

"In Jesus' Name " Pastor Takaaki Inou
Ezekiel 37:1-10, Acts 3:1-10

① 【Give what you have】

Peter and John went up to the temple for the 3 p.m. prayer. Then a man who was lame from birth was brought in. He had been placed by the gate of the temple, called the "beautiful gate," every day to receive alms from those who came to the temple. He also asked Peter and John for alms. Peter and John looked at him and said, "Look at us. When he looked at them, wondering what they could give him, Peter said, "I have no gold or silver, but I will give you what I have. He took the man's right hand and made him stand up, and the man's legs became strong, and he leaped to his feet and began to walk. Then he walked around, leaping and leaping, praising God, and went with them into the temple precincts.

● The other day, the personnel department committee of the diocese interviewed a person who was going to take the certification test to become a pastor. The person was a Chinese national who was baptized and became a Christian after coming to Japan. He said, "What is a Japanese person? He came to Japan, was baptized, and became a Christian. If they take away your passport and everything that can prove who you are, how do you prove that you are Japanese? Are you Japanese because you speak Japanese? Do I speak Japanese too?" When I heard that, I thought it was plausible.

Now, I ask you all. Are you a Christian? How do you prove it? Is it because you come to worship? Even cult members can come. Because you believe in Jesus? They believe so much that even evil spirits are horrified. What is the difference between them and you? The answer is written here. Peter said, "I have no gold or silver, but I will give you what I have." Peter said, "I have no gold or silver, but I will give you what I have. What did Peter have? He had no money, no position, no education. But he had Christ and the Holy Spirit. So do we. This is the proof of being a Christian. If Christ leaves me, I lose faith, I lose authority, I lose power, I lose life, I become as useless as salt that has lost its saltiness. If the Holy Spirit leaves me, I will be ignorant, unable to lay hands on, unable to heal, unable to speak.

He said, "Behold, he who turns away from You will perish. Thou shalt cut off those who wander away from Thee." (Psalm 73:27). I am in awe of these words. That is why I will not turn away from Christ, no matter what. Only Christ can lift me up.

Christ gave the apostles “power and authority to overcome all demons and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1). (Luke 9:1). This is a power that all Christians who are made the body of Christ have. We do not have it; we have it. We must allow that gift to flourish. Paul said to his disciple Timothy, "I have given you by the laying on of my hands. I urge you to rekindle the gift of God that has been given to you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us the spirit of timidity, but the spirit of power and love and discretion." (II Timothy 1:6-7) By again, I mean that it was burning before and now it is smoldering. But the gift is not extinguished, it is still in you, so he says, "Let it burn again. Timothy seems to have been a man of modest character. In the Book of Numbers, there is an article that says, "The Lord was in the clouds, and He descended upon him. The Lord descended in a cloud and ... took some of the spirit that was given to Moses and gave it to the seventy elders." (Numbers 11:25) Here we see the importance of leaders receiving the Holy Spirit. (Numbers 11:25) Here we see the importance of leaders receiving the Holy Spirit, for a leader who has received the Holy Spirit is able to share some of his gifts with his people. When I speak to you, I am giving you a portion of my Spirit. For when leaders are fired up with faith, the people are also fired up with faith.

● There was a 19th century Russian saint named St. Seraphim of Sarlov. He was not a man of special education, but he was a man of great faith from his early childhood, and after 15 years of retreat in a deep forest, he received the gift of the Holy Spirit, prayed day and night on a large stone for 1000 days, and later gave great comfort to people, performed miracles, and shared the joy of salvation by the Holy Spirit. He was a saint. He greeted everyone he met by saying, “My joy, my treasure,” and he said, "Acquire a peaceful heart. Then, he taught, "Acquire a peaceful heart, and thousands around you will be saved. He said that this “peaceful heart” is the fruit (character) that the Holy Spirit produces, and that the purpose of life is to acquire the Holy Spirit.

This is well understood. A person with a peaceful heart helps those around him, but a grumpy person puts those around him in a grumpy mood. We must first examine our own faith. Do you have Christ and the Holy Spirit?

② [What it means to walk in the name of Jesus Christ]

Seeing a lame man healed, a great crowd of people gathered. Then Peter told them that we did not make him walk by our own strength or faith, but that "the name of Jesus strengthened this man whom you have seen and know. It is by faith in his name. It was faith in Jesus that completely healed this man before you all." (Acts 3:16). Faith in Jesus is important. What does it mean to "stand and walk in the name of Jesus Christ? He has been unable to walk since birth

and has always depended on others. He stopped that way of life and began to live relying on Jesus Christ. He changed direction. He changed his way of life to one in which Jesus would make me live, Jesus would heal me, Jesus would make me get up and walk. The name of Jesus itself does not have "magical power. No matter how many times I call his name, if I don't believe in Jesus himself, miracles will not happen. The name reveals the body. And the words of Christ also reveal his body. To believe in Christ means specifically to obey His words. He who loves me will keep my word. ...He who does not love me does not keep my words." (John 14:23, 24). Again, instead of responding to Peter's words, "Get up and walk," with "No, I can't, I can't," he did it. Then he stood up. There are many people who hear but do not do. That is because they "don't listen to the words as if they were spoken to them," or they take them lightly as "good words. That is why miracles do not happen. Sister Kazuko Watanabe wrote that when she was hospitalized for depression, she felt as if Jesus had said to her, "I will go and heal you.

●I recently went to preach at a Chinese church called Osaka Christian Life Hall. It is located around the corner from Mirai Bank on the main street. Until a few years ago, it was a small church in the Tenjinbashisuji shopping arcade, but it quickly grew and moved here. It is a magnificent chapel, and services are held several times a day. After morning prayer, we all had breakfast together, and one of the congregants gave me a small "omikuji" (oracle of the word). It was made by the sisters of a convent in Tokyo, who wanted to share the words of the Bible with as many people as possible. It is like a scroll, and you never know what you will win. When I opened the scroll I received, it said, "There is nothing that God cannot do." (Luke 1:37). It seemed to see right through my heart, and I was thrilled. I felt as if the Word of God was being said to me. Now we are trying to build a new church. I wondered if we could really do it, if it would be impossible, if it would be better to compromise with something that fits our own size, and my mind wandered daily. We need this much. Please give it to us, Lord, or else it is not faith. These were the words that came to me. The believer said that the right words mysteriously hit him. For the pastor who was standing next to me, it was, "A grain of seed remains a grain of seed unless it falls to the ground and dies. He got it and said, "You mean I must die!" He said. Anyway, there is nothing that God cannot do." I heard this as the Lord's words to me.

All of God's words are said to you. Do not just hear it, but do it. Then miracles will appear and you will know that the Lord Jesus is with you.