

**Open thy Mouth Wide - 2014**

March 5th, 2013, Kichijouji Bible Study  
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**Romans 3**

10 As it is written, "Not even one person is righteous.

11 No one understands. No one searches for God.

12 All have turned away. They have become completely worthless. No one shows kindness, not even one person!

13 Their throats are open graves. With their tongues they deceive. The venom of poisonous snakes is under their lips.

14 Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.

15 They run swiftly to shed blood.

16 Ruin and misery characterize their lives.

17 They have not learned the path to peace.

18 They don't fear God.

[International Standard Version]

The Lord said through the author of the Psalms;

**Psalms**

81:10 ...open your mouth that I may fill it.

This is his intention and is exactly what He wanted. The word 'fill' appears many times throughout the Bible. 'To fill' refers to the end-time. That is to say, at the end-time, the evil will be in its fullness and reach its maturity. In parallel, the righteous too will be in its fullness and achieve its perfection. Those who reject Jesus will be drawn away from Him even further, while those who want to please Jesus will be transformed into His image by surrendering themselves to Him unconditionally.

I think that for us what matters more than anything is what we are filled with. In other words, it is where the force that drives us is coming from and who our governor is.

Today, I would like to discuss one matter with you which may not be so pleasant. It is about our minds. There are some unpleasant words in the Bible. It tells us that the human mind is filled with evil.

The thoughts of people who see things from the standpoint of so-called humanism are totally opposite. Their thoughts are based on the idea that the hearts of human beings are essentially good. These people believe that if their circumstances are improved and they make efforts based on their own positive beliefs, they can be better people. However the Bible, which consists of the words of God, teaches differently;

human hearts are extremely infected by evil and there is no goodness within them. So says the Bible. In fact, it is already mentioned in Genesis 8:21; "*Human inclinations remain evil from youth.*"

Jeremiah pointed out exactly the same thing in Chapter 17, Verse 9. He wrote that human hearts are more deceitful by nature than anything in this world, and they are extremely steeped in vice. This fact was testified from the mouth of Jesus. It is in the Gospel according to Mark. Let me read it out;

**Mark**

7:21 because it's from within, from the human heart,...

We can replace 'human' with 'all men' or even with 'the whole human race.' But, it does not say 'non-believers'.

7:21 ...that evil thoughts come, as well as sexual immorality, stealing, murder,

7:22 adultery, greed, wickedness, cheating, shameless lust, envy, slander, arrogance, and foolishness.

7:23 All these things come from inside and make a person unclean.

Not from outside. Jesus, who is the truth itself, clearly said 'from inside'. This is exactly what all humans have in their minds. When we think of the unhappiness surrounding us in this world, namely news in weekly magazines and TV programs, the loveless marriages of so many people, we can't help but admit that the things pointed out in the Bible are only the truth.

*"In fact, the hearts of human beings are full of evil. Madness remains in their hearts while they live, and afterwards they join the dead."* So noted in Ecclesiastes, 9:3. We can find this verse in Ezekiel, 9:9; "*The land is filled with blood, and the city overflows with injustice.*" Indeed, it seems as if these words speak of the situation of the world today. I would like to use three examples from the New Testament to show that human hearts are completely stained by wickedness.

As the first example, let's look at the sorcerer Elymas from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 13. We can see from this chapter 13 of the Acts, Paul described Elymas this way;

**Acts**

13:10 and said, "You are full of every form of deception and trickery, you son of the devil, you enemy of all that is right! You will never stop perverting the straight ways of the Lord, will you?"

It was because Elymas was a man who contended the truth of God with clear intentions. A characteristic of the true words of God is that they are just as they are spoken, and are completely straightforward. However, Elymas contended this truth knowingly. This man called Elymas was totally the opposite and was said to be full of deception and trickery.

The second example concerns the people living in Nazareth who appeared in Luke, Chapter 4. When Jesus preached the gospel to the people living around the border, their first reaction was favorable as we can see from the verse 22; they *"began to speak well of him and to wonder at the gracious words that flowed from his mouth."* However, the moment Jesus started to talk directly about them, that is to say, when Jesus candidly pointed out their wicked minds that were filled with vice, their attitudes changed abruptly.

#### Luke

4:22 All the people began to speak well of him and to wonder at the gracious words that flowed from his mouth. They said, "This is Joseph's son, isn't it?"

but, later...

4:28 All the people in the synagogue became furious when they heard this.

4:29 They got up, forced Jesus out of the city, and led him to the edge of the hill on which their city was built, intending to throw him off.

These verses tell us what happened. The people of Nazareth became so furious and filled with anger that they drove Jesus out of the city and even tried to slay Him. They believed that they were religious and sincere people. They never failed to gather in the churches on every Sabbath to listen to the words of God, but they totally lacked the strength of mind to look straight into their own hearts and repent. As a consequence, their hearts were filled with fury instead of joy from being in the presence of God.

The third example is the couple that appears in Acts, chapter 5: Ananias and Sapphira.

#### Acts

5:33 Peter asked, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart so that you should lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back some of the money you got for the land?"

In the Japanese Bible we use, it is said, 'your soul was stolen by Satan', but in the original language, it is written that 'your soul was filled by Satan'. Ananias and

Sapphira belonged to the early church, and they were willing to abandon most of their property to serve the Lord.

Nobody forced them or demanded it of them. They may have taken the attitude of offering up all their possessions and serving Jesus, but after all, they were just pretending. Their attitude was that of hypocrites. And thus, they gave Satan the chance to slip into their minds. It was not the truth of Jesus but Satan's hypocrisy that filled their hearts. Consequently, the punishment of the Lord God was instantly inflicted upon them.

We too always have to be examined by the words of the Lord. Is there any discrepancy between our words and our deeds? What are we filled with? Aren't our hearts filled with bad thoughts, impurity, immorality, envy or some other loveless ideas?

When we read the Bible, instead of reading it from a force of habit or a sense of obligation, do we have a sincere attitude such as this; *"Speak, Lord, because your servant is listening"*? As I just mentioned, "your servant is listening. Speak, Lord and please reveal your intention to me." This is the attitude we have to take, isn't it?

Are we prepared to humble ourselves before the Lord? Are we willing to be broken into pieces? So far, we have seen how the Lord God judges us humans. Let us read again the verses where it is summarized. Actually, most of these words were collected from the Old Testament.

#### Romans 3

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Without the fear of God, there can be no blessing. Let us look at ourselves. Do we fear the Lord in the true sense? Unless you fear the Lord, there will be no blessing, no peace and no joy.

There are so many verses in the Scripture that emphasize the importance of fearing the Lord.

#### Psalm

111:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

What kinds of people are well-accepted in this world today? It is the competent people, excellent people, fascinating people and people who have a lot of money and authority. The Lord God seeks totally different kinds of people: those who are contrite and have broken hearts, those who respect the words of God in the Bible and fear the Lord.

Those who don't have a broken heart will never be blessed. Those who don't respect His words will have no blessing at all. Those who don't fear the Lord have no chance to be blessed no matter what they do. The Bible describes so many people who feared the Lord. For example Abraham, who is called the father of faith, left this confession. He said, "*I am only dust and ashes.*" He truly thought that way.

Dust and ashes have no value and are destined to be thrown out. Likewise, Abraham confessed from his heart, "I am absolutely valueless. I only deserve to be abandoned." After this, he was wonderfully blessed.

Asaph, one of the authors of the Psalms also feared the Lord. His confession can be found in this verse; "*I was too stupid and didn't realize I was acting like a wild animal with you.*" Those who fear the Lord are those who humble themselves and have broken hearts. And they come to realize how valueless and empty they are, by being illuminated by the light of the Lord. Today, what kind of people is the Lord looking for? One of the answers can be found in Isaiah, Chapter 66;

#### Isaiah

66:2 But this is the one to whom I will look favorably: to the one who is humble and contrite in spirit, and who trembles at my message.

To those who have attained the salvation of the Lord, Paul wrote a letter. He needed to write this, not to non-believers, but to the believers;

#### Galatians

5:19 Now the actions of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, promiscuity, 20 idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of anger, quarrels, conflicts, factions, 21 envy, murder, drunkenness, wild partying, and things like that.

Why are there still so many people walking the path of destruction without even hearing about Jesus?

Needless to say, it is all because of the sins of us, the believers. It is because we put too much importance on our own desires. Why are we, as brothers and sisters who are already parts of Jesus' body, so weak, powerless and spineless to tackle the evil spirits? Isn't it because we hold ourselves in high esteem?

Why are so many brothers and sisters so weak-hearted, lazy and self-pleased? It is because they only seek for their own satisfaction. Our hearts, which are supposed to be the sanctuary of God, very often turn to the castle of the devil. Our hearts, which ought to be the sanctuary of God, so easily turn to hideouts for bandits. Unfortunately, very few believers realize and care about this danger.

We were saved by the Lord to become His vessel, to serve the Lord. However, very often, the old men inside us have been controlling and guiding us. Do the thoughts that come into our minds meet the purposes of Jesus? Do we look up to the Lord? Is the desire to form the image of Jesus inside us sincere and pure? Paul could comment on this.

He could say, "We were saved to work together with God with the help of the Holy Spirits." Do we truly deserve to serve His intentions? Can Jesus use us exactly the way He wants? Or are we acting just the way we want? Paul fought sincerely and never stopped praying for the growth of his fellow believers. Let's read some verses he wrote;

#### 1 Corinthians 6

13 Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food, but God will make them both unnecessary. The body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

14 God raised the Lord, and by his power he will also raise us.

15 You know that your bodies belong to the Messiah, don't you? Should I take what belongs to the Messiah and unite them with a prostitute? Certainly not!

16 You know that the person who unites himself with a prostitute becomes one body with her, don't you? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."

17 But the person who unites himself with the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

18 Keep on running away from sexual immorality. Any other sin that a person commits is outside his body, but the person who sins sexually sins against his own body.

19 You know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received

from God, don't you? You do not belong to yourselves,  
 20 because you were bought for a price. Therefore, glorify God with your bodies.

Jesus paid the price and redeemed us. So, we were accepted as the body of Jesus. The body has to obey the head. How disobedient we are to the Lord! How arrogant are we? Instead of becoming the vessels that are used as the body of Jesus, haven't we been walking in the wrong direction?

James too contemplated this and decided to write these harsh words. He pointed these words to believers, not calling them 'dear brothers and sisters' but instead;

Jacob  
 4:4 You adulterers! Don't you know that friendship with the world means hostility with God? So whoever wants to be a friend of this world is an enemy of God.

Those who realize how they appear to the Lord would admit and say just like the tax collector, "I am the thief, I committed adultery and I am totally useless in front of the Lord." How do we get to the path of obtaining the blessing of the Lord? To be blessed by the Lord, you first need to realize that you are covered with filth, that you are lacking in so many important things, and then have hunger and thirst.

Many brothers and sisters complain about others instead of themselves. They criticize and judge other people. When we feel unhappy about other brothers and sisters, we are only pleasing the devil. Before we let out our complaints about other brothers and sisters, shouldn't we think of what we lack? What is the mission given to us believers? It is to stay as the sanctuary of God. We do not belong to ourselves anymore, but we belong to the Lord.

I would like to finish the sermon with these verses. Needless to say, these words too were meant for the believers of Jesus, who was raised high in heaven;

Revelation 2  
 4 However, I have this against you: You have abandoned the love you had at first.  
 5 Therefore, remember how far you have fallen. Repent and go back to what you were doing at first. If you don't, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place—unless you repent.

End