

“This Meaning of Another Last Supper” **2016 03 13**
John 12:1-8 **Pr. Hitoshi Adachi**

Note: No Edit was made... I apologize this rough English.

May the Grace and Peace of Jesus Christ be poured into the hearts of the people in this sanctuary!

Do you remember the Fundraising activity called Ice Bucket Challenge in the summer 2014? In order to strike the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis: ALS, ALS association started it.

The challenge encourages nominated participants to be filmed having a bucket of ice water poured on their heads and then nominating three others to do the same. A common stipulation is that nominated participants have 24 hours to comply or forfeit by way of a charitable financial donation

According to the ALS association, they could raise 115 million dollars. However, during the activity, because we were experiencing drought, it was criticized that the challenge was wasting water. For those of you who knew the challenge, what did you think? Or how do you think now about the challenge?

The Gospel text today is John chapter 12:1-8. Jesus visited the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus.. It was the third visit as far as we know from the Bible. The first one was the time Martha could not be patient enough since she was doing cooking but Mary did not help her.

The second one was the time Lazarus died and buried, but Jesus resuscitated him. Then today, we are reading what happened in the third occasion. It was six days before he was crucified on Friday. Therefore it was Sunday, and Jesus came there to eat with them.

The famous last supper was the supper when Jesus ate together with twelve apostles. However maybe we can call it as another last supper Jesus ate together with Martha, Maria, and Lazarus, the first lay leaders of the early first century Christian church. Then the famous incident happened that have been told generations to generations.

The incident was: Mary took a pound of costly, about 30 thousand dollars worth, perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Almost the same scene is described in Mark, and even though that was not Ice Bucket Challenge, it was poured from the head of Jesus. Then Judas Iscariot criticized Mary as it was waste. Then he said, why didn't you sell that perfume at the cost of 30 thousand dollars? And why didn't you give it to poor?

Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She brought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial." Then in reality Jesus was crucified six days later and without anointment on the Friday, he was buried.

I think today's story is giving us a challenge. Is it good to sell the perfume and just give the money to the poor rather than anointing the oil to Jesus? This is a social justice issue. In other words, where should we put a priority, charity or church, the body of Christ.

Whenever you do charity, I believe Jesus is teaching us today that upon having a firm relationship with church and then do charity. Church, the body of Christ, first. Without having a firm relationship with Him, probably the charity does not go well. Without having love of Christ, the charity may not work to the people who needed to be cared.

Last night, we had the charity concert for the victims of Tsunami by the Masayuki Hirahara at Yamaha in Irvine. We will have also the charity concert here at LCR this afternoon. All the money gathered from the both concerts were sent to Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church through Lutheran Disaster Response - Japan Disaster Fund in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. All the donation will support victims in Japan through the larger body of Church, Jesus Christ.

Now in Japan, after 5 years of the Tsunami, pastors and lay people together especially in Kanto and Tohoku area are watching various grass root activities especially for people in Fukushima and finding out where to support. And donations gathered from all Lutheran Churches in the world and Churches in Japan continue supporting the victims with Love, Mercy, and Comfort of Jesus Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit.