

Sunday, October 27, 2024 Sunday Morning Worship Sermon

「What is Eternal Life?」 Pastor Takaaki Inoue

1 John 5:11~12, John 17:1~5

### ① 【Father, the time has come】

The passage we read today is the prayer offered by Jesus after the Last Supper, which is called the "Prayer of the High Priest." It is a prayer that the Lord offered Himself as High Priest for the salvation of mankind, and for the apostles, all the believers of posterity, and the whole church.

Verse 1 says: "When Jesus had spoken these things, he looked up to heaven and said, Father, the time has come. Give glory to your Son, that he may manifest His glory." It says, "Father, the time has come," but this time is to die on the cross. For this time, Christ descended from heaven and waited for 33 years. What does it mean to "glorify you"? Glory means the appearance of an invisible God, so here the Lord says, "God, make it possible for people to see through the cross what you are invisible to the eye. I prayed. And just like that, Jesus showed what kind of person God is on the cross. He revealed that God is not man's enemy, but He bears man's sins and is united in man's death. Christ forgave those who killed Him by praying, "Father, forgive them." God is love, and He remained perfect love to the end. No matter what I did, I could only get love and forgiveness from Him. Not a drop of curse, anger, or hatred comes out. This is God. As it was said, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to me" (John 12:32), and through this sacrifice and prayer of Jesus, many people were drawn to Christ and lifted up to heaven. The number of people acquired by his death was nowhere near the number of people he had acquired during his lifetime.

### ② 【What is eternal life?】

Verse 2 says, "You have given the Son authority over all men, so that he can give eternal life to all whom you have entrusted to him." He prayed. Christ rejoices in being able to give eternal life to those who have been given to Him. And in verse 3, He explained, "Eternal life is to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." This "knowing" is not knowledge, but experience. It is the same as "Adam knew his wife Eve" (Genesis 4:1), which means to become one. You can rephrase it as getting married. Therefore, to know God the Father and Jesus is to become one with the triune God (marriage), and to become this one is eternal life. The purpose of man's creation is to become one with God and to live forever.

So, how exactly can we become one with God? We, as creatures, cannot become one directly with God the Father. For whoever sees God, who touches Him, dies.

But we can be united with Christ, the Son of God, who is the God of God, the light of light. Just as his mother would gently lift him up with a weakened grip on him, he adjusted the light of His divinity to commune with man. Christ God has already practiced taking the flesh (the incarnation). We connect to the humanity of the divified Son, and through it we become one with the divinity of the Son. Then the Father and the Holy Spirit come and dwell in us. Those who are invited to the king's palace first receive the garment of Christ at the entrance of the palace, and finally the king appears and invites us in. There is an order to everything. Christ: Becoming one with God is realized specifically through baptism. As it is written, "We who have been baptized to be united to Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:3), "eternal life" has already been given to us by this world upon us who have been united to Christ through baptism. In his epistles, John wrote, "That God has given us eternal life, and that this life is in His Son. He who is united with the Son of God has this life, and he who is not united with the Son of God has no life." (1 John 5:11~12).

My seminary teacher said that faith is "communion with God." We have the greatest fellowship with God in the church. We eat the Eucharist, hear the Holy Word, breathe the breath of the Holy Spirit, and offer prayers. The Church is the New Garden of Eden, and Christ is the Tree of Life. Whoever reaches out to Him will live forever. Thus eternal life is in fellowship with Christ. Life is a state of communion. Christ is the only living being. He is the life that He had from the beginning. We are a state, not a being. We are created beings, and we can only live by continuing to commune with life from the beginning. If a person does not continue to commune with Christ, his life will become thin and eventually wither. If we leave the church, do not eat the Eucharist, do not hear God's word, and do not pray, how can we say that we are in fellowship with God? The deeper one's fellowship with Christ God, the more radiant one becomes, the fullness of God's life, and the more Christ's likeness grows. It's the same in heaven and hell. God did not create a place called hell. Hell is not a being, but a state of separation from God. Fellowship with Christ is heaven. If you have deep fellowship with Christ, heaven will spread in you, and if you turn away from Christ, hell will spread in you.

### ③ 【The Glory of Christ】

In verse 5, Jesus says, "Father, glorify me now before you, that glory that I had before the world was made." He prayed. Before the world was created, the glory that Christ had in the presence of God the Father is the "radiance of divinity." This is what John wrote at the beginning of his Gospel. "The Word was God, and this Word was with God in the beginning." Christ has the same glory as the Father. It is a light that humans cannot see or approach. When Jesus was

transfigured on the mountain, He showed us a little bit of His glory. Even that the disciples could not look directly at it. The Father is the body of light that shines brighter than the sun, and Christ is the light that comes out of that light with the same nature as the Father. For 33 years, He hid this light by wearing the garment of human flesh. Now the garment of his flesh was torn by spears and nails, and light leaked out of it. The light shone on the centurion's face, and he confessed, "Truly, this man was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54). I fear the blood and water that flowed from Christ's hands, feet, and flanks. I want to go underneath it and scoop up the blood that has been impregnated with divinity with both hands. What a waste! But this was exactly what he wanted. He was torn apart to distribute His light, his life, and His forgiveness.

Today I spoke of eternal life to know Christ.

● Leslie Weatherhead from the United Kingdom will speak at a pastor's meeting in the Manhattan area of the United States. However, his boat was greatly delayed by fog, and the pastors had to wait for a long time. When we finally arrived, Weatherhead said: "You've been waiting a long time, but I've come a long way to ask you one simple question: 'Do you know Jesus Christ?'"

In the early church, the criteria for determining whether an apostle was an apostle or not was "whether or not he had met the resurrected Lord." Paul said, "I ... Are you not an apostle? Have you not seen our Lord Jesus?" (1 Corinthians 9:1). An apostle is a witness.

● When I was a seminarian, I met the resurrected Christ. Christ touched me when I was full of grievances and said, "I have given you all things, and I have given you my garments. There is nothing left. I'm sorry." I was told. The moment I was touched by Christ, all resentment was swallowed up and extinguished, and joy welled up from the bottom of my stomach. This was the moment when I experienced eternal life. Those who experience Christ are at the same time filled with His eternal life. It's the same. I only heard his voice once, but I saw Him alive and at work with my own eyes. Those who have come to know Christ once know this joy. A person who has become a husband and wife will never say that they do not know the other.

God reveals himself to those who truly seek Him. He comes to know Christ and has a fragment of eternal life. I would like you to use the time of your life to know and experience Christ.