

Sunday, April 6, 2025 Sunday Morning Worship Sermon

"The Death of Jesus " Pastor Takaaki Inoue

Psalms 22:1~9, 15~22, Matthew 27:45~56

### ① 【The end of all things and the beginning of the salvation of all things】

When Jesus was crucified, a strange phenomenon occurred in the natural world. It reads: "At twelve o'clock in the afternoon, the whole earth was darkened, and it lasted until three o'clock" (Mark 15:33). Jesus is called the "Sun of Righteousness." The Church Fathers interpreted that because Jesus was about to die, he was afraid of the sun, which was a creature, and hid himself, testifying that He was God. Psalm 88 predicts this darkness. "Loved ones and friends, you have kept away from me, and now the only thing that is close to me is darkness." (Ibid. 19) But that's not all. When Jesus breathed his last, the veil of the temple was torn in half from top to bottom, an earthquake occurred, rocks were torn, tombs were opened, and the dead were brought back to life. The torn veil of the temple symbolizes the end of the Old Covenant. Earthquakes represent the end of the old world. In the Old Testament, this day when the sun darkens is called the "day of the Lord." It is the day of God's judgment that will appear at the end of the world. "When that day comes, saith the Lord God, I will set the sun at noon, and I will make the earth dark in broad daylight" (Amos 8:9). I'm sure you've heard the word "doomsday" before. The Bible says that the end times began 2,000 years before Christ came. This is because the body of the Son of God has been destroyed, but the world cannot remain undestroyed. With the death of Christ, all things come to an end. But in this darkness, God is about to begin a new creation. This darkness is also the darkness of the beginning of creation. The Lord's Day is the day when "judgment and salvation" occur at the same time.

### ② 【Christ heals Adam's unbelief】

At 3 o'clock, Jesus shouts out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, Rema, Sabachthani." When some people heard this, they mistakenly thought, "This person is calling Elijah." So another person soaks a sponge with sour wine and puts it on a reed stick to give Jesus to drink. It is the fulfillment of the words, "Man will try to make me eat bitter things, and he will make me drink vinegar when I thirst" (Psalm 69:22). Sour wine is a wine that has been fermented and stale, which means old contract. But Jesus didn't take it. This "Eli, Eli, Rema, Sabachthani" means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" and it was a prayer prophesied in the Psalms. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Psalm 22:1~2) How should we read this cry? Three o'clock in the afternoon is the time when Adam committed a transgression in the Garden of Eden and heard God's

footsteps. At that time, God called Adam to "where he is" (Genesis 3:9), but he hid away from God's face. But now Christ calls out to God in the dark, but He hides and refuses to answer. In the Psalms, we read, "How long will you be hiding, Lord?" (Psalm 89:47) and "Lord, ... Why do you hide your face from me?" (Psalm 88:15). No matter how much you pray to God, you will not receive an answer, which is an expression of "hiding." In other words, the exact opposite of Adam is being reproduced here. Jesus asked for God's face and kept crying. Here we can see a human being who does not lose faith in any darkness, no matter how unreasonable things happen. In this way, Jesus heals Adam's disobedience. "Keep calling on God's name!" This is called faith. You don't have to know what's difficult. First, let's sit down and call on God's name.

### ③ **【Abandoned so that they could be like human beings】**

When I see so many children dying in Gaza, I want to pray, "God, why did You abandon them?"

●The Jesuit priest Silvano Fausti wrote: "Everything is manifested on the cross. We'll see. Life dies, the Word is silenced, the master becomes a slave, the cross becomes the throne, the head of all becomes the last, the Judge is judged, the righteous become sinners, the blessed are cursed, the holy are sinned, and God forsakes Himself to be just like us."

The prayer, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" is a cry that represents the cry of all human beings who seem to have been forsaken by God.

●When Father Damien worked at the leprosy sanatorium and contracted leprosy himself, he said, "Now I can finally be their friend." It is only when we become the same that our hearts are united. It was only when Christ, the Son of God, became fully united with man, as he became mortal like the dying man.

Jesus experienced being abandoned by God. It is the experience of dying. The Son of God, who was supposed to never die, experienced death in human nature. It was to go down to the dead in hell, which was the furthest away from God. For if Christ is not forsaken, he cannot go to the forsaken. In this way, Jesus stands in solidarity with those who die thoroughly. So no one can say, "I have been abandoned by God" anymore. God sought you out and came to the depths of hell. Thus is fulfilled the phrase "I will not leave you orphaned" (John 14:18). There is a deep gulf between all of us and God the Father. It is the abyss of death, darkness, hell, and unbelief. It is not God who created this abyss of death, but man. People create this deep abyss because they don't believe in God, and they think that God is beyond this darkness. But God is Immanuel, the One who is always "with" us. That is why this God enters the abyss of death, which He did not create. God even died to have you, to be with you. But let us bow down to

the suffering of the Father and the Son with respect.

#### ④ **【Be a servant of Christ our King on the cross】**

When the centurion and those who were watching Jesus with him saw these events, they were very frightened and said, "Truly, this man was the Son of God" (27:54). How could soldiers who had served in death and violence be able to make a profession of faith? The word "watch" appears three times here: "look" (54), "look" (54), "watch" (55), and "see." The reason he changed was because he kept his eyes on the cross of Jesus. Whoever gazes upon Christ is bound to change.

As you take the time to pray, you will gradually get closer to Christ, and your connection with Jesus will become thicker. All the words of the Psalms come in, and I think that it is really true. Christ will gradually fill you in and you will become a vessel for Him. Then it seems that all the prayers will be answered, and it seems that if you cast out evil spirits and lay your hands on them, you will be healed. Because it is directly connected to Christ, who is the blessing, I know that God will also bless those I bless. What a wonderful way to live! This is how I do God's work. It makes me happy to be God's servant, and I feel that I am willing to die for Him.

●A man went to Gunpei Yamamuro of the Salvation Army and said: "Why is it bad to drink what I want to drink (alcohol) with the money I worked for?" Then Gunpei Yamamuro said: "Were you not born to drink, to do something greater and greater, to please many?" those words pierced his heart, and he was eventually called to become a servant of Christ and do great work.

For what purpose were we Christians given faith and made children of God? We have been called to be God's stained glass. That those who have seen me may see Christ. If the stained glass were muddy, it would not be able to reflect the image of Christ in the world without the light of God. In order to become a person who is easy for God's light to pass through, we must connect firmly with Him and thicken that pipe. We must not do anything other than the way Christ lived, the crucified Christ. We were invited to live by imitating it. Let us continue to see Christ, your King, wearing the crown of thorns on the cross. Confess like a centurion, "Truly, you are the son of God," and rededicate yourself to becoming a servant of the king.