

April 29, 2018

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Keep On Loving One Another as Brothers and Sisters"

—With the Lord's Help—

Text: Hebrews 13:1~3

13:1 Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters.

13:2 Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

13:3 Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Introduction

- Our lives are dependent upon what we believe.

If we believe in worthless things, our lives become worthless and if we believe in a wonderful things, our lives become wonderful. If some people really believe that money is everything in this world, their lives would be money-centered ones.

- **My friends. Please don't misunderstand what I mean. We need money. I don't mean that money is unnecessary. I mean if some people think that money is everything, they don't see other things. They believe that money will fix everything so that they always focus on money.**

- **Therefore, they don't have the sense of satisfaction. Money becomes a scale of value for them. Therefore, they don't have a heartfelt relationship with their families, because money is everything to them.**

- **Our lives are dependent on what we believe.**

- Our Christian lives are same. Our lives are depend on what we believe. Therefore, the author of the Epistle wrote the content of faith from Chapters 1-2. Then, he begins to teach about the lives of faith and encourage people to live according to faith.

- Chapter 13 records the conclusion of the Epistle. He exhorts the readers *to keep on loving one another*.

Let's listen to the Lord's voice and study the important teaching from the following two points.

Main Points

1. Love One Another

13:1 Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters.

1. God's Exhortation

- The author begins with encouragement, "Keep on loving one another." The Bible consistently teaches those who believe in God to love one another.

One day, an expert of the Law asked Jesus as below—

Matthew 22:36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

22:37 Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with All your soul and with all your mind."

22:38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

- Jesus also said to His disciples as below—

13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

13:35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

- Paul the apostle also said as below—

Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

- Peter also records as below—

1 Peter 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.

- The first priority of Christian faith is to love one another as brothers and sisters. For that, we need to clearly understand what we believe in (we should not be double-minded). If we understand it, we come to be able to love one another.

2. Jesus Christ

- The author begins first to write the reason why Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, came to this world.

Hebrews 2:10 In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered.

- God sent His Son to this world to crucify Him so that we are saved by His sacrifice. On top of that, He became a human to make us free from the fear of death.

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 holds 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.

- Jesus experienced the same things like us in His life of this world. The One who is the Son of God experienced life in every way just as we do, and He sacrificed Himself on the cross to redeem our sins. He returned to the heaven and still helps us.

3) God's Love and His Chastening

- We have various kinds of battles in our everyday lives. God's doesn't abandon us when we have suffering.

The author records as below—

12:6 because the Lord disciplines the one he loves and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.

The Lord disciplines us whom He loves so that we are saved and become those who God is pleased with. Everything is done for us.

- Therefore, we who are saved and belong to the church are able *to love one another*. It is impossible for us to love by ourselves, God makes us love each other.

- When we are chastened by the Lord, we should give thanks that we come to be able *to love one another* because of Jesus. Then we start Christian lives. We don't need to complain and mutter. When we receive Lord's discipline, we should give thanks to God.

- Then, what should we do? We should come before the Lord and praise Him, pray to Him and read the Word of God in faith. If we try to do such things, the Lord absolutely works on our mind.

- Then, why does the author encourage us *to love one another*? The reason is that God glorifies Himself through love. Love makes God's church one. It is very easy *to love one another* when everything goes fine, however, once a human relation is broken, it is very difficult to love one another.

- Without looking at Jesus' love and prayer to be filled with His love, we can't complete this

important encouragement. The author teaches that love works concretely.

2. Love Works Concretely

1) To Show Hospitality to Strangers

13:2 Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

- People in the days of the Old Testament willingly showed hospitality to the strangers. We see one of examples in Genesis, Chapter 18 as below—

Genesis 18:1 The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.

18:2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.

18:3 He said, “If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by.

18:4 Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree.

18:5 Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant.” “Very well,” they answered, “do as you say.”

18:6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. “Quick,” he said, “get three seahs of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread.”

18:7 Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it.

18:8 He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

18:16 When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way.

18:17 Then the LORD said, shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?

- Abraham willingly showed hospitality to strangers. Two of them were angels and the other was the Lord. Showing hospitality is one of concrete action of love.

- What we learn from the story are:

① Abraham valued the encounter with three strangers.

② Abraham and Sara showed the most sincere hospitality to the strangers.

- Hospitality doesn't mean to let people stay at your house. It means to think of other people's needs. We should not ignore other people who are in trouble. Jesus taught the secret of hospitality through the parable of *the Good Samaritan* in the New Testament.

- Hospitality is derived from consideration for other people. Consideration has a deep relationship with love. Therefore, when we see consideration, we also find love at the same time.

2) To Remember Those Who Are Suffering

13:3 Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

- There were saints who were put in prison for the sake of faith about 2000 years ago (in ancient Roman). Paul encourages us *to remember those who were in prison and suffering*.
- Child abuse is getting to be a big problem in Japanese society lately. Some adults

intentionally mistreat children. They sometimes inflict physical punishment on children and don't give them food. When they are upset and don't understand how to deal with their feelings, they become so mean to the weak, children.

- The adults may feel good after abusing children, however, they must understand that children are deeply hurt by their thoughtless behavior. Those who are ill-treated are the weak. And they are not only children but also people who are in disadvantageous positions. This kind of violence in office, school, and the family is called DV and it becomes the serious problem in Japanese society.
- On the other hand, turning our attention to the world, many Christian churches and Christians are persecuted. I was called to minister in such countries that were part of the former Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries about 45 years ago. (I'd be happy if you read my books on ministerial works in those countries.)
- However, those who are suffering from persecution are still so many like the days of the early church.

{Illustration}

- **Open Doors, the International Evangelical Mission Organization, listed 50 High degree persecuted countries. The statistics suggests that approximately 4.8 billion people are under persecution and approximately six hundred million among them are Christians.**
- **The top ten countries are listed. The number one country is North Korea and then Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, Pakistan, Eritrea, Libya, Iraq, Yemen and Iran. Then other 40 countries are listed in order.**
- My friends. Those who believe in God have been always persecuted because of faith, even though times have changed.
The author of the Epistle writes that we should not forget them. He encourages us to, **“Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison , and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering”.(13:3)**
- The author encourages another important thing.

3) To Live by Faith

- Jesus said that those who live by faith are those who live by love.
**Matthew 25:31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.
25:32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
25:33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.
25:34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, , ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.
25:35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,
25:36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’
25:37 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?
25:38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?
25:39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’**

25:40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

- We learn very important things here. To remember those who are suffering doesn't mean to just listen to their problems and pain by sitting next to them. Even less, it doesn't mean to say bitter words together or nurse wounds each other.
- **It does not mean that we just share suffering and pain, but we should encourage to look at Jesus Christ together. We are allowed to talk to Jesus, then the Lord give us real peace. It means *to love one another*.**
- We are given such a love from Jesus, the Son of God. When *we love one another* through Jesus' love, our church will become the real place of peace.

Conclusion

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- The author of the Epistle exhorts *to love one another as the conclusion*. It doesn't mean it as a compulsion or order. Faith doesn't force such things, but encourages us to love one another. When we love one another, God's glory is revealed and the church becomes one.
- We learned that love works concretely as below:
 - 1 To show hospitality to strangers
 - 2 To remember those who are suffering
 - 3 To live by faith
- * God bless you!