

April 22, 2018

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Our Christian Lives that God is Really Pleased With"

— Our Privilege and Responsibility—

Text: Hebrews 12:25~29

12:25 See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?

12:26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."

12:27 The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

12:29 for our "God is a consuming fire."

Introduction

- Everyone is happy to be able to see other people rejoice. I have heard that the happiest thing for a cook is to see people joyfully eating his or her food. The happiest thing for parents and teachers is watching children grow to be great people. Joy makes enriches people's lives and also builds good relationships.

- Then, what do you think God is pleased with? We beg a favor of God every day, however, have we ever considered how much we please God?

- Let's think together. Many children wish, "I want to hurry up and become an adult! Then I can do whatever I want!" Yes, they can do whatever, however, at the same time they also begin to take on adult responsibilities. While they are children, they cannot understand what responsibility is. They gradually understand what it is as they grow.

- Then, what about adults? Many office workers want to work hard and climb up to managers, executives and finally to presidents of the company. If they become

presidents, they can do this and that and whatever else they want to do. They are taken to and from the office by car so that they don't need to take rush hour trains.

- However, presidents have great responsibility so that their decisions have great effect on their employees and their families. If they fail to make the best decisions, their employees and their families may be put out onto the streets. Therefore, the presidents cannot sleep peacefully when they ponder over these heavy decisions

- My friends! We learn here if we are given great privilege we also have a great responsibility. Privilege and responsibility always work together.

- We Christians are also given great privilege. It is not compared with becoming adults or presidents of companies. We are given privilege to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. There is nothing more precious than that privilege.

- To those who don't understand how amazing Kingdom of Heaven is, the privilege will be of little practical use to them. However, if they understand even just a little, they must not waste their time on the side road but they would walk toward the Kingdom of Heaven at full speed. Those who loiter around don't understand how it is amazing.

The author of the Epistle sent it to those who were loitering around at that time. Let's walk toward the Kingdom of Heaven without wasting time.

- Let's listen to God's voice about the privilege that God has given to us and our responsibility according the following two points today.

Main Points

1. The Privilege to Enter the Kingdom of Heaven

- **12:25 See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?**

- "He who speaks" is God. The Israelites listened to God's voice through Moses when they were traveling in the wilderness after they left Egypt. However, they

repeatedly refused God's voice, and they rejected Him by grumbling and muttering. For that, only Caleb and Joshua were allowed to enter the Promised Land among 600,000 adults.

- The other Israelites had to die in the wilderness, because they didn't follow what God told them. Seeing that those who didn't follow what God told through Moses had to die, how much more will those who refuse what Jesus, who is God, suffer for their disobedience. Christians are those who are promised to enter are given such responsibility.

- When we read the Bible we come to know that God wants to have fellowship with us. God tried to have fellowship with us by showing many ways from the beginning of human history. He is merciful, patient and full of grace and love. However, He is holy so that He judges every sin.

The author records as below —

- **12:26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."**

- "At that time" refers to the time when Moses was given the Ten Commandments and Mount Sinai was shaken. And the Scripture says that the earth and the heavens will be shaken at the end of the world. However, it is not recorded when it will happen. We should keep it in mind and live.

- The author of the Epistle records as below —

- **12:27 The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.**

- At the end of the world, not only the earth but also the heavens are shaken. It means that all created things are shaken and broken down. However, only one thing isn't shaken nor will perish. It is the Kingdom of Heaven. God reigns in the Kingdom with His authority as the King and Christians are belong to the Kingdom. This is the privilege that is given only by faith.

- Those who are given the privilege should have responsibilities at the same time.

If they fulfill their responsibilities, God will be very much pleased with them. If some of you think, "We can't carry out my responsibilities", you don't need to worry. It is impossible to do by your own power.

- Jesus said as below —

Matthew 11:30 "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

John 14:16 "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever."

- Let's study deeper the privilege and responsibilities that God has given to us.

2. The Responsibilities that Come with the Kingdom of Heaven

• 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

- The author points three attitudes toward life, that God is pleased with. Then what life is God pleased with?

1) Let's Give Thanks to God.

- The most important matter of all is to keep in mind that Christians are receiving the Kingdom that cannot be shaken. To receive means to rule. That is that they become rulers of the Kingdom with the Lord Jesus.

- My friends. Have you ever thought like that? The Kingdom is never shaken. When we clearly understand it, we are given peace of mind and live freely. We have peace of mind. When we think about the privilege of grace that is given by the great sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, our hearts are filled with countless thanks to God.

- As we who are sinners by nature, when God sifts us we absolutely cannot survive.

We do nothing but tremble with fear. The sinful created things are shaken and removed, but the Kingdom of Heaven that the Lord Jesus has founded remains and we are allowed to enter.

- My friends. Let's remember the days of Noah's ark. Noah and his family survived when God brought the great flood and those who mocked Noah were destroyed. It was a painful event.

- On the contrary, we receive the Kingdom in advance by faith and give thanks to God.

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

- Even if God's promise is not yet fulfilled, we hold it tightly and see in faith. As we continually give thanks to God, we come to realize it. We trust in God's Word and give thanks, then we gradually come to believe it. We don't act according our own feeling. Therefore, let's start with giving thanks to God. What kind of life is God pleased with?

2) To Live with Reverence and Awe

12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

- The author records the attitude of a saints' life "with reverence and awe." If we don't have reverence and awe to God, we easily become arrogant. We gradually think God's various gifts as ordinary things. We don't give thanks, on the contrary, we easily begin muttering about small things.

- When we stop thinking about God's salvation by His grace, we start to complain habitually and easily exploded in anger. It means that we rebel against God even if we don't realize it. We judges brothers and sisters without love. Reverence and awe for God are fundamental principles of our faith.

- Then, what does it mean to have reverence and awe for God? It is to have awe with God who is God. It begins to realize that God is the Creator and Savior. If we don't fear God, we feel that He is a friend so that we become over-friendly with him and may go astray. It would be a fatal thing for us. Living faith has awe for God.

- The author records, **12:29 for our "God is a consuming fire."**

Deuteronomy Chapter 4 records as below,

4:24 For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

- To consume is to completely burn to ashes. As the Scripture above says, our God is not the One who we can easily approach. He is the One who gave His Only Son to be crucified and to redeem us.

- God cannot forgive without the cross of Christ. We must worship Him with reverence and awe. He is the holy, holy, holy God. We can never approach Him without fear. However, we are able to come to God because of Jesus Christ. This is the privilege by grace. We would like to walk towards him with reverence and awe.

3) Works that God Is Pleased With

12:28 ... let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

- One day, the disciples said to Jesus, "Increase our faith!" Jesus replied as below

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Luke 17:7 Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'?

17:8 Won't he rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink?'

17:9 Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do?

17:10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, you should say, 'We are unworthy servants: we have only done our duty.'"

- My friends, in a sense, we are like servants. We sometimes carry out our responsibilities before God. Then, we should just say after work, "We are unworthy servants: we have only done our duty." Jesus taught that this attitude was how to increase faith and grow an inward man. God is the Almighty who controls everything and knows all of our work.

- We sincerely want to please God. We should not waver between hope and despair, but just want to please God. We should focus on this point so that we are all to live sound Christian lives. Everything is meaningless if God doesn't accept it.
- The Scripture above tells us to be thankful and worship God. The term to worship also means to serve. Our Christian lives are to serve God which is also to worship Him. Our Christian lives are centered on giving thanks to God and serving (worshiping) Him with reverence and awe. This attitude is one of speechless ministries (showing God to other people).
- We understand that we are asked for the same attitude of attending worship as in our Christians lives. Therefore, we should always focus on God and put ourselves before His presence. God is pleased with such people and willingly accepts them. They are really given true freedom.

Conclusion

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— Our Privilege and Responsibility—

- We have received immeasurable grace from God who created the earth and the heavens. God really loves us who are sinners by nature. He sent Jesus Christ, His Only Son, to be crucified and cleared our sins. He completed salvation and made us children of God, those who trust in Jesus as the Son of God. (Privilege)
- On top of that, He wrote our names on the Book of Life and promised us that we will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the unilateral grace of God that is given to us. It was the privilege that is given by His grace.
- The saints who are given the privilege has also responsibilities for our lives on the earth. We are promised to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, however, we have responsibilities to carry out until we go to heaven. Therefore, we should live appropriately as the children of God in this world.
- **12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken,**

let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

- We studied three important things today.

We don't live by ourselves. Our Christian lives are made to take Jesus' yoke and walk with another advocate (the Holy Spirit).

Let's remember the following three points.

- 1 . To walk by giving thanks to God
- 2 . To walk with reverence and awe
- 3 . To walk by serving (worshiping) God

- God is really pleased with the saints who walk following those points.

* God Bless You!