

January 13, 2019

God the Father

John 14:1-7

14:1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.

14:2 In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

14:4 And you know the way to where I am going.”

14:5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

14:7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

1. God of Personality

When Apostle Paul stayed in Athens, he was given an opportunity to witness for Jesus Christ in the place called “Aleopagus.” People in Athens worshiped many gods and built altars for the gods as much as they knew. In addition to that, they also built an altar for “Unknown gods” because there would be gods that they still did not know. Paul, who knew it, started talking like this. “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.” (Acts 17:22-23)

If Paul came to Japan, he would have preached in the same way. Since there are many gods in Japan as Athens, and they are enshrined everywhere. Japanese gods are called "*Yayorozu no kami*", and "*Yaoyorozu*" can be written in kanji "eight million." So, literally "eight million" gods will be there. In Japan, someone said "I believe in God," the person just being told, "Oh, is it so?" There is probably no resistance. Many of Japanese accept all "gods", but they do not particularly believe in one of them.

When the Apostles' Creed says, "I believe in God," the "God" begins with capital letter. In English it is "God" rather than lowercase "god." Lower case "god" is a common noun, but uppercase "God" is a proper noun. When Christians say, "I believe in God," it means not to accept the concept of deity, but to trust the person who is called by the name of "God," and who is a Person.

When Christians say, "I believe in God" in such meaning, people tend to have a bad face and say, "I do not want to hear that," or as the people of Athens told Paul, they will tell, "We will hear you again about this." (Acts 17: 32) And when you say that "I believe in this God," opposition will come about. Indeed, the first Christians were called "atheists" because of their faith confession and they were persecuted. It is strange that Christians who believe in God were called "atheists," but it is because the Christians did not believe in Greek or Roman gods.

But true believers did not stop confessing, "I believe in God." Because people can not be saved without clear faith in God; that is trust in God who is a Person. Those who keep the true confession to God, and return to the confession even if they have failures and

stumbling, can gain confidence in the salvation. If the believers obscure this confession, who can know the true living God? If the believers do not truly confess God, God will remain “The Unknown God” for people. We would like to be the people who confess clearly at any time, “I believe in God.”

2. God the Father

As the Apostles’ Creed states, “I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth,” it calls God as “Creator” or “Father.” The Latin word order of this part is “God, Father, Almighty, Creator.” The One we believe is first called “God,” then “Father”, and then called “Creator.”

So, in what meaning is God called “Father?” First of all, it is because God is the Creator and Source of “heaven and earth”, that is, everything in the world. Hippocrates (460-370 BC) is “father of medicine,” Newton (1643-1727) is “father of modern science,” Bach (1685-1750) is “father of music,” Adam Smith (1723-1790) is called “father of economics.” Japan also has various “fathers.” For example, Kano Jigoro is said to be “the father of judo”. In the United States “founding fathers” is not alone, but refers to many people who have signed the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States. These people are carved with their portraits on dollar bills. George Washington of one dollar bill, Thomas Jefferson of two dollar bill, Alexander Hamilton of ten dollar bill, Benjamin Franklin of 100 dollar bills. These people were called “fathers” because they produced something that had not been until then and has continued for a long time since then. But God is the “Father” of those “fathers,”

who is the Source of everything.

The reason God is called “Father” is secondly because he is the Father of Jesus Christ. Now, I said “secondly,” but in reality, I think that should be “firstly.” What God is called “Father” as “Creator” means “like a father,” but in the case of the “Father of the Son”, God is indeed the “Father.” It was two thousand years ago that Son was born as a man from now, but the Son did not come to exist for the first time at that time. He was “born” from the Father God eternally and was with the Father God. He is not One who was made, but rather One who created the world with the Father God. John 1:1-3 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Since the Son is not a man who was created, human words can only say “born” from the Father. Before this world was created, God was the “Father of Son” and “Father God.”

The fact that God is the Father tells us that God is love. There is no greater love than parents love their children. As the Creator, God is caring the world He made, but He is pouring more love on the Son. God is not a philosophy or concept that neither looks nor hears nor feels. He is not a principle or rule that does not have a heart. God is a Person. Moreover, he is not the one who does not know the love of all alone, He is the God of love who is with the Son from eternity, loves the Son with his big, high and deep love that is incredible in human knowledge. God gives that love to those who believe through His Son Jesus. Believing in God is to be deepened by being loved by this “God of love” and led to a relationship that loves “God of love.”

3. Calling His Name

The fact that God is the Father of Jesus Christ seems to be a terrible teaching to other religious people, especially Islamic people. A Biblical scholar, Scott Hahn decided to hold a public debate with a Muslim scholar. At a preparing meeting, when discussing with the Muslim scholar, as soon as Dr. Hahn said, “Father God ...”, the Islamic scholar quickly expressed anger, “Our God, Allah, is transcended everything, do not compare God to human beings.” When Dr. Hahn said “Jesus is the Son of God ...,” he refuted that “God is not a man, so it can not have children.” When Dr. Hahn tried to say, “People who believe in Christ are also adapted as the of God, and receive the love of God,” the Muslim scholar insisted, “God is the Master of every thing, and humans are just his servants. It is a blasphemy that human beings call God 'Father'.” After all, the two ended without any connections, and the public discussion was also canceled.

When I heard this story, I was taught again how much the teachings of the Bible are different from the teachings other religions. It is often said that “Judaism, Christianity and Muslims are all 'monotheism', then they are all similar from the view of 'polytheism'.” But it's not true. There is no other person than Jesus Christ, the Son, who taught and showed God who loves others in truth. Through Jesus Christ, the Son, we can know the God of love, and we can receive the love. Without faith that believes in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, we can not believe in the Father, the God of Love. We cannot know the love of God, and call God “Father,” and receive the love. So Jesus said, “Believe in God; believe also in me,” (John 14: 1) and the Apostles'

Creed confesses, “I believe in God ... and Jesus Christ.” We believe in God as “God the Father” and “God the Father of Jesus Christ.”

Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Jesus did not teach how people can find the way, learn the truth, and nurture life in the verse. If Jesus was only a leader of a religion, you would have heard such a thing. It is often said that “Christianity is 'Christ'.” Yes, the center of teaching of Jesus is always Jesus himself. Jesus says, “I am the way, obey me.” “I am the truth, Learn from me.” and “I am the life, believe in me.”

“No one comes to the Father except through me.” Many people say that this word is “exclusive.” No matter how superior Jesus is, if he is only a human, such words will be highly self-righteous and exclusive. But if Jesus is the only Son of God the Father, there is no more true word than these words. In ancient times, the king entrusted the prince to the real politics, the owner of business entrusted his son to manage it. In that case, the word of the prince was the word of the king, and the contract the son had made was the same as the owner made. The word of the Son of God is the word of God the Father, and what Jesus did was what God did. Therefore, Jesus said, “Whoever has known me has known the Father. Whoever has seen me has seen the Father,” and “ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17:3)

“I believe in God.” It is not to believe in the concept of deity, but to trust God, who is a living Person. It is to be connected to God the loving Father in the true love. And that is done by believing in Jesus

Christ, the Son of the Father and the Savior of the Savior. Only when we believe in Jesus Christ, we can confess, “I believe in God, God the Father of Jesus Christ” with confidence.

(Prayer)

God, the Father of Jesus Christ, you have revealed Yourself to us through Jesus Christ the Son, and invited us in your love. Please give us a clear confession of faith that we can say, “I believe in God the Father of Jesus Christ.” Please guide us so that many people can find you by our confession of faith. We pray this in the name of Jesus.