

St. Timothy Presbyterian Church

HOPE

Rev. In Kee Kim

2014 - 2018
Sermons

A photograph of several bright yellow daisy-like flowers growing out of a patch of dry, cracked, greyish-brown soil. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. The background is a soft-focus view of the cracked earth, extending to the top of the frame.

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When Life Doesn't Make Sense

June 29, 2014

Genesis 22:1-14

A Life of Contradiction

Today's passage is very difficult to interpret and to understand. Does this story even make sense? Does God make sense? Does Abraham make sense? How could a loving God ask Abraham to sacrifice his own son even if it was just a test? And how could Abraham actually try and almost kill his son? It is a bizarre story. There is an Old Testament scholar named Walter Brueggemann and this is his commentary on this passage: "Take care not to explain the story. It will not be explained." I'm glad that he said that. If you try to explain that of which cannot be explained, you're destroying the power of the story. What cannot be explained gives power to this story. There is no moral explanation for this story. There is no spiritual justification. This story is simply unexplainable. Now, after trying so hard to find an explanation from this passage, a thought came to me, is life explainable? Does life make sense? Do human beings make sense? Life is full of contradiction, and we are full of contradictions.

I believe the epitome of contradiction that we know of is about the cross. The son of God was killed by God's own people on Earth. That is the epitome of contradiction. Surprisingly, that contradiction is at the core of our faith. The cross is at the core of our faith, and that contradiction is at the core of our faith. At the core of our faith, we accept that contradiction. No wonder St. Paul said, the cross is foolish to those who don't believe.

Our faith is a dangerous faith. It is dangerous because you have to accept the contradiction. We can never believe comfortably. That's not the nature of faith. We can never believe comfortably. No one can believe because everything has to make sense. At the core of our faith, there is contradiction. What Abraham did was totally unacceptable. It was also unacceptable to God, so God stopped him from doing what he was going to do. Abraham was very decisive and very fast. The angel of

God had to move very quickly and called unto him twice, "Abraham, Abraham." I'm glad that God decided to intervene.

This reminded me of another story, the story of Jesus Christ on the cross. Isaac was silent, but on the other hand Jesus Christ cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And yet God, who intervened in Isaac's situation and saved him, God did not intervene when his own son faced a crisis. God was silent. For Isaac, God intervened, but before his own son, God did not intervene. Jesus' story and Isaac's story are very similar, yet very different. One story ended up with Isaac being saved and the other story ended up with Jesus being killed on the cross. Two very different results, but both stories are similar. These two stories expose life's total contradiction. It exposes very clearly life's total contradiction, and these stories also clearly show God's provision, even in life's devastating contradiction. God provided a ram for Abraham and God provided the resurrection for Jesus. Even in the situation of total contradiction and hopelessness, God provided the way out.

God's Answer

We don't know the way out. We human beings don't know the way out. We cannot even imagine what that can be, but we do believe that our God is a God who provides the way out. Even when every door seems to be closed, God still somehow provides the answer that we ourselves cannot even imagine. You don't have the answer. You don't have the key to unlock the mystery of life. Only God knows the answer, and only God provides the key. Only God has the key. When nothing makes sense, when God doesn't make sense, does God work in us? Both stories answer with an emphasis on "yes." Even when everything does not make sense. God still works.

Here I Am, O Lord

Another person who experienced the contradiction of life was Job. He was a righteous man, but he lost everything. He lost his children by the storm. He lost all of his possessions. He lost his health. Life didn't make sense to Job. "I've been righteous all my life. Why are all these things happening to me?" Life didn't make sense to Job. His friends tried to

make sense of what happened to Job through their own worldview, with their own logic, they had to make Job the worst person in order to maintain their well defined world, but Job could only see the contradiction. He could not see any logic behind what his friends said. The only thing that he saw was total contradiction. To Job, life didn't make any sense. In the end, God brought Job out and showed him the whole universe he created and Job stood before God with a simple heart and said, "Hineni." That is a Hebrew word, "Hineni," which means "here I am." "Here I am." This word "Hineni" is a very interesting word. Even though life didn't make sense at all to Job, by saying "Hineni," he simply left everything in God's hands and waited for God's answer.

Abraham used the same expression three times, "Hineni." He didn't know exactly how God would deliver him out of this dilemma, but he left everything in God's hands without trying to come up with his own easy solution. We are often trying so hard to make sense of what does not make sense. Some people make up crazy gods, with a small "g", and some people come up with strange conceptual constructs for their lives about life, and they just force those answers upon themselves. Some people simply reject the idea of God saying that it doesn't make sense.

Our heroes; Abraham, Job, and Jesus simply stood before God with the attitude of "Hineni," "Here I am." When life doesn't make sense, when life's tragedies hits you, when life's contradiction overwhelms you, don't try to come up with your solution: let us never lose our hope. Someday, you may experience the total contradiction of life. Don't come up with easy answers, and don't ever lose your hope. Let us see how God unlocks the mystery of life. Let us experience how God unlocks the mystery of life. Faith is not to believe when everything is believable. Faith is not to believe when everything is hopeful and when everything is understandable. The real challenge of our faith is when you cannot see, when you cannot hope anything, when you cannot understand. That's the real challenge of faith

Never Lose Hope

I shared that with the Korean Speaking Ministry members and a lot of them were crying because they have experience their own contradictions in life. They have experienced their own dilemma. They have experienced rock bottom. Faith is not to believe in what you can see. This is what St. Paul said about Abraham's faith: "hoping against hope, Abraham believed".

Viktor E. Frankl experienced total contradiction of life in the concentration camp in Auschwitz, and this is what he said in his book "Man's Search for Meaning": "We have come to know man, as he really is, after all, man is that being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz. However, he's also that being who enter those gas chambers upright with the Lord's prayer or the Shema Israel on his lips." Hoping against hope, that's what he believed, hoping against hope, that's what we also believe. Even when your life hits the rock bottom, if you have faith, you'll survive. That faith will create hope and that hope will give you the strength to fight life's cruelty. Life is cruel. When we hear the news around us, life does not make sense many times, and sometimes even God does not make sense but hoping against hope is still belief.

May God strengthen your faith and live your life with "Hineni," "here I am." I don't understand God. I don't understand what is going on in my life. When I look at myself, I don't understand. "Hineni"/"here I am" and God will unlock the mystery of your life. How often we recognize how feeble our faith is. When everything is believable and everything is hopeful, we have strong faith, but when tragedy hits us and dilemma hits us, we soon realized that we don't have as much faith within our hearts. Here I am, Lord.

You Give Them

August 3, 2014

Matthew 14:13-21

What Jesus Gave

Today's story, it is a very interesting story. It gives us a lot of hope, especially in every field that I don't have much to give to the world. I don't have much to really help out with anyone, uh, where we feel like that this passage gives us a lot of hope. A big crowd followed Jesus even from Galilee. Then it was dinner time if they knew, uh, that it was a, I mean, there were so fascinated with Jesus for God to bring their own food. They didn't prepare for the food in following Jesus, they just wanted to follow. You just said that they were so mesmerized by the, a message at the power authority and they forgot to eat. Jesus saw them and had compassion for them because they were physically hungry. He just saw another hunger in them that hungrier was disputable. Great. Jesus said, Jesus saw that they almost their souls or they were like sheep without a shepherd.

That's why they followed Jesus all alone because Jesus really gave them what they needed there so entwined Jesus gave them or what they needed. They had never experienced what they experienced with Jesus. It heard about joy, but they never knew that that kind of joy was possible in their own lives, but they were with Jesus. They really felt that deep joy and deep satisfaction and fulfillment, that kind of fulfillment that fulfills or fills up your soul, not just your emotion, not just you're that but the kind of fulfillment that fills up your soul and they experienced that with Jesus. Now they were hungry not only physically but spiritually, and Jesus is wanting to help them with their hunger, but instead of really helping them, Jesus was doing something strange. Jesus told the disciples, you don't need to send them away. You give them something to eat and you just knew very well.

It was no food, but Jesus knowing that, told the disciples you give them, you give or told them to that was very strange, Jesus, in a way, put them in a mode of challenge. He just wanted to challenge them. Challenge

their traditional thinking. You give them what they need to eat, but that was not only challenge, but Jesus was giving them the opportunity to extend themselves or stretch themselves, teachers wanting to take them and elevate them to another level of existence. You know, our existence can have many different metals such as level people think they are all equity, our lives the same life, but there are different layers of existence and you just wanted to take these people, the disciples from one level to another level of existence where the reality of the power of God becomes real. But their response was, that's very simple. We have nothing.

We Have Nothing

We have nothing. You tell me to give them what to eat, but we have nothing. We only have five loaves of bread and two fish and they are 5,000 people counting men to feed and five loaves of bread and two fish. There might as well be nothing. You know, in a high school math. You know one over infinity is nothing. Zero. So, five loaves of bread and two fish. Considering that you have to feed 5,000 people. Men and women and children, probably more than 10,000 people. They are nothing. You know? That's exactly how most of the time in modern world they're living in a nuclear age. The problem is today we ask ourselves, what can I do? There's nothing much for me to do to help out this word. We see our nothingness all the time. We feel small. When we confront our reality with our naked eye, we often feel that we have to feed 5,000 people, but we only have five loaves of bread and two fish.

The problems that we faced are much, much bigger and the power, ability and resources that we have, and so he simply said, Lord, we have nothing. That is our answer to our problems. You don't see any possibility in that five loaves and two fish. We don't see that they are any good. Only when we recognize in these five groups of bread and two fish are where the quote again, only if we can see that we can see the power of God. Jesus showed them what it could do with five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus actually showed them what they could do with this living human resources. He took five loaves of bread and two fish. He looked up to heaven and then he blessed them and then broke them and gave it out. In other words, Jesus, through his prayer. He delivered his five loaves of bread and two fish into the hands of God.

What We Bring to God

That's what Jesus did. Small things that you have you deliver that in the hands of God. That's the miracle Jesus introduced to us and that is a miracle of life. Actually. My friend's that is a secret of life. If you understand the secret of life, you will do tremendous things in your lives in small things which we don't find a value. We called them nothing, but when they are delivered in God's hands through our prayer they come very important and can be used to benefit many people around us, nothing becomes something when that nothing is delivered in God's hands. Christian understanding of creation in Latin is "creatio ex nihilo" and they put that up against. Yeah, so what is creation out of nothing when it is delivered into gossip that nobody becomes somebody that is creation. Many people live with urgent sense of your scarcity and focus on their nothingness. It fix their eyes on their debit. Tennis, they always see what they don't have this tendency so strong that it blinds their eyes and their eyes cannot see the abundance of life. Life is so abundant, but they never experienced that life can be abundant because they are always seeing the limited, limitedness of their lives. On Wednesday evening, we are doing spiritual reading on Ephesians, and then as we read Ephesians, one thing that we discovered was that to Saint Paul, life is a mystery,

that's basically it summarizes St Paul's perspective and his theology. To him, life is a mystery and God's revelation is mystery. Until that time, he didn't realize that life was a mystery.

He thought that Michael was very much a fixed in a certain way, but after meeting Christ, he realized that life is mystery in all over the place. In his writing. He says that life is mystery and it even the fact that he was doing God's work was a mystery to him. He never expected that to be for him. Even now was mystery, now this is the confessional of St Paul. Let me read it, "although I am the very basis of all the saints. This grace was given to me to bring the gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ." Here the important word is, "although." "Although" is the most important word, he recognized, that he is the least of all of the apostles, but that was not the end of his confession. He said, although I'm this small, God through the grace of God gave you the opportunity to share the good news, of sharing the richness, the boundless, the abundant riches of Christ. Recognizing that your small is not, should not be the

end of your confession, recognizing your limitedness should not be the end of your confession. Recognize that you cannot do many things or you don't have much should not be the end of your confession. You always look at your limitedness, your smallness with this word "although." "Although" I'm not talented, "although" I don't know much, "although" I'm not that smart, that "although" will make all the difference, that's how Saint Paul saw his smallness. Acceptance of your smallness is not, should not be the end of your life. You'll also have to accept the mystery of how these small things can bring about the abundance when the, when your smallness is delivered in God's hands and they were in God's grace, works in your lives, that they will multiply and make many people abundant.

Reflection

Sometimes we feel we have nothing. I feel like times compared to the challenges that I face, I feel like I'm very small. I don't have much ability and strength and resources, but when the grace of God works in us, we can bring the riches and abundance of Christ. Let's find something in our nothingness. Only through the grace of God we can do that. Then you'll be able to see how your nothingness can bring about abundance in life. God used 12 small people, they were small people, fishermen, laborers, tax collectors. There was small in their society. God chose them and using these small people, he changed the world. It started with the small people and he shared and spread the Gospel to all of the world. And 2000 years later we are enjoying the gospel. But you all get from these small people. 12 small people, sometimes, I mean five loaves of bread. Today we prepared 5 loaves. Peter, thank you. We don't have fish though. We have five loaves of bread and two fish. It is just enough for me. But when that small thing was to deliver in God's sense, not only it fed me, feeds me, but also it feeds 10 thousand and 12 baskets of leftovers. Not only was I, am I full, but making other people full.

Sometimes when challenge is so big. I'll take this portion. That's just good enough for me.

I am not fishing either. I'll just keep it for myself. We made that kind of life, but when you put that small things that you had in God's hands. God will multiply them. Not only God will feed you, God will feed many other

people, not only God will make your life abundant, he will make many people's lives abundant. Yes, we recognize we're small, but we also see the miracle and the mystery of life where this small thing can contribute to the abundance of the world. I think that we have that big the heart, bigger person, you can do so much for the people around you there are many people who need the Lord. There are many people who are hurting. There are many people who are lonely. There are many people who are hungry. There are many people who have so many, so much problems. Now you can. You may be small, but you can be used as a vehicle to reach out to them.

Rejoice Always

December 14, 2014

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

How Jesus Felt

One thing great about Christmas is that there's an atmosphere of joy, and I think that's why I like Christmas. Whenever Christmas time comes, there is a feeling of joy. There's a lot of parties, lots of laughter, and lots of giving and receiving gifts, especially receiving gifts are good. All of these things create joy in our lives. The birth of Jesus Christ brought joy to us, I think so. It is the right way of celebrating Christmas, celebrating with joy, with lots of joy. Life is supposed to be enjoyed, there is supposed to be joy in life. If there is no joy in life, what is the purpose of living? If there is no joy of salvation then what kind of salvation is that? Salvation is very much connected with the joy and Jesus Christ was born to restore that joy. A lot of people don't live with joy, so Jesus Christ came to restore that joy in us and he lived his life that way.

That's how he lived, he lived a very, very joyful life. He loved parties, when you read the scripture very carefully, he really loved parties. He met with all kinds of people and he enjoyed his life. He enjoyed every moment of his life so much that the people who were jealous of Jesus said, "Oh Jesus, he is drunker. He's a glutton" Since they were jealous, they could not enjoy their lives as Jesus did. Jesus had fights with all kinds of people, even with the senators, but had a great time, that's how he lived. We kind of have a skewed image of Jesus. We think of Jesus as always being serious, calm and in a lot of pain and suffering. A lot of artists actually painted Jesus or the image of Jesus in this way and rightly so, that is a true aspect of Jesus; Jesus who suffered, Jesus in agony. Jesus went through a lot of pain and those artists were right in picturing Jesus in that way.

The prophet Isaiah pictured Jesus in the same way and in Isaiah chapter 53 verse 3, he said, "He was despised and rejected by men. A man of sorrows and familiar with suffering." This is what Isaiah foretold about Jesus. So the image that we are familiar with is a very much a picture of Jesus in agony. But you know, that man of sorrow also said this, "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be new and that your joy,

may be complete.” That man of sorrows said, “I have lots of joy, so I give that joy to you so that your joy may be complete or your life may be complete.” Life without joy is not complete, life with joy is a complete life. He had joy, he was a man of joy, he was filled with joy. So since seeing Jesus in this way, I realized that joy and sorrow are not mutually exclusive. I realized that joy and sorrow co-exist and listening to Jesus, he was a man of sorrows, but he also said, “I am the joy.” So within Jesus, joy, and sorrow co-existed somehow.

Emotions we Feel

Why would you go through life’s pain and hardships and suffering? You can still have joy, anger, disappointment, sadness, fear, anxiety and frustration. These are what we go through every day. No one is immune from this experience, every day we all go through this. But this does not mean that you cannot experience joy. So I reflected on how is it possible, how can you have suffering on the one hand and joy on the other hand, in the same person, in the same life? How is it possible that you can have both in you?

This is what I realized, that there are different levels of emotions and experiences, I realized not all of the emotions are on the same level. Anger, disappointment, sadness, and frustrations are at one level of emotion or experience, but the joy is at another level, a deeper level of emotion or experience. At this experience, our emotion of joy is not triggered by what you’re going through or what you’re experiencing. Let me put it in this way to make the understanding easier. When you see the ocean, there is water on the surface and when the wind blows and the storm comes out, the water at the surface reacts violently. But 100 meters down below, the same ocean water does not really act violently, it is relatively calm when the winds blow and the storm hits the water. It is the same water; the only difference is the different level.

Joy

Joy is the same emotion that we experience, but it is at a different level. It is still our emotion, but it is at a different level. That’s why St. Paul said “rejoice always”, because it’s at the superficial level, you can never rejoice always. You will always react to the situation you are involved with and to what you experience. This joy will never be always and I

realized because its down below that is possible, rejoice always. Having joy and the deeper level of our existence is crucial for us to have a meaningful life. Life without joy cannot be called real life. Life is more than duties and responsibilities, life it has to be filled with joy. There has to be joy in life; the joy of pleasure, the joy of eating, the joy of meeting friends, joy of reading, joy of entertainment, the joy of serving, joy of doing meaningful things, joy of learning, joy of praying, the joy of worship, and joy of singing. There has to be joy in whatever we do, we need to enjoy it. But the thing is, when there is no joy at the deeper level of your existence, eating itself cannot give you joy.

Entertainment itself cannot give you joy, so when you have something that you enjoy so much such as food or travel or whatever you should be thankful that you can do that. There are some people who have nothing to really enjoy their lives. They eat just to survive, they watch TV because there's nothing to do. They go to work, but they don't seem to enjoy being there. They come to church out of responsibility.

The bigger the joy you have at the root of your soul, the more you can enjoy your life. It is not the travel itself that gives joy when there is joy at the deeper level of your experience, you can enjoy the travel so much. It is not the life circumstances that give you joy, but when there is joy at the deeper level of your existence, you can enjoy every moment of your life. Every simple thing that you do, you don't have to spend thousands of dollars to enjoy your life and to experience joy. In the simplest things, you can find joy. The people who are filled with the joy that walk around and see the flowers, they can enjoy it. They hear birds singing and they can appreciate and enjoy their lives, every single moment of their lives and every single thing they see around them when it is a joy at the deeper level of your existence. Then how do you get the joy at the deeper level of your existence? How do you get that? I realized that whatever you experience in your lives, whether it's a fun party or travel, eating or whatever, I realized that they cannot enter deeper into my soul. It affects me at the superficial level, at the water level, but it cannot penetrate into the deeper level. So for a while, we enjoy it, but it cannot, it just remains at the surface level, it cannot enter deeper into our soul, into the deeper level of our existence. This joy at the root of our soul is only possible when your deepest desire is satisfied, then we can have joy there.

Satisfying the Desire

Only God can satisfy that deepest desire within you. When that deepest desire within you is not satisfied, joy is not possible. Only God can satisfy your soul, only God can satisfy that deepest desire that you had, only God can penetrate beyond through the surface into the depth of our soul and satisfies it and then joy is created. Life can be cruel, sometimes waking up in the morning is a chore. You start the day with gloominess or anxiety and worries, sometimes keeping a happy face is hard. But still, we can smile because my deepest desire is satisfied by God. Day-by-day, we need to come to God with our deepest desires, saying “Lord, this is not something that can be satisfied by what I do, only you can satisfy this.” We need to come to God with that desire. I heard somewhere “In everybody’s life, some rain will fall and what we remain after the rain depends on how well we dance through the rain.” Rain will fall on us someday, but what remains is whether we can dance through the rain, singing in the rain.

This is what St. Paul said, “rejoice in the Lord always, do not worry about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with Thanksgiving, let your request be known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” This is an elaboration, rejoice always because the “peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds”, that’s why we can rejoice always. You can experience all kinds of things, but peace of God, which is beyond our understanding will guard my thinking, my heart, and mind. That’s why we can rejoice always. Present your request and your desire to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus, and that peace dances at his joy. So joy and peace are the same things and when the peace within us starts dancing, that is the joy. This joy is the power to go through hardships and difficulties.

Reflection

Last week I saw a good movie called "Of Gods and Men." It was about monks in Algeria. In the last scene just before they were all killed, they had two bottles of wine and then from the monk's cabinet, they got together and shared wine and bread. In the beginning, they're smiling and then it slowly becomes very serious and then you see tears. But I saw peace there and that peace gives them the assurance and confidence in life. Even in persecution, that peace gives us joy.

That is confidence in life. Through this Christmas season, choose not the superficial joy that you entertain yourself with, but I hope all of you may be filled with joy that Jesus Christ brought to us.

Resurrection is the Conclusion of Everything

April 5, 2015

John 18:1-18

The Concept of Resurrection

Jesus today is the rising from the dead. The concept of resurrection is kind of familiar to us. Resurrection is Jesus rising from the dead to the early Christians. For example, Mary today, resurrection, even the concept itself was not a familiar concept. It is unimaginable, beyond our imagination. It was a very, very difficult concept to accept. She might have some idea of the possibility of resurrection because her brother Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus. But the thing is, Jesus who raised Lazarus is dead now. Who's going to raise the raising? She cannot even think about the possibility of resurrection. When she saw the empty tomb, she was devastated. She did not even look at the empty tomb. She did not even think about the possibility that Jesus might've been raising. She automatically assumed that somebody took the body away. Somebody took the body away. That's how she thought. The entity was supposed to be good news because Jesus is raising. Jesus is not there anymore. But to Mary it was somebody must have taken the body from the tomb.

Tomb is where death is – the tomb cannot hold Jesus anymore because Jesus was not dead anymore. Jesus is not in the tomb where the dead gathers. When Mary finally met the risen Christ, she met Christ whom she could not find in the tomb. There when she met the risen Christ. She found the ultimate purpose of her life. She realized that all the teaching and all the actions of Jesus were consummated in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's what I believe. Resurrection is the conclusion of everything. Resurrection, it's the finale day of our life. The resurrection is a final goal and object of what we human beings pursue and look for it.

We do a lot of things in life. We tried to find meaning in what we do and sometimes we find good meaning in life and we do meaningful things. For without resurrection, everything becomes temporary and we cannot find the ultimate meaning. That's why St. Paul said "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile." Your faith is futile. We have hope even in our suffering because at the end of our suffering, we know that there

is restoration. Even you hit the rock bottom of your life, you can hit it, kick it and then rise again because you have the power of resurrection that brings you up from the dead. I believe the resurrection is the greatest gift God gave to all human beings, but it is there. It is hidden. We cannot understand it. We cannot know it. It is in different reality because it is in a different reality with our reality. We cannot understand the reality of the resurrection by touching, by feeling, by seeing, by tasting. You cannot understand resurrection because it is a different reality. So with the methodology of our reality, we can never understand the real reality of resurrection.

The Power of Resurrection

When Jesus died on the cross and afterwards when he was raised, he appeared to the disciples and Thomas wasn't there and Thomas said, "Unless I touched his head and then feel the nail mark and then I touch his side, and then put my hand in there, I will not accept the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Thomas said, in other words, what he's saying is, with this reality, I will understand, I will accept that reality or not. That's what he's saying, basically. With the evidence of this reality, I will understand the power of that reality, a different reality. When Jesus Christ, after one week, appeared to Thomas and then told him feel my head, put your hand on my side. Then the scripture doesn't say that Thomas actually felt the hand or put his hand on the side. The scripture doesn't say that. As soon as Thomas met the risen Christ, he knelt down and then confessed my Lord and my God. Resurrection is not something that I can explain. The resurrection is not something that you can prove, but there is a resurrection and there is a power of resurrection working in us and operating in us, and our ultimate goal in our lives is to meet the power, encounter the power of resurrection and live our lives with that power. Once we believe in the resurrection, that power will control us, will change us... that power will change our present moment. Not only will that power give us eternal life, that power will change our present life. It will give us the confidence, no matter what we go through we will not be crushed because that power of resurrection is with us.

Everything we do becomes so enjoyable. Even the suffering cannot dampen the spirit of life that is working within us. Jesus believed in resurrection and ultimately he resurrected. When you believe in the resurrection, ultimately you will also rise from the dead. You will experience the resurrection. I love even the concept of resurrection and I

may not be able to prove it to you, but even the idea of the resurrection is so wonderful. For any of you who are here who don't believe in resurrection but still think about the concept and the idea of resurrection, that is so powerful. And they will transform our existence in the most meaningful way, and today we celebrate that resurrection.

Reflection

Take a few moments of silence and reflection of how great God is. The resurrection is the greatest gift that God has given to all of us. May the power of the resurrection work in your lives – so no matter what suffering, hardship, difficulties or uncertainties of the future you may go through, let the power of resurrection work in your lives so that you may be able to overcome all these obstacles and challenges and live your life with confidence and victory.

On Waiting

July 26, 2015

Psalm 42

The Art of Waiting

This week I have been reflecting upon waiting. I think waiting is a beautiful thing. Somehow when I think about waiting beauty comes to my mind. There's something beautiful about waiting. Music is not just sound. Music is a combination of sound and silence. Some musicians say that silence is more important than sound, so sound and silence are combined together and make beautiful music. In the same way, life is both working in waiting and this is the rhythm of life. You cannot just work and work and work. There has to be waiting period. And then you go back to work. So waiting is very much part of our rhythm of life and waiting is a beautiful thing. It's not just a waste of time. We have to understand the art of waiting because a lot of things happen in our waiting.

In our waiting, we learn to be patient so that we don't get easily flustered when things did not go as well as want. We wait because we have hope. People who have no hope, they don't wait. Only people who have hope can wait. And waiting also means that you're not controlling everything. You just let God control things and you wait, so in waiting there are a lot of beautiful things. So in that sense, waiting is beautiful. When the farmer sows the seeds, sowing the seed is only small part of it. The big part of what farmer has to do is waiting for that seed to grow and produce fruit. That is not his control. It is in God's control or the control of nature. You have no choice but to wait.

We have to understand waiting quite well. Yesterday as John mentioned, we had our first meeting of young family with babies. I should have brought that picture, it's so beautiful, so cute on the sofa, about five kids. But there were more than that, more than ten kids, but only five kids sitting there. I should've brought it. They gathered together, they talked and the baby's crying and all that, but it's not a distraction. It's just fun. It was so fun that we decided to do it together. We're going to do it every month and I told them, "Okay, we'll do it every month. I'll

find a place.” So I have to ask the elders to provide a place. All these parents know what it means to wait for nine months. You have to wait for the baby to be born. So waiting is an essential part of our life, but we think the waiting is a waste. Waiting is never a waste. But sometimes it feels like a waste when you got caught in traffic and when you have to wait in a bank or even for coffee, you have to wait. And then sometimes you feel like it’s a waste, but it is not a waste of time. In waiting, a lot of things happen.

You know, I realized that change happens when we wait not when we work. Change happens when we wait. Depending on what attitude you have about waiting, you can come out of waiting as a bigger person or as a smaller person. You can come out as a bitter person who always complains about everything or you can come out as a bigger person who has gratitude, who is thankful and all that.

Why We Wait

One of our KSM members is having surgery. He has cancer. So, today after service I brought him in to my office and I prayed with him and he was smiling and all that. And then after awhile about five minutes of talking, he started crying a little bit. He said sometimes it is difficult when he deals with cancer within himself. But, you know, what is important is focus. “When I have focus, when I start having this clear focus on God, then gratitude came, thanksgiving came, and after that I smile all the time. And my wife always crack jokes now.” So he was smiling and laughing. He’s going to have surgery tomorrow. You can come out of waiting as a bitter person and sour person or you can come out of waiting as a grateful person, the bigger person.

A good example is Nelson Mandela. Nelson Mandela waited in prison for 27 years. Of course, the last period he stayed home, but most of his time he spent in this prison cell. Twenty seven years is a long time. For 27 years, he was waiting in that small cell. But at the end he came out as a bigger person. When you look at that, that’s Nelson Mandela after 27 years. 27 years changed him. Nelson Mandela became Nelson Mandela because of the 27 years of waiting. He did not become a bitter person. He did not become a hateful person. He came out as a bigger person. I don’t think without that 27 years Nelson Mandela cannot have had such

a powerful influence on South Africans, and also the whole world. Waiting can make somebody beautiful. Waiting can really cultivate a person and change a person. Without waiting there's no spirituality. Without waiting, you cannot be God's instrument. If you don't learn how to wait, you cannot live life successfully, and you cannot be an instrument of God. When God called the Israelites out of Egypt, they had to wait for 40 years before they entered into the promised land.

If we know how to wait, within us, character is built. Once character is built, you become a strong person. Through waiting character is formed. Then no matter what situation you may face, you'll be able to persevere and overcome it. That character can be built only in waiting. Nothing else. Every person who is successful all went through impossible situations. But through those impossible situations, because they have character to persevere, to overcome, they could get the next level. Most failures, they will stop there. They'll give up there because they don't have character to go beyond that. Where is the character built? Through waiting, you can build character.

As you read Psalm 42, you see desperation and despair of this psalm writer. This is what he said: "My tears have been my food day and night". How difficult it must have been that his tears have become his food day and night. We hear repeated this sentence twice. "Why are you cast down? Oh my soul. And why are you disquieted within me?" He experienced impossible situations and because of that he was depressed. He didn't know what to do. My friends, in our time, we experience this kind of feeling. Often we feel like there is nothing that we can do to deal with our situations. Challenges are too big and we get depressed and discouraged. We just don't know what to do and we feel like giving up. And many people, actually indeed they gave up. Today Katie came out, she's having both radiation therapy and chemotherapy together. She had a good spirit after service. She was in the corridor, and then she said it is hard, but I can handle this.

On Monday, she has to go to have a little hole so that she can have food because of tongue cancer. She cannot eat, but she doesn't want to do that. After a few days she can also eat again and recover, so she doesn't want to do that. But she was in such a good spirit. If she didn't have that character, she would have given up. Like, 'my goodness I can't handle this anymore. It's too difficult, too hard.' But she never gave up.

She had a high spirit. That is the kind of character that we all need. The people who have learned the art of waiting, they don't give up. We know how to wait. Even when we cannot do anything, we know how to wait. They know the importance of waiting and they know exactly when to wait. Sometimes we have to move.

The Opportunity of Waiting

Yes, we have to do the work, but sometimes we have to know that this is a time to wait. You don't go around frantically to solve your problems. Sometimes by doing that you're making the problem worse. Sometimes you just need to quiet down and wait. These people who know the art of waiting, they know how to wait and when to wait. They know exactly when to wait, and they wait for God to work, for the situation to work out on its own. We have to learn how to calm ourselves down sometimes. Be calm. Be calm, especially when the storm comes, learn to be calm. That's being cool. When the difficulties come, be calm and don't worry so much, don't be wrapped up with fear. Just be calm with confidence. I like this scripture passage so much. "Be still and know that I'm God". Just be still and know that I'm God. You're not alone. Be still, I'll take care of you. Just know that I am God. When we learn the art of waiting, you realize that from deep within hope arises. Hope is not something that you decide. Hope is not something that you decide to have.

If you have hope, you have it. If you don't have it, you don't have it. It's not something that you decide to have or not, but when you acquire the art of waiting, you realize that from deep within hope arises. Even when your situation is hopeless, hope arises within you. A life of waiting is not a passive life. Life of waiting is searching, yearning.

As a deer pants for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you. Oh God, my soul thirsts for God, for the Living God. That's what waiting is. You don't just passively wait and sit down and do nothing. But in your waiting you search for God, you reach out to God. You promised. You stand on the promise of God. Now you hold onto the promise and ask God, this is what you promised and then you search for God to work in our lives. Life of waiting is beautiful. There's so much passion, so much desire, so much thirst for the living God. God will pour his living water on your thirsty soul and heart.

So when difficulties arise, don't be scared. When impossible situations arise to not despair, just learn to wait. Trust in God and our waiting will not be wasted, and our waiting will not disappoint us. This is what St. Paul said: "Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." Beautiful passage. Practice the art of waiting. Whenever we have no choice but to wait, don't get frustrated. Use it as an opportunity to cultivate the discipline of waiting with anew.

And Perseverance Again

November 8, 2015

Galatians 6:7-10

Living my Life

Today I'd like to reflect with you on certain aspects of life. St Paul said, "do not be deceived". And last week we meditated on Paul's life. Paul had deceived himself for all his life. He really thought that he was living a good life but you know, he was just reacting and responding to people's kind of, a reaction to him. So he thought that, okay, this kind of life is a good life. So he lived that life and it. But spirituality is just coming to yourself coming to your naked self. That's what spirituality is. Most people are too scared to come to ourselves because we have a lot of weaknesses and shortcomings and ugly things, so we don't really come to ourselves. So we hide it so that people don't see that and people react to us with attraction. So, without realizing it, we are deceiving ourselves.

Paul did that same thing in his own culture during his time, whatever people admired was different from what we admire, but he did all the things that people admired and then he thought that he was living a really good life. And then he met Christ and all of a sudden he came to himself and then realize that, hey I didn't see myself deep within, and then I was deceiving myself, and when he discovered himself as naked itself, that was what he found. And I share with you, "I do not understand my own actions for I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate". Wow. What a revelation, I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate", that's kind of a conflict that we all go through.

Sometimes we don't understand our own actions and we should not deceive ourselves as a human being. Then you're not living your life. You're living somebody else's life. I want to live my life, you know, I don't want to live somebody else's life. I don't want to live my life to please other people. That doesn't mean that I just want to live to please myself, that's not what I'm saying. I want to live my life, authentic life. Whatever it is, it may not be perfect, but it's my life. I want to claim back my life, not somebody else. In the beginning, there was a difficulty I tried to live my

life and then they tell me, “Oh, you’re a minister. You’re supposed to do this and that”. No, I don’t want to do that. Right? I want to live my life.

I think ministers should live the most authentic life, as a minister. So we shouldn’t deceive ourselves. Who you are, who we are, both strengths and weaknesses, our bodies are very honest. For example, when you eat irregularly and unhealthy food and don’t do any exercise, soon, your body will tell you, this is what’s going on. The body’s very honest. You cannot deceive your body and our spirit, our soul is honest too. Our soul is not really something material. The soul is beyond your physical body. What gives you meaning and joy in life. That’s what soul is. Just by having a body, you cannot experience joy and meaning and. The soul is there. It’s invisible but it is there to enjoy the fulfillment of life. The soul is not that kind of thing. Soul is invisible and immaterial, but gives you the joy.

What do you think?

You know when God created heaven and earth creation story, actually what is really important is the last day, last day is not the day of rest, It’s not just a day of rest. Last day he created two things. One blessing, the other sanctification. In other words, he created all the material things on the last day, he sanctified all these material things that those things may come alive. Same thing, our body. Our body may be good, but when our soul is not good, our life cannot be enlivened. So if you don’t take care of your soul, then your life cannot, even if you’re healthy physically, your life cannot really enjoy the freedom, joy, and meaningfulness and abundance. You know, we know this story very well, a disciple, a disciple came to his master, the master told him and seeing him, “hey, there’s a war within you between worldly desire and your desire for God” and a disciple asked which one will win and the master said, “whatever you feed that will win, whatever you feed”. If you continuously feed worldly desire that will win. If you feed godly desire, desire for God, that will win.

That’s why Saint Paul said in verse seven, “do not be deceived. God is not mocked for you reap what you sow”. whatever we constantly think about that will shape who I am. thinking is very important. Whatever you think about all the time that will shape who you are, so whatever we feed will grow and win. So in verse eight, Paul said, “if you sow to your own

flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh, but if you sow to the spirit, you will reap eternal life from the spirit". So if you are continuously, think about negative things, you'll become a negative person. If you continuously think about dark things you become, your life will become dark. when you're continuously judging other people's weaknesses and shortcomings and all that, then you will become a judgmental person. Whatever you think will shape who you are.

We say that what you eat is what you are, but actually what you eat is not what you are. What you think is what you are. Whatever you think continuously, that makes you who you are. Paul said in another letter "finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there's any worthy of praise, think about these things". Think about these things. Think honorable, beautiful, godly, pure. These thing, positive things, things we think about when everything was wrong, you still think about and everything will be all right. Things will turn out all right. If you're continuously think, you become a very positive person. I do believe that life is good and life is beautiful. If life is not good and life is not beautiful, why do you live? If life is not good, why do you live? If life is not beautiful, why do you live?

Rinse and Repeat

I do believe that life is good and life is beautiful and I have to continuously think about that and I think people are beautiful. All of you beautiful, even though you have shortcomings, I think you're a beautiful. If i do not think you're beautiful, why am I here? Right? we think about these people are beautiful, but if you start thinking that these people are all ugly, then all your relationships will go wrong. We have to continuously think about good things. hope. when you always hope for and meditate on beautiful life, your life will become beautiful, but the important thing is constantly repetition. Just because of your exercise, your body will not get better any better. Just because you had healthy food for one meal, your health will not be restored. Continue. make a habit. That's why Bruce Lee said this, "I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times".

Whatever you do continuously, if it is an important thing, then make a habit. Make repetition, continuous repetition. Spiritual journey is creating these repetitions. Spiritual journey is finding good habit, and then you keep doing that. We have to make a good habit of living a spiritual life. If health is important, then make a habit of doing exercise. If a deep connection with God is important, we make a habit of doing prayer and meditation. If your understanding of the truth is important, we make a habit of the study of studying the word of God. If you keep doing that, you will learn about the truth. Even the will of God you cannot understand the will of God. understanding god's will it will not come overnight, but when you continuously tune yourself into God's will, then ultimately, you'll be able to hear God's will. you know, as much as we try to make changes, sometimes we get frustrated and disappointed because change does not happen easily and fast. That's the nature of change. Change never happens easily. Change never happens. Fast change that happens fast, may not be real change. The nature of change is never fast and never easy. I do believe that change is always possible, but the nature of change is always slow, always difficult, always invisible. change is invisible. You don't see change within you. Other people see the change in you.

Sowing Seeds

Paul said "Whenever you sow you reap", and if we take that negatively, we think that if you commit sin, you'll be punished. Whatever you sow, simple things, you will reap the punishment. We look at it only negatively. We are good at doing that, but that's not really what Paul is saying. Let us consider another letter of Paul what he said about sowing and reaping is a first Corinthian chapter 15, 42 to 44. So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable. What is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour. It is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power. It is sown a physical body. It is raised a spiritual body. If there is this physical body, there is also a spiritual body". we have a lot of contradiction within us because we are weak. We know they're whatever we sow will reap, and yet we don't sow beautiful things because we are weak.

It's not because we don't know it, but because we are weak, but we experienced God's grace who raises the opposite of what we sow we sow the perishable that God raised the imperishable. I do believe that that is God's grace. You reap whatever you sow I don't think Paul is

saying you will get a consequence of sin. Well, I think that his promise, if you sow justice, you don't see it fulfilled right away, but ultimately you'll see justice being done. when you sow beautiful thing in your life, it will not be wasted. ultimately you will reap the beautiful things in your life. I think that is a promise of God, so to not get discouraged, let us sow what is beautiful in your life? Ultimately, you'll see the fruit of it. Even unbelievers, they do that kind of thing. Lead believers, we never give up. We never get disappointed. We'll keep going, keep sowing the seed of beauty and ultimately the pod will be able to reap. I think that's a life lesson for all of us today.

Why Wait?

December 6, 2015

Isaiah 40:27-31

Waiting

Christian faith is about waiting. When you look at a Christian story, a lot of stories about waiting, and Christmas is also about waiting. Children are waiting for their gifts. I like to reflect on waiting today. There are some people also around us, waiting for their healing, waiting for a better financial future. So we all wait for different things. We don't like waiting that much. People don't like waiting. We think waiting is a waste of time. We think that by waiting, there is nothing good comes out of waiting. It's just pure waste. Waiting is very much part of our reality. We always have to wait, it's part of our life, especially in the modern world. Every morning, we have to wait. We get stuck in traffic, then we have to wait. At the grocery we have to wait in line.

Waiting is a part of our reality, it is an unavoidable reality. So don't get stressed out when you have to wait. Otherwise you'll be consumed with impatience and frustration. To survive the modern world we have to learn to how to wait, how to live with waiting. But you know what, we are living in a very fast paced society. We have created technology so that we don't have to wait. We even created a drone to deliver pizza, and then everything that you order from Amazon will get to you maybe next day or within two hours. We have created technology so that we can kill waiting. Before it took a few days to receive mail. Now it takes a few seconds to receive mail from people we know. In Jesus' time, for Jesus to get to Jerusalem, it took one whole week, 120 kilometer. That is kind of distance that we walked for Camino this spring. It was 120 kilometer and it took exactly one week. But now, if you drive fast, maybe one hour we can get to a Niagara. So we have reduced waiting time tremendously, but we have become more impatient. So not that we got better about our attitude towards waiting. We got worse with our attitude towards waiting.

Waiting in the Bible

So I was thinking, maybe a solution is not just to deal with waiting time or reduce waiting time. Maybe the solution is to change our attitude towards waiting. Waiting is not something we have to kill at all cost. Maybe there is something good in waiting. When I look at the people in the Bible. They all waited. It is a story about waiting. For example, Jesus, he always said "My hour has not yet come." What does that mean? He was waiting for his time. He didn't just do anything. How about Abraham? God promised, Abraham you will be the father of great nation. He didn't even have a son and he had to wait for the son to be born. Also Joseph, God gave him the dream that you be so great that a lot of people will bow to you, even including your parents.

But his life was miserable. His brothers were jealous and then they tried to kill him. Then at the end they sold him to Egypt in slavery. Then he was imprisoned in Egypt and he had to wait until his skill of dream was actually fulfilled and recognized. How about the Israelites? Israelites became Israelites through 40 years of waiting in the wilderness. The Israel was not born just like that. They had to wait 40 years to become truly the Israel. Waiting was part of their spiritual lives. So I was wondering why God led all of them to wait, instead of instantly giving them the answer or curing them. Why do they have to wait so long to be who they are? I think there's something special about waiting. God uses waiting to discern who the true people of God are and also God uses waiting to build these people up.

Character Building

And only waiting can do that. Nothing else can do that. Only waiting can build you up. There is a secret power in waiting. Waiting builds character in us and God needed that character to do his work. God cannot use just anybody, God cannot use just talented people. God uses people who are waiting, who know how to wait. That's why God installed that waiting in part of God's plan. Only those who are waiting for the Lord will be able to carry on the work of God. Will waiting build special muscle within us to persevere when the storms of life come? People who go through difficult times through the period of painful waiting time, they will be able to survive when they meet difficult times. They are strong. Waiting is the best way to become strong. My friends, people who easily give up can never be strong.

God's Plan

No matter how strong they may be in the beginning, no matter how talented they are, no matter how intelligent they may be. The people who give up easily can never be strong. The only people who know how to wait, they can be strong. God will use those who know how to wait. Only those who struggle and wait will be able to stand strong in times of trial. Also God will give these people who are waiting the strength. God will give them the strength, God's strength. This is what Isaiah said, but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, not just anybody. The people who wait for the Lord God will give them the strength and their strength will be renewed. Then they shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. In our waiting, God gives us the strength. Why are we waiting? Is it because we have no choice but wait? Is it because we don't have solution right away? Is it because situations cannot be resolved right away? That's why we wait because we cannot do anything about it. That's why we wait. Don't wait in fear.

Don't wait passively wasting away your time. Wait for the Lord, wait with hope, wait with prayer and God will give you strength and you'll become strong in the process of waiting. As I said last week, almost every week we hear tragic news. Two weeks before in Paris, terrible thing happen, and last week this man, when in the clinic and it killed three people. Just this week couple went into this place, they take care of physically challenged people. They killed 14 people and wounded many. Crazy world. I feel like people just don't know what to do with their anger and frustration. They just let it out. I don't like you so I kill. I don't like feminist, then they go and killed them off. We are living in such a difficult world and we think sounds so feeble and people may ask, why wait? Useless. we have to fight. Waiting sounds so weak and useless. Jesus also lived in a very violent world and as a result of that violence, Jesus was killed but he never submitted to the power of darkness. He waited for God to reign, even on the cross. While he was dying, he was waiting for God's reign to come upon us for the Kingdom of God.

Waiting with Hope

We still wait for God to reign in this world. Let us not become victims of despair. Let us wait with hope, let us wait for Gospel. We are not going to give up our dream for the world, where there is peace, justice, love

and harmony. While waiting, we will continuously promote our love for humanity and wait for God to work. I'm not going to be selfish, we are not going to be selfish. We are going to continuously promote love for humanity. Last week in the midst of dark and gloomy news, I was very encouraged by the good news. Light in the darkness. Mark Zuckerberg, the owner of Facebook and his wife Priscilla Chan. On Tuesday, they declare that they will donate 99 percent of their worth for the worthy cause. You know that asset is \$45,000,000,000, not just tithing, 10 percent, not just 90 percent, 99 percent of their asset, they'll use it for the great cause. They are not even believer's. We Christians should never lose our hope, our love for humanity. We can do that. Not everybody is selfish. Not everybody is a murderer and killers. Not everybody is a terrorist. There are people who love the humanity. As Christians, we have to stand up. Living selfishly, just for ourselves, we have to promote our love for humanity and we'll wait with hope.

Christmas is time of waiting with hope and that waiting gives us joy. In our waiting let us impregnate, hope and dream for the better world. Where people care for each other, truly care for each other, and I think we can do that. Let us impregnate that care in our waiting.

Stand on Your Feet

January 24, 2016

Scripture Passage Not Available

Recognition

They said last Monday was the blue Monday, it is supposed to be the most depressing day of the year. Cliff Arnall, a former lecturer at Cardiff University was commissioned by the UK travel agency in 2005 to find the most depressing day of the year as a way to market winter vacation. So he figured out all the statistics and everything came together. And then he said that the third Monday of January is the most depressing day of the year. I don't know how accurate that is, but January is not an easy month to get through for many people. Christmas spirit and cheer has worn off and you have likely broken your New Year's resolutions. By this time, 75 percent of Canadians break their resolutions for that year. Also, it is cold outside and your post-holiday credit card statement has arrived. So considering all of this, the third Monday in January, is the blue Monday. You know sometimes life can be depressing, especially when our needs are not met.

When our stories are ignored and where our emotions are not validated and rejected. Life can be depressing. I can be as good as that person, but people never recognize me. They always recognize that person, but they never recognize me. Always. She's more popular than I and people listened to her and that people pay attention to her but not me. So whenever you experience these kinds of injustice or unfairness in life, when your stories are not heard, when your emotions are not validated, it can make life depressing. I read an article on Thursday about why Oscar nominations are so biased towards white actors. It was written by Cameron Bailey, you probably know him as the artistic director of the Toronto International Film Festival. This was an article written by him and he said, it's about who's experiences count, whose stories get told, who's emotions in the movie theater are validated and are amplified by awards and who's are rejected or ignored. Right now there is controversy in the academy awards, which resulted in Will Smith saying that he was not going to attend a protest against the academy. Spike Lee and Michael Moore did not want to attend. because the last two years straight there was no nomination for the black actors, not a single

one. There was one British woman actress actually said maybe black people are not good actors. And Michael Caine “They got to be patient”, patient for what? Anyway, we can see how black people are treated in the United States very well. When you read the book “Between the World and Me Written” by Coates, Ta Nehisi, the columnists at the Atlantic. It’s a good book. Read it. I highly recommend that you read it. It was just told as it is.

Helplessness

Sometimes we are insulated in our own culture, in our own small surroundings. We don’t know what’s going on out there in the world. The kind of things that black people experienced in the United States. In the book, he said, just because you have a black body and only for that reason, your life gets ignored, threatened and treated like a criminal. When we finished this passage at TBS (Thursday Bible Study), just two weeks later, a famous black tennis player, was standing in front of an expensive, luxurious hotel in Manhattan and all of a sudden, the police came, and they pinned him down on the street and arrested him for no reason. So when you have a black body, you’re guarded, your thinking “what’s going” on all the time. So when you receive that kind of unfair treatment, and injustice in your life, even if you receive only one unjust action in your life, you will guard yourself. Sometimes it can be depressing. Life can be depressing. When this happens we shrink, we become small. We get angry. Why are these things happening to me? When you receive that kind of unfair treatment anger rises up within you. But soon I realized that the anger does not remain as anger. If anger remains as anger. It will be energy or power, but the anger does not remain as anger. Anger turns into helplessness and powerlessness. Immediately you feel angry, but soon that anger turns into helplessness and powerlessness.

That was what the Israelites experienced at the time of Ezekial. They were invaded by superpowers around them. I’m sure many small countries in the world experienced that the by the superpower country, the United States. Especially with this oil crisis and all that, a lot of small countries will be affected by that. Israel at that time was invaded continuously and threatened continuously by the superpower countries around them. You know, when I was in seminary, I was seriously thinking about studying Jews and Koreans because they share a similar history and similar experiences. Korea was also very much invaded and

threatened continuously in their history, thousands of years by the superpower countries around them. And they were once also invaded and then colonized by them. And the Israelites experienced getting colonized as well. They lost their land, their identity, their home and their families. They were completely cut off from their hope. They said “We have no hope. We have no temple. We have no nation. We have no identity. I lost my family, my sisters and my wives were raped. We have nothing to look forward”. That’s how they felt. At first, they felt angry, but soon that that anger turned into helplessness, hopelessness, and powerlessness. Ezekiel saw that powerlessness and helplessness in this way. This is what he said. “The hand of the Lord came upon me and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley. It was full of bowls”.

Restoring the Spirit

Ezekiel was a prophet and he also experienced this kind of injustice, powerlessness, and helplessness. Somehow in a vision, he saw dry bones in the valley. It was like the spiritual condition, mental condition or national condition of the Israelites at the time. The dry bones in the valley, but Ezekiel proclaimed this: “Yes, I see dry bones in the valley, but God did not leave them there alone in the valley. God did not ignore them. God did not ignore the injustice God did not ignore people who are oppressed by the power of this world”. That’s why God sent Jesus Christ to us. When we suffer from our own sins and misery, and then the difficulties and the way we are suffering in the valley, God did not leave us alone. God sent Jesus Christ. Jesus came down into the valley and then lifted us up. And that’s what Ezekiel proclaimed God is not going to leave them alone there. God saw the helplessness and powerlessness of his people and God chose Ezekiel and told him “Go and restore the spirit”. That is our God. Whenever you are helplessness, powerlessness, and hopelessness, God will lift you up. Restore Your spirit. God told Ezekiel to go and restore the spirit of my people, and Ezekiel said “How? How do I do that? How do I restore the spirit of the people”? And God said “Speak to them. Speak to them. Speak the word to them. Prophecy.”

“Does that make any difference? They are dead and dry bones. Speaking to them. They don’t even listen to me. They can’t even listen to me. Speak to them?” (Ezekiel talking). “Yes. You speak to them” (God responding). And Ezekiel, spoke prophecy to them and this is what happened when he did this. The breath came into them and they lived

and stood on their feet a vast multitude. When I wrote that tears flowed from my eyes. I wrote this on Thursday at 5:00 in the morning. As soon as I wrote the tears flowed from my eyes. Dry bones, dead bones stood up. They overcame their helplessness and hopelessness. They stood on their feet, got opened their dark graves and brought them up from their graves. Yes, life can be gloomy. Life can be difficult. At times we feel that life is not fair. We become weak and small. We shrink and we feel a tremendous loss, and experience hopelessness. I'm not going to sit there. I'm not going to live like defeated soldiers. I'll protest that. I'll never do that. I hope that you never do that either. We need to stand on our feet. We are not alone. God is with us. God speaks to us. We have God's word with us. They're the people who live by the word. You are Ezekiel prophesying to each other. We need to prophesy to each other. We need to bring each other out from our graves. We should be Ezekiel to each other. Let us not put others down. Who are you to do that? Let us not kill each other's spirit with our poisonous attitude.

Be a Prophet

Our circumstances can be gloomy, but we have each other and we have God and we have this community. Prophesying, that's what we do. We breathe life into each other. Prophecies are not about fortune telling about the future. Prophecy is speaking breath into each other. Simple words of encouragement. We speak to each other. That's what prophecy is. Whenever we gather together, we need to prophesy to each other. At the prayer retreat, I realized how powerful words can be. Words have power. We share our words of encouragement with each other. Every Friday we gather together. We prophesy to each other. During TBS we prophesied to each other. Every Wednesday, women gathered together. We prophesy to each other. We strengthen each other. We empower each other. I realized that the words have the power. If you don't have the words, you cannot resist. You cannot protest against your own powerlessness and helplessness. The world is full of injustice. How can you reconcile that? How can you reconcile and live on? If you have the word, then you'll have the power to protest against that. That's why the scripture says gather together as often as possible, so if you have every opportunity to learn the word, come. Only on Sunday, it's just a ritual. You got to learn about the word. You got to speak the word to each other.

Stand on Your Feet

Let us be a prophet to each other and we'll stand together on our feet and will fight against injustice that is going on around us.

Power to Press On

March 27, 2016

Philippians 3:10-12

Power to Press On

Happy Easter! Resurrection, that's a difficult topic. Knowing resurrection is not like knowing a computer or knowing forgiveness, resurrection, it's hard to talk about it, no one can explain it. Maybe something that you cannot understand by explanation or visual presentation, we can never do that. Even the early Christians had difficult time explaining the resurrection, even those who experienced the resurrection had difficult time explaining that resurrection to others. First of all, the disciples met the risen Christ- Some of the disciples, but Thomas did not happen to be there. So they tried to explain to Thomas about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but they failed they couldn't do that, doesn't matter what they tried.

Seeing to Believe

They couldn't really explain resurrection to Thomas. And this is what Thomas said, "unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe". Unless I see it, unless I touch it, I will not believe it, the disciples cannot really let him see it or touch it or anything like that, but next week when the risen Christ came to Thomas, he didn't need any of what he demanded. Somehow he's not just seeing the risen Christ. It is somehow that resurrection event happened and he believed and he made the highest confession, that is "my lord and my God" in the Gospel nobody said. Nobody said Jesus was God, they were at most able to say Jesus was the son of God. Nobody was able to say Jesus was God. But Thomas was only the first one who said, my Lord and my god.

Acceptance of Belief Without Physical Sight

So the early Christians had a difficult time explaining the resurrection and understanding the resurrection. For example, when the risen Christ came to Mary, Mary with fiscal eyes, she saw the risen Christ, but she

didn't realize that that was Christ Jesus, she didn't even know. Another instance, two disciples were on the road to Emmaus and they were talking with the risen Christ. Jesus was risen, and they were talking with him, but all the way to the end they were talking but didn't know that it was Jesus who was risen. So the early Christians had difficult time explaining resurrection. So we realized that resurrection is not to be understood by seeing it, touching it, explaining it, or proving it, then I realized that maybe the resurrection is a bigger reality than what we can explain by touching it, seeing it or feeling it, is much, much bigger reality.

when you're not able to explain it, prove it, show it, how can we accept the resurrection? That's a big question to all of us. How can we accept the resurrection? And I realized that we don't see the resurrection, but we see the power of resurrection. You don't see the wind, but we see the power of the wind, so we don't see the resurrection. We thought, but we see the power of resurrection. Then what is the power of Resurrection? I believe that it is hope. When the power of resurrection is crystallized, that is hope. Within you, you have hope, and that is a crystallization of the power of resurrection. Hope is not something that you can see because hope is something that has not happened yet, so you have hope for something which has not happened yet, so it is hard. You cannot really see, so you don't hope for what you see. This is what Saint Paul said eloquently about hope "for in whole, we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope for who hopes for what is seen, but if we hope for what we do not see we wait for it with patience." So hope is not for what you don't see, I mean that's the nature of hope. If you have a hope for tomorrow, you don't see it tomorrow yet, so you hope for what you do not see, but amazing thing about hope is that hope makes you what you cannot see, see, somehow that's what hooked us. hope makes you see what you cannot see.

Hope Carries On

when you suffer from illness, you don't see healing. When you suffer from injustice, you don't see justice. When you suffer from bondage, you don't see freedom. You don't see that, but you hope for what you don't see, but then when you have hope, you start seeing healing justice and freedom. That's why we fight for our illness, injustice around us and bondage that binds us because we see healing. we see justice and we see freedom. It is hope within us, and our hope will not be in vain. Our

hope comes true as Jesus rose from the dead, and will also rise from the ashes, that was a secret of the early Christians I realized, because disciples, when they were around Jesus, they were totally helpless and hopeless and incapable, they didn't have faith. They were doubtful all the times. They always made mistakes they weren't able to carry on. So many people might have expected that with the death of Jesus, the movement of Jesus will die too. With the death of Jesus, the purpose of Jesus will die too because the disciples would not be able to carry on. That's what people thought, but somehow that was not the case. Somehow our history tells us that Christianity survived, that. The early disciples carried on, moved on, and even 2000 years later, here we are talking about Jesus movement. They went through so much a persecutions in difficulties, even more persecution when they were with Jesus and now without Jesus, they were able to go through the storm because they had hope. They were able to fight through the threat and crisis, because there was something within them, and that something within them was hope, hope for the Kingdom of God. Hope for the better world, they had that hope and that hope carried them. That's why Christianity was able to survive. He's a very small movement. Few people at the most, few hundred people in the beginning and they were able to carry on. That is a power of resurrection.

Press On, Don't let Belief Die

Today we read words from St Paul. This is what he said. I want to read it again for you. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. I want to know it. I want to know the power of Resurrection, and he said, "and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death. If somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead, not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus happened, and has made me". So here, very clear picture, He wants to know the power of resurrection and then he will have hope and that hope will carry him so that he could press on. Paul knew the power of resurrection, he didn't see the resurrection, but he saw the power of Resurrection, he has strong hope and that was why he could press on, my friends. You won't see the body of resurrected Christ. Even if you see him in your dream, it won't help you much because the resurrection, the resurrection cannot become real by what you see. But as you believe in God, the power of resurrection impregnated.

When you believe in God, the power of resurrection will be impregnated and the hope will be impregnated and then hope will start moving within you like a baby moving in your body. For those who are pregnant, they experienced, they know what it means to have baby moving in their tummy in the same way, the hope moves within you, the power of resurrection is not what you achieve, the scripture never says that Jesus rose from the dead by himself. No. Jesus did nothing about resurrection. Jesus did nothing he just died. And the scripture says, God raised him from the dead. Jesus only had hope, but God raised him from the dead using the hope that Jesus had with him.

The power of resurrection is not what you accumulate within you. The power of resurrection is not something that you can get from the world. The power of resurrection is what God gives you, when you trust in God. Harvey Cox, a professor at Harvard University. He wrote many famous books like secular city and so on, and he said this “when I was in prison during civil rights movement, young black men or captured with me and in the neighborhood cell, when Harvey heard the young black men crying out, singing, we shall overcome. That was when I was most cruelly sure about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” When we heard that shouting, screaming and singing, we shall overcome. That’s when he was sure about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Resurrection is not somewhere out there. Resurrection is right here. I’m allowed to sing with us. We are living in a very sad world. Just last week you heard about the bombing in Belgium. We are living in the world of greed, violence, inequality, anger, apathy and meaninglessness, all kinds of discriminations and prejudice. We can easily be victims of the world around us, but let us not leave ourselves powerless victims of this world. You are better than that.

I hope that you don’t just become powerless, meaningless victim of this world. If you only think about your own survival, in my opinion, as a victim, that’s a victim mentality. If you only think about yourself, in my opinion, that’s a victim. The people who have hope in them, they will press on to make justice, to make this world better a world, and God will let the power of resurrection work within them. It is not what I do. It is what God does. The power of resurrection make us living, makes us live a meaningful life, not just for myself, for the others around us.

Run

September 25, 2016

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Inspired by Running

The image of running always inspires me. I mean, running is not unnecessarily a fun activity for everyone to enjoy. It can be boring because you repeat the same monotonous movement for two, three hours. Marathons are longer than that, so it's not really a fun activity, but for those who love to run, they seem to enjoy it so much. Every moment of it. I heard that something comes out of your body, a hormone or whatever, when you run. Running inspires me because it is associated with sweating, perseverance, discipline, hard work, and being active.

So whenever I think about running, I think about a lot of inspiring movies about running like the old movie Chariots of Fire and also in Forrest Gump, he continuously runs and runs and runs, and also people like Terry Fox. In spite of his physical illness and even though he was crippled, he did not give up. He ran and he inspires so many people. He still remains as an inspiration because he would not give up.

Run Your best

I guess I'm not the only one who is inspired by running. Our St. Paul seems to be also inspired by running. He used the image of running to explain our spiritual life. He said run in such a way that you may win it. I don't think he meant competitiveness. Winning is not the only goal. I think what he meant was do your best. Don't just run, run hard, run as fast as you can. To win a prize you have to run your best.

When I look at the Olympics, I'm glued to the TV, especially with running, because they really run their best. They want to be faster than others by a fraction of a second, and they run and run and run, and that really inspires me.

Life is like running hard. Life is like running as best as you can. Don't sit around, get up and run, because that's what life is supposed to be.

Running Requires Discipline

We all know that running is not easy. It requires discipline. St. Paul said, athletes exercise self control in all things. He also said, I punish my body and enslave it. He didn't mean literally punishing his body, but disciplining his body. Training his body, so that he's able to run fast and run well. Running also requires a clear sense of direction. You can't run aimlessly, you have to have a clear focus of what you're running for. St. Paul said, "so I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air." So you have to think, you can't just run around. When you look at the Olympics, they choose the shortest course and they think about themselves. "Okay, up to that distance. I have to use this much energy and after that distance I have to save this much energy." They always think about that, they ration themselves very well. They always think so that they can run a successful race. You have to think to know what to do.

Wayne Gretzky said, "A good hockey player plays where the puck is. A great hockey player plays where the puck is going to be." You have to think if you're going to be a good athlete. You have to be smart to be a good athlete, good athletes don't just have physical ability. They are very smart in knowing exactly what to do in each situation. So when you look at really good athletes, they are very, very smart. That's why we call them geniuses. If you're not smart, you cannot be a good athlete. When you know exactly what to do, you know how to use your body to get the maximum result. You have to always think to do so. In the same way. You have to be smart to live a good life. You have to know what to do in given situations so that we don't live aimlessly beating the empty air.

The Defeated Mentality

All these things are involved in running but I was thinking, why don't people live like they're running? What is one cause for people not to run? I was meditating on this, what is that cause? I realized, it's discouragement. People get discouraged. That's why they don't run. It's not that they don't know how to run. It's not that they don't know what is required in running. They get discouraged. They cannot get themselves up to run. As we deal with challenges in life, problems in life, somewhere along the way, unfortunately, you shouldn't do it, but we develop a defeated mentality. That's really sad. We live with a lot of encouragement but, at one point we adopted this defeated mentality

from the discouragement of life. We get tired, we get discouraged and we compromise with what we have. We stop in the middle of our journey. There's still a journey left for us to walk and run, but we just stop. We don't run anymore. We don't take the journey anymore because we are discouraged. We have developed this defeated mentality.

Humans' Higher Calling

We human beings have a higher calling. We cannot just compromise with what we have. St. Paul said, I press on towards achieving the goal, the higher calling that God calls us from heaven, and then at one point we see ourselves. We get satisfied with the security and comfort that we have created and we say to ourselves, this is good enough. And we don't think about anything else in that very moment, your life is dead. At that moment, we lose aspiration for life. We lose our goal. We don't even have what we truly want from life anymore. When we were young, didn't we all have something that we wanted to achieve? I want to be like this. I want to have this, this is what I want to do with my life. And then at one point we don't even have that.

We just coast along without much passion and aspiration. And the sad thing is we comfort ourselves, saying life is good. Wow. My life is good. What do you have? Comfort and security, that's all. What do you do? Nothing much, but life is good. We comfort ourselves saying that life is good. To me. That is defeated mentality. You're just comforting yourself saying that life is good. Just because you say life is good doesn't mean that life is good. When you live for a higher calling, you cannot call that a good life. When you live just for security and comfort, you cannot say that your life is good, because we human beings are not created to live like that. If you don't have a higher purpose to live for, I wonder whether we can say life is good. Having enough money for security and comfort itself cannot be enough of a condition for a good life. A good life is more than that. For animals, yes, they can say it's a good life. If they have food, if they have a security and comfort, yes, animals will say it is a good life, but not for human beings. Human beings are given intelligence to know better than that. Not to be satisfied just with what we have.

We human beings live with a higher calling, for a noble purpose. We always strive for meaning and purpose. That's what human beings are. When lions hunt, they have intensity. You see their eyes burning, their

eyes are sharp. They are passionate. When they follow their prey, they run fast, they're fierce, they're so focused. But once they have food, all they do is sleep. So if you want to see a lion hunting, you can hardly see it. Even if you go to Kenya, all you see is sleeping lions, because as soon as they have food all they do is sleep because they don't have the intelligence to do so. They're just satisfied.

Humans Go Further

But we human beings are given intelligence to go for more than that. People who are satisfied with security and comfort, it doesn't matter how much money they make, I don't call them intelligent. I don't call them smart. They're dumb!

Even if we have enough food, we run for purpose and meaning. Yes, many times we get discouraged, but that does not paralyze us. We stand up again and challenge ourselves and challenge our limits. We push our limits to be able to run, to overcome our discouragement. We need faith. We need spirituality.

We need faith in God who strengthens me. Let us not live with a defeated mentality. You are better than that. You're stronger than that. Don't be fooled saying that life is good. We need faith to overcome our discouragement. We need faith to go beyond where we are.

Isaiah's Advice

Isaiah gave us good advice on spirituality. He said, "why do you say o Jacob and speak o Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord and my right is disregarded by my God." Of course, that somebody is very discouraged and God doesn't want them to develop a defeated mentality. Why do you say that? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He's smart. God is smart. He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless. Even youth will faint and be weary and the young will fall exhausted, but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

Be a Smart Person

Be a smart person. Don't be dumb. Don't be stupid. Saying that I have security and comfort, that's saying you're stupid. That's what you just said. You fool, you say to yourself, "oh, I have enough to eat in my barn" and all that. You fool. Tonight, your soul will be demanded. Jesus called that foolishness. God gave us the intelligence to take care of the earth, to live out for higher calling.

St. Paul confidently said "in God who strengthens me, I can do all things in life that push us to our limits to achieve God's noble purpose that is a life worth living." Let us not live life that runs aimlessly. Let us not be a boxer that beats the empty air. Let us trust God and run with faith. God will renew our strength and that's what I'd like to see with our congregation. God built this congregation. Let us run together to build this congregation so that this congregation may be the light for the world.

Three Things to be Always Mindful of

October 9, 2016

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Introduction

While I was sitting there, I realized how blessed I am and how privileged I am, and we are, you know, once a week we gather together. We are here every Sunday. What a blessed time it is, it's better than any concert, it's better than even a blue jays game to me. Just being in touch with the holy spirit, being on your own, thinking about where my life is going and things like that. That is just wonderful kind of system that we have in life. Once a week we gather together and make this a rhythm of your life. Just once a week we come together and then for an hour we get that kind of time, quality time with ourselves, with friends and with family. I think you do deserve that. Today I'd like to say that life is wonderful. I dare to claim that life is wonderful because when you look around us, not always can we say that life is wonderful. We see tragedy, many people dying, many people experiencing tremendous hardships, suffering and difficulties, especially down south because of the storm and so many people lost their homes and family members and they're in deep sadness and sorrow. The hundreds of people were killed because of the storm. We need to pray for them, but in spite of all that, I dare to claim that life is wonderful. I believe that life is wonderful, too short maybe, but it is wonderful and that's what God wants our life to be. He wants to make our life wonderful and he wants us to enjoy that wonderful life. We want it, and God wants it, but strangely and ironically, we don't always experience that life is wonderful.

There are people who hurt us so we don't want to see them. There are problems that have no solutions, so we don't want to face those problems. We don't always find life exciting. Sometimes life can be dull, boring, and monotonous, in some extreme cases some people even question why do I continue my life? They question seriously about their life, "Why do I need to continue my life?" They suffer so much, to many of us and to many of them life seems like an endless chain of one misery after another. We easily forget that life is good and life is wonderful. You know, the biggest problem, especially for me, is that we often forget that

life is wonderful. When we hear the sermon. Yeah, life's good. Life's wonderful. But as soon as you enter into your life, you experience challenges and difficulties that you easily forget that life is wonderful. We're so forgetful. I'm so forgetful and we are also forgetful. You know, about being forgetful. One of the elders in the KSM, you know, a Costco toothbrush, when you first buy them, they're clearly red and blue. You can see that, but after you use two or three and the color is kind of blurry, is it red or blue? It's not quite clear. Is that for men is that for a woman? So this elder, after using the toothbrush the first two times, they get confused, which toothbrush is theirs right? So one day they said, okay, we'll wrap the thread around it, right? So this is mine. And the one without the thread is yours. After a while they forgot who's one is threaded.

Lead Your Heart

I mean, as you get older forgetfulness becomes a symptom and that is also my problem too. But we forget so easily that life is good. But let us remember that life is good. Life is good because God is good. Not because our circumstances are good. Life is good because God is good. Our Sunday school students always say this, God is good all the time, all the time. God is good. They recite that every morning, every Sunday morning. Why don't we do that together today? Okay. I'll say God is good, "all the time," all the time, "God is good". Yeah, life is good because God is good. We have to constantly remind ourselves that life is short but worth living. You know, our life is shaped by our thoughts. The things that you think all the time, shape who you are, affect your mood and affect who you are. That's why Saint Paul said this, "finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there's anything worthy of praise, think about these things." All these good things think about it all the time as you think about them, you will be influenced by your thoughts all the time. If you're thinking about gloomy things, negative things, miserable things all the time, then you become miserable, you become negative and you become very unhappy. Your thoughts, you need to discipline to think about honorable things rather than gloomy and negative things. Because we are shaped by what we think. It is God's will that we live a wonderful life. Last week we talked about the specific will of God, but the general will of God is this, in today's passage. "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of

God in Christ Jesus, for you.” Don’t just do it. This is the will of God for all of you, we need to constantly remember, rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances.

That’s what good life looks like. Just because you have a good time that doesn’t make your life a good life, just because you have lots of money and a good career and honorable whatever. Just because you have that, that doesn’t mean that doesn’t make your life good life. Good life is very simple: rejoice always, being joyful, being prayerful and be thankful, anybody can do it. You don’t need a university degree to do that. You don’t need millions of dollars to do that. Being joyful, being prayerful, being thankful, that’s what a good life looks like and that is the will of God. Every one of us deserves to have a good life and good life looks like this. Doesn’t matter what circumstances you may be in. You can always be joyful. You can always be prayerful. You can always be thankful, but even in good circumstances, you can always complain.

Be Joyful

You can always be dark. You can always be negative, so we have to choose. Do you want to live a good life or do you want to live a not so good life? I hope that all of you live a good life. Always every moment, being joyful, being prayerful, and be thankful, being thankful, and I’d like to say a few things about each one very briefly. What does being joyful do in our lives. Being joyful, it defeats the darkness of life. That’s what being joyful does. When you rejoice, it defeats the darkness of life. Don’t let your gloomy circumstances take away joy from you. If you don’t have joy, life is not worth living. Why live when you don’t have joy, so don’t let your gloomy circumstances take away joy from you being joyful to me, means being full of life. That’s what being joyful is. When you’re full of life, you’re joyful. When you’re joyful, you’re full of life and this is what Jesus said, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and let the one who believes in me drink, as the scripture has said out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.” From their heart, rivers of living water will flow, that’s being full of life. From your heart, living water will flow. I mean of course Jesus is talking about the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit will give you full of life and when you have full of life, then your life becomes joyful. And I learned the secret. You know when I tend to be gloomy, I say to myself, be joyful. I remind myself, be joyful. Sometimes I even commend me, be joyful, and then soon I realized I changed my

perspective and joy flows out of my heart and I realize it's not just me. Some writers say this, "Why are you cast down? Oh my soul," he's talking to himself. He's kind of. He's not within himself, he separated himself from himself and then tells him, why are you cast down? Oh my soul. And why are you disquieted within me? He is commending, he is rebuking himself. When he becomes gloomy and dark, he comes out and rebukes himself. I think there's wisdom in that. There's wisdom in that, instead of just letting your heart influence you, you direct your heart where to go. You are the rider that controls the horse. Don't let the horse go everywhere it wants to go. You are the rider, you direct where to go with your heart with your horse. So same thing with your heart, you have to do that. You have to direct where to go. In every situation, simply remind yourself to be joyful.

Be Prayerful

Being prayerful defeats worries and anxieties. Being joyful defeats the darkness, being prayerful, defeats, worries and anxieties. This is what Saint Paul said, "do not worry about anything but in everything, by prayer and supplication with Thanksgiving, let your request be known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus". When you pray, the peace of God will guard your hearts and minds. You know, I realized that worries and anxiety that they look like water, in a building when there is a little opening, the water seeps in or it goes in, you don't know where the water goes after it goes in. It just goes all over the place. So once you have the water, you have a problem. My condo upstairs, it's leaking water, and one day I came to my room and it was kind of warped right. Maybe my vision is getting warped or blurry, whatever. Why is this happening? I mean all of the sudden, I thought it was myself. And then one day my wife came in. How come your floor is worked? Really? Yeah. So I'm not the problem. And then I realized that water was leaking from the upstairs and came down. We don't know where it went. And then it affected my floor. It affected my kitchen area and, and all that. Now we have to change the floor and oh my goodness, just thinking about it gives me a headache, but it's worries and anxieties like that. Once you go in there, once you have an opening in your heart and it goes in and you don't know where it goes, as soon as you realize that you're filled with worries and anxieties. If you don't seal yourself, if you don't guard your heart than worries and anxieties will easily come in and did you notice that worries and anxieties is endless. One worry brings

another worry and that brings another worry. And then all day you can worry, you will never get bored because it's endless. The worries and anxieties are endless. Being prayerful defeats worries and anxieties. When you worry about something, don't sit down and worry. Turn it into a prayer topic. Present your request to God. Simple. So whenever I have worry, I always pray. I stop, "Lord, I'll leave it up to you. This is a problem that I have right now. I worry about that, but I leave it up to you. I know that you will take care of it. You said, let your request be known. I'm making my request known to you," and then soon you have peace of God, life is too big to control. Don't try to control it. Just leave your request to God. God will control it, God will take care of it, so worries and anxiety can be defeated by your prayerfulness. Sometimes you can't fall asleep at night because you worry so much. Are you stressed out? Your life is full of stress, and then you get your health gets affected. Learn how to pray. Prayer is a powerful tool. Learn how to pray. Just simply leave your request to God and God will help you in a way that you will never know and that's I think a better way than trying to control your life.

Be Thankful

And third, being thankful. What does that defeat being? Thankful defeats, complaints and anger. When you complain, more and more, you complain, it becomes anger, so when you are thankful, that defeats complaints and anger, so why don't we just go over the first thing there? When you rejoice, what does that defeat, darkness. Second, when you pray, what do you defeat, worries and anxieties, and third, when you're thankful, what do you defeat complaints and anger right? Yeah, so when you're thankful, it defeats complaints and anger. You know, being a complainer is such a wimpy thing to be. You know who complains usually weak people complain. Big people don't complain. What do they do? They think about solution. Weak wimpy people, they always complain, "Oh, this is wrong. I don't like this. I don't like that." Big people "Ok if I don't like it, I'll do something about it." They will find a solution. They think about solution rather than just complaining about their life and their situations. If you're not careful, you can easily be consumed by complaints and anger. So many people are angry about life. They are so angry. I don't know what they are so angry about. They're angry about everything. They complain about everything in life. The best remedy is to be thankful. Learn to be thankful, it is not an automatic thing. Thankfulness is not an automatic thing. It's not a natural thing to do. For

many of us, it is something that you have to learn, to be thankful. Once at a retreat I talked about having a notebook on Thanksgiving, every day, write down nine items that you're thankful for, your life will change. Every day nine things that you are thankful for write down. Your perspective will change. I realized that my heart, if I just leave it, it has a tendency to go down into the darkness. This is strange, I don't know why it does that? If I just leave it, don't control it just goes down and down and down, deep into darkness. So the songwriter is right. Sometimes you have to command yourself, "stop it" you have to tell your heart, "stop going there." So instead of letting the heart go down. You have to direct your heart to be joyful, to be thankful, and to be prayerful. If you catch yourself complaining all the time, I hope that you do something about it very fast. Otherwise it becomes a habit. You may think your logical and you're right in complaining. You may be right. You may be logical and you may be right to complain, but if you keep it up, you're not going to be a very happy person. Do you want to always be right? Do you have to always be right and be an unhappy person or do you want to be always thankful and be a bigger person? You decide. What does it prove at the end of the day that you're right, but you're unhappy or you be thankful and become a bigger person. You decide, which one is more logical, which is better, which is wiser. I rather choose the latter. I don't need to prove that I'm right all the time. I'd rather be thankful and become a bigger person rather than being right and an unhappy person.

Being dark and heavy, always constantly worrying and being anxious and complaining all the time and being angry, these three things are poisons. Pillars that destroy your soul, kill your soul, take away your happiness. These three things. You have to defeat these three things with these new three things that is being joyful, being prayerful, and be thankful by doing these three things, we have to defeat all these negative things that take away joy and happiness from your life. My friends, life is wonderful. I dare to claim the life is wonderful. Enjoy it. Enjoy it. That's what life is all about.

Patience Attains the Goal

November 27, 2016

James 5:7-11

Patience

Patience is a wonderful word, very hard and difficult to practice. Think about it. Patience, do I have patience? That's something that we really need to meditate on. Today I'm going to reflect on patience.

St. Theresa's Poem

St. Theresa of Avila is a great saint of Spain. She said a wonderful thing. I want you to reflect on it. It's a short poem, but very nice. Let nothing upset you. Let nothing frighten you. Everything is changing. God alone is changeless. Patience attains the goal. Who has God lacks nothing. God alone fills every need. How beautiful and how true that is. Just enjoy reflecting on her words.

Without Patience Goals are not Achieved

I do believe that patience attains the goal. That phrase really catches my eye. Patience attains the goal. I realized that without patience, we cannot attain any goal. Here, we're talking about spiritual goals in our spiritual journey. If you don't have patience, you cannot finish your spiritual journey. A spiritual journey is not just a few years, you work really hard, the next few years, you forget about it. A spiritual journey is not like that. A spiritual journey is, until you die, you keep pushing it. A spiritual journey without patience is impossible. We'll just give up in the middle of it and how many people just give up in the middle of it? So if you live like this, that will only be a mediocre life. When we start something and then give up in the middle because it's hard. Whether it's a spiritual life or not, that life will become only mediocre. It's not just your spiritual life, but this patience applies to everything in your life. Well to me, spiritual life is everything in life. I don't distinguish between spiritual life and just life.

Last Friday I had a premarital counseling with Sarah and Mike, and then we concluded our counseling, and then at the end, I asked him about his spiritual journey, and then Mike said this, "you know, to me being

spiritual is living, and living is being spiritual.” And I said, wow. Profound statement. You learn very well in this church. Yes, being spiritual is everything about life. So patience also applies to your daily living.

Patience is needed for anything

Without patience you can never be a good athlete. To be a good athlete, you have to have patience. You may have great abilities and skill, but only through patience the jewel of your great ability will be manifested. Without patience. You can never achieve the goal. How many times do athletes experience their limits? No matter how hard they try, they just cannot go beyond the limit that they are hitting all the time. How many times must they have been frustrated and wanted to give up in the middle of it. There are some athletes who go through slumps, but somehow another time, they just come out stronger than ever before. Why? Because they have the patience to go through that dark tunnel, that difficult time. But through patience they have overcome their limits and the jewel of their ability within them comes out.

It applies to artists, too. Inspiration comes all of a sudden, you walk around, then all of a sudden you get an idea and you start drawing and painting or all of a sudden you get some inspiration and you write poems and beautiful ones come out. Yes, it is spontaneous. Yes. Often inspiration comes suddenly when you're not prepared, but before it comes, you have to remember that there was painful waiting and struggle and many failures. Because you went through this dormant period, you can experience sudden inspiration. Inspiration doesn't just come suddenly, but there is something you have prepared before that happens.

In our relationships too, without patience, you can never build meaningful relationships. See in relationships, as you get to know each other, after a while you get tired and you see some limits. Of course, if the relationship is not worth it, ending it is an option, but to have any meaningful relationship, you have to go beyond the limits. So without patience, the relationship is not possible. Meaningful relationships are not possible. Next year we have seven weddings, and just this morning I got another wedding, so we have eight weddings from our congregation, just this congregation, so 2017 will be a year of parties, celebrations, and blessings. It's great, but soon they will all learn how important it is to be patient to build a meaningful relationship. Mike and Sarah said, “wow,

this is good. I didn't know that all these things were involved in marriage counseling. I'm going to tell all those kids to take all of those premarital counseling courses and all that." But there's so much in marriage in addition to other relationships. Without patience, any meaningful relationship is not possible.

And that is what the Bible teaches us today. He used the example of farmers and they know very well about the secret of patience, and this is what James said. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. They work hard, but at the end they have to wait patiently for the rain to come. It's beyond their control. Life is like that, sometimes it's beyond our control. Then we have to learn to wait with patience. Everything's like that. To have precious crops, you need to be patient. To have precious things in your life. You have to be patient, you have your own timing, you cannot rush it, but you have to be patient. Then you'll see the jewel of life in the end.

Patience, the Greatest Quality

Being a patient person is what we all should strive for. It is one of the greatest qualities that we have to build within us. I think you can learn other skills, but if you don't learn how to be patient, I don't think you can succeed in anything that you do. Patience is the greatest quality that we all must master. It is a skill, an art. The art of being patient, we have to learn how to master it, but being patient is not just keeping everything inside.

Patience is an Inner Quality

Some people mistakenly think that being quiet and not saying anything is being patient. Wrong. Just because you're quiet and just because you don't say anything, that doesn't mean that you're patient. It may be a sign of being patient, but not always. I mean, you're boiling inside, but just not expressing it outside? That's not patience. Patience is an inner quality. Boiling inside already tells you that the equilibrium of inner peace is shaken and disturbed, so patience is not just keeping it inside and not expressing it. Patience is an inner quality. Well, what is that inner quality? The inner quality is peace and calmness. If you don't have peace and calmness within you, you cannot be patient. To be patient you have to

have this peace and calmness, so in that sense, I realized that patience is tremendous strength. It's tremendous spirituality. Being always peaceful and calm. Only when you have that, then you can have patience.

Real Strength

The real strength is not to fight back and attack. I don't think that's real strength. The real strength of a person is to have internal peace and calm. You can call it internal toughness to take whatever that comes to you. Someone said strength is the internal toughness to take whatever life deals out without losing your humanity. And he said, those who are ready to strike back at the slightest provocation are not strong but fragile. I think he said it well.

There are always difficult people around you who test your patience. There are always difficult people around you who make you feel miserable, who make you feel small, who make you feel nothing but dirt. You know, there are always people who provoke you and there are always situations and circumstances that are ready to attack and throw you off balance. You will experience that all the time. We are living with provocation every day, every single day. We get provocation from the early morning. As soon as you get up and until you go sleep, you get provocation. As you drive in the morning, you're already provoked by the way people drive these days. So whether you're driving, or at work, or at home even, when you look at your children, you get provoked. You encounter situations where you feel so vulnerable, you lose patience. They test your patience very harshly.

Patience is building the inner strength to deal with all these situations with peace and calm. Not indifference, but with peace and calm you can engage in it, so you have to continuously practice. It is a spiritual discipline. Every day you experience a situation where you're provoked, that's a situation where you need to build up your muscle of patience. Instead of just being provoked and letting it out, you have to learn how to be patient in that situation. As you keep doing that, you learn how to be patient. It is a discipline. It is something that you need to practice every single day. But let me tell you, patience does not make you incapable of being angry with injustice. Let me say it again. Patience does not make you incapable of being angry with injustice. Patience does not make the

anger consume you. You may be angry with injustice, but you don't let the anger consume you. Patience gives you the strength to fight injustice around you.

Gandhi's Story

Gandhi was campaigning for the rights of Indians in South Africa when he was young. He came one day before the Governor General Jan Smuts, and then he told him very quietly. He said, I want you to know that I intend to fight against your government, and Smuts laughed. You have come here to tell me that? And is there anything more you want to say? Yes, said, Gandhi, I'm going to win. Smuts sarcastically asked him, how are you going to do that? And Gandhi smiled, with your help. Years later, Smuts said, that was exactly what Gandhi did, and I did exactly what Gandhi said. You know those sandals, Gandhi made that those sandals and gave them to Smuts in 1914. In 1939 at the 70th birthday of Gandhi, Smuts brought these sandals and said this, I have worn these sandals for many summers since then, even though I may feel that I am not worthy to sit in the shoes of so great a man. Gandhi won the respect and the friendship of the General.

The Patience Jesus Showed Us

Patience is not just being patient with injustice. It does not make you incapable of being angry with injustice, but instead of being consumed by the anger, you turn it into a real fight and you will win it. That's patience. Somebody tries to make you hate them, instead of responding to them with hate, you can continuously love them. That's patience. That is the kind of patience I'm talking about and that is the kind of patience Jesus showed us. To the cross he was patient, but it was clear where he was going.

You have dreams, visions, I hope that you have strong patience. Ultimately you will win when you have that patience. Today's the first Sunday of advent. Advent is a time waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us wait with patience. This is what James teaches us in today's scripture. Be patient, therefore beloved, until the coming of the Lord, you have done well so far, keep persevering, be patient and do what you dream about in life. Only patience can give you that.

Christmas – New Possibility

December 4th, 2016

Luke 1:26-38

New Possibilities

Today the word of God is taken from Luke Chapter One, verse 26 to 38. In the sixth month, the Angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth. So a Virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, out of the House of David. The Virgin's name was Mary, and he came to her and said, "greetings, favored one. The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The Angel said to her, "do not be afraid. Mary, for you have found favor with God and now you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you will name, him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the son of the most high. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom. There will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "how can this be since I'm a virgin?" The Angel said, "the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the highest will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be holy. He will be called son of God, and now your relative, Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be infertile, for nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "here am I the servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word. Then the angel departed from her." This is the word of the Lord.

Impossible becomes New Possibilities with Jesus

Whenever I read this passage, I feel bad about Mary because how difficult it must have been for the young girl. You know, I looked into the, kind of study of how old Mary might have been when she heard this news. I found out that at most she was either 14 or 15 because they got married very early during that time, around 12 to 14 months, girls get married off. And so, she must have been around 14 or 15. Teenagers. How could a teenager handle such a big, huge problem? I feel so bad about Mary even in our time. Teenage pregnancy is a social problem and the society will not accept that or take that favorably. But in Mary's

time, it was not just a social problem. It was life or death problem. She could have been stoned to death for getting pregnant. That was the kind of culture that she was in.

So you can imagine the kind of burden and fear Mary must have felt, but surprisingly only 14 or 15 year old girl. She handled the situation very maturely and wisely. She didn't say much. When you look at the passage, it was mostly Gabriel. The Angel who spoke most of the time, and, Mary just said two sentences. The first sentence was, "how can this be since I'm a virgin?" The second sentence was, "here am I, servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word." Those were two words, two sentences, Mary spoke. The first sentence when you look at it clearly pointed out that this is impossible. Gabriel, she was telling Gabriel, what you're telling me is impossible. I'm a virgin. I never had a man. I never knew a man. How can I get pregnant? This is impossible. That's what Mary was saying to Gabriel. Gabriel knew, he clearly heard what Mary was saying and Gabriel knew clearly what Mary was thinking, because Mary was saying that it is impossible. Gabriel said to her, this is what he said, "for nothing will be impossible with God. Nothing will be impossible with God. "

When Gabriel said to Mary, Mary pondered thought about it took it in, and she accepted the reality, then she said the second sentence, "here am I the servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word." I was pondering upon this passage. I think this, this was the message Luke wanted to get across, through the story of Mary, Luke has something that he wanted to say to us, and that is nothing will be impossible with God. That is a message Luke wants to get across to us. Nothing will be impossible with God. Luke was saying that Mary was the first one who accepted the truth. Nothing will be impossible with God. Luke in his life, he experienced that. He saw that nothing was impossible with God. That's why he wanted to write the gospel Luke, because he experienced that nothing was impossible with God. He wanted to write that and then give it to us so that we can believe also nothing will be impossible with God. Luke was trying to say that Jesus, God became a human. That's what Luke was writing about when he was writing about Jesus. He was saying God became a human being. That's impossible.

So I mean, a teenager, who doesn't even know a man, getting pregnant. That's difficult reality, difficult fact. But God becoming a human being,

that's more difficult to write about. And that's what Luke wanted to write. Mary getting pregnant and Luke writing about Jesus. These all, these are not the things that we human beings could do, these other things impossible with human beings, but Luke was saying that what he was writing about and what Mary was experiencing were mystery, were mystery. What I'm going to write about you is a mystery. I like that. I like that about life. Life is mystery, especially with God. Life is full of mystery.

New Possibility through Jesus

I like that aspect of life. The mysterious aspect of life. Life is not fixed. There's something that you don't know yet. There are many things that you don't know yet. You don't know what's going to happen to you in the future. Life is mystery in that sense. I accept that through Jesus, Luke's eyes were opened and he was able to see new possibility in life, new possibility it was Luke alone who experienced the new possibility, though all the disciples experienced new possibility in life through Jesus, when they met Jesus, what they encountered was new possibility. That's what they encountered. When they encountered Jesus,

when we encountered Jesus, when we encounter God, what we encounter is new possibility. You also encounter new disciples. Also Saint Paul experienced the new possibility, that's why he said "The Christ, the old has gone away. Behold, the new has come with God who strengthens me. I can do all things." That's a new possibility. Paul saw new possibility when you read Paul's letter, all these letters, he constantly talks about revelation. The mystery that is refilled to me. He writes the mystery. He writes about a revolution.

Always search for New Possibility

They're all experienced new possibility in life, not necessarily explainable or comprehensible, but new possibility. Seeing life with a new possibility that is Christmas spirit, merry Christmas. When you say merry Christmas, what you are saying is new possibility merry Christmas. New possibility for you. Jesus came to us and opened the new possibility. They saw the new possibility. That's why they traveled great distances, for you traveling a great distance, Oh, that will be boring. Oh, they're taking plane, or they will take 10 hours or more. For those people, great distance, meaning they were risking their lives on the way they

could have been killed, robbed, they could get sick, so they are risking their lives, risking danger. They traveled long distance because they saw the new possibility. Herot also saw the new possibility and Herot did not like that. New possibility, that means there is a possibility that I may lose my power. I don't like this new possibility. He saw the new possibility, but he didn't like it, so he wanted to get rid of a real new possibility and killed all the children. The people who have power don't like new possibility, they want to maintain the status quo, but people who have no power, they want new possibility in life.

Nothing is Impossible

We are faced also seemingly impossible situations in life. Sometimes we get so totally absorbed into impossible situations that our eyes become blind. We cannot see any possibility. All we see is impossibility. What Mary taught us, the little girl 14 or 15. What Mary taught us today is to let your life be in God's hands. Then you will see something different. The song that you sang,

“Mary, Did you know that you will bear a son who walk on the water?” Probably Mary didn't know what was going on, but when she let her life be in God's hands, she saw new possibility and that new possibility became reality in Jesus. Amazing. She taught us. Little girl taught us. Let your life be, let it be in God's hands. As we wait for the Christmas, let us embrace the new possibility in our life and also let us embrace new possibility in the world we live in. We pray for Korea. Any possibility there, but even in the midst of impossibilities let us embrace the new possibility, and I know this new possibility is not something that I can create. This new possibility is what God can give. It's not something that I can make up for all of you. The new possibilities is now what you can make new possibility is given to you by God. Embrace it. Have faith in this total nonsense of Gabriel's message. Mary saw the new possibility in this ridiculous situation. Mary held onto the new possibility, so Mary said, “here am I the servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word.” Last week we reflected on patience. Patience is not something you try, patience is possible because you see the new possibility in the seemingly impossible situation. Only when you can do that, patience comes

your patient because you see new possibility. My friends, what is impossible is in our eyes, in God's eyes, nothing is impossible. Only in your eyes you see impossibility, but in God's eyes, there is always possibility. Are there people in this room who are experiencing the impossibility of life right now? Are there people in this room who are surrounded by the dark cloud of doubt about life right now? Are there people in this room who are completely knocked down, because of whatever situation you may be in, do not be afraid. Maybe it is a way of God opening up the new possibility for you. Maybe it is God's message for you that it is time for you to open up to the new possibility. Mary said, here, am I the servant of the Lord? Let it be with me according to your word. That is so refreshing. Life is not all about grasping with our hands. Immigrant life was difficult. It was difficult for me too, university time and everything. Just so difficult. Work harder and harder, but sometimes because you work so hard, you forget the new possibilities is what God gives you, not what you make. Life is not just about grasping with your hands. Life is sometimes letting it be. Let go. Letting it be and see how it unravels before your eyes. There is a song sung by The Beatles called "Let it be", famous song. Do you know?

Let it be this song sung by The Beatles and written by Paul McCartney. In 1970 he wrote this song and just before The Beatles were broken up. Paul McCartney went through a lot of trouble in a difficult time and when he had a difficult time, one day he had a dream and his mother who died of cancer, came up in a dream and then the mother told Paul, "it will be alright, let it be" that's where he got inspiration and he wrote it. But what he wrote is exactly from the Annunciation of Mary. The passage that we read today. He said, I'm not going to sing, but I'll read it "when I find myself in times of trouble. Mother Mary comes to me speaking words of wisdom. Let it be." That's what Mary said. "Let it be with me according to your word." Yes, sometimes maybe we find ourselves in times of trouble. There's a few verses later, he said, "and when the night is cloudy, there is still a light that shines on me. Shine until tomorrow. Let it be". Beautiful, isn't it?

If Mary did not have the wisdom of letting it be, she might've gone crazy, she would've never been able to embrace the reality that was imposed upon her. Maybe the best gift for this Christmas may not be iPad or Roomba. Whatever. Maybe the best gift, Christmas gift for you this year, maybe to have the eyes to see the new possibility, having the eyes to see the new possibility, that may be the greatest gift that we can have.

No matter what situation you may be in, you should always live with new possibility. My friends don't ever forget. Doesn't matter what situation you may be always live with new possibility. That is what Christmas is all about, it's what Christmas teaches us. Open your eyes to the new possibility.

Hope Never Dies

December 11, 2016

Jeremiah 29:11-14

Past, Present or Future?

I was thinking about what is most important past, present, or future. What is most important to you? Some people may say, present. Only thing that exists is present, and then they say present is the most important. But for human beings, future is the most important. The present and past are our only means by which you get to the future. Ultimately, future is the most important. The future is the end. Woody Allen said "I have seen the future and it is very much like the present, only longer acute", but I have two problems with this statement. First, our future is not just repetition of our present, or just continuation of our present. Then maybe the dream of those who have everything in the present, they want to just maintain the status quo. Their life is good as it is, so they don't want any change. So their future is exactly what they want, exactly the same as the present. That's what they want for their future before those who have not, who don't have, who suffer, they want their future to be different from the present. It can't be the same. So I do believe that future is different from the present, the heaven that I envisioned is very different from the life that I live here. Heaven is not just continuation of the life that I'm living right now. Heaven is radically different.

Secondly, you cannot see the future. He said, I have seen the future and he's the same as the present, just longer. You cannot see the future. Future is invisible. It is made that way. The future is invisible to us, no one sees the future. God created in such a way that future is blocked. We cannot see it, and that's why God gave us hope, so that we may go to worse. The invisible future, with hope as the light and the guide to that invisible future. Listen to what Saint Paul says, "for in hope we were saved. Now, hope that is seen is not hope for a who hopes for what is seen, but if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for with patients". That's why Paul is so amazing. He just saw exactly what's going on in our spiritual. In a world he knew exactly what hope does. What you see is not hope, but what when you cannot see through the hope, you can enter into that unknown, the uncertain. That's what hope does. God

gave us hope so that we don't become prisoners of the future. We do not see. You know what I mean?

In this day and age, our life, our future is very uncertain. Many people say that, you know, I'm scared for my future because it's very uncertain and unpredictable. That's what future is like and if people are scared and that fear makes them prisoners of their future, they just simply don't know what to do with their future. Lots of worries, anxieties and powerlessness. Whenever they think about future, they feel powerless. I cannot do anything about it. I just receive and accept whatever comes to me. That's what future is. They just hope that something good comes, but I cannot do anything about it. They feel powerless. The future's not ours to see, whatever will be will be. That's why people say whatever will be will be. I can't do anything about it. That's how people feel these days. It is their response to the life that is very unpredictable, uncertain and uncontrollable. But life has been that way from the beginning. Always. Not just now. It has been always like that from the beginning of time.

You know, I saw a very interesting phenomena when Paris was attacked, these terrorists in the middle of the city started killing people. Interestingly, a day later or so, around the same time, same thing happened in Beirut, Lebanon and whatever happened in Paris, all media was focusing on that and had big media coverage. Everybody talked about it, everyone knew about it, but what happened in Lebanon? Nobody really knew. Media didn't deal with it, and then I was wondering why, why does Paris gets so much attention while Lebanon doesn't get any attention? And I realized, Oh, you know, unpredictability, uncertainty of future deals with it. They built a fortress very well. Oh, defended city. We built this in this city. This can never happen. Maybe in Lebanon, but not in the city. You can never have this. This kind of thing would not happen in this city that we built, whether it's Toronto, New York, Paris, and when that happens, they feel so vulnerable.

Even with their mighty fortress they cannot deal with it. They cannot protect themselves from the unknown and unpredictable future. So they feel vulnerable, nothing can save us from the tyranny of the unknown and the uncertain future. Nothing. You can never build a fortress that can protect you from that. When you face the future, all alone without hope, what does future look like? Future looks like enemy that threatens to destroy. That's how future looks like, but when you see the future with

eyes of hope, what does future look like? Future becomes a friend that guides you, that opens up the new possibility which we talked about last week. So when you see your future with the eyes of hope, you see friends who guide you and lead you into the unknown, the uncertainty. That's why God gave us hope so that we may become friends with our future. Our future is not there to devour you nor destroy you, our future is there waiting to guide us and lead us into the better possibility

Hope Within Your Path

Jeremiah proclaimed to the Israel people who are in exile who lived with bleak hope for their future because they lost their country. They were all in exile in Babylon, and then Jeremiah proclaimed this message "for surely I know the plans I have for you says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope to give you a future with hope". He spoke this message to the people who are in exile who lived with no hope. He proclaimed to them, God will give you a future with hope. Jurgen Moltmann, famous German theologian in his book, theology of hope. He said, "it is through faith that we find the path of true life, but it is only hope that keeps him on that path. Through the eyes of faith, you'll find your path, but what makes you keep on that path is hope. Without hope, you will go off that path as we see the future with the eyes of hope". Not only does your future looks different, but your present comes alive. Your present becomes empowered, so empowered to be able to stay on that path that your eyes of faith sees your eyes of faith will see something, but what makes you strong enough to stay on that what you see is hope.

Without hope, you cannot stay on that path. We'll have strength to persevere, we'll have strength to be patient, and we talked about it two weeks ago patience. Patience gets possibility and hope. So during advent time we are reflecting on these themes. What do you think is the punishment for the sin of unbelief, what will be the result of the sin of unbelief? I think it is despair and hopelessness. The result of the sin of unbelief is hopelessness. Today is the third advent. Hope is very much a theme of advent. Someone said this, when I read books, I always have pen and a notebook usually fountain pen, so I always write, I like writing itself. Doesn't matter what I write. I write it. I forgot who said it and which book he was from, but it's pretty good. He says, "Hope moves between

the illusions of our own presence, stability and the reality of things that are not yet to come” what does that mean? It means wanting to stay where we are is temptation and our illusion. You can never stay the same, that’s illusion. We can only move forward and what moves us forward is hope. Only when we have hope. We can move forward.

Sanctified Future

How did the early Christians survive through prosecutions, tortures, killings, and murdering the hardships and of the unknown future? How could early Christians survive? because they saw something different for the future with the eyes of hope. That’s how they survived. What did they see? They saw the sanctified future, they didn’t see the future as we see it, they had their eyes open and they saw the sanctified future. That’s why they could persevere. That’s severe persecution. Do you see the sanctified future? When hope works in you, you see something different, Paul said “Suffering of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us”. He saw the glory that was about to be revealed. In other words, he saw the sanctified future. The present suffering is not comparable. it’s nothing. You can handle it. When you see the sanctified future, you can handle the present and you can overcome your challenges, hardships and difficulties and move on and move forward to what your eyes of faith sees. That is a message of the advent that is the message of hope and that’s how hope works in us.

Two Realities

April 9, 2017

Luke 9:28-43

Mixture of Two Realities

We live in two realities, good and bad. There are good times, but there are also bad times. There are times we feel spiritually high, optimistic and we feel like we can do everything well and everything will go all right, but there are also times when we feel spiritually so dry. Not only that, we feel devastated, hopeless and helpless. When things are good, we feel good, but when things are bad, we feel miserable. That's life. Good times and bad times. We cannot do anything about it. We cannot demand our life to be this way or that way. We cannot just complain because life does not turn out the way we want it to turn out.

Unexpected things happen and unpleasant things also happen.

Sometimes we are to be blamed for things that happen in our lives, but other times they just happen regardless of us. Things just come to us without any warning. Life is a mixture of two realities; good and bad.

I think the author of Ecclesiastes knew about this very well, this duality of life, or the two realities of life. I think the author of Ecclesiastes knew it very well when he said this; "a time to be born and a time to die."

Interestingly, my son, Joshua's birthday is the same day as the day my father passed away. One gone, the other came. A time to weep and a time to laugh. A time to mourn, and the time to dance. A time to seek, and the time to lose. He knew very well about the dualities of life. Two realities of life. A few chapters later, he gave us this advice, when times are good, be happy, but when times are bad, consider this, God has made one as well as the other. Therefore no one can discover anything about their future. That was the advance of Ecclesiastes.

Even When You're with Jesus

The disciples experienced this duality of life, even when they were with Jesus. So I realized even if you believe in God, even if you are with Jesus, you experience these two realities in your life. The bad times will

not disappear. Good times and bad times will be there even when you're with Jesus.

The first day they went up to the mountain and experienced something no ordinary human being had experienced. They saw Jesus being totally transformed, dazzling white. They saw the two most famous Old Testament figures, Moses and Elijah, and they heard the voice of God. We've all experienced these kinds of things, being spiritually high. They felt like they were in a cloud. They were actually in a cloud. They felt that they could do anything on the way down. It was so good that Peter asked Jesus, why don't we build tents here and live here forever?

But the very next day, they encountered a very different reality. A dark reality, a harsh reality, a demonic reality. They encountered demons, the devil, darkness. They had to deal with this demonic power and in that experience, they saw that they were powerless, vulnerable, weak. They cannot do anything with their power. The boy was demon possessed. They fell for him, but they could not do anything. They felt totally defeated. The day before they felt victorious, but the day after they feel so defeated. This was what the father of the boys said, "I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they cannot do it." They cannot do it. They experienced the duality of their reality in just two days. High and low, ups and downs, elated pride and depressing embarrassment.

One Reality

Reading this and meditating and reflecting on this, I realized that two realities are not really two realities. They are just one reality called life. We cannot have one excluding the other. Good times and bad times are not two separate realities. This is simply the rhythm of life. Notes go up and down, but it is still the same song. Two realities are simply the rhythm of life and it's one reality called life, but our attitude and our feelings are very different towards our good times and bad times. When good times come, we welcome them. We like it. When bad times come, we ask ourselves why these things happen. Why are these things with me as though that is not part of me, as though bad times should not be there.

We are too sensitive. The disciples did not become true disciples of Jesus Christ just like that. Just because they were called by Jesus, they did not become disciples of Jesus Christ. They had to go through ups and downs, victory and defeat, and through this, they were in the process of becoming disciples. They experienced failures, hopelessness, frustration, misguided expectations, false beliefs, even denial. When you read the Gospel very carefully, until they entered into Jerusalem, they all thought that Jesus Christ would conquer the Romans, so they expected that. "Let me sit on your right hand and let me sit on your hand when you have that power. When you control Jerusalem." They had a totally misguided expectation and even Peter denied him on this Palm Sunday. Until they entered into Jerusalem that's how they were, but through all that, they became disciples. They did not have a highway of being disciples from the moment that they were called.

At The Cross

The Cross is our dark times. At the cross we feel abandoned. On the cross, even Jesus cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Total abandonment. At the cross, we see only darkness. When Jesus was on the cross, the whole world became dark. The whole world. And at the cross we feel spiritually so dry. Even Jesus felt that dryness on the cross, he said, I am thirsty.

So my friends, when dark times come, remember that. That is your cross to bear. Jesus said, you want to follow me? Take up your own cross and follow me. Don't run away. Don't turn your face away, but don't fear either. Just simply take up your cross. The cross will ultimately bring the resurrection. The cross and resurrection are not two separate realities, but one connected reality. Bad times and good times are not two separate realities, but one connected reality.

Some of you may be going through hard times right now. Some of you may go through bad times, but bad times will not stay with you forever. When you take them as your cross, they'll bring about resurrection. And I also realize this, good times are not the absence of bad times. You have good times, not just because there are no bad times. Good times are a result of how you deal with your bad times. They're not absence of bad times.

Yesterday I counseled a couple who just went through life's most difficult time. I was so impressed at how they handled their situations. I was very proud of them and I told them how proud I was. Bad times can bring worse times, but if you take your bad times with hope in God and trust in God, they will not destroy you. When the right time comes, things will be restored. Jesus Christ did not end at the cross. Jesus' cross came to the empty tomb. That's the message of the Gospel.

Reflections on King David

August 13, 2017

2 Samuel 23:1-7

David's Flaw and Strength

David was a great king. The Israelites could never forget King David. King David shaped and defined who Israelites are. He defined the country, the nation. They were proud of David. A king, a leader can have this kind of impact on a nation, on the people. They always, kind of in the back of their minds, they had King David. What King David said, and what King David did. So even their messianic expectation was Davidic. If the Messiah comes, it will come from the Line of David. So King David was at the center of their consciousness, the consciousness of the Israelites. And as you know, David was not a perfect person. He made a mistake, a big mistake, huge mistake. He was flawed, in many ways.

I'm kind of jealous of the Israelites who had this a great king, a leader. A leader is so important. So I would like to reflect on this King David today, and I'd like to reflect on your life in this country. By reflecting on David, it will give us insights into our life and our own leadership. First of all, David knew how to admit his own flaws, his own mistakes. I think that's courage, to be able to admit my own flaws and mistakes. When the Prophet Nathan confronted David and rebuked David for what he did, it was a private conversation between Nathan and King David. It was kind of like the private conversation between Comey and Trump. King David had all the power, and he could completely destroy Nathan with the power he had. He could spread false rumors about Nathan, he could do some kind of conspiracy against Nathan, or he could just simply order him to be killed, murdered. He had that kind of power, he was that kind of king.

But he didn't do that. He accepted the rebuke of Nathan and truly repented. It is hard for a powerful person to admit one's own fault. We forget who we are when we have so much power. People that are powerful do not admit their faults because to them, that is the sign of weakness. They say only weak people admit their faults. But our greatest leader is different. St Paul, for example, he's our greatest leader

for Christians. St Paul said, "I am the sinner of sinners." Not only that, he went further. I am the worst sinner. This great leader that we have, we Christians have admitted his own mistakes, false and flaws. Leaders who don't know themselves are very dangerous. They will use the power accessible to them with their self-centered judgment. We should never make self-centered people as leaders because their judgment will be false. People who recognize their weaknesses can be humble. They'll be able to understand the pain and suffering of other people. People who cannot feel other people's suffering and pain should not be leaders. There will become monsters like Hitler. The leaders should be able to empathize with the pain and suffering of the people.

People who know themselves very well can understand others deeply. People who have experienced the failures of life will understand the failures of other people. People who have suffered the sickness can understand the pain of other's sickness. People have gone through the darkness, the deep, deep darkness of life can understand other people's darkness when they go through that darkness. Jesus knew us very well. Hebrew writer says this, for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. You know, understanding other people deeply is a great skill but is a rare skill. Many people don't understand what other people feel. A lot of people are so self-centered that they just don't understand what other people feel. It is a rare skill, but it's a very important and valuable skill. It shows your integrity. When you have, when you possess that skill, to understand other people's pain, suffering, and feelings, you have an integrity of life. When we live a self-centered life. We simply cannot understand other people. That's why Jesus said, if you want to follow me, the first thing, get rid of your self-centeredness. Get rid of self-centered thinking first, deny yourself. and then follow me. As long as you're self-centered, you cannot follow me.

Whom David Trusted

Second, David knew how to wait. When David's fame soared sky high, he could have taken kingship from Saul. He was the king when David was becoming famous, King Saul was the king. He could get rid of King Saul very easily because David was more popular. He had so much power he could get rid of Saul right there with the fame and the power he had. If he did that, he could have possessed the throne, but he would

not have won the hearts of the people. He could have the position of kingship, but he cannot be the king of the people. David wanted to be the king of the hearts of the people. That's the real king, not the king who has kingship position, the king who wins the hearts of the people. That's the real king.

He had many opportunities to kill Saul. When Saul was all by himself sleeping, David was able to enter his room. He did not kill him. He could kill him. He did not kill him, but he just left a mark that I was here. And then once he was with this group of people in the cave and King Saul came into the cave to do his business and then David could have killed him right there, but he just cut the piece of his clothes and told him I was right there, but he did not kill King Saul. He waited. Instead of creating his own future with his power, wisdom, and might, he waited for everything to work out for good. That is the wisdom. People who cannot wait are disqualified to be leaders. People who just react to the situation without waiting, saying stupid things. I wanted to say I'm not qualified to be leaders. Jesus did not do things as he liked. He always waited for the time. He often said, my hour has not come yet.

It is not good to force our life. We need to learn to wait. Moses waited for 40 years in the wilderness, and he himself could not enter the promised land, but Moses, led other people to enter into the promised land. People who do not lose hope while waiting will see the fruit, ultimately. Waiting is not just passively wasting your time. We wait while working hard to prepare the soil with hope and vision. Waiting needs to prepare ourselves to receive the promise. God's promise grows in our waiting and will bear fruit when the right time comes.

In two days, we have August 15. Many of you know that is a significant day for the world and for Koreans. That is the day Korea was freed and liberated from Japanese occupation, and that is the day World War II ended. Koreans were under Japanese occupation for 36 years. Many young women were taken by force to be prostitutes for the soldiers in war. Many people were exploited, their names were erased. Their culture was erased. For 40 years. They suffered under imperialistic occupation. That was the waiting time for Koreans. That became the soil for Koreans. And I believe the God trained them for 40 years. Now the Korean Peninsula is in a great crisis by two monsters. Very harsh words were exchanged between North Korea and the US. I truly pray that there

may be a peaceful resolution. I believe that 40 years of waiting was not a waste of time, for God's great work, God has trained them. Let me say a personal thing. God will produce a great leader using that 40 years of waiting time, and a lot of you are second-generation Koreans. I believe that the leader will come out not from the Korean soil, from the immigrants. Not just people who make less money, thinkers who will come out. You have a previous history of abuse, but that abuse will never be wasted. That will turn into a passion to fight for justice and human rights. Third, David believed that our future and his future is in God's resolution, not his.

He did not try to create a future with his own power and wisdom. He trusted God and God's resolution. That trust is in David's bones, in every cell of his body he had that trust. I am who I am by God's resolution, he believed. That's what Saint Paul said. I am who I am by God's grace. Even when he fought Goliath, he had that trust. We look at today's passage. We can see David's heart very well. This is what he said: "Is not my house like this with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. Will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?". He believed that everything depended on God and his decision. The reason he didn't touch Saul and waited was that he believed that everything depended on God and his resolution. The country that is built by force will be destroyed by force. History tells us that, but the country that rules over people justly, rules in the fear of God will be like the light of morning like the Sun rising on a cloudless morning gleaming from the rain on the grassy land. Our life is the same. The life that is built by God's resolution will never be destroyed. Did you build your life, or is your life built by your God's resolution? When you believe that your life is built by God's resolution, you'll never be destroyed. You stand up again because God will never give you up.

Reflection

I pray that you have a sense that your life is built by God's decision. David, as a king, had a profound impact on the future of Israel. I pray that we also have that kind of world leaders. We lack leaders. How come the evil came out of the shadow and freely told the whole world their existence, and the leader doesn't do much about it? You don't need that kind of leader. We need leaders who can name evil as evil. We should pray for the United States. They're the world leaders. The most powerful

nation. Their leadership is very much needed. This world needs their leadership. I hope that God may use that country to build God's righteousness and justice and restore that. Let me recap three things that I say. First, David knew how to admit his own faults. Two, David knew how to wait. Three, David believed that his future is in God's resolution and not his.

Let Each Moment Come Alive

October 15, 2017

2 Peter 3:8-14

Life Flies, Literally

I'd like to explore its meaning with you today. What implication does it have to us believers? In what way is one day like a thousand years, and thousand years like one day? To, us one day is a very short time and a thousand years is a very long time. When I was young, I used to see a lot of day-flies and I played with them – somehow, I don't see them much – but when I was young I saw a lot of them. They live only one day, in the morning they're born and in the evening they die. And then I wonder to myself, and when I saw them, what is the meaning of flying so hard when they're going to be gone at the end of the day? I was wondering. I mean, they just fly around but soon, within few hours they'll be gone from the face of the earth.

Then I realized that we are not much different. Compared to the age of the universe, at the most – 100 years – that's like one day. A select little speck. I still remember when I was really young – I didn't even go into elementary school yet at that time – and then one day I was lying down at my house and I saw a shooting star at night. We had a little a yard, and so I saw a shooting star and then, "Oh my goodness, my life is so..." I don't know. I was maybe six or seven. I don't know, they think like that. But I still remember, "Oh Gosh, scary. My life is going to be like that. It's just a little spark and gone." Now I look back, nearing 60 soon in January, and as I look back, my life went by just like that too. What have I done? What did I do? I was very busy, but it passed by so fast. Sometimes I talk with people in their eighties and they tell me, "Reverend, I don't know how my life just passed by. Gone."

Maybe life is like that. Moses confessed in his prayer, listen to his prayer, "The days of our life are 70 years or perhaps 80. If we are strong, even then their span is only toil and trouble. They are soon gone and we fly away." The last sentence really caught my attention. We fly away. Life is like that. We fly away. Some somebody told me, when you're 50, you're driving 50 miles per hour. When you're 60, you're drive 60 miles per hour. When you're 90, you are driving 90 miles an hour. Life goes by so

fast. Every year goes by so fast. So we fly away, that makes a lot of sense. And in the same prayer, Moses said this, "For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is passed. Or like a watch in the night, you sweep them away. They're like a dream. Like grass that is renewed in the morning. In the morning it flourishes and it is renewed, in the evening it fades and withers." It's like day-flies. You're born in the morning and then die in the evening. And Moses and Peter said, "One day is like thousand years and a thousand years like one day." What did they mean? The first thing that came to my mind was that time flies.

Here and Now

But there's another thing that they wanted to say. That is; what is important about time? It's not its length. One day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. What is important about time is not about his length, but what is contained in it. That's what's important. Time is not just about the length. Time is about what's in it. And I realized how people misunderstand salvation or eternal life. They think that salvation is lengthening their time to eternity. That's salvation to them, they just want to prolong, they just want to extend their life to eternity. That's what salvation is to them. The desire to lengthen your time to eternity, to me that is attachment, not salvation. It is just life attachment, attachment to life. That is not salvation.

That only gives me fear. People just use the word salvation as they like, when they actually talk about attachment. We human beings are good at doing that. We just put different words that thinking that reality changes. Reality doesn't change just because you changed the word. Attachment is attachment. Salvation is salvation. Some people call their narrow-minded stubbornness as conviction. That's not conviction. That's a narrow-minded stubbornness. We have a way of using words to make it good and acceptable, or to disguise our unpleasant self. To me, real salvation is not attachment to life and be obsessed with it. To me, attachment is simply bondage. Because we have attachment, we have fear of death. When St. Paul rhetorically asked a question to the personalized death, "Oh, death. Where is your victory? Where is your sting?" I see that Paul overcame the attachment to life. He never thought that salvation was an extension of your present life to eternity. His desire was not to lengthen his life, but rather he said he wanted to be with God. Attachment cannot be salvation. Salvation is overcoming your attachment. That's what salvation is.

When you overcome your attachment to life, what happens? Your moment comes alive and you can see that there is no difference between one day and a thousand years. When your moment comes alive, there is no difference between one day and a thousand years. That's what it's like, the moment coming alive – what you have is only the moment. The past is in your memory and the future is in your imagination. The moment is the reality. You have only your moment, but you don't need to lengthen your moment because the moment is full. You just acknowledge that it is a gift of God and you don't need to be sad that it will pass by. Salvation is a new realization of your moment. What is contained in that moment is more important, than the quantity of time. What you're experiencing now and feeling now is more important than how many hours you have left in a day. When the moment comes alive, you don't need to worry about tomorrow. Jesus said, "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of his own. Today's trouble is enough for today."

People who want to extend their lives, worry about tomorrow because tomorrow is essential to extend your life. For those who find salvation today, don't worry about tomorrow. They don't waste today while worrying about tomorrow. They live each moment fully. In that sense, the moment is not a temporal language. What is important about the moment is not how short it is, but how full of life it is. These moments come together and make your life, and when your moments alive your life is alive.

Salvation Is The Moment

Salvation did not happen yesterday. Salvation will not happen tomorrow. Salvation is now. Now is the time for salvation. Salvation is God's blessings on our moments. Unfortunately many people's moments are completely empty. It is just a short passing moment. As you encounter God in a meaningful way, the concept of time will stop – not the time, the concept of time will stop – and you will enjoy the peace and joy that filled your moment, and that moment becomes eternity. That's what eternity is all about. When your moments come alive, your past will come alive and your future will come alive. Many people live with regrets about their past, and worries and anxieties about the future. But when your today comes alive, everything comes alive. Regrets will be gone. The worries will be gone. The past will come as a meaningful lesson and the future will

come as a beautiful hope. The past comes alive and future comes alive when you experienced salvation today.

Salvation is not about someday in the future. It's about now. Pay attention to now and see what God is doing in your life. My friends, I don't feel sad getting old. Not at all. I believe that you're getting renewed as you age, not getting old. Is it escapism? Maybe, but that's how I feel.

Young people don't waste your time mindlessly. Don't waste your time mindlessly. Live the moment fully, awake, and enjoy your every moment doing what is the most meaningful to you. Life is not about how long you live. Life is about how well you live. St. Paul enjoyed his life even in prison because he was alive from within. Being alive does not depend on time and space. Being alive is was within you. When you meet God, you come alive. You just simply enjoy every moment. Older people, like Steve, don't be sad. Just because last Friday you said, "I'm getting old, you know, everything just deteriorates." Don't be sad because you're getting old and everything deteriorates. Cultivate the wisdom. Know what is essential and what is not. Throwaway your attachment, but entrust your life in God's hands. In that sense, a day is like a thousand years, a thousand years is like a day. That was my reflection this week.

Hope vs. Wishful Thinking

December 10, 2017

Romans 8:18-25

Hope is not Wishful Thinking

It's just an attitude. This is just like something in the air, vague, ephemeral, but it's not concrete. It's not concretely helping you. It's just so vague. When people say, "I hope you get better." They're very kind words, I mean, it's very nice to say that, but that's about it, being nice, being kind, something nice to wish for. Is that all about hope? I have this dissatisfaction with the definition about hope. Hope is not just wishful thinking. It's not just something nice to say. Hope is more than that. The hope that I find in the scripture is more than that. When you buy a lottery ticket, you wish for some good fortune. That's wishful thinking and we all have these kinds of wishes and we live with this wishful thinking. We wish that something good happens in our lives. Something good may happen in our children, something good may happen in our job. We wish that everything may work out well. We merely wished that our circumstances get better. All of this is just wishful thinking and, we all have that, but that's just wishful thinking. Nothing more than that. Hope is not wishful thinking.

What is Hope?

Hope is to have a concrete vision for the future. That's what hope is, hope is to have concrete vision for the future. Vision to me is not a calculated conclusion for the future, from the visible possibility of the present. Let me say that again. Vision to me is not a calculated conclusion for the future. From the visible possibility of the present, vision comes from hope even when we don't see any possibility hope gives us this vision and we move forward with this vision, not because we see the possibility, but because the hope is good. That was what Saint Paul meant when he said, "for in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope for who hopes for what he's seen, but if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." The reason Desmond Tutu could see a light even in the darkness around him was because he had hope. Everyone thought that the apartheid system in South Africa was too strong to fight. The system was too big to defeat,

but that's when Tutu had a vision, that the systemic evil will be ultimately defeated. And so he fought for his vision, not because he saw the possibility, but because the vision was good. That is hope. People who live with hope do not merely wish for something good, they fight with a concrete vision, and in that fight the hope becomes stronger and stronger. People who live with hope are fighters.

The Hope of Salvation

Salvation, we all got it wrong. Oh, if you believe in Jesus Christ, whether conceptual, whatever, I'll go to heaven that is wrong. Salvation is not something that is given to you like freebies just because you're a member or once because you believe in Jesus Christ. Salvation is not a ticket to go to heaven. Salvation is possible only through faith and faith always gives us vision and the vision to change, the vision to fight and the vision to be free. If that is not, their salvation is not there. We live with hope that we will be free from the darkness of our sins that will press us and we fight every day with the vision for the freedom and ultimately will become free. If you don't fight, you won't be free. "Oh yeah. I once believed in Jesus Christ." That's not good enough. If you don't fight, you won't be free. St Paul said in verse 23, "and not only the creation, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies groan inwardly." What image does that give you? It is the image of struggle and fight, groan inwardly, and my friends without hope we cannot even fight without hope we don't even struggle because you have nothing to hope for.

Why do you struggle? Life is nice, comfortable, nothing to struggle for, but once you have hope, you have something to fight for. You have something to struggle for, so without hope, salvation, is not possible. That was why St Paul said in hope, we were saved, in hope we were saved people who have no vision for the redemption of the body. How can they be redeemed? We wait and fight for the redemption of our bodies even though we only see the decay of ourselves. The process of fighting for the redemption itself is a salvation. Salvation is not a freebie you get. The process of fighting for the redemption itself is the salvation and hope is the power to live our lives with vision living day by day, without purpose, merely wishing for something good is not living with hope. When we have hope. Our lives change, just because you bought a

lottery ticket, does your life change? Maybe if you win it, but when we have hope, it changes us. We'll have something to pursue. Something to hope for we will have new vision for life. Life will move forward. Not only do we have power to persevere, our sufferings and challenges, but power to overcome them.

Even now, every day I fight, when I look at myself, it's so pathetic. That's why I fight. Still pitiful emotions bother me. Still, there's decay of my bodies rather than redemption. I fight. That's why there's still anger. There's still hatred, there is lack of belief, doubt. I believe that life should not be in bondage, being pressed down. Whether you're aware of it or not. I believe that life should not be in bondage. We should not let our circumstance take us as it's captive. Doesn't matter how you see it about your life. You may come for yourself "ahh my life is great." Good. At one point, we just have to get up and move. I cannot live like that any longer, constantly in fear in bondage. I cannot live like that any longer. Get up and move and the hope can give us that strength to get up and move. Hope is not a guessing game about our future. Hope is a spiritual insight to see our future with the promise of God. If we have hope, our life will move towards God's promise. When people who have hope are gathered together, then the history will move towards a brighter future.

Now we are here together. People as people, with hope, when we get together, the history will move towards a better future. This community will be able to do that. That's why 2018 for me is exciting because you are going to make some changes. Let us live with hope. It's not just wishful thinking. Hope is a powerful weapon. All the great people who made a dent in the universe, they lived with hope. The great people who made changes in history, they all lived with hope. Living hope, hope makes you a great person. Find that hope in your life.

Be Joyful When You're Sad

December 17, 2017

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

What is Joy?

When I hear the word Christmas, the first image that comes to my mind or first emotion or the first thing that comes to my mind is joy. Joy characterize Christmas: bright lights, cheerful Christmas carols; some radio stations if you turn it on, they play all day Christmas carols from December. I love that, and the joy of giving gifts and receiving gifts, parties and good food. Christmas is a season of joy. It symbolizes that life is good. It symbolizes the happiness of life, but the problem of the joy that we feel during Christmas is that it does not last too long. It is short lived. And when the lights are down, and when carol songs stop, and the bills of Christmas shopping and spending come in the mail and all we see is our weight gain we come back to our gloomy reality.

That's why February is the most depressing month of the year. In January at least there is a new beginning. And at least you have some hope that something is starting, but in February we have nothing, nothing to look forward to. So government was worried. They created a family a day long weekend and then, long-term, over university, already, they sensed the depression of students and also the suicide rate is pretty high. So they created a reading week in February. I guess the joy that we know is not something that lasts for a long time. The joy that we know is a very short lived experience or a feeling. Is joy just a momentary feeling and that's about it?

Manufactured Joy

Do we have to keep creating our environment either buying things or having a party or listening to music or watching movies by doing all these things? Do we just keep doing things to have joy? Is there no such thing as everlasting joy? It's just an instant, instantaneous and temporary, a momentary feeling. That's about it, but when you look at the scripture, especially when you hear the word from St Paul, his joy was different from the joy that we know. Paul said, "rejoice always". How can you rejoice always? There are times when you are depressed.

There are times when you're sad. There are times when you go through difficulties. How can you rejoice always? But Paul says, rejoice always. So, his understanding of joy was not a momentary or instantaneous thing. He always had it. Rejoice always. I want to think about what that joy looks like, not just during Christmas season, but also in February. Not just on bright sunny days, but also on gloomy, rainy days. Not just when I'm at the party, but when I'm alone at home.

How can I have that joy? We read Paul's words in a letter, his letter to the Thessalonians, "rejoice always", but he talks about joy more in an emphatic way in Philippians rather than Thessalonians. In Philippians, he says, "I will say it again. Rejoice". The whole book is about joy. Ironically, he wrote that letter from prison. He was in prison when he wrote it, but the prison system at that time was very different from the prison system right now. We at least have a legal process. But at that time, a lot of times there was no legal proceeding. If the guard said 'kill him', then he could be killed the next day. So he didn't know. You'd expect more in that situation. He said, 'rejoice, rejoice always'. I realized that the joy Paul is talking about, as well as other spiritual qualities too, did not come from circumstances, or the exciting atmosphere around him. He did not draw joy from outside. Somehow he had joy within him and then I realized that nothing in the world can produce or manufacture joy. Even food cannot produce joy to everyone. Some people enjoy food, but some people, even though it's delicious food, they don't even enjoy it. They don't get joy out of it, so nothing in the world can produce or manufacture the everlasting joy. The joy that comes from our circumstances can make us more depressed. Actually, once those circumstances disappear, change.

Joy and Satisfaction

Joy is within us. In the Gospel John, there's a very interesting, very strange kind of statement. It says, whoever believes in me, rivers of living water will flow from within them. Rivers, rivers of living, water flow from within you, and Jesus is talking about this holy spirit actually, but I realized that that is what joy looks like. It looks like rivers of living water flowing out of you. In your conscious or in your ecosystems, there's a flow of living water and that is what joy looks like. It is a power of life. It brings vitality to our existence. It is the energy that boosts up otherwise tasteless existence. When joy touches it, everything comes alive because of the energy. It's not just feeling and it's not just emotion, but

it's an energy that is flowing within the us. So whenever this joy that is within us touches anything, it comes alive. It's not just emotion, it's not just a feeling, it is the energy that is flowing within you. That's why he can rejoice always. That's why we can rejoice always. And there's another the aspect of this joy. When God created the world. God said, it is good. It is a satisfied joy, a satisfied smile. God created the heaven and earth and everything and then he saw it and he was satisfied and he enjoyed the creation. It is good.

So I realized that joy, another aspect of joy is deep seeded satisfaction. It's not just the energy that boosts up your existence, but it calms you. It gives you tremendous satisfaction. Okay, it is good. Life is good. Your life is completely in God's hands. That awareness; you don't need to worry about anything. When you have that sense, you can start enjoying your life rather than worrying about your life. Your taste buds come alive and so you can enjoy your food. Your ears are open and so you can enjoy your music. Your spirit is alive and so you can enjoy the divine presence. We need joy within us to enjoy life. I don't think we need that much money to enjoy life, in truth. When we have joy within us, we can enjoy things that are not that extraordinary. When you're joyful because of you have money, that's great, but if you're joyful, even though you don't have much money, that is really good. That is what joy within us looks like. The joy that comes not from money, but from within, that gives energy and satisfaction. If you have reason to be joyful, that's good, but if you are joyful, even when you're sad, that is really good.

Joy Within

After KSM service, one person came up to me and asked, "Moksanim, how can we be joyful when you're sad? How can you be joyful when you're sad?". I think we can be joyful, even when we cry. Does it make sense? It doesn't seem to make sense, but it seems to make sense somehow. I felt that. And that was what Saint Paul said in 2 Corinthians, this is what he said. Listen: 'as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything' (2 Corinthians 6:10). That's a spiritual secret, a spiritual truth. When we have joy even though we are sad, the joy doesn't disappear because joy is not a feeling. Joy is not a feeling. The joy does not disappear even when we are hurt. The joy does not disappear even when we are hard pressed from all sides. The joy within us is always there. Do you know what the true characteristic of joy is? The joy within us is different from

the joy that you get from circumstances. You know what the difference is? The true characteristic of joy within you? The joy within you makes others happy.

Joy is Contagious

That's what the joy within you does. Joy within you makes other people joyful. The joy you get from the world makes you happy, but the joy the spirit gives within us, makes others happy.

Making others joyful is my joy. Sometimes I get a reply for my inner voice. Whatever they got, whatever message they got from the inner voice, sometimes some people write a short reply to me. When I realized that something that I write that is very short touched their lives and made them joyful, that gives me tremendous joy. Making others happy is the best joy you can ever ask for. Making yourself happy, it's not that great of a joy, but making others happy because of you gives you tremendous joy. Joy is contagious, trying to make other people joyful for when you're not joyful, that's hypocrisy or you're a clown, but true joy is contagious. When I'm joyful, it makes people around me joyful. There are people like that. When they're present, somehow the whole atmosphere comes alive. The whole place is like a new light comes in, and they make everything bright. But some people come in the dark. They make everything dark and gloomy.

Wherever Jesus was, he made people happy. You know what? Jesus loved parties. He always went to a lot of parties. That's why people accused him; 'you're a drunkard and glutton!'. because he loved parties. When Jesus first called disciples, most of them were from John. You know John? John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness. He had the camel's clothes and he only ate wild honey. He lived a very ascetic life. So all the disciples followed John expecting that lifestyle and then John told them to follow Jesus, so they started following Jesus. Do you know the first place Jesus took these disciples to? It was not the mountain to pray, it was a wedding party and he enjoyed it and he taught them how to enjoy life. He taught them what joy looks like. The deeper your faith is, the deeper joy will flow out of you. Don't try to influence other people by trying to change them. The best influence you can give to others is to make them happy and joyful, but often we make other people miserable. We make other people sad. We create so many problems for other

people rather than making them happy and joyful. It's our job to make others happy. In your family, it is your job to make your spouse and to make other people around you, to make your children happy.

Don't try to make other people miserable. That's not the right thing to do. Make other people happy. If they're happy because of you, thank God and praise God. Take joy wherever you go, take smiles wherever you go. Rejoice always. There will be people whose joy is restored because of your joy. When the deep seeded joy comes out from within us and becomes a song, that song will hit the joy that is hidden in others and their song will come out as a beautiful melody. That's what joy is like. Joy is the best medicine. When we restore our joy, much of our illness will be healed. This world needs more joy. It's too depressing, too gloomy. We need joy. Let us rejoice all our lives.

God Who Calls

January 14, 2018

1 Samuel 3:1-11

Those Who Were Called

God we believe is God who calls. When you read this scripture, you will encounter many stories of people, and these stories all talk about calling.

God called Abraham, Moses and the prophets. When God called Abraham, Abraham did not even question. Immediately, he obeyed God's calling and left his home to go to a place where God called him to go.

When God called Moses, it was a little bit different. Moses was resistant. He said, "I cannot speak. I'm not eloquent. I cannot go." God continuously called him to go and at the end he said, "No, I can't really go, so send my brother Aaron." So it was very different from Abraham. Abraham did not even question, he immediately left his home and went to the place God called. Moses was resistant, but in the end he accepted the call from God and lived out that calling for 40 years, the last 40 years of his life. Very different response, but it has to do with calling.

And also, prophets too. When God called Jeremiah, Jeremiah said, "I'm too young to do anything that you ask me to do," and when God called Isaiah, Isaiah said, "I'm a man of unclean lips. How can I preach your Gospel or good news or message?" All these people responded differently, but their life was to do with the call from God.

When it comes to the New Testament, same thing. God called the ordinary fisher people, fishermen, and God called them. "You follow me," and they left the net and then followed Christ. When God called, when Christ called, Paul, on the road to Damascus, it was a supernatural experience, but he received a call and lived out God's call all throughout his life. For example, Jonah the Prophet who we studied last year, God called him and he ran away.

So, very different, but it's all to do with God's call. Very interesting. Their lives were intricately connected, with a call. To all these people, life and calling could not be separated. There was no arbitrary division between their personal life and their life of calling. Their life was to fulfill the calling that they received.

Does God Have My Number?

I wonder, is there a call in life? Or do I make my own life? What is life that we live? Is there a call that we respond to? Versus "I don't know about any callings, I'm just busy making my own life." What is it? Are we so different from the characters in the Bible? Only they got called and God doesn't call anymore in modern days? Or is calling still a relevant concept to understand my life? I still believe that callings are very much relevant to my life and to our life. That's what I want to tell you today.

It is wonderful to see that your life is connected with a bigger picture, and I believe that your life is connected with a bigger picture. Your life does not end where you are. It is connected with God's greater plan. Whatever you do right now has some implication for God's greater plan. When you have this sense of connected-ness, you will understand that you're not alone. You don't have to figure out everything that is going on in your life. You don't have to solve every problem that you encounter in your lives on your own. You are connected with God and God is with you to help you to work out your life. That was what all these people in the Bible experienced in the background of their lives. They experience that there's God. In the background of your lives, there is God. You may not necessarily see God, you may do all these things on your own, but in the background of all that you do, there is God. And this God knows you very well. When you read the scripture Samuel, the scripture says, "Samuel did not know Jehovah yet. Samuel did not know God yet, and yet God knew Samuel's name." And he knew exactly, "You are the one that I have chosen and I want you to do this." God knew Samuel when Samuel did not even know God.

God knows all of us. God knows all of us better than we know ourselves. God knows your struggle, your hurt, your pain, your longing, your weaknesses. God knows all about us, and he will give us what we need. To live a life of calling, we need to be able to hear that calling. We need to be able to hear the voice. We need to be attentive to the voice of God. And I believe that there is a voice of God in our lives, not necessarily audible voice – if you hear them, maybe you may see Joe Park – it may

not be audible voice, but I believe that we hear God's voice. And we try our best to live out that voice that speaks to us. That voice is what inspires us, what prompts us, what gives us conviction. Life is not about a whole bunch of your decisions and your schedule. There are sometimes that you have this urge. This voice nudges you. Sometimes uplifts you. Sometimes speaks to you very clearly like, "Hey, this what I want you to do." I believe that there is a voice. We just ignore it a lot of times.

We Don't Pick Up

As we respond to what nudges us, our life is slowly moving towards God's wonderful plan for you and for the world. And it's very important to hear God's voice every day. God said to Samuel, "Then the Lord said to Samuel, see, I'm about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle." Does it tingle right now? It's a very dramatic way or graphic way of listening to the voice of God. It may not be physical tingling, but the tingling of your heart. And it's not always easy to hear God's calling. God had to call Samuel three times. Samuel could not understand. Eli must've been really upset or frustrated. In the middle of the night this boy comes in and says, "Did you call me?" And he woke him up and "No, I didn't call you. Lie down," and the next night, "Did you call me?" Three times! It was hard to hear God's calling sometimes.

You know, when I read that part of the story, I was reminded of Paul. Paul said he prayed because he had thorn in the flesh and he prayed three times for the thorn to be removed. That three times did not mean that he only prayed three times. He prayed as much as he could, but God did not take out the thorn. So here too, God calls Samuel three times, but it's almost like God called until he really hears it. God called continuously until he hears it, and finally he heard it with the help of Eli.

God calls us sometimes and we don't hear it. Why? Because we are so saturated with our own agenda. With my own plan. Or sometimes we're too strong in our own will, or sometimes we're too distracted, or sometimes we are too painfully hurt, and sometimes we are too proud and arrogant. And so, many times we don't hear God's voice. But God never stops calling us. God never gives up calling us. God continuously calls us.

We Are All Called

The way we started TBS, Tuesday Bible Study, I believe that it was God's calling for me. It's not what I planned. I was busy as I was and then few people came to me – they said they don't go to church, but they wanted to have a Bible study. You don't go to church, why do you want a Bible study? And they said, "Well, we don't go to church, but we are still interesting in what the Bible really, really says." "Oh, so you want to know what the Bible really says? Sure, I'll help you." So that evening at Knox College in that cafeteria, about 20 of us gathered together. And then one person said, "I'm an atheist," and another person said, "I'm kind of Buddhist." All kinds of people and they all wanted to have Bible study. That's how I started. I didn't know what God's plan was, but God had a plan when He called me to start a Bible study. Now we have Pastor Simon here, working for our church from that group.

WBS, same thing. Women's Bible Study. I don't know, more than 10 years ago I believe now, and a few women wanted to come. They came to me and they wanted to have a Bible study, so I responded to that call. I didn't know exactly what would entail, what that Bible study might have entailed, and I realized last 10 years I've experienced them changing so much, and they had a profound impact on the church itself.

Inner Voice, that was what God nudged me. Called me. At first, I didn't have confidence, "Everyday? How? How can I do that?" And he said also to do it in English too. I thought I was going to just do Korean and then do the English one too? "What? I can't!" But God never stops calling. I mean, I have planned this for three, four years. God gave me this idea three or four years ago and I said, "No, I can't do it. I'm too busy." And finally last year I responded to God's calling. Prayer retreat or New Year's retreat that we're going to have... a few years ago, God gave us, gave me that calling. Let people start the new year with prayer, with a fresh spirituality. Let them start with that. "Lord. I'm so busy at the end of the year. You know, I have Christmas worship service and December 31st service and then I have to go to my family gathering and play games all night and all that stuff. I can't prepare." And He said, "Do it." So I just responded. Happiness seminar is the same thing.

My friends, God calls. God calls each and every one of us to respond to his call. It's not just Bible people who heard God's calling. Even now, God is calling all of us. Life is my response to God's calling. It's as simplest as that. Life is a response to the calling. Be attentive to God's

voice. Be by yourself, where there's no distraction to that. Every day, be by yourself, where there's no distraction. Quiet yourself down. Your worries, anxieties and fear, let all those down. Pay attention to God. Try to listen. You can do that. Life is more than your decision. There is something that comes to you from outside or from the depth of your heart. You need to listen to that voice that comes from the depth of your heart rather than just making schedules every day mindlessly and living it out. Instead of doing that, sit down and what voice comes from the depth of your heart.

As you respond to that calling, your life will be enriched. Sometimes that voice makes you cry. Other times, that voice gives you new strength. And sometimes, that voice leads you to repent. And sometimes, God says, "You will be all right. Don't worry. You'll be fine." When we hear God's calling, we can be true disciples of Jesus Christ. We all go through hardships, uncertainties and difficulties. Don't make yourself numb. Listen, and God will guide you... to a very, very good place. Green pasture. Only if you are able to hear that voice.

Tomorrow is Better than Today

February 4, 2018

Isaiah 40:27-31

Through Worship, Healing

Healing through worship. I'm going to talk a little bit about worship right in the beginning, before the sermon, maybe two minutes or so. There's a Korean word, a very interesting word. It is called "MuLib", meaning total immersion. That's what worship is. Total immersion from the beginning to the end. Worship is not what you do, what you do is meaningless. Worship is not the action. Worship is not what you do. Worship is your heart, your spirit meeting God's spirit. So, without that total immersion, without MuLib, we cannot have worship. I mean, you can do all the actions of worship, all the motions of worship, but it is possible that you never worship God in your entire life. When there is no immersion, there is no worship. To this year, hopefully, that from the beginning to the end, we made totally immersed into God's presence and have meaningful and good worship. If we learn how to worship our life will change. Our spirituality will change. Only through the worship, healing is possible. Only through the worship real spirituality is possible.

I believe that tomorrow is better than today. That's what I believe. I live with that belief. Tomorrow will be better than today. Is that not what hope is all about. Hope, meaning that you believe that it will get better. Tomorrow will be better than today. We should live with the belief that life will get better and, we should live a life that gets better as time goes on. Even though our present life may be difficult and very hard, if we have hope, we can see a brighter future. When we see a brighter future, we can have a better attitude towards the present suffering that we are going through. Even though you go through hardship now, if you have hope, you can have a better attitude to deal with the present suffering. That's what that was what Saint Paul said. "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. The glory is not yet here, but the glory that is about to be revealed to us is so great that you can handle the present suffering better."

Finding Strength

I think hope is very important to live a good and meaningful life. Those who have hope will handle life's difficulties much better than those who have no hope. People who have hope know how to wait. When I see people who live with hope, they know how to wait, they know what it means to wait. This waiting is very important. A hope and waiting can be interchangeable. When you look at NRSV, it says those who wait for the Lord, it's the same Greek, same verse, but in NRSV says those who wait for the Lord, but in NIV, those who hope for the Lord. So, hope and wait are interchangeable. Ability to wait is a very important quality in your life you should learn, not only to survive but also to thrive in your life. When things don't work out as you wish and very well, wait. Learn to wait. It will work out and eventually everything will fall into place. When you have problems and you don't know how to solve your problems, wait. Somehow, you'll find the wisdom to deal with your problem. Waiting is a secret key to your life. When you learn the art of waiting, the wisdom and power will be given to you, and then you will rise up like an eagle. This is hidden to those who cannot wait. This is hidden to those who don't have hope, but to those who know how to wait, they will find this wisdom and strength in their lives.

This is what Isaiah cried out. "Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint." They'll have this power and wisdom when they wait for the Lord, they will have this power and wisdom to be able to continue to thrive in their lives. Not those people who are waiting, who know how to wait. It's not because their life is necessarily better than other people. It's not necessarily because their life is easier and more comfortable than other people. Nobody's life is given to them on a silver platter. We all go through difficulties and hardships, and even for those people who wait for the Lord, hope for Lord go through the exact same problem as anybody else. But somehow those people who wait for the Lord and who hope for the Lord, have the strength to persevere through their trials and difficulties and hardships. They don't easily give up. They can persevere. They continue to pursue their life even though it is difficult because they experienced the power that fills them up. That is the power that lifts them up and lets them rise up like eagles.

Hope for the Lord

Young people learn to hope for the Lord. Learn to wait for the Lord. More than anything else, learn to wait. You'll become very strong people. You will receive all kinds of challenges in your life, but you will be able to handle them if you know how to wait and how to hope for the Lord. Tomorrow will be better than today, is not a guess. That is not our wishful thinking. Oh, I wish that tomorrow is better than today. It's not wishful thinking. It is your faith confession and it is also your commitment. Yes, tomorrows got to be better than today. The reason the early Christians could survive through persecutions, martyrdom and hardships and all kinds of severe situations was that they believed that tomorrow will be better than today. They had this confession that tomorrow will be better than today. That's how they survived and persevered.

Christian life I believe that it is not just maintaining the status quo. It is our struggle to make tomorrow better, to make our future better. When I say tomorrow will be better than today. I'm not talking about your life situations. I'm not saying that your life situation will be better tomorrow than today. St Paul life situation became worse after he met Christ. I'm not talking about the life situations, but you will change. Tomorrow you will be better. So, you'll be able to handle your life situations better. Saint Paul got better and better every day, even though his life situations changed. That's a winner. Be a winner in that way. Be strong in that way. Don't let your circumstances crushed you down. Believe that tomorrow will be better and then God will make you better.

Look to the Lord

Jesus said this parable, "the Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown, it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." What does it tell you? Tomorrow will be better than today. It starts with a small seed. Have you seen mustard seed? It's so small that you cannot even see it very well. And tomorrow it will be like a tree where the birds of the air will come and find rest. Maybe you start with a very smart person who is very selfish and self-centred. You only think about yourself in the beginning, so small, but later you become a big person. A bigger person so that other people find rest in you. That should be what our life should be like. We cannot continuously be selfish and self-

centred and just ask for something to be given to me, but you will become a bigger person so that you are not just receiving person. You become a giving person at the end. Our life must change like that. When you're more immature, when you're young, yes, of course, you will only think about yourself, but as you grow mature, more mature, you think about other people, so you become a bigger person in this way. This is what the Christian journey is all about.

Sometimes we feel like we are stuck. Sometimes you feel so tired and drained and sometimes we see no future and there'll be no way out, that when you wait for the Lord. Instead of letting yourself be discouraged, that is when you wait for the Lord, hope for the Lord. And you will have to meet God who gives power to the feet and strengthens the powerless. When you look to God, you will have hope. Hope is not something that you can create on your own, only when you look to God, that God can give you the hope and with that hope you wait, and you'll become a bigger person. And the hope will give you a new strength.

God wanted to teach this to the Israelite. He showed all kinds of things to the Israelite. He made a way when there was no way it was possible. For example, in the middle of the ocean, God made a way and then when there was no food, God gave them food and God gave you the water in the desert. He gave everything for them so that they know how to wait for the Lord, but when Moses disappeared into Mount Sinai to get the 10 commandments, he wasn't around for a while and these people cannot wait for the Lord. What did they do? They made a golden calf and dance around the golden calf. You know in other words, "I have to make my own destiny now This Moses guy? I don't know where Moses says, let us create our own idols, our own help, and this golden calf will lead us from now on." They didn't know how to wait for the Lord. they created their own destiny. Don't do that. When you're desperate, when you feel powerless, wait for the Lord rather than creating your own resources, your own idols. Don't take care of yourself by yourself. You'll fall into a deeper problem. Look to God and God will give you hope. And with that hope, wait and you will become strong. God will strengthen you.

Wait for the Lord

Isaiah wrote today's passage when they were captivated, Israel because of their sins and problems. They were invaded so they were all captives by Babylon. So, Isaiah wrote this when they were in Babylon and they

lost their country. They lost their temple. They lost their identity. They lost everything. So, in that battle, in the foreign country, Isaiah cried out, wait for the Lord, wait for the Lord, and that Lord will strengthen you guys. Wait for the Lord.

To all of us, God tells us to wait. And when you have this waiting heart, your tomorrow will be better than today. That waiting heart, that yearning is crucial in living a good life. Life without yearning is dead life. When you have that yearning to make your tomorrow better than today. Yes, your tomorrow will be better than today. As the deer pants for the water wait for God. When you come to worship, wait for the Lord to touch you, to speak to you, to empower you, to open your eyes, to give you the wisdom. And God will give you that secret wisdom to you as you seek the Lord. There was another prophet after Isaiah. His name is Jeremiah. Jeremiah cried out like this. Call me and I'll answer you and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. Call me I will show you the secret, secret of life.

Reflection

All the YA, as you enter university and you're dealing with all kinds of new challenges, learn to wait for the Lord. Learn to hope for the Lord and Hi-C now your beautiful life is ahead of you but also at the same time, all the challenges will be in front of you. When life's difficulties come, learn to wait for the Lord and he will help you. He will guide you. And you will go, "Oh God is alive." God gave me this wisdom and this strength that I never knew before. God will do that. And all of us, those who wait for the Lord God will strengthen you. Let us trust in the Lord who gives the strength to the faint and power to the weak.

Three Things We Believe

February 25, 2018

Romans 4:17-18

Worship and Living with Faith

Just before the sermon, I gave a little blurb about worship. Worship is something that you give with faith. Without faith, it is not possible to give worship because worship is not an action. Worship is not what you do. Worship is something that happens internally between you and God. So only way to really worship God is through faith. Only through faith. You cannot figure out God with your brain. You can only approach God through faith. And when you approach God through faith, something wonderful happens. As we heard the song today, God made everything beautiful and that beauty of life will be experienced in our lives through the worship. So wonderful things can happen. So, I hope that your life opens, and you experienced that a beauty of life.

I believe that living with faith is very important. Living with faith is more beneficial than living without faith. You can live more meaningfully, and you can achieve even more in life. Abraham is known as the father of faith and I believe that he lived with faith and he lived a truly blessed life. Even hope against hope. He believed he encounter all kinds of impossible situations, but somehow Abraham learns to deal with all his situations, with faith. Not with his brain. For a while he tried to deal with his situation with his brain, he ended up making more mistakes, but somehow, he learned to deal with these situations through faith and in the end, he became a father of faith. If there's one thing that you need to learn in life, I will say, it is faith. But this learning is different from what you can learn in school. It isn't life learning, so it's a little bit more complex than studying the textbook and all that. It involves your life, situations, circumstances, and your attitude, who you are, and everything is involved, but somehow if there's one thing that you need to learn in life, I believe that that is faith. That if you learn to live your life with faith, you can deal with a lot of situations in a healthy and productive way. Your life will be very different.

Of course, when I talk about faith, I'm talking about faith in Christ and faith in God. But today what I'm going to talk about is when that faith is

manifested in our life, what does it look like? How does it manifest itself in life? And I would like to share three things with you.

Circumstances

The first, I believe in circumstances. I believe in circumstances. That's how faith is manifested. Our circumstances are not always good. There are times that our circumstances are very bad, unbearable even. Sometimes there are times when things work out very well, but there are also moments when life gets so entangled that you don't know where to start to untangle your life. But no matter how difficult our situations maybe I believe that there is always a way out. That's what I believe. There always a way out. I believe that all our circumstances will work out alright. If we learn to be patient. A lot of times we make it worse by trying to untangle on our own, but when we wait with faith, somehow our circumstances, life circumstances have their own ways of resolving themselves. We need to be patient. We need to wait, and we must trust in the fact that the circumstances will find their own way out. Even in a hopeless situation, there is a way out.

This is what Saint Paul said. "We know that all things, all things meaning, all circumstances will work together for good, for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. All circumstances ultimately will work together for good." That's what St Paul believed. He believed in circumstances, but all these circumstances will work out for good. That was how Abraham lived his life. Even when he had no child, not a single child, God told him that you will be a father of great nations, many nations. And somehow, he believed when he had no child, he believed. Kind of dumb. When you really look at it. Being too smart, it's not really being smart. I realized sometimes being dumb is good and Abraham somehow believed that he will be a father of many great nations. And then he got a son, Isaac, and he was so happy. Finally, God is doing his work and then suddenly God told him to sacrifice your son. But strangely he again believed. Somehow something will work out. So, he brought his son Isaac to be sacrificed, believing that somehow there'll be a way out. And there was a ram right there. Jehovah Jireh, meaning God prepares in all circumstances, Abraham somehow believed, believed that things will work out. If you can believe that you can live a powerful life.

Don't be victims of your circumstances. Overcome your circumstances and do not fear difficult circumstances. Do not give up just because you

face many difficult circumstances. When you learn to live with faith, you will be able to see how things work out for good. I've encountered many impossible situations personally, but also other people's lives and in the end, things worked out. And I'm thankful to God for that. I believe in myself. That's how faith manifests itself. I believe in myself because God chose me. I believe in myself because God believes in me. This is what Isaiah said, "do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine." This is what Isaiah believed. You are mine God said. I have chosen you. I have called you.

There's another prophet, Jeremiah, before he was in his mother's womb, somehow God used Jeremiah. Even before he was born, when he was in mother's womb, God set him aside as a prophet. But unfortunately, Jeremiah did not believe in himself. This is what Jeremiah said, "our Lord God truly, I don't know how to speak. For I am only a boy. I'm not a prophet. I'm only a boy." Jeremiah did not believe in himself. When he did not believe himself, God said to Jeremiah "do not say, I'm only a boy, for you shall go to all. To whom I send you and you shall speak, whatever I command you, do not be afraid of them, for I'm with you to deliver you." God told Jeremiah, "trust in yourself. Don't say you're just a boy." Trust yourself. Don't just say that you are a failure, or I cannot do this. I cannot do that. Don't just say that. Believe in yourself. You can do many things. I believe in myself, not because I'm great, not because I can handle everything well. I make so many mistakes, I fail so many times, but still, I believe in myself because God chose me. God called me. God strengthens me, and God protects me.

Believe in the Future

Peter articulated our human identity or believer's identity in this way, "but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." I don't know how Peter got all this message to some miracle. I mean that's how he saw himself and others. In order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. That was how he saw himself. If you don't believe in yourself, you cannot achieve anything. God works through you, but if you don't believe in yourself, how can God work through you? Only when you believe in yourself, then God can work through you. If you are weak, God will give you strength. If you have no wisdom, God will give you wisdom.

Even before Jesus started his ministry, he was preparing himself by being baptized for his ministry. The first thing that God taught Jesus was, believe in yourself. That was the first thing God taught Jesus. This is what God said. "You are my beloved son. With you, I am well pleased." In other words, make sure that you remember that you are my son, the beloved, and I am very well pleased with you. Make sure you know that. No matter what circumstances you may go through, make sure that you know that you're my son. Right after that, Satan comes to Jesus and said to Jesus, if you are the son of God, are you the son of God? He was questioning Jesus, but the first thing God said to Jesus was, you are my son, beloved. I am well pleased with you. Jesus had to believe in himself in all kinds of situations. When you believe in yourself, there'll be nothing in the world that can destroy you. In any situation. You will come out strong. Come on strong. Believe in yourself.

Third, I believe in my future. I preached a few weeks ago. Tomorrow will be better than today. That's what I believe. I lived without faith. Tomorrow will be better than today. We learned from the past live in the present and believe in the future. Somebody said, "the future belongs to those who believe in it. For those who don't believe in the future, there is no future. But the future belongs to those who believe in it." God told Jeremiah "for surely I know the plans I have for you, plans for your welfare and not for harm. To give you a future with hope." I believe that. This morning preparing to come to church we turned on the TV and then there was an Olympic closing ceremony. And the chairperson of our IOC came out and said a similar thing. "I have faith in the future. Yes, I have faith in the future. I have faith that someday in the future there will be no situation where the powerful exploit the weak, but everybody lives with equality and love, harmony and understanding. And I believe in the future that North and South Korea will be reunified and become one country. I believe in the future. All nations will come together in harmony and love." I do believe in the future. Future is not something we can see. You cannot see the future with your physical eyes, but we can see the future with the eyes of hope. If you have eyes of hope and believe in the future, you can persevere through your adversity in the present. If you don't have it, you cannot persevere. But when you have that, when you have faith in the future, you can persevere through your adversity.

I believe in what St Paul said. This is what Saint Paul said. "I am confident of this. That the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." This is a word that I gave to MiSun when she suffered quite a bit/ Ultimately God will bring

things to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. Luke recorded what the people who received the Holy Spirit look like. When you receive the Holy Spirit, what do they become? This is what he said " 'in the last days it will be,' God declares, 'that I'll pour out my spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams.' " Prophecy, visions, dreaming dreams. They became the people who believe in the future. When the Holy Spirit comes, that's what happens.

The early Christian survive through extreme persecution and difficulties. They worship like this, and the next day so and so got killed and so and so disappeared. All kinds of stories they heard every day. But they went through and persevere through extreme situations because they believed in the future. And they saw the future and the future they saw was this. Let me read it for you. "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, see, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more. Mourning and crying and pain will be no more for the first things have passed away." When you look at the second part is all future tense. They will. They will, they will, he will, but in the beginning, then I saw a new Heaven. They saw the future and they believed the future and they fought for the future. You are God's people, you're God's chosen race. God called you to bring about a better, brighter future in this world. Let us believe in God who is working through us.

The Evidence of Resurrection

April 1, 2018

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Vitality

Easter is about change and hope. With Christ has risen and he gave us a change and hope, you all know, St Paul, a very famous Christian theologian who probably defined what Christianity is all about. And St Paul, his main theology was around resurrection. His, the core of his theology was on the resurrection. So when you read his writings, everything is surrounded around by resurrection. Why? Because he changed after he met the risen Christ. After he experienced the power of the risen Christ, the power of Resurrection, he became a changed person. And as a changed person, he wrote all his writing. Probably more than half of the New Testament is written by St Paul before he met the risen Lord, he basically followed what everybody else was doing and he was doing pretty well. He was going really well with his life, but he didn't know the essence of life that is filled with vitality. He didn't have that.

He did very well, but he didn't have a life that is filled with vitality. Once he changed, he saw what he was missing and he saw that life was missing in my life and he started pursuing life. His eyes were open and he started seeing everything so differently and a radically new way. That's why he got so many insights, almost like life wisdom and insight were poured out upon him. When he changed and when he started seeing everything differently, all the wisdom and insights about life, about himself and about God, he had all that. After he met the risen Lord, that's why he was able to write more than half of the New Testament. He experienced the power of the risen Lord. God, who was dead to Paul, came alive. In other words, God became resurrected within Paul. Paul emphasizes today the risen Christ appeared to many people. This is what he said and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures and that he appeared to Cephas, that's Peter, then to the 12. Then he appeared to more than 500 brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive though some have died. Then he appeared to James then to all the

apostles. Last of all, as to someone untimely born, he appeared also to me.

Change came from risen Lord

He emphasizes the appearance of the risen Lord. Why did he emphasize that so much? And as I reflect on it, it was not really appearance that Paul emphasized. He emphasized on the change, this appearance made in these people. That's why you said even to me, untimely born even to me, he appeared, and he changed me and he said, I am who I am by God's grace. And not only be me but all these people that risen Lord appeared and they, every single one of them changed. That was his focus and emphasis, not just appearance of the risen Lord but the what the appearance did to the people. The real evidence of resurrection is of witnesses. They changed so much after meeting Jesus Christ. We may not have physical evidence, but we have a lot of witnesses. Look at disciples. If you know the scripture, you know disciples in the scripture very well. Jesus always told them, how foolish are you? How long do I have to stay with you? While the disciples were with Jesus, they didn't have any idea of what they're hearing. They didn't understand what Jesus was saying.

Every time they misunderstood what Jesus was saying, they did not even have great faith either. That's why they were always scolded by Jesus, but after they met the risen Lord, they have changed so much. They experienced the power of resurrection and from then on they didn't care whether they will be persecuted or not. They went out and proclaim the message of the risen Christ. They didn't care about their own life, own death. They cared about the message that they receive. The disciples completely changed after the risen Lord. If Jesus just died, then they would have fabricated that and then give their lives for the phony thing? For the lie?

Because they have changed after meeting the risen Lord, they became different people. Resurrection is not a theory. Resurrection is the power, power to change. When you approach the resurrection only as a theory, you'll never understand why the resurrection is all about. You cannot open the secret of the reality of the resurrection. But once you experience the power that comes from the risen Lord, then you'll understand the power of resurrection. They all experienced that power of

resurrection and they changed and they proclaimed the message of resurrection to others.

Even now, the risen Christ is changing us, the power of resurrection gives us hope that defeats the despair. It gives us the courage that defeats fear. It gives us peace and reconciliation that defeats the division and hatred it gives us life that defeats the power of death. The evidence of resurrection is not out there. It is within you. When you have the risen Christ within you, you will bear the fruit of the resurrection and that fruit is evidence of the resurrection. The risen Christ is with us today and we still celebrate the life he gave to us.

The Power to Keep on Going

June 3, 2018

2 Corinthians 4:5-12

The Struggle

We feel like we cannot take another step. Sometimes we feel like throwing the towel. No matter what we do we see no result and we are going nowhere and we give our best shot, and yet even with the best shot was not good enough. We feel like giving up to solve our problems. We have tried all different things different ways and yet nothing works. That's when we feel helpless and hopeless. We all experience that in our lives. Some people struggle with their marriage. Doesn't matter what they do. Somehow, nothing seems to work. Some people struggle with their teenager children. They love them, but they don't know what to do with them. Sometimes teenage children, students a, feel that with their parents, no matter what they do, you cannot, they get never pleased them. I remember my daughter, my own daughter used to say, we can never please you guys. Teenage students, they go through their own struggles. Some people struggle with their health, they try their best, but it does not work and they don't know what to do.

When you feel that, what do you do? When you feel this helplessness and hopelessness, what do you do? I suggest that you go back to the basics, go back to the basics. What are the basics? Look to God. That's what basic is, you have to look to God. That's exactly the moment that you need to look to God. When we look into today's passage, even Saint Paul the greatest disciple and apostle who founded Christianity. Even that great Saint experienced, the same thing as we experienced: total exhaustion, total helplessness, and total hopelessness. He also felt that there was nothing for him to do anything. He said he was afflicted in every way, but that's not all, he said, he confessed that he had looked to God. He went back to the basics. He looked to God.

This was what he said. "For it is the God who said, let my shyness that God has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He looked at God and then somehow as he, look to Jesus Christ the light of the glory, shone upon him and he saw that light and he was filled with that light and that light

gave him hope and new strength. He had this spiritual moment of experience in the power that did not belong to him. He experienced the power that comes from outside himself. He didn't know what to do but somehow as the light of glory shone upon him he experienced empowerment in life.

A Helping Hand

Spiritual people, look to God. I hope that we all become spiritual people. When you have problems, don't look anywhere else. Just look to God. They don't go to self-help books. They don't go depending on common sense or street wisdom. They don't trust their own power alone. They looked to God when their problems been looked to God. If you are able to do that, you are lucky. We have to live a spiritual life. As we live, a spiritual life, we will experience the extraordinary power that doesn't belong to us. People who look to God, need God, the people who need God they experience the power that comes from God. Saint Paul looked to God and he met God and as he met God he experienced the power that did not belong to him but that belongs to God.

There was a famous concert pianist, the early part of 20th century. His name was Ignacy Paderewski, 1860 to 1941. He was also prime minister of Poland. There's a very famous story about him. He once had a great concert hall. He was so famous at that time. There were lots of people came. There were all waiting for his performance with excitement and enthusiasm but the time came and he didn't appear.

So people were wondering, "why isn't on the stage yet?" While they were wondering, a little boy came down the aisle and started walking towards the stage. Everyone looked, what is he doing. And he went up to the stage and he went over to the piano and the sat down and he started playing Chopsticks. It was the only song he knew how to play. Chopsticks. And then people were kind of mumbling to each other "what is he doing," "where are his parents," "they should take him down," and all kinds of commotion going on. And then Paderewski, in the back of the stage. He heard this commotion, and instead of telling the usher to remove him, he came out in the tuxedo and he came behind the little boy who was playing chopsticks, with his big hands on the right side and left side. He was doing improvising the accompaniment of Chopstick. The ordinary playing of a little boy became an extraordinary masterpiece. Do you know what he said to the boy? "Keep playing. Keep

doing it. You are doing very well. Do not stop. Do not stop. Keep playing.” While he was doing the improvise accompaniment.

Listening to this story, I was thinking about [unknown]. With our small hands. We are trying to make our life. We struggle and struggle and struggle and then the big hands come behind us and start playing our life. And then our life becomes all of a sudden extraordinary. Our ordinary life becomes extraordinary. And God speaks to us; “Keep playing. Keep moving on. Do not give up. You are doing well.”

Sometimes we all feel like giving up. I’m done. I can’t go anymore. And yet God comes to us, do not give up, keep moving, I’ll be with you. And he plays the music with us. I wish that you all experience God coming to you. I wonder what would have happened to that boy. There was no record of what happens to the boy. I can imagine that he will never forget the experience that he had in his entire life. Once you experience that extraordinary power, you will never forget that. You will always look to God. When life is difficult, we need to experience God’s hand then our difficulties become our blessings. When life is good, we don’t experience blessings. When life is difficult, those difficulties can become blessings in disguise. When life is hard, look God. The fear will disappear in the background and new confidence will appear in the foreground. Anger will die down and you will be able to embrace your life. Dark clouds will move over and you will see a bright sunshine. That our life will be much more enjoyable. Are you going through a hard time? Difficult time? Learn to look to God, you will be stronger.

God Sees Us

June 10, 2018

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

Doubt

There was a famous American author who was deaf, blind, her name was Helen Keller. She said this, “the best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.” It is true, the really beautiful things in life. You don’t see them with your eyes. You have to feel it with your heart. That’s why people close their eyes when they enjoy the beautiful things, they want to taste it rather than seeing it. I think our faith is like that too. Faith is not to accept what you see. Faith is to accept what you don’t see. You believe and see. Not that we see and believe the order is the other way. The first belief, and then we’ll be able to see it.

Once Thomas doubted about Jesus’ resurrection and this is what he said, “unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in this in his side, I will not believe.” He demanded to see before he believed, and Jesus said to Thomas, have you believed because you have seen me, blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe. Faith is not to believe what you see, but what you cannot see. That’s why the Hebrew writer defined faith in this way. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Faith is the conviction of things not seen with eyes of faith, we accept what we cannot see. St Paul confessing this way. “We look not at what can be seen, but at what cannot be seen.” I mean these great people are so different from us. St Paul and all, Helen Keller, all these people, they were able to see what cannot be seen? What ordinary people cannot see, these people were able to see.

To See

The beauty of being able to see what you cannot see is that you find treasure in life. I mean what we see in the world in our life is only 10 percent. Ninety percent of the life that we are experiencing is what we cannot see. But you feel only if you live only seeing what you can see you’re living only 10 percent, but when you’re able to see what you cannot see it, you can find the treasure. You can find the beauty in life because beauty is hidden in what we cannot see. For example, our outer

nature, no matter how beautiful you are, you may be, as you get older, a belly comes out and a hair gets grey and then you get wrinkles. Your outer self is naturally wasting away, no matter how much I try, so I don't like to get taken pictures anymore. So, I run away whatever people put the camera on me, I run away because when I look at the mirror, sometimes it's okay, but when I look at the picture, it comes out exactly as it is. That's why I don't want to see.

So our outer nature, you can see so clearly that you're wasting away. You're being wasted away. Every year is different. When you get to near 60, you will experience that when you're in 20's is okay, 20 or 23 years, still beautiful. But when you become 60, 61, 60 something, make so much difference. But. But it's important. But St Paul saw the inner self. Inner self is what you cannot see. Your inner self is being renewed day by day. He saw that. He saw what cannot be seen. He saw the inner self-being renewed day by day. And also, the house that you built on this earth. No matter how beautiful you may've designed, after 10, 20, 50 years, it becomes decayed and destroyed. St Paul saw that, but the when the earthly tent is destroyed, he saw what cannot be seen. That is the home in heaven that you can never destroy. That home, that house, not built with human hands, but built by God will never be destroyed.

That's why Saint Paul said, I don't lose heart even though my outer nature is being wasted away and even the earthly tent is being destroyed. I don't lose my heart because I have an inner self. And also I have a home that is eternal in heaven.

Thankfulness

If he looks at only what we can see, we'll lose heart. But when we see what we cannot see, we can get confidence. Last week was particularly difficult for me because one of my friends actually he was very close to me. Lee Soo Chul jundosanim. He was not just jundosanim. He is my golf buddy and he's a wonderful man, so we spend a lot of time together, we share a lot of things together. His wife had a heart condition, so he was always concerned about his wife's health. So, he always went home and made sure that she was okay and her a heart, she had a heart attack about 30, 35 years ago when she was giving birth. So she always, all her life, she lived with a heart condition and all of a sudden, last week, she couldn't handle that anymore. She has three heart attacks that morning. And then when I by the time I visited her, she wasn't conscious. She wasn't able to survive.

I had a really difficult time, doing the funeral, you know, whenever we had, you know, the staff, she really took care of us very well. She was a good cook and she always made new food and let us taste it and enjoy it and all that. And so, I miss her terribly, but his family came from Chicago to attend a funeral and his sisters also came and then his younger sister somehow got very stressed and she passed away yesterday. And so I went to hospital and I did the final rite. Then they have to send that a body to Chicago and then they will have a funeral here and there and before he can even a grief for his own, wife. Now he has to get to Chicago to grieve for her, his sister's death. I mean, how can you handle that? How can you handle that kind of a tragedy, the tragedy in your life? How can you survive? Yesterday, I went to the hospital and then he held my hand and then he said, "thank you, thank you for being with me. And thank you for doing the final rite for my sister." And he said, "I'm out of my mind right now. I can't think." But with tears, he really thanked me. Where did he have room to thank other people.

That thankfulness is faith. That thankfulness. This morning when I arrived at, at a church, he was there waiting in the parking lot for me before he left for Chicago. He came to tell me, "thank you." What a great person. I mean he came all the way from Scarborough just to see me, to thank me. IT's like the 10 lepers getting healed and one came back and thanked Jesus. The same way.

If he lives with only what he can see, he'll lose heart. But, he was able to see what cannot be seen. That's why you didn't lose heart. The Cross, we can see. The suffering, we can see. But the resurrection, we cannot see. The glory. We cannot see. In this life, we not only see suffering, but we also see glory. We not only see the cross, but we also see the resurrection. People with great minds and great heart, they live seeing what cannot be seen. That's how they live. When their situation is totally helpless and hopeless and they cannot see anything hopeful they saw hope which cannot be seen.

Things He sees

They saw treasure hidden in the field when most people cannot even see that there's a treasure in the field, but they see the treasure in the field and they sell everything that they have and then they buy the field. Sometimes in life, like jundosanim, we look around, we cannot really see what's ahead of us. It's like a foggy road, you don't see an inch, but you have to move on, but you cannot see anything because suffering is so

much. The pain is so much. The sorrow and sadness, that is so much that you cannot see anything beyond an inch. That was the experience of Job. This is what Job said. "If I go forward, he's not there or backward. I cannot perceive him. On the left, he hides. I can not behold him. I turned to the right, but I cannot see him.

Job Felt total desperation. He lost his children. He lost his health, he lost his possession, he lost everything in life, and then he cannot see anything

Forward, backwards, right or left. He could not see anything. But Job said. But. This but is important. Right after he said that: "I cannot see everything" he said, "but he knows the way that I take. When he has tested me, I shall come out like gold." What a confession. What a great mind. What a great person. That's a greatness of Job. Because of suffering, he cannot see anything but God sees me. I can not see God, but God can see me. That's what he knew. That's hope that we have. I cannot see God, but God can see me.

There's a fire in the house. Everybody rushed out and then the father and the mother, they all rushed out, run, run, run. They all came out and the father thought that everybody came out and then he looked up and there was a son in the second floor at the window. And the father said jump and the son said. "Dad. I cannot jump because I cannot see you" and the father said, "but I can see you." But I can see you.

Reflection

That's where the hope is. We cannot see God, but God can see us. When we are suffering so much that we can not see anything ahead of us, but God can see you. And God will bring you out.

My friends, what can be seen is temporal, temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal. Hold onto what's eternal. Don't hold onto things that are here for awhile and vanish, but hold onto things that are eternal. When you cannot see anything, still you got to move on because God sees you. This is what Martin Luther King Junior said in his sermon. "Fly as high as possible. If you cannot fly, run. If you cannot run, walk. If you cannot walk, crawl, but don't ever sit down and give up. Move on. Don't ever stop your journey." We got to move on even though we cannot see anything in life.