**Slide 1: “How Simple It Is!” 2017 07 09**

**Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30 Pr. H. Adachi**

May the Grace and Peace from our Heavenly Father be poured into people's hearts in this sanctuary!

**Slide 2: I would like to start with three questions today… First question is** How many of you have a Bible in your house? Or as we are well into the cloud era, you may include computers, tablets, smartphones and other devices that can access the Internet and read the Bible. Hopefully, everyone will raise their hands.

**Slide 3: Second question:** Whatever way you read the Bible, how many of you feel that it is really difficult to understand what is written in the Bible? Of course, unless you open the Bible, you do not know if it is difficult or easy to read...

**Slide 4:** I'd like you to be honest with the next, third question. Because there is no Pastor Brad today, how many of you have difficulty locating your Bible at home? Or for those computer, tablet, or smartphone people, how many of you have never accessed Bible verses via the internet?

**Slide 5:** If your answer is yes for the third question, please do not worry. There may be a time for a person to think about rather than read the Bible. For Pastor Tateno, one of my pastor colleagues I admire, when he preached at the Resurrection LC several years ago, he shared his story with us.

**Slide 6:** He was discerning if he would become a pastor while he was studying at JELC seminary. One conclusion he reached at that time was, the Bible is not a really good book. At Japanese stations, there is a box that people can throw away adult magazines unsuitable for children, so he had thrown his Bible in the box at that time, because he felt the Bible was difficult to understand.

**Slide 7:** I would like to jump into the gospel text given today. While you were listening, many of you might have wondered about what is written. To be honest, maybe excluding the last three verses, this portion of the Bible was difficult, wasn’t it?

**Slide 8:** The Bible consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament, but as far as the Old Testament is concerned, no matter how often the heavenly Father sent a prophet to this world, there were many people who could not obey what the prophet stated as God’s word. This has been the reality of human history. Since this history is written in the Bible, we might feel it is still difficult...

**Slide 9:** Even when the New Testament age began, in other words even when Jesus Christ, a long-awaited Savior, was born into the world, it was impossible for Jewish religious leaders to believe that Jesus was a savior at the time.

**Slide 10:** It is expressed metaphorically in the text, ‘Children played the flute for wise and intelligent people, and they did not dance; children wailed, and they did not mourn.’ Moreover, John the Baptist who was living a simple life was viewed as the devil, and Jesus was viewed as a glutton and a drunkard, by those religious leaders.

**Slide 11:** Jesus said, "you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants."

The wise and the intelligent were maybe those who studied the "law" in the Old Testament. To the contrary, children were ignorant about the law, over 600 individual laws.

So what are the “these things” that are hidden to the wise and the intelligent but revealed to infants?

**Slide 12:** There was a person named Karl Barth, it is said that he is the most famous Protestant theologian in the 20th century. He concluded that the most important point of the Bible is sung in the famous children's hymn, “Jesus Loves Me”.

**Slide 13:** God sends us the Lord Jesus and Jesus loves each one of us, which is the most important message in the Bible. It is very easy for children to understand.

**Slide 14:** However, unfortunately, this most important thing was hidden from the wise and the intelligent because they had always thought that the most important thing is to understand God’s many laws and to obey them.

For people who read the Bible often might wonder if Christianity is such an easy thing to understand and live by.

**Slide 15:** Let me tell you the truth. This is my confession. I, actually, wondered how to preach this text for many hours. I read the text over and over again for several weeks prior to prepare for today's sermon. Additionally, since 3 p.m. last Sunday afternoon, I read it again many times, so I could hardly sleep because I still wondered how to effectively preach it. Even at 3 pm on Monday, I did not know what to preach.

**Slide 16:** I prayed to the Lord, “I do not know what to do. I will leave it, to you, Lord.” I was sleepy and took a nap. Then a breeze blew so nicely that today’s was finished in the next few hours after my nap.

**Slide 17:** Although I needed to type for a few hours in Japanese and in English (since I always prepare sermons in both languages), typing was very easy and I felt that God was helping me to type.

**Slide 18:** Whatever you do after today, please remember what Jesus said, “Take my yoke. You will find rest. My yoke is light.” Which means, Jesus is always carrying the yoke together with you because he loves you and is making it light for you. Amen.