

January 21, 2018

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Your Choice Is the Key Point"

—Where is Your Viewpoint?—

Text: Hebrews 11: 29~31

Heb 11:29 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

Heb 11:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.

Heb 11:31 By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

Introduction

- Some heartwarming stories were reported. The National Center Test for University Admission in Japan was held in the heavy snow last weekend. The students rigorously took the entrance exams of the universities they wanted to go to. Some heartwarming news was reported where a few certain students were fortunately taken by a patrol car to an examination venue because the train had been stopped by a heavy snowfall. The students tackled the test with all their efforts because their futures will depend on their ability to pass.
- We have to make many choices and decisions in our daily lives. They may be small ones or serious ones. For example, choosing of a future course or a choosing a spouse are very important for life. If we make a wrong decision, our lives may possibly become unhappy ones.
- The Israelites had to make choices and decisions in today's text. They left Egypt and wandered in the wilderness for forty years because of their unfaithfulness. On the other hand, the Bible also records that the Israelites made correct choices and decisions.
- Let's study three people whom the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews recorded in today's text.

Main points

1 Moses, the Leader of the Israelites

- **11:29 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.**
- The Israelites left Egypt and went southward by God's guidance. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, allowed them to go, but he didn't do it willingly. He pursued

the Israelites by sending chariots and troops.

- The Israelites (approximately 20 million) who were overtaken by Egyptian armies saw the Red Sea before them. They weren't equipped with weapons or chariots so that they were in a serious crisis. Therefore, they were terrified and cried out to the Lord and said to Moses as below:

Exodus 14

14:11 They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt?"

14:12 Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

- At the very moment, God performed a miracle through Moses. When he raised his staff and stretched out his hand over the sea as God said, the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind all that night and turned it into dry land. The water divided into two with a wall of water on their right and on their left.
- The Israelites went through the sea on dry ground. The Egyptian army pursued them and followed them into the sea. God threw the army into confusion. When Moses stretched out his hand over the sea as God said, the sea went back to its place. The water covered the entire army and not one of them survived.
- The Israelites had feared until they experienced God's miracle. However, they believed the Word of God's promise that Moses said and followed him. As a result, they came to have that great experience.

Moses said as below —

Exodus 14

14:13 Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again.

14:14 The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

2. Joshua, Moses' Successor

- **11:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.**
- The Israelites wandered in the wilderness forty years. They were led by Joshua, who was Moses' successor, to enter into the Promised Land. First, they had to triumph over the city of Jericho. Jericho is one of the most ancient cities in the world, according to an archaeological survey. There were strong walls around the city and when the city was excavated, they found the walls collapsed.
- The Bible records that seven priests went forward, blowing their trumpets and

the ark of the Lord's covenant followed them. And the Israelites followed them. The armed guard marched ahead of the priests and the rear guard followed the ark.

- They marched around the city of Jericho for six days and on the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times. When the priests sounded the trumpet blast and the Israelites gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed, and everyone charged straight in and they took the city.
- Now we understand that Jericho, the impregnable city, collapsed by faith, not by force. It means that when the Israelites followed what God said to them, the city walls collapsed and they could take the city. It was God's miraculous work. Then, what happened in the city of Jericho?

3 . God's Plan for the Prostitute Rahab

11:31 By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

- When the Israelites attacked Jericho, the prostitute Rahab was not killed. Why did Rahab and her family survive even though all people in the city were killed?

1) Rahab Believed in the True God.

- Rahab was a prostitute but she believed in God. The Bible doesn't speak about her in great detail, but she probably had a chance to hear about the true God.
- By the way, Joshua sent two spies to Jericho. They stayed at Rahab's house. The Bible doesn't record the reason why they stayed there. Or, they might have understood that she believed in the true God.
- The king of Jericho was maybe told about the spies. He sent his men to Rahab to bring out spies. If they realized that she had hidden them, she would have been strictly charged. However, she had hidden them well and let them go by risking her life. At that time she said to them as below:

Joshua

- **2:9 and said to them, "I know that the Lord has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.**

2:10 We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.

2:11 When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

- She continued,

2:12 “Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign

2:13 that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death.”

- The two spies replied to her,

2:14 “Our lives for your lives!” the men assured her. “If you don’t tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land.”

- The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews records the event as below—

11:31 By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

- My dear friends! Rahab had two different choices: to refuse or to accept. If she chose immediate profit, it would be easy for her to turn down their request. However, she would have deeply regretted it later.
- The other choice was very dangerous for her. If her deed was uncovered, she would be accused of treason. She would be put to death in the worst case. However, she made a choice to go with people who believe in the true God. It was a very important decision
- Knowing it was the dangerous decision, she chose the latter way (the way to accept the spies).

2) God’s Plan for Rahab

- Later, Rahab married Salmon who was from the tribe of Judah, and Boaz was their son who became a husband of Ruth. Jesus Christ the Savior was born from their descendants. Then, why does the Bible record such a woman, a prostitute? Probably, the reason is that even though she had been a prostitute, she believed in the true God at that time.
- My friends. Some of those who believe in the true God have led immoral lives until they believed in God. However, what differences are there between those who led immoral lives or not? We all are sinners in God’s eyes even though human beings compare differently.

{Illustration} A Marathon Boom in Japan

- **We’re having a marathon boom and races are being held everywhere in Japan. There are many people who run. They run for maintaining and promoting their health and relieving stress. They also run for training for a half-marathon or a full-marathon. Like this, they run for various purposes. It is said that the number of marathon runners in Japan is approximately ten million.**
- **The Osaka Marathon is held here every November. Approximately thirty thousand**

people join the marathon in Osaka. A large number of competitors vigorously run through Naniwa city and their running makes a deep impression on us.

• These days a marathon race is streamed live to us by a helicopter. Let's think about it a little. When we look runners on the road, some of them are tall, medium height and others are short. However, when we look them down from the sky, every runner looks just like a pea-sized image. They all look same.

- Human beings compare who is tall or short, who leads immoral life or not. We sometimes make a boast of leading good lives. However, all of human beings are sinners in God's eyes.
- They compare themselves with other people and feel superior or inferior to them. It is meaningless before God. The important thing is to believe in the true God who is only one God and live *by faith*.
- You may think it dangerous life with our humans eyes, but God never betrays our trust. He surely does what he promises. The Bible records His promise.

The Epistle to the Hebrews

11:1 "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

- The Modern Japanese Bible translate as below—

11:1 "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."

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.

- Like this, Moses, Joshua and Rahab, a prostitute, lived by faith. We also want to live this week by faith like these three examples.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Your Choice Is the Key Point"

—Where is Your Viewpoint?—

- These three examples lived *by faith*. They were afraid, felt danger and risked their lives, but they lived by faith in God the Creator.
- What should we do to make important choices and decisions?
 - 1 . We should trust in God.
 - 2 . We should trust in the God's Word.

* God bless you!