

“The Spirit Who Unites into One, the Holy Spirit”

2 Samuel 9:1–8

June 8, 2025

2 Samuel 9:1–8 (PowerPoint)

Preface

Looking at the first book of the Bible, Genesis, it is recorded that in the time of Noah, God judged humanity by bringing a flood.

The descendants of Noah who survived claimed, “When God judges again with a great flood, we must overcome it, we must survive,” and saying “Let us build a tower whose top reaches to heaven and make a name for ourselves,” they built a tall tower as if to oppose God.

In this way, people did not choose the path of obeying the Lord God, but instead made the foolish choice of opposing God.

To such humanity who built the tower of God, descended from Noah, God gave divine punishment. But this divine punishment, at first glance, seemed to make one wonder, “How is this divine punishment?”—a slightly unusual kind of punishment.

It was not that fire fell from heaven, nor that they were thrown into a lake of sulfur, nor was it another great flood; rather, it was that God confused the language of people.

According to the Bible, until then the languages of the world had been unified into one. But because God confused the spoken language of the whole earth, people were no longer able to communicate well.

Various languages appeared, and as they were divided into different tongues, the inability to communicate not only made it difficult to convey feelings and thoughts, but also brought about various inconveniences. So, those who could understand one another’s language, those who shared the same language, made groups and spread out across the surface of the earth.

As a result, because languages no longer matched, division arose among people, and those who could not communicate became enemies, leading to conflict, strife, and even things like war beginning to happen.

This is the teaching that the Bible gives us.

Part One

Today is the Pentecost worship day, in which we remember and celebrate the historical event when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples who were gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Shavuot) 2,000 years ago, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and suddenly began to speak of the great works of God—the Gospel—in the languages of various nations, languages which they had not been able to speak or understand until then.

When we view human history as salvation history—that is, the history of God's salvation—this event of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was a major event that became a great historical turning point.

And this event was, as I mentioned earlier, the complete opposite of the event written in Genesis chapter 11, the event of the Tower of Babel.

The event of building the Tower of Babel, because it was an act of opposing God, resulted in the confusion of languages, the separation of tongues, and, as a result, became an event like the beginning of human history filled with repeated conflict—a history of division.

However, the event on the day of Pentecost, in which the Holy Spirit came upon the people and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, was an event in which people and God visibly became one, and a way was given for people to become one again through the one language called the Gospel—making it one of the most important events in the history of God's salvation.

The first gift of God that appeared among the people who received the Holy Spirit and were filled with the Holy Spirit was the gift of tongues—the gift of speaking of the great works of God and the Gospel in the languages of various nations.

People who had gathered in Jerusalem from all over the world for the Festival of Pentecost were astonished, wondering, “What in the world is going on?” when they heard the Gospel being spoken not in Hebrew, the language in which the Old Testament was written, but in the languages of the countries and regions in which they were born and raised.

And although the languages were different, because it was the word of God called the Gospel, they began to understand one another's words, and hearts and minds began to connect.

Those who had been scattered began to make efforts to gather in one place.

In the Tower of Babel event in Genesis chapter 11, the important key word in a negative sense was "scattered," "were scattered," and "to scatter."

In other words, it was division. It was strife among companions.

However, in the Book of Acts, where the Pentecost event is recorded, the important words are "all became one," "with one heart," "He made them one," and "one."

Acts 2:1–12 (PowerPoint)

Acts 2:40–47 (PowerPoint)

"All became one, gathered with one heart, and the Lord made them one."

This was the appearance of the people who received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the first church.

Last week's Open Worship was led by Pastor Thomas Weekly, who is working with CCC in America. Though our countries and languages are different, the same Gospel was spoken, we believed in the same Gospel, and in that same Gospel, I immediately felt that we were one upon meeting him and hearing his message.

It was the same even when I went to Russia, to Malaysia, and to Mexico.

Even though the languages do not match, through the one Spirit, within the one Gospel, in the one and only same God, we feel that we are one, and became one.

Once, while I was eating in a Korean restaurant, I felt something different in the way the server spoke and in her words. So I asked, "Excuse me, but do you perhaps go to church? Are you a Christian?" and she replied, "Yes." That happened two or three times.

It's mysterious, isn't it?

Perhaps it's because the same Holy Spirit dwells within us—there is something that connects us.

Recently, my wife has been attending a beginner's training course for caregiving. While listening to the teacher's talk, she wondered, "Could this person be a Christian?" Then, unexpectedly, that teacher came up and said, "You're the pastor's wife from Tsuchiura Megumi Church, right? I attend worship at Toride Bible Church," which surprised her.

This summer, for the first time in a while, we will welcome a large group of 43 junior and senior high school students and their teachers from Daebang Church in Korea as part of our fellowship through Koinonia. Even in that fellowship, although our languages are different, we will surely feel that we are one. In these 25 years of Koinonia fellowship, we have received many special blessings of being one in the Lord. Especially when hosting or being hosted in homestays, we strongly feel this.

Even when Japanese and Korean cannot be understood verbally, in the same Gospel, in the same Holy Spirit, in the same Christ, even through gestures and signs, we immediately feel that we are one.

Part Two

The Holy Spirit makes us one, and evil spirits scatter us.

Evil spirits are spirits of division, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit who makes us one.

For people to become one, for families to become one, for the church to become one, and for hearts to be united and form a community of the Kingdom of Heaven and live in it—this is peace, and the *shalom* of the Kingdom of God. There is no blessing more important for people than this peace in God.

On the other hand, while we live on this earth, I think there is much suffering we undergo here. Financial hardship and difficulty are also suffering, and when we fall ill, that too is suffering. But among the sufferings that humans experience, I believe the greatest suffering is division and factionalism.

Not being able to become one—that is suffering, isn't it?

Conflict, jealousy, hatred, deceit, fighting, warring, killing one another—as Jesus said, calling each other “fool” and “good-for-nothing”—might be the greatest suffering that human beings experience on this earth.

The Holy Spirit brings us peace, and evil spirits bring us discord. The Holy Spirit makes us one, but evil spirits tear us apart, lead us to division, and cause us to fight in scattering—that is their work. And the Bible teaches us that “the ruler of the course of this world” is that evil spirit—the evil spirits.

Since World War II, the Pacific War, the economy has developed, scientific technology has advanced, and people—including Japan—have come to enjoy the richness that mankind envisioned, with diversified cultural content. Yet still, it seems as though the spirit of division and factionalism continues to reign.

Not just in newspapers, television, YouTube, towns, regions, and countries—but even in myself, in ourselves—it feels as if we are being controlled by this spirit of division and factionalism. We become entrenched in our own sense of justice and rightness, trying to make others acknowledge us, guiding others, sneering at others with condescending smiles, looking down on others, judging one another—We are not born with a spirit that makes us one.

The spirit of division rules this world—making enemies of one another, gouging and digging at each other, knocking each other down, waging war, trying to kill one another. I cannot even begin to express in words how painful and heartbreaking this is.

Part Two

I once heard a parody comedy like this.

It’s a bit grotesque, but a child from a tribe of cannibals eats his own father and mother.

Then after eating them, he cries out saying:

“I’ve become an orphan! I have no parents!”

It may seem like a ridiculous skit—crying sadly after eating one’s own parents himself—but there is satire in this, a kind of lesson or philosophy that appeals to society.

Even if people eat one another, fight one another, kill one another, and feel good after winning that fight—In the end, they end up lonely and alone.

We humans truly have a lonely nature. Rather than trying to make everyone around us our friend, we try to make them enemies—we try to create enemies.

We stab, we kill, we split, we trample, we divide—And when we look back later, everyone has become our enemy. We forget peace, forget love, only hatred remains, filled with anger—and we are all alone.

We have no friends.

This is the most foolish part of us humans, and it is precisely the place Satan aims at, focusing all his nerves, watching with fierce intent.

1 Peter 5:8 (PowerPoint)

As it is written.

Of course, being at peace and harmonious with everyone is not always the right thing or a good thing.

There are times when we must fight to the point of shedding blood—there are such subjects and occasions.

Jesus also said:

Matthew 10:34 (PowerPoint)

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

I believe this Word is also a very important Word.

During the Pacific War, many churches and church leaders accepted emperor worship and shrine visits as part of Japanese culture, and declared that they would create a Japanese-style Christianity. They failed to fight against what should have been fought, and became friendly with Satan, and with matters and people under Satan's control. As a result, just as written in the Book of Judges, they did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord, did what was right in their own eyes, could not or would not distinguish between idols and God, and committed

the mistake of not fighting. Today's church in Japan must stand upon reflection of that. But what about us, who live in the present day? Are we wearing the helmet of salvation, and taking up the sword of the Spirit—that is, the Word of God—and fighting? Are we, without turning our eyes away from Jesus—the author and perfecter of our faith—spiritually fighting against sin to the point of shedding blood, without growing weary?

Part Three

The person named David, the second king of Israel who appears in the Scripture passage we read at the beginning today, was also a man of war.

In David's time, even more explicitly than in the present day, war was, in one aspect, economic activity itself.

Since it was also a means of surviving on this earth, as a king leading a nation, I think his life was such that he could not help but go to war.

As a result, David was a believer—a Christian—who fought many wars throughout his life and lived while shedding much blood.

When I say "believer" or "Christian," some of you may think, "What?!" but in a way, I believe we are the same.

Unfortunately, as I spoke last week, in this world like a lost paradise, where we have been expelled from God's paradise, the Garden of Eden, we cannot live without fighting, to a greater or lesser extent, whether we like it or not.

Even when it comes to something like a department store's bargain sale—if you want to get your hands on the released reserve rice, you have to start from the battle of lining up earlier than anyone else.

However, David was not a man who only fought wars.

He was not a person who tried to protect order and peace only through war.

What is wonderful, what I think is amazing about David, is that rather than choosing to fight and win, he chose not to fight if he could, and in fact, he had more victories in wars that he won without fighting.

One of the things we learn through David is: "The greatest victory is to win without fighting."

To win without shedding blood is, even in this world, still the best victory—we learn this.

David sought that, and he was a person who could do that, and I think he was someone who understood its importance.

We, if we're not careful, even turn friends into enemies, but David was a person who, if I may say so, had the outstanding ability or faith to turn enemies into friends—he was someone who stood on the faith of God's love.

There was a person named Saul, the first king of Israel, who tried with all his might to kill David, but even in such a case, for David to kill Saul to protect his own life would have been self-defense and not unjust. Even if David had actually killed such Saul, in the societal situation and customs of the time, there would have been no problem—in fact, it might have been welcomed with “Well done. Now it'll be a better dynasty.” But even so, David never tried to kill Saul, who was unjustly treating him.

Rather, when King Saul, who had been desperate to kill David, died, David tore his clothes and grieved in pain.

Then, after becoming Israel's second king, David sought to protect the remaining family of Saul, searching here and there to find them with all his might, until finally he found the last survivor of Saul's family—Mephibosheth.

Finally, when he found Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul and son of his dear friend Jonathan, David rejoiced from the heart.

When I look at such a figure of David, I am reminded of Jesus' parable of the shepherd who goes to find the one lost sheep, and at the same time, I am made to think that David was truly, in the real sense, someone who knew grace.

He understood well that, before God, he had not even one millimeter of worthiness to be saved, not a single ounce of righteousness, and that he was only a wicked sinner—yet, despite that, he lived by God's grace, and he truly understood that.

When I deeply consider the life of David, I am made to think that “knowing grace,” “coming to know God's grace,” is the life of those who believe in God.

I am made to think that “if you have come to know grace, you will treat others with grace”—this is the walk of those who believe in God.

Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul, when his grandfather Saul and father Jonathan died in battle, was carried in his nurse’s arms as they fled, but the nurse accidentally dropped him to the ground, and he became crippled and lame.

From a status of being a king’s grandson, he fell in one night to the status of being a fugitive, and until David found him, he lived hiding quietly.

When a king died and a dynasty changed, it was common practice and logic at the time that the remaining royal family and relatives of the former dynasty would be exterminated, killed completely—so when King David found Mephibosheth, he trembled, thinking, “It’s over.” But David spoke to such Mephibosheth, saying, “Do not be afraid,” and then offered, “I will return to you all the property and land of your grandfather King Saul.”

Not only that, he said, “You will always eat at my table,” and he even restored Mephibosheth’s royal status.

David treated Mephibosheth as one of his own family.

2 Samuel 9:6–8 (PowerPoint)

In this, we see the image of us—who were born as children of wrath, worthy of divine judgment—being shown God’s love, God’s forgiveness, God’s grace, and God’s salvation.

Also, this very figure of David makes me think that this is truly, in the truest sense, the image of someone who knows God’s grace.

Part Four

David was a man of grace who turned even his enemies into his friends and companions.

In one battle, when the troop led by David won and gained many spoils of war, there were those among the men who had gone out to battle with David who said one after another, “We cannot and must not share the spoils with those who did not go out to battle with us.” But David said this and shared all the spoils among everyone:

“Brothers, what the Lord has given us, we must not treat in such a way. The Lord has protected us and delivered the raiding party that attacked us into our hands. We must share equally.” (1 Samuel 30:22–25)

Also, when King Saul, who had sought David’s life, died in battle, David said not a single word like “What have you people done?!” to the villagers who had treated Saul’s corpse with honor, carried it in, and held a funeral for him. On the contrary, he said, “Well done!” and gave generous rewards to those villagers. (2 Samuel 2:5–6)

David was also a person who transformed those who had been his enemies into his allies and achieved victory without fighting.

I think we human beings have a sort of DNA like that of the cannibal parody mentioned earlier.

We have a tendency to ceaselessly try to capture and devour others. We try to trample, crush, gouge, knock down, insult, act with malice while wearing cold smiles, betray, categorize, divide right and left, and if someone is even slightly different from us, we push them out and corner them.

It is as though we hand our hearts over to the spirit of division and faction, to an evil spirit—a demonic spirit—as if such a spirit rules this world. But, beloved friends, those of you who love the Lord Jesus, those who have received the love of the Lord Jesus, are we not people of the Holy Spirit?

David truly was a person of the Holy Spirit.

Because of the Holy Spirit—God—he was a person of forbearance. Like us, he was a sinner who, if he erred, could even turn a friend into an enemy. But when it was time to fight, he fought; and when it was not the time to fight, he refrained—he lived as a person of the Holy Spirit, who listened attentively to the discernment and Word that the Holy Spirit gives, and who was eager to keep his eyes fixed and heart directed toward it.

Conclusion

Just as in the words of Jesus, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God,” we too, keeping our eyes fixed on the

Lord Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, while firmly fighting what and whom we ought to fight, also wish to be people of the Holy Spirit who discern clearly what things and whom we should not fight, and who make even enemies into friends.

And I cannot help but pray that in the homes, churches, workplaces, groups, and world where we are, the peace of God may be established.

Not as those who follow the evil spirit of division and faction, but while seeking to be filled with the Spirit who unites, the Spirit who creates peace, the Spirit of forbearance—the Holy Spirit—we wish to be people who bestow grace, the grace of God.

Let us pray.

Benediction:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who leads us to live according to the words of David, “I will show kindness to that person,” “I will bestow God’s grace on that person,” the love of God the Father, and the intimate fellowship and filling of the Holy Spirit, be with each person who offered worship, and with all living beings who walk in accordance with the heart of the Lord Jesus, now and forevermore, abundantly. Amen.