

January 1, 2017

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (The New Year's Day Worship)

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Title of the Message: "Learning the Principle of a Fruitful Life"

—The Mechanism of Producing a Crop—

Text: Mark 4:13-20

4:13 Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?"

4:14 The farmer sows the word.

4:15 Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

4:16 Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy.

4:17 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

4:18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word;

4:19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

4:20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.

Introduction

1. A Happy New Year!

May the grace of the Lord be with you!

Nowadays, our society is thrown into confusion, disorder, anxiety and so on. We can hardly have a long-term forecast. Therefore, we need to lead a life according to a firm coordinate axis.

2. What resolutions do we need to make to have a fruitful new year?

{Illustration} I got advice how to reach goals as the following.

- ① Announcing the year's goals on New Year's Day
- ② Setting a period for achieving each goal
- ③ Setting goals and note the possible time to achieve them
- ④ Setting moderate goals, not unreasonably high goals or setting low goals
- ⑤ Making a promise to achieve them to God
- ⑥ Writing goals on paper and put it up on a wall
- ⑦ Praising oneself when one achieves them successfully

* We need take a great deal of effort to achieve goals successfully. We should keep working. However, we already work hard, don't we?

3. It is very good to work hard but can we lead a successful life by only doing our best? It is clear that a Christian life isn't such a thing. Then, how can we start a fruitful year?

Jesus said as below — [Mark 4:20](#)

- **Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.**
- Jesus said that seeds sown on the soil sprout and produce crops by themselves. Everyone understands this parable. However, Jesus doesn't simply teach an event of the natural world. He spoke to teach God's control over the kingdom of God through the parable. That is when God controls over human beings, this kind of thing happens.
- By the way, we understand that seed and soil carry symbolic meaning from the context of the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 4 as the following.

Seed : the Word of God (the Scripture)

Soil : human beings (man's heart)

It refers to a relationship between God and human beings. God's Word is spoken to human beings and those who trust in it produce a crop by themselves. This is a very simple law of the natural world (God's rule).

A seed is sown ⇒ comes up ⇒ grows ⇒ produces a crop

- We see the process of producing a crop. The most important goal in our life is producing a crop. We want to produce good results in our business, studying and work. If the result becomes twenty times we feel great joy. The Bible teaches that we produce a crop of thirty, sixty, and a hundred times. How can we get greater grace than that? My friends, the grace of God is right in front of our eyes.
- Let's study the following two points from the parable of Jesus.

Main Points

1. **The Mechanism of Producing A Crop**

- 1) Jesus compared soil to human beings and it was a very familiar idea to the Jewish people. The for term "man" is *adam* in Hebrew. The first man who was created by God is called *Adam*. The term *adam* refers to both a man and the *Adam*, as man's name. [Genesis](#)
 - **2:7 Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.**
The term for ground is *adama* and it originally means that Adam was formed from the ground, or *adama*.
 - The Bible teaches that there is a close relationship between *Adam* (a man) and *adama* (the ground). God spoke to him who lost a relationship with God.

Genesis

3:19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.

- God said to man who committed sin, “You are soil (the ground).” Jesus said in the parable, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the soil (the ground).” He also said, “All by itself the soil produces grain.” We should remember that the soil (the ground) refers to mankind. The Jews who lived in the Hebrew culture easily understood the Parable of the Sower.
- 2) Then, what did Jesus teach the Gentiles who were unfamiliar with the Hebrew culture?
- To sum it up, I would say that human beings, who committed sin, were created in God’s image, but were broken and became mere soil. However, when the seed of God’s Word are sown and sprouts, even the helpless soil can produce a crop.
 - This is God’s plan that human beings restore the image that God created. We can see the fulfillment of its image in Jesus (the second Adam).
 - The Bible teaches that human beings can not change through their own effort. On the contrary, it teaches that they can voluntarily produce a crop by accepting the Word of God. It means that a good relationship between the seed of the Word and the soil (the ground) produce the blessed image of God. Let’s go deeper into this topic. First of all, we look at the natural world and study the law (the fundamental rule) of producing a crop according the following three points.

Rule 1 : Life is concealed within a seed

- It is difficult to imagine that a beautiful flower blooms from a seed or a mere seed can produce a crop. The seed has a secret plan of life.

The seed is sown ⇒ **it sprouts** ⇒ **it grows** ⇒ **it produces a crop**

Every order such as the time to sprout and the time to produce a crop are planned in life of the seed.

- Like this, the Word of the Bible has life. The Word guides us, enlightens us, fills us and encourages us. Moreover, the Word has the secret of life to transform our personality into the same image of Jesus. The Word of the Bible has great power.
- **“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”**

1 Corinthians 1:18

- **“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the**

thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

Hebrews 4:12

- * The seed looks worthless but it has great value. Like this, the seed of Word hides the great life in it.

Rule 2 : A seed need the soil.

- No matter how precious a seed is, it can not sprout or grow to produce a crop if it is not sown on the soil. The seeds need the ground to be sown. In a similar way, the seed, the Word of God, comes to have its value after it is sown. My friends, if you give the Word to your pet animal or you try to make it memorize the Word, it doesn't bear any fruit. It is only when the Word of the Bible is sown on human heart and sprouts that it begins to produce a crop. **The Gospel of John**
15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.
15:7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.
- What does it mean that the Word remains in? It doesn't simply mean to remember the Word of God, but it touches a chord in the heart of those who read it. It is that the Word pierces the heart of a man and remains in it and profoundly effects his thought and actions.
- The Word of the Bible is like a love letter from God. When the Word remains in man's heart, his heart changes and finally his actions come to change. However, the seed of the Word doesn't remain in him, nothing happens. No matter how precious the Word is, it is impossible to shoot out a sprout. The seed of the Word needs to sow in our heart to shoot out its life. When the seed remains in our life, it gives great joy to our heart so that it changes our actions.

Rule 3 : The ground voluntary makes the seed produce a crop.

- The seed does not produce a crop through humans' effort but it has its own program to produce within it. It is the very theme of the parable. However, the soil supports the seed to grow. Jesus said, “He does not know how.” **The Gospel of Mark**
4:27 Night and Day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.
- That is what the mechanism of producing a crop is hidden. It doesn't mean human's effort. It doesn't depend on human's work. The Bible teaches that it is the seed, the Word of God that produces the image of God. • **Genesis**

1:27 So God created human beings in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

- Adam (man) was created in God's image. His essential purpose is to show the image of God. However, the image was broken when he committed sin. God wants him to produce His image again. It is Adam (man) whom God expects.
- As we studied today, the important thing is that the seed and the ground have appropriate environment to produce a crop. Equally, the seed, the Word of God, that is sown in man's heart first sprouts up in his heart and set its root deep and grow larger. Finally, he comes to produce the image of Jesus, His personality. God has created us to achieve such a precious work.

* This is the mechanism of producing a crop.

2. The Lord Makes the Ground Ready to Use

“All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head.” Mark 4:28

1) God who takes care

Once God sown the seed (the Word), He keeps taking care of it by giving sunshine and rain. The plants can not grow fine without sunshine. If it doesn't rain, the ground will dry and the plants finally wither. God doesn't leave the ground (our heart) unattended. God who is a good farmer and cares for us even when it is raining or snowing.

2) The four different soils

- Jesus taught people many things by parables and then He spoke the Parable of the Sower.

(Read the Gospel of Mark Chapter 4:3~9)

- A certain analysis demonstrates the following four types of people according to the parable.
 - ① Type 1 (They turn a deaf ear to the message. They don't remember anything.)
 - ② Type 2 (Their faith is only superficial one. It doesn't reach to the deep part.)
 - ③ Type 3 (They keep leading a life by following flesh.)
 - ④ Type 4 (They are model Christians, who read the Bible, pray and serve God with joy.
- The important thing here is that Jesus didn't teach to judge other people and ourselves.
- Our heart tends to be type 1, type 2 and type 3. We absolutely need God's help to be type 4.

“Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”
Mark 4:20

3) Then, how can we become type 4?

- Jesus repeated, “Remain in me”, “Remain in my love” and “Remain in my Word”. Why did He repeat “remain” so many times? ⇒ The reason is that we wouldn’t naturally remain in His Word. Human nature tends to love evil more than good ones.
- We easily become type 1 to type 3 according to the parable. Jesus knew it. Even His disciples were weak enough to become these three types. Therefore, Jesus repeatedly said to remain in Him.
- **Then, what does to remain mean?**
⇒ In simple words, it means to become always being conscious of His Word.

① Reciting :Psalms

1:1 Blessed are those who do not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,

1:2 but who delight in the law of the LORD and meditate on his law day and night.

1:3 They are like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither whatever they do prospers.

- What about the Israelites?

Deuteronomy

6:4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

6:5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6:6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

6:7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

② Let’s put our ground (heart) in the hands of Jesus.

- If we put ourselves in Jesus’ hands He breaks Satan’s evil work. Jesus removes a big stone that blocks the seed to deeply root in our heart. He also removes thorn bushes from our heart.

Ezekiel

36:26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

36:27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

4) To grow to transform into the Lord's image

Jesus taught through the parable that God sown the seed, the Word of God, on the ground (man, Adam). **The Gospel of John** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (1:1)

- When the Word of the Bible remains in the inner part of human beings, Jesus begins to live in their inner part. When the Word remains in me Jesus comes to live in us. (His dwelling) We are so precious that Jesus comes to live in us. Even if we feel His dwelling is too small to realize, His presence will be bigger and bigger. **The Epistle to the Ephesians**
4:13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: “Learning the Principle of a Fruitful Life”

—The Mechanism of Producing a Crop—

- Let's sum up the message of New Year's Day. What do we need to have a blessed new year? What should we do for a new fruitful year? It is important for us to know the mechanism of producing a crop.
- The mechanism (the secret) of producing a crop that Jesus taught is the grace of God. We hope that God blesses our 2017. What are the important points to have God's grace this year? They are the following three points.

1. To remain in Jesus The Gospel of John

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5

2. To remain in the Word of God Deuteronomy

6:4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

6:5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6:6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

3. To commit yourself to Jesus The Gospel of John

14:1 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.

⇒ Then, a crop will be naturally produce.

* God bless you!