

Children of the resurrection in the world (Luke 20:20-47)

We have been studying the gospel of Luke together. Today, we will look at 20:20-47. Right before this section, Jesus quoted from Psalm and said, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone." This implies Jesus' cross and resurrection. That is our salvation, our hope.

Who is Jesus? Who are we who believe in Jesus? The following part of the chapter clearly shows it.

1. What is God's

20-26

²⁰ Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to be honest. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor. ²¹ So the spies questioned him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. ²² Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" ²³ He saw through their duplicity and said to them, ²⁴ "Show me a denarius. Whose portrait and inscription are on it?" ²⁵ "Caesar's," they replied. He said to them, "Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." ²⁶ They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent.

The teachers of the law and the chief priests try to trap Jesus in what he said in order to hand him over to the power and authority of the governor. They sent spies, and the spies asked Jesus, "Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not? If Jesus says, "It is not right" then they can hand him over to the governor as a rebel against Rome. If he says, "it is right" then he will disappoint the people of Israel who seek liberation from Rome, and lose popularity. They can trap him either way. It was a very clever question.

Jesus answered, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's." Let's first think about "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's".

Jesus didn't say, "Of course, you should pay taxes." Nor did he say anything against paying taxes. Whether they liked it or not, people were in "the peace of Rome." As they lived in the society ruled by Rome, they cannot live

separated from that structure. As a member of the society, they couldn't help but fulfill their duty.

Rom 13:1

¹³ Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

All the authorities in the world are under God's authorities.

God didn't give authority to the emperor of Rome so that he can do whatever he likes. And God also doesn't agree him to oppress people and to live luxurious life by himself.

God will judge all people to their actions. That will be the same for emperor and governors. That will be the same for the oppressed and us. In the world, people might justify their wrong doing when they see those above them also committing wrong doing. But we should never forget wrong doing is wrong doing before God. And one day everybody will have to stand before God to pay off our actions. (Rom 2:6-8)

As God's people, should Israelites pay taxes to Rome which opposes God? In order to maintain God's righteousness, to whom should they pay taxes? How should the people of God pay taxes? To pay taxes using denarius which has Caesar's portrait and inscription are on, is it considered as idol worship submitting them to Caesar?

I don't think Jesus had intention to teach how to pay taxes here. He is not talking about such detailed exposition, but he is lighting up our being, our way of living from greater field of vision.

We Christians are God's people sent into the world. (John 20:21) We don't live isolated from the world. We will fulfill our role as a member of this society. We can do that only by trusting in Him. As we trust in Him and seek His kingdom and righteousness, we can continue to be the salt of the earth. We are in the world but not of the world.

Jesus continued, "Give to God what is God's."

In NIV and NRSV, the verb "give" is used. In NKJ, NASB and ESV, the verb "render" is used. I looked up the word in the dictionary.

Render (v): from Latin *reddere* "give back, return, restore," from

"back" + "to give".¹

As I checked the meaning in Greek, it says:

to give, give back, return, to deliver, to give away for one's own profit
what is one's own, things promised under oath²

If we say "give", we might feel as if what is ours would be reduced. But here it means to "give back, return or render." And what we return is what is God's, not ours.

"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." That is not telling us to distinguish what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God. It is also not asking, "Is this Caesar's, or is this God's?" Put it in extreme terms, everything is God's. Man is only taking charge of it and using it.

Even when we "give" to God what is God's, we won't lose anything. For we have only been taking charge of it for a while. It was God's in the first place, and we have just given it back, return it or render it to Him.

However, if we think as if it were ours, and spare it to be returned to God, and try to possess it all as ours, there will be a problem.

Just before this section, there is Jesus' parable of the tenants. The farmers were renting the vineyard from the owner. The vineyard and the owner's share of the harvest is not theirs. They are the owner's. But, the farmers killed the owner's son and tried to take the owner's property. They didn't want to render it.

If we go back a little farther, we will see the account of Jesus' driving out the merchants from the temple. Whose house is the temple? Jesus said it is his house.

Temple is a place where people offer sacrifices to God, where God meets people and speaks to people. Temple is a place consecrated by God's glory, set apart for Him, filled with God's glory. (Ex 29:42-43) However the place was made into a den of robbers. People had stolen what was God's.

Luke 20:45-47

⁴⁵ While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁶ "Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and

¹ http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=render&allowed_in_frame=0

² <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/apodidomi.html>

love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁷ They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

The essential work of the priests and the teachers of the law is to teach people the Word of God and lead them to God. They are supposed to show God's glory. But they were trying to receive praise and honor for themselves. They were stealing what was God's.

It is God who receives worship, praise, glory and honor. (Rev 5:12) "Give to God what is God's". Just like Israel in the OT, today Church has a role of showing God to the people and draw them closer to God and add them to God's people.

Recently, I read an article "Is there idolatry in your church?"

"The idol of personal prosperity: There are believers whose main motive is to use their faith to leverage influence with God for personal gain... Many use God when they need Him... Many come to church merely to feel good instead of being equipped to do good works (Eph. 2:10)... There are many believers who live no differently than their unbelieving neighbors, which is why mega-churches do not always result in "mega-cultural" influence, and why church growth doesn't always result in personal and societal transformation."³

Fortunately, I don't think our church is affected by these tendencies. Let's not be content with it, but let's aim higher. We can be a good model to other churches in this place. We cannot stop the tendencies mentioned in the article to enter into this country. We cannot say these trends will not influence the churches in this land. And I don't think we should just do nothing and say "We cannot help. This is the trend today." What can we do? First we should remind ourselves "We are children of the resurrection who live in the world but not of the world." This can be our starting point.

Eph 1:13

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

³ <http://www.charismanews.com/opinion/the-pulse/46496-5-signs-there-s-idolatry-in-your-church>

Paul uses the words craftsmen use, like “marked with a seal”. In those days, the seal was used to prove the owner of the goods or quality of the goods. Just like the barrel of wine or oil is marked with a seal of manufacturer vineyard or olive garden, we are marked with a seal of God. God is our owner. We are God's.⁴ He proves us children of the resurrection.

1 Cor 6:20

²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

“Give to God what is God’s.” We believed in Jesus, received Him as our savior and Lord, and we were saved. We were born again. We were added to the people of God. Since then, we are His. We are sent into the world to show His glory. We are children of the resurrection in the world.

2. Children of the resurrection

27-40

²⁷ Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question. ²⁸ "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. ²⁹ Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. ³⁰ The second ³¹ and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. ³² Finally, the woman died too. ³³ Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?" ³⁴ Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. ³⁵ But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, ³⁶ and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. ³⁷ But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' ³⁸ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive." ³⁹ Some of the teachers of the law responded, "Well said, teacher!" ⁴⁰ And no one dared to ask

⁴ James Houston, "Prayer, The Transforming Friendship" (Japanese Translation), Word of Life Press Ministries, 1999, p.143

him any more questions.

Sadducees did not believe in afterlife or the resurrection.⁵ They pointed out that if there was resurrection, that wouldn't fit the law of Moses. By this argument, they claimed their opinion, which was there was no resurrection, was correct. To this, Jesus pointed out their blind spot. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive. (38)

Jesus' words clearly tells us who God is, and who we are as we believe in God. The key is "everlasting".

First of all, the Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. (Isaiah 40:28)

God is everlasting. In other words, God is alpha and omega. (Rev 1:8) There is no beginning and end with God.

Ps 90:2

² Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Man was created by everlasting God, and will continue to exist before God. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive." (38) Man will experience physical death. The dead man can no longer die. (36) But the person will not disappear at the physical death. Nor will he become another person or another kind of animal on this earth again. He or she will continue to be that person. In that sense, "To God all are alive." We will continue to live before everlasting God.

Secondly, salvation through the everlasting Word of everlasting God.

1 Peter 1:23-25

²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.

⁵ "Children's Ministry Resource Bible", Nelson, 1993, p.1324

Our salvation is by the everlasting Word of everlasting God.

Thirdly, those who were saved have become “God's children, since they are children of the resurrection”. (36)

1 Peter 1:3-4

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you,

We have become the heirs of the everlasting inheritance by salvation through the everlasting Word of everlasting God.

Our faith and hope are in this everlasting God and everlasting Word. (1 Peter 1:21) So we don't have to lose heart. We don't have to give up, nor be afraid.

Eternal life, resurrection life: that is not just referring to life after physical death. We can live now in resurrection life. That is what people of God do. And we are not alone. We live with God. We are in the personal fellowship with God of trinity. Our friendship with God is awakened by Father's love, made possible by Christ's grace, and becomes living experience in the close fellowship with the Holy Spirit.⁶

And we are not alone. We walk with other people of God. In order to enrich our fellowship with friends, we must cherish our personal fellowship with God. At the same time, in order to deepen our fellowship with God, we must cherish our life in the community of believers. A man cannot be alone unless he lives in the community. Without being alone just with God, we cannot belong to the true community.⁷

Through the word of God, prayer, praise and worship, and fellowship, we will come to know God deeper and experience Him more vividly. "Experiencing the Life, changing lives." Those experiences teach us how rich the eternal life is.

Eternal life, resurrection life: that is not only referring to life after physical

⁶ Ibid., James Houston, P.338

⁷ Ibid., James Houston, P274

death. We can live now in resurrection life. That is what people of God do. Where do we live this resurrection life? Just in a church building? Only in the fellowship with Christians? No, even in the market place, we live as people of God, as one who has received eternal life.

"For them [people who are untouched or unimpressed by the church], the vital and convincing factors are spiritual reality, a ringing note of conviction, meaningful and relevant communication, and a visible expression of the gospel in the church."⁸

We must ask ourselves: "Am I here as one who belongs to the world, or have I been sent to this world as one who belongs to God?" We are in the world but not of the world. If we forget this, we will lose sight of the richness of the eternal life which we have already received. We will forget who we really are. We are children of the resurrection in the world.

3. The Lord sits at God's right hand

41-44

⁴¹ Then Jesus said to them, "How is it that they say the Christ is the Son of David? ⁴² David himself declares in the Book of Psalms: " 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand ⁴³ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." ' ⁴⁴ David calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"

In the last two scenes, people came to Jesus and challenged him. They thought they knew the Bible and the law, but actually didn't know them so well. In this scene, now Jesus asked the teachers of the law a question, "David calls Christ his Lord. How then can He be David's son?" Luke didn't record how people responded to this. But Matthew recorded, "No one could say a word in reply." (Matt 22:46) No one said anything in response. They probably didn't know what to say.

"The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone." It doesn't mean the stone the builders threw away as useless actually fit when they used it by accident, and became the capstone unexpectedly. The truth is that the stone was the important stone to be the capstone, but the carpenters didn't realize it and threw it away. This illustrates about the teachers of the law and the chief

⁸ David Watson, "I Believe In The Church", Hodder and Stoughton, 1978, P.266

priests very well. They seemed as if they knew the Bible and Jesus, but actually they didn't really know them both. So, they rejected him.

David calls Christ his Lord. How then can He be David's son? What is Jesus' intention of this question? What is he saying here? He is saying Christ is more than just "son of David". I think this is the point. He is the one who sits at God's right hand.

Acts 5:30-31

³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead--whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

This verse shows several important things to understand Psalm 110:1 which Jesus quoted. Jesus is the Messiah prophesied. It is none other than Jesus who sits at God's right side. His sitting at God's right side is the series of events following his cross and resurrection.

Everyone in Jerusalem knows Jesus died on the cross. Over 500 people witnessed resurrected Jesus. (1 Cor 15:6) But other than John who saw it in his vision, it was only Stephen who saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. (Rev 20:11, Acts 7:55) Nevertheless, not only Peter but also Paul, Mark and the author of Hebrews talk about Jesus' sitting at the right hand of God with confidence. (1 Peter 3:22, Rom 8:34, Mark 16:19, Heb 1:3)

It is the cross and resurrection that confirms Jesus is Christ and he is the one who is sitting at the right side of God.

Acts 3:15

¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

In human eyes, Jesus was crucified as criminals. But God raised him up from the dead, for he is the author of life. And now he is sitting at the right side of God. Jesus himself is the stone "the builders rejected, but has become the capstone."

Jesus, the author of life said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." (John 11:25)

I believe in Jesus. Do you believe in Jesus? We who believe Jesus live the eternal life. We are children of the resurrection.

Eternal life, resurrection life: that is not just referring to life after physical death. We can live now in resurrection life. That is what people of God do. Wherever we are, we will live as people of God who has received the eternal life.

We've been redeemed by Jesus life. We are God's. We are sent into the world as ones who show God's glory. When believe in God, rejoice in Him, cry out to Him, worship and praise Him, and live with Him together with other God's people, we show God's glory to the world. We are children of the resurrection who live in the world but not of the world.