

**SERMON: At The Right Time**

**Merry Christmas---Kirisito-MAS---メリークリスマス**

**I will focus much of this Message on the Letter that Jesus' Apostle wrote to the Christians in Galatia, a province now located in the country of Turkey. It was written about A.D. 49.**

**Galatians 4.3-5**

*3 And that's the way it was with us before Christ came. We were like children; we were slaves to the basic spiritual principles of this world. 4 But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. 5 God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.*

***4 But when the right time came, God sent his Son,***

**A TIMELY CHRISTMAS PRESENT**

So many things in our lives are influenced by the *right time*. At Umeda station here in Osaka a few days ago I saw many Christmas Shoppers lined up for Christmas Season special sales. But, more than that, presents must be wrapped in colorful paper and ready by that special day. In December of 2022 my wife and I ventured into the huge Q's Mall to find Christmas gifts for our two grandchildren in America. That adds another time pressure. These had to be posted to arrive in Montana, USA by Christmas Day. All societies, especially Japan, give little mercy to patients who are late to a doctor or a dentist appointment. It is not always true, but the expression "Timing Is Everything!" fits much of our lives all around the earth. Galatians Chapter 4, verse 5 speaks of *slaves to the basic spiritual principles of this world*. Time pressures are simply a fact of life, and not spiritual principles. However, the God of Heaven and Earth uses all means, including time, to bring His love to Mankind.

**A TIMELY INVASION**

Throughout time, the history of man is full of battles of power between nations . These wars are often

motivated by the ego or arrogant pride of a national leader. God used this to set up His Christmas Gift...wrapped in glory and beauty...His Son, the Prince of Peace, the baby Jesus. In about 315 BC Alexander the Great had led Greece to conquer almost all of the known world. His conquests stretched from Greece to much of Egypt and the region of Punjab in South Asia. The conquered nations adopted the complex but accurate Greek Language for their businesses. This encouraged world trade in a world under Greek control. This was called the Macedonian Empire. When the Romans later conquered the Macedonian Empire, the inhabitants kept the Greek business language. Latin, the language of the Romans, was awkward and vague. This was God's plan to give the writers of the Gospel, or Good News of His Son Jesus, the best accurate language ever known. God's infinite wisdom and power is also seen in Rome's conquest of the Macedonian Empire. Jesus' death on the Cross by crucifixion fulfilled the Law of God given to the Israelites about 1400 B.C. The Romans, not the Greeks, executed criminals by Crucifixion, nailing them to a cross-beam and hanging them on a tree! The Apostle Paul included this in his letter to the Galatians in **(Galatians 3.13)** *But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."* Paul was quoting the Law from God which is written in the Older Testament of the Bible in **(Deuteronomy 21.22-23)**. *22 "If someone has committed a crime worthy of death and is executed and hung on a tree, 23 the body must not remain hanging from the tree overnight. You must bury the body that same day, for anyone who is hung is cursed in the sight of God. In this way, you will prevent the defilement of the land the LORD your God is giving you as your special possession.* As sinners, we are all *criminals deserving death*. Therefore, on the Cross, the *Tree*, Jesus took upon Himself the Curse we deserve as sinners who broke God's Holy Law. So, we who receive Jesus are *FREE...really free to experience God's Love with joy unspeakable and full of Glory!* The early Believers in Jesus brought this Good News of freedom from the curse of breaking God's Laws and called it Jesus' Story, or Gospel. They went to the *Ends of the known world* to proclaim it and to write it in the language spread to the world by Alexander's conquests, that is Greek.

***4 But when the right time came, God sent his Son.***

#### **THE RIGHT TIME FOR AN ENEMY FIGHTER**

This story has been carefully documented and reveals human compassion even in times of war. It happened in World War II about A.D. 1943 in Europe. An American Bomber airplane had just dropped bombs to destroy factories in Germany. It was returning to its home base in England. It had

received great damage from anti-aircraft artillery. These guns were placed on the ground for protection from bombers. Those factories were building weapons for the German army. Germany was waging war against the Allied Forces which included America and England. The American bomber, a **B-24 Liberator**, was like a wounded eagle trying to stay in the air. All of its defensive guns were disabled. The most important gun was located in the B-24 tail. Enemy fighter planes would hold a constant speed behind a slower bomber for accurate shooting. But this bomber's most important machine gun in the plane's tail had been blown off completely. The American pilot decided not to crash land in enemy territory. He was trying to fly back to England with only two of the four propeller engines keeping the plane aloft. It was flying very low. Running out of fuel, the pilot could not go around a major city with many anti-aircraft guns. The tension mounted! Oh no, disaster! A German fighter plane, a Messerschmidt appeared. The bomber is defenseless. Now the unexpected happens. The German pilot saw the limping enemy plane with no guns to attack him. He was actually an "Ace" with many allied planes shot down by his skill. This would be an easy *kill*. But, he flies very close to the American pilot's window and tilts his wings...up and down. This is the international sign of Friendship in the Air. Then as they flew over the city, the German pilot flew his fighter plane under the belly of the B-24. The guns on the ground did not fire for they saw a German plane under the American enemy plane. This true story reminds me of the passage in the Bible in **(Romans 5.7-9)**: *7 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. 8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. 9 And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation.* Why did the German pilot show mercy to the American bomber airmen? We can only guess that it was the honor of the German pilot to not kill unarmed enemy soldiers. The German pilot was risking his life for the anti-aircraft guns may have fired. He was risking his career, for news would spread back to his home base. But, as a WW II "Ace" pilot, he had much prestige. Yet, if the ruler of Germany, Adolf Hitler, had heard the story, it would mean his execution.

This true story of human compassion is like the Bible verse in **(Romans 5.7-9)** *7 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. 8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. 9 And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation.* For God who knew how sinful and evil men are, still He sent His Son to save us all. **Jesus did not just risk His life, He gave it up willingly for**

**execution by Roman soldiers on the Cross.**

### **JESUS' STORY**

Jesus' story is often called the Good News or Gospel of Jesus Christ. Tomorrow we celebrate His Birthday. Jesus had always existed as God the Son in Heaven with God the Father. Because Mankind has sinned, all people are separated from God by an impassible gulf. God is holy and righteous and pure. He cannot fellowship with, or be in the presence of, sinners for sinners have sin within them! The Apostle Paul wrote in his Letter to the Roman Church in **(Romans 5.8)**: *But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.* On Christmas Day we celebrate God's gift to us all. The birth of His Son, Jesus, was in a stable with farm animals about Him. Jesus left Heaven to live inside a human body, created supernaturally in the Virgin Mary. God gave so much beauty and glory to His birth with Angels appearing and singing to lowly shepherds in the fields around His birthplace. But Jesus' purpose to be born on Christmas Day is given us in **(Romans 5.8)**: *But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.* Without His Death on a Cross 30 years later, Jesus' nativity story would be a fading beauty of a baby's birth. Like the bright lights we see in the train stations and malls in Osaka, Jesus' Birthday would be soon forgotten. God sent His Son for He intends His love for us to last and last...even forever.

### **LOST!**

Jesus often referred to sinners not in fellowship with God as the *lost*. He made it clear that this is why He came from Heaven. As Jesus said in **(Luke 19.10)** *For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.* He spoke many truths to help those outside of God's Family to know the seriousness of this separation, that impassible gulf between sinners and God. Luke's Gospel says in **(Luke 9.25)**, *And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed?* As many sinners focus on success with worldly gain, Jesus knew this was focused on that which would not save a sinner. Again, in Luke's Gospel, Jesus shows that a sinner is like a lost coin. He said in **(Luke 15.8-10)**: **8**“*Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it?* **9** *And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.'* **10** *In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents.*

**I guarantee that joy in Heaven does not stay there. The forgiven sinner receives true JOY.... joy**

*unspeakable and full of Glory!*

Now, to Umeda Station a few days ago. Having lived here in Osaka for 16 months, I am confident in finding different train lines even through the Umeda Maze! But, finding a doctor's office from underground, not so good!

Dorothy and I got lost! Once we lost the familiar way, everything looked the same. We asked many people. Most Osaka Japanese speak enough English for directions. But those who work underground knew nothing of the above ground 16 story building named JRE. We had to get above ground and ask a passer by who happened to speak great English. He actually lives in our town, Higashiyodogawa. He took us to the door. But, before we got there, as I saw the "Tulley's Coffee" sign, it looked like Heaven to me! I recognized this from visits to this doctor. I knew that I was no longer LOST! That above ground passer-by was a *saviour* to us lost travelers!

Sinners are lost. No matter what they do to work towards God...nothing gets them to His Loving Arms. They seek guidance from other sinners, underground in sin, who don't know God. Jesus called this *the blind leading the blind*. They are all *underground*. They must look above ground, to Jesus, to get above their underground spiritual condition. This is like Dorothy and I having to go above ground for directions in Umeda Station. God showed His acceptance of Jesus' Blood Sacrifice on the Cross as acceptable to appease God's anger at sin. God did this when He raised Him really from underground...from the grave, from the dead on Easter Sunday. This was the third day after Jesus' crucifixion and death on the Cross. Oh sinner, looking to Jesus will open your spiritual life to arise from your grave of sin, your underground spiritual life.

## YOUR TIME

If you are not a Christian....**Is this your right time?** You are here tonight because God loves you and wants you to be found. You can not do good works to get closer to God. God will only accept Jesus' work on the Cross as a work good enough to enable you to cross from spiritual death to life. Jesus' work on the Cross built a spiritual bridge for sinners, the lost, to cross over to God.

*Today is the acceptable time for salvation.*

I will close with a prayer for all. Christians will pray it too, although they are not lost but found. It reminds us Christians of the JOY of celebrating Jesus Birthday is the JOY of His death on the Cross so we are now forgiven and accepted by God.

**1. First, pray to God that you know you have sinned. *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.***

2. Next, tell God you repent or turn away from your life of sin. Tell God that you do not want to be a sinful person like that anymore. *You want to turn with repentance to God.*
3. Then, accept that Jesus died for you. Believe that He died on the Cross and took God's wrath for your sins, the wrath that you deserved. *Only Believe and you will be saved.*
4. Thank him that *It is finished.* Simply believe that He did it all for you on His Cross. You can not add to what He did for you. He died for you when you were committing your most sinful sin!
5. Rejoice! This is Christmas, Jesus Birthday and your re-Birthday.

*Let Us Pray,....*

## REFERENCES

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