

Greetings. What an absolute honor it is to share God's word with you on this 126th Anniversary of The Salvation Army's service to the people of Japan.

For over a century and a quarter The Salvation Army has served as a reflection of God's light into a darkened world.

Just as the Japanese Flag represents the land of the rising Sun, those who have come before us have illuminated the one who serves all mankind as our Redemption from sin and our Lord and Savior.

So, what does scripture have to say to us on such a significant occasion.

The scripture I am led to on this special occasion may seem odd to some, but for this occasion I believe it to be appropriate.

You see, on such anniversaries as this it is as though we stand together on a mountain peak and look down one valley which represents the past and in looking in the other direction we investigate the future.

We stand at a point in time whereby too much attention to one and not the other could limit our understanding of the past and diminish the impact of the future.

In the Jewish tradition lineage is incredibly important to lend context to the discussion.

In the Jewish tradition the Rabbi was educated and trained to be able to read the Torah or Old Testament scrolls to their followers and often portions of the text was then memorized and shared with other members of the family.

It was the father of the family who was tasked with bringing home the Synagogue lesson to his family.

And it was always important to be aware of your lineage in understanding where the family came from.

After the closing of the Old Testament there was a period of 400 years of silence during which God did not speak to the Israelite people.

Early in the Old Testament, God was regularly giving his people direction and correction for their own good.

I have long been fascinated with Moses' relationship with God, as countless chapters throughout Exodus and Leviticus begin with "And the Lord said to Moses."

救世軍の働きが始まって 126 周年を迎えるこの機会に、聖書の言葉を分かち合うことができることを感謝します。救世軍は、暗い世の中に神様の光を照らすために仕えてきました。

日本の国旗に表されている太陽のように私たちの先達者たちは、罪を赦す救い主、イエス・キリストの光を掲げてきました。

この記念の時、み言葉は何と語っているのでしょうか。

今日の聖書の箇所を不思議に思う方もいるかもしれません。

記念日という機会は、共に山の頂上に立ち、過去を振り返る時。そして、方向を転じて、将来に目を向ける時でもあります。

どちらかだけを見るのではなく、過去を理解しつつ、将来の可能性を損なわないことが必要です。

ユダヤ教では伝統として系図が重んじられます。

ユダヤ教の聖職者は、トラーと旧約聖書の読解を学び、人々に教えます。

聞いた人はこの内容を暗誦し、家族に伝えます。

会堂で学んだことを家族に伝えるのは、父親の役割です。

そして自分の家系を知ることがとても重要でした。

旧約聖書が書かれた後、神様は 400 年の間、沈黙されました。

旧約聖書の前半では、神様はよくご自分の民に語られました。

出エジプト記やレビ記では、何回も「主はモーセに語られた」と記されています。

His people continued to disregard Him and often His direction, but He kept speaking. But during the 400 years between the Old and New Testament, God was silent.

But what a wonderful reentry God makes with Matthews' genealogy listed in Matthew 1.

This gives the Jewish people and us a clear understanding that all the loyal God-fearing leaders of the old testament were the lineage which led to Jesus.

Matthew begins with: "A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham."

The list of the Jewish religious leaders includes the likes of Isaac and Jacob all the way to King David.

From David to Solomon down to Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary of who was born Jesus who is called the Christ.

Then, don't miss this next verse, verse 17:

Therefore, there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ."

God is such a God of order that he recorded this genealogy to represent to the Jewish nation as well as to the world that All those who came before were in preparation for the coming of Christ.

This genealogy mattered then and it matters to us now.

To borrow this example, we have not made it this far by ourselves, but there have been many who have gone on before have paved the way for where The Salvation Army stands in the year 2021. Paul says, in Ephesians 2:19-22,

イスラエルの民がどれほど無視しても語り続けられた神様が、旧約聖書の後、400年沈黙されたのです。

しかし、マタイ1章に出てくる系図を通して沈黙が破られます。

この系図を通して、神を拝する旧約聖書の指導者たちがキリストの誕生につながっていることが分かります。

1節は「アブラハムの子ダビデの子、イエス・キリストの系図」とあります。

指導者たちの名前にはイサクからダビデ王まで登場します。

そしてダビデからマリアの夫であるヨセフに至り、マリアからメシアであるイエス様が生まれました。

そして17節が大切です。

アブラハムからダビデまで14代
ダビデからバビロン移住まで14代
バビロンからキリストまでが14代

秩序の神は、系図を記録することによって、すべての先達者は救い主キリストが来るための備えであったことを教えられました。

これは今の私たちにも大切なことです。

ここから学ぶのは、
今、救世軍があるのは、私たちの努力ではなく、
私たちの前に道を切り開いた人々がいるからです。
エフェソ書2:19-22

9月22日(水)救世軍日本開戦126周年記念日

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigner and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple. In the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.”

The Salvation Army is blessed to have been affecting the Kingdom of God for the past 126 years and we praise God for that foundation.

None of this has happened by accident, but God has brought about His people to serve as His followers and leaders throughout Japan.

God has a passion for the Japanese people and He is clear in Scripture that it is God’s intention that every human member of mankind come to know God as a personal savior.

He chooses to allow us to have a part in His spiritual ministry and even to this day He is bringing people into His saving Grace. I praise God for that.

We too stand on the shoulders of those who have come before us in Japan.

Influence of God’s leaders from Yamamuro to Hasegawa to Yoshida to Harita and countless others God has blessed the genealogy of this Japan Territory.

We are allowed to stand here because of faithful and dedicated soldiers in Corps across the country.

Faithful Sunday School teacher dedicated to teaching young children the Holy Scriptures. And lives lived out by following the calling of God to be His children.

Even more than that . . . we each are honored to continue the long tradition which has been handed down to our generation, directly from The son of Abraham, David and our Savior Jesus Christ.

The encouragement for us today is:

Are we each bringing up our children, spiritual or physical, in a way which will allow them to pass on this same spiritual fervor?

Are we investing our very lives for the growing of His Kingdom with more and more of His creation bowing and acknowledging their son and daughter-ship as children of the King.

従って、あなたがたはもはや、外国人でも寄留者でもなく、聖なる民に属する者、神の家族であり、使徒や預言者という土台の上に建てられています。そのかなめ石はキリスト・イエス御自身であり、キリストにおいて、この建物全体は組み合わされて成長し、主における聖なる神殿となります。キリストにおいて、あなたがたも共に建てられ、霊の働きによって神の住まいとなるのです。

神様が土台を備え、救世軍が126年間、神の国の働きを継続できたことは大きな祝福です。

これは偶然ではなく、この日本で神様に従う人々を神様ご自身が立ててくださったからです。

神様は日本の方々を愛しておられ、すべての人が神を救い主として信じることを願っておられます。

その働きに加わるようにと私たちを選んだ神は、今もその救いの恵みに多くの人を導いておられます。

先達者の後にわたしたちは続くのです。

山室軍平から今に至るまで数多くの指導者を立てた神様は、日本の救世軍の系図を祝福しておられます。

全国にある小隊の忠実な兵士の方たちのおかげで今のわたしたちがいます。

忠実な日曜学校の先生たちが神の子どもとして生きることを聖書を通して教えてくれています。

そして何より、私たちはアブラハムから救い主イエス・キリストの至る系図に加わる特権にあずかっているのです。

振り返ってみましょう。

私たちは同じ霊的な熱意をこどもたちに伝えているでしょうか

多くの人々が神様の子どもと迎えられよう、自分の人生を神の国の働きのために用いているでしょうか。

In all my life and in my continually growing Christian maturity, there is one identity which defines my life.

It's not that I'm an officer;

it's not who my parents may have been,

it's not whatever small accomplishments I may have achieved.

My identity rests alone in having the privilege of serving as a Child of the King, Jesus Christ.

Everything else about me ends when my life ends . . .

but I will continue to be a Child of the King forever.

Our legacy matters. Our influence matters on others for Christ.

We thank God today for those who have come before us who influences us to be able to serve in The Salvation Army in Japan today.

But most of all, we thank Jesus for allowing us to be united with Him.

May all we do praise His name today.

May our lives serve as a reflection of His Holiness.

And may more and more of His children come do know Him daily as continued evidence of His power and grace.

May God Bless The Salvation Army in Japan.

We join you in celebrate this milestone of 126 years.

May we continue to serve God until He returns to Earth to reign forever.

May God Bless each of you as you celebrate.

And in all we do, May His name be praised.

わたしの人生の意味は何なのか。自分はいったい何者なのか。

それは士官ということでも、

自分の両親が誰かということでも、

自分にどんな実績があるかでもありません。

私のアイデンティティは、神の子とされ、イエス様に仕えることができることにあります。

その他のことはすべて消え去ります。

しかし神の子とされることは永遠です。

キリストの感化を周りに伝えることは大切です。

救世軍で仕えることができるよう感化してくれた先達者のゆえに神に感謝します。

そして神様に結び付けてくださったイエス様に感謝します。

今日、神の御名を賛美しましょう。

神の聖さを表せますように。

神様の力と恵みの証しによって、神様を知る人が大勢起こされますように。

神が日本の救世軍を祝福してくださいますように。

126周年の節目を感謝します。

神が再び来られる日まで、忠実に仕えることができますように。

神様の祝福をお祈りします。

神様の御名があがめられますように。