August 11, 2013

Your Lover

당신을 사랑하는 자

Romans 10:8-17

*8 In fact, it says, “The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart.” And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: 9 If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. 11 As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” 12 Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. 13 For “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? 15 And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!” 16 But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, “Lord, who has believed our message?” 17 So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.*

True love for the Lord leads to obedience and submission

Thought:

God loves us

His love is to a standard – holiness

Accept Jesus as your Lord (submit, obey, surrender) –

* Not to do as you please, when you please, how you please – but rather, submit to Him, who desires the best for us

Introduction (Video – Lifehouse Everything Skit)

**Have you ever felt that we, as the Church of Jesus Christ, are missing how we are called to live?
우리는 교회로서 하나님이 우리에게 요구하시는 삶을 놓치고 산다고 생각해 본적이 있습니까?**

When we think of being a Christian, we associate that with going to church, living a life of politeness . . . and I grew up believing that too . . .

I called myself a Christian

Involved in the church – became president of youth group – then served in college groups, took positions – led worship

Then served as an unofficial youth pastor after college

I must be certain that I am living as a good Christian, right? When you see people living this way, you can be sure this person is a follower of Christ, and certain he will enter heaven, right?

Christianity to me was a weekend thing. Something to get me respect in front of adults, something to show off my guitar skills, my knowledge of Christian music, show how much I know about computers – and brag about how much I “serve” in the church, while not many people cannot even match the things I do.

Perhaps even something I worked hard at to even try to impress girls, get close to girls –

And many of you – all it takes to be a good Christian is fairly simple:

Attend church on Sundays and generally live a good life – refrain from drinking, drugs, having sex before marriage (or hide it from others), swearing. Simply -- fight your desires in order to please God. Over the years, I became pretty good at living this fake life – looking good in front of others, while my heart has no desire for God. Outwardly brag about the blessings God has given me, while inwardly knowing that I have made all this for myself.

It was over the past few years that God has been stirring up my heart to show me this wasn’t it.

From easier life, work began to take a toll on me. My family began to grow. Life became hectic, and I wanted to run. It was then that God brought me back to the beginning, to the time when I first met Jesus in high school. That love we had -- then God began changing my heart – this was not all there was to being a Christian.

When you look at Acts 2 (you can follow along with me on your phones – verses 42-47), it shows what the Church looked like

There was a “deep sense of awe” “두려워하였다” – “하나님은 위대하시구나” – people had a constant respect for God, they thought of Him, revered Him, worshipped Him – today, we only do this during worship services.

As a result, there were many miraculous signs and wonders – there were healings, there were people who were depressed whose lives were changed to joy, people of bad circumstances receiving life anew, relationships being restored – now, we don’t get much signs and wonders – in fact, our form of obedience is simply attending church on Sundays and other worship services. Our hearts are empty and have no expectation of the amazing things God will do. .

Did you know, back then, people were excited to gather together – and even with strangers, they wanted to share everything including their lives with them. Today, we live in a culture of mistrust – we need to be careful to hide the truths in our lives, we are embarrassed, we are ashamed – we have to keep it to ourselves. . . so we enter into an empty community to do some good deeds in a worship service and we leave – week after week, we see no transformation in our lives, and we wonder if that’s all that God had intended.

And people kept coming to these “crazy” believers and their numbers kept growing – for us, we look inwardly and even wonder if church can have any value to any one at all.

Today, I challenge you to question your view of being a follower of Jesus.

**Do you think the life you live is the life God has called you to live?**

Do you truly believe that He loves you? Do you love Him?
Is that relationship full of joy, expectation of hope, and are you ready for more?

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How many of you have been baptized? (ask someone to gather the names of those that have or have not)

(Maybe share what baptism is – it is to signify that you declare (선포) in front of others that you accept Jesus as Lord)

God's pursuit for you is constant – (하나님이 당신의 마음을 이기려고 계속 추적하고 계십니다)

Like when I went to the library to see her

Like how I tried to vie for her to be in my small group

Like how I tried to coordinate giving rides on campus, just so maybe she may get in my car help find a church for deli owner

When you are in love with your lover -- you become free

free to speak, free to dance, free to make mistakes

free like a child to a loving father -

we are having our small group, and my daughter can interject -- that boldness can come because we are loved

But we are lost -- I want to talk about the word **lost** –

Suicide – as of 2007, tenth leading cause of death. 1 of 11 successful death – more than 200% increase in teenage suicide rate

Education – only 25% of fourth graders can read at a fourth grader level

Illegitimate births – 400% increase since 1960

Divorce – 50%, no different whether Christian or not (people that stayed married are the strange ones – 25 years, what’s wrong? Don’t you know you can get out of it?)

Economy on the low – people need second jobs to make ends meet, unemployment rate at its highest, employers underpaying new hires, families with uncertainty of life, singles confused with what to do with life

Singles – afraid to marry, not enough money saved up; uncertainty on their own, how can they support another?

Increase in violence

Need to do more to be found acceptable – maintain fitness, know how to cook, own a house, need a job…

We are a nation that is lost and we do not know where to turn.

And in our fear and insecurity, we are willing to try out anything that promises us a way out.

I wouldn’t be surprised if many of you are taking diet pills, and some of you anti-depression pills, and some of you, afraid to get married; afraid to meet others because of so much shame in your life. . .

We need direction, we need guidance. I think we are like people on steroids, red bull, coffee? – constantly on the rush, need to pull off herculean efforts, whether at work, on your own, families – and we get stressed out wondering if we ever got anywhere in life.

We need to know where we are going, and we need to know it is a good path, the one that’s best for us.

So, what is the opposite of the word “lost?”

Saved. You may say the antonym is actually “found” – but I want you to know, when you are found, you are saved!

We need to be saved. Our nation, we are lost, and need to be saved.

The problem is that the word saved is a taboo in today’s culture. When we think of the word saved, we cringe – we think of a pushy street evangelist giving us a tract and demanding that we confess our sins and pray a canned prayer.

Saved is the right word, it tells you

* Your sins are forgiven
* You are considered righteous (because of what Jesus has done)
* He loves you
* He guides you (through the Holy Spirit)
* You are a child in His family, and an inheritance is prepared for you
* Your life is changed – you have power over evil, over the world, over the flesh, over the devil as Jesus lives inside you

God is after you – He knocks on the door of your heart

We have tough jobs, long hours, low pay, bad bosses, feel we are stuck at dead-end job

We wonder if we’ll ever make it in life

We wonder if anyone will ever love me, will ever marry me

We are depressed, angry, frustrated, want out –**Accept the love of your lover – He is knocking and desires to guide you.**

Back to the original question –

**Do you think we as the Church, as believers of Jesus Christ, are missing the mark of who we are called to be? Are we missing out on all the blessings that God has prepared for us, for those that willingly follow Jesus Christ as our Lord and our lover?**

This is what happens – Jesus is asking us to accept His grace toward us – of this forgiveness, of this guidance –

But we do not accept. We rather fill it with pseudo tasks as if we have accepted, and continue to come to church, continue to sing songs, continue to give to the poor, and think we have done well when we are suffering…

Accepting the love of God is accepting His Lordship. Letting go of our belief of what is best, and following b/c we fully trust Him.

Is that not like a marriage relationship? We die for each other.

My wife and I die to each other – when we make decisions, we consider what the other person wants. I don’t say I am going to use my savings and go buy a Lamborghini without discussing it with each other. And she guides me in my decisions as I do for her. And this is what we call prayer, and having a constant communication with God. He will guide you, but you must follow – and you too, share your views with God but also have an open heart to change your mind when He speaks to you.

**How is your prayer life? Is it repetitious, canned prayers, or do you speak honestly w/ God? Do you hear God’s guidance?**

The relationship between husband and wife, as imperfect humans, are at similar level – as with friends. There’s another relationship which is parent and child relationship. He is the Father. He knows more than us – He knows what’s best for us.

It’s like my son playing video games. He loves to play and wants to play indefinitely – just like his dad!

When I was in Sunday school, I was told to imagine the most fun thing you do, and you can do it whenever you want for as long as you want. So I imagined heaven to be a place where I can play video games and eat Tonkatsu and my mom won’t stop me.

In order for my son to do great things, he needs to learn to do the basics such as reading and math. . . and playing with Mario 24/7 will not help him. So, as parents, we tell him to stop and read a book together. Or perhaps do homework together. Or play chess. Or go out for a run. (consider how much he hates to do anything other than what he knows is good for him!)

You see, we too have a parent who knows what’s best for our lives – that’s the omniscient God . . . and we too would need to learn to yield if we want to go toward the best path in our lives. My son would believe that videogames is the path to success, as we may also think what we are doing is the best for the Lord – but He demands us to submit and obey. This is what it means to accept Jesus as your Lord.

Many Christian tracts say we must accept Jesus as our Savior – but nowhere in Scriptures actually say you are to accept Jesus as your Savior. Certainly, He did save us – but we are to receive Him as Lord. (and this means to accept Him as Savior)

In high school, I was involved in a Christian fellowship. There, I met a girl who said she accepted Jesus as her Savior. Then I saw that during her struggles in life, she stopped coming to the Christian fellowship. One day, as we were heading home after school, I met her at the train station at the platform. I asked her why I haven’t seen her at the fellowship – she told me she’s not too sure about Jesus any more. Life’s too complicated – and I don’t feel the need to be part of a fellowship. I asked her, “don’t you think maybe friends that are going through similar difficulties may be able to help?” She told me, I accepted Jesus as my Savior – isn’t that all there is to being a Christian? I don’t need anything else. (This is for those that have said a canned prayer at some point in life, and thus, they believe they are heaven-bound, while in reality, they have no relationship w/ Jesus)

I told her about our need to accept Jesus as our Lord. She said she wasn’t aware of that truth, and she is unwilling to give up control of her life to anyone. I do not know what happened to her beyond that, but you see, this is how many of us call ourselves Christians. We accept Jesus as a good man, who died for our sins – but do not return without response to our lover. We just accept that there is a lover, and we’ll continue to do as we please and know that Jesus saved us.

God is calling you into a love relationship – and your response is to accept His Lordship.

When you accept Him as your Lord

* He is the Lord of your past – all your sins are completely forgiven
* He is the Lord of your present – He dwells within you and guides you to the best path for your life
* He is the Lord of your future – leading you to eternal glory
* He is Lord of life, death, over all things

Do you believe this? Do you accept this? Is Jesus your Lord?

Are you willing to submit, die, and surrender (항복) to His guidance for you?

Let’s conclude with our passage: (Romans 10:9-10)

*9 If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.
9만일 여러분이 입으로 예수님을 주님이라고 고백하고 또 하나님께서 그분을 죽은 사람들 가운데서 살리셨다는 것을 마음으로 믿으면 구원을 받을 것입니다. 10사람이 마음으로 믿어 하나님께 의롭다는 인정을 받고 입으로 고백하여 구원을 받게 되는 것입니다*

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A child who suffers from severe malnutrition ends up losing all appetite. After weeks of nothing to eat, the desire for food completely shuts down. When aid workers begin to dip a sugar-sweetened finger in such a child’s mouth, tears are the first signs of hope. The cries of hunger mark the return of the child’s appetite and the birth of hope.

And many of us similarly have been spiritually starting for so long that our appetite for spiritual nourishment has shut down. We have been doing the religious, doing tasks to make us feel like things are ok, and that we are indeed Christians, where in reality, we live as my son wants to play video games.

Today, are you hungry? Accept His love for you, and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, then you will be saved.

Accept Him in your difficulties; Accept Him as you struggle in your careers, your relationships, your future – He wants to set you straight; *John 10:10 The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.
도둑이 오는 것은 양을 훔쳐다가 죽여 없애려는 것뿐이다. 그러나 내가 온 것은 양들이 생명을 얻되 더욱 풍성히 얻도록 하기 위해서이다.*