

■ No.130 Invitation to Live by the Word 《Explanation and Meditation》

● First Reading: Ezekiel 37:12-14

“The bones of the people of Israel are dried up, our hope is lost, and we are cut off” (Ezekiel 37:11). Lamenting in grief as though they were already dead, the people are addressed by Ezekiel through “the vision of the valley of dry bones” (Ezekiel 37:3-10).

In this passage, hope of restoration is given to the people of Israel who were taken into Babylonian exile. Through the rebuilding of the nation, God demonstrates His power. From the depths of despair, through spiritual resurrection, He fulfills His covenant with the people and reveals His presence to them. It is precisely when the people despair, saying “we are cut off,” that salvation by God’s sovereignty is proclaimed.

God commands Ezekiel to speak to them as His spokesman. The nation had fallen, and the people’s hope and faith had disappeared. Their state of death is described as a “grave.” God opens these graves, and what He calls drawing them out is a unilateral act of rescue from the dominion of death. Through their return to the land and the restoration of the covenant, He brings them back to the land of Israel.

Although the people felt abandoned by God in exile, He reveals His strong love to them. Repeatedly in this book, God says, “Then you shall know that I am the Lord.” To know the Lord deeply is salvation.

Wind and breath signify the Spirit. Just as God breathed into man and he became a living being (Genesis 2:7), so by God breathing His Spirit into them, the people are newly created both physically and spiritually and come to life. By fulfilling the covenant and letting them dwell in their own land, God speaks and acts, thereby demonstrating His sovereignty and truth.

【Author’s Reflection】 I had taken my daily walk for granted, and my thoughts toward the Lord had grown faint.

● Second Reading: Letter to the Romans 8:8-11

Paul teaches that all people are under the power of sin, and that they are justified not by works of the law, but by faith (justification by faith). Through the death of Jesus on the cross, reconciliation with God has been accomplished. Because of human weakness, people fall into sin and feel miserable. Emotions, the body, and self-centeredness are referred to as “the flesh.” To live in this direction is to be under the control of the flesh, which means being separated from God; therefore, God is not pleased with such a person.

God’s life and the Holy Spirit are called the Spirit of God. When this Spirit dwells within a person and they are no longer ruled by their emotions, it is said that the Spirit lives within them. When one is enlivened and transformed by the Holy Spirit, one is under the control of the Spirit.

A person becomes a new creation through the Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17), and by living in this reality, becomes a witness of the Lord (Acts 1:8). The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus are one and the same, and this Spirit this life dwells within the believer (in the soul). To “belong” means to be in a relationship of possession.

Salvation is determined by whether one belongs under the control of the flesh or of the Spirit. The body will eventually decay and perish. However, through being made righteous in a right relationship with God and through the beginning of spiritual life, the Spirit becomes life because of righteousness.

God desires that His Spirit continue to dwell within believers. Paul repeatedly speaks of the Spirit dwelling within us because this is the basis of salvation. Even though the body is destined for death, we do not live for the perishable body, but live by the Spirit of God dwelling within us, directing the life given to us toward resurrection.

【Author’s Reflection】 I live now in order to live eternal life.

● Gospel Reading: John 11:32, 17, 20, 27, 33-45

This passage speaks of three main points:

Jesus is the resurrection and the life. God reveals His glory and leads to salvation even in the extreme limits of human experience.

Many come to believe in Jesus and are led to faith.

The family of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus presented here shows the image of the Church living with the Lord and the nature of faith.

Martha represents the active, serving believer and confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Mary represents the contemplative, listening believer who kneels at the Lord's feet.

Lazarus represents the believer who becomes a witness of the Lord. Though passive, his death does not become the final end; rather, it serves for God's glory, revealing that Jesus is the Son of God.

In Judaism, it was believed that resurrection would occur on the last day. But Jesus declares, "I am the resurrection and the life." While the resurrection of the body is a future event, eternal life has already begun through Jesus and is now poured into us.

Even if the body perishes, the life given by God is not lost. On the last day, we will be transformed into the likeness of the risen Jesus. Those who are united with Him continue to live eternal life; therefore, those who believe in the Lord will never perish.

Jesus, angered by death and unbelief, was deeply moved and stirred, and He wept in empathy with human sorrow. Through obedient faith, we are able to see the glory of God. The miracle of Lazarus' resurrection was not only to astonish the crowd, but to reveal that Jesus is the Messiah and to lead people to believe.

【Author's Reflection】 I am deeply grateful that I was led to this miracle through my parents.

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