



Sermon, Sunday January 5, 2025 "The Lord Is with Us in Our Troubles"

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 63:7-9 ⁷I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. ⁸For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not act deceitfully," and he became their savior ⁹in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Introduction: The Way to Live Happily

Today is the first Sunday of 2025. I sincerely hope that your 2025 will be filled with happiness-and that you all will be healthy and worry-free.

However, even if the conditions of life that we generally consider happy are met, our happiness is not guaranteed. This is because the conditions of a happy life that we think of can easily collapse. Also, the things that we think of as the conditions of a happy life become boring over time. Therefore, a person cannot enjoy complete happiness under any living conditions.

The Bible says that the way for people to live happily is to be with the Lord, because the Lord is the one who created life. Many people do not take this claim of the Bible seriously. Because of them, the world seems to revolve without the Lord. In the eyes of many people, money and power seem to rule the world. This was also the case with the ancient Jews. In the eyes of the Jews, empires with superior military and economic power seemed to rule the world.

The empire that ruled the lives of the Jews at the time of the prophet Isaiah in today's text was Babylon. In 587 BC, Jerusalem was destroyed by Babylon. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, and the people of Jerusalem were massacred or taken into slavery. The Jews of that time thought that the happy times were over. The situation of the Jews at that time was very desperate.

Body: The Lord's Grace and Our Tribulation

To the Jewish people who were in such despair, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed the Lord's message. Verse 7 of today's text says, "**I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.**"

However, to the Jewish people who were in a desperate situation, this message sounded like a very boring word rather than touching. Because the reality they were in was so desperate. Even if they ended their captivity and returned to Jerusalem, not all their problems would be solved. What is the basis for Isaiah telling the Jewish people about the grace of the Lord in today's text?

Rather than telling people objective evidence, Isaiah speaks about the Lord that he experienced. In verse 8 of the text, the prophet Isaiah says, "**He said, 'Surely, they are my people, children who will not deal falsely'; and he became their savior.**" In this passage, the prophet Isaiah expressed his confidence that if the Jewish people were the chosen ones of the Lord, the Lord would lead and protect them. However, as we see in the history of Israel, they did not fully trust this. However, some of the Jewish people listened to the words of the prophets.



But why do some people hear the message of the prophet Isaiah in today's text and others don't? In today's text, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed the Lord's mercy and grace, the assurance that the Jewish people are the Lord's people, and that the Lord is with the Jewish people in their tribulations. If these words of the prophet Isaiah enter our hearts, we can live as people who have experienced the Lord.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Our lives, which long for happiness, become difficult because of the tribulations that come among us. The reason the Jewish people left the Lord was also because of the tribulations. However, if we are sure that the Lord is with us during the tribulations, we can overcome the tribulations.

The tribulations we experience in our lives are so diverse, but to understand the life that the Lord is with us, let us think about the difficulties that poverty gives us.

In today's text, Isaiah's words that the Lord is with us in our tribulation can be expressed as the Lord participating in our poor lives. However, if someone wants to experience the presence of the Lord while living a rich life, is this possible? It may not be impossible, but it is not easy to deeply experience the Lord in a rich life. This is because when people have many things to rely on, they do not seek the Lord well. This is the dilemma that our lives have.

We want to live comfortably financially, if possible, but it is difficult for us to truly seek the Lord while living like that. Do you want to live a life where you are rich and do not seek the Lord, or do you want to live a life where you are poor and seek the Lord? Do you think I am talking too extreme? Or do you want to claim that you can live a comfortable life as a rich person and still seek the Lord deeply?

Then, on the contrary, can we seek the Lord more because we are poor? The pain of poverty makes human life impoverished. So, if our life is poor, our life will be too hard and tiring. That is why a poor life can be an obstacle to seeking the Lord. However, the poor have something that the rich do not have. It is desperation. This desperation is the foundation for the poor to experience the Lord. I am convinced that the message of the prophet Isaiah is right that the Lord is involved in all our troubles. What do you think?

Conclusion: The Cross of Jesus

The message of the prophet Isaiah that the Lord is present in all our troubles is realized in our lives through Jesus. The apostle Paul said in Philippians 2:6-7, **“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”**

On the cross, Jesus cried out, **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”** (Matthew 27:46). This is Jesus being forsaken by God. In this place of death, Jesus Christ, that is, God, exists.

We often believe in God, but sometimes we think that God may not exist. This is because our experiences and knowledge do not allow us to understand the world and life with certainty. There are too many things in our lives that we do not know. Therefore, living our lives day by day is not easy. We each run frantically to achieve our dreams in life, but at some point, we are confused about where we are heading.

If the Lord exists, why is life and the world so uncertain? Where can we experience the Lord with certainty? Perhaps, the question of whether the Lord does not exist may not be resolved until we die. However, I believe that this question is the process of our coming closer to the Lord.

In a life that we cannot know for sure, the prophets of the Old Testament give us the light of life, as in today's text. Today, Isaiah proclaimed the Lord as **‘the One who is with us in all our troubles.’**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! The year 2025 has begun. This year, please do not worry about the tribulations that will occur in our lives. The reason we worry like this is because we are afraid that we may not get what we want. However, if we can experience the Lord deeply even if we do not get what we want, isn't that happier? I hope that you all will experience happiness through your deep walk with the Lord in 2025. **Amen!**

