



**Month of Stewardship
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, August 26th, 2018**

**Christianity in a Challenging World:
The Recovery of Virtue**

Jeong (정)

These last two weeks, as we consider Christian, stewardship we have been thinking about the fundamental challenges of our modern age and the contribution that Christianity and the Christian Church has made, does make and is in a position to make.

The first challenge of modernity that we observed is a very concrete one that we all observe and experience: the broad movement of peoples – immigrants and refugees. Just as international and national demographics rapidly change, so does the Church as it embraces changes in worship life and its own thought. The second, challenge that we thought about last Sunday, was that of the rise of fundamentalism: religious but also secular. While the religious forms are clear, the secular forms are also quite recognizable as the old liberal consensus of our world breaks apart in favour of sectarianism. The challenge for Christianity, one of which it is quite capable given its breadth and depth of thought, is to ensure that it itself, does not become simply another sectarian expression, in a sectarian world. but contributes broadly and generously to rebuilding our societies where agreement and cooperation are at a premium.

Today, our final Sunday for stewardship month, is to think about another basic mark of our modern world: the loss of virtue. In conversion to Christ, Christians are converted to a life-style, a way of living, a life of virtue. In the Epistle reading for today, we hear about what a life of virtue includes. In essence, Christian virtue includes the values of faith, hope and love, but it runs even deeper, reflecting many of the characteristics of the Greek view of the good character – something that Aristotle wrote about in his famous work Nicomachean Ethics. Today, virtue is something that has been lost to our modern world, and yet we yearn for it, as we despair over the lack of it in our lives: individually, socially and politically speaking. Above we see the Korean word or character for virtue, which approximates the Biblical view. Jeong is genuine concern for one's fellow human beings and fosters real friendship among people. Inherent in jeong is unselfishness and humility. A person who strives to live up to the ideals of jeong won't let status or appearance consume them, and won't draw attention to themselves. Instead, they'll work with others harmoniously out of concern for what they must all do together so they can make life better for themselves and everybody else.

GATHERING

Announcements

Welcome

In the name of God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

The Lord be with you

And with you

Hymn: Love Divine (TiS 217, Hyfrydol Charles Wesley)

Introduction to the Theme

Community Prayer: The Difficulty of Following Jesus

Today's Gospel reading of John continues with the discussion about Jesus as the "bread of life". In this prayer we confess that it is really difficult to meaningfully follow the man Jesus, because it has to do with the reshaping of who we are as well as what we do. The metaphor we use is "seems the bread of heaven's just too hard to chew".

Seems the bread of heaven's just too hard to chew.
Said, this bread of heaven's just too hard to chew.
I'm chokin' on flesh that's given for me and you.

Says his words are spirit, but they feel more like a knife.
Says his words are spirit, but they feel more like a knife.
Yet he tells me his words hold the power of eternal life.

Don't know 'bout a Lord who'd lay down his life for love.
Said, what kind of a Lord lays down his life for love?
This world, my friend, is a place of push and shove.

Funny how hungry I feel down to my shoes.
Said, funny how hungry I feel down to my shoes.
Can't seem to shake these empty-feeling blues.

Wish the bread of heaven wasn't so hard to chew.
Is the bread of heaven really so hard to chew?
Maybe need that flesh that's given for me and you.

Our Confession and Reconciliation

Let us be still and listen to the voice of God

Silence

We admit with tears
that we have not chewed you enough;
that we have spat you out

We admit with pain
that we have not chewed you enough;
that we have spat you out

We admit with a sense of our own brokenness
that we have not chewed you enough;
that we have spat you out

***O God, forgive us and create in
us a new heart to build
communities founded, grounded in love***

Peace

Peace be with you;
and also with you

Children leave for SMG

LET'S HEAR THE WORD

Some Thoughts About Christianity and Virtue

Jeong (정)

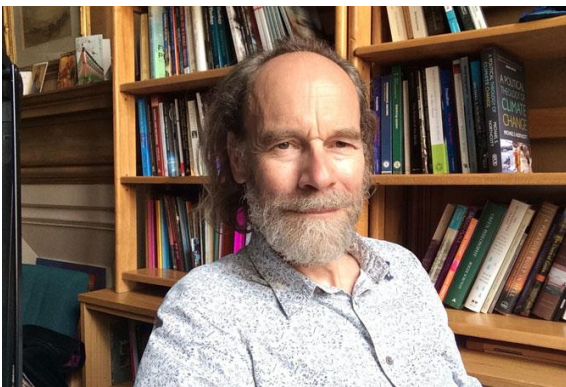
Jeong is genuine concern for one's fellow human beings and fosters real friendship among people. Inherent in jeong is unselfishness and humility. A person who strives to live up to the ideals of jeong won't let status or appearance consume them, and won't draw attention to themselves. Instead, they'll work with others harmoniously out of concern for what they must all do together so they can make life better for themselves and everybody else.

Lyman McLallen, Professor, College of English, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies.



Conversion to Christ is about conversion to the kingdom and as part of the kingdom, virtue. To live virtuously is not about what particular response I should make faced with a particular predicament, but rather what I should consistently be doing at all. What sort of shape might my entire life appropriately take? What sort of character do I want to be and how should I structure my response in my relationships with others and society.

John Milbank, *The Politics of Virtue*



Liberal thought has the 'constitution of individualism' and relies on a negative definition of what individuals want, which is freedom *from* coercion and *from* limits on their own choices or *from* the needs of other persons. There is no concept of freedom *for*, no concept of the good of the commons, the common good, the good of all. Instead we have turned to economic management with the publicly recognized values of capital, consumer goods and money.

Michael Northcott, Professor of Ethics,

Edinburgh University

Readings

Ephesians 6:10-20 (Good News Translation)

Seng Eng Low

This is Paul's instruction about what it means to live virtuously. He uses the image of armour but counter-intuitively, the armour is in a sense disarming of the destructive dynamics which threaten humanity. Truth is one of the first casualties of hate. Righteousness/ goodness/ justice is the centrepiece, close to the heart. The feet move not to march in war but to bear the good news of peace. Faith here is as much about faithfulness and trust as it is about belief. Salvation here probably has a strong sense of security and hope, the basis for the trust.

¹⁰ Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all the armour that God gives you, so that you will be able to stand up against the Devil's evil tricks. ¹² For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. ¹³ So put on God's armour now! Then

when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy's attacks; and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground.

¹⁴ So stand ready, with truth as a belt tight around your waist, with righteousness as your breastplate, ¹⁵ and as your shoes the readiness to announce the Good News of peace. ¹⁶ At all times carry faith as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. ¹⁷ And accept salvation as a helmet, and the word of God as the sword which the Spirit gives you. ¹⁸ Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God's people. ¹⁹ And pray also for me, that God will give me a message when I am ready to speak, so that I may speak boldly and make known the gospel's secret. ²⁰ For the sake of this gospel I am an ambassador, though now I am in prison. Pray that I may be bold in speaking about the gospel as I should.

John 6:56-69 (Good News Translation)

Colin Bradford

In this final reading about Jesus as the bread of life: in other words, the means to salvation, conflict breaks out with the Synagogue about such a claim. The emphasis here falls, as it often does in Scripture upon the last lines of Peter, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. ⁶⁹ And now we believe and know that you are the Holy One who has come from God."

⁵⁶ Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood live in me, and I live in them. ⁵⁷ The living Father sent me, and because of him I live also. In the same way whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This, then, is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the bread that your ancestors ate, but then later died. Those who eat this bread will live forever."

⁵⁹ Jesus said this as he taught in the synagogue in Capernaum.

⁶⁰ Many of his followers heard this and said, "This teaching is too hard. Who can listen to it?"

⁶¹ Without being told, Jesus knew that they were grumbling about this, so he said to them, "Does this make you want to give up? ⁶² Suppose, then, that you should see the Son of Man go back up to the place where he was before? ⁶³ What gives life is God's Spirit; human power is of no use at all. The words I have spoken to you bring God's life-giving Spirit. ⁶⁴ Yet some of you do not believe." (Jesus knew from the

very beginning who were the ones that would not believe and which one would betray him.) ⁶⁵ And he added, “This is the very reason I told you that no people can come to me unless the Father makes it possible for them to do so.”

⁶⁶ Because of this, many of Jesus' followers turned back and would not go with him any more. ⁶⁷ So he asked the twelve disciples, “And you—would you also like to leave?”

⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. ⁶⁹ And now we believe and know that you are the Holy One who has come from God.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Christ

Hymn: Awake from your slumber (Dan Schutte)

**Awake from your slumber, arise from your sleep
A new day is dawning for all those who weep
The people in darkness have seen a great light
The Lord of our longing, has conquered the night**

***Let us build the city of God
May our tears be turned into dancing
For the Lord, our light and our love
Has turned the night into day***

**We are sons of the morning, we are daughters of day
The one who has loved us, has brightened our way
The Lord of all kindness has called us to be
a light for all people to set their hearts free.**

***Let us build the city of God
May our tears be turned into dancing
For the Lord, our light and our love
Has turned the night into day***

**God is light, in him there is no darkness
Let us walk in his light, his children one and all**

**O comfort my people, make gentle your words,
Proclaim to my city, the day of her birth**

***Let us build the city of God
May our tears be turned into dancing
For the Lord, our light and our love
Has turned the night into day***

A Film Clip: Muriel's Wedding (30:30-35:24)

Muriel is an impressionable young woman struggling to work herself out in a world where she has no meaningful role-models. In her struggle, she dreams about who she might be but is well aware that the methods she uses to get there are dishonest. Behind her struggle to build a sense of self and virtue, she fears she is nothing, a no-one. It is in the end however, her best friend, Rhonda, who holds her up.

Some Thoughts

Let's Give

Doxology

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
praise him, all creatures here below,
praise him above, ye heavenly host,
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.***

Prayer of Dedication for Stewardship Commitments

Prayers of the People

Seng Eng Low

The one who prays ends each petition with the words, ***“help us to see with honesty and humility”***, and the congregational response, ***“to live the kingdom”***.

Lord's Prayer

Let us say the Lord's Prayer

***Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.***

***Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.***

하늘에 계신 우리 아버지여
이름이 거룩히 여김을 받으시오며
나라이 임하옵시며
뜻이 하늘에서 이룬 것 같이
땅에서도 이루어지이다.
오늘날 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주옵시고
우리가 우리에게
죄 지은 자를 사하여 준 것 같이
우리 죄를 사하여 주옵시고
우리를 시험에 들게 하지 마옵시고
다만 악에서 구하옵소서
대개 나라와 권세와 영광이
아버지께 영원히 있사옵나이다. 아멘

Closing Hymn: In Christ Alone

“In Christ alone my hope is found;
 He is my light, my strength, my song;
 This cornerstone, this solid ground,
 Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
 What heights of love, what depths of peace,
 When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
 My comforter, my all in all—
 Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,
 Fullness of God in helpless babe!
 This gift of love and righteousness,
 Scorned by the ones He came to save.
 Till on that cross as Jesus died,
 The wrath of God was satisfied;
 For ev’ry sin on Him was laid—
 Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
 Light of the world by darkness slain;
 Then bursting forth in glorious day,
 Up from the grave He rose again!
 And as He stands in victory,
 Sin’s curse has lost its grip on me;
 For I am His and He is mine—
 Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death—
 This is the pow’r of Christ in me;
 From life’s first cry to final breath,
 Jesus commands my destiny.
 No pow’r of hell, no scheme of man,
 Can ever pluck me from His hand;
 Till He returns or calls me home—
 Here in the pow’r of Christ I’ll stand.”

Blessing and Sending Out

Christ is life!

Through Christ
we seek to read the signs of the times
with perception and discernment,
without fear, with imagination and courage.

Through Christ
We seek to give of ourselves and our resources for good

Our service has ended

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ

**Going Out: Father bless us as we go (TiS 781, Kookaburra,
Robin Mann)**

Musical Postlude

Pianist: Rosemary Osborne



