

The oil price

Last Friday my wife, Sun and I went the Cheyenne Frontier Days Pan Cake Breakfast. Mr. and Mrs. Duane and LuAnn Wall kindly guided us to the place. When we were there about 8:00 A.M. a huge people were lined up in front of us. I heard that eight thousand people ate the free pan cake breakfast a day. It must be a greatest breakfast in the world held in Cheyenne. I found there hundreds and hundreds volunteers to help the breakfast for eight thousand people. Someone has to get up early like 4:00 A.M. for to help without getting pay. All volunteers seemed joy and happy on their serving others. I thought myself, "I wish myself or my church members could be participated as volunteer in one or two days."

Jesse L. Jackson once said; "The church gave us a way for living." If you can endure the how of living because you know the why of living, you have a reason for living. You can get up early in the morning and you can work without wages – if you just have a reason to do it." He is right. I agree with it.

People are hungry for inspiration –in worship, in invocations, in meaningful activity, and in calling. We are people of God who are hungering for a chance to offer ourselves and life to the meaningful one. If someone has a goal for live which you can put everything you have, he or she is blessed. That is true. But problem is that many people are waiting for the chance to put everything for their significant life however most of them couldn't find out the meaningful one until they die.

One day a Baptist preacher stood in front of pulpit and said to the congregations. "I have two news presenting to you; one is good news and the other is bad news. The good news is that we have more than enough moneys to pay off the mortgage payment of this church." When the congregations heard that news they were proud themselves. And he added; "And a bad news is that the more than enough moneys are still in your pocket." When the congregations heard the second news they were quiet. To participate in activity with money is not easy commitment than we have thought.

Today's topic of sermon is "the oil price." The gas and oil price is sensitive issue in our life. Because, we are living depend on usage of oil. Especially our automobiles are depended on power of gasoline and oil. Thus oil price is hot issue in our life.

In the Bible, oil means the olive oil which was extracted from the fruit of the olive tree. In ancient Palestine the olive oil is very important element of their daily life as well as their religious life in both usefulness and worthy.

Olive oil was widely employed in preparation of food, replacing butter in cooking. As equally popular usage in the domestic sphere was that of a fuel for the small lamps found in abundance from an early period of Palestine.

Oil was commonly used for anointing the body after a bath some festive occasion. In ancient Egypt a servant generally

As a medicine olive oil was used both internally and externally. Its soothing protective qualities made it a valuable remedy for gastric disorder, while its properties as a mild laxative were also recognized in antiquity. Externally it formed a popular unguent application for bruises and wounds.

Especially, oil is important symbol for the religious life. Oil was prominent among the first-fruit offering and was also an object of tithing. The meal-offering, were frequently mixed with oil. Oil was employed ceremonially at the consecration of priest and at the purification of lepers during the daily sacrifices. And also, the presence of oil symbolized gladness while its absence indicates sorrow or humiliation. Similarly oil was used as an image of comfort, spiritual nourishment, or prosperity.

The scripture readings today, I Kings 17:7-16, John 12:1-8 and James 5:13-18, all three are related to oil. The common issues in three scriptures are oil is using for sacrificing, consecration and healing. Especially, when we use oil for sacrifice there are miracles occurred.

In the story of 1 King 17:7-16, God had a plan to help out the widow and her son. And God called and sent the man of God, Elijah to help out. Whenever God had a special plan God asked for a test in addition.

Following the Lord's further leading, the prophet is guided from the problem of saving his own life to the privilege of saving a widow's faith and her son's life.

Elijah asked for breads to the widow who had only handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. She was very, very critical situation which she and her son may be starved to death after eating the last poor meal. But Elijah asked to make small bread for him first and make something for them. It must be an unmerciful test for her. But she accepted and did as Elijah had told her. There were happened a miracle that there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family and for the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

A miracle is an event with which human comprehension has not yet caught up. It is not an interruption of law, but the working of a law which human reason has not yet working a law which human reason not yet charted.

Some people believe that nothing exist except Nature; we call these people Naturalist. Others think that, besides Nature, there exists something else: We call them Super-naturalists. Some philosophers have defined Nature as "What we perceive with our five senses". But this also unsatisfactory; for we do not perceive our own emotions in that way and yet they are presumably 'natural' events.

Naturalist believes in free will: for free will would mean that human beings have the power of independent action, the power of doing something more or other than what was involved by the total series of events. Naturalist view is that miracles are impossible.

Do you think that every things you planed according to your reasonable will did go well? I don't think so.

We believe that by the God's interference our life can be directed differently than we expected. God may never in fact interfere with the natural system He has created. If He has created more natural systems than one, He may never cause them to impinge on one another.

Imagine, as if you were alien from the Mars who visit this globe. If you noticed cars passing on the green light and stopping cars on the red light at the intersection you may figured out that that must be traffic rule of this globe. And if you noticed again that a red color- truck, making siren, without stopping, moving at the red light you may be confused, if you don't know the rule of emergency. And think the rule of the globe must be something wrong. Like this we know only Natural general rule. Beside Natural general rule, there is God's loving rule in our life. There, in God's special merciful rule we find miracles.

Remember the story in John 12. Jesus is on his way to the cross. It is six days before Passover. The crucifixion is less than a week away, and Jesus knows it. He stops in Bethany to visit with his good friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Just a few days earlier Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, and now they all sit down to have dinner together, and Mary does a beautiful but extravagant thing for Jesus; she kneels before him and anoints his feet, generously pouring out costly perfumed oil on him, and then she wipes his feet dry with her hair.

Why did she do that? Some say it was act of gratitude in which she was thanking Jesus for raising her brother, Lazarus, from the dead.

Some say it was an act of consecration in which she was baptizing the feet of Jesus to encourage him to go into the Holy City and do what had to be done.

Others say it was an act of preparation in which she was anointing Jesus' body for the death that was to come in Jerusalem a few days later.

But the story doesn't end there. After doing this beautiful thing, Mary is criticized and ridiculed and rebuked harshly by the disciple Judas, because Judas disagrees with what she had done. "What a waste!" he complains. "How foolish it is! How stupid! Look what we could have done with all the money we could have gotten from selling that perfumed oil. Think of how many poor people we could have fed!"

Now, the point of the story is simply this: Sometimes it's okay to be extravagant. Sometimes, in the name of love and kindness and gratefulness, it's O.K. (indeed, it's beautiful) to be extravagant.

There are mystics, consecrations, miracles and healings we can not understand but God knows and pleases where the expensive, extravagant oil to be offered to God. The life is the one that one time should be offered in extravagantly to God.

One of my previous church members, Sincha was very religious lady. She lives in Longmont, Colorado and goes to the Asbury Korean UMC for one hour driving. She couldn't go to the church every Sun Day. Because, her husband was a Catholic and she had to go to the church with her family. She speaks English very little. I understand that reluctantly, she goes to the Catholic Church and she really wants to go the Korean Church because of language and culture.

Koreans love to prayer and to have devotion any time and in any place and occasions. New business opening, relocation, marriage and funeral and any occasions are many kinds of worship there. That is Korean culture.

Whenever Sincha met a serious problem she used to call and asked me to visit her. One day I was called and asked by her to visit and pray for her family. My wife and I visited her on that day on time. She waited and greeted us and treated me as if she met a prophet. She knelled in front of me and asked for a prayer for her family seriously especially for her son John and her husband. John was not too smart to enter a college. Her husband got a second notice to prepare to be laid off and recently he got a final notice. She asked me a prayer for son either to be smarter or to be a talented basket player for special admission to college. In addition, she asked me a prayer for her husband not to layoff.

So I prayed for her family and especially for her petitions. During the prayer meeting I noticed that her husband returned from his work and coming into the room. After finished a prayer meeting Sincha introduced me to her husband. And we left her saying "good luck."

Three days later I heard from the lady that a good news of her husband. For her family there were happenings for three days. The story was two parts; the first part was that the time I was praying was too late to pray logically. Her husband got layoff already and returned home from his job. Without knowing that information I was praying for him for not to layoff. Second part of story was that her husband was recalled and got a promotion from the same company.

Recently I heard that her son John finished a college of engineering school. He was not a basket player for the school. She used to saying: "God is so good to me, and always to me!"

The sacrificial oil you have is too expensive to you to offer to God?