

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas  
May 7, 2017

## Stay In Christ

Luke 24:28-35

24:28 So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther,

24:29 but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.

24:30 When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them.

24:31 And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

24:32 They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

24:33 And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,

24:34 saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

24:35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

### **1. Don't go away from Christ**

Last week, we have learned that the resurrected Jesus appeared in front of the two disciples who were heading to Emmaus and explained the Scripture (Luke 24:13-27). The two disciples believed in Jesus as the Savior and committed to follow Him. However, he died and they

believed that everything came to end; therefore, they decided to leave Jerusalem and go back to their home. They were apart from the Savior and from other disciples. It was very disappointing.

However, these two words tell us a lot. This verse tells that Jesus, the Son of God, became human and experienced all of the pains and sorrows of us, and knows our pains and sorrows by experience. It may be the deepest sorrow for us to see the death of the beloved. Jesus knows the sorrow. He mourns with those who are mourning, and weeps with those who are weeping.

Even today, there are many people who are leaving the church and their Savior for many reasons. But, God, now and always, is calling those who are leaving from Him. 2 Peter 3:9 says, “the Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” In Matthew 11:28, Jesus is inviting people saying, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Are there any people on the earth who do not have any load and do not need comfort? Even though children who are fulfilled with energy, they sometimes feel disappointed because they can not handle with their emotional pressures. When I was at a church in Silicon Valley, I talked to a boy who was dispirited. He answered “I am very tired”. He had been busy all week because of his study, lesson, and sports activity etc. Doesn't matter the children or adults, no matter what kinds of environment, we have burdens and need the Savior. Jesus has been inviting all people to Him and the churches also are inviting the people to Christ.

However, how does Jesus feel when they come to the church but do not meet Jesus or even meet Jesus but leave Him later? It is very sad. We have desire that people know Jesus, and believe in Him, then confess their faith by baptism. However, the baptism is not a goal. It is the beginning. Baptized believers shall stay in Christ, walk with Christ, and be transformed to the character of Christ. We have to keep the grace of baptism and our commitment through it. Let us stay in Christ, not go away from Him.

## **2. Welcome Christ into Your Life**

By the way, in Buddhism it has three generations/statuses, called “Sho-ho,” “Zoh-ho,” and “Ma-ppo.” “Sho” means “accurate,” or “appropriate,” so the first generation describes the status practices “accurate principles” of Buddhism. “Zoh” is “from,” and it symbolizes “formalism.” It explains the status people forget the truthful things and just imitate the outer forms. Finally, “Matsu (Ma is the shorten form because of Japanese syllable structure)” means “the end” and the principles and forms of Buddhism are all destructed in this status. The more time goes by, the more superficial the faith would be; it is as same as Christianity. Churches once had been persecuted at the time of establishment, yet no one could destroy the souls of believers, even though their persecution in fact killed the bodies of believers, according to Matthew 10:28, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” It has rather strengthen Christian’s faith through persecution at the time. Despite the toughness, after all, when people were freed from persecution, and

many came into churches, it gradually lost the accurate form of faith and people tended to have the untruthful faith for Jesus Christ.

Faithful-hearted people couldn't have given upon such situation and prayed for the Revival again; then it occurs Reformation and Revival. It was enough to let the "superficial faith" spring back to life. This year, 2017, is the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. In 500 years, the Bible was translated into various languages. It has over 2000 ways of communication in this world, I often refer, but most people can read the Bible by their mother language nowadays. As you see, the Gospel has been literally spread all over the world.

It is also true that the stuffs of the world "invaded" the churches in the 500 years, indeed. Throughout history, the churches took "the ship" as an analogy; the ship is only useless on the land, and should take voyage in the sea. Likewise, the churches should be watered by the world and walk with people in the world, yet the ship has to keep away from the water trying to soak it down. Churches shall stand firm surrounded by the principles and rules of the world for keep being responsible for the mission we have in this world.

What if the Bible has no right and authority in churches, prayers disappear, and people enjoy like in the culture centers or clubhouses? Many people might come in, but where is the worship place? The Bible teaches how we must keep the principles of worship; and if you follow the principles, you could accommodate the gaps between rules and cultures. However, we could never exchange the sacred worship and secular attitude. Recently, people might lose the proper form of worship and forget the truth. Not only Buddhism, but also Christianity might forget the principles and break the form down in the "Ma-ppo"

generation.

We will never give up, regardless. Jesus did appear to the disciples, interpreted the Bible, and testified Himself, because He couldn't look through the two guys of Emmaus about to go back their village without the faith of the Resurrection. Jesus had taken the churches back into the right place again and again, throughout the history, because He loved the churches and couldn't only look at the churches soaked down in the waves of untruthfulness. When the apostles got in the ship on Galilee Lake, the storm was strong enough to break the ship, and at the time, Jesus came to the ship and got in it. When the disciples welcomed Him the storm became still, according to Matthew 14:22-34, Mark 6:35, and James 6:16-21. When you about to be watered and everything seems to be shortly broken down, Jesus could still say, "Fear not, it's me," and come close to us. If we joyfully accept Jesus Christ, we could be once more the one who commit to the mission. Again, and many times again, we should follow Jesus Christ as the Lord of churches and the Lord of our lives, as ourselves having the new commitment of faith.

### **3. Abide In Christ**

Now, let's go back to the today's gospel. When they arrived the village, the two disciples asked the stranger who had been traveling with them, saying, "Stay with us" without recognizing it was Jesus. The word, "stay" in this verse is not a special word. It is translated into "remain", "stay", and "abide" in the English Bibles. However, this word has a unique meaning in the New Testament. This means not only a traveler stay physically in someone's house, but also Jesus

Christ is with the believers spiritually, and the believers are with Him by faith.

The most important verses which this word is used in such spiritual meaning is John chapter 15. In verse 4, Jesus said to the disciples, “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.” Both the word “stay” in Luke 24:29 and the word “abide” in John 15:4 are the same in the original language. This word teaches us that we are with Christ and Christ is with us does not mean the physical distance. The word, “stay” or “abide” does not mean that someone just comes to the church and touches the Bible a little. It has the deeper meaning more than that. The relationship between Christ and the believers is the relationship between vine and branches. The believers grow in the life of Christ like branches grow getting nourishment from the vine. It is not a physical but the organic relationship that we stay in Christ and Christ abides in us. It is the relationship of life that Christ is with us and we live in Christ.

When the two disciples said, “Stay with us,” they didn’t say it in the spiritual or religious meaning. But we, who are reading this portion now, can say it in the spiritual or religious meaning. We can say, “Lord, stay with us. We also stay with you” as our answer to the word of Jesus, “Abide in me, and I in you.”

Jesus went to their house answering their request, “Stay with us.” And blessed the bread at the table. Verses 30 and 31 read, “When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.” The sentence, “he took the bread and blessed and broke it and

gave it to them” is exactly the same as the sentence describing the Lord’s Supper. But there were only the Twelve at the Last Supper. The two disciples might recognize Jesus by recalling the feeding of the five thousands. Jesus also “took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them” at the miracle. Since the feeding of the five thousands is closely connected to the Lord’s Supper, the sentence reminds us Jesus at the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper is the invitation of Jesus for us to abide in Him. As we join the Lord’s Supper, we abide in Christ and live in His life.

When the two disciples recognized that the stranger was Jesus, they immediately went back to Jerusalem. They asked Jesus, saying “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent,” but they started to Jerusalem where other disciples were there, thought it was already dark. They just came back their house. Why they went to Jerusalem? Because they found that they should go back not to Emmaus, but to Jerusalem. They witnessed Jesus was alive there and met the other witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus, and met Jesus Himself again in Jerusalem. The two disciples had faith in the Resurrection, and became “authentic” disciples of Jesus Christ, and had a fresh start as witnesses of the Resurrection.

Do you want to have the same experience? Even our hearts and life look temporally far from God, the Lord never abandon us. He continues to talk us with His words and invite us to Himself again by the Lord’s Supper. Listen to His voice. Answer to His calling. If you already have met Christ, it was the irreplaceable experience. Why don’t you enrich and develop the life changing experience by staying in Christ?

## **(Prayer)**

Our Father, we thank You that the Lord Jesus Christ is always inviting us to stay in Him. We answer the invitation saying the prayer, “Stay with us. Abide with us.” Help us to abide in Christ. In Jesus’ name, Amen.