

October 22, 2017

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Messenger by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Is it Okay with Your Common Sense?"

—Faith in Action—

Text: Hebrews 11:4~7

11:4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

11:5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.

11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

11:7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

Introduction

- What are our criteria for our daily lives? Many people seem to live by applying **their common sense**. Their common sense is formed by their knowledge and experiences they had.
 - However, it is undeniable that their common sense is biased, even though he or she thinks they have a lot of common sense. Sometimes, my common sense is others' lack of common sense.
 - Therefore, it is quite natural that we fail if we judge things with our own common sense. Then, the important thing is to see things according to God's viewpoint, who judges everything rightly. We should understand that judgment according to God's viewpoint is the only perfect way to judge matters.
 - Then, what is God's viewpoint like?
The Bible teaches as below—
Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God
Those who live according to God's will can prevent failures in advance and become successful people.
 - We often hear people say that he or she was a successful person in life. However, it means that most of them became successful and famous in this world.
(Please don't misunderstand what I said. I don't mean that the worldly, successful person is helpless.) The Bible teaches that those who live a life that God is pleased with are successful. It means to live by faith.
 - The Bible also teaches that those who have faith in God become successful in their lives. On the other hand, there are people who finally get fame and fortune like Job who went through hardship. Indeed, those who like the prophet Zechariah and Stephen died as martyrs for their faith. The Bible teaches each of them lived a life God was pleased with. ⇒ They lived by faith.
 - If they live by faith, it is not a problem whether they become successful or not in this world. Anybody who lives by faith is successful in the end.
- Now, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews first mentions three people who lived by faith. They are Abel, Enoch and Noah. Let's study their successful lives today.

Main Points

1 . God Blesses People Who Really Worship Him.

11:4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

- Abel is one of Adam's sons. He was the younger brother. He and Cain brought offerings to God. Their conducts reveal that they were religious men and they worshiped God.
- However, being religious doesn't always mean being faithful. One's act of offering does not always show his genuine faithfulness. We should not ignore the story of Cain and Abel as somebody else's problem.
- Genesis Chapter 4 records that Cain was a farmer. He brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. Abel was a shepherd and he brought his sheep as an offering to the Lord. Both of them brought offerings. They did the same thing. However, God accepted Abel's offering. As a result, Cain killed his brother because God didn't look at his offering. It was the first murder in human history.
- My friends. When we read the Scripture, we may ask why God accepted Abel's offering, not Cain's. Cain brought the offering to God, however, He accepted the Abel's. The reason was Abel's faithful attitude.
- When we read the passages carefully, it is only written that Cain brought the offering. But it is written that Abel brought the offering by himself and his offering was fat portions from some of his firstborn of his flock.
- We come to understand from the description that Abel worshiped God with all his heart, but Cain didn't.
The author of the epistle writes, "**By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous.**" (11:1)
- It is my understanding that the grain offering should be a precious offering. However, grain produces more grains so the grain offering refers to reproduction. However, it is impossible for sheep to live again once it is offered. Therefore, it means that an animal offering is to offer blood (life), the most precious thing. God wanted it. The offering to God must be such a great sacrifice. It seems to imply the offering that Jesus, the Son of God, who gave his blood for forgiveness of sin.
- Our way of daily life reflects the attitude when we worship God. Those who faithfully live before God also worship Him with the faithful attitude like that of their daily lives. Our daily conduct naturally reveals our daily lives.
- If they live lukewarm Christian lives, they don't really worship God even if they regularly attend worship. Their worship is merely external.
- They don't meet God by attending worship or they are not changed by God. God is pleased with those who live daily lives with faithful attitude toward Him. Abel worshiped God in a manner to please Him. He always lived by faith. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews records as below—
- "**And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.**" (11:1)
The Bible teaches that Abel still speaks to us by his faith.
- God blesses those who worship Him like Abel.

2. God Blesses People Who Walk with Him.

11:5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not

experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.” For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.

- Then, the author records Enoch. He appeared in Genesis, Chapter 5 as one of Adam’s descendants. Before Enoch, everyone *lived and died*. However, Enoch was different.

Genesis 5:24 Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

- It is written about Enoch in the Epistle to the Hebrews as below—
11:5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.” For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.
- Enoch was a very unusual man. According to the genealogy of Genesis Chapter 5, he lived 365 years different from other people who lived about 900 Years. Enoch **“walked with God.”** He lived faithfully with God. The Epistle to the Hebrews records, **“ Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death.”** And it is because that he lived **“by faith”**.
- My friends. We are able to learn that Enoch, who *was taken from his life, so that he did not experience death*, was not always unhappy by comparing with those who lived long lives. His life teaches us *the grace of the faithful life with God*.
- Enoch who lived by faith was a mysterious man.
Next, the author of the epistle mentions Noah, who also lived by faith.

3. God Blessed People Who Are Faithful to Him.

11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

11:7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

1) Noah’s faithfulness

- Genesis, Chapter 6 records the days of Noah as below—

Genesis

6:10 Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

6:11 Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence.

6:12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.

- Noah was a righteous man among the people of his time, and he lived by looking up at God. He walked faithfully with God.
6:9 This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.
- Then, God said to Noah that He was going to destroy people on earth by flood. God also told Noah to build a big ship to save him and his family. (The ship is called Noah’s ark.)
- **{Noah’s ark}**
It depends on how long 1 cubit (the length from the tip of the middle

finger to the bottom of the elbow) is. The approximate dimension of the vessel was 150m in length, 25m in width and 15m in height. It was the vessel of 10,000-ton class. Noah had never experienced such a great flood or he had never built a ship. It was an overwhelming work for him.

- However, he trusted in God's Word and accepted it. My friends! They didn't have any sawing machine at that time. How did he cut down big trees? It seems that it took about 120-years for Noah and his three sons to build the 10,000-ton vessel.
- Genesis Chapter 6 records as below —
6:3 Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years."
 Some people say that the verse above demonstrates the average life expectancy of human beings.
 The 120-years work was far more-consuming work. However, Noah accepted it by faith.
- Noah trusted in the Lord's Word even though it was an unreasonable thing. It is faith. He must have worked hard in the mountain to cut down trees day after day. It might took him many days to cut down even one tree. People around him probably laughed at him and his sons, who devoted themselves to build the vessel. They must have thought that Noah had gone crazy to do such a thing without thinking about their lives.
- The Bible records as below —
6:22 Noah did everything just as God commanded him.
 The faith means to follow God's Word, even if it is far beyond our common sense. And it is the way that pleases God.

2) Noah kept teaching the Word of God.

- Noah didn't always build the vessel. Another important point was that Noah gave a warning to the people by faith and taught what God said to him.
- The world was corrupt in God's sight at that time.
 Let's read Genesis, Chapter 6 again.
6:11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence.
6:12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.
- Jesus Christ taught that he would come again at the end of the world. He said that his day was just like the days of Noah.

The Gospel of Luke 17:26 "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 17:27 People were eating, drinking, marrying being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

- We easily give up to preach the Word when people wouldn't listen to it. However, Noah kept preaching God's Word. Though people around him wouldn't listen to him so that they all were destroyed except Noah and his 8 members of his family.
 The Bible teaches.
- **11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.**
- **"Anyone who comes to God"** is able to know that God is alive. It means that

they are able to experience God. Experience your God! If we want to confirm and understand faith and make it our own, we must experience it. Therefore, we should completely trust in His promises of the Word without fear. It is faith. Those who trust in Him live successful lives and win in the end.

- The important point to live is to live according to God's will, not to common sense.

Conclusion

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—Faith in Action—

- The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews mentioned three saints who were blessed by God. Their common points were ⇒ they lived *by faith*.
- Today, we studied the following three points.
 1. God blesses people who really worship Him.
 2. God blesses people who walk with Him.
 3. God blessed people who are faithful to Him.

* God bless you!