

March 3, 2019

Life and Sufferings of Jesus

Hebrews 5:7-10

5:7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

5:8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.

5:9 And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

5:10 being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

1. Life of Jesus

Apostles' Creed continues confesses, "I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary." about Jesus, and immediately continues, "suffered under Pontius Pilate" It is flying from the birth of Jesus to his death. The childhood of Jesus and his public ministry seems be omitted from the Creed. After being baptized, Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of the kingdom, walked around the cities and villages, healed various diseases and caste out evil spirits, but the Creed does not mention about them, even though they are written in detail in the Bible. Why? Is the Cross and the Resurrection only important, and not the life and the work of Jesus for our salvation? No, it is never the case.

Knowing the life of Jesus is very important. His life without sin

and filled with love is to prove that this one is the Son of God. Many people are impressed with their life before believing Jesus as “God’s only Son” and “our Lord.” When I purchased the Bible by myself and read it, I am attracted to Jesus as a person who touched and held sick people by his hands, and stood on the side of the weak people, and protected them against the powerful people at the time. For me it was the first step to the faith in Christ. I think you are the same.

The work of Jesus’ powerful miracle is also a proof that Jesus is the true Savior. The Old Testament said, “the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy” (Isaiah 35: 5-6) when the Savior comes. Jesus did these miracles the Bible foretold. When John the Baptist asked Jesus through his disciples from a prison, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” Jesus answered, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.” (Matthew 11:2-5) He answered that the miracles that he was performing proved that he is the Savior. And the people saw the miracles said, “When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?” (John 7:31) and believed in Jesus.

Many people say, “I cannot believe the Bible because it write about miracles.” However, Jesus said, “Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.” (John 14:11) If Jesus couldn’t perform any miracles, he couldn’t save people. We can believe that Jesus can do the greatest miracle, that is the salvation of mankind because he could do

miracles.

Life and the work of Jesus, was initially conveyed orally. The people who lived with Jesus, listen to his teachings directly, and the eye-witnesses of his work told the life of Jesus. These people were called “euangelistēs,” that means “the story teller of the gospel.” This word has been translated as “evangelist” in Ephesians 4:11, but it means different from the today’s “evangelist.” The gospel of Jesus Christ quickly spread to a wide area, so the number of original “evangelists” became run soon. In addition, it came the time that the “evangelist” became older and passed away. Therefore, inevitably it becomes necessary what was written, so the Gospels were written.

However, the four Gospels did not write down all that Jesus did. John 21: 25 says, “Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” Even the four Gospels could not include everything about Jesus’ life and his work, how Apostles’ Creed which is not even a single page, rather than a single book, can include the words about the life and work of Jesus? That is why the Apostles’ Creed does not directly address Jesus’ life.

Another reason is that the Apostles’ Creed has already included the life and work of Jesus in the words of “I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord.” John 20:31 says, “These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” The life and work of Jesus leads us to the faith that we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The Apostles’ Creed does not directly address Jesus’ life or his

work, but it confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God as the Bible. In other words, the Apostles' Creed tells about the life and work of Jesus in by confessing the faith brought by knowing his life and work. When we say, "I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord," we confess the faith in Jesus including the life and work of Jesus.

2. Sufferings of Jesus

The third reason why the Apostles' Creed does not directly address Jesus' life is that Jesus' life is aiming for the Cross, and it is summarized in the word; "... suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead." Between "born of the Virgin Mary" and "suffered under Pontius Pilate" there is three decades and three-year-public life of Jesus. But the Apostles' Creed continues his "death" immediately after his "birth," and says, "Jesus was born to die." It says that the shadow of death covered the entire life of Jesus.

Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to offer him to God on the forty days after his birth. At that time, Simeon told Mother Mary, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." (Luke 2:34-35) What a bad word! On the day of blessing the birth of a child, the child's death is foretold.

Matthew 2:13 and followings, wrote that King Herod sent troops to Bethlehem to make Jesus dead. Jesus is saved by the brushstroke by the revelation of angel, but he actually went through the danger of

death in his young time.

Luke 2:41 and followings, it is written that an incident happened when Jesus was twelve years old. On the way home from Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph lost Jesus. So the two returned to Jerusalem and found Jesus discussing with scholars at the temple. It was three days later. Mary said, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.” Then Jesus answered, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” The Bible tells us that at that time Mary did not understand the meaning of this word, but later she might know that this word was an expression of Jesus’ awareness that he was the Son of God.

Mother Mary “lost” Jesus temporarily. Ancient Christians thought that this was a symbolic incident that Jesus left the world and was hidden from the eyes of the people, and appeared again on the third day, that is, the Cross and the Resurrection. We can see that there was a shadow of the Cross in his life both when he was born and when he were a boy. We tend to confine Jesus’ sufferings only to sufferings on the Cross, but indeed there was the suffering that leads to the Cross in all of his lifetime.

Hebrews 5:7, today’s Scripture, reads, “In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.” The fact that the Son of God becomes man is that the Lord of life, the immortal One becomes a mortal one. In such a meaning, Jesus’ suffering has already started from the moment of conception.

Jesus was obedient to the will of the Father, to die for the sins of human beings on his back. He loved us and gave his life. However, he did not just succumb to “death.” He did fight against “death,” and overcame it. The Bible says that Jesus won that victory because of his reverence and obedience. Jesus is the God who listens to the prayers of the people, but on earth he became a single believer who prayed to the Father. The words; “with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence” mentions not only the prayer at Gethsemane or on the Cross. Every day, Jesus prayed alone away from his disciples. Every one of the hidden prayers was a prayer of fight against death accompanied by cry and tears.

Hebrew 5:8-10 reads, “Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.” The perfect Son of God should neither need to learn something nor need to be perfected. Well then, the Son dared to trace the process of growth that we follow, daringly. It was to taste all of the sufferings of life we would taste. It was to suffer with us and to give us the salvation.

Everyone’s life has a battle to live, there are troubles and sufferings. Everyone has pain and burden in his or her life. How much should we shed sweat of labor, tears of sorrow and pain during the days we live? We might experience the feeling “I can not bear it any more” many times in our life. What a comfort that the Son of God will suffer the suffering of our lives together! Jesus is not the one who just looks at our sufferings and scolds when we are discouraged in our

sufferings. The One who experienced lamentation and tears will suffer our sufferings together and support us. Jesus met the same sufferings we have to endure. He suffered more sufferings than ours, but has overcome them. By this Jesus we also will be able to fight the battle of life.

The song titled, “Jesus, My Saviour to Bethlehem Came” sings Jesus’ life as followings.

Jesus, my Saviour, to Bethlehem came,
Born in a manger to sorrow and shame;
Oh, it was wonderful — blest be His name!
Seeking for me, for me!

Jesus, my Saviour, on Calvary’s tree,
Paid the great debt and my soul He set free;
Oh, it was wonderful — how could it be?
Dying for me, for me!

Jesus was already licking the suffering of the cross there, in his life between “born of the Virgin Mary” and “suffered under Pontius Pilate” of the Apostle Creed. Every time we recite the Apostle Creed, we would like to express our faith in Jesus Christ remembering that Jesus suffered for us in his life and the suffering will make us to live our life.

(Prayer)

God Father, I thank you for letting Himself Jesus experience all of the sufferings of my life and made us our Savior. When we meet suffering, let me remind you of the life and suffering that Jesus was

passed through. And convince all of Jesus' life, that all his sufferings are for our salvation, and finally be those who rely on the Lord Jesus. We pray this in the name of Christ.