

## "We are living at temporary house"

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There are two elder men named Mike and John. They always had coffee at a café in their town and enjoyed the chat. When they were young, Mike was the third baseman and John was a pitcher in the local baseball team, so their chat was always about baseball, and one day they discussed, is there a baseball team in heaven?

After one year, Mike was passed away and went to heaven. John lost his best friend and lived with grief. One night, Mike was appeared in John's dream and said with a smile, "Hey John, I have good and bad news for you, good news, we have a baseball team in heaven and actually, I am enjoying it as a third baseman. Bud news . . . , what is that? Mike, tell me! John said. We were announced next Friday's starter and seems like you will throw the ball.

In our conversation or even in our jokes, we mention about heaven. We can see heaven in movies and drama, but most of the time these heavens sound like a fairy tale.

But the Bible said surely there is a heaven. Let us read the book of Hebrew 11:13-16.

For those who speak English, during this sermon, I will quote a couple of the Bibles verses and read it in Japanese, but I will not read the same verses in English to save time, especially long verses, but you will see the English verses on the screen along with Japanese, so please read it while I am reading. Thank you!

So this is Hebrews 11:13-16;

<sup>13</sup>All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. <sup>14</sup>People who say such things show that they are

looking for a country of their own. <sup>15</sup>If they had been thinking of the country they had left; they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup>Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

I would like to share about "we are living at the temporal place".

The meaning of Alien is the person who stays in a temporal place. I was at a motel in Ikebukuro, Tokyo last week. I brought one suitcase with me. I stayed there for four days. So clearly it was travel and I was an alien in Tokyo.

The Bible also tells us we are the traveler and we are living temporal place even though we have been living there for eighty years with a lot of stuff. Yes, the life is only a little bit longer and a little bit lot of stuff we possess, but still we are alien on the earth.

Today's Bible verses, Hebrews 11:13 begin with "all these people". In grammar, these all people are written before that sentence. Let's me explain this little bit.

These all people were written before verses 13, there are seven people written there "Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Sara", and most of them had been lived apart from their home country.

And these people knew their country is not on this earth, but it is the heavenly country. Please read Psalm 39:4-7

"Show me, O LORD, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. <sup>5</sup> You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. <sup>6</sup> Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it. <sup>7</sup> "But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.

The author said "God, teach me how the fleet is my life. The span of my years is nothing. Even though my life is at the height zenith, it is just a breath. My life is just a phantom, and we go to and fro for empty. We do not know who will take our wealth.

"Fleet" "Nothing" "Breath" "Phantom". What is the meaning of these words? Fleet is just an instant, nothing is nothing, Breath is done by in a moment, Phantom remains just short time, and disappear. Every theses word shows us a passing moment, and these explain about our life.

In Japanese folk song, we have a so-called, "Furusato-Hometown". The song is about our home town. The song starts like "We chased a rabbit in the mountain and fished little fish at the river. When we looked at the word "hometown" in Japanese dictionary; they said that is the place we were born".

Many of us never forget our hometown. When we, Japanese listen to the song, our heart goes to our hometown. If the town is in a country, we can still remember the smell of rice field and fresh green, the cry of locust and the sound of a little stream.

But one thing unfortunate in hometown, which is those hometowns are also changing. When we go back to our hometown, usually, we notice the change of stores and house on a street and people who live there.

And when I ponder about my current situation, I realize one thing. I visited my mother last week but someday she will going back to our father's place, when that moment had come I feel I will not going back to Japan as often as I visit go now. Because the meaning of my mother country is ended.

The previous seven people knew it, therefore they were longing for a better heavenly country and God has prepared a city for them. Please read in English Bible, Romans 8:18-25

Apostle Paul said in the book of Romans 8:18-25; <sup>18</sup>I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup>The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. <sup>20</sup>For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. <sup>22</sup>We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. <sup>23</sup>Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup>For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

The people in the book of Hebrews has thing longed for, and apostle Paul also said in verse 24; "For in this hope, we were saved" What hope is that? The hope is written prior to that. His hope is "Our body will be changed to the glorious body, to adopt as God's son and that means we will go back to our heavenly home someday". Paul said we are saving by these hope.

Those who live abroad always accept the possibility of not back to our home country again in our life. It does not matter our age but it will happen to anyone. Some people might think after spent days in Japan and when they come back to State, they might think this trip might be my last visit to Japan.

But God prepared the heavenly home for us. If we call our home town on earth "temporary", we call the place where there is our heavenly father, we call that place "our true house".

World famous theologian and well known Christian writer, CS Lewis wrote "The Chronicles of Narnia". I think you might read this story before. The series is ended with the chapter of "The last battle", and in

that conclusion does not say something like "finally everybody became happy".

Lewis describes exciting adventures and journey and in its very last page Lewis wrote: "the true story will just begin".

The stories by then are just a front cover of book or title page. The chapter one is just beginning, and nobody read these stories on the earth and the stories will continue eternally, and the story is getting greater and greater.

Lewis said here "The adventure you read was just an introduction! These all adventures are just an announcement of the forthcoming great story! It is an introduction before the wonderful story will begin!

Brothers and sisters, our true hometown is in heaven. We are living now by this hope. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we praise your name. Thank you that we could make sure about the goal today. The country is not fade away but that country will continue eternally. May you lead us to that eternal country, and live our daily life with our best. We pray these things in precious Jesus name, Amen.

Translated by Makoto Okura