

Bethel Christian Church - Sunday Sermon (June 7, 2020)

Together, we make a life (2 Corinthians 13:11-13) by Baek Hee Kim

- **San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge**

- San Francisco was the first city I lived in since I came to the States. I did my master's degree there as an international student. I really enjoyed the beautiful city, nature, and its rich culture. And the Golden Gate Bridge! It is a symbol of the city. As an architectural work, it is an amazing achievement. The combination of the bridge, the ocean, the mountains, and the sunlight in the golden hour make the bridge one of the most beautiful sites to visit.
- Yet, the bridge has sad stories too. First of all, the bridge is also called a suicide attraction, as opposed to its beauty. So far, more than 1,200 people have committed suicide there since the bridge was completed. And second, the bridge was built with countless Chinese immigrants' sacrifices and blood.

- **Chinese immigrants in the late 1800s and other Asian immigrants after the Chinese**

- In the late 1800s, many people moved to the San Francisco Bay Area and California since there were rumors of gold being found in California. Throughout the United States, Europe, South America, and even Asia, people heard the story and gathered in California. We call this the California Gold Rush.
- Among Asians, Chinese people were the most active in the Gold Rush. Although most of them did not discover gold, they still managed to settle down in the Bay Area and pursued their American dream little by little.
- But Americans complained as arguing that the Chinese immigrants stole their jobs and their resources, so they oppressed and discriminated against Chinese immigrants. Finally, the Chinese Exclusion Act, a kind of immigration law, passed in 1882, which prevented Chinese laborers from immigrating to the United States. This was the first immigration law that excluded an entire ethnic group.
- Ironically, the Chinese Exclusion Act was eventually a benefit for other Asian immigrants, including Koreans, Japanese, and the Philippines could come to the US, and they started to pursue their American dream on the soil of first Chinese immigrants' sacrifices.

- **The Civil Rights Movement**

- But most of the Asian immigrants in the early 1900s still experienced many kinds of exclusion, discrimination, oppression, and racism.
- Interestingly, the civil rights movement by African Americans in the 1950s and 1960s benefitted the life of Asian immigrants too. Eventually, the civil rights movement helped to end discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. In 1965, the 1965 immigration Act passed, and the country was open, and the lives of Korean immigrants were getting significantly improved since then.

- **We are interrelated**

- So, we need to remember that without the presences of Chinese immigrants who built the Golden Gate Bridge and railways in the 1800s, and without the efforts of Black people in the 1950s and 1960s, we might have had to work harder and make more enormous sacrifices to enjoy the happiness we have now. History shows that we are interrelated with each other, and we are responsible for others' lives at any rate.

- **The Triune God (Trinity)**

- Today, the Holy Trinity Sunday, we celebrate the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Yes, the Holy Trinity, as a concept, a doctrine, a theology, is a challenging topic and theme to grasp in one or a couple of hours of study. On this Sunday, I want to focus on one of the most essential and fundamental ideas related to the Holy Trinity.
- God is one, but the unity of God is not undifferentiated dead unity. The Trinity is essentially a fellowship of persons (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) in love. Theologian Daniel Migliore says, "The trinitarian persons are not isolated and independent selves but have their personal identity in relationship."
- When we confess and proclaim, we believe in the Triune God, we decided to follow God's true nature/character. So, we have to remember that we are not isolated and independent beings; rather, we have our identity in a relationship. We must love each other, share our joys and sadness, and have a harmonious fellowship.
- The Apostle Paul offers his encouragement in the name of the Triune God not only for the Corinthians but also for us today. "Finally, brothers and sisters, Be cheerful. Keep things in good repair. Keep your spirit up. Think in harmony. Be agreeable. Do all that, and the God of love and peace will be with you for sure. Greet one another with a holy embrace. All the brothers and sisters here say hello. The amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you."