

July 2, 2017

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Messenger: Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "The High Priest of the New Covenant"

—From the Old Days to the New Days—

Text: Hebrews 8:1~6

8:1 Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,

8:2 and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.

8:3 Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer.

8:4 If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law.

8:5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

8:6 But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.

Introduction

- The times are greatly changing. It is surprising that young people have played an active part in various fields recently. A professional shogi (a Japanese board game similar to chess) player, Sota Fujii (14year-old), who holds the rank of fourth dan, has gone undefeated and continued a winning streak for the first time in 30 years. A shogi boom has broken out, and it is overheating somewhat. Shogi game boards and a set of pieces are selling like crazy. (Shogi once was elderly person's' hobby.)
- On the other hand, Japan's National Track and Field Championships that took place last week at Nagai Stadium in Osaka was a success and people in their teens and their 20's also played a very active part. Those who are chosen as representative Athletes will be sent to the world championship meeting in London this summer.
- Japanese Athletes are getting to a higher level so they are expected to win the prize at the world championship meeting. We are surprised at young peoples' achievements. Our times surely gives way to the new times. Old things give way to the new things.
- By the way, as Japan is a constitutional country, the law that was enacted by the

government is very important. If we don't have the law, our country will be thrown into disorder.

- The Constitution of the Empire of Japan was proclaimed in 1889 (Meiji Era 22). The Constitution of Japan was enacted in 1947 (Showa Era 22) after the Second World War. The former Constitution of the Empire of Japan was abolished. And now, the Diet deliberates about an amendment to the constitution.
- In this way, the constitution changes. If the constitution does not need to change, it must be a perfect one, however, it is impossible to happen in our imperfect world. Chapter 8 teaches that the law that God gave to the Israelites through Moses was also changed.
- It means that the old law became invalid and was abolished (fulfilled, taken away) because Jesus Christ, the superior High Priest, came to this world. Moreover, the Scripture teaches that the new law is perfect.
- We lead Christian life in this world. However, the power that makes us alive is given from heaven, not of this world. Therefore, if we don't understand things about heaven, our Christian life becomes powerless and it could turn out to become worldly.
- Therefore, it is not surprising that we should focus on things of heaven. Those who live lives in this changing world are able to receive power from the unchangeable *Kingdom of Heaven*.
- In that sense, we need to study to understand things in heaven. However, it doesn't mean that we only study in a classroom to store intellectual knowledge.

The author of the Epistle records as below —

“Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered, and, once made perfect.” 5:8-9

- We learn various things through experiences. And, above all, we are able to learn what God is like through the Bible and prayers. We also learn through not only our personal lives but through attending worship services, Bible study meetings and prayer meetings. One of my friends in faith told me, **“If we disregard studying in Christian life, we can never grow in faith.”** I really agree to what he said. Let's study the following two points today.

Main Points

1 . The Sanctuary that Is the True Tabernacle

8:1 Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,

8:2 and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.

- **“The sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord”** refers to the Kingdom of Heaven. Moses made the tabernacle according to the God's order.

Exodus

25:8 Then have them make sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.

25:9 Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show

you.

- The tabernacle was made for God the Creator. However, the tabernacle was “the temporary tabernacle”, not the eternal one.

Stephen, the first martyr, said as below—

Acts

7:44 Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the covenant law with them in the wilderness.

It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen.

7:48 However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says:

- The tabernacle is the holy place where the God is present. The tabernacle in heaven is the Kingdom of Heaven where Christ is present now. It is the holy place and the most important thing there is to worship Him.
- Worship doesn't mean to give worship only on the Lord's day (Sunday) but it also means a daily devotional time as a personal worship. It is very important for us to live lives with an attitude of worshiping God. God is present in the center of worship and we glorify His name there. We are asked how much we focus on God in our daily lives.
- When I say this, someone says, “It is possible for you like pastors and missionaries to lead lives only for God, however, it is impossible for those who immerse ourselves in this world. If we keep thinking about God, we can't live lives.” Is that true?
- A dualism-like way of thinking is based on their idea. They classify pastors, who are religious people, and common people, who live in the secular world. When I come to think of it, I understand that every man leads a life in this secular world.
- However, power to live couldn't be given from things in this world, but it comes from the eternal *Kingdom of Heaven* that comes from the Holy One. If we don't rely on that power, it is natural that we will make a mistake or fail. The author of the Epistle records *the Kingdom of Heaven as the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord.* (8:2) Christ, the High Priest, always intercedes for us not to make a mistake or a fail.

2. Christ, The Superior Mediator

1) Christ is the real Mediator.

- **8:5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”**
- “**They**” refers to the Levitical priests.
“**A copy**” means that it is not a genuine one, even though it is like genuine. It is just like a sample. It has no reality like “a shadow”.
- **8:6 But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.**

- **“The new covenant”** refers to what is written from verses 8 to 12.

The important term here is *a mediator*.

1 Timothy

2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,

- Christ is the only one mediator between God and mankind. Human beings have a broken relationship with God since Adam rebelled against God. Since then, they have kept seeking God and exerted all possible efforts. As a result, many religions came to appear in this world.
- However, there is no other way to restore a relationship between God and mankind. Christ is the only way to restore the relationship. It is impossible for even Abraham who is the father of faith, Moses who is the great leader of the Israelites, Buddha and Confucius. Even Aaron who was the high priest couldn't do it. Everything except Christ is temporary and brief things.

2) The Mediator For Us

(1) The High Priests Offered Sacrifices.

- Christ gives intercessional prayers for us not to make mistakes or fail. Therefore, if we think that we are able to walk a victorious way by ignoring Christ, our lives come to nothing.
- The high priest's duty is to intercede between God and the Israelites by offering sacrifices. The high priest of the Israelites continuously offered sacrifices generation after generation. However, *it only reflects to serve in the true sanctuary in heaven.*
⇒ The author of the Epistle writes that it was *a copy* and *shadow*. He records as below—
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.
- The Scripture above teaches us the following two points.
 - ① **Christ does not need to offer sacrifices for Himself.**
 - ② **Christ does not need to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people.**
- Therefore, when Christ died on the cross, they stopped having to offer animal sacrifices day after day. When Christ offered Himself on the cross, He completed and finished offering sacrifices. How great God's grace is!
- By the way, the Bible records in Chapter 8:2 that Christ in heaven serves as the High Priest. To whom does he serve?
⇒ He serves God the Father and makes intercession for us.
- If we realize the fact, we come to understand that we live in Christ' protection day and night. When we work in this world, Christ always gives prayers for us not to be overcome by temptations. If we try to live lives without His help, our lives would be a real waste.

(2) The Superior High Priest

- My friends. Since we haven't been in heaven yet, we can't really imagine what kind of place heaven is like. However, the four Gospels record that Christ came from heaven and what He has done in this world. When we study them, we understand that Christ wants to help us now.
- **For example, the crowd (a great multitude) came to Jesus. There were no sick persons who were brought to Him and were not healed. There were no disabled people who were brought to Him and were not healed. There were no demon-possessed people who were brought to Him and were not driven evil spirits out. Every people who was suffering from pains, troubles and committed sins was brought to Him and received answers. Like this, we are able to understand Christ through the Bible.**
- No matter what serious problems we have, if we come close and tell Christ, the High Priest in heaven, He will absolutely solve our problems.
- Let's imagine Jesus Christ who lived in Galilee about 2000 years ago. He loved Galilee and did many miraculous deeds. If we want to meet Jesus for example, we should go to Galilee. On top of that, many people who have problems flood to Him from all over the world. When is my turn? We have to wait for a long time.
- However, it is quite different now. We can come close to Christ in heaven and bring our troubles before Him whenever we want. On top of that, He understands all languages. When we call someone, sometimes *a line is busy*, but we can call Him at any time in prayer. Christ always listens to our problems. Indeed, He is the superior High Priest. He is the true mediator between us and God.
- Jesus' purpose in coming to this world was to fulfill *the Kingdom of Heaven*. Jesus often spoke about *the Kingdom of Heaven* during His public life. We who are the saints are allowed to experience *the Kingdom of Heaven* in this world. God really wants us to welcome to *the Kingdom of Heaven*. Jesus Christ became the mediator between us and God and intercedes for us in the heaven.
Let's give thanks to God sincerely.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "The High Priest of The New Covenant"

—From the Old Days to the New Days—

- **8:6 But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.**
- We listen to the Word of God according to the theme "*From the Old Days to the New Days*". The days of the Old Testament is over and the days of the New Testament have already started. As a result, we are able to experience God's grace, *the Kingdom of Heaven*. It is the privilege that is given to those who were freed from the old law.

Let's make sure of the following two points.

1. The days of the Old Testament are over and the days of the New Testament have started
2. The saints are given the privilege to experience *the Kingdom of Heaven*. The privilege has given through Jesus Christ, the superior High Priest.

* God Bless You!