

June 25, 2017

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Messenger: Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "The Greatest Blessing that We Receive in Our Lives"

—Through the Perfect High Priest—

Text: Hebrews 7:11~28

- 7:11 If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood—and indeed the law given to the people established that priesthood—why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron?**
- 7:12 For when the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed also.**
- 7:13 He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar.**
- 7:14 For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.**
- 7:15 And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears,**
- 7:16 one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.**
- 7:17 For it is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."**
- 7:18 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless**
- 7:19 (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.**
- 7:20 And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath,**
- 7:21 but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.'"**
- 7:22 Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant.**
- 7:23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office;**
- 7:24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood.**
- 7:25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.**
- 7:26 Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.**
- 7:27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.**
- 7:28 For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.**

Introduction

- I preached a sermon last time entitled, "Jesus, Our High Priest" (The subtitle was "The True Intercessor") We received Jesus Christ as the true intercessor, who is the One in the order of Melchizedek. We studied that it was only by God's grace, not by the law.
- We also studied that the means by which we receive God's grace is through the intercessor. He who builds a bridge between us and God is Jesus Christ. Those who meet Jesus are able

to live the happiest lives. Those who already have faith in Jesus were made free from the old law.

- Therefore, being free from the law, we live in the days of *grace*. We learned that we should not receive God's grace in vain (to be insensitive to God's grace), but lead a life with joy and thanksgiving.

6:20 where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

- We have learned the following two important things.
 1. *We should accept the Word of God and trust in it.*
 2. *We should give thanks to God and follow Him faithfully.*

- By the way, Jesus Christ, our High Priest, is *the perfect High Priest*.

We will study two points about the perfect High Priest in detail from today's Scripture.

Main Points

1 . The Perfect Salvation through Jesus Christ

1) The law was changed.

7:11 If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood...

The New Japanese Bible

7:11 Suppose the Levitical priesthood could have made people become perfect...

The Bible, the New Interconfessional Translation

- "To attain perfection" or "to become perfect" means that our sin is perfectly cleansed so that we become sinless beings like Adam before he committed sin. Everyone is a sinner. Therefore, being freed from sin is the ultimate and most precious hope for human beings.
- If he is given the grace of perfection he will achieve 99% of his life's purpose. He should live another 1 % to lead a daily life by the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit. He should walk with Jesus the Lord by focusing Him until he returns to/from heaven.
- The Israelites desperately followed the law and even now they try hard to keep it. However, human beings cannot *attain perfection* through the law.

Romans

3:20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

- I believe that a term perfection should be used only for God. God gave the law to the Israelites as a tutor to bring them until the law of love comes after. The worldly regulation and law are changed. The Bible ⇒
- **7:12 For when the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed also.**

The New Japanese Bible

People in the day of the Old Testament were cleansed and forgiven of their sins through the Levitical priesthood. Meanwhile, Jesus Christ has abolished that priesthood. Therefore, the law must be changed.

2) The purpose of the law

- **7:18 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless.**

When you read the Bible, you may think that the Scripture above conflicts with what Jesus said.

Jesus said as below—

Matthew

5:17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

5:18 Truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

5:19 Anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

- Jesus said that He didn't come to abolish the law. However, the author of the Epistle wrote, “**is set aside**”. The Jewish people who have desperately kept the Law of Moses can hardly accept it, rather, they think him to be liable to the death penalty.
- The Luther Bible translates the term, *abolish*, into **take away** .
- My friends, the following Scripture records:

Romans

10:4 Christ makes the law no longer necessary for those who become acceptable to God by faith. The Bible, Colloquial Japanese

10:4 Christ is the goal of the law, which offers righteousness to everyone who trusts. The Bible, the New Interconfessional Translation

10:4 Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. The New Japanese Bible

- It means that Jesus came to fulfill **the end of the law** and also **the goal of the law**. The old law *was taken away*. The cross of the Christ fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament. What was the last Word of Christ on the cross?

John

19:30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

It is finished (achieved, completed) means that the Old Testament prophecies were finally completed.

- Therefore, the law was fulfilled by Jesus Christ as the author of the Hebrews affirmed. It means that Jesus Christ is superior to Abraham, Moses, Aaron and other high priests. The author records as below—
- **7:19 (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.**
- **7:25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.**
- Our God completely saves those who come to God through Christ. He always makes intercession for human beings. Human beings can be saved only through Christ. He is the guarantor of salvation and of the perfect salvation. This is the point what the author of the Epistle emphasized.

2 . The Privilege to Receive the Priestly Blessing

1) The word of blessing

- A pastor usually addresses the blessing at the end of a worship. How do we receive it? Do we think of it as merely a conclusion to the worship, don't we? It is absolutely not.
- Aaron's prayer is given at the end of our worship as the following:

Aaron's Blessing

Numbers 6

6:23 Tell Aaron and his sons, “This is how you are to bless the Israelites.”

Say to them:

6:24 “The Lord bless you and keep you;

6:25 the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;

6:26 the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.

6:27 So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

- As you know, Aaron was Moses’ brother and a priest. He worked as an intercessor between God and the Israelites. His priestly prayer is said to be the first *benediction* that was ever given. The interesting point is that the Lord told Aaron to bless the Israelites.
- **What does blessing mean? It may refer to various definitions. The original meaning is that God stoops down to serve us. I think that blessing is to be under God’s grace.**
- **Aaron’s blessing** is made up of the following three parts.
 - ① **6:24 The Lord bless you and keep you;**

“The Lord bless you” is written in a singular form of a noun. The former section is written in a plural form (the Israelites). God gives you His blessing.
God speaks to you and blesses you personally.

 - The verse above means God’s protection. Psalm 23 records that God is the good shepherd. Jesus said, **“I am the good shepherd.” (John 10:11)** According to the record of Judaism, the priests gave *Aaron’s Blessing* at the temple every day. In the same way, the Jewish people of today still give *Aaron’s Blessing* at the synagogues.
 - ② **6:25 the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; :**

When the Lord makes His face shine on us, His grace is given like sunlight. His grace contains forgiveness, compassion, spiritual gifts, peace, fellowship with the Lord and so on.

 - Psalms records many praising songs. It can also be said that they are written in response to *Aaron’s blessing*. We are able to learn a relationship between God the Lord and His chosen people, the Israelites.
 - ③ **6:26 the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.**

When the Lord turns His face toward us, we are given His peace. Peace also means *salvation* in the original Hebrew. The term *give* means to give things, to accomplish, to make something ready and so on.

 - Christ is our true peace. Jesus said, **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.” (John 14:27)**
 - “Aaron’s Blessing” ⇒ It is a prayer for God’s blessing, protection, light and shine, love and favor and peace. The prayer is not of human’s hope, but it is the prayer that God ordered Aaron to pray. It means that God guarantees His blessing to the one praying.
- The prayer of blessing is God’s Word that blesses people individually. The Word gives personally and the Lord protects them. Therefore, we should receive the Lord’s Word as it is surely fulfilled. If we don’t trust in it, our faith is in vain.
- By the way, Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek.

7:1 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him.

 - Melchizedek was not from the Israelites. He received tenth of the plunder and blessed Abraham, who was given God’s promises. He who gives blessing should be superior to him

who receives blessing.

- The Bible records a blessing at the beginning and closing of not only the Epistle to the Hebrews but of nearly all of the epistles.
- My friends, how about us? We sometimes write at the end of a letter, “I pray for your good health.” However, we sometimes forget to pray, do we not? The blessing in the Bible is quite different from our prayer.
- The blessing means to be under the God’s grace. It affirms that the grace of God is surely given. It has very significant meaning, because it occurs what it affirms. Those who receive the Word of blessing faithfully are blessed.
- We can’t lead good lives without God’s blessing. In a real sense, human beings are able to live a blessed life through God’s grace. We come to gather at church to worship God every Sunday. One of the reasons to attend worship service is to come close to God and receive His blessing.
- In the days of the Old Testament, priests brought an animal offering to God so that sinners were able to come close to the Holy God. Meanwhile, Jesus Christ, who is the High Priest in the order of Melchizedek, came to this world so we are given the way to meet God. Jesus said, **“I am the way and the truth and the life.”** The author of the Epistle demonstrates that the true way, the truth and the life are fulfilled in Him.
- Therefore, we are able to meet the Holy God through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, not by an animal offering. We are given an amazing grace, aren’t we?

2. God’s blessing

- The most important purpose of God is to bless us. God’s blessing has mainly two graces. They are ① a spiritual blessing, and ② a physical blessing. People in this world usually seek the physical blessing.
- The Bible teaches that Christians need both blessings to lead a Christian life. And we should strike a balance between them.
 - ① A spiritual blessing is to experience God’s grace, God’s love, God’s mercy and so on.
 - ② A physical blessing refers to every blessing that we need to lead our lives. • Paul Mayer, who is a business consultant, said, “Our ultimate goal of happiness is to receive God’s blessings in our total lives.” It means to receive blessings in every part of life. They are a spiritual and physical blessing, blessings of a family life and a social life and so on.
- The Bible records as below—

3 John 2

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

- The Bible teaches that God wants us to receive both physical and spiritual blessings equally. If we want to receive them, we should live in God’s grace.
- Let’s remember the blessing that God gave Abraham. As God promised, he received the blessing for his descendants. God promised Abraham to make his descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. However, Sarah was too old to bear a child. It was impossible for her as a human being. What did they need?
 - ⇒ It was faith in God. (Trust)
- God also promised Abraham to give the land. He promised him to give Canaan as the Promised Land. And God surely gave the Promised Land to the Israelites. What did they

need to receive the Promised Land?

⇒ It was faith in God. (Trust)

- Let's think about Job who was a man of pain, of trial and of patience. He had seven sons and three daughters. However, all of them died. The following was his word when he lost his children.

1:21 and said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and I naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.

1:22 In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

- Job had to meet innumerable trials after that. Then, what did Job say in his later years?

42:2 I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

42:12 The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand of donkeys.

42:13 And he also had seven sons and three daughters.

- My friends. What did Job need in his life?

⇒ He needed faith in God (Trust).

- The Bible records the life of people who received God's blessing. Let's pray to God to give us His blessing. What do we need to receive God's blessing?

⇒ He needed faith in God (Trust).

- What should we do to have faith in God? We should trust in Jesus Christ (the Savior) and follow Him, who is the perfect One and became a human. We should trust in God and faithfully follow the Word of God and we surely receive God's blessing. This is God's promise. Do we trust in God and His promise?

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "The Greatest Blessing that We Receive in Our Lives"

—Through the Perfect High Priest—

- We learned from today's Scripture that the saints who trust in God received the greatest blessing in their lives.

Let's make sure of what we studied today.

1. God's blessing is given through Jesus Christ, the perfect High Priest.

2. God gives both spiritual and physical blessings to the saints who trust in Him.

- God's blessing is given through His grace. Therefore, we worship Him and lead a Christian life in response to His grace.

* God bless you!