

### **“Scriptural Passage which led me to Faith in Jesus Christ”**

Good morning, everyone! It is my first time to be here and to meet the Congregation of Osaka International Church. The representative of OIC, Dr. Shinichiro Ochiai, was my comrade and we were studying together at the same University, and we belonged to the then Bible Study Club of the University. We club members often met on the school lawn for prayers. After our graduations, each of us went on to our own directions. However, recently I have received a mail message from him saying that I may deliver a message at OIC. As far as I am concerned, after graduation, I dedicated myself to the Lord’s ministry, and I went to seminaries, and then served with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Papua New Guinea, and then after the missionary work came back to Japan for Pastoral ministries and seminary presidency for many years, about 55 years as a servant of Christ. And now I am a retired minister.

After having received his request, in my prayers, the Lord has directed me to share a message about my conversion experience. For me, I have a Bible passage, which I may call “my life time Scriptural Passage”. Now, I will share shortly how I got this passage.

When I was a freshman at the Osaka University, I was literally a freshman in Osaka, a big urban city, having come from a rural area in Niihama Shikoku. Unexpectedly I was thrown into an immense problem. I started to think about my own future life and asked questions to myself. “What for am I living?”, “What is the significant way of life for me?” All of a sudden, such questions emerged inside me. I started to find solutions for those questions. I read desultorily many books, about life and philosophy and etc. Without finding meaningful solutions from those readings, one day, I noticed a sign board message in the campus, “Only one thing is needed”. It was a notice about the Bible Message lecture sponsored by the then Bible Studying Club of the University. I was literally drawn into a Student Hall lecture room to listen for the first time in my life to the Bible expository message. I understand this is the help extended to me from the Lord. I was about to drown, and try to catch anything which may be a help to me.

It was a real help to me, not a straw. After a meeting, I was given a Gideon New Testament and was advised to read it and begin to attend the nearby Church, which is MB Ishibashi Church.

Today, I would like to share this Bible Passage, which has given me an opportunity to come to Jesus Christ for salvation.

## **I I was just like Martha before I came to Jesus (vs. 40-41)**

When Jesus and his company went to Bethany, they were invited into the house. And the preparation to treat them started. Martha, who was a mistress of the house welcomed them into their home, and the preparation to treat them has started. Martha was very busy to prepare food for them. While she was working very hard, she happened to notice that her younger sister, Mary was sitting at Lord's feet listening to what he said. Martha, who was so busy doing all the works by herself without the help of others, became angry at what Marry was doing. So, she went to Jesus and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

I was a young man nineteen years old, was just like Martha. Like her, I was worried about many things and was filled with many anxieties without having any solutions about my future and my death. My heart was void and empty with lots of fear and anxieties.

## **II I was urged to make a choice which Mary has chosen**

The answer of Jesus given to Martha is as follows :

**"Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (vs. 41-42)**

I was in a very desperate condition, although I got much knowledge from many books without reaching to a solid understanding and assurance about my life. The feeling of voidness and emptiness persisted in my heart. The philosophy and the wisdom of this world has not given me the answer to my desperate cry of my heart.

However, through the ministry of the preacher, I began to hope that the "only one thing is needed" for Mary should be my own only one thing needed.

After the meeting, I was given a volume of Gideon's New Testament, and I was encouraged to begin to attend the Sunday worship service near the University. The church is Japan Mennonite Brethren Ishibashi Christ Church.

In this way, my life of dedication to Christ started many years ago.

## **Conclusive Word**

I believe that my decision in Christ Jesus when I was a freshman at a university was a right decision. I became a Christian, and I was led into a life of "what is better, and it will not be taken"(v.42) from me. PTL.

Written by Takashi Manabe

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After graduating from seminary, Pastor Manabe worked as a translation missionary for the Wycliffe Bible Translators Society for about 15 years.

He worked in the Kwanga-speaking area of Papua New Guinea, then returned to Japan and served for about 22 years as Senior Pastor of Japan Mennonite Brethren Ishibashi Church and President of Evangelical Biblical Seminary.

After retiring in 2011, he has mainly assisted pastoring in the churches of the denomination.