

Rev. Yugo Suzuki's Sermon

7/12/09 **“Do not Be Afraid. Everything Is All Right”** Psalm 44: 23–26, Micah 6: 8

The writer of the 44th Psalm cries out, “Rouse yourself. Why do you sleep, O Lord? Wake up. Do not cast us off forever. Why do you hide your face? Rise up and come to our help.”

Those words were written approximately 1000 years before the birth of Christ.

After the death of Solomon, son of David, the Davidic Kingdom was split into the northern kingdom Israel and the southern kingdom Judah. The glory and splendor of the Davidic kingdom was no more. Now both the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom were pervaded with rumors of war, mutual suspicion, and fear of domination by foreign empires.

In this desperate situation, they thought that God had become silent. God was asleep. God did not care. The psalmist was expressing the desperate mindset of the people in both Israel and Judah.

“Does God care?” The prophet named Micah answered this question. God never ceased to be caring. If the people thought God was silent, that was because they really did not listen to him. Their ears were filled with the noise of this world. Their eyes were focused solely on the ugly reality of their political, social, and spiritual situations.

Micah said that God had never been silent. What had God been telling them all along? These are his words. “God has told you what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

For Micah, it was clear that God was never silent. God was never indifferent to the plight of human beings. All along, he had been persuading his people to be just, merciful, and kind despite the facts of corruption, rumors of war, suspicion, and fear.

Micah gives an important lesson to us who seek an answer to the question: what does it mean to live as authentic human beings in this world where so much goes wrong?

As long as our attention is focused solely on this world, we will not be able to find the true answer. Without listening to God, we are bound to go astray. God's intention for us is clear: it is to do justice, and love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God.

God alone empowers us to be truly human. This world cannot. God is our foundation. This world is not.

This truth may be comprehended in the following imaginary situation. It is a stormy night. A child wakes up to feel the house shaking, hear the rain beating the windows, and see streaks of lightening cutting through the dark. The child trembles in fear and cries for help. The mother runs into the room and embraces the child. Then she would say, “Do not be afraid. Everything is all right.”

Now if the mother is not telling her child a lie, if she is truly sincere, she must believe in God. This world cannot give her that kind of assurance. Only the God who persuades us to do justice, and love kindness, and to walk humbly with him, can do that. Without God, nothing is all right. But with God, everything is all right.

God is with us. We are not alone. That is why we proclaim with confidence, “Do not be afraid. Everything is all right.”

Thanks be to God.

