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Overlying Theme: "Christ Wants You" -- Joy, Prayer and Gratitude

Scriptural Theme:

Always be joyful and never stop praying. Whatever happens, keep thanking God because of Jesus Christ. This is what God wants you to do. (1 Thess. 5:16-18)

On Friendship

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Montaigne, a French philosopher, said in his Essais;

... thereby to express that melancholic, dumb, and deaf stupefaction, which benumbs all our faculties, when oppressed with accidents greater than we are able to bear. And, indeed, the violence and impression of an excessive grief must of necessity astonish the soul, and wholly deprive her of her ordinary functions: as it happens to every one of us, who, upon any sudden alarm of very ill news, find ourselves surprised, stupefied, and in a manner deprived of all power of motion, so that the soul, beginning to vent itself in tears and lamentations, seems to free and disengage itself from the sudden oppression, and to have obtained some room to work itself out at greater liberty.

the diaconal center of JELC, runs a temperance program. People who come and join the program are those who have experienced excessive grief and used alcohol in order to drown out their sorrow. How could they liberate their soul, which has hardened like a stone, without escaping to alcohol?

What they need is a friend, who will not desert but trust them, even if they pour out all their sorrow on them. At Kibo-no-ie, they find such companions who still love them even after they confess everything. This is why the participants are able to continue temperance.

Paul advises us, "Always be joyful." (1 The 5:16) However, we have a reality that we cannot be happy with. If we are to be joyful, I think we need a friend who still loves us as Christ does.

The church is a flock of believers in Christ. In church, we find companions in faith who love us as Christ does, even after we pour out our soul. I think this is why we can always be joyful, even if we encounter an event that may harden our soul like a stone.

Kibo-no-ie (House of Joy and Hope),