

Sunday, October 20, 2024 Sunday Morning Worship Sermon

「Don't Orphan」 Pastor Takaaki Inoue

1 John 4:16~21, John 14:15~23

① 【Send another advocate】

On the night before His death, Jesus said to the disciples He was leaving behind in this world: "I ask the Father, who will send another advocate to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth." (John 14:16~17) The Father is God. He asks God to send him an advocate. This advocate is the Spirit of God, called the Holy Spirit. In Greek, it is called "paraclete," which in English is translated as "counselor," and in other translations it is "helper," "comforter," or "advocate." It means the spirit that intercedes with God, consults us, teaches us about Jesus, and comforts and helps us when we sin. These are the things that Jesus has done for his disciples so far, and he says that he will send the Holy Spirit as the successor of them.

● The other day, when I was watching TV, I saw the world's kindest judge Frank Caprio (now 86 years old) in Rhode Island, USA. He is a celebrity in the United States. People come to court who have been ordered to pay fines for speeding and parking violations. One girl had a six-year-old child who was speeding in a car to get away from a man. A homeless woman was sleeping in her car when her car was taken away. When he was unable to pay the fine, Judge Caprio said, "I'm going to give ~ dollars from my mother's fund, and I'm going to give ~ dollars from other donations. If you still can't pay, come to me." He says. After watching the speeding video, he says, "The video is too dazzling to see, so I dismiss it because of insufficient evidence," and pardons the defendant's crime. Hold the child in your lap, hold the hammer held by the judge, and ask, "You are going to judge your mother's trial, is your mother guilty or not guilty?" and try to get the child to give a verdict. "I have a heart, not a badge, under my robe," Caprio said, "and I think it's important to have an understanding and empathy for people when dealing with them, no matter what their life is like or what their circumstances are." He says.

He is an unthinkable judge in Japan. It was full of "compassion and compassion." Watching TV moved me and warmed my heart. It was like watching God's trial. It's the same with the God of the Bible. We have two benevolent advocates, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Jesus sits at the right hand of God and intercedes (Romans 8:34), and the Holy Spirit intercedes in us groaning. (Romans 8:27) If you have a competent lawyer, you will be acquitted, no matter how much you are guilty. Even though I have a huge debt, a lawyer named

Christ will pay my debts, and a lawyer named the Holy Spirit will tell me what is good about me. Interestingly, the devil means "the one who accuses," while the Holy Spirit means "the one who advocates."

● "The monk wrote: "The surest way to know if we are with God is to look at how we treat our brothers, and my spiritual father always said that we should only see the beautiful, the good, and the real in people, because man is the image of God. ... To see the Holy Spirit in others, we must have the Holy Spirit in us. He who sees nothing but evil in his brother is himself occupied by evil spirits." (From a quote from Athos)

② [I will not make you orphaned]

Jesus went on to say to his disciples, "I will not orphan you, but I will come back to you. After a while, the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me." (John 14:18~19). The people of this world will no longer be able to see Christ when He dies, but His disciples will be able to see Him. Jesus was resurrected and appeared alive to those who believe in Him. Paul also witnessed the resurrected Christ and had faith. So to "come back" means to come back to be with them in their resurrected form. The reason why they come back is because without Christ, people cannot have faith. Faith may come out of man, but faith does not. Christ is the body of faith. Living with Him is a life of faith, and it is the true nature of human beings. Therefore, the Lord will surely return. Because that is the purpose for which man was created.

● Have you ever seen the movie "Quo Badis"? It means "Lord, where are you going?" in Latin. At the end of the 1st century, Christians were persecuted by Emperor Nero. From Rome, Peter walks along the Appian Way, trying to escape. Then the resurrected Jesus Christ stood in front of me. When Peter asks, "Lord, where are you going?" Christ replies, "I am going to cross again for my suffering people in Rome." When Peter hears this, he is converted, turns around and returns to Rome, where he is martyred by hanging on an upside-down cross.

Christ will return again to bear the suffering of this world with us. Human power can no longer make peace. There are people who have been cut off from their parents when they go to prison. I was abandoned because I had done so many bad things. If you look at the history of Israel, you can see that they are always rebelling against God. If it is true, it is natural to be abandoned. But God does not abandon those who sin and the world. You can continue to engage with people. God will continue to carry this world on His shoulders. In the Bible, God's name is "Immanuel," which means "God is with us." God is the One who is with us forever.

③ [God and human beings share a common destiny]

Jesus said to His disciples, "Because I live, you will also live" (John 14:19). It's one of my favorite words. My existence is completely dependent on Christ. We are completely destined to be a community. If Christ dies, I will die, and if Christ is resurrected, I will be resurrected. If Christ is the head, then I am the body. I am a branch connected to the trunk of a tree. We are not living by ourselves, but by Christ. Verse 23, "The Father and I will go to him and dwell together," also expresses the unity of God and man. I will be the temple where God dwells.

● There was a Christian psychiatrist named Masami Hirayama. He wrote an interesting story in his book "Mental Illness and Faith" called "Parents and Poor Children." "In the Old Testament, there are often so-called troubled children, such as the sons of Eli the priest. ... Samuel was also troubled by his two sons, Joel and Abijah. It is written that these sons "did not follow in the father's ways, but sought unjust profits, took bribes and bent judgment" (1 Samuel 8:3). The two sons of Aaron, the elder brother of Moses and known as his spokesman, also grieve their father for not living according to God's will. (Leviticus 10:1~2)... As far as their children's education was concerned, they had lost all confidence. At least they couldn't be role models for others because they were children. They must have been hurt, worried, impatient, and sad about the child." "If the Bible... If it's a book that only preaches morality and ethics (it can't be like this), then it's... It's going to be a shallow one. ... In our experience as psychiatrists, when a child like this comes out of the family, arrows of criticism are usually directed at the parents. "I had a child like that because my parents weren't firm." It would be easy if things were solved by blaming the parents for having these children. But I suspect that God has other intentions. In order to make us realize God's suffering, we are often given troubled children."

As a pastor, I work with people with various mental disorders and homeless people, and sometimes I wonder, "Why this person?" No matter how you look at it, there are people who can only think that they are unlucky, that they are sick or unhappy. According to Dr. Hirayama, it is to make them realize "the Passion of God." When we see that person endure suffering and love others, we are comforted and healed. I think it's because I see the image of God there. As St. Paul said, "Now I take pleasure in suffering for you, and I fill the void of Christ's suffering with myself for the sake of the Church, the body of Christ" (Colossians 1:24). Suffering also has meaning. And beyond suffering, there is always the triumph of love. When I suffer, Christ suffers with me. Let us take it as a solace and live a Christlike life.