

March 5, 2017

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Messenger: Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Do You Understand the Grace that God Gives by Calling?"

—The Privilege to Become a Child of God -

Text: Hebrews 5:1~4

**5:1 Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.**

**5:2 He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness.**

**5:3 This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people.**

**5:4 And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was.**

### Introduction

#### { Illustration }

- **Have you ever experienced that your heart was pierced with a word that someone said without any intention? A human being may seem to be strong, but the truth is he is unexpectedly weak. I have heard the following story.**
- **It is said that the story really happened in London a decade ago. A certain man committed a bank robbery. He robbed a considerable sum of money and finally escaped to America. It had been several decades since he committed the sin and nobody remembered that bank robbery.**
- **At last, the statute of limitations on the case ran out in England. He came back to London. One day, when he was walking along a main road, he saw a police officer running after a certain man. He was whistling and shouting, "Stop, thief! He is a thief!"**
- **He was startled at a word of the police officer. His case already ran out, however, the word of the police officer pierced his heart. He is said that he turned himself in to the police.**
- Yes, indeed, we have a conscience. God gives us a conscience. Every wicked person should feel guilty if he commits a sin. Sometimes, a simple word from another person pierces one's heart.
- If a simple word of a human being is so convicting, the word of God (the Scripture) is sharper than any double-edged sword and it has power to expose the thoughts deep in our heart. The author of the epistle records as below -

#### **Hebrews 4:12**

**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.**

- There is nothing to hide before God the Almighty. Even if someone thinks that he can hide and deceive, God easily breaks such thinking in his heart. The

Bible says that people must stand before God someday and they are judged what they have done, whether they are good deeds or bad deeds.

- Thankfully, the Bible teaches us that we have Jesus the High Priest as an Advocate. Jesus defends those who believe in His blood, shed on the cross for us. What a precious advocate we are given! Let's focus on Jesus Christ again from the following two points.

## Main Points

### 1 . Qualifications for the High Priest

- The high priest who comes before God needs the following four qualifications. 1 ) **The high priest must be a human being.**

**5:1 Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.**

- The high priest must be a human being. Concretely speaking, the high priest was selected from Aaron's descendants. Jesus Christ also became a human being.

#### 2 ) The high Priest must be selected from the priest class.

**5:1 Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.**

- The high priest must belong to the priest class. The task of the priest was to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. Aaron also needed to offer sacrifices for his own sins. However, Jesus did not commit sins, so He didn't need to offer sacrifices.

#### 3 ) The high Priest must have compassion on people.

**5:2 He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness.**

**5:3 This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people.**

- The priest must have compassion because of his weakness as a human being. Being tempted in every way, Jesus can empathize with sinners.

#### 4 ) The high Priest was called by God to receive his job.

**5:4 And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was.**

- Like this, the high priest was called by God to receive his job. By the way, what life did Jesus Christ lead, who is our High Priest? ⇒ He led a life by focusing on God the Father and always gave prayers to Him.

### 2 . Jesus Christ often Prayed.

#### 1 ) Jesus' prayer

- Jesus gave prayers to God the Father with tears when He led a life by taking the

appearance of a man in this world. Christ's prayer was accepted by God because of His humble attitude before God.

**"But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Luke 5:16**

- Jesus had fellowship with God, who is His Father, through prayers . As Jesus was the Son of God, He didn't need to pray to His Father. He should have understood God's will. Nevertheless, He often prayed.
- We sometimes think, "I understand God's will." However, we often make a mistake even if we think we know God's will. It means that we really don't understand His will, don't we? Jesus often prayed. It means that He asked for God's will in everything.

The Gospels record that Jesus often prayed as below -

**(1) When Jesus was baptized,**

**Luke 3:21,22**

**3:21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too.**

**And as he was praying, heaven was opened**

**3:22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove.**

**And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."**

**(2) When Jesus chose the twelve apostles,**

**Luke 6:12,13**

**6:12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.**

**6:13 When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:**

Jesus spent the night praying to God.

**(3) When Jesus went up on the mountain to pray,**

**Luke 9:28,29**

**9:28 About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray.**

**9:29 As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.**

The appearance of His face Changed.

**(4) When Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer to His disciples,**

**Luke 11:1~4**

**11:1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.**

**11:2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.**

**11:3 Give us each day our daily bread.**

**11:4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."**

When Jesus finished praying, one of His disciples came to ask how to pray.

**(5) When Jesus was crucified,**

**Luke 23:34**

**23:34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.**

Jesus prayed to God His Father on the cross.

- Like this, Jesus often prayed.

### **Hebrews 5:7**

**5:7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.**

- You may think that the Scripture above refers to the prayer at Gethsemane. However, it is written *in the days of his flesh* in the original sentence. That is not a specific day, but during His entire life on earth.
- Therefore, Jesus prayed not only at Gethsemane but He kept praying with tears during His life. We understand by the context that Jesus the Lord gave intercessional prayers for us as the High Priest during His life.
- Who else gives prayers for us with tears to God the Father? On top of this, He gives intercessional prayers in heaven even now. We give thanks with all our heart to Jesus for His prayers.

### **{ Illustration }**

- **I took a mission trip to Okinawa last week. It was full of God's grace . There is a forest of Yanbaru (an old growth forest) in Motobu town in Okinawa Island. I went to the restaurant called Sakura-en that serves meals as dietary therapy based on traditional Chinese medicine. They prepare really elaborate dishes. I had a chance to talk to Ms. Ruriko Uehara, who is a restaurant owner. She told me the following testimony in faith.**
- **She started believing in God only three years ago. Before that, she had led a faithful life by offering water and flowers to a god of fire every morning. She also burnt incense sticks and worshiped the god on the first and fifteenth of each month. She didn't think it a strange behavior.**
- **One day, her husband said, "Don't you burn incense today?" She forgot to do it that day. A word of her husband stuck into her heart. She realized that her behavior made him feel stress even if her husband was a kind man.**
- **She felt miserable because she had devoted herself to a hopeless idol. Then, she asked her Christian friend to invite a pastor and to pray for consecration. Since then, she separated from idolatry. When she heard the prayer of consecration, her tears fell fast. She understood that her sin was cleansed by Jesus' blood.**
- **Now, she devotes herself as a Christian to healthy Chinese medicine dishes for people. She said that she goes up a mountain in her 4950 m<sup>2</sup> property every morning to give thanks and pray to God through Jesus the High Priest. I was very encouraged by her life story.**

### **Conclusion**

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- The author of the epistle taught about the right of saints who were saved through the grace of God and also a promise to enter the eternal Kingdom of God. We are not Hebrews but we are like them as a member of spiritual family of God in Jesus Christ the Lord. We are the saints who are given the promise to enter the eternal Kingdom of God in heaven. Let's give thanks to God.
- What response do we make to God today?
  - We studied two important things today.
  - 1. We should follow the example of Jesus.
  - 2. We should give thanks and praise to God the Father.
- \* God bless you!