

■ No.129 Invitation to Live by the Word ? Commentary and Meditation

● First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13

The prophet Samuel anointed Saul as king (the beginning of the monarchy). However, because of Saul's disobedience to God (chapters 13 and 15), the Lord regretted having made Saul king (1 Samuel 15:35) and rejected the continuation of his reign.

In this passage, the standard for the new king who is pleasing to God is placed not on outward appearance but on the condition of the inner "heart."

The anointing with oil is the sign that one has been chosen by God as king. Samuel filled the horn with oil and went to Bethlehem, a town of the tribe of Judah. In God's plan, which is connected to the genealogy of the Messiah, the sons of Jesse (of the line of Judah), a humble man, were chosen as candidates.

God had already seen who should become king. The eldest son had a fine appearance and impressive stature, and Samuel thought he must be the one to be anointed. However, God told him not to look at his appearance or height but to look at the inner person, and thus he was rejected.

God's standards are qualities such as heart, humility, and sincerity. Seven sons (1 Chronicles 2:13- 15 lists seven in total) were not chosen. Their father did not think much of the youngest son and did not consider him a candidate for kingship, excluding him from the beginning according to human judgment.

But God's thoughts were different. He saw David, who was tending sheep a task requiring patience, responsibility, and facing danger. Samuel declared that they would not sit down at the banquet until David returned.

David was ruddy and handsome, with a heart that placed God first. Samuel anointed him with oil in front of his brothers. However, there would be about 15 years of training before his enthronement.

The qualification of the king (the Messiah) is not based on ability, but on the fact that the Spirit of the Lord continued to come powerfully and mightily upon David.

Author's Note: Joseph belongs to the genealogy of the house of David, and Mary carries the bloodline of the house of David.

● Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

In the city of Ephesus, believers are called to a new way of life. Those who are saved are urged to practice a way of life that casts off the old self and lives in love.

Paul teaches that since their very existence has been transformed, their way of living must also change. They were once darkness, but now they have become light itself, and therefore they should live in a manner worthy of those who have been saved.

Those in the church were once separated from God and in the darkness of sin, but now they are united with Jesus and joined to the Lord. Our existence has become light, and we must walk as children of light.

The fruit born from the light, which has its source in God, is goodness that seeks the benefit of others. The righteousness that accords with God's standard produces truth without falsehood.

Do not be self-centered, but judge by the Lord's standard. Examine and discern what pleases the Lord. Even if sin brings temporary pleasure, it has no eternal value. Do not participate in the fruitless works of darkness; rather, expose them to the light and make the darkness clear.

Sins that fear the light and are secretly committed in hiding are shameful even to mention for those who are created in God's image. In God's light, nothing remains hidden; the truth becomes clear and judgment is revealed.

When sin is exposed, it leads to repentance and becomes light. Those who have grown dull through sin and have fallen asleep in spiritual indifference are called to rise from among the dead ruled by sin and walk in the light of Jesus.

Author's Note: We have learned the turning point in the life of one who walks in the light of the Lord, bearing the fruits

worthy of that light.

● Gospel Reading: John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

In this passage:

Jesus denies the common belief of the time that disabilities were the result of personal sin (retribution) and instead speaks of salvation as the work of God.

As the light of the world, Jesus opens the eyes of faith and reveals his true identity.

Jesus makes mud with his saliva and applies it to the blind man's eyes, reenacting the creation of humanity from the dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7). God sent Jesus, and he directs the man to the Pool of Siloam (meaning "sent"). The blind man is also sent there.

Jesus calls for the obedience of faith when he tells him to go and wash in the pool. Through this act of obedience, the man is healed by a kind of re-creation.

The recovery of sight also represents spiritual awakening. The man who had been socially excluded and known as a beggar receives salvation, showing that salvation appears among the weak.

To confirm the facts, the man is brought before the Pharisees. They place the observance of the Sabbath law above people and insist that anyone who does not keep the Sabbath cannot be from God.

Yet some begin to question: Can a sinner perform such miracles?

They press the blind man for a confession of faith, asking, "What do you think about this man?" When he answers, "He is a prophet," the teachers of the law react with hostility, saying, "You were born entirely in sin, and you would teach us?" They then drive him out of the synagogue.

There he encounters Jesus, the Son of Man, who possesses authority and glory. When the man expresses his sincere desire to believe in him, Jesus tells him that spiritually he has already seen him.

The confession of faith is completed with the words: "Lord, I believe."

By kneeling before Jesus, it becomes an act of worship. This consistent journey from healing, to testimony, to confession, to worship becomes a model for believers.

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