also means "examine". Here I would like to take four lessons:

(1) We must examine what God's will is.

Look at Romans 12:2 – "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will." The reason we fail to examine the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God is because we cannot renew our minds and be transformed by conforming to the pattern of this world. So, how can we know the will of God? First, when we diligently read and ponder the word of God, the Bible, we compare it with the principles, doctrines, promises, and precepts of the Bible that govern our lives, and examine whether this decision is against God's will before making our own decisions. And those who constantly read and ponder the Bible will have relatively little difficulty in discovering the will of God compared to those who do not. It will help us to discover the will of God in the following ways:

(a) Focus on God.

As we ask ourselves questions about the purpose of doing this, ask ourselves whether this work is suitable for God's work.

(b) Obey what God has already commanded us to do.

Before doing anything new, we obey the command we have already been given. In fact, many of God's will are already known to us. But there are many cases in which we don't voluntarily obey and seek other ways.

(c) Pray.

We should definitely pray to God. We must pray for God to work through His word, through others, and through our own hearts.

(d) Study the Bible.

God speaks to us through the Bible. In order to know God's will, we must read the Bible steadily. In reading the Bible, we should look for principles. It isn't the right attitude to look for specific words or proof sentences to justify ourselves.

(e) Take the advice.

We should accept the advice of those who have mature faith and who know the Bible well and know themselves well.

(f) Set priorities.

We should consider prioritizing everything. Past experience can also help in this case. Of course, this standard should be the Bible.

In 1 John 4:1, when the Apostle John said, "test," it means not to believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. However, in connection with the Apostle Paul's word in Romans 12:2, I tried to apply this by thinking about the four will of God that the Apostle John is saying in 1 John chapters 1 through 3 that we should test:

(a) The will of God is 'Shine the Light!'

Look at 1 John 1:5 – "This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." The Apostle John says, "God is Light" (v. 5). In the Gospel of John he wrote, Jesus refers to himself as "the light of the world" (Jn. 8:12). And in John 12:36, the word of Jesus recorded by the Apostle John is, "Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light." The word similar to this word of Jesus written by the Apostle John is written in Ephesians 5:8, written by the Apostle Paul: "for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light." Our God is Light. And we who believe in God are the children of light. The will of the Lord to the children of light is to walk as children of Light. We must shine the Light

according to the will of the Lord.

(b) The will of God is 'Practice the truth!'

Look at 1 John 1:6 – “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.” The Apostle John says that we have fellowship with God, and that if we walk in the darkness, we lie and don’t practice the truth. In other words, it is a lesson that we, as those who have fellowship with God, should not walk in the darkness but practice the truth. When we think of the word “the truth” here, we can think of the word of Jesus written by the Apostle John in the Gospel of John: “... I am the way and the truth and the life. ...” (Jn. 14:6). Our Lord is the truth. Therefore, if we have fellowship with the Lord, we must be doers of the truth. Our Lord is the truth. There is no lie in our Lord. Therefore, we too must imitate the Lord and become those who practice the truth without lies. This is the Lord's will for us.

(c) The will of God is 'Love!'

Look at 1 John 3:11, 23: “For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; ... This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.” The Apostle John says that the command of the Lord is to believe in Jesus and to love one another. Therefore, he also tells us who believe in Jesus to love one another. Interestingly, the Apostle John not only teaches us God's will to shine the Light by telling us that God is Light (1:5) and Jesus is the Light of the world (Jn. 8:12), but he also teaches us God's will to practice the truth by telling us that Jesus is the truth (Jn. 14:6). And in 1 John 3:11, 23, he teaches us God's command (will) is to love one another by telling us that God is love (4:8, 16). Our God is love. A loving God commands us to love one another. Therefore, we must love one another according to the will of God.

(d) The will of God is 'Do righteousness!'

Look at 1 John 2:1, 6: “... Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ... Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.” The Apostle John says that Jesus Christ is “the Righteous One.” And if we say that we live in the Righteous Jesus Christ, we are to do us as Jesus Christ did. That means we must also do righteousness as the Righteous Jesus Christ did. So what does it mean to do righteousness here? In my opinion, doing righteousness means doing the will of the Holy Triune God. In other words, to do righteousness means to shine the Light according to the will of the Father God, to practice the truth according to the will of Jesus the Son, and to love according to the will of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the Righteous One. Just as the Righteous Jesus Christ did righteousness, so we must do the righteousness as well. Just as the Righteous Jesus Christ came to shine in this dark world, to practice the truth in a world full of lies, and to show love to us who are full of hate, so we must shine His light in this dark world, practice the truth, and do the righteousness by loving each other. This is the will of God.

(2) We must examine ourselves.

Look at 2 Corinthians 13:5 – “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test?” We must diligently reflect ourselves in the word of God and examine and test ourselves to see if we are truly living by faith now. For example, we can examine ourselves in the word of God James 1:6-8: “But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” As we examine ourselves in these words, we may ask ourselves: ‘Maybe I am praying with doubts rather than asking God in faith right now?’, ‘If I am praying while doubting, I am now a double-minded person who is undecided in everything. Therefore, I should not expect that I will receive anything from the Lord.’

I applied the Paul's word of 2 Corinthians 13:5 to us in four ways from the perspective of the Apostle John. In other words, as we examine and test ourselves, I think we should each apply to ourselves the four wills of God taught by the Apostle John in 1 John:

(a) We should examine ourselves to see if we are really shining according to the will of the Father God.

Are we really living as children of the Light, shining the Light in this dark world? Is our life itself a life of the Light, without the darkness, but rather exposing the deeds of the darkness?

(b) We should examine ourselves to see if we are actually practicing the truth according to the will of the Son Jesus Christ.

Are we really living the truth in this world of lies like Jesus, who is the Truth? Do we hate lies and obey the command of the Lord as our life itself is a life of of the truth?

(c) We should examine ourselves to see if we are truly loving according to the will of the Holy Spirit.

Do we really love our neighbor as God, who is love, loved us so much even when He gave up His only begotten Son Jesus on the cross? Are we loving each other by making our life itself become a life of love and bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit, love?

(d) Indeed, we should examine ourselves to see if we are shining the Light, practicing righteousness and love like Jesus Christ did according to the will of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Are we really practicing righteousness like the Righteous Jesus Christ? Are we living a life that reveals the righteousness of Jesus by making our life itself a righteous life?

(3) We must examine whether the love of the other member is sincere.

Look at 2 Corinthians 8:8 – “I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.” One of the best ways to examine ourselves whether our love for other brothers and sisters in Christ is sincere or not is the love chapter of 1 Corinthians 13:4-5, “Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered.” Also, based on the Bible Proverbs 17:9 says, “He who conceals a transgression seeks love ...,” it is possible to examine whether our love for others is sincere or not.

I thought of this 2 Corinthians 8:8 from the Apostle John's point of view in four ways: How we can test the sincerity of the love for other member:

(a) It is whether the love of the other member is humble like the love of Jesus Christ.

I think of Jesus' love as 'incarnate love'. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into this world in the flesh (2 Jn. 1:7). Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Jesus humbled Himself and served us (Phil. 2:6-8). In other words, the incarnated love of Jesus is a humble love that humbles oneself and serves others. We must test whether the other member really loves us this way.

(b) It is whether the love of other member is reconciling love like the love of Jesus Christ.

In 1 John 2:2, the Righteous Jesus Christ is said to be “the propitiation for our sins.” Jesus Christ, who is actually Righteous One, died on the cross as the propitiation to reconcile us, who was God’s enemies, to God. As a result, we are reconciled to God. The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:18, “Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” Therefore, our love for our neighbor should be a love that reconciles each other.

(c) It is whether the love of other member is sacrificial love, giving even our lives, like the love of Jesus Christ.

Look at 1 John 3:16 – “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” The third criterion that can test whether the other member’s love toward us is sincere or not is whether that member loves us sacrificially, even to the point of giving up his life or not.

(d) It is whether the love of the other member is loving with actions and in truth like the love of Jesus Christ.

Look at 1 John 3:18 – “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.” The fourth criterion to test whether the other member’s love for us is sincere or not is whether that member loves us only in words or with actions and in truth. If we want to test whether his love for us is sincere or not, we can tell by looking at whether he loves us in truth and with actions or only in words.

(4) We must examine everything carefully.

Look at 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22: “But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.” According to the counsel of the Apostle Paul, the Thessalonian church members lived a life of holding fast to that which is good and abstaining from every form of evil in the midst of tribulation. In the midst of tribulation, they held fast to the good things God gave them and resisted the temptations of tempters. They held fast to faith and abstained unbelief. They held fast to love and abstained hate. They held fast to hope and abstained despair. We must also hold fast to faith and abstain unbelief, hold fast to love and abstain hate, and hold fast to hope and abstain despair.

I thought of these words of 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 from the Apostle John's point of view in four ways: We must take the light and put away the darkness, take the truth and put away the lies, take the love and put away the hate, and take the righteousness and forsake the unrighteousness/evil.

Second, the Bible tells us not to believe every spirit, but to test the spirits to see whether they are from God.

Look at 1 John 4:1 – “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” Should we blindly believe the pastors’ sermons? Or should we even examine whether the pastors’ sermons are true or not based on the Bible? In Acts 17:11, the Bible says, “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.” That is, the people in Berea studied the Bible daily to see if the words of God that they had heard through the Apostle Paul were true. If this verse is applied in modern times, it means that we should study the Bible daily to see if the sermons we hear through pastors are really the word of God. Now, as some pastors said in sermons in the old days, we shouldn’t cover the Bible and believe unconditionally. We need to confirm. The reason is because there are too many false gospels and false sermons are spreading through the false pastors’ mouths.

Who are the false pastors? The false pastors don’t preach the word from God's mouth, but rather the deceit of their own hearts (Jere. 23:26). They spit lies out of their false hearts. They preach vain consolation to God's sinful people, saying, "You will have peace," and "Calamity will not come upon you" (v. 17). The false pastors say what the listeners’ itching ears want to hear rather than preach the sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:3). There is no correction, no rebuke and no encouragement (v. 2). They preach the false gospels. Rather than turning the sinning people to turn back from their wickedness, they strengthen the hands of evildoers (Jere. 23:14). The false pastors

are misleading the church members (v. 13). This is inevitable because the false pastors themselves are running the wrong way (v. 21). They defile themselves by doing evil. By committing evil deeds even in the house of God, they eventually pollute the whole church because defilement comes out of them.

In 1 John 4:1, the Apostle John says: “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” When the Apostle John was writing this letter of 1 John to the recipients, he had already said in 1 John 2:18, “this is the last hour.” And he said that many antichrists have already appeared in this last hour (v. 18). These antichrists are liars (v. 22) and deceivers (v. 26). They not only deny that Jesus is the Christ, but they also deny the Father God and the Son Jesus (v. 22). Since many false prophets have appeared in the last hour, the Apostle John is exhorting, ‘Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God’ (4:1). In other words, the Apostle John said, ‘Do not blindly believe those who claim to have received the Spirit, but test whether the spirit they claim is from God.’ Here we have to consider two things:

(1) We must not blindly believe in those who say they have received the spirit (1 Jn. 4:1).

The Apostle John exhorted the recipients of his 1 John letter not to believe in every spirit in 1 John 4:1. To put it back in the Korean modern Bible, it is said, ‘Do not blindly believe those who say they have received the spirit.’ What is the reason? The reason is because not all of his recipients believed in Jesus and received the Holy Spirit, but some of them believed in another spirit. We can know this when we look at 1 John 3:24, “... We know it by the Spirit he gave us,” but in 1 John 4:1, the Apostle John said, “do not believe every spirits.” Here, the word ‘do not believe all spirits,’ in the original Greek, means “Stop believing every spirit” which means to stop continuing to believe in other spirits at the moment when they were receiving the Apostle John’s letter of 1 John [“‘Believe not’ is in a construction in the Greek text which forbids the continuation of an action already going on” (Wuest’s Word Studies in the Greek NT Comments)]. That is, some Christians who received the Apostle John’s letter of 1 John believed in other spirits than the Holy Spirit, whom they received from God. Then, what other spirits were among the first-century Christians who received the Apostle John’s letter of 1 John besides the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, whom they received from God? Look at 1 Timothy 4:1 – “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.” This word of the Apostle Paul says that there were “deceiving spirits” and “doctrines of demons” at that time. That is why Pastor John MacArthur refers to the Apostle John as “demonic spirits” other than the Holy Spirit (MacArthur). In 1 John 4:3, we can find some answers to that question: “but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.” The Apostle John said not to believe, that is stop believing every spirits because among the recipients of his letters, there were some who believed in “the spirit of the antichrist” besides the Spirit of God. d

(2) We must test whether the spirit that those who claim to have received is the spirit from God

(1 Jn. 4:1).

The Apostle John said in 1 John 4:1, "... but test the spirits to see whether they are from God." That is, he said to test whether the spirit that those who claim to have received other than the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of God, come from God. How can they test it? How can those who claim to have received the Spirit test and know whether the spirit they claim is from God or not? Look at 1 John 4:2-3: "This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world." In this verse, the Apostle John is telling us the standard by which we can discern how the Spirit came from God. The standard is that the Spirit of God is the spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, and the spirit of antichrist is a spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus.

When considering this standard, we need to think more specifically about "the spirit of the antichrist". It can be summarized in four ways through the letter of the Apostle John.

The spirit of antichrist ...

- (1) Doesn't acknowledge Jesus (v. 3).
- (2) Denies that Jesus is Christ (2:22).
- (3) Denies the Father and the Son (v. 22). Doesn't have the Father (v. 23).
- (4) Doesn't acknowledge that Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh (2 Jn. 1:7).

We can discern other spirits other than the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, based on these four criteria.

How, then, can "the Spirit of God" be discerned? The Spirit of God acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in the flesh (1 Jn. 1:2). That is, the Spirit of God acknowledges the incarnation of Jesus Christ. In other words, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, makes us to acknowledge and confess that Jesus Christ came into this world as the man in the perfect and sinless body (MacArthur). More theologically speaking, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, acknowledges the humanity and the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Third, the Bible says we belong to God and have overcome the false prophets.

Look at 1 John 4:4 – "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." If we truly believe in Jesus, we must live a holy life. The holy life is the life of a "saint". We are now those who are called to belong to Jesus (Rom. 1:6) and those who are called to be "saints" (v. 7). We no longer belong to this world and are living a life separate from the world with a clear sense of belonging to Jesus. Furthermore, we are those who pursue the holiness of Jesus. Our responsibility as believers must be cut off from the sinful world. In other words, we must live a life separate from sin. Just as water and oil cannot mix, the saints who are children of light must not live in harmony with the dark world. To do this, we

must have the clear sense of belonging as the saints. We must remember that we are not of this world (Jn. 17:16). We must not forget that we belong to the Lord who is the Light.

In 1 John 4:4, the Apostle John said: “You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” Here the Apostle John tells the Christians to whom he receives his letter, 'You belong to God', and that those who belong to God have overcome the false prophets. And he said that the secret that Christians who believe and confess Jesus Christ and who belong to God overcome the false prophets is that the Holy Spirit in the Christians is greater than the devil who is the world and in the false prophets. The Holy Spirit is greater than the devil. So the Christians who belong to God and in whom the Holy Spirit dwells have overcome the false prophets. This is what the Bible says about the false prophets and the devil”:

(1) The false prophets:

(2 Pet. 2:1) “But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves.”

(Mt. 7:15) “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.”

(Mt. 24:11, 24) “and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ... For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible.”

(2) The devil:

(Jn. 8:44) “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

(1 Pet. 5:8) “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

(1 Jn. 3:8) “He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.”

(Rev. 12:9) “The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”

(Rev. 20:2, 10) “He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. ... And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where

the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

If we consider these words in connection with 1 John 4:4, the devil and the false prophets are deceivers (Mt. 24:11; Rev. 20:10), and they try to deceive the Christians who are chosen by God (Mt. 24:11, 24).

Then, what does the Bible say about the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God who dwells in us Christians who believe in Jesus? Look at what the Apostle John said about the Holy Spirit:

(1 Jn. 5:6) “...the Spirit is the truth.”

(1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13) “Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. ... We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.”

(Jn. 14:26) “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

(Jn. 15:26) “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.”

(Jn. 16:13) “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”

If we consider these words in connection with 1 John 4:4, the Holy Spirit in us, who belong to God, is the Spirit of truth (Jn. 16:13; 1 Jn. 5:6), testifying Jesus Christ (Jn. 15:26), reminding us of all that Jesus Christ said, teaching us (Jn. 14:26), and leading us into all truth (Jn. 16:13) so that we know that Jesus Christ dwells in us and we abide in Him (1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13).

As a result, we Christians who believe and confess Jesus Christ and who belong to God overcome the false prophets. And the secret of victory is because the Holy Spirit in us reminds us that Jesus Christ overcame the devil on the cross. Not only that, but also the Holy Spirit teaches us with the word of the Lord and guides us into all truth, so that we can overcome the false prophets/the false teachers/the false pastors.

The Apostle John already spoke about this fact in 1 John 2:14 – “... I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.” According to this word, the secret that we, the children of God, can fight and overcome the devil's temptation to hate our brothers is because we are strong and the word of God dwells in us. The word 'we are strong' here means that we are strong because the powerful word of God abides in us. And the fact that the word of God dwells in us is proof that our faith in Him is strong and firm. So the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:4 – “for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.”

Fourth and last, the Bible says that we can discern the Spirit of truth from the spirit of falsehood.

Look at 1 John 4:6 – “We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.” Unless we sharpen a blunt knife, it will inevitably require more strength (Eccle. 10:10). As such, the Christians who are dull in the word of God, the sword of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 6:17), have no choice but to use more strength in their spiritual life. In other words, the Christians who don’t have sharp mind that is sharpen with the word of God have no choice but to live with their own strength, not the power of God given by the Holy Spirit. As a result, they live in confusion because they are lack of spiritual discernment due to their spiritual insensitivity. And they wander and run about in confusion, not knowing where they are going. However, the Christians who are sharpened with the word of God have spiritual sensitivity and spiritual discernment. They are not only sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but also discern whether the Holy Spirit closes some door and opens another door. Therefore, they boldly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in obedience to the guidance of the Spirit of Jesus.

We should be spiritual Christians rather than carnal Christians. We must no longer live the foolish Christian life, bearing the sinful fruits of envy and strife, pursuing the works of the flesh, no different from those of unbelievers. Rather, we should forsake the childish work of being a beginner in the word of God and become mature Christians who have reached the maturity level of faith. Therefore, we must eat solid food, have spiritual discernment, discern good from evil, choose good, and live a life of throwing away all forms of evil. In the midst of this, we must strive to keep the unity of the church while living a life that bears the fruit of the Holy Spirit, especially under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In 1 John 4:5-6, the Apostle John said this: “They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.” Here, the Apostle John speaks of those who are from God (those who have the Spirit of God in them, the children of God, saints, Christians) who confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (v. 2) and those who are from the world (those who have the spirit of antichrist, the children of the devil, the false prophets) distinctively

First the Apostle John said two things about those who are from the world in verse 5:

(1) Those who are from the world speak from the viewpoint of the world (v. 5).

Here, those who are from the world are the false prophets (v. 1), through whom the false spirit of the antichrist is working (WBC). They speak from the viewpoint of the world. Here, the "world" the Apostle John is talking about is said in 1 John 2:16 – “For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world.” Therefore, the worldly words spoken by the false prophets are of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes,

and the boastful pride of life, all of which don't come from the Father God, but from the world (v. 16). These carnal, lustful, and boastful words from the world are worldly words and don't speak according to "the will of God" (v. 17), but as the antichrist wants (v. 18). In other words, the worldly words spoken by the false prophets who are from the world are words that deny that Jesus is the Christ, and deny the Father God and the Son Jesus (vv. 22-23). In short, the worldly words spoken by the worldly false prophets (false pastors/false teachers) are never truth, but lies (v. 22).

(2) When those from the world speak from the viewpoint of the world, "the world listen to them" (4:5).

It's natural. When the worldly false prophets (false pastors/false teachers) tell worldly lies, the people of this world belonging to the devil pay attention to their lies and never listen to the true word of God, proclaimed by the Lord's servants (true pastors/true teachers) like the Apostle John. For example, people in this world hear false doctrines from false pastors/false teachers that deny that Jesus is the Christ, deny the Father God and His Son Jesus, and deny that Jesus came in the flesh.

Then, what does the Apostle John say in 1 John 4:6 about us who are from God? He says two things:

(1) We who are from God know God (v. 6).

We who are from God are the children of God (3:2) and know God (4:6) because we have constant fellowship with the Father God and His Son, Jesus Christ (1:3). In other words, we whose received the forgiveness of sins and salvation and became God's children (3:2) through Jesus Christ, who came in the flesh (4:2) and died on the cross as the propitiation for our sins (2:2), know God (4:6). Not only do we know God, but moreover, we are known by God (Gal. 4:9).

(2) We who are from God listen to the servants of God (1 Jn. 4:6).

The Apostle John also said in John 8:47, "He who belongs to God hears what God says." In particular, the Apostle John speaks of the good shepherd in John 10, saying that the sheep hear the good shepherd's voice and follow him because they know him (10:4). And the sheep never follow a stranger, but run away from him because they don't know the stranger's voices (v. 5). The children of God hear God's voice. They only hear the truth (no lies) through God's true servants (pastors/teachers). The children of God hear the true gospel of Jesus Christ through the true servants of the Lord, not other gospels, not false gospels. But those who don't belong to God and are of the world don't hear the gospel of Jesus Christ through the true servants of the Lord. They don't listen to the truth, but to lies (1 Jn. 4:6). "This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood" (v. 6).

Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:16a – “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves.” Like those who were sent out among the wolves, we are living a spiritual life in this world where there are many false pastors like predatory wolves who are outwardly clothed in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are full of greed and ravenous wolves (7:15). How should we beware, wary, and careful of the false pastors? I found the answer in the second half of Matthew 10:16, the words of Jesus: “... Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” First, we must be wise as snakes. As we are wise as serpents, we must be wary, be on guard and beware of people (v. 17). Why should we be wary, be on guard, and beware of people? This is because, as Jesus prophesied, many false prophets have arisen now and are deceiving many (24:11). Since now the false christs and the false prophets have arisen and are working signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, the elect (13:22), we must be careful, beware, and be on guard against the false christs, the false prophets, the false pastors and the false teachers. And we must be as innocent as doves. The Greek literal meaning of the word “pure” here is “unmixed, pure” (Walvoord). In other words, we must be as innocent as doves toward God (Park). To do this, we must purify our souls by obeying the pure word of God (Ps. 12:6; 1 Pet. 1:22).

The Bible 1 John 4:1-6 tells us four things: (1) The Bible tells us to test the spirits, (2) The Bible tells us not to believe every spirit, but to test the spirits to see whether they are from God, (3) The Bible says we belong to God and have overcome the false prophets, and (4) The Bible says that we can discern the Spirit of truth from the spirit of falsehood. I hope and pray that all of us don’t believe in all spirits, but test whether the spirits belong to God, whether it is the Spirit of truth or the spirit of falsehood. Also, since we, who are from God, have the assurance of victory that the Lord has overcome the devil and the false prophets, I hope and pray that we live a victorious life of overcoming against the false pastors, the false teachers, and the false gospel by knowing God and listening to His word.

Wanting to be filled with the Holy Spirit, have spiritual discernment, and to live like the one who belong to God,

James Kim

(September 27, 2020, While pursuing a life of militant Christian life with the assurance of victory through faith in Jesus Christ)

‘Dear friends, let’s love each other’

[1 John 4:7-21]

What kind of community should our Victory Presbyterian Church, which the Lord promises to build, become? The community the Lord wants is a community of love. What should we devote to building the church, the body of the Lord, as a community of love? In order for us to participate in the Lord's work of building the community of Victory Presbyterian Church, we must pursue sincere love (Rom. 12:9). Sincere love is love with hypocrisy. How can we achieve love without hypocrisy? It is to hate what is evil and cling to what is good (v. 9).

In order for us to participate in the Lord's work of building the community of Victory Presbyterian Church, the body of the Lord, we must devote ourselves to one another in brotherly love that is sincere and without hypocrisy (v. 10). How should we truly love our brothers and sisters in Christ with God's love in the church? Five things we learn from Romans 12:9-13: (1) We should devote to one another in brotherly love (v. 10). What this means is that we should love each other with longing hearts, drawn together by spiritual bonds, like one family. (2) We should honor one another above ourselves (v. 10). (3) We should serve the Lord together diligently and zealously (v. 11). (4) We should be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer (v. 12). (5) We should be hospitable to each other (v. 13).

In 1 John 4:7, the Bible tells us: “Dear friends, let us love one another” I would like to take this word as the title and receive the lessons from 1 John 4:7-21, by meditating on the three lessons the Bible tells us to love one another.

First, the Bible says, “God is love.”

Look at 1 John 4:8, 16 – “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ... And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.” Have you ever seen a tract called “The Four Spiritual Laws”? The tract called “The Four Spiritual Laws” was created by a Christian organization called Campus Crusade of Christ (CCC) and was easily accessible long ago. It can be said that the heart of the tract is the Four Spiritual Principles:

(1) The first of the Four Spiritual Laws is, “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.”

John 3:16 tells us, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in

Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 10:10 gives us the reason that Jesus came, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." What is blocking us from God's love? What is preventing us from having an abundant life?

(2) The second of the Four Spiritual Laws is, "Humanity is tainted by sin and is therefore separated from God. As a result, we cannot know God's wonderful plan for our lives."

Romans 3:23 affirms this information, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 6:23 gives us the consequences of sin, "the wages of sin is death." God created us to have fellowship with Him. However, humanity brought sin into the world, and is therefore separated from God. We have ruined the relationship with Him that God intended us to have. What is the solution?

(3) The third of the Four Spiritual Laws is, "Jesus Christ is God's only provision for our sin. Through Jesus Christ, we can have our sins forgiven and restore a right relationship with God."

Romans 5:8 tells us, "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 informs us of what we need to know and believe in order to be saved, "...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..." Jesus Himself declares that He is the only way of salvation in John 14:6, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." How can I receive this wonderful gift of salvation?

(4) The Fourth of the Four Spiritual Laws is, "We must place our faith in Jesus Christ as Savior in order to receive the gift of salvation and know God's wonderful plan for our lives."

John 1:12 describes this for us, "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." Acts 16:31 says it very clearly, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved!" We can be saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8-9).

The reason I think of these four spiritual laws is precisely because of the first principle: "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for you." The first thing that the Four Spiritual Laws emphasize is that 'God loves you'.

In 1 John 4:8, 16, the Apostle John said: "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ... And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love." In these two Bible verses, the Apostle John said that we love each other if we know and believe that God of love loves us. In other words, the reason why the Apostle John said 'God is love' twice in verses 8 and 16 explains the ultimate reason why we should love one another (v. 23; 4:7) according to the Lord's command (2:24). To be more specific, the reason we should love one another as the Lord commanded is that God is love (4:8, 16), and that the God of love loves us (v. 16), and we

became the children of God because of the great love of God that has bestowed on us (3:1). That is, as children of a loving God, we must love one another as God loves us (3:11, 23; 4:7). After all, the reason we have no choice but to love one another according to Jesus' command is that (1) God is love (4:8, 16), and (2) that the God of love first loved us (v. 19). That is why the Apostle John said in 1 John 4:19, "We love because He first loved us." After all, the reason why we should love each other as the Lord commanded is because God's being is "love," and God's doing is He first loved us. Therefore, because our being is a child of God, and God first loved us, our doing is that we should love one another as God loves us.

As I meditate on the word 'God is love' written in 1 John 4:8, 16, I wonder what the Apostle John is saying who God is from 1 John 1:1 to 4:21. So, by re-reading from 1 John 1:1, I looked for who he was saying that God is. At that time, the first word I came across was 1 John 1:5, "God is Light." And in verse 1:9 the Apostle John said, 'God is faithful and righteous.' The phrase 'God is righteous' also appears in 2:29 and 3:7. And he said in 2:1, 'Jesus Christ is the righteous.' And in 3:3 he said, 'Jesus Christ is pure.' And he said in 4:2 that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. And the Bible says, "God is love" in 1 John 4:8, 16. In this way, while searching for the words of who God is, that is, the existence of God in 1 John, the Father God is Light, faithful, righteous, and love, the Son Jesus is righteous and pure, and the Holy Spirit acknowledges (or makes us to confess) that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, I came to think of two:

(1) The first thing that comes to mind is that the Son of God Jesus is pure (3:3).

This means that Jesus is without sin (v. 5). If we apply these words to the existence of God spoken of in 1 John, as 1 John 1:5 says, "God is Light, and in him there is no darkness at all." Also, as in 1 John 1:9, 'God is faithful and righteous' means that God is completely free from unfaithfulness and unrighteousness. Then, what can we say if we apply the word that the Son of God Jesus is pure to the word 'God is love' in 1 John 4:8, 16? Could it be that God has no hate? In a slightly different way, based on 1 John 2:5 (Ref.: 1 Jn. 4:12), isn't God's love a perfect love?

(2) The second thing that comes to mind is that the four main themes in 1 John: (a) light, (b) truth, (c) love, and (d) righteousness and what the connection is.

Then I came to this conclusion: 'God is Light, God is truth, God is love, and God is just.' This also means that with God who is Light there is no darkness at all, that God who is truth has no lies, that God of love has no hatred, and that with a righteous God there is no unrighteousness (evil) at all. And when I meditated on this conclusion in connection with the words 'Dear friends, let's love each other' in 1 John 4:7, I applied like this: 'Dear friends, God is love (4:8, 16). As children of God who is Light (1:5; 3:1, 2), we must love one another according to the command of the Lord who is truth (1:6; 3:23, 24). That is the righteousness of those who know that God is righteous (2:29).'

The first spiritual principle of CCC's Four Spiritual Laws is "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for

you”. As I reconsider this principle, I believe that God loves us all and has the wonderful plan of salvation for us. The reason is because God is love. God's being is love. And out of His being, He doing is God loves us. Through the love of God, we believed in Jesus and are saved and became the children of God. Therefore, as the children of God, just as God loved us, we should love one another with His love. ‘Dear friends, let’s love each other.’

Second, the Bible says, ‘God manifested his love in us.’

Look at 1 John 4:9-10: “By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” If we look at the book ‘The Salt Warehouse of Wisdom’ written by Tae-gwang Kim, there is this saying: ‘It is beautiful to see people serving others without expecting anything in return. What makes them truly beautiful is not a momentary directing, but a love that is practiced with a sincere heart’ (Internet). It is a blessing to be able to love our neighbors with a sincere heart. And I think that it is also a great blessing to be able to enjoy by practicing love with the sincere heart. However, there is something that prevents us from enjoying this blessing. That's "expectation". In other words, when we love our neighbors and expect something from them, then we aren't fully enjoying the blessing God gives us. We should love without except anything in return. In other words, we must love our neighbors unconditionally, so that we can enjoy the great blessing, and that our hearts will be filled with the joy God gives us. Those who enjoy this great blessing and taste the joy are considered beautiful people in the sight of God.

In 1 John 4:9-10, the Apostle John says: “By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” These verses tells us that the God of love was manifested his love to us. How then does the Bible say that God manifested his pure love (3:3) or perfect love (2:5; 4:12) to us? God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, into the world as the propitiation and the Savior of the world (vv. 9, 10, 14). Here, the word “propitiation” means “satisfaction” as we have already meditated on in 2:2. And it refers to the fulfillment of God's holy requirement to punish sin (MacArthur). Why did God send His only begotten Son, Jesus, as the propitiation and the Savior of the world? What is the purpose? The purpose is to atone our sins (save from sin) (v. 10) and so that we may live through Him (v. 9). The Bible 1 John 3:5 says, “He appeared in order to take away sins.”

We were dead in our transgressions and sins (Eph. 2:1). The Korean modern Bible Ephesians 2:1 says, ‘You are spiritually dead because of your disobedience and sins.’ Because sin entered the world, and death through sin through the disobedience of “one man” Adam, in this way death spread to all men, because all sinned (Rom. 5:12). We were spiritually dead. And we were the people who were destined to die forever. Thus, when we were in a state of helplessness (v. 6), when we were still sinners (v. 8), and when we were enemies with God (v. 10), God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, died for us sinners (v. 6), so that we have been reconciled to God (v. 10). Therefore, God demonstrates his own love for us (v. 8).

We need to know how great, wide, high and deep God's love for us, which has been manifested in us, is (Eph. 3:18-19). We need to get to know God's love in sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 Jn. 4:10) and the Savior of the world (v. 14) in order to atone our sins (v. 10), to save us, who not only died spiritually but were destined to die forever, and to give us eternal life (v. 9). As we have already seen in 1 John 3:16, the Apostle John said this: "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." How great, wide, high and deep is the love that God's only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, laid down His life on the cross for us? In 1 John 1:1-2, the Apostle John said that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the Word of life from the beginning and eternal life. Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, who is the Word of eternal life from the beginning was manifested. The Bible 1 John 4:9 says, "By this the love of God was manifested in us ...", while 1 John 1:1-2 says, "eternal life," which is the "Word of life" from the beginning" "was manifested. In other words, God's perfect love was manifested by sending God's only-begotten Son, Jesus, as the propitiation for our sins and the Savior of the world.

We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us (4:16). We are the ones who confess (acknowledge) that Jesus is the Son of God (v. 15). In other words, we are believers in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (3:23). The Bible refers to these people as those who abide in his love (4:16). In other words, we are people who abide in the love of God. Therefore, God abides in us, and we in God (v. 15). How do we know this? Look at 1 John 4:13 – "By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit." In the end, God loved us and sent His only begotten Son Jesus into this world as the propitiation for our sins and the Savior of the world to atone our sins. Let us praise the hymn "My Life Flows Rich in Love and Grace" to God: (v. 1) "My life flows rich in love and grace By Christ in mercy offer'd, Who anguish bore, and took my place, When on the cross He suffer'd. His precious blood He Shed to free, From sin and all its stinging, Death destin'd sinners such as we! How can I keep from singing?"

Third and last, the Bible says, 'If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.'

Look at 1 John 4:11, 19 – "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ... We love, because He first loved us." There is a book author that I personally fell in love with a little late. After I first encountered his book, since I liked his book, I bought and read all of his books if possible. The author's name is Iain M. Duguid, professor of Old Testament at east Westminster Theological Seminary. I wrote this while reading his commentary on "Zephaniah, Haggai, and Malachi": 'Doubting God's love for us is the root of all spiritual problems (Mal. 1:2). A heart that has not personally experienced the perfect love of God revealed through Jesus' atoning death on the cross is bound to fall into various temptations.' In the Bible, Malachi 1:2, we see that when God said to the Israelites through the prophet Malachi, "I have loved you," the Israelites say: "How have you loved us?" God loved the Israelites, but they didn't understand God's love. I think this is the root of all spiritual problems. In other words, our failure to realize God's love is the root of all spiritual problems.

I once wrote this article about "the love of God" based on Isaiah 43:4 and 49:15 and Psalms 46:1 – 'The Bible says that God loves you. What does the Bible say about this God's love for you?'

(1) The Bible says that God honors you.

In Isaiah 43:4, God says, “Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you.“ All of you are honorable in the sight of God. How did sinners like us become noble in the sight of God? The reason is that we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus.

(2) The Bible says that God will never forget you.

Look at Isaiah 49:15 – “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!” Even if a mother forgets her nursing child, God promises not to forget you.

(3) The Bible says that God is our refuge, strength, and very present help in trouble.

Look at Psalms 46:1 – “God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.” Let us take refuge in God, our refuge and strength, our very present help in trouble. He will protect us.

In 1 John 4:11, 19, the Apostle John says: “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ... We love, because He first loved us.” d

How does the Apostle John say that God loves us? Look again at 1 John 4:9-10, which we have already meditated on: “By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” God loves us and sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to be the propitiation of this world to atone our sins and to save us. Here, the word “propitiation” means “satisfaction,” and Jesus died on the cross as the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, so that God’s holy requirement to punish sin was satisfied (MacArthur). Therefore, the Apostle John says in verse 11, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” That is, we must love one another because God first loved us (v. 19).

We are not at all capable of loving God first. That means, unless God first loved us, we were not able to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, according to the first commandment of Jesus’ twofold commandment (Mt. 22:37). How can we, who were dead in trespasses and sins (spiritually dead because of disobedience and sins), love God first? (Eph. 2:1) How can we, who were enemies of God, love God first? (Rom. 5:10) We were never able to love God first. We could never have loved God first unless God loved us first. But the Apostle John said in 1 John 4:19, “We love, because He first loved us.” Then, what does the Bible really say about loving one another according to God’s command? I would like to receive the lesson from 1 John 4:7-21 in five ways:

(1) The Bible says, “love is from God.”

Look at 1 John 4:7a – “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God;” Here, the Apostle John said, “Beloved,” to the Christians who received his letter of 1 John. The Greek meaning of this “Beloved,” is “agapatoi,” which is God’s “agape” love. It means “divinely-loved ones,” that is, “beloved ones, loved by God” (Wuest’s Word Studies in the Greek New Testament). And when the Apostle John said, “Let us love one another,” he meant, “Let us continue (permanently or habitually) to love one another.” Isn’t that obvious? If we are children of God who have already received God’s love and are still receiving it, it is natural that we should continue to love each other according to His command just as the Lord continues to love us. And the Apostle John said, “for love is from God,” which means, “Love is from God.” That is, as the Apostle John said in 4:8, 16, ‘God is love’, love is from God because God is love. Therefore, the reason we can love each other is because God is love, and the God of love loves us first, and because we have come to know that love, we can love each other with the love of God. Simply put, the God of love is the source of love. We can love each other because God, the source of love, abides in us through the Spirit and produces love, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, so that we can love each other with the love of God. That is why the Apostle John said, “love is from God” (v. 7).

Conversely, if we think about it the other way around, it means that if love is from God, then hate belongs to the devil/Satan. The Apostle John said in 1 John 1:5, “... God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all” After saying this, he said in 2:9, “The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now,” and in 2:11, “But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” By saying these words, the Apostle John compared that God is Light and the devil/Satan is darkness, and he who loves his brother abides in the Light (v. 10), but he who hates his brother is still in the darkness (v. 11). After all, the Bible says love is from God, but hate is from the devil/Satan. And the hatred that is from the devil/Satan is from the world: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world” (v. 16). But we don’t love the world because the love of the Father God is in us (v. 15). Rather we are the doers of the will of God (v. 17). The will of God is to love one another according to the Lord’s command (3:23).

(2) The Bible says, “everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”

Look at 1 John 4:7b – “... everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” Here, the Apostle John says, “everyone who loves is born of God,” which means that those who love one another (with the love of God) according to the command of the Lord are those who are born again (the regenerated ones). In other words, those who believe in the righteous Jesus Christ (2:1), who laid down his life on the cross (3:23) as the propitiation for our sins (2:2) are born again and have received new life in the Lord and are new creatures. These new creatures, the new people, and those who are born again obey the command of the Lord and love one another. The Apostle John had already spoken about being “born again” in 1 John 2:29 – “If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of

Him.” Here, those who practice righteousness are those who are in Jesus Christ (Lord) who love their brothers according to Jesus’ command. And to love our neighbor in obedience to Jesus’ command is doing what is right or practicing righteousness. Those who practice righteousness in this way are born of God, and they are the righteous children of God. This is living in Christ (vv. 27, 28). The Apostle John said that those who live in Christ truly know God (4:7).

But those who don’t love don’t know God. Look at 1 John 4:8 – “The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” If we say we know God who is love and don’t love our brothers and sisters in Christ, we don’t truly know God. So the modern Korean Bible translates it this way: ‘He who doesn’t love doesn’t know God’ (v. 8). And the Apostle John said in 3:6 that “no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.” Rather, the Apostle John said that those who sin are of the devil (v. 8). In other words, those who don’t love aren’t of God (v. 10). Look at 1 John 3:10 – “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.” But we are the children of God (vv. 1, 2). Our Heavenly Father shows us so much love that we become His children (v. 1). Therefore, as children of God, we practice righteousness and love our brothers (v. 10). I hope and pray that all of us, as children of God, love each other, so that we may live like born-again (regenerated) people, and that we will prove that we truly know God through a life of love.

(3) The Bible says, “He who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

Look at 1 John 4:20 – “If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.” The Bible Proverbs 26:24-25 says this: “A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbors deceit. Though his speech is charming, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart.” We can hate others with our hearts, yet we can speak kindly on the outside. This is hypocrisy. A hypocrite has an evil heart toward others, yet he speaks smooth words with his lips and pleases others, but disguises his evil heart with words of very warm (ardent) love (v. 23). What kind of love is hypocritical love? To say “I love you” with our lips but hate with our hearts, this is hypocritical love. The Israelites did that. They say they honor the Lord with their lips, but in their hearts they turn away from the Lord, committing idolatry over and over again. So Jesus said in Mark 7:6 – “He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.”

In 1 John 4:20, the Apostle John said: “If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.” When I meditate on this word in connection with Jesus’ word of Mark 7:6, I say that our hypocrisy is to love God whom we cannot see with our lips and not loving the brother whom we can see. This seems to be the same as confessing our sins to the invisible God and asking for forgiveness, but not confessing our sins to our visible brothers and sisters and asking for forgiveness. Why are we committing this sin of hypocrisy?

I only recently came to realize a little bit that there is such a hypocrisy in me, and I wrote this (September 2, 2020): ‘My hypocrisy is quick to see the speck in the eye of the other person with my own eye than to see the log in my eye as I first reflect myself in the spiritual mirror, the word of God.’ The reason I am writing this is because the Holy Spirit made me look back at that word while reading Luke 6:41-42 and meditating on it: “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.” In a bible commentary, it is written like this: ‘It is a serious sin to deceive God and one's conscience to act with pretentiousness conscious of people's eyes’ (Bible Commentary). What is pretending to be? When I look at the Naver dictionary, it says that ‘pretense’ means ‘falsely adorning words or actions’. For example, if the Lord has commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves, it is pretentious to pretend to love our neighbors in words and deeds while hating them in our hearts. The Apostle John says in 1 John 4:20, “If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar” I've come to think of this word in two ways:

(a) First, I meditate “Whoever says I love God . . . ” in connection with verse 15: “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.”

Seeing that both verses 15 and 20 begin with “Whoever” (v. 15), I thought there was a connection between the two Bible verses. The connection is that “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God” (v. 15) loves God (v. 20). The reason is because those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God know and believe in the love that God has for them (v. 16). And those who know and believe in the love of God abide in that love (v. 16), so they cannot but love God (v. 20).

(b) The second thing that came to my mind is the word “the liar.”

The Apostle John already said this about “the liar” in 1 John 2:22 – “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.” Considering this word, we can see that the Apostle John is speaking of who the “liar” is in two ways: (1) The liar is one who denies that Jesus is the Christ, (2) The liar is one who says he loves God and hates his brother. As I meditated on these two truths in connection, I thought that to say I love God and hate his brother would be to deny that Jesus is the Christ. The reason I think so is because believing and acknowledging that Jesus is the Christ is that Jesus came into this world and faithfully fulfilled the roles of priest, king, and prophet as the Christ, and ultimately bore all our sins and died on the cross to save us is acknowledging that we are saved. We, who have been saved through the love of the Savior, ought to love Him, but what is it to say that we love the Lord and hate our brothers, but to deny that Jesus is the Christ? In 1 John 4:20, the Apostle John said, “...for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.” In other words, the liar is the one who says he loves God and hates his brother, and he who lies like that cannot actually love God. Of course, he says he loves God with his own lips, but it is

only the lie to say that he loves the invisible God without loving his brother whom he sees. The true Christian truly loves the invisible God and also loves the visible brother. Look at verse 21: “And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.” But he who doesn’t love his brother doesn’t love God. This reminds me the verse 2 lyric of the hymn “I Want to be a Christian”: “Lord, I want to be more loving In-a my heart, in-a my heart, Lord, I want to be more loving In-a my heart. In-a my heart, In-a my heart, Lord, I want to be more loving In-a my heart.” As I sang this hymn to God, I made it my prayer subject, and prayed that I would love the Lord and also my neighbor with perfect love (pure love without hate). I hope and pray that we will become loving our neighbors with the Lord's love because we truly love God with perfect love. Since we truly love our neighbors, I pray that we will all become lovers of God.

(4) The Bible says that if we love one another, God lives in us.

Look at 1 John 4:12 – “No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.” If we look at the lyrics of the gospel song “Abide in me,” it goes like this: “For I am the Lord your God, so abide in Me/ Your Deliverer and Protector, a Shelter from the storm/ Don’t tremble with fear. Surely I will help you/ I am holding your hand, so do not be afraid/ I have called you by name; you are Mine/ You are Mine and I am the Lord your God/ You are precious in My sight and you are highly honored/ I, the Lord your God love you/ I the Lord your God love you.” This gospel song is based on several scriptures: (a) “abide in me”: (John 15:9) “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.” (b) “Your Deliverer and Protector, a Shelter from the storm”: (Ps. 121:7) “The LORD will keep you from all harm-- he will watch over your life.” (c) “Don’t tremble with fear. Surely I will help you I am holding your hand, so do not be afraid”: (Isa. 41:10) “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (d) “I have called you by name; you are Mine You are Mine and I am the Lord your God”: (Isa. 43:1) “But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.” (e) “You are precious in My sight and you are highly honored”: (Isa. 43:4) “Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life.” Among these Bible verses, in John 15:9, Jesus said, “remain in my love” and in verse 10, he tells how to remain in the love of the Lord: “If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.” Then what is the Jesus' command? Look at verse 12: “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” Also, look at verse 17: “This is my command: Love each other.” The Apostle John also spoke of this Lord's command in 1 John 3:23-24: “And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.” When we love one another according to the Lord's command, we abide (live) in God, and God abides (lives) in us. And we know that God is in us through the Holy Spirit

whom God has given us. This is what 1 John 4:13 says: “We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.”

In 1 John 4:12, the Apostle John says: “No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.” The similarity between this verse and 1 John 3:23-24 is the Lord's command, 'Love one another'. Another similarity is that God abides (lives) in us when we love one another according to the Lord's command. The difference is that when we love one another according to the Lord's command, 1 John 3:24 says that we abide (live) in God, whereas in 4:12 says that, 'God's love is made complete in us.' The Apostle John already said in 1 John 2:5, “But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him:” In other words, when we love one another according to the Lord's command, God's love has truly been perfected in us. In this way, when we love one another according to His command, God's love has been perfected in us (2:5; 4:12), and God abides in us (3:24). The Apostle John has already said that ‘the word of God abides in us’ (2:14), and that eternal life abides in us (3:14, 15), as well as the 'Holy Spirit' in us (4:4, 13). As I meditate on these words, I believe that when we love one another, God who is love (4:8, 16) not only abides in us (3:24), but also Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is the Word of life from the beginning and eternal life abides in us (1:1-3), the Holy Spirit abides in us (4:4, 13). In other words, when we love one another according to the Lord's command, the Holy Triune God abides (lives) in us. We are believers who confess that Jesus is the Son of God (v. 15). And the Bible says, “If anyone confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God” (v. 15). The Bible also says that if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us (v. 12). May God dwell in us and God's love be perfected in us as we love one another in obedience to the Lord's command.

(5) The Bible says that when God's love is perfected in us, we will have confidence in the Day of Judgment.

Look at 1 John 4:17 – “By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.” Personally, when I think of 1 John, the unforgettable Bible verse is 1 John 4:18 first half: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear,” The reason I can't forget this word is because I often remembered this word when I had counseling with my brothers and sisters in Christ before. There were those who were afraid in relationships with their loved ones. For example, a certain member had fears in her heart before getting married, and that fear seems to have been the fear of failing to marry herself due to the divorce of her parents. Clearly, in 1 John 4:18, the Bible says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear." But why is there fear in us? The reason is because our love is not “perfect love” or “mature love” (MacArthur). And the reason our love is not perfect is because we are disobeying the Lord's command, 'Love one another' (v. 12; 2:5). More specifically, our love is not perfect because there are times when we hate our brothers and sisters in Christ more than we love each other as the Lord commanded (2:11). So those who have not yet perfected love

will be afraid. The reason is because they think about what they will be punished for (4:18). However, the believers who have perfected their love by loving one another according to the Lord's command aren't afraid. They have no fear because they love each other according to the Lord's command, just as God first loved them. Rather, the perfect love casts out fear (v. 18).

In 1 John 4:17, the Apostle John says: "By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world." How can we have confidence in the Day of Judgment? As I meditated while asking this question, I was reminded of 1 John 2:10 – "The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him." What does the word "there is no cause for stumbling in him" mean here? There are 3 Bible verses in the Gospel of John to help you understand what this mean: (1) (Jn. 6:61) "But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble?," (2) (Jn. 11:9) "Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world," (3) (Jn. 16:1) "These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling." If we look at these verses from the Gospel of John written by the same author, the Apostle John, the meaning of the word "there is no cause for stumbling" in 1 John 2:10 means, I think, 'there is no stumbling block' or 'there is no slipping down'. In other words, he who loves his brother abides in the Light, and does not stumble in himself. How is it? Do we have anything that causes for stumbling in us now? Is there no cause for stumbling in us because we live in Jesus who is the true Light, and love our brothers and sisters in Christ? Or is there something that causes stumbling in us because we hate our brother or sister in Christ even though we say we are in the Light? If so, we cannot have confidence on the Day of Judgment (4:17). To have confidence on the Day of Judgment, we must have no cause of stumbling in us. In other words, if we are to have confidence, we must love one another as the Lord commands. As those who know and believe in the love that God has for us (v. 16) and that God first loved us (v. 19), we must love each other with His love. If we say we love God and hate our brother, the Bible says we are "liar" (v. 20). In other words, if we say we know God and don't keep His command, then we are lying and the truth is not in us (2:4). We must be true Christians. We must love one another in obedience to the Lord's command. Then there will be no cause for stumbling in us (2:10), and our conscience will not reproach us, so that we will have confidence before God and whatever we ask, we will receive from Him (3:21-22). The reason is because we keep the commandments of God and do what pleases Him (v. 22). Then we will not be put to shame when Christ comes again, but rather will have confidence to stand before the Lord (2:28).

Let us love one another as the Lord has commanded us. The Bible says, "God is love" (4:8, 16). If we know this God of love and believe in the love that this God loves us, then we should love each other. God's being is love. Out of His being, He loves us, which is God's doing. Through the love of God, we believed in Jesus and are saved and became the children of God. Therefore, as children of God, we should love one another with the love of God as God loved us. The Bible says that God's love was manifested to us (vv. 9-10). God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to the world as the propitiation and the Savior of the world to atone for our sins (save us from our sins)

and make us alive. In the end, by the grace of God, we believed in Jesus and received salvation and new and eternal life. Having received this saving grace and love, we must love one another according to the Lord's command. The Bible says, "If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (vv. 11, 19). The Bible says five things in 1 John 4:7-21 about our love for one another according to the Lord's command: (1) The Bible says that love is from God (4:7a), (2) The Bible says that everyone who loves is born of God and knows God (v. 7b), (3) The Bible says that he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen (v. 20), (4) The Bible says that if we love one another, God lives in us (v. 12), (5) The Bible says that when God's love is perfected in us, we will have confidence in the Day of Judgment (v. 17). May all of us love one another as the command of the Lord

Desiring to live a life of love for one another according to the Lord's command,

James Kim

[December 28, 2020, "We may have unfading splendor, When love shines in, And a friendship true and tender, When love shines in. When earth vic-t'ries shall be won, And our life in heaven begun, There will be no need of sun, When love shines in. When love shines in, When love shines in, How the heart is tuned to singing, When love shines in, When love shines in, When love shines in, Joy and peace to others bringing When love shines in" (Lyric 4 and the chorus of the hymn "Jesus Comes With Pow'r to Gladden")]

“This is love for God”

[1 John 5:1-5]

Last week, I read an Internet article written by Pastor John MacArthur under the title “Remaining Faithful in Ministry: 9 Essential Convictions for Every Pastor”. The reason I was interested in the title of the article was probably because I had a desire to carry out the ministry for the glory of God without being shaken in my heart, like Pastor John MacArthur, faithfully until the end. Pastor John MacArthur said that about two years ago, in February 2019, the 50th anniversary of the ministry was held at Grace Community Church. He said that it is a great grace of God to be able to pastor at the age of 70 from where he started pastoring in his twenties and it is a great honor and blessing to serve, love, teach, feed the word of God and care for the group of saints in one church almost all of his life. In 2019, as he celebrated his 50th anniversary of ministry, he introduced the 9 principles he followed, how he kept the path of his ministry in a book titled “Remaining Faithful in Ministry: 9 Essential Convictions for Every Pastor.” For reference, these 9 principles are found in 2 Corinthians 4, written by the Apostle Paul. I’ve tried to apply these nine principles to all of us who seek spiritual maturity in this way:

1. Let us see ourselves as stewards of God.
2. Let us think of stewardship not only as a great privilege, but also as a great mercy received by God's grace.
3. Let us be determined to keep our hearts pure and honest, and think that faithfulness is the key to our pursuit of true integrity.
4. Let us fill our own hearts with one passion. It is the heart of passionate devotion to love the word of God
5. Let us believe that the word of God never returns in vain (Ps. 55:11), so let us not be swayed by man-made standards of success and failure.
6. Let us not seek the acclaim or approval of men, but humbly seek the glory of God at any cost.
7. Let us participate in the fellowship of Christ's suffering, knowing that God uses suffering as a means of sanctification.
8. Let us get to know the great heroes of faith in the Bible and imitate their courage.
9. Let us fix our hearts on heaven and above, and believe that our present sufferings are incomparable to such glory.

In addition to the application of these 9 principles, there was a saying in connection with 1 John 5:1-5: ‘A pastor serves God first. He serves the saints to serve God. The pastor must first love God with all his heart, with all his mind, and with all his strength. Only then can he use his strength to love the saints as himself. There are ups and downs in life, successes and failures in ministry are repeated. And there are times when we get discouraged or

stand up, and when we get flat or stumble on the contrary. However, if the anchor of the pastor's soul is placed on God, he will be able to faithfully keep the path of ministry with faith that is shaken but not swept away' (Internet). Here, I want to listen to my heart to the saying, 'A pastor must first love God with all his heart, with all his mind, and with all his strength.'

In 1 John 5:3, the Apostle John says: "This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome." I would like to receive the lessons given by meditating on 1 John 5:1-5 in three categories under the title "This is love for God".

First, I want to consider who loves God.

One of my personal favorite Bible verses is Romans 8:28 – "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." The reason I like this word is because I have hope in God's word that all things work together for good to those who are called according to God's will, and I gain the strength to endure any kind of hardship through faith. But the reason I came to like this verse more is after meditating on Romans 12:2 – "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will." The grace that I received and I am still receiving is the fact that God's will is good, pleasing, and perfect. Although I don't know what God's good, pleasing, and perfect will is at many times, I am in that will of God, and as Romans 8:28 says, all these things work together for good. So in the end, I will finally taste His goodness according to the word of Psalms 34:8, while having hope, patience and enduring in that word of God. That's why I can confess to you, 'God is good, All the time!' I want to live by faith holding on to these four principles based on the words of the Bible in the future: (1) God is good (1 Chron. 16:34; Ps. 86:5; 100:5; 107:1; 135:3; 145:9). (2) God's will is good (Rom. 8:12:2). (3) God works for the good of those who love him (v. 28). (4) We will taste that the Lord is good (Ps. 34:8). However, while I liked Romans 8:28, I lived my life of faith, focusing a lot on the phrase, "n all things God works for the good." But I didn't really focus too much on the word, "And we know that ... of those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose". As I meditated on 1 John 5:1-5 this time, I was able to meditate on the words "those who love Him" from the perspective of 1 John. In particular, as I meditated on the phrase "This is love for God" in 1 John 5:3, I asked the question, "Who really loves God?"

I think the Apostle John is talking about who loves God in 3 ways in 1 John 5:1-5:

(1) Those who believe that Jesus is the Christ loves God.

Look at 1 John 5:1 – "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well." Do you believe that Jesus is Christ? At the time when the Apostle John wrote 1 John, there were those who deny that Jesus is the Christ. Look at 1 John 2:22 – "Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he

denies the Father and the Son.” The Apostle John refers to those who deny that Jesus is the Christ as “the liar” and “the antichrist.” The Apostle John said that these liars, the antichrist, have arisen “even now” and therefore we know that it is the last hour (v. 18). It is still the last hour. Even now, there are too many antichrists and liars in this world. Therefore, as the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:1, we must become the believers that Jesus is the Christ.

So what does it mean to say that Jesus is the Christ? First of all, what does the name “Jesus” means? Look at Matthew 1:21 – “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” From this verse, we can guess that the meaning of the name “Jesus” is related to the one who will save God's people from their sins. In fact, the name “Jesus” means “Jehovah is salvation.” So the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and said that Mary would give birth to a son, and he should name him “Jesus”, which means that the son to be born is the Savior. So what does the word “Christ” mean? Its meaning is “the Anointed One.” In the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, the Anointed One is “Messiah.” For the Hebrews, anointing was a sign of consecration of the offices of king, priest, and prophet (Exod. 29:7; 1 Sam. 10:1; 16:13; 1 Kis. 19:16). In other words, Christ means King, Priest, and Prophet. Then the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:1, “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ” means those who believe that Jesus, the one who will save us from our sins, is the Christ, that is, King, Priest, and Prophet. So, when I asked you, “Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ?” I meant, “Do you believe that Jesus is the King, the Priest, and the Prophet who saves us from our sins?” Indeed, the Bible speaks of Jesus Christ as King, Priest, and Prophet:

(a) The Bible not only refers to God as ‘King of king’ (1 Tim. 6:15), but also refers to the Lamb Jesus Christ as ‘King of kings’.

Look at Revelation 17:14 – “They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings--and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.”

(b) The Bible refers to Jesus Christ as ‘High Priest’.

Look at Hebrews 3:1 – “Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.” Look at Hebrews 4:15 – “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.” Look at Hebrews 5:5, 10: “So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father.’ ... and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.” Look at Hebrews 9:11 – “When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, ...” The Bible Hebrews 7:21 speaks of Jesus as “a priest forever”. The modern Korean Bible says that Jesus’ priesthood endures forever because He lives forever. The point is that “we have

such a high priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Most High in heaven” (8:1).

(c) The Bible refers to Jesus Christ as “a prophet.”

Look at Deuteronomy 18:15 – “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.” That was why, in the Gospel of John written by the Apostle John, the Jews asked John the Baptist, “Are you the Prophet?” (Jn. 1:21), and when Jesus accomplished the miracle of two fish and five breads, the people said, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world” (6:14). If we look at these words, we can see that the Jews in Jesus' day were waiting for “a prophet like me” that Moses prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:15. So, when they saw Jesus who had accomplished the two fish and five breads miracle, they said, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world” (Jn. 6:14).

Then, why did the Apostle John say that those who believe that Jesus is the Christ love God? The reason is because the God of love (1 Jn. 4:8, 16) loved us first (v. 19) sent his Son, the Righteous One (2:1) as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (4:10) and to be the Savior of the world (v.14) in order to atone our sins (v. 10) and so that we, who were spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), might live (1 Jn. 4:9). So if we know and rely on the love God has for us (v. 16), then we cannot help but love God.

(2) Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God can love God.

Look at 1 John 5:5 – “Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? At the time when the Apostle John wrote 1 John, there were not only those who deny that Jesus is the Christ, but also those who deny that He is the Son of God. Look at 1 John 2:22-23: “Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father;” That is why the Apostle John said that these liars, the antichrists, have come “even now” and ‘therefore we know that it is the last hour’ (v. 18). It is still the last hour. Even now, there are too many antichrists and liars in this world. Therefore, as the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:5, we must become those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

So what does it mean to say that Jesus is the Son of God? It means that Jesus is God. In other words, when Jesus is said to be the Son of God, it means that Jesus and the Father God are one [(Jn. 10:30) “I and the Father are one”]. If we use that word as the words of Philippians 2:6, it means that Jesus is “being in very nature God.” So the Apostle John said in John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Here, “the Word” refers to the Son Jesus, and the Apostle John said, “the Word was God.” So the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:10 – “Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made

him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son.” In this verse, the Apostle John said, “Anyone who believes in the Son of God,” and then “Anyone who does not believe God.” That is, the Apostle John equated God and the Son of God. In other words, he said that Jesus, the Son of God, is God. That was why if we see Mark 14, before Jesus was arrested and nailed to the cross, the chief priests and the whole council were looking for evidence to kill Jesus (verse 55), and the high priest asked Jesus this question: “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” (v. 61) Then Jesus replied, “I am. ... And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven” (v. 62). At that time, the high priest tore his clothes and said, “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think? They all condemned him as worthy of death” (v. 64). In other words, when Jesus said that He was the Christ, the Son of God, from the viewpoint of the Jews, Jesus was condemned to death for blasphemy. The reason is because from the point of view of the Jews, there was only one God, and a man named Jesus said that he was the Christ, the Son of God, that is, God.

As I meditated on these verses, I thought a bit about the connection between the word that says that Jesus is the “Son of God” and the word that says that Jesus is the “Christ”. The reason is because in Mark 14:61, Jesus answered, “I am” to the high priest’s question, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?”, that is ‘the Son of God?’ As we have already meditated on, “Christ” means ‘the anointed one’ (Hebrew, “Messiah”), meaning King, Priest, and Prophet. In other words, to say that Jesus is the Christ means that Jesus is King, Priest, and Prophet. And “the Son of God” means that He is one with God, very nature God, and God, that is Jesus is God. Then, the meaning of ‘Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God’ can be interpreted to mean ‘Jesus is God the King, the Priest, and the Prophet’. And the saying that Jesus, the God, is the Christ (Messiah) means that Jesus, the God, came in the flesh (2 Jn. 1:7) as pure and without sin (1 Jn. 3:3, 5) as the propitiation for our sins (2:2; 4:10) and laid down his life (3:16) in order to atone our sins (4:10), to take away our sins (3:5), to make us alive (4:9) and give us salvation (eternal life) (5:11-13). Therefore, when I ask you, 'Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?', it means, 'Do you believe that Jesus, the God, came in the flesh and laid down his life on the cross as the propitiation for our sins in order to atone and take away your sins, to raise you who were spiritual dead in trespasses and sins and to save you (to give you eternal life)?' The Christians who answer this question with their heart and lips, saying ‘Amen!’ (I believe!), are the ones who love God.

(3) Those who are born of God love God.

Look at 1 John 5:1 – “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.” Are you born again? To ask again, have you been regenerated? Have you become a new creature (new man)? The well-known Bible verse 2 Corinthians 5:17 says: “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” If we look at this word, the Bible says that if we are in Christ, we are a new creature, or a new man. If we relate this verse to 1 John 5:1, it is saying that we have been born again (regenerate) and

become new people through faith that Jesus is the Christ. If we relate this to Ephesians 2:1 and 1 John 4:9, we are dead in trespasses and sins [dead spiritually because of disobedience and sins (Eph. 2: 1) and came to live through Him (1 Jn. 4:9)]. In other words, when we say that we are born again, it means that we who were dead are brought back to life.

Who brought us back to life? It is God who raised us from the dead in our trespasses and sins. Look at Ephesians 2:4-5: “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” Before we believed that Jesus was the Christ, our old man followed the evil ways of the world and obeyed the devil, lived according to the desires of the flesh and of the mind (vv. 2-3).

To put this from the perspective of 1 John, before we were born (before we were regenerated), the old man was in the darkness and walked in the darkness (1:6; 2:11), lied (1:6), hated (2:9; 3:15), loved the things of the world (2:15), did evil (3:12), and sinned against God (v. 8). In this way, God made us, the old people, who were spiritually dead, alive and made us new people. This is what the Apostle John says in 1 John 5:1, ‘We are born of God.’ Here, the phrase “is born of God” refers to he who is born again and who is regenerated. The same word Jesus used when he spoke to Nicodemus in John 3:7 – “Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it.” Before this word, Jesus said to Nicodemus: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (v. 3). The meaning of the Apostle John’s word in 1 John 5:1, he who “is born of God”, that is, he who is born again (is regenerated) is a new birth. And its meaning implies ongoing faith. In other words, there is evidence for the one who is born again, who is regenerated and who is new man (MacArthur). The evidence is twofold, as verse 1 says: (1) to love the Father, and (2) to love our brothers/sisters who are born of God. This twofold evidence has the same meaning as Jesus’ twofold command: (1) “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” and (2) “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt. 22:37, 39). That is, the evidence that those who are born of God (1 Jn. 5:1), those who are born again, those regenerated Christians who have been born of God, live as new people, as in the twofold command of Jesus and the word of 1 John 5:1, by (1) loving God and (2) loving brothers and sisters in Christ (neighbors).

Second, we want to think about what it means to love God.

Look at 1 John 5:2-3: “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.” The Bible Romans 8:28 says: “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” If we look at this verse, the Bible says that they are “those who love God.” Who are those who love God here? They are those who are called according to His purpose. Then who are those who are called according to His purpose? As Romans 8:29-30 says, it refers to “those whom He foreknew” (v. 29) and “these whom He predestined” (v. 30). In other words, those who are called

according to God's purpose are those whom God loves and cares for in advance [Ref.: Ps. 1:6, Hos 13:5, Am 3:2, Mt. 7:23 (Park)]. Those who were chosen by God before the foundation of the world, whom God allowed them to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ (common calling) and to believe in Jesus Christ are saved (special calling) and became "saints" (Rom. 1:7) are called according to His purpose and are those who love God. And those who love God love God because God first loved them (1 Jn. 4:19).

Who are those who love God? We have already meditated on three types of people who love God, focusing on 1 John 5:1-5: (1) Those who believe that Jesus is Christ (v. 1), (2) Those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God (v. 5), (3) Those who are born of God (v. 1). In 1 John 5:2-3, the Apostle John says: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome." Here the Apostle John is teaching us what it means to love God. It is keeping God's commandments (v. 3). In other words, the Apostle John says that those who love God are those who are born again (regenerated) by faith that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God, and are new people (new creatures) who keep His commandments. Here, as I meditated on the saying that those who love God keep His commandments, I was reminded of John 14:21, written by the same author, the Apostle John: "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." The Apostle John consistently speaks in John 14:21 and in 1 John 5:3. The consistent word is that those who love God keep God's commandment.

We need to prove biblically that we truly love God. Based on 1 John 4:7, I wrote this short contemplation: 'Those who love one another in obedience to God's commandment are truly born again (regenerated ones) and truly know God. Conversely, he who disobeys God's commandment of the Lord and hates one another is not truly born again and doesn't truly know God.' What I have learned as I write this short reflection is that if I am truly born again, a regenerated person, a new person, I will obey the Lord's commandment. The Apostle John is telling us again in 1 John 5:3 that if we truly love God, we must prove it. And the way to prove it is to keep God's commandment consistent with the word of 1 John 4:7 (5:3). If we apply this to us, it means that we don't end up praising and confessing, "God, I love you" only in words. But we must live according to that confession and praise. Living according to that confession and praise is keeping God's commandment. Then, what is God's commandment that the Apostle John is talking about? Look at 1 John 3:23 – "This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us." The commandment of God is to love one another as God has given us through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. If we meditate on this word again, if we believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ, and if that faith is truly a living faith, we must prove it by our works. And the way to prove that is to love one another according to God's commandment.

The God who gave us this commandment first loved us (4:19). How did God first love us? Look at 1 John 4:9-10: "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

- (1) The love of the Father God is the love that He sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ into this world to save us who were spiritually dead.

The love of the Father God is the love that He sacrificed His only begotten Son Jesus Christ on the cross as the propitiation for our sins. Because of the great love of the Father God, who sent and forsook His begotten Son, we have become children of God (3:1).

- (2) The love of the Son Jesus is stated in 1 John 3:16 – “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us”

Jesus Christ, who is the Word of life from the beginning and eternal life (1:1-2), came to this world in obedience to God the Father (3:5) and was the propitiation for our sins (2:2), even though he had no sin at all, in order to take away our sins (1:1-2). Jesus Christ came as the Savior of the world (4:14) and in the flesh (v. 2; 2 Jn. 1:7) (Incarnation love). And by laying down His life on the cross as a propitiation sacrifice, He satisfied God's holy wrath (2:2) (love that laid down His life). Therefore, we are freed from death (3:14) and received eternal life (salvation) that Jesus Christ directly promised us (2:25; 5:11-13).

- (3) The love of the Holy Spirit is that He made us to confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh (4:2), that Jesus is the Christ (2:22), and that Jesus is the Son of God (4:2, 15), and made us alive (v. 9) [the love that made us to confess Jesus and the love that made us alive from spiritually dead].

And the Holy Spirit not only makes us know that God is in us (3:24), but also makes us abide (live) in God (4:13). Also, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (4:6), teaching us all things so that we may always live (abide, live) in Christ (2:27). Also, the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of love, enables us to abide in love (live in love) (4:16). That is, the Holy Spirit causes us to obey the Lord's command so that we can love God and love our brothers and sisters in Christ (neighbors) (v. 21; cf. Rom. 5:5). And the Holy Spirit will give us confidence in the Day of Judgment because love has perfected us (1 Jn. 4:17). The Holy Spirit makes us not to fear in love (v. 18).

In this way, the Holy Triune God first loved us (v. 19). Therefore, we love God (5:2). And our love for God means that we keep His commandment (v. 3).

Today, on the last Sunday in February, I was grateful to God while worshipping, as I remember, at this time in 2020, our church started offering online worship services due to the corona virus and God has shown His love to all our church families. God has protected and kept us, and has helped us, guided us, and provided us even in difficult situations in many ways. As I remember, last year, I exhorted you to use it as an opportunity to pursue closer fellowship with God through God's word and prayer while relying more and more on God in this difficult corona virus era. Looking back on the past year, I can't help but thank God for allowing us to enjoy more intimate

fellowship with God through God's word and prayer. In the midst of this, in the New Year 2021, we set our church motto "The Year of Spiritual Maturity" and challenged us to do our best, praying that it would be a year for all of us to promote spiritual growth and maturity for each of us in this difficult time. In particular, during the New Year's worship service, we received three lessons, focusing on Colossians 1:9-12: (1) We must gradually grow in the knowledge of God (v. 10). (2) We must be filled with the knowledge of the will of God (v. 9). (3) We must live like saints who believe in the Lord (v. 10). Here, the life of a saint who believes in the Lord is (a) bearing good fruit (v. 10), (b) enduring all things with joy (v. 11), and (c) giving thanks to the Father God (v. 12). These three lessons can be applied from the perspective of the words of 1 John: (1) We must come to know the God of love more and more (1 Jn. 4:8, 16). (2) We must grow in faith in Jesus Christ, the will (commandment) of God, and love one another more and more (3:23). (3) We are to live a life of saint - (a) Bearing the fruit of love, (b) Enduring everything with joy, and (c) Giving thanks to our Heavenly Father.

In order for us to love one another according to God's commandment, we must first know the God of love (1 Jn. 4:8, 16). In particular, we need to know more about the saving love of the Holy Triune God who loves us. So, last week we briefly meditated on the saving love of the Holy Triune God: (1) The love of the Father God is the love that He sent His only begotten Son into the world as the propitiation for our sins (vv. 9, 10) to save us, who were (spiritually) dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). The Father God's love is a love that forsook His own Son on the cross. (2) Because of the love of the Father God sending His Son and the great love of forsaking His Son, we who were enemies with God (Rom. 5:10) became His children (1 Jn. 3:1). (2) The love of the Son Jesus is the love that came to this world in the flesh in obedience to the will of the Father God (2:2; 2 Jn. 1:7), or the love in the flesh, and was sacrificed to satisfy God's wrath as the propitiation for our sins (2:2). It is a love that laid down His own life (3:16). As a result, we have received eternal life (salvation) (2:25; 5:11-13). (3) The love of the Holy Spirit is the love that gave us life (4:9), the love that regenerated us, or the love that made us a new creature (new man), and also makes us realize that Jesus is the Christ (2:22) and the Son of God (4:2, 15) or the love that converted us. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth (v. 6), teaches us to understand this love of the Holy Triune God, so that we can love one another according to God's commandment.

The Apostle John says that this commandment of God is "not burdensome" (v. 3). What does it mean? As I meditated on this verse, I was reminded of Matthew 11:28-30: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." I found it on my blog and re-read what I wrote on July 19, 2009, 'The spirituality I want to pursue.' And I wanted to share the part of it because it may help us to understand the Apostle John's saying that "His commandments are not burdensome" (1 Jn. 5:3): 'The Lord calls those who are weary and burdened and promises to give them rest. And He says that the way to find the rest for our souls is to take His yoke upon us and to learn from Him. True spirituality is achieved only when we go up to the level where we can enjoy rest even with His yoke upon us. But if we are overwhelmed by the weight of His yoke and losing consciousness, then we can't say that we have true spirituality. The Lord's yoke is easy and His burden is light (Mt. 11:30). Although the weight of the cross is not light at all, it is the

spiritual power that spirituality is based on if we can feel the weight of the cross light since we are taking His yoke upon us out of love for the Lord. I want to pursue this spirituality. It is spirituality that I can feel easy and light because I am taking His yoke out of my love for Him. I want to pursue the spirituality that gives me rest from the Lord, rather than wandering back and forth in the anxiety of my heart because of His yoke that I took upon (Mt. 11:28, 29). It is truly attractive that even if there is pain and suffering, the spirituality that can find rest in the Lord, and the spirituality that imitates Jesus' meekness and humility (Mt. 11:29) more and more in the midst of pain and suffering. I think that the spiritual power that flows from this spirituality is the true spiritual power. I hope and pray that I will become a pastor who spreads Christ and His gospel more boldly with such spiritual power.' God's commandments are by no means heavy. The reason is because we want to keep the commandments of God with a heart of love for God because of the great saving love and grace that God gave us first. How could the Son, Jesus Christ, be obedient to the Father God, even to the point of dying on the cross as the propitiation sacrifice, bearing the burden of all our sins (Phil. 2:8)? How could Jesus, who bore the burden of all our sins, including the original sin and our past, present, future sins, and be able to obey the Father Good until he died on the cross? The reason is because Jesus Christ loves God and also loves us (1 Jn. 3:16). It reminds me of Hebrews 12:2 – “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame,” Jesus was obedient to the Father God until he died on the cross, bearing the burden of all our sins for the joy we will enjoy in the future. Therefore, we too must follow Jesus' example and obey God's commandments. We must love each other.

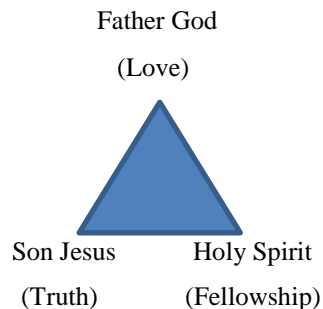
Last week, my friend pastor said that he shared an English gospel song “The Afters - Well Done” with the wife of a 53-year-old colleague who passed away due to the coronavirus. And he said that she and her two sons were comforted a lot and they were very grateful. This is because the second son said during his eulogy that the Lord would say to his father, “Well done, My faithful servant.” This reminded me the funeral service of Pastor Hendricks that I and my wife attended not long ago. During the funeral service, one of the sons of Pastor Hendricks did the eulogy through his brother-in-law and he said through her that when his father stood before the Lord, the Lord will say "Well done, My faithful servant." After the eulogy, I heard the gospel song “The Afters – Well Done” for the first time in my life. As I listened to that song, my heart was moved and the lyrics became my earnest prayer to God:

“What will it be like when my pain is gone
And all the worries of this world just fade away?
What will it be like when You call my name
And that moment when I see You face to face?
I'm waiting my whole life to hear You say
Well done, well done My good and faithful one
Welcome to the place where you belong
Well done, well done My beloved child
You have run the race and now you're home
Welcome to the place where you belong
What will it be like when tears are washed away
And every broken thing will finally be made whole?
What will it be like when I come into Your glory
Standing in the presence of a love so beautiful?
I'm waiting my whole life for that day
I will live my life to hear You say
Well done, well done
My good and faithful one
Welcome to the place where you belong
Well done, well done

My beloved child You have run the race and now you're home Welcome to the place where you belong
 What will it be like when I hear that sound? All of heaven's angels crying out
 Singing holy, holy, holy are You, Lord(3x) Waiting my whole life for that day
 Until then I'll live to hear You say Well done, well done My good and faithful one
 Welcome to the place where you belong Well done, well done My beloved child
 You have run the race and now you're home Welcome to the place where you belong
 Well done.”

I sincerely hope and pray that when we all obey God's commandments, which are not heavy at all, and love each other, we can receive praise from the Lord, saying, “Well done, well done, my good and faithful servant” when we stand before Him.

A week or two ago, on a Christian newspaper website, there was an article about a book ‘1 John’ written by a pastor, so I read it with interest. The reason I got a little interested is because I meditate on 1 John and preach every Sunday. What caught my attention among the contents of the introduction to the book was that the author of the book was looking at the book of 1 John with three themes: ‘Love,’ ‘Truth’ and ‘Fellowship.’ However, I think the Apostle John contrasts four themes in 1 John. They are ‘light vs. darkness (1 Jn. 1:5), ‘truth vs. lie’ (v. 6), ‘love vs. hate’ (2:9), and ‘righteousness vs. evil or unrighteousness (3:12). So I was little bit struggling about how to view the pastor's three themes and my four themes. In the meantime, I've been able to sort things out to this extent. First, when I re-considered the pastor's three themes, I came up with the following: (1) The Father God is “love.” Look at 1 John 4:8, 16: “The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ... We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.” (2) The Son Jesus is the “truth.” Look at John 14:6 – “Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (3) The Holy Spirit brings us into “fellowship” with a loving Father God and with Jesus Christ, the Son of God who is the truth. Look at 1 John 1:3 – “what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” I drew three truths like this:



I think it is necessary to look at the entire book of 1 John (1:1-5:21) with these three themes: “love”, “truth” and “fellowship”. More theologically, I think we should look at the book (letter) of 1 John from the point of view of the

Triune God (I think this is true not only of "1 John", but especially of "Romans"). As an example, as we meditate on the words of 1 John, it is necessary to meditate on the book of 1 John from (1) The perspective of how the Father God, who is love, first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19), (2) The perspective of believing in the Son Jesus Christ (5:1, 5) and keeping His commandment (3:23-24), and (3) The perspective of how the Holy Spirit regenerates us, causes us to love God and love our neighbor (5:1), and enables us to win the battle against the world (v. 5).

Then what should I think of the contrast between the four themes by the Apostle John that I have been meditating and preaching on 1 John? If we compare the 3 themes of the pastor who wrote the book "1 John" above and the 4 themes I suggested, the 2 themes of "love" and "truth" are the same. But the pastor said the third theme was "fellowship," and I said "light" and "righteousness." And while the pastor said "love", "truth", and "fellowship" were the three themes in the book of 1 John, I said that the Apostle John was contrasting the four themes in 1 John. That is, the Apostle John spoke on the subject of "love" and at the same time he spoke of 'hate', the opposite of love, and not only spoke of the subject of "truth" but also of 'lie', and also of "light" and 'darkness', and 'righteousness' and 'evil' or 'unrighteousness'. I think it is very helpful to understand the contrast of these four themes, especially when we meditate in connection with 1 John 5:4-5: "for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God." Here, the Apostle John uses the words "overcomes," "overcome," and "overcomes," three times, and also uses the word "world" three times. And he uses the words "faith" and "believers" to express in two words who overcomes the world by faith: "everyone born of God" (v. 4) and "he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (v. 5). Taking this fact into account, the Apostle John is saying that we are now war with the "world" because the God of love (4:8, 16) who first loved us (v. 19) and showed us His great love (3:1), sent His begotten Son Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, as the propitiation for our sins (2:2; 4:9, 10) and He laid down his life for us (3:16), so that the Holy Spirit regenerated us (5:1, 4), enables us to believe that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God. (vv. 1, 5), and made us children of God (3:1, 2). Therefore, the Apostle John also said to us, "Do not love the world or anything in the world" (2:15). The reason is because "everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world" (v. 16). "The world and its desires pass away" (v. 17). Therefore, we who are born again, who are regenerated, and who have become new creatures (new people) must fight against this world. Also, considering the four themes of the entire book of 1 John that I have proposed, this "world" in which we must fight is (1) the dark world (1:5, 6; 2:8, 9, 11), (2) the lying world. (1:6, 8, 10; 2:4, 21, 22; 4:1, 6, 20), (3) the world of hate (2:9, 11; 3:12-15; 4:20) and (4) the evil and the unrighteous world (1:9; 2:2, 13, 14, 16; 3:12; 5:17, 18, 19, 21). We must fight this world. The secret to victory in this spiritual battle is "faith". Look again at the words of the Apostle John: "... This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith" (5:4). In other words, those who are born of God (vv. 1, 4), those who are regenerated, the children of God who became new creatures (3:1, 2) who believe that Jesus is Christ and the Son of God (5:1, 5) overcome the world (vv. 4, 5).

The church is both a militant church and a triumph church. The Lord, who is the head of the church, has already triumphed over death and Satan on the cross. Therefore, the church must fight with self, sin, the world, and

Satan with the assurance of victory in Jesus Christ. As soldiers of the cross of Jesus Christ, we must engage in spiritual warfare with the assurance of victory. As we engage in spiritual warfare, I hope and pray that we will receive and obey a few lessons today:

- (1) We must have fellowship with the Father God of love and Jesus Christ who is the Truth according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit faithfully and intimately. Therefore, we must know the saving love of the Holy Triune God more and more deeply, more broadly, and higher.
- (2) As regenerated ones, as children of God, we must walk in the light and practice the truth by loving one another according to the Lord's command.
- (3) We must not love this world, nor should we fellowship with it. We must know that everything in this world, such as the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does will pass away. So we must fight this dark world, a world of lies, a world full of hatred, evil, and unrighteousness. We must fight only by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. By believing that Jesus Christ has already triumphed, we must lead a militant life of faith and with the assurance of His victory. We must win through faith alone.

Third and last, we want to think about the truth that those who love God overcome the world and have victory through faith.

Look at 1 John 5:4-5: “for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” The church is both the militant church and the triumph church. The Lord, who is the head of the church, has already triumphed over death and Satan on the cross. Therefore, we the church must fight ourselves, sin, the world, and Satan with the assurance of victory in Jesus Christ. As soldiers of the cross of Jesus Christ, we must engage in spiritual warfare with the assurance of victory. We must learn not only the assurance of victory, but also the secret of victory through the word of God. There are 4 secrets of victory that we meditated on based on the words of Joshua 1:1-9:

- (1) The secret of victory is to remember God's promises.

Look at Joshua 1:3-4, 6b, 13: “I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates--all the Hittite country--to the Great Sea on the west. ... because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. ... Remember the command that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and has granted you this land.'” The God of the covenant had already sworn to give the land of Canaan to the Israelites through Moses. God said that the land of abundance flowing with milk and honey would be Israel's territory. Joshua, who remembered this promise, told the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (v. 12) to remember the command that Moses gave them: “The Lord your God is giving you rest and has granted you this land” (v. 13).

We too must remember the Lord's promise. The word of promise the Lord gave to our church is Matthew 16:18 – 'I will build my church.' Our church is the Lord's church. And the Lord promised that He will build His church. Therefore, we must remember this promise of the Lord. Not only do we remember, but we also need to commemorate this promise. We must believe that the God of the covenant will surely and faithfully fulfill this promise. And we must win with this faith in His word of the promise.

(2) The secret of victory is the presence of God

In the Bible Joshua 1:5, 9b, 17 and 3:7, God made this promise to Joshua: "No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ... for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go. ... Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses. ... And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses." Just as God was with Moses, God promised to be with Joshua. God promised Joshua that He would never leave him and never forsake him. God promised that Joshua would be with him wherever he went. And God promised to make Joshua great in the sight of Israel. Therefore, He promised that all the people of Israel would know that God was with Joshua. Therefore, God said that there would be no one who could stand against Joshua during his lifetime.

Our God is Emmanuel God. That is, He is God with us (Mt. 1:23). And this Immanuel God is for us. If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:31) We must overcome by faith in Immanuel.

(3) The secret to victory is to be strong and courageous.

Look at Joshua 1:6a, 7a, 9a, 18: "Be strong and courageous, ... Be strong and very courageous. ... Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. ... Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey your words, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!" The covenant God who promised to give the land of Canaan to the Israelites and to be with Joshua commanded Joshua to be strong and very courageous. God was with Joshua, who would he fear and what would surprise him? Not only God, but also the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh said to Joshua, 'Be strong and courageous.'

Look at Isaiah 41:10 – "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." We must not fear. Rather, we must be strong and courageous. The reason is because God is with us. The reason is because Emmanuel God's promise to us will surely be fulfilled. God will surely help us and will sustain us. Therefore, we must strengthen our faith and overcome through faith alone.

(4) The secret to victory is to be careful to obey all the laws that God has commanded.

Look at Joshua 1:7-8: “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” Joshua and the people of Israel, who had received a promise from God, had a responsibility. The responsibility was to be careful to obey all the laws that God commanded. The reason God commanded the people of Israel this way was to make them prosperous and successful. This is the secret to success and the secret to victory. The secret is to be careful to obey all the commands of God.

However, as we know, we cannot obey all the commands of God. This is our weakness. But Jesus kept it all and obeyed them. Jesus obeyed all the will of God until He died on the cross. Therefore, we who cannot obey all the commands of God must only believe in Jesus. That is why the Bible says that believing in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God's command (1 Jn. 3:23). This is God's work (Jn. 6:29). We must work hard on this. To do this, we must meditate on the word of God day and night (Ps. 1:2). And we must hear the word of Christ through the word of God that we meditate on (Rom. 10:17). Therefore, there must be progress in our faith (Phil. 1:25). And with the help of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26), we must obey God's commands. We must win by faith.

In 1 John 5:4-5, the Apostle John says this: “for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” Here, the Apostle John says that the one who is born of God means the one who has been born again from God, which we have already meditated on in verse 1, and that means a new birth. And its meaning implies ongoing faith. In other words, there is evidence for the one who is born again, who is regenerated and who is new man (MacArthur). The evidence is twofold, as verse 1 says: (1) to love the Father, and (2) to love our brothers/sisters who are born of God. This twofold evidence has the same meaning as Jesus' twofold command: (1) “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” and (2) “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt. 22:37, 39). That is, the evidence that those who are born of God (1 Jn. 5:1), those who are born again, those regenerated Christians who have been born of God, live as new people, as in the twofold command of Jesus and the word of 1 John 5:1, by (1) loving God and (2) loving brothers and sisters in Christ (neighbors).

The Apostle John says, “everyone born of God overcomes the world” (1 Jn. 5:4). What does it mean? What is the “world” which we, being born again (regenerated) of God, and new creatures, overcome? When I think of the word “world”, I think of 1 John 2:15-17: “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” By reading these words, we can understand a

little bit about the “world” that we who have been born again (regenerated) and Christians who have become new people must fight and overcome. It is “all that is in the world,” “the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life” (v. 16). To put this in the context of Genesis 3:6, when the serpent seduced the woman (Eve), Adam’s wife, to eat the fruit, the Bible says, “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.” Here, “good for food” is “the lust of the flesh” (1 Jn. 2:16), “pleasing to the eyes” (Gen. 3:6) is “the lust of the eyes” (1 Jn. 2:16), and “desirable for gaining wisdom” (Gen. 3:6) means “the boastful pride of life” (1 Jn. 2:16). Adam and Eve fell into this temptation and sinned against God. If we say that in 1 John 2:15, the first Adam (as the representative of the family responsible for Eve and the representative of mankind) did not win the spiritual warfare and was defeated because he loved the world and the things in it. In contrast, Jesus Christ, the “last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45), triumphed when tempted by the devil in the wilderness. When we read from Matthew 4:1, we see Jesus fasted for 40 days before beginning His public ministry and then hunger (v. 2), “the tempter” (v. 3), that is “the devil” (v. 1) tempted Jesus in three ways.

- (1) The first temptation was, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread” (v. 3).

If we say this in terms of Genesis 3:6, we can say that it is “good for food.” And if we say it in terms of 1 John 2:16, we can say that it is a temptation to stimulate “the lust of the flesh.” At that time, Jesus overcame the temptation of the devil by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 of the Old Testament: “... It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Mt. 4:4).

- (2) The second temptation was, “Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: " 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone” (vv. 5-6).

Here the devil is quoting Psalms 91:11-12, but it is different: “He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” If we say this in terms of Genesis 3:6, we can say that it is “desirable for gaining wisdom.” And if we say it in terms of 1 John 2:16, we can say that it is a temptation to stimulate “the boastful pride of life.” At that time, Jesus overcame the second temptation of the devil by quoting Deuteronomy 6:16 of the Old Testament: “... It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test’” (Mt. 4:7).

- (3) The third temptation was, “Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me.”

If we say this in terms of Genesis 3:6, we can say that it is “pleasing to the eyes.” And if we say it in terms of 1 John 2:16, we can say that it is a temptation to stimulate “the lust of the eyes.” At that time, Jesus overcame the third temptation of the devil by quoting Deuteronomy 6:13 of the Old Testament: “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only’” (Mt. 4:10).

Ultimately, the world we have to fight and overcome is “the lust of the flesh”, “the lust of the eyes” and “the boastful pride of life”, which the Apostle John already spoke of in 1 John 2:16 (Ref.: Gen. 3:6; Mt. 4: 1-11). The Apostle John says in 1 John 5:4, “everyone who is born of God overcomes the world.” In other words, we who are born again (regenerated) from God and are new creatures, fight and overcome the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, which are in the world (2:15).

But I think that apart from this lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, we who are born again (regenerated) from God and the new creatures have more to fight and overcome. That is, as the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:1, (1) to love God and (2) to love brothers and sisters in Christ (neighbors) (Ref.: Mt. 22:37, 39). In other words, the spiritual war we must fight and win is obedience to the twofold command of Jesus. To obey this twofold command of Jesus is doing the will of God (1 Jn. 2:17). The Apostle John says, “the man who does the will of God lives forever” (v. 17), which specifically means that we “Do not love the world or anything in the world” (v. 15), but that we love God and love brothers and sisters in Christ (5:1). As we love our brothers and sisters in Christ according to the Lord's command, we can know that we have passed from death to life (3:14). In other words, when we love our brothers and sisters in Christ in obedience to His command, we know that we have eternal life. But the devil continues to tempt and deceive us into disobeying His twofold command, and to make us hate our brothers and sisters in Christ (neighbors), thus leading us to sin. The devil is trying to make us hate our brother like Cain, so that we are in the darkness (2:9). And the devil tries to create something in us to make us stumble (v. 10). In a word, the devil is preventing us from enjoying eternal life by making us to hate our brothers and sisters in Christ (3:15). The Apostle John says that he who is born of God (regenerated) and the new creature wins this spiritual war (5:4). In other words, “he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God” overcomes the world (v. 5).

How, then, does the Apostle John say we are victorious? Look at 1 John 5:4b – “... This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.” Here are just a few of the short reflections I wrote a few weeks ago while reading and meditating on Hebrews 11, the chapter of faith: (1) I still want to speak to my beloved wife, children, church members, and brothers and sisters in Christ around me even after I die by faith in the Lord (Heb. 11:4). (2) A Christian who receives the evidence that he is pleasing God is one who must believe that God exists, that God rewards those who earnestly seek Him and the one who walks with God and live in deep fellowship with God (Heb. 11:5-6; Gen. 5:24). (3) Receiving disgrace for the sake of Jesus Christ is greater value than the treasures of this world (Heb. 11:26). (4) We must love our family, our church brothers/sisters, and our neighbors whom we can see (1 Jn. 4:20; Mt. 22:39) like seeing God who is invisible (Heb. 11:27) and whom we cannot see (1 Jn. 4:20). (5) By faith, even if it is the same faith as the Israelites who grumbled before the Red Sea when they

saw the dreadful situation (Heb. 11:29; Exod. 14:10-12), we must be strong in our weakness (Heb. 11:34). If we are to be strong in our weakness, we must be captivated by the powerful word of the Lord: "... In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33), "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37), "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him" (2 Cor. 2:14).

In 1 John 2:13, 14, the Apostle John said: "... I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one ... I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one." Here we can see how the children of God can fight and overcome the devil. In other words, we can learn some of the secrets of how to fight and overcome the devil's temptation to hate our brothers and sisters in Christ. The secret is that we are strong and the Word of God abides in us. Here, 'we are strong' means we are strong because the powerful word of God dwells in us. Also, the fact that the word of God abides in us is proof that our faith in the word is so strong and firm. So the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:4: "for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith."

This is the hymn "Encamped Along the Hills of Light", verse 2 and chorus lyrics: "On ev-'ry hand the foe we find Drawn up in dread array; Let tents of ease be left behind, And onward to the fray. Salvation's helmet on each head, With truth all girt about, The earth shall tremble 'neath our tread, And echo with our shout. Faith is the victory! Faith is the victory! Oh, glorious victory, That overcomes the world." Faith wins. Faith in the Lord Jesus fights and overcomes this sinful world and the devil. Although the devil tempts us to (continuously) hate our brothers and sisters in Christ, the victory over that temptation is our faith in the Lord (1 Jn. 5:4). And because the God in us, the object of our faith, is greater than "the one who is in the world" (4:4), we will fight and win by faith. May our hearts be filled with joy as we all stand firm in the faith and love our neighbor as ourselves, as Jesus commanded (1:4).

Desiring to love God more and more,

James Kim

(April 25, 2021, Praying for victory over Satan's temptation to hate my brothers and sisters in Christ by faith as I obey His command to love them in the Lord)

“God’s testimony”

[1 John 5:6-12]

Let's not all evangelize together. On April 8, 2005, I wrote an article under the title 'Let's not evangelize indiscreetly.' I thought of this title 'Let's not evangelize indiscreetly' after I met one of our church grandmothers. At that time, I went to the hospital where she was lying down in order to evangelize to her. So I preached the gospel to her. But she said to me, 'I shouldn't say this while there is a pastor ... but Christians' hearts are jet-black like a lump of charcoal even though they pretend not to be on the outside.' At that time, I had no choice but to humble myself by confessing my own heart that is like a lump of charcoal. The reason is because this is my shame and also our shame. So I wrote this and left it on the record: 'In the midst of not being able to make our hearts and our beings reminds us of Jesus, our actions are too perfect to be seen by people with evangelistic zeal, like the Pharisees or Paul, that is, Saul before he believed in Jesus, and we have the perfect (?) Christian image. The surprising fact is that God exposes our untruthful character and life, heart and life full of hypocrisy to unbelievers. That is why I think we Christians are committing the sin of obstructing evangelism. Evangelism without a heart of love is incompetent. Although our lips may cry out for love, I think that the other person can't feel love is just a ringing bell. However, while we are so used to the evangelism program of the church or the evangelism training we received from Christian organizations, I think we are trying to witness and do evangelism for the salvation of souls without trying to live a life of witness. I think that we are making an unbelieving soul to get hurt and to leave the church and never looks at the church again by not living a life of an evangelist but trying hard to witness and testify and bring the person to the church. I think that in evangelism without the full of the Holy Spirit, our actions are more evident than the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Maybe that's why the word 'Evangelism King' was coined. When we think about the number of people filling the church chapel, it is doubtful what percentage of the souls who are saved and go to heaven. Let's not evangelize indiscreetly.' What do you think of this article I wrote? Aren't we trying to do evangelism for the salvation of souls with our testimony before doing so through our life as His witness? Aren't we witnessing Jesus with our lips while we are not living the life of witness that reminds Jesus?

Looking at the first half of 1 John 5:9 and the second half of verse 10, the Apostle John says this: "... for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. ... because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son." I would like to receive the lessons that the Holy Spirit gives us by meditating on the words of 1 John 5:6-12 under the title of "God's testimony".

What is "testimony"? What is your testimony? When I think of "testimony," I think of the testimony of the Apostle Paul in Acts 22. And I think that testimony can be divided into three parts:

- (1) The first part is the story of the Apostle Paul before he met Christ (Acts 22:2-5a) (Before

Christ).

The story is that Saul was “educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God” (Acts 22:3), and “persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons” (v. 4). In this case the high priest and all the Council of the elders were Paul’s witness (v. 5).

(2) The second part is the story of the Apostle Paul when he met Christ (vv.5b-16) (On Christ).

The story is that Saul received letters from the high priests and all the Council of the elders, and started off for Damascus in order to bring the followers of this Way even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished (v. 5). On his way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around Saul (v. 6). At that time, Saul fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (v. 7) So Saul answered, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said to him, I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting” (v. 8). At that time, Jesus told Saul to go into Damascus (v. 10), and Saul obeyed His word and went into Damascus, met Ananias and his eyes were opened and heard these words from Ananias: “... The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard” (vv. 14-15). And as Saul was calling on His name, he was baptized, and his sins were washed away (v. 16).

(3) The third and last part is the story of the Apostle Paul after he met Christ (vv. 17-21) (After Christ).

After Saul met the resurrected Lord, who is seated at the right hand of God, on the road to Damascus, he was converted, and received a commission as an apostle to the Gentiles (v. 21) and became a witness for Him (v. 15).

“God’s testimony” should be “my testimony”. God has testified concerning His Son, Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 5:9, 10). Therefore, we must testify concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God. To do so, let us all bear our testimony as the Apostle Paul spoke in Acts 22. In order for us to testify, let us think about our stories before we met Jesus Christ (Before Christ), when we met Jesus Christ (On Christ), and after we met Jesus Christ (After Christ) in a quiet time and place, with a quiet and prayerful heart, and write down our own testimony. And let's share that testimony we wrote with our family. In particular, let's share it with our family, friends, and neighbors who don't believe in Jesus Christ. Therefore, just as God testified concerning His Son Jesus Christ, I hope and pray that we too will testify concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

In 1 John 5:9b, 10b, the Apostle John says: “... that He has testified concerning His Son. ... because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.” The Apostle John used the word

“witness” (or “testimony” or “testify”) almost 70-80 times in his Gospel of John, 1, 2, 3, and the book of Revelation and can be divided into 7 categories (Word Studies in the NT commentary):

(1) The witness of the Father

Look at John 5:37a – “And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me”

(2) The witness of Christ himself

Look at John 8:14 – “Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going.”

(3) The witness of works

Look at John 10:25 – “Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me.”

(4) The witness of Scripture

Look at John 5:39 – “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me.”

(5) The witness of the forerunner

Look at John 1:7 – “He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him.”

(6) The witness of the disciples

Look at 1 John 1:2 – “and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us.” Look at 1 John 4:14 – “We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.”

(7) The witness of the Spirit

Look at John 15:26 – ““When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,”

Of these seven kinds of “witness” (or “testimony” or “testify”), the witness mentioned in 1 John 5:9b, 10b is the first kind of witness, the witness of the Father God. The Apostle John speaks of this as “the testimony of God” in verse 9. Here, the content of “the testimony of God” that the Apostle John is speaking of is “concerning His Son” (vv. 9, 10). It means is that God testified about His only begotten Son, Jesus. Then what did God testified who the

only begotten Son Jesus was? To answer this question, we need to look again at 1 John 5:1, 5, which we have already meditated on. In verse 1, the Apostle John said, “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ . . .” and in verse 5, “he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” The Apostle John said two truths about Jesus. However, when the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:9, 10 that the testimony of God is “concerning His Son,” the only truth remaining is that Jesus is the Christ. In view of that fact, the testimony that God testified about His Son is that “Jesus” is “the Christ.”

Then, what is “the testimony of God” that the Apostle John spoke of in verse 9? I think there are at least two testimonies in 1 John 5:6-12:

(1) ‘The testimony of God’ is the testimony of the Spirit, the water and the blood.

Look at 1 John 5:6-8: “Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. This is the one who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.” In this verse, the Apostle John says that the three witnesses, ‘the Holy Spirit, and the water and the blood,’ all testify that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. More specifically, the Apostle John says, ‘The Son of God is Jesus Christ, who came by the water and the blood’ and it is the Holy Spirit who testifies to this fact. In other words, “the testimony of God” is the testimony that God testified concerning His Son (vv. 9-10), and the testimony is that the Son of God is Jesus Christ, who came by the water and the blood. And the Holy Spirit, who is the truth, testifies to this fact.

Then, what does “water” and “blood” refer to in the words, ‘The Son of God is Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood’ (v. 6)? The Apostle John uses the word “water” only here in 1 John 5:6, 8, but uses it several times in the Gospel of John which he wrote. For example, in John 1:26, 31, 33, the Apostle John said that John the Baptist baptized with “water”, and in John 3:22 and 4:12, Jesus also baptized with “water”. “Water” here symbolizes “purification” or “cleansing”. Also, in John 3:5, Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Here, “water and the Spirit” means “washing away sins” by the Holy Spirit (compare Ezek. 36:25-27). ‘Water’ also symbolizes “the gift of the Spirit” given by the resurrected Jesus (Jn. 4:13-14; 7:37-39). After all, “water” symbolizes “purification” or “washing away from sins,” but especially “washing away from sins” by the Holy Spirit (The IVP New Testament Commentary). So what does “blood” mean? In 1 John 1:7b, the Apostle John said, “... the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” In the words of Jesus in John 6:51-58, “blood” refers to the self-sacrificing death of Jesus and tells us that there is no eternal life without the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. In other words, there is no forgiveness of sins or eternal life without the shedding of Jesus' blood and death. One interesting thing is that in John 19:34, when one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. Jesus' blood and water pouring out here signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit (“water”) and the

washing away (“blood”) given to us through Jesus’ death (The IVP New Testament Commentary). That is why the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:8, the Spirit, and the water and the blood, and these three witnesses all testify that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

We have already learned from 1 John 5:1 that everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. There, I also learned the meaning of the word that Jesus is the Christ. Also, we learned that the name “Jesus” means “Jehovah is salvation”, that is, He is the One who will save us from our sins, and “Christ” means “Anointed One,” and Jesus is the King of Kings, High Priest, and the Prophet. That is, Jesus is the Christ means that Jesus is the King of kings, the High Priest and the Prophet who saves us from our sins. Also, we have already learned about “he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God” in 1 John 5:5. In a word, we learned that Jesus is the Son of God means that Jesus is God. However, in 1 John 5:6-10, the testimony that God testified about the Son is that the Son of God is Jesus Christ. And that Jesus Christ came by water and blood. The point is that when we think about Romans 6, we are buried with Jesus only through baptism (“water”) into the death (“blood”) of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Rom. 6:4). In other words, our old self was crucified with Jesus, so that our sinful body died so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin (v. 6). In a word, we who were baptized with the shed blood of Jesus Christ, who came with water and blood (1 Jn. 5:6), became dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:11). Now that we have been set free from sin, we have become servants of God and lead a holy life, which the result is eternal life (v. 22). That is why the Apostle John says this in 1 John 5:11-12: “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

(2) ‘The testimony of God’ is “man’s testimony.”

Look at 1 John 5:9 – “We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.” Here the Apostle John compares “man’s testimony” with “the testimony of God,” that is, the testimony of the Son of God, and says that if we have received the man’s testimony, we must receive the greater testimony of God. What, then, is the “man’s testimony” we have received here? First of all, from the standpoint of the recipients of this letter of 1 John, among the testimonies of those they received, there is 1 John 1:2 – “The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.” That is, they received the testimony of the Apostle John. This is the fulfillment of Acts 1:8 – “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The Apostle John was empowered by the Holy Spirit that came upon him, and he testified to the recipients of the letter through 1 John, the Son of God, whom he had personally seen. In this way, God testified of His Son, Jesus Christ, through the testimony of people, and He continues to do so.

Look at 1 John 5:10 – “Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone

who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son.” The Apostle John says that the Father God testifies concerning his Son Jesus Christ, firstly by the Spirit and by water and blood (vv. 6-8), and secondly by man’s testimony (v. 9). And the Apostle John says in verse 10 that those who hear this testimony of God are divided into two groups:

- (1) The first group of people who hear the testimony of God are those who believe in the Son of God.

Those who believe in the Son of God are those who believe in Jesus Christ when God testifies concerning his Son, Jesus Christ, and are “born of God” (vv. 1, 4). That is, they are those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit (the regenerated love of the Holy Spirit) and those who have received eternal life through believing that Jesus, the Son of God, is the Christ (converted love of the Holy Spirit). Look at 1 John 5:11 – “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” What does it mean? God gives eternal life to those who believe in “the testimony of God” (v. 9), that is, the testimony of His Son, Jesus Christ (v. 10). In a word, those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, have eternal life. The Apostle John said that this eternal life is in the Son of God (v. 11), which means that eternal life is in Jesus Christ. In fact, the Apostle John says in 1 John 1:1-2 that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Word of life from the beginning (v. 1) and eternal life (v. 2). And this life appeared, and the Apostle John says, since he has seen it and testify to it, he proclaims to the recipients of the letter of 1 John the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to them (v. 2). If we receive the testimony of this Apostle John, we will receive the testimony of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which is the greater testimony of God, and through the work of the Holy Spirit, who is the truth, the regenerating work and the work of conversion, there is witness in those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (5:10). The testimony is that those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, have eternal life (v. 12). This is because they have in their hearts Jesus Christ, who is eternal life (v. 12).

- (2) The second group of people who hear the testimony of God are those who do not believe in God (v. 10).

The Apostle John says in verse 10, “Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart.” And then he says “Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar” (v. 10). Here we have to consider two things:

- (a) **First, we need to think about why the Apostle John said “Anyone who believes in the Son of God” and then ‘Anyone who does not believe in God’ instead of ‘Anyone who does not believe in the Son of God’.**

The reason is because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is “God. That is why the Apostle John said this in John 1:1 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Here, “the

Word” refers to Jesus, and the Apostle John said that Jesus was God. Also, the Apostle John recorded the words of Jesus in John 10:30 – “I and the Father are one.” The meaning of the saying that Jesus is the Son of God means that Jesus and the Father God are one, and that Jesus, the Son of God, is God.

(b) Another thing we need to consider is that the Apostle John says in 1 John 5:10, “Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar.”

The modern Korean Bible translates it this way: ‘Anyone who does not believe in God has made God a liar.’ What makes God a liar? In 1 John 1:10, the Apostle John already mentioned making God a liar: “If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.” If we say that we have fellowship with God, who is Light and in whom there is no darkness at all (v. 5), and walk in the darkness, we lie (v. 6). And yet, if we don’t confess our sins (v. 9), but rather say that we are without sin, then we deceive ourselves (v. 8) and make God the liar (v. 10). The Apostle John says in 1 John 5:10, “Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar.” The reason is because “he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son” (v. 10). The Bible says that those who don’t believe in “the testimony of God” about Jesus Christ don’t have the Son of God (v. 12). And the Bible says that unbelievers who don’t have in their hearts the Son of God, who is eternal life, who is God, Jesus Christ, have no life (v. 12). It means that unbelievers, who are not “born of God” (vv. 1, 4), are not regenerated, and are dead in trespasses and sins (are spiritually dead because of disobedience and sins) (Eph. 2:1), don’t have eternal life (1 Jn. 5:12).

The Apostle John testified that Jesus is the Christ (v. 1) and the Son of God (v. 5). If we should receive the testimony of the Apostle John, will we not receive the greater (v. 9) or stronger witness? The testimony of the Father God is the testimony of his Son (v. 9), and that testimony is the testimony that Jesus, the Son of God, is the Christ. This testimony of God is the testimony of the Spirit, and the water and the blood, and they all testify that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (vv. 6-8). In other words, the testimony of God is that the Son of God is Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood, and the Holy Spirit, who is the truth, testifies this fact. The meaning of these words is that, through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, on the cross, we are saved (eternal life) by the gift of the Holy Spirit (“water”) and the washing of sins (“blood”). Hearing this testimony of God, whoever believes in the Son of God (v. 10) has the Son has life [“eternal life” (v. 13)]. But he who doesn’t believe in Jesus Christ, who is God, don’t have the Son of God (v. 12) and has made God the liar (v. 10) and don’t have eternal life (v. 12).

Believing in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, by the Holy Spirit, who is the truth, and who is working in my heart to hear and believe the testimony of God,

James Kim

(July 18, 2021, Earnestly praying that the testimony of God will become my testimony and live only for Jesus Christ and His gospel)

‘You may know that you have eternal life.’

[1 John 5:13-21]

What do you think eternal life is? In the famous Gospel of John 3:16, the Bible says: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” What does “eternal life” mean here? If we look at this verse, the Bible says that whoever believes in Jesus Christ will have eternal life.

The Bible says that sin entered the world through the disobedience of one man, Adam, and death through sin (Rom. 5:12), and the wages of sin is “death” (6:23). Here, “death” has three meanings: (1) 'Spiritual death', which is separation from God; (2) 'Physical death', where body and soul are separated; and (3) 'Eternal death', where eternal and complete separation from God. But through the obedience of one man, Jesus Christ, who is “the last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45) to the point of death on the cross (Phil. 2:8), we have been justified to enjoy eternal life (v. 18). This is what Romans 6:23 says: “... but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Here, "eternal life" means three things: (1) Eternal life means being connected to God through Jesus Christ. Just as the baby in the mother's womb has life because he is connected to the mother by the umbilical cord, eternal life is connected to God through the “eternal life” (1 Jn. 1:2; 5:20) and ‘eternal umbilical cord’ Jesus Christ. (2) Eternal life is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ. Look at John 17:3 – “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” In other words, eternal life is the fellowship of love with God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 1:3). (3) Eternal life means whether the body is changed (if we are alive until then) (1 Cor. 15:52-53) or is resurrected (if we are already dead at that time) at the Second Coming of the Lord, united with the soul and entering a new heaven and a new earth and living with God forever (2 Thess. 4:14-16; Rev. 21:1). However, when we say that we have eternal life if we believe in Jesus here, we must not think of eternal life merely as eternal life in the coming age. The reason is because eternal life is partly enjoyed by us here and now in the present in Jesus Christ.

It is in the Gospel of John where the word “eternal life” appears intensively. In the original Greek, "eternal life" means “zoe” “aionios”. It is a combination of the words "zoe" (life) and "aionios" (eternal). In other words, the word "eternal life" literally has two meanings (Internet): (1) It means, firstly, ‘a life that lasts without end’ in terms of time, and (2) qualitatively, it means ‘a divine life different from human life’. Therefore, the word eternal life includes both the meaning of eternal life in time and the qualitative meaning of a divine life enjoyed in God. In

particular, in the Gospel of John, "eternal life" means 'eternal blessings to be enjoyed in the hereafter' like the synoptic Gospels (Matthew / Mark / Luke), but rather emphasizes the blessings enjoyed in 'the present'. The Gospel of John says that those who believe in the Lord already have eternal life and can enjoy that blessing in the Lord even in the present. What are the blessings of eternal life that we enjoy in the present? There are at least three: (1) The blessings of the hereafter that come from the sharing of intimate personal fellowship with the Eternal Father God and His Son Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (Jn. 17:3). A typical example is participation in God's divine nature. Look at 2 Peter 1:4 – "Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires." In other words, the blessing of eternal life that we partly enjoy in Jesus Christ while we live on this earth is to become like Jesus in the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. (2) The blessing of eternal life that we partially enjoy now is love. When we love God and love our neighbor with the love of God that has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, we experience, at least in part, the joy of heaven. The believers who have eternal life obey Jesus. They obey Jesus' twofold commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Jn 3:36; Mt. 22:37, 39). In doing so, we, as citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20), do part of our heavenly life on earth as well. This is the life that continues to work out our salvation in the present (2:12). And this is the life that partially enjoys eternal life on this earth. (3) The blessing of eternal life that we can partially enjoy now is peace. Although we are living in a world without peace now, those who believe in Jesus are partially enjoying the peace of God, the blessing of eternal life, while living on this earth.

The words "life" or "eternal life" appears at least six times in the Book of 1 John:

- (1) (1:2) "The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.
- (2) (2:25) "And this is what he promised us--even eternal life."
- (3) (3:14) "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death."
- (4) (5:11-12) "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."
- (5) (5:13) "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."
- (6) (5:20) "We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true--even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life."

I've charted these six verses in the 'sandwich law' [Greek "chiasm"] like this:

(A) (1:2) Jesus Christ, who is eternal life

(1) (2:25) God promised eternal life to us.

(a) (3:14) We know that we have eternal life because we love our brothers.

(a') (5:11-12) God has given us eternal life. He who has the Son has eternal life.

(1') (5:13) "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

(A') (5:20) Jesus Christ is eternal life.

And I grouped the six verses of this 'sandwich law' with similar verses: (A) and (A'), (1) and (1'), (a) and (a') is tied. When I did so, I think there are three key messages that the Apostle John wants to give us through these six verses where the words "life" or "eternal life" appear. Those three key messages are: (1) The true God Jesus Christ is eternal life [(A)(1:2) & (A') (5:20)]. (2) Jesus Christ, who is eternal life, directly promised us eternal life, and he faithfully kept that promise, so that we who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, now have eternal life [(1) (2:25) & (1') (5:13)]. (3) We who already have eternal life, Jesus Christ, love our brothers [(a) (3:14) & (a') (5:11-12)]. What we pray and hope for is that we who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and eternal life, become like Jesus by the work of sanctification of the Holy Spirit, and love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind and love our neighbor as ourselves, as those who already have eternal life, so that we may all partly enjoy a heavenly life and eternal life on this earth.

Are you sure that if you believe in the Lord, you will all be saved and receive the crown of eternal life? This is what the Bible Ephesians 1:3 says: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." When we believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, we are saved and receive spiritual and eternal blessings. Then, what are the eternal spiritual blessings that we have already received through faith in Jesus Christ by the grace of God? There are at least five:

(1) The eternal spiritual blessing we have already received is that we have been reconciled (connected) to God.

We were spiritually dead separated from God, and sinners who were enemies of God, who had no choice but to die forever (Rom. 5:10, 12). At that time we were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12). But the Lord put to death our hostility in the one body to reconcile us to God through the cross (v. 16; Rom. 5:10). In other words, through the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is eternal life (1 Jn. 1:2; 5:20) on the cross, we, who were separated from God and died spiritually, and who had no choice but to die forever, are connected to God and are reconciled to God. This is the first eternal spiritual blessing

we enjoy.

(2) The eternal spiritual blessing we have already received is to have intimate and loving fellowship with our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit.

Since we, who were separated from God and cut off our relationship and fellowship with God, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross (Eph. 2:16), and became children of God (1 Jn 3:1). Thus, we have been able to have a fellowship of love with God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (1:3). This is “eternal life”. Look at John 17:3 – “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” In other words, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he sent to this earth is eternal life, and that eternal life is to love (“know”) the true God the Father and Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit, who dwells within us, enables us to enjoy intimate and loving fellowship with God the Father and with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Then, when our Lord Jesus Christ returns, we will see Him face to face. And we will come to know fully as the Lord knows us, and we will fully enjoy the perfect fellowship of love (1 Cor. 13:12). This is the second eternal spiritual blessing we enjoy and will enjoy in the future.

(3) The eternal spiritual blessing we have already received is to participate in God's divine nature through the work of sanctification of the Holy Spirit, and that is to become like Jesus.

Because of the sin of the first Adam (Gen.2:17; 3:6; Rom.5:12), we were separated from God and died spiritually. And we, who were bound to die forever, lost “the image of God” (Gen. 1:27). But because Jesus Christ, who is “the last Adam” (1 Cor.15:45) and “the image of God” (2 Cor.4:4), died on the cross, all our sins are forgiven and we are saved, are reconciled to God, and the lost image of God has been restored. The restored image of God means that we become partakers of the divine nature. Look at 2 Peter 1:4 – “Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” Here, the word that we who believe in Jesus participates in the God’s divine nature does not mean that we become God. But it means that the Holy Spirit who dwells in us sanctifies us so that we become like Jesus, the image of God. In this way, the Holy Spirit makes us become like Jesus, who is the image of God. When Jesus comes again, we will all see the glory of the Lord with our unveiled faces, and we will be transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor.3:18). And the Holy Spirit will transform our lowly bodies so that we will be like His glorious body (Phil. 3:21). This is the third eternal spiritual blessing we enjoy and will enjoy in the future.

(4) The eternal spiritual blessings we have already received are partly enjoying our heavenly life on earth so we can partly enjoy the joy of heaven by obeying the twofold commandment of

Jesus, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” and “Love your neighbor as yourself,” with the love, that is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

When we are saved by God's exclusive grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible says, “The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us” (Rom.5:5). In other words, the moment we believed in Jesus, we received divine love of God and the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit bears “love,” which is “the fruit of the Spirit” [the Greek word for “fruit” is singular and I think the other eight are included in “love” (Gal. 5:22-23), and enables us to obey the twofold command of Jesus, which is the commandment of the kingdom of heaven - “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt. 22:37, 39; Jn. 3:36). This twofold commandment of Jesus is the commandment of the kingdom of heaven, and the commandment that we must keep and obey as the people from heaven (1 Cor.15:48) and citizens of heaven (Phil.3:20). Although we are unable to love, God the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, works in us to will and to act according to his good purpose (Phil. 2:13). This is the life that works out our salvation in the present (v. 12). As we share the fellowship of love with God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, while becoming more like Jesus in the work of sanctification of the Holy Spirit, and obey Jesus’ twofold commandment by the work of the Spirit who bear the fruit of love and who enables us to love, we partly enjoy our heavenly life on this earth and partly taste the heavenly joy. Then, when our Lord Jesus comes again, we are suddenly transformed and completely conformed to the image of Jesus, put on the glorious spiritual body of Jesus, and enter the new heaven and new earth, the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-2). We will fully enjoy eternal life by being completely filled with the Holy Spirit and full of love and obeying the twofold commandment of Jesus, the heavenly commandment. This is the fourth eternal spiritual blessing we enjoy and will enjoy in the future.

(5) The eternal spiritual blessing we have already received is to enjoy the peace of God.

We have been reconciled to God through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross (Rom. 5:10), who is the “Prince of Peace” (Isa.9:6) and the “God of peace” (Rom. 15:33). Our Lord Jesus Christ made peace through His blood that He shed on the cross (Col. 1:20), so we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom.5:1). Also, we know that Jesus, who is our peace, “who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. ... and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility” (Eph. 2:14-16), so that we are also at peace with our neighbors. Even though we are living in a world without peace now, we can partly enjoy the peace of God while we live on this earth even in the midst of sorrows like sea billows roll so that by faith we can praise God “It is well with my soul; It is well, it is well with my soul” (Hymn “When Peace, Like a River,

Attendeth My Way,” refrain). Then, when our Lord Jesus comes back to earth and takes us to the heavenly kingdom where He is (Jn. 14:3), we will enjoy the peace of God fully and completely. This is the fifth eternal spiritual blessing we enjoy and will enjoy in the future.

In today's text, 1 John 5:13, the Bible says this: “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” Focusing on this verse, I want to meditate on the five assurances (John MacArthur) in 1 John 5:13-21 under the title of ‘You may know that you have eternal life’, and want to receive the lessons that he Lord gives us:

The first assurance is the assurance of salvation. In other words, it is the assurance that those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, have eternal life.

Look at 1 John 5:13 again: “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” The Apostle John, in writing the letter to 1 John, considers why he is writing this letter to his recipients for six purposes:

(1) Look at 1 John 1:4 – “We write this to make our joy complete.”

The first purpose why Apostle John wrote to the recipients of the 1 John letter was so that “our joy” might be completed also in the recipient brothers and sisters in Christ. The “our joy” spoken of by the Apostle John here is the joy we enjoy in fellowship with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (v. 3). The apostle John wrote the letter to 1 John with that purpose because he wanted the recipients to enjoy the full joy of fellowship with God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

(2) Look at 1 John 2:1a – “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin.”

The Apostle John told the recipients of the 1 John letter that the second purpose of his writing was so that they would not sin. The reason is because if we say that we are having fellowship with God, who is light, who has no darkness at all in him (1:5) and continue to walk in the darkness, then we are only liars who do not live by the truth (v. 6). It is also because if we walk in the light, just as God is in the light, we will have fellowship with one another (v. 7). In the Lord, true horizontal love fellowship between brothers and sisters in Christ presupposes vertical love fellowship with God the Father and His Son our Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. And this vertical fellowship of love presupposes that we walk in the light just as God is in the light. It means, ‘If we claim to have fellowship with God yet walk in the darkness (v. 6), then it means that we are not having a true vertical love fellowship with God the Father who is the light and His Son Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. As a result, we cannot share true horizontal love of

fellowship with our brothers and sisters in the Lord. That is why the Apostle John wrote this 1 John letter so that his “dear children” (children of faith) would not sin (2:1).

- (3) Look at 1 John 2:7-8: “Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.”

The third purpose of the Apostle John in writing this letter to the recipients of the first letter of John is to make them obey the true command of Jesus. The true command of Jesus is “to love one another” (3:23). The Apostle John wanted his recipients not to commit the sin of hating his brother (2:9), but rather to love one another according to God's command. This is because “the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining (v. 8). The reason is because they became children of God through the great love of God the Father (3:1). Therefore, the Apostle John said that if the recipients of his 1 John letter were in loving fellowship with God, the light, they would no longer live a dark life of hating their brothers (1:6) but would do the righteousness of loving their brothers (2:29; 3:10) just as God is righteous (3:7) and would live a life of light. Then the love of God will be perfected in them (2:5), and there is nothing in them to make them stumble (v. 10), because they belong to the truth (3:19) and live as those who have eternal life (v. 14). That’s why the apostle John wrote this letter of 1 John.

- (4) Look at 1 John 2:12-14: “I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”

The fourth purpose of the Apostle John in writing this letter to the recipients of the first letter of John is because their sins are forgiven on account of Jesus’ name, that they have known him who is from the beginning, and that they have overcome the evil one. Here, their sins have been forgiven on account of Jesus’ name means that even though they should not have sinned while having fellowship with God the Father, who is the light, and Jesus Christ, who is eternal life, through the Spirit “if we say that we have fellowship with God, but if they claim to have fellowship with God yet walk in the darkness (1:6), God will forgive them their sins and purify them from all unrighteousness if they confess their sins since He is faithful and just (v. 9). And if anyone commits a sin, because the righteous Jesus Christ, who became the propitiation for our sins, who pleads for us before God the Father (2:1-2), their sins are forgiven on account

of Jesus' name. The apostle John wrote this letter to the recipients in order to let them know that their sins have been forgiven. Also, the Apostle John wrote this letter to them because the recipients knew Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is the word of life from the beginning and who is eternal life (1:1-3). Since their sins were forgiven on account of Jesus' name, and were having fellowship with Him, the Apostle John wanted them to get to know Jesus Christ more and have an intimate fellowship, so he wrote this letter to them. The Apostle John also said wrote this letter so that the recipients, who have overcome the evil one with the powerful word of God lives in them (2:14), so that they continue not to love the world or anything in the world (v.15) that pass away but to do the will of God (v. 17). In particular, the Apostle John wrote this 1 John letter to the recipient because he wanted them to stand firm in the word of God and continue to fight and live a victorious life (v. 14) since "this is the last hour" and "the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come" (v. 18) and they were in the spiritual warfare with "the liar" (v. 22) and "those who are trying to lead you (them) astray" (v. 26).

(5) Look at 1 John 2:21 – "I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth."

The fifth purpose of the Apostle John in writing this letter to the recipients of the first letter of John is because they know the truth and no lie comes from the truth (v. 21). The Apostle John knew that "this is the last hour" and that "many antichrists have come" (v. 18), who were liars, who deny that Jesus is the Christ and who deny the Father and the Son Jesus Christ (v. 22). And he knew that the true Christians know that many antichrists who appeared in the last hour not only did not belong to Jesus Christ, but also did not belong to Christians (v. 19). So, the Apostle John, who knew that the recipient brothers and sisters in the Lord had already received the Holy Spirit from the Holy God, and that "this is the last hour," and that "many antichrists have come" (v. 18), wrote this letter of 1 John to them so that what they had heard from the beginning could remain in them (v. 24). What does it mean by what they have heard from the beginning here? Could it not be the Christ who is the eternal life that the Apostle John saw and proclaimed to them? (1:1-2) In a word, I think what the recipients of the 1 John letter have heard from the beginning is the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, since lying and deceiving antichrists appeared, denying that Jesus is the Christ, and denying God the Father and the Son of God Jesus Christ (2:22), the Apostle John wrote to the recipients and told them that anyone who believes in Him is a child of God (5:1) and only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God overcomes the world (v. 5). So Apostle John wrote this letter so that they would not forget that they had already heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and became the children of God by believing that Jesus, the truth (2:21), is the Christ and the Son of God (v. 24).

(6) Look at 1 John 5:13 – "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

The sixth purpose of the Apostle John in writing this letter to the recipients of the first letter of John is to make known to the recipients of the 1 John letter that they who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, already have eternal life. The Apostle John knew that the recipient brothers and sisters in the Lord had already heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and believed in the Christ who is eternal life (1:2), believed that Jesus is the Christ (5:1), and that Jesus is the Son of God. Since the Apostle John knew that they knew this truth that denying that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God is lie and it did not come from the truth (2:21), he wrote this letter to them, saying that those who have the Son of God, that is, who believe in Jesus Christ, who is eternal life (1:2; 5:20), already have eternal life that God has given them (5:11-13).

In today's text 1 John 5:13, the Apostle John explains the purpose of why he is writing this letter to the recipients. Its purpose is that "you who believe" in Jesus Christ, "the Son of God," may "know that you have eternal life" (v. 13). Interestingly, in John 20:31, written by the same author, the Apostle John, the Apostle John explains the purpose of why he wrote the Gospel of John: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." Here, the Apostle John is talking about the twofold purpose of writing the Gospel of John: (1) "you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God", and (2) "by believing you may have (eternal) life in his (Jesus') name. However, the Apostle John explains why he wrote the book of 1 John in 1 John 5:13 and the purpose is that those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, may know that they have eternal life. The purpose of the Apostle John writing the Gospel of John was to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers who still do not believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, so that they might have eternal life by believing in Jesus Christ. But when he wrote the letter of 1 John, the purpose was to give the assurance of salvation to those who have already received eternal life by believing in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (MacArthur).

I received Romans 8:28-29 under the title of 'Assurance of Salvation' through my church retired pastor Chang Kim at the Wednesday prayer meeting on February 17, 2021. Look at Romans 8:28-29: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." Here, the salvation refers to eternal life as the glory that will be revealed in us (v. 18). In other words, salvation in the text refers to the completion of future salvation. In other words, when Jesus comes again, we will be resurrected or transformed, enter the kingdom of heaven, and enjoy eternal life with the Triune God and live forever. As for what kind of people can have the assurance of salvation, 'those who love God' (v. 28) can have the assurance of salvation. Those who love God are those who have been called according to God's purpose (v. 28). In other words, those who love God are those who are called according to the will of God the Father and will surely be saved. Here, 'God's purpose' is salvation, and 'those who have been called' are those who have received 'effectual/special calling.' According to Westminster Shorter Catechism Q & A 31, this is what effectual calling is: "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to

embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.” To these people, the Bible says that “in all things God works for the good” (v. 28), which means that in our lifetime, all things (including our sins) combine to achieve salvation, which is the highest good. Therefore, I have been taught that I must have the assurance of salvation.

The Bible 1 John 5:13 says that “you who believe in the name of the Son of God (Jesus Christ) “have eternal life.” This is what the Bible 1 John 5:11-12 says: “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” God gives eternal life to those who believe in “God’s testimony,” that is, the testimony of His Son, Jesus Christ (vv. 9-11). In a word, those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, have eternal life. That is, those who believe in Jesus Christ have eternal life (v. 12). This is because they have in their hearts Jesus Christ, who is eternal life (v. 12). Have you had the eternal life of Jesus Christ in your heart? Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God? You and I, who believe in Jesus Christ, the eternal life, already have eternal life. Therefore, when we have the assurance of salvation, we must be all the more eager to make our calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10). And we must stand firm, unshaken, and always zealous for the work of the Lord. Our labor in the Lord will never be in vain (1 Cor. 15:58).

The second assurance is the assurance of answering prayer. In other words, it is the assurance that God will hear our prayers if we only ask according to God's will.

When you pray to God, are you confident that your prayers will be answered? On November 8, 2020, while meditating on the words of Psalm 55:16-17, I would like to share what I wrote under the title ‘Why am I not sure of answers to my prayers?’: Why am I not sure of answers to prayers? Why am I praying to God, but not convinced that God will hear me? Perhaps the reason is because I am being led by a situation when I am praying to God. So, when the situation seems to be getting better for me, I seem to have confidence in my prayer in the thought that God is hearing my prayer. But if the situation is getting worse in my opinion, I cannot have confidence in prayer. Maybe that's because right now I'm focusing on my expectations and praying to God. My expectation is that the suffering members enjoy freedom from that suffering. I don't want them to suffer anymore. I am praying for healing from addiction or disease. I think this expectation of prayer is reasonable and natural. But if I pray to God and things don't go as expected, how can I continue to pray to God with confidence in prayer? I will never be able to do so. I want to learn the prayer of Jesus: “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Mt. 26:39). In order for me to pray to God with the assurance of answering prayer, I need to focus on who God is and instead of focusing on circumstances or expectations. God is salvation. The meaning of the name of Jesus is 'God is salvation'. The indwelling Holy Spirit makes us look to this God of salvation with faith and pray. And God is love (1 Jn. 4:8, 16). The God of love first loved and saved sinners like me who were enemies with God, who had no choice but to die spiritually and eternally. If we know and believe in the saving love of this Holy Trinity God, we have no choice but to have the assurance of answers our prayers when we pray in the name of the Son Jesus, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit who intercedes for us according to

God's will (Rom. 8:27).

In today's text, 1 John 5:14-15, the Bible says this: "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him." The Apostle John says, 'I have the confidence that God hears our prayers. This is not the assurance of answers prayer that only the Apostle John or the recipients of the letter of 1 John can have. You and I, who have received eternal life by believing in Jesus Christ, can also have the assurance of answering our prayers. The secret is if we only ask according to his will (v. 14). In other words, the secret to having the assurance that our prayers will be answered is that we ask according to God's will. But I think there are at least three problems:

(1) The first problem is that most of us pray to God without knowing what God's will is.

How much do we actually know God's will? In fact, we do not even know the will of God, which is spoken of in the 66 books of the Bible. For example, in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, the Bible says what God's will is: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." However, when we pray to God, how many times have we prayed to God, saying, 'God, please make me always rejoice, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in everything according to God's will? Another example is in 1 Thessalonians 4:3, the Bible says, "It is God's will that you should be sanctified." When we pray to God, how many times have we asked God to sanctify me according to His will? Another example is in John 6:40, where the Bible says, "For the will of my Father is that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him has eternal life" But how many times have we prayed to God for receiving eternal life by believing in Jesus according to our Heavenly Father's will? As we do not know the will of God in the Bible, if we look at the contents of our prayers, I think that it is a big problem that we are not praying according to God's will.

(2) The second problem is that we seek our own will rather than God's will.

Looking at the contents of our prayers, most of us have been asking God for our own will to be done instead God's will be done. The reason is because we do not know what God's will is. How can we pray according to God's will when we do not know His will? Therefore, we have no choice but to pray to God according to our will.

(3) The third problem is that we often pray to God according to our will even though we know God's will.

To that extent, we pray not to submit to God's will, but to carry out our will to God. So we must imitate

(learn) the prayer of Jesus who asked Heavenly Father on the Mount of Olives: “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done” (Lk. 22:42).

This is the lyric 3 of the hymn “My Jesus, as Thou Wilt”: “My Jesus, as Thou wilt! All shall be well for me; Each changing future scene I gladly trust with Thee. Straight to my home above I travel calmly on; And sing, in life or death, My Lord, Thy will be done. The person who wrote this hymn is Pastor Benjamin Schmolck (1672-1737). More than 100 years have passed since Martin Luther’s Reformation swept across Europe and Germany, and the Lutheran Church is on the verge of decline. Pastor Benjamin Schmolck, who is also a descendant of the Reformer, was the last pastor of a small church touring a wide area serving the members. However, it was not enough for the couple to tour a large area, and as time passed, they went to visit more distant places. That winter of 1704, the year that Rev. Benjamin Schmolck was 32 years old. Leaving their two sons behind, the Schmolcks and his wife went to a distant visitation. For some reason, they felt uncomfortable, but they had to go because they had been putting off a visit for a long time. The next day, when they returned home from a distant visit, the house they lived in was burned down and they could not find any traces of it. The problem wasn't the house, it was the two sons sleeping in it. The Schmolcks frantically began digging through the ashes like howling beasts, and their two sleeping sons were burned to death, hugging each other. ‘Ah Ah! How could such a thing ... How could the two beloved sons burn to death after returning from God's work? ...’ The Schmolcks wept bitterly for a long time. Schmolck, exhausted during his suffering, remembered the figure of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, who died for him at that moment, sweating blood and praying (Internet). So the lyrics written by Pastor Benjamin Schmolck are the hymns “My Jesus, as Thou wilt”: (1) My Jesus, as Thou wilt! O may Thy will be mine; Into Thy hand of love I would my all resign. Through sorrow, or thro' joy, Conduct me as Thine own; And help me still to say, My Lord, Thy will be done. (2) My Jesus, as Thou wilt! Though seen through many a tear, Let not my star of hope Grow dim or disappear. Since Thou on earth hast wept, And sorrowed oft alone, If I must weep with Thee, My Lord, Thy will be done. (3) My Jesus, as Thou wilt! All shall be well for me; Each changing future scene I gladly trust with Thee. Straight to my home above I travel calmly on; And sing, in life or death, My Lord, Thy will be done. Amen.

The Apostle John already mentioned prayer in 1 John 3:21-22 in addition to 1 John 5:14-15: “Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him” (3:21-22). The Apostle John said in 1 John 3:21-22 that the secret to receiving answers to prayers from God is that we keep God’s commandments and do what is pleasing in His sight. Then, what pleases God? It is obedience to God's commandment, which is to believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and to love one another, as he commanded us (v. 23). In other words, our faith must be a living faith, and it must be a faith that loves one another according to the commandment of Jesus. And when we love one another as Jesus commanded, “we must not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth” (v. 18). Then we can know that we belong to the truth, and set out hearts at rest in God’s presence (v. 19). In doing so, our hearts do not condemn us and we have confidence before God (v. 21). This is the love where there is nothing in us to make us stumble

(2:10). After this word, the Apostle John came to 1 John 5:14 in today's text and said, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." The Korean modern Bible is translated as 'If we ask anything according to God's will, we have the conviction that God will hear our prayers.' It is said that the assurance of answering God's prayers is "if we ask anything according to his will" (v. 14). But in 1 John 3:22, we are also taught that we should live according to God's will and pray to Him. In other words, the secret of receiving the God's answer to our prayer is to live according to God's will and seek only God's will.

But the problem is that we do not know the will of God very well. That is why I believe that the words of Romans 8:26-27, 34 that I received grace while preparing the time to recite Romans 8 to commemorate the 41st anniversary of the establishment of Victory Presbyterian Church are the solution to that problem. Look at Romans 8:26-27, 34: "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. ... Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." The comfort and strength we receive from these words is the fact that the Holy Spirit also helps us in our weakness (v. 26). Our weakness here is that "We do not know what we ought to pray for" (v. 26). Why do we not know what we ought to pray for? The reason is because we do not know what the will of God is. That is why we cannot ask only according to the will of God as 1 John 5:14 says. This is "our weakness" (Rom. 8:26). But, Romans 8:26 says, "The Spirit also helps us in our weakness." How does the Holy Spirit help us in our weakness? The Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will (v. 26). The Holy Spirit himself intercedes for us according to the will of God (v. 27). Interestingly, the Bible says "In the same way, the Spirit," because Romans 8:34 says that Christ Jesus, who is at the right hand of God, also interceding for us. On the Mount of Olives, Jesus said, "Father, if it is your will, take this cup from me. But, not my will, but your will" (Lk. 22:42). It is Jesus who seeks and obeys the Father's will. When that Jesus makes intercession for us at the right hand of God, won't He pray only according to the will of God the Father? That is, God the Son, Jesus Christ, intercedes for us according to the will of God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit also intercedes for us "according to the will of God" to God the Father. Will Heavenly Father turn away from the prayers of the Son Jesus and God the Holy Spirit? Heavenly Father hears the prayers that Jesus the Son and God the Holy Spirit pray for us only according to the will of God. That is why the Apostle John is saying this in 1 John 5:15 in today's text: "And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him." Because Jesus the Son and God the Holy Spirit are interceding for us only according to the will of God, we can know that God hears our prayers (v. 15) if we ask anything according to God's will (v. 14). This is the assurance of answering prayers we should have.

The Apostle John clearly shows an illustration of praying according to the will of God in 1 John 5:16-17: "If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death." In this example, the Apostle John

exhorts that if anyone sees his brother committing a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray to God ('ask God for forgiveness'). Here, what is the sin that does not lead to death? (vv. 16, 17) I believe that one of the sins that does not lead to death is the sin of not loving one's brother. My thought is based on 1 John 3:14 – "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death." In other words, one of the sins that does not lead to death is to 'hate his brother.' Look at 1 John 3:15 – "Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him." When we see a brother who continues to commit this sin of hating his brother, the Bible tells us to ask God for forgiveness (5:16). Then God will give him life to him whose sin does not lead to death (v. 16). This is prayer that we should ask God according to His will and that we could have assurance that God hears our prayer (v. 14). This is because Jesus prayed on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk. 23:34). In Acts chapter 7, when those who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears (v. 51) stoned Stephen, Stephen fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." "When he had said this, he fell asleep" (v. 60).

But in today's text, 1 John 5:16, the Apostle John says, "There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that." What does that mean? What is the sin that leads to death that the Apostle John said not to pray about? I think that the sin that leads to death refers to denying that Jesus is the Christ and denying the Father and the Son (2:22), which is lie (v. 21) by the liar (v. 22), the antichrist and many antichrists (v. 18) and those who are trying to lead us astray (v. 26). Perhaps among the recipients of this letter of 1 John from the Apostle John, there were those in the community who, deceived by the lies of the false teachers, deny that Jesus is the Christ and deny God the Father and the Son of God Jesus Christ (KJV Bible Commentary). These people 'went out from us, but they did not really belong to us" (v. 19) and I think they refer to unbelievers who were influenced by the antichrists who followed the antichrist in this last hour (v. 18). Because they reject the truth of God, death in unbelief eventually leads to sin that leads to death, I think the Apostle John said, I am not saying that he should pray about that" (5:16).

Among the five assurances I learned during my disciple training in college, I still remember the Bible verse for assurance of answering prayer. That Bible verse is John 16:24 – "Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." After learning this word, I remember that I was in charge of the early Morning Prayer meeting at the Christian club I served as a staff. We had a prayer meeting in a rented classroom at 7 am. At that time, I was probably in my 4th or 5th year of university, and the juniors who attended were first and second year members. Then, after graduating from college, I went to seminary. But for the first two years, I did not attend the early Morning Prayer meeting held by the Korean student club. My excuse was that I was too busy studying. Then, as I became the president of the Korean student club in my 3rd year, I started to attend the early Morning Prayer meeting to set an example. I think I finished the seminary to the end thanks to the grace God gave through the early Morning Prayer meeting. Then, after graduating from that seminary, when I moved to my church in the Beverly building, I slept in the room on the second floor and did not attend the Morning Prayer meeting led by the senior pastor in the main sanctuary on the third floor, even though I was an evangelist. So

my prayer life was a mess. I had no sincerity and reluctantly participated in the early Morning Prayer meeting, but God gave me grace. Then, about 18 years ago, the Lord gave me the word of promise, Matthew 16:18, and made me come back to the Victory Presbyterian Church in the United States from Korea. And as the senior pastor, I was able to enjoy a lot of God's grace while leading the Morning Prayer meeting. In the meantime, I think the indwelling Holy Spirit provided me with no choice but to hold on to the Lord's promises while I have been pastoring. The reason is that, while gradually realizing and acknowledging that I cannot build the Victory Presbyterian Church, the Lord has been giving me assurance that only the Lord can build His church according to His promise of Matthew 16:18. In the meantime, the Holy Spirit started to make me realize a little bit that the basis for the assurance of answering prayers is not in myself, but in the fact that the Son Jesus Christ is interceding for me at the right hand of God (Rom. 8:34), and that the Holy Spirit himself interceding for me with groans that words cannot express accordance with God's will (vv. 26-27). My responsibility is to pray, with faith in these words of Romans 8:26-27, 34, according to the will of God according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In particular, I should pray like Jesus on the Mount of Olives, saying, 'Do not let my will be done, but Your will be done' (Lk. 22:42). Then, I can have confidence that if I ask anything according to God's will, He hears my prayer (1 Jn. 5:14).

The third assurance is the assurance of victory. In other words, it is the victorious assurance that we are victorious in our fight against sin and Satan.

Look at 1 John 5:18 – “We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.” Among the 5 Assurances to learn in the foundation of discipleship is “Assurance of Victory.” The Bible verse for the assurance of that victory is 1 Corinthians 10:13 – “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” The ‘temptation’ here does not refer to God’s test in Genesis 22, when God told Abraham, “Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on the mountain I have told you about” (Gen. 22:2). ‘Temptation’ here refers to Satan’s temptation. Personally, while reading the Word of God, I became interested in “The temptations of Satan” and wrote several brief meditations. For example, in “The temptation of Satan (1)” I wrote about Jesus being tempted by Satan in three ways before He began His work as the Redeemer (Lk. 4:1-13). What is interesting is that when Jesus was crucified to complete His work, Satan tempted Jesus to ‘save Himself’ three more times: (a) (Lk. 23:35) “The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, ‘He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.’” (b) (vv. 36-37) “The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, ‘If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.’” (c) (v. 39) “One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: ‘Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!’” The purpose of this satanic temptation was so that Jesus, as the Redeemer, would take our sins and die on the cross. In this way, there was Satan's temptation at the beginning and at the end of Jesus' ministry. “Satan’s temptation (2)”, the temptation that Satan gives us is the cross without suffering, the gospel without the cross, and the church of Christ without the gospel. “Satan’s Temptation (3)” is a

brief meditation on three things based on Acts 21. The three temptations of Satan are (1) a commotion (v. 30), (2) a rumor (v. 31) and (3) violence (v. 35). Satan still stirs up the church by causing commotion in the church, and by creating a commotion in unfounded speculation (a commotion). Not only that, Satan still spreads malicious rumors within the church (rumor). And Satan still tempts people in the church to use their words and deeds to assault them (violence). In addition to these 3 meditations on “Satan’s Temptation,” I wrote 9 meditations under the title “Satan’s Strategies” while reading the Bible. Pastor John MacArthur said: ‘The main strategy of Satan is to spread as many lies as possible to deny, pollute and confuse the truth’ (MacArthur). Now, our thoughts are heavily polluted with lies, which are unevangelical and untruth. We are unable to distinguish between truth and lies under the trend of mutual respect. Now we are confused and we are living a syncretistic faith life. The reason I wrote about “Satan’s strategy” while reading the Bible like this is because we need to know Satan’s strategy through God’s Word so that we can respond and win the spiritual battle against Satan. We must have “the assurance of victory” in this spiritual battle. That is why 1 Corinthians 10:13, the Bible verse for the assurance of victory, is important. There are three things we need to be sure of in this passage: (1) It is perfectly normal for us who believe in Jesus to be tempted by Satan [(v. 13a) “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man”]. (2) God is faithful and will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear [(v. 13b) “And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear”]. (3) A faithful God provides a way out so that we can stand up under it [(v. 13c) “But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it”].

In today's text, 1 John 5:18, the Apostle John says: “We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.” Here, the one who is born of God that the Apostle John refers to refers to one who has been born again or regenerated from God, as we have already learned in 1 John 5:1, 5. The Bible 1 John 5:1 says, “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” In other words, it means that those who believe that Jesus is the Christ are born again/regenerated by God. And in 1 John 5:4-5, the Apostle John said, “for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” The modern Korean Bible translates ‘those who are born of God’ as ‘children of God.’ In other words, the modern Korean Bible translates 1 John 5:5-6 as follows: ‘For any child of God can overcome the world. It is our faith that overcomes the world. Who can overcome the world except those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God?’ This is what 1 John 3:1 says: “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” Considering these words together, ‘those who are born of God,’ that is, those who are born again (regenerate) and become children of God by believing that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God, have victory through faith in Jesus. The Apostle John said in 1 John 5:18 in today's text, “We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin.” The modern Korean Bible is translated as ‘We know that the children of God do not continue to sin.’ This is what the Apostle John already said in 1 John 3:9 – “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.” The point of the Apostle John in these two verses is that the children of God who are born of God, that is, those who are born again (regenerated) of God, do not continue to sin. The reason is because God’s seed remain in the children

of God (3:9). What is God's seed here? Look at 1 Peter 1:23-25: "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, 'All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.' And this is the word that was preached to you." Looking at these words, "God's seed" (1 Jn. 3:9) is God's "imperishable seed" (1 Pet. 1:23), which is "the living and enduring word of God" (v. 23), that is, the gospel of God. And this gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16). Considering these words collectively, I think that the seed of God mentioned in 1 John 3:9 is the gospel of living and enduring word of God and is the power of God to save God's children. Because the saving power of God dwells in God's children, they do not continue to sin (v. 9).

But in reality, we continue to sin even though we are children of God who have been born again by God. Why? Look at 1 John 3:2-3: "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure." I have already thought of this verse in three ways:

- (1) The implication of these words is that when Jesus appears (when he comes back to this world), we will not only be like Jesus, we will be sinless people who do not even know what sin is.

This is the future hope we have in the Lord (v. 3). When the last trumpet sounds, we will all be changed (1 Cor. 15:51). The Lord will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body (Phil. 3:21). That glorious body is a glorious body that does not sin and knows no sin like Jesus did.

- (2) We believers who believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus are already buried with Him through baptism into death (Rom. 6:4), we already died to sin (v. 2).

This has already happened in the past. Since we died with Christ in His death (v. 5), we are already dead to sin (v. 2). More specifically, our old self was crucified with Jesus so that the body of sin is put to death, that we are no longer enslaved to sin (v. 6). This is what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 6:7: "because anyone who has died has been freed from sin."

- (3) Although we are already dead to sin because we were buried with Jesus in union with His death in the past (6:4-5), when Jesus comes into this world, how should we live in the Lord now until we will be changed and become sinless people like Jesus (1 Cor. 15:51, Phil 3:21, 1 Jn. 3:2).

In other words, it is the question of how we should live in the present, living between this future hope we

have and the fact that we were already buried with Jesus' death on the cross in the past.

I think this question is very important. In Pauline theological terms, this is a question of how the people of God should live in the church age, which is between “already” (past) and “not yet” (future). Misunderstanding this question, many of us Christians believe that we who believe in Jesus and who have already been saved, do not lose our salvation and thus we are not afraid of disobeying God’s word and sin against God but sin boldly. Look at Philippians 2:12 – “Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” Here, “work out your salvation” does not mean that we must be saved by works (good works) (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 8:22-24). Salvation is the past, present, and future tense: (1) The past of salvation is that by the grace of God we have already been saved if we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (1 Jn. 5:12-13). (2) The future of salvation is that we will be saved on the day Jesus returns (Acts 16:31, Rom. 10:9). (3) The present of salvation is “work out your salvation” (Phil. 2:12). Then, what is the meaning of the words to work out our salvation in the present between the salvation of the past and the salvation of the future? Salvation here means eternal life. In other words, Paul said to the Philippian church members, ‘Work out your eternal life’ (you should live for those who have eternal life). And for those who have eternal life (the heavenly people, to live in the answer is to obey the twofold commandment of Jesus, the two commandment of the kingdom of heaven, to love God and love our neighbor (Mt. 22:37-39). This is what God does in us (Phil. 2:13). He gives the believer the will to do good, and also the strength to do it. The Holy Spirit produces in us love, the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), so that we can love God and also love our neighbor.

We, who are already dead to sin by being buried with Jesus in union with Jesus' death in the past (Rom. 6:4-5) and will be changed and become sinless like Jesus when Jesus comes back into this world (1 Cor. 15:51; Phil. 3:21; 1 Jn. 3:2), how should we live in the Lord now? As 1 John 2:29 says, we must live by doing righteousness. Until then (1 Corinthians 15:51, Philippians 3:21, 1 John 3:2) how to live in the Lord now, as 1 John 2:29, which we have already meditated on, says, we must live by doing what is right. That is, the Apostle Paul said, “Work out your salvation” in Philippians 2:12, but the Apostle John said in 1 John 2:29 that you should do what is right. Look at 1 John 2:29 – “If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.” Here, “everyone who does what is right has been born of him” means those who have been born again who believe in Jesus and are righteous as God is righteous (Rom. 4:25). Therefore, the righteous should always do what is right as the indwelling Holy Spirit teaches them. This is what it means to live in the Lord. So what does it mean to do righteousness? As we are already dead to sin and are living in this church age until we become sinless people like Jesus in the future, we must first seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness of God (Mt. 6:33). We must seek the Kingdom of God and its King, the righteous Jesus. That is, we must walk as the righteous Jesus did (1 Jn. 2:1, 6). It is living in obedience to the twofold commandment of Jesus (vv. 7-11). This is what the Bible Matthew 22:37-40 says regarding the twofold commandment of Jesus: “Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” To do

righteousness first is to love the Lord God with all our heart, soul, and mind, according to the first of Jesus' twofold commandment. If we say this commandment from the perspective of 1 John, we obey 1 John 2:15-17: "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever." Doing God's will here means not living according to the passing world or the things of this world, "the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does" (v. 16). In other words, when we purify ourselves as Jesus was pure (3:3), we are doing righteousness. And doing righteousness means, first of all, that we do not live according to the passing world or the things of this world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of our eyes, and the boasting of what we have and do, but we do the will of God (2:15-17). Then doing righteousness is to love our neighbor as ourselves, according to the second of Jesus' twofold commandment. If we say this commandment from the perspective of 1 John, it is obeying the words of 1 John 2:3-11, which is to love our brothers and not hate them. Thus, in obedience to Jesus' commandment, to love our brothers, God's love is truly made complete in us (v. 5). And we live in the light, and there is no nothing in us to make us stumble (v. 10).

As we are born of God, that is, God's regenerated children, we must fight sin and Satan so that we do not continue to sin. In this spiritual battle, we must lead a life of combative faith with the assurance of victory that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has already won the battle against sin and Satan on the cross. In particular, we must fight the spiritual battle by having the hope of faith that when Jesus appears (when He comes back to this world), the future hope we have for the Lord, we will be like Jesus, without sin and without a knowledge of sin. In this spiritual battle, we must fight sin and Satan by holding on to the words of 1 John 5:18 with faith: "... the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him." Here, "the evil one" refers to Satan (MacArthur). And the Apostle John says that Satan, "the evil one," cannot touch (injure) the children of God who are born of God. The reason is that our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, who is begotten of God (Mt. 1:18, 20) and appeared to the world (1 Jn. 1:2), is the Son of God (5:5) and because Jesus Christ (v. 1) keeps the children of God (v. 18). Look at Psalms 121:3-8: "He will not let your foot slip-- he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD watches over you-- the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm-- he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."

The fourth assurance is the assurance that we belong to God. In other words, it is the assurance that those who are born of God, that is, those who are born again (regenerated) belong to God and not to this world ruled by Satan.

Look at 1 John 5:19 – "We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." The Apostle John says there are only two kinds of people in this world: (1) children of God, or (2) children of Satan (MacArthur). Look at 1 John 3:10 – "This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children

of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.” The Apostle John says that it is possible to distinguish clearly between the children of God and the children of the devil (v. 10). The way to distinguish it is that “Anyone who does not do what is right” is not of God (“not a child of God”) (v. 10). The one who does not do what is right that the Apostle John is referring to here refers to the one who does not love his brother (v. 10). In other words, the children of Satan (the devil) do not do what is right and do not love their brothers. But God’s children are said to be those who do what is right (v. 7), loving their brother (v. 10). Look at 1 John 3:7 – “Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.” The Apostle John says that those who do what is right are righteous just as Jesus is righteous (v. 7). He already mentioned “Jesus Christ, the Righteous One” in 1 John 2:1, and in 2:6, “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.” In other words, he who does what is right (3:7) also does what is right (v. 6) just as “Jesus Christ, the Righteous One” did (2:1). If we take these verses together and meditate on 1 John 5:19, the conclusion is that those who are of God do the same things that Jesus did.

Look at 1 John 5:19 – “We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.” What does the Apostle John mean when he says “we are of God” here? The literal translation of the original Greek word for “we are of God” here is ‘We are from God’. However, it is interesting to note that the literal translation of the Greek word for “born of God” in 1 John 5:1, 4 is “He is born of God”. In other words, in 1 John 5:19, “we are of God,” and in 5:1, 4, ‘we who are born of God’ are both ‘we are from God.’ It means “we are of God” (v. 19), which means ‘we are born of God’ (v. 1, 4). And as we are born of God, we not only believe that Jesus is the Christ (v.1) and the Son of God (v. 5), which is the Apostle John’s testimony (v. 9), but also believe the testimony of God that the Son of God (vv. 9, 10) is Jesus Christ. And in those who are born of God who believe in the Son of God (v. 10), there is eternal life (vv. 11, 12). The reason why the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:19, “And” in “And we know that we are of God” is because he already said in verse 18 that “We know that no one who is born of God sins” So, at the beginning of verse 19, he said, “We know that ...,” and in verse 20, he said, “And we know” In addition to this, looking at 1 John chapter 5, the Apostle John said in verse 2, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments,” and in verse 15, “And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.” In this way, the Apostle John said the word ‘we know’ 6 times in 1 John 5 alone, which means ‘know for sure’ and ‘enjoy knowing the truth continually’ (KJV Bible Commentary).

As I was meditating on these verses, I was curious to find out where the word ‘we know’ appears again from chapter 1 through 4. It seems to come up about 10 times:

- (1) (2:3) “We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.”
- (2) (2:5) “But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him:”
- (3) (2:18) “Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even

now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.”

- (4) (3:2) “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”
- (5) (3:14) “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.”
- (6) (3:16) “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”
- (7) (3:19) “This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence.”
- (8) (4:6) “We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.”
- (9) (4:13) “We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.”
- (10) (4:16) “And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.”

I focus on the 10 words 'we know' in 1 John chapters 1-4 and the 6 words in 1 John chapter 5, a total of 16 words. It made me think about how the Apostle Paul and the recipients of the 1 John letter knew for sure that they are from God. In doing so, I was able to draw 14 conclusions. Those who are from God ...

- (1) Are those who know Jesus, the proof that they know Jesus is that they keep His commands (2:3).
- (2) Are those who are in Jesus (the Lord), and those who are in Jesus, keep the words of Jesus, so that God's love is truly made complete in him (v. 5).
- (3) Are those who know that “this is the last hour” and have heard that “the antichrist is coming” and know that “even now there are many antichrists” (v. 18).
- (4) Know that they will be like Jesus, when He appears (when He returns). The reason is because they will see Jesus as He is (3:2).
- (5) Know that they have passed from death into life (eternal life) because they love their brothers (v. 14).
- (6) Know love because Jesus laid down His life for them (v. 16).
- (7) Know that they belong to the truth by loving in deed and truth (vv. 18-19).
- (8) Are those who know the Spirit of truth (the Holy Spirit) and the spirit of falsehood and those who know God will “listen to us,” and those who are not from God “does not listen to us” (4:6).
- (9) Know that they abide in Jesus, and that Jesus abides in them by giving the Holy Spirit to them (v. 13).
- (10) Know and believe in God's love for them (v. 16).
- (11) Are those who love God and keep His commandments, love His children (5:2).
- (12) Know that the Lord hears them whatever they ask (v. 15).
- (13) Know that those who are born of God (those who have been regenerated), do not continue to sin (v. 18).

(14) Know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has come and has given them understanding (v. 20), and know Jesus who is true and that they are in the Jesus, who is the true God and eternal life (v. 20).

Then, out of these 14 conclusions, I summarized in three ways how we can know for sure that we are from God, focusing on the remaining 13, except for verse 20, which we will meditate on next:

(1) If we are of God, we know and believe the love that God has for us (4:16).

More specifically, if we are of God, we know love that Jesus Christ laid down His life for us (3:16). And we know that we live in Him and He in us because God the Father and Jesus the Son gave us the Holy Spirit (4:13). Therefore, we who are of God know that God hears our prayers when we pray to our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus (5:15).

(2) If we are of God, we know Jesus and obey His commands (2:3, 5).

The command of Jesus here is to love our brothers (3:14; 5:2). If we are of God, we love our brother in deed and truth (3:19). Never have we continued to commit the sin of hating our brother (5:18). Therefore, not only do we know that we ourselves have passed from death to life (eternal life) (v. 14), but we also know that we are of the truth (v. 19).

(3) If we are of God, we know that when Jesus returns, we will be like Him (3:2).

The reason is because we know that we will see Jesus as He is (v. 2). That is why we who are of God know that this is the last hour (2:18). And since we know the Spirit of truth and the Spirit of falsehood, we listen to the servants of God and never listen to those who deceive us with lies (4:6). That is, we hear the true gospel of Jesus Christ [“the eternal gospel” (Rev. 14:6)], and not hear “another” gospel (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Cor. 11:4) or false gospel that deny that Jesus is the Christ (2:22), and deny God the Father and the Son of God Jesus Christ (v. 22).

The Apostle John in 1 John 5:19 makes this also clear that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” [(Modern Korean Bible) ‘The whole world is under the control of the devil’]. What does this mean? This wicked and evil world is under the dominion of the evil one, the Devil (Satan). Although we now live in this Age under the control of Satan, we who are of God set apart from the world in this world live like those who belong to heaven (1 Cor. 15:40, 48, 49) [like heavenly citizens (Phil 3:20)] as we hope in heaven, The Coming Age (cf. 3:10). Then, what does it mean to live like heavenly citizens?

I share what I wrote on September 29, 2014, under the heading ‘The Life of Heavenly Citizens’: Our

Christian citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). Therefore, we must fulfill our responsibilities as heavenly citizens (1:27). Our responsibility as heavenly citizens is to obey the heavenly laws. The heavenly law is the twofold commandment of Jesus: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ (Lk. 10:27). When we obey this commandment, we assume our responsibilities as citizens of heaven. Especially when we obey this commandment in our homes, the Lord will make our homes into heaven. And when our family is going to become a heavenly kingdom, the Lord will use our family as a community of witnesses to testify of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. A family living worthy of the gospel of Christ bears witness to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as a family.’ This is the life in which the eternal life to be fully enjoyed in the world to come (heaven) is partially enjoyed in this world. When we love one another with the love of the Triune God, the joy of the Lord will be in us and our joy will be full (Jn. 15:9-12). As we reflect the Lord's love, our hearts will be filled with joy. This is what it means to live in the kingdom of heaven, which is the coming age from this age.

We must live the life Jesus said, “You are wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Mt. 10:16) in this world under the dominion of Satan (the devil) who is the “evil one” (1 Jn. 5:19). How can we live like this? From the perspective of 1 John, we must live a victorious life of fighting (waging a spiritual battle) against Satan, the “evil one”! The basis for my thinking is 1 John 2:13, 14 and 4:4: (2:13) “... I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one ...,” (2:14) “... I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one,” (4:4) “You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” The secret of victory in this spiritual battle is our faith (5:4) that we believe that the Lord who is in us, who belongs to God, is more powerful than the devil who is in the world (4:4) and that the powerful Word of God dwells in us (2:14). There are two specific applications of this truth:

(1) We must commit ourselves to getting to know the Lord in us who are of God.

Look at 1 John 2:13a – “I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning.” Who is the “from the beginning” of which the Apostle John is speaking here? In 1 John 1:1, the Apostle John said that Jesus Christ was the word of life from the beginning and this life was made manifested (v. 2). This Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins (2:2). In other words, Jesus Christ died on the cross as the sacrifice of the Passover lamb for our sins, thereby satisfying God's holy requirement to punish our sins. Also, Jesus Christ is the righteous Advocate who defends us before the Father (v. 1). When we stand before God's court and Satan prosecutes us to our holy and righteous Heavenly Father, who is our Judge, Jesus, who has become the defense attorney, defends us before God.

Look at 1 John 2:14a – “I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning” We must strive not only to get to know Jesus Christ, but also to get to know the Father, the

Father of Jesus Christ. The Apostle John speaks about the Father in two ways in 1 John: (1) In 1 John 1:5, the Bible says, "God is light." The Apostle John says that God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all (v. 5). (2) In 1 John 4:8, 16, the Bible says that God is love. And the Bible says that God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to this world as the propitiation for our sins (4:9-10). We must overcome by believing in the truth that the Lord who dwells in us who are of God is more powerful than the devil who is in the world (4:4).

(2) We must win the spiritual battle with the powerful Word of God who dwells within us.

Look at 1 John 2:14 – "... I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one." According to this verse, the secret that we, children of God, can fight and overcome the temptations of the devil is because we are strong and the Word of God dwells in us. The word 'we are strong' here means that we are strong because the powerful Word of God abides in us. And the fact that the word of God abides in us is proof that our faith in Him is so strong and firm. So the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:4: "for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith."

We belong to God. The children of God who have been born again (regenerated) by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we belong to God. We must be firmly aware of this fact. We must be convinced that we belong to God. Even though we are living in this world ruled by Satan (the devil), we who belong to God must live in obedience to the twofold commandment of Jesus as citizens of the heavenly world that is approaching. Even though Satan tries to deceive us and make us hate our brothers and sisters, we who have already received eternal life must love God together and live a life of loving each other. In this spiritual battle, we must grow in the knowledge of the Lord who dwells in us and of the Father, and must stand firm in the powerful Word of God which dwells in us, and live a life of victory over Satan's temptations with faith. Therefore, even though we live in an evil world ruled by this devil, I hope and pray that we who belong to God will be well prepared for the Second Coming of Jesus and life in the kingdom of heaven by loving our neighbors, brothers and sisters in the Lord, with the love of God who loves us.

The fifth and final assurance is the assurance that Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life.

Who do you think Jesus is? In Matthew 16:13, there is a scene where Jesus came to the region of Caesarea and asked his disciples, "Who do people say I am?" Then the disciples of Jesus answered: "'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets'" (v. 14). Hearing that answer, Jesus asked his disciples, "Then who do you think I am?" (v. 15) Then Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16). Then Jesus said: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to

you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (vv. 17-18). I received the Lord's promise, “on this rock I will build my church,” the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:18 and the Lord brought me back to Victory Presbyterian Church. And He has enabled me to hold on to His promise word and to carry out the ministry. That is why, to me, the word of Matthew 16:18 are very important, precious, and dependable. Even now, centering on this word, I am praying to God, ‘Lord, you have promised to build your church, Victory Presbyterian Church, so please build your church according to your will.’ In that prayer, I pray that all of us, like the Apostle Peter, will become disciples of Jesus who make a true confession of faith who Jesus is through revelation from God. And I pray that we all become disciples of Jesus who live according to our profession of faith. Therefore, I pray that the Lord will build us all “on this rock” so that we can become a strong church that is firm and that will not be shaken. And I pray that the Lord will build our church as a church where the powers of Hades cannot overcome as a church that triumphs over myself, the world, sin, Satan, and death.

Look at 1 John 5:20 – “We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true--even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.” Here the Apostle John speaks of the fifth and final assurance. That assurance is the assurance that Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life. According to Pastor John MacArthur, the truth of this fifth assurance is the summation of the entire book of 1 John of the Apostle John (MacArthur). That's why this fifth final assurance is so important. In this passage we must remember three important points:

(1) The point is that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding.

Look at 1 John 5:20 again: “We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding” Already the Apostle John said in 1 John 1:2, “the life was made manifested” and in 1 John 5:20 he said, “the Son of God has come.” This verb is present tense, meaning that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is here (“HE IS HERE”) (Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments Commentary). How should we interpret this meaning? I found the answer in the second half of verse 20 that Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life. That is, the presence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, means that since the children of God who are born again (regenerated) through faith in Jesus Christ, already have eternal life (v. 13), Jesus Christ, the eternal life, is with us. The Apostle John says in 1 John 5:20 that this Son of God, Jesus Christ, has come and has given us “understanding”. This word “understanding” is used by the Apostle John only here in 1 John 5:20, and the Greek word is a combination of two words, meaning “through” + “mind”. To better understand this meaning, I think Exodus 36:1 is helpful: “Now Bezalel and Oholiab, and every skillful person in whom the LORD has put skill and understanding to know how to perform all the work in the construction of the sanctuary, shall perform in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded.” That is, the understanding that Jesus Christ has given us by coming means that we have become wise men because the Lord has given skill and understanding. In Matthew 16:17, when

Jesus heard the Apostle Peter's confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," he said to Peter that his Father who is in heaven revealed to the Apostle Peter. Combining these two Bible verses, when I think of the word "understanding" in 1 John 5:20, I think it means that God, Jesus Christ, reveals to us and gives us wisdom so that we can understand.

(2) The purpose of the coming of the Son of God to give us understanding is that we may come to know God who is the true, and also to realize the truth that we are in Jesus Christ.

Look at 1 John 5:20 again: "We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true--even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life." As the Apostle John said in 1 John 2:18 when he was writing the letter of 1 John, he knew that "it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour." An interesting contrast is that this Age is now under the dominion of the evil one, Satan (the Devil) (5:19) and many antichrists have already appeared (2:18) and have deceived many with lies (vv. 22, 26) by not only denying that Jesus is the Christ, but also denying God the Father and the Son (v. 22). In this situation of making us to deny both the Father and the Son Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Lord of the Coming Age, has come to give us understanding so that we may come to know God who is true (5:20) [(Jn. 17:3) "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent"]. In particular, when the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:21, "Dear children, keep yourselves away from idols," he is making contrast between "true" God (v. 20) with "idols" (v. 21). Now the Apostle John is admonishing us to keep ourselves away from idols because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has come and has given us understanding, so that we may not only know the true God, but also that we are in Jesus Christ, the Son of the true God. In other words, the Apostle John is admonishing us to protect ourselves from all the deceptive lies of Satan (the devil) who rules the world, such as the lies that we heard, 'Jesus is not the Christ', 'Jesus is not the Son of God', and 'Jesus is not God' since we know the true God and that we, the children of God, are in Jesus Christ (vv. 19-20) (MacArthur).

(3) The point is that Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life.

Look at 1 John 5:20 again: "... He is the true God and eternal life." Obviously, the Apostle John must have known that the reason Jesus was crucified was the blasphemy from the point of view of the Jews. In other words, the Apostle John saw the reason why the Jews cried out to crucify Jesus (Jn. 19:6) was because Jesus blasphemed God in the Jewish perspective. Look at Luke 5:21 – "The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, 'Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?'" The reason why the scribes and Pharisees thought this way was because Jesus said "Friend, your sins are forgiven" when He saw the faith of those who came carrying a paralytic on a mat and went

up on the roof and lowered the paralytic on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus (vv. 18-20). From the point of view of the scribes and the Pharisees, only God can forgive sins. But a man named Jesus said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." To them, this was considered blasphemy against God. In other words, from the perspective of those Jews, Jesus was guilty of blasphemy because he said that God was "my Father" (Mt. 11:27) and that he himself was the Son of God (27:43). Since they believed that Jesus deserved a curse from God, they shouted that Jesus should be crucified. The Apostle John also knew that the liar denies that Jesus is the Christ and denies the Father and the Son of God (1 Jn.2:22), and knew that there were people who did not acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God (4:15), he testified that Jesus is the Christ (5:1) and Jesus is the Son of God (v. 5). If we accept the testimony of the Apostle John, who is a human, isn't it natural for us to accept the the Father God's testimony, which is the greater testimony, regarding his Son? (5:9) The Apostle John said that those who receive by faith the testimony of the Father God regarding Jesus Christ have eternal life (vv. 11, 12). And then, the Apostle John said in 1 John 5:20, what we know for sure and continue to enjoy the truth we know is the truth that Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life (v. 20).

The Apostle John wanted the recipients of his letter, who not only believed that Jesus is the Christ (v. 1) but also he is the Son of God (v. 5), to know for sure that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the true God and to continue enjoying that truth. Not only that, he wanted the recipient saints to know for sure that the true God, Jesus Christ, is "eternal life," and he wanted them to continue to enjoy the truth. It is interesting to note that when the Apostle John began writing the letter to 1 John, in 1:1, 2, he spoke about the true God, Jesus Christ, and referred to Jesus as the word of life from the beginning (v. 1) and "the eternal life" (v. 2), and at the end of writing the letter to 1 John, 5:20, he said, Jesus Christ, who is the true God, is eternal life. The Gospel of John, written by the same author, the Apostle John, also begins in verse 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" and ends in 20:31, which is the conclusion of the Gospel of John, "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life (eternal life) in his name." Looking at these two books (Gospel of John and 1 John), I think that the Apostle John wrote the Gospel of John and 1 John with the purpose of starting with the true God, Jesus Christ, and having eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. .

We must know for sure that Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life. Also, we must continue to enjoy the truth that Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life. To do this, we must yearn for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to give us understanding. Therefore, we must grow in the knowledge of God with understanding that Jesus Christ gives us. And we must know for sure that we are in Jesus Christ. And through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true God and eternal life, we must obey the twofold commandment of Jesus, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" and "You must love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt. 22:37, 39). In this way, we will be able to enjoy eternal life while partially enjoying life in heaven on this earth.

Believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true God and eternal life,

James Kim

(December 26, 2021, praying to get to know Jesus more with the understanding God gives)

Conclusion

God is love (1 Jn. 4:8, 16). The God of love first loved us and sent his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Savior of this world and to be the propitiation sacrifice to save us and make atonement for our sins (vv. 9-10, 14). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the true God and eternal life (1:1-3; 5:20) came into this world in the flesh (4:2) and laid down His life on the cross as the propitiation for our sins (2: 2; 3:16). In other words, Jesus Christ died on the cross as the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, satisfying God's holy requirement to punish sin and atoning for our sins (4:10). How could Jesus Christ, the true God and eternal life die (1:1-2; 5:20)? How did the sinless (3:5) and righteous Jesus Christ (2:1) come into this world to take away our sins (3:5) and become the propitiation for our sins (2:2)? It cannot but be the great love of God the Father and the Son of God, Jesus Christ (3:1). We became children of God through this great love (v. 1), and have been regenerated through the Holy Spirit (5:1, 4), who is the Spirit of God whom Jesus Christ, the Son of God, sent to us after asking God the Father (4:3, 13), came to believe that Jesus is the Christ (5:1), the Son of God (v. 5), the true God and eternal life (1:1-2; 5:20), came to confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh and Jesus is the Son of God (4:2-3, 15), and became children of God (3:1, 2), so that we live in Him and He is us (4:13). Therefore, the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth who dwells in us (3:24), enables us, who belongs to God and know God (4:6) and believe the Son of God, to have fellowship Jesus Christ, the Son of God (1:3), to live by the truth (v. 6) and to love each other (3:11; 4:7; 5:1-2) according to God's command (3:23, 24; 5:3). The Holy Spirit causes us to love in deed and truth (3:18) and even, like Jesus, to lay down our lives for our brothers (v. 16), so that we may know that we belong to the truth (v. 19) and that we have passed from death and already have eternal life (v. 14). In this way, the Holy Spirit gives us the assurance of salvation by making us to know that we have eternal life (5:13). Also, the Spirit makes us to pray only according to God's will, so that we may have the assurance of answers to our prayers (v. 14) and so that he may live forever by doing the will of God (2:17). In particular, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, enables us to test the many antichrists who appeared in this last hour (2:18), the liar (v. 22), those who are trying to lead us astray (v. 26), the spirit of falsehood of many false prophets (4:1, 6) and the false gospel (2:22-23). Also, the Holy Spirit enables us to overcome the devil (2:14) and the world (5:4) with the powerful Word of God that dwells in us (2:14). The Spirit enables us to be victorious by faith against everything in this world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does (vv. 16-17). And because the Son of God protects us, the evil devil cannot touch us (5:18). “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure” (3:2-3). If our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God (v. 21). I hope and pray that we may be confident and unashamed before the Lord at His coming (2:28), on the Day of Judgment because love is made complete among us (4:17).