A Song of Confidence

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Psalm 16:1-11

1 Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge. 2 I say to the Lord, 'You are my
Lord;I have no good apart from you.' 3 As for the holy ones in the land, they
are the noble, in whom is all my delight. 4 Those who choose another god
multiply their sorrows; their drink-offerings of blood I will not pour out or take
their names upon my lips. 5 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you
hold my lot. 6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have
a goodly heritage. 7 I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also
my heart instructs me. 8 I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at
my right hand, I shall not be moved. 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul
rejoices; my body also rests secure.10 For you do not give me up to Sheol, or
let your faithful one see the Pit.11 You show me the path of life. In your
presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures for
evermore.

1. Easter Celebration

This Easter, we were blessed to have a lot of visitors visit our church to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. I heard we had 143 adults, 32 children and 4 toddlers totaling 179 people. Isn't that wonderful? I believe God sent many people to us because He knew that we would be able to help them to grow in their faith. Can you imagine what God may have in store for us?

Churches across the world see a lot of visitors on Easter. But after Easter we do not see many of them in worship until Thanksgiving and Christmas. Why is that so? Do we have any clue about the reason? We might think that they do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus. So, we think their absence is their fault. But when I meditated on it last week, God seemed to tell me, "It is not their fault, but the Christians' fault." We need to remember that none of us has ever actually seen the risen Jesus face to face. But those who had believed in the resurrection of Jesus and lived the resurrected life helped us believe in the resurrection of Jesus. This morning, I'd like to find from Scripture how to help others come to believe in the risen Lord.

2. David's Confidence

Psalm 16 is written by King David. In this psalm, David tells us how he came to know and trust in the Lord. Verse 1 is a summary of the entire psalm:

"**Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.**" David takes refuge in God. We see the source of this conviction in verse 2, "**You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you**." David says without the Lord, he is nobody and has no happiness. In verse 3-4, David contrasts two communities. One is those who are "the holy ones" and the other is those who choose another god. David tells us that those who have chosen another god may have ended up experiencing sorrows, but David's life has been filled with joy and happiness.

In verses 5-8, David talks about the numerous blessings of relying on the Lord. Verse 5 in the Good News Bible says, "**You, Lord, are all I have, and you give me all I need, my future is in your hands**." David tells us that God meets his physical, emotional and spiritual needs now and in the future. As a result of God's care and provision, David says, "**I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved**" (verse 8). David knows he is safe because of God's constant presence in his life. In verses 9-11, David describes the joy of the total security that God's faithful care provides. David says that he can rest because God will preserve his life in the face of death.

Psalm 16 has been a very important passage for the Israelites to have confidence in the Lord, but it is a very crucial passage for all Christians. This psalm is often called a "Messianic psalm" because it is quoted in the Acts of the Apostles. Both Peter in Acts 2:25-28 & 31 and Paul in Acts 13:35-37 quoted from this psalm when they talked about Jesus' resurrection. Of course, in Psalm 16, preservation from Sheol and the Pit means a deliverance from death, but in Acts, it means the resurrection of Jesus.

3. Jesus' Death and the Early Christians

When Jesus' disciples began to preach the gospel of Jesus, the biggest challenge they faced was how to explain the death of the Messiah. If the Almighty God sent Jesus to the world as the Messiah, why would God not do anything to prevent the crucifixion or save Jesus from the crucifixion? Peter explains in Acts 2:23-24 that everything happened to Jesus was according to God's plan. So, he says, **"this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law.** 24**But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power."** Peter tells us that God's plans weren't disrupted by the Roman government and the Jewish officials. Rather, in quoting Psalm 16:8-11, he

tells us that the death and resurrection of Jesus was foretold in the Old Testament.

4. A Different Interpretation

Needless to say, Psalms 16 is not understood by everyone as a reference to the resurrection of Jesus. Many Jews would say that Psalm 16 has nothing to do with the resurrection of the Messiah. They would say that in Psalm 16, David simply talks about God's presence and protection from his imminent death. But for the earliest Christian community and Christians today, this psalm is an Old Testament passage that talks about the death and resurrection of Jesus. How are such different interpretations possible? When Paul quoted Psalm 16:8-11 in Acts 2:25-28 and preached his first sermon, the Bible does not say how he interpreted Psalm 16:8-11 as a reference to the resurrection of Jesus. The only way to explain Peter's interpretation is that the Holy Spirit helped him to see Jesus' resurrection as the fulfillment of the prophecy in Psalm 16. Peter began to have a new perspective when the Holy Spirit was poured out on Pentecost. And Peter became one of the most influential apostles in the early church. He was full of passion for preaching the resurrection of Jesus. Peter and Jesus' other disciples began to live the resurrected life proclaiming good news of the risen Lord.

5. Fr. John Tae-Seok Lee

This morning, I'd like to introduce to you a Korean man who shared good news of the risen Jesus in South Sudan. Father John Tae-Seok Lee is a Catholic priest who is nicknamed "The Schweitzer of Sudan." Father John was born in 1962, the ninth of 10 children from Busan, Korea. He was influenced by the biography of Albert Schweitzer, a missionary and doctor in Gabon, Africa. And he wanted to be a medical doctor.

Father John went to medical school, worked as a surgeon in the Korean army, and then felt the call to become a priest. After he became a Catholic priest, he went to South Sudan and built a medical clinic in 2001. During this time, Father John's clinic treated roughly 300 people a day and made visits to patients who couldn't travel to see him. Father John also built a local school to teach math and music and started a famous brass band in Sudan. In 2008, on a rare vacation in Korea, Father John had a routine checkup and was diagnosed with colon and liver cancer. He died in January 2010 at the age of 47. Before his death, Father John awoke and told people: "Don't worry. Everything is going to be alright." There is a documentary regarding his mission called, *Do Not Cry for Me, Sudan*. Father John had confidence that

there was nothing to worry about because God would take care of everything. Sudanese people met the risen Christ through Father John Lee.

6. Conclusion

Many people might ask us to show God and the resurrected Jesus. But there is no way for us to convince someone of the risen Christ with physical evidence. Yet, you and I can help them experience the power of the Holy Spirit and God's love by living the resurrected and transformed life. Our way of life can often be a strong testimony of who God is and who Jesus is in the world.

King David knew that there is no problem too big that God does not actively control. King David and Father John could find perfect peace in their imminent death. They showed their confidence in the power of the Lord who raised Jesus from death. And the risen Jesus makes us sing songs of confidence in God's provision and care every day. When people listen to our music, they would want to come to the risen Christ and believe in him. We know that music has great power. Last Sunday, many people came to listen to the Easter Cantata.

7. Application

I may not be able to show you the risen Christ. But I can sing a song of confidence, and I hope you can encounter the risen Lord this morning. I am going to sing "Under His Wings." When I sing the 2nd stanza, please join me in singing. "Under His wings I am safely abiding; Though the night deepens and tempests are wild, Still I can trust Him, I know He will keep me; He has redeemed me, and I am His child. Under His wings, under His wings, Who from His love can sever? Under His wings my soul shall abide, Safely abide forever." Please join me in singing. "Under His wings, what a refuge in sorrow! How the heart yearningly turns to His rest! Often when earth has no balm for my healing, There I find comfort, and there I am blessed. Under His wings, Under His wings, Who from His love can sever? Under His wings my soul shall abide, Safely abide forever." Amen. Let us pray.