



September 3, 2006

Preaching: Pastor Eunbae Doh

Song of Songs 2:8-14

“Arise & Come Away”

My favorite game that I love to play with my kids is "Hide and Seek". There are some reasons that I like this game. First, I am always a winner. Second, I can be free from them at least, when I am hiding. And the last reason is that I can feel that I am an important person to them while they are searching me, calling my name, saying "Daddy, where are you? We can't find you. Please come out. We need you."

The Bible is full of stories of people who play hide and seek with God, Adam and Eve in the garden, Elijah withdrawing to a lonely cave, Jeremiah refusing preach, Jonah sailing away to Tarshish.

As we look at the bible passage from Song of Songs, we find another hide and seek. Somebody is looking for someone, asking show me your face; let me hear your voice.

Verse 13, 14

Oh, my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in cover of the the cliff, let me see your face. Let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely

As we read the Bible, there are several reasons God calls people. First, giving a calling, second, asking repentance, and third calling for relationship. In this passage, we are able to hear God's calling for relationship. This is not a call for mission, not a call for repentance, but a call for deep, close relationship.

God wants to have a deep relationship with us. God wants to see you, and talk to you to have an intimate relationship. God is calling your name now. "Where are you? Show me your face! Let me hear your voice. Come on, come to me."

How do you respond to his calling for a relationship? "Oh, my God, you know who I am, even better than me. I know who you are. Don't bother me." Can you really say

you know who God is? Therefore you don't need any more relationship with God. How deeply do you know God?

My wife and I got married around 10 years ago. But it was 30 years ago that we met. My wife was a little girl who was attending the church that my father was serving. Of course, I was a pastor's kid. She really loved my parents like her own family. After my father was reassigned to serve a different church, she came to our home regularly to see my parents. That relationship continued for 20 years. Sometimes I ask my wife the question. "Sunghee, tell me why did you come to our home for such a long time." She said, "I liked your parents." But frankly, I don't believe that. I'm still thinking she had some hidden agenda. I believe it was me, which made her visiting for such a long period of 20 years, possible. Believe it or not, it doesn't matter. I'm convinced.

Anyway we got married. But what a surprise! It just took a few days until I realized the fact that the woman who I married was not the woman who I had known for 20 years. It seemed to me she was a totally different person. I found I really didn't know who she was.

That's right. It is not important how long I go to Church, or how long you have known and heard about God. If we don't have a deep, close relationship with God, we may not know who God is.

How can we have that kind of deep, close, and intimate relationship with God? Some people go to the desert. Some people fast, praying without any food. In Korea, it is common for pastors to have some time for fasting. Some people do it seven days. Some people do forty days. I have never done forty days of fasting because it already appears that I am fasting. I *look* like a person who is fasting

A few days ago, I read a funny story in the newspaper. There was a young man who went to the desert to have some time to pray and meditate at a place separated from the world. He decided to handcuff his leg to bind himself. As soon as he did that he found he dropped the key and lost it. He tried to find the key but couldn't. Fortunately, a traveler was passing by him and he was rescued.

I don't want to recommend that you have a close relationship by doing something that special. We need to see God in our life. Our daily life is the best place we can experience and meet God.

We need to see God in our daily life. What is that? That includes worship, Bible reading, and prayer.

Why do we have to worship God? We are the people who chose to worship God. Worship is the way God established to meet his people. This is not an option but a duty. Through worship we can come into the presence of God.

As you know, our Church will start a new worship at 10:30. We named the worship "4 M" worship to say Message, Metaphors, Music and More. Some of you may think it's going to be a contemporary worship with loud music, big screen, and entertaining things. Sorry. It's not. Basically, this worship will have same message, same song, and same liturgy. But there will be some differences. This worship will be a children and family friendly worship. We will try to worship God in more visible, tangible, sensible ways to help people understand the message of God just like Jesus who was using parables and stories.

And the other way help for us to have deep relationship with God is by reading the Bible and prayer. Communication is an essential part for building a deep relationship in our daily life. When we read the Bible, and pray, we can communicate with God.

I believe that you have heard about new programs and many learning opportunities that will be offered from next month. Wednesday night programs for children and parents, new high school girls class, Companions in Christ, women's Bible class, Men's Bible class. There will be a lot of learning opportunities. It will not be easy for me to come to this worship because I am going to lead an adult Bible class at 9 o'clock. Why do we offer these kind of classes? What can we expect from these learning opportunities? RELATIONSHIP!! Deeper, closer relationship with God.

Yes, worshipping God, reading Bible, and prayer, these are the ways that help us, lead us to a deep relationship with God. What a trite remark, old time story. Yes, it's true, nothing new, and nothing special. You might have heard about this message more than a hundred times. But think about this, even though you got the same message hundred times, how many times did you accept this message seriously? How many times did you worship God in your heart and soul? How often do you pray? How many times did you read whole Bible from Genesis to revelation?

You may know the famous man, a religious leader internationally well known, and a living Buddha, Dalai Lama. Have you heard about what he said? When I was a seminary student, I heard about him. His story was covering the pages of all magazines and newspapers. I was wondering, why this guy is winning such a great reputation. I wanted to know the reason. So, I went to a bookstore and bought some books, his biography, and his message. But I was really disappointed with his message, loving God, forgiving our neighbor. He was saying everything I have already known. Everything he is teaching was what I had already learned from kindergarten. But here is the true reality, we know all these things, but we don't do them!

Brothers and sisters. Listen! Jesus is calling you. He is coming to you with great hope and expectation to have deeper, closer relationship with you.

“Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away, for now the summer is past, the holiday is over.”

I want to invite you and encourage you to respond to this calling for relationship with God by joining the new 10:30 worship and learning opportunities of our Church.