

# A Holy Moment

Transfiguration Sunday

Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012

2 Kings 2:1-12      Mark 9:2-9

## 1. *Sae Ong Ji Ma*



There is a Chinese saying, “Our life is like ‘Sae Ong Ji Ma’”.

‘Sae Ong Ji Ma’ means an old man’s horse. The Chinese saying came from a story of an old man and his horse.

There was an old man who lived in North China. He had a horse. One day, his horse ran away to the land of barbarians. His neighbors came and comforted him for losing the horse, but he said calmly without any signs of pity, “Who knows? This may be a blessing to me later.”

Then, one day a few months later, the horse came back with another barbarian’s horse. At this time, his neighbors came and congratulated him that not only his horse came back but also his horse brought another horse. Again, he said calmly without any signs of joy, “Who knows? This could be a suffering to me.”

One day, his beloved son rode the barbarian’s horse. He fell down from the horse and broke his leg. He became lame. His neighbor came and comforted him, but he said without any signs of sadness, “Who knows? This may be a blessing to me again.”

One year later, the massive barbarians invaded the village, and all young men had to fight against the barbarians and they died, but the old man’s son survived because he was lame. The old man and his son lived happily together.

Our life is like ‘Sae Ong Ji Ma’. It is not stable always. It is turning around again and again. Sometimes ‘joy’ becomes ‘sadness’ and ‘sadness’ becomes ‘joy’, or ‘hope’ turns into ‘despair’ but ‘despair’ turns into ‘hope’. Therefore, we don’t have to be so overwhelmed by what happens at a moment. Life changes all the time, but peace and hope is in Jesus Christ.

## 2. A Desperate Desire (2 Kings 2:1-12)

I like the old man's story. Life changes again and again, and we don't have to be so overwhelmed by our situations. But in another way, I'd like to laugh when it is joyful and cry when it is sad. We are human beings, but not divine. I believe that being faithful to our feelings is more like a human being.



I like the story of Elijah and Elisha. Elijah knew that it was time to leave for heaven. So he stopped by Bethel and Jericho for a farewell. As we read, there were a group of prophets in Bethel and Jericho. In our language, there were prophet's school in Bethel and Jericho, and Elijah was the master for the prophet's schools. When Elijah moved from one place to another place, Elisha followed him. Finally they crossed the Jordan River, and Elijah was about to be taken away.

Elijah asked Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" Elisha replied, "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit." In other words, Elisha said, "Master, I want to be twice better than you."

In Korean culture, if a student says to his teacher that he wants to be better than his teacher, the teacher will scold him and tell him to learn to be humble. But when the teacher turns around, he will smile because his student has such a desire. When Elijah heard what Elisha asked for, he smiled and said, "Well! Then it will be yours if you see me being taken away."

Even though it may be rude, I like what Elisha asked. He knew what he wanted, and he had desire for it. Do you have a desire that Elisha had? Would you like to have a double portion of Spirit?

I watched an audition program. Hundreds of people applied for the audition to be a singer. The first winner will have 2 million dollars and a chance to be a professional singer. It was the semi-final competition. 10 out of 40 people will go to the final competition. The three judges picked up 9 people, but still one ticket was available for the final competition. 31 people who didn't pass the semi-final stood on the stage and hoped that they could get the last ticket to the final competition, but the three judges announced that they could not find one more person who was qualified for the ticket. Everyone was disappointed and was about to leave.

Then, one girl raised her hand and said to the judges that she would really like to have the last ticket, and asked one more chance to sing. The judges allowed her to sing again. She sang her best, but it was not excellent enough. One judge said, "Your singing is not better than others, but I will give you the ticket for the final, because you have such a desperate desire for the ticket." Then, the judge also said to the others, "All of you have a wonderful talent in music. But I want you to remember that more important than talents is a desire, a desperate desire for music."

Elisha was blessed by Elijah not because he was smarter than any other prophets, but he followed Elijah at the final moment and he was so desperate for being blessed by Elijah to be a better prophet, even better than his teacher. God loves us and blesses us, but sometimes, God wants to see how much we desire for His blessing.

One day my son came to me and asked me to buy him a game chip that he could play on his game player. Then, I asked him, "Do you really need it?" He said to me, "If you'd like to buy it." What a sweet and humble answer! So what did I do? I didn't buy it, because I didn't think he needed it. Sometimes he told me that he really wanted to play the game. I knew he liked the game. So what did I do? I didn't buy it, because I still didn't think he needed it. When he came back to me again and again and asked for the game, then I knew he was so desperate for the game, and I would say, "Okay! I will buy you the game..., if you make all 'A's"



Elisha was so desperate for being blessed by his teacher, Elijah. Elisha wanted to be spiritually empowered, more than Elijah was. Elijah smiled and said, "Okay! You will be..., if you see me when I am taken from you."

"...if you see me when I am taken from you." Elijah was taken into Heaven alive. When Elisha saw Elijah was being taken into heaven, Elisha saw that the eternal time and divine place was open into the temporal time and space. Elisha saw the holy and divine moment and he was spiritually empowered. Because Elisha followed his teacher to the final moment, he could experience the holy and divine moment.

### 3. To See the Moments of Truth (Mark 9:2-9)

The same holy moment opened in Mark 9. Jesus went up a high mountain with Peter, James and John. On the mountain, Jesus was transfigured, and Elijah and Moses appeared and talked with Jesus. Elijah is the one who was taken alive into heaven and represents 'prophets', and Moses is the great leader among the Israelite and represents 'laws'. "Prophets" and "Laws" represents 'divine message' or 'God's plan'.



Again, this is a holy moment that the eternal time and divine place crossed or revealed into a temporal and mundane world. The gate between heaven and earth was open. This transfiguration shows the true identity of Jesus, who came from heaven to follow his Father's will even to the cross.

In chapter 8, Jesus predicted his suffering and death, and then in chapter 9, this transfiguration story appeared. Through the transfiguration, the Bible says that Jesus will suffer and die on the cross, not because he is weak or powerless but because he will follow his Father's will.

Peter, James and John saw the holy moment and they wanted to stay at the holy place, but Jesus told them to go down to the village. The high mountain is a holy place, but the village is the place where they live and carry out God's mission.

A group of people went up a mountain in Korea. They hiked with a professor to learn history and culture in the mountains. After a few hours of hiking, they arrived at a big



stone. On the stone, Buddha's statue was inscribed. People were amazed by the Buddha's statue. Then the professor told his group, "It is beautiful to see the Buddha in a mountain, but it is more beautiful to see what the Buddha sees." So, people turned around to see what the Buddha was seeing. It was a village where people live with joy, sadness, hope and despair.

I'd like to say, "It is beautiful to see God in a holy mountain, but it is more beautiful to see what God sees." It is a village where we live with joy, sadness, hope and despair.

Jesus' disciples liked to stay in the mountain because it was so good, but Jesus came down to the village because it was where God always kept His eyes. God's concern was on His people, and Jesus wanted to bring the holy and eternal moment into the village where people live.

#### **4. Closing Story**

As Elisha saw the holy moment when Elijah was taken away, as Peter, James and John saw the holy moment when Jesus transfigured on the mountain, we can see the holy moment in our lives.

The holy moment is when we are spiritually empowered. The holy moment is where we experience God's love in our lives. The holy moment is a time of blessing and hope, and it comes to us if we desire....if we really desire to see it.

40 days of Lent season begins with Ash Wednesday. The theme of 'Lent' is 'footsteps'. As Elisha followed Elijah's footsteps to the final moment and became spiritually empowered, and as Peter, James and John followed Jesus' footsteps to the high mountain and saw Jesus' true identity, I pray that as we follow the footsteps of Jesus' last moment, we all can be spiritually empowered by experiencing Jesus' love and grace. You are invited to join the Bible Study in Thursday or Sunday, to follow Jesus' footsteps and experience holy moments in your lives.