

Your Family will be Saved.

September 3rd, 2014, Kasukabe Home Meeting
 Gotthold Beck

家族の救いの確かさ
 2014年9月3日、春日部家庭集会
 ゴットホルド・ベック

Isaiah

6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, high and exalted. The train of his robe filled the Temple.

6:2 The seraphim stood above him. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he was flying.

6:3 They kept on calling to each other: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of the Heavenly Armies! The whole earth is full of his glory!"

6:4 The foundations of the thresholds quaked at the sound of those who kept calling out, and the Temple was filled with smoke.

6:5 "How terrible it will be for me!" I cried, "because I am ruined! I'm a man with unclean lips, and I live among a people with unclean lips! And my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of the Heavenly Armies!"

6:6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, carrying a burning coal in his hand that he had taken from the altar with tongs.

6:7 He touched my mouth and said, "Look! Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt is taken away, and your sins atoned for."

6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord as he was asking, "Whom will I send? Who will go for us?" "Here I am!" I replied. "Send me."

Matthew

28:18 Then Jesus came up and told them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

28:19 Therefore, as you go, disciple people in all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

28:20 teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. And remember, I am with you each and every day until the end of the age.

We used to sing a hymn like this, "Let me become your disciple, my Lord, my Lord. Let me be your disciple. From the bottom of my heart, let me be your disciple." It is to have an attitude like this that is expected from us today. Jesus is looking for his disciples, someone who obeys him.

Mark

1:16 While Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew. They were throwing a net into the sea because they were fishermen.

1:17 Jesus told them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people!"

1:18 So immediately they left their nets and followed him.

1:19 Going on a little farther he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat repairing their nets.

1:20 He immediately called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Mark

2:13 Jesus went out again beside the sea. The whole crowd kept coming to him, and he kept teaching them.

2:14 As he was walking along, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax collector's desk. Jesus told him, "Follow me!" So Levi got up and followed him.

2:15 Later, he was having dinner at Levi's house. Many tax collectors and sinners were also eating with Jesus and his disciples, because there were many who were following him.

2:16 When the scribes and the Pharisees saw him eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

2:17 When Jesus heard that, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a physician, but sick ones do. I did not come to call righteous people, but sinners."

Mark

3:13 Then Jesus went up on a hillside and called to himself those whom he had decided on, and they approached him.

3:14 He appointed the Twelve, whom he called apostles, to accompany him, to be sent out to preach,

Verse 13 is so remarkable. Jesus first said, "come to me," then he said, "now, leave!" In the main hall of the divine school in Switzerland where I studied, a large world map was shown on the wall, on which these verses were shown: "Come. Come to me." Then, "Go, proclaim the gospel!"

There are two kinds of things that Jesus calls people to do. Firstly, he calls us to accept the Salvation and to become children of God. Secondly, Jesus urges people to become his disciples. The whole book of The Gospel According to Mark is intended to characterize Jesus as the great servant, the servant who works for his Father, God.

On the other hand, in the First Gospel, Matthew, Jesus is characterized as the King, while in Luke he is characterized as a man, and as the son of God in The Gospel According to John, the last Gospel. However, as I mentioned above, The Gospel According to Mark depicts Jesus as the servant of Father God, seeking and looking for his fellow workers, his disciples.

Co-workers of Jesus, or disciples, refer to those who are ready to serve Jesus. And The Gospel According to Mark clearly describes what Jesus urged to his disciples to do. The central figure of the entire story is, needless to say, Jesus.

In here, I would like to split the discussion into a few parts. Firstly, as we all know, it is Jesus who is calling us. The central figure of the world is Jesus, and it is nobody but Jesus himself whose words call to us. As we can see from a series of verbs used in these verses, Jesus is the one who always acts first, then leads others to participate in that action.

Mark

3:13 Jesus called to himself those whom he had decided on, and they approached him.

In verses 16 and 19 of Chapter 1, and verse 24 of Chapter 2, it is repeatedly written that “Jesus saw this” and “Jesus saw that.” We also see in verses 17 and 20 of Chapter 1 and verse 14 of the second Chapter, the same words appear a number of times: “Jesus called someone, Jesus called someone.”

Jesus called the names of Zacchaeus and Saul. Likewise, he called each one of his disciples by their own names. This has a significant meaning because it implies that a one-to-one relationship with Jesus, just like Jesus and me, or Jesus and you, is an extremely important relationship.

Furthermore, it is not that men chose Jesus, but Jesus chose miserable humans, joined them, and had fellowship with them. Up until this day, men can never be saved by their own strength or by their own decisions. Jesus opens the eyes of our hearts so that we can see the reality of ourselves, and the salvation completed by Jesus. The calling of Jesus can be found in this verse, which you know by heart:

Matthew

11:28 Come to me, all of you who are weary and loaded down with burdens, and I will give you rest.

Jesus is there for all sinners, for those who seek help, for those who are agonized, for those who are isolated, and for those who have lost all hope. Through

repentance and faith, the salvation of Jesus becomes a reality. However, repentance and faith do not come from humans, as they are a present a gift granted from above.

So, is it not true to say that believers refer to those who have gratefully received this gift? Whether you have received it yet, or not, it is critical for your life. What could be more important than being saved? We must become the children of God. But, what do we need to do to become God’s children?

First of all, we have to realize our need for salvation. Second, we need to admit that human effort is utterly meaningless and useless. In other words, you can never be saved by yourself, by other people, or by any religion. All kinds of human efforts are worthless and hopeless. The salvation mentioned in the Bible is indeed the solution to the problem of your sins.

Although all men are under the wrath of the Lord God because of their sins, the Bible tells us that their sins will be forgiven and that they will still be granted eternal life. However, this can be accomplished neither by men nor religion, but by Jesus alone. When Jesus was punished by his Father God for the sins of humans, he paid our debts with his sacred precious blood to forgive our sins.

When believers accept this truth as fact in their hearts, they will have peace with God, forgiveness of their sins, and eternal life in their hands. Humans cannot solve the problem of their sins through their own strength. They need to be brought to the realization that they absolutely need Jesus.

“Jesus, I come to you now as the most miserable and helpless man. For solving the problem of my sins in order to redeem me, my heart is filled with gratitude to you.” Those who can express such feeling towards Jesus will be blessed.

Let us summarize again. To become children of the Creator God, two things are necessary. Firstly, we need to accept all things that the Lord God tells us. Secondly, we need to accept Jesus.

Then, what is the Lord God telling us? The Lord tells us that this disease of our sins is utterly incurable and there is no hope for improvement. However, Jesus has sacrificed himself for us, and what Jesus has accomplished for us is more than enough. We only need to accept what is provided to us.

Let us read from some of the last verses from the Bible, Revelation, chapter 22, a verse which sits near the very end of the entire Bible:

Revelation

22:17 Let anyone who wants the water of life take it as a gift!

The “water of life” in this verse refers to nothing less than the gift of salvation given by Jesus. It is stated in here, “Anyone who wants it, take it.” And, in here, what matters is whether you want it or not. If you want it, you will never fail to receive it. If you reject it, you are hopeless. Your future is in darkness.

Although Jesus gives eternal life to us, he never forces us to accept it. It only says, “anyone who wants it...” As it is promised, those who want it will receive it. Those who receive it will keep it. They will have peace with God, forgiveness for their sins, feel the joy of being made children of God and will be given eternal life.

Now, here is the second question. What is Jesus urging us to do? Actually, Jesus is calling us to become his disciples. We can see the answer in the verses we read today in which he repeatedly says, “follow me.” These words were not only for their salvation. “Follow me and I will make you fishers of people!” He is calling them to serve him. And, what does this call of Jesus imply? It implies we were not saved just for our own salvation but we were saved to be used by him, to serve him.

When you are truly saved, you will also be given the desire to save those who have not been saved. If you lack a sincere passion for the salvation of those unsaved people, your faith may be questioned.

After Jesus told the people that he would release them from their burden so that they would accept the salvation, he also asked them to serve him. And, what does it mean to serve Jesus? It is not to be given a list of tasks to do, but it means simply to obey him. So then, what is it to obey Jesus? To obey Jesus is to deny yourself and abandon yourself, which is an extremely difficult thing to do.

Matthew

16:24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow me continually.

16:25 Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

These verses can be confusing. Although it is written that “Whoever wants to save his life will lose it,” in the original Bible, written in the Greek language, the word 'life' is not used. Instead, it is written 'soul'. Then, what does it mean to “want to save your soul?” It is to turn to

your own way and live in a self-centered manner.

Human souls have three functions. Firstly, to think. Secondly, to feel. And thirdly, to desire. Therefore, to deny yourself is to simply refuse to allow your thoughts, your emotions, and your intentions to control you. Contrarily, to abandon your soul, you need to drive your own intentions away from your heart and replace them with Jesus—to make him sit on the first seat of your heart.

Without this, no one can truly obey and follow Jesus. To follow Jesus, not only do we have to deny and abandon ourselves, but we need to hate ourselves. Let me read some verses from Luke, chapter 14:

Luke

14:26 “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters, as well as his own life, he can't be my disciple.

14:27 Whoever doesn't carry his cross and follow me can't be my disciple.

To hate ourselves, we absolutely need to have distrust of ourselves. Not until your confidence is totally broken down will you be able to obey Jesus. You have to give up your confidence until you feel that you can never take another step without Jesus. Let us look at what Jesus himself said and confessed.

He, himself, admitted that he could not accomplish anything alone. And in this, we can see that we too have to seek nothing but the will of Jesus. Otherwise, we will run into a wall. However, Jesus still says that it is not enough to have a distrust of ourselves, but we have to hate ourselves to obey him. Why is such a harsh word like 'hate' used in the Bible? Paul would clearly answer this question like this:

Romans

7:18 For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh.

If nothing good lives, there should be only evil in our flesh. After all, the intentions of the Lord are fundamentally different from the way humans think. This is explained not only in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament as well. Let us look at some verses from the Old Testament.

Isaiah

55:8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts...

The 'you' in here refers to the people of Israel, people who were chosen and saved by the Lord.

Isaiah

55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.
 55:9 For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

His thoughts are totally different from ours. There isn't even the smallest resemblance between them. They are utterly different. Now, I would like to quickly speak of Peter from verses 21 to 23 of Matthew, chapter 16.

Matthew

16:21 From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he would have to go to Jerusalem and suffer a great deal because of the elders, the high priests, and the scribes. Then he would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised.
 16:22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God be merciful to you, Lord! This must never happen to you!"
 16:23 But Jesus turned and told Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an offense to me, because you are not thinking God's thoughts but human thoughts!"

The desires of the Lord are fundamentally different from humans' desires. Although Peter believed in Jesus, when he tried to keep Jesus away from the cross, Jesus had to throw these words at him, "Get behind me, Satan." How could this happen? It was because Peter, at that moment, was not Jesus' disciple in a true sense. This was a man who had already lived with Jesus for three years. He had been always with Jesus. When he was called by Jesus, he abandoned everything and followed him. There was nothing wrong in the purpose and motives of Peter at all.

However, because Peter judged things from the human perspective and acted based on that human view, Jesus had to hurl such a harsh word at him, 'Satan', instead of 'Peter'. In all aspects, we have to act bearing this in mind: "Not my own will, but the will of the Lord to be followed." It is absolutely necessary for us to abandon our own thoughts and respect nothing but the will of the Lord. In verse 39 of Matthew, chapter 26 expresses the prayer of Jesus, "Yet not what I want but what you want." This was his never-changing desire that he always prayed for: "Let your will be followed."

To obey Jesus is to surrender all your will and desire to the Lord every day. We should pay special attention to his words telling us that not only do we have to hate ourselves, but we also have to hate our family. What does it mean to hate our own family? Is it telling us to literally neglect our family members and not to care

about them at all? Of course, it is not.

It is a matter of course, but when we try to find an answer to some specific problem in our life, it is extremely dangerous to pick up some convenient verses and use them to convince ourselves and justify our solution to the problem.

Whatever the problem you are facing, you should try to understand what the entire Bible is telling you. Needless to say, the Lord sincerely desires, not just the salvation of each person, but rather the salvation of their entire family. Then, what does it mean to hate your family? Paul wrote something totally opposite to his beloved disciple, Timothy:

1 Timothy

5:8 If anyone does not take care of his own relatives, especially his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

This verse and the other verses cited earlier may seem to totally conflict with each other at a first glance. The Bible clearly states that we have to place importance on our family and respect them.

However, at the same time, the Bible tells us that we have to obey the Lord more sincerely than any person. Those who place the Lord and his words at the top will absolutely care about their family. Contrarily, those who put the highest importance on their family will come to deny the Lord.

I will finish this sermon with these words of Jesus:

Matthew

10:34 Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword!
 10:35 I came to turn 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.
 10:36 A person's enemies will include members of his own family.'
 10:37 The one who loves his father or mother more than me isn't worthy of me, and the one who loves a son or daughter more than me isn't worthy of me.
 10:38 The one who doesn't take up his cross and follow me isn't worthy of me.

The Bible tells us that those who seek the salvation of their family have to abandon them. The salvation can never be accomplished with lukewarm attitude and compromise. If you sincerely wish the salvation of your family and the salvation of your relatives, you need to stand on the side of the Lord 100 percent. That is to say, obedience to Jesus has to begin by denying yourself as well as your family, hating them and

placing Jesus at the top of your life. When we take this uncompromising attitude, the Lord will give us an abundant blessing so that our family will absolutely be led and saved as he has promised.

End