

October 8, 2017

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Messenger: Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Those Who Live by Faith"

—A Hand and Eyes of Faith—

Text: Hebrews 11:1~3

11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

11:2 This is what the ancients were commended for.

11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

Introduction

- The term *faith* appears many times in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It appears 32 times in this epistle and 24 of them appear in Chapter 11. Therefore, the epistle can be said to be the book of *faith*.
- What usually comes to our mind when we talk about *faith*? A certain person may think *that faith* is to humbly pray before a household Shinto altar or a family Buddhist altar in the morning and in the evening as they think over what they did that day. They may repent at their lack of eagerness and faith.
- I think such attitude to faith looks like an athlete who controls himself and strives to build up his body. He trains himself to achieve the goal. In a sense, it looks respectable and beautiful. Therefore, they say that anyone who has *faith* can't be a bad person. And the more he becomes religious, people respect him as he is a pious man.
- The other person says if he doesn't know faith intellectually, he can't acknowledge it as faith. It means to understand by using our five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch). However, it is impossible to understand the supernatural world only by the five senses. Like this, the way to understand *faith* is quite different.
- Now, what do you think of *faith*?
The important point is that faith that the Bible teaches is quite different from the ones as I mentioned. Bergson, who was a French philosopher, said, "When a man takes a cognitive approach to things in nature, he is able to observe objects at a distance. However, when he tries to take a cognitive approach to things in the supernatural world, he should throw himself into it." It means that ***if we don't throw ourselves into it, we can't acknowledge it.***
- The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews records, **"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." (11:1)**
The Modern Japanese Bible translates as below—
"The faith is a hand to hold with confidence in what we hope for will actually happen; the eyes to see the evidence of things not seen."
- The translation above is easier to understand. The faith is not a blind faith to swallow everything unquestioningly but to acknowledge things by reliable

evidence. It is impossible for us to get faith by making efforts and training. It is God's unilateral grace by faith in Christ on the cross. It is a gift from God.

- The term *assurance* in verse 1 originally refers to *documents of a title* in business language. It means to be under guarantee.

Let's study faith that the Bible teaches according the following two points.

Main Points

1. The Faith that God Pleases (or Rejoices)

- God is pleased with our faith when we walk in hardships and darkness by trusting in God. Because we live our lives with confidence in eternal life. A Christian life is not to be lived by only what is visible. God commanded us to live for the Kingdom of Heaven that He promised.
- However, what is reality? Do we keep trusting in God whenever we face hardships, sorrowful and discourage things? It should be not easy for us to always trust in God. It is quite a different way of life from that of the material world.
- What do you think supports and gives power to us who are suffering from hardships? We can learn lessons from many saints of the days of the Old Testament. The Bible teaches that we are surrounded by many witnesses. What a great encouragement we are given! We have good witnesses of the saints who were pleased God because of their faith.

I would like to focus on the following two points from the viewpoints of The Modern Japanese Bible.

1) Faith is the hand to hold tightly. (Faith doesn't need an article because it is uncountable in this situation)

11:1 "The faith is a hand to hold with confidence in what we hope for will actually happen." The Modern Japanese Bible

- We see this world and believe that visible things, things that we can touch and hear are real things. Therefore, we hardly understand what will happen in future and the supernatural things that we can't see.
- We feel uneasy and anxious about our future. We can't find any answer from our limited intelligence. Even though we plan for the future life, we don't want to think about any problems or unhappy events in it.
- Then, when some problem occurs, we don't know what we should do. No one knows his or her future. Therefore, when we meet an unexpected event, we get completely frustrated. We need to be prepared for anything that happens in future.
- It doesn't mean to feel safe if we buy a life insurance and non-life insurance.
(Please don't misunderstand what I mentioned. Insurances are very helpful so I don't deny them. What I want to say is that we can't get a peaceful mind through it.)
- *Faith* makes us have an attitude that we can keep calm, whatever happens. *Faith* is to believe in God the Creator who is always with us no matter what may happen.
- The Modern Japanese Bible records, "**The faith is a hand to hold with**

confidence in what we hope for will actually happen.” (11:1)

We feel safe and peaceful in faith because God is present with us. Therefore, faith refers to *a hand* to hold assured things. Borrowing Bergson's words, we should voluntarily throw ourselves in it. Then, it becomes a guarantee for us. Another point is *that faith* is eyes to see.

2) Faith is eyes to see the evidence.

11:1 “the eyes to see the evidence of things not seen.”

The Modern Japanese Bible translation

- We make sure of things by listening, seeing and touching. However, when we see by faith, we can see the real evidence of things even though they are invisible.
- When we acknowledge things in faith, it doesn't depend on ourselves. It depends on God's faithfulness, whom we trust in. We don't depend on who they are like. The most important thing is God Himself who really saves us.
- God the Father in heaven loved us so much to give His Only Son to sacrifice on the cross to take our sins. God gave us the Bible where His promises are written. Therefore, we find positive proof in it because of God Himself.
- *Faith* that God is pleased in is to hold it as *positive evidence* (to voluntarily receive) and have *eyes to see the evidence of things not seen*. It is impossible for us to understand logically, but if we read the Bible we understand it through Abraham who experienced the secret of it.
- By faith Abraham left his home for an unknown place. By faith he also accepted unreasonable things. He finally received God's promised things for him. He is an example for our faith and he is called the father of faith. Abraham literally lived a life according to the faith that the Bible teaches. It was a faith in which God was pleased.

2. A Christian Life that pleases God. (Or Rejoices)

1) A life in faith

11:2 This is what the ancients were commended for. The New Japanese Bible

11:2 The elders in the past were approved because they showed faith.

The Modern Japanese Bible

- Their Christian lives were pleased with God *because of their faith*. It is also written that they were commended for. What life was it like? Faith means to simply accept things that God allows to happen and to trust the effects of them in advance.
- ⇒ We will see the conclusive evidence when God's time is fulfilled.

11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

- The author teaches that we can accept God's Creation by faith. No one observed the time of God's Creation, however, we can accept it in faith.

2) The secure life

- God's Creation in Genesis was written by Moses who received the revelation from God. We understand that God created the heavens and the earth by His single Word. The Bible records that God said, "Let there be light, and there was light. It means that God controls everything. God makes us understand His will through His Word. God's single Word makes light appear. What a magnificent event it is! He is our God.
 - We understand with eyes of faith that God created things from nothing. Since God created all things, every thing including human beings would absolutely perish without His support. If we realize it, we will lead a life more humbly.
- {Illustration} Leading a Life in Faith**
- **A genuine Christian can be compared to a scuba diver. When he dives under the water, he needs to take oxygen regularly. If he can't take it, he would die. Like this, a Christian needs to send spiritual fresh air to his soul, or he would die.**
 - **Prayer is like a mouth to take fresh air. Faith is a pipe to let air go. We take godly air from heaven through the pipe so that we can receive lots of blessings and are strengthened. Therefore, we are able to keep working and live in this dark world.**
 - **When a Christian completes works in this world, he is welcomed to heaven like a scuba diver who becomes relieved by taking off a weight and rises to the surface.**
- Those who live a life by faith can see invisible things that non-Christians can't see. They can lead a life before God so that they find the final goal of life and realize their true selves. It is an amazing life. It is a steadfast life that those who have no faith don't understand.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Those Who Live by Faith"

— *A Hand and Eyes of faith*—

- We listened to God's Voice about the faith that pleases God. What kind of faith is it? It is a life by faith.
- Then, how do we live by faith?
 1. It is a hand to hold with confidence in what will happen.
 2. They are eyes to see the evidence of things not seen.
- How about today's message? Do we have a hand and eyes of faith?

* God bless you!