

July 29, 2018

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Peace that Is Produced by Trials"

— To Be Made Humble —

Text: James 1:9~11

1:9 Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position.

1:10 But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower.

1:11 For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

Introduction

Mr. José Alberto Mujica, who was a Uruguayan politician and served as the 40th President of Uruguay from 2010 to 2015, visited Japan some time ago. Do you remember him? Many Japanese people were interested in him.

Why did Jose Mujica, the former president, draw attention of many Japanese people?

The reason was that he was the poorest president in the world. For example, he

had neither credit card nor bank account. His house had no running water. He didn't live in the presidential palace during his term. (He lived ~~in~~ on a small farm with his wife.) He didn't use ~~the~~ presidential air plane. (He usually flew economy-class or flew on a flight with other foreign politicians,)

His monthly income as the president was 970,000 yen at that time. ~~An~~The average monthly salary of Uruguayans was 60,000 yen. He donated about 80% of his salary to ~~the~~a charity organization.

He had lot of interesting episodes in his life.

His personal property was a 1987 Volkswagen as a means of transportation. (In 2014, the value of the car was approximately \$2000: 320,000 yen) A certain Arab multimillionaire ~~had~~ offered him 1 million dollars for the car.

However, he said, “No, I ~~don't~~ sell it. The car was ~~presented-given to me by~~ my friends, so if I sell it, they would be hurt.”

My friends, people ~~spend- live their lives in~~ various ~~lives ways~~. The life-style of the former president Jose Mujica is very unique compared to many people who work hard to become wealthy.

Jose Mujica ~~left said~~-many famous ~~sayingsthings-for-~~ Here are a few examples: as below=

“Life is short, and it slips away from us. And no material belonging is worth as much as life.”

“My definition of poor people are those who need too much-~~B~~ because those who need too much are never satisfied.”

My friends! **Unsatisfied desires!** ⇒ It is that the problem of people ~~of~~ today, isn't it? The world overflows with a lot of things. A plentiful supply of things are on the markets as if ~~they-there~~ weren't already enough. In fact, our society and also the world are seeking an abundance of things. However, our life is short as Jose Mujica said. What do we focus on in our lives?

Let's consider our personal life today according the following two points. The author speaks to **believers in humble circumstances** and to the rich people.

Main Points

1 . Believers In Humble Circumstances

1:9 Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position

1) Being in Humble Circumstances

At that time, there were in the church the saints in various circumstances, who were suffering from trials and persecutions, like Philemon a master and Onesimus a slave ~~in the church~~.

It means that the poor and the rich of the society were in the same church. The author ~~records a-explains the~~ relationship between trials and social positions. It is one of the themes that is still very applicable to the present day. The author ~~records instructs~~ in Verse 9, “**Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position.**”

Being poor is one of trials in life. It doesn't only mean to be in humble circumstances but also to be despised in society. We see some poor people ~~among them~~ who are never satisfied as Jose Mujica ~~mentioned-talked~~ about. How about you?

What is the definition of being poor? Can we clearly define it? Being poor is relative. What do you think about being poor?

Jesus said ~~as below~~ —

Matthew 6:31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

6:32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

One of criteria for the definition of being poor is if they people are satisfied with food, clothing and shelter.

2) Take Pride.

James taught that those who were in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position.

Why did he teach such a thing? To take pride refers to a feeling of satisfaction and pleasure in privileges and properties they have. Then what did James mean ~~it~~? Being in humble circumstances is that God allowed. Generally, he who is poor becomes low and humble, however, if he comes to have faith in Jesus, he becomes a **son-child of the God** who created the heavens and earth (a great privilege). Therefore, he should take pride it.

James teaches that they should take pride ~~to bein being~~ given a the high position of a son of God ~~B because~~, God blesses people for their faith ~~in them~~, not for how much property they have.

Jesus said ~~as below~~ —

Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The Scripture also teaches ~~as below~~ this —

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Jesus became poor so that those who believe in Him would become rich.

The Scripture records the position of those who believe in Jesus ~~as below~~ in this way —

Romans 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

James 2:5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

My friends, God sometimes puts us in the humble circumstances to test our faith. Therefore, if we accept our circumstances as they are given, God blesses us. The purpose of being poor is to test our faith.

{Illustration}

Sister Kazuko Watanabe, the administrative director of Notre Dame Seishin University published a book entitled *Bloom Where You are Planted*. The book became a best seller and sold more than two million copies. Sister Watanabe taught that we ~~were~~ are able to ~~spend~~ have the happiest lives when we ~~bloom~~ produce flowers where we were planted, in whatever situation we are in, and many people ~~felt sympathize~~ agreed with her book.

Then, what should we do when we face trials? ⇒ ~~to become~~ humble

2 . What the Rich Should Do

1:10 But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower.

1. Being Rich

Being rich ~~becomes~~ can be a trial ~~as well as~~ just like being poor. It is very difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Please don't misunderstand what I ~~mention~~ am saying. The Bible doesn't teach not to be rich. There are many good ~~persons~~ people who are rich.

God sometimes makes a certain person ~~to be~~ rich so that his faith ~~he~~ is tested ~~his faith~~. The rich ~~should~~ person must understand that he can-not buy salvation ~~by~~ with his wealth.

My friends, our spirits need to be broken in order to believe in Christ as the Savior; It is ~~absolutely~~ extremely difficult for the rich to become humble. ~~To~~ But to be Christians means that our spirits are broken and we become humble. Therefore, the rich should take pride ~~that they are~~ in being made humble, not in being rich.

Wealth is very attractive. Many of the problems in this world are resolved with wealth(money). ~~Power~~ The power of wealth controls people and society. Some people commit a sin because ~~he or she is~~ they are not rich. It is very regrettable. ~~ful~~.

James ~~records as below~~ later writes this —

2:6 But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?

2:7 Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

Wealth is frail and ~~helpless~~ undependable. It ~~looks justis portrayed~~ like plants and flowers of the fields in the Bible.

James 1:11 For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

Plants and flowers in Israel usually begin to bloom in February, ~~h~~ H. However, when the dry season comes in May, scorching heat from the wilderness withers them quickly. Likewise, worldly wealth disappears in the blink of an eye.

Isaiah 40:6 All people are like grass, and all human faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.

40:7 The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass.

{Illustration}

Lido (Lee?) Iacocca, ~~who~~ was the former president of the Ford Motor Company, then later worked ~~for to~~ reviving revive the Chrysler Corporation as CEO. He successfully restored the company's business and achieved good results.

He ~~mentioned~~ wrote this in his autobiography that sold seven million copies as below:

"I have reached the twilight years of my life. I'm still not sure what is meant by good fortune and success. I know fame and power are for the birds."

2) Jesus' Teaching

Let's look at what Jesus said ~~as below~~ —

Luke 12:16 And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest.

12:17 He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

12:18 "Then he said, this is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain.

12:19 And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years.

Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”

12:20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’

12:21 “This is how it will be with those who store up things for themselves but are not rich toward God.”

My friends, this is the Word that Jesus Christ spoke about 2000 years ago.

Wealth belongs to God, and it should be shared with people. What ~~about is~~ our attitudes ~~s are about this~~? (See Matthew 25: 14~29)

We have studied ~~the~~ situations of the poor and the rich. What does the author teach us? The churches at that time were under persecutions and hardship. On top of that, churches had problems inside that were caused by difference of social positions. ~~Normally-Actually,~~ they should have helped one another.

However, their real lives were completely opposite, and ~~they~~ had problems. What ~~does was he in at~~ the root of ~~their~~ problems? ⇒ **Humbleness** before the Lord was lacking.

They were lacking ~~an~~ attitudes ~~s-to-become-humble-of-humility~~ before God. Both the poor and the rich needed to **become humble** before the Lord.

Then, **what is the important point we should understand in conclusion?**

~~It~~ **Today’s passage** teaches that both the poor and the rich have no choice but ~~to~~ **to come close to God in the same way. Trials are testing tools for the poor and the rich. God is pleased with those who become humble and respond in faith in the** ~~it~~ positions that God has placed ~~them~~.

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Conclusion

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— To Be Made Humble —

Today, the Lord taught us ~~a~~ very important point; our circumstances, whether ~~it~~ ~~is~~ ~~we are~~ rich or poor, are trials that God has given ~~us~~. A trial means to weigh the goods on the scales. It also means that when we face trials we are asked to prove our real worth.

Then, why does God give us trials? ⇒ They are given ~~help~~ ~~us~~ to learn **humbleness**. God reveals the secret of the Kingdom of Heaven (~~to~~ ~~teaches~~ how blessed the Kingdom is,) to those who are humble before Him. It is **peace that is produced by trials**. Let’s remember the reason why God gives us trials.

Let's consider again the following two important points ~~as below~~—。

1. We should **be humble** in the position where we are placed.
2. We should faithfully follow ~~the~~ God's Word.

* God bless you!