

October 1st, 2017

ICA Sunday Pulpit Message

The Son of God Dies for the Gospel (Matthew 27:50-54)

<Intro> The death of Christ brought us new life. (The core of the Gospel – Mark 10:45)

Hello, it is good to see all of you. Regardless of whatever situation you are in, there is one solution that can change and solve anything. What is it? It's being a child of God. You might say, "I already believe in Jesus, but things are still not working out for me." However, even if you're a child of God, you must come to the conclusion and proclaim that you will enjoy the authority of being a child of God. That is making your confession of faith, and that is when the Holy Spirit will work through you. You might say, "I don't think I'm a child of God yet? How do you even become a child of God? How can I enjoy the authority of being a child of God?" Today's Scripture is Matthew 27; what is the situation? It is a description of the death of Jesus who was crucified on the Cross. You must clearly understand the significance of His crucifixion, and when you finally understand that He is your Savior, that is when you will truly become the child of God. From here, you might then ask, "If He becomes my Savior, does that mean that I cannot do things on my own free will?" This is not the type of Savior and Lord that we speak of. Then what do we mean when we say that Jesus is our Lord and Master? It means that He is fully responsible for all of our lives. That is why when we accept and take Jesus as our Lord and Savior, God will complete His promise in making us His children. It is the fulfillment of John 1:12: "Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." Essentially, it is saying that in that particular moment, you will become the child of God. It is the promise of God, the Word that has never deviated from the thousands of years that preceded it. It means that when you discover Jesus and get to know Him, that is when you become a child of God. That is called the salvation of God. It sounds easy and simple, but that is the Gospel. A parent neither requires nor requests a lot from the children. What God requires from us is simple, but what He has given to us is unlimited.

What does His death signify? When the sins that we've committed and the curses that had been handed down from our ancestors accumulate, we have no choice but to fall into disaster. All of that is simply the introduction of life. Then there's the eternal curse, the eternal disaster, the eternal judgement of Hell. However, all of these have been resolved once and for all. Because of the sins you've committed, and because of the sins that your ancestors have committed, you are destined to fall. However, because Jesus died for you, all those things can be resolved. This is what we call salvation. Unfortunately, there are people who attend church yet are not aware of this; they cannot enjoy this blessing. Sometimes,

there are people that come and ask me, "Pastor, I have committed this sin. Does that mean that I can no longer go to Heaven?" to which I answer, "You will definitely go to Hell, however, you have lost your right to go to Hell." This is because when Jesus died, you died with Him, and He entered Hell in your stead. You are incapable of falling into Hell; there is no need nor is it even possible. When Jesus died, we died with Him. When God views us and see that we have accepted Jesus, in His eyes, we are the same as Jesus. That's amazing grace. Why did He make it this way? Why did He give everything He had simply for our salvation? The answer to that is in 1 John 4:19: "We love because He first loved us." This is love; not in the sense that we loved God, but that God loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. We weren't aware of God, but He sought us out first, and that is why we received His love. When we were still sinners, He came to us, found us, and loved us first.

He first gave us His grace, which enabled us to love Him back. This is the evidence that proved He loved us first. Because He loved us first, that is why He only requested the simplest thing: to confess Jesus as your Savior. That sums up the Gospel; that is the way to salvation. In return, He gave us everything He had: life, youth, and even death. This is the essence of the Gospel. In Mark 10: "The reason the Son of God came was not to be served but to serve His people." Because He loved us, and because He loved us first, that is why He was able to do this to us. God already knows that, internally, there is nothing that we can be boastful about. God already knew that within us, we didn't even have faith that summed up to the size of a mustard seed. But He gave us the power to help us believe, and He didn't ask for anything in return. Why? Because He knows us that much. He already knew that even though He had given us this faith, because we are so weak, we will lose that faith. And because He knew that we are lacking, He said that He will be responsible for us. That's why He said that He would answer our prayers, to fill us with the Holy Spirit, and to mobilize His angels when we pray. Because He knew that we are weak, He said that He would give His authority to break down the darkness. Already knowing that we would go after the physical things of the world, He said that He would grant us not the materialistic items but our citizenship in Heaven. If you are a child of God, it would be nice to enter into heaven right away, but you still have a life journey to finish on Earth? Why? Because He wants to experience what it's like to be a child of God and the associated authority that comes with that. How can you experience that? By being His witness to the ends of the earth. When you walk the path towards world evangelization—and when you stay on that path—you will experience this authority and power. He has told us to go and make disciples in all the world's nations.

I started to believe in Jesus and began my walk of faith ever since I was young. Because I enjoyed writing, I would rewrite

the Bible and write down what the pastor said in his messages. That's why when you look at my writing hand, the top part of my middle finger has a little bump because I wrote so much. However, although I was happy, I never experienced anyone else being happy because I focused on my own happiness. While it says in the Bible that you must have many disciples, and the Early Church was able to raise numerous disciples. I, on the other hand, had not a single disciple, and because of this contradiction, I started having weird thoughts, thoughts like, "Am I a fake believer?" So I restarted my prayers. When a man and woman marries, even though they don't go through special training, they will end up having children. Why, because it's a result of love. Likewise, if you truly love God, you will result in a spiritual disciple. This is something that cannot be hidden or faked because it's something that God has given you. That is why even if you have to leave this world, works will continue to take place through these disciples. I said this before. I used to work for the Korean government. The bible study that I used to be a part of exists up to this day. When I was a deacon, we used to have small meetings of about 5-6 deacons, each of which are pastors now. Some are pastors in Korea and some are doing missionary work in many different countries. This is all the work of God. It's called the work of life that no other religion, no idols can mimic. This is the blessing that He wants to give us. This is called world evangelization.

Why is it that Jesus who is the only Begotten Son of God must die? If you look at today's Scripture, you can see that He was tortured. He didn't do anything wrong, but He faced the sentence of execution. He was beaten, and people spat on Him. His clothes were torn off of Him. He experienced this agony that shook His bones, and He had to undergo shame and embarrassment that is unfathomable to any man. It says in the Scriptures that He had to endure the suffering of the Cross and the shame of crucifixion. It's not that He was shot and died an instantaneous death. In order to save us, to free us and give us salvation, this is the road He had to endure. In other words, He had to walk this path to complete the Gospel. For our stead, in order for us to receive the Gospel, He died for us.

1. The people that the Son of God met after He was captured
 - (1) Those who oppose (Mt. 27:1)
 - (2) Those who avoid (Mt. 27:17-24)
 - (3) Those who ridicule (Mt. 27:29)

Then we need to look at the people Jesus met after He was captured. If you read in the Scripture, it says that the chiefs, priests, and elders planned against Jesus for His death, that they have met with the Governor of Judea province, who realized that Jesus didn't deserve this death. This judge,

known to most as Pontius Pilate, noticed the jealousy of the high priests and Pharisees that forced Jesus to undergo this execution. The wife of Pontius Pilate requested of her husband to not get involve in the plot because Jesus is a righteous man. If Pontius Pilate said, "You Israelites try to kill Jesus but I don't see any fault in Him. So dismiss Him," then everything would have been over. Yet he asked the Israelites, "What should I do?" He told them to choose between Jesus and Barnabas, who actually was a criminal. He thought that he could make them choose Barnabas in Jesus' stead, but the plan was unsuccessful. He felt that if he doesn't execute Jesus, a great riot would arise. So he said that, according to your wishes, Jesus will be executed, however I will not be responsible for the murder of His blood. He didn't want to be associated with Jesus' death. Even though he was seated at the authority to save Jesus, he hid from that.

Another example is the soldiers of Israel, who tore off all Jesus' clothes and humiliated Him, asking if He really was the King of the Jews. They put a barbed crown on His head and wounded Him. They mocked Him and raised their hands, saying, "Hail the King of Jews!" And they would hit Him on His head and face. Think of how shameful that would have felt. Let's think if your parents went through the same treatment; you would be very angry. At the end, He was nailed onto the Cross. Some people have portraits of Jesus' crucifixion, but most of them are very inaccurate. He did not have golden hair and long beard; He didn't even have undergarments. He was completely naked while nailed on the Cross. No one could understand the humiliation and shame that He went through this, as well as the shame that His mother, Mary, felt while watching this. Because He was nailed by His hands and wrists and ankles; gravity was dragging Him down causing intolerable pain. Because His wrists hurt, He had to lift up His body. Then, His ankles would hurt. And vice versa. This pain that no one has ever thought about, Jesus felt for our sakes. For the average person, they would lose consciousness while going through this. Or a hardheaded person would bite off his tongue and commit suicide. This is what Jesus experienced after He was arrested.

2. The reactions during the interrogation of the Son of God
 - (1) "I am truly the King of the Jews." (Mt. 27:11)
 - (2) He did not give other excuses or oppositions.
 - (3) Lastly, He passed away with the important word.

Surprisingly, amongst this treatment, Jesus never tried to justify Himself to those people. When He faced the judge (Pilate), this was the only time He spoke. The judge asked Jesus, "Do you consider yourself the King of Jews?" And to that question, this is how Jesus answered. "It is as you speak." He's saying that's right. And He said that it doesn't matter what anyone else says. To no one else did he give a response.

Why, because He had to complete the Cross and complete the Gospel. Only because of this, He did not react to the events when He was mocked and at a loss. Even before His own death, He did not complain or try to avoid the situation. On the other hand, when He was crucified, He prayed to God, "Please forgive these people, for they do not know what they are committing." It means that He asked for forgiveness of their sins. This is the appearance of One who has completed the Gospel. Therefore, for us who are the children of God, this is the path that we must take as well. The true believers of the early church walked down this path. When Stephan was stoned to death, he said "Jesus Christ receive my spirit!" He didn't ask to kill these authorities who persecuted him. What we feel when we are at a loss, how do we react? At that time, we forget about God. It's as if He doesn't exist at all. And you try to gather all your shame, not knowing where it comes from, and you try to muster all your power against. However, God's desire is that you stay inside the Gospel, and that after your life, the Gospel will be complete. Because Jesus is the Son of God and because He died in this way, He completed the Gospel. In the same way, since we are children of God, we must fulfill the Gospel the same way. This doesn't mean that you should refrain from all the things you have been doing. If you truly know and enjoy the Gospel, this becomes possible. If you don't know the true taste of the Gospel and refrain from everything else, you will become ill.

3. The way for the sons of God to die for the Gospel

- (1) Only Gospel-centered (Lk. 23:34,46, Mt. 27:46, Jn. 19:28,30)
- (2) Only evangelism-centered (Lk. 23:43)
- (3) Only church-centered (Jn. 19:26-27)

We are told to live for the Gospel and die for the Gospel, but how do we do that? Like Jesus died on the Cross, we must do the same. When He was nailed to the Cross and dying, there were some things that He shared. And because these were the words spoken on the cross, these are called the Seven words of the Cross. "Father God, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." The first word is Forgive. He wants us to forgive others because we have been forgiven of our sins. In other words, He spoke the Gospel and executed the Gospel. He also said, "Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani? (My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?)" This doesn't mean that he was annoyed by God, but He felt abandoned by God. Only when Jesus is abandoned by God can we enter the embrace of God. He also said, "I'm thirsty." Because He was starved and thirsty, that's how we were fed and became full. Because Jesus was stricken and beaten, that's how we received healing. This is the gospel.

At last He said, "It is finished". The fact that He died for us, the fundamental problems of our life were gone. The problems of separation, sin, and deception. But Jesus became the Way of

God. He has given the power to overcome Satan. This power is called the Gospel. And He prayed that I entrust My life into Your hands. So ultimately, entrusting your life to God's sovereignty is the Gospel. It doesn't mean that you need to bear your own cross physically when you come to church. But you need to realize that by living Gospel-centered, you are dying for the Gospel and completing the Gospel. In all that you do, you must center yourself on the Gospel. Why do spouses live together? Is it because they're on the same page, because the other is good looking? Because of the Gospel, they form oneness. Why is it that we pay a copious amount of tuition to attend universities? Because we must study in order to live in the Gospel. Why do we work hard? It is because of the Gospel. Why is it that the elders put on their gowns and serve the church? Do they receive a salary? No, they actually have to pay more for their services. However, despite the higher costs, they choose to do this because of the Gospel. So when you are Gospel-centered, understand that you are dying for the Gospel and completing the Gospel.

There was a thief who was executed along with Jesus. While all the other criminals mocked Jesus, this one person asked Jesus to remember him when He enters God's Kingdom. And Jesus responded "Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in paradise." This is Jesus giving His salvation to this robber. Likewise, if you are able to live an evangelism-centered life, you will be able to complete the Gospel.

At the end, Jesus looked towards His mother, Mary, and said, "Woman, look here." He called His mother, "woman." This might sound weird in Asian cultures, but it's not a matter of our culture. You'll see that in the culture of Israel, people reference women who are lifted up or higher than them as "woman." He's telling Mary to look at Him, to see that His disciples are her sons as well. It says that He looked at His disciple John, "Here, this is your mother," as He pointed to Mary. What does this mean? It's not some last minute adoption, but it's saying that John should take care of her as if she was his mother. Physically, although Mary was Jesus' biological mother, spiritually, they are all part of one family. In other words, you need to take care of your church members. Therefore, live church-centered.

<Conclusion> Hebrews 12:2

We talked about three things: Gospel-centered, evangelism-centered to save people, and church-centered to save church members. This is the way to complete the Gospel and die for the Gospel. We need people who love souls and who have the message of the Gospel to save the souls. God will be pleased by those who consider the church precious and take care of the church members. When you are able to live this kind of life, this is what God will do. That is the conclusion. It is

recorded in Hebrews 12:2: "Looking onto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." It said that there was joy, and for this joy, He endured the Cross. What kind of joy was that? This is the reason why He loved us first, and because He loved us first, He gave His life for us and died. And ultimately, He was able to receive the glory of the throne. Therefore, when we tried to complete the Gospel by living and dying for the Gospel, that is when God will, in return, give us the glory of the throne. As we live our lives on this earth, how can we receive this glory? We must live a life that lives and dies for the Gospel. When you give your life in these three centers (Gospel center, evangelism center, and church center), God will take care of the rest. The Kingdom of God will come upon you. And when you experience this joy of God, you can perceive the world differently. It's not that you're forcing yourself to love your enemies, but that you will naturally find them lovable. That is how you can make this confession. You'll be able to confess that all things are provided and gifted by God. And for you, there is one thing, and that is to confess Jesus as your Savior. I pray that you will be victorious.

<Prayer>

We give thanks to the Almighty God. Your Son Jesus has died for the Gospel and He finished everything, completing the Gospel. Now, He is seated at the right hand of the throne. We believe that He has shown us the way. Help us so that we can follow this way. Help us to be victorious with the grace and gifts that You give us. And with the answers and the blessing that you give us, help us so that we can glorify God. And from today on, help us so that as children of God, we may die for the Gospel and complete the Gospel. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.