Sunday, October 25, 2026　Sunday Morning Worship Sermon

"Those Who Blaspheme the Holy Spirit"　Pastor Takaaki Inoue
Hebrews 6:4–8, Luke 12:4–12

❶【We Should Fear Turning Away from God】

"I say to you, my friends: Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot do anything more after that. I will tell you whom you should fear: the One who, after killing, has the authority to cast you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him." (Luke 12:4–5) I believe this passage was spoken with persecution in mind. The Jewish authorities—the chief priests, elders, and scribes—persecuted Jesus and His disciples, viewing them as a sect within Judaism and as a threat to the national order. Yet Jesus tells us not to fear those who persecute us, but to fear God instead. To not fear death, we must understand the true nature of death as revealed in the Bible. There are two kinds of death. Since human beings are a composite of body and soul, there are also two kinds of death: "physical death" and "spiritual death." Of these, the most terrifying is spiritual death. Spiritual death is the death of a person's very essence, whereas physical death is the destruction of the vessel that houses the soul. The soul died instantly upon being separated from God, but physical death did not occur until much later. "Adam lived 930 years, and then he died." (Genesis 5:5) During those 930 years, did Adam realize that he was dead? People in this world fear physical death the most and strive to keep this physical body alive by any means necessary. However, they do not realize that their souls are dead. And no one makes any effort to keep their soul alive. It is the devil who has enabled people to live comfortably without giving a thought to God. Being deceived by this devil and failing to realize that one is dead—that is true death.

●Johannes Chrysostomos of Constantinople, in the 4th century, said as he neared the end of his life at the age of 62, "No one can destroy a person unless that person destroys himself."

People cannot kill other people. The Church Fathers unanimously declare that while people may destroy God's creations, they can never kill them. This is because the Word of God endures forever. The only thing that can kill a person is "that person's sin." A person dies because of their own sins; they cannot kill another person. Since God the Christ is the "Tree of Life," we must fear above all else being separated from this Tree, which is God the Christ. For that is the root of sin. As long as we remain connected to this Tree, which is Christ, even if our physical bodies are destroyed, our inner selves do not die. When the time comes, we will be resurrected and live forever. However, if we fear persecution or are deceived by the devil's lies into thinking there is life in this world, and our hearts begin to turn toward the world, our souls will become numb. Eventually, we will

no longer feel any need to go to church, we will no longer fear separating ourselves from Christ, and our souls will truly die. It is this kind of death that we must fear above all else.

"Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows." (Luke 12:7) This means that God remembers me eternally—so much so that He even counts every single hair on my head. Even if my body decays, He remembers me and will surely raise me up. Therefore, we must not fear physical death; rather, we must fear nothing more than turning away from Christ.

❷【Let's take pride in being followers of Jesus】

Next, it is said that if someone declares before others, "I am one of Jesus' followers," then Jesus Himself will say before the angels and saints of the Kingdom of God, "This person is one of mine." In the early Church, publicly confessing that "Jesus is Lord" was a matter of life and death. If someone was identified as a Christian, they would be arrested, imprisoned, have their property confiscated, be dragged into the colosseum, and either forced to fight wild beasts or put to death by crucifixion. To confess "Christ as Lord" even at the cost of martyrdom requires taking great pride in Christ and believing that He is the most trustworthy One, the Truth, the Giver of eternal life, the King of Heaven, and God Himself. This is because people are willing to die for things of value, but they cannot risk their lives for trivial matters. For this reason, the church did not administer baptism for at least three years. If someone became a believer half-heartedly and, out of fear of persecution, informed on the whereabouts of fellow believers, everyone would be arrested and killed. Worship services consisted of two parts: the first was a service of the Word for catechumens, and the second was a service of the Lord's Supper for believers; before the second part—the Lord's Supper—the catechumens were asked to leave. This was because there were rumors, stemming from a misunderstanding of the Lord's Supper, that Christians were eating the flesh of children. The Lord's Supper was reserved only for believers who truly believed in Christ as "Lord," and the Lord's Prayer was also taught and recited here.

If you reject Christ and say, "I am not one of Jesus' followers," you will not be allowed into the Kingdom of Heaven. Peter said, "I do not know you," three times in the high priest's courtyard, but he was forgiven because that was before he received the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is also said here: it is said, "Everyone who speaks against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven" (12:10). It is only after the Holy Spirit descends that one truly comes to know Jesus; until then, there is neither certainty nor courage. In fact, the disciples, having received the Holy Spirit, were transformed and bore witness to Christ, performing miraculous works and signs, and Peter himself went on to become a martyr. As it says, "When you are brought

before synagogues, rulers, and authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that moment what you ought to say" (12:11–12), the Holy Spirit gave the disciples the words they were to speak.

●Yesterday, I watched a TV program called "Platinum Family." The Tsuchiyama family in Tsuchiyama-juku, Koka City, has run a "honjin" for generations. A honjin is an inn where distinguished guests, such as daimyo and court nobles, stayed. Katsu Kaishu, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, and even Emperor Meiji stayed there. The guest register is filled with their names and has been designated as a cultural property.

A house where a famous person has stayed is respected simply for that reason. Likewise, if we were to meet a celebrity, we would likely boast about it. Yet the great God, Christ, dwells within each of us. Why, then, do we not rejoice in the fact that we have become the dwelling place of Christ? Let us not boast about our own greatness, but rather boast in the Lord Christ, saying, "I am a sinner. Yet the Lord has chosen and loved even one as sinful as I am, made me part of His body, and used me as a vessel to proclaim Him."

❸【What Does It Mean to Blaspheme Against the Holy Spirit?】

Let's examine the statement, "Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven" (Luke 12:10), in a little more detail. What does "blasphemy" mean? According to the dictionary, it means "to violate or defile something sacred; to undermine the value of something cherished; or to grossly disregard something that deserves respect." Those who, having been illuminated by the light of the Holy Spirit, healed, and experienced the work of salvation, yet cast it aside to run after idols (apostasy), and mock and despise the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, have effectively rejected the final Savior (the first Savior being Christ). No other Savior will be sent. Since it is indeed the Holy Spirit who teaches the truth and gives the life of God, this amounts to rejecting both truth and life. Such a person will never be saved. (Hebrews 6:4–8) But that is not all. Even Christians who do not accept the work of the Holy Spirit and treat it with contempt will be punished. For example, those who treat the Bible lightly are blaspheming the Holy Spirit. "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. " (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible was written through the collaboration of the Holy Spirit and human beings. Therefore, it contains both the Word of God and the words of humans. The Bible possesses two natures: the divine nature and the human nature. Earthly things change, but heavenly things are eternal. Therefore, anyone who studies and reads the Bible thinking of it as merely an earthly book will be blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, anyone who treats the creeds lightly is blaspheming the Holy Spirit. The apostles

gathered in Jerusalem and held the First Council to discuss whether Gentile Christians should be required to undergo circumcision. As a result, they declared, "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essential requirements" (Acts 15:28), thereby resolving that circumcision was not necessary. Since then, the Church has convened seven ecumenical councils, resolved the question of who Christ is, and formulated creeds. These were decisions made by the Holy Spirit and the Church. To reject this is to insult the work of the Holy Spirit. The Church is the bearer of the "sacred tradition" that comes from God. I am not speaking my own teachings; rather, I have passed on to you what I myself have received. I hope that you will believe this with reverence. Pastors and churches that disregard the Bible and the Church's tradition will stray from the holy tradition; therefore, they will inevitably lose their life and fade away. Christianity is not merely a religion created by human beings. Because it comes from God, it is able to save us completely. I pray that you will believe in the Bible, the creeds, and the Church—which are the work of the Holy Spirit—and become those who bear abundant fruit.