

Satan's Strategy

James Kim

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Introduction

“And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him” (Rev. 12:9). Satan was not originally Satan. When he was created, he was created as a good angel (like the angel Michael). But Satan harbored pride in order to become like God (Isa. 14:12-14). Therefore, Satan became a sinful angel who did not keep his own position of authority but abandoned his own home (Jude 1:6). This fallen angel, Satan, entered the serpent and made the serpent craftier than any of the wild animals (Gen. 3:1), eventually causing the serpent to tempt Adam, who became a living being (2:7) and tempted him to break the commandment of God, and eventually eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (3:6). Therefore, Satan made Adam fall into sin and die (vv. 16-17) (Chang she Kim).

As I listened to Pastor Chang Seh Kim’s sermon and summarized it yesterday at the Wednesday prayer meeting, I shared with the church members ‘Satan’s Strategies (1)~(9)’, which I have meditated on so far. At the same time, I had a desire to find all the articles I had meditated on about Satan on my personal Naver blog and make a book to share with my beloved church members and members of the Internet ministry. So from last night to this Thursday night, I’ve been compiling a book under the title "Satan's Strategy". I hope and pray that my book on Satan, which is lacking, will be of somewhat useful to all of us in our spiritual battle against Satan.

Praying for victory in the fight against myself, sin, the world, Satan, and death,

James Kim

(August 20, 2020, Praying that the banner of victory be placed in the heart, family, church, and the kingdom of God)

Satan (1)

Satan takes away from our hearts the word we hear
And prevents us from being saved by believing in Jesus (Lk. 8:12).

Satan prevents the word that we received with joy to be rooted deeply in our hearts
So that we believe for a while, we fall away in times of testing (v. 13).

Satan makes us, who have heard the word, to be choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures
So that we may not mature (v. 14).

But the Lord makes us, who have heard the word, in an honest and good heart,
And hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance (v. 15).

Satan (2)

Satan makes us lazy in worshiping God
By making us diligent in the affairs of the world.

Satan (3)

Satan made Peter not to set his mind on God's interests, but man's (Mt. 16:23).

Satan filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira
To lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land (Acts 5:1-3).

Satan (4)

Satan makes the Lord's work so big that we have to do it,
But he keeps magnifying how small, fragile and weak we are to do it.

And Satan discourages us from doing the Lord's work
By whispering in our ears, 'You won't be able to do it.'

Satan (5)

Through adversity and hardship, Satan makes us to shrink and to have despairs in our hearts.
Satan also causes us to lose confidence and hope,
Eventually leading us to distance ourselves completely from God.
(John Calvin, "Institutes of the Christian Religion")

Satan's goal

'The devil's ultimate goal is not to lead us into wrongdoing through temptation,
But to prevent the life God put into us through regeneration from functioning worthily before God. ...
Satan makes us claim our rights. Satan's goal is to dethrone God.
All Satan's goal through his sinful propensity is to tempt us and dethrone God.'

[Oswald Chambers, "The Philosophy of Sin"]

Satan is attacking you.

‘Satan is attacking your body so that you cannot endure the will of God.
Satan is attacking your heart with lies so that you do not know the will of God.
And Satan is using his pride to attack your will to turn you away from God's will.’

[Warren Wiersbe, “Strategy of Satan”]

War of identity?

Now Satan continues to attack our identities.

He is clouding our identity, exchanging it (Romans 1:26-27), and also confuses us.

In particular, Satan is making us to attack our identity in the Lord,

Causing us to doubt and eventually forget who we are in the Lord.

As a result, we are not living in obedience to our Father as children of God.

We are not able to partially reproduce the life of Jesus in this world as we are brothers of Jesus.

And we are not living a holy life by going against the Holy Spirit.

After all, we are living our lives forgetting who we are because of Satan's attacks.

Furthermore, we are living our lives forgetting God.

In this way, Satan's attack on identity is fatal.

Satan's temptation (1)

Jesus, who was tempted by Satan before starting His public ministry as the Redeemer (Lk. 4:1-13),
Overcame Satan's three temptations (4:3, 7, 9-11) by quoting the words of Deuteronomy
(Deut. 8:3; 6:13; 6:16).

Then Satan went away for "until an opportune time" (Lk. 4:13),

And then returned and tempted Jesus, who was about to be crucified to complete His work, three times

By saying 'save yourself' (23:35, 37, 39)

(The purpose is to make the Redeemer Jesus not to bear our sins in our place and die on the cross).

In this way, there was Satan's temptation at the beginning and at the end of Jesus' ministry.

(As I am reading C. D. "Jimmy" AGAN III's "The IMITATION of CHRIST in the GOSPEL of LUKE")

Satan's temptation (2)

The temptations Satan gives us are the cross without suffering,

The gospel without the cross,

And the church of Christ without the gospel.

(As I am reading Iain M. Duguid's "Daniel")

Satan's temptation (3)

First, Satan's temptation is 'Provocation' (Acts 21:30).

In the end, the Jews from Asia laid hands on Paul in a speculation
That was not based on facts and made self-assertion about him.
Thus, they stirred up all the Israeli men in the temple,
And the whole city of Jerusalem was provoked.

Satan stirs up trouble in the church by provocation.

Second, Satan's temptation is 'Rumor' (v. 31).

When the crowds dragged Paul from the temple and were trying to kill him,
The commander of the Roman troops, who heard the news ('rumor' in Korean Bible)
That the whole city of Jerusalem was in uproar, took some officers and soldiers
And ran down to the crowd and ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks.

Satan spreads malicious rumors in the church.

Third, Satan's temptation is 'Violence' (v. 35).

As Paul was being led and slowly going down the stairs leading to the barracks,
The soldiers caught the signs of the crowd's violence and carried Paul away (v. 35).

Satan makes us use our words and deeds to create violence even within the church.

Satan deceives our minds.

Satan deceives our minds.

Satan deceives us in order to make our minds to go astray

From the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ (2 Cor. 11:3).

What Satan wants from us

‘Satan wants us to feel guilty.

Satan wants you to suffer only from regret and remorse, not repentance.

Satan will continue to accuse you so that your attention is focused solely on yourself and your sin.’

[Warren Wiersbe, “Strategy of Satan”]

Satan uses any means whatsoever.

‘Satan will do everything he can to get us out of it

By making us to think too much or too badly about our work.’

[Charles H. Spurgeon, ‘The indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the glory of the church’]

Satan entices us, even by using a close loved one?

Satan can try to turn us from the way of the Lord

Even by using our brothers (sisters), our children, our wives (husbands), or our life-shared friends

(Deut. 13:1-5).

The flattering Satan

When we are in tribulation and adversity,

Satan flatters us, like a dog waving its tail,

So that we can compromise with sin and go the easy way (Yun-sun Park)

(1 Thess. 3:3).

Reasonable and practical Satan's shortcuts

The shortcuts that Satan suggests and shows us are reasonable and practical.

Furthermore, when we choose those paths to walk,

Satan initially convinces us that our choices were right.

But in the end, we fall into Satan's temptation

And the shortcuts we choose lead us to sin against God.

Why does Satan stop us?

Out of intense longing,

The Apostle Paul made every effort to see the Thessalonian church members (1 Thess. 2:17).

But Satan stopped Paul (v. 18). What is the purpose?

Perhaps the purpose was to make the Thessalonian church members,

Who had heard the word through Paul and received it with joy (1:6),

Not to be matured, not to believe and be saved (Lk. 8:12-14) but to betray the Lord

When they were suffering persecution (1 Thess. 2:14).

Satan who makes us under siege?

Satan makes us “under siege” (2 Chron. 32:10).

And Satan says that the Lord's servant is misleading us when we are under siege by the belief that we heard through the Lord's servant, ‘The Lord our God will deliver us from the siege’ (v. 11).

That's why Satan tells us not be deceived or misled by the Lord's servant.

And Satan tells us, ‘Don't believe in him’ (v. 15).

Satan hates that we get rid of all idols and serve and worship just the Lord.

Satan is telling us that even the Lord is not “able” to deliver us from the difficult crisis that surrounds us:

‘How can your god deliver you from my hand?’ (vv. 14, 15; cf. v. 17).

Satan's strategy is to besiege us and to shut us in.

Satan's strategy is to besiege us (1 Sam. 23:8; 24:26).

Satan shuts us in (23:7; Cf.: Exod. 14:3).

Not only did Satan put Joseph in prison (Gen. 39:20),

he also puts Peter (Acts 12:4, 5) and Paul and Silas in a deep prison (16:23, 24).

Although Satan shuts us in, our God delivers us from our captivity.

The reason is because God is a God of salvation who loves us.

Satan who maximizes the role of emotions

'Today, Satan captures us through our emotions.

He makes our emotions more important than they really are in our lives.

And he creates a lot of outrageous guilt about having certain emotions or not having them.

What Satan seeks is to maximize the role of emotions,

making them the foundation of our actions or changes in our character.

Of course, the foundation is the share of insight, understanding and conviction of the truth.'

[Dallas Willard, "Renovation of the Heart"]

You are being deceived by Satan.

Those who are deceived by Satan do not show the love of God

By not forgiving a person who has grieved them (2 Cor. 2:5-11).

Satan's work?

Satan is maximizing the words of the Bible, 'don't' and 'do', in our heads,

while minimizing God's grace in our hearts.

(As I am reading Iain M. Duguid's "The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel")

Satan's work vs. the Lord's work?

Satan makes us who have heard the word of God not to believe and be saved,

but to betray Him through trials, and to bring us no fruit to maturity

due to worries and riches and pleasure of this life.

But the Lord is making us who have heard the word of God to hold it fast

and bear fruit with perseverance

(Lk. 8:12-15).

God's test and Satan's temptation

**“Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.”
(James 1:12-13)**

God tests us. A good example is the story of Abraham in Genesis 22. God tested Abraham (Gen. 22:1). The test was to take his only son Isaac and go to the land of Moriah and offer him as a burnt offering on a mountain that God had told him (v. 2). Why did God test Abraham? The reason is because God wanted to know whether Abraham feared Him or not (v. 12). And it is because God not only wanted to greatly bless Abraham who passed the test by faith, but also wanted all the nations of the earth to be blessed through Abraham (vv. 17-18). The Apostle James says that when we are tested by God, blessed is the man who perseveres under trial (Jam. 1:12). We must persevere under trial when we are tested by God. Then God will give us the crown of life that He has promised to those who has been approved (v. 12).

Satan tempts us. In other words, Satan tempts us who are being tested by God. How does Satan tempt us? Satan makes us think, “I am being tempted by God” (v. 13) when we are tested by God. In other words, Satan twists our minds. Just as the rulers of the house of Israel despise justice and twist all that is right (Micah 3:9), so Satan twists our right hearts. Satan twists the knowledge of God in our hearts. Although God is a holy God who tests us but does not tempt us (Jam. 1:13), Satan twists the truth so that we who are being tested by God think that God is tempting us. This Satanic temptation is very frightening and convincing. In other words, this Satanic temptation is persuasive as well as fatal to our faith when we are being tested and tried by God. When we are going through extreme trials, Satan twists our minds just as he twists the hearts of the Israelites in the wilderness, making us think that 'God hates us' (Deut. 1:27). Clearly, God is a God of love and a God who loves us. But Satan makes us doubt God's love by telling us in our minds how that loving God can give us so much pain and trials (Now Satan is

making many Christians doubt God's love by making them think, 'How can a loving God send souls to hell?'). Not only that, but Satan also makes us to believe that God hates us, which is a lie. What is the result? Satan not only makes us distrust God, but also makes us complain and grumble against Him in our dissatisfaction, which ultimately leads us to sin against the Holy God.

We have to keep in mind. We must remember that God is not a God who tempts us. He never tempts us. Satan is tempting us. Satan twists our knowledge of God. Satan perverts us to the correct biblical knowledge of God. Satan makes us distrust the truth about God and makes us believe in lies. The lie is that God tempts us when we are in trials. What should we do? When we are tested by God, we must not fall into the Satan's temptation. To do this, when we are tested by God, like Abraham, we must obey the God's command by faith. Obviously, Satan will try to make us doubt and distrust God and thus disobey His word. We must overcome this temptation of Satan with faith. Furthermore, like Job in the Bible, when we are tempted by Satan, which is permitted in God's sovereignty, we must not sin like Job and do not blame God foolishly (Job 1:22). Rather, like Job, we must endure the trials we face with the belief that "But He knows the way I take; When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (23:10). Then, like Job, we will enjoy the blessing of "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You" (42:5). May this blessing be upon you.

Why did God test Job through Satan?

“Then Satan answered the LORD, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.’ Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.’ So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.” (Job 1:9-12)

‘Why did God test Job through Satan?’ This is a question a brother in Christ asked me. How would you answer this question?

I answered this question briefly to the brother: ‘God’s heart.’ Then the brother asked me another question: ‘Can’t you guess the heart of God?’ Then I replied: ‘It is not impossible. But I refuse to guess.’ The reason I answered the brother in this way was to emphasize the need to acknowledge the sovereignty of God. In other words, even though I can guess why God tested Job through Satan, I deliberately refused to do so. The reason is because I believe that when the Sovereign God allowed Satan to strike Job (Job 1:11), there is a sovereign will of God, and that sovereign will is “good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2). Although I don’t know exactly what God’s sovereign will is (and I can’t know exactly enough), I believe that Job is in God’s good, pleasing, and perfect sovereign will. So I have no desire to guess the reason why God tested Job through Satan. Of course, given the excruciating pain and suffering that Job was going through, I think we may well be tempted to know why God allowed Satan to strike Job. And I think the reason can be found in Job 1:8 and 2:3 – “Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.’ ... Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.’” In other words, the reason God allowed Satan to attack Job is probably because God wanted to boast to Satan that there is no

one like Job in this world who is blameless and upright, who fears God and shuns evil. And even though Satan actually struck Job, Job still maintained his integrity (v. 3). As a result, the word of God has been proven to be true (1:8; 2:3). And Satan's words have been proven to be lies (1:9-11, 2:5). Satan's lie was that Job feared God because God had put a hedge around Job and his household and everything he had (1:10). In other words, Satan's lie was that Job feared God and shunned evil (v. 8) because God had blessed the work of Job's hands, so that he flocks and herd were spread throughout the land (v. 10). And it was Satan's lie that if the Lord struck everything Job had, he would surely curse God to His face (v. 11). Also, Satan's lie was that if God stretch out His hand and strike Job's flesh and bones, then Job would surely curse God in His face (2:5). Job's wife fell for Satan's lie. So she saw her husband Job, sitting among the ashes, taking a piece of broken pottery, and scraping himself with it, she said to him: "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" (v. 9) Satan's purpose was to make Job curse God. Although Job did not fall for that temptation, his wife fell into Satan's temptation. Although Job's wife fell to Satan's temptation, Job not only did not fall into Satan's temptation, but also passed God's test. He said to his wife: "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" (v. 10). In all this, Job did not sin in what he said (v. 10). He did not blame God (1:22). Rather, as he worshiped God (v. 20), he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD" (v. 21).

Although I don't fully understand why the brother asked me, 'Why did God test Job through Satan?' I think I understand a little bit why he wanted to ask such a question. And I think all of us Christians can fully ask the same question. I think we can ask such question well enough, especially in the midst of unexpected adversity and suffering. But I personally think that we should ask the question "Who is God?" rather than "Why did God ...?" The reason is because when my first baby Charis died from diseases, no matter how much I tried to ask the question "Why?" I could not get an answer. It only made me commit a sin of blaming God. But God made me to ask "Who is my God?" and thus made me to praise God's marvelous and wonderful saving love after Charis' death. At that time, I also asked the question "How?" (I also asked a medical question about how the baby got such diseases). Furthermore, I threw the question "What is the will of God?" so many times. But I couldn't find the answer. Rather, the more I asked such questions, the more discouraged I became and the more I experienced despair. At that time, the Lord made me to ask the question "Who is my God?" and thus enabled me to focus on God who was in control instead of focusing on my thoughts, feelings, and hearts and the dying baby Charis or my wife Jane at the crossroads of Charis' life or death situation. And God made me to believe that my God is a God of love. So through the baby's death, God made me to realize the marvelous and wonderful Savior's love for me a little more deeply. Rather, God allowed me to experience God's love more deeply

through the crisis. Therefore, from then on, no matter what crises and adversities come I began to ask “Who is God?” rather than “Why did God ...?” At that time, the indwelling Holy Spirit teaches me through the word of God and makes me to believe and rely on Him whom I got to know little more in the midst of crisis. In particular, the Holy Spirit enables me to trust that God is good and to trust that “all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28). And the Holy Spirit reminds me the word of Joseph “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive” (Gen. 50:20), so that I can trust and rely on God who is good. Therefore, God is allowing me to taste and see that the Lord is good (Ps. 34:8). That is why I have to confess: “God is good All the time! All the time, God is good!”

Because of our possessions ...?

Why does God put all of our possessions in Satan's hands?

Could it be that He is trying to test whether we fear God or not because of all our possessions, which are the blessings of all the material things we have received from God? (Job 1:10-12)

Why does God test us?

Why did God test Abraham?

God's command to take Isaac to Mount Moriah and offer Isaac as a burnt offering was God's test to Abraham (Gen. 22:1-2). Why did God test Abraham?

The reason is because God wanted to know the heart of Abraham.

More specifically, God was trying to find out whether Abraham would keep His command or not.

The basis is that God made the Israelites walk in the wilderness at the time of the Exodus.

God's purpose in making them walk in the wilderness was that God would humble the Israelites and test them to see what their hearts were and whether they would keep God's commandments or not (Deut. 8:2).

Abraham passed the test of God. In other words, Abraham obeyed God's command.

As God had commanded him, he took Isaac to Mount Moriah to offer it as the burnt offering.

Then an angel of the Lord stopped Abraham (Gen. 22:11-12a) and said to him:

“... Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son” (v. 12). God knew Abraham's heart. God knew that Abraham feared God.

Those who fear God obey God's command.

Because Abraham feared God, he obeyed God's command, which he could not understand, out of love for Him. God tests us to know our hearts in this way.

But Satan tempts us. The purpose of Satan's temptation is to bring us down.

In other words, the purpose of Satan's temptation is

to make us to disobey God's command of the covenant and result in a curse (the first Adam).

But God tests us.

The purpose is to overcome temptation so that we can obey God's command of the covenant and receive blessings (the last Adam Jesus).

What's different?

Satan threw Paul and Silas into prison (Acts 16:24).

God threw Jonah into the deep, into the heart of the seas (Jonah 2:3).

What's different?

God's purpose was to make the disobedient Jonah to pray to God in the midst of suffering (vv. 1, 2) and to confess with faith, "Salvation comes from the Lord" (v. 9).

But Satan's purpose was to prevent Paul and Silas from proclaiming the way of salvation (Acts 16:17).

Nevertheless, God was in control of Satan's work.

God, not only delivered Paul and Silas, who were praying and praising God in the middle of the night, from the prison (vv. 24-26), but also the jailer who drew his sword and tried to kill himself (v. 27) and his whole family, who believed in God and were all baptized (vv. 31-34).

Our God is the God of salvation!

Terrifying satanic strategy

This satanic strategy is truly terrifying.

The reason is because Satan first highlights how weak we are, and then shows us how great our work is.

In other words, Satan's strategy emphasizes our smallness but the big size of our work, so that we may think, 'How can a weak and needy person like me do such a great work for the Lord?' Therefore, we discourage ourselves.

The reason why we cannot help but become discouraged and frustrated is because Satan, through all these delusions, prevents us from looking to God with faith. No matter how weak or lacking we are, if God is with us and He gives us the strength and allows us to bear it, no matter what great things we do. And we will try with faith for the Lord.

But Satan tries to stop us from starting at all.

And by highlighting the great thing, Satan makes us see ourselves smaller and smaller, and makes us unable to see God with faith, who is greater than the great thing.

Thus we become discouraged, frustrated, and even despair.

Satan's main strategy

'It is Satan's main strategy to spread as many lies as possible to deny, pollute, and confuse the truth' (John MacArthur).

The thoughts of Christians today are heavily polluted with lies, which are non-evangelical and untruth.

We do not distinguish between truth and lies under the trend of mutual respect.

Now we are confused and live a syncretistic faith life.

Satan's strategy (1)

“Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.’” (Exodus 14:3)

The Satanic strategy presented in this verse is twofold:
first, to make us wander aimlessly, and second, to put us into a corner.

Satan's first strategy is to let people wander aimlessly.

The all-knowing God already knew Pharaoh's thought, so He made it known to Moses.

I wonder why Pharaoh thought that the Israelites were wandering aimlessly in the wilderness.

Although God gave the Israelites a purpose through Moses,

I wonder why Pharaoh thought they were wandering aimlessly in the wilderness.

The first thing to consider here is the purpose God gave to the Israelites through Moses.

We can think of it in two ways.

The first purpose is worship.

One biblical scholar said that if our salvation is a method, then the purpose is worship.

The purpose of God's deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt was so that they could worship God.

The second purpose was to enter the Promised Land, Canaan.

But considering why Pharaoh thought that the Israelites were wandering aimlessly in the wilderness,

I would like to take Exodus 14:12 as an example:

“Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'?”

It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!”

The Israelites looked back again.

In the wilderness, in the midst of hardship and adversity, looking back on the past,
they looked back to serve Egypt rather than to serve God.

The Israelites, who should say that they want to worship God and would not return to Egypt

even if they die in the wilderness as they were heading toward the Promised Land,

said that they would rather serve the Egyptians and live longer in Egypt than to die in the wilderness.

They pursued the fleshly lusts of the city, Egypt, rather than the spirituality of the wilderness.

On the way to the Promised Land of Canaan, the Israelites wandered in the desert while looking back. As Pharaoh thought, they were wandering aimlessly in the wilderness.

I think this purposeless wandering life applies to too many of us. So many of us keep looking back.

We are homesick of the old life and are trying to go back to the past life of unbelievers.

I think we are living a life of confusion rather than living a life driven by His purpose.

Maybe that's why, from a certain point of view,

Pastor Rick Warren's book "Purpose-Driven Life" was the best seller.

I don't think there are too many souls wandering in this wilderness life

without certainty about the purpose of worship, the life that leads to heaven,

and the purpose of life that God has called us individually.

Therefore, Satan cannot help but like it. The reason is because his strategy is working.

His first strategy is to make us wander in confusion and forget the purpose God has given us.

Finally, another strategy of Satan is to drive us into a corner in the wilderness.

If we watch boxing, we will often see a scene where a boxer tries to knock out his opponent by pushing him into the corner.

In this way, Satan is trying to put us into the corner and knock us down.

In Exodus 14:3, Pharaoh knew that the Israelites were "hemmed in by the desert."

If the Red Sea in front, the mountains on the left and the right, and Pharaoh following the Israelites,

the Israelites would be blocked from the east, west, north, and south,

and there would be no way for them to escape.

That was why Pharaoh went after the Israelites with officers over all of six hundred of the best chariots, along with all the other chariots (v. 7).

When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were marching after them,

they were terrified and cried out to God and complained to Moses (vv. 10-11).

Rather than looking at the Promised Land, the Israelites, who were grumbling,

were controlled by the situation they were facing.

Thus, they looked back to the past and wanted to change the object of their service.

How pleased Satan must have been.

I think too often we do what pleases Satan rather than God.

Especially when we are in a situation that seems to have no solution no matter how much we look around, like the Israelites, who are trapped in the wilderness, we seem to blame God and our leaders.

When we look no matter how far we look from east to west, north and south,

and we can't see a hole to spring out of, don't we sometimes complain to God and to people

if we get frustrated in fear and discouragement?

Then, rather than looking at God, if we look back to the past,
don't we commit the sin to God with our unbelieving words and actions
and do the things that please Satan?

Among this twofold strategy of Satan, Moses, the servant of God, did not fall for that strategy.
His purpose was clear.

And even when he was hemmed in the wilderness, he looked up to God and prayed.

And when God told him to raise his staff and stretch out his hand over the sea to divide the water,
he simply obeyed His word in faith and saw the glory of God (vv. 16-18).

What is surprising is that the battle between Moses' staff
and Pharaoh's army is incomparable to the human mind.

When Moses lifted his staff and struck the Red Sea in simple obedience,
the Israelites were saved, but Pharaoh and his army were all destroyed.

How amazing is this God's power?

Therefore, I believe that the way to overcome Satan's strategy is
to listen to God's voice in prayer like Moses and obey Him with faith.

Hearing the voice of God and being drawn to His purposes,
we must move toward that heaven, the true Promised Land.

When we move toward the heaven in faith without leaning to the left or right
and with a clear purpose of life and conviction and a life of true worship,
we are more than capable of overcoming the Satan's strategy.

I hope and pray that such a victorious life will be filled among us.

Satan's strategy (2)

“Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building.” (Ezra 4:4)

When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles who returned to Jerusalem after their captivity and were building a temple in Jerusalem for the Lord, the God of Israel (Ezra 4:1), they set out to discourage the people of Judah and made them afraid to go on building (v. 4). How did the enemies of Judah and Benjamin hinder the rebuilding of the temple?

First, the enemies of Israel discouraged the people of Judah (v. 4).

Look at Ezra 4:4 – “Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building.” The enemies of Judah and Benjamin tried to prevent the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem by discouraging the hearts of the people of Judah by intimidating and terrifying them. Even today, Satan's temptation continues. Satan tries to discourage our hearts and to prevent us from building the body of the Lord, the church. How does he discourage our hearts? I personally believe that one of Satan's many strategies for discouraging my heart is by instilling a crooked self-view in my mind. That crooked self-view makes God's word to look at myself crookedly. In other words, Satan makes me to look at myself crookedly by making to see and listen to God's word crookedly. So, in the end, when I look at myself, I get disappointed, discouraged, and hopeless. But even in the midst of such despair, God works together for good. He gives me hope by helping me to long for God in despair. And because of that hope, He revives my heart and gives me strength.

Second, the enemies of Israel bribed officials to frustrate the Israelites' plan.

Look at Ezra 4:5 – “and they bribed officials to frustrate their plan throughout the reign of King Cyrus of Persia and until the reign of King Darius of Persia” (NRSVA). The enemies prevented the people of Judah from building the temple by bribing the king's counselors (7:14, 28) or ‘someone like the king's secretary’ (Yoon-sun Park). Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘It is the action of the enemy who opposes

righteousness to give bribes to officials to obstruct the fulfillment of righteous works, and that is the devil's action' (Park).

What is a bribe? An Internet Web site defines bribery as follows: 'An unclean gift of money given by the person of his or her powers as a request for special convenience' (Internet). The bribe eventually blind people and pervert the speech of the righteous (Exod. 23:8), resulting in corruption [the public official who abuse his or her public role for personal gain (monetary gain, position, influence) or for any other purpose or deviates from the legal and social norms associated with that position (Internet)] and bears rotten fruits. I think the root of the bitterness of these rotten fruits is the love of money after all (2 Tim. 3:2). They take bribes because of the love of money. And because bribes cloud their judgment and conscience, there are strife, divisions, and turmoil in the church. We should continue to write deeply the word of 1 Timothy 6:10 in the tablet of our hearts: "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

Third, the enemies of Israel accused the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

Look at Ezra 4:6 – "Now in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem." The adversaries wrote to Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, and accused the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem (vv. 6, 8). According to the accusation, the enemies of Israel said that the Jews who came up from them at Jerusalem were building the rebellious and evil city (vv. 12, 15, 19) and "if that city is rebuilt and the walls are finished, they will not pay tribute, custom or toll, and it will damage the revenue of the kings" (v. 13). Also, they said that this rebellious city was a place of rebellion from ancient times and had been troublesome to kings and provinces (vv. 15, 19). Furthermore, the content of the accusation was that if Jerusalem were rebuilt and its wall were restored, then as a result the king would have no possession in the providence beyond the River (v. 16)

These days, we hear a lot of suing. Of course, we hear it on the news countless times, but even within the church, we encounter cases of being sued in courts of the world. When I hear the news of accusations in the church like this, I sometimes think of 1 Corinthians 6:5-6: "I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? But instead, one brother goes to law against another--and this in front of unbelievers!" As a member of the church, which is the body of the Lord, we are reminded of shame. It is very unfortunate that there is no one wise to judge between brothers, so we have to take church matters to the courts of the world. Satan not only

makes non-believers accuse the church, but also tempts believers to sue the church. By doing this, Satan divides the church and also destroys it.

What was the result of this Satan's work of obstruction? In the end, King Ahasuerus issued an order to Rehum the prince, to Shimshai the scribe, and to their companions who were in Samaria, and to the people of other lands on the west side of the river, so that the people of Israel stopped their work, so that they could not rebuild the city (vv. 17, 21). After receiving this order, Rehum, Shimshai the scribe and their colleagues hurried to Jerusalem to the Jews, and stopped them by force of arms and put an end to the work of rebuilding the city and temple in Jerusalem so that the work of the house of God in Jerusalem ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia (vv. 23-24).

Satan's purpose is to stop building the Lord's church. Satan is always persistently attacking the church to tear it apart and destroy it. Satan is attacking our hearts and is trying to discourage us so that we may stop building the Lord's church. Satan also motivates us to love money, and makes us quarrel and fight among the church members over money. In the end, Satan even causes us to sue each other, so we take the matter to the courts of the world, ultimately hurting the hearts of many church members and causing them to leave the church and even faith. We must be wary of these works of Satan. And we must grasp Satan's strategies so that when he tempts us, we must fight and win by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. As we can see in Ezra chapters 5 and 6, God's work eventually overcame the work of Satan. God helped the Israelites and encouraged them in the work of the house of God (6:22), so that the temple was being rebuilt. The church is the Lord's church and the Lord has promised to build it (Mt. 16:18). So no matter how Satan opposes us, the Lord will build His church. Therefore, we must not be discouraged, but strengthen our hearts and participate in the Lord's work of building His church. I hope and pray that we will be victorious in the good fight of faith with the assurance of victory in the Lord.

Satan's strategy (3)

“But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face ... But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face. ... His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!” (Job 1:11; 2:5, 9)

A man named Job was blameless and upright who feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:1). God boasted this Job to Satan: “... There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil” (v. 8). At that time, Satan questioned God, “Does Job fear God for nothing?” (v. 9) And he said that the reason Job feared God and shunned evil and blameless and upright was because of the blessings God had bestowed upon him. So Satan asserted that if God struck all of Job's possessions, Job would surely curse God to His face (v. 11). So Satan, with God's permission, struck down all that Job had [7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 donkeys (v. 3)], and went on further to strike down Job's ten children [7 sons and 3 daughters (v. 2)] (vv. 13-19). Did Job really curse God when he heard this news? As we already know, when Job heard the news that all his children had died and all that he had lost, he got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship (v.20). When I think about how Job could have worshiped God after hearing such news, I think that it is truly amazing God's grace and Job's faith. Just as David, who went into the temple and worshiped God after heard the news that the baby, who was born with Bathsheba, was dead, because God struck the baby, due to his sins with Bathsheba and killing her husband Uriah (2 Sam. 12:20), Job also worshiped God despite the death of all ten of his children. After all, Satan failed to make Job curse the Lord.

Satan, who did not succeed in his first attack, went to God again (Job 2:1). God said to Satan “... And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason” (v. 3). At that time, Satan said to God, “... stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face” (v. 5). And with God's permission (v. 6), Satan afflicted Job with painful

sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head (v. 7). As a result, Job was in so much pain that he took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes (v. 8). Job's wife saw it and said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" (v. 9) At that time Job said to his wife: "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" Eventually, Job's wife fell into Satan's temptation and committed the sin of blaspheming the Lord. But Job did not sin in what he said in all this (v. 10). Satan once again failed to get Job to curse the Lord.

As I meditated on these words this morning, I realized that Satan's purpose is to make us curse the Lord by striking our possessions, our children, or our health. In such a realization, like Job, I reflected myself whether I sinned against God with my lips like Job's wife without being able to endure hardship and adversity with faith until the end. At least Job's wife did not say to Job, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die" (v. 10) (There is no such word in Job Ch. 1). Judging from that, it seems that Job's wife also had great and precious faith. However, no matter how great and precious faith she had, if she fails to keep that faith like Job to the end but end up blaspheming the Lord, I don't think we can say that she fought the good fight of faith well to the end. I just hope and pray that we don't sin against God with our lips like Job, but rather to be raised as true worshipers even through suffering, even if Satan tries to make us curse the Lord in any way possible.

Satan's strategy (4)

[Acts 21:27-36]

Pastor Joel Park's book, 'Critique of the Korean Church Written with the Preparedness to Be Hit and Die', is a clear and sharp criticism of the problems of the Korean Church. For example, it deals with denomination supremacy, offerings, church building issues, and false sermons and prayers and etc. Pastor Park said, 'The Korean church does not unite the two, but divides one into two or hundreds, and the barrier between church and denomination is higher and stronger than the barrier between the old Pharisees and Sadducees.' He said that true Jesus Christ broke down the wall, but the Korean church built a wall stronger than the Tower of Babel.' According to the publisher, after the publication of this book last year, some 3,200 members of the mega-church returned to the local church. They are said to continue to spread the movement to restore local churches by forming an organization called 'Handongye', such as the title of the book, 'Jesus Weeping for the Korean Church.' This book is considered very unusual for a Protestant pastor to directly criticize the Korean church, which is now being criticized by the public. However, it clearly presents the mistakes of the Korean church and solutions that must be reformed. And it is highly regarded as a book written with a penitent heart about the situation of the Korean church that even the antis, who are opposed to Christianity, could not mention (Internet).

What do you think of these criticisms of the church? What kind of criticism can we make when we and ourselves look back at the church and ourselves as Christians? Of course I'm talking constructive criticism. I do not believe that criticism for the sake of criticism or non-constructive criticism is beneficial to the church. Therefore, I think we need to criticize the Korean church constructively, and also need to listen humbly to those criticisms. One of my personal criticisms of the church is that I think the church is not becoming a militant church. We must not forget that the church is fighting a spiritual battle until the day of the second coming of Jesus. Therefore, the church must be the militant church. Therefore, we must fight the good fight of faith while running the race of our faith (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7). We must all be militant Christians who fight the spiritual battle with assurance of victory. In order to do that, we need to know a little bit about our enemy, Satan and his strategy.

In Acts 21:33, we see the Apostle Paul going up to Jerusalem and being bound according to the

prophecy of the Holy Spirit. In this way, I would like to meditate on how the unbelieving Jews from Asia (v. 27), who were the persecutors who oppose Paul in Jerusalem and oppose the gospel, even bound Paul, in four ways. In the meantime, I want to think about the strategies of Satan and his servants who oppose Jesus, oppose the His gospel, and oppose us. When we know the pattern, we will know the temptation of Satan and will be able to fight that temptation and win.

First, Satan's strategy (temptation) is stirring up.

Look at Acts 21:27 – “When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him.” Apostle Paul accepted the counsel of James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem, and all the elders, entered the temple with the four Nazarites who took vows, paid various sacrifices for them, and participated in their sacrifices, showing how thorough and pious he was. When the very day that definitively shows the truth was right before our eyes, the Jews from Asia for the Feast of Pentecost saw Paul in the temple and urged all the crowd to arrest Paul (Sang-seop Yoo). How, then, did these Jews from Asia provoke the whole crowd in the temple? They did not hesitate to make false claims about the Apostle Paul. Those false claims can be summarized in two parts (Yoo):

- (1) The first false claim was that Paul was teaching everywhere against the Jews, the Law, and the Temple.

Look at Acts 21:28a – “shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place.” This argument was enough to stir up the Jews. The reason is because it was the claim related to Jewish identity. In other words, since the Law and the Temple (Jerusalem Temple) were fundamental factors in determining their identity for the Jews, claiming that the Apostle Paul was a teacher against the Law and the Temple (Jerusalem Temple) was a worthy argument enough to provoke the hearts of all Jews and anger them.

- (2) The second false claim was that Paul had brought even Greeks into the temple area and defiled the holy place.

Look at Acts 21:28b-29: “And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place. (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and

assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.)” At that time, the temple had a court of Levites, a court of Israelite men, a court of women, and a court of the Gentiles. But they claim that the Gentiles crossed the boundary wall and entered through the women's courts and the Israelite men's courts, saying that Paul had committed this great sin. At that time, according to the historian Josephus, there was a warning on the wall of the border, which warned that if strangers crossed the border, they would be killed. Dr. Sang-seop Yoo says: ‘It was a serious crime to be executed immediately for a foreigner to enter a woman's yard. And if you went beyond this and even enter the yard of an Israeli man, then you could easily guess how serious the situation was’ (Yoo). However, this was not an argument based on the fact. But the Jews who were Paul's opponents from Asia speculated on it (v. 29) (Yoo). They must first confirm whether it was true or not, and then said it. But they just stirred up all the Jewish men who were in the courtyard of the Israeli men in the temple to arrest Paul. The Apostle Paul had this experience already at Iconium (Ch. 14). When he and Barnabas went to Iconium and went into the Jewish synagogue as usual and preached the gospel, not only he experienced that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed (v. 1), but also disobedient Jews, who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers (v. 2). So they mistreated Paul and Barnabas and tried to stone them (v. 5).

How pathetic and frustrating is this? However, I think this is also happening in the church of this age in which we live. In other words, I think there are people in the church who, like the Jews from Asia, make false claims to stir up the members of the church. It's not based on facts, but just speculation and making claims about people they hate and dislike. Thus, they eventually inspire the people around them to form their own side and form a group. So the Bible Proverbs 16:28 says this: “A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.” Considering the Bible verse “When words are many, sin is not absent” (10:19), there may be many instances in the church where babblers in the church keep making statements that are not based on facts and provoke other members into quarrels in the church. It is because the church listens to the lies of the devil. This is because the devil keeps emphasizing that they have different thoughts and stir them up to fight. Satan keeps stirring us up to do evil. How does he do this? In Genesis 3, just as the crafty serpent provoked Adam by repeatedly saying, 'If you eat this fruit, you will become like God,' Satan keeps urging us to exercise our will to assert it. That is why Satan makes us to be the center of our lives, and keeps urging us to live our own life, pursuing our own interests, and to achieve our own life and our happiness by relying on our own strength and ingenuity, that is, our own resources’ (Internet). We must not succumb to Satan’s temptations due to the quality of this conflict and break the peace and order of the church by constantly making claims in the church. Rather, we must

diligently build up the church, the body of the Lord, as the Spirit stirs up our hearts as in Haggai 1:15, not Satan's stirring up.

Second, Satan's strategy (temptation) is provocation.

Look at Acts 21:30 – “Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut.” In the end, the Jews from Asia seized Paul in unsubstantiated speculation and eschewed his assertions, which in turn provoked all the Israeli men in the temple. Therefore, the whole city of Jerusalem was in a commotion, and the people ran and gathered Paul, captured Paul, and dragged him out of the temple. And in verse 31, Paul was brought out from the courts of Israel, through the courts of women, and into the courts of the Gentiles, and was on the brink of death. The people were beating Paul with the intent to kill him until the commander of the Roman cohort came with the centurions and the soldiers (v. 32) (Yoo). As a result of the urge of the Jews from Asia, the entire city of Jerusalem was in confusion (v. 31). I think it's still the same. We see and hear things that stir people up in the church and cause the whole church to make confusion and commotion even now, here and there in the church. But the people who make the church loud and noisy by that stir up don't seem to know that they are the cause of the problem. Rather, they undermine the peace of the church by making assumptions that they are right and the other person is wrong. At the same time, they accuse the other party, not themselves, who are responsible for breaking the church's peace and making noise. The Apostle Paul also had this experience. In Acts 16, when the Apostle Paul was going to a place of prayer in Philippi, he met a female servant possessed by a fortune-telling demon (v. 16). When he brought out a demon in the name of Jesus Christ (v. 18), the slave girl's owner realized that their hope of making money was gone (v. 19). So they brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar” (v. 20). In the end, the owners of this demon-possessed girl seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities (v. 19) and claimed that Paul and Silas were making a lot of commotion and provocation in the city. There are, like these owners, people in the church who are stir up, uproar, and provoke because of financial problems. We must be on guard against the commotion or provocation, which is this second Satan's temptation. And we must do our best to keep order in the church. Our God is not a God of disorder. The Bible 1 Corinthians 14:33 says, “... God is not a God of confusion but of peace” Therefore, we must carry out the work of peacemaking in the church.

Third, Satan's strategy (temptation) is rumor.

Look at Acts 21:31 – “While they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the Roman cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.” Here, the word “a report” is translated as ‘a rumor’ in the Korean Bible. When the Jews from Asia stirred up all the Jewish men in the temple and caused a commotion and provocation in the city of Jerusalem, and eventually dragged Paul out of the temple and tried to kill him, the report (rumor) came up to the commander of the Roman cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion (v. 31). So, the commander hurriedly went with soldiers and centurions (v. 32), and ordered that Paul be arrested and bound with two chains (v. 33). After that, when the commander asked who he was and what he had done (v. 33). “But among the crowd some were shouting one thing and some another” (v. 34). When he could not find out the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks (v. 34).

Do you know how fast the rumors spread? I found this interesting article to share: ‘There are people who have analyzed the speed at which rumors spread through mathematical calculations. The speed at which rumors spread is beyond our imagination. Suppose a man shows up at 8 in the morning in a small town of 30,000 people with startling rumors. He tells the news to just three people. Let's say it takes about 15 minutes to spread this rumor. Then, at 8:15 in the morning, the four people in the city know about this rumor. The three people who hear the rumors each tell the story to the other three friends. Again, it takes 15 minutes here.

Number of people who know the rumor by 8:30: $4+(3 \times 3) = 13$ people

Number of people who know the rumor by 8:45: $13+(3 \times 9) = 40$ people

Number of people who know the rumor by 9:00 : $40+(3 \times 27) = 121$ people

Number of people who know the rumors by 9:15: $121+(3 \times 81) = 364$ people

Number of people who know the rumors by 9:30 : $343+(3 \times 243) = 1,093$ people

Number of people who know the rumor by 9:45: $1,093+(3 \times 729) = 3,280$ people

Number of people who know the rumors by 10:00: $3,280+(3 \times 2,187) = 9,841$ people

Number of people who know the rumors by 10:15: $9,841+(3 \times 6,561) = 29,524$ people

After all, people in small towns will know this rumor before two and a half hours. ... It could be faster than this in Korea. The speed of the Internet spread is probably beyond imagination. So maybe in two hours it can reach a few million people. Also, the speed of the rumors is amazing. It seems to be true that silent words go a thousand miles (Internet).

We must not spread malicious rumors in the church. When I looked on the Internet, I saw an

article under the title of 'A letter of advice and warning against illegal groups who call themselves 'Queen Samo' for the establishment of a healthy and upright church,' dated December 9, 2007 by a session of a Korean American immigrant church in the United States. Looking at the contents of the article, there is an article under the sub-topic 'Background of counsel and warnings against self-proclaimed Queen-samo,'" and it is divided: 'The session of this church has been formed by a small group of self-proclaimed Queen-samo' that has been around for the past 1 year and 6 months. We have evidence for all the facts about spreading malicious rumors and sending discordant documents to common members, and as a result of directly asking the members who are judged to be related, not a single member of the 'Queen Samo' member admitted to being a member. They have spread malicious rumors in the church and framed certain members or ministers without any basis. But it is true that they have been waiting for the conversion of the minority group for the sake of the exhortation of love and the oneness of the church. As a result of the investigation, their words and actions were only malicious and baseless plotting to the extent that they could not even be called saints' (Internet). Rather, like the church in Antioch (Acts 11:22), our church should be a well-known church. I earnestly hope and pray that the church will become a church where many people can believe in Jesus and come back to Him because the power of God is with them (v. 21). Also, I hope and pray that our church will become a church where the word of our faith spreads everywhere, just like the church in Thessalonica.

Fourth and last, Satan's strategy (temptation) is violence.

Look at Acts 21:35 – “When he got to the stairs, he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob.” When Paul was being arrested and beaten by the people after hearing the rumors of commotion and confusion, the commander of the Roman cohort arrived with the centurions and soldiers (v. 32) and asked, ‘Who was Paul and what he had done?’ (v. 33) Then he ordered that Paul be brought into the barracks first because the truth of the incident could not be grasped due to the commotion (v. 34). So, when Paul got to the stairs, he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob (v. 35). The soldiers recognized this unusual sign because a crowd of people followed them and cried out for Paul to be removed [It is not “Away with him!” but ‘You commander, get rid of him!’] (Yoo). This call was to pressure the commander to remove Paul. Considering that the Jews in Jesus' day cried out to the governor Pilate, ‘Get rid of this man and set Barabbas free’ (Lk. 23:18), we see the Apostle Paul suffering like Jesus. The ultimate purpose of this Satanic temptation, “violence,” is to get rid of people. Until this goal is achieved, Satan and his servants are constantly tempting and committing evil.

Can church members fight and quarrel with each other and become violent? It seems like saying

bad words is nothing. It's really frustrating when I hear church officials blaspheme without hesitation in the church or especially outside the church. At one church, even at the church board meeting, I heard that the elder was angry and cursed and quarreled. However, if we go further and use violence outside the church like the bloody people of the world, how can we explain such violent behavior as a believer in Jesus? Last week, when I saw the news on Yahoo's Internet version of Korea, I remember reading an article about three pastors who were drinking at a drinking party and assaulted a man, who seemed like a non-believer, who asked them how the pastors could drink. I was speechless. We Christians must not use verbal abuse and violence. We should never be the aggressors. Rather, we should remember that even if we are assaulted and suffer, our mission is to suffer for the Lord in addition to the mission of preaching the gospel in fulfilling the Lord's will.

Satan is attacking the church. Satan is trying to stir up commotion within the church and provoke the church. He is trying to destroy the peace and order of the church by spreading even malicious rumors. Furthermore, Satan even forsake (remove) the children of God from the community by verbal abuse and violent behavior. What should we do? We must resist this satanic attack. In other words, we must counter his tactics: stirring up, provocation, rumor and violence. I hope and pray that the church that is the body of our Lord will be a church with order, a church with peace, a church with the word of faith, and a church with love.

Satan's strategy (5)

[Nehemiah 4:1-3]

In the church, who do people ridicule? They usually ridicule a person who believes in the Lord well and is faithful to Him. So, to a person who is well-believing and faithful, they ridicule by saying, 'Should you believe in Jesus like that? Do you have to go to church on a Sunday like that? To whom are you trying to impress with being so faithful?' Therefore, in the last days, the members of the church will be hurt by other members of the church (Internet).

In Nehemiah 4:1-3, we see Nehemiah and the people of Judah being ridiculed. Who ridiculed them? These were Sanballat (vv. 1-2) and Tobiah the Ammonite (v. 3). When Sanballat heard that Nehemiah and the people of Judah were building the city of Jerusalem, Sanballat became furious and very angry and mocked the Jews (v. 1). Tobiah the Ammonite, along with Sanballat, mocked and despised Nehemiah and the people of Judah (2:19). This suggests that Sanballat and Tobiah are engaged in a vile psychological warfare as operatives to thwart the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. What was the purpose? It was to instill disappointment and fear in Nehemiah and the people of Judah (White). In other words, the purpose was to destroy the morale of the builders to prevent the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem (Packer). These adversaries tried to stop Nehemiah and the people of Judah by taking advantage of the psychological weaknesses of those rebuilding the city of Jerusalem. Today, as I meditate on Sanballat's ridicule (v. 2) and Tobiah's ridicule (v. 3), I would like to think of Satan's strategies in six ways. Therefore, we can all know Satan's strategies, realize how deceived we are by Satan's temptations, turn to God, look and rely on Him, so that we can rededicate ourselves and be faithful in building the church, the body of the Lord, with the power that the Lord gives us.

The first thing I would like to meditate on is the ridicule of Sanballat.

Look at Nehemiah 4:2 – "He spoke in the presence of his brothers and the wealthy men of Samaria and said, 'What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore it for themselves? Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish in a day? Can they revive the stones from the dusty rubble even the burned ones?'" We find five satanic strategies in his five ridicule questions.

(1) Sanballat's first ridiculed question was, "What are these feeble Jews doing?" (v. 2a).

At the heart of Sanballat's ridicule here were the workers of Judah. He called them "these feeble Jews." In psychological warfare, you can either point at the opponent's weakness or tell them one fact that the opponent reacts sensitively. Sanballat called the people of Judah "feeble Jews" because he knew how sensitive the Jews would be to their poor and humiliating situation in front of his brothers, the Samaritans and the army. By "feeble Jews" here we mean "Miserable Jews", that is the wretched or unhappy Jews. The root of the word 'mll' is used in two ways in the Old Testament: (a) It is used to refer to a tree that is disappearing or withers, (b) also to those who have no hope (Isa. 19:8; Hos. 4:3). Calling "feeble Jews" in the text is a mockery of how the Jews can do anything worthwhile or good because they are useless people like a withering tree.

I have fallen for this Satan's strategy countless times, and I still fall for it often. Just as Sanballat called the people of Judah "feeble Jews," Satan keeps making me to say to myself, 'James, you lack, you are weak, you do not deserve to be a pastor, you are useless' and so on. I often mistook Satan's voice for the voice of God. In other words, I was mistaken for humility to say that to myself. Satan's clever strategy is to make me look at myself more than looking at God. To be more precise, Satan makes me to look only at myself. In particular, Satan makes me to look only at my weaknesses, my shortcomings, and my sins. And then Satan makes me unable to look to God, so I am disappointed with myself and even despair. True self-examination is to get to know God by getting to know ourselves. But Satan prevents us from knowing God and allows us to only get to know ourselves. Therefore, in the end, Satan prevents us from holding onto 1 Corinthians 1:27-28: "but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are." Satan keeps us from looking at this God and only makes us focus on our foolishness and weakness, our lowliness, our despised points and our nothingness. So Satan is trying to discourage us from doing the Lord's work by disappointing and frustrating us.

(2) Sanballat's second ridiculed question was, "Are they going to restore it for themselves?" (Neh. 5:2b).

At the heart of Sanballat's ridicule in the second question here was the work itself, the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. To paraphrase this ridicule, 'Do they really know what they started

with?' says John White, while J. I. Packer says, 'Rebuilding the city of Jerusalem is clearly beyond their capabilities.' For example, people who ridicule our Victory Presbyterian Church are pointing at us and asking, 'How can a church with such small numbers and weakness as you do to rebuild Victory Presbyterian Church?' It is the same ridicule as continuing to criticize our weakness and insufficiency with taunting questions. Such mockery can be fatal when we are weary and weak in our ministry. The fragility of the Jews in Nehemiah 4:10, "Thus in Judah it was said, 'The strength of the burden bearers is failing, Yet there is much rubbish; And we ourselves are unable To rebuild the wall,'" as John White says, 'It is the most disgusting thing to hear someone else tell you of the fear you already feel when you are about to have doubts about something you have started' (White). Already the people of Judah were exhausted. There was still a lot of work left, but they were exhausted. And they wondered if they could rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Then this second mockery of Sanballat, "Are they going to restore it for themselves?" (v. 2) was fatal.

I think this satanic strategy is truly terrifying. The reason is because Satan first magnifies how weak we are and then shows us how great our work is. In other words, Satan's strategy is to magnify the greatness of our work and our smallness in order to make us think, 'How can a weak and insufficient person like me do such a great work for the Lord?' By doing so, Satan makes us to be discouraged and be frustrated. The reason why we are so discouraged and frustrated is that Satan, through all these delusions, prevents us from looking to God with faith. No matter how weak and lacking we are, if God is with us and He gives us strength and allows us to bear it, no matter what great things we do. Thus, we will try with faith for the Lord, but Satan tries to stop us from even starting at all. And by magnifying the great thing, Satan makes us see ourselves smaller and smaller. Also, he makes us unable to see God with faith, who is greater than the great thing, so that we become discouraged, frustrated, and even despair.

(3) Sanballat's third ridiculed question was, "Can they offer sacrifices?" (v. 2c)

This third ridicule may not make sense clearly. As John White says, Sanballat is ridiculing their [the people of Judah] faith in God (White). It's like saying, 'Do they really think that prayer can elevate walls?'" What a terrifying ridicule of Sanballat? He ridiculed the people of Judah, ridiculed their work, ridiculed the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, and now ridiculed their faith. Not only was Sanballat denying that God was helping His people, but also he was blaspheming God.

Now Satan attacks our faith. He first attacks our weakness, then what we want to do. Thus, Satan attacks even our faith and puts us into doubt. Satan ridicules us by making us to think, 'What good is prayer? Would prayer and worship come makes us to build the Lord's church?' For example, how would you react if you were ridiculed about the use of intercessory prayer for evangelism meetings and for non-believers whom you try to reach out? Maybe you fall into Satan's strategy and ask yourself, 'Will God really answer my prayers?' Will you not doubt that your non-believers will accept the gospel? Satan makes us abandon our faith and walk the path of doubt. Satan creates disbelief in us. And in the end he leads us to unfaithfulness in unbelief.

(4) Sanballat's fourth ridiculed question was, "Can they finish in a day?" (v. 2d)

At the heart of this fourth ridicule is the ability to complete the task, namely, 'Can you rebuild the city of Jerusalem in a short time?' To the people of Judah who were still weary of strength (v. 10) and were saying, 'We cannot rebuild the wall,' Sanballat intends to further discourage them by ridiculing them, how long it will take to finish such a great and difficult task. In the end, Sanballat attacked the incapacity of the people of Judah and tried to force them to give up on rebuilding the city of Jerusalem while they were exhausted. To the tired and weary people of Judah, they could not endure any longer, but they acknowledged the limits of their patience and wanted to stop this great work of rebuilding the city of Jerusalem.

This is Satan's ridicule and temptation. Satan tries to make us impatient and give up in doing the Lord's will by making the things we have to do seem so great and at the same time too small for us to handle the great thing. In particular, Satan magnifies how short our time is, which causes us to stop serving the Lord when we are tired and exhausted. While Satan emphasizes our inability and the size of the work we have to do, he makes us think that we don't have enough time. So in the end, he makes us to say, 'Lord, I can't do it,' and makes us give up on the work of the Lord.

(5) Sanballat's fifth and last ridiculed question was, "Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble – burned as they are?" (v.2e)

The key to Sanballat's ridicule here was the building materials. He said that the stones necessary for rebuilding the city of Jerusalem have already been burned and are of no use. But the burned stones around Jerusalem at that time were still good building materials (White). Packer also says that the gates were extinguished at the time and that the walls had been demolished. As a result,

almost all the stones were reusable. But in order to disappoint the people of Judah, Sanballat spit out the wrong words (burned stones were useful) as well as the right words (burned gate materials were not useful) (Packer).

This ridiculed question of Sanballat made me realize more clearly that Satan indeed tempts us with a mixture of truth and lies. Just as Satan quoted the Old Testament with a twist when tempting Jesus, Satan does not tempt us with unconditional lies, but with lies plus truth (truth + lies). Consider the church as an example, and Satan often causes us to say: 'There are no workers in our church.' Even though we are serving the body of the Lord according to the gifts we have been given, Satan makes us think and say things like, 'There is no one who serves outside of me' like Elijah. God has prepared 7,000 people other than Elijah who did not bow down to Baal. But When Elijah was exhausted from fear and discouragement, he did not know that fact. By making us focus on things like lack of resources with the church since the church is small in order to discourage us and stop us from serving the church. Indeed, Satan's strategy is clever.

After these five ridicules of Sanballat, Nehemiah 4:3 shows the ridicule of Tobiah the Ammonite. This is the second and last thing we want to meditate on.

Tobiah's ridicule was this: "What they are building--if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!" (v. 3)

The key to Tobiah's ridicule here was the finished product, the city of Jerusalem. He is ridiculing that even if the wall of Jerusalem, which Nehemiah and the people of Judah are building, is completed, it is too weak and will soon collapse even if a fox climbs on it. The Hebrew word for 'to break down' here means 'a breach in (wall)'. In other words, even if the fox climbed up, there would be cracks in the walls of Jerusalem.

I will never forget this Tobiah's ridicule. The reason is because about 5 years ago, the Lord led me back to Victory Presbyterian Church and led me to meditate and preach on the Book of Nehemiah, and showed me many breaches in my life through this Tobiah's ridicule. As I received that grace, I was convinced in my heart that the Lord wanted to build me as the senior pastor of the church first in fulfilling the promise of Matthew 16:18 that He will build His own church, Victory Presbyterian Church. With the thought that 'I, as a pastor, must be properly build first,' and I couldn't understand why the Lord is trying to build Victory Presbyterian Church by raising such man like me who had many breaches. So I could

not but praised the hymn “I know not why God's wondrous grace To me He hath made Known, Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love Redeemed me for His own” (v. 1 of the hymn “I Know not Why God’s Wondrous Grace”). Then, about five years later, as I meditate on this text again, God is showing me my breaches and how much I am exposed to Satan through these five ridicule questions of Sanballat.

But I am not discouraged. The reason is because God is giving me strength again with the word of His promise. God is giving me strength by making me see His strength and power in the midst of my own weakness. Also, God is making us bold by making me to look to God, who is bigger than the size of the work of building Victory Presbyterian Church, which is the body of the Lord. God has given me the wisdom to distinguish between Satan's voice and God's voice, so that I can listen to His voice and move forward in faith. Also, He is allowing me to persevere and participate in the Lord's work of building the body of the Lord even in the midst of against all hope. And God is giving me strength by letting me see the faithful workers the Lord is building for me, who complains about the lack of workers.

In building the Lord’s church, we must hold on to the word of the Lord's promise, 'I will build my church' (Mt. 16:18), and do not be shaken by the ridicule of any adversary. Let's serve the Lord and His church faithfully together. Although our adversaries ridicule us for our shortcomings and weakness, our work and our abilities and resources, let us all participate in building the body of the Lord. Even even if they further ridicule and challenge our faith and patience, let us all participate in building the Lord’s church. I hope and pray that we will all be able to glorify God by doing the Lord's will completely.

Satan's strategy (6)

“Then Rabshakeh said to them, 'Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, 'What is this confidence that you have?’”(Isaiah 36:4).

Satan attacks us Christians who believe in Jesus. Satan attacks our faith intensively. Even now, Satan is diligently trying to shake our faith in Jesus, so that we ultimately distrust Him. In doing so, Satan is still strategically attacking us. I have already meditated on Satan's strategy five times while reading the Bible. Briefly reviewing Satan's five strategies again:

Satan's strategy (1): Exodus 14:3

1. Satan makes us to wander aimlessly
2. Satan puts us in a corner

Satan's strategy (2): Ezra 4:4

1. Satan weakens our hands
2. Satan interferes with our plans
3. Satan sues us

Satan's strategy (3): Job 1:11; 2:5, 9

1. Satan strikes our possessions
2. Satan strikes our bodies

Satan's strategy (4): Acts 21:27-36

1. Satan stirs up the people around us

2. Satan provokes
3. Satan spreads false rumor about us
4. Satan is violent

Satan's strategy (5): Nehemiah 4:1-3

1. Satan ridicules us
 - a. worker,
 - b. work,
 - c. faith,
 - d. ability,
 - e. resource,
 - f. finished product

I would like to meditate on how Satan attacks us in three ways under the title of "Satan's strategy (6)", focusing on Isaiah 36:4.

First, Satan shakes our trust in God and His servant.

Look at Isaiah 36:7, 15 – “But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away and has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar'? ... nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, ‘The LORD will surely deliver us, this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’” In the 14th year of Hezekiah king of Judah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them (v. 1). Sennacherib, king of Assyria, sent Rabshakeh, the commander of his army, to Jerusalem with a large army from Lachish (v. 2). Rabshakeh speaks to Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the recorder (v. 3). One of the things that Rabshakeh said is verse 4: “... ‘Say now to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, ‘What is this confidence that you have?’” Rabshakeh asked Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah about the object of faith of the people of Judah. He said that whether the object of the faith of the people of Judah was “counsel and strength” (vv. 5, 8), “Egypt” (vv. 6, 9), or “the Lord our God” (vv. 7, 15) or their leader, King Hezekiah (vv. 14-18), it was of no use (vv. 18-20). According to this word of this Rabshakeh, he was unaware of what King Hezekiah of Judah, his servants, and the people of Judah believed and became so confident (v. 4). More specifically, Rabshakeh was unaware that King Hezekiah, his servants, and all the people of

Judah were emboldened by their trust in God. They wouldn't have known. How could the Rabshakeh, who did not believe in God, know how trusting in God could make him bold and confident? However, what he was trying to do was to shake the people of Judah's trust in God and in Hezekiah, God's servant. That was why he started with the question of Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah, "What is this confidence that you have?" (v. 4), said to the people of Judah not to let Hezekiah make them trust in the Lord, "Do not let Hezekiah deceive you" (v. 14), "Beware that Hezekiah does not mislead you" (v. 18), "he will not be able to deliver you" (v. 14). In the end, he even said, "Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the LORD would deliver Jerusalem from my hand?" (v. 20). He said that neither King Hezekiah nor the God whom Hezekiah and the people of Judah trusted could deliver the people of Judah from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria (v. 20).

Satan also tells us that God cannot deliver us from our great troubles and adversities. Satan is whispering to us that God does not hear and answer our prayers. Satan keeps telling us that God cannot save us. Satan is still trying to make us doubt the God of salvation, and ultimately, to make us distrust God. At the same time, Satan is trying to distrust God's servants who proclaim His word to trust in God. Satan is telling us not to believe in His servant, not to be deceived by his words. The ultimate purpose of Satan is to make us Christians give up our faith and turn away from God. We must keep this satanic purpose and strategy in mind so that we do not waver in our trust in God and His servant. Rather, we need to trust God more and more and trust His servant whom God has anointed.

Second, Satan mocks our abilities.

Look at Isaiah 36:8 – "Now therefore, come make a bargain with my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them." Rabshakeh, the military commander of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, proposed a bet in the name of the king of Assyria to Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the recorder (v. 8). The proposal was, "I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them" (v. 8). Rabshakeh said this because he knew that among the people of Judah there were not enough 2,000 horsemen to fight in the war with Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and his great army. Not only that, Rabshakeh ridiculed the Jewish soldiers that not one of the lowest rank officers could stand against them (v. 9).

This mockery is Satan's strategy. As we see in Nehemiah 4, Satan mocks us, not only of our faith in God, but also of our abilities. When Nehemiah and the people of Judah were trying to rebuild the city

of Jerusalem, their adversary, Sanballat, attacked the incapacity of the people of Judah and tried to force them to give up on rebuilding the city of Jerusalem in a tired and exhausted state (Neh. 4:2, 10). This was to make the Jewish people, who were tired and exhausted, no longer endure, acknowledge the limit of their patience, and stop the great work of rebuilding the city of Jerusalem. This is Satan's strategy. Satan keeps mocking our abilities. Satan continues to make us think that we are lacking, that we are weak, and that we are incompetent. In doing so, Satan keeps us focused on our shortcomings, weaknesses, and incompetence, thus blinding us to the Almighty God in faith. Then we must keep looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2). We must focus on the Almighty God, not on our shortcomings, weaknesses, and incompetence. And we must win the spiritual warfare with Satan who is against us by believing that Almighty God is with us.

Third and last, Satan lies to us.

Look at Isaiah 36:10 – “Have I now come up without the LORD'S approval against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, ‘Go up against this land and destroy it.’” Rabshakeh, the commander of the army of Sennacherib king of Assyria, told Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah, that it was God's will to strike and destroy the land of Judah, and that God had spoken to him directly (v. 10). Was it really the will of God to strike down and destroy Judah through the Assyrian kingdom? It never was. Of course, God used Assyria as a rod of God's wrath to discipline the northern Israelites (10:5-6). But God never intended to destroy the people of Judah through Assyria. Although Rabshakeh also said that God spoke to him directly (36:10), God never spoke to him directly. This is a lie. Rabshakeh lied. It makes no sense to say the will of the Lord to Rabshakeh, who does not believe in God. He tried to deceive the people of Judah by telling them, ‘Do not be deceived by Hezekiah’ (v. 14). He also tried to persuade them to surrender (vv. 15, 16) by telling them, ‘Do not fall for Hezekiah’s persuasion to trust in the Lord’ (vv. 15-16). But the people of Judah were neither deceived nor persuaded by Rabshakeh's lies. Rather, they listened to King Hezekiah and trusted God according to his word (vv. 15, 16). The people of Judah believed that God would deliver them from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria, just as King Hezekiah had said (vv. 18, 20). So, as King Hezekiah had commanded, they were quiet and did not answer a word to Rabshakeh (v. 21). It was because they quietly trusted God.

We must be quiet and trust in God in obedience to God's commands to gain strength and be saved (30:15). Also, we need to be persuaded that God can do what He has promised us to do (Rom. 4:21). We must not be deceived by Satan. Satan is a liar and the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). There is no truth in him; he speaks lies (v. 44). His lies to us by adding or subtracting lies to the truth. So Satan makes it difficult

for us to distinguish between the truth and a lie. In particular, he makes it difficult for us to discern the will of God. Satan confuses us by making us to ask ourselves, 'Is this God's will or mine?' In order not to fall for Satan's tricks, we must stand firm in the word of truth. And we must obey the will of God, which the indwelling Holy Spirit makes us to understand through the word of truth. To do that, we must give up 'my will'. And we must pray to God, 'Not my will, but your will be done.' We must ask God with a willingness to humbly submit to His will. And we must obey God's will. We must obey the word of truth. The truth will set us free (Jn. 8:32).

Satan shakes our trust in God and His servant. Satan mocks our abilities. Satan lies to us. We must not fall for this satanic strategy. We must trust in God and trust in His servant whom God has anointed. We must also believe that the Almighty God, who makes us strong, is with us. And we must stand firm in the word of God's truth. I hope and pray that God will fully accomplish God's will through us in God's time and in God's way.

Satan's strategy (7)

“Then she said to him, 'How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have deceived me these three times and have not told me where your great strength is.” (Judges 16:15)

Aren't there times when you are tired and discouraged? In that case, what should we do? I pray to God for powers. In particular, I personally have five powers to ask the Lord. They are 'the power of grace', 'the power of love', 'the power of the Word', 'the power of prayer' and 'the power of the Holy Spirit'. The reason I seek these five powers is because I feel the need for them. For example, the reason I seek the power of God's grace is because I believe that the more I realize that 'I am what I am because of God's grace', the more I can thank God and work harder for the Lord's work with the power of that grace (1 Cor. 15:10). And the reason I ask the Lord for the power of love is because I realize more and more deeply that I cannot love even my wife with my own power. Because I believe that I can love my wife only with the power of love from the Lord. Only when I become a garden watered with love and understand the Lord's love for sinners like me more and more deeply, much, broadly, and highly (Eph. 3:19), then I will be able to love the Lord my God with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my mind and love my neighbor as myself (Mt. 22:37-39). In this way, I often ask the Lord for 5 powers. But the problem is that Satan is constantly working in my life in the opposite way to these 5 powers. For example, whenever I ask the Lord for the power of grace, Satan keeps trying to instill in me a sense of merit rather than a consciousness of grace. So even though I must confess, 'I am unworthy servant; I have done only that which I ought to have done' after I did all the things which are commanded by the Lord (Lk. 17:10), Satan is trying to exalt myself and make me like Diotrephes, who loves to be first among the people of the church (3 Jn. 1:9). In the end, Satan is trying to inject thought into my head in such a way that 'I became what I am through my own power' rather than confessing that 'I am what I am because of God's grace' (1 Cor. 15:10). Perhaps, in the case of business Christians, Satan makes them think, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me" even though it is God who gives them the ability to produce wealth (Deut. 8:17-18). Satan is also trying to make hatred grow in my heart when I ask the Lord for the power of love, so that I can even hate my wife. Clearly, even though

the Bible says, “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer” (1 Jn. 3:15), Satan not only prevents me from loving even my wife, who is one flesh in the Lord, but on the contrary, constantly working in my life to hate her. Besides this, when I ask the Lord for the power of the Word of God, Satan is making me stay away from His Word without even opening the Bible. Therefore, Satan not only prevents me from learning to fear God, so I cannot observe all the words of God, but also tries to make my heart proud over my brothers and sisters in Christ (Deut. 17:19-20). Not only that, Satan whispers a lie in my ear when I try to get closer to the Word of God, adding or subtracting from the truth. The same goes for prayer. Not only does Satan keep me from continuing to pray, and to keep me from gaining the power of prayer, but he also makes me sleepy many times when I try to pray. Although Jesus said, “Watch and pray so that you may not fall into temptation” (Mt. 26:41), Satan makes me sleepy because of my weak body so that I may fall into his temptation. In addition, Satan keeps clashing with me to stand up and solve problems with my own strength, ability and experience when I am trying to cultivate the attitude of mind to solve problems on my knees and the habit of prayer. When I seek the power of the Holy Spirit, Satan is supporting me to live with the power of sinful flesh. In other words, Satan continues to entice me to go against the Holy Spirit and follow the desires of the flesh in order to do the deeds of the flesh (Gal. 5:16-21). In this way, Satan is working diligently in my life, contrary to the five powers I am asking the Lord for. Furthermore, Satan is constantly trying to distance me from the Lord who is the source of all these powers. By attacking my faith in that Lord, Satan keeps asking questions in the realm of my thoughts so that in the end, my heart may doubt about Him. Also, Satan keeps turning my eyes from looking to the Lord, who is the source of strength and perfecter of faith (Heb. 12:2), so that I can see the “wind” and make my heart terrified (Mt. 14:30) instead of fixing my eyes on the Lord and walk by faith. Therefore, he is trying to make me to be drawn into the fearful situation. What should I do to avoid falling into these temptations of Satan?

In Judges 16:15, we find the word of Delilah (v. 4), the woman whom Samson loved, who pressed him daily with her words and urged him (v. 16). Her word was “How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have deceived me these three times and have not told me where your great strength is” (v. 15). Here, Delilah's words, ‘You have not told me where your great strength is,’ was not what Delilah really wanted to know, but rather what the rulers of the five Philistine provinces, who were behind her, wanted to know (v. 5). Since they went to Delilah and said, “Entice him, and see where his great strength lies and how we may overpower him that we may bind him to afflict him. Then we will each give you eleven hundred pieces of silver” (v. 5), she asked Samson four times, “Please tell me where your great strength is and how you may be bound to afflict you” (vv. 6, 10, 13, 15). In other words, what Delilah wanted was not what caused Samson's great power and how he could be bound and

make him submit, but 1,100 silver coins each (total: 5,500) from the rulers of the five Philistine provinces who were controlling her from behind. But Samson lied to her three times: (1) "... If they bind me with seven fresh cords that have not been dried, then I will become weak and be like any other man" (v. 7), (2) "... If they bind me tightly with new ropes which have not been used, then I will become weak and be like any other man" (V. 11), (3) "... If you weave the seven locks of my hair with the web [and fasten it with a pin, then I will become weak and be like any other man" (v. 13). After Samson lied to him three times, Delilah said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have deceived me these three times and have not told me where your great strength is" (v. 15), and "when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death" (v. 16). "So he told her all that was in his heart and said to her, 'A razor has never come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will leave me and I will become weak and be like any other man'" (v. 17). Upon hearing this, Delilah sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up once more, for he has told me all that is in his heart." Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands (v. 18). Delilah made Samson sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his hair. Then she began to afflict him, and his strength left him (v. 19). "She said, 'The Philistines are upon you, Samson!' And he awoke from his sleep and said, 'I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.' But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him" (v. 20). As a result, Samson was seized by the Philistines. And they gouged out Samson's eyes, brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains, and he was a grinder in the prison (v. 21).

As I meditated on these words, I pondered a little about how Samson was tempted by Delilah. As I was doing this, I had these thoughts:

My first thought was that Samson didn't know who was behind Delilah.

Samson had no idea that the rulers of the five Philistine provinces were behind Delilah. He didn't know that those five rulers promised to give Delilah bribe to find out what caused his great strength and how they could bind and subdue him. I don't think I'm any different from Samson. A lot of times I experience that Satan is behind my beloved family and shakes my little faith in turning to the Lord, who is the source of my strength. Satan makes me look at the problems and sufferings of my loved ones only with my own physical eyes, so it often makes me worry and wander around. Satan knows my weakness is that of the family I love. So he continues to drain my spiritual strength through my family members in one way or another.

The next thought came to me was that when I saw that Samson had lied to Delilah three times, and on the third lie he told the secret story of his hair, I thought that Samson was falling for Delilah's temptation more and more.

We see the Samson's first lie that "If they bind me with seven fresh cords that have not been dried, then I will become weak and be like any other man" (v. 7) and the second lie that "If they bind me tightly with new ropes which have not been used, then I will become weak and be like any other man" (v. 11), it seems that Samson did not fall for Delilah's temptation at all, nor did he shake. However, when we see Samson's third lie that "If you weave the seven locks of my hair with the web [and fasten it with a pin, then I will become weak and be like any other man" (v. 13), it seems that Samson fell for Delilah's temptation to some extent. Then, Delilah pressed Samson daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death (v. 16). "So he told her all that was in his heart and said to her, 'A razor has never come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will leave me and I will become weak and be like any other man'" (v. 17). In the end, Samson fell into Delilah's temptation. As I contemplated this, I was reminded of the story of Samson's first woman, a woman from Timnah (Ch. 14). Samson went down to Timnah, saw a woman in Timnah (14:1), fell in love with her, and asked his parents to get her for him as a wife (vv. 2-3). So Samson's father went down to the woman; and Samson made a feast there, and gave a riddle to the 30 friends he had made (vv. 10-12). But the 30 friends could not solve the riddle posed by Samson, so on the seventh day they said to Samson's wife Timnah: "Entice your husband, so that he will tell us the riddle, or we will burn you and your father's house with fire. ..." (v. 15). So, Samson's wife continued to weep for seven days during the feast (v. 17). And when she pressed him so hard, Samson could not bear it and on the seventh day he told her the answer to the riddle (v. 17). In this way, even though Samson had already experienced being urged by the first woman from Timnah, and told her the answer to the riddle because she wept and urged him for seven days, Samson told Delilah all that was in his heart regarding the secret of his strength when she pressed him daily with her words such as "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have deceived me these three times and have not told me where your great strength is," and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death (16:15-17).

As I meditated on these words, I remembered Potiphar's wife, who seduced Joseph day after day (Gen. 39:10). She looked Joseph, who was handsome in form and appearance, with desire at Joseph, and said to him, "Lie with me" (vv. 6-7). Then Joseph refused her request (v. 8). The reason was because not only Joseph did not want to sin against Potiphar, who withheld nothing from Joseph except his wife, but also Joseph did not want to do great evil and sin against God by sleeping with her (v. 9). But look. Like

Delilah, Potiphar's wife also urged Joseph day after day (v. 10). But Joseph did not listen to her and did not lie with her, nor was he with her (v. 10). Even when Joseph was alone with her at her home, when she grabbed his garment saying, "Lie with me!" he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside (v. 12). Samson should not have listened to the Delilah's word, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? ...," even she pressed and urged him daily. But Samson eventually listened to her and told her all that was in his heart (Judg. 16:15-17).

In view of this fact, I made some contrasts between Samson and Joseph. At the same time, I thought about why Samson could not resist the temptation of a woman like Joseph. Of course, there is a difference that Joseph did not love Potiphar's wife and Samson loved Delilah. But I think the fundamental difference between these two men is that Joseph feared God, hated evil (Prov. 8:13) and turned away from evil (Ref.: Job 1:1, 8; 2:3, 28:28) while Samson did not fear God and did not live his life properly as a Nazarite (Judg. 13:4, 7). Not only did Samson was close to three unclean foreign women [the woman of Timnah (Ch. 14), a harlot in Gaza (16:1), and Delilah (v. 4)], but also he was close to honey from the body of the dead lion, scooped out with his hands and ate but also gave them some to his parents so they ate it too (14:6-9). Samson, who disobeyed God's command and did not live like a Nazarite dedicated to God (13:5, 7), did not know that the rulers of the five Philistine provinces were controlling behind Delilah, whom he loved, and also lied to her three times when she enticed him three times (16:5). So in the end, the rulers of the five Philistine provinces did what they wanted. Like Samson, I, too, cannot live as a servant of the Lord who supposed to be dedicated to God, and eventually fall into Satan's temptations and sin against God countless times. My heart wants to act like Joseph, who feared God, but my body, like Samson, fell into temptation, hiding the glory of God, and committing the sin of giving occasions to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme (2 Sam. 12:14). Satan stimulates my weak points, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life (1 Jn. 2:16) to make me sin against God, making me discouraged and draining my spiritual power.

Another thought was that Joseph did not listen to Potiphar's wife, so he did not lie with her, nor was he with her (Gen. 39:10), while Samson fell asleep on Delilah's lap (Judg. 16:19). I don't understand how Samson managed to fall asleep on her lap even after telling Delilah, who had seduced him, that if she shaved his head, his power would go away. It seems that Samson believed Delilah because he loved her to that extent. To that extent, it seems that Samson was completely unaware of the dangers of the rulers of the five Philistine provinces, who were behind Delilah, whom he loved. So he fell asleep on Delilah's lap, telling Delilah all the truth and never expecting the outcome.

As I meditated on these words, I was reminded of the story of the frog in the kettle. A university laboratory conducted an experiment on the neural reaction of the frog. It is said that when a man put a frog in boiling water, it immediately reacts and jumps out to live. However, it is said that when the frog was put in cold water and heated slowly, the frog, which did not feel the change or respond to the situation, was slowly boiled and died (Internet). I think Samson has a similarity to the frog in the kettle that was slowly boiled to death. As if putting the frog in cold water and gradually heating it up, Samson fell deeper and deeper into the love of Delilah, and thought that he fell asleep on her lap even after he had revealed all that was in his heart. In the eyes of the rulers of the five Philistine provinces, this behavior was nothing other than ‘Eat me.’

It reminds me of the unwise young man who ruined himself in Proverbs chapter 7. When this foolish young man passed through the street near the corner of an adulteress (Prov. 7:8), he should have avoided it and not passed by it, but rather turned away from it and pass on (4:15). But he did not turn away from the way of the adulteress, but rather walked closer to the corner of her street and headed towards her house, even in the twilight, in the evening, in the middle of the night and in the darkness (7:9). I think the reason this foolish youth went to the adulteress’ house secretly in the middle of the night was because he did not look to the word of God with the middle of his eyes and didn't keep it. He may have been secretly looking at the adulteress with his eyes at the window of his house, through his lattice (v. 6). And when this foolish young man went to the adulteress' house (v. 8), the cunning adulteress greeted him with hidden intention (v. 10). The hidden intention was to set a trap that would make him unfaithful in marriage. In other words, the adulteress’ hidden true intention was to force many married men to break the covenant they had made when they got married (Yoon-sun Park). With this hidden intention, the adulteress led the young man with persuasive words and seduced him with her smooth talk (v. 21). This word ‘seduction’ is derived from Latin, and its literal meaning is “to lead astray,” meaning ‘to lead in the wrong direction,’ ‘to deceive,’ or ‘to corrupt.’ When used negatively, this word is associated with seduction and flirting, which arouses a person's sexual arousal into a choice of action, which in turn leads to his or her depravity (Wikipedia). How, then, did the adulteress seduce and corrupt the foolish, ignorant young man? There were at least three: (1) The adulteress seduced the foolish young man with the sight [(v. 10) “Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute ...”], (2) The adulteress seduced the foolish young man by touching [(v. 13) “She took hold of him and kissed him ...”], (3) The adulteress seduced the foolish young man by her words [(v. 21) “With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk”].

Even now, Satan tempts me, a fool, to corrupt me. Satan is sexually seducing me to commit

adultery with my heart. As a result, Satan is draining my spiritual power. Therefore, I cannot help but ask God for power while meditating on these words today. I ask the Lord for the power of grace, the power of love, the power of the Word, the power of prayer, and the power of the Holy Spirit. The reason is because I have no power. I have no power to fight myself, the world, sin, and Satan. The reason is because I have sinned against God by falling into Satan's trap countless times, and I am and will continue to do so. So I ask the Lord for power. The reason is because only the Lord is my power.

Satan's strategy (8)

“And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.” (1 Samuel 18:9)

The Bible speaks of two types of jealousy. One is the jealousy of God and the other is the jealousy of Satan. God's jealousy is good because He loves people and hates sin at the same time. But Satan's jealousy is evil because he loves sin and hates people (Pusey, Park). A good example of God's jealousy is Phinehas in Numbers 25. When the whole assembly of Israel were weeping at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting because of the wrath of God came upon the people of Israel, Phinehas saw an Israelite man named Zimri brought to his family a Midianite woman named Cozbi right before the eyes of Moses and the whole assembly of Israel. So he took a spear in his hand and followed the Israelite into the tent and pierced Zimri and Cozbi's belly and killed both of them (Num. 25:7-8). As a result, the plague against the Israelites was stopped (v. 8). In the end, Phinehas had turned away God's wrath from the sons of Israel in that he was jealous with God's jealousy, so that God didn't destroy the sons of Israel in His jealousy (v. 11). A good example of Satan's jealousy is King Saul in 1 Samuel 18:9. King Saul looked at David with jealousy eyes. And Saul's eyes of jealousy were the eyes of murderous jealousy that even tried to kill David.

Saul wasn't jealous of David from the beginning. Saul had disobeyed God's commands (15:11, 18-19) and was already rejected by God (vv. 23, 26; 16:1). So the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him, and instead an evil spirit from the Lord was tormenting him (vv. 14, 15). And David had already been anointed by Samuel at God's command (v. 12), and he was greatly moved by the Spirit of God (v. 13). At that time, Saul needed a man who could play the harp when the evil spirit from the Lord came upon him (v. 16). And one of Saul's servants recommended David, who knew how to play the harp, was a brave man and a warrior, and spoke well and was a fine-looking man (v. 18). So Saul sent men to Jesse, David's father, to send his son David to him (v. 19). When David came to Saul, the moment Saul saw David, he liked him very much, and David became one of Saul's armor-bearers (v. 21). But the reason why Saul, who liked David very much, began to look at David with jealous eyes was because after David went out against the Philistine giant Goliath (17:23) in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel (17:45), with a sling and a stone, without a sword in his hand and killed the Philistine giant Goliath (v. 50) and when he and King Saul were returning, the women from all the towns of Israel

came out and celebrated the victory by singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes and sang, “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands” (18:6-8). When Saul heard this, he was very angry and said, “They have credited David with tens of thousands, ... but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?” (vv. 8-9) And the very next day, Saul, who was strongly possessed by an evil spirit, tried twice to kill David, who was playing the harp to calm him down, as usual. But David escaped from Saul's spear twice and fled (vv. 10-11). Then one day, Saul said that he would give David his older daughter Merab as his wife when David serve him bravely and fight the battles of the Lord with the Philistines. The reason Saul said this was because he wanted to put David to death at the hands of the Philistines instead of raising his own hand against David (v. 17). But there was a setback in that plan (v. 19). So when Saul heard that his daughter Michal loved David, he was delighted and thought that he had another chance to kill David. So he tried to use his daughter Michal to trap David and put him to death at the hands of the Philistines (vv. 20-21). So Saul told David through his servants that he didn't want anything but 100 Philistine foreskins to avenge his enemies. The reason he said so was because Saul had a plan to put David to death at the hands of the Philistines (v. 25). Saul's jealousy toward David was a murderous jealousy that even tried to kill David.

Even now, Satan is twisting our love relationship into a relationship that makes us not only to hate each other, but also try to kill each other. The weapon Satan uses at that time is “jealousy.” That jealousy is a sinful jealousy, a murderous jealousy, and also Satan's jealousy. Satan stimulates and incites us to keep comparing us with others in our minds and to make us feel superior to others in that sense of comparison. But at the same time, Satan not only makes us not feel superior, but also makes us jealous by making the other person more praised, recognized, and exalted than we do. In particular, Satan fuels the jealousy of our hearts by making us maximize what others have as well as what we don't have. Therefore, Satan is making us maximize our hateful feelings against the person who has more than us, and also makes us express those hateful feelings through actions. What should we do? How can we fight and overcome this satanic strategy without falling for it? Like Phinehas, we must be jealous with God's jealousy (Num. 25:11). To do this, we must know that our God is “a jealous God” (Exod. 20:5; 34:14). In doing so, we must be jealous of God's jealousy and hate idolatry (v. 3) and all sins that God hates (Ps. 5:4). In particular, we must hate pride, arrogance, evil behavior, and perverse speech, which God hates (Prov. 8:13; 16:5). We must guard ourselves against the proud heart that strives to elevate ourselves, that is obsessed with the idea of being superior to others, the jealous heart that cannot endure when others are praised and recognized more than others, and the jealous heart when others receive more praise and recognition than others. We must guard our heart, which is the wellspring of life (4:23). May the Lord, who neither slumber nor sleeps, protect us (Ps. 121).

Satan's strategy (9)

“So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and sent letters to the elders and to the nobles who were living with Naboth in his city. Now she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the head of the people; and seat two worthless men before him, and let them testify against him, saying, 'You cursed God and the king ' Then take him out and stone him to death.” (1 Kings 21:8-10)

In today's world, if you accidentally upload an article, photo, or video on the Internet, you will face great difficulties. Someone who hates us can use our writings, pictures or videos, etc., with a malicious intent to harass and inflict pain on us. In particular, if someone posts a very bad lie about us, slanders them, or spreads strange rumors, we can face fatal difficulties that can lead to social burial. The reason is because the article posted on the Internet can reach many people at a very high speed. And even if the article later turns out to be false, the fatal wounds we have already suffered are not so easy to heal. So negative writing is very dangerous.

In 1 Kings 21:8-10, Jezebel, wife of King Ahab of northern Israel, wrote letters in the name of her husband Ahab and stamped King Ahab's seal, and sent letters to the elders and to the nobles who were living with Naboth in his city. The content of the letters was, in a word, to kill Naboth. Why did Jezebel want to kill Naboth? The reason was because King Ahab wanted to own Naboth's vineyard (vv. 1-2). The reason was because King Ahab wanted to make a vegetable garden with the Naboth's vineyard (v. 2). So King Ahab was willing to give Naboth a better vineyard than Naboth's vineyard a generous price or to give him the price of it in money (v. 2). But Naboth rejected King Ahab's offer because God forbade him to give the inheritance of his fathers to King Ahab (v. 3). So King Ahab came home, sullen and angry, lying on his bed, turning away his face away and ate no food (v. 4). But his wife Jezebel came to him and asked him, “Why are you so sullen? Why won't you eat?” (v. 5) Then King Ahab said to Jezebel, ‘I said to Naboth to sell his vineyard or give him another vineyard in its place, but he refused’ (v. 6). So Jezebel promised that she would get him the vineyard of Naboth (v. 7). Then she wrote the letters in Ahab's name,

stamped the king's seal, and sent them to the elders and nobles living in Naboth's city (v. 8). As I meditate on the contents of those letters, I would like to think about Satan's strategy in three ways:

First, Satan's strategy is to seat us at the head of the people.

Look at 1 Kings 21:9 – “Now she wrote in the letters, saying, "Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the head of the people.” The first instructions Jezebel wrote to the elders and the nobles who lived with Naboth (v. 11) in writing were to proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the head of the people (v. 9). Why did Jezebel give such instruction? After all, she would have wanted to kill Naboth in the end. But why did she even instruct them to declare the fast and to seat him at the head of the people? Did Naboth really sit on that high place? If he had sat down, would he have liked to sit on that high place? I don't think so. The reason I think so is because Naboth was a man who did not do what God forbids (v. 3). Considering Naboth's word that God forbade the giving of his father's inheritance to King Ahab (v. 3), I think he did not like to be treated by others like the scribes and Pharisees, who loved the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues (Mt. 23:6). But Satan's strategy keeps us being treated by others. Satan keeps trying to get us to sit at the top seat. He keeps making our minds prouder and over-thinking, leading to over-thinking actions. In the end, Satan stimulates and maximizes our pride by making us to have the most important seat and exalting us in front of people (Lk. 20:46). His purpose is to make us to sin against God.

We must not fall for this satanic scheme. We shouldn't like to sit at the most important seat and to be exalted in front of people. Rather, we need to be burdened to be exalted in front of people. And we need to humble ourselves, even deliberately in front of people. The reason is because when we get used to sitting in the high place, our minds run the risk of becoming proud too. Therefore, our attention should be on those who sit on the lower place than on those who sit on the higher place. And our hearts should be with those who sit on the lower place. At the same time, we must have the humble heart of Jesus and learn His heart (Phil. 2:5-8). We should become those who are exalted by God rather than being exalted by people.

Second, Satan's strategy is to frame us.

Look at 1 Kings 21:10a – “and seat two worthless men before him, and let them testify against him, saying, 'You cursed God and the king. “ The second instruction Jezebel wrote to the elders and the nobles who lived with Naboth was to set up two worthless men before Naboth, and to give false

witness against Naboth. The false witness was that Naboth had cursed God and King Ahab (v. 10). What a cunning ploy this was. Although Naboth never cursed God or the king, the elders and the nobles of the city where Naboth lived and set up the false witnesses and made Naboth a curser against God and the king (v. 13). How could Naboth curse God who didn't do what God forbade? Also, how could Naboth, who obeyed God, curse Ahab, whom God had anointed, no matter how evil Ahab was? This was a blatant lie. But Jezebel set up the false witnesses to make the lie a truth by making them to lie against Naboth. This was Satan's strategy. Satan is the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). He is not on the side of the truth because he does not have the truth (v. 44). He is a liar (v. 44). His scheme is to lie to us. Satan lies to us by adding or subtracting from the truth. Therefore, it may not be easy for us to discern the lie.

We must not fall for this satanic scheme. Satan, who turns truth into lies and lies into truth, uses his servants, his false witnesses, to frame us. Even by telling lies, he puts us in trouble. At that time, we must be awake and sober, praying and standing firm in the word of God. In particular, we must not abandon our integrity in the midst of any lies and slander. We must be truthful with the belief that the truth triumphs over lies. In addition, we should look and depend on God more and more and long for God's deliverance. We must ask God to deliver us from the hands of those who frame us. We must also have spiritual discernment. Only then will we be able to discern Satan's clever lies and the lies of his false witnesses so that we can throw away lies and stand firm in the truth.

Third, Satan's strategy is to kill us.

Look at 1 Kings 21:10b – "... Then take him out and stone him to death." The third and final instruction Jezebel wrote to the elders) and the nobles who lived with Naboth was to stone Naboth to death. According to this instruction, the elders and the nobles living in the city of Naboth did as Jezebel had written in her letter to them (vv. 11, 13). Then they sent word to Jezebel, "Naboth has been stoned and is dead" (v. 14). Upon receiving this notice, Jezebel said to her husband, King Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead" (v. 15). So, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up and went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard (v. 16).

How evil are these people. Evil Ahab broke the tenth of the Ten Commandments and coveted his neighbor's vineyard (Exod. 20:17), and his wife Jezebel made Ahab take possession of Naboth's vineyard that her husband wanted, even by killing Naboth. How wicked is it that the king and the queen of a nation take away what they want, even if they kill the faithful Naboth, who obeys the word of God,

instead of taking care of their people (v. 19). Ahab, who had sold himself, did what was evil in the sight of God, and his wife Jezebel incited him (vv. 20, 25). Perhaps Ahab and Jezebel thought they had overcome because they got what they wanted. They would not have felt any guilt for the sin they had committed. But God knew it all. So God sent the Prophet Elijah to meet King Ahab (v. 18) and said, “In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs will lick up your blood, even yours” (v. 19). Not only that, but God said to Ahab through the Prophet Elijah, “Behold, I will bring evil upon you, and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, both bond and free in Israel; and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and because you have made Israel sin” (vv. 21-22). Regarding Jezebel, God said, “The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel” (v. 23). God's righteous judgment was, “The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of heaven will eat” (v. 24). It is truly a terrifying judgment from God. Therefore, we must not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul, but fear God who can destroy both soul and body in hell (Mt. 10:28).

In one way, I think that it is effective to spread the Word if I write a meditation on the Word and post it on my personal Facebook or Social Network Service (SNS) such as Naver blog and make it public so that everyone can see it. At the same time, I think there is also a risk on the other side. The more I think about it these days, the more I think that I can be caught in my own writing just like an animal is caught in a trap. Since I am trying my best to write honestly by reflecting on the words of God while meditating hard on my own, I think writing down my shortcomings and faults and sharing them openly with everyone is enough to cause difficulties and pain for myself in the future. Since in writing, the intention of the writer may not conveyed to the readers as it is, and each person interprets the writing in his or her own way, I think those who may hate me can attack me with my own writings. So these days, I am more careful about writing and sharing than before. However, I do not want to stop writing. I want to continue writing while meditating on the Word of God. The reason is because the heart that the Lord has given me is that it is my mission to meditate on the word of God day and night and share it. But Satan will continue to work to prevent me from fulfilling this mission. Satan has placed me on a high place in front of people and keeps working to make me proud. Also, Satan continues to work to get his false witnesses to frame me by falsely accumulating the writings of my meditations. Satan's purpose is to kill me. Satan continues to work to kill my faith rather than kill my body (life and death are in the sovereignty of God). In other words, Satan is working diligently to get me to have a dead faith without works (Jam. 2:26). Satan is making me to just say, “Lord, Lord” only with my mouth, so that I cannot do the will of my Father who is in heaven (Mt. 7:21). But I am not afraid. The reason is because Jesus, who

overcame Satan and death on the cross, is with me. Therefore, imitating Jesus and sharing the word of the truth with humble heart, I want to enjoy eternal life on this earth, even partially, more fully.

Satan's face and angel's face

[Acts 6:8-15]

Do you know Treacher Collins Syndrome? On the evening of March 1, 2005, TV viewers were surprised to see 'The Faceless Child'. This three-year-old girl lives in Orange Park, Florida, USA. Her name is Julieanna. The child was born with only 30% of the bones that make up the upper jaw, cheeks, eye sockets, and pinna. This symptom of a 'faceless state' due to the lack of proper bone structure is called 'Treacher Collins Syndrome,' and the medical staff agreed that Juliana's condition is the worst among all cases so far. The child underwent 14 surgeries. She will have to undergo at least 30 surgeries in the future. However, her parents, who serve in the navy, are grateful, saying, 'This lovely daughter is a gift from God.' Her dad, Tom, said, 'God never gives us what we can't handle. My daughter has a lot to show to everyone.' Even if she doesn't have a face, her father says he is thankful for her and says that she is gift, how unfortunate it would be if we considered the gift as a valueless commodity (Internet). Among the reactions to an Internet article about Julianna suffering from Treacher Collins syndrome, the best remark was, 'In our country, children would be abandoned. Or even if they were raised by their parents, kindergartens or schools would not accept them.' The next remark was 'My daughter says this: When I sleep today and wake up tomorrow, I hope that our country, Korea, will become a country like that country without prejudice. ... Somehow bitter and shy .. Conversation with daughter ... Reflected ... '. The next remark was 'We should be thankful': 'Every time I see people with disabilities or people in need, I think about it, and we should be grateful even if our hands and feet are intact and our bodies are intact. Am I the only one who thinks so?' (Internet)

What about our faces? Aren't we 'faceless Christians' just like 'a faceless child'? Let us listen to Lincoln's famous words: 'If you are over the age of forty, you must take responsibility for your face.' 'The Chinese New Year water bucket, where all the dross has settled, looks like clear water. But if you turn the inside of the stick once, everything that has sunk, such as bean sprouts, rice grass, and radish pieces, will float up. A person's personality can also be known by turning it inside out. Only when you are at peace and when you receive grace are all the faces of angels. But when you are upset, you can only know what is inside. What came to mind when you turned Stephen's stomach upside down? An angel's

face came to mind. It was a face that no one dared to touch' (Internet).

In Acts 6:15, we are going to meditate on the angel's face and Satan's face, focusing on the words of today's text, looking at the word that Stephen's face was like "the face of an angel." In the midst of this, we want to be taught what kind of face we should and shouldn't be.

First, let us think about the face of Satan.

Satan's appearance is perfect in beauty (Ezek. 28:12-13). Charles Stanley said in his book "When the Enemy Strikes": "The Bible introduces Satan as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). Satan hides his face and comes wearing someone else's mask. The Bible describes this as a ferocious wolf in sheep's clothing (Mt. 7:15) (Internet). Who is Satan? See the names of Satan: Satan, the devil (slanderer), Lucifer (son of the dawn), Beelzebub [the prince of demons (Mt. 12:24)], and Belial [the wicked (2 Cor. 6:15)], the evil one (1 Jn. 5:19), the tempter (1 Thess. 3:5), the ruler of this world (Jn. 12:31), the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4), the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2), the accuser of our brethren (Rev. 12:10), an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), the serpent (Rev. 12:9) and the dragon (Rev. 12:3). Look at Satan's attributes: Satan is a created angelic being. He had been created as part of the realm of angels (Eph. 6:11-12; Ezek. 24:18). And he is the highest in the ranks of all of them (Ezek. 28:12-14). What are Satan's actions? Satan is trying to go against God's plan by making it as evil as possible in every way. The indirect action is that Satan is acting indirectly through the world [where Satan is extremely free and powerful (Jn. 12:31; 1 Jn. 5:19)] and through the flesh. The world, the flesh, and evil are not the three separate enemies of Christians. Rather, Satan is working through the system of the evil world (1 Jn. 2:13-15) to use the fleshly nature within us (Rom. 7:18; Gal. 5:19-21). The direct action is that Satan acts directly by depicting, seducing, attacking, and possessing. The work in the believer (1) Satan tempts the believer to conceit (1 Chron. 21:1-8), to be secular (Jn. 2:15; Jam. 5:1-7), to be immoral (1 Cor. 7:5), to lie (Acts 5:3), to be discouraged (1 Pet. 5:6-10), to be unforgiving (2 Cor. 2:10-11). (2) Satan hinders the work of believers (1 Thess. 2:18; Rev 2:10). (3) Satan promotes false teachings among believers (1 Jn. 4:1-4). (4) Satan promotes anger, sorrow, and wrath (Eph. 4:26-27; 2 Cor. 2:5-11) (Internet).

Who are the servants of Satan in today's text and argue with Stephen? They are "the Freedmen" (v. 9), that is, "the Synagogue of the Freedmen," former captives and freedmen, scattered Greek-speaking Jews from Cyrene, Alexandria, and Cilicia, respectively (v. 9, Yoo). How did Satan's servants attack Stephen? In a word, they incited people to give false witness. Look at verse 11: "Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, 'We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and

against God.” The word “secretly persuaded” is the only Greek word used here, and it means the act of instigating people to do as they are instructed (Yoo). The people in the synagogue of the freedmen who oppose Stephen were using people to represent them with false evidence. In other words, they made for false propaganda. What was that false evidence or false propaganda? “We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God” (v. 11). The important thing here is that those they bought and built had never heard Stephen say anything, but they put forward as if they were eyewitnesses to what Stephen said (Yoo). The servants of Satan who attacked Stephen lied and bribed those who had never heard Stephen say that Stephen had committed the sin of blasphemy and gave them false witness. Eventually, when the bribed go out in public and Stephen speaks blasphemy against the temple and Moses, they incite or “stirred up” the people, the elders, and the scribes (v. 12) so that they all become one and made them flock to Stephen. Isn't it interesting? Those who oppose Jesus and those who oppose the apostles work together, and those who oppose the ordained deacon of Stephen in today's text, the freedmen in the synagogue, the people, the elders, and the scribes all united to defeat Stephen by giving false testimony to get rid of him. Furthermore, these satanic servants even made the bribers serve as false witnesses in court (v. 13). They were false witnesses before the Sanhedrin court, saying, “This man does not hesitate to speak against this holy place and against the law, saying, “This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us” (vv. 13-14, Yoo). These satanic servants, bearing false witnesses with a false heart, attacked the truly holy deacon, Stephen, under the guise of the holy temple and the holy Law of Moses.

The unholy people, who pretend to be holy, live false witnesses and give false witness. Like the false witnesses in verse 11, they lie that they have heard things they have not heard. They are not quick to hear the voice of God, but rather lie in the midst of hearing the voice of Satan. The same work of Satan can exist within the church. We can commit the sin of accusing each other by speaking as if we have heard it without even hearing it directly. In 3 John 1:9-10, there is a person named “Diotrephes”, who gossiped maliciously about the apostles. In modern saying, there is Diotrephes kind of people within church who are slanderers of a pastor. These souls are largely wrong souls. In the church, the saints gossip and criticize the pastor is a person with a wrong soul, like Diotrephes. Members of the church should never slander not only the pastor but also each other. It is the act of falling into the devil's temptation and acting as the devil's agent. If they slander each other, the relationship will be broken. That's the devil's goal. This is the devil's tactic to cause division by causing the church to be engulfed in chaos. If there is a person in the church who slanders and frames the Lord's brothers and thus promotes division and strife, that person is like Diotrephes with a wrong soul (Internet). It is malicious to slander

the Lord's brothers (v. 10). We need to be wary of such person. Such a person is like a root of bitterness that disturbs the church and harms the peace of the church. Therefore, we must be very vigilant (Internet). And we must be on guard against Satan's servants who incite people by giving false witness. In other words, in the church, we must be very careful about accusing the members of the church, as they accuse the pastor, the elders, and the church members. If it is good to lead people who are not yet ready in any field, it is incitement to secretly fan the naive public with false ideas with written words or actions to cause them to be suspicious, distrustful, or angry about the beliefs of their community. In the church, if there are many leaders, it is peaceful. But if there are persistent agitators who are active in an organized way, they will be involved in division and power-defying tricks. The natural enemies that destroy the community are the instigators. The instigators are those who hide their true identity and play tricks on others with plausible words (Internet).

We must be wary of wolves in sheep's clothing. Even though they may appear as gentle as a sheep, we must be wary of those who oppose Jesus because they incite and frame people and thus oppose the servants of God. Even though their faces look beautiful outwardly like Satan, and they look like the faces of a bright angel, we must be careful and beware.

Second, let us think about the face of angel.

Look at Acts 6:15 – “All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.” Here, what does it mean by that Stephen’s face was like the face of angel? This shows that Stephen resembles Jesus already in the glory of the resurrection. He shows that the glory of God is with him (Yoo). This refers to Stephen's face shining with peace, love, and joy (Park). How is this possible? With all the people around him accusing him and threats from those in power at the time, he could be terrified. Instead, how did Stephen's face look like an angel? I find the cause in Acts 6:8, 10. That is, Stephen was full of God’s grace and power, and his adversaries were not able to stand up against Stephen’s wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke. That is, since Stephen was full of grace, power, wisdom, and the Holy Spirit, even in the face of threats, the true radiance of an angel appeared. This radiance reminds us of Moses in the Old Testament. Moses' face was radiant when he met God from Mount Sinai and came down with the stone tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments. And the Israelites saw Moses, they were afraid to come near Moses. So Moses put a veil over his face. The reason that Moses had the radiant face, that is, an angelic face, was because Moses spoke with God like a friend and obeyed His command (Internet). The word radiance is the Hebrew word 'karan', which symbolizes the glory of God. The radiance, a symbol of God's glory, appeared on Moses' face, indicating

the climax of his faith. The radiant face means a human figure reflecting the glory of God. It can be said that it is a word that expresses the state of being filled with the Holy Spirit by the grace of God. Then, the radiant face means that it has reached the highest level in God's eyes, and that it is the most perfect human form that has restored the image of God (Internet).

But what is the face of Christians? If we look at an Internet article written under the title 'The Two Faces of American Christians,' an American pastor (Anthony B. Robinson) said these words in a sermon: "The traditional Trinity of Christianity has been replaced by the modern trinity of 'Me, Myself and Mine'" (Internet). This is a rebuke that we, Christians, are living selfish life rather than living the Trine God-centered life. In the end, Christians living in the United States seem to have one face that resembles Jesus, but the other face is drowning in selfishness in which 'my face' that only I know is becoming more and more clearly visible. Like Stephen, we must be full of grace, full of power, full of wisdom, and full of the Holy Spirit, so that the radiance that reveals the glory of God appears on our faces. Therefore, even those who oppose and persecute us may see "the face of an angel" in our faces, like Stephen.

We need to restore the face of Jesus. An Internet article titled 'Restoring the Face of Jesus' states: Leonardo da Vinci invited his acquaintances to unveil 'The Last Supper', which he worked hard for several years. Finally, the fabric was removed and the work was revealed. For a moment, exasperation flowed from the people's mouths. A friend said with a recalled expression. 'It's a really great piece of work. Look at that shiny glass in Jesus' hands. Isn't that great?' Then Leonardo da Vinci picked up his brush and smashed the part of the glass. Leonardo da Vinci said to the startled people: 'This work is a failure. I wanted your attention to be focused on the face of Jesus. But if my eyes were focused on the glass, it was beyond my intentions.' He completed the painting by repainting the glass so that it did not obscure the expression of Jesus. Modern people often make the mistake of cheering at the gleaming glass in Jesus' hand.' Faith is the process of finding the essence of life. Faith is the restoration of the face of Jesus hidden in a glass (Internet).

We need to know rightly.

Although it is important to know a lot of God's word, I think we need to know it rightly.
The reason is because Satan distorts the word of God by adding or subtracting from it.

(Thinking while summarizing our church retired pastor Chang Kim's Wednesday Prayer Meeting sermon)

Will be taken away

When we hear the word of God and do not understand it,
the word sown in our hearts is inevitably taken away by the evil Satan (Mt. 13:19).

Fight against myself

Although the Lord wants me to trust him/her as much as He loves him/her with His love,
Satan is trying to make me not love him/her as much as I doubt about him/her.

(In a fight with myself in a relationship)

Separate heart and body

Although my heart wants to act like Joseph, who feared God,
but my body fell into temptation, like Samson, hiding the glory of God,
and committing the sin of allowing God's enemies to blaspheme (2 Sam. 12:14).

Satan provokes my weakness, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 Jn. 2:16),
to sin against God. By doing so he discourages me and drains my spiritual strength.

Seed of hate

Satan sows the seeds of hatred in our hearts.

If we leave the seed of hatred alone, it will grow, sprout and become a tree, bearing sinful fruits.

Therefore, we must not just let the seeds of hatred sown in our hearts.

We must immediately confess our sins to God and repent.

We must ask for forgiveness.

My disobedience

Some thoughts that come to mind when I see myself disobeying God's word in the light of Eve's disobedience:

1. Seeing 'the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' that I should not see.

The fact that the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is pleasing to my eyes, it is evidence that I have already turned my eyes away from looking at the Lord.

2. Hearing the word of Satan's delusion that I should not listen to.

Although I should not listen to Satan at all, nor mix with Satan, the fact that I am already mixing with Satan's lies in the realm of thought is evidence that I am ignoring the voice of the Lord.

3. Not being afraid of the consequences of disobedience.

Although I am far from the Lord and close to 'the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil', and keep on making sinful choices to satisfy the lust of my eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life and not being afraid of the consequences of my disobedience, it is evidence that I am not fearing God.

(As I am reading Lydia Brownback's "LEGACY OF FAITH: From Women of the Bible to Women of Today")

Eve’s disobedience, my disobedience

**“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”
(Genesis 3:6)**

I started reading a new book yesterday afternoon. The book is titled “Legacy of Faith” (Lydia Brownback). When I looked at the content of the book, I saw the names of various women in the Bible. And I was curious to know what the author would say about each of them, so I started reading it. The first woman the author mentioned was “Eve”, the first woman of all mankind. After reading all about Eve, I came to my own conclusions: 'Eve was a disobedient woman.' Eve disobeyed God's command, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.” (Genesis 2:16-17). She took the fruit and ate it and gave it to her husband who was with her’ (3:6). I had time to reflect on myself in Eve's disobedience to God's command. As I was doing this, I had three thoughts:

First, my disobedience is seeing ‘the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ that I should not see.

Look at Genesis 3:6a – “When the woman saw that the tree” Eve should not have seen the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. I think that the fact that she began to see the tree had already begun to walk the path of disobedience in her mind. Obviously, God commanded not to eat from that tree. But when she saw the tree, “the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise” (v. 6). When Eve began to see the tree, and eventually craved the fruit of the tree, she had already disobeyed the God’s command in her heart even before she ate the forbidden fruit. This reminds me the Bible Matthew 5:28 – “but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” The Bible says that to look at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Since what comes out of

his heart is “adulteries and fornications” (Mt. 15:19), to look at the woman with lust is that he has already committed adultery with her in his heart, even if he has not slept with her. It is because he already has covetousness in his heart. Obviously, in Exodus 20:17 the Bible says, “You shall not covet your neighbor's house.” To covet your neighbor's wife is already committing adultery in your heart. Eve had already coveted the forbidden fruit in her heart. That was why she saw the tree. And the fact that when she had already harbored covetousness in her heart and looked at the fruit and the fruit was good for food, it is proof that she had already turned her gaze away from looking at God.

The Bible Hebrews 12:2 says, “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.” When I do not look to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, and keep looking at ‘the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ that I should not see, then I already disobeyed God's command in my heart. Here, my ‘fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ are the words God has commanded ‘Do not do’, for example, the words ‘Do not look at a woman with lust’ (Mt. 5:28), ‘Do not trust in people who cannot save’ (Ps. 146:3), ‘Do not be arrogant’ (Jere. 13:15). Obviously, God has commanded me not to be arrogant, do not trust in people, and do not commit adultery. But if I see that myself is committing adultery in my heart, trusting in people with my heart, and proud of your heart, the reason is because I didn’t fix my eyes on the Lord but on myself and other people. I pray and pray that God will have pity and mercy on me that He may grant me the grace of repentance every day. I earnestly pray that I will turn my gaze from looking at myself and others and look only at the Lord who is the author and perfecter of my faith. Therefore, I pray that I will no longer commit the sin of disobeying the Lord's commands, but rather become God's child who humbly obeys the Lord's words by faith.

Second, my disobedience is listening to Satan's deceptive words that I should not listen to.

Look at Genesis 3:1-3: “Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Indeed, has God said, You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’ The woman said to the serpent, ‘From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’” Eve should not have listened to the serpent at all, nor should she have conversed with the serpent. No matter how cunning the snake came and asked, ‘Did God really tell you not to eat all the fruit in the garden?’ (v. 1), there was no need for her to answer. She should have avoided it altogether. Joseph in Genesis 39 did just that. Even though the wife of Potiphar, the captain of the bodyguard of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt (v. 1), whom he was serving, spoke to Joseph day after day and

asked him to lie with her, Joseph did not listen to her (v. 10). Moreover, Joseph was not even with her (v. 10). Then one day when Joseph went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside, and she was alone (vv. 11-12). Then the woman caught Joseph by his cloak and said, “Come to bed with me!” But Joseph left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house (v. 12). Eve should have done like Joseph. But like the foolish young man without wisdom in Proverbs chapter 7 (v. 7), who passed through the street near the corner of an adulteress, and took the way to her house (v. 8), Eve not only approached and saw the forbidden fruit, but also approached and heard the words of the serpent, whom she should have kept away from (Gen. 3:1ff). Not only that, but Eve mixed the words with the serpent. She should have avoided that place. She should have ignored the serpent and left the place. This is evidence that she was ignoring God's word. And it is evidence that she valued the snake's words in her covetousness.

The Bible says in Deuteronomy 5:27, “Go near and hear all that the LORD our God says” Like Moses, I also have to come closer to God and listen to everything God says to me. But there are many times when I disobey God and rather listen to Satan more quickly. Although I have to listen to the voice of God that the Holy Spirit tells us while thinking about the word of truth and meditating on it, there are many times I am mixing up Satan's lies in the realm of my thinking. When I think about why I am thinking of Satan's words of delusion, I think that the cause is my own greed. In the end, I am drawn and deceived by my lust (Jam. 1:14). As a result, I depart from the truth (5:19) and be tempted (1:14), disregarding the voice of God and committing the sin of disobedience. I pray and pray that God will have pity on me and that he will have mercy on me and grant me the grace of repentance every day. I pray that God will open the ears of my heart so that there will be no true joy but the voice of the Lord. Therefore, I pray that I will become a disciple of the Lord who no longer secretly dislikes Satan's sweet whispers, but prefers to listen to the voice of God, and enjoys the joy of obeying His word.

Third and last, my disobedience is not being afraid of the consequences of the sin of disobedience.

Look at Genesis 2:16-17: “The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.’” God clearly commanded, ‘You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.’ He even said, “in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.” But Eve was deceived by the serpent and ate the fruit (3:6). She disobeyed God's command. Eve chose the path of disobedience, despite God's promise that she would surely die in the day she ate of the fruit.

To that extent she coveted the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, rather than fearing the consequences of her own sinful choice. In this way, covetousness made Eve to want the fruit of the tree that was good for food, the delight to the eyes and desirable to make one wise, rather than fear of the consequences of sin, and eventually led her to eat the fruit of the tree (v. 6). Because she is so far from God and close to the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she made the sinful choice to satisfy the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life, but was not afraid of the great consequence of that sinful choice. It is proof that she was not afraid of God.

In Numbers 14:34, the Bible says, “According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even forty years, and you will know My opposition.” Of the 12 spies Moses sent to search for Canaan, the Promised Land, the remaining 10 spies, except for Caleb and Joshua, reported bad reviews and unbelief to the people of Israel, making them discouraged, weeping and crying (Num. 13:31-33; 14:1, 11). As a result, all of the Israelites, except Caleb and Joshua, who were counted over the age of 20, who complained to God, were not allowed to enter the Promised Land of Canaan (14:28-30). They wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, and suffered for their unfaithfulness, until their corpses lied in the wilderness (v. 33). And they were destroyed in the wilderness (v. 35). It was the result of disbelief in God and disobedience to His word. In my case, too, my first baby died in my arms about 19 years ago as a result of distrusting God and disobeying Him. Even after suffering the consequences of my unrepentant sins, when I see myself committing sins without fear of God before a holy God, I cannot but seek His mercy. I am asking God for help. I want to live in obedience to the word of God. Like Jesus, I want to pray, ‘Not my will, Your will be done’ (Mt. 26:39). And I pray that I will become a disciple of Jesus who obeys the Lord’s will until I die (Phil. 2:8).

Satan who attacks couples

‘Satan attacked the home when Eve needed Adam's spiritual authority, for he separated the two. Eve acted independently of her husband, and rather led her husband to sin.’

[Warren W. Wiersbe, “The Strategy of Satan”]

Satan's work in marital relationship (1)

Satan makes us see each other's faults more clearly (Prov. 17:9),
writes them down in our minds (1 Cor. 13:5),
and makes us repeat them (Prov. 17:9)
so that there is strife and discord in marital relationship(19:13; 21:9, 19; 27:15).

Satan's work in marital relationship (2)

Satan is making me see my spouse's faults more and more.
Furthermore, Satan is making me repeat my spouse's faults
even though God clearly says, "He who covers over an offense promotes love" (Prov. 17:9),
and love "keeps no record of wrong" (1 Cor. 13:5).

When a couple does not fulfill each other's responsibilities

'... A couple who are considerate of each other and
who are faithful to their marital obligations will never be interested in another man or woman.
Satan easily recognizes when the couple does not fulfill their responsibilities to each other.
So he offers an affair opportunity to satisfy the body's normal needs.
The couple who use sex as a tool for fighting rather than as a tool to build a family
is like asking Satan to destroy the family.'

[Warren W. Wiersbe, "The Strategy of Satan"]

What if my spouse fell into Satan's temptation...?

Satan strikes our bones and our flesh with God's permission,
so that in the end, he tries to make us not to hold fast our integrity and also to curse God to His face.
Then, like Job, we must not sin with our lips, saying,
“Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?”
But how would we react if our beloved spouse saw us in excruciating pain and said,
“Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!”?
Satan tried to get me to curse the Lord.
But what if my spouse tells me to curse God...?
(Job 2:4-10)

We must not allow Satan to attack our marriage.

‘If a Christian gets married against God’s will, Satan can freely work in that family.
If either or both spouses are immature to marry, Satan will find plenty of room for attack.
Also, if a married couple doesn't obey the word of God or can't leave their parents,
so they give them a chance to intervene, then it's all too easy for Satan to attack the marriage.’

[Warren W. Wiersbe, “The Strategy of Satan”]

Temptation of adultery

“Then an Israelite man brought to his family a Midianite woman right before the eyes of Moses and the whole assembly of Israel while they were weeping at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.” (Number 25:6)

The world is full of sexual temptation. It's a sexually promiscuous world. Satan stimulates the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes to make us sin sexually (1 Jn. 2:16). Satan kindles the fire of lust (Prov. 6:24-29) and makes us to covet the body of a woman other than our own spouses, leading to sin not only in mind but also physically. In particular, Satan is using the honey trap to overthrow us men who are vulnerable to sexual temptation. Therefore, it leads to the breakup of the family in the end. Sexual seduction is so strong and dangerous.

In Numbers 25:6, there is a scene that is absurd and incomprehensible. All the Israelites were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting because they had sinned against God and were being punished. A man of Israel went into the tent in front of Moses and all the people of Israel with a woman from Midian. The reason the Israelites were punished was not only that they began to commit adultery with the Moabite women at Shittim, but the Moabite women also invited the Israelites to the sacrifices of their gods and made them eat sacrifices and bow down to their gods (vv. 1-2). How could the single Israelite man bring that Midianite woman to the eyes of all the weeping people of Israel? It is because he has committed spiritual fornication, how can a single Israelite bring that Midianite woman right before the eyes of all the weeping Israelites? And that Israelite man was Zimri, the son of Salu, and one of the leaders of the family of the Simeonites (v. 14). How could Zimri, a leader, bring Cozbi, a Midianite woman, [daughter of Zur, a tribal chief of a Midianite family (v. 15)] into the Tent of Meeting in front of all the weeping Israelites? Why did Zimri bring Cozbi into the Tent of Meeting? I hope it wasn't because Zimri wanted to have sex with Cozbi when all the Israelites were weeping at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. When the Israelites sinned against God, God commanded Moses to take all the leaders of the people of Israel and execute them in broad daylight before the Lord. So Moses told the Israel's judges, “Each of you must put to death those of your men who have joined in worshiping the Baal of Peor” (v. 5). How could Zimri, the leader of a Simeonite family, bring Cozbi, the Midianite woman, into the Tent of Meeting before the eyes of Moses and the whole assembly of Israel? This was also in a situation where

the Israelites were dying from a plague (v. 9) because the Midianite women seduced the Israelites through the Cozbi incident (v. 18) and made them join Baal of Peor (v. 3). It's a really absurd scene and I don't quite understand it.

When I think of these words, I think that Satan's clever deception (Ref.: v. 18) leads us to not only fall into the temptation of adultery and commit the sin of adultery, but also ultimately commit the sin of spiritual adultery. I also think that Satan is especially persistent in attacking church leaders and tempting them into adultery, making them sin against God. Satan not only hardens our hearts (Jere. 9:14, Heb. 3:13), but also makes our faces like bronze and iron (Jer 6:28; Ezek. 2:4) and paralyzes our consciences (1 Tim. 4:2). By doing so, he is making us to commit the sin of adultery openly, not only in front of the brothers and sisters of other churches, but also in the presence of family members. Satan is making us commit the sin of adultery even while we receive (or even after) loving discipline from God for our sin of adultery. Satan makes us to see only those with whom we want to commit adultery. And he keeps us from committing the sin of adultery (2 Pet. 2:14). Satan fills our hearts with lust and greed. That is why the Bible says, "But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband" (1 Cor. 7:2).

Sexual seduction

When a foolish young man who lacked judgment went to the house of the adulteress (Prov. 7:8), the crafty woman greeted him with hidden intention (v. 10).

The hidden intention was to set a trap that would make him faithless in marriage.

In other words, the adulteress' hidden true intention was

to force many married men to break the covenant they had made when they got married (Park).

With this hidden intention, the adulteress seduced the fool with persuasive words, and seduced him with her smooth talk (v. 21).

Here, the word 'seduction' is derived from Latin, and its literal meaning is

“to lead astray,” “to deceive,” or “to corrupt.”

When used negatively, the word is associated with seduction and flirting, which arouses a person's sexual arousal into a choice of action, which ultimately leads to his or her depravity (Wikipedia).

How, then, did the adulteress seduce and corrupt the foolish, ignorant young man?

At least three things:

1. The adulteress seduced the foolish young man with her appearance [(v. 10) “Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute ...”].
2. The adulteress seduced the foolish young man by touching him [(v. 13) “She took hold of him and kissed him”].
3. The adulteress seduced the foolish young man by what she said [(v. 21) “With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk”].

Even now, Satan tempts me, a fool, to corrupt me.

Satan often tempts me sexually, my weakness, into adultery with my heart (Mt. 5:28).

As a result, Satan is draining my spiritual strength.

What causes the sin of adultery?

Why are we committing the sin of adultery? Why is there so much sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape happening? What could be the causes?

First, I think the cause is “the lust of the eyes” (1 Jn. 2:16).

Satan is stimulating the lusts of our eyes to become sexually sinful. Satan arouses greed within us and makes us covet other women beyond our limits. If we succumb to the temptations of Satan, we are drawn to the lust of the eyes to look at women other than our wives. But our eyes are not satisfied with how many women we see and hear (Eccle. 1:8). Because the lust of the eyes cannot be satisfied, we covet other women by looking at them again and again.

Second, I think the cause is “the lust of the flesh” (1 Jn. 2:16).

Satan tempts our fleshly lusts into sexual sin. Satan is making us covet women other than our wives. Satan is always dissatisfied with our wife's breasts and keeps us from captivating by her love (Prov. 5:19). As a result, Satan compels us to commit sexual offenses such as molestation, sexual assault, and rape. The cause of our infidelity is greed. Greed is never satisfied (Isa. 56:11). Therefore, greed makes us dissatisfied with our wives (Prov. 5:19) and makes us covet our neighbor's wives (Exod. 29:17). The lust of the flesh on this earth eventually lead to sexual sin through sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed (Col. 3:5).

Third, I think the cause is ‘foolishness’.

A good example of this is the foolish young man who lacked judgement in Proverbs chapter 7. That foolish young man was the one who had been deceived by the adulteress who spoke seductive words (v. 5). How did Satan tempt this foolish young man? I thought of three things:

- (1) Satan tempts the foolish young man to go down the street near the corner of the adulteress.

Look at Proverbs 7:8 – “He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house.” When this foolish young man was going down the street near the corner of the adulteress (v. 8), he should avoid it, should not travel on it but turn from it and go on his way (4:15). But the foolish young man did not turn away from walking along in the direction of the adulteress’ house. Rather he walked closer to the corner of her house and headed towards the adulteress’ house. He did so at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in (7:9). It was because he didn’t want anyone to see him. In other words, the foolish young man secretly went to the adulteress’ house in the middle of the night to hide his deed from others (Park).

(2) The adulteress comes out to meet the foolish young man with a hidden intention.

Look at Proverbs 7:10 – “Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.” When the foolish young man without wisdom, tempted by Satan, passed through the streets in deep darkness (v. 9) and approached the corner of the adulteress’ corner to her house (v. 8), the adulteress dressed like a prostitute met the foolish young man (v. 10). Here, the reason the Bible says the adulteress had crafty intent is because she has a hidden intention in welcoming the young man. In other words, the crafty adulteress is hiding her own true intention in welcoming the foolish young man. In fact, the literal meaning of the original Hebrew word for “crafty” here is ‘hidden’ (MacArthur). What is her hidden intention? Look at Proverbs 23:27-28: “for a prostitute is a deep pit and a wayward wife is a narrow well. Like a bandit she lies in wait, and multiplies the unfaithful among men.” The hidden intention of the adulteress to greet the foolish young man dressed as the prostitute is to set a trap to make him faithless in his marriage. In other words, the adulteress’ hidden true intention is to force many married men to break the covenant they made when they got married (Park).

(3) The adulteress deceives the foolish young man with her smooth talk.

Look at Proverbs 7:21 – “With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk.” How does the adulteress seduce the foolish young man and corrupt him?

(a) The adulteress seduces the foolish young man with her appearance.

Look at Proverbs 7:10 – “Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.” The phrase “dressed like a prostitute” here means, in modern terms, that the

adulteress is dressed like the prostitute. It means that the prostitute is dressed seductively, but in such a way that she sexually arouses the lusts of the eyes and the lusts of the flesh. It's really irritating to seduce the foolish man.

(b) The adulteress seduces the foolish young man by touching him.

Look at Proverbs 7:13a – “She took hold of him and kissed him ...” Can you imagine a heavily clothed adulteress rushing to the foolish young man, squeezing him with her arms and kissing him on his lips? At that time, the foolish young man must have already felt sexually aroused visually by looking at the prostitute's clothe. But if she has grabbed the young man and kissed him to the lips, then he would have had no choice but to feel the sexual urge. This crafty adulteress uses even physical contact to seduce the foolish young man. How sexually aroused the lively young man would be if the adulteress has seduced the foolish young man by touching and kissing him?

(c) The adulteress seduces the foolish young man by what she says.

Look at Proverbs 7:21 – “With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk.” In seducing the foolish young man, the adulteress seduces him with persuasive words and with her smooth talk (v. 21). I think the women are the same. But I think that men, in particular, have weak sight, touch, and hearing in their five senses. In other words, when a man is seduced by a woman, he can be seduced by looking at the woman's body, or through physical contact. But he can be seduced enough by listening to the woman's words.

We shouldn't give Satan a chance ...

'When a believer commits a sin over and over again, he or she is giving Satan an opportunity to provide a foothold in his life.'

[Warren Wiersbe, "Strategy of Satan"]

While doing evil greater than that evil ...

Amnon,

who became frustrated to the point of illness on account of his beloved beautiful sister Tamar, forced her to sleep with him.

After he had done such wicked thing, he hated her with intense hatred.

In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. So Amnon sent Tamar away.

Although Tamar told Amnon,

"Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me,"

he refused to listen to her (2 Samuel 13:1-19).

Those who fall into Satan's crafty temptation do evil greater than that evil.

Yet they do not listen to rebuke.

Home is a spiritual battlefield!

The Lord wants us to establish our homes as heaven.

So the Lord has given us the twofold commandment of Jesus, the commandment of heaven (Mt. 22:37, 39). He also had poured out God's love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5), so that the fruit of the Spirit, love, fills us more and more gradually (Gal. 5:22).

Therefore, it is our responsibility to obey that commandment in our family and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit to love God with all our souls as a whole family with one spirit and one mind (Phil. 1:27; 2:2), and to love each other as ourselves. When we do this, our home will become a heavenly kingdom. And our home will be filled the joy of heaven (Jn. 15:11; 1 Jn. 1:4), love (Ps. 33:5) and peace (Rom. 15:13).

Satan wants to make our homes a hell.

So Satan is making us disobey Jesus' twofold commandment, which is the commandment of heaven (Eph. 2:2; 5:6), and is making us to hate each other, which is the commandment of hell (Gen. 37:5; Deut. 22:13; Mt. 24:10; 1 Jn. 2:9). Also, along with the spirit of lies, Satan's hatred is instilled in us (Deut. 21:17; 2 Sam. 13:15; Prov. 10:12), making us to work in darkness (Isa. 29:15; Ezek. 8:12; Eph. 5:11) and thus making our family to bear bitter fruit (Rom. 7:5).

So Satan is making us not want to go to a hellish home, but rather to linger outside the house, or even further away from it. Satan is also making us not to want to see our family members. And Satan is making us to hate our spouse even more. In the midst of growing hatred toward our spouse, Satan seeks to open up a gap in the balance of the marital relationship (cf. Neh 4:3, Hebrew "gap"; 6:1), and thus making us to be interested in other women/men. In addition, Satan is making us to covet the other person with the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh (1 Jn. 2:16) so that ultimately leads us to affair.

The purpose of Satan is to break down and destroy our homes, making it impossible for us to achieve the heavenly home, and to turn our homes into a family like hell.

This is a spiritual warfare!

Home is the spiritual battlefield!

Diary of a martyr's wife

From the book "The Gates of Glory" (author: Elizabeth Elliot), this is the diary of Barbara Euderian, the widow of five young North American missionary martyrs:

Tonight the captain told us they found four bodies in the river. One was wearing a T-shirt and jeans. Roger was the only person in such an outfit. Two days ago, God gave me the words of Psalm 48:14 – “For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.” When I heard the news of Roger's death, my heart was filled with hymns. He was worthy to go to his homeland. ‘Lord, help me to do both mother's and father's roles. Help me to know 'Your training and instruction' (Eph. 6:4)...

Tonight Beth asked me to pray for her dad who went to heaven. She asked me whether her dad can come down from heaven since she wanted to write a letter to him. I said, 'He can't. Daddy is with Jesus.' Beth said, 'But Jesus can help him to come down. God will hold Daddy's hand so that he doesn't slip.' I wrote a letter to the missionary supporters, explaining the peace I enjoy. I want to free myself from self-pity. Self-pity is a Satan's tool that gnaws a life. I am convinced that this is the perfect will of God.

I was challenged and still being challenged while reading this diary written by the wife of a martyred missionary. I am praying continually with the thoughts of offering my beloved wife and three God-given children to the Lord in my heart. This week, I heard the news that the second daughter of my friend pastor at a seminary, who was 10 years old, had suddenly died of an illness. Maybe one day I too will have to let my wife and children go first too. I don't want to love my wife and children more than the Lord. I want to offer them to the Lord. That's why this missionary wife's diary is a great challenge for me. I want myself, my wife, and my children to be worthy of going our heavenly home. I don't want to fall into the "self-pity" that this missionary wife said in front of her beloved family members. I want to see more glory. My wife and three children are precious gifts that the Lord has given me by grace. It is natural to offer to the Lord what is the Lord's. Rather than self-pity, I want to be immersed in the glory of our heavenly home. I hope that one day my wife will be able to write this kind of diary that this missionary wife wrote. Of course, I myself must be prepared to die for the name of the Lord.

“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace”(Acts 20:24).

Why are pastors giving into Satan's temptations?

“Again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, ‘Go and take a census of Israel and Judah.’ ... Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel.” (2 Samuel 24:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1)

One of Satan's temptations toward us, the pastors, is to count the number of members. As Satan makes us count the number of church members, he wants us to make the number seem large so that he can maximize vain pride and arrogance in us. Not only that, Satan stimulates our greed to make us focus on increasing the number of church members even more. Therefore, our church leaders are using all kinds of worldly methods to increase the power of the church. So these days we hear that the church is like a company. It seems that we are not thinking much about whether the method is appropriate in God's sight as the church ministry seems only caring about results. Now it seems that it's not about whether the method we use is biblical or not. It's more about whether the method can bring the desired result of increasing the number of church members or not. Isn't the head pastor of the church even demanding an increase in the number of members from the cell or department in charge of the assistant pastors? After all, Satan is making us slaves to the number of church members. And we the pastors have succumbed to the temptations of this Satan and are now preaching while inflating the number of members to make us proud. Is this really what the Lord is adding to those who are being saved (Acts 2:47), or are we the pastors stealing sheep? Why are we now giving into Satan's temptations?

The Bible 2 Samuel 24:1 says that God "incited" David to go and take a census of Israel and Judah. But in 1 Chronicles 21:1, the Bible says that it wasn't God but Satan who "incited" David to take the census. What does it mean? It means that God didn't prevent Satan from inciting David to take the census of Israel, but leave him alone (Park). In other words, God allowed Satan to tempt David into sin (permissive will of God). Why? This is because God was angry with Israel (2 Sam. 24:1) and was against Israel (1 Chron. 21:1). In other words, God wasn't angry with David and wasn't against David, but rather was angry and was against the Israelites. And the reason God was angry with them and was against them was because they followed Absalom's rebellion for a while (2 Sam. 15:12) and also

supported Sheba's rebellion (20:1-2) (Park). In other words, God allowed King David's mistake to be as it was in order to punish the people of Israel for their sins (Park). As a result, God sent a plague on Israel, and 70,000 people died (24:15).

It is said that there are 10 million Christians in Korea (a quarter of the Korean population). I don't know if that's a reliable statistic. I think the number of church members is somewhat inflated. I remember a Christian newspaper article I read sometime ago. The news is that about 24 of the 50 largest churches in the world (with the largest number of members) are in Korea. I'm not sure if the number of megachurches and the number of members of the Korean church is something to be proud of. On the surface, they are increasing the number of members by calling for salvation of souls, evangelism, and missions. But I don't know whether the Lord is adding those who are being saved to the church or whether we are multiplying those who have already been saved. What will God say when He sees this phenomenon of the Korean church? Why is God allowing Satan to tempt the church leaders to make us proud of the church members' number? Why doesn't God stop this temptation of Satan and leave it alone? Maybe the reason is because God is angry not only with us the pastors, but also with all of our church members and is against all of us. Why is God angry and opposing all of us? Maybe the reason is because we are betraying and rebelling against the Lord. In other words, perhaps because we are betraying the Lord and also rebelling against Him like teenagers. What should we do?

First, like David, our hearts should be conscience-stricken and we must confess our sins to God.

Look at 2 Samuel 24:10 – "... 'I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O LORD, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing.'" We must be humble and truthful before a holy God and His holy word. Now we are committing a great sin in the sight of God. It is not a sin to be taken lightly. Now we are doing a very foolish thing in the sight of God. Yet we still continue to deceive ourselves and consider ourselves wise.

Second, we, like David, should rely on God's great mercy when we are in trouble, wanting us to fall into God's hands and not the hands of men.

Look at 2 Samuel 24:14 – "David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men." David chose to send a plague on the earth for three days rather than seven years famine or three months of fleeing from his

enemies (v. 13). As a result, David loses 70,000 (v. 15) of the 1.3 million (v. 9) (note: 1.57 million in 1 Chron. 21:5). Like David, we too must choose the discipline God gives us. Even if we lose so many church members and they leave the church we serve, we must humbly receive God's discipline. Even so, we should not be obsessed with the number of church members.

Third, like David, we must love the flock of God that God has entrusted to us.

Look at 2 Samuel 24:17 – “Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, ‘Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father's house.’” What a beautiful shepherd's heart. Like David, shouldn't we also have this shepherd's heart? Shouldn't we have a heart to love the flock whom God has entrusted to us and a heart to love them with God's love, knowing that one soul is more precious than the world? Are we not longing for and crying out for “many souls” rather than “one soul” to the extent that we do not even know when we had this heart? Many, big, wide and high... Isn't the realm of greed in our heart constantly changing like this?

Fourth and last, like David, we need to be determined and act on the promise that we will not worship the Lord without a price.

Look at 2 Samuel 24:24 – “However, the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing " So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.” We should never, like David, offer unprepared worship to God without paying the price. Rather, we say, as David said, “I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing” (1 Chron. 21:24), and we must worship God with the full price. Then, the calamity God is bringing on us will cease (v. 25).

We pastors should no longer be slaves to the number of church members. We can no longer pastor according to our greed under the pretext of ‘This is God will’. Otherwise, God will bring disaster on all of us. Maybe He has already brought disaster on us now. Now, the flocks whom God has entrusted to us, the pastors, are spiritually starving and are wandering in the world. Now those flocks are the prey of wolves and Satan. What should we do? We can no longer offer God a show or entertainment service to entertain the congregation in His name. We should no longer preach the truth of God with an untruthful heart. The mature church members who long for the truth and seek the true character of the pastor already know it all. The believers should no longer listen to the unsound doctrine that pleases their

itching ears (2 Tim. 4:3). They should no longer follow a great number of pastors who suit their own desires (Cf.: v. 3). They should have a pastor who proclaims the truth of God and wrestles with the truth he proclaimed (just like Jacob wrestles with an angel at the river Jabbok) as he seeks a truthful life. Like David, he sincerely confesses his foolish sin and wants to be disciplined by God's hand. They must worship God together with the determined pastor who truly loves the flock, and as a disciple of Jesus, pay the cost of worship with a willing heart. We must no longer yield to Satan's temptations!

Repentance prayer and action

“Then David said to God, ‘I have sinned greatly by doing this. Now, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing. ... David said to God, ‘Was it not I who ordered the fighting men to be counted? I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? O LORD my God, let your hand fall upon me and my family, but do not let this plague remain on your people.’” (1 Chronicles 21:8, 17)

When we receive grace from God, we must be careful. When God exalts us, we need to be careful and watch out for ourselves. The reason is because when God exalts us, Satan opposes us and urges us to sin against God.

King David mentioned in 1 Chronicles 21:8, 17 was not careful. He became the ruler of Israel by God's grace (17:7), but he failed to keep that grace. When Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel (v. 1), David fell into the Satan's temptation and made his people to count the Israelites (v. 2). Thus, he sinned and done wrong against God (vv. 8, 17). I think that before David sinned and did wrong against God, God rebuked David through his servant Joab, saying, “Why does my lord want to do this? Why should he bring guilt on Israel?” (v. 3) But David ignored the rebuke. Rather, he hastened Joab (v. 4) to number the people of Israel (v. 5), which was not appropriate (v. 6).

I have applied these words to the modern church. It seems that we, the pastors, in many churches are not being careful right now. Although not only we were saved by God's total grace, but also appointed as pastors by God's total grace, now we are not humbly serving the church, the body of the Lord, with the power of God's grace. In other words, we are now sinning against God by failing to keep God's grace given to us and falling into Satan's temptation. Here, Satan's temptation is for us to fall into Satan's incitement and do things that are not appropriate to Him. One of the things that are not appropriate to Him is counting the number of church members. The reason why it is not appropriate in

the eyes of God is that our hearts have become proud as we count the number of members in the churches we serve. To prevent this, when we are tempted by Satan, God rebukes us, the senior pastors, through an associate pastor like Joab, but now we are not listening. Rather, we are promoting by inflating our membership numbers. To that extent, our hearts are now proud, and are filled with a sense of merit rather than grace, so we are giving glory to ourselves rather than to God.

King David should have listened to God's rebuke. But he ignored the rebuke and numbered the people of Israel. So God eventually struck Israel (v. 7). Then David repents of his sin to God. The content of that prayer of repentance is found in 1 Chronicles 21:8, 17. Comparing the contents of the two prayers of repentance, the first similarity is that David confessed that he had sinned against God: "I have sinned greatly by doing this" (v. 8), "Was it not I who ordered the fighting men to be counted? I am the one who has sinned and done wrong" (v. 17). Therefore, he pleaded with God to forgive his own foolish sins (v. 8). Then what is the difference between the two prayers of repentance? The difference is that something not found in verse 8 is added to verse 17. The content of the additional prayer is, "... These are but sheep. What have they done? O LORD my God, let your hand fall upon me and my family, but do not let this plague remain on your people" (v. 17). The reason David additionally offered this prayer to God was when God saw what David had done as evil (v. 7) and told David through the prophet Gad to choose one of three things (vv. 10-12), David chose the three days of the sword of the Lord – days of plague in the land (v. 12), so that 70,000 of the people of Israel died (v. 14). So David repented of his sins to God and said, "Was it not I who ordered the fighting men to be counted? I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? O LORD my God, let your hand fall upon me and my family, but do not let this plague remain on your people" (v. 17).

When I meditated on this David's prayer, I thought of Jesus and the church. In particular, I remembered "Father, forgive them" among the seven words spoken by Jesus on the cross (Lk. 23:34). Jesus, who had no sin, asked Father God to forgive us our sins while He was crucified and died on the cross to atone for our sins. Although David, who sinned against God and did evil in numbering the Israelites and thus 70,000 people were killed by the plague, the sword of the Lord, pleaded with God (1 Chron. 21:17), Jesus prayed to God to forgive our sins and died on the cross for such sinners like us who had no choice but to die eternally. As a result, our sins are forgiven and we have eternal life.

King David not only repented of his sins, but also acted worthy of repentance. I think that David's repentance was worthy of two actions. First, David humbly accepted the consequence of his great sin. David chose the sword of the Lord, the plague (v. 12), relying on the great mercy of God (v. 13)

when he had to choose one of the three that he heard from the prophet Gad (vv. 11-12). As a result, 70,000 people died from the plague among the Israelites (v. 14). Second, David obeyed God's command and built an altar to God (v. 18). David paid full price of 600 shekels of gold for the site and gave it to Araunah (vv. 24-25), and built the altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings and called on the Lord (v. 26) on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (v. 18). As a result, God responded by sending fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering, and commanded the angel to put his sword back into its sheath (vv. 26-27).

Personally, I often think of David as a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). And I wonder what that means. Apparently, he committed the sin against God of committing a married woman, Bathsheba and killing her husband Uriah (2 Sam. 11). But I wonder why the Bible says he was "a man after my own heart" (Acts 13:22). I think the reason maybe was because after David sinned, he not only repented his sins to God, but also acted worthy of that repentance. Of course, I believe that there were also prayers of repentance and acts of repentance because God regarded David as the man after his heart. As a result, God fulfilled all His will through David (Acts 13:22).

The bride church must be a pure virgin.

The bride church is to be "a pure virgin" to be presented to the "one husband," the Bridegroom Christ (2 Cor. 11:2). As a pure virgin, the church must have a sincere and pure devotion to Christ (v. 3).

But Satan deceives us to corrupt our minds so that we may be led astray from our sincere and pure devotion to Christ (v. 3). Satan preaches "a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached" and tries to get us to receive "a different spirit" and "a different gospel" (v. 4).

Now our ears ...

Now our ears prefer to hear another gospel than the gospel of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:6, 7, 8, 9).

The other gospel is the mixed gospel. This mixed gospel is Jesus Christ + Alpha.

And that alpha is wealth (Mt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13).

Now, our ears prefer to hear sermons about material blessings rather than the blessings of salvation.

Because our ears are itching, we do not receive sound doctrine.

Instead, we gather around us a great number of pastors and teachers to suit our own desires (2 Tim. 4:3).

So the pastors also preach the blessings of material things we want to hear.

They gave up on becoming a true pastor and became our co-conspirators.

Now our ears are not enjoying listening to the voice of the Lord.

Now our ears are too exposed to Satan's voice.

Just as a woman Eve heard the voice of a crafty serpent saying,

“Did God really say that you must not eat from any tree in the garden?” (Gen. 3:1),

we too hear Satan’s questions about God’s word over and over again.

As a result, now we are doubting God. We lack confidence in His word.

We must no longer listen to Satan's lies. We must no longer want to hear false gospels.

Rather, we should love to hear the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We should rejoice in hearing the word of truth from God.

When my heart is shaken

“Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. Selah.”(Psalms 62:8)

I am reminded of the lesson that I should be careful after receiving grace. In the midst of the full grace of God I received during the Internet ministry in Korea in 2016, I noticed that my heart was a little shaky after returning to the United States. I saw myself getting depressed without myself realizing it. Although physically my fatigue is recovering a lot, I don't know why my heart is getting depressed and then it's okay again. Then, while reading Psalms 62 today, I became interested in verse 3: “How long will you assault a man? Would all of you throw him down-- this leaning wall, this tottering fence?” d

The psalmist David was under attack. His enemies were uniting in unison and attacking David to kill him. David, who was thus under attack, described his current situation like a wall that falls down and a fence that shakes. The reason is because his enemies not only tried to bring David down from his throne, but they were deceitful, and blessed with their mouths, but in their hearts they cursed (v. 4). In other words, when David's enemies seem to have tried to shake him up, they also tried to shake up a protective barrier such as a wall” or fence and knock it down. I think this is Satan's work and strategy. Satan continues to attack us, diligently trying to shake us up and even knock down the wall and the fence that are like the shield of our hearts which is the wellspring of life (Prov. 4:23). Satan is constantly attacking our hearts, diligently trying to make us discouraged, depressed, and even desperate. What should we do when our hearts are shaken as a result? I meditated on two things.

First, when our hearts are shaken, we must quietly trust God.

Look at Psalms 62:8a – “Trust in him at all times, O people;” When our hearts are shaken in the face of Satan's attack, we must realize two truths at the same time: (1) We should not depend on our wealth even if we increase it (v. 10) and (2) We must trust in God alone (vv. 1, 2, 5, 6). When Satan attacks us, he attacks us a lot, especially with material temptations. Satan diligently tempts us with money, especially when we are in material need. Satan is trying to tempt us even by increasing our

wealth so that we can eventually serve the Lord and wealth together. Our hearts can be shaken enough by this temptation of Satan. However, as the Bible says, we should not set our hearts on our riches that are increasing (v. 10). Rather, like David, we must always trust in God alone (v. 8). Even when our hearts are shaken, we must find rest in God alone and look to Him only (vv. 1, 5). We must keep our eyes on the Lord alone (vv. 2, 6). How is this possible? How can we quietly look to God only when our hearts are shaken? I am reminded of Psalms 42:5, 11 and 43:5 – “Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him For the help of His presence.” I often use this word as my prayer and pray to God. Especially when I am discouraged and anxious within myself, I often pray to God, declaring to my own soul: ‘James, why are you in despair, and why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God!’ In doing so, I often experience God's help. God revives and lifts my soul, which was discouraged and anxious, with the word of God's promise. Likewise, when my heart is shaken, like David, I want to go to God in prayer, crying out to my own soul, “Find rest, O my soul, in God alone” (62:5). Why should we find rest in God alone? The reason is because “my salvation” and “my hope” come from God (vv. 1, 5). The reason is because only God is “my rock” and “my fortress” (vv. 2, 6). Therefore, we will not be shaken if we are quietly trusting in God and finding rest in Him alone (vv. 2, 6). Rather, we will be strengthened (Isa. 30:15).

Second and last, when our hearts are shaken, we must pour out our hearts.

Look at Psalms 62:8 – “Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. Selah.” Many church members in the community are unable to share their concerns and difficulties. The reason seems to be because they know that when they share their concerns and difficulties, it will go viral in the church and will eventually hurt them. Therefore, it seems that they have no choice but to live with their concerns and difficulties. Although the church should be a community of sharing, it seems that there is no church culture that can deeply share each other's concerns and difficulties. It is a sad reality. Even in this reality, we are not discouraged because we can come to the Lord and pour out our hearts. That's why I personally like the hymn “Go, Carry the Burden to Jesus.” If we look at the chorus lyrics of that hymn it reads: “O, steal away softly to Jesus, To Him let thy heart be outpoured; Thy Father, who seeth in secret, Shall give thee a gracious reward.” How grateful we are to be able to quietly go to the Lord and pour out our hearts. It is a privilege and a blessing to be able to cry out to the Lord in prayer and to pour out our hearts to Him who loves us the most and knows us best. The reason why the psalmist David exhorted the Israelites to always trust in God and pour out their hearts to Him is because “God is our refuge” (v. 8). He was able to exhort them that way because in the attack of his enemies (vv. 3-4), he trusted in God alone, who was his might, his rock, and his refuge (v. 7). Then

David heard the word of God. There were two things he heard: (1) 'God is strong' (v. 11) and (2) 'God is loving' (v. 12). When our hearts are shaken, we should pour our hearts out to God. Then we will experience God's power and God's love. As we find rest in God alone and trust in Him quietly, we will receive the strength that God gives us (Isa. 30:15) and experience God's eternal love that is better than our lives (Ps. 63:3).

We are like walls that fall and fences that shake (62:3). Satan and our enemies continue to attack us in unison (v. 3). They are deceitful people. And they only seek to dislodge us from the faith (v. 4) with lies (v. 4) and deceitfulness (v. 9). They can make our hearts shaken. When they do so, we must quietly trust in God alone (v. 8). We must be find rest in Him and quiet look to Him alone, our salvation and our hope (vv. 1, 5). And we must pour out our hearts to Him (v. 8). When we do this, God will take hold of our hearts with His power and His love (vv. 11-12). Therefore we will no longer be shaken (vv. 2, 6).

Sin is crouching at your door

“The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’ ... If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”
(Genesis 3:2-3; 4:7)

Among the Chinese martial arts movies I have enjoyed, there is a movie called “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” in which actor Chow Yun-Fat appeared. Can you imagine a tiger crouching down to eat its prey while staring at it in front of it? Like that crouching tiger, now Satan is at the door of our hearts.

In Genesis 4:7, God said to Adam's son Cain, “But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door.” That is, if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door. God said this to Cain because God accepted Cain's brother Abel and his offering (v. 4), but did not accept Cain and his offering (v. 5). So Cain was very angry and his face was downcast (v. 5). God, who knew it, told Cain, “sin is crouching at your door,” and said, “it desires to have you, but you must master it” (v. 7). Sin was crouching at the door of Cain's heart and desiring to have Cain. So God told Cain to master it. However, Cain could not control his sin and killed his own brother Abel (v. 8). In the end, Cain lost to his enemy Satan who went about like a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8) and looked for someone to devour by not able to master his sin and was ruled. So he ended up committing the crime of murder by killing his own younger brother Abel. In the end, Cain became the food of Satan, who was like a crouching lion.

When I think of this Cain, I think of his parents, Adam and Eve. This is because Adam and Eve also became Satan's food and sinned against God. They disobeyed God's command and ate the fruit from the knowledge of good and evil that was in the middle of the Garden of Eden (3:3), which God had told them not to eat. The woman Eve ate first, and she gave it to Adam, and Adam also ate the fruit (v. 12).

Interestingly, in the process of eating the fruit, the serpent, the most cunning of the wild animals (v. 1), did not tempt Adam but his woman Eve, and the fact that she first said, “but God did say” (v. 3). Why did the serpent tempt Adam's woman instead of tempting him? Perhaps the reason is because Adam received God's word (command) directly (v. 11), but his wife Eve received God's command indirectly through her husband Adam. That is, the woman did not receive a direct command from God not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:17). Perhaps she received that God's command from her husband Adam. Nevertheless, when the serpent said to her, “Did God really say to you that you must not eat from any tree of the garden?” (3:1), she said, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die’” (vv. 2-3). That is, when the serpent tempted her, she fought him with the word of God at first (v. 3). But when the serpent again tempted her, “You will not surely die ... For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (vv. 4-5), she did not (could not) say “God did say” again but saw “the tree” (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) (v. 6). She had already fallen into the serpent's temptation. Like Jesus, when Satan tempted her, she should have continued to fight and overcome his temptation with the word of God [“it is written” (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10)], yet she saw the forbidden fruit. As a result, she fell into the lust of the flesh (1 Jn. 2:16) [“good for food” (Gen. 3:6)] and the lust of the eyes (1 Jn. 2:16) [“pleasing to the eye” (Gen. 3:6)] and the boastful pride of life (1 Jn. 2:16) [“desirable for gaining wisdom” (Gen. 3:6)]. That is, she ate of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (v. 6). And she gave the fruit to her husband Adam who was with her, and he also ate it (v. 6). Isn't it a bit ridiculous? As a man who had received the direct command from God, shouldn't Adam have rejected his wife's offer when she gave him the fruit and rebuked her with love? At least, when the serpent tempted her, it seems that she tried to remember and obey God's command by saying "but God did say" at least once. Isn't it so ridiculous that her husband Adam didn't do it at all and just received the fruit his wife gave him and ate it himself? And, as the head of a family, Adam should have led his wife. But doesn't it look pathetic to be led by her and eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Another interesting thing is that the serpent spoke to the woman, but God spoke to Adam (v. 9). Adam and his wife Eve, who sinned by breaking God's command and eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, heard God's voice in the garden, and were afraid because they were naked and hid themselves (v. 10). When Adam and Eve hid from God among the trees of the garden (v. 8), God did not call Eve who had sinned first, but He called Adam (v. 9). And when God asked Adam, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” (v. 11), Adam said: “The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it” (v. 12). Is this really a valid reason? No, how could Adam make an excuse that “The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the

tree, and I ate it”? (v. 12) Eventually, Adam and his wife fell into the Satan’s temptation and sinned, so sin entered this world and death through sin (Rom. 5:12).

Now Satan is at our door. Like the crouching tiger, Satan lies at the door of our hearts and tempts us. Satan is trying to make us to fall into the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life, and to disobey the word of God and commit sin. We must fight and overcome this temptation of Satan with the word of God. The Lord says this in Revelation 3:20 – “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” Now the Lord is standing at the door of our hearts and knocking. Let us all hear the voice of the Lord and open our hearts. Therefore, in fellowship with the Lord, I hope and pray that we will be victorious in the fight against sin and the devil and Satan with the power of the Lord's word.

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world” (1 Peter 5:8-9).

“but you must master it”

“If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.” (Genesis 4:7)

At the beginning of the New Year, the whole family gathered at my brother's house to worship God first. Three generations of family members, my fathers' generations, my generations and my children's generation, gathered together to sing praises to God in Korean and English, and then my cousin pastor first spoke the Word of God from the Old Testament Joshua 1:9 and then my father pastor proclaimed the Word of God from the New Testament 2 Corinthians 5:14-17. As I meditate on these two sermons again, I think that there is a common message that God speaks to our whole family on January 1, 2020. Although two pastors proclaimed the Word of God from two different texts, I believe that in God's sovereignty God used both of them and their two different sermons to give God's message to our whole family. I personally summarized that God's message as follow: 'As we are new creations in Christ, we must not commit sin against God by living according to the flesh. In order to do that, we must fight sin. We are to be strong, courageous, and not be terrified and discouraged as God commands. The reason is because the Lord our God has promised to be with us wherever we go.'

In today's passage Genesis 4:7, the Bible says: “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.” Cain, son of Adam and his wife Eve (v. 1), was very angry (v. 5). The reason is because God did not regard for Cain and his offering (v. 5). More precisely, Cain was very angry because the Lord had regard for his younger brother Abel and for his Abel's offering but not for him and for his offering (vv. 4-5). At that time, God said to Cain, “What are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?” (v. 6) As I meditated on this, I remembered what God said to Prophet Jonah, “Do you have good reason to be angry?” (Jon. 4:4), “Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?” (v. 9) Why was Jonah angry twice? The first reason is because God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon the people of Nineveh (3:10). Why then did God relent? It was because God saw the

deeds of the people of Nineveh that they turned from their wicked way (v. 10). That was why God relented concerning the calamity but His servant Jonah didn't turn his will toward the people of Nineveh. That was why Jonah was angry. Here, I thought about why we are angry with God. I think it is because we refuse to humbly accept the sovereign will of God in faith and try to accomplish our will ("my will") to God. For example, I think we can get angry with God when God does not deliver us in our adversity and suffering even though we earnestly pray to Heavenly Father and expect Him to do so. But God asks us, "Do you have good reason to be angry?" (Jon. 4:4) At this God's question we may say, 'Yes. I have a good reason to be angry, even to death' (v. 9). In other words, we think there is a good reason for us to be angry with God. But in God's eyes, there is no reason for us to be angry with Him. In God's eyes, Prophet Jonah had no reason to be angry with God. Although God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon the people of Nineveh because they repented, God's servant Prophet Jonah refused to turn his own will and wanted God to bring the calamity upon the people of Nineveh. That was why Jonah went out from the city, made a shelter from himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the Nineveh city (4:5). How could Jonah, the instrument of God, refuse to turn his will when God turned his will? This reminds me Romans 9:20: "But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" Who are we to dare not to humbly accept God's sovereign will in faith and to carry our will to God? "Does not the potter have the right to make out the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?" (v. 21) I think a reason is because we didn't learn the Jesus' prayer on Gethsemane: "... My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Mt. 26:39). In other words, we have not learned the prayer of Jesus, "Yet not as I will, but as you will" (v. 39). That's why we want to accomplish our own will even to God. In the meantime, I think we are busy offering our prayers to God like this, "may this cup be taken from me" (v. 39). That is why we resent God and even get angry at Him when God does not answer our earnest prayers. Like Jonah who was extremely happy because God provided a plant, made it grow up over him to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort (Jon. 4:6) but was angry enough to die (v. 9) because God provided a worm to chew the plant so that it withered (v. 7), I think we are extremely happy when God answers our earnestly prayers and ease our discomfort but we get very angry when we suffer again.

After God said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?" (Gen. 4:6), this is what He said to Cain: "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it" (v. 7). As I meditate on this verse, I came to think of three things:

First, Cain did not do right in God's eyes.

Look at Genesis 4:7a – “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? ...” Cain did not do what was right in God's eyes, and God did not accept his offering. If we apply this to us, I think that God does not accept worship that is given to God without doing what is right in God's eyes. In other words, the worship that God receives must have a life of worship that is doing what is right in God's eyes. And in that life of worship, there must be doing good and doing right in God's eyes. I think of Ephesians 2:10: “For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” The purpose why the Creator God created us new in Christ Jesus is for us to do good works. That is, we are new creations in Christ for good works (2 Cor. 5:17). Therefore, we must worship God as we do good works as new creations in Christ. And in doing that good work we must offer our lives. I also learned this lesson from the movie “A Hidden Life” I saw with my wife this Tuesday. An Austrian soldier Franz Jägerstätter, who confronted Nazi Germany for his convictions during World War II, met his wife before he was executed by the German Nazis, who told him: 'Do the right thing.' For Franz Jägerstätter, what was right was that even though a Catholic bishop quoted Romans 13:1, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established ...”, he did not (can't) obey his wicked leader, Hitler. As a result, he was executed. After watching this movie, I came home with my wife and we talked about two things. The first one was my father-in-law. I told my wife that my father-in-law, her father, was like the main character Franz Jägerstätter in the movie, died for doing the Lord's work silently in the midst of adversity and suffering for his conviction. The second One is Jesus. I told my wife that after watching the movie, I was reminded of the death of Jesus on the cross as I watched the hero eventually die. I was instructed that we Christians, the disciples of Jesus Christ, are not to spare even our lives for doing good and doing the right thing. That was what Apostle Paul did. Look at Acts 20:24 – “However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.” Like Apostle Paul, we should consider our lives worth nothing to us in fulfilling our mission that the Lord gave to us.

Second, sin was crouching at the door of Cain's heart.

Look at Genesis 4:7ab – “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door” When I think of the word “crouching”, it reminds me the Chinese movie called “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon.” The word "crouching" reminds me an image in which a tiger or a lion is quietly crouching down in order to catch and kill a prey. Likewise, if we do

not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door of our hearts. As long as we do not live in Christ Jesus, doing good works and the right thing for the Lord as His new creation, sin is crouching at the door of our hearts and will swallow us to sin against God. And now, not only Jesus is knocking at the door of our hearts (Rev. 3:20), but Satan also at the door of our hearts like a tiger or a lion crouching at the door of our hearts to provoke our old nature and commit sins against God. A good example of this is in Genesis 3. The serpent, who was more crafty than any of the wild animals (v. 1) asked the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” (v. 1) “The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die’” (vv. 2-3). As I meditated on these verses, I compared it with what God said to Adam in Genesis 2:16-17: “And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.’” God clearly commanded this to only “the man,” Adam. But when we look at Genesis 3:2-3, Adam’s wife Eve knew the command of God as well. Adam must have taught Eve God’s commands. But what is interesting is that even though God told Adam, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (2:16-17), Eve told the serpent “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die’” (3:2-3). What are the differences? First, even though God commanded Adam, “but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (2:17) Eve told the serpent “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it” (3:3). In other words, God commanded Adam to “you must not eat,” but Eve told the serpent not only “You must not eat” but also “you must not touch it”. Second, God told Adam “you will ‘surely’ die” (2:17), but Eve said to the serpent, “you will die” (3:3). But the serpent told Eve that “You will not surely die” (3:4). This shows that the serpent knew more about the God’s command to Adam (2:17) than Eve. This cunning Satan knows God’s Word better than we do. And Satan is deceiving us and make us to sin by either adding to (Rev. 22:18) or subtracting from (Deut. 4:2) the Word of God that he knows better. So sin desires to have us (Gen. 4:7). Sin wants to rule over us. The big problem, though, is that we have lost the ability to rule over sin. In other words, our big problem is that we are not overcoming sin (v. 7). So Cain killed his younger brother Abel even after he heard the Word of God (vv. 6-8).

Why are we not overcoming sin? Why do we not rule over sin but allow sin to rule over us? In particular, why do we let sins invade our homes so that we sin against each other and sin against God? How can we fight sin and win? I would like to think about three things based on my father pastor’s

sermon and my cousin pastor's sermon that I heard yesterday and want to try to apply to myself and our families.

First, we must keep in mind that we are new creations in Christ.

Look at 2 Corinthians 5:17 – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” Our old man died on the cross with Jesus. The “one (Jesus) died for all and therefore all died” (v. 14). “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24). Therefore, we should clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and should not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature (Rom. 13:14). We must put to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature: “sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5). We should not recognize anyone according to the flesh (2 Cor. 5:16). The reason is because the Holy Spirit dwells in us and we are no longer under the control of the sinful nature, but under the control of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9). Therefore, we should no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who died and rose again on our behalf (2 Cor. 5:15).

Second, we must believe that our God is with us wherever we go.

Look at Joshua 1:9 – “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” We believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for us and rose again. We believe that Jesus already triumphed over Satan and death on the cross. Therefore, we are fighting with ourselves, the world, sin, Satan, and death with assurance of victory. We fight with Immanuel faith. In other words, we are fighting spiritual warfare by believing that God is with us. Clearly God said, “for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Jos. 1:9). Therefore, we are strong, courageous, fearless, and not discouraged as God's commands us (v. 9). And we have always dedicated ourselves to reading the Word of God, the Bible, and meditating on it day and night, and keeping all that is written in it (v. 8). Although we may not live up to our devotion many times, we should be strong and bold in keeping with all of God's commandments, not turn from it to the right or to the left, believing that God is with us (v. 7).

Third, we must master sin by doing what is right.

Look at Genesis 4:7 – “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.” If we do not

do what is right, sin will crouch at our door like a crouched lion. The reason is because sin wants to rule over us. But as new creation in Jesus Christ, we are those who are not ruled by sin but by the Lord. And when we are ruled by the Lord, we hear the voice of the Lord knocking at the door. We open the door for Him so that He can come in and eat with us, and we eat with the Lord (Rev. 3:20). And we only hear the voice of the Shepherd and follow Him (Jn. 10:3-5). Therefore, we do not listen to the cunning of Satan (Gen. 3:1-5). We do not fall for Satan's deception (v. 13). We resist Satan's temptations and deceptions with the Word of God and obey His truth. We enjoy freedom of heart because our conscience is healthy every day by obeying the truth and doing what is right in the midst of adversity, suffering, and persecution.

The New Year 2020 is here. During the New Year's Day whole family worship, I received the word of God centered on Joshua 1:9 and 2 Corinthians 5: 14-17 through two pastors whom God loved. Although two pastors preached two sermons from two different Bible texts, I think there is a common message from God to all of us. I think the message is this: 'As we are new creations in Christ, we must not live like the old man, following the flesh and our sinful nature, and commit sins against God. In order to do that, we must fight sin. We are to be strong, courageous, fearless, and not discourage as God commands. This is because our God has promised to be with us wherever we go. Since Christ's love compels us (2 Cor. 5:14), we should not be strong, courageous, fearless, and not discouraged as God commands. And wherever you go, we believe that God is with us, and we pray that we all be victorious over our sins by faith.

When the sword of the Spirit is dull

“The price was two thirds of a shekel for sharpening plowshares and mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening forks and axes and for repointing goads.” (1 Samuel 13:21)

For me, a smart phone is beneficial. One of the reasons is because I can open the Internet and upload the contents of the texts or words that I read and meditate on the websites I manage [Naver blog, Facebook(several groups), KakaoTalk, KakaoTalk Story, Church website, e-mail]. Among the writing I am posting, there are some challenging Christian books that I am reading at the time. I cite them and post them all over the websites I manage, and share them with other people. Also, when I read the Bible at night before going to sleep, if I have any enlightenment, I write down my enlightenment and post it on the websites I manage. Sometimes, reading the Bible at night gives me multiple enlightenments. Even then, I post all those enlightenments here and there on my personal websites. This habit is beneficial to my spiritual life. What makes my life of faith beneficial, along with the habit of reading and meditating the word of God at night and writing down my enlightenments, is that after the Morning Prayer meeting, I enter the pastoral room and sit in front of the computer and meditate on the word of grace again like this as I write down my meditation. Although this is the word I meditated on last night, and it was preached at the early Morning Prayer meeting, there is a new enlightenment that comes from preaching, which is the grace given to me at many times. That is why after the Morning Prayer meeting, I have time to meditate on His word again while sitting alone in a chair in the pastoral room in the quiet morning hours.

The verse I want to meditate on this morning is 1 Samuel 13:21. I was reading the Bible last night, and I became interested in the word “to sharpen” (‘when they were dull’ in Korean Bible). As I meditated on that, I came to think that when the sword of the Spirit, the word of God (Eph. 6:17) is dull (not sharpen (1 Sam. 13:21), then I have no choice but to be defeated by Satan’s attacks in the spiritual warfare. And actually, looking back on my own life yesterday, from morning to afternoon, when the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, was dull, I was defeated by Satan's attack in the spiritual warfare and sinned against God. I woke up on Monday morning and didn't read the Bible or pray. I did this on

the excuse that my body was tired. I just wanted to rest. So I stopped reading and meditating the word of God and praying to God. Therefore, since I was so easily exposed to Satan's temptations, I did not win the spiritual battle but lost it. Then last night, while reading the Bible, I came to enlightenment from 1 Samuel 12:21, 25. So I wrote these words all over the websites that I manage with my smartphone like this: 'Why can't I turn around, knowing that it's vain, of no benefit to me? If I still do evil, I will perish ...' (2016. 3. 28.). Then, on my personal Naver blog, a certain person wrote this comment: 'Yeah .. It's not easy.. I can't let it go ... I'm just sorry to the Lord.' When the sword of the Spirit is dull, I see that my spiritual discernment and judgment are also clouded. And when my spiritual discernment and judgment are clouded, I see myself floundering in confusion and not knowing what to do. Furthermore, when the sword of the Spirit is dull, I see myself being more sensitive to the environment around me than to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In such a spiritual state, when Satan attacks with one or more temptations, before I commit a sin in my words and deeds, I first see myself in the realm of my thoughts, losing the ability to fight and overcome those temptations with the word of God. I remembered last night that it was a bigger problem than the sinning itself.

Today's text in 1 Samuel 13:21, the word "to sharpen the goads," means that since there were no blacksmith in the whole land of Israel (v. 19), all Israel went down to the Philistines to have their plowshares, mattocks, axes and sickles sharpened (v. 20) when they were dull (v. 21). The reason why there were no blacksmiths in all the land of Israel was because the Philistines had said, "Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears!" (v. 19) So, before the Israelites went to war with the Philistines at that time, only Saul and his son Jonathan had swords or spears (v. 22). And the rest of the Israelites went to war with plowshares, shovels, axes, hoes, pitchforks, and whips. However, it seems that all of them were not sharp and went to war in a dull state. So how could they fight and win the war? But it wasn't just their dull weapons that forced the Israelites to lose the war against the Philistines. Another cause was that from 3,000 men [Saul had 2,000, Jonathan had 1,000] (v. 2), Saul had only about 600 left (v. 15). The reason the soldiers were so few was that they were scattered from Saul (v. 8). And the reason the men were scattered from Saul (v. 8) was that all the people who followed Saul were afraid and trembled (v. 7). Why did they tremble in fear? The reason was because there were only 3,000 of the Israelites, and the enemy Philistines who came to fight them were thirty thousand chariots and 6,000 horsemen, and the people were as many as the sand on the seashore (v. 5). So how could the people of Israel not tremble with fear (v. 7). So, "When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were hard-pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in cellars, and in pits" (v. 6). And those who were staying at Gilgal with Saul were trembling with fear at the thought of the danger that was to come (v. 7). There, King Saul waited for 7 days according to the deadline set by Samuel. But Samuel

did not come to Gilgal until then and the remaining ones began to scatter (v. 8). When Saul saw that the Philistines were assembling at Michmash (v. 11), he forced himself and offered the burnt offering after he said “I have not asked the favor of the Lord” (v. 12). But this was what King Saul did foolishly (v. 13). In other words, King Saul did not keep the commandment that God gave him (v. 13). In the end, King Saul sinned against God because he did not keep what God had commanded (vv. 13, 14).

When we think of the time when we sinned against God, we were not standing firm in the word of God at that time. At that time, we were in a spiritual state in which we could not but be defeated by Satan's attacks and temptations because we were either not properly equipped with the word of God, our weapon in the spiritual warfare. The reason we have no choice but to lose in the spiritual war is because we are not led by the word of God. We are led by our difficult situation rather than being led by His word. When we are led by that situation, we react sensitively to the difficult situation rather than being sensitive to the word of God, and thus we are afraid and trembling. In the end, we fail to trust God and rely on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5). And we are busy running away from that difficult reality in fear. This phobia and escapism are a natural reaction of the fear within us. Even though God's work of salvation does not depend on many or few people (1 Sam. 14:6), when we are in fear, we are biased toward the number and small number of people, going back and forth and even scattered. We no longer look to the God of salvation by faith, but look at the fearful situation and commit the sin of breaking God's command. What should we do? We must stand firm in the word of God. We must sharpen the sword of the Spirit. We must be filled with the word of God and live according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit with spiritual discernment, judgment, and spiritual sensitivity. Then, in fear and trembling, we can no longer be defeated and overcome by Satan's attacks and temptations and live according to the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16, 17). “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like ...” (vv. 19-21). We must be vigilant against these things by being filled with the word of God, the sword of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, we must sharpen the sword of the Spirit to combat these acts of sinful nature. We must diligently sharpen our minds with the word of God to win the battle against ourselves, sin, the world, Satan, and death. I hope and pray that we will win the spiritual battle with the power of God's word.

God's work in Satan's work

“But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites ... And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.” (Exodus 1:12, 21)

Satan's work is to persecute the church, God's people. Satan's work is to afflict them with hard labor (Exod. 1:11). In other words, Satan's work is to oppress the God's children.

If we look at the background of today's text Exodus 1:12, 21, it is the story of Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died (v. 6), and “a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph (v. 8). At that time the Israelites were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied from seventy, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them (vv. 5, 7). So he told his people, “Come, let us deal wisely with them” (v. 10). So he appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor (v. 11), because when war broke out, the Israelites would fight with their enemies and flee from the land of Egypt (v. 10). Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had the people of Israel build for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses (v. 11). But what is surprising is that the more the Israelites were oppressed, the more they multiplied and more they spread out (v. 12). As a result, the Egyptians were dread of the sons of Israel (v. 12). Therefore, the Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously (v. 13), making their lives bitter with hard labor (v. 14). Furthermore, King Pharaoh commanded the Hebrew midwives, Shiprah and Puah (v. 15), to watch over the Hebrew women when giving birth, and to kill the male and leave the female alive (v. 16). But these midwives, who feared God, disobeyed the king's command and saved Israeli male children (v. 17). Therefore, God was good to the midwives who feared Him (v. 20) and established households for them (v. 21). “Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, “Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive” (v. 22).

As I meditated on these words, I thought about the work of Satan who persecuted the church. Satan, like Pharaoh, king of Egypt, afflicts us with his foolish wisdom by burdening us, the people of God, who prosper and are mighty. Satan oppresses us. He compels us to labor rigorously and makes our lives

miserable with toil. Furthermore, he is trying to get us to death by any means. However, the surprising thing is that we see God's work in the midst of this Satanic work. The work of God is found in the context of today's text Exodus 1:12, 21 in two ways.

First, although Satan oppresses us, the more we are oppressed, the more God multiplies and strengthens us.

God is strengthening us, growing and revitalizing us, the more we suffer tribulation and persecution. I am reminded of the words of a preacher. That we cannot grow in a greenhouse. For some reason, I think that we are trained while learning the word of God through the furnace of suffering. Although Satan puts a heavy burden on us, so we live in hardship, but in the midst of Satan's work, God works all things together for good so that we can become more and more refined and powerful workers of God, and grow and revive.

Second, although Satan deceives us into committing the sin of (murder), God does not let us committing the sin of (murder) by making us to fear God rather than man, but rather giving grace to us, who obey and participate in God's work of salvation (delivery) and making our house prosperous.

Although Satan is working to tempting us commit murder by making us to hate our brothers in Christ, God gives us abundant grace to resist the Satan's temptation in fearing God and instead obey the Lord's command to love our neighbor. He gives grace abundantly not only to us but also to our household.

Victory depends on God.

“After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the LORD, ‘Who will be the first to go up and fight for us against the Canaanites?’ The LORD answered, ‘Judah is to go; I have given the land into their hands.’ ... The Israelites went up to Bethel and inquired of God. They said, ‘Who of us shall go first to fight against the Benjamites?’ The LORD replied, "Judah shall go first.”
(Judges 1:1-2; 20:18)

The name of the church I am currently serving is “Victory Presbyterian Church”. Victory Presbyterian Church was established on the first Sunday of July 1980 by the Lord who used my father, the retired pastor of our church, as a tool. At that time, we had a church planting worship to God. Although I don’t remember very well, I once wondered why my father planted the church and named the church “Victory Presbyterian Church” out of the many church names. In my memory, while pastoring Victory Presbyterian Church, my father exhorted the church members to become ‘a church that triumphs over myself, the world, sin, and Satan’ many times. I didn't know the meaning of it. But as I wandered as a teenager, I enjoyed the things of the world according to my own sinful instinct, sinned against God and saw myself defeated by Satan countless times. In doing so, I began to learn, feeling the importance and desperate need of its meaning, as I struggled in the depths of despair because of myself. Then, when I was in my freshman year of college, I attended the college retreat of the church and was transformed and devoted myself to become a pastor like my father. Then I went to a seminary and listened to a lecture on ‘the doctrine of the church’ by a professor, and was taught that the church is ‘a militant church vs. a triumphant church’. In other words, the church is in a state of tension between the militant church and the triumphant church. The reason I still remember this teaching is probably not only because I have been attending the Victory Presbyterian Church since I was 12 years old but also because I couldn't win in the fight against myself, the world, sin, and Satan according to my own father's teachings, and I was always living in a sense of defeat. Then, about 24 years after planting the church, my father retired and started the mission himself, and I became the senior pastor of Victory Presbyterian Church. From that time until

now, I have been pastoring Victory Presbyterian Church, leading the funeral services of several older members in the church. I visited not only when they were in nursing homes, but also when they were in the intensive care unit and even in the hospice, giving praise and prayers to God and preaching His word to them. At the same time, my heart felt that I had to not only fight against myself, the world, sin, and Satan and be victorious but also fight against death and be victorious. So, from that time on, I began to pray and exhort the members of our church to become a church that triumphs over myself, the world, sin, Satan, and death. Of course, I believe that this spiritual battle must be continued starting with me as the senior pastor, and that this spiritual battle must be fought to the end not only as individuals but also as a community as a church.

I am still in a spiritual battle. I am now fighting against myself, sin, the world, Satan, and death. But too often I don't know what to do in my spiritual battle with myself. I seem to know that I have to repent in my head, but I do not repent in my heart. I have no heart to mourn and repent. I really don't know what to do when I see myself unable to repent even if I want to. In the meantime, I came across the Bible 2 Chronicles 20:15 – "... For the battle is not yours, but God's." As I read this word, at least in my head, I knew a little that the spiritual battle against myself, the world, sin, Satan and death is not belong to myself, but to God. But the serious problem is that I did not believe in this word of God with my heart. So I continued to engage in my own spiritual battle on my own. Because of that, I have been defeated in countless spiritual wars. So I was filled with sense of defeat. And I used to struggle with feelings of guilt and self-doubt over and over again, feeling discouraged because of myself. That was my daily life. I think I've lived like that for 50 years. In the midst of such circumstance, God's great grace is that God has made me not to lose sight of God's word and the bond of prayer. If God made me continue to meditate on the word of the Lord, who is the bread of life, and made me, who hated the morning prayer, to realize the necessity of the morning prayer, and let me taste the joy of meditating on His word and praying little by little. Then, while reading Judges Chapter 20 today, I became interested in verse 18 and meditated on it.

Look at Judges 20:18 – "The Israelites went up to Bethel and inquired of God. They said, 'Who of us shall go first to fight against the Benjamites?' The LORD replied, 'Judah shall go first.'" I read this verse again and again, and remembered that I read something similar to this in Judges Chapter 1. So I opened Judges Chapter 1, and saw this similar word in verses 1 and 2: "After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the LORD, 'Who will be the first to go up and fight for us against the Canaanites?' The LORD answered, 'Judah is to go; I have given the land into their hands.'" First, I compared these two verses and thought of similarities. The similarity between these two Bible verses is that in both cases the Israelites inquired of God before going to war (1:1, 20:18). And God's answer to them is similar: "Judah

is to go” (1:2), “Judah shall go first” (20:18). However, the difference is that the target of the battle the Israelites wanted to fight was different. In Judges 1, the battle that the Israelites wanted to fight was “the Canaanites,” whereas in Judges 20, the battle they were fighting against was the Benjamites. Another difference is that in Judges 1 the Israelites fought against the Canaanites and won the battle, whereas in Judges 20, the Israelites fought against the Benjamites and lost the battle twice (20:18-25). Why were the Israelites defeated twice by the Benjamites? Clearly, the Bible says that the Israelites were 400,000 soldiers armed with swords (v. 2, cf. v. 17), “the Benjamites mobilized twenty-six thousand swordsmen from their towns, in addition to seven hundred chosen men from those living in Gibeah” (v. 15). How did the 400,000 Israelites lose twice in the battle against the 26,700 Benjamites? According to human calculations, shouldn't the Israelites, who had many soldiers, have won the battle against the Benjamites, who had very few soldiers? However, the result of the battle was that the Israelites were defeated by the Benjamites twice. What could be the cause? Why did the Israelites lose twice in the battle against the Benjamites? Obviously, both times God told the Israelites, “Judah shall go first” (v. 18) and “go up against them” (v. 23). Why did the Israelites, who obeyed these words of God and went up against the Benjamites, lost the battle twice?

One interesting thing to point out is that the number of the Israelites killed in the first battle was 22,000 (v. 21) and 18,000 in the second battle (v. 25) when they lost these battles. If we add these two numbers together, we get that the number of the Israel soldiers killed in two battles against the Benjamites was 40,000. If it was 40,000, then one-tenth (1/10) of the 400,000 men (vv. 2, 17), the total number of soldiers of the Israelites, were killed. I found this a bit interesting. This is because I thought it was no coincidence that 10% of the total number of soldiers of the Israelites was killed. It must have happened under the sovereignty of God. But I wonder why it was 10%. For when the Israelites fought two battles with 400,000 soldiers and 40,000 died, all the Israelites went up to Bethel and sat before God and fasted until the end of that day and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord (v. 26). After losing the first two battles, they didn't do that. Rather, after losing the first battle, the men of Israel encouraged one another and again took up their positions where they had stationed themselves the first day (v. 22). It's like watching a Korean historical drama, a scene reminiscent of a barbarian enemy army attacking the fortress to kill the Joseon people in the town, but being defeated, they came back to their camp, set up a battle line, and attacked again the next day. But seeing that the Israelites encouraged themselves (v. 22) after losing the first war and re-established their remnants where they had formed on the first day, perhaps they thought that their remaining 378,000 men ($400,000 - 22,000 = 378,000$) were sufficient to win the battle against the 26,700 sons of Benjamin (without relying entirely on God). But the result was that another 18,000 children of Israel were killed (v. 25). So when all the Israelites went up

to Bethel and sat down before God weeping, they fasted until evening and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God (v. 26). At that time, unlike the first two battles, the ark of the covenant of God symbolizing God's presence was also there, and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, Aaron's grandson was also serving as a priest (v. 27). Then the Israelites again inquired of God: "Shall we go up again to battle with Benjamin our brother, or not?" (v. 28) Then God said to them, "Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands" (v. 28).

That's it. This is another difference between Judges 1:1-2 and Judges 20:18. The difference is that in Judges 1:1-2, God said to the Israelites, "I have given the land into their hands" (v. 2), whereas there is no word of God's promise in Judges 20:18. God simply said to the Israelites, "Judah shall go first" (v. 18). So the Israelites lined up to fight Benjamin and fought with them at Gibeah. On that day, 22,000 Israelites were killed and the battle was lost. Clearly, the Israelites were defeated in the first battle despite God's saying, "Judah shall go first." Although God had clearly told the Israelites to "Go up against them" (v. 23) even in the second battle, the Israelites were defeated in the battle (v. 25). Why did the Israelites here lose the battle twice? Obviously, God had spoken twice, and the Israelites went up and fought against the Benjamites as He had said, why did they lose the battle twice? I thought of that answer by comparing it with the words of Judges 1:1-2. At that time, I think that the reason the Israelites lost two battles with the Benjamites was because God did not hand them over to the Israelites (v. 2). Before the Israelites went to battle against the Benjamites, God did not tell the Israelites that He hand the Benjamites into their hands (Cf. 1:2; 20:18, 23). Why didn't God say that to the Israelites? Could it be that the all-knowing God knew that the Israelites would grieve for their brothers, the Benjamites, after winning the battle against them (21:6)? Could it be that God caused the Israelites to lose the battle twice, lest they grieved for the Benjamites by saying, "Today one tribe is cut off from Israel" (v. 6) after the Israelites won the battle against the Benjamites? In fact, the Israelites won the third battle against the Benjamites (20:26-48). However, after winning the third battle, the Israelites repented for the Benjamites because God had made a gap in the tribes of Israel (21:15). Perhaps the reason that God caused the Israelites to lose the two battles against the Benjamites was that He did not want one tribe to be lost in the battle between their own people, and that if one tribe of Benjamin was lost, the other eleven tribes would grieve for their brothers (21:6, 15). Perhaps the reason God caused the Israelites to lose twice in the battle against the Benjamites was because He did not want a battle between their own people, and perhaps because He knew the cause of the battle. Indeed, this kind of warfare was fought because "Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt" (19:30). And the thing was that a Levite's concubine, who was unfaithful to the Levite, left him and went back to her father's house and had been there four months (19:1-2). The Levite went to her and persuaded her to

return (v. 3). When the Levite went into Gibeah with his concubine and lodged in the house of an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, the wicked men of the city raped her, abused her throughout the night, and killed his concubine (vv. 10-28). So the Levite put her on his donkey and sent out for home (v. 28). When he arrived at his house, he took a knife and cut up his concubine's body into twelve pieces and sent one piece to each of the twelve tribes of Israel (v. 29). In the end, all the Israelites from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead assembled before the Lord in Mizpah (20:1) and went to battle against the Benjamites (Ch. 20). Looking at the cause of the battle between these people, it is thought that a Levite had a concubine was a violation of the law, it was wrong bring his concubine who had committed adultery back. And the Levite's motive doesn't seem good that he wanted to take revenge by cutting her body and sending each pieces to each tribe of Israel so that eventually each tribe participated in the battle (Tae-seok Jang). Perhaps that is why God caused the Israelites to lose two battles against the Benjamites.

With this in mind, I looked for the reason why God did not allow the Israelites to win two battles against the Benjamites in the words of God to the Israelites before their third battle. Before the third battle, the Israelites differed from what they had done before the two previous battles. The difference is that the Israelites fasted before the third battle and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God (v. 26). As I thought about this, I was reminded of Judges 7:15, which I meditated on at the Morning Prayer meeting last week: "When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, 'Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands.'" God made Gideon, who could be afraid when he saw the Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts and their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore (7:12), to hear the conversation between two men from the enemy camp (the story of the dream and the interpretation of the dream) (v. 15). After hearing the dream and interpretation, Gideon first "worshiped" God (v. 15). And Gideon was no longer afraid, but with the assurance of victory and salvation (v. 15), he fought against the enemy and experienced God's victory and salvation (16-8:22). The important thing here is that God made Gideon worship him. It reminds me of the truth that the Father God seeks the true worshipers who worship the Father in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:23). Eventually, the worshiping Gideon was found by God, and God delivered Midian into his hand as promised to Gideon, and delivered Israel from their hand (Judg. 6:14, 16, 36; 7:7, 14). I think the reason God gave the Israelites victory in the third battle against the Benjamites was because they sat before God and fasted until the end of that day and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God (20:26)[At that time, the ark of God, symbolizing the presence of God, was there (Bethel), and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was serving as a priest (v. 27)]. Eventually, when the Israelites asked God, "Shall we go up again to battle with Benjamin our brother, or not?"(v. 28)[Comparison: The first question

was “Who of us shall go first to fight against the Benjamites?” (v. 18) and the second question was “Shall we go up again to battle against the Benjamites, our brothers?” (v. 23)], God said to them, “Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands” (v. 28) [Comparison: The first God's answer was, “Judah shall go first” (v. 18), and the second God's answer was “Go up against them” (v. 23)]. So the Israelites set an ambush around Gibeah, and went up against the Benjamites on the third day and took up positions against Gibeah as they had done before (vv. 29-30). “The Benjamites came out to meet them and were drawn away from the city” (v. 31). As before, they followed the road going up to Bethel and the field of Gibeah, and started striking the Israeli army, killing about 30 men, and thinking that the Israeli army was defeated before them and fled as before. But the Israelites said, “Let's retreat and draw them away from the city to the roads” (vv. 31-32). “All the men of Israel moved from their places and took up positions at Baal Tamar, and the Israelite ambush charged out of its place on the west of Gibeah” (v. 33). Then ten thousand of Israel's finest men made a frontal attack on Gibeah. The fighting was so heavy that the Benjamites did not realize how near disaster was (v. 34). “The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel, and on that day the Israelites struck down 25,100 Benjamites, all armed with swords” (v. 35). The result of the third battle between the Israelites and the Benjamites was that the Israelites were victorious (verses 36-48).

As I meditate on the Israelites who received the promise of God, “Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands” (v. 28) and went up and were victorious in the third battle against Benjamin, I remembered the battle between the Israelites and the people of Ai in Joshua chapter 8. The reason is because the methods of winning both battles are similar. For example, the Israelites ambush in both battles. Joshua had taken about 5,000 men and set them in ambush in the battle with the people of Ai (Josh. 8:12) and the Israel set the ambush around Gibeah (Judg. 20:29). And both wars carried out 'decoy operations'. Perhaps the reason is because in both battles, the Israelites lost the battles first. In the days of Joshua, the Lord's anger burned against Israel because of the sin of one man, Achan (Josh. 7:1). As a result, about 36 Israeli soldiers were killed in the first battle with the people of Ai (v. 5). During the time of the Judges, the Israelites lost two battles against the Benjamites, and 40,000 were killed (Judg. 20:21, 25). And in both battles, the enemy forces fell into the Israeli decoy operations. In the days of Joshua, the Israel's enemy, King Ai, got up early in the morning and ran to the Jordan Valley to fight the Israeli army, unaware of the Israeli ambush. All the Ai forces inside were involved in the Israeli army's decoy operation and left the city of Ai to pursue the Israeli army (Josh. 7:14-16). Apparently, from the point of view of King Ai, he fell into the Israelites' decoy operation because he won the first battle against the Israeli army [despite God's wrath and defeat due to Achan's crime, King Ai probably thought that he defeated the Israeli army with his own strength and killed about 36 Israeli soldiers (v. 5)]. During the

time of the Judges, the Benjamites also fell into the Israelites' decoy operation. When the Benjamites came out of the city and fought against the Israelite army, they fell into the Israelites' decoy operation and moved further and further from the city (Judg. 20:31). "They began to inflict casualties on the Israelites as before, so that about thirty men fell in the open field and on the roads--the one leading to Bethel and the other to Gibeah" (v. 3). But the Israelites said, "Let's retreat and draw them away from the city to the roads" (v. 32). Eventually, the Benjamites fell into the Israelites' decoy operation and realized that they had been defeated (v. 36). Ultimately, God gave the Israelites victory.

The Bible says, "The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD" (Prov. 21:31). Victory depends on God. The victorious God made the Israelites victorious in the battle against the Canaanites during the period of the Judges (Judg. 1:1-8). Also, the God of victory made the Israelites victorious in the battle against the Benjamites (20:26-48). The secret of victory is the word of God's promise. God said to the Israelites who were going to fight the Canaanites, "I have given the land into their hands" (1:2), and God gave the men of Judah the victory according to His promise (v. 8). Also, God said to the Israelites, who were defeated after fighting the Benjamites twice, "Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands" (20:28), and God gave the Israelites the victory according to His promise (vv. 29-48). As God went with the Israel in this way, He gave them victory (Exod. 33:14). God has already given us victory. God not only gave us the victory over our sins, but He also gave us the victory over our death by crucifying and resurrecting His only begotten Son, Jesus (1 Cor. 15:55). God saved us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and gave us eternal life. Jesus overcame Satan by dying on the cross and resurrecting. Therefore, we should give thanks to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 57).

God's will for us

“pray continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

The phrase “pray continually” here does not mean to pray over and over again, nor does it mean to pray continuously without breaks, but to pray persistently and regularly (MacArthur). When we go to God with prayer topics and pray, we must not give up but pray persistently. However, Satan continues to come to us and deceive us, especially when we think that the difficult situation we are facing continues and the answers to our prayers are slow, Satan continues to deceive us. Satan comes up to us from time to time and offers us shortcuts and continually deceives us. The reason why Paul exhorted them to “pray continually” was that they, who had already been taught by God and loved each other, loved them and prayed, always giving thanks to God, I think Paul wanted the Thessalonian church members to always thank God and pray for each other. The lesson this teaches us is that we should always thank and pray to God for our brothers and sisters in Christ who love one another in the Lord. The reason why we should always give thanks to God and pray is because we do not cease to always remember before our God and Father the work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in each other. Paul prayed most earnestly that he might see the Thessalonian church members again and supply what was lacking in their faith (3:10). The reason was so that they would not be unsettled by the many trials (v. 3). We must constantly pray to God for each other's faith. In particular, we should be alert, sober and pray to God (5:6). We should not sleep spiritually, but be awake and pray to God (Park, 1 Pet. 4:7).

The slower your prayers are answered

The slower our prayers are answered, the more often Satan comes to us, offering deceptive shortcuts that continue to deceive us. Then we have to choose between the two:

1. We continue to pray, expect and wait for God in faith with a heart of trust in God, so that prayers will be answered in God's time, or
2. We choose to take the shortcut Satan shows us to quickly get what we want rather than praying and waiting for what we so desperately want (however, the consequence of this choice could be unimaginably painful not only for us but for our descendants as well).

The slower our prayers are answered, the more God will build our faith. And when we receive our prayers answered in God's time, we will see God's hand (presence) more surely and clearly.

(As I was reading Iain M. Duguid's "LIVING IN THE GRIP OF RELENTLESS GRACE")

“Cast your burden upon the Lord”

[Psalms 55]

The world makes us to carry heavy burdens on our minds gradually. This world can only give us anxiety, worry, sadness, and pain. But we Christians are laying down heavy burdens before the Lord continually and enjoying the peace that the Lord gives us. But somehow it seems that we are not good at laying down our heavy burdens. What do you think is the cause? I looked up the answer in Pastor Lee's book, 'Putting it down': 'Satan, who is the master of the world, tempts us to keep having it and to keep holding it.' I agree with this statement. Satan's work is constantly tempting us to 'hold on.' And among the things that Satan tempts us to hold on are 'past baggage', and hurt, pain, bitterness, anxiety, and worry that are heavy burdens on our mind.

But the Bible 1 Peter 5:7 says: “casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.” Our God is the God who cares for us. According to Psalms 139:17-18, God loves us so much that His precious thoughts toward us are more than sand. Therefore, we must lay down all our concerns to God who loves us and cares for us. And we shouldn't worry about tomorrow. The reason is that tomorrow will care for itself and each day has enough trouble of its own (Mt. 6:34).

According to Psalms 55:22, the psalmist David says: “Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.” I want to mediate on Psalms 55 under the title “Cast your burden upon the Lord” and receive God's grace.

First, what was the burden of David?

There are two things we can think of:

(1) David's burden was "restless."

Look at Psalm 55:2 – “... I am restless in my complaint and am surely distracted.” The Hebrew word for “restless” here means "bush" (Park Yun-sun). Dr. Park Yun-sun said that the word “restless” is used here because it is caused by a complicated and confusing mind like a forest and thorny bush" (Park Yun-sun). What was the reason David was restless? Look at verse 3: “Because of the voice of the enemy, Because of the pressure of the wicked; For they bring down trouble upon me And in anger they bear a grudge against me.” David was restless because of the oppression and persecution of his enemies.

I am sure everybody has experienced restlessness. Shakespeare in the Great Britain said, ‘Restless is the enemy of life.’ A person with a lasting restless cannot be happy and enjoy his or her life. Restless can hinder health and shorten life and makes human beings unable to concentrate on new creative work. The measure of happiness is not in wealth, but in how much power do we have in order to overcome restlessness. A poor life without restlessness is more valuable than a rich life that is buried in restlessness. Aesop said, ‘A piece of bread that is eaten with relief is better than eating so many foods in a feast with restlessness’ (Internet).

(2) David's burden was 'anguish heart'.

Look at Psalms 55:4 – “My heart is in anguish within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me.” Not only David’s heart was in great pain due to his enemies’ oppression and persecution but also he felt the danger of his life. That was why he confessed that “Fear and trembling come upon me, And horror has overwhelmed me” (v. 5). If David had wings like a dove and he would fly away and be at rest. In a word, David’s heart was so heavy that he wanted to escape the present situation. David saw violence and disputes in the city, and suffered heartache because of sin, debauchery, malice, oppression, and deceit (vv. 10-11). In addition, David's heart was restless because of the betrayal from his friend. Look at Psalms 55:12-13: “For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, Then I could bear it; Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, Then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, My companion and my familiar friend.” The deep wounds of David's heart were betrayed by his close friend who had walked in the house of god in the throng and had sweet fellowship together (v. 14). This good friend betrayed David by putting forth his hands against those who were at peace with him and violated his covenant (v. 20). The mouth of David’s friend was smoother than butter, but his heart was war, and his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords (v.21).

Second, how can we cast our burdens to God?

David cast his burden to God in prayer. Look at Psalm 55:1-2: “Give ear to my prayer, O God; And do not hide Yourself from my supplication. Give heed to me and answer me” David cast all his heavy burdens to God in prayer. He cast his severe painful heart to the Lord in prayer due to his restlessness in his evil and sinful situation. In particular, he cast all his painful heart from the betrayal of his friend to God. Why did David cast all his heavy burdens to the Lord in prayer? The reason was that he believed only God could save him. Look at Psalms 55:16-17: “As for me, I shall call upon God, And the LORD will save me. Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, And He will hear my voice.” David set three times a day at evening, morning and at noon, and cried out to God. He poured out his restlessness, hardship, and pains to God in prayer. The reason was that he was confident that only the Lord is his Savior.

Prayer is an expression that we are relying on God. In other words, those who rely on God pray. The psalmist David cast all his heavy burdens, restlessness, and severe hardships of his heart to God as he trusted in Him (v. 23). We must cast all our heavy burdens to God in prayer as we trust in Him.

“Are you weary, are you heavy-hearted? Tell it to Jesus, Tell it to Jesus;
Are you grieving over joys departed? Tell it to Jesus alone. Tell it to Jesus,
Tell it to Jesus, He is a friend that's well known; You've no other such a friend
or brother, Tell it to Jesus alone.”

(Hymn, “Are you weary, are you heavy hearted?”)

Lastly, what happens when we cast our burdens to God?

When we cast all our burdens to God in prayer, God gives us two blessings::

(1) God sustains us.

Look at Psalms 55:22 – “Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you;” David also confessed in Psalms 54:4, “God is my helper; The Lord is the sustainer of my soul.” These two words tell us that David was convinced of God's help in the present threat and crisis as he remembered the past experience of God's help in his tribulation. As David remembered the past grace of salvation, he was convinced that if he cast all his heavy burdens to God then He would

sustain him (55:22). What was the result? Look at Psalms 55:18 – “He will redeem my soul in peace from the battle which is against me, For they are many who strive with me.” As a result, David enjoyed the peace that God gave him. We, like David, cast all our heavy burdens to God in prayer. In doing so, God will sustain us and will keep us in peace in our hearts.

(2) God never allows us to be shaken.

Look at Psalms 55:22 – “... He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.” When we cast all our burdens to God in prayer, not only that God hears our prayers and sustains us but also He doesn’t allow us to be shaken. But those who don’t fear God (v. 19) and who don’t turn his wicked way, God will bring retribution by bring them down to the pit of destruction (v. 23). But those who rely on God will never be shaken. Look at Psalms 21:7 – “For the king trusts in the LORD, And through the lovingkindness of the Most High he will not be shaken.”

One of the songs I like to sing is “I Must Tell Jesus”: “I must tell Jesus all of my trials, I can-not bear these burdens alone; In my distress He kindly will help me,” This hymn was written by Rev. Elisa Hoffman. One day one of his church member came to him and asked, ‘What should I do? What am I supposed to do with my heavy burdens?’ After listening to his complaint for a long time, Rev. Hoffman prayed earnestly for him to the Lord of Consolation to work in his heart. After the prayer, he made a bright face and confessed: ‘Yes. I should tell my heavy burdens to Jesus, instead of bearing them alone.’ After he left, suddenly the inspirational Rev. Hoffman began to write a poetry of hymn: “I must tell Jesus all of my trials, I cannot bear these burdens alone; In my distress He kindly will help me.” This was how this hymn was born (Internet).

I heard my father singing this hymn at his mission field. At the time when my father encountered troubles in the mission field, he sang this hymn vigorously during the Morning Prayer. On that day, God gave us a way to escape from danger. Our God is the God who carries our heavy burdens. So let us cast all our heaven burdens to Him who cares for us. Let us cast our restlessness, our worries and our severe pains in our hearts to God in prayers. Then God will deliver us. And God will sustain us, will give us peace, and will make us strong so that we will never be shaken. Let us cast all our heavy burdens to God!

Who keeps my soul?

“The LORD will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul.” (Psalms 121:7)

It is the Lord God who keeps our souls (Ps. 121:5). But the question arises is "Isn't there my responsibility?" I think of this when I think of the gasoline incident in my car yesterday. I thought about whether it makes sense if I prayed to God to go to my destination, which was church, without going to a gas station when there was only little gasoline in the car. Apparently, the car would have stopped on the side of the road as before (the church car was standing on the side of the road because there was no gasoline as I was coming to the church morning prayer meeting). Although it is common sense, there are so many things that we ask of God without taking our human responsibilities.

In Psalms 121:7, if we ask God, who protects our souls, to protect our souls while our spiritual fuel isn't filled, then we will fall into the temptation of evil Satan. We can't boldly say that we will not commit sin against God when we fall into Satan's temptation. Our responsibility is to make the word our possession in the life of obeying the word of God (119:56). It is our responsibility to keep the word of God in our hearts and not commit sin against Him (v. 11). That is, in order to protect our souls, our responsibility is to fill our spiritual fuel tank with spiritual fuel. Just as we know that gasoline of the car has run out when we see it fuel gauge, we must realize that our spiritual life has run out of spiritual fuel. Then we must listen to God's voice in the desert (Hos. 2:14) and be supplied with spiritual fuel.

Now many Christians are serving the church unprotected against the forces of the evil spirits of Satan who are trying to destroy our souls. Even though we are spiritually dry inwardly, we may well be shining on the saints outwardly as if we are standing firmly like cedars. I think we have to continue driving a car despite our dying souls due to lack of spiritual fuel being supplied to us. Why can't we experience the work of reviving our souls even though we pray to God? Why can't we experience the supply of spiritual fuel even though we hear so many sermons? I know the word to love, but why can't we love others? The reason is because we don't prioritize the protection of our souls and do our best to

reach the fullness of Christ. We aren't protecting our souls because we aren't making the word of God our possession by not obeying His word, which is the spiritual fuel, in order to protect our souls. As we ask God to protect our souls, I hope and pray that we become a wise racer of faith who always has enough spiritual fuel to protect our souls.

Do not sell yourself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord!

“... because you have sold yourself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD” (1 Kings 21:20)

As I meditated on this verse, I thought of this. What sells best in Satan's shop? My personal thought was “my heart.” In other words, in Satan's shop, my heart is the best seller. I think that in Satan's shop, which sells with a false heart by twisting an honest heart, our hearts such as greed and covetousness are not beautiful in God's eyes and are sold by changing them into a heart that Satan likes. That is why the wise man exhorts in Proverbs 4:23: “Above all else, guard your heart ...”

In 1 Kings 21:20, the king of Israel, Ahab, was an evil king who could not keep his heart and had sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord. At first, King Ahab did not. According to 1 Kings 20, he was the king of Israel who heard the voice of God and obeyed Him. And he fought twice with King Ben-Hadad of Syria and his army and won twice. But where did King Ahab go wrong? When did he start to commit the sin of disobeying the word of God by selling himself? According to 1 Kings 20:34, after King Ahab fought and defeated King Ben-Hadad of Syria and his army, he obeyed the word of God and released the man whom God had determined that he should die (vv. 34, 42). The reason for this was because instead of letting him go through a treaty with Ben-Hadad, Ben-Hadad's father returned to King Ahab all the cities that Ben-Hadad's father had taken from King Ahab's father (v. 34). Ultimately, King Ahab was led by his greed or covetousness, and eventually committed the sin of disobeying God's word. Unfortunately, King Ahab's covetousness did not end there. But in 1 Kings 21, he coveted Naboth's vineyard near his own palace (21:1-2). The phrase “close to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria” (v. 1) reminds me of David. Didn't David, who was walking around on the roof of the palace, commit a sin by being drawn to sexual desire when he saw Bathsheba bathing close to his own palace? In the same way, King Ahab also coveted Naboth's vineyard near his royal palace. After all, maybe we should not be close to people who have a lot of power, honor, and material things.

The reason King Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard was because he wanted to “use for a vegetable

garden” (v. 2). Look at King Ahab, who had received “the cities” (20:34) from Ben-Hadad, is now coveting even the Naboth’s vineyard (21:2). In this way, covetousness or greed is endless. It is greed or covetousness that cannot be satisfied. However, Naboth could not satisfy Ahab's desire just because he was a king. The reason why Naboth refused to give his vineyard to King Ahab was because the Lord forbade that he should give the king the inheritance of his fathers (v. 3). So King Ahab was sullen and angry (v. 4) in covetousness. So lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat (v. 4; 20:43). Then Queen Jezebel appeared (21:5). In the end, Jezebel urged her husband, King Ahab (v. 25) to commit the sin of killing Naboth. Jezebel wrote letters in Ahab’s name to the elders and nobles who lived with Naboth’s city (v. 8), proclaiming a day of fasting and seating Naboth in a prominent place among the people (v. 9). Then she told them to seat two scoundrels opposite to Naboth and had them testify that Naboth cursed both God and the king (v. 10). Then she told the elders and nobles to take Naboth out and stone him to death (v. 10). This satanic scheme is similar to the case in Acts 6, where the members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law to give false witness, and thus brought Stephen to court and eventually stoned him to death. The servants of Satan, who is also the father of lies, kill a man by giving false witness.

One interesting observation, however, is that when Jezebel asked her husband, King Ahab, “Why are you so sullen? Why won’t you eat?” (v. 5), King Ahab replied that it was because Naboth said “I will not give you my vineyard” (v. 6), King Ahab was so deaf due to covetousness in his heart that he could no longer hear the voice of God. Although King Ahab heard the voice of God twice in the war with Ben-Hadad, king of Aram, and fought twice in the mountains and in the plains and was victorious (1 Kgs. Ch. 20), King Ahab said that Naboth, who told King Ahab “The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers’ (v. 3), would not give him his vineyard (v. 6). He was no longer possible to hear the voice of God in the midst of covetousness and anxiety. What a shocking degeneracy of one man? Eventually, after hearing the news through Jezebel that Naboth had been stoned to death, Ahab got up and went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard (v. 16) and seized his property (v. 19). Watching Ahab take the land to the point of killing Naboth, we can see how terrible the result of the sin of covetousness was.

We must not sell ourselves to do evil against God. We must guard our hearts from covetousness and greed. We must be very wary of the spiritual condition in which we cannot even hear the voice of God in the midst of sorrow and frustration due to covetousness. Rather, we should be quick to hear the word of God. We must always keep our ears open to hear His word and faithfully obey His word. Therefore, we should not do evil in God's sight, but do good.

In the name of Jesus I will rise.

“Do not lie in wait like an outlaw against a righteous man's house, do not raid his dwelling place; for though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity” (Proverbs 24:15-16).

In this week's news, I saw an American medical missionary, Kent Brantley, 33, arriving in an ambulance at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, USA. I didn't know at first, but I found out later that one of the two who got off the ambulance was Doctor Brantley. I was a little surprised to see him walking on his own feet to the hospital. And I was proud and happy. On July 31, last month, he was infected with the Ebola virus and was wandering around. He even called his wife in the United States goodbye. And now I am grateful to see him walking into the hospital on his own feet. Three months before he left for a medical mission to Liberia in 2013, he said, ‘When a difficult day comes, I will remember God's calling in my heart.’ And what he said to the congregation at Christ's Church in Southeastern, Indiana, USA in July last year, was recently released on Facebook as an audio file. He said, ‘I will go on a mission,’ and ‘I will live there for two years and serve those who have suffered violence and destruction for 20 years.’ As for the reason he decided to serve in a place he had never been to, Brantley said that he had affirmed that ‘because there was a call from God.’ Emphasizing the need to live boldly like the apostle Paul, he quoted 2 Timothy 1:7 and said, “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline” (Internet). As I saw Dr. Brantley, who had been on a medical mission to Liberia under God's call and was infected with the Ebola virus, called the death virus, was walking into the Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, USA, I just hoped and prayed that he would get up again so that he could continue doing God's work as he is called.

We Christians are those who are called by God. Therefore, we must continue to do God's work faithfully with a sense of calling. However, there are those who continue to watch us and try to overthrow us and destroy our houses if he sees a gap (Prov. 24:15). He is Satan. Satan is the one who causes Jesus to fall (Mt. 16:23) and the one who makes us Christians, the church of Jesus Christ, to fall.

How is Satan trying to make us to fall? Satan tries to make us to be like the apostle Peter, not having in mind the things of God but the things of men (v. 23). The apostle Peter fell into the Satan's temptation. When Jesus said to his disciples that "that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life" (v. 21), Peter "began to rebuke him. 'Never, Lord!' he said. 'This shall never happen to you!'" (v. 22). The apostle Peter, who thought about the things of men, didn't want Jesus to suffer and be crucified. That was why he turned to Jesus and said, "Never, Lord! ... This shall never happen to you!" (v. 22) However, God's will was that Jesus suffered, took all our sins for us, and died on the cross. Although it was Jesus who came to this earth to accomplish this God's work, the apostle Peter didn't think of this God's work, but rather thought of men's work.

Satan is well aware of our weaknesses. And he keeps trying to attack and infect our vulnerabilities with deadly spiritual viruses like the Ebola virus. Satan continues to tempt us, not only to make us think of men's work rather than God's work. But he is also striving to go further and make us do men's work. Satan is trying to get us to walk the wide path of the world, turning away from walking the narrow path of the cross of Jesus. He keeps tempting us to make us think about our will, not the will of the Lord, so that we can abandon the Lord's will and live according to our will. Satan is trying to infect our weak point, our loved ones, with a deadly spiritual virus, making us prioritize human affairs over God's. When we and our family are infected by the deadly spiritual virus, we are drawn to the flesh by falling into self-pity rather than being drawn by His call. In that case, we not only think of our family members before God, but also think and pursue human work even at the expense of God's work. As a result, we ruin the God's work. In this way, Satan is trying to make us fall somehow. He is trying to get us all to fall somehow by watching at not only us, but also our homes and churches. What should we do? We can think of many lessons in the Bible, but I'm going to think about two things based only on the words of Proverbs 24:16: (1) We need to know that we can fall. In other words, we stumble because of the work of Satan that causes us to stumble. And we can fall not only once, but seven times, even countless times. At that time, we may be disappointed because of our own fall, and we may suffer from guilty feeling. (2) However, the second thing to keep in mind is that even though the righteous fall seven times, he will rise again.

I think that our Christians' life of faith is like a roly-poly. Just as if we hit the roly-poly and then it rises again, we must believe that even if Satan and the wicked strike us and cause us to fall, we will rise again. How can the roly-poly rise again even it falls down? The reason is because the lower part of the roly-poly is the heaviest, so even if the upper part is accidentally tilted downward, the heaviest part is

going to go down again due to the effect of gravity, so in the end it always stands upright. The lesson we can learn from here is that the center of gravity must be located below to be safe. So even if it stumbles momentarily by external influences, it will be able to stand back (Internet). I believe that the “center of gravity” that makes us to stand up again and hold the center again is the Lord who is the Rock. Even if we fall countless times, the Lord is the God who raises us up again countless times. The Lord who raised up Elijah who fell down again is the God who raises us up so that we can fulfill His mission. The Lord is the God who raises us up by rekindling our discouraged souls with the perfect word of God. May the Lord reach out to us with the right hand of His power and hold our hand and raise us up again.

Among the gospel songs that I can't forget, there is a song titled “I Stand”. I learned this song through sister in Christ Jong-mi Lee of Seohyun Church in Korea. Although her physical body was "like a mummy" because her body was burned and was bandaged and lying on her bed in the hospital room, the Lord raised her up again. When I heard the testimony of Jong-mi, who fought at the crossroads of life and death, I was compelled to praise the Lord who gave her victory in that fight: “I will stand, I will stand, I will stand in Jesus name/ For the things that God has given, I will stand in Jesus name/ Satan's host may come against me, I will not surrender ground/ For the things that God has given (2x)/ For the things that God has given, I will stand.” I hope and pray that all of us to be raised up again in the name of Jesus.

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

[1 John 2:18-25]

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

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

now? Aren't we without love, ungrateful, and unforgiving? Aren't we not lovers of the good, treacherous and rash? I think the time that we are living in is the last days and the second coming of Jesus is almost near. I saw an article on the Internet that summarized the signs of Jesus' second coming into 5 points based on the Bible in their own way: (1) The gospel is preached to all peoples, (2) The full number of Jews enters and fills the church, (3) Apostasy occurs among those who believed in the gospel and churches, (4) People of lawlessness appear and aggravate confusion, (5) Earthquakes and wars occur all over the world and the Great Tribulation this will happen (Internet).

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

First, the Apostle John said about "the last hour."

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

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

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

- (1) When we think about what the Apostle John said in 1 John 2:18, “this is the last hour” and then “even now many antichrists have come,” the Apostle John wrote this letter in the first century, the age of the apostles, after Jesus died, rose and ascended into heaven, and said that that was the last hour, and that many antichrists had already appeared at that time. That being said, when we mainly say “the antichrist”, we seem to think that the antichrist will appear in this age when the second coming of Jesus is nearer. However, today's Bible is the fact that the antichrists had already appeared in the first century A.D. when the New Testament was written.
- (2) The Apostle John mentioned “the antichrist” twice in 1 John 2:18. Once he said “the antichrist” in the singular, but the other time he said “the antichrists” in the plural. This tells us that the Apostle John, when he first used the singular word “the antichrist,” he was referring to a particular person prophesied in the Bible, while when he used the plural word “the antichrists,” he was referring to those who deceived Christians who believed in Jesus in the days of the Apostle John as “the antichrists” (many individuals). Those who deceive Christians who believe in Jesus here are, for example, “false teachers” and “deceivers” (MacArthur).
- (3) Then, who are the “the antichrist” and “the antichrists” that the Apostle John spoke of in 1 John 2:18? The Bible 1 John 2:18-25 tells us two things:
 - (a) First, look at 1 John 2:19 – “They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.” When the Apostle John said that the antichrists “went out from us, but they did not really belong to us,” it means that the antichrists were formerly believers in Jesus Christ, like the apostle John or the recipients of the letter to 1 John, but no longer believe in Jesus Christ. It refers to those who have departed from Jesus and from the believers. Therefore, the Apostle John said that the antichrists “did

not really belong to us,” because they no longer belong to Jesus Christ. When I meditated on this word, I thought of ‘the false prophets’. The reason is because even though God didn’t send the false prophets, they prophesied lies in His name (Jere. 14:14; 28:15). Another thing that comes to mind is “Satan”. What we learned growing up in the church is that Satan was originally an angel, but because of his pride in trying to become like God, he sinned against God and fell, and became Satan. So it was learned that Satan was a fallen angel who was cast out by God and came down into the world, and the Bible verse that is the basis of that doctrine was known as “Lucifer” when translated into Latin for “a morning star” in Isaiah 14:12 (Internet). It is said that this Lucifer fell to the ground. This Satan and the false prophets don’t belong to God, nor are they sent by God, just as the antichrist didn’t belong to the Apostle John or the recipient Christians to the letter of 1 John.

- (b) Then the antichrist is spoken of in 1 John 2:22 – “Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son.” If we look at this verse, the Bible says that the antichrist is one who denies God the Father and the Son Jesus. And verse 23 says, “No one who denies the Son has the Father.” Isn't it obvious to say that those who deny Jesus, the Son of God, don't have the Father? If we look again at verse 22, the Bible says that the antichrist is one who denies that the Jesus is the Christ. Such a person, the antichrist, is said to be “a liar.” The Apostle John also said this about the antichrist in 1 John 4:3 – “but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.” The Bible says that the spirit of the antichrist is the spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus and that this spirit of antichrist doesn't belong to God. However, this spirit of antichrist already existed in the world in the first century AD when the Apostle John was writing the letter of 1 John. And this spirit of the antichrist is still here. In other words, the spirit of the antichrist is from the first coming of Jesus to the second coming in the last days (the end times). Thus, after the Apostle John spoke about the antichrist and the spirit of antichrist in 1 John 2:22 and 4:3, he mentioned the antichrist again in 2 John 1:7 – “Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.” In this verse, the Apostle John speaks twice about ‘deceiver(s)’. And the deceiver that he refers to is the one who don't acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. In other words, the deceiver is the one who denies the incarnation of Jesus Christ. And the one who denies the incarnation of Jesus Christ is

the antichrist.

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

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

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

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

In 1 John 2:20, the Apostle John speaks of who the true Christian is in contrast to the antichrist. In other words, he speaks of one characteristic mark of the true Christian. The distinctive mark of the true Christian is that he knows the truth by having the anointing from the Holy God. This reminds me of Romans 5:5 – "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us." When we came to believe in Jesus Christ by the grace of God, God gave us the Holy Spirit and poured out His love into our hearts. The true Christian is one who has received the Holy Spirit from God. And the Apostle John said that the true Christian who has received the Holy Spirit knows the truth, Here, what does "the truth" mean? In verses 18-19, which are close to the word of 1 John 2:20, "the truth" that the Apostle John said seems to refer to the truth that "this is the

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

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

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

Look at 1 John 2:21 – “I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth.” The second mark of the true Christian, the hypothetical evidence that we are Christians, is that we know the truth. Personally, when I think of the word “the truth,” two Bible verses from the Gospel of John come to mind. One is John 8:32, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” The other one is John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” If we relate these two Bible verses, it is that Jesus is the truth, and knowing Jesus who is the truth will set us free. As we have already meditated on, one of the four the light and the darkness spoken of in the Apostle John is that the truth is the light and the lie is the darkness. If the Apostle John applies the phrase “God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all” in 1 John 1:5, it means that God is the truth and that in God who is the truth there is no lie that is the darkness. Then, since we, as the children

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

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

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

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

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

Look at Psalms 119:49 – “Remember the word to Your servant,” The reason the psalmist prayed to God in this way was because the Lord gave him hope through the word of His promise (v. 49). As I meditated on this word, I was reminded of Abraham in Romans 4:18. He was able to hope and believe against all hope because he remembered the word of God's promise and was fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised (v. 21). In other words, the promised word-driven life is the secret to living a life that is personified by the word of God and the secret to having the word of God to be my possession.

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

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

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

Look at Psalms 119:51 – “... Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.” Although the proud mocked the psalmist bitterly, he didn't depart from the law of the Lord. When I think of this principle, the words of John 6:68 come to mind. When the Lord's teaching was so difficult that many of His disciples left him and never walked with Him again (Jn. 6:66). So Jesus asked the Twelve, ““You do not want to leave too, do you?”” (v. 67) Then Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go?” (v. 68). How amazing is this confession? Many of Christians are leaving the Lord and His Church because the word of the Lord is so difficult and unbelievable. Because we cannot taste the Lord's word of eternal life like Apostle Peter, we are listening to Satan's instantaneous fake 'gospel' rather than hearing the gospel of Christ, which gives eternal life. It seems that even the pastors and members of the church are proclaiming and listening to the 'words of this life' rather than the words of eternal life. However, the psalmist didn't leave the

word of the Lord's promise, no matter what the situation was, no matter what anyone said. He didn't even listen to anything else. The reason is because the word of promise of the Lord gave him hope when he had no hope and revived him with comfort in his troubles.

In 1 John 2:24, the Apostle John says, “See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you” What did the recipient Christians who received the letter of 1 John here “heard from the beginning”? Look at 1 John 1:1-2, which we have already meditated on: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.” These verses tell us what the recipients of the letter of 1 John had heard from the beginning. It is the Word of life which was from the beginning, the Son Jesus Christ, who was with the Father God as eternal life, and had appeared to us. That is, what those Christians heard from the beginning was about Jesus Christ, and in a word, Jesus Christ and His gospel. The Apostle John exhorted the recipients of his letters to let Jesus Christ and His gospel dwell in them.

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

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

Look at 1 John 2:25 – “And this is what he promised us--even eternal life.” The Bible says in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” And the Bible Romans 6:23 says, “The gift of God is eternal life

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

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

This is the last hour. Now many antichrists have come. Many of these antichrists are liars and deceivers, not only denying that Jesus is the Christ, but also denying the Father God, denying the Son Jesus, and denying that Jesus came in the flesh (incarnation). Unlike these antichrists, true Christians have received the Holy Spirit from God and know all things. They know the truth of God. Also, they let the truth of God that they heard from the beginning to remain in them. That is, the true Christians have Jesus Christ abiding in them. And they have eternal life. I hope and pray that even in this last hour when

many antichrists have appeared and proclaim a different Jesus, a different gospel through false pastors and false teachers, and make people to receive a different spirit, we who are true Christians who believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God, and in His incarnation will understand the truth and obey the word of God according to the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit. I hope and pray that as we all obey the twofold commandment of Jesus, may God's love will be perfected in us, so that our hearts will be filled with joy and will partly enjoy eternal life on this earth.

Conclusion

Satan, who actually exists, tempts us, God's children who believe in Jesus, by any means, so that we may break God's commandments and committing sins, so that we not only turn away from God completely, but also betray Jesus and depart from the faith. All Satan's goal is to tempt us to dethrone God (Chambers). So Satan continues to attack us. Satan attacks our hearts with lies so that we do not know the will of God, and also uses pride to attack us to depart from the will of God (Wiersbe). Satan continues to attack us, even our identity in the Lord. This satanic attack on our identity is fatal. In addition, Satan attacks our homes and separates them as a result of quarrels and fights in the marital relationship and makes us to commit adultery through sexual temptation, which ultimately destroys our homes. Satan wants to make our homes a hell. Indeed, the home cannot but be a spiritual battlefield. The church is also a spiritual battlefield. Satan continues to attack the church now, and he is tempting pastors to sin against God. As the bride church is a pure virgin to be offered to one husband, the groom Jesus Christ, the church must have a sincere and pure heart toward Christ. But Satan is trying to deceive us to corrupt our hearts toward Christ. Satan preaches "another Jesus," trying to get us to receive "a different spirit" and "a different gospel." Satan's temptation is the cross without suffering, the gospel without the cross, and the church of Christ without the gospel. Satan's main strategy is to spread as many lies as possible to deny, pollute, and confuse the truth (MacArthur). As a result, our thoughts are now heavily polluted with falsehoods that are unevangelical and untruthful. We do not distinguish between truth and lies under the trend of mutual respect. Now we are confused and live a syncretistic faith life.

What must we do? We must hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must confess our sins and repent by relying on the power of the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. And relying on the Lord who makes the spiritual warfare against Satan victorious, we must win the battle against ourselves, sin, the world, Satan, and death. Victory belongs to God. By dying on the cross and resurrecting His only begotten Son, God not only has already given us victory over our sins, but He has also given us victory over our death (1 Corinthians 15:55). God saved us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and gave us eternal life. Jesus overcame Satan by dying on the cross and resurrecting. Therefore I hope and pray that we give thanks to God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Also, I hope and pray that we win the battle against Satan every moment of every day while praying to God and with the word of God by sharpening the sword of the Holy Spirit and grasping Satan's strategies with spiritual discernment. I hope and pray that all of us who sing the hymn of victory put the flag of victory in our hearts, families, churches, and the kingdom of God.