

*“The promise will be fulfilled” Jer 33:14-16 / 1 Thes 3:9-13 / Luke 21:25-36 (11/24/24)*

Last September, my friend’s family and my family planned to go to a water park in Wisconsin Dells for Thanksgiving. My friend’s children are a little older than my children. They took care of my children well when my family was in Chicago. And my children also like them so much, so we expected it would be a great Thanksgiving if we could meet each other.

We booked rooms and a water park for stay and fun in September, but I did not tell Sooho about the Thanksgiving plan until November. About two weeks ago, I told Sooho about the Thanksgiving plan. “If you listen to Mom and Dad well, we will bring you to the water park on Thanksgiving Day.” Once he heard about the plan and that my friend’s children would come together, he was so excited and happy. Of course, he is too young to have an idea about the time and day yet, and he does not know when Thanksgiving is. So, he kept asking me, “Dad, when do we go to the water park? When can I meet them? How many days should I sleep to go?” He was really excited and was looking forward to going to the water park and seeing his friends. Waiting for something was a great joy and excitement for my son.

Let me share another story. After I became a Christian, many people asked

me how my Christmas was before and what I did for Christmas. Christmas was a lonely day for me when I was young. Christmas was not an important day for my family. My father went out to work, and my sister met her friends. My mother took a rest at home, and I just stayed home and watched Christmas TV shows or movies. Christmas was a boring and lonely day in my memory.

One day during the Christmas season, my mother felt sorry for me staying home. So, she promised to take me to a steak house on Christmas. I was so excited. At that time, I had never been to a steak house. I was so excited at the thought of being able to go to a steakhouse that I had only seen on TV.

As Christmas came that year, I was more and more excited and could not wait to go to the steak house. However, on the day of Christmas, everything was the same as last year. My father went to work. My sister went out to meet her friends. My mother took a rest at home, and I watched TV all day. My mother promised to take me to the steak house next time, but that promise was never kept. After this, waiting for something gave me worry and doubt rather than excitement and joy. After waiting a long time, if what I expected did not happen, only huge disappointments and frustrations came to me. So, even now, I try not to be excited and happy when I must wait for something good. And I try my best not to

disappoint my children.

My son and I experienced “waiting for something.” But our feelings about “Waiting for something” are different. My son looks forward to what he expects, but I have many concerns and doubts about waiting for something. What made us have different views about “waiting for something”? I found that my son had faith that his father’s promise would be kept, while I did not believe that my mother would not keep the promise again. Sooho had faith that the promise would be fulfilled. His faith made him excited and joyful about “waiting for something.”

In today’s Scripture, Jeremiah delivered God’s message about God’s promise. I believe Jeremiah had the most challenging time among the prophets. He saw the restoration of Judea, and he also saw the fall of Judea. He was the prophet who should deliver the message about the fall of Judea. And if we accept some of the timelines of some scholars, we can assume that Jeremiah was a prophet who personally saw the fall of Judah. So, Jeremiah is also called the “weeping prophet.”

After Jeremiah delivered God’s message about the fall of Judea, he also delivered a hopeful message. “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD,

when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judea.” Not only this message of Jeremiah but also many other prophets’ messages about the promise of God became a great hope for the people of Israel when they were suffering and lost their country. The people of Israel had faith that God’s promise would be fulfilled. So, waiting for the day of God could be hope for the people of Israel.

In today’s 1 Thessalonian Scripture, Paul mentioned the second coming of Jesus. “May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.” As I shared before, most of the Christians in the Thessalonian church were Gentiles. And they expected and believed Jesus would come again very soon. Paul wrote this letter to teach Christians in the Thessalonian church how to live as Christians. Paul also taught Thessalonian Christians how to wait for the second coming of Jesus. He encouraged Thessalonian Christians to strengthen their hearts and be blameless and holy when Jesus comes again.

Those two today’s Scriptures, Jeremiah and 1 Thessalonians, show how we should wait for Jesus Christ well. We are Christians who have already experienced God’s promise being fulfilled through Christ. And we believe that

God's promise will be fulfilled through Christ. We can be excited and joyful while we are waiting for Jesus because we already know that our God is faithful. We know God must fulfill the promises. And we are Christians who are waiting for the coming of Jesus. Even though we do not know when Jesus will come again, we walk the way of holy with the Holy Spirit until Jesus comes again.

Today, the Advent season started. Advent is the season that we can think about the coming of Jesus, wait for the coming of Christ, and prepare for the coming of Christ. Sometimes, even though I am a pastor, when I am suffering, I say, "Oh, Jesus, please come tomorrow. Then, my suffering will end." But it is not a good attitude for a Christian who is waiting for the coming of Jesus. We wait for Jesus Christ with faith. And we wait for Jesus Christ with the preparation. Advent is the season that we can think about our faith and reflect on our holy life. We desire to see the coming of Christ, and we prepare ourselves by walking the holy life. The promise will be fulfilled. I hope God blesses our advent so we can have great excitement and joy while we are waiting for the day of Jesus Christ. Amen.