

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas  
August 13, 2017

For the Name of Christ

1 Peter 4:18-22

4:14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.

4:16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

### **1. The Name of Christ**

There is an organization named “Love INC.” Their purpose is to practice Jesus’ love by helping people through their given talents without any rewards. They clean people’s rooms, help kids do their homework, and even replace a bulb. People need just a little action, and it will be a big help for them. This organization enlists some volunteers working in the name of Christ. Their name, “Love INC” stands for “Love In the Name of Christ,” not “Incorporated.” They have the direction to lift Jesus’ name, not as a simple volunteer.

There is no other precious names than the name of Jesus, of Christ, or of the Lord. In this name we can become children of God and have the eternal life. The Bible says in John 1:12, “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,” and in John 20:31, “but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by

believing you may have life in his name.”

The apostles proclaimed this name of Jesus Christ. On the day of Pentecost Peter said, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38) He spoke that people would be saved “in the name of Jesus Christ”

And, the apostles did miracles in the name of Christ. Once Peter went up to the temple with John for prayers, one person having a disability in his leg asked them for some charities. Then Peter said, in Acts 3:6, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” The man stood up strongly, walked around, and even danced. The people actually witnessed came to Peter; but he answered in Acts 3:12-16, “Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk...And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.”

Like all these, Peter and John proclaimed “the name of Jesus,” the Jewish congress called Peter and John to accuse them. They, however, even in the congress, testified the name of Jesus Christ, saying in Acts 4:12, “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Then the congress in Acts 4:18, “called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus,” and released them. Once Peter and John were back in church and talked about what happened in the congress, the fellow believers presenting there prayed for their

strength to proclaim and testify Jesus Christ very boldly, and their spirituality to heal people and achieve testimonies and miracles in the name of Jesus Christ. The more regulated not to speak in the name of Jesus, the more activated the church prayed to speak in His name.

It was forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus, yet the apostles kept delivering the name. As a result, they were sometimes imprisoned and wilted. They, still, were not afraid of suffering at all; in Acts 5:41, it says, “They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.” Even today’s verse, 1 Peter 4:14, says, “If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.” This is the repeated teaching of Matthew 5:11, “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.” Yet this was rather Peter’s testimony than simply repeated, because he experienced the “blessing” through the suffering for and with Jesus, just as Jesus Christ said to Peter at the time.

## **2. Christ’s Declaration of Victory**

Here, there comes another name, that is “Christian”. At first, those who believed in Jesus Christ were called “believers” (Act 2:44). It was when a church was built in the city of Antioch that believers began to be called “Christians.” The city of Antioch is a large town in Turkey and it is currently called “Antakya”. It used to be a peaceful town where you can see the Cyprus Island from the seashore. But at present, the base of ISIS is located to the Syrian side and it is in a dangerous condition.

That aside, the reason why those who believed in Jesus Christ

began to be called “Christian” was that not only apostles but also believers spread the name of Christ. Those who believed in Christ proclaimed “Christ” and delivered His name and gave a testimony about Christ. Therefore, people in town started to call them “Christian”, saying “they kept telling Christ, Christ every day. That’s why they are the buddies of Christ, Christians!!” They gave the name of “Christian” and looked down on them. But the believers were proud of this name of humiliation. They were proud to be called “those of Christ” or “those who belong to Christ”. You can understand it from what Peter said in verse 16. “Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.” The believers took the name of Christian and they began to call themselves Christians. Then, not only in Antioch but also in every region, the believer was called “Christian”. They delivered the name of Christ by calling themselves as a “Christian”.

However, not all the Christians were proud of calling themselves as a Christian or testifying about Christ. Peter knew human weaknesses. When Peter himself was asked if he was with Jesus, he denied it and he was ashamed of Jesus. It was Peter who first confessed as follows “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16). It was Peter who insisted in front of Jesus’ cross, saying, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away” (Mathew 26:33) and “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” (Matthew 26:35). But Peter said “I don’t know the man named Jesus” out of fear.

However, Peter did not finish there. Or Jesus did not let Peter finish there. After Resurrection, Jesus forgave Peter and gave him mission to

spread the name of Jesus, which Peter once denied. Jesus not only gave mission but also power to conduct his mission, the Holy Spirit. When Jesus gives a mission to believers, he also gives power to complete it. By the words of Christ and Holy Spirit, Peter was changed into a person who could speak the name of Jesus without hesitation. Peter said “Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name” out of his own experience.

This is my experience in Japan. When the church was blessed and the membership increased, we decided to start a mission church in the area where 15 of church members lived. We decided to deliver tracts to the neighbors, but a sister came to me and said “Pastor, I can do any service for the mission church but not to deliver tracts in my neighborhood”. I asked her why. She replied, “Because my neighbors will know that I am a Christian. I feel embarrassed. Moreover, I don’t like my husband to complain about it...” Since this sister became a Christian when she was in a middle age, she had social relationship as well as subtle human troubles with her neighbors. But God encouraged her and she joined the tract delivery. Later, I heard that her husband also became a Christian. She already returned heaven but I am sure the Lord has said “well done, you were not ashamed of my name.”

Even we don’t explicitly deny Jesus, we often become hesitant to testify about the name of Christ. In that case, we often make excuses such as “I did not know what to say, because I did not have much knowledge” or “The timing was not good. I could not start the conversation”. If you keep doing that, you cannot testify the name of

Christ. If you think you lack the knowledge or trials, please seek for it seriously. Church is a place to train yourselves to testify. Let's make a testimony at church. If you cannot do it at church, you cannot do it outside of church. The important thing is to love the name of Christ and follow him, to have the passion to deliver the most wonderful name of the world. If you have love and passion, the knowledge follows.

Lastly, I would like to conclude today's message by reading Philippians 1:20," as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death."

**(Prayer)**

Heavenly Father, there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. It is the name of Jesus Christ. We would like to deliver this name to our neighbors. We are proud of being called "Christian" and we hope to live our life accordingly. Lord, please strengthen our desire to glorify the name. Please give us the power to do it with the Word and the Holy Spirit. In the name of Christ we pray, Amen.