

February 10, 2019

God's Only Son

John 1:14-18

1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

1:15 (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'")

1:16 And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

1. The Son

The Apostles' Creed calls Jesus the "God's only Son," saying, "I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord." We read "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son" in John 3:16 and have many songs that sing, "Jesus, God's only Son." However, many people do not know why Jesus is called "God's only Son," and the meanings for us. So today, let us learn that Jesus is "God's only Son."

First of all, let's pay attention to the word "Son." Why is Jesus called "Son?" That is because Jesus is not created by God. God has made everything in this world. Besides God Himself, there is nothing that is not made. Those that are not Creator are creatures, and if he is not a creature, he is Creator. 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.” The “Word” in these verses is Jesus. Especially Jesus before becoming a person and born in this world. This world was made by the “Word”, that is, Jesus. In John 1:1-3, it is written that Jesus is not created, but he is the Creator of the world.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea more than two thousand years ago from now. Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus. So, did Jesus first exist at that time? No, Jesus existed from the beginning, from eternity. Jesus himself claims, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58). Abraham was a man two thousand years before Christ, four thousand years ago now. Jesus was born as a “descendant of Abraham” as a human being, but as the “Son” he existed before Abraham. He existed with God before Abraham’s, humanity, and the universe existed. Jesus is God. God called “Son,” “God Son” in the relation to “God Father.” This is a very important thing, so let’s keep it in your mind.

Since the persecution by Roman emperors ceased and Christianity became like the state religion, things that distorted the faith that has been protected by the life have been entered into the church. One of them was the “Arianism”, which claimed that Jesus was not God but the “Maker of the world” who was first made by God. Though Jesus is divine, but not identical to God. The church held a council for discussing on this teaching, and denied it. The church made Nicene Creed. The creed describes Jesus Christ as follows.

the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.

Most of this word is taken from the Gospel of John. The Nicene Creed not tells something new, but affirms what the Bible teaches and the apostles conveyed. Even if Jesus was a wonderful person, he was a man, we won't be saved by him. Indeed, the Arianism, who denied that Jesus was God, taught that people must save themselves by their own good deeds. If Jesus is not God, the important teachings of the Bible that human beings are saved by faith and grace are also destroyed.

2. The Only Son

Next, let us consider that Jesus is called God's "only" Son. Jesus is the "only" Son indeed because God does not have any other "Son" besides Jesus, but it does not mean "an only child." The Japanese translation does not use the number for "one." The inter-confessional translation use a kanji character, and it's meaning is "special" and "unique." Because Jesus is a completely unique person, he is called the "One and Only Son" in English. It means "one in the world," "not compatible with the others," and "not be replaced by another."

SMAP sang a song titled "Only One Flower in the World" in 2002. The lyrics are as follows.

No need to struggle to be Number 1
Just be yourself, be the Only One
Why don't we get it?

In this wide world you are one of a kind
Cherish your beauty, there's no need to hide it
Each of us holding a different seed
Just be yourself, that is all you need

A lot of people sympathized with this song, so this song was done very much in Japan, because it had a message that we should be happy to be “only one” instead of competing to become “number one”. The word “ONLY ONE” refers to a special person. God loved Jesus as the “Only One,” with special love.

After Jesus was baptized, the voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17) Jesus is the “Son” of “the Father” from the eternity. Between “Father” and “Son” there was a deep love we could not know. As a human being, the Son was baptized, and was trying to accomplish the will of the Father, the Father declared his love again. Jesus is called “One and Only” because Jesus is an irreplaceable “Son” for “Father” and the most beloved one.

God had been sending prophets and angels and showed his heart and glory. But finally God sent neither the prophet nor the angel, his beloved “Son” to the world. It was to show God's love for us. God had to send his beloved Son to the world as a person inevitably to show us the love for us. God's love could only be expressed by his Son. In verse 14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

In the following verses 16 and 17, the Bible says, “And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given

through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” The word “grace” is repeated. “Grace” is the “love of God given to those who are not eligible for it.”. God conveyed this love to us through his “Only Son.”

John 3:16 speaks of God’s love, saying, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” Jesus is called the “only Son” instead of any other names. This name appears in the verses which speak of God’s love; the love for his “Son” and the love for human beings. Let us deeply consider the love of God given through Jesus when we confess, “I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord.”

3. The First-Born

Finally, let us also see that we are also children of God by the “only Son” Jesus. John 1: 12-13 says, “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” Jesus gives the right to become children of God to those who believe in him. I said that the name “only Son” of Jesus does not mean “an only child.” Jesus has his “brothers and sisters” to receive God’s love together. Jesus does not want to receive the love only for himself, but he wants to share the love with those who believe in him.

Jesus suffered in our substitution on the cross and died. So we are forgiven our sins and have the right to stand before God. By giving the innocent one as a sinner, that is, by exchanging his position with our position of sinfulness, Jesus gave us his righteousness. Besides

that, Jesus replaced the status with us. In other words, Jesus gave the status of the Son of God to us who was a slave to sin. God gives us a beloved “Son” for us and the “Son,” Jesus gave us his life, identity, position, and Father’s love.

After the resurrection, Jesus said, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God “ (John 20: 7) Jesus made the Father the common Father both of him and those who believe in him. So we can receive the God’s word to Jesus, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” as the word to ourselves. We can be glad to be the children of God.

Jesus did not like monopolizing his Father’s love even he is the “only Son” of the Father. Jesus became the firstborn and wanted to share God’s love with many younger brothers and sisters. We, the believe in Jesus, forsaking down the narrow and small idea that we only have to participate in the love of God and grace of Jesus. And we should share the love of the Father and the grace of the Son with as may as people. Let us seek and pray that the God’s family to increase, calling God as the Father. And let us start to work for it.

(Prayer)

Father God, You gave us your beloved Son, and the Son Jesus share your love with us. Every time we confess that “I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,” please remind us of your big deep love. And let us know that it is poured upon us by the Holy Spirit, because of the Son. Please make us those who give your love to people. We pray this in the name of Jesus, the Son.