

April 2, 2017

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Messenger: Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "The Word of Our God Endures Forever"

—Whoever Has Ears to Hear, Let Them Hear—

Text: Isaiah 40:8

40:8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.

Introduction

- We have the first Sunday worship service of 2017 today. The year's Scripture given to KIBC for 2017 is Isaiah 40:8, the following verse. **"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever."**
- Everything in this world is **continually changing**. As the internet rapidly developed, news and information can **now travel around** the world **instantaneously**. However, some of **it is** fake news, so we don't know what we should believe. Moreover, new things quickly become old things. That is exactly what the Scripture records, "the grass withers and the flowers fall."
- Isaiah was a prophet who was called by God in B.C. 8 (B.C. 745~695). He records the Voice of God as below—

40:6 A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?"
"All people are like grass, and all human faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.

40:7 The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass.
- The Scripture above compares **finite** with **infinite**. Everything in this world is limited and the end will absolutely come. On the contrary, God is infinite and He is eternal. Only God is eternal and the Bible says that *the Word* that He has given is also eternal.
- We are able to receive answers **to** our problems and needs from God's Word. It means that we are able to understand the eternal God through His Word. Everything is changing in this world but God has given *His Word* that is true and unchanging. How happy we are!
- In this year, 2017, let's lead a Christian life by trusting in the Word of God that endures forever. What is the Word of God that endures forever? Let's study about it according to the following points.

Main Points

1. The Word of God does not Return to Us Empty.

Isaiah the prophet said as below—

Isaiah

55:11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for

which I sent it.

- Many people read the Bible. Some people says, “I keep the Bible at hand. It guides my life.” They open the Bible when they need some guidance for a life. That might be one way of reading the Bible, but does the Word that Isaiah prophesied **describe this method?**
- No, it doesn't. It has deeper meaning. The Bible deserves much more **credit** than **as a mere** guidance book, because it shows Jesus Christ who is the center of the Bible.

1) God's master plan

- The Bible had prophesied the coming of Jesus in the days of the Old Testament. It showed God's master plan of salvation for human beings through the history of Israel.
- The Old Testament records that the Abrahamic Covenant is beginning of God's grace. Every grace of God begins from the Abrahamic Covenant. God showed *the type* of relation between human beings and God by **the** descendants of Abraham. He also said that promises in His Word would not return empty.

“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”

- God had guided the Israelites by prophets. God called many prophets to give *the Word of God* to the Israelites. However, they were unfaithful and sometimes they ignored His Word. Even though they were unfaithful, God loved them and patiently wanted them to return to Him.
- Then, God the Father in heaven prophesied that He sent Messiah (the Savior) for salvation of the Israelites and all human beings. This is the Messianic prophesy (Isaiah 53) that is well-known to us. God prophesied the coming of the Messiah through Isaiah the prophet. However, many Jews have not understood the will of God to this day because of a veil on their faces.
- **The promise** of God **was** fulfilled approximately 2000 years ago. God the Father in heaven sent Jesus Christ as the Messiah (the Savior) to this world. And, the salvation of human beings **was** fulfilled through the cross of Christ the Son of God and His resurrection.
- The New Testament records in details the life of Jesus Christ, God's salvation, the saints who received salvation and churches that founded later. The four Gospels specially gave a full detail of the public life of Jesus Christ by His beloved four disciples. The Old Testament and the New Testament is **part of one complete** book, the Bible. God's master plan is written throughout the Bible.

*** God made record of His will like this. ⇒ *the Bible***

It is because that God wanted the **following generations go through the righteous way, not to make mistakes.**

2) *The Word of God speaks to those who believe in Him.*

- God gave eternal salvation to those who believe in Jesus. Moreover, He wanted us to understand Him by *God's Word* (the Bible).

- Then, what is *the Word of God* like? Let's consider it in some following points.

① **God's power:**

1:19 and his incomparably great power for us who believes, That power is the same as the mighty strength. Ephesians

- When we listen to the Word of the Bible in faith and take a step, God gives His unbelievably mighty strength and helps us. We are able to experience His precious hands at that moment.

{Illustration} A Certain Jewish Young Men I Met in Wakayama

- **It was a long time ago, when I was doing ministerial work in Wakayama, a certain Jewish American young man was teaching at an English conversational school. He was a faithful Judaist. (Now if I think about him, he probably was an orthodox judaist.)**
- **One day, he came to see me to talk about Judaism and Christianity. We talked over a cup of tea. However, it was not easy for me to explain a theological story in a foreign language at that time, so I gave him the English New Testament.**
- **After a while, I gave him the book entitled *Jesus Christ Is More Than Carpenter*, that was a best seller in America. He seemed to read the book without stopping.**
- **Then, something mysterious happened. The New Testament records the genealogy of Jesus Christ at the beginning. He was interested in a history until Jesus was born, that is the history of the Jews before the Christian era. The committed Jews usually read nothing but Torah. But he kept reading the New Testament and as a result he understood that Jesus was Christ (the Messiah). It was really strange. He just kept reading the New Testament but he understood who Christ was. I believe that the Holy Spirit directly worked on him.**
- **He believed in Jesus as the Messiah by himself, without a teacher. He quit teaching English and went back to America. He rejoiced to become a son of God and was proud of it. He praised God. He came to understand God's great power and His grace through reading the Bible. His life was changed. This is the story of conversion of a young man, who is a Jewish (His conversion is different from the one of the Gentiles.)**
- **I haven't seen him since then. I don't know where he is now, but I can say that he read a book, the Bible, and understood the power of God.**

- My friends, the Word of the Bible has power to change people's lives. God is alive today and if we read it with a thirsty mind He absolutely responds to us.

1:19 and his incomparably great power for us who believes, That power is the same as the mighty strength. Ephesians

② **God's comfort:**

107:20 He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. Psalm

- Our worship today is organized with music, praise, testimony, message and

so on. And preaching about *the Word of God* takes the most time among them. When we have a devotion time, we become quiet before God, give prayers and open the Bible, the Word of God.

- We listen to the God's Word with our spiritual ears and we are taught, given comfort and encouragement from His Word and we also respond to Him. The fundamental thing is to receive God's healing. Because He is the Lord of healing.

- *The Word of God* works on our three parts such as ① an intelligent part (to understand as knowledge), ② a part of our will (to put what we learn into practice) and ③ our emotional part.

Healing relates to this emotional part. We can't continue attending worships without healing as well as our devotion time. It is very important to be healed because our hearts are that tired, hurt and sometimes become sick.

- **Then, what is the secret to be healed at a worship service and in a devotion?**

⇒ *It is to meet the Lord who is present.*

When sinful human beings meet the holy God, they are healed because of His holiness. At the very moment, the Word of God is not mere the written word, but it comes to us as the word of comfort, encouragement and healing.

- When the Spirit works on the Word of God, the Word of the Bible becomes alive and works on us. How great the grace of the God's Word!

107:20 He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. Psalm

③ God's encouragement:

8:31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples." John

- Jesus' disciples, Christians, should hold to their master's Word. What does it mean to hold to the Word? Does it mean to follow His commands (to love each other, the Ten Commandments, etc.)? Yes, it should be one of reasons.
- However, **it's not** the only one thing the Bible teaches. It means to put ourselves in the grace of Kingdom in heaven that the Lord taught and in the world that Lord's love and His authority controls.

The Bible teaches as below—

2:17 The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. 1 John

- It means to follow a sense of value in the Kingdom in heaven, not a sense of value in this world. It is **"to hold to my teaching."** It means ⇒ to be faithful to the God's Word.
- On top of this, what does God want us? He wants Jesus to live in us as the Spirit. When Jesus lives in us, He becomes our power to testify Himself.

The Gospel of John

7:38 Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."

- It is, **“To hold to my teaching”** ⇒ to live according to a sense of value of the Kingdom in heaven. It means to lead a **blessed** life in the infinite world but not in the finite world.

④ **To be made alive in eternal life**

17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John

- If we understand the Word of God we come to know that we are children of God and **the** joy will flow from us and finally come to praise God. My acquaintance once said, “To know Jesus Christ is as if an infant receives a check for 1 billion yen as a legacy.”
- **Some people begin to read the Bible as a guidance for a life. And some of them come to receive salvation that is the fundamental need** of human beings and finally we have a personal fellowship with Jesus. We come to experience the power of the Lord who is God and lead a life by praising God. This is **the** Christian who live in eternal life.
- Let’s study the important thing that is the second point.

2. You must Sow before You can Reap.

- Jesus taught people many things by *the Parable of the Sower* in the Gospel of Mark 4:3~9. (Please open the Bible.)
The parable teaches about the attitudes of four kinds of people who listen to the Word of God: seeds such as ① some seeds fell along the path ② some seeds fell on rocky places ③ some seeds fell among thorns and ④ other seeds fell on good soil.
- We who **have** met Jesus give thanks **to** the farmer, God (the Father in heaven), for removing stones and clearing thorns in our heart. If He didn’t help us, the seed of the Gospel in our hard hearts couldn’t grow up. The seeds produce a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times. We imagine how happy the farmer **is!**
- Then, Jesus said,
4:9 “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”
- However, Jesus said soon after He explained the parable as below—
4:21 He said to them, “Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don’t you put it on its stand?” Mark
- I guess from the context that Jesus wanted to tell them what the verse above teaches more than anything else. A lamp refers to the Gospel of Christ. **When I was preparing today’s message, God spoke to me, “Don’t you put a lamp under a bowl or a bed?” Then I remembered the Japanese saying, “You must sow before you can reap.”**
- As I am pastor, I should guide you that you come to preach the Gospel. However, God taught me that I neglected being a leader of the church. I was taught many things and I reconsidered my attitudes as a pastor.

- I am thinking how I should work as a leader. How can I give a testimony? To whom can I speak? How can I encourage brothers and sisters to not put a lamp under a bed? Are there any other good approaches in addition to speaking? God spoke these things to me through the Word of God.
- How about today's message? How do we receive *the Word of God*? The year's Scripture given to KIBC for 2017 is **"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever." (Isaiah 40:8)** Let's pray to God that we are able to experience the Word of God that works in various ways in our lives

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "The Word of Our God Endures Forever"

—Whoever Has Ears to Hear, Let Them Hear—

- We listen to *the Word of God* from the year's Scripture for 2017. **"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever."** We grow through the Word of God. The attitudes of our hearts to receive the Word is the secret to produce a crop (blessings), some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.
- People can lead a blessed life if they trust in the Word of God that endures forever. My friends, the seeds have no problem. The seeds are the Word of God that endures forever.
What is the key to grow by receiving God's grace?
 1. To trust in the Word of God
It depends on our daily devotion and attending the Sunday worship service. When we give priority to worship God, He shows his presence.
 2. To experience the Word of God
The key to continue devotion and attending the Sunday worship is to experience the Word of God and have the place to share it. (give testimony)
- The Lord speaks to us as below—
 - 4:9 "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."**
 - 4:21 He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand?" Mark**

* God bless you!