

# Vision of Praise

November 2016

*From the editor*

In this issue, we will share Pastor Peter's message, "Quicken the Time through Thanksgiving." You will find the secret of God's divine life through his message.

May thanksgiving to the Lord overflow in you, and reached to the end of the earth.

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## Quicken the Time through Thanksgiving

Peter

♪ *Here comes God's Time.  
Now is the moment of God's Time.  
O Lord, we are filled with the oil of joy.  
We praise You in the garment of praise.  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. ♪*

Gone is the hot summer, and now we are in the crispy wind of the autumn. Time passes so quickly, doesn't it?

When you get old like me, you notice how fast time seems to run. Hardly do you remember what happened a week ago, much less a few months ago. Is this something to do with aging? I cannot believe Christmas is only a couple months ahead!

Objective time, which I call the clock time, runs equally to anyone, older or younger. Perception of time, however, differs individually. The mechanism of memory, I think, may be eroding and falling into decay as we age. Old folks like me do not remember daily occurrences in detail, and consequently they feel less stressed or stimulated in daily

life. Thus time runs fast.

All are getting older. Anti-aging is a big concern in our time, and it is a huge business all over the world. I wonder why we are so afraid of getting old.

A poet, Robert Browning, sang the ancient wisdom of Rabbi Ben Ezra:

*Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be.  
The last of life, for which the first was made:  
Our times are in His hand  
Who saith "A whole I planned,  
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"*

And it is the very thought that the Bible affirms. Getting old is a blessing, for it brings forth abundant harvests.

One of many blessings is the cleaning of memories. Haven't you heard that some old folks go through a positive transformation in their mentality? Not all people, of course, but some exhibit a sudden change of character, namely becoming a man of thanksgiving. Instead of irritable and constantly grudging personality, he is now like an angel, expressing hearty thanks to anyone around. The phenomenon seems to happen near the end of life. Is this a mere physiological change, or what?

Have you also heard of a near-death experience? It is not an aging phenomenon, but exhibits a similar outcome. Because of improved medical science or other reasons, we do hear reports from some who have gone through death medically and seen the world of life after death. They come to a beautiful garden or place, and yet are stopped from entering the most brilliant dimension. A voice of the Lord tenderly says to them, "It is not yet your time. Return to the

earth.” Regrettably they return to their earthly bodies. The astounding fact is not so much their heavenly reports but the exhibition of total transformation of their character. These people seem to have understood what is most important in life. They echo the same statement: “Love is most precious in life.” Almost all of them become full of thanksgiving.

The reality of love is overwhelming. They have glanced at the world of life, the ultimate dimension. It is the world of absolute affirmation. You are accepted just as you are. Nothing to condemn you; nothing to harm you.

Wouldn’t you say that it is similar to the state right after you accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior? I think it is, only far better than a near-death experience or a character-changing experience after it. Receiving the eternal life by faith may not be so dramatic as a near-death experience, but it is not limited to a very few. It is open to anyone, and its effect lasts all your life. I would say that the encounter with Christ brings forth a kind of death. You go through the spiritual death. That is why you experience love that accepts you just as you are. You are justified and saved by His grace, not by your work. Salvation through faith it is.

Since childhood, we have been accustomed to “doing good” mentality. “Be a good boy, and you’ll get a compliment of love as a reward.” Yes, love is something to be given as a reward for your good behavior. Do something bad, and you’ll get a reprimand and no love. Man knows only the world of *doing*. Even though parental love, in most cases, is different from love based on *doing*, it is not pure or absolute love of acceptance, which only God can bestow on us.

What is the love of God? This you can see in the heavenly dimension. There you discover pure and

transcendental love, which is truly absolute, truly affirmative. Your earthly behaviors, no matter how bad or how good, are completely dismissed and absorbed into the ocean of the divine love. Not *doing*, but *being*, that is the concern of the divine love.

I have become absolutely convinced that Christ's love is the total acceptance of who you are. You are identified with His life and love. No condemnation hangs over you, for you are the very child of Christ.

While we were under the *working* ethics which is the law, we were alienated from the love divine. But God's grace has appeared apart from man's work, and we have been enrolled in God's family with simple faith. How astounding is the love divine!

If the near-death experience produces a positive effect upon a person, I wonder, can't a normal life which you and I live every day bring forth the mystery of *being* in life? I believe it can, because it is the very desire of the Lord that we human beings stand on God's original intention to live. The mystery of *being* is the holy ground where the whole creation receives the wind of life:

Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.

(Acts 3:19-21 NAS Updated Version)

The wind is the breath of God which makes all created life refreshed and renewed. A Greek word for "times" in the above text is *kairos* which denotes a special meaningful time,

namely a time of divine visitation. It is different from *chronos* which is the origin of an English word, chronology. *Chronos* which indicates the clock time is inorganic and monotonic. *Kairos*, on the other hand, is qualitative and meaningful. The time of God's visitation is very meaningful for all creation. It is the awakening and conscious time.

It is the reality and essence of time. Though we all are living in *chronos*, we receive inspiration and meaning of life from *kairos*.

I believe that worship is *kairos*. It is the divinely appointed time. While our physical body is in decay moment by moment, our inner man is being refreshed and becoming anew in His presence.

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. (2 Corinthians 4:16 NAS Updated Version)

You can notice that two antagonistic concepts seem to battle in the Bible: grace versus work. Salvation comes to us through faith in Jesus Christ. That is grace.

And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. (Romans 11:6 NKJ)

Even though work receives much criticism that it enhances man's self-righteousness, it should never be tossed away. After all it is originated in the heart of God.

The problem of man's work against God's grace can be viewed as the problem between man's *being* and *doing*. I do not mean to enter the philosophical jungle. In our plain life, we can observe a really strange phenomenon: Man seems to retrieve the state of *being* at his last stage of life. Man has

lived in the active world all his life, but suddenly he goes through a dramatic change. He seems to be detached, losing all interests in the active world. No longer argumentative he is, and now he is serene with himself. He is now a man of gratitude and thanksgiving.

I believe it is the divine providence. Resigning from the world of *doing*, he is quite content with his own *being*. Not by work of man, but by grace of God he is.

This is the enlightenment, which I call the mystery of *being*. It is the consciousness of *being* accepted just as I am. No one ever evaluates you for what you do. And God sees you just as you are. This is the absolute love, the most affirmative love. This love is what Jesus speaks of as the lilies of the field. How glorious they are without toiling and spinning!

Didn't you experience such *love* when you encountered the Lord? All your sins were blotted out, and you've touched the spring of life which produces unlimited forgiveness. Borrowing Mitsuko's word in the *White Dove*, it is the consciousness: "In the universe there exist only Thou and my longing for Thee."

When you enter the ultimate state of the divine love, your consciousness dismisses all other things than God and His love. Nothing else exists. Such is the ultimate reality you discover in the universe.

Mitsuko is our representative for such an encounter with Christ, the living God and His love unlimited. Sooner or later, we shall all come to confess the Lord of ever-flowing love, for our soul hears His divine call and trembles in joy at the glance of His love unlimited.

While magnifying the mystery of the love of God

bestowed upon *being*, however, I must point out that man's existence is not only in *being*. Coming back from the world of *being*, he faces the outer world of *doing*. If you are nearing a point of death, you no longer concern your outer world of *doing*, but you can't live without making actions. As soon as you step in the outer world, you get in trouble, for this is the world where self must insist on his own righteousness. This is a dilemma, a big problem, especially for a soul who has experienced the absolute forgiveness and love of God.

After tasting the vast ocean of love and ecstatic joy through the encounter with the *White Dove*, Mitsuko had to face the harsh and abusive language of her husband who demanded that she renounce her faith in Christ. Once a happy family, but it was in danger of total collapse. Many readers of Mitsuko's book have been astounded by the gap between the most beautiful world of the *White Dove* and the darkest hell she had to go through. Mitsuko had to agonize in the world of *doing*, having discovered the most precious in life, the mystery of *being*.

It is not, however, Mitsuko's own puzzle alone. It is the enigma of every sincere soul who longs for the love of God. Filled with indescribable joy at the encounter with the Lord, we soon find ourselves in a situation where conflict with others is inevitable.

In my case, I often find that my egocentric self bumps into others even after deep prayer. It is a fact that our staff workers get into harsh argument with one another and display their irritation toward others right after singing the most *heavenly praise* in worship. And it is more shocking to learn that they do not recognize their own conflicts!

Alas, what is man? Ascending into the third heaven at one moment, he descends into the hell in the next second. In

other words, he cannot solve the enigmatic dilemma between *being* and *doing*. Why can we not keep the state of *being* in God's grace?

Paul also laments, "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel." (Galatians 1:6 NAS) Insisting on our own righteousness is to relapse into a different gospel!

For a considerable period, I have struggled with this problem, and prayed about it. Finally, however, I saw a flash of light. It was coincident with the cascade of *heavenly praises* which started flooding upon the flock in the year 2000. It was more like an intuition then, and yet I am fully convinced now. I was seeing through the veil, but now at close range. In the most humble sense of the word, I say that I am standing at the threshold of the kingdom of God where the invisible and the visible come together to sing the Hymn of the Universe to the Paschal Lamb.

That much? Yes, that much, and more, for I have discovered a key to bridge the gap between *being* and *doing*. Celestial virtue will be married to something earthen.

That is "thanksgiving." That is "praising." It is so simple. You don't need a PhD from Harvard to figure it out, but you need simple faith to receive blessings. When a childlike praise ♪*Kansha Kansha Kansha*♪ resounded in worship service, I exclaimed in my heart, "This is it!" *Kansha* in Japanese means thanksgiving. "Oh, the key is lying right here!" I said to myself. Thank You, Jesus.

In saying thanksgiving, you're expressing your heart's confession that the Lord Jesus has accomplished His redeeming work once for all. Everything is included in God's work of redemption, and none in the universe can escape from His forgiveness and love. The mystery of *being* will be

translated and transported into the sphere of *doing* through thanksgiving, *Kansha*.

*Being* and *doing* are in separate dimensions, but now they are being united at the threshold of the kingdom of God where praising echoes and resounds. As you give thanks, you are contributing to fusing both worlds into one.

It was the last year when Mitsuko received an *interpretation*, “We die in praise.” At first many, including Mitsuko herself, were puzzled at its meaning. When I had a traffic accident in the beginning of last December, I immediately understood: I did die. My old life was gone with the death of Jesus. No doubt about it.

And in realizing my death in a deeper dimension, I noticed that dying in Jesus would produce new life. I find myself constantly confessing, “Thank You, thank You, thank You.” It is a ceaseless stream of thanksgiving. As I give thanks to the Lord, I see that the mystery of *being* penetrates into the sphere of the world of *doing*.

When we praise the Lord, we are enacting the historical fact of the Cross to this day. That is “dying to praise.”

Another *interpretation* in a recent time says, “The time is approaching. You are the ones who should quicken the time.”

We are in the eschatological time. The crucial time, the Second Coming, whatever you may call it, is indeed near. But no need to get panicked, for the *parucia* (the Second Coming of Christ) will bring forth exceeding joy. You have heard of catastrophic disaster and calamity in the end time. But the bottom line is that the Lord will be back to the earth. It will be the consummating point of all history. Instead of getting panicked, I will be thrilled to death at the glimpse of His coming. As for me, I would like to quicken the time if possible. And it is very possible through faith and praise.

What the Spirit says of quickening the time is to unite *being* and *doing* according to my terminology. It is the task of the people of praise and thanksgiving. A man of *kansha* (thanksgiving) is to invoke the divine time, *kairos*. He is the man who has a double vision: seeing the most joyful image over a catastrophic scene, restoration over judgment.

He who has the Lord's vision lives in sparkling joy, for he knows the very desire of the Lord for this generation. Be not dismayed in the gloomy world. Surely you can conquer all negative campaigns the world throws at you, for the Lord is with you and you are guarded with His thanksgiving.

♪ Kansha Kansha Kansha

..... Thank You. Thank You, O Lord.

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