

Sermon: A Life of Light and Salt

Hong-deuk Kim
March 20, 2022
CheonWon Church, South Korea



Beloved CheonWon Church members! Good morning. I am happy to see you!

The seasons always bring us fragrant spring days. It seems that new shoots will emerge at any moment from every tree branch that has withered due to the cold. Tomorrow is the spring equinox, which is the fourth of the 24 seasonal markers of the year, and the day and night are the same length, and it is the start of the busy time for farmers. On the foundation of the miraculous victory of the Summit for Peace on the Korean Peninsula we have welcomed the new spring of the 10th year of Cheon Il Guk; God's providence is gradually getting busier, and I feel that the providential environment is changing in surprising ways.

Today, as we begin our sermon, I would like to introduce a poem written in the US. It is said that an article posted on the Internet while deploring today's reality after a mass shooting at a high school in the United States a long time ago, has quickly attracted worldwide attention.

Title: Paradox of Our Time

[Content contains content from the original but is also partly retranslated to English]

We have taller buildings but shorter tempers;
Wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints.
We have more degrees, but less sense;
More knowledge, but poorer judgment.
More experts, yet more problems,
More medicine, but less wellness.
We spend too recklessly, but laugh too little,
We drive too fast and get angry too quickly.
We've learned how to make a living, but forgotten how to live.
We've added years to our lives but lost the way to give meaning to those years.
We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have
trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor.
We own air purifiers, but we've polluted our souls.
We've split the atom, but cannot break down our own prejudice.
We grow taller, but our personality is stunted
We pursue greater profits but our relationships get worse.
We talk more about world peace, but start more wars.
Our leisure time has increased, but our peace of mind has decreased.
We have high-speed rail, and the convenience of disposable diapers
We have enthusiasm for education, an abundance of books, but a diminishing conscience
We have numerous drugs for our recreation,
But we find it harder to be happy...

Yes, I think these words are an accurate snippet of today's situation.

I've added two lines here:

A church where the number of believers has increased, but where it is harder to find those who pray.

A world where the number of religious people has increased, but where people are more afraid to meet others.

For this reason, today, so we can think together about what kind of life we should live in order to change this tough and dark world into a brighter one, I have prepared a sermon under the title of "A Life of Light and Salt."

First, I will read from True Parents' words.

From Pyeong Hwa Gyeong (English version) page 1290

"Indeed, as you delve into the words of truth, you will experience how God's life energy and God's love commune with one another. As the Apostle Paul taught, it is because God truly loves us as His children that we shine as lights unto the world." Aju!

He said that it is because of God's true love that we can become the light of the world. If we possess God's true love, we can live a life of light that illuminates the world.

Next, I will read part of Father's prayer from Cheon Seong Gyeong (English version) page 1521:

"Please be with everyone gathered today in Your name, and we earnestly hope and desire that You allow us to be Your children who can light the flames of life in this dark world, and fulfill our mission as a lighthouse and as the salt of the earth." Aju!

How should we live to become a child of heaven who fulfills the mission of a lighthouse in a dark world by lighting the fire of life like this, and fulfills the mission of salt?

But first, let's take a look at what Jesus taught:

From Matthew Chapter 5 vs. 13-16:

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

As we tend to know, the meaning of this light and salt is to illuminate darkness like light, and to give taste like salt and thus prevent spoilage / corruption.

First of all, this saying to be the light of the world means to become a light that guides humankind, who are wandering in the pitch-black darkness without knowing the way to go, to find the right direction - to become [like] a lighthouse. It also means to become the light of true love that gives life to people's souls just as the light of the sun gives life to all living things. To do that, as in verse 16 that I just read: "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." This means that I must first set an example to the world through my good deeds. Just as a small candle illuminates the darkness through the melting of its own body [of wax], we too can provide a warmer and brighter light of true love to our neighbors only through self-sacrifice, service, giving out, and through practicing love.

This is found on page 244 of True Mother's autobiography, Mother of Peace:

"True love is giving a pair of socks with your whole heart to your neighbor who is shivering from the cold. Sometimes it is sacrificing completely for an utter stranger without expecting anything in return. True love is giving and forgetting that you gave." Aju!

But, since it is said, you should not put a lamp under your feet, and you cannot hide a town on a hill, what happens if we are hiding our light under our feet or staying still to avoid being revealed to people, despite the fact that we too should be lamps that illuminate the world today?

Two thousand years ago, Jesus taught his disciples to be the light and salt of the world while telling them to preach the good news of the coming of Christ to the ends of the earth. What should our lives be like

with True Parents today? Now, wherever we go, shouldn't we proudly teach the world these wonderful words of truth and testify to the great achievements and lives of True Parents? Despite the rapid spread of Corona and Omicron, and the difficulties of the government quarantine regulations, 3,517 broadcasters around the world broadcast the events of the Summit for Peace on the Korean Peninsula that ran from February 11th to 13th, and millions tuned in. Notably, MBC-Net broadcast the three-day event live as it was, even preventing the broadcasting of other programs already scheduled, and also broadcast the highlights of the four THINK TANK 2022 Peace Forums on TV Chosun, and they say the video of the Summit will be broadcast this coming Wednesday morning. This really makes us feel that the way the world sees us is totally changing.

However, among our members there are those who are still hesitant or cautious about boldly revealing that they are Unification Church members to those around them. It is also because of the vague fear of what to do if we are at a disadvantage. But now times have changed.

I heard that a certain young man with good faith was able to successfully witness to several people even during his military service, where it is difficult to talk about religion. He confidently declared himself a member of the Unification Church and attracted a lot of interest. Another church member confidently explained during a job interview that he was attending the Unification Church when asked about his religion. I heard that the interviewer said that he had also participated in a Principle workshop when he was in high school and was very happy to meet this young member.

These days, when I talk with people I meet, there is a surprising number of people who encountered our church once or twice in the past. Among these, there must be some righteous people prepared by Heaven. If we stay still, we will not meet those righteous people. If we go through our lives without conveying the word of God, we will eventually go to the spirit world without saving anyone. Then how will we be able to look at God, the prophets and our ancestors in the eye? After all, didn't Jesus also say that the stones would cry out if the disciples remained quiet? [Luke 19:40] Perhaps we can see that our life of witnessing about God and True Parents is the most important way to live to become a light to the world.

Next, the Bible says that when salt loses its saltiness, it is thrown on the road and trampled on by people. This means that if we lose our unique "flavor" as people of faith, worldly people will rebuke us.

So, what is the unique flavor that a person of faith should have? This is becoming true sons and daughters that can please God. If we are unable to become a true son or daughter of God and lose the true flavor, it is like we are falling away. Therefore, first of all, I must become the true son or daughter of the original ideal of creation with that true flavor. If food is not seasoned with salt, it not only loses its taste, but also goes bad. Neither kimchi nor soybean paste can be made without salt. As such, salt is an essential condiment that is indispensable for creating a unique taste for all foods. Not only that, the more you go back to ancient times when it was difficult to obtain salt, the value of salt was comparable to that of gold. Therefore, the words of Jesus who said for us to be the salt of the world mean that we must become the most valuable beings, indispensable anywhere in the world.

Also, it seems that salt dissolves and disappears as soon as it goes into the water, but ultimately it turns fresh water into brine (saltwater) and revives tasteless, plain food into the most delicious dishes. In this way, salt has the unique power to change anything, as its saltiness affects everything it comes into contact with. Therefore, today too, by fulfilling our mission as light and salt in front of the world like this, we must become the beacon of salvation that leads our neighbors, who are wandering in darkness without knowing the way, to go before God. We must fulfill the role of salt to help people realize the true value of life and the true flavor of life. In this way, the good influence of each of us should spread throughout the world to make this world the true ideal world of peace that God desires and hopes to see, a world of eternal freedom, peace and happiness!! Aju!

Beloved members! So, how can we live a luminous life that has a positive influence on the world? Let's look at the words on page 1445 of the [English language] Cheon Seong Gyeong, the teachings of True Parents.

"I have already mentioned that a life of vertical alignment is like the noontime sun that casts no shadow. If we can all shine as we live in the light, we will not cast the shadow of sin. Those who receive the light will be indebted to it. In order to pay back your debt, all of you should live a life dedicated to wiping away the tears of people in misery and poverty, and lead an illuminated life of eternal true love that dissipates the darkness."

This verse looks at what a life of alignment with high noon (noon settlement) without shadows means, and what it is like to live an illuminated life of true love. First of all, an illuminated life of true love means a life that is like the sun that emits its own light. The moon and the earth do not emit light on their own, but are reflectors that depend on the sun's light. The reflector is nothing more than cold stone, useless in the middle of the day without sunlight. So today we must not be reflectors, but luminous beings emitting our own light like the sun. In order to become a luminous being, hot energy must always spring up from

within, like a furnace. That is, if my heart is always full of bright energy, overflowing with joy, hope, and positive energy and living with gratitude for everything, it is life as luminous being that illuminates the darkness around me.

And just as the life of "noontime settlement" is in line with the sun at 12 noon and casts no shadow, so long as it is aligned with God, who is like the sun, then doubt or distrust, skepticism, conflict, hatred or lies that all correspond to shadows can never arise in our mind. In Romans 11:17 of the Bible, it is written, "... you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root," and in John 15:5, Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches... apart from me you can do nothing."

These words say that all humankind today is a true olive tree, and only when they meet and engraft Jesus and the Second Coming Lord who come as the vine, can they inherit the sap from the root and be born again as God's true sons and daughters. If we do that, we are bound to have the same heart, the same thoughts, the same mindset, and the same direction as God. Your thoughts become my thoughts, and my thoughts become your thoughts. No matter what trials and tribulations follow, you can go forward in a straight line in line with the will of Heaven. However, if the angle between God and me does not match, even by a little, or there is a gap, all kinds of self-centered thoughts will seep through that small gap. When darkness creeps in through that gap and builds a nest, more and more complaints, skepticism and conflicts come in, and you start to wonder whether this path is right or not, even whether this is really the Savior and Messiah, the returning Lord.

Therefore, this is the reason why we need noontime alignment - so that there are no shadows or gaps in line with God and True Parents as we run on this path of faith today. What could be a happier outcome than having an absolute subject who has absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience in this unbelievable world where lies are the norm? Therefore, today, when we met True Parents, who are True Teachers, who became the light and salt of all humankind, we imitate the sacrificial life that True Parents showed us, in order to become brilliant lamps that illuminate the darkness for our neighbors and the world. We must fulfill the role of salt that brings out the true flavor of life.

If I myself become the light of true love and have the true flavor of an original son or daughter, then even if I do not try to change the world, they will look at me and try to imitate me, and they will gather in places of light and salt. The problem lies in how much an illuminating light I myself become, and how much I lose that unique saltiness. A lighthouse with only a faint glimmer of light is hard to see from afar. No one will be saved by the light of that lighthouse. If salt cannot become salt with the best salty taste, and if it is mixed with impurities and does not bring out flavor even after it is added to food, no one will be looking for it.

Therefore, in order for us to live a life that changes the world today by becoming the illuminating light of true love that emits its own light, moves the world, and becomes the best salt with the original flavor, first of all, we must first be in complete alignment with True Parents. You have to live in alignment with high noon. To do this, above all else, we must be faithful to the basic attitude of faith. If you do not keep even the fundamentals of faith but rather pursue worldly pleasures, the screw of your faith will gradually loosen and your relationship with God will become loose. But eventually, if you let go even of the rope of salvation that must hold on to God, you will fall off a cliff. If there is a member who thinks his or her relationship with God is a bit loose, he/she must hold on to God as soon as possible before it's too late.

That way is to keep the basics of faith - attending Sunday service, tithing, and witnessing. Furthermore, start each day by reading the Word at home. This is because the moment we miss reading the Word, our relationship between God and True Parents gradually weakens. This is the way to receive the essence of the root, by being grafted onto the true olive tree, which can be compared to Jesus in the Bible, and it is the secret to not letting the branch fall off the vine.

Today, I ask that you all become proud members of our Cheonwon Church who weave a more valuable life every day with the correct attitude of faith.

Let us pray.

Beloved Heavenly Parent, True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind:

The cold winter has passed and the fragrant new spring has arrived. There is still a lot of cold weather left, but I know that it will not be able to overcome the change of seasons and will soon withdraw. Even in Heaven's providence, the time for heavenly fortune, we feel that miraculous and amazing changes are slowly happening before us.

In the early days, which were stained with opposition and persecution, we inherited the tradition of our seniors who overcame difficulties as heavenly warriors and heralds, messengers of light, sublimating any difficulties into joy by being completely united with True Parents. And now the era of Cheon Il Guk has

opened wide. We hope to become one with True Mother who opened us up to become those who make the dream of a heavenly unified Korea come true. In this gloomy world, where all kinds of divisions and conflicts, confrontations and struggles, wars and misfortunes are looming, we must fulfill the mission of salt to become the light of true love and to change the world by imparting its original, true flavor.

Just as the darkness gets darker as the dawn approaches in the eastern sky, we know that the bright morning sun will surely defeat the darkness if we endure the darkness well. Because it was impossible to destroy this strong Satan's stronghold without first sacrificing the ship, the sad feelings of the Heavenly Parent, who had to guide this providence while enduring tearing pain, have deepened through the crisis in Ukraine.

Please work so that the war can quickly end, and turn this terrible situation into a turning point so that all humankind can move forward more quickly to a peaceful world. Please guide us so that inter-Korean relations do not deteriorate any further and we can move closer to the path of peaceful reunification with the newly elected president at the forefront. With such a bright new spring today, and wishing You to please bless all members of our Cheonwon Church to start anew with greater hope for the future, I earnestly pray these things in my name Kim Hong-deuk of a blessed central family.

Aju!