

Rev. Dr. Yugo Suzuki's Sermon

5/29/2011

An Instrument of God Micah 6: 6-8

In my home in Tokyo, I had a music instrument. It was a violin on the top shelf of a bookcase in the living room. It was a beautiful instrument and a creation of a young Japanese violin maker.

But somehow this instrument made me sad. When I looked at it lying there unused or played by untrained fingers, I could not help thinking about its unused potential. It was what it could have been that bothered me.

Antonio Stradivari of Cremona, Italy was the world's most famous violinmaker in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. During his life time he created some 1100 violins.

There are not many of them left. But those that exist today cost as much as one million dollars.

One wonders what happened to the rest, those that are not accounted for. Are they in the attic of an aristocrat's mansion in Italy? Are they lying somewhere in the servants' quarters in a nobleman's castle? Or are they in the hands of players who have no qualifications to play such superb instruments?

You recognize, of course, that I have spoken in parables, parables of unused or misused music instruments, for we human beings are much like them.

God created us with utmost care. He created us in his own image. We are his most precious creation. God created us with freedom and creativity in arts, literature, and music. God created us with the ability to examine the mystery of the universe, discover nature's laws, and find ways to cure diseases. What wonderful creatures we humans are.

But what happens to us, God's most precious creation?

We forget that we are created by God. We forget that apart from God, we are like a boat without an anchor.

We are like the violin on the top shelf of the bookcase in my living room. We are like a Stradivarius lying in the dark corner of a Spanish mansion with no one to play such a superb instrument. Or we are like a Stradivarius that is played by a musician who has no appreciation for the purpose for which it was made.

But our parables of unused, misused violins eventually break down. In the final analysis, we do not have to stay on the top shelf of a bookcase in some one's living room. We do not have to be lying hidden in the dark corner of the attic of a nobleman's castle.

No. We can get out of the attic. We can climb down from the top of a bookcase. We can choose to return to God. We can choose to return to our true maker. We can ask God to play on us the kind of music that he wants to play.

What is the music God intends us to play? What is the content of true humanity? What is the purpose of our life? The prophet Micah defines it most clearly. "God has told you, O mortals, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (6:8)

So God makes the purpose of our life unmistakably clear. That is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

To do justice is to share what I have with others. To love kindness is to be compassionate to those with whom we come into contact. To walk humbly with our God is to trust him in good times and bad times.

Let us ask God, our Creator, our Maker, to play on us the true tune that he intends us to play. Rest assured. He will answer our prayer.