

2020. 6.14.

The message for Mennonite Japanese church in Vancouver

Scripture: Luke 24:13~33

By Yoko Lee in Tokyo

Title: Mekara Uroko

(Which means scales from the eyes: It means it opened my eyes and I was awakened to the truth.)

Good afternoon everyone!

Now all people in the world are struggling for Covid-19. Are you tired with that, aren't you? Because of there are many things happened every day in Japan. As you may know, the sudden disappearing toilet tissues, the public was in panic for about 3months all over Japan.

At that time, one missionary in my church in Tokyo said "I understand all Japanese is in panic now, but why the Christian is acting the same? Don't you faithfully believe God's words to not worry for tomorrow (Matt6:31)? I think Mrs. Mary said the same thing as a missionary if she was in the same situation.

When I heard that comment, I confessed that I didn't pray about it and I had looked for toilet tissues to buy and see over 5 stores in a day. I thought my faith was totally different from the missionary and I started to examine my faith.

For that reason, I prepared this message about faith of Jesus Christ. Also, I choose today's story that I like the most from the scripture.

Look at verse 13. The same day two of the disciples were going to a Village called Emmaus. The same day was that Jesus resurrected.

When they were going to their home in Emmaus, they were not going to Jerusalem, they might feel that they have failed and lost all, their dearest teacher and friends.

But at that moment, a graceful thing happened.

Look at verse 15 and 16. Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.

But a very strange thing happened to them. They couldn't recognize Jesus, their lovely

teacher whom they had followed for over 3 years. It seemed that they became blind suddenly.

Let's think why they couldn't recognize Him. We can think that there are many reasons for that. They felt a loss because their most lovely teacher suddenly died. They were in fury because of the religion leaders of Jewish who crucified Jesus. They felt like a loser because they lost their mission and going back home. They cried and cried for 3 days without sleeping and their eyes were covered with their tears and they couldn't see Jesus.

Have you ever experienced like these two disciples? As I testified before, I experienced the same thing. Because of the rough waves of my life, I fell into the slump of faith for a long time. Even though I had attended to the church and volunteered every week, I couldn't have any joy and I even doubt God's existence.

To them what did Jesus say? Look at verse 25.

"How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" Jesus pointed that their problem was in unbelief. Not only Jesus gave compassion to their sorrow, but He also investigated their faith.

1) We have to find Jesus in the Bible.

Look at verse 27. "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." Jesus started explaining the Scriptures. On this, we need to focus that Jesus teaches about Himself.

John5:39 "These are the Scriptures that testify about me". According to this, we can find that the Bible was about Jesus. Jesus himself is in the center of the Bible.

In the last term of my seminary, I learned that all prophecies from Genesis to Malachi are about Jesus.

And then I really was surprised that there were very many prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament like the stars in the sky. When I learned this, my attitude in reading the Bible was changed.

Hebrews12:2. "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus". We Christian try to find Jesus every time when we read the Bible.

Now, let's think about who Jesus is. Is He really the true God that we can trust?

When we look at verse 19 and 21, we find the two disciples understood that, politically Jesus is the King of Judea. And they respected Jesus very much. But according to verse 22, they couldn't believe in Jesus' resurrection. They weren't in the faith level, they were in the level of respecting Jesus. That was even after they had learned beside of Jesus for over 3 years, how about us? It's important to check our belief.

Someone say, belief does not involve any rational thing and just believe without doubt. But this is very dangerous because we can be used by deceiver, when we mistakenly choose the person we believe.

Look at verse 26. "Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" Jesus was crucified for our sin and resurrected as the Bible had prophesied for several thousand years.

Rom.1:16. "Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believe.". Jesus gave the gift of gospel to us according to his death and resurrection. We receive salvation because of Jesus' sacrifice. No one can give salvation to us because Jesus has conquered the death. That's why the Bible proves that Jesus is the only one who we can trust.

According to Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus (AD347-420) who was a famous theologian that translate the Bible to Latin, said "Those who doesn't understand the Bible, they can't understand Jesus."(from John R.W. Stott, Understanding the Bible,2019,Seisyo Domei published in Japan).

Why then the two disciples couldn't believe Jesus? How can we have a strong faith?

From Rom.10:17, apostle Paul said, "Consequently faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." From this word, we learned faith comes from hearing about Jesus Christ.

Recently, Pastor Neufeld started preaching about Revelation. It would be a good chance to understand Jesus more and our faith will grow more.

2) Having good relation with Jesus makes us more faithful.

Look at verse 29 and 30. The day was almost over, it was nearly evening. Wow, time was really fast with Jesus!

They urged him strongly, "Stay with us." They were happy with Jesus.

Jesus stayed with them and ate together. Doctors see their patients just for 3 minutes. But our Jesus spends longer time for us. What a grace!

The Bible says that the relationship with God is with the Trinity God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

John 17:21 “that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

The reason God sent Jesus to us is to restore relationship with us who sin. Believing God means that we have good relationship with the Trinity God.

When I realized this truth, I was surprised like Mekara Uroko.

“Father our God, I am not able to volunteer so much in the church and my giving amount is small. I am not a good witness of Jesus because I am still in depression now. But am I OK with you?” I asked and I thought God answered like this; Yoko, of course you are OK with me. I love you very much.” And then I can be in peace.

According to Pastor John Piper in Minnesota, US said in his preach like this;

If it is hard to image relationship with God, try to remember your closest person. You have a very good relationship with them because they may be giving you their love, kindness and sacrifice and so on. God’s love is several times more and more than theirs.

Recently, I am talking to my mom in Vancouver every day for over 1 hour because I think she may be lonely. One day my second boy Taishi asked me, “Mom, aren’t you bored talking with Grandma every day?” I answered “Of course not. I am very happy with her ever moment!” I hope the relationship with God may be like with my mom.

I pray that you and I have a lovely relationship with God every moment.

Now, how was the two disciples changed after learning about Jesus in the Bible and having relationship with Jesus?

Look at verse 31. “Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him.”

They experienced Mekara Ukoru!!!

Let’s listen to their testimony. Look at verse 32 and 33. “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us.”

They completely recovered from their sorrow and changed their way and headed to Jerusalem. I imagine that they were jumping and hopping with great joy!!

As you know, I was in deep sorrow for over 10 years. At that time, I thought that my problems were caused from my parental discord, offenders and cold-hearted siblings. Especially, when I had flash back of bad memory, I thought that it was normal psychologically and socially. I had tried to recover in many ways, but it didn't work well. Finally, I was determined that I wanted to find the truth in the Bible and I started to learn the Bible every day. Also, I have prayed, sang and listened to the gospel songs. I have rejected the negative thinking and I have received the Gospel of Jesus. Starting this new life, I slowly realized that my problem was caused by my lack of faith not hardships of my childhood or unhappy circumstances. Even now I have experienced flash back of bad memory sometimes, but now no longer there in my problems. I return to Jesus and focus to the gospel of Jesus. And also I have new hope from Jesus and enjoy relationship with Him

These days, we experience many suffering because of Covid-19. Japanese media says that this is the worst economy since the World War 2. Many people lost their jobs and even their houses. The supermarket survey reported recently the most selling product is Moyashi (bean sprouts) which is the cheapest one, under 50 cents. That is why all house wives buy them every day. So do I. I eat Moyashi every day. Moyashi rice, Moyashi miso soup and so on. We have hardship for Covid-19 and also experience many individual trials which are about job, school, even home. Especially health problem is big.

But we can overcome all these trials because Jesus has conquered already (John16:33). Let's have a good relationship with Jesus through reading and learning the Bible. Let's experience getting our hearts burning with joy every day!!

Hebrews 11:6 "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because any one who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

Let's pray.