

7.3. sermon

My beloved Asbury family,

Tomorrow is the fourth of July. On that day, we will celebrate the birth of American independence, commemorating the declaration of freedom of the United States.

You may know the U.S means a beautiful country in Korean. As it is called, do you think of your country as beautiful?

Yes~! I agree because America is a nation of immigrants.

Your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents would have been immigrants.

Even if you were born in America, we are all descendants of immigrant families unless we are native Americans.

Many diverse people from different countries and cultures have become one nation in this country.

Moreover, in this beautiful country, diverse cultures are mixed and recreated repeatedly.

I believe this is an incredible blessing for our country. I hope many blessings on the United States and prosperity continue in God's protection~!

Even though we live a blessed life in this beautiful country, this hot summer weather irritated us a lot...

Last week, my office, which has windows all around, was like a pressure cooker with steam in the pot~!

All my precious plants were drooping, so I needed to water more than usual and evacuate my potted plants from the direct sun.

And I kept filling my mouth with ice cubes and sparkling water.

When the weather is so hot, we must find ways to quench our thirst.

Look at this picture. (show Ppt) What is your favorite beverage?

Wow, look at all the various beverages here. In this hot season, what drink can quench our thirst?

Yohan might choose his favorite one, diet coke. But, no, no, no, Choosing a soda actually makes us more thirsty. Right?

According to the New York Daily News, "when you are very thirsty or dehydrated, you have low levels of saliva. Saliva helps to neutralize acids, but soda is the most acidic beverage you can purchase."

It means drinking soda makes you thirsty, which makes you want to drink more and more~! Soda can even contribute to health issues such as high blood pressure, obesity, high cholesterol, and insulin resistance.

Then what can quench our thirst and make us healthier?

Yeah~ We all know it's water. Our bodies need water.

The adult human body consists of up to 60% water.

According to the Journal of Biological Chemistry 158, "the brain and heart are composed of 73% water, and the lungs are about 83% water. The skin contains 64% water, muscles and kidneys are 79%, and even the bones are watery at 31%."

We may have already known the fact that water is so important to us.

However, I would like to emphasize it because of the symbolic significance of water to quench our spiritual thirst in today's scripture.

Water is closely related to life. Furthermore, it is granted freely...rich, and abundantly...

In verses 1 and 2, as water symbolizes life for the human being, the wine and the milk symbolize joy and abundance. When God promised Canaan to the Israelites, it was described as "a land flowing with milk and honey," which meant an abundance of land.

A professor said, "Making a connection between food and the word, this text offers evidence that food increasingly is understood on a spiritual level, intended to still Israel's spiritual hunger and thirst."

In the background of Isaiah, the Israelites sinned, trusting other gods despite God's faithfulness to God's promise, resulting in them experiencing brutal colonization in Babylonia.

So, during their captivity in Babylon, they yearned for Israel's political recovery, and God's promises came true. At this time, Isaiah proclaimed the fulfillment of God's promises and His grace, inviting them to come before God.

As God invited the Israelites to come to the water, the way of life..., our God Invites us, who are living in uncertainty and despair, to come to the living water, which is never thirst, eat what is good, and delight ourselves in rich food.

Moreover, God offers this for free. It is God's unconditional and wholehearted grace toward us.

However, what is our choice?

This hot summer has lured us to choose sweet, ice-cold soda, which leads us to consider the way of thirst and the way of death so that we might never experience the richness and abundance of the living water God freely grants to us.

John 4:14 says Jesus said to the Samaritan woman in her distress, "those who drink the water that I will give them will never be thirsty.

The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

Through the living water, which is God's word, we will never thirst in our spiritual lives, and we can be in joyful and deep communion with God in our daily lives.

Are you thirsty spiritually?... Do you want to enjoy God's priceless grace? Yes, ~. Then, what will our response to God's gracious invitation be?

One step toward God is to trust in God's protection and guidance. When we come to the water and respond to God's invitation, we can experience the refreshing coolness of real living water. This is good news for us and the world.

I hope the Asbury church can be an instrument to spread this good news through your ministry of God's mission to the world.

First, let us respond to God's priceless invitation and step forward with trust in the living water.

Then, we can be God's children who can joyfully and actively participate in God's work. Isn't it exciting how our God works through Asbury church?

In my meditation about stepping forward with faith, a scene from the movie “Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade” came to mind. This is the final scene of the movie. In short, the main character, Indy's father, was shot by an enemy. The holy water used by Jesus at the Last Supper and the legendary cup containing the blood of Jesus hanging on the cross have the power to heal sickness and wounds, so he goes to find the Holy Grail for his father.

Before him, there were three tests that he had to cross to get it. The first and second wisely passed, and the final test was met, called “the way of Christ.” The hint was, "you would prove your worth when you jumped off the lion's head.” That is to say... “believe and move on...” But...

There were deep cliffs on both sides in front of him, and he needed to cross between them. But how? If he mistakenly took one step forward, he would fall off to a bottomless chasm and die.

Indy looked at the endless canyon... He must take a step of faith forward into what seemed to be an abyss.

Although he was afraid, he took a step forward based on the hint. Then, instead of falling, he could experience a miracle.

As you may have guessed, when he stepped out with his full weight, the bridge, which he had not been able to see, appeared in front of him. I prepared a short video clip of that scene.(Movie PPT)

I think the faith is like this example.

We can experience God’s miraculous work when we step forward in faith. We can't see the future and may be afraid of stepping into the abyss, but when we move forward in faith, we can experience God's miracles. It won't be easy... it won't happen all at once... So, we need to practice this discipline in faith...

My beloved Asbury family,

Let us put our whole weight on God. It could be risky, scary, or feel like a burden, but you know it is a way of life.

The way of life requires stepping forward into the living water in faith. Do you want to refresh your souls with living water? In this confusing time, our God invites us to come to the water of life through the words of Isaiah today. Now is the time for us to take a step forward with faith. I hope you will become faithful God’s children who experience the Lord's work ahead of you as you take each step with an expectant heart and strong faith.

Let us be the instrument of God’s work and expect God to work before us~!!!. May God bless you, who will determine to have firm faith in God. Amen.