

Let us Look up to the Lord Jesus 2

January 13th, 2015, Kichijouji Bible Study
Gotthold Beck

主イエスを仰ぎ見ましょう2
2015年1月13日、吉祥寺学び会
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Psalms

32:7 You are my hiding place; you will deliver me from trouble and surround me with shouts of deliverance. Interlude.

32:8 I will instruct you and teach you concerning the path you should walk; I will direct you with my eye.

32:9 Don't be like a horse or mule, without understanding. They are held in check by a bit and bridle in their mouths; otherwise they will not remain near you.

32:10 The wicked have many sorrows, but gracious love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

32:11 Righteous ones, be glad in the Lord and rejoice! Shout for joy, all of you who are upright in heart!

[International Standard Version]

Every time, before this meeting begins, I feel like exclaiming from my heart, "May the people who gather here not just hear what I speak to them. Instead, please let them hear your words. Moreover, please help them to accept your words and to be liberated through them!" Well, I have no idea how this prayer of mine reaches the Lord. However, I am convinced that he will absolutely hear it.

David prayed 3000 years ago as in the first verse we read this morning and the Lord answered:

Psalms

32:8 I will instruct you and teach you concerning the path you should walk; I will direct you with my eye.

32:9 Don't be like a horse or mule, without understanding. They are held in check by a bit and bridle in their mouths; otherwise they will not remain near you.

The Bible in many parts mentions the importance, possibility and greatness of having ears to hear and looking up to the Lord Jesus alone.

I would like to continue the discussion regarding the necessity, importance and greatness of looking up to the Lord that we started at the last meeting. What kind of eyes are the eyes of Jesus? What we learned in the last meeting was that the eyes Jesus are the eyes of love and the eyes of hope.

Thirdly, as we are going to see today, the eyes of Jesus are the eyes of compassion. It can be seen from these verses.

Luke

7:11 Soon afterwards, Jesus went to a city called Nain. His disciples and a large crowd were going along with him.

7:12 As he approached the entrance to the city, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the city was with her.

7:13 When the Lord saw her, he felt compassion for her. He told her, "You can stop crying."

7:14 Then he went up and touched the bier, and the men who were carrying it stopped. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!"

7:15 The man who had been dead sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

This was the supreme gift for her, wasn't it? Humans could only try to offer some words of consolation. However, what Jesus had done here was totally different, and it was simply amazing. The Lord felt deep compassion for this lady and he said to her, "You can stop crying."

This lady was a very pitiful woman who was exhausted because of the heavy burden she had been carrying throughout her life. She had already suffered the tragedy of losing her husband. Now, she had lost her son, who was her only source of joy and emotional support in a life of darkness. When Jesus saw this lady in deep sorrow, he didn't ignore her, but instead he sympathized with her according to these verses.

Jesus came to this lady and told her to stop weeping. This lady then looked up to Jesus with tears running down her face. They looked at each other and she saw the eyes filled with deep compassion. Jesus did not talk much. Nor did he offer any empty words of consolation to her.

Instead, he only said to her young dead son, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" The dead man then arose and began to talk. This lady, until she had looked into the sympathetic eyes of Jesus, had been devastated and had been living in a state of hopelessness.

Therefore, on her way to, and during, the funeral ceremony, she was in an extreme situation where all hope seemed lost. From the human perspective, everything was too late, and there was nothing anyone could do to heal her. However, nothing is too late for Jesus.

Even in the worst situations, when everything seems hopeless, Jesus can help us. Some people might feel that, from a human perspective, their life is on

the edge and that all hope is gone. However, even in the most desperate of times, nothing is too late to handle for Jesus.

After all, you do not need to give up on your life. Our Lord is the God of hope. As long as the God of hope stands by us, we can entrust everything to him and continue to seek for his help. What we need is nothing but Jesus' eyes of compassion. No matter how awful our pains are now, Jesus' eyes, which are full of love, hope, and compassion, are always there looking at us.

As we have just seen, the eyes of Jesus are the eyes of love, the eyes of hope and the eyes of compassion. But, these are not all. His eyes are also the eyes of admonition, which persuade lost people to head once again in the right direction and show them the way to proceed. We can find an example of the eyes of admonition in his relationship with Peter.

Luke

22:61 Then the Lord turned and looked at Peter.

The Lord turned and looked at Peter, and Peter was filled with confidence when he declared with these words in front of Jesus:

Matthew

26:33 But Peter told him, "Even if everyone else turns against you, I certainly won't!"

26:35 Peter told him, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!"

He was not lying this time, but he truly believed that he would never deny the Lord. When Jesus warned his disciples to stay awake and to not stop praying so that they wouldn't be tempted, Peter was so confident in himself that he did not take these words seriously. Peter was in the courtyard of the house sitting with the guards. They were not believers of Jesus; actually, they were the ones who had participated in the arrest of Jesus. Peter was sitting with these people.

Peter was not like he was a few moments ago, when he was filled with confidence. Instead, he became so cowardly and denied knowing who Jesus was.

Matthew

26:33 But Peter told him, "Even if everyone else turns against you, I certainly won't!"

"Don't worry, Jesus. I will be with you." However,

26:34 Jesus told him, "I tell you with certainty, before a rooster crows...."

Not two weeks later. Not several hours later, but,

26:34 this very night, you will deny me three times."

26:35 Peter told him, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!"

However, Peter failed as a matter of fact. He did a dreadful thing.

Matthew

26:69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard when a servant girl came up to him and said, "You, too, were with Jesus the Galilean."

26:70 But he denied it in front of them all, saying, "I don't know what you're talking about."

26:71 As he went out to the gateway, another woman saw him and told those who were there, "This man was with Jesus from Nazareth."

26:72 Again he denied it and swore with an oath, "I don't know the man!"

26:73 After a little while the people who were standing there came up and told Peter, "Obviously you're also one of them, because your accent gives you away."

26:74 Then he began to curse violently. "I don't know the man!" he swore solemnly. Just then a rooster crowed.

26:75 Peter remembered the words of Jesus when he said, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny me three times." Then he went outside and cried bitterly.

No hope was left for him. He must have thought that he had just committed an unforgivable sin. That was why he cried bitterly.

Luke

22:31 Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has asked permission to sift all of you like wheat,

22:32 but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail. When you have come back, you must strengthen your brothers.

Peter must have thought that he just lost all chances to come back to the Lord, but he did not. After all, Jesus was still watching him with eyes of admonition. When people are too confident about themselves, they become arrogant and the eyes of their hearts are dazzled. Consequently, Peter neglected the warning of Jesus.

When we don't stand firm on the words of God and refuse to respect his words alone, we are actually giving the devil a chance to win. When we are overconfident and disregard the words of the Bible, we are likely to fall into the sin of having a fellowship with non-believers. Jesus said, "the spirit is indeed willing, but the body is weak."

Jesus warns us to stay awake and to not stop praying in order to avoid the temptation of the devil. When we become overconfident of our own faith, we

will likely fall into the devil's trap. This was exactly what happened to Peter. From a human's perspective, Peter failed at this very moment.

Luke

22:31 Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has asked permission to sift all of you like wheat,
22:32 but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail. When you have come back, you must strengthen your brothers.

When Satan wanted to try Peter, he asked for permission to Jesus and it was granted. Jesus then began to pray for Peter so that his faith would not fail. When Peter denied Jesus three times saying he did not know such person, as I just said, Jesus turned around and stared at Peter.

The eyes of Jesus this time were exactly the eyes that rectify those who have stepped off the right path and guide them back on again. The eyes of admonition of Jesus penetrated Peter's heart and brought about his repentance instantly. Peter then went out of the courtyard, was separated from non-believers, and cried bitterly alone.

Peter must have been in utter darkness for the next three days, and his mind was in a complete blank. Peter clearly realized that when he denied Jesus, he betrayed the promised saviour, the Son of God. The eyes of Jesus were ingrained in his memory, a memory from which he would never be free.

When Peter heard about the resurrection of Jesus from women, he ran to the graveyard to see whether the tomb was really empty. They say it was Peter alone who met Jesus at this time. Unfortunately, the conversation held between them was not recorded in the Bible. However, there is no doubt that Peter was admonished by Jesus, who showed him the right direction to go in his life.

When Jesus asked Peter three times, "do you love me?" He answered wholeheartedly, "I do." It is clear from the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles that Peter completely recovered from his fail later in his life. A rigid anchor was cast from Peter's mind and it was rooted in the uninterrupted relationship with the Lord Jesus.

His joy came from thoroughly trusting in Jesus. His entire life was characterized by remarkable dignity and strength. Peter, who was so weak and cowardly, denied the Lord, changed into the most courageous witness of Jesus, and he became afraid of death no longer.

It is recorded in history that he was martyred for his faith in Jesus. We too have to be very careful so that instead of relying on ourselves, we always act based upon the words of the Scripture, as Peter in his later

life did. We must not compromise with others or conform to the opinions of non-believers.

What kind of eyes are the eyes of Jesus? As we have discussed so far, they are the eyes of love, the eyes of hope, the eyes of compassion and the eyes of admonition. Furthermore, it can be seen from the Bible that the eyes of Jesus are also the eyes of acceptance, those which accept everything as good.

John

1:45 Philip found Nathaniel and told him, "We have found the man about whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets wrote—Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth."

1:46 Nathaniel asked him, "Out of Nazareth? Can anything good come from there?" Philip told him, "Come and see!"

1:47 Jesus saw Nathaniel coming toward him and said about him, "Look, a genuine Israeli, in whom there is no deceit!"

1:48 Nathaniel asked him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

1:49 Nathaniel replied to him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

1:50 Jesus told him, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than that."

1:51 Then he told him, "Truly, I tell all of you with certainty, you will see heaven standing open and the angels of God going up and coming down to the Son of Man."

Nathanael is characterized by his honesty, purity and sincerity. Jesus accepts and justifies people like him. He reveals himself to such people.

Where can we find honesty, purity and sincerity in today's world? The present time we are all living in is characterized by dishonesty, deceit, evilness, and impurity. It is at the polar opposite of the time Nathanael lived. Actually, Nathanael did not believe in Jesus instantly, but he was skeptical in the beginning. This is why he said, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

However, the Lord approached him finally to make him convinced that Jesus was truly the Son of God. Nathanael was bigoted in that the promised saviour would rise from Bethlehem, and he could hardly believe that Jesus from Nazareth was the Messiah.

However, Nathanael decided to stop insisting on whether Jesus was from Nazareth or Bethlehem, but to come to see for himself who Jesus really was. When Nathanael met Jesus, he realized that Jesus was truly the Son of God. He obtained a firm conviction.

He had been absolutely skeptical and believed 100

percent that Jesus of Nazareth should never be the Son of God. But, when he met Jesus, he believed 100 percent and had an instant conviction that Jesus was the promised savior, the Son of God. Generally speaking, we do not innately have such faithfulness, purity, and sincerity.

We all more or less have an unbelieving and hypocritical nature. An encounter with the Lord Jesus wipes away our nature of deceiving ourselves and others. For until you have a sincere heart, you will never obtain true hope of blessing. Those who have a sincere and pure heart will see heaven opened before them, as Jesus has promised. To see heaven opened before you is to come to understand Jesus better by inspiration from above.

It is only the cross of Jesus that can liberate us from all kinds of untruth and deception. It was for this reason that Jesus demands us to accept the cross, bear it and follow him.

Paul was prepared to bear the cross and follow the Lord Jesus. He could say filled with joy, "I have been crucified with the Messiah. I no longer live, but the Messiah lives in me."

We too have to encounter Jesus and look into his eyes. The eyes of Jesus, filled with his deep love, are telling us about the cross. Jesus' eyes of hope invite us to have fellowship with him. Do we also have the strong desire to enter into a fellowship with Jesus?

People are hopeless if they are indifferent to this precious fellowship. The eyes of Jesus are full of compassion, and they are even capable of bringing back the dead. Jesus is still alive and hopes to reveal himself to us wholeheartedly. If you have desperate desire to understand Jesus better, you will eventually be compelled to admit that Jesus is all in all for you, and you will never be disappointed.

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