

From the editor

New Latin praise song of the whole chapter of Isaiah 53 was given to us through Mitsuko last month. As we recorded this praise at the *Church of the Wind*, we felt that the time has come when the heavenly presence of God covered all of our weakness.

In this time, we'd like to share with you Pastor Peter's message "What Is Lacking in Christ's Afflictions."

What Is Lacking in Christ's Afflictions

Peter

For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we shall live with him by the power of God.

(2 Corinthians 13:4)

Was Christ crucified because of His weakness?

The answer is "Yes, Yes, Yes."

The mystery of Christ's weakness is laid in the fact that He took the form of man for our sake. He was made weak in order to complete the redemption.

He was appointed as a high priest to bear our weakness on His body.

For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is

bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him,

“Thou art my Son,
today I have begotten thee.” (Hebrews 5:1-5)

The Son of Man went all the way so He might be acquainted with all sufferings and weakness of us human beings and the entire creation. The ultimate point was Calvary.

Because He tasted our weakness thoroughly, He was able to conquer every weakness.

This is the divine way. It is utterly opposite to our ways. We think we ought to be strong to overcome weakness. Should we expose our weakness to our enemies, we will be beaten mercilessly. That's how our world works. It is true in our daily life, as well as in the present world affairs.

Look at North Korea. A tiny nation in terms of economy and military strength is now threatening the world with missiles and nuclear testing, while their people are suffering from so little food to eat. The leaders know nothing but to bark and intimidate others. They are utterly foolish, but they represent our foolishness. When we do not recognize our own weakness, we behave as a caricature fool.

When I meditate on Christ's weakness, the puzzling scripture comes to my mind:

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's

afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.

(Colossians 1:24)

There is no such thing as “what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.” The whole Bible testifies that God’s redemption was completed once for all on Calvary. There should be nothing to add and nothing to subtract. Why did Paul, who knew the redemption more than anyone else, make the statement?

The answer is that there is something which makes Christ’s suffering look as if “lacking.” And that is the “church.”

God’s redemption is completed and perfected. It is the most powerful truth. And yet it *looks* otherwise because the church, the vessel of the divine redemption in the visible world, is mundane and is not fully able to manifest the perfect design of God. We, the church of Jesus Christ, have not yet realized the full scheme of God’s perfect redemption. When we reach the point of its full realization, we shall know the perfect love, all sufficient redemption.

The time is rapidly approaching so the whole council of God may be fully realized and we shall see the glorious coming of the Lord, accompanying New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ.

“Completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions” must mean that we, the earthly church, are to engage in the praising mission for the Bridegroom. By our so doing, the invisible and perfected redemption will be manifested on the earth in the visible dimension. It is the time of divine marriage of the Spirit and the flesh.

That is why we must learn the weakness of Christ. No matter how mundane we are, we confess our utter weakness

through the *Heavenly praises*.

As we all know, celestial praising is not like singing Handel's oratorio. It sounds very weak and feeble. It is just like the Suffering Servant who had "no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. (Isaiah 53:2)"

And yet its sound goes out to all the earth, spreading deep healing and life unto the whole creation.

April 9, 2012

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