

April 8, 2018

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

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Title of the Message: Let's Live From Grace to Grace"

—The Fruitful Life—

Text: John 15:1–5

15:1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

15:2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

15:3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

15:4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Introduction

–This Year's Scripture is from The Gospel According to John chapter 15, verse 5.

15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit."

•We set this Scripture for this year which is given to our church.

Now, after John Chapter 15, the Bible writes about Jesus who had the Passover at the upper room. Then Jesus and His disciples went to Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives. It is considered that Jesus spoke today's text on the way there.

•Jesus' "Parable of the Vine" is also the answer to Judas' question in John 14.

14:22 Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"

14:23 Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

•After that Jesus prayed with tears to the Father in heaven at Gethsemane. He was finally arrested and began to walk forward to the cross. Jesus taught His beloved disciples about God's will immediately before His Passion.

•The disciples of Jesus were Jews. Jesus wanted them not to return to the Commandments of Moses after His death. He encouraged them to follow the new law (the Law of Freedom) and lead a blessed life, not to follow the old law. Therefore, Jesus told the Parable of the Vine.

– By the way, "I am the vine" is the Jesus' seventh statement of his Deity. Jesus had

done other "I am" statements, in the Gospel of John, like the following

- 6:35 I am bread of life.
- 8:12 I am light of the world.
- 10:7 I am the gate for the sheep.
- 10:11 I am the good shepherd.
- 11:25 I am the resurrection.
- 14:6 I am the way and the truth and the life.
- 15:5 I am the vine.

-Jesus is the vine and God the Father in heaven is a gardener and disciples are branches. And we are also branches. The branches neither have any power to grow nor to bear fruit on their own. Like Jesus taught the disciples, if we don't remain in the vine, we will wither. Jesus said, [15:4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.](#)

•Therefore, it is very important to remain in Jesus who is the vine. Now let's study This Year's Scripture deeper today.

Main Subjects

1. God's Will to Israelites

•As we read the Old Testament we come to know that God had embodied His will and has chosen one nation (tribe) which was the Israelites. He teaches us about the relationship between God and human beings from the relationship between God and the Israelites. God compared the Israelites to the vine and its fruit for one of the examples. Israelites that were chosen by God should have borne fruit.

However, the Bible writes as the following.

[Jeremiah 2:21 I had planted you like a choice vine of sound and reliable stock. How then did you turn against me into corrupt, wild wine?](#)

[Psalm 80:8 You brought a vine out of Egypt; You drove out the nations and planted it. 80:9 You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land.](#)

•However, Israelites were quite different, in fact.

[Isaiah 5:2 He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yield only bad fruit.](#)

•It was the Israelites before God, which was the vine and its fruit. The vine should bear its fruit. However Israelites deviated from God's will and didn't bear fruit.

•About 2000 years ago Jesus told the Parable of the Tenants in the Gospel According

to Mark as follows.

Mark 12:1 Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place.

12:2 At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

12:3 But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

12:4 Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.

12:5 He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

12:6 "He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

12:7 "But the tenants said to one another, 'he is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'

12:8 So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

- The heir of the vineyard is Jesus Christ. The farmers killed the heir of the vineyard instead of merely beating servants (the prophets sent by God). Jesus spoke about the history of Israel using the parable.

- My dear friends, Jesus told the Parable of the Vine just before being crucified, His Passion. We understand why the parable is important. Then what was the real meaning of the parable?

- First of all, Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. (15:5)。

- The Israelites must have been the choicest vine. God the Farmer planted the good vine, but it became a bad wild vine. It was planted as the good vine for good wine but it became a bad vine which bore bad fruit. That was the real result. But, why? ⇒ Because of the unfaithfulness and the sins of Israel.

- However, God the Farmer is the One of love. He carried out the plan so that the vine could bear good fruit. And the plan was fulfilled through Jesus Christ.

2. God's Will for the Saints (The Fellowship of Life)

1) Jesus is the True Vine.

- Jesus said, "I am the true vine" 15.1. "True" means the genuine thing, not a false one. It means "the real vine", not the one of the history of Israel.

- My friends, the farmer is very important for the vine to bear good fruit.

{Example}

A vineyard is spreading for a long distance on the both sides of the Mosel River in Germany. The great river of 544 km runs through Luxembourg into Germany and joins the Rhein River, which headstream is in France. There are beautiful vineyards on the both sides of the gently winding river. The river runs into Germany first through the city of Trier, where I was studying at the University of Trier.

- It took one hour to the university from my homestay house by bicycle. As I was attending to the university I was very impressed by the farmers working in the vineyards. They were working there every day both on snowing winter days and on hot summer days.

- The harvest in autumn lasted just a week. There was no school during that harvest time and all of adults and children were gathering grapes in the vineyards. It was the joyful time. They were working faithfully for a year for the one week of harvest time. And there, the famous Mosel wine is produced.

2) The Farmer's Work

- The farmer cares for each vine with caution. Grape cultivation in Europe is focused on the hedging styles and the overhead trellis method is in seen in Japan. Grape cultivation method in Palestine at that time was to make the vine branches creep over the ground. The method was to make branches exposed to nighttime dew. We see the branches in Israel like that even today. However, vine branches need appropriate amount of air between branches and the ground surface to bear fruit. Then the farmers lay large stones between them and make the branches creep over them to bear fruit. God the Father in heaven prepares the environment for us to bear fruit.

- A farmer's works entails mainly two things:

① To Cut Off Branches

John 15:2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit,

Japanese translation writes "my branches", but "every branch" is found in the English translation and also "jede Rebe" in German translation ⇒ they write "each branch". And "bears no fruit" in the original language means, "a thing which has no will to bear fruit". The other work of the farmer is "to prune".

② To Prune the Branches

John 15:2 ...while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

"To prune" is "kathairo: to cleanse away" in original language. In ancient times, people

compared pruning to "cleansing". "To prune" was used according to the meaning of "to cleanse away". The German Bible uses the term "reinigen: to wash clean". John 15:5 is being translated "to prune branches" (trimming a tree) from the context. The purpose of pruning is to bear much fruit. "Pruning" is the farmer's work. The branches can't prune by themselves.

- "Pruning" is done to bear much fruit. There are no Christians who do not experience pruning. If someone has hardships in their life it means, in a way, that God the Father is pruning them ⇒ they need to bear abundant fruit.

- Jesus said that abundant fruit is yielded by "pruning". The Bible teaches about various fruit, for example:

(1) The Fruit of the Spirit: The Epistle to the Galatians

5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

5:23 gentleness and self-control.

(2) Fruit of the light: The Epistle to the Ephesians Ⅰ

5:9 for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth.

(3) Fruit of lips: The Epistle to the Hebrews

13:15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name

- God prunes us to bear blessing fruit.

3) The Secret to Bear Fruit

- By the way, we want to bear fruit in our life. Jesus teaches two things about the secret to bear fruit.

① God's Word

John 15:3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

- Jesus said something strange, "already clean because of the word". It isn't about the deed. For example, Jesus washed His disciples' dirty feet. However, the point is Jesus' Word, not His deed, in washing feet. Jesus said that the Word makes clean.

- I told you before that "prune" has the meaning to make clean in the German term "reinigen". Jesus said here, "You are already clean because of the word". His Word relates to chapter 15, verse 5. That is that His Word has authority, not deeds. "I am the vine; you are the branches." (15:5) It is the Word that has authority. The other secret is to remain in Jesus.

② To Remain in Jesus

- No branch can bear fruit by itself no matter how hard it tries.

15:4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

•The Bible writes the important secret to bear fruit here. ⇒ "Remain in me".

We easily depart away and become fruitless.

•My friends, it doesn't mean that we can automatically bear fruit because we have faith in God. "Remain in me". We should remain in Jesus' Word and we need to do it with our will and choice. Jesus said, "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you". (15:3)

The blood of Jesus has power to cleanse our uncleanness and spots. Therefore, we should remain in His Word of the Bible.

•The Word is the secret that we, the branches can remain in the vine with Jesus Christ through daily devotional time. Branches need nourishment from the tree. Like this, we can get nourishment through devotion time.

•As we learn in this way, we come to know that relationship between the vine and its branches is the relation of life. That is that the relationship between the vine and its branches is ⇒ "The Fellowship of Life".

•My friends, the Church of Christ has "The Fellowship of Life". Jesus is the head of church and is still alive. "The Fellowship of Life" is the community including Christ's life. "The Fellowship of Life" is the Church of Christ. We would like to set this year's goal to build church like this. The community of life where the Lord presents should not have uncleanness or spots. This is the place to experience the Kingdom of Heaven in this world. Jesus said,

•"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (15:5)

Let's remain firmly in Jesus Christ the vine this year, 2018. We would like to have nourishment from Jesus and bear much fruit in Christ.

Conclusion

Title of the Message:

"Let's Live From Grace to Grace"

—The Fruitful Life—

1. Let's give thanks to God

The Father in heaven who is the Farmer and also the Vine who is Jesus Christ.

2. Let's remain firmly in the vine ⇒ to have rich nourishment of the Word.

•Let's build the church of "The Fellowship of Life". He will lead us to a blessed life

living in God's master plan.

He begins to lead a fruitful life from now on. Let's give thanks to God again!

God bless you!