

When We Find Rest in Our Lives

[Illustration] Whose sin is it...?

A church was conducting baptism. Before baptism began, a pastor was supposed to ask the congregation a few questions regarding baptism. On that Sunday, an elderly woman was planned to be baptized. The elderly woman's daughter-in-law told her "Mother, if the pastor asks, 'Why did Jesus die on the cross,' you should say, 'He died because of my sin.' Do you understand?" The elderly woman nodded as if she had understood it well.

The daughter-in-law was still not at ease, so she asked again. Then, the elderly woman became annoyed and told her, "I got it. Don't worry!" The next day, the baptism began. Before the congregation the pastor asked the same question that the daughter-in-law asked. "Ma'am, I just want to ask you one of the most important questions. Why did Jesus die on the cross?" Then she answered without any hesitation. "Yes, because of the sins of my daughters-in-law." The elderly woman simply thought that when her daughter-in-law said, "Jesus died for my sins," it meant that Jesus died for her daughter-in-law's sin.

Dear Beloved, Jesus died for us. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Jesus died on the cross in order to save us from the power of sin and death. Do you believe this? Isaiah 53:5 says, "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." I hope you will be able to confirm the love of God again in today's message.

When we look at Israel at the time of today's message, Israel experienced a seven-year long civil war after King Saul's death. The southern part of the kingdom, where the tribe of Judah was located, was on the side of David, and the northern Israel was on the side of Saul's family. They had to fight for their own survival. In the end, David came out victorious in the long civil war against the family of Saul and he became the king of the unified kingdom of Israel.

David was anointed and blessed by the prophet Samuel in his early days as a boy,

but at the same time, his life began to be persecuted by King Saul. He had been on the run from Saul for about ten years. Since the death of King Saul, he had been anointed again as the king of the tribe of Judah. He ruled Judah in Hebron for several years, and eventually he was anointed for the third time to be king over all Israel. Do you know how long it took for God's promise to come true? It took about twenty years for the United Kingdom of Israel to be established, that is, for God's promise to be fully realized. David, the shepherd boy of Bethlehem, did not come out victorious against Goliath and became king of Israel overnight. He was disciplined again and again and learned to live a life of faith, patience, and obedience to God.

1. After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him

Before the LORD struck down all the enemies around him and made him king to live in peace in the palace, David had to fight for decades on the battlefield and had to live a long time in the face of death. David eventually found peace, in other words rest. There are moments in our lives that are full of pain, hurt, suffering, and fear, but these times are sure to pass. It will pass somehow whether you pass it with faith or pass it without faith. What is important, however, is that when we answer with faith, God adds God's precious blessings.

The first point I want to share in today's message is that when God gives us rest and allows us to live in peace, we must look to God instead of gazing at the world. We must take time to reflect on our relationship with God. When David found rest after the long battles, he looked back at his relationship with God.

2. He said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent."

One day, while David was living in a beautiful palace built out of cedar trees in the grace of God, he had a heavy heart that he could not endure. At that time, cedar wood was the best material from which to build palaces. He was living in a gorgeous palace, but the symbol of God's presence was just in a shabby tent. He felt so sorry. So, he wanted to build a temple for God that would be much bigger and better than his royal palace. It was because David loved God so much. David's desire to build a temple for God was from a pure and beautiful heart of faith.

However, God did not allow David to build the temple. There were two reasons.

One was that God considered the traveling tent to be sufficient as a symbol of God's presence. This is what we read in the Bible today. If God wanted a temple, God would have commanded people to build a temple. Just like when the people built the ark of Noah and the tabernacle. But it had been over 400 years since the Israelites settled in the land of Canaan, so God probably had a plan that the Israelites would eventually build the temple.

Another reason God did not allow David to build the temple was written in 1 Chronicles as David says in his confession. 1 Chronicles 22:8 says, "But this word of the Lord came to me: 'You have shed much blood and have fought many wars. You are not to build a house for my Name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in my sight.'"

God did not accept David's plan for building the temple, but God was gladly pleased with David's pure and faithful heart, the first of mankind, to build a temple for God even before God commanded him. And God blessed David even more. From that day on, David began to prepare the necessary funds and materials for his son to build the temple on his behalf.

Usually when there is rest and peace, people turn their eyes to the world. They look for things to enjoy in the world and want to show off their achievements. This is natural. But David was SO SORRY for God. It's important for David to think about his relationship with God. Of course, there were many difficulties. But God blessed him in many ways. Often we see what we lack first. But David was a man who could see how great the grace he had received from God. Likewise, whenever we come before God and find true rest, I pray that we may look towards God just like David did. That is what blessed life is!

The second point of today's message is this: I want you to keep an eye on the love of God that leads from the tabernacle to the temple and to the cross. In verse 6, God says this. "Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle." *It reminded me of a scene in the Garden of Eden. God walked in the tent and in the tabernacle as God walked in the garden. According to the Old Testament, the tabernacle was the portable earthly dwelling place of God. The tabernacle is called [Mishkan] in a Hebrew word, a word derived from a verb meaning "to dwell, to live" which symbolizes God's presence. The tabernacle

teaches us that God made a great sacrifice on our behalf in order to dwell with us.

The tabernacle is divided into the sanctuary and the holy place. Later, when Solomon became king, he built a temple in the form of a building that David had so desperately wanted. They call the inside of this temple a sanctuary. 'Sanctuary' means 'holy place'. Within the sanctuary, there is a special place which is divided by the curtain. It is the 'Holy of Holies', where only the high priest could enter once a year.

The Holy of Holies was covered with a very thick curtain to prevent anyone from approaching it. According to the Jewish tradition, the curtain is 8 to 9 inches thick cloth, 60 feet high and 20 feet wide. Why was the curtain so big and heavy? It means that the wall of sin between God and human is big and heavy. It means that sinners cannot have easy access to the 'Presence of the Holy God.'

But in Matthew 27, when Jesus was crucified, it was written that the curtain was torn from top to bottom. The importance of this is that after Jesus' crucifixion, the first thing that God had done was to split the curtain of the Holy of Holies. As a result, the place that was hidden from the world for thousands of years had been revealed to the whole world. Therefore, from then on, anyone can come to the holy place of God to be in the presence of God.

Hebrews 9 explains the significance of this. "He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption." (Hebrews 9:12) That is, Jesus' crucifixion represented that one sacrifice would replace the numerous sacrifices that is to come for all eternity. The curtain was like a wall blocked between God and sinners. However, now it is gone because of the Cross of Jesus Christ.

When we look at the relationship between God and people in the Bible, people always broke the relationship because of sin, but God came down from heaven to the earth. This has a very important meaning in faith. We say that we should come to God and live a life that follows God. But it means that before we draw near to God, God comes to us first.

We say we have the courage to grab the Lord's hand, but what good is it that we

have courage if the Lord has not already come before us! We boast that we have had a great deal of heart and opened the door to the Lord, but what good would it be if the Lord had not been waiting at the door? Through the meaning of the tabernacle and the temple, I hope that you and I are once again thankful for the love of Jesus on the cross!

We often think that there is a reason why God blesses us and loves us. We think that there is something that God wants us to do for God. Let's take another view on this matter. When parents are raising their children, do they raise them because they hope to receive something from their children in the future? Do they consider whether it is worth investing their time and money in their children? Maybe there are parents like that... However, parents' hearts for their children are not like that to begin with.

I have two children in college, but I do not expect them to make a lot of money in the future and buy me nice things. I only wish that they meet Jesus personally and live a life loving Jesus as a follower of Christ or Christian. I hope that they live a life serving others in the name of Jesus Christ instead of buying me nice things. This is my genuine desire for them. If one parent's heart for their children is like this, then how much more would our God in Heaven be for us?

In today's scripture, God said to David in the context of this: 'When did I ask you to build a good house for me?' When God wants us to worship God and live a life that follows God, it is only for our own good.

Dear Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus, I pray that you may come to God in your life even when you are living in peace just like David. And don't forget the mercy of God and the great love of the cross of Jesus Christ in our hearts as we live our lives. God wants us to have a healthy and lasting relationship with God. Let us build a community of faith that is healthier and stronger ever before in the presence of God! I bless you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you may find rest and peace in the Lord this week. Amen.