

Last Week's Sermon Summary

『Given Through the Promise』

Pastor Takaaki Inoue

Galatians 3:21–29, Matthew 20:9–16

❶ 【The Problem in the Galatian Church = The Force Pushing Them Back to the Law】

The problem with the church in Galatia was that false teachers who had come after Paul claimed, “He is not an apostle,” and preached a different Christ and a different gospel from the one Paul had proclaimed. So Paul said, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you and are turning to a different gospel.” (Galatians 1:6), and he even went so far as to issue a curse, writing, “May anyone who preaches a gospel contrary to what you received be accursed.” (1:9) What is this “different gospel”? It is the teaching that one cannot be saved by Christ alone, but must “live like a Jew, be circumcised, and perform the ritual of handwashing” to be saved. It is an effort to force a return to Jewish legalism. In contrast, the church in Corinth faced the problem of the teaching introduced by false teachers: “Everything is permissible for me” (1 Corinthians 6:12). Even today, these two teachings appear in different forms. Some teachers pit the Law against the Gospel, misinterpreting the Law as “works” and the Gospel as “faith,” and teach that it is not necessary to keep the Law—that simply believing is enough. This makes them just as heretical as the “salvation-by-works” sect. Faith and works are not to be pitted against one another; they coexist. When Paul says, “No one is justified by the works of the law,” he means that “people are not saved by their own strength”; and when he says, “We are saved by the gospel,” he means that people are saved through Christ. He wanted to say that we should rely on the power of Christ, not on our own strength.

❷ 【Christianity is, at its core, a religion of promises】

Paul says that Christianity is, at its core, “the religion of God’s promises.” God promised Abraham that He would give him land and descendants. Abraham heard this promise when he was 75 years old. However, as he grew older without having a child, he became anxious and decided to have an heir not through his wife Sarah, but through his maidservant Hagar. Ishmael, born through this human scheme, is the ancestor of today’s Arabs. But when Abraham turned 100, the promised son, Isaac, was born, and it was this promised son who became his heir. The promise—“All the nations of the earth will be blessed through your offspring” (Genesis 26:4)—known as the Abrahamic Covenant, was passed down from Abraham to Isaac and then to Jacob. Paul writes that the Law was established 430 years after this Abrahamic Covenant. The “promise” came first, and the “Law” came later. Therefore, he argues, all nations enter into blessing through Christ, who is a descendant of Abraham, and not by keeping and observing the Law.

❸ 【The Role of the Law】

Paul says that the Law was given to reveal our transgressions. In other words, it exists to make us realize that we cannot save ourselves, others, or society through our own strength. However, the Jews used the Law not to recognize their own powerlessness, but to justify their own superiority and to look down on other nations. It is precisely because we realize our own powerlessness that we need Christ. Those who think they have their own strength do not need Christ. ↗

Weekly Report

The United Church of Christ in Japan

Miyakojima Church

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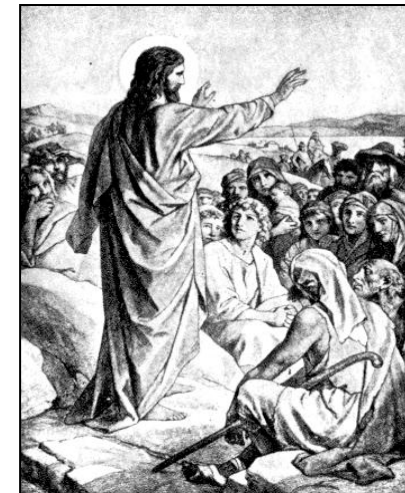
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《The Sermon on the Mount》

Miyakojima Church's 2026 Mission Policy

Motto : " Let us become faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ "

Scripture : " Stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord will return." (Matthew 24:42)

Goals for FY2024

- 1 Observe worship services every week and aim for an average of 28 people to attend services.
- 2 I will make good use of my time to invite the people I meet to worship.
- 3 We don't just listen to the Word; we put it into practice.
- 4 Make concrete preparations for the construction of the church.