

November 26, 2017

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "The Life that is Completely Freed from Death"

—Faith to Overcome Death—

Text: Hebrews 11:17~22

11:17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son,

11:18 even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."

11:19 Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death. It is a type.

11:20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

11:21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

11:22 By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.

Introduction

- The other night , (November 9th), a man was coming home by bicycle. He accidentally fell off his bicycle and broke his neck. He seemed to hit his head. He was taken to an emergency hospital and was admitted to the ICU. However, the bleeding would not stop.
- Receiving the news, we prayed to God for his recovery. (I asked our church prayer meeting members and deacons). Regretfully he passed away three days later. I used to meet him and had conversations with him. He was a friendly and amiable man. I am very distressed to hear of his death. I was seriously impressed of *the fragility* of human life.
- My friends! No one in this world can avoid *death*. We 100% must die. I should say that lives of human beings are limited by death. Therefore, if someone doesn't get an answer to the problem of death, they will always be threatened by death and finally come to think that life of this world is everything. They feel that they are helpless if they *die*. They are not able to have true freedom in such a life. They feel their life is painful.
- When God created human beings, did He want us to live only for the moment? Of course not. He wants us to live free with hope.
- Therefore, it is absolutely important to solve the problem of death. It is too late to solve the problem if we die. However, how can we solve it while we are alive?
- Those who appear in today's Scripture teach that they solved the problem and had hope in the world beyond death.
- My friends! When they are tested, their faith reveals whether it is true or not. As we studied last time, the phrase *by faith* was the key phrase in Hebrews Chapter 11.

We often study that it was not easy to keep faith in Christ at that time when the Epistle was written.

- They suffered a loss in this world because of faith in Christ. There were quite a few people who renounced their faith. For this reason, the author of the Epistle encouraged the saints by showing them the faith of their forerunners so that they would keep their faith.
- Let's study the following two points from the faith of forerunners.

Main Points

1 . Forerunners' Lives in Faith

1) The greatest trial of Abraham, the father of faith

- Abraham's greatest trial in his life was to *sacrifice* Isaac, his beloved son, as a burnt offering by God's order. My friends. Let's stand in Abraham's place and think.
- God told Abraham that He would give him Isaac and his offspring would become great nations. However, God told him to kill his son as a burnt offering. There was an inconsistency in His Word. Then, what about His former promise?
- God taught preciousness of human life as below—

Genesis 9

9:6 Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed.

Nevertheless, God told Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt *offering*. (Please read Genesis Chapter 22)

Hebrews

11:17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son,

- Abraham was an ordinary man. How could he follow God's command without pain and conflict. However, the Bible doesn't record his mental condition. Why doesn't it? ⇒ It doesn't mean that Abraham didn't feel pain and conflict. However, the Bible records things from the God's viewpoint, not of human beings. Chapter 11, Verse 17 demonstrates it.
- No one willingly kills his or her child.

Abraham believed that God never made a contradictory statement even though he was greatly distressed by his human understanding. Abraham knew who God was. Therefore, he willingly followed what God told him.

- **Genesis 22**

22:5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

- Abraham said, "I and my son go over there. **We will worship and then we will come back to you.**" If he sacrificed Isaac as the burnt offering, he would come back alone.

Abraham decided to kill his son and sacrifice him as the burnt offering. But at the same time, he believed that he and his son would come back together. The following Verse 19 records Abraham's faith and God's will.

11:19 Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death. It is a type.

- It is faith that God's two commands that seemingly contradict are solved by His miraculous work. It means that there is no contradiction in God's Word. This story shows Abraham's great trust in God. It is faith.

2) The greatest trial of Isaac, the promised son

- Then, the Bible focuses on Isaac. When Abraham told Isaac, "You are a burnt offering." He accepted his father's word. It was also by faith.
- Let's think Isaac's feelings. He must have had greater faith than Abraham, because he was going to be killed. However, the Scripture doesn't records his feelings. He foresaw by faith what would happen after his death and blessed Jacob and Esau as below —
- **11:20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.** Isaac was not long for this world. He was going to die. At that time, people usually think only of his or her death. However, Isaac looked the future. He saw God's blessing through death.

- **11:21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.**

When the famine had spread over the promised land, Canaan, Jacob and his family went to Egypt. Joseph, Jacob's son, who came to live first in Egypt became a minister (of state) took care Jacob and his family.

- Jacob became old. He blessed each of Joseph's sons. **"Worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff,"** means in Hebrew, the original language, "He bowed down at the head of his bed." The Septuagint seemed to mistranslate *a bed* of Genesis 47:31 into *a staff*.
- Knowing the time of his death, Jacob blessed his sons and grandsons. He didn't feel sorry for his end of life, but he believed that God's promise of blessing for his offspring never failed.

3) Faith of Joseph, a son of Jacob

- **11:22 By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.**

Joseph was sold as a slave to Egypt. He went through various hardships and finally became a minister. However, he knew that Egypt was a temporary residence. He hoped to return to God's promised land and he knew it by faith that he would return there. Therefore, he told Jacob to take his bones to the promised land.

- We studied lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, who are our forerunners of faith.
What thing do we find in their lives? ⇒It is the faith to overcome *death*.

2. The Forerunners' Faith to Overcome Death

1) God Who Has No Contradiction in His Words

Those four (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph) didn't fear *death*. Abraham was willing to die and even to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. He was not a brave man but he trusted in God who could overcome death. If it was God's will, we would come back to life even if we died. We will be restored in an imperishable body in Christ and live with the Lord forever.

- God didn't allow Abraham to kill Isaac. It means that the redemption of sins has been

completely fulfilled by Jesus Christ. We are able to trust in God, who is consistent in His Word even though He seemingly tells something inconsistent.

- The author of the Epistle records as below—

11:19 Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death. It is a type.

- **"It is a type,"** means the redemption of Jesus Christ.

2) The faith to overcome *death*

- Isaac, Jacob and Joseph didn't only see their *death*. If people who only look at death fear it, so that they are caught by it, they become helpless against it. However, those four kept trusting in God's promise until they were going to die and blessed their sons and offspring. We learned about their faith that overcame death.

- Life bound by death gives no freedom in life. When we are freed from death, we are given true freedom in life.

- Then, what should we do to solve the problem of death? We need to have the faith of

the forerunners to solve the problem. They all trusted in God's Word. They were not brave or strong people, rather, they were weak like us. However, they trusted in God's Word. ⇒ They trusted in God *by faith*.

- Today, Jesus Christ already came to this world and He already solved the problem of

death. The forefathers of Israel trusted and accepted God's Word by looking forward the death of Christ on the cross.

- The Bible teaches the reason of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ as below—

Hebrews

2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who hold the power of death—that is, the devil

2:15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

- The Scripture above teaches the way of life that is completely free and that is not controlled by anything.

Conclusion

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—Faith to Overcome Death—

- We studied the way of the blessed life, that is not controlled by death, through the lives of Abraham, Issac, Jacob and Joseph. We learned the secret of a victorious life that overcomes death.

- Then, what lessons did we learn from the faith of the forerunners?

- ⇒ We should trust in God's Word. (very important)

- 1 . The Word of God sometimes seems inconsistent, but it isn't.

- 2 . The way of life to overcome death is given by faith in trusting in God's Word.

* God bless you !