November 12th, 2017

ICA Sunday Pulpit Message

**The Son of God, Jesus is the Only Answer (Matthew 16:13-19)**

<Intro> Christ who is meek and lowly in heart gives us true comfort. (Mt. 11:28-30)

Today’s the day of our Athletic Field Day. Today is a day of important blessings for us to be able to gather unanimously before God, and as we enjoy our Athletic Day, I hope you guys can be thankful to God for your health. We have a lot of good food prepared so please enjoy each other’s fellowship. I haven’t been able to attend church for the past two weeks, and now that I haven’t seen our church for two weeks, I realize how great our church is. Since last week, we have been summarizing this year’s messages, and today is the second week. The title of today’s message is, “The Son of God, Jesus, is the only Answer.”

I’ve had my own set of spiritual problems. On the outside, I may look more put together when I speak to you, but there were a lot of times when I suffered and fell into a lot of worries due to my spiritual problems. You may not know, but I have a very hasty personality. Put it in a more extreme way, I have a quick temper and am quick to be angry; I have volatile mood swings. Because of that, I find myself in the loss for all things, and after all of it, I’m left with only my regrets. When I was young, we used to live as a big family of about ten to thirteen members. We have multiple generations including aunts and uncles; we lived under a strict set of rules. Whatever the words my grandfather said, it was the be-all and end-all of things. If he told us to do something, the moment it came out of his mouth, we had to execute it. If someone said something against what he had said, the whole household would be completely upside down. Let’s say he asked me to bring the cigarettes, then I would have to bring the cigarettes as well as the cigarette holders. When it’s dinnertime, my mother prepared his meal, and the moment he turned around and looked at my mother, she knew it’s time to serve his meal. Because these are the kinds of things that I watched when I was growing up, I realized that it was a habitual thing to have my personality; I became hasty, wanting to do things as fast as I could. That means that, by the time I get home, my wife must have prepared the dinner table for us to eat. Instead of being guided by the Holy Spirit, I was guided by my meal times for past twenty years.

My son, Daniel does a lot of exercise. He’s a child who is 13 years old, but sometimes I forget that he’s a child and think that he’s a professional athlete. So I realize that I try to drag him into a schedule fit for a pro and not for a teenager. And when he competes, he doesn’t always get the best scores; sometimes, there are mistakes, and I would talk his ear off, reprimanding him until he is crying. However, when I rebuke him, I see myself, and I think, “Am I truly a church Elder?” I wonder if I’m fit to work as a church minister.

Sometimes, I feel like I’ve handed my soul over to Satan himself. As a parent, instead of being guided by God’s time schedule, I find myself becoming very hasty. After rebuking my son, of course I fall into great despair because I’m not getting into my personal worship. As I was giving worship, as I was listening to the Word, I realized this one thing: I lack true peace inside of me. I found that, in me, it’s not just peace that I lack but also rest. When I peeked inside myself, I saw that I’m only filled with my own thoughts, my consciousness, and my motives. I saw that my heart was so shallow, filled with things that are rotten and material. My thoughts were slowly consumed by the circular things such as the material things of the world. Because I’m filled with greed and selfishness, of course I cannot find peace and rest in my heart. I hope you would pray for me.

It feels like I’m carrying all the heavy burdens of the world on my shoulders; all the improper and heavy things in the world, I have on me. However, Jesus said that “All who are weary, all who are burden, come to Me.” Why, it’s because His heart is filled with rest and mercy. Don’t hold onto the yolk of the world but instead hold on to the yolk of Jesus. If you do so, that is when you’ll find peace and rest in your heart. He said that His yoke is easy and light. Starting from this point on, I’m going to come to this resolution: I’m going to pray in resolution and ask Jesus who is meek and lowly in heart to heal everything. If you’re in any similar situation, I really desire us to pray together. I pray that all of you can conclude this year very well. Through the worship, we have received a lot of God’s Word. As you reflect upon the Word you receive, reflect on the answers you’ve been given as well. Holding onto the Word that has been given to you, make that into your pedestal so that you can make a new foundation for the new year.

1. He followed God’s time schedule in the midst of challenges of the world.

(1) Even within attacks from church authorities, exclusion by the Jews, persecution by Rome (Mt. 22:15-40)

(2) He completed the Cross and the Gospel of resurrection and He ascended. (Jn. 19:30)

(3) For this, let us enter into the time schedule of having imprints in the Gospel, roots in prayer, and nature in evangelism. (Ac. 1:3, 14, 3:6)

Jesus faced many things in the world, but He was able to follow God’s time schedule. He also received severe criticism. He was persecuted by the Jews, the Pharisees who tried to stop His ministry. Even during the midst of the most critical persecution, Jesus was able to proclaim the Word of God instead. Despite the legalistic taxing He received, He was able to accurately share the Word to others. In those times, He proclaimed what the truth is. Because of this, He was able to equip Himself with the right kind of armor, and these are the facts that we are aware of. What’s important here is that He did so in order to fulfill the Gospel. His crucifixion on the Cross was so that He could open the path for us to meet God. The third day, when He rose from the dead, He completely shattered the authority of Satan. That’s why in John 19:30, He said to us, “It is finished.” So we need to realize that in the midst of the suffering of this world, He was still able to follow God’s time schedule. As we sit here today, we must also enter this time schedule so that we can receive the same type of answers.

So then what must we do to enter this path? You must be able to imprint everything in the Gospel. What did Jesus do after He rose from the dead? He imprinted the Gospel and the works of God’s Kingdom into His disciples for forty days. The Bible we read says there is the Kingdom of God. If you go into your field, it’s filled with people who do not believe in God. You’re also surrounded by people who do know God but do not properly worship Him. That’s why you must be the person who corrects that. You must be the person who helps them. Grow deep roots in prayer. In prayer, when you’re able to enjoy a connection with God, that’s when you can enjoy authority of God. Disciples who were with Jesus gathered to prayer in Mark’s upper room. On that day and forward, the power of the Pentecost was with them. Before, they were so afraid that they would run around and hide. But once the disciples knew the Word, they openly shared the Word and were not afraid. This is only possible through prayer and when you live the life of the evangelist.

As an evangelist, you can be the person who brings transformation to other people. You can be the person to change the field that you live in. If you simply have the heart of wanting to evangelize, then God will touch the souls of the people He has prepared for you. In Acts 3, Peter and John were on their way to the temple to do their scheduled prayer. The crippled man that they passed every day was still there, and they told him, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!” Through that event, the gates of evangelism were opened. The spiritual case of Jerusalem was completely overturned. In the same way, when you’re able to have imprints of the Gospel, the spiritual field that you live in can be completely turned around.

2. He focused on the fulfillment of the Word even if He had to sacrifice Himself and die.

(1) Because religions, efforts, skills don’t give us salvation (Is. 64:6)

(2) He fulfilled the covenant of salvation that was prophesied and planned from the beginning. (Gen. 3:15, Is. 7:14, 1 Cor. 15:3-5)

(3) Therefore, as we are sons of God, let us fulfill the covenant of world evangelization. (Ac. 1:8, Mk. 16:15-20)

For these, Jesus focused on fulfilling the Word of God even at the cost of death. Do you guys believe that it’s by your efforts that you can bring salvation? Or that you can gain eternal life because of a great skillset and reputation? Or that we can see the Kingdom of God through the physical things that we’ve gained through our worldly lives? In Isaiah 64:6, it says that: “We are like filthy rags.” We are all shriveled up like leaves, and like the wind, our sins sweep us away. At that time, what did Jesus do? He completely condemned all the scribers and all the Pharisees who did not have the Gospel. If you look at the disciples who were with Jesus for over 3 years of ministry, what did they do? They didn’t have the Gospel, so they only interrupted Jesus’ ministry. The disciples were only trying to fulfill this through their own efforts and they failed.

Jesus knew all about these things, however. There was a reason for it all. From the beginning, this was prophesized by God, and that’s why Jesus didn’t complain. That’s why the Gospel was the only thing He proclaimed; He only focused on the Word for the fulfillment of the Word. Jesus Christ, who had the covenant of the offspring of the woman, who had the covenant of being with God, according to what is recorded in the Bible, He focused on the Word so that He could accurately fulfill the Word for the covenant. Because we are His sons, we must also fulfill this covenant. That’s what it means to have the representation of the covenant. In spite of that, we must also fulfill the covenant of evangelism.

The people who sacrificed for evangelism were greatly blessed. The people who shared the Bible, people who recorded the Bible, people who translated the Bible, and people who taught the Bible were all blessed. All these people, it was because they held onto the covenant were they blessed. The covenant of world evangelization was encompassed. For me, I personally hold onto Amos 3:7; it says that the Lord, Jehovah, takes the works and fulfills things by Himself. If you have a heart that wants to live the life of evangelism, then you must hold onto the covenant of world evangelization and the Word proclaimed on the pulpit. Even in the New Testament of Acts 2, it says that you must hold onto the Gospel. Afterwards, when they finished enjoying each other’s fellowship, was when evangelism began. You’ll see that God consistently gave His Word through His workers, disciples, and priests. And to the saints who received this Word, God will look over them and give them the blessings. If you listen to the worship as simply a message and you just receive it as knowledge, only your Bible knowledge will increase. Instead, you need to receive the message as God’s personal message to you.

3. Christ left His only disciples behind in this world.

(1) Because there is no future unless we raise descendants and disciples (Jn. 21:15-20)

(2) You have to first receive strength to restore people and the field. (Dan. 6:10)

(3) Now let us enjoy Immanuel, use the spiritual authority, and find and raise the disciples. (Mt. 3:13-15)

Christ left His only disciples behind in this world. If you focus in on the fulfillment of the Word, then Jesus has already explained why it was important. There’s nothing else that He left behind in the world other than His disciples. You need to concentrate on this and see. In John 21, this was when Jesus who was resurrected revealed Himself to Simon Peter. Just as He had before, they went together to fish to restore Peter. And then Jesus asked Peter, “Do you truly love me?” He asked the same question three times, and every time, Peter replied yes, to which Jesus told him to feed His lambs. This is very important; Peter, who received the Word, became the predecessor to the ministry. There’s something we need to look at very carefully here; you can see that more than the mistakes and flaws that Peter had, what was greater was the love Jesus had for Peter. We all know the random acts that Peter committed, but more than that was the committal love that God had for Peter. You’ll see in the Bible that many disciples were raised through Peter. In Mark’s upper room, he’s the one who was preaching for the 15 different business representatives for the 15 different nations. Even when he was facing trials, he proclaimed that you can only be safe in the name of Jesus and there’s no other name that you can proclaim to be saved. Although he committed many failures, how was it that he was able to have these blessings? I believe that it’s because of the unconditional love Jesus had for Peter. The unchanging love that Jesus had for Peter is the same love that will come for all of our descendants. Those descendants, in turn, must also share that love to their descendants. It’s this love that will keep the covenant of God alive throughout many generations. We must see how important it is to establish and nurture disciples.

This is why it is considered the absolute blessing of God. This is the inevitable answers that we need to find in our fields. In praying, you will be able to find that you will not only save yourselves but also the loved ones you hold close to you. It says that although Daniel knew that the King published a decree, he prayed three times a day while staying in Jerusalem. It’s the same thing. Through the pulpit as well as your individual prayer, this is where it starts. The time of worship is the time for you to receive the Word that you can share with others in your field. That’s why it’s such an important time. In this time of worship, it’s when you’ll also realize prayer topics, and because that’s how you’re answered, that’s how you can naturally proclaim the Word of God. When you’re able to repeat this experience to others, that’s when your faith grows. When you give forum, God enables you to meet with other co-workers who can do the same with you. Starting from this point on, that’s when doors will open for you. There’s a reason for all this. It says that when you pray together, that’s when the works of the Holy Spirit will take place. There are forces of darkness that are holding onto you without you even knowing it, and the forces of Satan do exist. All of these forces will have a hold on your heart, but it’s the light of God that will drive them out. At that time, you will see in your field that God had already prepared souls for you to save in your field. The disciples who dwelt with Jesus in 40 days, they found that they were able to meet many souls.

They were able to make sincere and devoted workers from 15 different nations. The committed workers at that time came together to form a system. In Acts 8, Phillip and Ethiopian eunuch met. Afterwards in Acts 10, Peter met his planned soul, Cornelius. It is through this that the door of evangelism for foreigners and Gentiles were opened.

Therefore, starting from today, may you also enjoy the blessing of Immanuel. The spiritual authority that God wants to give to you, you can receive through the strength of meeting other souls. The precious disciples that God has prepared for you, you need to nurture them well. Then God will enable to be able to fund them and commission them out. So what kind of disciples must we establish? We must establish the disciples who would abide in all things with Jesus. So I pray: “God, may You also use me as a disciple who enjoys all the fundamental things of God.” Pray that you will also be the one who can bring healing and love into the field you go into. In each field, God has already prepared the historical blessings. I pray that God will use me so that I can use the blessings for the sake of the Word of God. I also pray that I’ll be the disciple who follows after Jesus who has the authority to chase the forces of the darkness away. This is the first step of being a disciple who can have the spiritual blessings and answers. If you earnestly hold onto this desire, this will, that’s when you can overturn the spiritual paradigm. Your heart will change, your family will change, your field will change. When they accumulate together, that’s when the Kingdom of God will be in your place. I pray that you’ll be able to receive these kinds of answers and be victorious. I pray that we will be able to stand in this line together.

<Conc> Those who follow Christ will definitely enter into the time schedule of victory in the future. (Mt. 24:14, 29-31, Jn. 14:3, 1 Thess. 4:15-17)

In Matthew 24, you see that God was able to give an important time schedule for His disciples. It says that they will absolutely enter a time schedule of success and victory as long as they follow God. If you look closely, in Matthew 24:14, this is the what it says: “And this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” The exact same messages are repeated in the verses right after that. They will be able to see the Son of Man coming with their own eyes. We will be able to foresee the time schedule of the future with the eyes that Jesus has trained us to have. Because of this, this is why God said that He has prepared the Kingdom. We have already been selected by God, according to God’s time schedule. Everything has already been confirmed. Additionally, the time schedule of God has been guaranteed and secured to us, so we do not need to worry. There’s no reason to worry, and there’s no reason to fight against the world. Because in John 19, it said that “It is finished.” That’s why all you must do is believe and follow. Who is Jesus Christ? He is the only answer and solution to all things. I pray that you will be able to become victorious in all things.

<Prayer>

God, we thank You. We confess that You are the solution, the answer to all things in our lives. And we pray that as we come close to You, we will be able to organize the Word we have received this year. When we look and summarize the Word, help us to find the answers You’ve given us and to be thankful. Let us be thankful for the blessings and answers You’ll give to us in the future. Help us to come to the conclusion with the Word. Help us to enter into “only” prayer. Help us to also seek disciples and be victorious. Allow the answer to members of our church that we will be the people to raise disciples and do Your works. Help us to become the greatest, committed workers. We pray in the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.