

① **【Loved by Christ】**

John, the elder of the church in Ephesus, wrote three times about “overcoming the world”: “Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” (1 John 5:4-5) So let me speak about three things concerning this faith that overcomes the world.

First, we can overcome the world because we are loved by Christ. Paul declares, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... We are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:35, 37). Here Paul declares that we have already won the victory through Christ's love. No one can separate you from Christ's love for you. If you ask, “Why do you love me, a sinner like me?” the Lord would likely respond, “Is it not lawful for me to do what I will?” (Matthew 20:15). “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” (Romans 9:15) Christ fell head over heels for you. Christian salvation is entirely God's doing. God loves because He chooses to love, forgives because He chooses to forgive. There are no conditions on the human side. Those who know this love of Christ say, like Paul, “It's as if we've already won!” Because this love is so overwhelming. Christ searched for Adam relentlessly, even becoming human, tilting heaven to descend to earth, searching down to the depths of hell. And finding the lost Adam, He took Adam and Eve by the hand and triumphantly returned to the heavenly kingdom. This God is a God who pursues people, truly zealous to save them.

●Recently, a 90-year-old Christian resident at Sharon Senri (a senior care home) passed away peacefully. Though she hadn't attended church for many years, she began participating in Sharon's worship services. I visited her surviving spouse to offer condolences and prayed these words: “One person's journey became two, and after baptism, it became three. The third was Christ. Christ walked alongside you. This journey is eternal. The Lord said, ‘I will carry you; I will carry you and rescue you. I formed you, I made you, I created you. I will carry you’ (Isaiah 46:4). The idols of this world cannot go anywhere unless people carry them, but our God is the God who carries us. So please rest assured. Your husband is carried by Christ and is in God's kingdom.”

② **【Knowing that God's word will surely come to pass】**

Second, because the words of Christ, the words of God, will surely come to pass.

●Pastor Yasuro Enomoto writes: “When Abraham was a poor, humble traveler,

God chose him and said, 'I will make you a source of blessing.' From Abraham's reality at that time, it was a promise utterly impossible to believe. That is why we find it so difficult to truly accept that promise. In reality, we cannot find a single cause that would substantiate the fulfillment of that promise. Yet, as we see at the beginning of the creation story, this universe did not come into being through any cause. All things were created by God's word. No matter what our present reality may be, that is not the issue. When we believe in this promise of God, entrust ourselves to it, and follow it, we can overcome this world. Therein lies the glory of Israel and the path to victory for us Christians over the world."

The Gospel of John states, "All things were made through the Word (Christ), and without the Word (Christ) nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:3), and we believe this. God's word will surely come to pass. The very existence of this world is proof of that. Therefore, no matter how bleak the reality before us may seem, no matter how hopeless it may appear, we have hope. Because if God moves tomorrow, something amazing will surely happen. In fact, Israel's liberation from Babylon occurred suddenly one day. Herein lies the power of the Christian faith that overcomes the world.

③ 【Overcoming the World by Living Like Christ】

Third, it is because we are living by imitating Christ. The elder John states in verses 11–12: "This is the eternal life that God has given us: to know you and the Son whom you have sent. Whoever has this life is with the Son; whoever does not have this life is not with God." Jesus Himself is eternal life. By being united with this Jesus and living in union with Him, we can possess eternal life from this world. To live united with Christ means to live as He lived, to live by imitating Him.

●October 2nd was Gandhi's birthday. India was once a British colony, but Gandhi led the independence movement against Britain through nonviolent resistance. In January 1948, Gandhi was assassinated by a fanatical Hindu fundamentalist, ending his 78-year life. When shot with a pistol, Gandhi placed his hand on his forehead and passed away. This gesture means "I forgive you" in Islam. Gandhi's pacifist movement profoundly influenced figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and the world at large. Though he never became a Christian, he read the Bible extensively and emulated Christ's way of life. Gandhi famously said, "Christianity is wonderful, but Christians are not." He lived the most Christian life possible without being a Christian. He left behind many famous quotes:

- * "Things are always started by a few people, sometimes by just one person."
- * "The weaker a person is, the less able they are to forgive. Forgiveness is a sign of strength."
- * "Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the result."
- * "Nonviolence is the greatest weapon given to man, and it is more powerful

than the strongest weapon invented by man.” “I always think when I am disappointed. History shows that truth and love have always triumphed. There have been tyrants and cruel rulers. At times, they even seemed invincible. But in the end, they perished. I think of that.”

- * “I am an optimist to the core. Not because I can show evidence that justice will prevail, but because I hold the firm conviction that justice must ultimately prevail.”

We can overcome this world by imitating the way of life shown by Christ, just as Gandhi did. This means responding to evil with good, praying for those who persecute us, forgiving our enemies, and not resisting evil. Gandhi forgave those who killed him as he died. During World War II, Father Kolbe at Auschwitz also forgave the Nazi soldier who came to kill him. It is said that Father Kolbe's death changed the atmosphere of the entire camp. Prisoners who had previously lived in apathy began to find beauty in the setting sun. Realizing that “a person can become a beast, but also an angel,” they gained the courage and hope to “die as human beings.” It was the moment when evil, violence, hatred, and fear were defeated.

Gandhi said, “Fear breeds distrust. If just one person stops being afraid, we will stop fighting.” Yet fear is what drives those waging war today and what resides in the hearts of many. It is the fear of not being able to survive. Trump says, “If more immigrants come, America will fail.” A certain party in Japan says, “If more foreigners come, Japan will fail.” Putin says, “Russia will be ruined if NATO and Western nations come in.” It's all fear. They put on a brave front, but fear turns people into beasts, makes them kill, cling to possessions, and commit sins. People called Christians are dominated by fear and commit sins. Because they are nominal Christians. They have not truly encountered God's love. Those who have encountered genuine love should have their fear disappear.

Now more than ever, people truly governed by God's love are needed. Even if few in number, genuine Christians—those who live Christ-like lives—are sought. Loving others, forgiving, and never losing hope: these are our weapons to overcome the world. First, let us be still and be filled with God's love.