

**We Are a People Trapped
But With Hope.**
[Short Word Meditation (40)]

James Kim

**Do not worry, but seek first the kingdom of God
and his righteousness.**

Since our Father God in heaven knows all about our food, clothing, and shelter,
we should not worry about what we will eat, what we will drink, or what we will wear,
but seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Then, all these things will be given to us as a bonus

(Ref.: Matthew 6:31-33).

We must learn from the humble Jesus.

We must take Jesus' yoke upon us and learn from Him

who is gentle and humble in heart,

and then we will find rest for our souls

(Ref.: Matthew 11:29).

**We must not follow the example of church elders
who continue to lead wicked and sinful lives.**

We should not follow the example of church elders

who, despite receiving God's command and warnings through God's servants,

do not listen to them, but rather ignore and disobey them,

and continue to live wicked and sinful lives.

But are we perhaps becoming such church elders now?

(Reference: Zechariah 1:4-6)

**I pray that, even if I must walk the path of suffering,
I will be refined**

I pray that, even if I must walk the path of suffering,
I will be refined so that my heart becomes pure as gold.
The purpose is to enjoy the happiness of seeing God
(Ref.: Matthew 5:8; Job 23:10; 42:5).

We must not be like those who quickly fall away.

When we hear the words of the Kingdom of Heaven,
we rejoice and accept them immediately.
However, we must not be like those who fail to keep these words deeply
in our hearts and who quickly fall away
when suffering or persecution comes because of them
(Ref.: Matthew 13:20-21).

God will surely break the pride ...

God will surely break the pride of sinners
(Ref.: Zechariah 9:6).

Between the pastor and the elders, who are members of the church session

I pray that there will be complete harmony
between the pastor and the elders of the church session
(Ref.: Zechariah 6:13).

The Lord, who is the head of the church ...

The Lord, who is the head of the church,
will sift through all the members within the church,
gathering the faithful like wheat into His barn,
while those like chaff will be burned in unquenchable fire
(Ref.: Matthew 3:12).

At that time, we need not worry about what to say

We must be cautious of people.
Because of Jesus, we will be hated by everyone.
People will hand us over to courts, and even our own family members
who do not believe in Jesus will turn against us and accuse us.
At that time, we need not worry about what to say,
for the Holy Spirit of our Heavenly Father,
who speaks within us, will tell us what to say.
In this way, we will be witnesses of Jesus
even in court before unbelievers.
Those who endure to the end will be saved
(Reference: Matthew 10:17-22,

Only worthless comfort

Idols speak lies, and fortune-tellers
see empty visions and tell false dreams,
offering only worthless comfort.
Therefore, God's people wander like sheep,
suffering for lack of a shepherd.
But the Lord will be with them
and will care for them
(Zechariah 10:2, 3, 5).

This is because, in God's eyes, such a person is a 'murderer' ...

Jesus said that anyone who is angry
with their brother without cause,
insults their brother by calling them
a fool, or actually says, 'You fool,'
will be brought to court, judged,
and ultimately end up in the fires of hell.
This is because, in God's eyes,
such a person is a 'murderer'
who harbors hatred toward their brother.
Such a murderer has no eternal life
(Ref.: Matthew 5:21-22; 1 John 3:15).

If we go up to God's house to worship without first reconciling with our brother ...

If we have done something that causes our brother to hold a grudge against us, and we go up to God's house to worship without first reconciling with our brother (Ref.: Matthew 5:23-24), God might say the following about our worship:

'What is the use of your many acts of worship to me?'

'I am weary of the worship you offer.'

'I take no delight in your offerings of worship.'

'Who asked you to bring such worship before me?'

'You are merely trampling my courts.'

'Do not bring any more worthless worship.'

'I have grown tired of your assemblies.'

'Even when you observe the Sabbath or gather for religious meetings, I cannot bear the sight of your evil deeds.'

'The worship I detest has become a burden to me, and I am exhausted from bearing it'

(Ref.: Isaiah 1:11-14).

May shine and save them from that darkness.

I earnestly pray that the light of the Lord,
who is a great light to those
living in the darkness of the shadow of death,
may shine and save them from that darkness
(Ref.: Matthew 4:16).

Where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

At the end of the age, the angels will come
and separate the wicked from the righteous
and throw them into the fiery furnace,
where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth
(Matthew 13:49-50).

By fearing the Lord, they teach the law of truth ...

The covenant the Lord made with His servants
is a covenant of life and peace.
The Lord granted this to them
so they might revere Him.
By fearing the Lord,
they teach the law of truth, without deceit or lies,
and walk with Him in peace and integrity,
turning many people away from sin
(Ref.: Malachi 2:5-6).

The reason they were so sorrowful was ...

When Jesus' disciples heard Him say,
'I will be handed over to men, killed,
and raised again on the third day,'
they were filled with great sorrow
(Matthew 17:22-23).

The reason they were so sorrowful was
that they were not thinking of God's work in faith,
but rather focused on human concerns with unbelief
(Ref.: Mark 8:33).

Their sorrow came from concentrating more on Jesus' death
than on His resurrection because of this unbelief.
If we, like them, view the death of those we love without faith,
we will grieve like those without hope.
However, if we believe that Jesus died and was raised again,
we will also believe that God will bring with Him
those who have died in faith in Jesus.
When the Lord returns, we will believe
that those who have died in Christ will rise first.
After that, we who are alive will be caught up together
with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,
and we will be with the Lord forever
(Ref.: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

Therefore, we must rejoice greatly.

The righteous and humble Lord
who gives salvation will come to this earth again.
Therefore, we must rejoice greatly
(Ref.: Zechariah 9:9).

**Even though Jesus said,
“Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate” ...**

Jesus clearly said, 'Have you not read that the One who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, "For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh"? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.' But are we, like the Pharisees, asking Jesus in our hearts, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?' and testing Him in the same way?
(Ref.: Matthew 19:3-6)

Blessed is the Christian ...

Blessed is the Christian who has received the knowledge of God the Father in heaven that Jesus is Lord and Christ, the Son of the living God
(Ref.: Matthew 16:16-17).

Whoever gives a cup of cold water to a disciple ...

Jesus' clear words:
“Whoever gives a cup of cold water to a disciple, even though he is of little value, because he is my disciple, will surely be rewarded”
(Matthew 10:42).

" Just say the word."

Jesus was amazed by the faith
of a Roman centurion living in Capernaum.
This was because when Jesus said
He would go to the centurion's house
to heal his servant who was suffering greatly from paralysis,
the centurion replied, 'Lord,
I am not worthy to have You come under my roof.
Just say the word, and my servant will be healed.'
Because of this, Jesus told the centurion,
'Go, let it be done just as you believed,'
and at that very moment, his servant was healed
(Matthew 8:5-13).

As I meditate on this word,
I want to imitate the faith of the centurion,
which even amazed our Lord.
Although my faith is as small as a grain of wheat
(John 12:24),

I want to live by faith, not by what is visible,
but by the word of promise spoken by the Lord
(who is the Word through whom the heavens
and the earth were created, John 1:1; Genesis 1).
Personally, the promise I received from the Lord
is found in John 6:1-15,
and the promise received as a church
is from Matthew 16:18.

I want to live by faith
(2 Corinthians 5:7).

I rejoiced even more in finding (and saving) that 'lost sheep'.

I prayed to God, asking Him
to save the soul of one of my children,
who was like a 'lost sheep' and did not believe in Jesus,
even if it meant taking my own physical life.
God, who is rich in mercy and grace,
answered that prayer and saved my child.
Therefore, I rejoiced even more in finding (and saving)
that 'lost sheep' than in the two children
who had not gone astray
(Ref.: Matthew 18:12-13).

I am a hypocrite with a diseased heart.

If I cannot see the plank in my own eye
but can see the speck in my neighbor's eye,
and in my heart I criticize (judge) that person
while saying with my lips, 'I will help you remove
the speck from your eye because I care about you,'
then I am a hypocrite with a diseased heart
(Ref.: Matthew 7:1-5).

**I must first realize that there is
a plank in my own eye and remove it.**

As a hypocrite with a diseased heart,
I have failed to see the plank in my own eye
while only noticing the speck in my neighbor's eye.
I must first realize that there is
a plank in my own eye and remove it.
Only then will I be able to clearly see
and remove the speck from my neighbor's eye
(Ref.: Matthew 7:3-5).

**As the light of the world,
I first pray that I may shine the light of Jesus ...**

As the light of the world,
I first pray that I may shine the light of Jesus,
the light of the world, to all those in my house.
I pray that my wife and my children will see my good deeds
and give glory to my Father God in heaven
(Ref.: Matthew 5:14-16; John 8:12).

So I should not let my good deeds be noticed by others ...

I believe that God the Father, who sees in secret, will reward me,
so I should not let my good deeds be noticed by others
(Ref.: Matthew 6:4).

The bread we need each day

We thank God the Father
who gives us the bread we need each day
(Ref.: Matthew 6:11).

If we want to be treated well by others ...

If we want to be treated well by others but do not treat them first,
then we are not living by the words that come from the mouth of God
(Ref.: Matthew 7:12; Deuteronomy 8:3).

Blessed are those who have compassion on others ...

Blessed are those who have compassion on others,
for God will have compassion on them
(Matthew 5:7).

“If that’s the case with a husband and wife, it would be better not to marry”?

Jesus’ disciples probably heard
Jesus’ conversation with the Pharisees
and said to him,
“If that’s the case with a husband and wife,
it would be better not to marry.”
Jesus said to them, “Not everyone can do this,
but only those to whom God has given permission.
Some men are born ungodly,
others are crippled and cannot marry,
and others have voluntarily decided not to marry
for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.
Let anyone who can accept this teaching accept it”
(Matthew 19:10-12).

I think that when I meditate on this word,
I too can think like Jesus’ disciples,
“It would be better not to marry” (v. 10).
Especially when I think of the words
of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:38,
“So then, whoever marries does well;
but whoever does not marry does better,”
I can think even more that it would be better not to marry.
So it seems that there are some who,
according to Jesus’ words,
“have voluntarily given up marriage
for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (v. 12).

“I desire mercy, not sacrifice”

Healthy people do not need a doctor, but only the sick do.

Jesus did not come into the world

to call the righteous like the Pharisees,

but to call sinners, as the Pharisees referred to them.

Thus, Jesus called Matthew, saying, "Follow me,"

and then ate with many tax collectors and sinners at his house.

In this way, Jesus showed mercy to sinners.

And Jesus also said to us:

"I desire mercy, not sacrifice"

(Reference: Matthew 9:9-13).

When I reflect on these words, I receive two lessons:

(1) The God who is rich in mercy loves us with His great love

(Reference: Ephesians 2:4).

(2) The reason why those who show mercy are blessed

is that they will receive mercy

(Ref.: Matthew 5:7).

Even if I want to help someone else remove the speck of light from his or her eye ...

Even if I want to help someone else remove the speck of light from his or her eye,

if the other person cannot see the plank in his or her own eye

and only regards the speck in my eye as the plank,

he or she will not only refuse my help,

but will also criticize me in his or her heart

(Ref.: Matthew 7:1-5).

‘I wish one of you would close the door of your church.’

Perhaps God is saying to us now:

‘I wish one of you would close the door of your church.

I do not like you, and I will not accept your offerings’

(Ref.: Malachi 1:10).

“Why do you think evil in your hearts?”

When the scribes thought to themselves,

"This man is blaspheming,"

Jesus knew their thoughts and said,

"Why do you think evil in your hearts?"

(Matthew 9:3-4).

Our Lord knows even when we have evil thoughts in our hearts:

"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, and slander" (15:19).

“Return to me, and I will return to you.”

Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart,

with all your soul, and with all your mind,"

and "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Yet, we do not live according to these commandments.

To us, the Lord says, "Return to me, and I will return to you."

But we are asking, "How can we return?"

(Ref.: Malachi 3:7; Matthew 22:37, 39)

“Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven” ...

Jesus said:

“Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven
is my brother and sister and mother”

(Matthew 12:50).

We must repent like the people of Nineveh.

We must repent like the people of Nineveh,
even after hearing the preaching of a pastor
like the disobedient prophet Jonah

(Ref.: Matthew 12:41).

Three “Why” questions about Jesus’ parable of the vineyard workers in Matthew 20

In the parable of the workers in the vineyard in Matthew 20,
the owner of the vineyard says to the foreman,
“Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired.”
The last ones to come are those who came at 5 p.m.
when the owner of the vineyard said, “You also go and work in my vineyard.”
So the people who came at 5 p.m. each received a denarius.
Then the men who had come before them, those who had come at about 9 a.m.,
those who had come at noon, and those who had come at 3 p.m.,
thought they would receive a little more than those who had come at 5 p.m.

But they too received only one denarius.

So they began to complain to their master after receiving their wages:

“These men worked only one hour, and you have given them the same as we who have borne the burden of the day and the heat?”

(Matthew 20:1-12)

When I meditate on these words, several thoughts come to mind:

(1) Why did the owner of the vineyard say to the overseer,

“Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones (those who came at 5 p.m.)”?

Why didn't he say to pay them first (those who came at about 9 a.m.)?

Perhaps the reason is that Jesus had in mind the central lesson of the parable of the workers in the vineyard:

“So the last will be first, and the first will be last” (v. 16).

(2) Why did the people who came first

(those who came around 9 AM, 12 PM, and 3 PM)

think they would get paid more than the people who came later

(those who came at 5 PM)? Of course, common sense tells us

that the people who came at 5 PM only worked 1 hour,

and they worked 9 hours (those who came around 9 AM),

6 hours (those who came at 12 PM), and 3 hours (those who came at 3 PM),

so they must have thought and expected that they would get paid more

because they worked more than the people who came at 5 PM and only worked 1 hour.

But what they had forgotten was that the owner of the vineyard had promised

the workers “a denarius a day” and sent them into his vineyard (v. 2).

So the owner of the vineyard answered one of the workers

who had complained to him after receiving his wages:

“I have done you no wrong. Didn't you agree with me for a denarius?” (v. 13).

(3) Why did the owner of the vineyard have the heart to give the same wage,

one denarius, to those who were called around 9 AM to work in his vineyard,

to those who were called at noon and 3 PM, and to those who were called at 5 PM? (v. 14)

If it were up to us, we would naturally think that the wage

should be based on the number of hours worked.

So, if someone worked starting at 9 AM, they should be paid for 9 hours of work

(since they worked until 6 PM) (v. 12),

if someone worked from noon, they should be paid for 6 hours,
if they worked from 3 PM, they should receive payment for 3 hours,
and if they worked from 5 PM, they should be paid for just 1 hour.
In this parable of the vineyard workers, Jesus said,
"It is my will to give the same wage to those who came last
(the ones who came at 5 PM), just as I would to you
(perhaps one of those who came at 9 AM, noon, or 3 PM,
but this would include all of them). This is my heart" (v. 14).
And He also said, "Is it not lawful for me to do
what I want with my own possessions?" (v. 15).
From these words, I believe He was speaking about the sovereignty of God.
I was reminded of the words in Romans 9:20-21:
"But who are you, a mere human, to talk back to God?
Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it,
'Why did you make me like this?' Does not the potter have the right
to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery
for noble purposes and some for common use?"

If we refuse to hear the Word of God ...

If we refuse to hear the Word of God and stubbornly turn our backs,
block our ears, and harden our hearts like stones
so that we do not hear the Word of God
that the Holy Spirit speaks, great wrath will come out from God
(Ref.: Zechariah 7:11-12).

If the Lord wants me to be healed ...

If the Lord wants me to be healed,
I will go to God the Father and worship Him
with thanksgiving and testify to others
that I have been healed from my illness
(Ref.: Matthew 8:2-4).

However, when my first baby, Charis, was suffering from illness,
she was not healed from her illness,
but instead died (fell sleep) in my arms.

Nevertheless, the Lord made me praise
the Lord's wonderful and amazing love of salvation
when I returned after sprinkling Charis' ashes on the water.

And to this day, the Lord has made me testify
to the Lord's wonderful and amazing love
that I experienced through my daughter's death.

The Lord has fulfilled the words of the Psalms 63:3 for my wife and I:
"Because your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise you."

Jesus will come back before we have gone through all the towns.

When people harass us in one town, we must flee to another town.
The Lord has clearly said that before we have gone from place to place
and gone through all the towns of the world, Jesus will come again
(Ref.: Matthew 10:23).

**The lips of pastors should hold true knowledge,
and people should receive instruction from their mouths.**

The lips of pastors should hold true knowledge,
and people should receive instruction from their mouths.

The reason is that pastors are the messengers of Almighty God.

However, pastors have now departed from the right path
and are causing many people to stumble with their false teachings.

They do not follow God's will and are partial in carrying out the commandments,
so the Lord has made them despised and despised before all people

(Ref.: Malachi 2:7-9).

When the glory of the pastors fades away ...

When the glory of the pastors fades away,
there will be a wailing sound

(Ref.: Zechariah 11:3).

As a shepherd rescues his flock ...

As a shepherd rescues his flock, so God will rescue us, his children,
so that we will shine like jewels in the crown of the kingdom of God.

How great will our charm and beauty then be!

(Ref.: Zechariah 9:16-17)

The problem may not be the family, but our pride that causes the humble to sin.

Jesus said that anyone who causes a humble person
—one who believes in Him and humbles themselves—to sin,
“It would be better for them to have a large millstone
hung around their neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.
Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble...
Woe to the person who causes someone to stumble”
(Matthew 18:4, 6-7).

Who is it that causes humble people to sin?
Is it not the proud person who elevates themselves and acts as if they are superior?
Could it be that we ourselves are prideful, thinking too highly of ourselves?
Could it be that we are causing humble people to stumble and sin?
If so, the consequences will not only affect us,
but could bring misfortune not just to the world but even to our own families.
The problem may not be with the family, but with our own pride,
which causes us to lead the humble into sin.

Serving the Lord with faith until the end of this world

As good seeds belonging to the kingdom of heaven,
we, who believe in Jesus Christ, the One who has sown the good seed,
will serve the Lord until the end of this world.
When the Lord calls us, we will enter
the kingdom of God the Father and shine like the sun
(Ref.: Matthew 13:37-38, 43).

‘just then’ ‘at that very moment’

As Jesus went to the house of a synagogue leader
to raise the dead daughter of his wife,
‘just then’ a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years
came up behind him and touched the hem of his garment.

The reason was that she thought that

if she could just touch his garment, she would be healed.

Jesus turned and said to her, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has saved you.”

When Jesus said this, ‘at that very moment’ she was healed.

(Matthew 9:19-22).

When I meditated on this passage,

I was interested in the words ‘just then’ (v. 20) and “at that very moment” (v. 22).

So when I meditated on these words, the Bible verse that came to mind was

2 Corinthians 6:2, the latter half of the modern-day Bible verse:

“...now is the acceptable time and the day of salvation.”

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household”

(Acts 16:31)

Church members who are like the Pharisees ...

Church members who are like the Pharisees prioritize human-centered worship,
where the glory of people is emphasized, much more than showing compassion
and doing good works for the sick on the Sabbath (Sunday).

The reason is that they not only do not understand

the meaning of Jesus' words, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice,"

but they also place more importance on man-made laws than on the words of Jesus,

who is the Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus' words are, "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath"

(Reference: Matthew 12:7-12).

The Pharisees were the ones who received the help of Satan, the prince of demons.

When Jesus healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, the people were astonished and asked, “Could this man possibly be the descendant of David?” But the Pharisees said, “This man casts out demons with the help of Satan, the prince of demons” (Matthew 12:22-24).

Those people must have been waiting and hoping for the fulfillment of the prophecy that “a new king will arise from David’s descendants” (Isaiah 11:1).

So when Jesus healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, they must have asked, “Could this man possibly be the descendant of David?”

How could the Pharisees say that Jesus casts out demons with the help of Satan, the prince of demons? How could the Pharisees say that Jesus, the “King of kings” (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14), was helped by Satan, the prince of demons? The reason is that, as Jesus said, the Pharisees were children of their father the devil (Satan) (John 8:44).

Therefore, the Pharisees were the ones who were helped by Satan, the prince of demons.

That is why they said that Jesus, the descendant of David and the King of kings, was helped by Satan, the prince of demons.

He will surely be brought low!

He who is exalted to heaven will surely be brought low!

(Ref.: Matthew 11:23)

Among the punishments of God ...

Among the punishments of God, all the possessions of the unrepentant and sinful people will be taken away and their wealth will be thrown into the sea, so that they will be destroyed

(Ref.: Zechariah 9:4).

When I offer my insignificant life to the Lord ...

When Jesus got out of the boat and saw a large crowd,
he was moved with compassion for them and healed their sick.
When evening came, his disciples came to him and said,
“Send the people away to the villages so they can buy themselves food.”
Jesus said to them, “They don’t have to go. You give them something to eat.”
But the disciples answered, “All we have here is five loaves of bread and two fish.”
Jesus said, “Bring them here to me,” and he made the crowd sit down on the grass.
He took the five loaves and the two fish, and “looking up to heaven,
he gave thanks and broke them,” and gave them to the disciples,
and the disciples gave them to the crowd.
The crowd (about 5,000 men, in addition to women and children) ate and were satisfied,
and they picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces
(Matthew 14:14-21).

When I meditate on this passage, two thoughts come to mind:

- (1) Even through my life of “five loaves and two fish,”
the Almighty Lord can share the words of Jesus, the bread of life,
with about 5,000 men and let them eat spiritual food.
- (2) When I offer my insignificant life to the Lord,
the Lord “looks up to heaven and gives thanks”
and performs the miracle of the five loaves and two fish.

Aren’t parents desperately crying out to their beloved children?

Aren’t parents desperately crying out to their beloved children
who disobey their parents’ words, leave home, and live a life of debauchery and sin?
(Ref.: Zechariah 1:3, Luke 15:11-32).

I do good deeds to be seen by men ...

I do good deeds to be seen by men,
and I will not receive a reward
from God my Father in heaven
(Ref.: Matthew 6:1).

When people curse, persecute, and lie to us because we believe in Jesus ...

When people curse, persecute, and lie to us because we believe in Jesus,
we are happy because there is a great reward waiting for us in heaven.
Therefore, we are glad and rejoice
(Ref.: Matthew 5:11-12).

“Everyone will have to give an account for every word they have spoken ...”

Jesus said: “Everyone will have to give an account for every word
they have spoken on the day of judgment, for according to your words
you will be either innocent or guilty”
(Matthew 12:36-37).

What can a person exchange for his life?

What can a person exchange for his life?

For Jesus and the gospel

(Ref.: Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:35; Acts 20:24).

If we fight and divide ...

Any country, any church, any family that fights and divides among themselves will not last long and will perish (Ref.: Matthew 12:25).

We should have compassion for the believers who are scattered and suffering.

Jesus saw the crowds, who were harassed and helpless,

like sheep without a shepherd, and He had compassion on them.

He then said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field'

(Matthew 9:36-38).

We, too, should follow Jesus' example and have compassion for the believers who are scattered and suffering, like sheep without a good shepherd.

And according to Jesus' words, we should earnestly pray

to the Lord to send workers for the harvest.

By standing firm on the Word of God written in the Bible

Although a Spirit-filled Christian may be led
by the Holy Spirit to be tempted by the devil,
they can resist the devil by standing firm on the Word of God
written in the Bible, causing him to flee
(Ref.: Matthew 4:1-11; James 4:7).

I pray that the Holy Spirit will continually work within us ...

I pray that the Holy Spirit will continually work within us,
making our hearts sensitive to God's Word, our ears quick to hear His voice,
and our eyes able to see the fulfillment of God's promises,
so that we may come to know more deeply who God is
(Ref.: Matthew 13:13-15).

The Spirit-filled Christian ...

The Spirit-filled Christian hears the voice of God saying,
“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”
(Ref.: Matthew 3:17).

We must pay taxes.

We must pay customs duties and taxes
(Ref.: Matthew 17:24-27).

When I think about the death of John the Baptist, I feel truly absurd.

John the Baptist had told King Herod that it was wrong for him to marry Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, saying, 'It is not lawful for you to have her.'
Because of this, King Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, since they regarded John as a prophet, so he had him imprisoned.
Then, on Herod's birthday, Herodias' daughter danced before the guests and pleased Herod, so he swore to her that he would give her anything she asked for.
She, in turn, asked her mother Herodias what to request, and at her mother's prompting, she said, 'Give me the head of John the Baptist on a platter.'
King Herod was greatly distressed, but because of his oath and the guests at the banquet, he commanded that her request be granted.
He sent an executioner to behead John in prison.
When the head was brought on a platter, the girl gave it to her mother, Herodias (Matthew 14:3-11).

As I meditate on this passage, a few thoughts come to mind:

(1) When I think of King Herod, who wanted to kill John the Baptist for saying, 'It is wrong for you to marry Herodias, your brother's wife,' I am reminded that, like John, we too need the courage to boldly say to those in positions of power and authority, 'What you are doing is wrong.' We must be willing to speak the truth, even to those who are stronger or more powerful than us.

(2) King Herod wanted to kill John the Baptist, but he was afraid of the many people, so he did not do so. However, Herodias, the woman he married, ultimately had John the Baptist killed through her daughter.
She had John's head beheaded. I truly think she was a cruel woman.
I am reminded of Queen Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab, because she also cruelly killed Naboth.

(3) When I think about the death of John the Baptist, it seems so absurd.
But I believe that, in the eyes of the Lord, his death was precious (Psalms 116:15).

I don't want to be a Christian who has lost his salty taste.

I do not want to be a Christian who has lost his taste
and is like salt that is useless and thrown away in this world
(Ref.: Matthew 5:13).

All who are weary and burdened should come to the Lord.

Let all who are weary and burdened come to the Lord,
and He will give them rest
(Ref.: Matthew 11:28).

The reason why those who mourn are happy is ...

The reason why those who mourn are happy
is because they will be comforted
(Ref.: Matthew 5:4).

The sin of blasphemy?

When Jesus forgave the sins of a paralyzed man,
it was considered blasphemy from the perspective of some of the scribes.
The reason is that, from their point of view, only God, the one true God,
has the authority to forgive sins, yet Jesus was demonstrating
that He had the power to forgive sins through the healing of this paralyzed man
(Matthew 9:2-3, 6).

However, in reality, I believe it was the scribes who committed the sin of blasphemy.
The reason is that they did not believe that Jesus and God the Father are one
(Ref.: John 10:30).

When the Lord who judges appears ...

When the Lord who judges appears,
He will reveal the sins of those who practice divination,
commit adultery, give false testimony, cheat workers out of their wages,
oppress widows, orphans, and foreigners, and those who do not fear God
(Ref.: Malachi 3:5).

God cares for them as a father cares for his devoted son.

God has written the names of those who fear Him
and cherish His name in a book of remembrance before Him.
God cares for them as a father cares for his devoted son
(Malachi 3:16-17).

Evil people

Evil people try to seize the inheritance
of the rich man's children even by killing them
(Ref.: Matthew 21:37-38, 41).

I used to think that doing things that were not supposed to be done on the Sabbath was a great sin.

Like the Pharisees, who taught the laws made by people
as if they were God's commandments (Ref.: Matthew 15:9),
I remember a time when we thought that certain things we did on the Sabbath
were great sins, because we believed they were forbidden.
However, we did not realize from the Scriptures
that these 'Sabbath regulations' made by people were not sins to break
(Ref.: Matthew 12:2, 5).

Just as a tree is known by its fruit ...

Just as a tree is known by its fruit,
a good person speaks good words from the good stored up in their heart,
but an evil person speaks evil words from the evil stored up in their heart.
Church members who are like the Pharisees, whose hearts are filled with evil,
can never speak good words.
(Matthew 12:33-35).

'Yes, Lord, we believe.'

The two blind men, who desperately wanted to open their eyes,
followed Jesus and cried out loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on us!'
When Jesus entered the house, the blind men came to Him.
Jesus asked them, 'Do you believe that I am able to do this?'
They answered, 'Yes, Lord, we believe.' Then Jesus touched their eyes and said,
'According to your faith, let it be done to you.' And their eyes were opened
(Matthew 9:27-30).
We, too, should cry out in faith to the Lord, who has mercy on us,
bringing our earnest prayers before Him.
According to the faith that the Lord has given each of us, it will be done.

The gospel of the kingdom of Jesus Christ will be spread.

Jesus went through all the towns and villages,
teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom,
and healing every disease and sickness
(Matthew 9:35).

I pray that through us,
the gospel of the kingdom of Jesus Christ will be spread,
and that with the Lord's love,
He will heal the spiritual sicknesses of the weak and hurting hearts.

Those who do not gather together with Jesus ...

Those who do not follow Jesus are those who oppose Him,
and those who do not gather together with Jesus
are those who scatter the church people
(Ref.: Matthew 12:30).

Jesus clearly said:

Jesus clearly said: 'Until heaven and earth pass away,
not one jot or one tittle will pass from the word of God until all is accomplished'
(Ref.: Matthew 5:18; Numbers 23:19; Isaiah 55:11).

We must be content to become like Him.

We cannot and should not be higher than our Lord and Teacher Jesus,
but we must be content to become like Him
(Ref.: Matthew 10:24-25).

The worldly love of a mother who does not resemble Jesus' love is not the same as loving her children with the love of the Lord!

Among Jesus' disciples were two brothers, James and John.
Their father was Zebedee, and their mother came to Jesus with her two sons,
bowed down, and asked for a favor. She said to Jesus,
'Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit
at Your right hand and the other at Your left in Your kingdom'
(Matthew 20:20-21).

Why did the mother of James and John make such a request of Jesus?
Of course, she did not fully understand what she was asking of Jesus
when she made this request (v. 22), but I believe her ultimate intention was
that she wanted her two sons to become great and be first.
Therefore, after hearing her request, Jesus, seeing the anger of the other ten disciples
(who were upset with James and John), told them,
'Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,
and whoever wants to be first must be your slave' (vv. 26-27).
Jesus came not to be served, but to serve (v. 28).
However, it seems that the mother of James and John wanted her two sons to be served.
The worldly love of a mother who does not resemble Jesus' love
is not the same as loving her children with the love of the Lord!

What better are we than those who do not believe in Jesus?

If we, who believe in Jesus, love
only those we love and greet only our brothers and sisters,
what better are we than those who do not believe in Jesus?
(Ref.: Matthew 5:46-47).

What must have been in the heart of Jesus?

The disciples of John came, took the body of John, and buried it.
Then they went and told Jesus.
When Jesus heard this, He withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place
(Matthew 14:12-13).
How must the disciples of John have felt
when they took the body of their teacher, John the Baptist,
whose head and body were separated, and buried him?
What must have been in the heart of Jesus
when He withdrew alone by boat to a quiet place?

Jesus said (1)

Jesus said: "It is written in the law, 'You shall not commit adultery.'
But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully
has already committed adultery with her in his heart"
(Matthew 5:27-28).

Jesus said (2)

Jesus said: “Everyone who divorces his wife except for sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery” (Matthew 5:32).

They are not fit to be His disciples.

Those who love their parents or children more than Jesus are not fit to be His disciples.
Those who do not take up their cross and follow Jesus are also not fit to be His disciples.
Jesus said: “Whoever loves his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 10:37-39).

True disciples lay down their lives for Jesus.

True disciples of Jesus, who deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Jesus, are those who lay down their lives for Jesus (Ref.: Matthew 16:24-25).

If Jesus were to enter the temple today, would there be people He would drive out?

If Jesus were to enter the temple today,
would there be people He would drive out?
Even now, are there people who turn the temple,
which is supposed to be a house of prayer,
into a "den of robbers" as Jesus said?
Jesus drove out those who were selling and exchanging money,
as well as those selling doves, from the temple,
but He healed the blind and the lame who came to Him
(Ref.: Matthew 21:12-14).

Going throughout the world, proclaiming the gospel and truth of Jesus Christ.

The servants chosen by God,
the ones whom God loves and is pleased with,
are filled with the Holy Spirit given by God,
and go throughout the world,
proclaiming the gospel and truth of Jesus Christ
(Ref.: Matthew 12:18).

Wisdom

Wisdom is justified by her actions
(Matthew 11:19).

Why did Jesus' disciples rebuke the people who brought little children to Jesus ...?

Why did Jesus' disciples rebuke the people
who brought little children to Jesus,
asking Him to lay His hands on them and bless them?

Could it be that the disciples didn't understand, as Jesus had said,
that "the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these little children"?
(Ref.: Matthew 19:13-14)

Could it also be that the disciples were not like these humble children,
but instead, had prideful hearts, more concerned with
"who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"?
(Ref.: Matthew 18:1-4; Luke 22:24).

Why do we still worry about what to eat, what to drink, and what to wear?

Even though worrying cannot add a single inch to our height,
why do we still worry about what to eat, what to drink, and what to wear?
It is because of our little faith
(Ref.: Matthew 6:25, 27, 30, 31).

Why do I keep repeating unnecessary words when I pray?

It is not by saying many words that God hears my prayers,
so why do I keep repeating unnecessary words when I pray?
(Ref.: Matthew 6:7)

**We may even be wrongly judging
the innocent" as guilty in our hearts.**

If we had understood the meaning of Jesus' words,
"I desire mercy, not sacrifice,"
we would not have hastily judged the innocent as guilty.

(Ref.: Matthew 12:7).

However, perhaps we still don't fully understand what Jesus' words mean.

Furthermore, as Jesus said, "You are in error
because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God,"

(Ref.: Matthew 22:29), we may even be wrongly judging
the innocent" as guilty in our hearts.

For where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.

We are not to store up our treasures on earth,
but in heaven, for where our treasure is,
there will our heart be also
(Matthew 6:19-21).

It seems that many things happen in our lives that we cannot understand with our own wisdom.

It seems that many things happen in our lives
that we cannot understand with our own wisdom.
So, although we don't know why these things are happening,
we often struggle to find God's will
in the midst of them and pray to God for understanding.
However, in the midst of these events,
we may not always know what God's will is,
and we can become confused.
But what we believe now is that God will work all these
seemingly incomprehensible things together
for His good, perfect, and pleasing will,
and He will accomplish them in His time and in His way.
(Ref.: Zechariah 1:9; Proverbs 3:5; Romans 8:28; 12:2).

Aren't we loving our neighbors and hating our enemies?

As children of God who believe in Jesus,
the way we should live is according to Jesus' words:
"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."
But are we, instead, following the Old Testament law,
loving our neighbors and hating our enemies?
(Ref.: Matthew 5:43-45)

**Our Lord is pleased when we speak the truth
and judge fairly for the sake of peace.**

Our Lord is pleased when we speak the truth
and judge fairly for the sake of peace.
However, our Lord hates when we plot
against one another and love to swear falsely
(Ref.: Zechariah 8:16-17).

Our God rules us with sincerity and justice.

Our God rules us with sincerity and justice.
We who are ruled by God in this way
must diligently serve the Lord's church
(Ref.: Zechariah 8:8, 9).

Not by our own strength or ability ...

Not by our own strength or ability,
but only by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit!
(Ref.: Zechariah 4:6)

If we do not forgive the sins of others ...

If we do not forgive the sins of others,
our Heavenly Father will not forgive our sins either.
And we cannot pray to God the Father,
saying, "Forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors"
(Ref.: Matthew 6:12, 15).

God sees the suffering we are going through.

God sees the suffering we, His children, are going through,
so He will never let us be tormented again
(Zechariah 9:8).

‘What have we said against you?’

God's word is:
"You speak arrogantly against me; yet you say,
'What have we said against you?'"
(Ref.: Malachi 3:13).

To us this may seem utterly impossible ...

To us this may seem utterly impossible,
but to Almighty God it is not impossible
(Ref.: Zechariah 8:6).

Even if it means facing the misfortunes of our family ...

We must realize our pride and repent,
even if it means facing the misfortunes of our family,
and become humble like little children in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven
(Ref.: Matthew 18:7-9).

Furthermore, we must be careful not to despise
even "one of these little ones" who humble themselves,
as Jesus said, with a humble heart.

The reason is that "their angels in heaven
always see the face of my Father who is in heaven"
(Ref.: Matthew 18:10).

We are prisoners, but we have hope.

We are prisoners, but we have hope.
The Lord will rescue us from our prison through the blood of the covenant.
And the Lord will reward us with double blessings for the suffering we have endured
(Ref.: Zechariah 9:11-12).

We must continue to ask God the Father until we receive answers to our prayers.

Even the vilest father knows how to give good gifts to his children,
how much more will our Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?
Therefore, we must continue to ask God the Father until we receive answers to our prayers.
When we ask, we should seek the holy Word of God, which is as precious as pearls,
just as the Lord fed 5,000 men with two fish and five loaves of bread
(Ref.: Matthew 7:6-11; John 6:5-13).

The reason is that man does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God
(Ref.: Deuteronomy 8:3).

We must live according to that word and keep that word deep in our hearts.

We must all become people
who hear and understand the word of the kingdom of heaven.
And we must live according to that word and keep that word deep in our hearts.
Therefore, no matter what suffering or persecution comes,
we must stand firm on the rock of faith and not waver.
We must become people who live by abundantly
overcoming all the worries of this world and the temptation of wealth,
and bearing fruit 100-fold, 60-fold, or 30-fold
(Ref.: Matthew 13:19-23).

We must simply say, “Yes,” when we mean “Yes” ...

We must simply say, “Yes,” when we mean “Yes,”
and “No,” when we mean “No.”
Anything beyond that comes from the devil
(Ref.: Matthew 5:37).

When we pray, we should not doubt.

When we pray, we must believe without doubting
that whatever we ask for, we will receive it
(Ref.: Matthew 21:21-22).

We should not worry about tomorrow.

We should not worry about tomorrow.
We can worry about tomorrow.
Sufficient for each day is its own trouble
(Ref.: Matthew 6:34).

We should sing and rejoice.

We should sing and rejoice
because Emmanuel God dwells among us
(Ref.: Zechariah 2:10).

We must no longer hesitate, unable to decide ...

We must no longer hesitate, unable to decide
whether to enter through the narrow gate and walk on the narrow path,
or to enter through the wide gate and walk on the broad road.
Even if we see many people entering through the wide gate
and walking on the broad road that leads to destruction,
we must choose, by faith, the narrow gate and the narrow path that leads to life,
and enter through it, making sure not to turn to the left or to the right,
but to walk faithfully on that path
(Ref.: Matthew 7:13-14; 1 Kings 18:21; Deuteronomy 2:27; 5:32; 17:11, 20; 28:14).

We are of more value than many sparrows.

We must not be afraid.
God counts the hairs on our heads.
Not a single sparrow falls to the ground
without our Heavenly Father's permission.
We are of more value than many sparrows
(Ref.: Matthew 10:29-31).

We shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

We shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

We shall not tempt our Lord God.

We shall worship our Lord God and serve Him alone,
according to the word of the Holy Spirit

(Ref.: Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).

We must follow Jesus' example ...

We must follow Jesus' example and go everywhere
to teach the word of God and spread the gospel of the kingdom of heaven.

Therefore, I hope that many people will follow Jesus

(Ref.: Matthew 4:23, 25).

We must welcome those who humble themselves in the name of Jesus.

Jesus said, "Anyone who welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."

(Matthew 18:5).

We must welcome those who humble themselves in the name of Jesus.

(Ref.: Matthew 18:4).

However, could it be that, instead of welcoming those who humble themselves,
we are welcoming people who are proud and self-righteous?

(Ref.: Romans 12:16)

**We must guard our hearts
and not betray the wife we married when we were young.**

The purpose for which God made us one
with our wife is to have godly children.
Therefore, we must guard our hearts
and not betray the wife we married when we were young.
This is God's Word: "I hate divorce, and I hate a man
who covers his wife with violence.
So be on your guard,
and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth."
Nevertheless, among us, there are those
who have been unfaithful to the wife
they married when they were young,
failing to keep their vows to her
(Ref.: Malachi 2:14-16).

We must listen to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We must listen to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Son of God, whom God the Father loves and is pleased with
(Ref.: Matthew 17:5).

We must be very cautious about such false pastors.

Just as a tree is known by its fruit,
we can tell whether a pastor is genuine or false by their actions.

False pastors may come to us dressed like sheep,
but inwardly they are ravenous wolves
(Ref.: Matthew 7:15-16).

A false pastor loves money, just like the Pharisees
(Ref.: Luke 16:14).

Therefore, a false pastor is full of greed and wickedness in their heart
(Ref.: Luke 11:39), and in their insatiable greed, they only seek their own gain
(Ref.: Isaiah 56:11).

A false pastor who loves money will preach powerfully from the pulpit,
saying, "I love You, O Lord, my strength" (Psalms 18:1),
but in their actual life, they believe that "money is my strength"
and are busy accumulating wealth.

Outwardly, their faith in God may seem strong,
but inwardly, they trust money more than God.

Outwardly, they may appear to love the Lord with great zeal,
but inwardly, they love money more.

Such a false pastor may say with their lips that they have repented,
but they do not bear the fruits of repentance.

There is no righteous action to show that they have truly repented
(Ref.: Matthew 3:8).

Like a bad tree, a false pastor can never bear good fruit, but only bad fruit
(Ref.: Matthew 7:17-18).

A false pastor is a child of his father, the devil, and he desires to do what the devil wants.

That is, he desires to lie. A false pastor is a liar,
and the devil, the father of lies, delights in lies (Ref.: John 8:44).

We must be very cautious about such false pastors.

We should be able to recognize that they are false pastors by observing their actions
(Ref.: Matthew 7:15, 20).

We must listen to and understand the words of the Lord:

We must listen to and understand the words of the Lord:

“It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person,
but what comes out of the mouth that defiles a person.”

What goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and then out of the body,
but what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart,
and this is what defiles a person.

“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery,
sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.”

These are the things that defile a person

(Ref.: Matthew 15:10-11, 17-20).

We must not fail to recognize or treat disrespectfully the servants of the Lord.

We must not fail to recognize or treat disrespectfully
the servants of the Lord, like John the Baptist,
who are preparing for the second coming (the return) of our Lord Jesus Christ
(Ref.: Matthew 17:12-13).

We must live a truthful life.

We must live a truthful life.

We must show kindness and mercy to one another.

We must not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners, or the poor,
and we should not devise plans to harm others

(Ref.: Zechariah 7:9-10).

We must be people who listen to and put God's word into practice.

We must be people who listen to and put God's word into practice.
Even when the rain falls, floods come, and the winds blow and beat against us,
we must be wise people who build our house on the rock that does not fall.
We must be people who do the will of our Father in heaven.
Therefore, all of us must enter the kingdom of heaven
(Ref.: Matthew 7:21, 24-25).

We must obey God's commands completely.

We must obey God's commands completely,
and then everything God has promised us will be fulfilled
(Ref.: Zechariah 6:15).

He will protect us.

Almighty God will protect us, His children
(Ref.: Zechariah 9:15).

We should not fear those who threaten us.

We should not fear those who threaten us.

They can kill our bodies, but they cannot kill our souls.

We should fear the Lord,

who has the power to destroy both our soul and body in hell

(Ref.: Matthew 10:26, 28).

God, who chose us ...

God, who chose us, rebukes Satan

(Ref.: Zechariah 3:2).

We are truly blessed people.

We are truly blessed people

because we can see God with the eyes of faith

and hear His voice with the ears of our spirit

(Ref.: Matthew 13:16).

In order to win back a brother who has sinned against us ...

In order to win back a brother who has sinned against us,
we must meet with that brother privately and gently correct him.

(Ref.: Matthew 18:15).

If that brother is humble like a little child,

(Ref.: v. 4) he will listen to us.

But if he is proud and contentious, like the disciples of Jesus
who argued about who was the greatest,

(Ref.: Luke 22:24; Romans 12:16) he will never listen to us.

God know what we need.

Our Father God in heaven knows
what we need before we ask Him

(Ref.: Matthew 6:8-9).

If our faith is great ...

If our faith is great,
nothing will be impossible for us

(Ref.: Matthew 17:20).

Our lives must be better than those of the scribes and Pharisees.

Our lives, which have been justified by faith in Jesus Christ through the complete grace of God, must be better than those of the scribes and Pharisees
(Ref.: Matthew 5:20).

We must turn away from the hypocrites ...

We must turn away from the hypocrites of this evil and adulterous generation, who, while failing to discern the signs of the times, ask God to show them miracles in their unbelief
(Ref.: Matthew 16:1-4).

Hypocrites are disobeying God's commands.

Hypocrites say “yes” with their lips to obey God’s commands, but in their hearts they say “no” and disobey them
(Ref.: Matthew 21:28-29).

**But like the hypocrites, I am inclined to pray in a way
that is seen by others, wanting to be noticed.**

When I pray, I should enter my room, close the door,
and pray to my Father who is unseen,
trusting that my Heavenly Father,
who sees in secret, will reward me.

But like the hypocrites, I am inclined to pray in a way
that is seen by others, wanting to be noticed

(Ref.: Matthew 6:5-6).

**Are we one of those who cannot live
by the word because of temptation?**

Are we perhaps those who hear the word of the kingdom of heaven
but are unable to live it out because of the worries of this world
and the temptations of riches?

(Ref.: Matthew 13:22)

Blessed is he who does not doubt ...

Blessed is he who does not doubt our Lord Jesus Christ

(Ref.: Matthew 11:6).

This wicked generation ...

This wicked generation will be worse off
at the end than at the beginning
(Ref.: Matthew 12:45).

They worship the Lord in vain.

Hypocrites honor the Lord with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him.
They teach man-made laws as if they were the Lord's teachings.
They worship the Lord in vain
(Ref.: Matthew 15:7-9).

I want to live ...

I want to live a fruitful life
(Ref.: Matthew 13:8).

God's Sheep in the midst of a pack of wolves

The Lord says that He sends us
out like sheep into a pack of wolves.
Therefore, we must be wise
as serpents and innocent as doves
(Ref.: Matthew 10:16).

Even if the great storm of life sweeps through and causes the boat of my family to sink ...

Even if the great storm of life sweeps through
and causes the boat of my family to sink
(Ref.: Matthew 8:24), I want to rest in the peace of my soul,
trusting in the faith of Emmanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23).
“When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul. It is well with my soul;
It is well, it is well with my soul”
(Hymn “When Peace, Like a River,
Attendeth My Way” 1st verse and refrain)
I desire to experience rest in the Lord,
(Ref.: 2 Thessalonians 1:7; Hebrews 4:11).

Hypocrites, who honor the Lord with their lips but whose hearts are far from Him ...

Hypocrites, who honor the Lord with their lips
but whose hearts are far from Him
(Matthew 15:8), even when taught the right path
through the Lord's servant, do not believe.
Moreover, they do not repent or believe in the Lord,
even when they see tax collectors and prostitutes—
whom they regard as sinners—
receiving and believing in that teaching
(Ref.: Matthew 21:32).

His own household

A man's enemies are those of his own household
(Ref.: Matthew 10:36).

Wealth is never our master.

Our Lord is only God.
Wealth is never our master.
We cannot serve both God and wealth.
(Reference: Matthew 6:24, Contemporary Bible).
How long will we waver, unable to make up our minds,
between God and wealth?
(Ref.: 1 Kings 18:21)

Even if a wealthy person keeps all of God's commandments ...

Even if a wealthy person keeps all of God's commandments,
he does not realize that instead of obeying Jesus' command
to sell his possessions and help the poor,
he is anxious and troubled about what he lacks
(Ref.: Matthew 19:16-22).

I am a hypocrite who has already received my reward.

I am a hypocrite who has already received my reward,
because I blow my own trumpet in church or on an internet website,
pretending to help the poor in order to receive praise from people
(Ref.: Matthew 6:2).

As I meditate on these words, I believe that the Christian life is about:

When Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through
the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God,"
Jesus' disciples were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?"
Jesus looked at them and answered, "With man this is impossible,
but with God all things are possible"
(Ref.: Matthew 19:24-26).

As I meditate on these words, I believe that the Christian life is about:

- (1) fully realizing that we cannot do it by our own strength, and
- (2) believing that God can do all things.

I am the least person in the kingdom of heaven.

In the eyes of God, the greatest person in the kingdom of heaven is the one who obeys even the smallest commandment and teaches others to do the same.

But the least person is the one who breaks the commandment and teaches others to do the same.

I am the least person in the kingdom of heaven
(Ref.: Matthew 5:19).

Our dog Luna

Our dog, Luna, always waits for us to throw food on the floor when my wife and I are eating at the table, and she immediately runs to eat it. Yesterday, while my wife and I were having dinner at the table, our dog Luna kept kicking her food bowl with her paw, making noise, asking for food. So my wife put some food in her bowl, and Luna, wagging her tail with excitement, happily ate it. Despite the Lord's words, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs," the mother of the demon-possessed daughter replied to Jesus, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Hearing this, Jesus said, "Oh woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you desire." And at that moment, her daughter was healed from the demon possession (Ref.: Matthew 15:22-28).

This is the warning Almighty God gives to pastors:

This is the warning Almighty God gives to pastors:

“If you do not listen to me and do not honor my name with all your heart,

I will put a curse on you and your blessings will become a curse.

I have already cursed you because you have not taken my words seriously.

I will punish your children and spread the dung of your sacrifices on your faces,

and you will be thrown away like dung”

(Ref.: Malachi 2:1-3).

We must beware ...

We must beware of the teachings of hypocrites

(Ref.: Matthew 16:12).

They look for an excuse to condemn them, in order to judge the “sinless” as “sinners”.

People like the Pharisees, who firmly believe in and follow

man-made “Sabbath regulations”

and thoroughly observe “things that must not be done on the Sabbath,”

do not know (or do not care?) what Jesus meant when He said,

“I desire mercy and not sacrifice.”

So they watch closely to see if anyone breaks the “Sabbath regulations”

and then look for an excuse to condemn them,

in order to judge the “sinless” as “sinners”

(Ref.: Matthew 12:2, 5, 7, 10).

**The servant of the Lord, like John the Baptist,
who prepares for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,
will set everything right.**

The servant of the Lord, like John the Baptist,
who prepares for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,
will set everything right.

But the hypocrites, like the Pharisees,
who have stubborn hearts that refuse to be set right,
will persecute that servant of the Lord.

Therefore, the servant of the Lord
who prepares for the second coming of Jesus will suffer
(Ref.: Matthew 17:11-13).

‘Lord, this cannot happen. This must never happen.’

It is the work of God that Jesus suffered many hardships,
was killed, and then rose again after three days.

However, the apostle Peter, who was thinking in terms of human matters, said,
“Lord, this can never be! Such a thing must never happen to You!” and tried to stop Jesus.

In response, Jesus rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan!

You are a stumbling block to Me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God,
but merely human concerns” (Matthew 16:21-23).

Satan is constantly trying to make us think in terms of human concerns.

He causes us to not want to see our loved ones or those dear to us suffer
for the sake of Jesus and the gospel, or face even the threat of death.

As a result, we end up saying, “This should never happen!”
and we try to stop them from going through such suffering.

Is this not a way of making God's word of no effect?

Just like the Pharisees and teachers of the law who taught that if someone claims they have dedicated what they should have given to their parents to God, then they no longer need to honor their parents, have not we, due to church traditions that taught us to serve faithfully for the Lord and His church, neglected our responsibility to care for our families (even at the expense of sacrifice)?
Is this not a way of making God's word of no effect?
(Ref.: Matthew 15:5-7)

Would the Lord, who loves them, willingly accept them?

Perhaps right now, pastors are praying to God, asking for His grace, saying, "Have mercy on us," while at the same time, when they actually worship God, they are doing so with impure and vile hearts.
If this is the case, they are defiling the Lord.
Would the Lord, who loves them, willingly accept them and embrace such worship?
(Ref.: Malachi 1:7-9).

I earnestly pray that our Lord will visit ...

I earnestly pray that our Lord will visit my brothers and sisters in the Lord who are suffering from various diseases and touch the hand of each of them so that their diseases will all go away and they will rise up and serve the Lord again (Ref.: Matthew 8:14-15).

I pray that our Lord will heal ...

I pray that our Lord will heal
all our sick hearts with His words
(Ref.: Matthew 8:16).

The Lord has laid the foundation of our faith ...

The Lord has laid the foundation of our faith,
and the Lord will complete it!
(Ref.: Zechariah 4:9)

May the Lord purify and cleanse us ...

May the Lord purify and cleanse us
so that we can offer our bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and pleasing to God, in spiritual worship
(Ref.: Malachi 3:2-4; Romans 12:1).

The Lord gives us a heart of compassion and moves us to reach out to our loved ones who are suffering.

Jesus, knowing that the crowd of about 4,000 men (excluding women and children) had been with Him for three days and had no food, felt compassion for them. He did not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way. At that point, Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a large crowd?" Jesus asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They replied, "Seven loaves, and a few small fish." Jesus then instructed the crowd to sit on the ground. He took the seven loaves and the few fish, gave thanks, and broke them. He then gave them to His disciples to distribute to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of leftovers (Matthew 15:32-38).

The Lord gives us a heart of compassion and moves us
to reach out to our loved ones who are suffering.
But there are many times when we do not know what to do for them.
At such times, we must look to the Lord and pray with faith first in thanksgiving.
And we must share with them the Word of the Lord,
which is the bread of life that the Holy Spirit reminds us of.
Therefore, they will receive the spiritual food, the Word of God's power,
and gain strength to endure their suffering and finally be victorious!

The Lord promised ...

The Lord promised that He would build His church,
His victorious church, on the rock, Christ
(Ref.: Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 10:4).

We must not be afraid but must be courageous.

The Lord will save the church, which has become a curse to the people of the world,
and make it a model of blessing. Therefore, we must not be afraid but must be courageous.
We must not be afraid because the Lord has decided to bless the church
(Ref.: Zechariah 8:13, 15).

The Lord says to us, “Can a man rob God?”

The Lord says to us, “Can a man rob God?”
It refers to the tithes and offerings that are due to the Lord.
And yet, when we rob the Lord, we say,
“How have we robbed the Lord?”
(Ref.: Malachi 3:8)

He is also showing thorough patience to us.

Our Lord is saying to our faithless and crooked generation,

“How long shall I bear with you?”

(Ref.: Matthew 17:17).

Just as the Lord showed thorough patience to Saul (Paul),

He is also showing thorough patience to us

(Ref.: 1 Timothy 1:16).

The Lord not only forgives our sins, but also heals our diseases.

Jesus not only forgave the sins of a paralytic lying on a bed,

but also healed him of his paralysis

(Matthew 9:1-7).

The Lord not only forgives our sins, but also heals our diseases.

Therefore, the Lord allows us to give glory to God.

The Lord is telling us to test Him.

The Lord is telling us to test Him

by giving a full tithe to the temple to see

if He will pour out His blessings on us

(Ref.: Malachi 3:10).

The Lord's calculation method and our calculation method seem so different.

The way of calculation by the Lord,
who is the King of kings in the heavenly kingdom,
seems so different from our own way of calculating here on earth.
Our way of thinking is that when a brother sins against us,
we believe we only need to forgive him up to seven times.
But the Lord's way of calculation is, "Not seven times,
but seventy-seven times (or seventy times seven), you must forgive."
The fundamental difference is
that the Lord shows compassion for those who sin,
but we, when someone sins against us,
lack the heart of compassion to forgive them.
To such people, Jesus says:
"If you do not forgive your brother from your heart,
my Father in heaven will also treat you in the same way"
(Ref.: Matthew 18:21-35).

Christians, like John the Baptist, who prepare the way of the Lord

Christians, like John the Baptist, who prepare the way of the Lord,
make the way of the Lord straight by crying out in this world like a wilderness,
"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"
(Ref.: Matthew 3:2-3).

Those who become angry after hearing the word of the Lord are hypocrites like the Pharisees.

Those who are angry when they hear the Lord say,
“It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person,
but what comes out of the mouth that defiles a person,”
are hypocrites like the Pharisees. They are blind guides.
If a blind person leads a blind person, both will fall into a pit.
Hypocrites are trees that God the Father did not plant,
and they will all be uprooted
(Ref.: Matthew 15:11-14).

Pastors, who are servants of the Lord ...

Pastors, who are servants of the Lord,
must keep the Lord’s commandments well
(Ref.: Zechariah 3:7).

It is only natural that we will not receive an answer to the prayer the Lord taught us to pray.

If we do not forgive our brothers who sin against us on this earth now,
we will not be forgiven in heaven either (Ref.: Matthew 18:18).
It is only natural that we will not receive an answer
to the prayer the Lord taught us to pray:
“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive those who sin against us” (6:12).

Since we do not know when the Lord will return ...

Since we do not know when the Lord will return,
we must always prepare the way for His return
(Ref.: Malachi 3:1).

Saying "Lord, Lord"

Those who hear God's word and cry out to God,
saying "Lord, Lord,"
but do not understand the will of their Father in heaven
or put His words into practice,
are like foolish people who build their house on sand.
They will not enter the kingdom of heaven
(Ref.: Matthew 7:21, 26).

For us, who have little faith and cry out to the Lord ...

For us, who have little faith and cry out to the Lord,
"Lord, save us," in fear of death, I pray that the Lord will rise up,
rebuke the winds of our lives, and calm the great storm
that is raging in our lives, bringing us peace
(Ref.: Matthew 8:24-26).

We must immediately follow the Lord.

When the Lord calls us to become fishers of men,
we must leave everything behind and immediately follow Him
(Ref.: Matthew 4:19-22).

Until the truth triumphs ...

Until the truth triumphs, the Lord will not break us,
who are like a bruised reed, nor will He extinguish our homes and churches,
who are like a fading lamp. Therefore, we must place our hope only in the Lord
(Ref.: Matthew 12:20-21).

The church of truth, the holy church

I pray that the Lord will call His church
the church of truth and the holy church
(Ref.: Zechariah 8:3).

Truth and peace

We must love truth and peace
(Ref.: Zechariah 8:19).

A true and genuine pastor

A true and genuine pastor is a wise man who practices the Word of God.
He teaches the Word of God with authority, unlike the hypocritical scribes
(Ref.: Matthew 7:5, 24, 29).

They do not have the right actions to show that they have truly repented.

The brood of vipers, like the Pharisees and Sadducees,
do not bear the fruits of repentance.

That is, they do not have the right actions
to show that they have truly repented. God's Word says:

"The axe is already laid at the root of the trees,
and every tree that does not bear good fruit
will be cut down and thrown into the fire"

(Matthew 3:8, 10).

We must proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is near.

We must go to those who are like God's lost sheep and tell them,

"The kingdom of heaven is near"

(Ref.: Matthew 10:6-7).

We should wish them peace.

We should seek out those who are willing to receive us,
and as we enter their house, we should wish them peace.
If the house is worthy of our peace,
the peace we wish will come down upon it
(Ref.: Matthew 10:11-13).

'O God, how long ...?'

In times of various troubles, if the intense pain continues
and we reach the point where we can no longer endure
and feel we have reached the limit of our patience,
we, like the psalmist, may cry out to God:
"How long, O God, will You look on?" (Ref.: Psalms 35:17)
"How long, O God, will this go on?" (Ref.: 89:46; 90:13)
"How long, O Lord, will I have to bear this pain and suffering?" (Ref.: 13:2)
"How long, O Lord, will You forget me?" (Ref.: v. 1)
"God, my heart is deeply troubled; how long will I have to wait?" (Ref.: 6:3)
"God, how long will You refuse to listen to my prayers?" (Ref.: 80:4)
Additionally, like the angels of God, we might cry out,
"How long, O Lord, will You show mercy to me?" (Ref.: Zechariah 1:12)
At that time, God will respond to us with words of kindness and comfort:
"I have great love and concern for you. I will show you mercy and refine you,
setting you firmly on the rock of faith, as pure as gold.
I will bless you abundantly and make you rich.
I will comfort you and bless you"
(Ref.: Zechariah 1:13-17; Job 23:10; Psalms 62:6; Matthew 16:18).

We must seek God's grace.

We must go up to the Lord's house,
seek God, and ask for God's grace
(Ref.: Zechariah 8:22).

As God strengthens us ...

As God strengthens us,
we will rely on Him and obey Him
(Ref.: Zechariah 10:12).

May God pour out His grace ...

May God pour out His grace
and the spirit of prayer upon us
(Ref.: Zechariah 12:10).

"Abraham believed that God could even raise the dead."

A synagogue leader believed
that Jesus could raise his dead daughter to life.
So, he came to Jesus, knelt before Him, and said,
"My daughter has just died.
But come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live"
(Matthew 9:18).

As a result, according to his faith,
Jesus took the hand of his dead daughter,
and she immediately got up (Matthew 9:25).
When I think of this synagogue leader's faith,
Hebrews 11:19 comes to mind:
"Abraham believed that God could even raise the dead.
In a manner of speaking, he did receive Isaac back from the dead"
(Hebrews 11:19).

We will rejoice in what God has done.

God will have compassion on His people and bring them back,
so that they will be as if they had never been forsaken by Him.
God will answer their cries.
As a result, God will strengthen them and make them like warriors.
Therefore, the hearts of God's people will be glad as if they had drunk wine,
and their children will see it and be glad and rejoice in what God has done
(Ref.: Zechariah 10:6-7).

God will punish them.

God's eyes are on us and on all mankind.

Therefore, no matter how wise those who sin against God may be,
God will punish them (Ref.: Zechariah 9:1-2).

God took away our sins by shedding His blood ...

God took away our sins by shedding His blood
and dying on the cross of His only Son, Jesus Christ,
and He took away our “filthy garments,”
clothed us in “beautiful garments,”
and placed “clean tiaras” on our heads
(Ref.: Zechariah 3:4-5).

Isn't God saying this to pastors?

Isn't God saying this to pastors?

“A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master.

If I were your father, why would you not honor me?

If I were your master, why would you not honor me?

You despise me, and yet say, ‘How have we despised your name?’

If God is saying this to pastors now,

shouldn't pastors receive this word of God and reflect on themselves,

asking, ‘Am I honoring God the Father only with my lips,

but despising Him with my actions?’

(Ref.: Malachi 1:6)

God loves us and says to us ...

God loves us and says to us, "I have loved you,"
but we ask, "How did the Lord love us?"
The reason is that we do not experience God's love
(Ref.: Malachi 1:2).

God, through His servants, is diligently and repeatedly speaking to us:

God, through His servants, is diligently and repeatedly speaking to us:
"Turn away from your evil ways and wicked deeds, and return."
If we continue to ignore this message from God, we will receive the discipline of love.
At that time, we will return to God the Father with a repentant heart and acknowledge,
"God has done to me what He determined to do, according to my deeds"
(Ref.: Zechariah 1:6; Hebrews 12:5-6).

God does not change!

God does not change!
God does not change like a moving shadow!
(Ref.: Malachi 3:6; James 1:17)

Those who do not fear God ...

Those who do not fear God think that the proud are blessed,
that the wicked prosper in this world,
and that they will not be punished if they test God.
Therefore, they say to themselves, “It is useless to serve God,
and what good is it for us to keep his commandments
and to mourn and lament our sins?”
(Ref.: Malachi 3:14-15).

The kingdom of God had already come upon them.

When Jesus casted out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit,
the kingdom of God had already come upon them
(Ref.: Matthew 12:28).

God’s will is ...

God's will is to do as Jesus, the Son of God, said
(Ref.: Matthew 3:15).

**It is better to say “no” to God’s command
and then repent and obey ...**

It is better to say “no” to God’s command
and then repent and obey,
than to say “yes” to God’s command
and then disobey.

God considers it as obeying His word
when we say “no” to God’s command
and then repent and obey

(Ref.: Matthew 21:28-31).

**We, who are called sons and daughters of God,
are happy in the Lord ...**

We, who are called sons and daughters of God, are happy in the Lord
because we are peacemakers and peacekeepers

(Ref.: Matthew 5:9, 24; Mark 9:50; Romans 12:18;
2 Corinthians 5:18-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:13).

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Clearly, Jesus' disciples asked Jesus,

"Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Why did Jesus call a little child and put him in their midst and say,

"I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children,
you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Therefore, the greatest person in the kingdom of heaven
is the one who humbles himself like this little child"?

(Matthew 18:1-4)

Could it be that Jesus said this because his disciples were not humble people?

In fact, in Luke 22:24, Jesus' disciples were arguing over "who is the greatest?"

It seems that they were not humble.

This reminds me of Korean Modern Version of Romans 12:16:

"Live in harmony with one another.

Do not be haughty, but be friends of the lowly and humble, not conceited."

Jesus' disciples, who are concerned about "who is the greatest,"

should not be haughty, but be friends of the lowly and humble, like Jesus.

Then they will not be conceited.

If we hear the word of the kingdom of heaven and do not understand it ...

If we hear the word of the kingdom of heaven and do not understand it,

Satan comes and snatches away what was sown in our hearts

(Ref.: Matthew 13:19).

We believe that our Heavenly Father will grant it.

If even two or three of us gather in Jesus' name, with one heart,
and pray together according to God's will,
we believe that our Heavenly Father will grant it
(Ref.: Matthew 18:19-20).

A rich man who does not think of obtaining treasures in heaven ...

A rich man who does not think of obtaining treasures in heaven
but desires to accumulate wealth and enjoy prosperity and honor on earth
will find it very difficult to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, according to Jesus' words
(Ref.: Matthew 19:21-23).

I am a worker who can only stand around and idle all day ...

I am a worker who can only stand around and idle all day,
so what could be considered generous?
When I think about how the Lord called someone like me
and told me to work for the Kingdom of God,
it must be nothing but God's complete grace
(Ref.: Matthew 20:1-7).

He doesn't want to lose even one person.

Our Father God in heaven does not want to lose
even one lost sheep who humbles Him
(Ref.: Matthew 18:4, 12, 14).

Thank you, Lord, for allowing me.

Thank you, Lord, for allowing me to know
the secrets of the kingdom of heaven
(Ref.: Matthew 13:11).

Could it be that, like the Pharisees, we are stubborn and evil, and are we committing adultery ...

Jesus clearly said, 'I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife,
except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.'
Could it be that, like the Pharisees, we are stubborn and evil,
and are we committing adultery by divorcing our wives
even though they have not been unfaithful, and marrying another woman?
(Ref.: Matthew 19:7-9)

Because of our church traditions?

Are we perhaps now breaking God's commandments
because of our church traditions?
(Ref.: Matthew 15:3)

The need to periodically spend time alone with the Lord

When I think of Jesus, who after dismissing the crowds
went up the mountain alone to pray and was there alone
even when evening was coming (Matthew 14:23),
I am reminded of the need to periodically spend time
alone with the Lord, away from people.
The backbone of my ministry should be
spending time alone with the Lord.

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

As John the Baptist and Jesus preached,
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near,”
we too must preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near”
(Ref.: Matthew 3:2; 4:17).

Woe will come to those who do not repent ...

Woe will come to those who do not repent
even after witnessing God's amazing miracles
(Ref.: Matthew 11:20-21).