

July 15, 2018
KIBC Sunday Worship Service
Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda
Title of the Message: "Blessings that Are Produced by Perseverance"
—The Biblical Viewpoint—

Text: James 1:1~4

**1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.**
**1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many
kinds,**
1:3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.
**1:4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not
lacking anything.**

Introduction

We have just studied The Epistle to the Hebrews. We will begin to study The Epistle of James today. These two epistles have something in common; the epistles were written to Jewish Christians (Messianic Jews). Therefore, the epistles were written to receivers who had knowledge of the Old Testament and Judaism.

James, the author of the epistle, is said that he was a brother of Jesus Christ. He records as below—

**1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.**

He writes that he is a servant in two meanings: a servant of God and a servant of Jesus Christ in those days. However, James doesn't emphasize a worldly relationship with Jesus, rather, he mentions a spiritual relationship with Him.

The receivers of the epistle were Jewish Christians, the twelve tribes scattered among the nations. They understood which tribe they belonged to. James, who was a leader of church in Jerusalem, wrote the epistle to encourage his people (Jewish Christians) who were scattered among the nations.

Let's study the important points from The Epistle of James one by one for our Christian lives today.

Main Points

1 . When We Face Trials of Many Kinds

**1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many
kinds.**

1) Trials of Life

James suddenly writes a term, trials (peirasmos in Greek), next to the word of greetings in his epistle. Life and trials are like a head and tail of a coin. We live only once, however, why do we face so many trials and temptations in our life?

James the author of the epistle writes about the secret of life in this epistle. The author first writes the most important thing (what he wants to stress) in his mind according to the way of Hebrew thinking. When he wrote the epistle, Christians were being persecuted. Therefore, the author probably wrote the term, trials, at the beginning of the epistle by remembering hardships and pain.

The term trial is also translated into temptation that means to weigh the goods on the scales and to prove one's merits. It means that when they face trials and temptations,

they prove their real worth.

By the way, we also face trials in our lives. We ask God, "Why?" or "Why do we experience trials one after another?" Some people expect that they will not face any hardship if they have faith. Many religions teach like this. A man comes to church because of hardships and eventually he has faith. However, even though he has faith, his situation doesn't change and he also doesn't understand meaning of faith in God and finally leaves church.

First of all, we should understand that the Bible doesn't teach that we will have no trouble in our lives, even if we have faith. In fact, suffering contains power to make us pray to God and thank Him. Of course, God takes suffering and hardship away. However, we should remember that faith in God provides blessings that I said above.

2) Trials of Many Kinds

1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

By the way, there are many kinds of trials as verse 2 records: trials of health, monetary situations, and human relationships. Some people experience hardship in their youth like an entrance examination, on the other hand, some people experience hardship in their old age. There is no one who does not have troubles.

Some trials are visible and some trials are invisible. Some people are moved with sympathy because of the hardship that they see, "That's terrible" or "He must have a real pain." On the other hand, those who look fine may have real hardships for themselves.

On top of that, when those who have faith face trials, they come to think that faith is meaningless and faith itself becomes a trial. There are many kinds of trials, indeed. Trials are not simple things. Let's remember that there are many kinds of trials.

The Bible teaches what we should do when face many kinds of trials.

1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

When we face trials, what should we do? The Scripture teaches us to "consider it pure joy." However, no one can rejoice when he or she faces trials. Thinking about our nature, it is unnatural for us to rejoice when we face hardship.

We naturally think it disgusting when we face unpleasant things and when we have hard time, we also feel it helpless. Of course, the Bible teaches that life is like this, however, on the other hand, it teaches, "Consider it pure joy, whenever you face trials of many kinds." "Pure joy" is the supreme joy.

When we can calm down and think what the Bible teaches, we realize that it's an unbelievable teaching. However, the Bible has some reason to teach such an unreasonable thing. Why do trials become "pure joy" for us?

Let's study the next important point.

2 The Reasons to Rejoice in Trials

1) Testing of Faith

1:3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

What does it mean that our faith is tested through trials? It means that God prepares trials for us to make us and our faith genuine.

My friends, please remember the point that God doesn't test us whether our faith is genuine or not. He is the Almighty God so He already knows well what faith we have. He makes us go through trials so that our faith becomes genuine in the future.

We may think that we have real faith but it may not be real. On the contrary, we may doubt our faith but God admits it as genuine one. Anyway, God makes our faith more genuine through hardship.

Human beings would lead a selfish and I-centered existence if they don't have hardship. We learn perseverance through trials.

The author writes, "**Consider it pure joy, whenever you face trials of many kinds.**" Then, what is pure joy? ⇒ It means to give thanks to God because He makes our faith genuine through trials. God is waiting for us with hope and expectation. God is love, therefore He doesn't give us trials without any reason. Therefore, we think of trials as pure joy.

Now, let's consider an important thing. That is that we easily compare ourselves to others. We may think that, "If I were that person, I wouldn't face this hardship". On the other hand, we may think, "If I had face like him, I could overcome such trials". However, we cannot compare faith with anyone else.

I always tell you that our life is a school (a training school) where God provides a private lesson. God will give His lovely lesson individually. God takes care of us so that we will mature in faith. This is the first point that we give thanks for trials.

2) Perseverance Is Produced

When our faith is tested, perseverance is produced. I like fish. I heard that fish that live in cold water have firm meat. Like this, Christians who lack perseverance seem to be loose in faith.

Perseverance is not willingly accepted today. We live very convenient lives. We are able to live in warm rooms in winter with just the push of a button. As we can't bear even the cold of the winter, it is more difficult to endure a painful experience such as a bad choice, a mental problem, or a difficulty in our relationships. We are easily disconcerted.

However, the Bible teaches us many times that perseverance is a precious treasure that we should acquire to produce character. It is also power. God makes us to have keen awareness through perseverance.

We feel pain when we are under trials. However, we don't need to endure alone. Jesus said,

Matthew 28:20 "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Our Lord is with us even in hardship. How blessed are we! When we realize that the Lord is with us, He gives us a precious treasure - perseverance. And we gradually think it joy. Therefore, we should remember that the Lord is with us when we have painful and unacceptable experiences and makes us learn perseverance.

We can't measure perseverance. However, if our perseverance grows bigger and bigger, day by day, then how happy are we!

Let's study another reason why trials become joy.

3) We Will Be Mature and Complete, Not Lacking Anything.

1:4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

The verse above teaches that we are able to become mature by gaining perseverance that was produced by trials. God wants us to be mature so that He gives us trials.

And God speaks as below—

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to us all. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

It means that we do not drop out under trials. On the contrary, if we let perseverance finish its work we will not drop out, but we become matured.

By the way, when we see someone, we tend to judge them according to information we know about their past. We also judge people through the past relationships. "He was a person like that. He said such and such. Therefore, he ..." Like this we hurt each other by judging each other through past information and old deeds.

However, Jesus Christ doesn't judge us according to the data of our past. He expects us to mature. He observes us of today by looking at us in the future. How happy are we!

Let's remember Peter. He made lots of mistakes. He denied Jesus the Lord three times. It is unbelievable. However, Jesus didn't judge Peter by his failures in the past. Peter met Jesus after the Resurrection and was changed after he was given the Holy Spirit. Jesus was watching Peter until he was courageously martyred.

When we love Jesus and try to follow Him He looks us who grow in future. The Lord expected us in future.

When we do work for church, we don't grow so much if we do what we want to do or do some good looking work or easy work. I think the key to mature is hidden in works what we don't want to do or rather, we want to avoid.

Then what should we do to mature? We should be faithful where we are placed. Even if we don't understand why we are here, we need to accept that the Lord places us there.

Why did James write the epistle?

He was a Jesus' biological brother so he had seen Him from His childhood. However, James really understood Jesus, his brother, as Messiah when he saw the Jesus who died on the cross and has risen from the dead on the third day. At that time he really understood that Jesus, who died and resurrected and defeated death, was his real brother and the Messiah of God. That James wrote the epistle. How blessed are we! We feel as the epistle speaks to us with great power.

One of my Christian friends said, "The theme of The Epistle of James is not to listen to but to do works." The epistle teaches deeds not doctrine. When I heard his word, I really want to be a Christian who performs good works.

We would like to study The Epistle of James by focusing the key word, "humbleness". If we are not made humble before the Lord, it is impossible for us to take action according the encouragement of the Word of the Bible.

Conclusion

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1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

We studied very important thing from the beginning of The Epistle of James today: blessings that are produced by perseverance (the future aspect through the Biblical viewpoint).

Why do we accept trials as pure joy?

1. Our faith is tested.
2. Perseverance is produced.
3. We become mature and complete.

* God Bless You!