

September 3, 2017

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Messenger: Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Who Is the Closest Person?"

—The Secret Is in Our Relationship—

Text: Hebrews 10:11~25

**10:11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.**

**10:12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,**

**10:13 and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool.**

**10:14 For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.**

**10:15 The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:**

**10:16 "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."**

**10:17 Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."**

**10:18 And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.**

**10:19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,**

**10:20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,**

**10:21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,**

**10:22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.**

**10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.**

**10:24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,**

**10:25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.**

### Introduction

- **I heard the following story the other day.**  
A certain woman in Wakayama Prefecture lived alone and died at home without anyone knowing. She had no family or close relatives. She lived alone and died in private. Therefore, she was found after her death.
- **The people in a neighborhood held a funeral for her who had no place to go. After a while, they began to clear up her house. Then, they found many year-end gifts and other gifts in the closet. She led a frugal life and lived modestly.**
- **Surprisingly, they found more than ten million yen (It was a good amount of money at that time) in the back of the closet.**
- **The people in a neighborhood didn't know what they should do about the large sum of money. After a while, a certain male relative suddenly appeared. He heard the news about the large sum of money (He had never visited her before). The people in the neighborhood got very angry at him. I don't know what happened to that money.**
- **My friends! This is the nature of human beings, isn't it?**

We often unconsciously act from self interest. We work hard to gain a profit. However, our efforts sometimes end in failure and sometimes we suffer great losses. When we have such an experience, we think that we don't want to get involved with people any more.

- A human relationship can be generally divided into two groups: *a close relationship* and *a distant relationship*. Our relationships are based on our experiences. When we have good experiences with somebody (a beneficial relationship), we come to have *a close relationship* with them. On the contrary, when we suffer a loss, we come to have *a distant relationship*. These two relationships have something in common. Their common point is that they think that they are center of things.
- Then, who is *the closest person* to us?

Jesus said as below —

### The Gospel according to John

**15:14 You are my friends if you do what I command.**

**15:15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.**

- Jesus really wants to have a close relationship with us. A close relationship means to understand persons very well. We are able TO understand how they think and what they are going to do.
- Let's study about *close relationships* today according to the following two points.

#### Main Points

##### 1 We Should Have Confidence in Christ's Real Salvation.

- First of all, I would like to point out how we feel about God's salvation is not a matter of our faith. However, we sometimes fail to understand this point. Even if we are taught that we are saved by Jesus and we are made holy and we have been made perfect, when we see our real selves, it is difficult for us to accept it.
- We easily get angry and repeat complaining and muttering. We judge other people and hurt them. We hold a grudge, hatred and jealousy. Sometimes, we have unclean feelings and tell lies. When we look in our real hearts, we come to think that we are not so changed as before we became Christians. We are discouraged and begin to think that we are not saved.
- However, the important thing is not how we feel about our salvation. This is very important point and we must clearly understand it. We can't disregard our imperfect nature and this is a real fact.
- However, if we think that we are miserable and helpless people and are disqualified to be saved, it means that we look ourselves from our own viewpoint. As long as we are focusing on our problems, we hardly understand God's grace. God's salvation doesn't stand on our will or feeling. No matter how we feel, it has nothing to do with His salvation. The important thing is what God says. The Bible teaches as below —
- **10:14 For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.**
- **10:17 Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."**
- Let's study the following important point.

##### 1) Salvation is not a prejudiced impression.

God's salvation does not depend on our reality or the present situation, but it means to believe that we are forgiven and made holy through the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. This is God's salvation.

- My friends. This is not a mere impression of faith that has no evidence. Salvation is demonstrated by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Therefore, salvation assures that we are never judged.
- Jesus Christ was judged on the cross for us. This is the evidence that we are never judged. The Bible confirms it as below—  
**10:17 "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."**
- There is nothing like God's salvation in this world. This is God's Gospel, His grace.

## 2) God's master plan

- Jesus Christ wasn't crucified by mistake or it was not that His disciples could have protected Him from being crucified.
- It was not that if Pilate, a Roman governor, was a more reliable person, Jesus Christ would have not been crucified. It was God's master plan.
- It was in God's master plan that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came from heaven in human appearance to lead a life in this world and finally crucified and died.
- God understands well that there is no way to save human beings except Jesus' salvation. God repeatedly taught this through the prophets in the Old Testament. It is no exaggeration to say that the Old Testament was written to teach it. It records God's perseverance, mercy, forgiveness, joy and so on.
- Jesus Christ came to this world about 2000 years ago and led a life for over 30 years. He was crucified to provide forgiveness of our sin. Jesus offered His perfect body to God, not as imperfect animals of the days of the Old Testament. He was raised on the third day and demonstrated that He was God through his resurrection. Therefore, salvation is given only through Jesus Christ. **Acts**  
**4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved**
- If we simply accept God's master plan of salvation and believe Jesus Christ, we are saved. The salvation is nothing but God's grace. We can do nothing to receive it. It is God's unilateral gift from His grace that He has prepared.

## 2 Let's Come Close to God.

### 1) People in the days of the Old Testament were not allowed to come close to God.

- Those who lived in the days of the Old Testament could not directly meet God. The priest interceded with God for people through ritual offerings. However, even the priests and the high priests could not take people to God.
- The high priest was allowed only once a year to enter the Most Holy Place with blood of an animal. However, Jesus opened the way *to meet God freely by breaking the curtain that divided the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.* **Matthew 27**  
**27:51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.**
- Now, we are able to enter the Holy Place and have fellowship with God through the precious blood of Jesus. How great the grace God has given to us!

**10:19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,  
10:20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,  
10:21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,**

## **2) Confidence in faith**

- It is very important for us to have confidence in our Christian life. Without confidence, our faith is always shaken. The confidence refers to confidence in salvation. It is given after we are freed from twinges of our consciences.
- The Word of God guarantees this, so that we have faith in God. Therefore, from chapter 7, verse 1 to chapter 10, verse 18, the author of the epistle taught the very important principles of Christianity that Jesus Christ, the High Priest, achieved. The author records how Jesus Christ is the reliable Savior.
- Therefore, we should understand our Savior so that our faith becomes unswerving. We should train ourselves to stand fast on faith so that we are able to have confidence in faith. The confidence in faith is led by understanding that Jesus is the most reliable Lord. When we look at Jesus the Lord and understand Him and trust in Him, we come to have confidence in faith.
- We can't make our faith strong by focusing on ourselves. We should take our eyes off ourselves and look Jesus the Savior. We should watch Him carefully. If we don't understand the Lord, we can not have confidence in faith. It needs no explanation.

**10:22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.**

**10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.**

## **3) Spur one another.**

**10:24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,**

**10:25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.**

- The author teaches an important thing. He encourages them to consider how they spur one another on toward love and help.
- My friends. When a Christian leads Christian life alone, that person can't help but lead a self-satisfied life. We need a Christian fellowship. The most important fellowship is the one at the church. Because, church is our spiritual family. It is recorded, **"Let us consider how we may spur one another"**. It means **to study hard by competing with each other**. When we lead lives together, we sometimes have disagreements among us. Disagreements are necessary in a positive way.
- The Bible teaches as below — **Proverb 18**  
**18:1 An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and against all sound judgment starts quarrels.**
- A family is most important for a person to grow healthy. There are father, mother, brother and sister in a family. They are senior and junior Christians. They experience healthy growth in faith.

- We tend to get a narrow point of view and selfish in our Christian faith. Therefore, when we meet an undesirable person at church, we are disciplined and grow in faith. Some people may think, “I am always exhausted at church. I can’t find any answer to my problems by attending worship and a prayer meeting” and absent from church meetings.
- However, there are many people who are changed by the Lord at a worship service and a prayer meeting. The Lord works on us in His presence.
- My friends. What is the difference between a person who leads a Christian life under his own power, and a person who leads Christian life in faith? He who lives on his own power leads a life according to a sense of duty. However, he who leads a Christian life in faith is given motive power from God whom he trusts in.
- When we do something hard, we have a goal to achieve. An intensive life toward a goal would not last long, whether it is for sports, studying or business. We need to take a rest after reaching our goal.
- However, our Christian lives continues throughout our whole lives. We should live Christian lives throughout our lives. It is not like sports. Therefore, it is impossible to keep it by our will and efforts.

The author writes as below—

- **Hebrews 12**

**12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,**

**12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

**12:3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**

We should keep watching Jesus the Lord. It is the way to come close to God.

- Our God is not far from us. However, if our hearts are far from Him, we can’t feel that He is near to us. Those who always think God, they prey to Him for everything they meet and take action, whether they work at office or whether they work at home or whether they study at school.
- If we only think about God when we read the Bible and go to church, it means that we try to think and act by our own power. Therefore, when we meet a problem, we don’t know what to do. As a result, we continue making mistakes.
- However, those who try to come close to God, God always is with them and He Himself solves problems. How thankful we are! The Bible encourages as below—

- **2 Timothy**

**2:8 “Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel.”**

## Conclusion

Title of the Message: “Who Is the Closest Person?”

— The Secret Is in Our Relationship —

- The Lord spoke to us today. Let’s remember the following two important teachings.

1 . We should have confidence in faith.

**10:22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.**

**10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.**

2. We should encourage one another.

**10:24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,**

\* God bless you!