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Peter's Repentance

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HELLO EVERYONE, WE HAVE HELD THE IYF WORLD CAMP opening ceremony twice here at the Olympic Gymnasium. This will be our third event. Until now, we have held our conferences at Jamsil Gymnasium. I am thankful that I am able to share the Word of God with you for one week in such a nice place. There must have been many events held at this Olympic Gymnasium. I believe that the Lord will be pleased with us sharing these words of the gospel. Tonight, we will read the words in Matthew chapter 26. I will read from Matthew chapter 26, verse 69.

Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto

them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

I read up to the words of verse 75.

Repentance: the Exact Process of Change

This time, I will be preaching to you about the topics of repentance and faith. We train college students and send them all over the world as short term missionaries for one year. Most of these students are students who only live for themselves, but as I preach the Word of God to these students, the students change tremendously. And when I see this, I can't help but be thankful. This year, we have gathered and are currently training the students who will be going out in 2006. The students who are being trained attended our workshop a little while ago, and as they saw the students who went before them, they were very amazed and asked, "Pastor, after these four days of training at the workshop, how long is our next training session?"

"Three weeks."

"Can we change as they have in that short amount of time? Can we also become like them?"

This is what all the students ask. But last October 27th through the 30th, as we held the training session at our retreat center in Gimcheon, the students changed very much. Many of those stu-

dents are here tonight. As we teachers saw the image of these students changing, we and all those who were involved were all very amazed. Last week, we had a conference at the KBS Hall in Ulsan. During that time, there was an event held for the IYF students. During the event, we watched a play based on a true story that presented a student's life and how she had received salvation at the workshop we held in October. Most of the people in attendance watching this cried. How could it be that a person's life could change so much? Everyone, among us there are people who have gone to church for ten years, twenty years, and thirty years. It would be nice if we could do well in our spiritual lives. You want to live by faith and you want to have your prayers answered. You want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. But no matter how hard you try, it just does not work out.

I have searched everywhere in the Bible about the process of how people have changed. Peter changed, Apostle Paul changed, and the Samaritan woman changed.... There was surely a process to all of these people changing. That process of change is precisely defined as repentance. Sadly, many churches in Korea today do not teach about repentance Biblically and precisely. They simply tell people to confess their sins. "God, I have committed such and such sin. Forgive me." This is how people live their spiritual life. They repent and they sin; they repent again and sin again. No matter how much they repent--even if they do it a hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand times--they are still unable to depart from sin.

I preached from Romans chapter three last spring at Jamsil Gymnasium. Before that, I preached about the tabernacle and Noah's flood. This time, I am going to be preaching about true repentance. If one goes through the true repentance the Bible speaks of, it is like the change a broken tool makes when melted in

a furnace. It comes out of the furnace recast as a new tool. In the same way, a change will be brought about in your heart. The Bible calls the process that brings about true change repentance.

Beginning tonight, I will be speaking to you, step by step, about repentance. How did Peter repent and how did he change? How did Judas Iscariot repent so that he was unable to receive the grace of God? What kind of repentance did Apostle Paul have whereby he gained true faith? What kind of spiritual life did Cain have? What kind of repentance did he have? We will have time for reflecting those aspects upon our lives and distinguishing between them. If you do not do a single thing from now on and simply listen to the words I am preaching, I believe that faith will come into your hearts. I hope you will receive such grace.

You Must Play the Piano Relaxed

Soon after marrying my wife, we had a beautiful daughter. I don't know whether anyone else may say so, but to me, I can't believe how such a beautiful daughter could exist in this world. When she was young, I took her traveling with me on many occasions. One time when my daughter was four or five years old, we were riding on an express bus and a black man sat next to me. I hadn't noticed and sat down, but when my daughter stared at the black man's face for a long time, she shouted and began to cry. I felt so sorry and I apologized to that black gentleman. I told him that my daughter was like that because she had never seen a different world yet. He smiled and said that it was okay. Some people who sat nearby switched seats with us and gave my daughter chocolate as we continued our travel.

When I was single, I thought to myself that if I marry and have a daughter, I would have her learn to play the piano. I would imag-

ine, “Ah, when I am tired, I will tell my daughter to play the piano and I will listen to the piano being played.” But after getting married and my daughter and son were born, our circumstances as they were growing up were very difficult. Nowadays, they say that if you are not close to Benjamin Franklin, it is difficult to live. At that time, not just Benjamin Franklin, but it was difficult for me to see the faces of Abraham Lincoln or George Washington.

Because we were so busy living, we didn’t even have time to think of teaching my daughter the piano, nor did we have the finances to have her taught. Our children grew up without knowing what private lessons were.

One day, a certain pastor’s wife gave us a small used piano that she had played before she got married. Perhaps it was because I hoped for such a thing that my daughter often played that piano. She played Beyer, the beginning piano book, and she would play hymns. And although she was quite late in learning the piano, she would also play the piano at church services. After my daughter was grown, she had the heart to learn the piano. So she went to the United States, met a famous professor and learned the piano. One time, I was listening to my daughter playing the piano, and I thought in my heart, “Wow, that professor is good,” meaning that the sound of her playing the piano had changed.

A few years later, I traveled to Russia with my daughter. In the city of St. Petersburg, which long ago was called Leningrad; one of the world renowned cities for music, a world-class pianist named Isabella (Professor Isabella) received salvation. She was very happy to receive salvation, and my daughter began to learn the piano from her. After practicing the piano in Russia for many days, she returned to Korea. I wanted to see her so my wife and I went to meet her at Incheon Airport. I was very happy to see her because it had been a long time. She sat in the back of my car and I was driv-

ing. My daughter couldn't close her mouth because she was so busy talking about the things that had happened in Russia. Among them, she began to talk about the piano.

"Father, you know the piano. It doesn't work just because I am trying to control the piano. The piano and I have to become one. Father, before, I tried to play the piano well, but I can't do it when I have that heart. I have to empty my heart. The professor who taught me the piano always said to me, 'Playing the piano is like watering flowerpots. When you pour water into flowerpots, the water becomes absorbed. In the same way, you must be absorbed into the piano.' Father, this is exactly like spiritual life."

"Is that how it is when you play the piano?"

"Yes, Father. Even though you play the same piano striking the same keys, when you relax and play the piano, the sound becomes clean, pure, and light. You must be relaxed in order to have the touch that makes such sound."

"Hey, sounds are made when you strike the keys of the piano. How can you make the sound when you relax?"

"No, Father, it is not so. You must relax."

What do I know about the piano? Do, Re, Mi, Fa; that is all I know. People who play the piano for the first time play with all their might. They can play that way up to a certain point, but when they enter the next level, there is a secret to playing the piano. So what is the difference between people who have learned the piano in Korea and people who have learned the piano in a country of music? Inside Korea, they can't learn about this kind of a world.

Among our IYF teachers, there is a person named Young-woo Jin. This teacher studies plants. In my sermon, he listened to the words, "That which is impossible with men, God accomplishes." One day, he read a thesis on taxol. The substance taxol is an anti-cancer medicine extracted from yew trees. One must cut down

four one-hundred-year-old yew trees to get one gram of taxol. With one gram, they can make 35 to 50 doses of anticancer medicine. There is a limited supply of yew trees and therefore, many doctors in the world are studying how to cultivate taxol, but they have been unable to. This teacher had once read in a thesis that doing such a thing would be impossible. After reading that, he thought, "That which is impossible with the powers of men, God does. Then God will do this work." So from then on, he began to research taxol with his laboratory chief.

He has begun his research to conquer cancer. He has been issued a patent, and together with Edinburgh University of the UK, he is in the process of studying to make taxol. This is what I like to say these days, "Don't get cancer. But if you must, get it in two years." That is because in two years, there will be more than enough taxol produced.

What he says is that botanists in the world search for compounds in plants, but they do so in the opposite direction from the words of God. He also says that his research is set on the standards of the words in the Bible he hears at his church; that is why the research goes so well.

One must not strike the piano with all his might to play it, but the person must relax and be absorbed into the piano. This is also true with all the principles of the world. This is true with swimming. At first, people swim using powerful strokes, but they do not move forward very well. They say you must relax to move forward smoothly. My daughter-in-law was a swimmer. That is why when she married my son, she had such wide shoulders that my wife only stared at them. When my son and daughter-in-law swim, they tell me, "Father, you must relax."

"Hey, if I relax, I am going to sink."

"That's not true. Relax." This is a person who truly knows how

to swim.

Every principle of the world is this way. When a baseball player in the batter's box has too much strength, the commentator says, "He is forcing it. There is too much strength in him. That is why it is not working." In boxing, it seems that you must strike the person with all your might to knock him out. "There is too much strength in his shoulders. It's an open blow." That is what they say. It means that people must relax.

This is also true in the world of spiritual life. When people first enter the spiritual world, they only think about simply keeping the Ten Commandments, going to church on Sundays, reading the Bible, praying hard, and zealously being faithful. They busily do things. As they continue at that level of spiritual life, a change comes upon their lives. If they live their spiritual life without any thought, they just continue to labor with their own effort until they become old and die. But if people would think a little deeper, they'd conclude, "It is not going to work out because I do it with all my might. Ah, spiritual life doesn't work out because I am trying to do it with all of my effort. My spiritual life doesn't work out because I am pouring all of my heart into it." People are able to sense this. If people live their spiritual life thoughtlessly, they can't think like this throughout their entire lives. But in the middle of their spiritual lives, one day, people arrive at the point; "Ah, spiritual life will not work out just because I try hard, labor, or am loyal." From then on, their spiritual life begins to change.

I Will Never Deny You, Lord

Tonight, we read the words about Peter. One day, Peter was fishing at the Sea of Galilee and met Jesus. Just before Peter met Jesus, he had cast his net all night without catching a single

fish, so he was washing his empty net. Right then, Jesus boarded Peter's ship. After Jesus told Peter to set his ship out from the land a little bit, He preached the words of God to the multitude from the ship. He told Peter to launch out into the deep and let down his net for a draught after He finished preaching. According to these words, Peter said, "Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing. Nevertheless, at thy words, I will let down the net." And he let down the net and caught many fish.

Peter was shocked that day. Peter thought, "It seems that this man has never fished. How was I able to catch this many fish by listening to His words?" Peter was completely startled. So he said to Jesus, "Lord, depart from me for I am a sinner." Jesus said to Peter, "Peter, follow me. I will make you a fisher of men." At that instant, Peter threw his boat, net, and everything away, and followed the Lord. Peter had abandoned his ship, his net, and the fish he had caught, but he was not able to throw away believing in himself. That is why, even in following the Lord, he still followed his own thoughts.

When I read the Bible and see the lives of the powerful servants who have been preciously used by God, there was a certain point in their lives that allowed them to become used by God. Peter didn't reach such a point for a long time. He just lived on. In the words that we read this evening, he arrived at the capturing of Jesus. That evening, Jesus spoke to the disciples at the Last Supper, "One of you shall betray me."

Right then, the disciples became worried. Afterwards, Jesus said, "All ye shall be offended this night."

That was what He said, and right then Peter replied, "Lord, what do you mean? Though all men shall be offended because of you, yet I will never be offended."

And Jesus spoke again, "Peter, before a cock crows, you shall

deny me thrice.”

“Master, how can you say such a thing? If anyone would deny you, it would be Andrew, James, or John. Yet although I should die with you, yet I will not deny you.”

Here it shows that Peter's thoughts were so different from the thoughts of Jesus. When Jesus says, “You shall deny me thrice,” to Peter, he should say, “Lord, will I deny you? Then, what am I supposed to do?” Saying, “Though I should die with you, yet I will not deny you,” is a heart of believing in himself. If you believe in yourself as you believe in God, what kind of spiritual life would you have? People who believe in themselves, even if they believe in God, believe according to their own methods. That's why even though the Lord said, “You will deny me thrice,” Peter said, “I will not deny you. I said that I will not deny you. Why do you keep saying that I will deny you?” and exerted his own thoughts.

When people begin their spiritual lives, they try hard and with the heart, “All I need to do is pray hard, keep the law and be loyal.” They try to believe but when they actually try to do it, they arrive at their limits one day and they realize, “I can't keep the law.” They realize they can't do things the way they make up their minds to do. People who have not experienced this say, “All I have to do is go to church on Sundays. All I have to do is be loyal. All I have to do is pray. I just need not to sin. All I have to do is be good.” People who live this way, because they dwell within the spiritual life of trying to do everything themselves, can never reach the next level of spiritual life throughout their lives.

When people who play the piano reach a certain level as they sincerely play, they come to realize that the sound doesn't become better or clearer just because they strike harder. When they don't know this, they just play the piano mindlessly. As they listen to people who play the piano very well, they come to hear sounds

coming from the piano that are completely different from the way they play even if it is the same piano. “How can that piano make such clear sounds? How are such sounds coming about? Why can’t I do that?”

People who play the piano well, although they do not put any strength into it and simply play naturally, make beautiful sounds. They see this and come to realize, “Ah, things will not go well just because I put strength into it.” With swimming, it is not necessary to stroke the water by putting great strength into it. People who swim well, even though they are simply relaxed, move forward really well. How can that swimmer move forward easily although he doesn’t put much strength into it? Before seeing this, people think what they are doing is the best way. But once they see this, they enter into the next level.

Do you know what people who make money say? They say that you should not try to make money. If you try to make money, money will avoid you. They say, “Money has to come looking for you. You are not trying to make money, but the money comes looking for you. Then, you can make money. Don’t follow after money to make money.”

I read an interview in the IYF magazine about the famous hiker, Hong-gil Um, who conquered Mt. Everest. Upon reading his story, I thought in my heart, “If this man believes in Jesus, he will be very good at living a spiritual life.” The words God and Jesus were missing, but he was speaking as someone that had attained high levels of spiritual life. One of his underclassmen who was very close to him was holding on to a rope on Mt. Everest and froze to death. To bring back the corpse, although it was extremely dangerous, he risked his life to climb Mt. Everest. He tried to bring the corpse of his underclassman all the way to Korea, but he was unable to do so and they had a burial on the mountain. What he

said was, "I can't climb the mountain because I try to climb it. The mountain must permit me to do so." When he climbs the mountain, it already knows all about his heart. Unless he throws his ambitions away, the mountain will not give him permission. He tried to bring back the corpse of his loving underclassman to Korea. He thought in his heart, "This is as far as the mountain will permit me." He said, "Let us bury him here," and he buried him on the mountain and returned.

Everyone, in spiritual life there is a level we reach, and there is a level that God permits. No matter who it is, people who begin spiritual life for the first time think that if they pray hard, are loyal, and try hard, their spiritual life will work out. I listened to the sermons of many pastors on Christian television, and those pastors say, "Everyone, let us be loyal and let us serve God with all of our strength." But they are lying. Why? They have never done that. People who have tried know that they are unable to.

I once heard a person say that he read the Old and New Testaments of the Bible 175 times in one year. I knew right away, "That person has not once read the whole Bible." If I don't eat anything, and do nothing but just read the Bible all day long, it takes exactly one week to read the entire Old and New Testaments. So if you do not do anything but read the Bible, you can read the Bible fifty times in one year. But when I hear this man say that he read the Bible 175 times in one year, I know that he has not once read the Bible properly. People who have read the Bible know how long it takes to read the Bible through once. I don't read slowly. If I read the words with my eyes, it takes two minutes to read one page. The Bible is approximately 1,750 pages, so to read them all it takes a full 60 hours. But to have read it 175 times in one year, I recognized the fact that he has actually not read the Bible even once.

Everyone, people who say that they have gotten blessed because

they were loyal to the Lord are people who have never done that. They are lying. Nowhere in the Bible does it say people were blessed for trying hard and sincerely being loyal. That is why people have a fake, hypocritical, and superficial spiritual life. They say that they fasted for several days and saw a vision while enchanted. Sure, you may see a vision, but that is not spiritual life. True spiritual life begins when you fail in directing your own spiritual life. People who do not fail in spiritual life try to do things themselves; then their spiritual life cannot work out. You have to fail in order to give up on yourself. When you give up on yourself, then faith to believe in the Lord comes. If you think you are great, try hard, and work hard, then faith becomes superficial and true faith absolutely cannot come about.

The Dream of the Prodigal Son

The story of the prodigal son in Luke chapter 15 reads, *A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.* What is the meaning in these words? When a father gives his wealth to his son, if the son has no confidence, the son would say, "I am young so what am I supposed to do with this wealth? I don't know what to do." But in the prodigal son's heart, he had confidence. He felt strongly in his heart, "Father, do you think I am a little child? Come on, give me your wealth. I will do just fine." His father gave a portion of his wealth to his son. And not many days afterward, the son took that wealth and went to a faraway country and lived riotously. Then all of his wealth ran out and he began to be in need. A famine hit that land and there was nothing to eat.

And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have

filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

Even there, the prodigal son lasted as long as he could. Until when? Until his heart crumbled down.

Spiritual life is impossible because the tree called “myself” is wicked, dirty, and has fallen into sin. Spiritual life is cutting down the tree called, myself. You must deny the existence of yourself. I was thinking about what I should write on the front page of the sermon notes you have before you. I wrote the words, “Free from Sin.” This is simply my testimony. Since I was young, without knowing anything, I zealously went to church. As I grew, I sinned. The church told me to repent whenever I sinned. “God, I committed such and such sins. Forgive me. I’ve committed such a sin. Forgive me,” I would say, and I continued like that. I would sin and repent. And repent and sin. Repent and again sin. I continued living in this condition. This is not repentance. That is not turning from sin. That is not denying myself. After I received salvation, I saw that all the Christians of Korea, today, were living in this manner: repent and sin, and repent and sin.

When I was ministering at Hanbat Central Church, in Daejeon, below our church was a small church named Calvary Church. Our church’s early morning service is at 5:30 in the morning, but that church had their service at 5 o’clock. Whenever 5 o’clock came, people from that church would cry. In the winter time, services are held with the windows closed, so it’s okay. But in the summer time, it is hot, so the windows are open and we can hear all their crying. One early morning, a man took a flashlight and went into that church. Everybody was crying and he yelled out, “Let me sleep! Let me sleep!” Why were they crying? The Bible says, “Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks.” That’s what the Bible says. Did it say, “Cry evermore. Sob without ceas-

ing. In everything cry tearfully”? Is that what it says? Why do people do that?

Spiritual life is believing in Jesus. Because I can't do it myself, I believe the Lord will do everything in my place and I will leave my life to the Lord. People say spiritual life is tiring and wearisome, which means that you are doing it yourself.

I often travel on airplanes. I do not know how to fly an airplane at all, but it is not a problem in the least. It is because a skilled pilot is flying the plane. It is a problem when you are trying to live your spiritual life by yourself. If Jesus takes charge of your life and takes charge of your sin, and if He takes charge of your spiritual life and does everything for you, will there still be a problem? No!

The younger son took his father's wealth and went to a faraway country. He tried to do business himself. He thought he would do well running a business and the things his father did seemed insufficient. "Only if my father gives me the wealth, I can do well in business. I don't know why my father is like that. I don't understand him." But the father gave him wealth. And how excited he must have been! With that money, he would run a business and make a lot of money. If it were today, he would want to drive a nice Mercedes, honking the horn as he came home.

"Father, your younger son is here! How have you been? Why don't you come see my house?"

His father would ride in the beautiful car as his son drove into his estate. "From here, all the land within a 30 mile radius is my land."

"Father, from the entrance to the master bedroom is three miles. You have to ride a car to come in. On this side is my yacht harbor and on this side is my private jet. And on this side, there is my sedan. Father, all the trees in my house are tropical trees imported from South America. And all the gold fish I have cost 5,000 dol-

lars per fish. And see all the antiques in my house? That piece over there was used by Qin Shi Huang a long time ago. And those were things that were used by emperors in Europe. Father, do you know how expensive they are? I have made a lot of money!”

This is what the son wanted to boast.

You, too, are that way. Like the younger son, you prayed well, you were loyal, you read the Bible zealously. And as you display all the things you've done you want to say, “God, look! I did all these things. God, I fasted for 40 days and prayed like this. And with my loyalty, we opened up a chapel. God, how do you like it? Great, isn't it? Let me into heaven.” That is what people think. You all want this kind of spiritual life, but that is not grace. These are the wages for your effort. God knows that sin can't be washed away through the efforts of man and that man can't attain salvation through his labor. That is why no matter how loyal you are and no matter how much effort you make, He doesn't even glance at it.

The story of the prodigal son in the book of Luke was a story Jesus made up. Let me ask you one thing. In actuality, aren't there many sons who did well taking their father's wealth and going to a faraway country? Even among your neighbors, there are many people who came to Seoul with nothing and became rich.

I once read the autobiography of Chu-yung Jung, the founder of Hyundai. It was long ago and I don't remember the story exactly, but Mr. Chu-yung Jung was born in North Korea and ran away, was captured, and put in jail. He ran away again and got a job delivering rice. Through that process, he succeeded and created the Hyundai Company. They call the city of Ulsan, the city of Hyundai.

Many cars are sold abroad and within our country, and that's why even though other cities may have fallen into a recession, Ulsan doesn't fall into a recession. This was how successful Mr.

Chu-yung Jung was. But why does the Bible leave out the stories of people who have succeeded? Why does it include the story of the son taking his father's wealth, going out and staying with harlots, and herding pigs in a pigpen? Why doesn't the Bible speak of positive things?

The Bible was not written only for stories; it illustrates the world of our hearts. Among you here at the Olympic Gymnasium are some who make a lot of money, have good lives, and have succeeded in life. There may be some people who came to Seoul empty-handed, but through their hard work and labor, they made money, created a great business, became successful, and are helping many people. But to teach that spiritual life can't be achieved through one's efforts and labor, there is the story of the prodigal son becoming a beggar. If you, too, live a spiritual life of making an effort, laboring, and straining, you will become like the prodigal son.

Point of Change

The prodigal son one day thought, "There are so many hired servants in my father's house who have bread enough to spare. I perish here with hunger. I will go to my father and say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee and are no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me one of your hired servants.'"

Everyone, this is a story of repentance. It shows what repentance is. Until that point, the younger son wanted to make money in business to show his father. But that didn't work out so he went down to the pigpen. Just because he went to the pigpen doesn't mean that he had given up on himself. "Even though I am like this, if I work a little harder, my master will acknowledge it. Then

he will give me food and I will eat. And if I work a little harder, and if I gather the funds, and start doing business....” That is the heart the younger son always had.

One day a hunter went out to hunt and saw a fox sleeping. “I’d better catch it.” And he thought, “What am I going to do if I catch it? I will sell my fox and buy a hen. If I buy the hen, it will lay many eggs. And with that, I will buy a female pig. When the female pig grows and has many babies, then I am going to sell them and buy a calf. The calf will grow and have many babies. Then I will sell them and buy land. I am going to buy a brick house and get married.” He wanted to shoot the fox and aimed his gun. However, the fox had run away. The fox had been sleeping until then but had awakened and run away while the hunter raised many cows, built a brick house, and met a beautiful woman and married her. It was nowhere to be seen. So he had lost his chicks, hens, pigs, calves, a house and a wife; he lost everything. The fox had taken all of that with him.

Although the younger son lived in the pigpen, he had these kinds of dreams: “If I work a little harder, the owner will acknowledge it and give me some food, then I will work a little harder and make some money. Later on, I will start a business.”

Everyone, people live their lives feeling the fun of these kinds of illusions. Gamblers gamble because they want to win. Everyone wants to win. There is no one who wants to lose. Who tries to lose when they gamble? They only think of winning and they never consider losing. That’s why it seems that this time I will win, this time I will surely win. As men gamble away their money, they may even wager their wives and gamble. “What’s so bad about wagering your wife and gambling? I am going to win.” Isn’t that so? Because they think they will win, they are able to wager anything. That’s why people wager the ownership of their land, their houses,

and their children's college tuition.

Foolish people, even they become like the prodigal son. "This time I feel like I am going to make a lot of money." Continuing along that way, how far did he go?

And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

It is that he should discover that the result of walking his path was death, and turning his heart from him. "This is the result of what I did and I will no longer do it myself, but leave control of my life up to my father. I will allow my father to do things." That's how his heart changed and that's why he was able to go back.

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: (Luke 15:20-23)

When did it become time for this son to wear good clothes, shoes, a ring on his hand, and eat the fatted calf? When he came to know that everything about him was a failure. It was when he gave up and denied himself, and it was when he left control of his life completely to his father.

Everyone, this is the point we must arrive at in spiritual life. As a pastor, when I meet many saints, it shows: "Ah, this person has not reached that point or this person has gone beyond that point."

Bu-chee Kim, a Shoe Salesman from Chicago

There was a man named, Bu-chee Kim, from Chicago, in the United States. This person sold shoes at a shoe store in Chicago. He was a clerk in a large store. He was amazingly good at selling shoes. When customers would come and meet this man, he would send them away with at least a new pair of sandals. He would never simply let them go away. When I heard about this, I was amazed. What did he say that enabled him to do that? As a pastor, if I did not simply send people away, but send them all away changed, how nice that would be!

This person, too, had sins and he came to our Good News Mission Chicago Church and received salvation. After receiving salvation and having begun a spiritual life, he felt this in his heart: "What is the point of making money? What more can I do than feed myself? This gospel is so great and I want to become a preacher who preaches the gospel." So he applied to the missionary school in Korea. One day, he went to the shoe store owner and said, "Sir, I will work for one more month and then I will quit."

The owner was surprised. Bu-chee Kim was the driving force of the store.

"Mr. Kim, what's wrong? Is the treatment not good enough? Did we somehow disappoint you? Please tell me."

"It's nothing like that, but I want to go to missionary school in Korea."

"Why do you want to go to missionary school?"

"You don't understand, I must go there."

"Then go after one year. Mr. Kim, it is good that you are going to missionary school, but what's going to happen to our store? Who is going to sell if you are not here? Stay here a little bit longer, then go."

“I have made up my mind to go.”

The owner was very disappointed. So before Bu-chee Kim left, the two of them got together over dinner.

He said to him, “Mr. Kim, when you go to Korea, study hard and become a great missionary. But if you run into hardships, come to our store anytime. We’ll work together.”

He got on the airplane to come to Korea. He threw his job and everything away to become a gospel preacher, but he couldn’t throw away the words, “Whenever you run into hardships, come to my store.” He was studying in missionary school and was being trained in spiritual life. Other people were being trained with all of their hearts, but he thought, “The owner told me to come anytime. If this doesn’t work out, I will just go and sell shoes. I am good at selling shoes.” Because he was there with that heart, he couldn’t be trained. It’s just like a germ invisible to the eyes that enters the body and kills a person. This petty thought had entered him. The difference between him and the other missionary students after six months was like the difference between heaven and earth.

He had believed in himself. “I am good at selling shoes. I can cater to any customer’s heart without upsetting him.” After six months, even he noticed that there was such a great difference between the other students and him so he ran away. “If it doesn’t work out, what am I going to do? It will be good to be a missionary, but if not, oh well. I will just go back to Chicago.” He got off at the airport in Chicago and called the owner of the shoe store.

“Sir, I am back.”

“Oh, Mr. Kim, you are back. Welcome.”

From that day on, he went to the shoe store. But for some reason, whereas he was so good at selling shoes before, he couldn’t sell them so well now. He would get into arguments with custom-

ers. But the owner thought, "That's because he hasn't done this for six months. I know he has great skills in selling shoes. He will be fine again." And the owner waited. For one week, shoes were selling in every corner of the store but not Mr. Kim's. Every customer who came got upset and angry and left. He wasn't like that before. Since he used to be so good, the owner trusted him. After two or three weeks passed by, it still wasn't working. One day after dinner, the owner asked him to have a cup of coffee. The two of them sat down and spoke over coffee.

"Mr. Kim, I have something to ask you."

"What is it?"

"Why did you come back from the missionary school?"

"Well...."

"Go back. No matter how much I think about it, I think God is blocking this. I really like you, Mr. Kim, but if you stay here, God is going to completely destroy our store. Please go back."

Oh, that confidence! "I am good at selling shoes. I always sell shoes to customers who come to me. The owner recognizes this. There is no one who is as good at sales in Chicago as I am. I am good at selling shoes." The heart of his believing in himself had not once been scratched, but that belief began to crack.

All men think, "Oh, my family is doing well because of me." That is why they always say to their wives, "If I listen to you, this family isn't going to do well. Because of me doing everything, we are living this well off at least."

A homeless father and son were walking along their way and saw a house on fire. All the people were just running around crying, not being able to go in. When they saw that, the homeless son asked the father, "Father, we don't need to worry about a fire, do we?"

"Hey, thank your father for that."

Everybody believes in themselves.

In the heart of Bu-chee Kim, the thought that he was a good shoe salesman crumbled. "I didn't know I could be like this at times. I am good at selling. I am good. I didn't know I was this way. Even though I want to go back to the missionary school in Korea, because what I did when I ran away, I can't go back." One of our pastors in our mission went to America for a conference. One day, as Brother Bu-chee Kim gave that pastor his testimony, he said, "I have been arrogant." He repented tearfully.

That pastor called me and said, "Pastor Park, Brother Bu-chee Kim has broken his heart and repented."

"Tell him to come to Korea."

He came to Korea. The heart he had six months ago, "I am good at selling shoes, and if it doesn't work out in missionary school, all I have to do is go to the shoe store. I am different from the others," all came crumbling down. The thoughts that he could do it crumbled down. "If the Lord doesn't bestow grace upon me, everything I do is in vain. How foolish it was to believe in myself." He came to realize that fact.

Rather than during the training he received in the missionary school over the first six months, God had indeed showed him his true image while he was back at the shoe store for one month. He realized that he had sold shoes well until now by the grace of God. He came to know he was a human who was truly nothing. When the heart to believe in himself came crumbling down, he changed very much. He was trained in the missionary school and his faith grew so much that the others couldn't keep up with him. We sent him as a missionary to Anchorage, Alaska where many Eskimos lived. In the winter time in Anchorage, the sun rises at 11 am and sets at 2 pm. I heard that at night time, sometimes bears would come into the kitchen and go through things. When you drive

your car around, sometimes you may run into different kinds of animals. He witnessed there and many people in Anchorage received salvation. So he stayed in rugged Anchorage for a few years, and a couple of years ago, he was sent to Hawaii. We can't say how beautiful the church in Hawaii has become.

Peter Who Finally Crumbled Down

You have to go through this process in spiritual life. People who do not go through this process trust themselves. "All I have to do is pray. All I have to do is keep the law. All I have to do is quit drinking, and all I have to do is give offerings." Because they are doing it themselves, why would God need to help them? When does spiritual life begin to work? Spiritual life begins to work when nothing else works even when you pray; when nothing works when you try to keep the law; and when nothing works when you quit drinking. When nothing works no matter what you do, that is when spiritual life begins to work. The prodigal son did not change through doing something well and pleasing his father. He changed when nothing worked out.

Confessing that you have stolen, committed adultery, and lied is not repentance.

"God, I can't do it. God I am a descendant of Adam. I am a seed of sin. If you plant a peanut, peanuts are borne. If barley is planted, barley is borne. If rice is planted, rice is borne. If cotton is planted, cotton is borne. In the same way, I am a seed of sin. There is no fruit I can produce other than sin. How could I, a tree of sin, produce any good? How can a peanut plant ever bear apples? How can beans be borne from barley? How can red beans be borne from rice? I am a seed of sin. The core of my heart is evil and dirty. Filthy and evil thoughts arise in me. I indulge in ambitions.

Hatred arises in me. Time and time again, a lustful heart arises. I am an evil human who does wicked things! Oh God, have compassion on me! I am a dirty seed of sin, who has dirty sins springing up in me.”

That is true repentance. If people don't know their core, people say, “All I have to do is pray hard and be a good person. All I have to do is not sin and keep the law. People who do not know themselves try to do everything on their own. All of this deceives our conscience. As you live your spiritual life, you will say the same thing Apostle Paul said: “Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?”

“Why can't I ever do any good? Why does an evil heart arise in me? Why do I have a hateful heart inside of me? Why does such a dirty heart torture me inside?”

Just as David said, “I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me,” you must know that, by nature, you are nothing but sin. Everyone, the Bible says so. “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?”

One time, I had spiritual fellowship with an elder from Washington D.C., in the United States. He told me that as an elder, he did many great things. I asked the elder, “Elder, in America do the thistles produce figs?”

“No, they don't.”

“It is the same in Korea. By chance, are grapes borne from thorns in America?”

“No, they are not.”

“That's right. It is the same in Korea. Then Elder, how did you produce good things on a tree of sin? You are very skilled.”

His mouth dropped open and he was unable to shut it.

“Elder, the difference between you and I is that I am a seed of sin, so evil springs up in me and I am filthy and dirty and unable

to do anything good. If I try to do something good, it seems as though it is going to work, but then it doesn't work. I can't do it because I am a seed of sin. But Elder, how did you bear such good fruit although you are a seed of sin?"

He was speechless. He had trusted himself. When you trust yourself, then you end up producing only fruit of sin. We must realize we are trees of sin. You must realize that no matter how hard you try, all you do is sin.

Peter did not know himself well. "All I have to do is not deny the Lord. All I have to do is throw my life away and follow the Lord." That night, as in the words we read tonight, Peter followed Jesus when Jesus was arrested. Everyone else ran away, but why didn't Peter run away? It was because he said, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended," and that he would not throw the Lord away. He followed, saying that he wouldn't deny the Lord, and then he ended up denying the Lord. A damsel there said, "I saw this man with Jesus." But Peter denied it saying, "I don't know what you are talking about."

Before this, Peter didn't know himself. He thought that if he tried not to deny Jesus, he wouldn't. He thought if he tried not to lie, he wouldn't. And he thought that he would not do something if he made up his mind not to. He loudly boasted, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." But that day, he denied the Lord three times. Peter's heart of belief in himself crumbled down through seeing this.

"Foolishly, I had believed in myself and was like this. I had relied on myself. I had lived following these kinds of thoughts!"

Peter experienced how foolish he was, so he denied himself. Now Peter threw all of his thoughts away, and when he denied himself, his life became an amazing one in which Jesus Christ lead and guided his heart.

True repentance is not saying, “God, I lied. God, I stole. God, I had an abortion. God, I committed adultery. Forgive me.” This is just speaking of one aspect. If you are a wild olive tree, it is not one branch that has to be cut off, but the entire tree trunk must be cut off and grafted onto a good olive tree. It is not that you must confess that you lied and stole.

But true repentance is saying, “God, I am a seed of sin, so that is why evil thoughts arise inside of me without end. So many dirty and lustful thoughts arise inside of me. Although I had not committed sin outwardly, in my heart, I endlessly committed adultery, murder, and lied. How can I, who am this way, ever be good? I cannot be. Therefore I deny myself. Loving Lord, now you take charge of my life. Lord, you rule over me now.”

When you throw away everything that you are trying to do and leave your life and spirit to the Lord, from that point on, the Lord lives and works inside of you.

It is impossible for us to wash away our own sins. But when you leave it to the Lord, it is so easy for the Lord to wash away your sin. It is difficult for you to quit drinking, smoking, and taking drugs. But it is so easy when the Lord does it. It is difficult for you to do good, but it is so easy if the Lord does it. That is why true repentance is giving up on everything that you’ve done until now. It is leaving your life completely in the hands of Jesus because you can’t do it yourself. True repentance is giving up on everything you are trying to do.

When such repentance is accomplished in you, the loving Lord begins to work inside of you. Repenting because you have committed adultery, thievery, murder, and having lied; repenting of such continual things is not true repentance. Because, by nature, I am a seed of sin, I can’t be saved through me doing everything. I can’t go to heaven by doing good. Giving up on what I do and leaving it

up to Jesus Christ is true repentance and true spiritual life.

When this is accomplished inside of you, and if you truly repent, the faith to believe in Jesus naturally arises in you and God will work within you. And I believe that you will live a bright and blessed life.