

January 27, 2019

Omnipotence of God

Psalm 62

62:1 For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.

62:2 He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.

62:3 How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?

62:4 They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse. *Selah*

62:5 For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.

62:6 He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

62:7 On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

62:8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. *Selah*

62:9 Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.

62:10 Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them.

62:11 Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,

62:12 and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work.

1. Faith of Japanese People

There is a proverb, “From faith is also the head of the sardine.” This comes from the event of *Setsubun*. “*Setsubun*,” in other words, “seasonal split” from winter to spring, not only the natural world is booming, but also evil spirits are thought to begin to play their active part in the spirit world. Then people do “*Mame Maki*” that they shed beans and make a “charm” which the head of the sardine stabbed to the branch of the holly for driving evil spirits out of the house. It was believed that the evil spirits hate holly’s leaves and the smell of sardines. From this, the proverb. “From faith is also the head of the sardine,” has come to be used in the sense that it simply believes what is unfounded, regardless of whether it is true or not.

Society consists of “believing.” I came to use “checks” only when I came to the United States. A check is just a piece of paper. If you do not believe, you can not exchange money with it. Banknotes are also made of paper. A 100 dollar bill is not worth a hundred dollars as “paper.” Rather, the coins will have values as metals. However, society is established by trusting in God and believing each other as money is written “IN GOD WE TRUST” on both bills and coins.

When I came to the US it was not the age of the Internet yet, but now, online shopping and online banking become commonplace. Actual money does not move there. it is only number exchange. Therefore, I think that it can be said that there is no time when “believing” is more important than in modern times. Companies also must first think about “credit.” However, in economic activities, there is no one who believes without reasoning or collateral. When you intend to make an investment, you should thoroughly examine the

company's past performance, current performance, and future prospects.

Yet, many people do not know what they believe regarding religious area. Among those who say "My house is Buddhism," how many people know what sect they belong to and what is the teachings? Among the people who visit the shrine, how many know what is enshrined there? Most people do not know, and think that they don't need to know it. When Saygyo visited Ise Shrine, he wrote, "I don't know what I am worshipping, but I have tears falling down for the feeling of thankfulness." That way, there is something beyond human. It has awe of it. The Japanese people have thought that the believing heart is more important than what or why they believe. They are the second and third things.

This Japanese way of thinking is spreading now to countries that were once called "Christian countries." That is what is called "New Age." In "New Age," it is said that the world is not made by God, but it exists by itself and has mysterious power. It says that by having a mysterious connection with the universe, nature, and other people, we can receive their power. It denies faith in the "Father God" who made heaven and earth, and instead brings the faith in "Mother Earth." So called "Healing music" also were born by the influence of "New Age." Recently, in various places, the words "to get rejuvenated" and "to receive power" are used, but this is also from "New Age." What "New Age" is associated with psychology are "self-improvement seminars" and "positive thinking." It is intended to achieve "self-realization" by believing in the "god of human possibility." "New Age" seems to be "new" to Western European people but it only

incorporates Oriental religions, which Japanese have been familiar with for years.

2. Faith of the Bible

According Japanese way of thinking about faith, any gods, even “the head of the sardine” are okay will bring us salvation if we trust sincerely. But the fact is different. Our faith must be connected or headed to the One who has the power of saving people. God is like a power station. Electricity passes from the power station through the transmission line to the household outlets. Often times you will notice that the cord is not in the wall outlet after checking the non-working appliances. Like that, unless our faith is linked to God, the power of God’s salvation will not reach us. It is useless to connect to an outlet where electricity has not come.

Psalm 121 says, “I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?” (Verse 1) There is a forest in the mountains of Japan, and the beasts live and precious ores are found there. Clouds come from the mountain, let it rain, and moisten the fields. Water of thawing falls from the mountain and becomes a river. The mountain was a resource of life. So people worshiped the mountain itself as a god, set up a *torii* at the foot of the mountain, looked up at the mountain and put their palms together for prayer. The Japanese answer to the question; “From where does my help come?” was “From the mountain.” But the Bible says, “My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.” (Verse 2) The believers of the Bible believers do not end up just by looking at high mountains, but far above the mountains, they looked up God in heaven, and trusted in God who

made everything in this world, mountains and fields.

Psalm 62 also says that salvation comes from God who who has the power to save men. This poem was written by David, and Israel in the era of David was surrounded by enemies on all sides. Domestic politics was not yet established, and there were many political enemies against David. David had various difficulties, but each time he trusted in God and asked God for salvation. In verse 1-2 David says, "For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken." David was the most beloved king of Israel and have strong faith in God, but David never said that his faith brought salvation. He said that salvation comes from outside, the almighty god who made heaven and earth. "Humans are helpless, but God is omnipotent." The faith that the Bible teaches is faith that believes in Almighty God.

Even we are not like David, we also have good seasons and bad times, peaceful days and suffering nights, success and failure in our lives. When becoming unable to tolerate hardship and sufferings being crushed, tasting miserable failure, where is our eyes aimed? Some people may be frustrated that others may be happy, looking at only the surrounding people, while they are suffering. Serious believers may mourn for the lack of their faith. And they may look at only themselves and blame their unbelief. But neither brings salvation to us. Let's look up to God. God will represent his power that transcends our minds. Even though our faith is small and weak, faith itself does not rescue people, but God saves people through faith. Just hold on to God and wait for Him.

David tells us, “Trust in him at all times.” (verse 8) Because “power belongs to God” (verse 11) and “steadfast love belongs to the Lord.” (verse 12) In the Apostle Creed, God is called “Almighty Father.” God has love and loving-kindness as the Father as long as He is Almighty. We can believe that not only “God can save and help me.” but also “God will save me and help me.” Believe in Him, and look up to God Almighty.

3. Almighty God

In the Bible, the word “Almighty God” first comes out in Genesis 17:1. God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob as “Almighty God” and they called God “Almighty God,” too. For Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the alias “Almighty God” was not one of the names to God. “Almighty” was also not one of the nature that God has. “Almighty God” is the One who is indispensable to them, and they could not live except to believe in “God Almighty.”

Let’s consider the case of Abraham. God ordered Abraham to leave his hometown and to leave for unknown lands. Abraham had to follow a road that was not even a map with family and property, like pioneers of the frontier period of the United States. Abraham could not do without believing and relying on Almighty God. God also promised to raise a race from Abraham, and he made a covenant, “to be God to you and to your offspring after you.” (Genesis 17:7) However, at that time, both Abraham and Sarah became elderly, and they were in a state where they could not leave descendants. At this time Abraham was asked to believe that God is the “Almighty God” and is the One who fulfills his promises.

Abraham believed the promise of the God and that He is almighty. The New Testament wrote this as follows. “He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.” (Romans 4:19-21) Abraham believed that “God was able to do what he had promised.” He was convinced by the word of God the reality he have not seen yet. That is faith. God always prepare the power for us when He orders us to do something. And when God promises us something, although it seems impossible by human thought, God fulfills it with His almighty power. Indeed, faith is to believe that “nothing will be impossible with God,” (Luke 1: 37) and “there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to me from the Lord.” (Luke 1:45).

“I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.” What a blessing it is to be able to confess like this. “My faithfulness does not save and help me. God’s almighty saves and helps me and supports my faith,” When we believe so and entrust ourselves to the Almighty God, the peace transcending over our understandings filled with heart. Our daily life will become reliable. The apostle Paul says, “I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.” (2 Timothy 1:12) Like Paul, let us say, “I know the one that I believe, step by step through the way of faith, expressing that I am the Almighty God, who I believe,” and keep walking the

journey of faith one day at a time.

(Prayer)

God Almighty Father, how many times we have forgotten that you are omnipotent, and suffered a lot, or were panic, or tried to manage with our own power when we confront various difficulties. In such a case, make me remember the word; “For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.” And lead us to the confession saying, “I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth” in peace. We pray this in the name of Lord Jesus.