

Sunday Sermon 07212024 2 Samuel 7:1-14a Ephesians 2:11-22

“Our Cornerstone, Jesus Christ!”

I received US citizenship in 1984. What was the most important reason I wanted to get American citizenship? It was to receive the same rights that were given to other American citizens. I took the oath of citizenship at the ceremony and acquired my rights as a citizen of the United States, as well as taking responsibility for my obligations as a citizen. I felt proud to become a fellow citizen of other Americans and grateful for the opportunity to have the same opportunities for a great future as other Americans.

All of us who are here today confess not only that we are citizens of this land but also spiritual citizens of the kingdom of God, heaven. Let us look at the teachings of the Bible about the people of heaven through the scriptures today.

I. We were foreigners who were not related to the covenant (vv. 12, 19).

#Let me tell you the story of a father. He graduated from an Ivy League college and got a job at a world-renowned company. He worked hard with his ability, and he was promoted faster than anyone else. One day he was on a business trip abroad when he heard that his son had committed suicide.

His son was a 16-year-old high school student. He had been subjected to violence and bullying by school seniors; he was habitually deprived of money, beaten, and threatened. No one knew what happened to him at his home, nor his friends, nor his teachers. How hopeless must he have felt?

The father, who had been focused on working and succeeding, changed after the sudden death of his son. He thought that if he continued to be in sorrow, he would die. He stopped working to help teenagers who were bullied and suffered violence in school and asked for help from the government, schools, and citizens.

He had lost his only son. But now he has been running the Youth Violence Prevention Foundation for over 20 years. Through this work, many young people who are in danger are saved, and he serves as the father of many sons. The father of one son became the father of many sons.

Have you experienced how lonely and hard it is to live as a foreigner and a stranger in the world? Have you experienced the tyranny of a powerful authority in the world? This is very serious in underdeveloped countries and communist countries.

However, we have seen and heard similar things happening in advanced countries. Why? This is because of the nature of sin that exists in human beings, and God's truth tells it to us.

It was the same in spiritual relationships. The Bible compares the situation with that of the Israelites and other Gentile peoples in the love and care of the Creator God. And it reminds us of the feeling of alienation and suffering that we have not been able to experience spiritually.

When we did not know God the Creator, we were foreigners and strangers from his chosen people. So, we did not know sinfulness and did not know how to solve the problem of sin. All that was left of us was the destruction of death, and there was no way of life.

It is also necessary to imagine how miserable and hopeless we would be without God in our lives. I hope that the young man I told you about earlier can serve as a harsh but true example of that, and that it can show us how necessary the Absolute God and Savior Jesus are in our lives.

II. Jesus broke the blocked wall with his own body (v. 14).

God knew the violence and harm suffered due to the sin of man, and his heart broke. Therefore, He forgave our sins through his Son, Jesus Christ, and opened the way for liberation from the oppression of sin.

Does that mean that the Heavenly Father made the Son Jesus die for his sacrifice? Never. Our Heavenly Father himself came to this world in the body of his Son Jesus and experienced pain and death directly.

That is why we call Jesus the King of Peace. He has solved all the broken, divided, and clogged relationships and situations in the world directly with his body. The merit of the blood of his life shed on the cross paid for all the needs of the price of man's sin.

The Lord asks us for sacrifice and obedience in our bodies and lives as we live in the world as children of God and disciples of Jesus. So, we experience a lot of pain in our lives of faith. Without pain, there is no fruit of love and sacrifice. Nevertheless, we are not afraid of this pain because Jesus is our leader and general of victory.

A long time ago, one American missionary, whose name was not known, went to China to preach the gospel. At that time, an unidentified epidemic spread throughout China, and many Chinese people died. The missionary hastily took a sample of the germs of the plague into a glass bottle, and he went to America, where medicine was developed to create a vaccine.

When he was about to land in San Francisco, the quarantine staff began to investigate the passengers thoroughly. The missionary thought that if the inspector knew what he had now, everything would be in vain. After he was worried, he threw the germs into his mouth and dropped the glass bottles on the floor.

A little later, the germs spread throughout his body, and he caught a fever. He rushed to the hospital and shouted to the doctors. "My body is now infected with an epidemic spreading in China, so you can pull this germ to create a vaccine and send it to China to save a lot of people."

After that, the missionary died. But at the expense of his sacrifice, the vaccine was created. It is said that it saved the lives of many people in China. Love is accepting the loss by itself.

III. We are now a temple, a place where God can dwell through the Holy Spirit (22).

Here we shall look at the Old Testament scripture, 2 Samuel 7. We call this passage "God's Covenant with David." We can see that the blessings God promised to the house of David will be fully fulfilled by the fulfillment of His kingdom by the Messiah, who will be born according to David's genealogy.

King David wanted to build a temple where God would dwell. The Lord was pleased with his faith in God. He promised "a dynasty that will last forever" to appear through his descendants. But David wanted to build a house of God made by the hands of man.

However, through the descendants of Jesus Christ, God created the spiritual temple of believers through the faith of the saints. This is because of the real function of the true temple and the eternal temple God wants to build.

In the Old Testament, through the building of the temple, the people of Israel confirmed the presence of God visibly by creating with their eyes and hands. But in this age, we have experienced the Lord in every part of the universe through the Holy Spirit.

So, the Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:22, "In union with him, you too are being built together with all the others into a place where God lives through his Spirit." I, you, and us are allowed to become one in Jesus and become a temple where God dwells.

The "cornerstone" in verse 20, originally placed at the corner of the building foundation, served to connect the wall to another wall. Also, in verse 21, the expression "connected" originally meant the organic union of believers. In this way, the building was built through the organic connection of each part based on the cornerstone.

Jesus, the cornerstone, united man and God, Jew and Gentile, East and West, South and North, the poor and the rich, and the intellectual and the ignorant.

Also, the cornerstone is the first stone placed when building a house, and all other stones are placed after it. All other stones are placed on it with the help of that stone.

In other words, this stone is the one that supports the entire building. In this way, Christ is the only foundation upon which man can build, and everything that is not laid upon it will fall. Therefore, we must all be built with Christ as the cornerstone, as a dwelling place for God.

In modern buildings where, cement concrete and reinforcing bars are used, it is impossible to find parts that are compared to the same concept as the cornerstone of an old house. Then, are all buildings built with modern construction methods perfectly safe? Even if the foundation of a building is laid in the core of the earth, no structure built on the ground is ever safe.

However, there is one possible and only safe construction method that seems impossible. This is possible when we build a hanging house in heaven. That is, even though we are on earth, we can always be safe only in Jesus, the cornerstone.

Citizens of the kingdom of God are peacemakers who make people experience peace because God helps his children preach love, joy, and peace at the expense of themselves wherever they go in the world.

I am very proud to be a citizen of the United States who is guaranteed freedom, peace, and human rights. But how much more joyful is it that I have become a more faithful citizen of heaven after immigration? The Lord protects me with his almighty power through Jesus, who is the cornerstone today.

He is saving the reward that will be given to me on this earth and in the eternal world. Trust that God is doing the same for you, and be glad and thankful always. Amen.

Reflections and Applications for Today's Sermon:

(1) When did you confirm that you were a citizen of heaven? Also, what does your citizenship in heaven mean to you?

(2) If you were able to become one with God and his people thanks to the torn body of Jesus on the cross, what are you required to do for non-believers today?

(3) How does the spiritual principle that God dwells within you through the Holy Spirit affect your daily life? What experiences have you had that relate to that principle?