

Main text: Luke 2:36-38  
Title: Coming to meet Lord  
Translated by Myung-Ha Kim

1.

I often read a children's book called <Meet Mom> to my children. A little child of about four goes out one winter day to meet her mother on the main road where her streetcar drives. He stands at the train stop and asks the driver, "When will my mother come?" At the sullen reaction of the drivers, the child decides to wait for the mother patiently. The storybook ends on the last page with a picture of a mother holding her child's hand and walking down a snowy alley with something on her head. We all understand the heart of a child waiting for her mother. During childhood, mom is everything. Here is a poem expressing the longing for mother. This poem is called <Worry about Mother> written by a poet named Ki Hyeong-do and was written in 1985.

<Worry about Mother> - Ki Hyeong-do

Carrying thirty sheaves of radishes  
My mom went to the market  
She's not here yet, the sun has long since withered  
Left in the room like cold rice  
No matter how slowly I do my homework  
She's not here yet, her footsteps like the sounds of cabbage leaves  
I don't hear them, it's dark and scary  
The sound of rain quietly through the cracked window  
Sobbing alone laying down in the empty room

A long time ago  
Even now, it warms my eyes  
Those days, the cold bitterness of my childhood

Listening to the poem, don't you feel the lonely and desolate wait? Mom carried 30 sheaves of radishes and she went to the market. This is because she had to sell even 30 bundles of young radishes in order for her children to be fed. The child waits and waits to see if the mother will eventually come. The sun is setting in and it is getting dark. The poet used the expression "the sun has withered." It's a poetic expression that connects to the hard work with radishes that my mother left with. He uses "cold rice" to describe how long it's been since he's been locked up in the room. Through the cracks of the broken window, her mother's footsteps cannot be heard, only the quiet sound of rain. "A long time ago, those days that still make my eyes warm and teary, the cold

bitterness of my childhood.” Those who have experienced an ondol room where a fire is lit with a fireplace will know the feeling of the upper and lower necks. The lower part is a warm place, but the upper part is cold (thus compares to cold bitterness). He is a poet who leaves his lower part empty for his mother and waits on the upper neck.

As a child, the person who could help us deal with our dizzy and distraught reality was our mother. Mom was an all-rounder. It would be hard to imagine life without mothers. The lives of the Israelites at the time of Jesus were exactly like this “cold rice.” They have been occupied by five great empires for no less than 700 years. Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and the Roman Empire were the five great empires. From the beginning of the Roman occupation, their situation became more miserable. The other empires before the Romans gave the Israelites some degree of autonomy. They also recognized their religion. However, the Roman empire changed the way Israel was governed directly and enforced emperor worship. The crowds who could not stand this even rebelled against Rome. In Sepphoris, the center of Galilee, a Zealot party revolt broke out. To quell the rebellion in the region, Rome sent troops and is said to have erected 2000 crosses on either side of the road into Sepphoris. It is hard to imagine how severe the suffering of the Jews must have been.

The family of Herod, who was a Gentile who ruled the Edom region, stuck to the Roman side and gained a justification for ruling Israel. They began to brutally suck the blood of the Jews. The miserable reality of the Israelites reached its peak under the rule of the Herod family. Like children who lost their mothers, the people had no choice but to wait for the Messiah to save them. They believed that when the Messiah came, their miserable reality would be reversed since it was believed that the Messiah would come as a political king, defeat Rome, and give them freedom. Many people waited more earnestly for the Messiah the more difficult their lives were.

A woman like Anna of the tribe of Asher was a typical person who eagerly awaited the Messiah. She was widowed after just seven years of marriage. She said women at the time got married when they were 12, so Anna said she was already a widow by the time she was 20. In the Old Testament, the neediest, miserable people are orphans and widows. We can guess from her status as a 'widow' that Anna's life would not have been smooth. In introducing her peculiarly, Luke introduces her as the daughter of Penuel of the tribe of Asher. In the days of Joshua, the land that the tribe of Asher was allotted was the land of the Mediterranean coast at the northwest end. In the United States, it is the location of Washington State, where Seattle is located. In the land of the tribe of Asher were the port cities of Tyre and Sidon. This area was an active trade area where the Phoenicia people lived. The land that was ruled by the Phoenicia people, who were called Poeni (Punica) in Roman words, was distributed to the tribe of Asher. This

area was a very prosperous area because it was a town that made a living through trade. Queen Jezebel, the wife of Ahab in the Book of Kings, was from this area. She was a very vicious queen. The important thing is that it's not easy to keep the faith and live in such an area.

Nevertheless, Anna's family seems to have served God faithfully. You can tell just by looking at their names. Anna's father, Penuel, has the same meaning as Peniel, but it means 'the face of God'. For reference, Asher of the tribe of Asher means "happy one" in Hebrew. Anna is a Greek expression, and in Hebrew, it means 'grace' as Hannah. Although Anna was a widow, she was a happy person. Because she was a person who knew grace. She longed to see the face of God. From the age of 20 until she was 84, she longed to see the face of the Messiah. Luke introduces her as 'prophetis' (προφητις) in Greek. It is the feminine form of the word prophet. A prophet is one who awakens people with the word of God. These are the people who played a role in turning people's lives back to God. For more than 60 years, Anna has been in the temple, awakening the lives of those who went there. Although she is living in a dark era, she must have proclaimed to people to live uprightly because the Messiah will come soon. She actually comes face-to-face with Jesus and proclaims the Word of God to the people of Jerusalem. She tells those who are waiting for the salvation of Jerusalem that this baby is the one who will accomplish that salvation. Salvation used here is not 'Soter', which is generally used in Greek to mean salvation. The Greek word used here is "lytrōsis, λύτρωσις," which is equivalent to "ransom," which means paying a price. Through this word, she is letting people know that this baby Jesus will become the Savior who will pay for their sins and redeem them through the cross.

Anna's desperate waiting for the Messiah for over 60 years is just admirable. Anna knew. The fact that there is only one Messiah who can solve (redeem) their reality that is like 'cold rice'. The Israelites were exhausted from the long wait. However, the Messiah was able to come to them by turning their heart's earnest waiting into a road. I understand waiting is the way God will come. Our desperate waiting is like a road that makes him come into our reality.

We too are facing a disturbing reality. The world is still dark and confusing. People live according to what they think is right. Capitalism is considered the most powerful being in this chaotic reality. We are still frustrated in an unstable and opaque reality. Sometimes, you can't figure out what's right and wander. Just as all the chaos in the family will end when the mother comes, we only hope that the Messiah, the Lord, who was said to come again, will come soon and redeem this world. Anna was satisfied to see the face of Jesus, the Messiah. He was confident that He would redeem and deliver their people. Her eager waiting was rewarded with the face of baby Jesus.

This Christmas morning, what are you waiting for and what are you longing for? Are you waiting for someone to order and guide your life? Are you yearning for Him? Messiah Jesus came to us as the most vulnerable baby in the world. He emptied and humbled himself to no end and came to us. Like Anna, we want to welcome him with joy. Invite him into our unstable and confusing reality. I hope that Jesus will come and give us salvation in our 'cold rice' situations and lives.

I hope you will wait for the return of our Lord with the heart of waiting for your mother. Even though we live in the midst of a dark and confusing reality, I hope we don't forget to wait for the Lord. I hope you don't live as if life on this earth is everything. I have heard that faith is a stimulant. Faith is not an anesthetic that makes you forget the pain of this earth. It is also not a hallucinogen that is enjoyed while ignoring the reality of this world. Faith in Jesus Christ wakes us up and makes us face the reality of this broken world. And it makes us recognize that the true savior who will save us is Jesus Christ. Furthermore, it makes us realize what kind of life attitude we must prepare to meet the Savior. In that sense, faith is a stimulant that wakes us up. So we must live a prophetic life like Anna. Waiting for the Messiah, we must prepare the way for His coming through our lives.

I cook rice very well. I am particularly good at cooking rice in a pot. There is a reason why I am good at cooking rice well. When I was young, I spent a lot of time waiting for my parents to come home after their work in the fields. If there is no food at home, I have to wait for my mother to come back and cook. That's why I started to cook rice in advance. It can be said that the heart of eagerly waiting for mother and the desire to have her eat as soon as she returns are combined here. It is the same with the life we live on this earth. We do not know when the Lord will come again, but we are preparing the way for the Lord to come. Just as we prepare the rice and wait for our mother, we must express and proclaim the coming of the Lord through our lives. It is a life in which we strive to create in advance the beautiful world that the Lord will return to create. I hope you don't live a life of embarrassment when the Lord comes. I hope that our faith will awaken us and become a life of eagerly waiting for the Lord's return. Anna kept the temple and fasted day and night, waiting for the coming of the Messiah. She was awake when the Messiah came and saw Him face to face and experienced God's great grace. I hope we too wake up and earnestly yearn to meet the Lord. Last week, I couldn't see through my front windshield in the snow, so I ended up in a ditch near the church. I eagerly waited for the towing car. Similarly, our life is such a miserable life that we can't get out of ourselves. But the Lord will come soon and deliver us. Wait on the Lord, he will come and personally save your life. May the wonderful joy of salvation be with all of you this Christmas commemorating Jesus who has come to us.