

January 29, 2017

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Messenger: Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "A Life to Enter the Lord's Rest"

—The Supreme Grace—

Text: Hebrews 3:16~19

3:16 Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt?

3:17 And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness?

3:18 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed?

3:19 So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

Introduction

- **People like to indulge in various kind of rumors. A good rumor is no problem, but malicious and groundless rumors are harmful.**
 - **For example, when foot-and-mouth disease spread in Miyazaki prefecture in 2010, some forwarding agents in Miyazaki refused to receive things loaded by customers in other prefectures. Foot-and-mouth disease is an illness that affects cattle, pigs, sheep and so on. It causes a fever and blisters. Humans can also be infected.**
 - **The Fukushima First Nuclear Power Plant accident was caused by the Great Tohoku Earthquake on March 11, 2011. It is regrettable to hear that some evacuated people were refused by a taxi driver and a bullying occurred at school. On top of this, their crops were hit hard by rumors.**
 - **An Enterohemorrhagic Escherichia Coli (EHEC) case occurred in Germany on May, 2011. The city authority of Hamburg disclosed that the source of infection was cucumbers grown in Spain. Later, it became clear that cucumbers were not the source. However, crops from Spain were extensively damaged. It became a significant problem.**
- Rumors are very troublesome. Sometimes a fake rumor spreads around us and many people are greatly affected. Similarly, there were people who spread rumors 2000 years ago. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews wrote as below —
- 2:1 We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we may not drift away.**
- He gave a warning to the saints who believed in God not to turn away from the truth, because they are given the right to enter the eternal Kingdom of God. A false teaching that distorted

the grace of God was being spread at that time. Therefore, he gave a warning three times. Let's listen to the Voice of God according the following two points.

Main Points

1 . A Warning Given Three Times to the Hebrews

- The author of the epistle gave a warning three times to the Israelites, God's people. Three times has a special meaning in the Jewish society such as:
 - ① **The Gospel According to Matthew**
26:34 "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."
 - ② **The Gospel According to John**
13:38 Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."
 - ③ **The Gospel According to John**
21:17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."
- Three times mean that it is the final time so that there is no more action. Then, what does a warning of three times mean for the author of the epistle?

1) The First Warning

Hebrews 2:1~4

2:1 We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.

- The author gave a warning not to drift away from the important teaching in Chapter 2:1-4. God revealed Himself in three ways in the days of the New Testament. He gave a warning to pay the most careful attention to them. It is given to all mankind as well as the Jewish people.
 - ① **It is revealed through Jesus Christ.** **John 14**
14:9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?'"
 - ② **It is revealed through disciples.**
2:3 ... was confirmed to us by those who heard him.
"Those who heard him" indicates the disciples who heard the Gospel from Jesus. The Holy Spirit came down to the disciples after Jesus resurrected and returned to the

heaven. As a result, they became the witnesses of Jesus. The Acts records as below

2:32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

- The Acts of the Apostles records words and behaviors of the disciples in details, who were filled with the Holy Spirit. The term, “witness”, is used in court proceedings. A witness bore testimony before a judge that he or she was present at a place of an event and what he or she saw was true. The disciples of Jesus were witnesses of Jesus, their master. God revealed Himself through His disciples.

③ **It is revealed through the Holy Spirit.**

- **2:4 God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gift of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.**

Hebrews

- The Gospel According to Mark records as below—

16:20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

- God really gave an incredible power and faith to Peter, Paul and other disciples. The days of the early church were also the days of the disciples. Miracles occurred, for example, a man who was lame from birth healed and began to walk. (Acts 3: 1~10) And also a dead woman was brought back to life. (Acts 9:36~42) Like this, God revealed Himself through these three ways.

- My dear friends! Jesus Christ came to this world approximately 2000 years ago. God revealed Himself through Jesus Christ. And today, God reveals Himself through the Holy Spirit, God’s Spirit.
- God keeps speaking to us today. He is the One who encourages, comforts and makes us repent. ⇒ This is by the grace of God. It is only by the grace of God, neither of human efforts, human deeds or human training.

We lead a life in the days of grace that no one ever has experienced. How happy are we!

- Teaching of the Bible is not a human made religion. God the Creator directly spoke to human beings through Jesus Christ. The disciples who trusted in Jesus, the Son of God, testified the truth by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Christians’ identity is based on the following points.
 - ① The grace of becoming children of God
 - ② The grace to enter the Kingdom of God and live there
 - ③ The grace to be transformed into the image of the Lord
 - ④ The grace to return to the Kingdom in heaven in triumph

- Those who trust in God has given such an amazing grace!

2) **The Second Warning**

Hebrews 3:7~11

3:7 So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice,

3:8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness,

3:9 where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did.

3:10 That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, “Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.

3:11 So I declared on oath in my anger, “They shall never enter my rest.”

3) **The Third Warning**

Hebrew 3:14~19

3:15 As has just been said: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.”

3:16 Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt?

3:17 And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness?

3:18 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed?

3:19 So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

- The author wrote the verses above and told that his warnings were reliable things.
- My friends, we should faithfully receive warnings and advice so that we may not repeat a mistake. If we don't follow the law (rules) God has given, we come to repeat offenses against the rules.

{**Illustration**}

- **Many of those who repeat breaking the traffic rules are said to keep breaking the rules. (I have a driver's license for 54 years. Happily I was given a gold license. Can I a little be proud of it?) As we are ordinal humans, it is possible to make a careless mistake.**
- **However, if they repeatedly break the traffic rules and receive cautions and warnings, they will accrue penalty points and finally their licenses are canceled. Rules are made for such repeaters to protect from endangering other people.**
- **Similarly, God keeps giving cautions and warnings to the saints. These warnings are given not to forget that we are given eternal life and are able to enter the Kingdom in heaven. They protect us from drifting away from the first love and teaching.**

John's Revelation

2:4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.

2:5 Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

- The author of the epistle to the Hebrews gave a warning three times to his beloved people not to drift away from the truth. Let's deeply consider his warnings.

2. Why Did He Give a Warning Three Times?

- The Bible teaches as below — **1 John**
5:13 Write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

1) The Purpose of Warnings

- The author wrote the epistle **“so that you may know that you have eternal life.”**
The author gave a warning three times out of his love. He gave a warning of love so that they could learn a lesson (the mistake of the Israelites).
- The author wrote that they were given eternal life because they were God's people. We learn here that we are clearly able to know today that we are saved. It is not a teaching that we won't understand whether we are saved or not until we stand before God after death. It means that if we learn well the teaching of the Bible we come to have a conviction of salvation. If we continue to hold a conviction that we are given the grace of Christ's Kingdom in heaven.

We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. Hebrews 3:14

2) Lessons We Learn

- What was the attitude of the Israelites? They were delivered from Egypt and went on a journey to the Promised Land. They were freed from slavery by the grace of God and went into the wilderness by God's help. However, when they heard God's voice, they hardened their hearts.
 - Even Moses, who led about 2 million Israelites in the wilderness, could only come to Mt. Horeb. Joshua, his successor, led the Israelites to the Promised Land.
- ① The attitudes of Israelites in the wilderness teach important lessons to Christians today. We are also given the privilege to enter the Promised Land like the Israelites. Canaan was the Promised Land for the Israelites, but the Kingdom of Heaven is the Promised Land for us.
- If the Israelites held faith, all of them could have entered the Promised Land. However, those who entered the Land were only Joshua and Caleb. They failed because of their unfaithfulness.

- We are also like them.

3:14 We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.

- ② Then what should we do? We should learn the lesson from the Israelites and be careful so that we do not drift away from God.

We must not waste God's precious grace. What are the important things to do?

- (1) We should have a conviction of our salvation through the God's Word.
- (2) We should read well the Word of God and apply it to ourselves so that we may not drift away from God.

- How should we read the Bible?

2 Timothy

3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

The verse above gives us a useful suggestion. It teaches that when we read the Bible we **need to ask for help of the Holy Spirit because the Bible is God-breathed.**

- God-breathed does not mean that a certain mysterious power worked to make the writer write. **When the authors wrote the Word of God, God used their whole personality, knowledge and thought and breathed into them the breath of the Holy Spirit.**
- The Bible is not a simple description of human beings but a book that is God-breathed through the work of the Holy Spirit and contains God's will. Therefore, when we read and accept the Word of God by the help of the Holy Spirit we can correctly listen to the Voice of the living God. **Hebrews**

4:12 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.

- ③ My friends, it is not difficult but we just pray a word to God. We should come before God with a quiet mind and confess our sins if you have them, because God is holy. It is impossible for us to have fellowship with God who is holy.

- Jesus Christ took our sin and died on the cross. He shed his holy blood on the cross. The Bible: **"The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."**

John 1:7

- Those who are forgiven are made righteous before God.

The Bible: **"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."**

James 5:16

- Therefore, **let's pray a word, "Lord! Speak to me."** Then, God will speak to us through His

Word. Those who have fellowship with the Lord like this are those who will lead a life to enter His rest.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "A Life to Enter the Lord's Rest"

—The Supreme Grace—

- We listened to the Voice of God today. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews gave a warning three times to his beloved Jewish Christians. He wanted them to not take a roundabout course to enter the blessed rest land (the Kingdom of God). Let's take time and think our life with a quiet mind now.
- How can we apply what we learn from lessons?
 - ⇒ We should listen and accept God's warning with a humble mind so that we may not drift away.
- 1 . We should listen to the Voice of God.
It means to listen with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- 2 . We should just pray, "Lord! Speak to me."
The Lord will surely listen to the prayer of the saint who is forgiven from sins.

* God bless you!