

Rev. Dr. Yugo Suzuki's Sermon

8/23/09 "Jesus' Impossible Commandment" Matthew 6:25-34

Mark records the following words of Jesus.

"Do not be anxious about what you will eat or what you will wear. Look around you. See how God feeds the birds in the sky and clothes the lilies in the field. You are much more than these."

These are beautiful words. But we are living in a world where a healthy father is suddenly stricken with cancer. A strong company goes bankrupt. Honest people are victimized by dishonest ones. It seems to be totally unrealistic to say, "Do not be anxious."

What did Jesus mean by that?

What he is saying is this: this world of ours is not the only world. The invisible world, the perfect world that God envisions for us stands beyond our visible world.

The visible world of ours is the world where our human worth is judged by social status, money, and the power to lord over others.

Our visible world is like an anchorless canoe in mid-lake. Without an anchor, it remains unstable, pushed to and fro by values that are shallow and changing,

We had a glimpse of the fragile nature of the visible world on 9.11. 2001. Three thousand human lives were snuffed out instantly. The World Trade Center that symbolized American power and prestige collapsed within hours. We think that such a world is the only world there is.

But occasionally we have a glimpse of the invisible world, the world God envisions for us.

In the aftermath of that shocking day, churches, synagogues, and temples were filled with people. At least, for a while, they searched for signs of the invisible world that had an anchor in the holy.

Jesus' message is clear. This visible world of ours is not everything. It is sustained by God's vision of the world where love, reconciliation, and serenity pervade through every walk of human life.

When we believe this, we can live joyfully, lovingly, and with hope in this visible world of ours where tragedy, violence, and confusion are daily occurrences.

We can live in our visible world without falling into despair or complacency. This is what Jesus meant by "Do not be anxious."

In the aftermath of 9.11, I was watching CNN in Tokyo. A young woman who had lost her husband the day before in the World Trade Center was responding to an interview. She said, "I am convinced more than ever that understanding and love, not hatred and revenge, are what this world needs."

This young woman lives in this visible world, to be sure, but she reflects the light of the invisible world.

Let us remember. Our entire history of sobs and cries of pain meets God's tender smile. Therefore, "do not be anxious."

Thanks be to God.