

# **God's Work is Interesting.**

**[Short Word Meditation (30)]**

**James Kim**

## **I am reminded of a few lessons regarding family.**

King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) was furious when Queen Vashti refused to come at his command.

He consulted his legal advisers, asking, "What should be done according to the law?"

One of the advisers, Memucan, responded, "Queen Vashti has wronged not only the king but also all the nobles and the peoples of all the provinces of King Xerxes.

When the women throughout the empire hear about the queen's conduct, they will disregard their husbands, saying, 'King Xerxes commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him, but she would not come.'

This very day, the Persian and Median women of the nobility who have heard about the queen's conduct will respond to all the king's nobles in the same way.

There will be no end of disrespect and discord.

Therefore, if it pleases the king, let him issue a royal decree that Vashti is never again to enter the presence of King Xerxes.

Also, let the king give her royal position to someone else who is better than she.

Then, when the king's edict is proclaimed throughout all his vast realm, all the women will respect their husbands, from the least to the greatest."

The king and his advisers approved this proposal, and King Xerxes issued a decree to each province in its own script and language, proclaiming that every man should be ruler over his own household (Esther 1:12-21).

When I meditate on this passage, I am reminded of a few lessons regarding family:

- (1) Wives should submit to their husbands in the Lord.
- (2) Wives should not disregard or despise their husbands.
- (3) Rather, wives should respect their husbands.
- (4) Every husband should exercise his authority as the head of the household and manage his home.

## **The builders did their work very diligently and well.**

I think the builders who worked hard  
to repair the old Victory Presbyterian Church building  
during the pandemic did their work very diligently and well  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 34:12).

Personally, I believe God sent those builders at the right time  
to repair the Victory Presbyterian Church building very well at a reasonable cost.

## **In the end, it causes us to suffer fatal disaster.**

King Ahaziah of Judah went to Israel to visit King Joram of Israel,  
who was injured while going to war with him,  
but the visit ended up being a fatal disaster for him.

This was because God had already decided to punish Ahaziah.

King Ahaziah went there and met Jehu along with King Joram,  
who was the man chosen by God to destroy Ahab's family.

In the end, when Jehu was searching for and killing Ahab's family members,  
he not only found the leaders of Judah and King Ahaziah's nephews and killed them all,  
but he also found King Ahaziah and killed him as well  
(2 Chronicles 22:5-9).

When I meditate on these words,

I think that Satan makes us associate with people  
who do evil in God's eyes and makes us join them,  
ultimately causing us to suffer fatal disaster.

## **In the end, the reason Satan and his forces can only fail is because the Lord will prevail.**

When King Artaxerxes' response letter arrived,  
he instructed that the work on rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem  
should be halted until further orders, ensuring no harm would come to him.  
Upon receiving the letter, "Rehum the commander and Shimshai the secretary,  
together with their associates, carried out its contents promptly,  
stopping the work on the rebuilding of the city walls with force and power."  
As I reflect on this passage,  
Satan and his forces opposing the church will use any means  
to hinder the establishment of the Lord's church.  
While they may initially appear victorious,  
in the end, they can only fail because the Lord will prevail.

## **When a humble person receives a loving rebuke ....**

When a humble person receives a loving rebuke,  
he admits that he has sinned, humbly accepts the bitterness of the consequences of his sin,  
and says, 'It is natural for God to do this to me'  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 12:6).

## **We must humbly seek God's guidance and protection.**

During the reign of King Artaxerxes,  
those who returned with Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem  
fasted and humbled themselves before God at the Ahava River.

During their journey, they prayed, asking God to lead them safely  
and protect their children and all their possessions.

As I meditate on this passage, I receive these lessons:

- (1) We should humble ourselves before God.
- (2) We should seek God's guidance.
- (3) We should pray for God's protection over our children and all our possessions.

## **Reason for continuous warning?**

God sent his servants to continually warn us,  
who were committing evil in the sight of God,  
because God loves us and desires to spare us  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 36:15).

## **Complaints, letters, united front**

When Artaxerxes became king,  
the enemies of Judah and Benjamin sent a letter  
accusing the Judeans  
who had returned from Babylon and the residents of Jerusalem.

During the reign of Artaxerxes,  
Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and their colleagues  
wrote a letter in Aramaic to the emperor,  
which was translated upon reading.

Then Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe  
wrote an accusation against Jerusalem to King Artaxerxes.

As I contemplate these words:

I think about how our adversaries can form alliances to attack us together,  
legally accuse us, and also send letters filled with false  
and malicious accusations about us to people around us.

I believe such things could happen  
not only within the church session (pastors and elders)  
but also within denominational councils among pastors.

## **Church leaders must always be aware that Satan and his people may attack the church ...**

When Nehemiah and the people of Judah's enemies  
living around them heard about their adversaries' plans,  
they warned Nehemiah and the people of Judah ten times.

So, Nehemiah armed the people of Judah with swords, spears, and bows  
and positioned them behind the unfinished walls of Jerusalem,  
each family by their own house.

After assessing the situation and seeing the fear among the people of Judah,  
Nehemiah spoke to the leaders and the people, saying:

"Do not be afraid of them.

Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome,  
and fight for your brothers, your sons and daughters,  
your wives and your homes"

(Nehemiah 4:12-14).

As I meditate on these words:

I believe church leaders should always be mindful  
that Satan and his forces can attack the church.

They should have spiritual discernment  
to recognize and guard against  
how Satan is attacking the church from within.

Church leaders should equip the saints  
with spiritual armor to engage in spiritual warfare confidently,  
knowing that the battle belongs to the Lord  
and trusting that He will bring victory for the Lord,  
the church, and their families.

## **As the reversal drama of God of salvation unfolds in the Book of Esther ...**

Mumu Khan, the advisor, said to King Ahasuerus,  
'If it pleases the emperor, issue a royal decree  
and let it be recorded in the laws of Persia and Media, which cannot be revoked,  
that Vashti is never again to enter the presence of Emperor Ahasuerus.  
And let the emperor give her royal position to someone more worthy than she'  
(Esther 1:19).

Afterwards, the king's advisors throughout the provinces met  
to discuss what should be done about Queen Vashti,  
since she had refused to obey the king's command.  
Then the king, eager to make a display of the queen's beauty to his people,  
sought advice on what should be done (2:2-4).

When I meditate on these words,  
I see the dramatic reversal orchestrated  
by God of salvation unfolding in the Book of Esther.  
God used Vashti's disobedience during the third banquet  
in Esther chapter 1 as part of His plan,  
ultimately leading to the throne of Queen Vashti  
being given to someone better than her,  
possibly to Hadassah or Esther.

### **We will be left with no relief.**

If we mock God's servants, despise their words, and laugh at them,  
we will eventually incur God's wrath and be left with no relief  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 36:16).



## **I don't think they hesitate to flatter those in power.**

The enemies of Judah and Benjamin wrote a letter to King Artaxerxes.

The contents of the letter are as follows:

- (1) The Jews who have returned from Babylon are rebuilding Jerusalem, which they call 'a rebellious and wicked city.'
- (2) If the city is rebuilt and its walls completed, they will not pay taxes, which will decrease the king's revenue.
- (3) Since ancient times, Jerusalem has been a city that stirs up rebellion against kings and provinces, causing much trouble.
- (4) If this city is rebuilt and its walls completed,  
Your Majesty will lose control of the provinces west of the Euphrates River.

They wrote to King Artaxerxes:

'We are now informing the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are completed, you will no longer have control of the western province beyond the Euphrates River.' We felt obligated to inform the king so that this situation would not continue" (Ezra 4:12-16).

When I meditate on these words,  
I think about how our adversaries,  
when they write letters against us or slander and gossip about us,  
not only base their harmful intentions on falsehoods  
but also do not hesitate to flatter those in authority to achieve their wicked goals.

## **He must be more faithful and God-fearing than anyone else.**

After Nehemiah had completed the construction of the wall of Jerusalem and had set the doors in place, he appointed his brother Hanani and Hananiah, the commander of the citadel, to be in charge of Jerusalem.

Hananiah was a man more faithful and God-fearing than most (Nehemiah 7:1-2).

When I meditate on these words,

I receive the lesson that church leaders who are given responsibilities in the Lord's church should be more faithful and God-fearing than anyone else."

## **In such time, we will need God's help even more urgently.**

The enemies of Judah and Benjamin bribed officials of the Persian government to continually frustrate the plans of the returning exiles from Babylon to rebuild the temple of God (Ezra 4:5).

When I meditate on this word,

I think that if those who initially offered to help us with the Lord's work turn to harassing us and hindering the Lord's work when we refuse their offer, even going so far as to bribe government officials to continuously frustrate our plans, it will be very difficult for us to do the Lord's work.

This is because the officials who have been bribed will abuse their authority to prevent us from accomplishing the Lord's work.

Nevertheless, we must obey God's will and carry out the Lord's work.

In such times, we will need God's help even more urgently.

## **I pray that we will have reverence for His Word.**

I pray that God will enable us not only to long for His Word,  
but also to understand it and have reverence for it  
(Ref.: Nehemiah 8:1-5).

## **I hope we can cry when we hear and understand the interpretation of the meaning of His Word.**

May we become people who fear and long for God's word  
so that when we hear and understand its meaning,  
we can be moved to tears  
(Ref.: Nehemiah 8:7-9).

May the Holy Spirit who dwells within us  
enable us to hear and understand the gospel of Jesus Christ,  
moving our hearts so that we shed tears of gratitude and joy  
for the saving love and grace of the Triune God.

## **They will always serve us loyally.**

If we treat those who wish to follow us warmly  
and speak words that satisfy their hearts,  
they will always serve us loyally  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 10:7).

## **May they not dare to challenge us.**

May God put fear in the hearts of all those around us  
so that they do not dare to challenge us  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 17:10).

## **It doesn't even have that ability.**

As a pastor, I should grieve over the sins of the congregation,  
abstain from eating and drinking, and offer prayers of repentance to God,  
but I lack even the ability to do that  
(Ref.: Ezra 10:6).

## **However, just as we were enjoying peace, we sinned against God again.**

Countless times we disobeyed and rebelled against the Lord,  
abandoned His commandments, and did not return to Him.  
Then the Lord handed us over to our enemies to suffer.  
In our suffering, we cried out to the Lord,  
and He heard our plea from heaven  
and showed us great mercy by sending His servants  
to rescue us from the hands of our enemies.  
Yet, even so, when we found peace, we sinned against God again  
(Ref.: Nehemiah 9:26-28).

## **Cleansing purification work**

Although he was still young, King Josiah began to seek God and for 14 years carried out a cleansing purification work to rid Judah and Jerusalem of the sins that had defiled them. He removed the high places, Asherah poles, and all other idols (2 Chronicles 34:3-8).

Likewise, until my dying day,  
I want to cleanse my sin-stained heart  
with the precious blood of Jesus Christ's cross  
and then rest in the Lord's embrace.

## **‘See how I, the Lord, will save you.’**

We do not need to fight in God's war because God Himself fights for us. We simply need to move forward against Satan and his forces with the assurance that God is with us and that He will save us, just as His word declares: "See how I, the Lord, will save you" (2 Chronicles 20:17).

## **What must I cut off now??**

What is the first thing I should do as I pray with a longing for God's grace of repentance?  
What must I cut off now? (Ref.: Ezra 10:11)

## **I earnestly pray that the Lord will hear my prayer of repentance from heaven.**

There is no one who does not sin.  
When I suffer as a result of my sins,  
I pray that the Lord will help me realize my sins.  
And when I cry out to the Lord,  
saying, 'I have sinned. I have done evil,'  
and sincerely return to the Lord in repentance,  
I earnestly pray that the Lord will hear  
my prayer of repentance from heaven,  
show me mercy, and forgive all my sins and wrongdoings  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 6:36-39).

## **It's amazing!**

It's amazing!  
It is amazing that Ezra knelt before the temple,  
confessed sins, wept, and prayed.  
It is also amazing that many men and women of Israel wept loudly.  
Moreover, it is astonishing  
that even the children gathered around Ezra and wept  
(Ezra 10:1).

## **‘Nehemiah was greatly angered.’**

Nehemiah was greatly angered.

The reason was that he heard the complaints of the people of Judah.

These complaints were that they, as poor and powerless people, had borrowed money and grain from their fellow wealthy Jews to eat and live, and they had also paid taxes to the emperor.

However, they had no way to repay the interest on the money and grain to the wealthy Jews, so their children had to be sold as slaves, and some of their daughters had already been sold as slaves.

When I meditate on this passage, I wonder why Nehemiah was so angry.

I think the reason might not be simply because the people of Judah were complaining, but rather because of the content of their complaints.

In other words, I believe Nehemiah was greatly angered because he saw his fellow Jews doing things that should not be done among their own people.

However, today, foolishly,

I not only did something that Koreans should not do among themselves, but I also failed to be a good example to unbelievers (even as a pastor) and to believers.

This flaw of mine has been exposed, and I cannot help but acknowledge my own weakness and inadequacy.

I have prayed to God: "... forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors ..." (Matthew 6:12).

## **We must all pray to God together.**

When a tremendous difficulty came upon the church, the senior pastor resolved to inquire of God first.

He encouraged all the congregation to join together in prayer to God.

Therefore, all the church members, from various places, came up to the house of God to seek His help, and they must pray together to God (Ref.: 2 Chronicles 20:1-4).

## **When everyone only says things that are pleasing to the other person ...**

When everyone is saying only what is pleasant to hear,  
we should speak only what God tells us.  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 18:12-13).

### **I think we need to firmly refuse.**

Did the enemies of Judah and Benjamin genuinely desire to build the temple of the Lord,  
the God of Israel, together with the exiles who returned from Babylon?  
Were they truly serving the same God that the people of Judah and Benjamin served, as they claimed?  
Were the sacrifices they offered acceptable to God in His sight?  
If all these were true, then how did they respond when leaders like Zerubbabel,  
Jeshua, and the other heads of families said, "You have no part with us in building a temple to our God.  
We alone will build it for the Lord, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us"?  
Did they start then to harass the people of Judah and hinder them in their work on the temple?  
(Ref.: Ezra 4:1-4)

When I meditate on these words, I believe it is crucial to discern with the eyes of faith  
who are the people who desire to work alongside us for the church of God and His kingdom.  
Even if those who want to work with us claim to believe in Jesus, love the Lord, and worship God,  
we must firmly refuse them if it is not God's will for us to work together in His work.  
We should be ready to say to them, "We cannot work with you in the Lord's work."  
Seeing how they respond to such rejection can help us understand their intentions  
and why they desire to work with us in the Lord's work.



## **When money is loved to the extent of idolatry ...**

When money is loved to the extent of idolatry,  
one might think that it will help us in times of difficulty.  
Instead, it will actually become the cause of our downfall  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 27:23).

## **To reassure people in fearful situations ...**

When money is loved to the extent of idolatry,  
one might think that it will help us in times of difficulty.  
Instead, it will actually become the cause of our downfall  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 27:23).

## **After praying to God for a moment in my heart, I received the answer ...**

Nehemiah, who served wine to the king (Nehemiah 1:11),  
when asked by King Artaxerxes, "What is it you want?" replied,  
"After praying to the God of heaven, if it pleases the king to favor me  
and allow me to return to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried," (2:4-5).

When I reflect on these words,

I recall a memory from my days in internet ministry,  
chatting with brothers and sisters through messenger or KakaoTalk,  
or meeting them one-on-one in Korea, unsure how to respond to their words.  
Many times, I silently prayed to God for a moment and then received answered.

At those times, the Holy Spirit dwelling within me often brought to mind  
passages from Scripture, memories of sharing God's words faithfully.

One unforgettable memory is when a sister in Korea,  
whom I didn't know, read a reflection  
on my Naver blog and sent a long message on KakaoTalk,  
asking me this question:

"Does God love even someone like me?"

At that moment, the words brought to mind  
by the Holy Spirit were from Romans 8:35-39:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long;  
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,  
neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth,  
nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God  
that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

At that moment, when these words came to mind, the Holy Spirit also reminded me  
of a pastor who, after the loss of our first baby,  
had personally written a letter to us with a pen.

At the end of that letter, he had written Romans 8:35-39.

## **I long for the grace to repent of the arrogance of my heart.**

God blessed Hezekiah, who was humbled in his heart over his pride, allowing him to enjoy wealth and splendor, and bestowed upon him great riches.

Moreover, God made Hezekiah successful in all that he undertook (Reference: 2 Chronicles 32:26-30).

When I reflect on these words,

I believe that the ability to repent of our prideful hearts itself is a gift of God's grace.

## **We must be very wary of our hearts becoming arrogant.**

As we become strong with God's help,

we must be very wary of our hearts becoming proud.

Otherwise, we will end up on the road to destruction

(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 26:15-16).

## **Just as the people of Israel were scattered on the mountains like sheep without a shepherd ...**

Just as the people of Israel were scattered on the mountains like sheep without a shepherd, we see now that there are many believers who are scattered and wandering here and there because they have no pastor of their own and no church like their home (home church).

What would it be like? (Ref.: 2 Chronicles 18:16)

## **The mighty elite soldiers of Jesus Christ**

I pray that the Lord trains all of us into powerful elite soldiers of Jesus Christ and makes our church increasingly powerful (Ref.: 2 Chronicles 17:12-13).

## **If we believe that God blesses everyone who trusts in Him ...**

If we believe that God blesses everyone who trusts in Him,  
then we should pray and seek His protection rather than relying on human help,  
and we should receive His answer  
(Ref.: Ezra 8:22-23).

## **It's all just a made up story.**

When Nehemiah received the fifth message sent by Sanballat,  
they told him, "It is reported among the nations, and Geshem also says it,  
that you and the Jews intend to rebel; that is why you are rebuilding the wall.  
And according to these reports, you wish to become their king  
and have even set up prophets to proclaim about you in Jerusalem,  
'There is a king in Judah!' Now these matters will be reported to the king.  
So come, let us confer together"  
(Nehemiah 6:5-7).

Nehemiah's response to this message was that  
what Sanballat had said was not true but fabricated lies (v. 8).

When I reflect on these words,  
I realize that those who oppose the church can fabricate various untrue statements  
about the church leaders, such as pastors, and spread false rumors even within the church.  
Their aim is to incite dissatisfaction among church members  
and stir up disturbances within the church  
(Acts 21:21, 27, 31; Matthew 5:9).

As a result, church members may be hurt and leave the church,  
leading to conflict and division, which deeply grieves the heart of the Lord  
who is the head of the church.

## **All wives should respect their husbands.**

All wives should respect their husbands.

They should never ignore or belittle their husbands;

that would be wrong and could provoke their husbands to anger.

Wise wives will respect the authority of their husbands as the head of the household,

helping them to manage their homes well

(Reference: Esther 1:16-21).

## **We will succeed in everything.**

If we seek our God and pour out all our diligence in the work of our God's church

or in keeping God's commandments, we will succeed in everything

(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 31:21).

## **I pray that pastors will not be able to stand and serve.**

I pray that the glory of God fills the temple of God

so that the servants of the Lord cannot stand to serve

(and continue to perform their duties)

(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 5:14).

## **We must not ignore ...**

We must not ignore the advice of wise elders  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 10:8, 13).

## **It is precisely at that time, we should prepare for the upcoming spiritual warfare ...**

When we seek God, and He grants us peace on all sides,  
it is precisely at that time that we should fortify ourselves, our families, and our churches  
to prepare for the upcoming spiritual warfare.  
We should all become courageous and well-trained soldiers of the cross  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 14:6-8).

## **That is precisely when we cannot help but earnestly seek God.**

When we face challenges so great that we feel utterly helpless,  
that is precisely when we cannot help but earnestly seek God.  
The reason is that only God is our help.  
Therefore, we cry out to God, saying, "Our God, help us.  
We rely on you," as we confront those great difficulties  
(Ref.: 1 Chronicles 14:11).

## **That time is an opportunity for the whole family to return to God and seek Him.**

When there is no true God and no spiritual leader to teach the family,  
and when there is no word from God,  
that household will be disorderly,  
and no one will be safe to move about, and trouble will come.

That time is an opportunity for the whole family to return to God and seek Him  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 15:3-5).

## **To govern with righteousness and good politics**

I pray that God, who loves our country, will raise up wise leaders  
to make it a mighty nation and govern with righteousness and good politics  
(Ref.: 1 Chronicles 9:8).

## **A heart that does not give thanks for received grace is already a proud heart.**

When all the nations looked up to King Hezekiah, he fell ill and was near death.  
So, he prayed to God, who responded to his prayer and gave him a sign  
that he would recover from his illness.

However, Hezekiah's heart became proud,  
and he did not show gratitude for the grace he received  
(2 Chronicles 32:23-25).

As I reflect on these words, I am reminded of the verse from 1 Corinthians 10:12:

"Therefore, let the one who thinks he is standing watch out that he does not fall."

I also realize that when our hearts become proud, we fail to appreciate the grace given to us by God.  
In other words, a heart that does not give thanks for received grace is already a proud heart.

## **For the head of the family (husband/father) who commits sins ...**

In a household where the head (husband/father) commits sins,  
there may well be rebellious children  
(2 Chronicles 21:8).

### **Disguising doesn't help!**

When King Ahab disguised himself and went into battle,  
it seems he did not completely ignore the words spoken by the prophet Micaiah,  
who had told him the "truth."  
In other words, Ahab seemed to have been conscious of Micaiah's prophecy against him.  
Therefore, it appears he disguised himself with the intention of returning alive to Israel.  
However, a random arrow shot by an enemy soldier  
struck Ahab between the scale armor and breastplate of his armor.  
Eventually, he stood in his chariot to resist  
and fight against the Syrian forces until sunset,  
when he died (2 Chronicles 18:29-34).  
Ahab's death validated the prophecy spoken by Micaiah as true  
and affirmed Micaiah as a genuine prophet of God.  
This reminded me of the words that the Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit



## **We must discern who we should imitate and who we should not!**

King Jehoram did not follow the example of his father, Jehoshaphat, or Asa, king of Judah, who were to be emulated, but instead followed the evil practices of the kings of Israel, whom he should not have imitated.

As a result, he led the people of Judah and Jerusalem into idol worship (2 Chronicles 21:12-13).

We should follow the example of Jesus (Ref.: 1 Corinthians 11:1) and do what is right in God's sight.

We must not imitate Satan and commit evil in the eyes of God (Ref.: 2 Kings 18:3, 24:19).

## **I'm embarrassed and sorry and have nothing to say.**

Ezra heard that the Israelites, including the priests and Levites, were not living separate from the neighboring peoples but were following their customs and engaging in detestable practices. Moreover, he learned that the Israelites had intermarried with the neighboring peoples, thus defiling the purity of the holy nation.

Even worse, the leaders and officials were the ones leading in this wrongdoing. Upon hearing this, Ezra was so distressed that he tore his clothes, pulled hair from his head and beard, and sat down appalled (Ezra 9:1-3).

As I reflect on this passage, I am reminded that we, as Christians who profess faith in Jesus, must examine ourselves to see if we are living distinct from those who do not believe in Jesus, or if we are following the ways of the world and engaging in sinful practices. I feel particularly ashamed and sorry, wondering if I, as a teaching elder (pastor) and ruling elder, along with other church leaders, might be leading the way in this failure.

**It reminds me of the saying,  
"Raising children doesn't always go as parents wish."**

Hezekiah followed the example of his ancestor King David  
and did what was right in the eyes of the Lord  
(2 Chronicles 29:2).

However, his son Manasseh rebuilt the high places  
that his father Hezekiah had torn down, erected altars to Baal,  
made an Asherah pole, and worshiped the sun, moon, and stars.  
"He even built altars to foreign gods in the very temple of the Lord,  
about which the Lord had said,

'My name will remain in Jerusalem forever.'

In both courtyards of the temple of the Lord,  
he built altars to all the starry hosts.

He sacrificed his own children in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom,  
practiced divination, witchcraft, and sought omens,  
and consulted mediums and spiritists.

He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord, arousing his anger."

He practiced divination and witchcraft, sought omens,  
and consulted mediums and spiritists.

He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord, arousing his anger.

In short, King Manasseh followed the detestable practices of the nations  
that the Lord had driven out before the Israelites  
and did evil in the eyes of the Lord (33:2-6).

While his father, King Hezekiah, did what was right in the eyes of the Lord,  
his son, King Manasseh, did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord.

How can a father and son be so completely opposite?

It reminds me of the saying,

"Raising children doesn't always go as parents wish."

I earnestly pray that God Himself will nurture our children  
so that they become children of God who do what is right in His eyes.

## **God faithfully fulfills His promises even to unfaithful sinners**

King Jehoram's sins were so severe  
that God should have destroyed the house of David,  
but He did not do so because He had promised David  
that his descendants would continue to rule the kingdom  
(2 Chronicles 21:7).

2 Timothy 2:13, Modern Korean Bible says:

"Even if we are unfaithful, the Lord remains faithful,  
for He cannot deny Himself."

## **Even if the people of the world curse us Christians ...**

During the Exodus,  
the Ammonites and Moabites bribed Balaam to curse the Israelites,  
but God turned the curse into a blessing  
(Nehemiah 13:1-2).

As I reflect on this passage,  
I learn that even if the people of the world curse us Christians,  
the Lord will turn those curses into blessings for us.

## **Even if there are people mocking and ridiculing us not only from the outside but also from within ...**

Nehemiah said to Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem,  
who mocked and ridiculed the rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall:

"The God of heaven will help us succeed.

We, his servants, will start rebuilding,  
but you have no share or claim or historic right in Jerusalem"  
(Nehemiah 2:20).

As I reflect on this passage,  
I learn that when God moves our hearts to do His work,  
we must quietly and steadfastly carry on,  
trusting that the God of heaven will help us,  
even if there are people mocking and ridiculing us  
from both outside and within.

## **Satan can tempt us to sin even through our loved ones.**

King Ahaziah of Judah also followed the evil ways of Israel's King Ahab,  
influenced by his mother Athaliah, who was from the wicked lineage of Ahab  
(daughter of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, known for her cruel nature).

She led Ahaziah into doing evil  
(2 Chronicles 22:2-4).

After his father Jehoram died, Ahaziah followed the teachings  
of his relatives from the house of Ahab and committed evil in the sight of God.

As I reflect on this passage,  
I realize that Satan can tempt us  
and even lead us into sin through our loved ones  
(Ref.: 1 Thessalonians 3:5).

## **We do not fall for Satan's lies and deception.**

The person whom the Spirit has convinced through God's word  
has the assurance of God's salvation  
and therefore does not fall for Satan's lies and deceit  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 32:11).

## **Sanballat and Tobiah's intention was to assassinate Nehemiah.**

Sanballat, Tobiah, and the rest of Nehemiah's enemies among the Judahite people,  
upon hearing that Nehemiah and the people of Judah had completed  
the rebuilding of the city wall and there were no gaps left to repair,  
sent messengers to Nehemiah five times.

In summary, these messages proposed meeting Nehemiah  
in a village in the plain of Ono (Nehemiah 6:1-7).

However, the true purpose of this proposal was actually a scheme to harm Nehemiah.

In essence, Sanballat and Tobiah's intention was to assassinate Nehemiah.

Perhaps they believed that by killing Nehemiah, the leader of the Judahite people,  
they could prevent them from finishing the city wall  
and hanging its doors on the gates of Jerusalem.

They sent messengers to Nehemiah five times with the proposal  
to meet him because they did not want Nehemiah and the people of Judah  
to complete the rebuilding of the walls and gates of Jerusalem.

Their intention was to assassinate Nehemiah.

As I reflect on this passage, I believe that enemies of the church may attack  
and try to remove pastors who are leading the church to be established  
(or rather, wish for the church to collapse).

By attacking the pastor, they aim to make them leave the church,  
causing the congregation to scatter like sheep without a shepherd  
(1 Kings 22:17; 2 Chronicles 18:16), exhausted and discouraged (Matthew 9:36).

## **We must make an oath.**

We must make an oath  
to serve only our God with all our heart and soul  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 15:12).

## **The choir conductor must lead songs of thanks and praise to God.**

The singers, according to the directive established  
by David and his son Solomon, performed their duties with all their heart.  
Ever since the days of David and Asaph,  
there had been directors for the singers  
who led the songs of praise and thanksgiving to God  
(Nehemiah 12:45-46).  
As I reflect on this passage,  
I learn that the choir conductor  
must lead songs of praise and thanksgiving to God,  
following the directives set by the leader.  
The singers themselves must faithfully fulfill their duties  
according to the regulations established by the conductor.

## **‘Disaster’ disguised as "success"**

How many saints in the church are experiencing "disaster" disguised as "success,"  
deceived by lying spirits inside the church?  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 18:21-22)

## **Believers should live a life separated from the people of the world.**

The Israelites listened to the words of the Law given by Moses  
and separated themselves from all the foreign peoples  
(Nehemiah 13:3).

As I reflect on this passage,  
I learn that we as believers should live  
a life separated from the people of the world.

## **We must not defile the purity of the saints ...**

We must not defile the purity of the saints  
by following the customs of this sinful world,  
which is filled with all kinds of filth and ugliness,  
and by engaging in filthy acts  
and pursuing worldly peace and prosperity,  
and intermarrying and mingling with such people  
(Ref.: Ezra 9:1-2, 11-12).

**May the Holy Spirit move our hearts so that we can all be used  
preciously in the work of the Lord building His church  
(Matthew 16:18).**

God moved the heart of Cyrus, the emperor of Persia,  
to issue a decree allowing God's people to return to Jerusalem in Judah  
and rebuild the temple of the Lord, the God of Israel.

The Lord then stirred the hearts of the heads of the families of Judah and Benjamin,  
the priests, and the Levites, and everyone whose heart God had moved,  
to go up and build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem  
(Ezra 1:1, 3, 5).

As I meditate on this passage,

I pray that the Holy Spirit will move our hearts

so that we can all be used preciously in the work of the Lord building His church  
(Matthew 16:18).

**The cleansing work of the temple  
should take precedence over the construction of the temple.**

After King Josiah finished the cleansing of the land of Judah and the temple,  
he used the offerings brought into the temple to repair the temple buildings  
that the kings of Judah had allowed to fall into ruin  
(2 Chronicles 34:8-11).

As I meditate on this passage,

I learn that the cleansing of the temple

should take precedence over the construction of the temple.

The most important aspect of the temple's cleansing is  
that we, as God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16), must first be cleansed  
by the precious blood of Jesus (Ref.: Hebrews 9:22).



## **Before starting the construction**

Although we hold a dedication service to God  
after completing the construction of the temple,  
it would also be good to worship God  
before starting the construction  
(Ref.: Ezra 3:6).

## **The people of the world may oppose our church and temporarily halt the work of the Lord that we are doing, but ...**

Although the enemies of Judah and Benjamin succeeded  
in temporarily halting the reconstruction of Jerusalem's walls,  
the leaders of Judah and Benjamin, Zerubbabel and Jeshua,  
began to rebuild the temple of God once again  
after hearing the prophetic words of Haggai and Zechariah.  
The prophets of God were with them, helping them  
(Ezra 5:1-2).

Likewise, the people of the world may oppose our church  
and temporarily stop the work of the Lord that we are doing.  
However, even in such times, we must listen to the word of God  
through His servants, gain strength, and restart the Lord's work with His servants.  
This is because the work of the Lord, spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ  
to all the people of the world, cannot be stopped.  
Until the day the Lord returns, He will have us proclaim  
the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth!

## **We bring trouble upon ourselves.**

When we become proud, we not only refuse to listen to God's word but also ignore the warnings of His servants.

By disobeying God's word,  
we sin and bring trouble upon ourselves

(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 25:16, 19-20).

## **I pray for victory!**

With God's help, I pray for victory in the spiritual battle against myself, the world, sin, Satan, and death

(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 14:13).

## **Psalms 23:6**

Surely the saving goodness and saving kindness of the God of salvation will follow me,  
and I will dwell in the house of God forever!

(Meditating on Psalm 23:6)

## **Essential subjects for our faith life**

When receiving the Lord's guidance in the wilderness,  
He instructs us through the Holy Spirit.  
The teaching of the Holy Spirit in this wilderness  
is an essential subject for our faith life  
(Ref.: Nehemiah 9:19-20).

### **Are not many of the congregants who claim to believe in Jesus actually committing more evil than those who do not believe in Jesus?**

King Manasseh, who committed all kinds of evil and greatly angered God,  
deceived the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem to commit even more evil  
than the nations that God had destroyed before the Israelites.

Clearly, God warned Manasseh and his people multiple times,  
but they did not listen (2 Chronicles 33:6, 9-10).

Are there not churches where a single pastor, like Manasseh,  
deceives all congregants into committing more evil than the people of the world?

Surely God would warn that pastor and the congregants multiple times, but will they listen?

False pastors with false gospel and teachings can deceive congregants  
enough to commit more evil than those who do not believe in Jesus.

Are congregants who claim to believe in Jesus  
actually committing more evil than those who do not believe in Jesus?

## **Do you want to boast about the beauty of your beautiful wife?**

King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) also arranged a banquet for the women in the royal palace, and on the last day of the banquet, when King Xerxes was in high spirits from wine, he commanded the seven eunuchs who served him to bring Queen Vashti before him with the royal crown on her head.

He wanted to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at (Esther 1:9-11).

As I reflect on King Xerxes' desire to display the splendor of his glorious kingdom and the pomp of his majesty (v. 4) first, and then on the last day of the banquet, when he was in high spirits from wine, he wanted to show off the beauty of his wife, Queen Vashti, to all those gathered at the banquet.

I think his display issue is that he should have displayed his glorious kingdom and majesty first, and then his lovely wife, Queen Vashti.

However, he did not do that (the priorities were reversed) and he wanted to brag about the beauty of his wife at the banquet because he felt good in a little wine.

Therefore, Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command, as conveyed by the eunuchs (v. 12).

When a husband faces rejection from his wife, instead of getting as angry and unable to bear it as King Xerxes did (v. 12), he should think about why his wife refused his request.

Perhaps there is something in her heart that makes it unbearable for her to comply with her husband's request, possibly some shame or something else that she cannot endure.

**Rather than living a long life without any suffering or illness,  
we should come to know God's sovereignty through pain and ...**

King Manasseh, in his distress, sought God  
and humbled himself completely before Him in prayer.  
God heard his prayer and brought him back to Jerusalem,  
restoring him to rule over his kingdom again.  
"It was then that Manasseh knew that the Lord is truly God"  
(2 Chronicles 33:12-13).  
Rather than living a long life without suffering or illness  
while committing evil in the sight of God,  
it is far better for us to humble ourselves before God  
through pain and repentant prayer.  
In doing so, we receive the grace of God's restoration  
and come to realize His sovereignty as our God.

**He always faithfully keeps His promises!**

The truthful God always faithfully keeps the promises he made to us  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 6:10).

**May the words of promise come true now.**

My God, may the promises made to your servant  
in John 6:1-15 and Matthew 16:18 now come true  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 6:1).

## **Who will listen to the “true” words of a true pastor?**

When everyone is quick to listen to false pastors  
who tell what they think are “good things,”  
who will listen to the “true” words of a true pastor?  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 18:27)

## **How did it last for 3 hours ...?**

As I meditate on the words from Nehemiah 9:1-3  
where the Israelites stood in their places  
and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors,  
and stood for three hours and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God,  
and for another three hours they confessed their sins and worshiped the Lord their God,  
these thoughts come to mind:

- (1) Are there people in my life whom I need to cut ties with?
- (2) How were the Israelites able to listen to the reading of the Law of the Lord for three hours?  
If they valued God's word to that extent, I too should meditate on God's word day and night.
- (3) How were the Israelites able to spend three hours confessing their sins and worshiping God?

Did they have so many sins to confess?

If I truly meditate on God's word day and night,  
the Holy Spirit, who is the author of the Bible, will continuously expose my sins.  
Following the guidance of the Holy Spirit,  
I must confess my sins by believing in the precious blood of Jesus on the cross.

## **How can someone who has removed idols love and assist those who worship idols?**

It is puzzling how King Jehoshaphat,  
who earnestly sought God and also did good deeds,  
could love and assist King Ahab,  
who hated God and committed evil.  
How could Jehoshaphat,  
who removed the Asherah poles from Judah  
(2 Chronicles 19:2-3), support Ahab,  
who worshipped idols and did all sorts of wicked things  
(1 Kings 21:26)? How could someone  
who eradicated idols love and assist someone who worships idols?  
This seems akin to someone trying to serve  
both God and wealth simultaneously,  
as mentioned in Matthew 6:24.

## **The more difficult times are ...**

The more difficult times are,  
the more earnestly we must seek God  
and do what is right in God's eyes,  
but instead, we are sinning against God even more ...  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 27:22)

## **Maybe in order to obey God's word ...**

Perhaps we may need to cut off relationships with worldly people  
in order to obey God's word.

Alternatively, if there are individuals who hinder our obedience to God's word,  
we may need to wisely set healthy boundaries and maintain a distance  
(Ref.: Nehemiah 10:28-29).

## **He is a God who keeps the covenant and gives love!**

The Lord is a God who keeps His covenant  
and gives love to all who obey Him with a whole heart  
and try to live according to His will!  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 6:14)

## **The secret to being able to praise and worship God even when we faced with tremendous difficulties is ...**

Even when we faced with tremendous difficulties,  
the key to praising and worshiping God is believing (being assured)  
that God is with us according to His Almighty promises  
and that He will surely deliver us  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 20:18-19).  
Therefore, by faith we please God  
(Hebrews 11:6)  
and we live by faith, not by sight  
(2 Corinthians 5:7).



## **When facing tremendous difficulties ...**

When facing tremendous difficulties,  
although we realize and acknowledge our own lack of strength and ability,  
at the same time, we come to believe and rely on the fact that God,  
who is in heaven, has the power and ability.

This becomes an opportunity for us  
to seek help from God alone

(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 20:1-6).

## **When we are afflicted with various troubles and distresses ...**

When we are afflicted with various troubles and distresses,  
we must not lose courage but continue to do good courageously.

Then, we will surely receive our reward

(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 15:6-7).

## **May we exclaim, “The Lord is good and His love endures forever!”**

At the completion of our prayer, may the glory of God fill His temple,  
prompting all of us to bow down in worship and thanksgiving, proclaiming,  
"The Lord is good; His love endures forever!"

(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 7:1-3).

## **The secret to victory in spiritual warfare is ...**

The key to victory in spiritual warfare  
lies in believing with certainty  
that God is with us and that  
He will surely help us and fight on our behalf.  
With this faith and certainty,  
we should strengthen our resolve,  
take courage, and not fear Satan and his forces at all.  
For the Lord our God,  
who is much stronger than they, is with us!  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 32:7-8)

**In the midst of spiritual warfare,  
when our hearts and bodies are exceedingly weary,  
we must be very careful.**

In spiritual warfare,  
when our hearts and bodies are exceedingly weary,  
we must be very careful.  
The reason is because during those times,  
the work of the Lord can become burdensome to us,  
leading us to complain. It is precisely at those moments  
that Satan may suddenly attack us,  
seeking to overwhelm us and prevent us  
from continuing the work of the Lord any longer  
(Ref.: Nehemiah 4:10-11).

## **I think that maintaining a close relationship for a long time was itself a problem.**

When Nehemiah was not in Jerusalem, Tobiah, an adversary of Israel, was using a large room designated for storing offerings— grain, incense, temple utensils, tithes of grain, new wine, and olive oil for the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers.

This room was managed by Eliashib, the priest in charge of the storerooms of the temple, who had maintained a close relationship with Tobiah for some time.

Upon Nehemiah's return to Jerusalem, he discovered that Eliashib had provided Tobiah with this room in the house of God.

Nehemiah was unable to contain his anger.

He threw all of Tobiah's belongings out of the room, commanded it to be purified, and then brought back the temple utensils, grain offerings, and incense.

(Ref.: Nehemiah 13:4-9).

When I reflect on this passage, I believe that Priest Eliashib should have severed his relationship with Tobiah, who was an adversary of Israel

(or he should have separated himself from Tobiah).

The fact that Eliashib maintained a close relationship with Tobiah for a long time was itself the problem.

Because Eliashib did not do this, he eventually ended up allowing Tobiah to use and occupy the large room.

How could Eliashib enable Israel's adversary to use that large room?

This is akin to a pastor inviting Satan's servant into our church.

What would Satan's servant do inside our church as a result?

Therefore, like Nehemiah, we must not contain our anger.

We should drive out Satan's servant from our church,

throw out all their belongings,

and repent to purify our hearts and our church.

## **Only by serving the God of our parents and obeying His commands...**

We should demonstrate and show in this world  
that we, following the example set by our faith's forefathers,  
do not serve idols but rather serve our forefathers' God  
and obey God's commands.

In doing so, we prove to the world that God is with us  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 17:3-4).

## **Only with a consistent heart!**

I pray that we will serve God  
with a consistent heart and do what is right in God's eyes  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 34:2).

## Why had she remained silent until now?

Prime Minister Haman not only resolved to annihilate all the Jews but also devised and actively executed his plan.

He approached King Ahasuerus, arguing that the scattered Jews within the kingdom were not abiding by the king's laws and their existence would not be beneficial unless they were eradicated.

Haman requested an edict to exterminate them all.

Moreover, he promised to deposit 340 tons of silver into the royal treasury for carrying out this task.

Upon this, King Ahasuerus handed over his signet ring to Haman, authorizing him to deal with the Jewish people as he saw fit.

Reflecting on this passage, I believe that if King Ahasuerus had known that Esther, whom he loved more than all the other women (Esther 2:17) and who was a Jewess (vv. 10, 20), and Mordecai, who had exposed the plot of the two eunuchs seeking to assassinate the king (vv. 21-23), were Jews, he would not have given Haman the authority to carry out his plan to annihilate all the Jews.

Why did Mordecai firmly instruct his cousin Esther not to reveal that she was a Jew to anyone? (v. 10)

Esther, who had obeyed Mordecai's instructions since childhood, kept silent about her Jewish identity as Mordecai had directed her (v. 20).

It wasn't until she was hosting Haman for a second banquet, and King Ahasuerus asked her, "Queen Esther, what is your request?

Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you" (7:2), that she finally disclosed her Jewish heritage.

She said, "If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition.

And spare my people—this is my request.

For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed,

killed and annihilated" (vv. 3-4).

Why did she maintain her silence until this point?

Isaiah 53:7 comes to mind:

"He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth;  
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep  
before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."

Esther no longer remained silent, ensuring that her people,  
the Jews, were not annihilated by Haman.

However, Jesus Christ, who is the Lamb of God (John 1:36),  
endured oppression and remained silent like a lamb,  
not opening his mouth until the end.

As a result, we who deserved eternal destruction are now able to live eternally.

## **Why are we bringing misfortune upon ourselves?**

God warns His people to return, but God asks them, who do not listen to the warning,

‘Why do you disobey My commands and bring misfortune on yourselves?’

(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 24:20)

## **Have courage and work hard under the guidance of the Holy Spirit ...**

A pastor like me must have courage and work hard to repent  
under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, with the support of God  
and believers who fear God's commands, who will support me with all their might  
(Ref.: Ezra 10:4).

**The God of our salvation is  
the One who does not change yesterday, today or forever.**

The God who helped us and delivered us from crises in the past  
is the God who helps and rescues us even from the enormous difficulties we face now.  
The God of our salvation is the One who does not change yesterday, today or forever.  
Therefore, like the psalmist, we lift our eyes and look at the mountains.  
Where does our help come from? Our help comes from God who made heaven and earth  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 20:7-11; Psalms 121:1-2).

**In our hearts, there is divine joy that only God gives us.**

When the Holy Spirit moves and inspires our hearts,  
we are brought to tears by the realization of God's Word  
and His amazing love and grace of salvation.  
Yet, within our hearts, there is a divine joy that only God can give us.  
This divine joy that the Lord gives us is our strength (Ref.: Nehemiah 8:10-12).

**Let us all praise and worship the great God with faith (Amen).**

When Ezra praised the great Lord God,  
all the people responded by lifting their hands and saying, "Amen! Amen!"  
Then they bowed down with their faces to the ground and worshiped the Lord  
(Nehemiah 8:6).  
Reflecting on this passage, I am reminded of the lesson that we should all praise  
the great God with faith ("Amen") and worship Him humbly.  
The gospel song "Great and Mighty is the Lord" comes to mind:  
"Great and mighty is the Lord, our God, Great and mighty is the Lord, our God,  
We lift our banners high and praise the King, Great and mighty is the Lord,  
our God, Great and mighty is the Lord, our God."

**I hope that all of us, like Esther, can be established by God  
and be used as tools to fulfill God's will of salvation.**

When her parents died,  
Esther, who was raised by her cousin Mordecai as his own daughter,  
found favor with everyone who saw her.  
When she went before King Ahasuerus,  
he liked and loved her more than all the other women.  
He placed a crown on her head  
and made her queen instead of Vashti  
(Esther 2:7, 15-17).

Reflecting on this passage,  
I think about how the God of salvation  
orchestrates a reversal of fortunes.  
He made Esther queen and ultimately used her  
to save the Jews from their enemy, Haman.  
I pray that all of us, like Esther, can be raised up by God  
and used as instruments to fulfill His purpose of salvation.

**If pastors first repent ...**

If pastors first repent and return to the Lord by obeying His commands,  
the Lord will have mercy on us and grant us great grace,  
so that He will gather us back again  
(Nehemiah 1:9).



## **People around us are looking at our circumstances to see how we are keeping the word of God.**

In the letter given to Ezra, a scholar well-versed in the law and a priest, by King Artaxerxes, it states: "I, along with seven counselors, have decided to send you to Jerusalem and Judah to find out how the Law of your God, Yahweh, is being observed there," and "You are also to take with you the silver and gold that you can obtain in Babylon, as well as the offerings from the Israelites and priests for the temple of their God in Jerusalem. Use this money immediately to buy bulls, rams, and lambs, along with grain and wine for offerings, and present them on the altar of the temple in Jerusalem. The remaining money can be used as you and your fellow Israelites see fit according to the will of your God" (Ezra 7:11, 14, 16-18).

When I reflect on this passage, I think about how those around us who do not believe in Jesus are watching to see how we uphold God's Word and observe our circumstances. Additionally, when they support us financially to carry out God's work, they expect us to use the money wisely and according to God's will.

## **God, who gives us exceedingly more than we ask or imagine.**

King Artaxerxes (Ahasuerus) promised Ezra, "If there is anything else needed for the temple of your God, I will provide it from the royal treasury." Furthermore, he commanded all the treasurers of the region west of the Euphrates River, "Whatever Ezra requires of you, it must be provided immediately" (Ezra 7:20-21). Reflecting on this, I recalled Ephesians 3:20: "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us." Our God is one who provides exceedingly more than we ask or imagine! Moreover, God can even use those around us who do not believe in Jesus to abundantly supply what we need to do His work.

## **In order for us to enter the spiritual war with confidence and win ...**

King Abijah of Judah had confidence in victory  
in his war against King Jeroboam of Israel.  
Despite Jeroboam's army of 800,000 soldiers  
being twice the size of his own 400,000 soldiers,  
King Abijah was certain that they could not be defeated  
because "God is with us; he is our leader."  
Even though King Jeroboam sent part of his troops  
to ambush the Judahites from behind,  
surrounding them on both sides, the Judahites cried out to God.  
The priests with them blew their trumpets,  
and the people of Judah raised a battle cry.  
God helped King Abijah and the people of Judah  
defeat King Jeroboam and the Israelite army.  
Although King Jeroboam had expelled God's priests and Levites  
and appointed his own priests to serve idols as the pagans did,  
King Abijah remained faithful to God.  
He continued to serve God and did not abandon Him,  
allowing only the descendants of Aaron to be priests  
and the Levites to assist them in offering  
burnt offerings to God morning and evening.  
Just as King Abijah followed God's commands,  
King Jeroboam abandoned God  
(2 Chronicles 13:1-15).  
Reflecting on this passage,  
I learn that to engage in spiritual war with confidence and win,  
we must believe that God is with us and seek His help through prayer.  
Additionally, we must serve God and live lives that obey His commands,  
presenting ourselves as righteous before Him.

## **When we face difficulties ... (1)**

When we face difficulties,  
if we use the difficulties as an opportunity  
to return to God and seek Him,  
we will be able to meet God  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 15:4).

## **When we face difficulties ... (2)**

I hope that when we face difficulties,  
we can use it as an opportunity to repent  
and realize that we have been living without the true God,  
without a pastor who teaches us the gospel of Jesus Christ,  
or without the word of God  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 15:3 -4).

## **Throughout the days we live on this earth**

I pray that we will always fear the Lord (serve with a fearful heart)  
and live according to the Lord's will (walk in the Lord's path)  
throughout the days we live on this earth  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 6:31).

## **The secret to becoming stronger is ...**

The secret to becoming stronger is  
to walk the right path before God  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 27:6).

## **When we try to do the Lord's work ...**

When Nehemiah and the leaders of Jerusalem  
prepared to begin the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem,  
their adversaries Sanballat, Tobiah, and the Arabians mocked and ridiculed them,  
saying, "What are you doing? Are you rebelling against the king?"  
(Nehemiah 2:18-19).

Reflecting on this passage,  
I realize that when we endeavor to do the Lord's work,  
external adversaries may mock and ridicule us,  
and even those within our community may oppose and scorn us.

## **When we do the Lord's work ...**

When we do the Lord's work,  
we must do so with goodness, justice, and truth in God's eyes  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 31:20).

## **If we sincerely seek God ...**

If we sincerely seek God,  
He will meet us and give us peace all around us  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 15:15).

## **We need to be guards.**

Nehemiah instructed Hanani and Hananiah,  
whom he entrusted with the responsibility of governing Jerusalem,  
to station guards among the residents of Jerusalem,  
each at their post and each in front of their own homes  
(Nehemiah 7:3).

As I reflect on this passage,  
it reminds me that each of us should be like guards,  
protecting our hearts, homes, and churches.

## **Aren't we arrogant, stubborn, and disobeying the Lord's commands?**

God keeps his promised word to bless us, and he gives us commands,  
but are we being stubborn and disobedient to his commands due to our pride?  
(Ref.: Nehemiah 9:15-16).

## **We must raise up many Bible teachers ...**

We must raise up many Bible teachers  
so that they can teach the Word of God to all Christians,  
even through the Internet (Ref.: 2 Chronicles 17:7-9).

## **Even if we face opposition, adversaries, mockery, and scorn ...**

Even they faced with the ridicule, mockery, and insults from Sanballat and Tobiah,  
Nehemiah and the people of Judah worked with all their heart.  
Therefore, they (finally) built the entire wall of Jerusalem,  
even amid the opposition (Nehemiah 4:6).

As I reflect on this passage, I believe that when the Lord calls us to join in building His church,  
despite any opposition, adversaries, mockery, or scorn we may encounter,  
we should silently continue to work diligently and wholeheartedly in building the Lord's church.

## **We don't know what to do, so we only look to the Lord.**

When Satan and his forces attack our homes and churches,  
we find ourselves powerless to ward off such attacks,  
so we do not know what to do, but our eyes are on the Lord  
(2 Chronicles 20:12).

In this way, in the midst of spiritual war,  
when we deeply experience our own inadequacy and helplessness,  
we find ourselves looking to the Lord alone for guidance.  
Therefore, such profound difficulties seem to teach us two things:

- (1) Our own powerlessness and helplessness,
- (2) That our focus should be solely on Almighty God, the God of salvation.

## **We must train our ears.**

King Ahaziah should not have followed  
the teachings of his relatives from the house of Ahab.  
However, he did follow their teachings  
and committed evil in the sight of God.  
Furthermore, King Ahaziah should not have listened  
to the advice of the house of Ahab.  
Yet, he listened to their advice  
and went with Joram, the king of Israel, the son of Ahab,  
to fight against Hazael, the king of Syria.  
In the end, he was killed just like the members of the house of Ahab,  
when he went to meet Jehu  
(2 Chronicles 22:4-9).

As I reflect on this passage,

I realize that Satan can make us listen to the teachings  
and advice of evil people around us,  
leading us to commit evil in the sight of God.

Moreover, Satan can make us listen to the false teachings  
and advice of false pastors who are like hungry wolves in sheep's clothing  
(Matthew 7:15), causing us to sin against God. The time has already come.  
People are gathering around false pastors,  
preferring to follow their own desires and listen to teachers  
who gratify their ears rather than hearing sound doctrine  
(Ref.: 2 Timothy 4:3).

Therefore, we need to train our ears.

Our ears should be accustomed to hearing sound doctrine.

Our ears should be familiar with listening  
to the words spoken by the Holy Spirit to us  
(Ref.: Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:13, 22).

## **We have nothing to boast about, neither our strength nor our abilities.**

From India to Ethiopia, the Emperor Xerxes of the Medo-Persian Empire, who ruled over 127 provinces, displayed the splendor and majesty of his powerful empire during a lavish banquet that lasted for six months.

He invited all his officials, high-ranking nobles, military commanders of Media and Persia, governors of the provinces, and nobles (Ref.: Esther 1:1-4).

As I meditate on this passage, I'm reminded of King Nebuchadnezzar's words:

"Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30).

Both these kings shared the desire to display the glory and majesty of their respective kingdoms.

In other words, they had a desire to boast.

They both wanted to show off and boast about the glory (splendor) and majesty (grandeur) of the kingdoms they ruled.

Job 15:25 says, "for he stretches out his hand against God and bids defiance to the Almighty."

When meditating on these words together, I receive the lesson that I must examine whether there is any pride in my heart before God.

This is because even pastors like myself, while ministering, may fall into the temptation of thinking, "This church I have built with my own ability and strength," and subtly desiring to boast.

Similarly, Christian entrepreneurs in their businesses may think,

"My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:17) and fall into the temptation of wanting to boast.

They trust in their wealth and boast of their great riches (Psalms 49:6).

However, the Bible speaks like this: "Remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:18).

Therefore, we have nothing to boast about in our own strength or abilities.

Such boasting is all in vain (James 4:16; 2 Peter 2:18).

We should not boast about people (1 Corinthians 3:21).

Instead, we should boast about our weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:9),

boast about God all day long (Psalms 44:8), boast about the work of God (Romans 15:17),

boast about Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:3), and declare,

"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14).



## **Throughout our lives ...**

We must be faithful to God throughout our lives  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 15:17).

## **In serving the Lord**

We must take great pride in serving the Lord  
and boldly remove all idols from among us  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 17:6).

## **We must not ignore the Lord's warning.**

When we were arrogant, disobedient,  
and refused to follow the LORD's law, and did not listen to his commands;  
when we stubbornly turned away from the LORD's words,  
then he patiently endured us for a long time.  
And repeatedly, through his Spirit, he warned us to obey the LORD's law.  
We must not ignore this warning  
(Nehemiah 9:29-30).

## **We should continually exalt your name until we die.**

‘We are your servants,  
the people whom you have redeemed  
by your great power and by your strong hand.’  
Therefore, we should continually  
exalt your name until we die  
(Nehemiah 1:10-11).

## **Rather than seeking to receive any benefits from the God’s church ...**

We should pray to understand  
what we should voluntarily offer (dedicate)  
for the sake of the Lord's church,  
rather than seeking what benefits  
we can receive from God's church  
(Nehemiah 10:32).

## **We must have assurance in God's help!**

The edict that God moved the heart of the Persian emperor Cyrus to promulgate throughout the land states,  
'Wherever a Jew lives, when he returns, his neighbors will help him and give him silver, gold, and other necessary things.  
Give them animals and gifts for the temple of God in Jerusalem'  
(Ezra 1:4, Modern Bible).

When I meditate on this passage,  
when Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus,  
the children of Israel asked the Egyptians for gold and silver jewelry and clothing as Moses had instructed,  
and the Lord said that the Egyptians would give the Israelites,  
I was reminded of the words, "He made them feel good about them and gave them what they asked for,  
so the Israelites almost took away everything the Egyptians had (12:35-36).  
When I meditated on these two Bible verses in relation to each other,  
I came to the idea that our God not only helps us,  
but also touches the hearts of our neighbors  
so that they feel good towards us, so that they help us.  
In this way, God is a God who helps us  
even through people we cannot expect or even expect.  
Therefore, we are taught that we must have assurance in God's help.

## **We must listen to the word of God, gain courage ...**

We must listen to the word of God, gain courage,  
remove all idols from our homes and churches,  
and restore worship to God  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 15:8).

## **We are greatly encouraged by the Word of God we hear through His servants ...**

‘The leaders of Judah were greatly encouraged  
by the prophecies of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah,  
so they proceeded well with the construction of the temple and completed it  
as God and the Persian emperors Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes had commanded’  
(Ezra 6: 14).

When I meditate on this passage,  
I receive the lesson that we must be greatly encouraged by the words of God  
we hear through God's servants and finish the Lord's work well.

## **God will help us to live a life of victory.**

If we do what is right in God's eyes and diligently seek Him,  
God will bless us and help us to live a life of victory  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 26:4-7).

## **We pray that God protect us from all enemies.**

May our God be with us and protect us from all enemies  
as we ascend to the temple of God and as we go on missionary journeys  
to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ  
(Ref.: Ezra 8:31).

## **God will humble us severely.**

When we are unfaithful to God and promote evil among those around us,  
thus sinning against God, He will humble us severely  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 27:19).

## **God who speaks with us**

God came down and spoke with us  
and gave us His excellent laws and regulations  
(Ref.: Nehemiah 9:13).

## **We pray that He will make him our pastor.**

Because God loves His people,  
we pray that He will establish a wise leader  
like Solomon to be our pastor  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 2:11-12).

## **Forgive our sins, and teach us the right way.**

Lord, when we call upon Your name and repent of our sins,  
hear us from heaven and forgive our sins, and teach us the right way  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 6:26-27).

## **We should serve our God forever.**

We should not be stubborn but submit to God,  
come to His sanctified temple, and serve our God forever  
(2 Chronicles 30:8).

## **The people skilled in music**

I pray that the Lord will achieve a miracle of praise  
through the people skilled in music sent to Victory Presbyterian Church  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 34:12; Acts 16:25).

## **God will listen to every prayer offered in this place.**

God has already heard our prayers  
and chosen the Victory Presbyterian Church building as His temple for worship.  
If we humble ourselves, pray, seek God, and turn from our wicked ways,  
then God will hear our prayers from heaven, forgive our sins, heal our land, and bless us again.  
God will now watch over this temple and listen to every prayer offered here  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 7:12-15).

## **This spiritual war is not our war, it is God's war!**

We do not need to be afraid or discouraged by Satan and his forces.  
The reason is that this spiritual war is not our war, but God's war  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 20:15).

## **"They are so many people involved in this sin"**

Aren't we Christians now saying,  
"There are so many people involved in this sin  
that this is a problem that can be solved in a day or two?"  
(Ref.: Ezra 10:13)

## **This is our spiritual act of worship.**

We have become holy ones (saints) to God  
through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we must offer ourselves as holy living sacrifices, pleasing to God.

This is our spiritual act of worship

(Ref.: Ezra 8:28; Romans 4:25; 12:1).

## **When thinking about how this is possible, I remembered the word from 2 Timothy 2:13.**

In Nehemiah's prayer, it says,

"You are the LORD, the God who keeps covenant  
and steadfast love with those  
who love him and keep his commandments"

(Nehemiah 1:5).

When I meditate on this passage,

I realize that even though I do not truly love  
the Lord and keep His commandments

(I say this because according to John 14:21, if I truly loved the Lord,

I would be keeping His commandments, but I am not),

the Lord still shows mercy to me

and fulfills His promise to me as seen in John 6:1-15

(the miracle of feeding the multitude with two fish and five loaves).

When I ponder how this is possible,

I am reminded of the words from 2 Timothy 2:13:

"If we are faithless, he remains faithful—

for he cannot deny himself."



## **We should not face such a death.**

Jehoram became king at the age of 32  
and reigned in Jerusalem for 8 years before he died.  
No one mourned his death  
(2 Chronicles 21:20).  
We are taught that we should not face such a death.

## **By playing along like this, because of the people who sway ...**

When Sanballat heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being rebuilt,  
he became very enraged and insulted  
and mocked Nehemiah and the men of Judah.  
Tobiah, who was standing by at that time, joined them in agreement,  
saying, 'Even if a fox climbs on what they are building, it will fall down!'  
(Nehemiah 4:1-3).

As I meditated on these words,  
I thought that when the Lord uses us as tools to build the Lord's church,  
Satan and his people, the enemies of the church,  
will be so enraged that they can insult and mock us.  
However, in the process, when someone like Sanballat first insults and ridicules us,  
there is someone like Tobiah who is by our side at that time and joins us.  
By playing along like this, those who oppose us can form groups or factions,  
joining together to spread false rumors about us  
and cause enough disturbance to mount sufficient attacks against us.  
I believe this is one of Satan's strategies.

**Thinking of Soo-eun Shim,  
who was embraced in the Lord's bosom recently ...**

In rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem,  
who did what together,  
then others built the next part,  
then others built the next part, etc  
(Nehemiah 3).

When I meditate on this passage,  
when I think of the late wife Soo-eun Shim,  
who was embraced in the Lord's bosom recently,  
I think of the pastors  
who served her with the love of the Lord  
from the time she was a college student until she left us.  
I don't know for sure, but I think Pastor Ho-jin Bae,  
Pastor Hee-joong Kim, Pastor Sang-dae Kim, myself,  
and finally Pastor Myung-su Seo served Soo-eun Shim.  
If this is true to some extent,  
I thought that when the Lord uses His servants  
to serve one soul in His church,  
who serves in this way  
and when, then another servant of the Lord  
serves in that way, and so on.

## **I cannot understand.**

All of King Ahasuerus's servants paid him respect  
by kneeling and bowing down whenever Haman,  
who had become the prime minister by royal decree, passed by.  
However, Mordecai did not kneel or bow down to Haman (Esther 3:2).  
Why did Mordecai act this way towards Haman?  
Surely, it was an act of defiance against the king's command.  
Was it not Mordecai who had previously saved  
King Ahasuerus from an assassination plot?  
Yet why did Mordecai refuse to kneel and bow down to Haman as ordered by King Ahasuerus?  
The Bible remains silent on the exact reasons.  
Other servants questioned Mordecai daily, urging him,  
"Why do you disobey the king's command?" (Esther 3-4).  
Mordecai steadfastly refused their daily appeals, refusing to kneel and bow down to Haman.  
Then why did Mordecai openly declare himself as a Jew?  
Clearly, he instructed his cousin and adopted daughter, Esther,  
not to reveal that she was Jewish (2:10; see also 2:20).  
Why then did Mordecai disclose his Jewish identity by refusing to kneel or bow down to Haman?  
I don't understand. In the end, the other officials reported to Haman  
to see if Mordecai's behavior could lead to harm (3:4).  
I think this report from the officials was intended to endanger Mordecai.  
Mordecai had previously reported a plot by the eunuchs Bigthana and Teresh  
to assassinate King Ahasuerus through Esther (2:21-22).  
It's intriguing that the king's other officials reported something  
that could potentially endanger Mordecai to Haman (3:4), isn't it?  
Upon hearing that Mordecai did not kneel or bow down to him  
and upon learning that Mordecai was a Jew, Haman became filled with rage (vv. 5-6).  
How could Prime Minister Haman decide to not only kill Mordecai  
but also to annihilate all Jews just because Mordecai did not kneel or bow down to him?  
Even if his rage was at its peak, how could one person decide  
to exterminate an entire ethnic group, including their own people?  
I don't understand why Hitler killed so many Jews either

## **Human pride**

Human pride is the belief  
that one's own power is stronger than God's power  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 32:14-17).

## **The Lord, too great to be expressed in human language**

If we confess our sins by the grace of God's word,  
and then worship God after cutting off sin,  
we should praise the name of the Lord, who is so great  
that He cannot be expressed in human language,  
and worship Him from eternity to eternity  
(Ref.: Nehemiah 9:2-6).

## **When we taste the bitterness of life ...**

When we taste the bitterness of life as a result of our sins,  
we should seek the grace of understanding  
whether it is better to serve the Lord or to serve money  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 12:8).

## **We must give according to our ability and with a cheerful heart.**

Among those who returned from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem and Judah, some leaders of households arrived at the Jerusalem temple with the intention to rebuild it.

They joyfully contributed offerings according to their ability  
(Ezra 2:68-69).

Whether we give offerings for the construction of church buildings  
or for the establishment of God's kingdom through missions,  
we should give joyfully according to our own abilities.

This reflects the words in 2 Corinthians 9:7 in the Modern Korean Bible:

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give,  
not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

## **We must not neglect our duties.**

The Lord's servants are those chosen by God  
and must serve before God and not neglect their duties  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 29:11).

## **God gives strength to those who sincerely seek Him.**

God searches the whole world  
and gives strength to those who sincerely seek Him  
(2 Chronicles 16:9).

## **When our position becomes firm and our power becomes stronger ...**

When our position becomes firm and our power becomes stronger,  
there is a high risk that we become arrogant and abandon God  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 12:1).

### **Those who volunteer to serve**

The leaders of the Israelite people stayed in Jerusalem,  
and they cast lots among the people  
so that one out of every ten would come to live in Jerusalem, the holy city,  
while the rest remained in their own towns  
(Nehemiah 11:1-2).

However, some people voluntarily stepped forward  
among the people to live in Jerusalem.

When I reflect on these words,  
I realize that Christians who willingly step forward  
to center their faith life around the church receive praise.  
Those who do not wait to be told by others within the church  
but humbly and faithfully serve with a heart  
that loves the Lord and His church will be praised by the Lord.

### **Judges must judge carefully with the fear of God.**

Judges must judge with a fear of God,  
with a sincere and truthful heart, and carefully.  
The reason is that our God does not tolerate unjust judgments or bribery.  
They must handle all matters with caution.  
Their judgment is not for humans but for God.  
When they render verdicts, may they pray that God will be with them  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 19:5-9).

## **A servant of God (pastor) like me ...**

Ezra, who was a scholar well-versed in the Law of Moses, had determined to study the Law of the Lord, to practice it, and to teach its statutes and ordinances in Israel (Ezra 7:6, 10).

When I meditate on these words, I receive the lesson that as a servant of God (pastor) like Ezra, I should not only study God's Word but also commit myself to keeping it and teaching it to the saints.

**I receive the lesson that, like Nehemiah, I and the pastors who are the Lord's servants should confess to the Lord the sins we have committed.**

Nehemiah said, "O LORD, be attentive and hear the prayers I cry to you day and night for your servants the people of Israel.

When we meditate on the prayer,

"I confess that I and my people have sinned against you"

(Nehemiah 1:6), why does Nehemiah say that he prays (cries out) day and night for the people of Israel, the Lord's servants?

After speaking, I wondered if I had said

"my people" when I confessed my sins to the Lord.

The thought that occurred to me at that time was that, like Nehemiah,

I was taught that pastors who are "I" and "servants of the Lord" must confess their sins to the Lord.

## **I have no words to say.**

In Ezra's prayer of repentance:

- (1) He could not lift his face to the Lord in shame.
- (2) He confessed, "Our iniquities have risen higher than our heads and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens."
- (3) He acknowledged, "Since the days of our fathers to this day, we have been in great guilt."
- (4) He lamented, "Because of our sins, our kings and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as it is today."
- (5) He acknowledged God's mercy, saying, "But now for a brief moment grace has been shown from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape and to give us a peg in his holy place, that our God may brighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our slavery."
- (6) He recognized God's intervention, stating, "For we are slaves. Yet our God has not forsaken us in our slavery, but has extended to us his steadfast love before the kings of Persia, to grant us some reviving to set up the house of our God, to repair its ruins, and to give us protection in Judea and Jerusalem."
- (7) He concluded with a plea, "And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken your commandments" (Ezra 9:6-10).

When I meditate on Ezra's prayer of repentance up to this point, I confess as follows:

- (1) I am ashamed because of my sins, which are more numerous than the hairs on my head.
- (2) Having tasted the bitterness of life due to the consequences of my sins, I must fear God and hate sin.
- (3) I humbly confess that I am now living by God's abundant grace alone.
- (4) I am thankful to serve the Lord's church again, gaining strength through His grace.
- (5) Yet, even as I enjoy God's abundant grace, I find myself once again forsaking the Lord, breaking His commandments. Therefore, I have no words to say.



## **When I meditated on these words, I thought of Korea.**

Nehemiah asked some people who had arrived in Babylon from Judah about the people who had not been taken captive in Babylon and were still remaining in Judah and about the situation in Jerusalem. Then they told them that the people who had not been taken captive but remained in Judah were suffering great hardships and humiliation, that the walls of Jerusalem were in ruins, and that the gates of the city had not been rebuilt since they had been burned down.

When Nehemiah heard those words, he sat down and cried.

He mourned and fasted for several days and prayed to God like this (Nehemiah 1:2-4).

When I meditated on these words, I thought of Korea.

If people who fled to Korea before or during the Korean War heard from North Koreans that those who could not come to South Korea are still living in North Korea and suffering great hardship and humiliation, Nehemiah I thought about how people like him would cry and pray to God because of their heartache.

## **I must now confess my sins to God ...**

I must now confess my sins to God  
and do what pleases Him  
(Ref.: Ezra 10:11).

**I hope that after hearing the loving rebuke,  
I too can truly repent and fear God and do the right thing.**

Nehemiah first rebuked the Jewish leaders and officials  
and then “convened a great assembly to deal with this matter”  
and spoke to the leaders and officials before all the people of Judah:  
“We did our best to help our Jewish brothers,  
who were sold to the Gentiles, to bring them back from captivity,  
but now you are selling your brothers. And that too to your own people.”  
“Then they remained silent, as if they had nothing to say.”  
Then Nehemiah spoke again and said, “What you have done is not right.  
You must fear God and do what is right. Then we will not give our enemies,  
the Gentiles, an excuse to laugh at us. Me and my brothers and those who are with me  
We are lending money and grain to the people, but let us not charge interest anymore.  
Even today, give them back their fields, vineyards, olive groves, and houses,  
and one-hundredth of the money, grain, new wine, and olive oil that you have exploited.”  
“Then they said, ‘We will give back everything you said, and we will ask you for nothing.’  
He answered. So, Nehemiah called his priests and made the leaders swear  
that they would keep their promises. He shook out the hem of his clothes and said,  
“So God will rob those who do not keep this promise from their houses  
and their possessions, leaving them penniless.”  
“Then all the crowd praised the Lord, saying, ‘Amen!’  
The leaders kept their promise”  
(Nehemiah 5:7-13).

When I meditate on these words, I think about how the Jewish leaders and officials,  
upon hearing Nehemiah's words, initially "kept silent with nothing to say,"  
but eventually acknowledged that their actions were not right according to Nehemiah's words.  
They indeed "kept their promise" as Nehemiah instructed,  
to "restore everything and demand nothing more."  
This truly shows that they listened to Nehemiah's loving rebuke and repented.  
I believe they did "rightly fear God and do what is right," just as Nehemiah said (v. 9).  
Similarly, I hope to hear and truly repent from love's rebuke  
like these Jewish leaders, and earnestly strive to fear God and do what is right.

## **‘Let their mocking words return to themselves.’**

When Satan used his servants Sanballat and Tobiah  
to insult and mock God's servant Nehemiah and God's people of Judah,  
Nehemiah prayed to God.

When I meditate on the content of that prayer,  
Nehemiah prayed that “their mocking words may be turned back on them”  
(Nehemiah 4:1-4), I think that we, too, are opposing us in building the Lord’s church.

When people laugh at us, insult us, and ridicule us,  
I think we should seek God (pray) first  
and there is no need to talk back to them.

And I believe that when we pray, like Nehemiah,  
and ask God to turn away the mocking words of those who oppose us,  
He answers our prayers in His own time and in His own way.

### **It is a truly foolish act. (1)**

Relying on people  
even after experiencing the results of relying on God  
is a truly foolish act  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 16:8-9).

### **It is a truly foolish act. (2)**

When rebuked by a servant of God for having acted truly foolishly  
in relying on man rather than God, it is a truly foolish act  
to become very angry and persecute that servant of the Lord  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 16:9-10).

## **It is truly foolish ...**

When we are seriously ill,  
it is truly foolish to rely only on doctors  
instead of asking God for help  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 16:12).

## **May the Lord enable us ...**

May the Lord enable us to conquer ourselves  
(Ref.: Nehemiah 9:22, 24).

## **I must truly repent before the eyes of God and return to Him.**

As a leader of a nation, King Jehoshaphat first repented before God  
and then urged the people of Judah to return to God  
(2 Chronicles 19:4).

I must truly repent before the eyes of God and return to Him.  
After that, I should encourage God's people,  
whom the Lord has entrusted to me, to repent and return to God.

## **I admit that I was not filled with the Holy Spirit this morning.**

Although Nehemiah was very angry,  
after “think carefully”, he rebuked the Jewish leaders and officials.  
He rebuked them, saying, “You are exploiting your brothers!”  
(Nehemiah 5:6-7).

As I meditated on these words, I wondered how Nehemiah could “think carefully”  
even though he was so emotionally angry.

At that time, I did a comprehensive search for the word  
“think carefully” in the multilingual Bible on the Internet,  
and the Modern Korean Bible verse of Proverbs 20:25 caught my attention:  
“I made a promise to give it to God without even thinking about it carefully.  
It is foolish and careless to regret it later.”

When I meditated on these words,  
I wondered why I did something careless and regretted it.

At that time, I did a comprehensive search for the word  
“carelessness” in the multilingual Bible, and Psalms 106:33,  
the Modern Korean Bible verse, caught my attention:  
“Because they rebelled against the Holy Spirit of God,  
and Moses spoke thoughtlessly and thoughtlessly.”

When we meditate on these two Bible verses together,  
we think we can get some answer to the question:

How was Nehemiah able to think carefully even though he was so emotionally angry?

The answer is, ‘I think Nehemiah was filled with the Holy Spirit of God,  
so even when he was very angry, he was able to think carefully  
and not speak or act rashly (he did not do something he would later regret).

I admit that I was not filled with the Holy Spirit this morning.

## **Let us fully enjoy!**

Let us fully enjoy in the Lord the blessings He has given us!

(Ref.: Nehemiah 9:25)

## **Lord, please thwart the plans of the enemy.**

We pray that the Almighty God of Victory  
will thwart the plans of the enemies of our church  
and prevent them from attacking us hastily  
(Ref.: Nehemiah 4:15).

## **We hope that the Lord will continue to achieve miracles of praise through the praise ministers of our church!**

The choir members sang powerfully under the direction of Esrahiah,  
and on that day, the people of Israel offered many sacrifices and rejoiced.  
This was because God had given them great joy.  
Even the women and children joined in the celebration,  
and their shouts of joy could be heard from far away  
(Nehemiah 12:42-43).

As I meditate on this passage,  
I imagine our Victory Choir members singing powerfully  
under the direction of the conductor Deok Young Park, and our entire congregation  
offering ourselves as holy living sacrifices to God and rejoicing.  
I envision all our church members coming together in love  
and rejoicing with great joy given by God,  
and I hope that the great sounds of thanksgiving and praise  
can be heard by many through our praise videos.  
I pray that the Lord will continue to work miracles of praise  
through the praise ministers of our church, and that He will bring about miracles of praise  
in the lives and homes of all our praise partners, and also through their families.

## **O God, do not reject the anointed pastor You have chosen ...**

O God, do not reject the anointed pastor You have chosen,  
but remember the love You have shown to Your servant  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 6:42).

## **May the Lord work through us ...**

We pray that the Lord strengthens the foundation  
of our families and His church through us.  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 17:5).

## **We forget the amazing work the Lord has done in our lives and do as we please.**

When we are proud and stubborn,  
we forget the amazing work  
the Lord has done in our lives and do as we please.  
Nevertheless, the Lord forgives us,  
gives us grace, takes pity on us, and does not abandon us  
because He is a loving God who is not easily angered  
(Ref.: Nehemiah 9:16-17).

## **The more the Lord builds up His church ...**

When the entire wall of Jerusalem was built up to half its height, not only did Sanballat and Tobiah become extremely angry and insult and mock Nehemiah and the people of Judah, but from then on, the Ammonites and the people of Ashdod also joined forces and were greatly enraged.

They conspired to attack Jerusalem and create confusion (Nehemiah 4:1, 7-8).

As I meditate on this passage, I realize that the more the Lord builds up His church, the more Satan and his people, who are enemies of the Lord and the church, will unite to attack us and cause confusion within the church.

## **Only You, Lord, know our hearts!**

If we suffer harm, are attacked, or face disease or any other disaster, and we recognize our sins and pray with hands lifted toward God's temple, hear us from heaven, forgive our sins, and help us.

Only You, Lord, know the hearts of all people (Reference: 2 Chronicles 6:28-30).

## **The Lord knows how the people of this world act arrogantly toward us.**

The Lord knows how the people of this world act arrogantly toward us, sees our suffering in this world, and hears our cries.

Therefore, in His time and in His way, the Lord will perform amazing miracles and surely deliver us from their hands

(Ref.: Nehemiah 9:9-10).



**I believe that the Lord's church will ultimately be built according to His will, in His time, and in His way.**

Despite the attacks from the enemies of Nehemiah and the people of Judah, with God's help, the reconstruction of the wall of Jerusalem was completed in just 52 days.

Therefore, when the enemies of Nehemiah and the people of Judah, as well as the surrounding Gentiles, heard this, they were afraid and lost their confidence (Nehemiah 6:15-16).

As I meditate on this passage,

I believe that no matter how much the enemies of the church oppose it, Emmanuel, the Lord who is always with the church, will help us.

Thus, the Lord's church will ultimately be established according to His will, in His time, and in His way.

**The Lord's servants who serve the Lord's church must be people whom all church members think well of.**

On that day, men were appointed to be in charge of the storerooms for the contributions, firstfruits, and tithes.

They were to collect from the fields of the towns the portions required by the Law for the priests and Levites and store them in the storerooms.

This was because all the people of Judah were pleased with the priests and Levites who served in the temple (Nehemiah 12:44).

As I meditate on this passage, I learn that those who serve the Lord's church should be well-regarded by all church members.

In other words, the entire church family should find joy in the servants of the Lord who minister to the church.

## **Those who long for the word of the Lord ...**

Those who long for the word of the Lord,  
who is the bread of life,  
will listen intently to the word  
(Ref.: Nehemiah 8:1-3; John 6:48).

## **I pray that the Lord will raise up and send forth His workers.**

In building the Lord's church,  
I pray that the Lord will raise up and send forth His workers  
who are wise, skilled, and skilled in various tasks  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 2:13-14; Matthew 16:18).

## **When I think of the Victory Presbyterian Church that the Lord is building ...**

When I think about the Victory Presbyterian Church that the Lord is building,  
there are believers who praise God with grateful and happy hearts,  
but among the believers who remember the 43-year history of Victory Presbyterian Church,  
there are those who praise God with tears in their eyes  
(Ref.: Ezra 3:11-12).

## **The important thing is not to avoid suffering!**

Even though God has warned us repeatedly,  
if we continue to commit more evil than those who persist in not believing in Jesus,  
God will strike us and allow us to suffer.  
The important thing is not to avoid suffering but to seek God,  
humble ourselves greatly before Him, and pray for repentance  
even in the midst of suffering  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 33:9-13).

## **Let us serve God with a joyful heart.**

After completing the construction of the temple in Jerusalem with God's help,  
all those who had returned from exile in Babylon to Judah  
held a joyful dedication ceremony for the temple.  
Then they organized the priests and the Levites in their divisions  
to serve at the house of God in Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses  
(Ezra 6:16-18).  
They also celebrated the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread  
with the foreign residents of the land who had turned away  
from their impurities to seek the God of Israel (vv. 19-22).  
As I meditate on this passage,  
I learn that when we complete the construction of God's temple with His help,  
we should hold a joyful dedication ceremony for the temple.  
We also learn that each of us should serve God in His temple  
according to the spiritual gifts we have received.  
Furthermore, we should all abandon our impure practices  
and come before the holy God together  
to offer praise and worship. Let us seek God's help earnestly.

## **Hasn't the church now become a laughingstock to people?**

Could it be that because we are disobeying  
God's laws and commands and serving money,  
God has abandoned the church that was sanctified for His name  
and made it a laughing stock for people?  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 7:20)

## **Now, saints who are scattered here and there without a home church where they can feel at home ...**

When I think about Nehemiah's prayer where he said,  
"We have acted wickedly toward you and have not obeyed  
the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.  
Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses,  
saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations'"  
(Nehemiah 1:7-8), I wonder if our pastors, who are servants of the Lord,  
and I have disobeyed the Lord's commands and acted wickedly before Him.  
Could it be that the reason why the Lord is scattering us,  
the church, among the nations is because of this?  
As a result, I am thinking that many saints are now scattered  
and wandering without a home church, where they can feel at home.

## **I am saddened to realize that even I do not fully understand the seriousness of my own sins.**

All the people of Judah and Benjamin gathered together at the square in front of the temple. They were trembling because of the seriousness of the matter (the sin of marrying foreign women) and because of the rain (Ezra 10:9-10).

As I meditate on these words, I am saddened to realize that even I do not fully understand the seriousness of my own sins.

## **I hope we will want to hear about wisdom.**

May God give us wisdom so that people will come to us and want to hear about the wisdom God has given us (Ref.: 2 Chronicles 9:23).

## **Regarding the truth as a lie**

Ears that are accustomed to hearing lies that only speak favorably about themselves regard the truth as a lie (Ref.: 2 Chronicles 18:12, 15).

## **One person telling the “truth”?**

It is far better to have one person telling us the “truth,” even if it means telling us “bad things,” than to have many people telling us only “good things” (Ref.: 2 Chronicles 18:7, 10-11, 15, 17).

## **I want to become someone who truly repents.**

After receiving rebuke through the prophet Jehu,  
King Jehoshaphat no longer visited Israel but stayed quietly in Jerusalem,  
away from the evil King Ahab whom he had once loved and assisted,  
but who now hated the God whom Jehoshaphat loved  
(2 Chronicles 19:2-4).

As I meditate on these words, I am reminded of King David.  
He had committed sin by sleeping with Uriah's wife Bathsheba  
when she was pregnant with his child,  
and he had tried twice to send Uriah home  
to sleep with her to cover up his wrongdoing (2 Samuel 11:4-25).

When this failed, he had Uriah deliberately killed (vv. 6-27).

When God rebuked David through the prophet Nathan, David repented (12:1-13).

Later in his old age, despite having many blankets, he could not get warm.

His servants sought a beautiful virgin throughout the land,  
found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to him,  
but David did not sleep with her (1 Kings 1:1-4).

God called David a "man after my own heart" (Acts 13:22).

As we contemplate these words together, King Jehoshaphat was not a perfect king,  
but when he received rebuke through the prophet Jehu, like King David,  
he repented and did not commit the same sin "twice."

Thus, it seems that someone after God's own heart truly is one who sincerely repents.

However, I am troubled because despite knowing

I should not commit the same sin "again,  
like a dog that returns to its vomit,"

I continue to act in this foolish manner (Proverbs 26:11).

"Oh, how wretched I am!

Who will deliver me from this body subject to death?

Thank God! He will deliver me through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So then, with my mind I serve the law of God,  
but with my flesh, the law of sin"

(Romans 7:24-25).

## **Those who have truly repented ...**

By the grace of God and in the full work of the Holy Spirit,  
those who have truly repented make a solemn pledge to God  
and put it into practice to obey God and keep God's commandments  
written in the Bible with all their heart and soul  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 34:31).

## **We must lighten the burdens ...**

We must lighten the burdens of those who follow us,  
not make them heavier  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 10:9-11).

## **The Valley of Beracah (The Valley of Blessings)**

When we praise God with faith, trusting Him completely,  
He will miraculously rescue us from tremendously difficult situations  
and fill our hearts with joy.  
I pray that God will transform our "Valley of Trouble" into the "Valley of Blessings,"  
where we all sing praises to Him  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 20:22-27; Joshua 15:7).

## **Truly righteous is the Lord ...**

Truly righteous is the Lord, who faithfully keeps His promise to those who are faithful before Him, in His time and His way!

(Reference: Nehemiah 9:8)

## **Inciting or moving?**

Satan incited David's heart to take a census of Israel (1 Chronicles 21:1), intending to bring disaster upon the people.

However, God moved Nehemiah's heart to gather the Israelites and their leaders to register them by their ancestral homes (Nehemiah 7:5).

As I meditate on these words,

I understand that Satan "incites" our hearts to lead us into sin, but God "moves" our hearts to fulfill His will.

## **When the sword is drawn, it desires to cut at least daikon ...**

When the sword is drawn, it desires to cut at least daikon [meaning: "Once you've made up your mind to do something, even if it's small, you should start right away" (Internet)], we should consider how God commanded the angel who was about to strike Jerusalem, "Enough! Withdraw your hand now" (Ref.: 1 Chronicles 21:15).



## **When we encounter great difficulties ...**

When we encounter great difficulties (Psalms 86:1),  
we humble ourselves greatly before God  
(2 Chronicles 33:12) and seek Him (15:14),  
experiencing His great love (Ephesians 2:4)  
and abundant grace (Psalms 145:7).

## **Isn't it something that cannot be avoided?**

South Judah's King Rehoboam summoned his elite troops  
and prepared for war to conquer northern Israel.  
However, through the prophet Shemaiah, God spoke, saying,  
"Do not go up to fight against your brothers.  
Return home, for this is my doing"  
(2 Chronicles 11:1-4).  
God's intention was for Judah in the south  
and Israel in the north to be divided.  
This was because Rehoboam's father,  
King Solomon, had sinned against God  
(1 Kings 11:11-13).  
Reflecting on these words,  
I realize that rather than striving to unite  
and remain as one at all costs,  
it seems inevitable that we may be divided  
as a consequence of our sins.

## **Let us remain quietly before God and reminisce about the past.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when faced with an incredibly difficult task, stayed quietly before God and recalled the past, considered sinners like us as friends and gave his life for us on the cross, showing us that there is no greater love than this. Remembering the great grace and love He has given us, we must first offer a prayer of thanks to God in faith (Ref.: 2 Chronicles 20:7; John 15:13).

## **The reason we can praise, saying, "Give thanks to the Lord, for His love endures forever," ...**

The reason we can praise, saying, "Give thanks to the Lord, for His love endures forever," even when facing tremendous difficulties, is because we believe that God will uphold us. By trusting in God and His Word, we have the assurance of salvation and victory (Ref.: 2 Chronicles 20:20-21).

## **Pray to God and set a guard in front of the door of our hearts ...**

We must always remember that Satan and his people are plotting to attack our church and create chaos. Therefore, we need to pray to God and set guards at the gates of our hearts, keeping watch day and night (Ref.: Nehemiah 4:8-9).

## **Let us decide to ask God.**

When King Jehoshaphat heard the report that a vast army from Edom was coming to attack him and had already seized Hazazon Tamar, he was afraid and resolved to inquire of the Lord.

He also proclaimed a fast for all of Judah (2 Chronicles 20:1-3).

Yesterday afternoon, I had a prayer meeting via Zoom with a dear younger brother from university.

We shared our hearts and decided that, even when we face situations where it seems impossible to be thankful with our physical eyes, we should choose to give thanks in faith.

When we suddenly encounter overwhelming difficulties, we should, like Daniel, humble ourselves before our God (Daniel 10:12) and, like King Jehoshaphat, resolve to seek the Lord (2 Chronicles 20:3) and pray to Him.

## **I pray that God will break the power of arrogant leaders.**

Jehoram, the eldest son of King Jehoshaphat, became the king of Judah and established his power by killing his six brothers and some of the leaders of Israel.

He married Ahab's daughter and followed the ways of the kings of Israel, committing evil and sinning against God like Ahab's household (2 Chronicles 21:1-6).

Rehoboam, who succeeded Solomon as king, abandoned God once his position was secure and his power grew, and the people followed his example, neglecting God's law (12:1).

King Uzziah also became proud when he grew powerful, leading to his downfall (26:16).

When a leader of a nation becomes powerful, there is a great risk of sinning against God.

Unfortunately, such things are happening even within the church.

I pray that God will break the power of wicked and cruel leaders, strip away the strength they pride themselves on, and rescue their victims (Job 29:17; Ezekiel 30:18).

## **Those who do evil in the eyes of God ... (1)**

Those who do evil in the eyes of God do not humbly listen to the word of God even when the servant of the Lord speaks it to them  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 36:12).

## **Those who do evil in the eyes of God ... (2)**

In the eyes of God, those who do evil remain stubborn until the end and do not repent or return to God  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 36:13).

**I hope that God will give those in power around us who do not believe in Jesus a heart to cherish God's temple and also allow us to receive grace from them.**

Ezra, after reading the letter from Emperor Artaxerxes (King Artaxerxes), exclaimed:  
“Praise the LORD, the God of our ancestors, who put into the king’s heart the desire to honor the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem in this way!  
God has shown me favor before the king, his advisers, and all his powerful officials.  
Because the hand of the LORD my God was on me,  
I took courage and gathered leaders from Israel to return with me to Jerusalem”  
(Ezra 7:27-28).

As I reflect on these words, I pray that God would instill in the hearts of the non-believing authorities around us a reverence for the temple of God.  
I also pray that God grants us favor in their eyes.  
May God give us the courage to persuade our church leaders so that we may cooperate together for Jesus and the gospel  
(Mark 8:35).

## **If God bless us and help us ...**

Because God blessed Ezra, a scholar well-versed in the Law, the Persian emperor granted him everything he requested. Additionally, God helped Ezra, enabling him to depart from Babylon on the first day of the first month and arrive in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month (Ezra 7:6-8). As I reflect on these words, I am reminded that when God blesses us, He can provide for our needs even through non-believers around us. Moreover, with God's help, the tasks we set out to accomplish can proceed more quickly than we might expect.

## **God will give us peace.**

If we, like King Asa, do what is good and right in God's sight, get rid of all idols, seek God, and obey His words (commandments), God will give us peace (Ref.: 2 Chronicles 14:1-5).

## **Because God is with us and protects us ...**

Because God is with us and protects us, those who oppose us will not be able to stop the Lord's work of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ (Ref.: Ezra 5:5).

## **Because God is with us, there are people who support us, but ...**

Although King Artaxerxes granted all of Nehemiah's requests, allowing Nehemiah to travel with some army officers and cavalry that the king had provided, and giving letters to the governors of the Trans-Euphrates region, the Horonite Sanballat and the Ammonite official Tobiah were greatly displeased when they heard that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites (Nehemiah 2:8-10).

Reflecting on this passage,

I am reminded that, while God is with us and there are those who support us, we must also be mindful of those who, influenced by Satan, oppose us.

## **God has mercy on me and gives me great grace ...**

Shecaniah said to Ezra,

"We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women, but there is still hope for Israel.

Let us now make a covenant before our God to send away all these women and their children, in accordance with the counsel of my lord and of those who fear the commands of our God.

Let it be done according to the Law"

(Ezra 10:2-3).

Reflecting on this passage,

I find great comfort in the fact that, despite having sinned against God, there is still hope.

I believe that by relying on the precious blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross,

I can confess and repent of my sins with the assurance of forgiveness.

I pray that God, in His mercy and great grace,

will help me to fear Him and His commands, and to weep and repent sincerely.

## **When God moves my heart ...**

When God moved Nehemiah's heart to go to Jerusalem, he stayed there for three days without telling anyone what God had put on his heart to do for Jerusalem. Even the leaders of Jerusalem did not know where Nehemiah had gone and what he had done, because Nehemiah had not yet told the priests, leaders, nobles, or anyone else working there (Nehemiah 2:11-16).

Meditating on this passage, I receive the lesson that when God moves my heart, there are times when I should not speak about the work the Lord has called me to do. In other words, there are moments when God moves my heart to accomplish something, and it is not yet time to disclose it to others.

## **God is still inspiring His servants like Nehemiah ...**

Nehemiah, moved by God in his heart regarding the work for Jerusalem, remained silent about it until "afterward," when he spoke to the leaders, priests, and nobles of Jerusalem, saying, "You know very well the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." Then Nehemiah told them about the gracious hand of God upon him and what the king had said to him. Upon hearing this, they replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began the good work (Nehemiah 2:12, 16-18).

As I reflect on this passage, I pray that God will continue to move servants like Nehemiah today, to rebuild the fallen churches of the Lord.

## **God can thoroughly dismantle a church with just a few congregants.**

God enabled the Syrian (Aramean) army, a small force,  
to engage and defeat the large army of Joash king of Judah  
and his people who had forsaken God.

Thus, God judged King Joash

(2 Chronicles 22:24).

When the righteous God judges  
those who have forsaken Him and the community,  
the size of that community holds no significance.  
With just a few congregants,  
God can thoroughly dismantle that church.

## **Not only does God grant us everything we ask for, but ...**

After briefly praying to the God of heaven,  
when he responded to the emperor,  
Nehemiah's "request was gladly accepted.  
Therefore, Nehemiah made another request to the emperor,  
and because God was with Nehemiah,  
the emperor granted everything Nehemiah asked for  
(Nehemiah 2:4-8).

As I reflect on this passage,  
even though we may have only prayed briefly to God,  
because God is always with us, He not only grants everything we ask for  
but also reminds us that He is the God who is able to do immeasurably  
more than all we ask or imagine  
(Ephesians 3:20).



## **God lightens our punishment compared to our evil deeds and great sins.**

Ezra said, "All that has happened to us,  
even though we have sinned greatly  
and been subjected to a severe punishment,  
you our God have not abandoned us and have been gracious  
in reducing our guilt  
and granting us a remnant of escape like this"  
(Ezra 9:13-14).

As I reflect on this passage,  
I am grateful that God, despite our wickedness and great sins,  
lightens our punishment.  
If God were to punish us fully for our sins,  
not one of us would survive.  
It reminds me of the hymn,  
"We have often been unfaithful to the Lord"  
(verse 1 and chorus), which goes:

(Verse 1)

We have often been unfaithful to the Lord,  
But my Lord Jesus still calls me,  
And shows His true love.

(Chorus)

For You, Lord, are always true,  
For You, Lord, are always true,  
For You, Lord, are always true,  
Always, I need You.

Surely, it is by God's grace!

## **God will surely accomplish His will!**

King Darius ordered a thorough search of the archives kept in Babylon, and as a result, a scroll was found in Ecbatana, the fortress in Media, containing a decree issued by King Cyrus in the first year of his reign regarding the temple of Jerusalem.

The decree stated, in essence, that the temple in Jerusalem should be rebuilt and that all expenses for the reconstruction should be covered by the royal treasury.

Upon finding this decree, King Darius sent a reply to Tattenai, the governor of the province west of the Euphrates River, and to Shethar-Bozenai and their associates, instructing them not to interfere with the construction of God's temple in its original place.

He ordered them to support the work of the temple and to ensure that all expenses for the project would be paid from the taxes collected in their region, so that the work would not be delayed.

If any king or nation disregards this decree and attempts to destroy the temple in Jerusalem, God, who has chosen that place for His worship, desires to punish them.

I, King Darius, have issued this decree.

Therefore, quickly carry out this command."

Ultimately, God turned the heart of King Darius of Persia to support the rebuilding of the temple of the God of Israel.

As a result, there was great joy in that land (Ezra 6:1-12, 22).

As I reflect on this passage,

I am reminded that God's will is certain and that He will surely accomplish what He intends.

In fulfilling His will, God has the power to change the hearts of those who oppose His purposes, ensuring that His will is accomplished.

## **God will surely fulfill the promises He made to us through His Word, in God's time and in God's way!**

God moved the heart of King Cyrus of Persia  
to issue a decree throughout his realm and put it in writing  
to fulfill what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet.

The essence of this decree was to proclaim:

"The God of Israel is the true God,"

and "Any of His people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah  
and build the temple of the Lord, the God of Israel."

In issuing this decree, King Cyrus declared,

"He is the God who is in Jerusalem.

May the God of the heavens be with you all"

(Ezra 1:1-3).

As I reflect on this passage,

I realize that God, through His word and promises,

will surely accomplish His purposes

in His own time and in His own way,

even using unbelieving kings of nations

as instruments in His hands.

And about 20 years ago,

the Lord brought me back to the United States through a pastor from America  
who came to the Church Renewal Pastors' Fellowship (CRPF) retreat in Korea.

Through the words of promise from Matthew 16:18,

"... I will build my church,"

spoken by the guest speaker from the United States,

the Lord led me back to the United States,

where I have been serving Victory Presbyterian Church until now,

believing and seeing with the eyes of faith

how He continues to fulfill that promise.

Though I am unfaithful, the Lord is always faithful,

and He will surely fulfill the promise

He has made to Victory Presbyterian Church

(Ref.: 2 Timothy 2:13).

## **When God saves His people and raises up His people, He allows unbelievers to receive grace as well.**

The eunuch Hegai found Esther, a beautiful young woman with a lovely figure, pleasing, and showed her favor and kindness.

"He immediately provided her with cosmetics and good food and assigned to her seven female attendants selected from the palace and moved them to the best place in the harem" (Esther 2:9).

As I reflect on this passage, I believe that God elevated Esther to be queen in place of Queen Vashti and caused Hegai, the eunuch, to favor her and show her kindness.

In God's plan to save His people, He extends grace even to unbelievers when He raises up His chosen person.

## **It seems that God accomplishes His good will even through disobedience and discord in our marital relationship.**

King Ahasuerus, who did not hold a banquet in honor of Queen Vashti, favored and loved Esther even more.

He held a "great banquet" in her honor, inviting all his officials and servants, declaring the day a public holiday, and sending gifts throughout the provinces of his kingdom (Esther 2:17-18).

As I reflect on this passage, I think King Ahasuerus did not love Queen Vashti.

Therefore, I believe he did not hold a banquet for her.

Also, I wonder how much he loved Esther, as he went so far as to hold a great banquet in her honor and declare that day a public holiday.

Perhaps God used even the strained relationship between King Ahasuerus and Queen Vashti to elevate Esther to the position of queen.

It seems that God accomplishes His good will even through disobedience and discord in our marital relationships.

## **We must praise God, saying, ‘God is good and his love is eternal!’**

When we witness with the eyes of faith  
the amazing work (work) of the Lord building the Lord's church,  
we believers must all raise our voices in unison,  
thanking God and praising him, saying,  
'God is good and his love is eternal!'  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 5:13)

## **We can only praise God, saying, ‘God is good and His love for us is everlasting!’**

When they laid the foundation of the temple of Jerusalem,  
the priests and Levites from the house of Asaph praised and gave thanks to God,  
singing, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel."  
Then all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord  
because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid  
(Ezra 3:10-11).

"Our temple of God" is nothing but "Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 6:16).  
For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid;  
that foundation is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11).  
Therefore, with hearts full of gratitude, we can only praise and say,  
"God is good, and his love toward us is eternal!"

## **We must not form relationships with evil people who hate God.**

Prophet Jehu rebuked King Jehoshaphat of Judah,  
saying, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord?"  
(2 Chronicles 19:2).

Here, "the wicked" and "those who hate the Lord"  
refer to King Ahab of Israel.

Why did King Jehoshaphat love and assist King Ahab?

I believe the reason is found  
in 2 Chronicles 18:1 in the Modern Korean Bible:

"Now Jehoshaphat had great riches and honor;  
and he allied himself by marriage with Ahab."

In other words, the reason Jehoshaphat,  
despite Ahab's wickedness and hatred towards God,  
loved and helped him was because he formed  
a marital alliance with Ahab's household  
when he came into great wealth and honor.

King Jehoshaphat should not have formed an alliance  
with the wicked King Ahab, who hated God.

The reason he did so was  
because he came into great wealth and honor.

Therefore, when we come into wealth and honor,  
we especially need to exercise spiritual discernment  
and avoid forming relationships with those who hate God and do evil.

If, inadvertently, we have formed such relationships,  
we should quickly sever them.

If we cannot sever them immediately,  
then I believe we should gradually distance ourselves  
and ultimately cut off those ties.

## **What can believers who truly seek God do?**

Jeroboam dismissed all the priests from the Israelite territories, including the Levites, so that they could not serve as priests of God. Instead, he made his own golden calves and bull idols and offered sacrifices to them. He appointed priests from all sorts of people, even those who were not Levites, to serve at the high places. As a result, those who sincerely sought the God of Israel from all the tribes of Israel gathered around the Levites in Jerusalem to freely offer sacrifices to the God of their ancestors, Yahweh. This greatly strengthened the kingdom of Judah. If a church council were to arbitrarily dismiss pastors and appoint officials in such a way that the church could no longer freely worship God, what options would sincere believers who seek God have?

## **If we do not truly seek God ...**

If we do not truly seek God,  
we have no choice but to do evil  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 12:14).

## **God's eyes and heart will always remain on us.**

God chooses us to be holy and will receive our worship forever. Therefore, God's eyes and heart will always remain on us  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 7:16).

## **Pastors worshiped in God's temple?**

How could King Manasseh  
place his own carved idol in the temple of God,  
which God had chosen as the place to be worshiped?  
(2 Chronicles 33:7)

As I reflect on this passage,  
I am reminded that even today,  
there are pastors and leaders who, like King Manasseh,  
have set up idols of themselves in the temples chosen by God  
as places of worship,  
receiving adoration from the saints.

## **Aren't we desecrating God's temple?**

Isn't it true that church leaders and congregants,  
following the wicked ways of those around them,  
serve the idols of worldly people  
and defile the temple of God that God has sanctified?  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 36:14; 1 Corinthians 3:17)



## **He will be judged by God!**

Anyone who forgets the grace given and persecutes  
and even kills the person who gave that grace will be judged by God!  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 20:22, 24).

**We must humbly, silently, and participate until the end  
in the Lord's work of building His church with greater effort  
through the power of God's grace.**

When Nehemiah and the people of Judah's enemies threatened him,  
thinking that the people of Judah would become too weary to continue the construction,  
Nehemiah prayed to God, saying, "O God, strengthen my hands"  
(Nehemiah 6:9).

As I reflect on this passage,

I realize that enemies of the church may attempt to threaten  
and attack the lead pastors of churches, trying to exhaust the saints  
so that the work of the Lord's church cannot be established  
and the gospel cannot be spread to the ends of the earth.

However, we must rely even more on God,  
trusting in His grace to strengthen us in our weakness.

With humility, perseverance, and unwavering commitment,  
we should wholeheartedly participate in the Lord's work  
of building His church, no matter what challenges come our way.

## God's work in interesting!

When Esther's cousin Mordecai was sitting at the palace gate one day, he overheard Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the door, plotting to assassinate King Ahasuerus.

Mordecai informed Queen Esther about their plan.

Esther then reported it to King Ahasuerus, who investigated and found the report to be true.

As a result, Bigthana and Teresh were hanged on a gallows.

All these events were recorded in the king's chronicles in the palace.

However, at that time, King Ahasuerus did not reward Mordecai for his actions.

Later, "after these events," King Ahasuerus elevated Haman to a high position and appointed him as prime minister.

When reflecting on these passages, several thoughts come to mind:

- (1) When considering why King Ahasuerus did not immediately reward Mordecai for exposing the plot to assassinate him, but instead waited until Esther chapter 6 to do so, it reaffirms that our timing and God's timing are different.  
From a human perspective, logically, King Ahasuerus should have rewarded Mordecai as soon as he verified the truth of Mordecai's report exposing the assassination plot against him. However, God's timing was different.  
When Haman erected a gallows seventy-five feet high to hang Mordecai (Esther 5:14), "that very night" God caused King Ahasuerus to read in the chronicles of the court about how Mordecai had informed on the conspirators.  
This led the king to honor Mordecai (Esther 6:1-11).  
Reflecting on this, it seems that God's timing was precisely when Mordecai was in a critical situation.
- (2) Reflecting on the fact that King Ahasuerus investigated the truth of Mordecai's report through Queen Esther and then proceeded to hang Bigthana and Teresh on gallows,  
I am reminded of the importance of first investigating and confirming the truth of accusations or reports.  
In a world where words are plentiful and not all can be verified, it is crucial, at the very least, to verify the truthfulness of matters deemed significant,

especially in a world filled with lies and deceit.

- (3) Meditating on the fact that Mordecai's report of the plot to assassinate King Ahasuerus was recorded in the royal chronicles where the king could see, I believe it is important for us to develop a habit of recording significant events in writing. Personally, this applies to me in writing family journals and ministry journals. However, what has been particularly beneficial to me is recording my meditations on God's word and consistently posting them on my Naver blog. When preparing sermons, I often search through these meditations on Scripture and find abundant grace in revisiting thoughts I had previously recorded.
- (4) Why did King Ahasuerus elevate Haman to the position of prime minister after Mordecai reported the plot to assassinate him and after conducting an investigation that led to the hanging of Bigthan and Teresh? Why did King Ahasuerus elevate Haman without any apparent reason (at least, no reason is recorded in Esther chapter 3)? Shouldn't he have elevated Mordecai instead of Haman? It seems to me that King Ahasuerus was not fair in his actions. However, our God, who is the King of kings and perfectly just, exalted Mordecai at the appointed time (Esther 6). The arrogant Haman, on the other hand, was brought low and hung on the gallows that had been prepared for Mordecai (Ref.: 2 Samuel 22:28; Psalms 18:27; Isaiah 2:12, 26:5; Daniel 4:37). This was orchestrated by God to bring about justice, reversing the plans of King Ahasuerus to execute Mordecai and instead executing Haman (Esther 7:9-10).

## **God's servants must not accept bribes.**

Nehemiah and the enemies of the people of Judah, Tobiah and Sanballat, even went so far as to bribe the prophet Shemaiah to deceive Nehemiah with false prophecies.

Their intention was to entice Nehemiah into committing wrongdoing, tarnish his name, and slander him (Nehemiah 6:10-13).

Reflecting on this passage,

I realize even more strongly that God's servants must receive and deliver God's word to His people faithfully.

To achieve this, God's servants must not accept bribes.

The reason is that bribery corrupts the heart of people (Ecclesiastes 7:7) and even blinds the eyes of the wise, distorting the words of the righteous (Exodus 23:8; Deuteronomy 16:19).

Ultimately, it leads people astray from the right path (Job 36:18).

## **When we were told by God's servant to repent of our sins against God ...**

When we are told by God's servant to repent of our sins against Him, can we "answer loudly", "We will do as you say"?

(Ref.: Ezra 10:11-12)

## **"without limit", "force", "freely"**

Emperor Xerxes (King Ahasuerus), after showcasing the splendor and majesty of his mighty empire during a banquet that lasted for six whole months, held another feast in the courtyard of the palace for all the common people living in the city of Susa for seven days.

The emperor offered royal wine “without limit,” serving everyone in gold goblets of various designs.

He commanded the royal officials not to “force” the guests to drink but to allow them to drink “freely” as they desired (Esther 1:4-8).

As I meditate on this passage, I have been reflecting on it focusing on three words:

(1) “without limit”:

- (a) Just as God gave Solomon wisdom, discernment, and a broad heart “as vast as the sand on the seashore” (1 Kings 4:29), we pray that not only for ourselves but especially for our children and descendants, God would also grant them the wisdom, discernment, and broad heart that He gave Solomon in such abundance (without limit).
- (b) We have all received God’s abundant grace “without limit” (John 1:16).
- (c) The Lord is good and ready to forgive, and He abundantly bestows love on all who call upon Him “without limit” (Psalms 86:5).
- (d) We must not become like the proud Babylonians, who are restless and insatiable, being slaves to wine or wealth, and who have greed “without limit” that is as insatiable as death (Habakkuk 2:5).
- (e) Like the apostle Peter, we pray that we remember the Lord’s words and shed tears of repentance “without limit” (Mark 14:72).

(2) “force”:

- (a) Jesus said, “If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles” (Matthew 5:41).
- (b) As teaching elders like myself or ruling elders, we must take care of the flock that God has entrusted to us, not ‘forcefully,’ but willingly, according to God’s will, and with a joyful heart. We should not do it merely for the sake of earning a salary, but we must genuinely care for the flock (1 Peter 5:2).
- (c) Each of us should give what we have decided in our heart to give, not reluctantly or under “compulsion,” because God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

- (d) We should not be people who focus on outward appearances, and we should not “force” our children to receive baptism (Ref.: Galatians 6:12).
  - (e) When we lend money to our family members or church members, we should not “force” them to repay the debt through persistent demands (Ref.: Deuteronomy 15:2).
  - (f) We should not be ignorant or weak in faith, ‘forcefully’ interpreting the difficult passages of Scripture twisting them to our own destruction (Ref.: 2 Peter 3:16).
- (3) “freely”:
- (a) Our Almighty God is the one who sets us “free” (Ref.: Isaiah 60:16).
  - (b) Jesus Christ has given us freedom to make us “free,” so now as truly free people, we should not submit again to the yoke of slavery to sin (Ref.: John 8:36; Galatians 5:1).
  - (c) Knowing this truth will make us “free” (John 8:32).
  - (d) Whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives “freedom,” and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do (James 1:25).
  - (e) If we follow the Lord’s teachings, we will walk in “freedom” (Psalms 119:45).
  - (f) “In my distress I called to the Lord; He answered me and set me free” (Psalms 118:5).
  - (g) We pray that the Lord will open the eyes of the spiritually blind and rescue those imprisoned in this dark, sinful world, setting them “free” (Ref.: Isaiah 42:7).
  - (h) A newly married man should not be tied to his in-laws or special duties but should be “free” to stay in his own home (not his in-laws’ home) for one year and be happy with his wife (Ref.: Deuteronomy 24:5).

## **Let’s rejoice and be happy together!**

Let us rejoice and rejoice together

as we think about the grace God has bestowed on the pastor emeritus, senior pastor,  
and all the believers of Victory Presbyterian Church

(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 7:10).

## **I long for a tearful prayer of repentance.**

God hears us  
when we humble ourselves before Him  
with a repentant heart,  
listening to His words and praying in tears  
(Ref.: 2 Chronicles 34:26).  
I believe I have prayed  
such a tearful prayer of repentance only once in my lifetime.  
Even now, I pray that God, in His grace,  
will allow me to offer such a prayer of repentance again.

## **They gather around the repentant servant of the Lord.**

Those who fear God's word gather around a repentant servant of the Lord,  
like Ezra, because of our sins  
(Ref.: Ezra 9:4).