

# What is Peace?

Christmas Memorial Lecture at Christian Dokuritsu Gakuen

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## Hymns (First Edition, December 1, 1954)

### Hymn No. 98 (Luke 2:14)

1. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased,"  
Hearing the song of praise from the angels, let everyone rejoice together,  
Praise the Lord who is born today.
2. At the appointed time of salvation, He descended from His heavenly throne,  
And dwelt in a humble virgin to live among the people of this world,  
Praise the Lord who is born today.
3. Rising and shining like the morning sun, lighting up the darkness with His light,  
Giving life to those who come from the earth and granting eternal life,  
Praise the Lord who is born today.

### Hymn No. 228 (Mark 1:15)

1. Around the area where the wind of Galilee blows, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand,"  
How many thousands of years since You spoke those words, come, O Lord, Your kingdom come.
2. In days of battle, in nights of rest, the fervent prayer longing for the kingdom,  
How many thousands of times has it been offered, come, O Lord, Your kingdom come.

3. Let hatred and conflict cease, and let love and peace overflow in all directions,  
On what day will Your will be done? Come, O Lord, Your kingdom come.

## Scripture Reading

**Mark 4:35–5:21 (NRSV)** 4:35 On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." 36 And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" 39 And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41 And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

5:1 They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. 2 And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. 3 He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, 4 for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. 5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. 6 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. 7 And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." 8 For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" 9 And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." 10 And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. 11 Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, 12 and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them." 13 So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea. 14 The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. 15 And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. 16 And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. 17 And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their

region. 18 As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. 19 And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled. 21 And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea.

**Profile: Hiroshi Suzuki (Professor Emeritus, International Christian University)**

At the university, he taught mathematics and data science, and was responsible for supporting students with difficulties and overseeing service-learning programs. He held weekly Bible study meetings at his campus residence. He retired in March 2019 at the age of 65. Currently, he serves as a board member for the "Nozomi no Ie" children's home, the Japan Christian Service Center for support for persons with disabilities, and Keiwa Gakuen in Niigata. (Personal Website: <https://icu-hsuzuki.github.io/science/index-j.html>)

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# 1 Introduction

[no.9]

What comes to your mind when you think of "Christmas"? I recall my childhood days at church school. In a Christmas play, I played the role of an angel and had the following line:

"Glory to God in the highest, / and on earth peace among those  
with whom he is pleased." Luke 2:14

I don't remember exactly how old I was, but I clearly remember how anxious I felt about whether I could memorize this verse and say it without making a mistake.

The Gospel of Luke tells us that this praise, "Glory to God, peace on earth," was announced by a multitude of the heavenly host to the shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks by night in the fields.

We often use the word "peace" in our daily lives, but what exactly is it?

When something is unclear, one way to approach it is to consider its opposite. What is the opposite of "peace"? Is it "war"? It certainly seems that during a war, there is no peace. But is the mere absence of war enough to call it peace? Some might think so, but it feels as though something is missing.

What does "peace" mean to each of you?

## 2 Self-Introduction

### 2.1 My High School Days

[no.10]

I don't know much about you, and you probably don't know much about me either. However, how I think and feel is a reflection of the path I have walked. I would like to introduce myself in the hope that it will help you understand what I am about to share.

In the autumn of 1969, when I was a high school freshman, a period of "campus unrest" (student movements) began. Some students barricaded the area near the principal's office, leading to daily political debates. Eventually, the riot police were called in, and classes were suspended for several months. While there wasn't much physical violence, it was certainly not a state of "peace."

During this time, we had many discussions. Through questioning myself and being questioned by friends, I began to ponder two major questions:

- A. What are the conditions for deciding to break the law to protest something perceived as unjust?

B. What if I had been born into a Muslim family or a family of Communist Party members?

The first question is about the grounds for obstructing classes to protest social injustice. This also relates to war and the decision to start one. The second question is about the universality of the Christian values I was raised with. How can we find shared values and work together for peace when it is difficult to reach an agreement?

I have recently read books about Vladimir Putin [2]<sup>1</sup>, who is one year older than me, and the autobiography of Angela Merkel [3]<sup>2</sup>, who is one year younger. Now, I am learning about Osama bin Laden [4]<sup>3</sup>, and I hope to learn about Xi Jinping<sup>4</sup> as well. Being close in age makes it easier to imagine their lives as we lived through the same era.

[no.11]

Amidst the divisions of the student movement, I began attending church more earnestly. It was a time when my world suddenly expanded. The pastor there had been a missionary in Southeast Asia during the war. After the war, as an "act of atonement," he established a dormitory for Southeast Asian students, inviting war orphans and children born between Japanese soldiers and local women to Japan for education.

He said, "I want Japanese youth not to exhaust their energy in the confusion of campus unrest, but to see Southeast Asia firsthand and interact directly with the people there for the sake of the next era."

Thus, seven of us decided to go to Southeast Asia. We worked various part-time jobs for a year—washing dishes, assembling parts, selling typewriters—to save money for the travel expenses (at the time, about 72,000 yen for a round-trip by ship). It was a period of great learning.

## 2.2 A 53-Day Cargo Ship Journey Through Southeast Asia

[no.12]

In the summer of 1970, during my second year of high school, I embarked on a journey aboard a cargo ship.

The photograph on the slide was taken at Honmoku Pier in Yokohama at the time of departure, with those who came to see us off. I am in the center of the back row. Pictured are the pastor's wife, her two daughters, the grandson of the dormitory matron,

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<sup>1</sup>Vladimir Putin (72 years old), President of Russia. He ordered the invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

<sup>2</sup>Angela Merkel (70 years old), former Chancellor of Germany. She served as Chancellor for 16 years from 2005 to 2021.

<sup>3</sup>Osama bin Laden (1957–2011), the founder of Al-Qaeda and the mastermind behind the September 11 attacks in the United States.

<sup>4</sup>Xi Jinping (71 years old), President of the People's Republic of China.

and a trainee from Singapore. This person is an orphan of the Sook Ching massacre (the massacre of Chinese Singaporeans by the Japanese military)—the son of one of the victims.

[no.13]

The journey lasted 53 days. We loaded used bulldozers and machine tools from Japan, unloaded them at free trade ports in Singapore and Penang, Malaysia, then stopped at Balikpapan and Samarinda on the island of Borneo<sup>5</sup>, Indonesia. There, we loaded Lauan timber and finally unloaded it in Busan, South Korea<sup>6</sup>.

During the preparation period and the trip itself, we held study sessions on the Bible, English, and Asia. We learned about the history of Japan's expansion into Asia under the pretext of "liberating Asian peoples from Western colonies," where Japan used labor and resources as if they were its own colonies, plundered for the sake of war, and dominated the local people through military force, including massacres. Feeling the weight of Japan's war responsibility, I honestly began to feel anxious about how I should face the people of Asia<sup>7</sup>.

[no.14]

At each destination, we visited churches and met various people. Many of the older generation disliked or even hated the Japanese, or looked upon Japan's economic development with envy<sup>8</sup>. I met children living in extreme poverty, trying to earn money in various ways<sup>9</sup>, and young women who could not survive without providing sexual services<sup>10</sup>. However, seeing them living

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<sup>5</sup>Currently called Kalimantan in Indonesia.

<sup>6</sup>Leaving Honmoku Pier in Yokohama, we made short stops at Kobe Sannomiya Port (where I visited the Osaka Expo '70) and Hiroshima Ujina Port (from where I went to the Peace Memorial Park) before heading to Singapore. In Singapore, there was a branch of the Navigators, a Christian organization the members were involved with. In Penang, we were looked after by a former international student who had stayed at the Southeast Asian Student Dormitory and had returned home. However, in Balikpapan (which had an oil refinery) and Samarinda (now the provincial capital of Kalimantan, but at the time a small port town upriver), we had no acquaintances, so we searched for a church. It was only around the time we left Samarinda that it was decided the timber would be unloaded in Busan.

<sup>7</sup>Having heard stories from the pastor, I had more knowledge than the average Japanese person at the time, but information regarding Japan's war crimes in Asia was still limited, and I believe much of the information was ambiguous—along the lines of "it seems something terrible was done."

<sup>8</sup>This was true to some extent in Southeast Asia, but particularly in South Korea at the time, it seemed as though almost everyone hated Japan.

<sup>9</sup>In Samarinda, a boy who came to the ship with his father to help with the work told me he wanted my sandals. He said, "You have other shoes, but I am barefoot." I hesitated but was about to give them to him when he noticed the soles were slightly peeling and said he didn't want them because he couldn't sell them. Our conversation was, of course, mostly through gestures.

<sup>10</sup>To save on berthing fees, the ship stayed at the pier only during loading/unloading; otherwise, it anchored in the bay. We used barges (small flat-bottomed boats that shuttle cargo between large ships and land; also called lighters) to go ashore. At night, people

so desperately, I came to feel that rather than going around apologizing for what the Japanese had done, it was "more important to live responsibly as those who inhabit the same time together." It might not be the best expression, but perhaps I was moved to resolve that "even if we live in different worlds, I will remember these people and live in a way that I am not ashamed of before them"<sup>11</sup>.

This way of thinking has influenced my decisions on what to value at various times in my life—for instance, when considering how to live with people I had been close to until just before they ended up on the "other side" due to the divisions caused by student movements. Of course, there are things I regret.

(8:45)

The cargo ship journey is filled with many other memories. When several of my companions got seasick and could no longer continue the study sessions, I—having not gotten sick—spent my time playing Mahjong with the remaining university students, and I became quite good at it. I was allowed into the bridge and the engine room, where I was taught about navigation. It was during the Vietnam War, so we passed many ships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet amidst great tension. I saw a starry sky so full that I couldn't even distinguish the Milky Way, and it was then that I saw a satellite for the first time. I saw many dolphins chasing the ship. Flying fish flew onto the deck, so we caught them and had them grilled for dinner. When the timber was slow to arrive, the crew lowered the lifeboats, and we rowed out to buy fish from local fishermen. We also encountered a massive typhoon, and the ship tossed like a leaf. In South Korea, martial law was in effect, and on top of that, there was a cholera outbreak, so we were detained for quarantine at Shimonoseki. Actually, the itinerary wasn't even precisely fixed; we received information via telegraph<sup>12</sup> and only much later did I learn that the unloading destination for the timber was South Korea. By the time the ship returned to Yokohama and I got home, more than two weeks had passed since the start of the second semester<sup>13</sup>.

[no.13b]

(10:13)

would come to the ship on these barges to sell things, or call girls and their pimps would come, offering "massages" as a front for sexual services. Some were quite young. Being a high school student who spoke almost no English, I and my roommate could barely manage to turn them away by telling them to "go to the leader's room." I didn't even understand what they were there for until it was explained to me later.

<sup>11</sup>I believe the fact that my language skills were poor and direct communication was limited also formed the background for this thinking. There were students from the Southeast Asian Student Dormitory attached to the church, so I think I could have had much more direct interaction if I had made the effort, but I couldn't do it at the time. One could say I was young. Rereading "Now is the Time for Atonement" [1], I recognize many of the students, but there was no deep interaction back then.

<sup>12</sup>We could exchange telegrams, but since we were charged per character, we sent very short messages like "I'M OK" from my side and "IF YOU'RE OK, I'M OK" from the church.

<sup>13</sup>We were held up near the Kanmon Straits for three days. The university students

## 2.3 My Journey of Living Together Since Then

[no.15]

After graduating from high school, I studied mathematics at university. During my graduate studies, I studied abroad in the United States for about three years. Just as I had secured a position at a regional national university and was experiencing the joy of concentrating on mathematical research, I moved to International Christian University (ICU)—a Christian liberal arts university often referred to as ICU.

Shortly before moving to ICU, I had begun supporting mathematics research at universities in Asia<sup>14</sup>. After moving to ICU, my work expanded beyond research and education in mathematics. I began supporting the learning of students facing various difficulties, assisting people with disabilities, and organizing work camps in hill-tribe villages in Thailand. Through a program called "Service-Learning," I planned activities not only within Japan but also in China, Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, India, and Kenya, where I sent students and sometimes accompanied them to learn together.

At our home in the campus housing, we held a discussion-style "Bible Study Group" on Thursday nights, prioritizing the value of welcoming everyone. I continued this for about 16 years until my retirement. There were times when only a few people attended, but perhaps because my wife prepared tea and cake, it eventually grew into a gathering of 20 to 30 people every week. About five years into it, graduates of Dokuritsu Gakuen began to attend, and from then on, almost all of them became core members of the group. Ms. Satomi Nakajima (née Iso) was one of them. I think many people felt it was a comfortable place where they could say anything, or just listen to others, or simply eat cake and drink tea in silence while enjoying the conversation.<sup>15</sup>

While it was a place of learning, it might also have been a comfortable "place to belong" (ibasho) with friends. I feel that having a place one can call their "ibasho" is crucial for a person to learn and grow. For me, the time spent with friends at church and in the youth group was the "ibasho" where I was able to grow. Perhaps our home was able to provide one such "ibasho." I feel a sense of envy thinking that for all of you at Christian Dokuritsu Gakuen, this school itself has become your "ibasho." I believe that an "ibasho" remains something precious throughout one's life as the place where one was nurtured, even after everyone has moved on to different

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were worried they wouldn't be able to graduate if they couldn't take their final exams.

<sup>14</sup>The focus was on the Philippines and China. Between Japan and the Philippines, there was also a program supported by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS).

<sup>15</sup>Records can be found on the website: <https://icu-hsuzuki.github.io/biblestudy/>. A Bible reading group via email has also been active since 2011: <https://icu-hsuzuki.github.io/science/bible/brc.html>

paths.

When I was a junior in college, the director of a children's home<sup>16</sup> asked if I would like to work there. However, shortly after I left to study in the U.S., he passed away from cancer. His wife took over the management of the home, and since it was close to ICU, I became involved as a member of the board of directors.

After my retirement, when elementary and junior high schools were closed due to the pandemic, I was asked to help children with their studies. I began going there every day during their study hours, and for a while afterward, I continued to look after children who were falling behind in their schoolwork. During the pandemic, the staff members were under immense pressure, so I also began volunteering for overnight shifts to help out. Although the frequency has decreased, I still continue this today.

Furthermore, I am currently assisting at a support facility for the employment of people with disabilities<sup>17</sup>.

Although I have taught at a university for a long time, at the Bible study group, the children's home, the facility for people with disabilities, and the various institutions I visited at home and abroad through Service-Learning, I have been able to meet many people who have walked paths completely different from my own. It is difficult to truly understand what is important to others. However, in each of these places, I have been taught that even if it is not easily understood, there are things that are precious; and that every single person's life is valuable, not in terms of superiority or inferiority, but in its own right. I believe these encounters have become "treasures" for me. During my three-day stay here at Christian Dokuritsu Gakuen, I hope that I can have such encounters with all of you.

(14:55)

## 3 Understanding the Bible

### 3.1 Calming the Gale

[no.16]

Let us look at this passage from the Bible little by little. First, the first half: the account of Jesus calming the storm. Some of you may have read this before, but even for those who haven't, I believe it's helpful to have specific questions in mind to read actively. Let's consider the following while we read:

1. When did this happen? (Background)
2. Who was present at the scene?
3. What can we learn about the boat?

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<sup>16</sup>Children's Welfare Institution "Nozomi no Ie" (House of Hope): <https://www.nozomino-ie.or.jp>

<sup>17</sup>Japan Christian Social Service: <https://jcws.or.jp/houjin/houjintop.html>

4. How is the storm described?
5. How are the disciples reacting?
6. How is Jesus depicted?
7. What is written about the result?

Ideally, I would have you think and answer these yourselves, but since this is a lecture, I will provide the answers based on what is written. Of course, my interpretation is not the only "correct" one; I believe there are various ways to understand it.

**1. When? Background?** Let's start from the beginning. "4:35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side.' 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him."<sup>18</sup> [no.17]

It seems it was already evening. They were by the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and immediately following this, in Chapter 5, Verse 1, it says: "5:1 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes." The Sea of Galilee is a lake 13km wide (east-west), 21km long (north-south), and 53km in circumference. Although their exact starting point is not stated, it is likely near Capernaum. Currently, it seems you cannot reach Oguni via the Yonesaka Line, but the distance from the Gakuen to Oguni is about 11km. Looking at the maps,<sup>19</sup> I imagine they rowed the boat for roughly that same distance.

[no.16b]

**2. Who?** The text only explicitly mentions that the disciples were with Jesus. However, a little earlier in Chapter 4, Verse 10, it says: "When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables."<sup>20</sup> This suggests there might have been other followers besides the Twelve. Furthermore, looking at the corresponding passage in Luke 8:1-3,<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>JBS New Interconfessional Translation (SI) 4:35 On that day, when evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us cross over to the other side." 36 So, leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. Colloquial Japanese Version (CV) 4:35 On that day, when evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.

<sup>19</sup>[Galilee in the Time of Jesus, The Ministry of Jesus around the Sea of Galilee](#)

<sup>20</sup>SI: When Jesus was alone, those around him, along with the Twelve, asked him about the parables. CV: When he was alone, those who were about him with the twelve asked him concerning the parables.

<sup>21</sup>New Interconfessional Translation (NI): 1 After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and

we see that women were also traveling with them.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, it is possible that several people, including the twelve disciples and these women, were together in the boat.

**3. The Boat?** "There were also other boats with him" (4:36b).<sup>23</sup> This phrase "other boats"<sup>24</sup> is plural in the original Greek and in English, so there were at least three—perhaps three or four. Among the Twelve, there were the brothers Simon Peter and Andrew<sup>25</sup>, and the brothers James and John. We know that the house of Zebedee, the father of James and John, was like a master fisherman's house with hired servants,<sup>26</sup> so it is highly likely that these were their boats. A fair number of people must have been distributed across several boats. They used nets to catch fish, and since the fish still found in the Sea of Galilee today, called "St. Peter's Fish," are said to be up to 40cm long and weigh 1.5kg, the boats must have been of a certain size to handle such nets. According to archaeological excavations, boats about 8.2m long and 2.3m wide were common. It is said that the length of a person's outstretched arms is roughly equal to their height. The average height of a high school girl is slightly less than 160cm, so the boat was about as long as five high school girls holding hands with their arms wide open. It might

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diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; 3 Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

<sup>22</sup>Additionally, descriptions of women standing by the cross of Jesus suggest that when they finally made the long journey from Galilee up to Jerusalem, a significant number of women were part of the group. Examples: Mark 15:40, 41; John 19:25–27; Matthew 27:55, 56; Luke 23:49, etc.

<sup>23</sup>SI: Other boats were also with him. CV: Other boats also went with him.

<sup>24</sup>36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. NIV 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 36 ka>i >af'entes ton >'oqlon paralamb'anousin a>uton <ws >hn 'en t w| plo'iw|, ka'i >'alla plo ia <hn met' a>uto u.

<sup>25</sup>Since Andrew appears to have been a disciple of John the Baptist, he might have been away from home and not fishing during that period. John 1:40: Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.

<sup>26</sup>16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." 18 At once they left their nets and followed him. 19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

be interesting to try this experiment later.<sup>27282930</sup> Compared to a typical rowboat you might see in a park pond, you can think of it as being quite large.

**4. The Storm Conditions?** "37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped."<sup>31</sup> In fact, the Sea of Galilee sits in a valley about 200m below sea level, surrounded by hills and mountains, from which strong winds can blow down.<sup>32</sup>

**5. The Disciples?** "The disciples woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?'"<sup>33</sup> (38). I don't know exactly which disciples said this, but I suspect it was those who were not fishermen. For the women and those unaccustomed to such squalls, it is terrifying when a boat starts to swamp. Since they departed in the evening, it would have been even scarier if it had become dark. The sea or a large lake at night is frightening. [no.12b]

However, in reality, boats are designed so that they do not easily sink even if water enters.<sup>34</sup> I imagine the fishermen were desperately maneuvering the

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<sup>27</sup>Archaeological excavations confirm that fisherman's boats on the Sea of Galilee during the time of Jesus, known as the "Gennesaret Boat" (also called the Galilee Boat, Mary Magdalene's Boat, or Peter's Boat), were medium-to-small wooden vessels approximately 8.2m (27ft) long and 2.3m (7.5ft) wide, capable of carrying 5 to 10 people. This size is considered the standard type used for fishing in those days and is the likely size of the boat Jesus used with his disciples.

<sup>28</sup><https://www.magisterium.com/>: Estimating from archaeological evidence, the "Galilee Boat" discovered on the shores of the Sea of Galilee in 1986 dates back to the time of Jesus. It is approximately 8m long, 2.3m wide, and 1.1m deep, with a load capacity of about 4–5 tons (capable of carrying around 15 people). Built of olive and oak, it was a typical fishing vessel using both sails and oars, suitable for 4–6 fishermen to work and pull nets through the night.

<sup>29</sup>According to a survey by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (FY2024), the average height of high school students ranges from 168.6cm–170.8cm for boys and 157.1cm–158.0cm for girls. Boys tend to continue growing as they age, while girls' growth tends to slow down around age 16. <https://shingakunet.com/journal/column/20160417130000/>

<sup>30</sup>The lifeboat I once rode was said to hold twenty people. We rowed it with oars, and the size seemed roughly the same.

<sup>31</sup>SI: A furious squall arose, waves poured into the boat, and the boat became swamped. CV: And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.

<sup>32</sup>Gemini: The Sea of Galilee is very low at around 200m below sea level (approx. -213m) in northern Israel. While it has a Mediterranean climate—hot and dry in summer, mild in winter—the low-lying lakeshore becomes very hot and humid in summer (heatstroke warning). Conversely, cold winds blowing from the northern highlands (such as the Golan Heights) can cause sudden weather changes and storms.

<sup>33</sup>SI: So, the disciples woke Jesus and said, "Teacher, do you not care if we drown to death?" CV: And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?"

<sup>34</sup>They likely stayed close to the shore most of the time.

boat. I too encountered a typhoon during my journey on the cargo ship. That ship was 145m long and weighed 9,500 tons—vastly larger than their boat—but during the typhoon, there was "pitching and rolling." With the pitching (vertical) and rolling (horizontal), the bow would be completely submerged and disappear, then a moment later, it would come roaring back up. Watching from the bridge, I was amazed by the incredible restoring force. The horizontal roll was such that the stairs, which were sideways, became almost vertical; I had to wait for the ship to roll the other way and level out before rushing to move. Among the waves, "cross seas" (triangular waves) are particularly dangerous, so the captain and officers<sup>35</sup> were keeping a sharp eye in all directions while steering. Their boat, too, should not have sunk easily even when full of water. Still, their desperation is palpable.

[no.16b]

**6. Jesus?** "38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. 39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. 40 He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'<sup>36</sup>" The stern is the back of the boat, which is more stable. Even so, being able to sleep in such conditions suggests he may have been quite exhausted. One of the people steering the boat with the rudder was likely near him. I don't know exactly how the squall subsided, but it says it became "completely calm"—the surface of the water became flat. Jesus asks, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" Jesus was not afraid. The disciples' question, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" gives the impression they thought, "Teacher, you might be fine, but..." Why were the disciples afraid? What are you afraid of? For me, I think it is the fear of the unknown, of not knowing what will happen. Perhaps the ultimate form of that is death; here, it was drowning. Jesus shouldn't have needed to rebuke the wind. He likely rebuked it for the sake of the disciples. By saying "still," he seems to imply that by being with him, they should have already learned something vital—that they should be able to trust and not be fearful or unfaithful. Is he speaking strictly with such "righteousness"?

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<sup>35</sup>On the ship I boarded, besides the captain, there were first, second, and third officers. During the typhoon, I believe about three of them were gathered on the bridge.

<sup>36</sup>SI: 38 But Jesus himself was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. 39 Jesus got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the lake, "Silence. Be still." Then the wind stopped, and it became completely calm. 40 Jesus said, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" CV: 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. 39 And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you either no faith?"

**7. The Result?** Finally, "41 They were terrified and asked each other, 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!'<sup>37</sup>" This is described as the moment they revised their recognition of Jesus.

**Questions** Several questions arise. Why wasn't Jesus afraid? What kind of "faith" is Jesus talking about? Why did the disciples express themselves by saying, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"?

Setting aside the first question for a moment, regarding the latter questions, I believe those were the words of the fishermen. Fishermen who worked on the Sea of Galilee must have encountered such storms many times. I imagine they thought there was no need to be afraid of such a thing, and instead were maneuvering the boat with a sense of "I'll show you the strength of a fisherman." For those who were truly terrified, their dominant feeling would have been "Thank goodness we didn't drown." But for the fishermen, the fact that "even the wind and the lake obey him" must have been truly astonishing.

I believe that the parts of the Gospel of Mark up until Jesus enters Jerusalem in Chapter 11 were a compilation of what Peter and others had told. Here too, details that aren't strictly necessary for the main point, like "there were also other boats with him," are included. Boats appear frequently in other sections, and long sermons are absent; the focus is on a record of actions. Given this, I think the way Peter and his companions felt is expressed in the words, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Now, with that in mind, why wasn't Jesus afraid? The Greek word for "faith" is the same as for "trust" or "faithfulness." What kind of "faith" is being spoken of here? (25:46)

### 3.2 What is Peace? (1)

[no.18]

Now, at the beginning, I posed the question, "What is peace?" In the midst of the storm, the disciples were likely in a state that was anything but peaceful. Then, suddenly, a state of peace arrived. What brought about this change? One could say it was a single word from Jesus. However, since Jesus seems to be saying that they didn't need to be afraid in the first place if only they had faith, perhaps this boat was actually within peace from the very beginning. What do you think?

Earlier, I quoted the passage concerning the birth of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke, but the birth of Jesus is also described in the Gospel of Matthew. There, it is recorded that the following words were spoken to Joseph:

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<sup>37</sup>SI: 41 The disciples were greatly afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this? For even the wind and the lake obey him!" CV: 41 And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?"

1:22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). (Matthew 1:22, 23 NI) <sup>38</sup>

It seems to be said that the presence of Jesus means "God is with us." What exactly does this mean? Does it mean that if we are with Jesus, we are safe? (27:06)

### 3.3 Healing the Man Possessed by Evil Spirits

[no.19]

Now, let us look at the second half. Again, let's consider some questions.

1. When and in what context did this happen?
2. Who was present at the scene?
3. How is the person possessed by evil spirits described?
4. How is the interaction between Jesus and this person recorded?
5. What happens as a result? [no.22]
6. What do the pig herders and the people from the town and countryside do?
7. What is written about the person who had been possessed by evil spirits?

**1. When? Background?** Chapter 5, Verse 1 says: "5:1 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. 2 When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him.<sup>39</sup>" Was this a mere coincidence? At the end—or rather, at the beginning of the next story—it says: "21 When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the

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<sup>38</sup>SI 1:22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "Look, the virgin shall conceive and give birth to a son, / and they shall call his name Immanuel." This means, "God is with us." CV 1:22 All this was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us).

<sup>39</sup>SI 5:1 They came to the other side of the sea, to the region of the Gerasenes. 2 And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. CV 5:1 They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. 2 And when he had come out of the boat, there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.

lake.<sup>40</sup>" It appears he returned to where he had originally been. This implies that he went to the other side of the lake and then immediately returned. Therefore, I believe that Jesus, having heard rumors about this man, went out of his way to meet him, even taking the disciples through a storm to do so.

**2. Who?** Who do you think was there? First, there is the man possessed by an impure spirit, whom we will look at next. Later, the pig herders and the people from the town and villages appear, but at the very least, Jesus is there, and presumably, his disciples are too. What is strange is that while a fair number of disciples should have been present, they—men and women alike—say nothing. Why is that?

The pig herders appear here, and the people of the towns and villages are speaking. Since Jews considered pigs to be unclean animals, these town and village people were likely non-Jews.<sup>41</sup>

**3. The Man Possessed by Evil Spirits?** Now, let's see how the Bible describes this man.

2 When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. 3 This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. 4 For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. 5 Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. <sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>SI 21 And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. CV 21 And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him; and he was beside the sea.

<sup>41</sup>Perhaps the disciples remained silently at a distance because they did not want to be involved with such people. However, this might be exactly what would cause Jesus to ask them, "Do you still have no faith?"

<sup>42</sup>SI 2 And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. 3 He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, 4 for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. 5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. CV 2 And when he had come out of the boat, there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who lived among the tombs; and no one could bind him any more, even with a chain; 4 for he had often been bound with fetters and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the fetters he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. 5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out, and bruising himself with stones.

We don't know who made the judgment that he was "possessed by an impure spirit," but the biblical writer records it as such, and it is written that Jesus also addressed it as an "impure spirit." He lives in the tombs. Furthermore, it says that he had been bound many times with shackles and chains, but he tore them apart and broke them, and no one could subdue him. The mere fact that he lived in a cemetery is shocking, but it likely means the people in the towns and villages would not allow him to live among them. Chains and shackles are mentioned again later; at the very least, he didn't put them on himself, so he must have been tied down and restrained by someone. It says he cried out in the tombs and mountains night and day and struck himself with stones. This could be called abnormal behavior, but since it also mentions self-harm, he might have been in a state where even he didn't know what to do with himself.

How do you view this person? It is certainly abnormal, but the text doesn't say how he came to be in this state. We don't know since when, or if he was born this way. However, for the people around him, they likely wanted to keep him tied up somewhere, or at the very least, wanted him away from them.

Since my time teaching at the university, I have interacted with many people suffering from mental illness or mental distress. Not long ago, when I went to visit someone hospitalized in a psychiatric ward, there were cases where they were restrained so they couldn't move. Not only those with mental illnesses, but also elderly people are sometimes deprived of their freedom and restrained for various reasons. Even today, there are cases where a patient cannot be admitted unless the family agrees to the use of restraints. Hospitals can be such challenging environments.

The text says he was in the tombs. In a cemetery, one cannot easily or continuously obtain food, so he must have been getting it somehow. Perhaps his family carried it to him in a way that others wouldn't notice.

I'm not sure how to understand "he would... cut himself with stones," but perhaps there were times when he wanted to erase his own existence entirely.

**4. Jesus and This Man** So, how does Jesus face such a person? It is written as follows:

6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. 7 He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" 8 For Jesus had been saying to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!" <sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>SI 6 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. 7 And crying

It is a very short interaction, but it seems that when Jesus said, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit," the response was a loud cry: "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? ... don't torture me!" Jesus appears to distinguish between this person and the impure spirit, commanding the spirit. While it is likely the spirit answering, it asks not to be tortured; I'm not sure if these words came from within the man himself or if there is an independent entity called an impure spirit, but clearly, suffering is being expressed.

Next, though it feels abrupt, Jesus asks: "What is your name?"<sup>44</sup> The answer is: "My name is Legion, for we are many."<sup>45</sup> "Legion" can be a common noun meaning a great number, but it was also used to mean a large unit of the Roman army—depending on the era, a unit of five to six thousand soldiers. There is the term "multiple personality," and it may have been a confused situation where he couldn't distinguish which one was "himself" because there were so many things that seemed like himself.

I am not an expert, so I cannot say for certain, but this person was likely in a state where his perspective was confused, and he could not view himself or others with objectivity. It seems such a state can be triggered by panic following a particular incident.

Here, Jesus asks for his name. He is asking how the man refers to himself or how others call him. Nothing is written about him harming others, but his self-harm was recorded. Even if he was seen as someone people would rather not have around, or as a nuisance, Jesus asks, "Please tell me about yourself. Who are you? What is your name?" We don't know exactly what happened following this question, but it is certain that Jesus treated him differently than anyone else had.<sup>46</sup>

**5. The Result?** The story mentions the pigs, and since that is so striking, one's attention is drawn there, but what is written about the man? Verse 15 says:

15 When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been

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out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." 8 For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" 9 And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." CV 6 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped him; 7 and crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." 8 For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"

<sup>44</sup>SI "What is your name?" CV "What is your name?"

<sup>45</sup>SI "My name is Legion, for we are many." CV "My name is Legion; for we are many."

<sup>46</sup>Even in an abnormal state, the fundamental approach is to try to understand this person as a human being. "Tell me about yourself." To understand the "why," one must try to know how God is working in that person's life.

possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. <sup>47</sup>

Amazingly, he was dressed, in his right mind, and sitting there. What actually happened is not explicitly written.

## 6. The People of the Land? In response to this:

16 Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. 17 Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region. <sup>48</sup>

In other words, the pig herders and the people of the town and villages could not accept this and seemed instead to fall into a panic.

## 7. What about the man? Regarding the man, it is written as follows:

18 As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. 19 Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." 20 So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed. <sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>SI 15 And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. CV 15 And they came to Jesus, and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the man who had had the legion; and they were afraid.

<sup>48</sup>SI 16 And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. 17 And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. CV 16 And those who had seen it told what had happened to the demoniac and to the pigs. 17 And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their neighborhood.

<sup>49</sup>SI 18 As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. 19 And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marvelled. CV 18 And as he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. 19 But he refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and all men marvelled.

**About the Pigs** How should we think about the pigs? To be honest, I'm not entirely sure either. It seems the pigs died. This was likely a huge economic loss—and whose responsibility was it? Was it the impure spirits, or was it Jesus's responsibility if he could have stopped it? However, based on the writing, the pig herders were hired hands, so they themselves might not have been the ones who suffered the actual loss.

At the very least, however, I believe that through this, it was demonstrated to everyone that the impure spirits had left the man, and I think the man himself was able to know that as well. (37:12)

### 3.4 What is Peace? (2)

[no.20]

This time, I first spoke about the story of the storm. From the words "Do you still have no faith?", it was written that by acting together with Jesus, there are things that one becomes able to believe and understand. Following that, we read the story of the man possessed by impure spirits. In this account, the disciples do not utter a single word, but based on the context, they must have been present. Perhaps the kind of thing they experienced here is also related to the "faith" required in the midst of the storm.

In this story, what exactly is "peace"?

For this man possessed by impure spirits, who was "night and day among the tombs and in the hills... crying out and cutting himself with stones" (5), there certainly was no peace. Furthermore, when Jesus arrives, this man shouts, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" (7). It seems he thought of God—and God's Son, Jesus—as beings who would cause him suffering.

Then, what was it like for the people of the towns and villages, or the pig herders? The initial state might have been "peaceful" for them. As long as they kept the man possessed by impure spirits bound with shackles and chains, they might have been able to live in peace. However, when Jesus comes and the impure spirits are driven out of this man, and they see him dressed and in his right mind, sitting there, they become terrified and plead with Jesus to leave.

What kind of thing is peace? At the beginning, I asked if it is the absence of war. If Jesus had done nothing, these people might have remained in their version of "peace."

Let's look at the end of this story once more. "As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him" (18). However, "Jesus did not let him, but said, 'Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you'" (19). Then, "the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him" (20). In other words, he first informed his own people that "the Lord had mercy on him and told them

what He had done for him," and then he likely spoke to the people of the Decapolis—that is, the people of the towns and villages, and an even wider region.

The result is recorded only as "all the people were amazed," and nothing more is written. What happened after that? (40:03)

## 4 Summary

### 4.1 Jesus and His Disciples

[no.21]

Jesus was born about 2,000 years ago and, as far as we know, walked with his disciples for about three years after reaching adulthood. As I mentioned at the beginning, it seems there were others who acted with him besides the twelve disciples, including women. However, he does not seem to have written any books himself.

For example, if it were a matter of "righteousness" such as "murder and war are wrong" or "live with faith by trusting God," it would seem more accurate and easier to convey if left in writing, like the Old Testament—the Law and the Prophets. However, Jesus did not do that.

Nevertheless, by acting together with Jesus, his words likely took on meaning and were conveyed to others. Therefore, the Gospel writers passed down not only Jesus' teachings but also how he acted.

I think it would be best to read through the Gospels carefully with you all little by little, but since that is not possible today, we have read specific portions.

From here, I will pick up the pace a bit and highlight three sayings of Jesus that I believe are key.

First is the very first message of Jesus' ministry.<sup>50</sup>

1:14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" Mark 1:14, 15 (SI)<sup>51</sup>

[no.22]

His first words were: "The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" The core of this is the message that "the kingdom of God has come near." While the "kingdom of God" is

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<sup>50</sup>The Gospel of Mark, which we read together this time, does not include a birth narrative of Jesus.

<sup>51</sup>SI: After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." CV: Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel."

often rephrased as the "reign of God," in simpler terms, I think it means something like: "The world where God's will is done is right there." If that is so, then the transformation of a person from a state where they are considered abnormal, bound with shackles and chains, and believing there is no point in living, demonstrates this idea that "the world where God's will is done is right there."

Faith might be the trust that God's Will will be done—that is, receiving Jesus' message that "the kingdom of God has come near."

In the biblical passages we read earlier, what did the disciples who were with him learn? Even through the experience of a violent squall where the boat was swamped and filled with water, Jesus seemed to trust in God. At their destination, he drove out impure spirits from a single individual, and peace was apparently given to that man. We can safely assume that the company of Jesus went all the way to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, into Gentile territory, specifically for this purpose.

I am not sure if the word "peace" is entirely adequate, but I believe that for the man possessed by impure spirits—who had even wanted to erase his own existence—something special happened, providing an opportunity to reflect on the Kingdom of God and the world where God's will is done. What do you all think?

[no.21b]

The second is the passage where Jesus conveys the "First Commandment," or the most important instruction.

12:28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"  
29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."  
Mark 12:28–31 (SI) <sup>52</sup>

[no.22]

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<sup>52</sup>SI: 12:28 And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." CV: 12:28 And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; 30 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Although the scribe asks for the \*first\* commandment, Jesus seems to give two: the first and the second. While we can think of them as "Love God" and "Love your neighbor" as two separate things, I believe they can also be thought of as one. That is, to love God is to love your neighbor, whom God loves. I sometimes rephrase this and recite it as follows:

To treasure those who are precious to you is to treasure the people who are precious to them.

Jesus told this man, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you" (19). This, too, must mean knowing that God is not one who tortures us, but one who is full of mercy, and sharing that knowledge. And that likely includes treasuring the others who are precious to God—starting with one's own family. Furthermore, "the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him" (20). He might have treasured his neighbors, the people of the Decapolis, as precious individuals to the one—was it God, or was it Jesus?—who had treasured and loved even someone like himself. [no.21b]

The third is the "New Commandment" that Jesus gave to his disciples during the Last Supper.

13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Mark 13:34, 35 (SI) <sup>53</sup>

[no.22]

The world where God's will is done seems to be connected to God loving each of us, us loving God in return, and us loving the neighbors placed beside us as ourselves. And Jesus' wish is that just as he loved his disciples, the disciples should also love one another. However, "one another" is not a very simple thing. It is not something that can be achieved through one's own efforts alone. A world where people love one another—this may be the peace that God and Jesus desire.

Perhaps he was trying to remind them to believe that God loves each individual even when a violent squall blows. And that was also part of the journey toward the other shore for the sake of one person who had been bound with shackles and chains, ostracized by people, and living in a tomb. To understand "as I have loved you" is to see Jesus interacting with each person with such love.

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<sup>53</sup>SI: 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." CV: 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

The world where God's will is done was the Kingdom of God, but in other words, it might be God's peace. It may be different from what humans imagine, as seen in the outcome in the region of the Gerasenes.

The people of the town and villages tried to keep this man suppressed by the power of the majority, but it seems that his liberation was what Jesus desired. God's will is likely demonstrated through what His Son, Jesus, did. Conversely, perhaps it was because of such actions that God called Jesus "my son, whom I love."<sup>54</sup>

At the beginning, I asked you all what kind of state peace is. I think that is a question that cannot be easily answered.

A state of war cannot be called peace. Nor does it seem to be something obtained by binding someone with shackles and chains. You may already know that these cannot be called peace. However, I would like you to think carefully about whether simply eliminating such things constitutes peace. What Jesus preaches is to aim for a world where God's will is done. Given that we do not always know where God's will lies, it may mean seeking after God's will. And while it feels slightly different from what is commonly called peace, I believe it is to love your neighbor as yourself, just as God loves them, and to love one another. What do you think about peace? How will you seek peace? (49:27)

## 4.2 In Closing

[no.23]

What exactly is peace? Recently, I have been using AI (Artificial Intelligence) quite often. When I ask AI about peace, it informs me of various perspectives, including academic discussions, and introduces relevant books. I have included a link to my dialogue with Gemini in the slides, so please take a look if you are interested. Along with questions about peace, it also provides references and summaries of their contents.

What is Peace: <https://gemini.google.com/share/268c656eef7d>

Personally, I believe it is best to think for yourself and form various questions before asking an AI. Furthermore, I believe the key to gaining a deep understanding lies in whether you can actively pose questions in response to the AI's output. When you use AI, I hope you will do so actively while holding onto your own questions, just as we did when reading the Bible today.

When I first began thinking about peace, I thought that avoiding division was the most important thing to prevent heading toward war. However, even in today's passage, it seems that Jesus and his disciples did not always share

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<sup>54</sup>Mark 1:11: And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Mark 9:7: Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

the same understanding. Considering the man possessed by impure spirits and the people of the towns and villages, it does not appear that they all attained peace together. Division may exist in every world. Within that, what kind of journey is it to seek peace? Even in the Christmas scripture I quoted at the beginning, it was "peace to those on whom his favor rests (those with whom He is pleased)." Unfortunately, it does not say peace to \*all\* people. I believe this must not be something that promotes further division. While trying not to encourage division, what does it mean to wish for peace? I would very much like you to think about this.

At the beginning, I mentioned that Dokuritsu Gakuen likely serves as a precious "place to belong" (ibasho) for your learning. Whether you are here now or when you eventually leave this place, I believe that having companions to learn with is essential for this to be a starting point for meaningful learning. While I have emphasized the importance of questions, my hope is that this will be a place of learning where you consider and value not only your own questions but also the questions of others. That may be the path of valuing one another and loving one another in this place.

"Peace" is not something that can be easily defined, nor is there a simple formula for what one should do. However, at the same time, I believe that continuing to seek God's will, treasuring the people who are precious to those you treasure, accepting that you are loved, and loving one another are all deeply intertwined. I hope you will give this some thought.

(53:00)

## Notes: Regarding the Asia-Pacific War

I would like to record the reasons why I began thinking about peace and why I decided to speak about it.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the end of the war in Japan. Since the war ended in 1945, Japan, as a nation, has not engaged in war for eighty years. Because of this 80th anniversary, I have had many opportunities to study this war extensively this year.

First, has this eighty-year period been "peaceful"? While there was a war eighty years ago, what exactly do we call that war? It is commonly referred to as World War II; however, since the center of the conflict was between Germany and the Allies in Europe, and between Japan and the United States-led Allies in Asia, in Japan, it is often called the "Pacific War," focusing on the conflict with the U.S.

Indeed, it seems natural to call it the Pacific War—a struggle against America centered in the Pacific—since it began with the attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, ended with massive damage from American air raids across Japan, the landing of U.S. troops in Okinawa, the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the loss of many lives, and Japan's unconditional

surrender. However, many historians prefer the term "Asia-Pacific War" or the "Fifteen-Year War." While there is ongoing debate and I am not a historian myself, I cannot delve too deeply here, but I believe the key points can be summarized as follows:

Amidst the continuing Manchurian Incident and the Second Sino-Japanese War, perhaps out of concern over Japan's movements to colonize China, the United States cut off exports of oil and other resources to Japan, which had been heavily dependent on American imports. Japan, needing to secure oil from Southeast Asia and other regions, proceeded to attack Pearl Harbor.

In reality, about two hours before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan had invaded Kota Bharu on the Malay Peninsula. Thus, it can be said that the expansion of the war from China into Southeast Asia marked the true beginning of this conflict.

According to recent statistical results, approximately 3.1 to 3.8 million Japanese people died in this war, while American casualties were about 290,000. However, it is estimated that more than 20 million people died in China and Southeast Asia as a result of this war.

Personally, I feel that when Japanese people use the term "Pacific War," there may be an underlying desire to emphasize the view of the war as a struggle against the United States—a much greater power at the time—which resulted in many Japanese sacrifices, while averting one's eyes from the victims in Asia—that is, Japan's role as an aggressor. It is natural that people want to speak of their own victimization, while few wish to speak of their own aggression.

However, if we truly seek peace, I believe we must think about why things turned out that way and what "peace" actually means. What do you think? As I mentioned at the beginning, the fact that I hold such a perspective may be due to my experiences traveling through Asia in my youth.

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