

Rev. Dr. Yugo Suzuki's Sermon

7/24/2011

**"The Road, the Wind, the Sun, and the Rain" Matthew 5: 13-16**

The most important question we humans can ever ask is, "What is the purpose of life?" To this, Jesus answered, "You are called to be the salt of the earth; you are called to be light in the world."

Christians are people who take that call of Jesus into their hearts with utmost seriousness.

For those who are called to be the salt of the earth and light in the world, Jesus is the road that ever rises to meet them.

Remember what the Bible tells us about his followers. They were all at their wit's end.

Fishermen in Galilee were struggling with a meager livelihood; a wealthy tax collector had no one to love him; a certain woman was almost stoned to death in Public Square for her immoral act; a paraplegic at the pond in Bethesda had been abandoned for 38 long years.

But to them, Jesus came. To them, Jesus brought hope. To them, Jesus brought human dignity. In that sense, he was the road that ever rose to meet them.

This is true for us today. When we are at our wit's end, he comes to us. He brings us hope. He brings us dignity. We are to proclaim that message in words and deeds - such life is the salt of the earth, light in the world.

Jesus the road is also Jesus the breeze

Christian life is not trouble-free. Look at Paul. Look at Peter. Look at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Look at Mother Teresa. Look at Toyohiko Kagawa.

In the face of rejection, persecution, even death, they constantly experienced Jesus bringing serenity to their exhausted spirits. In that sense, he is the breeze of God.

Today we, too, experience Jesus as the breeze of God that brings us serenity. With the breeze of God at our backs, we can live compassionately in a world of lovelessness; we can live repentantly in the midst of self-righteousness; we can yearn for justice in a world full of injustices. Such life is the salt of the earth and light in the world.

But not only that, the Psalmist declares, "The righteousness of God is like the morning sun that brings warmth to cold and dark fields." To us Christians, Jesus is the embodiment of God's righteousness. Jesus is the rising sun in the morning.

We are living in a world where Christians easily lose their identity just as a drop of ink gets absorbed into a bucketful of water.

But Jesus Christ wakes us up from our stupor as the morning sun transforms cold and dark fields into green pastures. To be awakened by the morning sun - such life is the salt of the earth and light in the world.

Jesus the morning sun is also Jesus the rain. Again, listen to the Psalmist. "The grace and mercy of God is like the rain that waters the parched earth." As Christians, we say Jesus is the rain of God's grace and mercy.

When our souls are parched, Jesus would not leave us desolate. He would not leave us dried up. He always refreshes us. He will enliven us.

To be refreshed by the rain of God's mercy - such life is the salt of the earth, light in the world.

Jesus comes to us as the road, as the breeze, as the sun, and as the rain. The message for us is crystal clear: It is this Jesus who calls us to be the salt of the earth, light in the world. He is our true friend, our comforter, our sustainer.

What a joyous affirmation! What an empowering message! This is the Christian faith that braces us for the living of these days.

So my friends in Christ, "May the road ever rise to meet you; may the wind be at your back. May the sun shine warmly on your face. May the rain fall softly in your fields. And until we meet again, may God hold you firmly in the palm of his hand and give you peace."

Thanks be to God.

