

Sunrise Foursquare Church – Thanksgiving 2016

There is a word recited and sung about at Passover among Jewish people. In Hebrew, it is “da-ye-nu, (dah yeh’ new)” that can be best rendered as, “God, it would have been *enough* if You would have” The rest of the sentence is completed with God’s gracious acts including: the deliverance of God’s people from slavery in Egypt, his sustaining provision in the wilderness, the Sabbath day of rest, and the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, all of which, statement by statement, become the stanzas of a praise song sung at Passover.

To understand “dayenu,” we can think of receiving kindness and generosity that exceeds our expectations, that just “blows us away” in wondrous amazement. For the Israelites, their gratitude to God was so great and monumental, that any further act of divine beneficence would have been just be too much, certainly a far cry from where most people think and operate today. Perhaps, we could understand their extraordinary gratefulness by realizing that there has never been a generation of people who witnessed God’s mighty hand on a scale of the Exodus of Moses’ day. They saw firsthand, the ten plagues that leveraged a ruler to release a people while also never harming them, the parting of the Red Sea that enabled a road of escape and later a place of destruction for Pharaoh’s avenging army, and the pillar of a cloud by day and fire by night, that marked their way. Understandably, they could say, “dayenu,” and probably so would we too if we were them.

In contrast, our lives trudge forward mundanely with no miraculous parting for safe passage through the “sea” of financial debt, human conflict, and health troubles. We expect others to give us proper service and complain when short-changed. Miracles don’t happen on a daily basis, as at least ones of which we are aware. All around us, we are reminded continually of those who are younger, look better, have more, and need to toil less. It is no wonder we have difficulty mustering up gratefulness.

Yet, we’ve heard the saying that best things in life are free, meaning that they are completely separate from human striving, labor, and achievement. If that is so, then when you really think about it, every day of *life itself* falls into such a category. Ecclesiastes 9:4 states that “Anyone who is among the living has hope --even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!” When we lay our heads down to sleep, we can say, “Thank you,” for another day of life that we’ve chalked up, because of the miracle of life itself, thanks be to its Giver-Sustainer. The bottom line for the people of Moses’ day is really the same for us, too, who are alive by the grace of the Almighty, and if that wasn’t enough--dayenu!—after our time here, there awaits us an eternity free from everything that has brought us unhappiness here, the result of human sin for “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). From this perspective, life is a win-win situation! --Pastor Paul Iwata

Thanksgiving Service and Potluck – Sunday, November 20, 10:30 a.m. – 5853 Laurel Canyon Blvd., Valley Village 91607. Dancing in worship by Mark and Anri Green during the service. Come and join us!

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Springwater Calendars!

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Name _____ Address: _____

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Pastors: Paul Iwata (English), Spring Iwata (Japanese), James Iwata (English Assistant)

Mailing Address: 14705 Wyandotte St., Van Nuys, CA 91405

Phone: (818) 782-8738; (818) 642-2332 (Cell); Email: pmiwata@gmail.com

Website: www.sunrisejapanesechurch.org

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