



Sermon, Sunday October 13, 2024

“The Meaning of the Death of Jesus Christ”

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-10 ^{1:1} Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³ He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. ^{2:5} Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. ⁶ But someone has testified somewhere, “What are humans that you are mindful of them or mortals that you care for them? ⁷ You have made them for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned them with glory and honor, ⁸ subjecting all things under their feet.”

Introduction: The only way to save humanity

Today is the 21st Sunday after Pentecost. Most churches today have crosses. The cross was the instrument of execution in the Roman Empire, so it is not natural to use it as a religious symbol. In the beginning, crosses were not installed in churches. They began to be installed in churches during the 5th century, after Christianity had established itself as the official religion of Rome. This was possible because the doctrine that Jesus Christ hung on the cross to save mankind was firmly established within the Roman Empire.

What do people think about the Christian doctrine of the cross? People outside the church believe, **'It makes no sense that our sins were forgiven, and we were saved by Jesus dying on the cross in our place.'** The people outside the church continue to believe that **'If God is the Creator, he would not have sent his only son, Jesus, to die on the cross.'** It leads to the thought that **'He was able to directly forgive our sins and save us.'** Even for early Christians, this question was a serious challenge. Was Jesus' death on the cross the only way to save humanity? Let's find the answer to this question through today's text.

Body: The cross and death of Jesus Christ

Hebrews 1:3, the text of today's sermon, describes the essence of Jesus Christ in a very concise sentence: **“He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”**

In this verse, the expression that Jesus is **‘the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being’** means that Jesus Christ is the visible God. This is the concept that Jesus Christ is like God in essence.

Jesus' disciples and early Christians believed confidently that God's will, revelation, and word were fully revealed eschatologically in Jesus Christ. So the first half of Hebrews 1:2 says, **“But in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son.”** This verse means that God's revelation came to an end in Jesus Christ. In other words, it means that salvation was completed through Jesus Christ.

Many modern people today believe that they do not need a savior. Many people say that they can take care of their own lives, saying that Christians must not interfere with their lives in the name of God. Although many modern people look down on Christian worship, they follow modern, cutting-edge material civilization as if it



were worship. Why do so many people reject the God of Christianity but cling to pseudo-religious phenomena? What will be the result?

The Bible's answer to this question is separation from God the Creator. This happens because we do not know God, the source of life.

However, people outside the church make the following claims that differ from the Bible's answer. **“Christians are trapped in religious categories and live as slaves but differ from Christians those who trapped in religious, they are enjoy freedom.”** Of course, they can make these claims as much as they like. What is important in this debate is who experiences true freedom.

The Bible declares that Jesus is light, the only Son of God, the Savior, and that He had made purification for sins. (Hebrews 1:3). The fact that Jesus had made purification of our sins means that he gave us true freedom.

The fundamental meaning of sin in the Bible is the desire to elevate oneself to the level of God. Sin is pride, self-worship, self-pity and self-love without God. This attitude toward life comes from not believing in God, the Lord of life. People who live this way cannot escape from the constant worry of what to eat, drink, and wear.

But I am not saying that we can live happily with God alone even if we do not have daily bread. All people must work together to solve problems related to our daily needs.

The fundamental problem of our lives is that we are not satisfied with just the daily bread needed for survival. This attitude of our lack of self-sufficiency makes our souls sick.

The fact that our sins have been purified through Jesus in Hebrews 1:3 mentioned above means that we can free ourselves from the worries that make us sick by turning from our desire for ourselves to God. However, living this kind of life is not easy. Honestly, it is difficult to achieve this kind of life.

Jesus told us to repent because the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

The kingdom of Heaven is the reign of God. The God that the Bible speaks of is the Creator, the one in charge of history, and the one who will complete the world. According to Jesus' expression, God is the Father who is responsible for our lives. God is like a shepherd trying to find a lost sheep.

Each of our experiences with God is different. For example, let's imagine that a person is diagnosed with cancer and enters the operating room to undergo surgery. If they had learned the God of the Bible well and is faithful to their worship life, they will experience God's peace, even in the operating room.

The same applies to people awaiting death in a hospice ward. We can experience the fact that God is with us during all the difficult situations we try to avoid. People who have failed in business, who have been heartbroken, lost their jobs, or failed college entrance exams, etc., have all experienced difficult situations. The event that confirmed the fact that God is with us no matter what situation we are in is the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Jesus' death on the cross is not an event that can objectively comfort people in difficult situations. This is because Jesus' death on the cross cannot meet our real-life needs right now. In 1 Corinthians 1:23, Paul mentioned that Jesus' death on the cross was a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. But for Christians, it is God's power and God's wisdom, because through the death of Jesus on the cross, the radiance of God's glory, we no longer fear death.

The Jesus described in the Bible was not aloof when faced with death on the cross. Jesus prayed to God to help him avoid death on the cross if possible. But he obeyed God's will, not his own. That's how Jesus died on the cross. However, after his death, something happened that no one expected. Hebrews 2:9, says: **“But we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”**



According to this verse, the most cursed death on the cross of Jesus Christ became death for all people by the 'grace of God.' As a result, we became children of God and possessed eternal life. We are not afraid of death because we believe in eternal life. Also, because we are not afraid of death, we do not worry too much about what happens in our reality.

Conclusion: We are blessed that Paul's confession will become our confession.

Christians, in our real lives, must do their best to get closer to Jesus, who wore the crown of glory and honor by suffering death. Paul described this fact movingly in Philippians 3:10-14. I hope that this confession of Apostle Paul can be the confession of all of us.

"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow, I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." Amen!

