

“By the Lord Who Comes to the Lowly People, We Could Make the Family Happier through Precious Trials!”

Senior Deaconess Haksoon Seo (President of Second Women's Mission)

In December of 1989, I registered at Manmin Central Church and began feeling God's love and leading a proper Christian life. By the grace and blessing of God, my soul became prosperous. I was assigned many duties such as the sub-district leader of Parish 12-2, a group leader, a mission leader and a united mission leader of Women's Mission. During this time, Senior Pastor Dr. Jaerock Lee prayed for my daughter Soyoung in the name of Jesus Christ. When he did, she was healed of a chronic middle ear infection by the power of God. This work encouraged my husband Elder Ilgon Cho to lead a fervent Christian life as well.

His faith continually grew and in September of 1994, he presented a telephonic ARS (Automated Response System) service to Manmin Central Church as a form of offering. Originally it included Dr. Jaerock Lee's prayer for the sick and a 3-minute sermon recorded on the phone. Now Korean, English, Chinese and French languages are available at #82-2-830-5320 but it is English only at #1-770-554-5679. Through this telephonic prayer service, many healing miracles have been taking place in the name of Jesus Christ. The miracles include the revival of those who were dying, the healing of burns, recovery from injuries in traffic accidents and the curing of various diseases. In all God has been greatly glorified.

God has let us reap whatever we have sown and even blessed us with more than we've sown. My husband, Elder Cho, ran a bookstore and received much financial blessing. Our two children grew up properly in spirit and flesh by the grace of the Lord, and we lacked nothing. But one day something unexpected happened to us.

My Family Became More United in True Faith

In 2002, my husband had a strong desire to establish a major private educational institute and invested a great amount of money



We considered and served one another and did our best to be faithful to the kingdom of God while we were in trials so that our family could become more united in love and trust. (From the left, Sister Soyoung Cho, Senior Deaconess Haksoon Seo, Elder Ilgon Cho, and Brother Bumseok Cho)

to achieve that goal, but he was swindled out of the money he invested. From that time on and for several years we were in great debt of a couple of hundred thousand US dollars. We had to live a very tough life paying off the debt. We had lived in abundance for a long time and we felt severely burdened because we had fallen into such financial difficulty in just a day. But thankfully this difficulty led us to have the blessing of the prosperity of our souls and we were able to become more united in the Lord.

My husband and two children urged me to be more faithful to works of God while they were fulfilling their duties and taking care of the house. Financial difficulty never hindered me from fulfilling my God-given duties. I did my best to do my duties in all aspects. I was just sorry that I couldn't help poor members with financial support. At that time my husband ran a dumpling house. One day he said to my son Bumseok, "Shall we order a pizza?" Bumseok answered, "Daddy! Not possible! For a piece of pizza, we'd have to sell 10 dumplings!"

My daughter Soyoung had the

same heart that Bumseok did. The two children did not do the wrong way even though our home was not in a good condition. Though they did not have to do laborious work, they began working at part-time jobs to earn college tuition fee. They also studied hard to receive scholarships. The tuition fee amounted to approximately 15,000,000 Won (13,000 US Dollars) every year, but they earned that amount of money for themselves.

Through Trials My Heart Broadened and Changed into a Heart of Goodness

While going through financial trials, I came to measure and understand the hearts of mission members who lived a poor life, and to consider them even in small things. So, I no longer asked them, "Did you have lunch?" but instead I said to them, "Let's go out to lunch. I want to treat you."

One night after we came back home from church, my husband said, "What about some fried chicken for dessert?" I felt ill-feeling at being provoked deep in a corner of my heart. I was reminded of many bills to be paid the next

day. I said to him, "Honey! We're struggling severely to pay off our debts. How could you say something like that?" I said it in a way that revealed my ill-feelings.

Since I had always tried my best to serve others with good heart at the church, I couldn't discover forms of untruths including hatred and ill-feelings. But I found some forms of untruths in my attitude of serving my husband and repented and did my best to cultivate true goodness in practice and tried to become a virtuous and excellent wife.

It was so thankful that my husband had not been offended at my uncomfortable words but instead he considered it to be his own fault. And he said to me, "If you can just wait a bit more, I will surely change." He always set his mind on the positive side of the future. That's why quarrelling couldn't happen between us and nothing hurt my children's hearts. We all believed that trial was allowed for our true blessing, and confessed everything only in faith and gave thanks in everything. So, we felt only happiness during the trials.

Blessings Were Overflowing after Making a Vowed Offering and Humbling Ourselves

At last we paid off all our debts in 2008. I expected financial blessing would come to us, but for the next two years it was the same as before. The reason was that my husband had not been able to offer God his vowed offering because he had already spent it on his current business. We repented of that and waited for the mercy of God.

In December of 2009, Senior Pastor Dr. Jaerock Lee expressed his love for us in spirit and flesh because he fully understood our situation. He had not forgotten at all that my husband offered the telephonic ARS service to the church and we offered our dedications to the church in many ways. He not only encouraged us with good words but also supported us with a big amount of relief offering. My husband and I didn't spend the money on his new business but fulfilled his vow first of all. Then, overflowing blessing came upon us in spirit and flesh.

My husband quit his business lowering himself and entered an insurance company. Now he is giving a monthly tithe of 1,300,000 Won (1,200 US Dollars). My daughter Soyoung spends time reading the Bible and Senior Pastor's religious books and offering prayers to God. Once she didn't prepare for the mid-term examination but she could concentrate on some specific parts by the help of the Holy Spirit and gained satisfactory points. In the year of 2011, she will serve as vice president of the 4th college mission and praise leader at Tuesday Praise Worship Service.

I am so happy and very thankful for a good father who loves his children, good children who are pressing on toward the goal of entering New Jerusalem, my Senior Pastor Dr. Jaerock Lee who is leading us to hope for Heaven and resembling the Lord in prayer, and the Lord who has given me overflowing joy and happiness in everyday life.

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“Let the Whole World Be Brightened with the Lights of Love and Service!”

The 2010 Christmas Trees Lighting Ceremony Was Broadcast to the World



On December 10, 2010 Manmin Central Church held the 2010 Christmas Trees Lighting Ceremony in commemoration of the birth of Jesus.

The Master of Ceremonies was Pastor Dove Daehye Cho and representative prayer was offered by Pastor Sangtae Kim. The moment Senior Pastor Dr. Jaerock Lee turned on the main switch after all brothers and sisters in attendance cried out, "Faith, Hope and Love", fireworks flashed and all the lights that decorated the trees were lit. Then Immanuel Choir and Shalom Choir sang the carol "Joy to the World" in celebration of the birth of Jesus, who came down to this earth to save mankind. After that Pastor Iris Kim sang a special song "Feliz Navidad" which was followed by a short Christmas celebration message given by Senior Pastor Lee.

In his message, Senior Pastor Lee said, "Christmas is the day we celebrate Jesus coming down to this earth in a human form to save us from our sins. When I find the churches that have put up beautiful decorations in celebration of the Lord's birth, my heart is touched. In my childhood we lived in poverty, but every church made Christmas tree decorations with their sincerity every year and gave gifts to the poor. But I am very sorry considering the reality of today's situation. Now is the time for all the believers in the Lord have to renew their hearts."

The decorations with beautiful flowers, snowflakes, and LED bulbs in the main sanctuary of Manmin Central Church, expressed a banquet to be held in New Jerusalem to commemorate the birth of the Lord. The main theme of the outside decorations of the sanctuary is "Glory in Heaven and Joy and Peace on Earth" and the outside was adorned with snowy trees, holy paintings of Jesus' birth, a 35-meter-tall tree of lights and many LED bulbs shining in various-colors. At the entrance of the church there was a photographic booth with cards celebrating Christmas that were composed by senior leaders of the church.

This year's Christmas celebration trees' decorations were made by the Designer's Mission, Sharon Mission, and the Church Facilities' Managing Department. In their love for the Lord Jesus Christ, many other missions also contributed their talents and performances including Children's Mission, Students' Mission, Paul's Mission, Mary's Mission, Young Adults' Mission, College Mission, and Canaan Mission. This ceremony was broadcast live to the world via Manmin TV and the Internet. The members of the church prayed that the lights of love and service to the Lord might enlighten every corner of the earth.



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Why Was Jesus Laid in a Manger?

"Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:4-7).

Jesus originally existed in the form of God. He was the Master of the heavens and the earth and everything in them and He sat upon a throne of indescribable glory. But He put on a human form and came down to this earth in the flesh in order to redeem mankind from their sins and lead them to gain eternal life. God the Creator and the Almighty could have let His only begotten Son, Jesus, be born in an honorable and majestic place. But why was Jesus born in a stable and laid in a manger?



Senior Pastor Dr. Jaerock Lee

1. Why was Jesus born in a stable?

In Jesus' time, the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census was to be taken of all the inhabited earth. According to this decree, all the Jews in the land of Judea had to return to their home cities to register for the census. Joseph went together with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant with child. They traveled from the city of Galilee to the city of Bethlehem. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver the child.

Since so many people moved from place to place to register for the census, there was no room for Joseph and Mary to stay at an inn. Mary delivered the child in a stable. She wrapped the child in swaddling cloth and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. Why then was Jesus, who came to this earth as the Savior for all men, born in such a shabby and lowly place?

Ecclesiastes 3:18 reads, "I said to myself concerning the sons of men, 'God has surely tested them in order for them to see that they are but beasts.'" This verse tells us that since all mankind sinned and lost the image of God they are but beasts.

When God formed the first man in the image of God and breathed the breath of life into him, the man became a living being. He was a man of spirit and learned only truth from God. But after he disobeyed the Word of God and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, his spirit died and he was disconnected from the communication he had with God. He could no longer rule over the earth as the lord of all things. He fell under the leadership of the enemy devil and his heart, that used to be filled with the truth, became imbued with untruths that the devil manages. When Adam's spirit died his soul came to play the part of the master and he lost the image of

God.

Thus, men of flesh cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven nor can they call God 'Abba, Father.' In order to redeem these people who are no better than beasts, Jesus was born in a stable.

2. Why was Jesus laid in a manger?

Why was then Jesus laid in a manger after His birth? It was for the Child to become the bread of life to people who are but beasts. In John 6:51 Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down out of Heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever." Jesus was laid in a manger in accordance with God's plan to help us to be restored to the lost image of God, perform the duty of men and accomplish complete salvation. As recorded in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, the duty of men is to have the reverent fear of God and keep His commandments. Then God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil, will be revealed.

Those who do not carry out the duty of men and lead beast-like lives cannot escape from being brought to the Great Judgment and being thrown into Hell. For this reason, Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger to become the living bread of spirit to mankind and redeem men, who had become no more than animals, from their sins.

3. Why did Jesus live a poor life though He was rich?

Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, could have lived life of wealth if He had just wished for it. But He was born in a stable and lived in poverty intentionally.

News in Brief

Japan's Maizuru Manmin Church Spread the Love of the Lord at the Sakura Plaza

On December 11th the Women's Mission, the choir and the Students' Mission of Maizuru Manmin Church in Japan recently under the ministering of Pastor Marco Kim, visited the Sakura Plaza, a welfare center for the elderly who have disabilities or cannot live unassisted. When the choir sang carols the faces of the elderly started to brighten and when students, in angelic attire sang praises and danced, they gave a big applause with joyous emotions. Pastor Marco Kim explained to them about the birth of Jesus and the meaning of Christmas and those who accompanied him gave the elderly people various presents they had prepared. The elderly felt very thankful for the warm love of the believers of Maizuru Manmin Church and were shedding tears of thanksgiving.



Believers of Maizuru Manmin Church sang carols with the elderly at the Sakura Plaza

2010 Christmas Celebration Tree Decoration in the Main Sanctuary

The decorations in the main sanctuary symbolize the "Christmas Commemorative Banquet in the City of New Jerusalem." Pink and white flowers, snowflakes, and LED bulbs expressed the beautiful and bright mood of Heaven. The pretty decorations on the pillars on the right side of the sanctuary showed the beauty of the banquet in New Jerusalem. The big stars on the arched balcony represent the star that guided the three magi to the baby Jesus.

The pretty flowers symbolize 'the joy of Christmas'. The hexagonal snowflakes stand for happy memories of white Christmases celebrated on earth and God's mysterious providence of creation. The two big trees on the altar stand for the grace and love of God that was poured down upon us. The angelic decorations are spreading the joy of Christmas with trumpets in the streams of lights.



What is the reason?

2 Corinthians 8:9 explains to us the reason: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." Jesus abandoned the glory of Heaven, came down to this earth in the flesh, received humiliation and mockery, and lived a poor life to redeem us from our sins and poverty.

While Adam and Eve were living in the Garden of Eden, everything was in abundance. They always ate without toiling and sweating for food. But from the time of Adam's disobedience to the Word of God, he gained food only through sweat and toil. He also had to live in poverty, deficiency and need.

Since poverty is not a sin, Jesus didn't need to shed His blood to redeem us from poverty. But poverty is also a part of the curses that fell on Adam because he had disobeyed God. It is for that reason that Jesus also redeemed us from the curse of poverty and enables us to become rich through His life in poverty.

Some believers say Jesus was poor in a spiritual sense. Since Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and is one with God the Father, it would never be correct to say that Jesus is spiritually poor. Only when you realize why Jesus was originally rich, yet became poor, can you feel thankful for the grace and love of God and then become rich for the glory of God.

Some people say asking for financial blessing in prayers to God is not proper in faith. There are some others who misunderstand thinking that the believers in Jesus Christ have to be poor. In Deuteronomy 28:2-6 and in 3 John 1:2 we see that poverty is not in accordance with the will of God at all. In fact, many forefathers of faith including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Daniel lived blessed and rich lives.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In order to fulfill God's plan to lead mankind to the path to salvation and blessing, Jesus was born in a stable, laid in a manger and lived a life in poverty. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I pray that you may understand this providence of God, perform the duty of men and receive the fullest blessing in spirit and flesh.

MERRY CHRISTMAS



Three Gifts Offered to Jesus by Three Magi Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh



On Christmas, we rejoice with and celebrate the birth of Jesus who came down to this earth as the Savior of mankind. But many people consider Christmas as just another holiday or a day of 'Santa Claus' without understanding the true meaning of Christmas. If even the believers unconsciously follow this trend of the world, how painful it would be for God the Father!

Jesus was originally the Son of God, but He abandoned all the heavenly glories and came down to this earth in a human form. Before he was born, the three magi had made note of it and prepared three gifts to celebrate His birth. Under the supervision of God, the three magi followed a very brightly shining star that guided them to Bethlehem where they worshiped the baby Jesus and offered Him the three gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—on behalf of all men.

Let's look into the spiritual meanings of the three gifts and commemorate the blessings God has given us on this Christmas.

The First Gift of Gold, 'the Heart'

Pure gold is one of the most valuable of all minerals. People love it the most of all metals on the earth. It is considered to be 'forever unchangeable'. It is the very symbol of riches and wealth. As recorded in Matthew 6:21, "...for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," gold also refers to our heart. So, 'giving gold to the Lord' means we have to give everything we have to the Lord.

God was pleased when gold was offered to the baby Jesus. He rewards us with heavenly mansions built with gold and various jewels. Anyone who believes and accepts Jesus Christ as his Savior and possesses the kingdom of heaven in his heart and is blessed to enjoy eternal life in Heaven forever.

Therefore, the kingdom of Heaven is in the heart of true believers in the Lord. God allows for the believers to hope for Heaven in their hearts. They cannot accomplish the kingdom of heaven without the hope for Heaven. On the other hand, to the same extent that they lack hope for Heaven, they will be unable to accomplish the kingdom of Heaven in their hearts.

The Second Gift of Frankincense, the Fragrance of the Christ

Frankincense is an aromatic resin obtained from trees of the genus *Boswellia*, particularly *Boswellia Sacra*. It is also known as olibanum (Hebrew: תרבויל, levonah), which is derived from the Arabic al-lubān (roughly translated: "that which results from milking"). It is a reference to the milky sap tapped from the *Boswellia* tree. It is also postulated that the name comes from the Arabic term for "Oil of Lebanon" and in Exodus 30:34, it is named levonah, meaning either "white" or "Lebanese" in Hebrew. It is used in incense and perfumes. Exodus 30:34 says

it was an ingredient for incense.

The giving of the frankincense spiritually means the spreading the fragrance of the Christ through the circumcision of the heart. When we spray perfumes, it removes foul odor and sends forth a good fragrance. In the same way, when we remove all forms of evil and glorify God with good deeds, we can spread the fragrance of Christ. This is represented by the offering of frankincense to the Lord. God doesn't search for only our deeds but also sees our heart. He first receives good aroma from our hearts. That's why those who really love God and understand this heart of God do their best to get rid of every form of evil and circumcise their hearts.

Those who spread the fragrance of Christ by circumcising their hearts, namely those who give the Lord frankincense, can give everything they have to the Lord and do not spare even their lives for Him. Then, their souls will prosper. They will be successful in everything they do and they will enjoy good health (3 John 1:2).

In the same way that many blessings of God are given to those who 'give gold' to the Lord by giving Him everything they have, God also gives blessing in accordance with what a person has done. God is well pleased and He gives overflowing blessings to those who have circumcised their hearts and spread the fragrance of Christ.

The Third Gift of Myrrh, Unchanging Faith

Myrrh is the dried oleo gum resin of a number of species of trees, *Commiphora*. Like frankincense, it is produced by the tree as a reaction to a purposefully inflicted wound through the bark and into the sapwood. The trees are bled in this way on a regular basis. Its name is rendered into English from the Greek myth of Myrrha 'μύρρον' from Greek. The related

word became a general term for perfume. However, the term ultimately derives its name from the Aramaic word 'murr' which meaning "bitter." Since ancient times, myrrh has been valued for its fragrance, its medicinal qualities as a wound dressing and an aromatic numbing agent. The ancient Egyptians used it as the principal ingredient in the embalming of 'mummies'. In ancient history it has been so valuable at times that it has been equal in value to its weight in gold. During times of scarcity its value rose even higher. It has been used throughout history as a perfume, incense and in medicines.

Jews used myrrh at the funeral ceremony as the embalment to preserve the dead body (John 19:39-40). In a spiritual sense, giving myrrh to the Lord means we have to give the Lord what does not perish, but lasts forever. It is none other than unchanging faith. The believers in the Lord must be able to surrender everything they have, even their lives, to the Lord. They must dedicate themselves to Him unchangingly. Because some forms of evil that remain in you may cause you to seek your own benefits and cause you to change your mind, you must possess unchanging faith and you have to cast off every form of evil above all else.

God was delighted when myrrh was offered to the baby Jesus, and He gave us a life that lasts forever—eternal life. We were all originally doomed to fall into Hell. But, when we possess unchanging, spiritual faith we will be able to put on the imperishable and renewed body at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On this happy Christmas, all men are expected to sincerely feel the love of God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ and our Helper the Holy Spirit. We should commemorate Christmas with the spiritual meanings embedded in the three gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh and present them to the Lord as true gifts.

The Confession of Faith

1. Manmin Central Church believes that the Bible is God-breathed Word that is perfect and flawless.
2. Manmin Central Church believes in the unity and the work of God the Trinity: God the Holy Father, God the Holy Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
3. Manmin Central Church believes that we are forgiven of our sins only by the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ.
4. Manmin Central Church believes in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus

5. Christ, His Second Advent, the Millennium, and the eternal heaven.
5. Members of Manmin Central Church confess their faith through "The Apostles' Creed" each time they come together and believe in its content verbatim.
- "[God] Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things." (Acts 17:25)
- "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

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