

February 12, 2017

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Messenger: Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "The Secret of Entering God's Rest"

—Trusting in the Word of God—

Text: Hebrews 4:11~13

4:11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

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.

4:13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Introduction

- When a professional musician plays at a concert , we are moved and feel comforted by the music. Our Praise Worship Serves held at our church gives us encouragement and heals us.
- Even though one might be professional musician, he always gets nervous whenever he plays at a concert . Therefore, he prepares for the coming concert by putting his blood into it for many months. He works hard for preparing the concert.
- He carefully gets himself into good physical condition so that he reaches the climax on the day of performance. He gradually becomes tense as the concert draws nearer.
- When the performance is successfully completed, he will feel relieved, "I did it!" Then, he has a closing party to celebrate the success of the concert. He shares thanks and joy with his co-workers. He must be very excited because he could play to his fullest ability so that the concert was successfully finished.

- My friends, we also have a comfortable rest (peace) after we diligently work. Similarly, those who work hard during a week that is full of pain enjoy a very comfortable rest after it. We know it is true. It is also true to have a rest like this in heaven.
- One who does his best and faithfully leads a life on earth is awarded the eternal rest in heaven. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows the goal we will reach. He encourages the readers to lead a faithful Christian life so that they are able to enter the rest in heaven.
- This is my favorite Scripture, **"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' - Matthew 25:21**

- The title of today's message is, *The Secret of Entering God's Rest*. Let's study the following two points.

Main Points

1. Look the Israelites.

4:11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

1) The Israelites who left Egypt

- The Israelites left Egypt in approximately in BC 1280 leading by Moses. At that time, Egypt conquered the whole world and exercised authority. Therefore, the world was greatly changed with a single word of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. The Israelites lived in Egypt under slavery for 400 years.

- The Bible recorded the Israelites' exodus from Egypt as below— **Numbers**

33:3 The Israelites set out from Rameses on the fifteenth day of the first month, the day after the Passover. They marched out defiantly in full view of all the Egyptians, **The New Japanese Bible**

The Bible, Colloquial Japanese records as below—

33:3 The Israelites left Rameses on the fifteenth day of the first month, the day after the Passover. The Egyptians watched the Israelites proudly left their country.
The Bible, Colloquial Japanese

- The Israelites proudly left Egypt. Let's imagine their attitude. It is like people who gained victory after breaking down a long-lasting ideology with which they have suffered.

{Illustration}

- **Let's remember the Fall of the Berlin Wall(November 9, 1989), the fall of the Iron Curtain in Soviet and Eastern Europe, the Arab's Spring that began in Tunisia and so on.**
- **Then, what are the situations of these countries today? They have new problems and their countries have become more and more confused and chaotic. People say, "We had a better life in the past."**
- **What is the problem?**
- People seek a real rest. They often say, "If the ideology changes, our life becomes peaceful". "If government changes, our society becomes peaceful". "If a leader changes, our nation becomes better". My friends, human history repeats these expectations, doesn't it?
- A true rest isn't given until we go to God because we are all created by God. If we don't go back to God who created us, it is impossible for us to have a true rest.
- By the way, what journey did the Israelites make after they left Egypt?

As they began to walk in the Desert of Sinai, they began to grumble. They provoked God's wrath and they wandered around the desert for 40 years. As a result, all of them perished before they entered Canaan the Promised Land except Joshua and Caleb. (We already studied them.)

2) God's people in the days of the New Testament

- We have learned a lesson from their failure. What does it teach? ⇒ It teaches that as we heard the Gospel, trusted it and began to lead a new life with hope, we should not turn away from faith in Christ like the Israelites.
- We have a lot of complaints and discontented matters in our life. However, if we drift away from God we might have an experience like the Israelites. Jesus Christ **taught this secret through parables like the following.**

① Matthew, Chapter 7

7:24 Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

7:25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

7:26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

7:27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash. •

- Let's read another passage.

② Matthew, Chapter 13

13:18 "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means:

13:19 When people hear the message about the kingdom and do not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their hearts. This is the seed sown along the path.

13:20 The seed falling on rocky ground refers to people who hear the word and at once receive it with joy.

13:21 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.

13:22 The seed falling among the thorns refers to people who hear the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.

13:23 But the seed falling on good soil refers to people who hear the word

and understand it. They produce a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. •

our true nature? The following study teaches us. My friends, what do these two parables teach us?

They teach that it is helpless if someone just hears the Gospel. If they believe by a transient emotion, their faith will not last long. The important thing is to lead a life in faith.

- It means that the facts that the Old Testament records are still valid today. The term *parable* (parabole in an original language) means to parallel. The truth in nature parallels to a relationship with God and human beings. It is a very easy story to understand for the people at that time.
- We are given both the Old Testament and the New Testament. We live in the days of grace because we are able to understand the whole picture of God's precious Master Plan. However, there are two kinds of people who accept the Gospel in faith and those who don't accept it. How about us?
- How can we realize

2. The Word of God that Corrects the Attitudes of Faith

1) The best way to see my self

- The best way to see our true nature is to put ourselves before the Bible, a mirror that reflects our true hearts. When we read the Bible we are able to understand how much faithful we lead a life by following the Word.

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.

- Those who are arrogant become humble by reading the Bible. The coward becomes the brave. The selfish begins to love neighbors. Their sinful nature is gradually refined through the Bible.
- Their attempts in the depth of their mind are exposed to light and their evil motives are taken away. Hidden things come to the light by the Bible. The Word of the Bible has such great authority.
- The author of Psalm 139 praised God as below—

139:1 You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

139:2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

139:3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

139:4 Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.

139:5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

139:6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

139:7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

139:8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

139:9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,

139:10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

2) **The saints who live in the days of grace**

- We must stand before God sooner or later. At that time, everything is uncovered before God and laid bare before His eyes.
- We must give account to God. It must be a horrible day to those who are unfaithful. On the contrary, those who believed the redemption of Jesus Christ on the cross and faithfully led a life in faith are able to enter the God's rest.
- They will meet Christ there as an advocate. **1 John**

2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One

- Like this, Jesus Christ is also an advocate for our life in this world as well as an advocate at that day in heaven. Jesus so loved us that He gave His life. His love is not changed even now. Therefore, Jesus Christ, who was crucified, is our hope and strength.
- Isaiah the prophet said as below— **Isaiah 26**

26:1 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts.

26:2 Open the gates that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps faith.

26:3 You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

26:4 Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.

- The Word of God teaches us that we must trust in the Lord so that we are protected physically and spiritually. Jesus Christ gives us this promise.

Matthew

11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give

you rest.

11:29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

11:30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. •

- The verses above promises us that those who learn from taking Jesus' yoke receive the rest (peace).

- My friends, these verses teach that we should focus on Jesus and receive Him in the center of our mind like we keep thinking about a person whom we love. Jesus surely lives in the saints who keep thinking about Him. We will come to have a rest (peace) if Jesus lives in us. It does not mean that we should occasionally remember Him or when we are in problems. It is insufficient.
- If the principal axis is not perfectly fixed, a motor does not work. Our life is just like it. How about our life? What life do we lead every day? Let's go to God with a quiet mind.

Conclusion

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—Trusting in the Word of God—

- We studied life to enter the real rest today. Diligent working results in a comfortable rest. It is like a comfortable and restful (peaceful) closing party that a musician holds after concert.
- It is important to live with God's rest in mind. Then, how should we live?
 - 1 . To learn a lesson from the story of the Israelites
 - We learn from a failure of the Israelites who left Egypt. God wanted them to work faithfully in their situation.
 - 2 . To trust in the Word of God
 - A life of a firmly fixed axis is like a house that is built on a rock. The house won't fall with a great crash even if the winds blow and beat against the house.
 - God promises that those who believe in the Word of God and accept it produce a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. We should trust in the Word of God.
 - **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.**
 - The Word of God can correct our attitudes of life. Let's pray to God for His support and guidance this week!

* God bless you !