

Nokesville UMC Sunday Worship  
July 25, 2021  
Rev. YoungMin Kim

Be Proof of God!

Psalm 14

(1)

A voyage in space has been considered as the monopoly of NASA. So, we have seen pictures or videos of the Earth, the moon, Mars, Jupiter, and other planets and galaxies taken and released by NASA. We know they are there above our heads, but we have not seen them with our own eyes relatively close. However, on Sunday July 11<sup>th</sup>, a private space tourism company—Virgin Galactic—launched a new space age. It sent its first civilian passengers—including its CEO, Richard Branson—to the space, 53.5 miles from Earth. About a week later, another space tourism company—Blue Origin—succeeded in its first flight to the edge of space carrying Jeff Bezos, former CEO of Amazon, and crew. Since Apollo 11 landed on the moon in 1969, space science has been developed up to this stage. Who knows? A few years later, we may see tourism packages to the moon.

How about “Genetic Scissors”? On October 7, 2020, the Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded to two professors—Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna—who discovered what is known as “genetic scissors.” It has the ability to artificially construct a guide RNA, so it can cure inherited conditions such as Huntington’s disease, cystic fibrosis, and certain types of cancer. It definitely gives hope and good news to those who suffer from such irreparable diseases.

Unfortunately, however, while science was developed, Christian faith has been threatened. When the way to space was open, people asked, “Where is heaven, and where is God?” When the blueprint of the human gene was found and cloning technology was developed, human life is not only in God’s hands any longer. Have such scientific developments threatened our faith, and consequently we come to say that there is no God?

(2)

According to the Lectionary schedule, we read Psalm 14. Psalm 14 starts with a word “Fools.” In Hebrew, there are six different words referring to the English word “fool.” Here in Psalm 14, the Hebrew word “nabal” is used. Yes, the word nabal is the same word of a person’s name—Nabal—in First Samuel in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 25:3). Nabal was focused on because of his wife. Her name was Abigail. First Samuel explains her in this way: “She was an intelligent and beautiful woman” (v. 3); after Nabal died, she became the third wife of King David and gave birth to a son, named Daniel. On the other hand, Nabal was explained in this way: “He [Nabal] had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep...but [he] was surly and mean in his dealings...” (vv. 2-3). Nabal must have been a rich man, and it was possible because David and his men protected his livestock. So, David asked Nabal for the rightful reward for his men, but Nabal rejected it, disdained him, and sent him out. David was outraged and gathered his men to attack him. At the time, Nabal just ate and got drunk regardless of what was going on around him. Years later when David wrote Psalm 14, he chose the Hebrew word “nabal” to explain a person who cannot distinguish what is righteous in the eyes of God. With this concept of “fool” or “nabal,” let us examine today’s passage.

(3)

In verse one, David called them fools who “say in their hearts, ‘There is no God.’” Just as we have many atheists around us, so there might have been many atheists in David’s time. According to David, people who insisted that there is no God had common features. Verses 3 through 5 say, “They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is no one who does good. Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon the LORD? There they shall be in great terror...” God gave commandments and laws to His people through Moses a long time ago. By preserving the commandments and laws, they were called to be the people of God and be far from evildoings. Through the commandments and laws, they came to know what is good and what is evil. However, for the Gentiles who did not believe in God, they just followed their customs in their community or did what they wanted that mostly satisfied their physical desires.

By the way, did David only refer the fools to the Gentiles who did not believe in God? Or did the fools include the Israelites? Let us set the Gentiles aside because they were such people, and it seems unfair to judge them who did not know about God with God’s commandments and laws. So, let us focus on the Israelites. Among the Israelites, it seems impossible to find people who did not know God and who never heard of God’s commandments and laws. Nevertheless, we can find many Israelites who did evil things against God’s righteousness in the Old Testament. How about the Israelites in the wilderness who made the golden calf and worshiped it? How about the Israelites in the Promised Land who married Gentiles, worshiped their gods, and accepted their customs? How about Israel’s kings, in the divided Israel, who did not follow God’s orders? Is there any difference between those who said there is no God and those who said there is God but did not follow God’s way?

(4)

Seeing what is going on around us—innocent death by the collapse of a building, flood, famine, and virus, or insatiable human greed and desire, hatred, violence, selfishness, and many others—it seems much easier to find proof that there is no God. By seeing these events, we find no hope in the world, so that we close our eyes and keep silent against those who say there is no God. How about us? Are we proof through our lives that there is no God?

There were numerous faithful Israelites in the Old Testament who believed in God, printed God’s commandments and laws on their minds, and kept practicing them throughout their lives. On the other hand, there were Israelites who believe in God, heard God’s commandments and laws, but walked the opposite way. I believe there is no difference between them and those who say there is no God.

Among us, whether there is God or not is not our matter. Our matter is whether we practice God’s new commandments and laws throughout our lives. God gave the commandments and laws to the ancient Israelites to make them the people of God; but to us God gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, and by accepting Him and following His teachings, we can be His people. We believe in God, and we have heard His salvation story and teachings to become His disciples. My next question is this: “Do we make ourselves and our lives proof that there is a God; God is alive; and God is with us?”