

## Greeting by Masaaki-sama

### “Love and love only”

World Church of Messiah Headquarters

July Monthly Service

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Hello, everyone.

It is raining today, but regardless, all of you gathered to be here with Kyoshu-sama. Thank you.

Just now, as I sat here, I was thinking about how once a month, if possible, attending a service under Kyoshu-sama is necessary and good for our hearts and bodies. For it is in these services under Kyoshu-sama that we can experience solemnity and quiet intensity.

Recently, I have been thinking, how has each one of us settled the matter within ourselves regarding what Meishu-sama repeatedly said about the Final Judgment or the division of good and evil.

As I also mentioned in the Paradise on Earth Service, in Meishu-sama’s Sacred Word “Preface to *Creation of Civilization*,” he said, “In the Final Judgment, the grave sinners will perish, and the not-so-grave sinners will be saved. Those who believe in this will attain eternal life and survive as the residents of a paradise on earth that is to come.”

This is only a small portion of “Preface to *Creation of Civilization*,” but I cannot help but feel that in it, truly, lies God’s mystery, the mystery of mysteries, that Meishu-sama wanted to relay to us.

Meishu-sama says, “I suspect that no one notices it, but there is no writing that is more difficult than mine. The degree of its difficulty is unmatched by any other writings since the invention of letters.” What is so hard that “its difficulty is unmatched by any other writings since the invention of letters” is Meishu-sama’s Sacred Word.

So the truth is, while you may think that Meishu-sama’s Sacred Word is easy to understand, actually, it is something that cannot be easily understood by human wisdom. I mean, the content of even the small part I just quoted is really beyond our human wisdom.

Meishu-sama is saying that those who have attained eternal life will survive as the

residents of a paradise on earth. Meishu-sama, of course, has attained eternal life and has survived as a resident of paradise on earth, hasn't he? That I am sure of. I mentioned this at the Paradise on Earth Service, too, but I think it is just too important, so I need to say it again now.

For a long time, we've been saying "the construction of a paradise on earth," right? But if a paradise on earth is a place where those who have attained eternal life live, our preconceived understanding and notion of "a paradise on earth" will be overturned completely, won't it? I think Meishu-sama is saying something really huge.

So from an ordinary viewpoint, I say we wouldn't know what this Sacred Word means. A paradise on earth is a place where those who have attained eternal life live—can you understand what this means?

Well, what guidance does Kyoshu-sama give to us on this? When we hear "a paradise on earth" and look at the world around us, we might simply think everything is still in chaos, so a paradise on earth is still a long way off. But Kyoshu-sama says it in the following way: We say "earth" but aren't we ourselves on this earth? Isn't each one of us here on this earth carrying the sense of "I"? So doesn't "earth" mean this sense of "I," that is, our life?

So this life called "I"—if it can become one with the eternal heaven and attain eternal life, isn't this what Meishu-sama called a paradise on earth? This is what Kyoshu-sama is teaching us. Meishu-sama also straightforwardly says, "The place where divine humans gather—this is what I call a paradise on earth." So the part in "Preface to *Creation of Civilization*" that Meishu-sama wrote is truly no small matter.

And then there is "In the Final Judgment, the grave sinners will perish, and the not-so-grave sinners will be saved." Can anyone really say to God, "That person's sins are grave. Mine are not so grave. So I have the right to be saved."

Well, maybe some of you feel you can say those things. But in any case, Meishu-sama himself says that he is a grave sinner. In a part of one of his hymns, he mentions, "O God, my sin is grave. But You, O God, did not punish me for it," and in a part of another hymn, "Forgive me—me whose body, family and ancestors are filled with many sins!" Meishu-sama himself says that he is a grave sinner, that he is filled with many sins.

If that is the case, since Meishu-sama said, "In the Final Judgment, the grave sinners will perish, and the not-so-grave sinners will be saved. *Those who believe in this* will attain

eternal life,” he must have believed that he was a grave sinner and was destined to perish, right? He must have believed that he was an existence that needed to repent, right? That is why Meishu-sama was allowed to attain eternal life.

This means that Meishu-sama was declared not guilty by God. He was destined to perish, but God told him, “Your sins have been forgiven. You are not guilty.”

In another Sacred Word “What is the Last Judgment?” Meishu-sama says that in the Last Judgment, “what will take place is the division of good and evil, and a decisive judgment will be delivered. That is, the good will be declared not guilty and the evil guilty.” Here he says that “the good will be declared not guilty.” And he continues, “Accordingly, we are in a dire predicament: all human beings on earth share the same fate as animals that are about to be slaughtered.”

Now if we were to ask whether Meishu-sama is a good person or an evil person, we would say he is of the most good, right? But this Meishu-sama was conscious of how sinful he was. “The good will be declared not guilty” means we have to be made sinless by God regardless of how sinful we are. This is what it means to become a good person. That is clear.

Meishu-sama is telling us that we are in a dire predicament as we share the same fate as animals that are about to be slaughtered—even still, I doubt that we believe it is dire. Even when we hear, “The good will be declared not guilty,” we don’t think this is serious or that we are in a “dire predicament.” That is how arrogant we, myself included, are in the eyes of God.

But if Meishu-sama was made sinless, this truly is a grave subject and means that we, too, need to receive a pronouncement of not guilty, right?

Yes, Kyoshu-sama did say that everyone is already forgiven. Yes, it is true that the verdict of not guilty is already prepared, that God already decided to pronounce His judgment to forgive all humanity. But, if you do not say to God, with your own will, that “I am a sinner and want to be forgiven,” you will remain a sinner from here on, too. Being a sinner means your sins have not been removed. You will end up remaining what is called evil by Meishu-sama.

That is to say, the biggest question here is how each one of us can be made sinless.

So let’s take a look at the Sacred Word “Repent, for the end of night is at hand.” In it,

when it says Final Judgment, it means the executor of this Great Judgment is God. It is this God who controls the lives of humans. Meishu-sama says, “In order to overcome the dire situation we are in, the only way out is to implore God, dive into His saving hand and be forgiven of our sins.” Again, “In order to overcome the dire situation we are in”—and to us, it may not seem like a dire situation—“the only way out is to implore God, dive into His saving hand and be forgiven of our sins.” And he clearly says, “Our sins have accumulated so much to the extent that we cannot carry their burdens by ourselves anymore. It is only through the power of God’s saving hand that our sins can be removed and cleansed. I reiterate. This is the only choice left for us.” Could Meishu-sama be any clearer about this?

He is saying that in order to overcome our dire situation, we have no other choice but to implore God and dive into His saving hand, that there is no other path of salvation.

As it was said in the Sacred Word a moment ago, we are in a position likened to animals that are about to be slaughtered.

When I read that Sacred Word, “All human beings on earth share the same fate as animals that are about to be slaughtered,” what came to mind was the Japanese expression “like a fish on a chopping board.” I thought that you, me, everyone, are like fish on a chopping board.

In looking up the meaning of “like a fish on a chopping board,” it says, “When the fate of one’s life is in someone else’s hands; no matter how much one flounders, there is no escape; facing certain death”—literally like a fish on a chopping board.

Here, “someone else” for us means God. God holds the fate of our lives in His hand. There is no escape from God no matter how much we flounder or wriggle about. Still, I think we have been wriggling desperately “like a fish on a chopping board.”

In the name of faith, in the name of “to be a better person” and in the name of practice, we’ve been struggling, saying things like “I have to do this and that” or “I have to improve.” Of course, trying our best is not a bad thing. But, first, we need to admit that we are sinners, be forgiven and made sinless. Otherwise, no matter what good deed you do, wouldn’t it mean that you are doing it simply to prove to others that you are a good person who is better than others?

For a long time, we struggled and wriggled about desperately. But from the start, we were likened to animals that are about to be slaughtered. And there was nothing we could

do about it—like a fish on a chopping board. We faced certain death, but we still continued to flounder and struggle. Even in this state of ours, with His compassionate heart and His great patience, God let us go unpunished to this day.

And then when it says “implore God, dive into His saving hand,” don’t you wonder what this hand is?

In Meishu-sama’s hymn, he wrote:

“O great hand of the Messiah! / All creation on earth, without exception, / Will be saved by you!”

He also wrote:

“Wise are those / Who obediently depend on the Messiah. / For the fate of the lives of all people / Is in his hand!”

Normally, when we say “depend” on something or someone, we think it is a foolish thing to do since humans have knowledge and power; we’re intelligent; we are able; it’s silly to depend on anyone or anything.

But what appears to be foolish to humanity is wise to God. What appears to be wise to humanity is foolish in the eyes of God.

We humans are proud, thinking we can do this, we do these deeds, we have this kind of faith—as if we were wise. But in actuality, to God, they are all foolish. Isn’t that right? And what truly is wise seems at one glance to be foolish to humans.

As far as the world goes, to say that God is my everything, that we can do nothing else but depend on God, is considered foolish, isn’t it? But to God and Meishu-sama, those foolish things are the wisest.

And the Sacred Word “Repent, for the end of night is at hand” that says to depend on God’s hand comes to an end with the following conclusion.

God has entrusted Meishu-sama with the final salvation and the announcing of this Last Judgment to humanity. Should you cover your ears to the voice of Meishu-sama urging to repent, the Sacred Word ends with “To you who ignore God’s warning, let me say this. Even if you repent when the final time comes, it will be too late.” Meishu-sama is giving a warning and saying that when the final time comes, even if you repent, it will be too late—so hurry and implore God, dive in and obediently depend on the hand of the Messiah.

When did Meishu-sama publish this Sacred Word? It was on December 31, 1949. New

Year's Eve. On December 31, 1949, the last day of 1949, Meishu-sama published this Sacred Word in the newspaper *Light*. He closed the year with a warning to humanity.

Then what happened in the beginning of the next year, in 1950? Soon came February 4, beginning of spring. And as all of you know, it is the day that World Church of Messiah was founded. About a month before on the last day of the previous year, Meishu-sama conveyed the strict message. Soon into the new year, Meishu-sama founded World Church of Messiah on the day of beginning of spring, bringing the name of Messiah to the fore.

Anyone who rejected the word "Messiah" would surely not have become a member of World Church of Messiah, right? That is to say, because Meishu-sama wished to gather people who wanted to receive the salvation through the name of Messiah and wished to offer them to God through himself, soon after he conveyed the strict Sacred Word, he founded World Church of Messiah in the next year. With that, as this salvation was not only for the Japanese, he started to advance worldwide salvation through the name of Messiah at full scale.

When you think about it this way, it doesn't really matter whether it's Sekai Meshi-*a* Kyo or Sekai Meshi-*ya* Kyo, whether or not the pronunciation of "Messiah" is written above the Japanese characters for "kyusei" (salvation). Well, to say it doesn't matter might be a bit too strong, but the point is that it is a really minor issue, wouldn't you say?

Whether humanity will be saved or not—this is the most crucial point, isn't it?

Yes, the Church name is important, but the most important is the salvation of humanity. Is there anything more important than this to God and Meishu-sama? This means that it is the most important to us, too, right?

Well, since Meishu-sama made the name of the Church "World Church of Messiah," does that mean that the matter is complete with us saying, "We will rely on Meishu-sama the Messiah" or "We will rely on the name of Messiah that Meishu-sama taught us"? No, it doesn't end there, as I always say.

Why? We are left with the existence of Jesus Christ, without a doubt. For as long as we publicly put out the name "Messiah," we will never be able to escape the existence of Jesus Christ.

But when Meishu-sama established World Church of Messiah, he said repeatedly, over and over again, that Jesus Christ is part of the salvation he was advancing through the name

of Messiah.

I speak about it very often, but when World Church of Messiah was established, Meishu-sama did many interviews. In one of them, he was asked, “What is the global significance of the birth of World Church of Messiah?” to which he answered that the mission of World Church of Messiah is to bring joy to the whole world through faith. But he also said that in the West, there is Christianity, that we have to admit Christ’s greatness and his divine power to bring salvation to the whole world, and that what Jesus preached is truly worthy of praise. So “I and this new religion of ours wish to carry out our divine mission in concert with Christianity. We will strive to save humanity and lead it in the right direction; I ask God to use all my heart and soul to achieve this task.”

Here, it is not a matter about the words “Christ” or “Messiah.” He clearly says “Christianity,” and we know that Jesus is the originator of Christianity. He says that by working in concert with Christianity whose originator was Jesus Christ, “We will strive to save humanity and lead it in the right direction; I ask God to use all my heart and soul to achieve this task.” You can see that within the salvation of humanity, Meishu-sama fully viewed himself and Jesus as one, didn’t he? Or how about to the question “Is it possible to realize world peace with the power of religion?” and Meishu-sama’s reply “I believe that it is absolutely possible”? He is so confident, isn’t he? He says “absolutely possible.” And after that, he says “as I said before,” meaning he has repeatedly said it.

Here is what he says: “As I said before, in the West, there is Christ. In the East, there is Messiah. If these two major forces work in concert with each other—one in the East, the other in the West—and if all members of the two powers diligently fight for peace, eternal peace will surely be brought about.” This is a powerful Sacred Word. Wouldn’t you agree?

“All members” to Meishu-sama were both members of Christianity and members of World Church of Messiah. He saw them as one under God.

Or how about this? Meishu-sama was asked about the issue of how Jesus Christ is usually designated as the Messiah. To this, he said that we still do not have a concrete definition of the term “Messiah,” but in this twentieth century, at last, the time has come when God will reveal His true power. He said that in the West, Christ will no doubt demonstrate his true potential, and in the East, the Messiah will manifest his true divine power. He continued that this cannot be understood with the kinds of religious notions we

have had until today, and a far greater, divine power will appear. You can see how Meishu-sama fully recognizes that under God that uses him, Jesus and Meishu-sama are two but work as one.

In one of Meishu-sama's hymns, he says it even more clearly.

“Amidst the joyous and resounding shouts of Hallelujah! / The Messiah-Christ descends. / And, ah, it descends so quietly!”

I don't think this hymn is about Messiah and Christ descending together separately. He wrote, “Messiah-Christ.” He is saying they are one.

From the start, Meishu-sama said that he is the Second Coming of Christ. If he did not accept the first Christ, how could he ever be the Second Coming of Christ? It would not be possible.

So if you look at the array of Sacred Word I just mentioned, “Messiah” that Meishu-sama speaks of not only includes himself but includes Jesus too. There is no doubt about that.

It is only when you receive and accept both Jesus Christ and Meishu-sama that you can dive into and depend on the hand of Messiah and obtain salvation in the truest sense. Meishu-sama is very clear about this, make no mistake.

Then there is the Bible. In his Sacred Word, Meishu-sama quotes from the Bible a great deal. It is clear that he read the Bible. He even said that among all the religious books in the whole world, there is no other book more powerful than the Bible to lead people to repentance, didn't he?

Meishu-sama saw on TV, or on other media, the president of the United States place his hand on the Bible at the time of inauguration, and he said, “I felt something inexplicable within me.” He was in awe and believed that America's current prosperity came from their faith in God.

To begin with, doesn't Meishu-sama say in a Sacred Word, “Reading through the Bible today”? This means he was reading the Bible, right? So doesn't that mean that Meishu-sama received and accepted Jesus Christ's existence and the Bible's existence?

If you think about this, what was found from this recent secretly following and filming of Kyoshu-sama—that Kyoshu-sama was meeting with a Christian friend, that he was going to a Christian gathering to learn and that he was learning about the Bible—was simply

not an issue, regardless of how you think about it, right?

Didn't we proceed until today not knowing the various matters regarding World Church of Messiah during Meishu-sama's time? Didn't we proceed until today without dedicating our attention to the necessity of working in concert with Christians or to the hymns and Sacred Word that I just mentioned? If we continued in the same way, we would have never accomplished Meishu-sama's true will.

Even Meishu-sama acknowledges that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer. But what about us? Have we ever acknowledged Jesus as the Redeemer?

But in order to fully complete Meishu-sama's salvation, we must realize that within the word "Messiah" that Meishu-sama speaks of, both Jesus and Meishu-sama exist. And being dependent on the hand of Messiah, through that name of Messiah, we also must be made sinless. If this is the case, shouldn't everyone connected to Meishu-sama have known this?

So though their intention, the intention of those who criticized Kyoshu-sama, was to slander and defame Kyoshu-sama, I think it was a good thing that they tried so hard to disseminate the information they obtained from secretly following and filming him. Because contrary to their ill intention, through their propaganda, some people were probably able to awaken to the importance of Jesus Christ in the divine work of Meishu-sama. If this kind of thing did happen, it would make Meishu-sama really happy.

So I say they did a rather good job [laughter]. As such, Izunome Church and MOA/Toho no Hikari were intending to attack Kyoshu-sama. But in actuality, Meishu-sama used them and made the truth known to the people who belonged to those groups and who were seeking Meishu-sama's true salvation. After all, it is Meishu-sama's will to save as many people as possible, isn't it?

In his last years, Meishu-sama said to his close attendants that when the division happens at the Last Judgment, even amongst the members of World Church of Messiah, only about a third will survive. When you look at this from a human perspective and see the current number of members remaining in World Church of Messiah, I think the division has happened through this time's Church purification, just as Meishu-sama predicted.

So those who do not accept Meishu-sama and Jesus are going to perish, and those of us who do accept them will be declared not guilty—is that the end of story? Well, it's

actually not that simple. It doesn't end by saying, "Those who do not accept them will be judged and are destined to perish, and we will be saved."

What I mean is that the reason why we came to know this path is because of those who criticized Kyoshu-sama. There's no doubt. If they didn't do what they did, we would have gone our whole lives without thinking about or receiving and accepting Jesus Christ or working in concert with Christians.

Certainly, there is the psychological burden that Kyoshu-sama and my mother are under by the secretly following and filming. But if those people did not exist, we could not have known true salvation nor even entered the path to be made sinless. To be made sinless or not—it is a grave issue. This is not just rhetoric. We have to sincerely thank those people.

Even if they say we are a nuisance or they criticize us, we will not say or do the same to them. World Church of Messiah would simply not have resurrected were it not for them! We would not have been able to receive Jesus as the Redeemer, and we would not have thought about working in concert with Christians.

If this is indeed so, each and every one of us can't thank them enough. All of us together must thank them. Let us do that.

Some of you may certainly be thinking, "You may say all that, but it's impossible for people who carried out or approved of secretly following and filming someone to be saved by God." Actually, that's not the case.

Meishu-sama says in a hymn:

"God is the Ruler of the universe. / He forgives any kind of sin. / And He punishes every kind, too!"

He says God forgives any kind of sin. God forgives any kind of sin! But of course, you will not simply be forgiven. Since Meishu-sama says God punishes every kind of sin, it means you must repent, without doubt. Those people I just mentioned have yet to reach the stage of repenting. They have yet to reach it, but it is prepared for them. "If you repent, I will forgive you"—there, the love of God is prepared for them.

Well, is each one of our lives something to be that proud of in the first place? In the several-odd decades that we have lived, myself included, there is something, something that we were made to experience, isn't there? Each and every one of us. We may not even be able to tell others about it, and we think, "This surely cannot be forgiven"—I am sure that

each one of us has been made to experience this kind of sin in some form. Why is each of us made to experience something like that? It is for us to know the forgiveness of God.

And not only ourselves, perhaps within our family or relatives, maybe someone we know—they might have done something terrible, enough to end up being mentioned on TV. But even for that, actually, salvation is waiting for them. After all, Meishu-sama says, “God forgives any kind of sin.” There are no exceptions. In this way, the love of God, truly, is something that far exceeds our imagination.

Even when the Last Judgment arrives and we find ourselves like fish on a chopping board, even if we continue wriggling and struggling about, God patiently waits for us. And if you truly repent, God will forgive any kind of sin of yours.

“Looking up at the sky and its vastness, / I ponder. / How immense and unlimited the grace of God is!”

As it is written in this hymn, truly, the love of God has no bounds. The love of God is so great that we humans cannot even fathom just how great His heart of love is.

Recently, there is a hymn that I have repeatedly been bringing up:

“When the end of days comes, / You will be taken to the court to be judged. / No matter how much you repent at that time, / It will be of no use.”

Here, at “the end of days,” meaning the Last Judgment, you will be taken to “the court,” and even if you repent at that time, nothing can be done for you. It is a stern hymn, isn’t it?

The next hymn is thought to be a pair with the one I just mentioned.

“O God, / The power of Your great love will manifest itself / On the day of the Last Judgment!”

It says that God’s love will manifest on the day of the Last Judgment.

What kind of love is it? It is of course, the love that forgives anything, and it is also the love a parent has for their child.

Look at this hymn:

“How humbling it is that / You, O God, look after all that exists / Just as You would love Your own child!”

As parents would love their own children, God looks after all that exists, that is, all humanity and all creation. How humbling it is that He loves everyone and everything with

the heart of a parent.

Still, we may think something like “But I don’t remember anything about God being my Parent.” Instead, we know that we were born in this year, in this month, on this day, to these parents, right? But actually, as the law of the spiritual preceding the physical governs all, before we were born on earth, at the very start, God bore us in heaven first.

Even for human parents, when their child is born, they feel something like “How precious is my child,” “For this child, I would do anything” or “I am going to protect this child no matter what.” But when God bore us in heaven, He had a feeling of love toward us that far exceeded that of human parents.

God was all alone at the beginning, wasn’t He? But He wanted to live in the world of happiness together with many and decided to bear us. Well, sometimes when our life is miserable, we feel like we want to say to God, “Why did you have to do that? Why did you have to bear me?” But when God bore us, He really thought we were so precious. Just like human parents love their children, God had such a strong feeling of love for us, thinking, “Oh how precious My children are. I want to protect them no matter what. I will forgive them no matter what they do.”

So, God decided this at the very beginning: “I will forgive My children no matter what. For I love them.” God already decided it.

We say “Last Judgment,” right? We say that God judges at the end, right? But, to tell you the truth, He had already passed His Judgment *in the beginning*. In the beginning, when He bore us in heaven, He had already delivered His judgment of forgiving all humanity. He had already decided that He was going to forgive us no matter what.

If that was the case, why does He have to use stern expressions like the “Last Judgment” or “beware” or “many will perish”? Well, I’m quite sure that God was speaking to us very tenderly at first, saying, “I am your true Father, children. Can you turn your faces to Me?”

But we were so self-centered, and we regarded the human world as the only world. We thought things like “I want to prosper in this world,” “I want to be successful.” In that way, we didn’t even bother to listen to the voice of God, even though He was speaking to us so tenderly.

That is why, now, finally, God has no other choice but to be a bit harsher with us, using expressions like the “Last Judgment,” “I warn you,” “I will separate the good and the evil”

and “You will perish.” Do you think God wants to use these words to the children He dearly loves? Of course not.

But we are making God do that! We are making God use these stern words!

For a long time, God has been trying to speak to us with His tender voice, saying, “Can you turn your faces to Me? I am your true Father.” But since we’ve been living our lives only seeking the prosperity of the human world, God now needs to address us with harsh words. How pathetic we are. We really need to reflect on our posture toward God.

So when we think about the love that God pours into us, as Meishu-sama says, “How humbling it is,” there is nothing else we can really say to God, is there?

After all, He has loved us from the very beginning, from the time He bore us in heaven. He has carried overflowing loving affection for us, for every single one of us, and still carries that feeling.

Not too long ago, I composed the lyrics to the song “For I Now Know Your Love,” which was performed for the first time at this past Paradise on Earth Service. In it, there are lyrics that say, “O God, I will not ask anything from You from now on.” But actually, isn’t that impossible, not to ask for or want more?

I mean, when I look at myself, I want to do things this way; if my children are sick, I want them to get better; I want to do this; I want to do that. In the same way, each and every one of us lives for what we ask for, what we want, don’t we? It is like our driving force to live, isn’t it?

Regardless, we will ask and want, won’t we? So when you hear my lyrics, I don’t want you to think, “I was asking from You this whole time, but I should not ask anymore. It is not good for me to ask from You.” Don’t think like that.

God fully understands and has forgiven even people like us who will ask and want as such. Even though we are complete and whole existences with God living within us, we are always asking for, wanting more. But God has even forgiven that posture of ours. If we can turn our hearts to this, it would be good.

So why did I choose those kinds of lyrics? There is no mistake that God has truly filled us with His abundance of love. So when we hear or sing the song, if we can think, even if only for a moment, “Ah, this entire time, I have lived asking for and wanting more without any regard for You, God,” followed by “But in reality, God, You are here with me. So I will

not ask for anything more”—if we can think like this even for a second, God will say to us, “You finally understand. My love exists within you, whole and complete.”

We want many things, right? “I want to be like this or that,” “I want this and that.” I am not saying you shouldn’t be like this. What I am saying is that if you can truly think, even for a fraction of a moment, “O God, I will not ask anything from You from now on,” God will be very pleased and say to us, “I will give whatever you ask for.”

There are many things we want, aren’t there? Of course, what we really should want is to be born anew, but we also have other human desires, right? And it is not a bad thing to ask something of God, “If it is Your will, could You do this for me?”

Of course, if it becomes too much, “I want this, this, this, this and this—,” maybe God might say to us, “My child, that is a bit too much, don’t you think so?” But if we say, “If it is Your will, God, I would like such-and-such to happen,” and if the prayer is answered, we can say, “God, thank You,” can’t we? On the other hand, if we do not ask God and something, a wish, is fulfilled, then we will just end up crediting ourselves for it, won’t we?

Certainly, there is the matter of being born anew, and we say, “I am walking the path to be born anew.” But we have human wants, right? Of course, I think wants that are self-serving and cause trouble to the people around us are not good. But for human wants, too, I think it is fine to be honest and say, “If it is Your wish, I would like for this to be fulfilled.”

And even if our wishes are not fulfilled, that means God decided it to be so, with our happiness and the happiness of the people around us in mind. So it would be good to think, “I see, You needed it to be this way for some reason. Thank you.”

When we think in this way, there is nothing we can say to God. Truly, the greatness of God’s love makes us humble, doesn’t it? The love of God.

With our human love, there is no way that we can “forgive any kind of sin.” We are very quick to say, “That person is terrible.” But if we knew even just a little of the immeasurable love of God, we would be so grateful that we wouldn’t even be able to speak before God.

I believe that this overwhelming gratitude is why Kyoshu-sama often uses the phrase “in deep awe and fear of God” at the start of his messages. The “awe and fear” here does not simply mean being scared of God. Rather, I believe that it means we are so unworthy of God’s existence who blesses us without end, we are so indebted, so blessed, that Kyoshu-

sama says “in deep awe and fear of God.”

So all we can really do is just stand there, speechless before God.

In another one of Meishu-sama’s hymns, he says:

“Do not hesitate. / Be embraced by me. / You, then, will be saved instantly / Into a paradise, / Into heaven.”

This “me” is Meishu-sama, and it is also God who lives within Meishu-sama. He is saying, “Be embraced by me; be embraced by God.”

We are just standing there. We are right in front of God. We wonder, “The likes of me? A sinner who has lived a life completely ignoring God’s will? How in the world . . .” But this hymn describes how God is saying, “Do not hesitate. You don’t have to hesitate. Just be embraced by Me.” And when you do so, you will be saved instantly into a paradise, into heaven.

The word “salvation” has a religious connotation to it, right? But don’t overcomplicate the matter because of that. What I want to say is that in this world, we feel joy, peace and happiness, right? But there is a joy, peace and happiness that is much bigger than what we are able to feel at the moment. That, I say, is salvation.

If we are embraced by God, that joy, that peace of mind, will be a joy and peace of mind that far exceed those of this world.

Even though we have yet to experience that joy and peace of mind, those wonderful things are prepared for us. They are promised to us! Just knowing this, I feel within my heart, “Could there be such a blessing! If this isn’t salvation, what is?”

We cannot even begin to respond to the love of God. But we have come to know God’s love, and we have heard His voice, right? When we were born in heaven, we let out our first cries as babies do. And I believe He gently spoke to us, “I love you, My child.”

So in reality, when we were born in heaven, we saw God with our own eyes, we heard His voice, and we were embraced by Him. Isn’t that true? And now, we are walking the path to where we can, once again, experience that immeasurable joy we felt at that time. There is no greater blessing than this.

There is no way that we can reciprocate God’s love. But we can offer our whole selves to God and live in the love of God that is greater than words can describe. Isn’t that the only way of life for us?

It is true that in each and every moment, there is always something going on in our lives. But isn't living each and every moment with the happiness of knowing that something wonderful is promised to us, a much more joyful living? We are promised to experience the love of God. So let us go forward, each and every moment, with great joy.

Thank you very much.