

# **When I Can No Longer Bear the Burden Alone...**

**[Short Word Meditation (11)]**

**James Kim**

## **Is Satan tempting us by using our close, beloved ones?**

Satan can tempt us by using our brothers or sisters, our children,  
or our spouse in our arms, or even friends who share our lives (Deut. 13:1-5)

### **I want to see the salvation that God is working on our behalf while remaining still.**

Moses and the Israelites, in the wilderness,  
found themselves perceived by Pharaoh as trapped (Exod. 14:3).  
Indeed, Pharaoh, with his chariots and army,  
equipped for pursuit, came near to the Israelites (vv. 6-10).  
When the Israelites looked up and saw the Egyptians marching after them,  
they were greatly afraid and cried out to God (v. 10).  
After calling upon God, they turned to Moses, their leader, and complained (vv. 11-12).  
Upon their complaint against Moses, who had led them, Moses reassured them, saying,  
“Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today.  
The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you;  
you need only to be still” (vv. 13-14).  
When I meditated on these words, I came to the realization that what we excel at is often fear,  
and what we struggle with is quietly observing and trusting in what God is doing.  
Ultimately, just as Moses had foretold,  
the Israelites witnessed the salvation that God was working on their behalf.  
This salvation included God's judgment against the Egyptians.  
In other words, God fought against the Egyptian army,  
annihilating them and delivering the Israelites from their hands (v. 30).  
The Israelites saw 'the great power the Lord displayed against the Egyptians.'  
As we receive God's word and fully trust in the promises, He has given us,  
if we quietly observe and trust in the salvation that God is working on our behalf,  
we too will witness the great power of God in action! Hallelujah!

## **The home is a spiritual battlefield!**

The Lord desires to establish our homes as heavenly realms.

Therefore, the Lord has given us the dual commandment of Jesus, which is the commandment of heaven (Mt. 22:37, 39).

Additionally, along with the Holy Spirit, God pours His love into us (Rom. 5:5), progressively filling us with the fruit of the Spirit, which is love (Gal. 5:22).

Thus, our responsibility is to obey these commandments and, guided by the Holy Spirit, have our entire family love God wholeheartedly, with one mind and one purpose (Phil. 1:27; 2:2).

We should love God with all our hearts and love each other as ourselves.

When we do this, our home becomes more like heaven,

filled with the joy of heaven (Jn. 15:11; 1 Jn. 1:4), love (Ps. 33:5), and peace (Rom. 15:13).

Satan desires to turn our homes into hell.

Thus, Satan works to make us disobedient (Eph. 2:2; 5:6) to the dual commandment of Jesus, which is the commandment of heaven, and instead instigates us to hate each other, which is the commandment of hell (Gen. 37:5; Exod. 22:13; Mt. 24:10; 1 Jn. 2:9).

Moreover, along with the spirit of falsehood, Satan constantly sows hatred in us (Deut. 21:17; 2 Sam. 13:15; Prov. 10:12), leading us to engage in dark deeds (Isa.29:15; Ezek.8:12; Eph.5:11), resulting in the bitter fruits of our homes (Rom. 7:5).

Therefore, Satan aims to make us not want to be in a hell-like home.

Instead, he may tempt us to roam outside the house

or even make us want to distance ourselves far away from home.

Satan also seeks to make us not want to see our family members.

Moreover, Satan works to make us hate our spouses even more.

In the growing hatred toward our spouses, Satan watches for the cracks in marital relationships (Note: Neh.4:3, in Hebrew “breach”; 6:1), making us interested in other men/women.

Along with the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh (1 Jn. 2:16),

Satan tempts us to desire these other partners, eventually leading to infidelity.

The purpose of all this is that Satan aims to demolish and destroy our homes, preventing them from becoming heavenly realms and, instead, turning our homes into hell-like environments.

This is spiritual warfare! The home is a spiritual battlefield!

## **We must remove the idols in our home.**

To experience God's peace, those who have received God's calling must eliminate the idols in their homes (Judg. 6:11-16, 24, 25-27).

## **I want to serve the Lord together with my family.**

Joshua declared to the Israelites, 'But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord' (Josh. 24:15).

As the head of the household, I pray that not only I but also my wife and children faithfully serve the Lord together in our home.

## **Detestable prayer?**

Praying without heeding God's word  
Is abhorrent in the sight of God (Prov. 28:9).

## **The need to be driven into the wilderness without mercy?**

Living in a busy, complex, and noisy world,

we sometimes need to be unceremoniously thrust into the 'wilderness' (Mk. 1:12).

The reason is that in that 'wilderness,' we must engage with God, becoming humble in heart.

Moreover, it is in our destitution that we realize the truth:

we are not to live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God

(Deut. 8:3).

(While reading Eugene Peterson's "As Kingfishers Catch Fire")

## **We must stay away from shrewd individuals.**

While Adam's wife, Eve (Gen. 3:20), encountered the craftiest serpent (v. 1),

David's son Amnon had a very shrewd friend named Jonadab (2 Sam. 13:3).

## **Though God earnestly and continually warns us...**

Since the ancestors of our faith until today, God has earnestly and consistently warned us,

saying, 'Obey my voice.' However, we have not obeyed, nor inclined our ears,

and each one follows the dictates of our own evil heart,

behaving according to our wickedness (Jere. 11:7-8).

## **When we are imprisoned ...**

Joseph, who was imprisoned in the dungeon (Gen. 40:3),  
God interpreted the dream of the chief cupbearer,  
an Egyptian official in charge of the king of Egypt's wine.  
Eventually, Joseph was brought out after interpreting the king Pharaoh's dream.

The Israelites, hemmed in by the desert (Exod. 14:3),  
God miraculously parted the Red Sea and made dry land,  
delivering them from the Pharaoh and his army.

Jeremiah the prophet, who was trapped in a pit (Jere. 38:6),  
God used a Cushite named Ebed-Melech to rescue Jeremiah from the pit.

Jonah the prophet, trapped inside the belly of a great fish (Jonah 2:1),  
God spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out,  
rescuing him from his confinement.

Peter, the apostle imprisoned in a cell (Acts 12:5),  
God miraculously delivered him through an angel of the Lord.

Paul and Silas, imprisoned in a prison (Acts 16:23-24),  
God caused a great earthquake, breaking their chains and setting them free.

When we are imprisoned,  
when we look in all directions and find no solution to our problems,  
when we cannot rescue ourselves,  
the saving God, in His time and His way, will deliver us.

## Trapped I am

Trapped I am,  
No matter how I look in all directions,  
The solution to my problems remains elusive.  
I am disheartened, even verging on despair.  
I want to resent.  
I want to give up.

Trapped I am,  
Though I may look in all directions,  
Even if the solution to my problems is not in sight,  
I lift my eyes to the Lord,  
I long for the Lord,  
I harbor hope in the Lord.  
Because even though I am confined, I am a “prisoner of hope” (Zech. 9:12).  
Therefore, I give thanks.  
Therefore, I praise the God of salvation.  
I will see the glory of God.

## **The God who acts in the lives of the captives**

God leads the captives  
to bring about prosperity (Ps. 68:6).

God led Joseph out of prison  
and made him the ruler of Egypt,  
thus saving the lives of his family and descendants  
and preserving them in this land (Gen. 39:20ff.).

God led the Israelites,  
hemmed in front of the Red Sea,  
out of the situation and rescued them  
from the hands of the Egyptian army (Exod. 14:3, 22ff.).

God led Paul and Silas out of prison  
and, in doing so, saved the jailer and his family  
(Acts 16).

## **Seemingly sudden, but...**

While “the thing” may appear sudden to our eyes,  
God has "prepared" it for us,  
so we rejoice over what God has done  
(2 Chron. 29:36).



## **The lazy one, worse than an ant**

The lazy person is worse than an ant.

The lazy one should go to the ant, observe what it does, and gain wisdom (Prov. 6:6).

The lazy one should go to the ant and learn to work voluntarily, diligently, and cooperatively, even without a supervisor (v. 7).

Ants are said to be considerate, mutually supportive, and specialized in their tasks based on size.

However, the lazy person lacks consideration, not only causing harm to others but also preventing them from doing their work.

The lazy one should go to the ant and learn to prepare in advance for the future (v. 8).

Ants, even in the hot summer when they harvest, prepare for the cold winter by storing food.

But the lazy person says, "Let's sleep a little more, let's take a little nap, let's fold our hands and rest a little" (v. 10).

As a result, unavoidable poverty comes upon the lazy one,

like a victim overwhelmed by a robber (MacArthur).

Yet, whether the lazy one, who considers himself wise (26:16),

can go to the ant, observe what it does, and gain wisdom remains uncertain.

## **Dog and pigs?**

After knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and escaping the defilements of the world,

if someone becomes entangled in them again and os overcome,

it is like the saying, "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow,

after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:20, 22).

## **Arrogance**

The reason we do not heed the rebuke of God's wisdom is because there is arrogance within us (Prov. 9:7-8).

This arrogance leads us to disregard and reject the teachings and rebukes of truth.

Moreover, it makes us quick to listen to the foolish voices and tempting sounds of the world.

We should be listening to the voice of wisdom.

### **We will eat the fruit of falsehood.**

Instead of relying on God, who produces abundant fruit, when we rely on that abundant fruit, we harbor two hearts:

"Plowing wickedness and reaping iniquity, eating the fruit of falsehood"

(Hos. 10:1, 2, 13).

### **We should not become a stumbling block.**

One should not become a stumbling block in the church of God

by seeking one's own benefit instead of the benefit of others

(1 Cor. 0:24, 32).

## **If if God does not save ...**

Are you relying on God? (Isa. 50:10)

Even in difficult and challenging circumstances,

are you depending on the God who has the power to save you? (v. 2)

Are you trusting in God, who is near you (v. 8), who helps you (vv. 7, 9)?

Even if the God who has the power to save you does not deliver you from your difficulties and challenges even you are obedient to God's Word, will you still rely on Him?

Our Heavenly Father, who endured suffering (v. 6) and died on the cross, the only begotten Son Jesus Christ,

even though He had the power to save Himself from the crucifixion, chose not to be saved from the cross.

The reason is that He desired to give you eternal life.

## **To build a sturdy foundation for a relationship of strong love...**

In the Lord,

those who build a steadfast and unshakable relationship of love

do not merely love with words and tongues,

but they love with actions and sincerity

(Lk. 6:48; 1 Jn. 3:18).

## **God, who beautifies the humble with salvation.**

Not only does God uphold the humble,  
but He also beautifies them with salvation  
(Ps. 147:6; 149:4).

## **Humble knowledge, love that builds virtue**

The person who continues to grow in humility through the knowledge of knowing God  
builds virtue by sincerely loving God and, in turn, loving their neighbor with God's love  
(Ref.: 1 Cor. 8:1-3).

## **He who acts with humility**

Nebuchadnezzar appears to rely on God (Dan. 3:28),  
but he again seeks the interpretation of his dream from all the wise men of Babylon (vv. 6-7).  
Nebuchadnezzar seems to give glory to God (2:47; 4:3),  
but he again glorifies himself (4:30).  
Nebuchadnezzar seems to acknowledge God's rule (3:29),  
but he denies God's rule again (4:26, 32).  
The one who acts with arrogance (v. 37)  
does not rely on God, does not give glory to God,  
and does not acknowledge God's rule.  
However, the one who humbly acts, lowered by God, relies on God,  
gives glory to God, and also acknowledges God's rule.

## **Boundary**

We must clearly draw the boundary lines (Exod. 23:31).

And we should drive out all elements

that lead us to sin away from within those boundaries (v. 31).

If we fail to do so, all those things will become snares for us (v. 33).

### **We are acting recklessly without hesitation.**

The Lord is directing us to turn away from our disobedience, resentment, and causing distress among brothers and sisters in unbelief.

He is instructing us to turn in a different direction and enter the wilderness.

However, we confess our sins to the Lord

only to then obediently follow His command with recklessness and without hesitation.

As a result, we fall into suffering, crying out in prayer to the Lord,

yet He does not listen to our voice or pay attention to our cries

(Deut. 1:19-45).

### **Comfort in suffering**

The comfort in suffering is the word of God that saves us (Ps. 119:50).

The comfort of God's word enables us to endure hardship (2 Cor. 1:6).

## **The purpose of suffering is to know who God is and to make a true confession of faith.**

Last Thursday,

under the title "Why do we have to go through suffering?"

I meditated on Matthew 14:24.

The passage centered around Jesus immediately rescuing Peter, who was sinking in the water.

The conclusion of the meditation was that

the 'purpose of suffering' permitted by God is to make us know who God is  
and make a true confession of faith.

When Jesus got into the boat with Peter, the wind ceased (v. 32).

At that moment, the disciples bowed down to Jesus and confessed:

"Truly, You are the Son of God" (v. 33).

Last Saturday, a sister in the Lord shared an incident

where her beloved second daughter fell into a swimming pool,

her entire body turning blue,

and a foreigner who happened to be there rescued and performed CPR.

At that time, the sister seemed to be earnestly praying to God by her side.

Thankfully, the beloved child almost died but revived,

and the sister tearfully informed me of the situation over the phone.

Although currently in the intensive care unit,

she sent me a photo of her beloved daughter breathing again

and sitting up in the hospital bed through KakaoTalk.

Additionally, the sister shared a testimony with me.

The conclusion of that testimony was:

"In the end, all the answers are in Jesus Christ..."

## **Wanting to receive healing from pain**

Wanting to receive healing from pain,  
yet in the midst of enduring that pain,  
I desire even more to experience the sufficient grace of the Lord  
(2 Cor. 12:9).

## **An opportunity in suffering?**

Suffering is a good opportunity to understand my weakness  
(Ps. 39:4).

## **The benefits of suffering?**

Is there a good way to expose my sins as much as the pain?  
Is there a way to show how much the Lord loves my soul as much as the pain?  
Through the pain in my life, God reveals my sins,  
leading me to confess and repent, not only forgiving all my sins (2 Cor. 7:10)  
but also delivering me and showing me God's saving love, giving me peace (Ps. 37:17b; 38:17).  
Therefore, I confess that my suffering, experienced within the sovereign  
and gracious will of God, is beneficial for my soul (119:71).

## **Merit**

We should not strive to establish our own merits.

Instead, we should rely on the merit of Jesus' cross and fulfill our proper duties.

Even after doing all that is commanded, we should say,

" We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done"

(Lk. 17:10).

## **Sense of merit vs. Sense of grace**

We need to guard against a sense of merit.

We should be cautious about recording our deeds  
for the Lord, the church, or neighbors in our minds.

Instead, we should be filled with a sense of grace.

We need to deeply engrave what the Lord has done for us in our hearts.

Therefore, like the Apostle Paul, we should confess,

"By the grace of God, I am what I am,"

and labor even more with the power of that grace

(1 Cor. 15:10).



## **Past love, Future love, Present love**

### **(1) Past love:**

When we received salvation through faith in Jesus (past salvation), not only did God give us the Holy Spirit, but through the Holy Spirit, He has already poured God's love into our hearts (Rom. 5:5).

### **(2) Future love:**

When we will be saved at the future coming of Jesus (future salvation), as we enter into heaven, the Holy Spirit will enable us to fully obey the twofold command of Jesus, the command of the kingdom of heaven. He will make us love God and love our neighbors with perfect love.

### **(3) Present love:**

The Bible says, "Work out your salvation" (Phil. 2:12), indicating the current aspect of salvation.

It means, "Live as those who have eternal life," "Live as citizens of the kingdom of heaven."

With the eschatological Spirit dwelling within us, producing the fruit of "love" (Gal. 5:22), and guiding us to obey Jesus' twofold command, we should walk in love following the Holy Spirit (v. 16).

In other words, we should become what the Holy Spirit leads us to be (v. 18), live by the Spirit, and walk in step with the Spirit (v. 25).

At that time, our hearts, our homes, and our church will become a community that is transformed into the likeness of heaven.

## **Past body, Present body, Future body**

### **(1) Past body:**

In the past, our body was the body of sin (Rom. 6:6).

The body of sin refers to the body of the old self (v. 6).

The body of sin originally became a living being when God formed the first man, Adam, from the dust and breathed life into his nostrils (Gen. 2:7; see also 1 Cor. 15:45).

However, due to Adam's sin, sin entered into the body.

Thus, the body of sin, which is our past body (the old self), is like Cain (Jn. 3:12), a body that hates brothers and commits murder (v. 15).

### **(2) Present body:**

Now, our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, in which the Holy Spirit resides (1 Cor. 6:19).

This present body is a new creation, the body of the new self (2 Cor. 5:17), and the body of the slave to righteousness (Rom. 6:18).

The body of the slave to righteousness practices righteousness (1 Jn. 2:29).

In other words, the body of the new self, the slave to righteousness, obeys the command to love one another according to the Lord's commandments (Jn 13:11, 23).

Additionally, the body of the slave to righteousness, as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19), is a body that produces the fruit of the Spirit, love (Gal. 5:22), and is a body that cannot help but love.

### **(3) Future body:**

In the future,  
our bodies will undergo a transformation (resurrection) at the coming of Jesus.  
Although our bodies are currently perishable,  
on the day when Jesus returns,  
our perishable bodies will be transformed into glorious bodies,  
resembling the glorious body of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we will enter into heaven.

This future body will be imperishable, glorious (spiritual),  
and a body of the Spirit (1 Cor. 15:42-44),  
resembling the body of those who belong to heaven,  
just like the body of Christ, who comes from heaven (v. 48).

The Lord will transform our lowly bodies  
so that they will be like his glorious body  
(Phil. 3:21).

[The Lord will cleanse the church with water and make it holy by the word,  
presenting it as a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any other blemish  
but holy and blameless before Him (Eph. 5:26-27)].

This future glorious body will fully obey the twofold commandment of the Lord in heaven,  
"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).

## **How should we live in the present, which is between the past and the future?**

We, who have already been buried with Jesus in the cross and have died to sin (Rom. 6:4-5), should live in the present within the context that when Jesus comes to this world, we will be transformed suddenly, becoming people without sin, until Jesus comes (1 Cor. 15:51, Phil. 3:21, 1 Jn. 3:2).

In the present, how should we live in the Lord?

We should live by practicing righteousness (1 Jn. 2:29).

We, who have been justified by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus (Rom. 4:25), should always practice righteousness as those who have become righteous (v. 25).

We must always act in accordance with the teachings of the indwelling Holy Spirit [which means living in the Lord (1 Jn. 2:28)].

Practicing righteousness means seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt. 6:33).

We must seek the kingdom of God and the righteous Jesus Christ, who is the King of that kingdom.

In other words, we must act as the righteous Jesus Christ does (1 Jn. 2:1) according to His deeds (v. 6).

As those who live in Jesus Christ, we must live and act as He does (v. 6), which means obeying and living according to Jesus Christ's twofold commandment (vv. 7-11).

Those who love their brothers according to Jesus Christ's twofold commandment have truly had God's love perfected in them (v. 5), so there is nothing in them that can cause offense (v. 10).

## **Can I truly avoid committing sin against that pastor?**

Even if the pastor  
who has received God's anointing  
not only fails to cherish me  
but seeks to harm my life,  
can I truly cherish that pastor  
and avoid committing sin against him?  
(1 Sam. 24:10-11)

## **Can I truly withhold and give up?**

Can I truly,  
for the salvation of one soul  
valued by God,  
not withhold  
and give up my own child?  
(Rom. 8:32)

## **The wilderness is never a "terrible place."**

For the grumbling Israelites,  
the wilderness was a "terrible place" (Num. 20:5).  
The reason was that in the wilderness,  
there was no seed to sow, no figs, no vines, no pomegranates,  
and no water to drink as they desired (v. 5).  
Their hearts considered the manna provided by God from heaven  
as "this miserable food" and they also despised "this miserable food" (21:5).

However, for us grateful Christians,  
the wilderness is a very good place and a necessary place.  
The reason is that just as Jesus prayed to God the Father in a desolate place (Mk. 1:35),  
we turn the lonely wilderness into a solitary garden (Henry Nouwen)  
where we can have intimate fellowship with the Lord.  
The reason is that our hearts love Jesus,  
who is the true bread from heaven (Jn. 6:32)  
and the one who gives life to the world (v. 33),  
the bread of life (v. 35).

## **Turn the wilderness into God's garden!**

God comforts us, turning our deserts into Edens,  
our wilderness into gardens, so that we may rejoice, be glad,  
give thanks, and praise (Ref.: Isa. 51:3)

God, who transforms the lonely wilderness into a sanctuary of solitude.

## **The pain is intense.**

Departing quickly  
from the path of obedience to God's commandments  
and persisting in the rebellious way,  
the people of God have become so corrupt  
that wherever they go,  
the hand of God brings calamity upon them,  
causing their suffering to be severe  
(Judg. 2:15, 17, 19).

## **A proud heart**

A proud heart  
not only considers the significant grace bestowed by God  
to be very small  
but also elevates itself,  
leading to excessive thoughts, words, and actions  
(Num. 16:3, 7, 9).

## **“Ephraim people” within the church?**

The Ephraimites said to Gideon,

"Why did you not call us when you went to fight against the Midianites?

How could you treat us like this?"

and they argued strongly with Gideon (Judg. 8:1).

Similarly, they confronted Jephthah, saying,

"Why did you cross over to fight against the people of Ammon without calling us to go with you?

We will burn your house down over you!" (12:1).

Although the Ephraimites questioned

why they were not called to war by Gideon or Jephthah,

examining Jephthah's response reveals that their claim was not entirely accurate:

"I called you, but you did not save me from their hands.

So when I saw that you would not help, I took my life in my hands..."

(vv. 2-3).

When I contemplate this reality,

I think there are people in the church who are like the "Ephraimites":

1. They talk but do not act.
2. Therefore, even when church leaders seek help, they do not offer assistance.
3. They do not take communal responsibilities seriously.
4. Despite this, they desire to be treated well by church leaders.
5. When they do not receive the treatment they desire, they become angry.
6. Consequently, they engage in disputes and arguments with church leaders.



## **Harmful gatherings within the church**

Within the church,  
there are gatherings that are not beneficial but rather harmful.  
In these harmful gatherings,  
there are factions and conflicts  
(1 Cor. 11:17-19).

## **People who like to receive praise within the church.**

Those who love money and attend church  
are those who assert themselves before others  
and enjoy receiving praise from people  
(Lk. 16:14-16).

## **Those who cause quarrels within the church**

Those who desire to be treated well,  
recognized, and elevated within the community,  
when they do not receive what they desire,  
often cause great disputes in anger  
(Judg. 8:1-3).

## **Those who stir up fights within the church**

Those who, despite not helping when called upon,  
later join the fray and engage in unnecessary fights  
by questioning why they weren't called, exhibit an unreasonable tendency  
to stir up conflict within the church (Drawing insights from Judges 12:1-3)

## **A person in the church resembling "Absalom"?**

It seems that there is a person in the church resembling "Absalom."  
Stealing the hearts of the congregation,  
causing them to turn against the pastor or the church leadership,  
their influence grows, and followers of "Absalom" continue to increase.  
However, these followers are often unaware of Absalom's true intentions  
(2 Sam. 15:6, 11, 12).

## **The God of salvation rules over us.**

The God who called and appointed Gideon to deliver the Israelites from the hand of Midian  
is the same God who rules over us. After Gideon had rescued the Israelites,  
they requested him to rule over them, both him and his son.  
However, Gideon refused, stating that neither he nor his son would rule over them,  
but rather, God would be their ruler (Judg. 8:22-23).  
The one who rules over us is the God of salvation.  
This is because God alone is our Savior, and He has rescued us.  
We are merely instruments of God's salvation,  
acknowledging that He is the ultimate ruler over us.

## **He will teach you what to do next.**

When God speaks to us,  
we should simply obey His word.  
While obeying,  
we need to restrain our desire  
to know more about God's will beyond what He has revealed.  
The reason is that,  
as we obey His word,  
God will teach us what to do next when the time comes  
(1 Sam. 16:1-3).

## **What is that “vine”?**

Perhaps, I have rejoiced greatly  
due to the 'vine' that helps me escape the sorrows of my life,  
but when that 'vine' is absent,  
am I not filled with anger to the point of wanting to die?  
Am I not currently treasuring that 'vine' to such an extent?

The 'vine' that God has provided for me in advance,  
through the lessons learned from cherishing the 'vine' so dearly,  
makes me desire to cherish souls just as God cherishes them  
(Jonah 4:6-11).

## **To cover up the fact ...**

To cover up the fact that he had made Bathsheba, a married woman, pregnant, David attempted twice to bring her husband Uriah down to his house so that Uriah would sleep with his wife and it would seem like the child she was carrying was conceived during their union, not David's. However, when Uriah didn't go home on the first attempt, David made a second effort. He even got Uriah drunk, thinking that in his inebriated state, Uriah would go home and sleep with his wife. However, Uriah remained loyal to his duty as a soldier and did not go to his house. Instead, he slept at the entrance of the king's palace with the king's servants. When David inquired why Uriah did not go home, Uriah responded with dedication to his fellow soldiers and the ongoing war, refusing to indulge in personal comfort while his comrades were at war (2 Sam. 11:5-13).

## **In the midst of this severe destitution...**

Because the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, the Lord delivered them into the hands of Midian (Judg. 6:1). So, Israel was brought very low because of Midian (v. 6), At this, the Israelites cried out to the Lord (v. 7). Although they faced severe destitution due to their wrongdoing, in the midst of this severe destitution, they cried out to God. Gratitude for their turning to God in their time of need?

## **Committing an even greater evil ...**

Amnon, who became ill  
due to his obsession with his love for Tamar,  
hated her intensely after he raped her,  
and this hatred surpassed the love he had for her before.  
As a result, Amnon sent Tamar away.

Tamar told Amnon that  
what he did was a greater evil than the initial act of raping her,  
but Amnon did not listen (2 Sam. 13:1-19).

Those who fall into the cunning temptation (deception) of Satan  
commit even greater evils than their initial wrongdoing.  
Yet, they remain unresponsive to rebuke.

## **Without turning away from that sin...**

Without turning away from that sin,  
it is impossible to faithfully observe  
and follow the Lord's commands with a whole heart  
(2 Kgs. 10:31).

## **What he earnestly desired ...**

Apostle Paul, who said that  
nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God  
that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:39),  
had fervent desire even he himself was cursed and cut off from Christ (9:3).  
For the realization of this desire,  
Paul had great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart (v. 2).  
What he so earnestly desired was  
the salvation of his brothers, those of his own race (v. 3, 10:1).

## **Was it good to take their words positively?**

The Israelites said to Moses,  
"Send some men ahead of us to spy out the land of Canaan, which we are entering.  
Then, report back to us about the route we are to take and the cities we will come to."  
Moses thought favorably of their suggestion and sent twelve spies.  
However, the Israelites, when hearing the spies' report,  
expressed fear and complained against God,  
ultimately refusing to enter the promised land.  
The question is whether Moses' decision to send the spies was a good choice.  
Would it have been better for Moses  
to simply instruct them to obey God's command to go  
and possess the land without fear or hesitation, as He had promised?

## **‘Nevertheless’ faith**

Lord, nevertheless, I rely on You (Ps. 31:14).

Lord, even if I am surrounded by enemies who oppose me,  
hate me, and even become my adversaries, I still rely on You (v. 8).

Lord, even if I find myself trapped as the Israelites were before the Red Sea,  
and the solution to the problem is not visible no matter how I look in all directions  
like they were trapped in the vast wilderness (Exod. 14:3), I still rely on You.

Lord, even if I am at a crossroads of life and death,  
confined like the apostles Peter, Paul, and Silas were in prison (Acts 12:5, 16:23),  
I still rely on You.

Lord, even if I am insulted by all my enemies and even by my neighbors (Ps. 31:11),  
I still rely on You.

Lord, when I am surrounded by the voices of many people speaking ill of me,  
even if I am engulfed in fear, I still rely on Your will (v. 13).

Lord, because of my enemies and those who persecute me,  
I am in distress, and my eyes, soul, and body are weakened due to sorrow,  
yet I rely on You (v. 9).

Lord, because of those with arrogant and wicked lips who rudely strike me with false words,  
I spend my days in sorrow and sighing, yet I rely on You (v. 10).

Lord, nevertheless, I put my trust in You and confess, “You are my God” (v. 14).

Lord, You are a God who abundantly bestows grace;  
even though my fervent prayers and expectations may not remove the 'thorn in my flesh' as I desire,  
Your grace is sufficient for me.

Therefore, I rely on You and confess,  
“You are my gracious God” (2 Cor. 12:7-9; Ref.: Ps. 103:8; 111:4; 116:5; 145:8, etc.).

For You have stored up great goodness, O Lord, for those who fear You,  
and the grace You pour out before mankind  
for those who take refuge in You is truly immense and amazing (Ps. 31:19).

Therefore, nevertheless, I rely on You and make a faith declaration,  
'You are my gracious God' (v. 14).

## **At such times, one must discern people with whom one should not form human relationships.**

King Jehoshaphat of Judah formed a marital alliance with the Ahab dynasty of Israel when he was enjoying great wealth and glory (2 Chron. 18:1).

In other words, Jehoshaphat, at a time of great prosperity, entered into a relationship that he should not have formed.

To the extent of their relationship, when Ahab, the king of Israel, urged Jehoshaphat and his servants to join him in battle against Ramoth-gilead and offered many sheep and cattle (v. 2), Jehoshaphat was willing enough to say to Ahab, "I am as you are, and my people as your people; we will be with you in the war" (v. 3).

Contrary to the advice of the prophet Jehu, Jehoshaphat supported the wicked and showed love to those who hated God (19:2).

As a result, when Jehoshaphat went into battle with the evil Ahab against the king of Aram, wearing Ahab's royal attire as Ahab had suggested (18:29), he narrowly escaped death (v. 31).

However, God intervened, causing the commanders of the chariots (the enemies who sought to kill him) to recognize Jehoshaphat and turn away from pursuing him (v. 31).

When they realized that Jehoshaphat was not Ahab, they abandoned the pursuit (v. 32).

What lesson does this message teach us?

When God bestows blessings upon us, the lesson is that we should be even more humble and not be arrogant.

Especially during such times, we must wisely discern people



with whom we should not form relationships, help, or love.  
We should avoid getting close to those  
whom we should not associate with.  
Furthermore, during such times,  
we should listen to the true words of God's genuine servant  
and cut off wrong relationships.  
We should no longer allow the negative  
and harmful influences of wrongful relationships to affect us.  
If, despite God's word,  
we disobediently continue maintaining harmful relationships  
and find ourselves in crisis, we must seek God's help.  
In doing so, God will deliver us from that crisis.  
After receiving deliverance through God's grace,  
we should humbly accept the rebuke of the Lord's servant (19:2).  
Then, we should live not for the sake of people but for the sake of the Lord,  
carefully examining our ways and walking in the fear of the Lord (vv. 6-7).

## **The beauty of a Christian**

When Jesus entered Jerusalem,  
a large crowd gathered to celebrate the Passover.

They went out to meet Him, holding palm branches and shouting,  
"Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,  
even the King of Israel!" (Jn. 12:13).

Here, the palm branches symbolize righteousness, beauty, and victory.

The large crowd regarded Jesus as the victorious King of Israel,  
expecting Him to bring about political liberation from the Roman government,  
economic prosperity, and social justice by practicing righteousness.

This was the beauty they saw in Jesus.

They believed that He would free them from Roman rule (political liberation),  
bring economic prosperity, and establish social justice.

This was the beauty they envisioned in Jesus.

However, what was the beauty that God the Father saw  
in "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Jesus Christ?

It was His obedience to the will of the Father unto death (Phil. 2:8).

This is the beauty of Jesus Christ as seen by God the Father.

We should emulate this beauty of Jesus.

As Christians, we should follow the example of Jesus  
and obediently submit to the will of the Lord even unto death.

This is the beauty of us as Christians.

## **The wisdom and knowledge of Christians**

Keeping and obeying the commandments of the Lord  
is precisely the wisdom and knowledge of us Christians  
before the people of the world  
(Deut. 4:6).

### **"Enough! Speak to Me no more of this matter"?**

Moses desired to cross the Jordan River and enter the land of Canaan,  
so he pleaded with God.  
However, God, in His anger, did not listen to Moses's prayer  
and instead said to him, "Enough! Speak to Me no more of this matter"  
(Deut. 3:23-26).

As a result, Moses addressed the Israelites, saying,  
"But the LORD was angry with me on your account,  
and would not listen to me; and the LORD said to me,  
'Enough! Speak to Me no more of this matter (v. 26).

Moses went on to explain that he would not be able to cross the Jordan  
and enter the beautiful land that God had promised them (4:21-22).

Perhaps, in response to our long-standing and fervent prayers,  
God may also be saying, "Enough! Speak to Me no more of this matter."  
If that were the case, can we, like Moses, accept this reality with humility and faith?

## **It would be good if we realize even then.**

Even if we experience distress due to our evil deeds  
and, as a result, humbly pray and seek God's face,  
God, in His mercy, hears our prayers and restores us.  
Through this, we come to realize,  
even if it's only then, that the Lord is God (2 Chron. 33:2, 12-13).  
The reason is that our instinct is to not acknowledge  
that the Lord is God until 'even then.'

## **Unceasing Love and Faithfulness of the Lord**

The Lord's love and faithfulness toward us do not cease.  
With His unfailing love and faithfulness,  
the Lord will guide us until our last breath  
(Gen. 24:27; Ps. 48:14).

## **Job, who rejoiced even in the midst of unrelenting pain**

Even to the point of cursing his own birthday (Job 3:1),  
Job, who suffered and agonized in his distress (v. 20),  
For him, there was no peace, no ease, and no rest,  
Only anxiety prevailed (v. 26).  
He wished for death, seeking it earnestly (v. 21).

However, Job, even in the unending agony  
To the extent that God would cut him off,  
Still found joy in the midst of relentless pain (6:9-10).  
The reason was that he did not resist the holy words of God (v. 10).

I believe that Jesus, even in the unrelenting pain of bearing our sins  
and being cut off from God on the cross, found joy.  
The reason is that Jesus remained obedient to God the Father  
until His death on the cursed tree, the cross (Phil. 2:8).

Even in the midst of unending pain,  
our joy comes from obeying the word of God.

## **The benefit of unending pain ...**

The benefit of unending pain is  
thoroughly realizing and acknowledging  
that "my help is not within me" (Job 6:10, 13) and  
confessing that "my help comes from the LORD,  
the Maker of heaven and earth" (Ps. 121:2).

## **God who calls the exceedingly weak and the smallest ones and uses them as His instruments**

God, addressing Gideon  
who considered himself exceedingly weak and the smallest one,  
commanded him, saying,  
"Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand.  
Am I not sending you?"  
(Judg. 6:14-15).  
Gideon's response to this was,  
"Pardon me, my lord. How can I save Israel? ..." (v. 15).  
God's reply was,  
"I will be with you,  
and you will strike down all the Midianites together" (v. 16).

### **Hearts like flint?**

If our hearts were like flint right now,  
not only would we refuse to listen to God's word,  
but we would also turn our backs on God,  
disliking even the idea of listening.  
Therefore, we must not make our hearts like flint  
(Zech. 7:11-12).

## **It is appalling.**

Certainly, God has commanded us  
not to mingle with the nations (people of the world)  
who engage in impure and abominable practices  
in this defiled land where we dwell (v. 11) – not to mix with them (v. 2).  
Yet, the leaders of the church today are becoming leaders in this sin (v. 2).  
Despite this, we are not troubled (v. 5),  
and furthermore, we are not even ashamed (vv. 6, 7).  
We dare not lift our faces towards our God (v. 6).  
Nevertheless, God has bestowed upon us a little grace and preserved us (v. 8).  
God has also made us a little lower than the heavenly beings (v. 8).  
Despite God's dealings with us, we have betrayed the Lord's commandments.  
What can we say now? (v. 10)

## **The key to prayer answered ...**

The key to prayer answered is  
to obey the commandments of the Lord,  
to do what pleases Him before His presence,  
and to pray while doing so (1 Jn. 3:22).  
In other words, the key to prayer answered is  
to obey the commandments of the Lord,  
loving one another as the Lord delights,  
and praying to God while loving one another.

[Note: Here, "loving one another" (2:9; 3:11, 18, 23, 24) is understood to mean

- (1) shining light (1:5),
- (2) walking in truth (v. 6),
- (3) practicing righteousness' (2:29; 3:12).]

## After prayer, sinning ...

King Solomon,  
after seeking what pleased the Lord (1 Kgs. 3:10),  
disobeyed the words of the Lord.

Certainly, the Lord had instructed the king to ...

- (1) not multiply horses or send the people to Egypt to get horses,
- (2) not accumulate silver and gold for himself,
- (3) not take many wives, lest his heart turn away (Deut. 17:16-17).

However, King Solomon...

- (1) gathered chariots and horsemen and imported horses from Egypt and Kue,
- (2) made silver and gold as common as stones in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 1:14-17),
- (3) loved many foreign women, besides Pharaoh's daughter,  
having '700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines' (1 Kgs. 11:1-3).



## **"As soon as you began to pray"**

Daniel, from the very first day  
he set his mind to gain understanding and humble himself before God,  
his words were heard and he received an answer (Dan. 10:12).  
"As soon as you began to pray,"  
God responded to his prayer (9:23).

## **When God granted the prayer ...**

Eli the priest said to Hannah,  
"... may the God of Israel grant the request you have asked" (1 Sam. 1:17).  
Hannah then told Eli the priest,  
"I prayed for this child (Samuel),  
and the Lord has granted me what I asked of Him" (v. 27).

Therefore, as Hannah had vowed to God in prayer (v. 11),  
she dedicated her son Samuel, even from his infancy (vv. 22-24),  
to the Lord for his entire life (v. 28).

## **Gideon made a snare for himself and his household.**

When I think of Gideon,

I think of Gideon and his 300 soldiers (Judg. 7:8).

The reason is that Gideon's 300 soldiers fought against the numerous enemy forces as numerous as locusts (v. 12) and emerged victorious.

However, what caught my attention today is that after Gideon's triumph over Midian in war, he made an ephod out of the gold and placed it in his city, but it became a snare to Gideon and his household (8:27).

What is meant by the gold here?

Where did Gideon get the gold to make the ephod?

The gold refers to the gold earrings that Gideon requested from the Israelites as a tribute after their victory in the Midianite war (v. 24).

As I meditated on this passage,

I was reminded of the words of Samuel.

Among his final words to all Israel, he said:

"Whose ox have I taken?

Whose donkey have I taken?

Whom have I cheated?

Whom have I oppressed?

From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes?"

(1 Sam. 12:3).

## **Gideon's wool fleece test**

Gideon: "If You will save Israel by my hand, as You have promised ..."

First wool fleece test: As Gideon requested,

‘Make dew be only on the fleece and all the ground is dry’

Second wool fleece test: As Gideon requested,

‘Make the fleece be dry and the ground be covered with dew’

(Judg. 6:36-40).

I believe that the words of the two promises the Lord has already given me,

John 6:1-15 (personal) & Matthew 16:18 (church),

the Lord will fulfill (accomplish) just as He has promised.

## **With joy and gladness**

I rejoice in the salvation of the Lord

and am joyful

because of the God of my salvation

(1 Sam. 2:1).

## **Things to remember and things to forget!**

Let's remember what God has done in our lives (Ps. 77:11).

However, let's forget the things we have done for God's sake.

## **Watch yourselves very carefully**

We must be careful not to corrupt ourselves by making idols for our own sake.  
We must be cautious and refrain from doing so  
(Deut. 4:15-16).

## **We must seek understanding.**

When we find ourselves in situations where we desperately need God's help,  
before earnestly crying out to God to deliver us from those situations,  
we should first seek understanding from God's Word (Ps. 119:169).

This understanding involves recognizing:

- (1) The fact that I am a helpless being.
- (2) The fact that God is my true Helper.

## **Is it necessary to reconcile?**

If the pastor does not listen to the words of the congregation,  
and if the division of the church into two congregations  
is something that happened according to God's will,  
then there may not be a need to make efforts for reconciliation  
(Ref.: 2 Chron. 10:15; 11:1, 4)

## **"fully" "daily without fail"**

The Lord builds His church (Mt. 16:18).

No one can thwart the work of the Lord in building His church (Ps. 6:7).

The Lord, "fully" (v. 8), "daily without fail" (v. 9),  
bestows grace and works to build His church.

The Lord involves us in the work of building His church,  
strengthening our hands for this task (v. 22).

Therefore, the work of the Lord  
in building His church cannot help but prosper (v. 14).

## **The reason for stumbling and faltering within myself is ...**

The reason for stumbling and faltering within myself is  
that I am not loving one another as the Lord's commandments dictate  
(1 Jn. 2:10; see also Jn. 6:61; 11:9; 16:1).

## **When the thought 'I am alone' arises**

The prophet Elijah said to the Lord, "I alone am left,"  
but the Lord responded to His servant Elijah, saying,  
"I have reserved for Myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal"  
(Rom. 11:3-4).

In times of trials and persecution, when faced with the crossroads of life  
while serving according to the calling,  
and the thought 'I am alone' arises,  
let us remember the Lord's words,  
"I have reserved for Myself ..."

## **I am a sinner beyond redemption ...**

I am a sinner beyond redemption,  
"I am a man of prayer" (Ps. 109:4).

## **I will not harm a pastor with my mouth.**

Even though God may avenge me against a pastor like King Saul,  
I will not harm the pastor with my mouth  
(1 Sam. 24:12).

## **To whom am I speaking?**

Boasting of one's (great) knowledge  
is neither aiding the powerless well  
nor instructing the foolish wisely.  
To whom am I speaking?  
(Job 26:2-4)

## **I believe**

Even though I say in my distress,  
"I am greatly afflicted" (Ps. 116:10),  
I believe.

I believe in a gracious, righteous, and merciful God (v. 5).

I believe that God hears my prayers (v. 1).

I believe that God will deliver my soul from pain, distress, and sorrow (vv. 3-4; Ref.: v. 8).

I believe that God will keep and save me when I am in trouble (v. 6).

I believe that God will be gracious to me (v. 7).

Therefore, I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living (v. 9).

## **I have not committed any wrongdoing against the other person ...**

I have not committed any wrongdoing against the other person,  
yet they seek to harm me and do evil.

At that time, I should pray to the judging God  
to bring judgment between me and the other person  
(Judg. 11:27).

## **I am a sinner, yet ...**

Ruth, a Moabite woman who had wished for grace from someone,  
found favor with Boaz (a prominent relative of her deceased father-in-law Elimelech)  
(Ruth 2:2).

After receiving grace from Boaz (vv. 5-9),  
she prostrated herself with her face to the ground and said to Boaz,  
"I am a foreigner; why have you shown me kindness and taken notice of me?" (2:10).

As a sinner like me,  
I find it challenging to comprehend how God showers  
such immense grace upon me and cares for someone like me.

## **I will place my hope in God.**

When I am discouraged and anxious,  
I will place my hope in God.  
Thus, even in the midst of trials,  
I will continue to praise Him  
for the help of His presence  
(Ps. 42:5, 11; 43:5).



## **I also want to confess like this before I die.**

Like Joshua,  
before I die, I want to sincerely confess  
to my beloved family, church, and all my brothers and sisters:

'I acknowledge with all my heart and intention  
that the good words spoken to me by my Lord  
in John 6:1-15 (personal) and Matthew 16:18 (church)  
are absolutely true and are fulfilled in every aspect,  
with none of them being violated' (Josh. 23:14)

## **What is troubling me?**

What is it that troubles me,  
turning into thorns in my eyes and pricking my sides,  
due to the things I have not yet completely driven out from my heart and life?  
(Num. 33:55)

## **I pray to be delivered from the hands of that pastor.**

May God, as the Judge,  
examine my situation, judge between me and a pastor like King Saul,  
address my case, and relieve my injustice.  
I pray to be delivered from the hands of that pastor  
(1 Sam. 24:15).

## **“O Lord, be my helper”**

We must be cautious when things are going well.

Perhaps we may become arrogant and say,

'I shall never be moved' (Ps. 30:6).

If we become arrogant,

The Lord may raise our adversaries (v. 1) and punish us.

In such times, we should look to the Lord who is our helper (v. 10).

The Lord who helps us

is the one who draws our soul even from the grave (vv. 1, 3).

Moreover, He is the one who heals us (v. 2).

He turns our mourning into dancing and brings joy (vv. 5, 11).

The reason is that His anger is but for a moment,

while His favor is for a lifetime (v. 5).

Therefore, we have no choice but to give thanks

and praise to God without ceasing (v. 12).

## **Those who trouble me ...**

Those who trouble me,

even those whose faith is weak, are also brothers and sisters for whom Christ died.

(Rom. 8:10, 11).

**Despite having my own purpose and being cautious about it,  
I did this, but nevertheless ...**

Not by any means opposing God and turning away from following Him,  
but having our own purpose, being cautious, and acting accordingly.

Yet, how did they so misunderstand us

(Josh. 22:10-29).

**My snare?**

Right now, have I brought someone closer to myself than the Lord,  
making them a snare to me, a whip on my side, and a thorn in my eye?

**As You have spoken concerning me and the church ...**

As You have spoken concerning me in John 6:1-15  
and concerning Your church in Matthew 16:18,  
may You perform all good things for me and the Victory Chapel Church,  
revealing the glory of God  
(1 Sam. 25:30).

## **The message that God has spoken to me and to us ...**

The message that God has conveyed to me and to us through the three pastors during the Friday and Saturday sermons and Sunday worship this time is this:

'As we pray to God for our spiritual maturity, be obedient to God's word (command) even when He sends refining fires, as Elijah was sent into situations that were not understandable.

## **My help, my hope**

I place my trust in the God of my great-grandfather, the God of my grandfather, and the God of my father as my help. My hope is placed in the covenant God alone (Ref.: Ps. 146:5).

## **My heart is delighted ...**

When my faith wavers, my enemies may rejoice, but my heart delights in the salvation of the Lord (Ps. 13:4-5).

## **All my joy is in the Lord**

All my delight is in the noble saints  
(Ps. 16:3).

## **My folly is ...**

My folly is 'I have acted foolishly and have been so terribly wrong,'  
and then I go and do the same foolish and terribly wrong thing again  
(1 Sam. 26:21).

'As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly'  
(Prov. 26:11).

## **My freedom?**

Could my current exercise of freedom or rights  
be causing those with weak faith to stumble?  
(1 Cor. 8:9)

## **“What is my beloved doing in my temple”**

We Christians are living a double life.

Our lips are close to the Lord, but our hearts are distant (Jere. 12:2).

Currently, we are serving two masters.

We are simultaneously serving God and wealth,

God's church and this wicked world (Mt. 6:24).

We portray a life of faith before people.

Our faith life may seem holy in the eyes of others,

but in God's eyes, we are committing evil.

Currently, we are sinning against God.

We are engaging in spiritual adultery

while coming before God's sanctuary to offer our contributions

(Jere. 11:15).

Looking upon all this, God speaks to us in this way:

'What is my beloved doing in my temple?'

(Jere. 11:15).

## **Do not be discouraged; be courageous!**

Those who believe in the God of salvation and have confidence in His saving power

do not "become discouraged" even in daunting situations,

like facing the "Goliaths" of life.

Instead, they boldly confront those challenging circumstances

and eventually emerge victorious

(1 Sam. 7:32-37, 50).

## **What the discouraged need is ...**

What the discouraged need is  
compassion rather than a friend's rebuke  
(Job 4:3; 6:14).

## **The wickedness of man**

How can the wickedness of man,  
who takes a wife and after sleeping with her  
dislikes her and slanders her and gives her a bad name,  
be removed?  
(Deut. 22:13-14, 19)

## **Even without a husband?**

It seems that Ruth, as a woman, felt she couldn't live without her mother-in-law,  
even if she could manage without a husband  
(Ruth 1:13, 18).

## **A wife praised by her husband (1)**

A wise wife who brings confidence to her husband (Prov. 31:10, 11),  
a wife who enhances her husband's standing,  
earning recognition from people (v. 23),  
her husband praises her, saying,  
"Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all" (v. 29).

## **A wife praised by her husband (2)**

A wife who receives praise from her husband,  
a mother whom her children thank,  
she is a woman who reveres only God  
(Prov. 31:28, 30).

## **A husband ...**

A husbands should respect his wife's opinions.  
And he should desire that "only may the LORD make good His word"  
(1 Sam. 1:23).



## **The basis of my assurance of salvation is ...**

The foundation of my assurance of salvation lies  
not only in the sure accomplishment of the Triune God's salvation  
but also, further, in God being the God of my salvation  
(Rom. 8:29-30).

## **I always look to the Lord with my eyes.**

When my loneliness, distress, worry, suffering, anguish, and trouble ensnare my steps,  
I will look to the Lord; my eyes will always be fixed on the God of salvation  
(Ps. 25:15-21).

## **There must be a piercing in my heart.**

If, upon hearing the words of my loved ones,  
I realize that what I did, following my own thoughts,  
was actually something God had forbidden  
when examined in the light of God's word,  
then there must be a piercing in my heart  
(1 Sam. 24:4-7).

## **The thing that delights my heart**

The teachings of the righteous God delight my heart.

The reason is that I have been honest  
and have kept myself from great sin

(Ps. 19:8, 13).

## **Let us speak according to the anguish of our hearts.**

When our soul is weary of life,

let us cry out to God according to the anguish of our hearts

(Job 10:1-2).

## **The reason my heart rejoices in God is because...**

The reason "My heart rejoices in the Lord" is

because I am glad "for I delight in your deliverance"

(1 Sam. 2:1).

## **Do as you please in your opinion?**

We should be careful to listen to God's voice  
and discern His will through the people we love around us.  
Especially when those people interpret our situations and say,  
'Do as you please in your own opinion,'  
we need to consider whether our thoughts align with God's thoughts  
as we viewed our thought in the light of the Scripture (1 Sam. 24:4).

## **I shouldn't let my thoughts come first ...**

Naaman, the commander  
who came to the prophet Elisha seeking a cure for his leprosy,  
thought that his own ideas were better than the words of the servant of the Lord  
(2 Kgs. 5:10-12).

Thinking that one's own thoughts  
are better than the words of the Lord's servant  
is an act of disobedience.

## **Hypocrisy within me**

The hypocrisy within us  
is like looking at ourselves in the spiritual mirror of God's word first,  
so instead of seeing the speck in our own eyes,  
we are quick to see the plank in the eyes of others  
(Lk. 6:41-42).

## **My conscience**

My conscience  
should not become weak and defiled ...  
(1 Cor. 8:7).

## **I want to remember my neighbor like this**

Lord, do not remember the sins and transgressions of my youth;  
according to your unfailing love remember me,  
for you, Lord, are good.  
I want to remember my neighbor's past sins and transgressions not,  
but to remember them according to His unfailing love  
(Ps. 25:7).

## **Am I willing to give up my freedom (rights)?**

Am I willing to give up my freedom (rights)  
for the sake of a weaker brother or sister in faith  
for whom Christ died,  
so that they may not stumble?  
(1 Cor. 8:13)

## **‘My Lord, let Your will be done.’**

The will of God was for the disobedient prophet Jonah  
to be thrown into the sea (Jonah 1:12).

God had already prepared a great fish for this purpose (v. 17).

However, the pagan sailors, in their unbelief,

tried to save Jonah by rowing hard to bring the ship back to land (v. 13).

As they did so, the sea, which had been growing increasingly tempestuous (v. 11),

became even more violent, making it impossible for the sailors

to turn the ship back to land (v. 13).

These sailors could not prevail against God.

Their desire to turn the ship to land,

in opposition to God's will to cast Jonah into the sea, clashed.

Eventually, after acknowledging,

"The Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land,

does not wish us to perish for his sake" (v. 14),

the sailors threw Jonah into the sea according to God's will (vv. 14-15).

“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.”

(Hymn “My Jesus, as Thou Wilt”, verse 3)

## **"I am profaned among them."**

Perhaps, as God looks upon His Church,  
could He be speaking to our church leaders like this?

"I am profaned among them" (Ezek. 22:26).

This thought arises because our church leaders,  
in God's sight, are described as those who are like "roaring lions tearing prey;  
they have devoured people, seized wealth and precious things,  
and made many widows within it" (v. 25).  
Furthermore, we, the congregants,  
have transgressed God's law (commandments, word),  
failing to distinguish between the holy and the common,  
and not taught [the congregation] to recognize the unclean and the clean (v. 26).  
We have covered our eyes to ignore God's Sabbath.

Are we not currently swallowing up people's wealth unjustly,  
shedding blood to destroy lives, and committing extortion (v. 27)?  
Yet, at the same time, are we not engaging in empty rituals,  
looking at false visions, and preaching things that God has not spoken (v. 28)  
– all for our own gain?

## **When my beloved “vine” is no longer there ...**

The “vine” of my life that brings me great joy by helping me avoid my distress,  
even though I didn't labor for it, nor did I nurture it.

It is a “vine” that springs up overnight, only to wither and die the next morning.

Yet, when my beloved “vine” is no longer there,

I wonder if I truly have a reason to be so angry before God

as to wish for my own death?

(Jonah 4:6-10)

## **‘While I was still in prayer’**

When I was still in prayer,

the Lord quickly came to us,

teaching and speaking to me (through His word).

Among the things He spoke, there was a statement:

'You are highly favored'

(Dan. 9:21-23; Ref.: Lk. 1:30).

## **When I am old and do not know on which day I will die**

When I am old and do not know on which day I will die,

how will I request and bless my beloved children with what brings me joy?

(Gen. 27:2-4)

## **During the days of my survival**

During the days of my survival,  
I will be careful not to forget those two unforgettable things in my heart,  
and I will also make sure to let my children and my future grandchildren know about them  
(Deut. 4:9).

## **The reason I utter words of profound arrogance and pride from my mouth is ...**

The reason I utter words of profound arrogance and pride from my mouth is  
that there is none holy like the Lord, no one besides Him,  
and there is no rock like our God, and I am unaware of it.  
Additionally, I do not realize  
that the Lord is a God of knowledge and weighs actions  
(1 Sam. 2:2-3).

## **‘How long must I endure?’**

Perhaps even now, God may be saying to us:

"How long will you despise me?"

"How long will you not believe in me?"

"How long must I endure?"

(Num. 14:11, 27)



## **The reason I love the Lord is ...**

The reason I love the Lord is  
that He is my strength (Ps. 18:1),  
and He listens to my prayers (116:1).

## **‘I will dwell in the house of God forever!’**

God is our Savior (2 Pet. 1:11).  
The good, pleasing, and perfect will of God is our salvation (Rom. 12:2).  
The God of salvation desires all of us to come to salvation (1 Tim. 2:4).  
God works all things together for our salvation in our lives (Rom. 8:28).  
The God who began this work of salvation  
will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ's return (Phil. 1:6).  
Therefore, we confess in faith,  
“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Ps. 23:6).

## **The wrath of God giving us over**

We must carefully observe that God's wrath of giving us over  
(2 Chron. 29:8).

"Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts  
to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another"  
(Rom. 1:24),

"Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts.

Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.

In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women  
and were inflamed with lust for one another.

Men committed indecent acts with other men,

and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion" (vv. 26-27),

"Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God,  
he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity.

They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice.

They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful;

they invent ways of doing evil;

they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless" (vv. 28-31).

## **‘Do for yourself what the occasion requires’**

God says to me,

‘Do for yourself what the occasion requires. ... For God is with you.

I will show you what you should do’

(1 Sam. 10:7-8).

## **‘Is what you have done truly truthful and righteous?’**

To those church members who are filled with pride,  
seeking elevation within the church without regard for means and methods,  
the Lord, who is the head of the church, might perhaps pose this question:  
‘Is what you have done truly truthful and righteous?’  
(Judg. 9:16)

## **"I will rebuke you and accuse you to your face."**

When we proclaim God's word with our mouths  
but harbor hatred in our hearts for that word,  
disobeying it by throwing it behind us, we are committing a sin.  
In such a situation, God says to us:  
“You do these things, and I have been silent, so you thought I was just like you.  
But now I will rebuke you and accuse you to your face”  
(Ps. 50:16-21)."

## **‘How long will you mourn for that person?’**

God said to Samuel concerning Saul,  
"Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,  
He has also rejected you from being king"  
(1 Sam. 15:23; 16:2).  
Perhaps, at this moment, the Lord might be saying to us,  
"How long will you mourn for that person?"

## **Song, blessing, death**

Moses' song (Deut. 32), Moses' blessing (Ch. 33), Moses' death (Ch. 34).

My song before my death, my blessing before my death.

James' song: Praise sing in the wilderness.

I believe that the Lord will add more songs until my death.

James' blessing:

During the morning prayer meeting,

I offered a blessing for my family (wife and three children), relatives, church members, friends, co-workers, and the people of Korea.

I prayed for them with whatever words I could find, asking for God's blessings.

James' death:

I hope to depart peacefully within the faith of resurrection  
and the anticipation of the second coming,

leaving behind beautiful memories for those who love me.

May it happen according to the Lord's time and in His way.

## **Dad Father God who dwells in the high and lofty heaven hears even the sound of my humble cry from low below**

The prophet Jonah was inside a great fish in the deep sea, not on land. However, in that deep place, he "again" turned his gaze to the Lord and offered a prayer of gratitude, acknowledging that salvation belongs to God. The God of Jonah, who dwells in the high and lofty heaven, heard the prayer of Jonah from deep within the sea, rescuing him. Furthermore, the God of salvation gave Jonah another opportunity, using him as an instrument to bring salvation to the people of Nineveh (Jonah chaps. 2-3).

What lesson does this story give us?

## **An arrogant man whose heart is elevated to high position**

An arrogant man whose heart is elevated to high position says, 'Who can bring me down from this high place?' will be 'made very small' by God. Surely, that arrogant man will be brought down from their high position (Obad. 1:2-4).

## **Let us not be deluded when receiving praise and special treatment.**

When one is in a high position (Esth. 3:1)  
and thinks they are receiving special treatment,  
rejoicing and delighting in it (5:8, 9),  
one should not deceive themselves by thinking,  
'The one who elevated my position is now intending to honor me.'  
The heart of the wicked (7:6) rejoices in receiving praise and special treatment,  
mistakenly thinking that they alone will be esteemed.

## **Who has imitated the heart of the Lord more?**

As a pastor, I am risking even the lives of unbelievers who are with me.  
Yet, these unbelievers are striving to save my life because they value it  
(Jonah 1:11-13)

## **Who serves God?**

Those who know all the deeds that God has done for us serve Him  
(Joshua 24:31).

## **Who believes in the word of God's promises?**

God spoke to Gideon,  
instructing him to lead the Israelites against the enemy camp of the Midianites,  
saying, "I have given it into your hand."  
However, even after receiving this promise from God,  
it seems that Gideon was afraid to go down to the Midianite camp.  
Perhaps the reason was that the Midianites, Amalekites,  
and the people of the East were as numerous as locusts,  
and their camels were as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore.  
Ultimately, it seems that Gideon doubted God's promise,  
possibly because he couldn't believe that with just 300 Israelite soldiers,  
God would enable them to defeat such a large enemy army.

Interestingly, despite Gideon's doubt,  
there was someone in the Midianite camp  
who knew that God had given the entire camp into Gideon's hand  
(Judg. 7:9-14).  
Gideon doubted God's promise,  
but this Midianite individual believed in it.

## **According to the greed of the eyes**

We should not commit adultery  
following the desires of our own hearts  
and the lust of our eyes that lead us astray;  
instead, we must remember and obey all of God's commandments  
(Num. 15:39).

## **When everyone is going astray ...**

The people of Israel were all acting corruptly, even the Levites.

However, the descendants of Zadok,  
who had kept the charge of my sanctuary  
when the people of Israel went astray from God,  
shall come near to me to minister to me  
(Ezek. 48:11).

Even in a situation where everyone was acting corruptly,  
the descendants of Zadok,  
who were holy and faithfully observed their duties as priests, stood out.  
The reason for their faithfulness  
may be attributed to their focus on a sanctuary-centered life (vv. 8, 10).

Similarly, Christians may find themselves  
in a context where many are acting corruptly, even among pastors.  
Despite this, how can we, as holy and set-apart saints, faithfully uphold our duties?  
This becomes possible  
when we live a life centered on God, the Lord, the Word, and the Church



## **We should not return to foolish ways again ...**

We should not return to foolish ways again,  
We should not sin against God again,  
We should not provoke the Lord again,  
We should not incur God's discipline again.

I must listen to the words God will speak.  
I must fear God.  
I must repent before God.  
I must believe in the Lord's salvation.

The Lord extends grace to me.  
The Lord forgives and covers my sins.  
The Lord gathers all His anger.  
The Lord revives me.  
The Lord speaks peace to me.  
The Lord saves me.  
The Lord gives me good things  
(Ps. 85).

## **We should carefully maintain the unity of the church through various gifts.**

Why, among our fellow believers in the church who possess various "gifts," are we failing to maintain the unity of the church?

Clearly, "there are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit"

(1 Cor. 12:4).

## **Jonathan who was sorrow for David**

Jonathan, who loved David as his own life (1 Sam. 20:17),

desired to fulfill any wish of David's heart (v. 4).

Jonathan was sorrowful for David (v. 34).

The reason was that Jonathan's own father, King Saul, had treated David shamefully, falsely accusing him of deserving death even though David had done nothing to deserve it.

Jonathan knew that Saul had determined to kill David, and as a result, Jonathan was deeply upset and did not eat (vv. 31-34).

## **I spoke for your benefit ...**

I spoke for the benefit of my beloved,  
but my beloved may think that I am trying to set a snare for him  
(1 Cor. 7:35).

## **People who get angry because they don't receive attention?**

Because God delivered Midian into Gideon's hand,

Gideon and his 300 men achieved victory.

However, after the victory, the Ephraimites were angry with Gideon and had a great dispute with him.

The reason was that when Gideon went to fight against Midian, he did not call the Ephraimites to join him (Judg. 8:1).

More specifically,

the Ephraimites were displeased with how Gideon had treated them (v. 1).

Similarly, within the church,

when individuals do not receive the treatment they desire,

there often seems to be discontent leading to anger and disputes.

How did Gideon resolve the Ephraimites' anger and dispute?

Gideon addressed them by saying:

"What I have done now compares to what you have done?" (v. 2),

"Can my efforts even compare to what you have done?" (v. 3).

In the church,

there appear to be individuals harboring resentment and engaging in disputes because they feel overlooked or mistreated.

How can we resolve their anger?

Philippians 2:3 comes to mind:

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves."

## **When I can no longer bear the burden alone ...**

Moses bore the burden of the Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years  
(Deut. 1:3, 9).

He alone took on their laborious tasks,  
their burdensome responsibilities, and their disputes (v. 12).

Therefore, Moses said to the Israelites,  
'I alone am not able to bear all this burden' (v. 9)  
and 'How can I alone bear your troubles, your burdens, and your complaints?' (v. 12).

Like Moses, when we can no longer bear our burdens alone,  
we need to admit it and confess.

After that, Moses instructed the Israelites  
to 'take wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes' (v. 13)  
and appointed them as leaders for the people (vv. 13, 15).

Similarly, we should, like Moses, identify individuals  
with wisdom and understanding, respected and knowledgeable people,  
and appoint them as leaders, delegating responsibilities to them.

Let us not bear the burden alone any longer.

## **They acted more corruptly.**

In the time of the judges,  
the Israelites not only quickly turned aside from the way their ancestors had walked  
but also 'acted more corruptly than their ancestors,  
turning to other gods, serving them, and bowing down to them.  
They did not stop their rebellious ways and corrupt practices.  
As a result, wherever they went, the hand of the Lord was against them  
to bring them disaster, as he had sworn to them.  
Their distress was severe, just as the Lord had warned and foretold  
(Judg. 2:15, 17, 19).

## **Heart that is like a thorny bush**

My heart that is like a thorny bush ["my complaint" (Ps. 142:2)],  
when I find myself in a state of confusion, not knowing where to start or what to do,  
feeling overwhelmed and helpless in the face of numerous difficult problems,  
even in those moments of bewilderment,  
I lift up my heart that is like a thorny bush to my heavenly Father (v. 1).  
When I pour out my heart to Him, expressing the challenges and pains,  
even the tangled threads of my life that I see with my own eyes,  
He, working all things together for good (Rom. 8:28),  
weaves them into a masterpiece,  
leading me forward to create a work of art in my life.  
With faith in His guidance, in patience and endurance,  
I am confident that I will witness the glory of God unfold.

## **The situation that urgently requires help is a good opportunity.**

Being in a situation that urgently requires help is a good opportunity for us to receive God's word. Furthermore, instead of being led by the situation with the strength derived from the received word, it is a good opportunity for us to stand firmly on God's word and be led by it.

Therefore, a situation that urgently requires help is an excellent opportunity for us to seek God's salvation and delight in His word (Ps. 119:174).

## **Chasing money even more ...**

In times of hardship, one should focus more on the Lord, but instead, chasing after the money that caused the distress and striving to seek help through it... In the end, that money is likely to lead to one's downfall (Ref.: 2 Chron. 28:22-23)

## **How should we use money?**

We should first give the money that God gives us to God, and the remainder should be spent according to God's will in activities that are pleasing to us and our brothers, in accordance with the will of our God (Prov. 7:17-18).

## **People in the church who like money**

Those who love money and justify themselves as righteous in front of the people in the church are those who, upon hearing the Lord's words, "You cannot serve both God and money," mockingly dismiss the message (Lk. 16:13-15).

## **God who cuts off the help of the assisting spouse**

God, who cuts off the help of the beloved assisting spouse (Ps.107:12), makes us realize the fact that our help comes only from the Lord who made heaven and earth (121:1-2).

When we observe the marvelous works of God, we can only praise Him (107:8, 15, 21, 31, 32) because of His steadfast love (v. 43).

## Similarities between two wars

There are similarities between the story of the Israelites in Joshua 8, where they finally achieved victory in the war against the people of Ai, and the story in Judges 20, where the descendants of Israel achieved victory in the war against their fellow tribesmen, the descendants of Benjamin:

- (1) The Israelites employed ambush tactics (Josh. 8:4; Judg. 20:9, 36).
- (2) The Israelites pretended to be defeated (falsely) (Josh. 8:15; Judg. 20:31).
- (3) The people of Ai or the descendants of Benjamin fell for Israel's deception (strategic maneuver) or trickery (Josh. 8:6, 16; Judg. 20:32).

## Two types of suffering?

### 1. Disciplinary Suffering:

Refinement, faith growth (progress in faith),  
Experience of God's discipline.

### 2. Corrective suffering:

Consequences of sin,  
repentance and confession,  
obedience.



## **Should have been afraid ...**

They were not afraid to speak against the servant of God  
whom God met and spoke clearly to  
(Num. 12:8).

## **There is a clear fault!**

There is already a clear fault among us  
(1 Cor. 6:7).