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Church of the Lord

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오늘의 말씀

"Where Revival Quietly Begins"

[Romans 12:1~2]

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. (2) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

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Throughout this series, before each sermon begins, we will recite this declaration together:

“Living as a true believer is not about trying harder, but about living aligned with the Spirit.” Through our New Year Special Daily Devotionals, we reflected together on “Build-ing a Beautiful Foundation for the Church,” where we shared biblical and logical teachings about the healthy foundations and pillars of the church. Then, as the first sermon series open-ing the new year, we studied the Five Solas, learning the doctrinal pillars upon which the Re-formed Church must stand. Now, as our fourteenth sermon series, we are beginning “Living as a True Believer.” This series addresses the real-life realities of living as believers.

Introduction ~ Today, I would like to open this message with the words Jesus spoke to His anxious disciples, which we reflected on during last week’s morning devotionals. John 13~14 record Jesus’ Upper Room Discourse, shared with His disciples on the night before the cross.

The disciples’ hearts had already collapsed. The future was unclear, Jesus’ words were dif-ficult to understand, and all the expectations they had held onto were being shaken. And Jesus said to them, “Let not your heart be troubled.” This was not a rebuke of anxiety itself. The Greek word Jesus uses for “troubled,” *tarassō*(ταράσσω), refers to a heart that has been shak-en and has lost its direction. Jesus does not ask, “Why are you anxious?” Rather, He invites them not to allow that anxiety to rule their souls. Then He immediately says, “You believe in God; believe also in Me.” The circumstances remain the same, but Jesus realigned their focus.

Main Message

The problem of anxiety is not an environmental problem, but an alignment problem.

Our faith today often looks the same. When we lose the joy of faith, we tend to blame the church, other people, or the world. But Jesus shifts the focus away from circum-stances to the direction of faith. This is His core teaching: “What surrounds you mat-ters less than who stands at the center of your life.”

After saying, “You believe in God; believe also in Me,” Jesus continues, “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places.” This is Jesus’ proclamation concerning heaven.

[John 14:1~2a] "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. (2) "In My Father's house are many mansions;

As we said in our daily devotionals, because the KJV translates this verse as “many mansions,” heaven has often been described and imagined as a place built and deco-rated with magnificent and expensive materials. As a result, heaven has frequently been understood as a distant, unrealistic, imaginary place we enter only after death. Of course, the book of Revelation does portray heaven in glorious terms.

However, the “dwelling places” (μονή, monē) Jesus speaks of in John’s Gospel are not merely future realities. His words are far more present and relational. The term does not mean a temporary lodging, but a place of abiding, a space of ongoing shared life. The focus is not the place itself, but who is there with you. Where Jesus is present, that place is already heaven. Jesus does not merely tell His disciples, “One day you will go to heaven.” Instead, He says, “That where I am, there you may be also.” This means that a life walking with Jesus, a life where He is Lord, a life centered on Him—that life itself is already the beginning of heaven.

So, the life of a believer is not a life that waits for heaven, but a life that extends heaven into the present. A faith that has lost its joy is not “normal” Christianity.

This does not mean believers must always be comfortable. But

living with faces devoid of heaven is not a biblical picture of faith. We already abide in Christ, already live under the reign of God's kingdom, and already have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. The issue, is not that heaven has not yet come, but that our lives are not aligned with Him.

Therefore, Paul does not tell us to try harder in faith, but urges us to present our lives to God. Let us now turn to today's main passage.

[Romans 12:1] I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

A life that lives heaven is an aligned life. This is Paul's exhortation at the great turning point of Romans, where the letter moves from doctrine to practice. Paul is essentially saying: "Faith is not about devotion; it is about alignment."

When Paul urges believers by "the mercies of God," he is not saying, "Try harder." Rather, he appeals on the basis of mercy already received.

The command "present" is not coercion, but a response to grace. Therefore, a "living sacrifice" does not mean dying devotion, but a living life aligned with God.

The life of a true believer is not about adding more things, but about re-centering one's life.

Paul's next teaching is that change is not about appearance, but about direction.

[Romans 12:2] And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The word translated "be transformed" comes from the Greek *metamorphoō* (μεταμορφώω), which refers to a change from the very essence. This transformation does not occur because

circumstances improve or environments change, but when the center of the heart is realigned. Then the Holy Spirit reshapes our lives. The noun form of this word is metamorphosis. This is not improvement—it is complete transformation into a fundamentally different being.

A powerful illustration of this transformation is the process by which a tadpole becomes a frog. When a tadpole first hatches from an egg, it resembles a fish with gills. But as it grows, according to the genetic design God placed within creation, the gills disappear, lungs develop, the tail gradually vanishes, and it becomes a frog. A tadpole dies if it leaves the water, but a frog can live freely both in and out of water. How clearly this illustrates the life of a believer transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Tragically, some tadpoles never become frogs. Their heads grow large and their bodies become frog-sized, yet transformation never occurs, and they die as aged tadpoles. This transformation depends on hormones secreted by the thyroid gland, and their activation is related to iodine intake. Likewise, if believers neglect healthy spiritual nourishment—such as God’s Word that strengthens the soul, and prayer that leads to the filling of the Spirit—and instead consume only mythical or sensational spiritual content, they may grow outwardly but lack the Spirit’s transforming work, ending their lives like oversized tadpoles that never become frogs.

This is why Paul says, “that you may discern what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Let us look at another image of metamorphosis—the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly.

A butterfly lays eggs, which hatch into caterpillars. The caterpillar spins a cocoon and enters a process that resembles death. Then, breaking through the cocoon, it emerges as a butterfly—utterly different from the caterpillar, possessing beauty and the ability to fly. When we die with Christ and are raised with

Him by the power of the Spirit, this same essential transformation takes place in us. This is the spiritual life aligned with the Holy Spirit.

The climax of today's message: David's confession; "Create in me a clean heart."

[Psalm 51:10] Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

David does not pray, "Change my circumstances," or "Change the people around me." Instead, he prays, "God, realign me." His longing is focused entirely on inner transformation: "Do not cast me away from Your presence." "Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me." "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation."

Beloved congregation, this is the essence of repentance—not self-condemnation or self-punishment, but a prayer that re-centers our lives before God.

Conclusion — "It Begins with Me!"

The restoration of the church and the renewal of a beautiful faith life do not begin with fixing circumstances or changing others. They begin when one person turns again to God and yields the center of life to the Holy Spirit. From that one person, the fragrance and reality of the church and God's kingdom begin anew. For far too long, we have waited for circumstances to change and hoped others would be different. Yet Jesus still says to us today, "You believe in God; believe also in Me." So we close today's message with this declaration: "Living as a true believer does not begin with fixing circumstances or fixing others, but with aligning my own life with the guidance of the Spirit."

Prayer Points for Today; Let us hold onto today's message and pray together:

A. Lord, help us to see You as greater than the circumstances that cause anxiety and worry.

B. May the center of my life be realigned with the Holy Spirit, and may my daily life be-come an extension of heaven.

C. May all these beautiful works begin today, with me.