

Sunday, August 11, 2024 Memorial Service for the Dead Sermon

「Christian View of Life and Death」 Pastor : Takaaki Inoue  
Genesis 2:15~17, I. Corinthians 15:50~58

### ① 【Let's remember the war and the atomic bomb】

August is a month to reflect on war and peace. For the first time in the world, atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima on August 6 and Nagasaki on August 9. As the only country to have suffered atomic bombings, I would like to offer Thailand in silence in memory of the many people who died in the atomic bombings, and in memory of the peace that was given to us by the many victims of war. (Silence) I watched a program on NHK about war testimonies. There is a famous "photograph of Miyuki Bridge" taken three hours after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Many people have taken refuge on a bridge 2.3 kilometers from the hypocenter. There were many junior high school students among them. The surviving people in this photo testified about what it was like at that time. It was tragic, and I think it must have been really painful, it must have been painful. They went to work at the factory as usual that day. An atomic bomb was dropped there. At first, he didn't know what had happened, but he just looked at the many corpses around him and thought, "I was lucky." I wonder if I would be able to endure it if I lived in that era. I think that when we say that we should not forget those who died in the war, we should not forget the sinfulness of human beings, do not take for granted the blessing of being alive, and live our lives as if we are called at any time. The other day, an earthquake occurred in Miyazaki, and I was told to be careful of the Nankai Trough earthquake. What can you do if you are told to be careful? There are people who are hoarding water. Is it possible to extend one's life with human power? Death is always next to us, and no one knows what will happen tomorrow. Under such circumstances, how should we live as Christians?

### ② 【What is the Christian view of death】

First, let's think about death. If there is no definition of death, there will be no definition of life. The first occurrence of the word "death" in the Bible is in the book of Genesis. In the center of the Garden of Eden was the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God placed man in the Garden of Eden and said, "Never eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and if you do, you will surely die." (Genesis 2:17). In the Bible, "life" refers to God, so the "tree of life" refers to God, and eating from the tree of life symbolizes the way of life lived by God. On the other hand, the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" symbolizes a way of life that separates itself from God, a way of life that does not ask God about good and evil, but judges for oneself. Just as a branch withers

when it leaves the trunk, so a person who has separated from God, who is life, has died. But if you look at the Bible, Adam and Eve are alive. The soul died immediately, but the death of the body did not occur immediately, and it collapsed over time. Since human beings are a composite of the soul and the body, death also affected these two. God did not create death. It is man and human sin that has brought death into this world. Christians do not think about death without God. Death is separation from God. However, people in this world think that death is a biological thing, not a religion, but a natural phenomenon.

### ③ 【What is the Christian view of life】

If death is separation from God, then life is union with God. Specifically, it is to be united to Jesus. Because God is an unapproachable light, and we cannot bear it. But we can be united to Jesus, who is God of God, light of light. That is baptism. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life, and whoever believes in me will live even though he dies." (Ibid. 11:25). No one has ever said this about themselves. Through baptism, we are united to Christ, our souls are resurrected, and we become eternal by receiving a body that does not die in the hereafter, and salvation is complete. In this way, Christianity believes that to live is to be united with God.

●Pastor Motokichiro Ousaka writes: "The death of Christ was not only a sacrificial death, but also a death to teach the resurrection. He showed on the cross that no matter how much he was tormented, no matter how much he was beaten, he would be resurrected. Christianity is not an idea, nor is it a morality, but a belief that we will also be resurrected because the Lord was the forerunner of the resurrection. ... The sacrament is the backbone of the Church. ... Today's church is a place where people gather, a place where morality is preached, a place that is slightly different from the world. The sacred thing of risking one's life to partake of the sacrament and rejoicing and remembering the image of the profoundly precious God has been abandoned. ... Henry Newman's Tract No. 90 says, "This is the church of Christ, where the body of Christ is eaten."

### ④ 【How to live in this world】

If we think of death as a biological thing, our goal is to keep our bodies (life) alive in this world for a long time. The emphasis is on medical care, and everything is considered to be human responsibility, and medical errors are severely questioned. This world is everything. There, children born with severe disabilities and those who die prematurely will be unhappy. But if we think of death as separation from God, then returning to God is our first priority, and we rely only on Him. Because only God can forgive man's sins and destroy death. We will also have hope in heaven and not in this world. This is because as long

as people with sin rule this world, war will not disappear from the earth, and there will be no hope. The peace movement is not enough to deal with human sins. Even in Christian countries, they say "God" in their mouths, but in the end, it's all about politics and economics. We are not trying to live by God, but by human strength. They don't listen to God, they don't obey God, and they do it selfishly. T Mr./Ms.'s husband, Mr./Ms., was watching TV and was stunned, saying, "Don't bring up God easily." Mr./Ms. Biden told Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, "Don't lie, don't make fun of the president of the United States." He yelled, but the world is full of lies. I feel that the Christian church today is out of step with the view of life and death handed down by the early church. They see death as a natural phenomenon, and it seems that the best thing to do is to protect the body. It seems to me that they only think about the peace of this world and do not aim for the afterlife or the kingdom of God.

●Pastor Yasuro Enomoto writes: "The Apostle Paul says that if we once knew Christ in the flesh, we no longer know Him that way. Knowing Christ in the flesh, Christ as the teacher of life, Jesus as a practitioner of love does not give us the strength to save us from my fear and sorrow right now. It is only when we know Jesus as the Lord of life that we can live a life without fear at any time, and we cannot see it with our natural eyes. ... It is only when our spiritual eyes are opened that we know that God is with us, and we realize how much He loves us."

Recently, many teachers have been saying, "Let us love others as Jesus loved them." This is morality. You don't have to be told to "love." They come to church because they can't do that. Morality is of no power in the face of death. Because nothing can be done. There is hope in Christ, the God who destroyed death. I have no hope in this world. I have only one hope. He is Christ God, who descended to earth, and is the Holy Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is written, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). This world is all that God has created. Some of them are sinful. I only look forward to God's love and His deeds.

This world is a Thailand stage. You only get one chance to do it. In the first few acts of this world, you get your part, and when you're done playing that role, you leave the stage and give way to a younger person. There is no going back. It will be over in no time. No matter how hard we try, the effect is temporary, and we can't do anything about it. You just have to do the best you can right now.

●Pastor Motokichiro Ousaka also wrote: "Looking up to Christ's 'Great Death,' our 'death' will change, and our 'life' will also change. We will live our death and life in the life and death of Christ."

I think that's exactly right. We cannot change ourselves, but we are united to Christ and become Christlike. Our joy lies in this change. It is the mystery that Paul spoke of. Let's live in this world with hope.