

My soul praises

Luke 1:39-56

Key verse: Luke 1:46b, 47

“My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

I was born on 1970 in Yosu, a small harbor city which is located in southern end of South Korea. I was the third among 4 siblings. My parents were kind, mild and very affectionate. Particularly I was loved much more than any other family member by my father. But when I was 11 years old, my father died of cancer. His death brought to our family deep sorrow and financial problems. My mother tried to bring us up by selling clothes and fruits as vendor, but our family always suffered from poverty. Dispute was there between my mother and older brother and sister. After that Mother wept severely cursing my father who had passed away. I didn't know why my family, which was once in peace, now fought each other. Sometimes I missed my deceased father and his love. As time went on, I became a man of sorrow and was ashamed of poverty.

In 1989, I was admitted to the university. I hoped that I would meet a beautiful girl and fall in love with her like in a novel or a movie such as “Gone with the Wind”. But God had a more wonderful plan for me than I expected. God prepared not a beautiful girl but a spiritually beautiful shepherdess for me. I studied the bible with her twice a week and met Jesus personally at the summer bible conference. Through John 8:11 I realized I was a nasty sinner before Jesus and accepted the forgiving love of Jesus who does not condemn sinners like me. I repented honestly my sins of shoplifting at the store and of indulging my sensual desires. Then God poured lots of blessings down on me. He granted me the true satisfaction of my soul and a delight and a rejoicing in God. And he also blessed me to receive a scholarship. Based on God' love and grace I lived a shepherd's life all my years in college. God granted me many sheep but they soon left, right after accepting my friendship to them. So I got mad and felt sick and tired of my fruitless shepherd life. I forgot Jesus' grace of salvation. Then a worldly desire smeared into my heart. While serving the army, I pursued worldly joy as a prodigal son singing, dancing and running after sensual and lustful desires. But there were no true satisfaction in my soul. After a temporary delight, emptiness and a guilty sense were left in my mind. I missed God so much. I wanted to meet God again.

This sinner God had mercy on. Jesus who is full of love, grace and mercy helped me to meet God through Luke 15. Preparing the message of Luke 15 for a summer bible conference, I realized and felt the wonderful love of God who had waited for me to come back from the world to God's arms for more than 10 years. And through Jesus' crying out on the cross, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”, I heard Jesus' voice toward me.” “Gilmyung, I love you so much like this.” Hearing God's voice of love clearly, I confirmed God's unchanging love which is the same yesterday, today and forever. Since I lost my father in childhood, I have always missed the father's love so, sometimes, passersby looking like my father have reminded me of him. But after realizing and accepting father God's love, sorrow, loneliness and weakness in my mind faded away. I repented all my sins with tears endlessly down on my cheek and decided to live a shepherd life for the glory of God. Since then, God has become the everlasting and

loving father to me and my spirit has rejoiced in God my savior. In 1999 God blessed me to establish house church with shepherdess Myungchoon who highly loves and respects me even though I am two years younger. Together we have 3 kids. Moreover, whenever I was obliged to change my workplace, God spiritually trained me and finally transferred me to one of the best academies in Korea. I thank God for sending me Jesus who died for me on the cross.

In the beginning of this year, I had one prayer topic that I may become a spiritual father to sheep. Though I met everlasting God as my father, I have not become a good spiritual father to sheep for the while. I didn't practice the love of God. I was indifferent to the sheep of the Lord and selfish and just interested in making money. Sometimes I made up an excuse that I was so busy and tired by the life of my workplace that I had no time for sheep. Then my sheep became weak from spiritual malnutrition and were given many knock-out punches by Satan.

So I wanted to be a good spiritual father to sheep but I didn't know how. But when I prayed to God who hears our prayer, God counseled me with one word which is my key verse this year. "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." God also encouraged me that I could be a good spiritual father and good shepherd who cherishes one needy soul. This year I have held on to my key verse and Lord's encouragement. I prayed to God in the dawn and in the evening after work. I visited the campus rather than make a lot of money. Everytime I prayed to God, God encouraged my spirit and gave a shepherd heart to my mind. Whenever I visited the campus, God let me meet my pupils who had learned English from me in the private academy. Pupils were forced to study the bible with me just by the relationship between the former teacher and student, and after one or two polite studies, they left. But God let there be remnants among them. They studied the bible and participated in the Sunday worship service faithfully.

God also blessed me to be one of the best teachers in my academy this year and helped me to glorify the Lord. I thank God for saving me from my sins. I praise God for blessing me and growing me up to be a good shepherd and spiritual father. Truly God is the God who encourages one in difficult situation and uses him or her preciously in the God's work.

"Gilmyung's soul glorifies the Lord and Gilmyung's spirit rejoices in God Gilmyung's savior." A-men.

This time God granted me a good opportunity so that I could visit America and learn the God of America. God led me to meet missionaries and shepherds who have lived a faith life and have been dedicated to God and God's mission whole heartedly. I pray that I may learn the shepherd heart, faith life and dedication toward God and apply them to my life. And I also pray that I may see God's vision and hear a calling that God wants me to live as a missionary.

One word: God who encourages and uses one in the God's work.