

St. Timothy Presbyterian Church



# PEACE

Rev. In Kee Kim

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Sermons

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# SUFFERING: THE ROAD TO VICTORY

MARCH 29, 2015

Mark 11:1-11

## Celebrating Suffering

Today is Palm Sunday. I've always been uncomfortable with Palm Sunday. The lectionary has two choices for today – you can go with Palm Sunday or you can go with Passion Sunday, passionate meaning suffering. I always took Passion Sunday because it is a reflection on suffering. We are going through the lenten season. During lent, what we are meditating on is the suffering of Jesus Christ. And today is the peak. With the beginning of Palm Sunday, the passion comes, so it is a continuation of the theme of suffering. Then, all of a sudden, on Palm Sunday you see this celebration. People shouting Hosanna. They were laughing and playing with each other, the children were running, and people were waving palm branches and they put their clothes on the road, and that they were really, really celebrating for the coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus was entering into Jerusalem. Of course, we understand why they did that because they probably had different expectations from what really actually happened in Jerusalem.

What they expected was that Jesus, being such a powerful king, would enter into Jerusalem and conquer all the leaders and powerful people, and then he will bring the Kingdom of God and then he will win the victory. That's what they expected. That's why they were celebrating. They were shouting. They were already in a victorious mood. I understand very much of why they do that. But as a person, all of you, you already know what would happen in Jerusalem to Jesus. And that's why it is difficult for me and for all of us to reconcile these two scenes. You know, Jesus in Jerusalem, he went through so much suffering there. He was opposed and rejected by people, betrayed by a friend, and his best friend denied him. I mean, in a matter of a week, he went through the worst human experience.

Think about your best friend rejecting you, betraying you, selling you and denying you saying that he doesn't know you. All these things happened from Monday to Thursday. And then people were spitting at him. They were

angry with Jesus. They finger pointed at him, ridiculed him and they finally put him on the trial. At the trial they said, 'Okay, you're guilty, your punishment is capital punishment, crucifixion on the Cross'. So finally they condemned Jesus at the trial. People who followed Jesus were hoping for the best, but they came up with the worst. And then finally on Friday, Jesus was crucified. And that's what happened in Jerusalem. Jesus was entering into Jerusalem to receive all of that. People were shouting, "Hosanna", and they were happy, laughing. I mean, this is what they said, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

I found that very hard to see these very contrasting and contradicting images. You don't celebrate for the suffering of a person. That's not nice. We don't do that. If somebody goes through suffering, we sympathize with them, we cry with them. But you don't celebrate by shouting 'Hosanna'. You don't laugh and wave palm branches. You don't do that for a suffering person. That's not nice, but we do it officially on Palm Sunday. That's why I have a difficult time to preach on Palm Sunday. But this time while preparing the sermon, I understood more deeply the reason why we can or we should celebrate for the suffering of Jesus Christ, we can celebrate the suffering of Jesus Christ because Jesus changed the meaning of suffering. That's why we can now celebrate for the suffering of Jesus Christ. To many of us, suffering is not a good thing. It is a bad thing that happens to us. We want to avoid suffering at all costs. When suffering happens to us we don't want to say 'wow that's great!', most of us say 'this should not have happened'. So we don't like suffering.

## The Road To Victory

Whenever I preach, something happens to me that is relevant to the sermon. And on the way home after a visitation, this car just came into my lane and hit my car, the front parts. I was going down University and Front – this guy was on the left side and from there he tried to go to York and he didn't see me. He just came in and hit me. I'm so busy, so things are happening right now in my life and I never had an accident. He just jumped in and banged my car, and then immediately I was upset and angry. He was lying and all kinds of stuff, he was with two or three young guys, and then immediately the sermon that I was preparing came to mind.

Be calm, be quiet, and all of a sudden I had a kind of compassion for these guys because they were swearing, and it is a bad thing for them to do. Suffering, we don't like it. We like to avoid it as much as possible, but somehow, when I look at Jesus and then listen to his message, all along, he was choosing the suffering.

It's not as if He tried to avoid the suffering and then somehow encountered suffering and then he overcame it. No, he was choosing the suffering from the beginning. That was really odd to me. But you know, it was refreshing and even inspirational. He was choosing the suffering from the beginning because to Jesus suffering was the road to victory. Not to many of us, but to Jesus suffering was the road to victory. That's why he choose from the beginning to suffer. What kind of victory was that? Jesus' victory was not to conquer the enemies. If that was Jesus' fight, he would not have come into Jerusalem on a donkey, but on a horse with swords. But he didn't come in with swords on a horse. He came on donkey with palm branches. 300 years before Jesus came, 332 BC, King Alexander the Great came into Jerusalem on his famous warhorse, a black stallion and he conquered Jerusalem. But Jesus did not come on a horse, he came on a donkey. The donkey was a symbol of peace and the horse was an animal of war. Jesus' fight was not to conquer, but to bring peace and love. That was the fight of Jesus Christ.

Jesus' fight was not to dominate the weaker people. Jesus' fight was to bring peace and justice and love. And if your fight is not to conquer, but to bring peace, justice and love, then I realized that suffering is the only road. There is no other road. Suffering is the road to take. Martin Luther King Jr, Ghandi, Mandela, all of these people took the road of suffering because that was the road to victory. And that victory was not to conquer, but that victory was to bring peace and justice and love. Jesus fulfilled what Isaiah foresaw. This was what Isaiah saw. When I went to south of Jerusalem, I mean, as soon as I landed, I felt suffocated. Why? Because there are walls all around. So you have to go round and round to just to get from point A to B. You can't just walk there, but you have to go around so much and there were soldiers guarding everywhere.

But this is what Isaiah the Prophet said many years ago before Jesus came, "He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into

pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” (Isaiah 2:4) What a beautiful imagery and how much we need this message today in this world. There’s so much tension, fighting, terrorism, struggles, killing, violence. There is just too much violence for me to take in the world. Jesus Christ came into Jerusalem as a humble servant of God to bring peace. He came to bring peace. He lowered himself to the lowest of all human beings. He took all the humiliation, ridicule, rejection and horrible death upon himself, but did not say much. He did not say much, and this was what got me yesterday. As soon as I saw that, at first I got angry and then I had compassion. So I asked, ‘maybe I should have given them a ride’ because they had no car. Their car had to be towed.

## Suffering Is Strength

Suffering to Jesus was the road to victory. When he took suffering, he was silent. This is, again another vision of Isaiah. He was oppressed and he was afflicted and he did not open his mouth like a lamb that is left to slaughter and like a sheep that before is sheared is silent, so he did not open his mouth. He entered Jerusalem and made a peaceful demonstration against evil, his courageous embrace of suffering brought healing to all of us. Jesus’ suffering was the road to victory. Jesus’ suffering brought healing to all of us. When you fight with others, you don’t bring healing. You may win. You may justify yourself. You may say that ‘I am right and you are wrong’, but there’s no healing. Only when there is suffering, there is healing and this is what Isaiah foresaw. Jesus was despised and rejected by others. A man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity and as one from whom others hide their faces. He was despised and we held him of no account, but he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. Jesus’ suffering healed all of us. Suffering, I realized and I discovered, was Jesus’ weapon, not a sword. Suffering was Jesus’ weapon. If your fight is a fight for peace then suffering is your weapon. That’s why Jesus chose suffering. He took it upon himself. I’m thankful to Jesus to show that humanity, I’m thankful to Jesus because he showed what a good life is. Truly, his suffering was a suffering of love and we have a special word of suffering love. That is Compassion. Compassion meaning come together. Passion meaning suffering. You suffer with somebody; that is compassion and that is the kind of love Jesus showed during his life. He wasn’t scared of suffering.

I'm embracing the suffering. He transcended the fear of suffering. If you're running away from suffering you will always be scared of suffering. When we embrace suffering, we will transcend the fear of suffering. So many young people get scared of suffering. What if I lose my job? What if I don't get a boyfriend or girlfriend? What if my life is not that great? They're scared of suffering and they try to avoid it as much as possible. They try to deal with it... but Jesus suffering was the road to victory and his best weapon. He quietly and confidently walked into Jerusalem to go through all this suffering and finally completed that suffering on the cross. That's why he just said on the cross, "It is finished." It is completed.

We are living in a violent world. I just can't believe how we human beings have become this low. Just because you suffer, you go through so much, you take 150 people and plunge into the mountain? If you're hurting, not just the death of 150 people, but the hurt of the families of 150 people and the fear caused for anyone who rides the plane. So many conflicts and fights. Why do we have to do that? Why do we have to fight so much? We human beings, sometimes I wonder whether we have lost the ability to live together in peace and harmony. Our fight is not to win. Our success is not to go higher. Happiness is not to have more. Our fight is to love and to bring peace. Jesus walked through the violent Jerusalem and suffering was waiting for him, but he did not submit to the temptation of this world to conquer, to go higher and to have more. He chose suffering to love and to bring peace.

My friends, you are the disciples of Jesus Christ. The Prince of Peace. May God fill you with this peace. And in your life, whenever this hostility or enemies or volatile situation comes to not lose, be kind. Be hospitable, be gentle, and be peaceful. That is the only road to victory. We're going to be different. We are not going to use weapons, violence, to deal with problems. All the movies that you see, the only solution is violence. I don't believe so. I don't believe that message. I believe in the message of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

# NOT WALLS, BUT BRIDGES

AUGUST 14, 2016

Ephesians 2:13-14

## Peace

This is what Saint Paul said, for he is our peace. In his flesh, he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall that is the hostility between us. Just reflect on this. What a powerful insight and a wonderful, beautiful vision. This is how Paul saw what Jesus did. This is Paul's interpretation of Jesus' life. Jesus' teaching. Jesus' action. He summarizes what Jesus did on earth. Paul's interpretation is very powerful and insightful. Paul saw the work of Jesus as the work of peace. Jesus came to give us peace. That is how Paul saw it. Paul never met Jesus in his life. He only heard about Jesus, heard about his teaching, heard about his ministry and his action, and yet he saw through what Jesus was thinking and what Jesus had in his heart, and he said this, Jesus came to bring peace, breaking down the dividing wall, putting an end to the hostility and bringing two groups into one and give peace to the world. That's exactly what Jesus also said. Jesus said this, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives." Last week we talked about forgiveness and in that context he also said, I will give you peace and this peace will be different from the peace that you can see in the world. It will be a very different peace that I came to give you.

That's what Jesus said, and Paul saw that so clearly and critically. How did he do that? That is just wonderful to me. Whenever I read Paul's epistles, it amazes me. It amazes me how Paul was able to figure out what Jesus wanted to do so clearly. That's why Paul said this, "there is no longer Jew or Greek. There is no longer slave or free. There is no longer male and female for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." In one sentence, Paul summarized what humanity is all about, what Jesus teaching is all about, and what life is all about. In one sentence, he was able to do that. How genius. No more division, but peace and oneness. That's what we aspire towards, what we are supposed to achieve. Race, religion, social status and gender. These used to be the walls, the calls for division, but Paul saw



that these walls being broken down, crumbled down to the ground, and now there is no division but peace and unity. That was what Jesus did on earth. That was 2000 years ago. Not 200 years ago, 2000 years ago. He saw this vision, a wonderful vision in Jesus. Regionalism or parochialism was taken for granted at that time, so it was a status was what determined one person's identity, male domination was taken as a natural order of society, and yet Paul saw that the world Jesus envisioned at the time was different. That's why Paul was shocked hearing about Jesus.

These things were prevalent at the time, but Paul saw the world Jesus envisioned was very different from the world he witnessed during his time. Peace and oneness. That was what Jesus wanted to establish, young and old, male and female, rich and poor, white and black, all become one. It just amazes me about how Paul can see through Jesus' inner thought in our heart. How he could capture the world that Jesus dreamed about. Nobody truly understood what Jesus meant. Even the disciples did not understand what Jesus meant to the world, but Paul saw that. And what is more amazing about this is his message is so relevant to us today in 2016.

## Division

His message is so relevant. Every day we are witnessing how fragmented this world is. We are living in a divided world, but my friends, division comes from within us, not anywhere else. Because we are divided inside, we create more division. Division comes from within us. We don't have peace and harmony within us. We are divided in our heart, you don't look inside. That's why in this world, there is much division.

For those who are not divided, for those who have peace within them, race is not the reason for division. For those who have peace within them, gender is not the reason for division. For that peace and harmony within them, our differences are not the reason for division. But the world has no peace and all these things divide us and we use them and we make excuses that these are the reasons for our division. Humanity is divided. My friends, I do believe that division is going to be a serious problem for the future of humanity and this division is as serious as the environment that we're living in. There's environmental corruption right now but this division is going to be a threat and it will bring a crisis to the future of humanity. We have to seriously change our attitude towards division. We have to turn it

around. And think how can we live together in harmony and unity rather than in dividedness. This very serious issue that we have to tackle starting right now.

The WCC, the World Council of Churches is a worldwide church organization, which include Protestant churches, Eastern Orthodox, and many others, held a meeting in Busan, South Korea in 2013. And that day, they decided this particular Sunday, the Sunday prior to August 15th as the Sunday of prayer for the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula. That is the only country that is divided. So they have decided this. It's not just us who are praying for the Korean peninsula, but the whole world right now is praying for the Korean Peninsula that is a divided north and south. That country has been divided for more than half a century. But I do believe that is not just Korea that is divided. People are divided everywhere. Even in the same country. Martin Luther King Junior said at 11:00 AM on Sunday, we stand at the most segregated hour in this nation.

I'm reading a book called Disunity in Christ. It is written by Christina Cleveland, an associate professor of reconciliation studies at Bethel University in St Paul, Minnesota. She talks about how divided Chicago is. In fact, Chicago has recently been named the most segregated city in America. She said, "by simply knowing a person's race, you can predict where they live and even what teams they will root for." In Chicago, many black people live on the south side and many white people live on the north side and blacks tend to be White Sox fans and whites tend to be Cubs fans. So it's all divided. One of our congregation members, she is not Korean. She said once, she wanted her children to be exposed to more than just a white congregation. That's why she decided to come to this church so that her children may be exposed to different races. She has been here for some years. She is a Catholic and this church is Presbyterian. Catholic, Presbyterian, Pentecostal. Does it matter? Tomato, tomoto, potato, patato. Does it matter? Shall We dance?

## Unity

Her cousin came from Maryland and last week she told me as she was sitting right here. She insists that she had to come to this church today. So they are here. She told me that she used to attend a Catholic church right downtown in Maryland. It is a predominantly black church. She told me it

had a beautiful congregation. Their service is just like our service and she enjoys the service so much. But unfortunately, that church closed down because they didn't have a priest. And then she said, when I go back to Maryland, this time, I'm going to look for a church like this. We should celebrate diversity. We just celebrate our differences. Division is what destroys humanity. God created Adam and Eve and said, two shall become one. It is not just a romantic passage about people who are getting married. Yesterday, I did a wedding and according to this passage, but it's not just for the romantic message for a married couple. This is for humanity. Two shall become one. Adam and Eve were different, male and female.

When Adam and Eve were created, the difference was created. The diversity was created, but God told them, you shall become one. Diversity should not be the reason for your division. You're two different people. There is a diversity, but you shall become one. Without diversity, there's no unity. Only uniformity. Uniformity is not unity. God told the first human beings to become one. Celebrate each other's gifts, respect each other's differences, but work together to become one. Reach out to those who are different from you and learn to build bridges, not walls. Don't build walls. Build bridges, and don't listen to the politicians who try to build walls because they are not Christians.

That was Jesus' vision and Paul saw it very well. Forgive each other, accept each other, appreciate each other, and respect each other. Learn to live harmoniously. That is humanity 101. Before you learn to make money, learn to live together with others in unity and harmony. Put down greed, put down selfishness, be generous and don't have us and them mentality. We are all one in the bond of love. There is no us and them. We are all one in the bond of love. That's what Jesus proclaimed and that's what Paul saw and that's what I proclaim and that's what you should proclaim to the world. That is the Gospel. We are one in the bond of love and that will be our pronouncement. We are proclaiming that we are one and Jesus made us one. He broke down all the walls to make all of us One.

## Reflection Song and Prayer

Now let us pray together. Let us pray for the Korean Peninsula. The country's divided north and South, still threatening each other, but not only that country, but the Middle East and everywhere in the world. There's

tremendous division, divided heart, animosity, hatred, continues to revenge, let us pray for humanity. That we may learn to live together, to co-exist, to love each other, to become one. Let us pray. This time, let us pray for ourselves. A lot of division is caused by us because we are divided within us. So let us pray for the healing so that our divided heart, may be unified and we may find true harmony within us. Let us pray for ourselves so that wherever we go, instead of creating division, we bring reconciliation and unity and peace.

Maybe you can hold hands together with the person beside you and we'll sing together. We are one in the bond of love.

## THREE THINGS TO BE ALWAYS MINDFUL OF

October 9, 2016

### 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

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 a 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,

you're 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.

# WISDOM AND PEACE

April 22, 2018

Colossians 1:15-20

## Peace

I believed that what we need in this world at this moment is peace. That is what we need the most more than anything else. We need peace. When we look around, we see so many conflicts, violence, and a lot of hurt and pain. What we need is peace in this world. The world that Isaiah dreamt about is the world that I also dream about. This is what Isaiah said. "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with a kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together and the little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp and the weaned child shall put his hands on the adder's den. Then they will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

How beautiful. That was, the world that Isaiah dreamt about, and that is the world that I also dream about. Some of you may think that. Oh, that's unrealistic. That's impossible. But I still believe that that kind of world is possible. If it is not possible out there in the world, maybe at least in this congregation or in this community. I like to see that kind of world where people live together in peace and harmony. When you look at the scripture very carefully, it is the image of the powerful letting go of their power like lions and wolf and all of these they let go of the power to be in a relationship with the other, with the others. The powerful did not use their power to control others, dictate others or conquer others, but they let go of their power to be one with others.

## Pain and Suffering

The world we live in is very different from this image. We are hurt, in much pain and have much sorrow. Many relationships are broken and people are in deep pain. You know, human beings are very smart. Sometimes I'm totally amazed how smart we human beings are, not me but human beings.

They are so smart. I mean, how could they think of going to the Moon? Moon? You look at it, he enjoys the beauty of it. You write poems maybe and you write songs about it, but think about going there and actually, they went there. How smart, how smart can you get? And they built invented this airplane. Whenever I look at the airplane, it's a miracle to me. How did they invent that? And so they go from one country to another country before we just walked around and did the build this gigantic machine to carry so many people. Now he's almost done that. They'll be cars driving around without drivers. Can you imagine the car driving without drivers? I think we human beings are really, really smart, but these smart human beings don't seem to be wise enough to live in peace. That's why I wonder why these smart human beings don't know the basic of ABC, of how to live together in peace and harmony. And I realized that being smart and being wise are two different things and being smart doesn't bring about peace. Being smart is connected with the power. Being wise is connected with love. It's almost like a magnet when there is smartness, intelligence, always connect, it gets attached to the power and wisdom is attached to love.

Two totally different things. Being smart and being wise are two totally different things. To live in peace. What we need is not being smart, but being wise. To be smart, either you're born with it or you acquire that from the world. But I believe that the wisdom comes from God. The source is different. When you have a heart of love, only then you'll have wisdom. Doesn't matter how smart you are. If you don't have a heart of love, then there is no wisdom possible. To those who have a heart of love. God pours that wisdom. But for those who don't have a heart of love, God cannot give that wisdom.

## Wisdom

We have a family with twins. Just born. She has a little girl and now three children. She's having such a hard time, you know, a postpartum and all this stuff. She's going through so much and our women, they take turns and they spend a few hours, several hours there, a, sometimes 10 to six, sometimes three hours, four hours. They just go there and talk to her. And then a son sometimes help her out. And where did that get was wisdom? I call that wisdom, that comes from the heart of love. I share that with my Bible Study Group on Friday, a Friday morning, I have a Bible study, mostly women. And then they come from different churches, not necessarily all

from our church, but that they come from different churches and they all say, “that is an ideal church.”

It was then, right there when the thought hit me. I call that wisdom. Wisdom comes from love. When you're considerate of others, you become wise. Jesus' cross was the wisdom. If Jesus were just smart, I think he was the smartest man in the world, by the way, because of all the things that he said, I think that he's the smartest man in the world, but if he were only smart, he would have never taken up the cross. No. If you're just smart, he would have never taken up the cross. The sins Jesus had the wisdom. He took up the cross for us and, and that is the wisdom. The smartest man in the world took up the cross. That is the wisdom. That's why St Paul said this, for the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. I think to those who are smart, you can even replace that because he just talked about another wisdom and that foolishness. In that same chapter, the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God to smart people. The cross is foolishness, but to the wise people to cross is God's power and that is a power that brings peace and reconciliation.

That was all that Paul said in today's scripture passage and through him, God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. I struggled all day with this passage through the blood of his cross peace through the blood of his cross. What does that mean? And I realized that that cross was the wisdom and through that wisdom, peace is possible. There are a lot of smart people in the world, but I see very few wise people. No wonder it is so hard to see true peace in this world. This world is getting smarter and smarter. As the years go by. We have so much information compared to 20 years ago, 30 years ago, we know so much. We have so much. We're so much more educated than ever before. We are smart. Within 10 years, I don't know what this technology will surprise us. We don't even know within 10 years maybe something you cannot even imagine they will come up with, but at the same time you can become more foolish and we may not know what they will do to the world they live.

I don't know what kind of violence and domination this new technology may bring about including AI and all this stuff. To coexist in peace. What we need is wisdom, not intelligence. We have a lot of intelligent people. We

have a lot of smart people. They don't inspire me anymore. We need wise people. This world needs wise people. If we doubt each other, put up a guard against each other and try to control each other all the time, we'll all be destroyed.

With power, no peace is possible. Peace is possible only through love. What binds us together is the wisdom that comes from love. Today's Earth Day, Miyang shared very eloquently about the situation, the current situation. We human beings with a power, we often, we exploit the nature. Nature is a most beautiful gift God has ever given us. He created this earth and the trees and birds and he painted it with the beautiful colours and green and the red and all this stuff. We enjoy life. If we destroy because of our greed, then, how can we enjoy our life? We need to be just conscious of what we're doing. We need peace with nature. Nature is not there for you to exploit and conquer. Nature is there for you to take care of, to enjoy, but also take care of and protect.

Human intelligence will turn into power. Look around you. All the smart people have all the power, but that power turns into a desire to conquer. Don't take that route. Don't take that route. The end is a disaster. From that desire. We see domination and violence. Last 100 years. The Aboriginal children were taken away from their parents when they're really little. They didn't know anything about the world. They just took them away from their parents miles and miles away, and they had to live in a foreign place called residential school and there many children, powerless children were abused sexually, physically, emotionally by the powerful people. People of the power, oppress them in the name of inculturation, of the uncivilized, in the process, they destroy the soul and the spirit of these innocent children. Since the wisdom comes from love, it always seeks justice. It always stands on the side of the weak and vulnerable, not with the strong. Wisdom always takes take sides on the weak and vulnerable. True reconciliation is possible when there is justice when there is true reconciliation, true peace is possible. Human intelligence is often used for the personal benefit, but the wisdom has the cross built within it and that always seeks the benefit of others. That's what wisdom is. Intelligence always, you seek for your own good, but wisdom always seeks the benefit of other people.

That's what wisdom is. The wisdom not only comes from love but also comes from the fullness. When you're with the spirit, then wisdom comes,

but when you're filled with greed, what you get is an emptiness within you. When you have emptiness, you want to fill yourself with self-needs. That's why needy people always have to do something to fill or fulfill them, but people who are filled with the fullness of God, they don't need to be obsessed with their personal needs anymore so they can look around and they can see other people's needs rather than their own needs, so wisdom comes from that fullness of God. Our human civilization should be built on the wisdom. Then that civilization can be a great civilization. A civilization where people can thrive and live in peaceful harmony. Yesterday I had an interview with a Taiwanese second generation as if we were talking well, this and that. In the end, both of us talked about peace and harmony in this world about ethnic ecosystems and all of that, and we had a great time together. That's what we need, to be connected with each other.

Our community should be built on the wisdom. That's why St Paul kept emphasizing on the wisdom and insight to bring about reconciliation, peace, and harmony. This is what he said, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time together of all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." He understood that from the true wisdom of all things heaven and on earth will be gathered up in harmony and fullness. Just a few months ago, not even a few months ago, I was really worried about the Korean Peninsula when Kim Jung Un and Trump were back and forth with this nasty words and all that. I mean, they have nuclear weapons and they're threatening with each other in the midst of it. How about the people? Innocent powerless people. Now finally they are talking about talking about having a conversation together. The community that is built on wisdom is viable. A family that is built on the wisdom is viable. The country that is built on wisdom is viable.

In that community, there will be true joy and a deep sense of respect and warm love. Let us build this community with wisdom that comes from God. Be filled with the spirit. When you're filled with the spirit, you'll become a bigger person. When you're a bigger person than you can embrace other people's differences and weaknesses. You can let go of your power and then embrace and welcome another person. In that fullness, all our differences will be, will not be the reason to fight, but the reason to

celebrate. The wisdom that brings about peace and peace, that is what we need in this world.