

“Jesus Chris Is the Same Y, T, and F!”

One day during our vacation two years ago, Euni and I set out to catch crawfish with our two young grandchildren, Caleb and Jacob. We drove an hour and a half from our daughter's house. It was at Regional Parks and Recreation Areas in Santa Clara County, Northern California. While driving, I proudly explained to my grandchildren that I had caught crawfish in Korea when I was young.

The grandchildren were very excited, expecting to have their first chance to catch crawfish. Do you know my deepest desire and prayer topic that day? It was to have Caleb and Jacob, with their grandmother and grandfather, have their first experience catching crawfish.

We arrived at the Chestnut Picnic Area, led by a park ranger, and headed to the stream. But the stream's water was dark gray, and nothing could be seen. And the current was too strong, so little children could not play there. I looked all around that picnic area. However, among the many adults and children who went out for a picnic there, I could not meet anyone who was catching crawfish.

Euni and I were so sorry for our grandchildren. So, we had to call our daughter and ask for the name of the place again. Finally, we confirmed we were in the wrong place; we should have gone to the Sycamore Group Area. At that moment, I was very happy that we had made a mistake. So, I shouted, "Hallelujah, Praise the Lord." Because if I find the right way, there is hope now that we could really catch crawfish.

I drove for a while and thought about it: 'When was I ever happy because of the mistake I made?' I couldn't easily remember that experience from my past. But this realization made me very excited. It is because I could always believe that if I continued to apply this spiritual principle in my life, I could always live in hope and thanksgiving.

How much are we all nervous because of our fear of making mistakes in our lives? And because of these mistakes, we are frustrated and tempted to give up on life.

But how much stability and peace can our lives have if we always have hoped every time, even though we have made some mistakes? Is it really possible for us?

So, let's look at the reason here why I could shout Praise the Lord in the Chestnut Picnic Area. It was because of confidence in the future. By driving four more miles on the trail, we were able to reach the Sycamore Group Area, where we could really catch crawfish. That was a simple solution, but how can we meet forces or beings that can guarantee our future, and who can do it for us?

I. We must first admit it and shout the answer to that question joyfully and boldly. He is Jesus Christ!

The author of Hebrews in the New Testament today says to us, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me? Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (vs. 6, 8). Jesus does not end with a simple "hope" that cannot exist for us. He is the most mighty and reliable power in our lives and faith.

Who in the world besides Jesus could be the same yesterday, today, and forever? Although it is impossible for all beings in the world, it is possible only for Jesus Christ, for he is the Creator. But He volunteered to help us through our faith in Him as our Savior. Thus, no power in the universe, neither humans nor the environment, can cut us from his love and protection.

But we live, often forgetting the security given to us by our great Creator. Why? This is because humans have a nature and habit of recognizing the value of something only when they achieve or possess it by paying a very high price. But remember, such security came at the ultimate price, and we paid that price already clearly.

Jesus paid the cost of our desperate and painful sin with His death on our behalf. Now, by his grace, we are his children, not servants. In Him, we are free forever, bold, victorious, happy, and grateful. It is an integral part of our faith to remember it. We now live under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, with the cross of glory instead of the wooden cross of punishment.

On our path of faith, objectively, pain and joy coexist. But the Lord encourages us to choose subjectively and joyously in the way, and relatively, He exhorts us to leave all that suffering to Him.

II. Now let us pay attention to the scripture from the book of Jeremiah.

Here, God continues to rebuke Israel repeatedly for its unbelief. Think of what the core of that unbelief is. Humans always prefer righteous behavior but always fail to execute it. So, they give up obeying God under the excuse that it is too difficult to obey Him.

However, God knows that it is impossible for us to carry out righteous actions on our own. So, He demands that we depend entirely on His name and strength. Hence, God wants us to turn our hearts and interests first to Him for our righteous faith, and He promises to help us resolve righteous actions through the power of the Holy Spirit.

However, Gentile gods and religions always demand determination or self-denial of actions that are instinctual in human nature. This is because human beings are attracted to the extremes of wrong and right as a way of avoiding their weaknesses. But the promise of the blessing of incompetent evil spirits on humans is only fiction from the beginning.

Let us look at the two evils that God pointed toward Israel. They have forsaken the Lord, the source of living water, and have dug up a broken pool that cannot hold water. This refers to the fact that they served useless idols. This is the result of their unbelief in the omnipotence and faithfulness of God. God wanted to make it clear that they were making a religious mistake.

Very often, we finite human beings try to understand and treat Almighty God in our own way. But when we do so, there is only self-deceit and degeneration. However, the Almighty God allows us to utilize His unlimited possibilities, bringing hope, tolerance, and healing. This is possible because of the unchanging and eternal love and power of the Lord.

According to Hebrews, God is pleased that we do good, share possessions, and serve one another. In addition, He is pleased when we call on His name in praise and acknowledge him as supreme.

For this is the fruit of our lips. This is why we should enjoy a lot of praise, both individually and jointly.

We try to please God by making great sacrifices for Him. But remember that God is greatly pleased with our little acts of service as well. He is very pleased when we remember His love, seek Him, and acknowledge His highest authority (Jr. 2:6–8).

These are the fellowships between us and the Lord. Furthermore, the Lord entrusts us with a bigger vision of heaven and the work of salvation as our faith matures.

Let's go back to the crawfish story. Do you think we really caught crawfish that day? Of course, we did. Although they were as small as a knuckle on my finger, we caught three crawfish and many baby rainbow trout of 14 different sizes, as a bonus unexpectedly. The grandchildren refused to come out of the stream, shouting “a little more, a little more.” I put the fish in a large bucket with some stream water and took them home.

After three days, I knew I could no longer manage the fish. In the end, I found a natural water creek four miles away. Monday afternoon, I loaded the fish into the car. After Euni and I picked up our grandchildren from daycare, we went to Val Vista Park together.

When we descended to the creek there to release the fish, suddenly Caleb shouted, “There's a crawfish!” In the stream, I saw a crawfish as big as my finger. It was a total unexpected surprise at all for us. When we caught it, his head and two big, dark red claws that looked like oven gloves, were very beautiful and unique. The grandsons put the fish in nets and put them one by one in the creek. Together, we blessed them to grow well in the stream and in the larger rivers.

Through this little incident, I thanked so much for God's response and grace to me. Above all, I am happy to allow my grandchildren the opportunity to experience the hand of God through nature. Oh, and of course, I'm very happy no one got pinched by any of the crawfish!

Nature still lives 100% in obedience to God's hand and providence after creation. It is possible in God, the Creator, whose love and patience have not changed yesterday, today, and forever.

Likewise, nature is proving to us, through their existence, the principle of creation that if we obey God 100%, He will protect us 100% in His safety.

The same God created us human beings in His image. And He gave them His strength, wisdom, and life to bless them and live great lives. Today, you are that very creation.

Believe and remember the Creator, who has prepared His unchanging love for you forever, past, present, and future. There, your life will be spiritually and physically prosperous. Amen.

Reflections and Applications for Today's Sermon:

- 1) The true failure of faith is not our sins but our failure to repent. Identify two evils that God can point out to you, and repent sincerely. (Refer to Jeremiah 2:13)
- 2) How do the everlasting love of Jesus Christ and His word of truth inspire you, as His child, to take action today?
- 3) During the coming week, when you wake up in the morning or before you go to bed at night, let's confess and cry out Hebrews 13:6. "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?"