

Accomplished Plan of Salvation (11)

November 10th, 2015, Kichijouji Bible Study
Gotthold Beck

果たされた救いの計画 11
2015年11月10日、吉祥寺学び会
ゴットホルド・ベック

Ephesians

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah! He has blessed us in the Messiah with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm,

1:4 just as he chose us in the Messiah before the creation of the universe to be holy and blameless in his presence. In love

1:5 he predestined us for adoption to himself through Jesus the Messiah, according to the pleasure of his will,

1:6 so that we would praise his glorious grace that he gave us in the Beloved One.

[International Standard Version]

Romans

8: For if you live according to human nature, you are going to die, but if by the Spirit you continually put to death the activities of the body, you will live.

8:14 For all who are led by God's Spirit are God's children.

8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery that leads you into fear again. Instead, you have received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

In the past few meetings, we set up some questions and tried to find answers together. One of our questions was about the intention of the Lord in our lives. The answer was that he wants to let us have his life. It is for us to have the life the Lord has, which is the eternal life.

Secondly, we set up a question as to how we can obtain the eternal life of the Lord. The answer to this question was, when the Holy Spirit shows us our sins and Jesus, who sacrificed himself and died on behalf of our sins so that we confess our sins and rely on Jesus, the Holy Spirit will revive our dead spirits.

This recreates the fellowship with the Lord God, which was once shut off. This is what is called the regeneration in the Bible. Through nothing but this regeneration, we can obtain the life of the Lord. The conversion of the mind is truly a wonderful experience.

However, the conversion is not our goal. We are

delighted when we have a child. However, if the child does not grow at all but remains as a baby, it will cause nothing but grief. No growth, no joy. Likewise, it is only such Christians who grow internally and are constantly transformed to be like Jesus who please the Lord.

We need to be transformed into the image of Jesus gradually. It is easier for us believers to become like the world than to become like Jesus. We are easily adapted to this world through our job, education, lifestyle or conversation with others.

Such Christians may sincerely wish to live according to Jesus, but the devil is spreading his reign in their hearts. Even the saved believers are not free from the possibility of committing horrible sins or mistakes. If people have failed as believers, they are after all, considered as not saved in a true sense. Believers in Corinth of those days were very corrupt and committed many shameful sins.

The conversion occurs within the spirit of humans. Therefore, in the beginning, it may not be seen outwardly and in most of the cases, it is not visible by others. It is for certain that Jesus is not pleased with Christians who grow to become like the world. We absolutely need to become like the Son, Jesus.

Romans

8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that the Son might be the firstborn among many brothers.

This is a truly remarkable verse. When the saved people realize that the intention of the Lord God is not only to forgive all their sins, but he also wants them to be transformed to the image of Jesus, all things which have been so precious to them until then would turn as meaningless as dust instantly.

At the same time, we will be filled with great joy. All pains and troubles we have to endure are intentionally prepared in order for us to be transformed to the image of the Son. It is written in many places of the Bible that the desire of the Lord God is to sanctify us.

All pains and troubles we suffer are planned carefully in order for us to become like the Son. The intention of the Lord is to sanctify us. Sanctification is not the end of our trip. It is just one step of the process of becoming like the Son of the Lord God. Growth itself is not our purpose but our purpose is maturity. It is absolutely impossible to reach a goal if no road is connected to it. Likewise, we would never be able to be like the Son of God without the sanctification.

Today, I would like to go a little further and discuss with you the third thing in order to find the question we set up in our earlier meeting, which was about how much of the life of the Lord we can receive. It is maturity; in other words, it is to become like the Son of God.

To become like the Son of God indicates our maturing. The Lord God seeks the matured sons. That is to say, the Lord God wants the gathering of matured sons of himself who have grown through the faith of his Son, Jesus.

How is this explained in the New Testament? It can be seen from Romans, chapter 8 or Galatians that, in Greece in the era of the New Testament, when a new child was born, he was considered as the property of his father. He had to live among their servants and he was not qualified to be a successor of his father yet.

Only after he reached adulthood, he was regarded as the son who was qualified to be a successor of his father. A man, who used to be a child, grew up and when he reached maturity, he was finally regarded as the son. Likewise, those who have experienced the regeneration are merely regarded as children of God. Regenerated children will further be accepted as the sons through sanctification, transformation and growth. Let us look at the verse that explains this;

John
1:12 However, to all who received him, those believing in his name, he gave authority to become God's children.

This verse is telling us that all who have experienced the true regeneration are now the children of God. However, in Greek language, two different words, child and son are clearly distinguished.

Ephesians
1:5 he predestined us for adoption to himself through Jesus the Messiah, according to the pleasure of his will.

Here, it is written, "for adoption to himself." In the Greek language, in this verse, a word, 'son' is used intentionally instead of 'child'. It clearly refers to our status as his son, not just a child. When we have a status as his son, we are recognized to have legal independence and wisdom that is necessary. Jesus desires to lead all matured sons to his glory.

Hebrews
2:10 It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering as part of

his plan to glorify many children.

Although it is written, "many children" in this verse, again, the expression used in the original Bible is "his plan to glorify many sons."

Romans
8:23 However, not only the creation, but we who have the first fruits of the Spirit also groan inwardly as we eagerly await our adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Some people may misunderstand this verse and interpret it as that some stranger adopted a child, raised him and left all the estate to him; it could be anyone to anyone. This, of course, is not what was meant in the original Bible written in the Greek language. The Epistle to Romans was, needless to say, meant for believers. Brothers and sisters in Rome had accepted Jesus and were already children of God.

Paul wrote to those people who already had become children of God that the most important purpose of the Lord God was to reveal his glory through the Christians as his matured sons. The desire of the Lord is to reveal his glory to the world through these matured sons.

When we believe in Jesus and accept him, we certainly have experienced the regeneration. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we have Jesus dwelling in us and have obtained an eternal life. However, we are not finished yet. We need to continue to grow to become matured sons and daughters of God.

It is in order for us to share responsibility in the work of the Lord as co-workers of God, who are supposed to glorify him. In the New Testament, children and matured sons are clearly distinguished. Children do not have to make any efforts to be born.

However, there are some specific conditions which must be met in order for us to be recognized as matured sons, who bear honor and responsibility of the Lord. Unless these conditions are met, we would never be able to bear the honor and responsibility of the Lord. Two questions are raised here. Firstly, is it possible for whoever once was born from above to perish again? Then, what can people lose after they are born from above?

John
10:27 My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.
10:28 I give them eternal life, they will never be lost, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.
10:29 What my Father has given me is more

important than anything, and no one can snatch it from the Father's hand.

Here is the first question. Can anyone who once was born from above perish again? Never. Whoever once was born from above would never perish anymore. First of all, we need to realize that there are too many people who were converted based on their human intelligence.

So many people, after coming to churches or attending the assembly for years, still do not experience the true conversion. Moreover, many people learn the teachings in the Bible, which might have moved them emotionally, but they still refuse the true conversion. John described such people as;

1 John

2:19 They left us, but they were not part of us, for if they had been part of us, they would have stayed with us. Their leaving made it clear that none of them was really part of us.

If we do not regenerate, we would, sooner or later fall from the race and perish. However, the question here is whether it is possible for the truly regenerated people to perish. As we seek the answer to this question, we might be dismayed and another question is raised. That is to say, what is it to be reborn after all? To be reborn, or to be born from above is to become a new man. It means becoming a man who was liberated from the slavery of the devil and newly created. This is what is called the regeneration.

I would like to raise three simple questions. Firstly, how does the regeneration occur? Secondly, what do we experience in the regeneration? And thirdly, what is the regeneration based on?

First of all, how does the regeneration happen? Jesus once said;

John

3:6 What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.

He meant that the regeneration is the outcome of the work of the Holy Spirit. Peter also wrote fundamentally the same thing in his letter;

1 Peter

1:23 For you have been born again, not by a seed that perishes but by one that cannot perish—by the living and everlasting word of God.

At the moment when a spiritually dead man hears the word of the Lord and accepts it, the Holy Spirit comes

into his dead spirit and revives it. By this, he obtains the life, that is to say, the fellowship with Jesus, which means that he is now connected with God. To be born from above is only possible by the Holy Spirit and the word of God. The seed of the regeneration is the word of God. The word of the Lord as the seed remains forever, so does the regeneration.

Now, the second question is what we will experience at the time of regeneration.

John

3:16 For this is how God loved the world: He gave his unique Son so that everyone who believes in him might not be lost but have eternal life.

When we are regenerated, we receive an eternal life.

2 Peter

1:3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the full knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and excellence.

1:4 Through these he has given us his precious and wonderful promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, seeing that you have escaped the corruption that is in the world caused by evil desires.

When we are regenerated, we will come to participate in the divine nature.

Ephesians

1:13 You, too, have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed in the Messiah, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

First of all, we need to listen. Secondly, we have to believe. Then thirdly, we take action. It is written that when we were regenerated, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit. What was received as a result of the regeneration can never be taken away. It is because the eternal life would never die and the nature of the Lord would never disappear. Once we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, nothing can erase it. Now, what is the regeneration based on?

Hebrews

10:14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

Regeneration is based on the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus.

Romans

3:21 But now, apart from the Law, God's

righteousness is revealed and is attested by the Law and the Prophets.

3:24 By his grace they are justified freely through the redemption that is in the Messiah Jesus.

3:28 For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the actions prescribed by the Law.

Regeneration is based on the achievement of Jesus.

Ephesians

2: For by such grace you have been saved through faith. This does not come from you; it is the gift of God

2:9 and not the result of actions, to put a stop to all boasting.

Regeneration is based on the work of Jesus.

Conversion is something we receive for no charge as a gift. Just like babies do not bear on their own effort, we are not able to regenerate ourselves. Regeneration is made possible by the sacrificial death of Jesus, his achievements and his works, which means that it will never be lost forever. It is because the sacrificial death of Jesus would never lose its power. It is because the achievement of Jesus will never be diminished. It is because the work Jesus has accomplished is perfect. Let me finish this sermon with this verse;

1 John

3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given us: We are called God's children—and that is what we are!

End