

“Paul’s humility” May 4, 2017

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. (1 Timothy 1:15)

Good morning, everyone. Today I will be speaking to you on the topic: “The humility of Paul.” You all know very well that Paul was a very famous person. **Paul wrote thirteen books in the Bible, and their content is enough to really inspire us and to deeply resonate within our hearts every time we read them.**

Paul was a very prominent person even in his time. His parents were Jews and he **studied under Gamaliel**. He was an apostle, and there was no sin which anyone could detect in him. In the beginning he was strongly opposed to Jesus and to the Gospels. **But he changed his faith as the result of a voice that came to him from Heaven.** In the midst of his strong persecution against Christianity, one night on the road, he heard a voice from Heaven. It was the Lord’s and it said, **“I am Jesus whom you have been persecuting so much!” and that is how he became an apostle.**

Paul witnessed the stoning of Stephen, the first martyr, and at the scene raised both hands in praising it. But then he converted to Christianity, and over the next decades he did a tremendous amount of work for Christ. **His age is said to have been three years younger than Jesus.**

When he first became an apostle, he was filled with gratitude, and he thanked God for this opportunity. He was proud of the fact that he was an apostle of the Lord and, at times, felt that among the apostles he was the most important.

But when he was filled with the grace of the Lord, he would become more aware of himself and understand who he really was. **In those times he would realize that even though he had been thinking of himself as the most important among the apostles, he was actually not.** He realized that even though God had called him to receive a mission, and that people respected and recognized him as important, he was truly an insignificant person.

We see that when Paul composed the books of the Bible that are attributed to him, **he wrote a good deal about this kind of humility: “Yes, I am an apostle, but I am not the most important. I might be an apostle, but I am the least amongst them.”** When he was filled with the spirit, filled with God’s grace, he would realize that he was actually least among the apostles. **In this way he was able to come closer to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ.**

But then sometimes Paul would think, “OK, I might be the least among the apostles, but among the saints I am among the most important.” Then he also repented about that, saying, **“I am not the most important among saints. I am actually the least important.”** Every time that he was filled with the amazing grace of God, he repented and realized that he was not

important among the apostles, and not even important among the saints. And then he thought that, “As a child I must have been born prematurely.” He felt his mother must not have carried him to full term but that he was born seven or eight months into the pregnancy and, therefore, he was somehow deficient.

Paul regarded himself as a sinner before Jesus and he wept in repentance. **He wept so much that actually he was not able to see very well; his eyesight was poor as a result of that incredible weeping.** There are words in the Bible that indicate this. Paul truly repented a great deal. Consequently, he was able to go to a profound spiritual realm that few others were able to enter. From this we can see that Paul was truly a humble man and he lived a life of humility.

Humility in the Bible means that when we receive the grace of God, we need to uproot the sin of pride within us. Pride is the root of many evils. To uproot it and instead plant the root of humility within ourselves can create the foundation of goodness. Jesus also told his disciples that they must be humble. **This is especially to be found in Matthew 11:29: “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls.”**

Every time Paul received God’s grace, every time he felt filled with God’s spirit, he realized that it was God sending him out into the world to deliver His Gospel to all the Gentiles. **We see in Paul’s writings that he speaks from his own experience about the fact that God rejects those who are prideful and gives grace and inspiration to those who are humble.** We can understand that this was the kind of life that he himself was always striving to live. Jesus also taught that, **“Those who try to uplift themselves will be brought down, and those who are humble will be uplifted.”** Paul recognized that God had sent him to spread His Word and salvation to all the Gentiles. God had established him for that purpose.

We see that Paul’s writings came to him when he was having his deepest spiritual experiences with God. 1 Timothy 1:15 is a good example: **“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” He said of all these sinners, I am the chief!**

I was reading the Book of Romans a few days ago and there in **Romans 3:10-12, Paul says, “There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away; they have together become worthless. There is no one who does good, not even one.”**

We observe that Paul wrote his greatest works when he was in a state of deep repentance and great humility. **In that sense Father was very pleased with him, and Jesus too was very pleased to see that Paul was able to reach that state of repentance. Paul realized that God had created him in a certain way and he wanted to restore the original creation that God had intended. He worked to do that and to spread God’s word to people.**

This morning we need to learn from Paul's humility, from his conversion and from his experience of repentance.

St. Augustine also spoke about the fact that pride is the opposite of goodness. Just as an insect can invade and devour a tree, so also pride invades our heart and devours it. Other forms of evil will only attack one aspect of us, but pride can attack us in many ways. **A beautiful woman, for example, may sin when she takes pride in her beauty.**

Pride attacks us from all directions, not just from four directions, or from eight directions, but from all directions. So, it is extremely difficult for us to overcome pride. Pride can come upon us when we are speaking, or it can also come upon us when we are sleeping. It follows us like a shadow. **Even though our bodies may deteriorate, pride does not deteriorate.** As our position rises, pride becomes that much stronger. **As we grow in knowledge, pride also grows along with that increase.** If we try to do something good, pride will go before that, and if we **accomplish something, then our pride will grow accordingly.**

Just as there is no shadow only when we are directly under the sun, so also it is when we are directly under God that the shadow of pride can disappear from us. It is only when we are one with God that we can truly become the light to the world in that way. **Only when we become one with God, only when we become one with our True Father, can we truly say that we have changed for eternity.**

We need to understand what kind of a person God was intending to create when He made each one of us. It is only when we comprehend and realize it that we can truly be qualified as citizens of Cheon Il Guk.

How wonderful it would be if we could truly tell God this morning, "I know this is how You intended for me to become as You created me, and I have achieved that as a citizen of Cheon Il Guk!" Imagine how wonderful it will be when we can report that to God and show Him our victorious self, show Him that we have accomplished the victory and we have planted its flag before the entire world. How happy God will be! How happy True Father will be! How happy Jesus will be about that!

Let's sharpen ourselves, let's polish ourselves so we can become qualified to shout, **"Og mansei" for God and for True Father, for the Second King and Queen, and for the victorious Cain and Abel!**

Let's remember the way that God and Jesus called out to Paul through a voice from Heaven, and said, "I am the Lord Jesus whom you have persecuted!" Remember how they assigned a commission to Paul to go into the world and spread the word of God, and then how Paul determined and he even went into Arabia for three years in order to do this.

Let's learn from Paul's humility! **We have come out into this place and even though people are speaking ill of us, we have come here to accomplish God's Will.** That Will is to realize God's ideal in this world. We can only do that from a position of deep humility and repentance.

Thank you very much.

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