January 15th, 2017

ICA Sunday Pulpit Message

**The Family That Confessed Christ (Mt 16:16)**

(Intro)

It is good to see you. Greet those around you. Have you had a good week? Today’s title is, “The family that confessed Christ”. Even though we don’t speak about it, we tend to choose a certain person. It is done by different standards. What kind of people do you prefer? There are 3 types that I will give you. The first type is a decisive thinker and is able to express his thoughts. We often make resolutions at the start of the year. The 2nd type of person is a person who takes action with their words. The last type of person is able to think, take action and bear fruits from it. There are people who just speak, people who speak and take action and people who speak, take action and get results. What type of person would you prefer? All the young adults here will get married. What type of spouse do you want? I would prefer the 3rd type of person. It is the same with the world. These standards are often used for recruitment. In John 15:5, Jesus Christ said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” Today, we will look at 1 person. There was 1 disciple who always remained with Jesus just like a branch, it was Peter.

1. Peter had many lacking
2. Fisherman of Galilee (Mt 4:18)
3. Uneducated (Acts 4:13)
4. Impatient (Mt 26:51)

We tend to have assumptions about Peter. For example, we would think that he was a head disciple. He made a great confession of faith. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. In Catholicism, they serve Peter as the 1st Pope. When you look at when he started to become a disciple, there were many surprising things. He was a fisherman of Galilee. Jesus told him to throw it away and follow me. Peter was from Galilee, the countryside. In Korea, people prefer others from affluent areas. They would also look at others’ backgrounds. Suppose a person is from the countryside in Korea, then they would be looked down upon. There are levels of how people evaluate Peter. If you think about the occupation of a fisherman, it is a low-class job. Peter wasn’t from a renowned background. In Acts 4, people knew about Peter’s background. They would label him as uneducated. Peter wasn’t from an elite background. In good terms, people would honestly describe others. In bad terms, people would point out the flaws of others. He was also impatient. There was a time when Jesus was captured by the Roman army. Peter quickly defended Jesus and tried to slash the neck of a Roman soldier, but accidentally cut his ear. Jesus picked up his ear and miraculously attached it. Then, He rebuked Peter. “Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword, Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?” He was impatient and didn’t think ahead. He makes hasty decisions. Therefore, this person didn’t make smart decisions. Because of this background and personality, he was rebuked several times.

1. He was rebuked numerous times as he was following Jesus
2. Doubt (Mt 14:31)
3. Humanism (Mt 16:23)
4. Speaking nonsense (Lk 26:52)
5. Impatient (Jn 18:11, Mt 26:53)
6. Cowardly Betrayal (Mk 22:56-60)
7. Meddlesome (Jn 21:22)

We have talked about Peter’s background and personality. He wasn’t from a good background and had a lot of lacking. In Matthew 14, it talks about the miracle of 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. Thousands were fed. Jesus sends everyone home afterwards. Jesus goes to the mountain to pray. The disciples went away on a boat. Then, there was a storm at sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid. "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water. "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" This was a continuous series of miracles. Peter was afraid of the storm and had unbelief. Then, he fell into the water. It was dark and stormy. In that situation, Peter had no faith so Jesus saved him and rebuked him. In Peter’s perspective, it wasn’t easy for him. There is a difference when you get rebuked secretly or in front of everyone else. In Matthew 16, Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples who do they think I am. Peter confessed that He is Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. Jesus then blesses Peter. After this confession of faith, Jesus starts to give an important message. Jesus said that He would go to Jerusalem. Through 3 types of people, He would experience 3 things. He would suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law. He would suffer, die and resurrect. Jesus talks about the essence of the Gospel. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" In the Korean version, He is making a request. However, in the English version, He rebukes Jesus. Then, Jesus ordered Satan to get out of Peter. Peter gets rebuked in front of other disciples. "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” Jesus rebukes him because of his humanism. This happened in Matthew 16. Peter makes a great confession, but gets rebuked later on. Do you understand? Try to apply this into your life. This happens again in Mt. 17. It hasn’t been a week yet. Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. Then, He goes through a transfiguration. His clothing shines like a bright light. Then, Moses and Elijah appeared with Him. Then Peter said, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah” This is also mentioned in Luke 9:33. Peter did not know what he was saying. Jesus didn’t even respond and disappears. A cloud appears and there was a voice. "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" You could learn that Peter was impatient. Jesus was captured, and Peter follows them. Then someone asks if he was Jesus’ disciples and Peter denies it. Then the person presses on. Peter keeps on denying it. Peter was cursing at Jesus. At this time, he was becoming a coward as he betrays Jesus. Then, the rooster crows. Jesus would predict this and Peter was embarrassed. He was a traitor. Jesus was eventually tortured and killed. Then, a resurrected Jesus appears. Jesus asks if Peter loves Him. Jesus asks this 3 times. Peter keeps on insisting that he does. Jesus asks him to feed His lambs. John was trying to hug Jesus. Then, Peter asks what will happen to John. Then, Jesus replied to not think about the future. He was supposed to ask for forgiveness. Peter was being meddlesome and interfering with other people’s business. So, he is rebuked again by Jesus. This is how Peter was.

1. However, he became the head of the Early Church at the end
2. The sermon of the Pentecost that fits well with God’s will and time schedule (Acts 2:14-47)
3. His proclamation in the court where he was prepared for death (Acts 4:12)
4. The ministry that opened the doors of Roman Evangelization (Acts 10:1-48)

He receives the 40 days intensive training from Jesus in Mountain of Olive. After that, he goes to Mark’s Upper Room and trains for 10 days. He receives the filling of the Holy Spirit. The Early Church was born in the Mark’s Upper Room. People were speaking in tongue. Non-believers thought they were drunk. Peter was a person who likes attention. However, in Acts, Peter would come up with a team and gives a message. “These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” He gave an accurate sermon. Peter used to speak nonsense but now speaks a correct sermon. With the correct content and time, he gives an accurate sermon. This was a turnover. He goes to scheduled prayer. There was a crippled man in front of the temple. Peter looked straight at him and said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Then, a miracle happens. This handicap was able to walk. All the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. The Pharisees felt threatened so they were angry. They called Peter to their court. He was charged in a religious court. This is so because of the methods of execution used, such as being burned. Everyone related to that person will die. Peter was asked what has he done. Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. Peter didn’t say that he would obey. Peter replied, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." This is the confession of faith prepared for death. This is the proclamation where he fits as a leader of disciples. He used to deny Jesus in front of a servant girl, but now he was prepared to die. He had a turnover. Paul did a lot of ministry among Gentiles. However, the 1st step for Roman evangelization started with Peter. If you look at Acts 10, He goes to Cornelius and baptizes the entire family. Peter often like to interfere in the affairs of others but received the guidance of the Holy Spirit in detail. He was no longer like his old self. He had a complete turnover. He fits a leader of disciples. Who made this work? God. Do you believe? He was trained by Jesus. He was praying for 10 days according Jesus’ command. One thing that Peter did was a confession of faith in Mt 16:16. People in the world criticize Christians. Christians tend to only speak of things, but don’t take actions nor have any fruit. It is true for us to be criticized by non-believers. However, God will give the strength to be able to change to those who tend to only speak of things, but don’t take actions nor have fruit, especially for us. There was no rightful thing Peter did after confession of faith in Mt. 16.

(Conc)

However, Jesus forgave Peter and gave the filling of the Holy Spirit to him to be able to change completely. You want a person who speaks, takes action and bears fruit. However, God can accept a person who only speaks. Is it because God accepts everyone? No. The Lord has the power to change Peter. He has the power to change us. He is able to embrace us. He has the accurate method. There are people in the church who speak a lot but have no fruits. If you see that type of person in the church, just embrace them and offer words of encouragement and compliment, “Oh, you will become of a head of disciples.” Peter received blessings after a confession of faith. “you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.” Peter became a leader of the church that God built. “the gates of Hades will not overcome it” Even though the power of death and Hell keep attacking Peter, he overcame that. “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” Peter continuously received answers. Peter made a confession of faith but the one who fulfill is God. Make a confession of faith, and God will do the work. Actually, he did get married. However, Catholics like to preach that he wasn’t married so they won’t get married as well. God changed Peter to be able to affect his family. May you make this confession of faith correctly. God is calling you. As long as you make a confession of faith like in Matthew 16:16, God will work for you. The hand of Jesus that saved Peter whom was beginning to sink will save you. Close your eyes and pray.

(Prayer)

Even though I confess Christ, I am lacking. I cannot bear fruit with my own strength. Dear Lord, give me the strength to take action and bear fruit. I need You to walk with me. I want to be Your branches. If you are able to make this confession, put your hand over your heart and close your eyes. It means you are standing before God. Dear God, you know I am doubtful and speak of nonsense. You know I am impatient. I confess that I know you in my head, but I often would betray you. Dear Lord, I confess that I need to make disciples, but instead I would meddle with others. With the concentration, you give me, I desire guidance. With unlimited strength, may you pour unlimited power of the Holy Spirit on me. May you give me the strength to take action and bear fruit. May you allow me to turnover. There is only 1 thing I need to do. I will confess the fact that You are my Christ before all problems, conflicts and incidents. May you be the one who guides me. In Jesus Christ name I pray, Amen.