

August 26, 2018

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Listen to the Word of God"

—The Way toward the Grace of God—

Text: James 1:19~21

**1:19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,**

**1:20 because our anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.**

**1:21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.**

### Introduction

Man seems to listen to other people's words, but he actually doesn't. On the other hand, man doesn't seem to listen to, but he really listens to what he is interested in, especially gossip about other people. Why such a thing happens?

One day, Jesus told the parable of the sower and the seeds that fell on the four different soils. He said, "**Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.**" **When he said this, he called out, Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear." (Luke 8:8)**

It means that those who are willing to listen to me.

Therefore, it is important for the listeners to listen to by their own will.

James commented on **the word of truth** in Verse 18 and now he explains what **the word** means in detail today.

By the way, James called the readers **my dear brothers and sisters**. The purpose of the epistle was to make their faith grow. James recorded six tests to examine whether they have faith or not. We study the first test among them: **to listen to the Word of God**. It means that **his faith is tested how he responds to the Word of God**.

The author recorded in Verse 19 a, "**take note of this.**" As they already know, all he has to do is to let them remember.

Let's listen positively to the Word of God by our will from the following two points.

### Main Points

#### 1 . **We Need to Listen to the Word of God.**

**1:19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,**

When we face trials we think “where is God?” and “why is it I who only has to suffer. As we studied last time, even though we understand that God does not tempt us we sometimes mistakenly think that God tempted us. We blame it on God.

Therefore, if we don't correctly understand trials and temptations we easily come to doubt God.

Let's read Verse 17 and 18 again.

**1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.**

**1:18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.**

When we are under trials and temptations, we may suddenly have doubts about God. However, He chose to give us birth as Christians through the Word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all He created.

**To be a kind of first fruits** means to make us more wonderful and like the innocent believers. How blessed we are!

For that, the author gave three orders as below.

#### 1 ) **Be Quick to Hear!**

When the Word of God is read they should open our heart and listen to it willingly and positively. No one had the Bible for individual use in those days and the New Testament wasn't written yet when the epistle was recorded.

The believers could only study the Word of God and the oral law by listening to them at the congregational meetings. Therefore, If they didn't carefully listen to them, the Word quickly went through so they couldn't get it.

Our situations are not so serious as them. However, our problem is how we take time to read the Bible and listen to the voice of God through Sunday messages. And also it means that how we willingly listen to His voice through our various experiences and people around us. Anyway, we should listen to God as quickly as possible. If we are slow to listen to, it would be regrettable. Therefore, it is very important for us to create a good environment to listen to the voice of God in our daily lives.

## 2) Be Slow to Speak!

Of course it doesn't mean to speak slowly. We are allowed to speak anything we want so we often excessively speak without knowing. In other words we become too much self-assertive. (We clearly understand the result of self-assertion.) James teaches us not to speak too much.

We probably speak to assert ourselves. We live in the world of overflowing information. We hear various ideas and information, whether we want to or not. As we are afraid of becoming out of date, we seem to have an urge to assert ourselves.

However, we usually refuse to yield and wouldn't correspond with other people's ideas. Therefore, the more we get impatient the more we get angry. James teaches that we should listen to God before everything.

**Be slow to speak** means that when the Word of God is read, we should listen to the Word with a humble heart, understand and assimilate well. We should not react too quickly. If we don't understand the content well, we need to pray to the Lord. Then, we are allowed to speak.

We should accept this order seriously by paying more special attention than when James taught.

## 3) Be Slow to Anger!

Another order is to be slow to anger.

We don't know why James recorded about anger here. He probably thought that anger was a big problem among Christians and their human relationships in those days.

Let's imagine the reality of those days. They were persecuted from outside and in the church there were people who gave in to sins and finally lost faith.

The anger hinders the progress of God's work.

**1:20 because our anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.**

The Bible gives a warning about the anger, because it doesn't produce the righteousness of God. On the contrary, it discourages God's righteousness.

**Matthew 5:22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.**

We see people who failed in their lives because of anger in the Old Testament.

Cain was angry because God was pleased with Abel's offering. Cain became bitter and the anger was born of his jealousy.

Moses got irritated and angry at the Israelites who didn't willingly listen to him. God got angry at Moses and felt sorrow at Moses' impatience.

Jonah the prophet felt angry at God's work that was not his expectation. It is the anger of a man who was ignored.

The anger is not someone else's problem. The Scripture records, "**because our anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.**" (1:20)

Like this, the anger stands in the way of progress of God's righteousness.

How about our attitude towards the Word of God?

## **2. Humbly Accept the Word of God.**

**1:21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.**

The author teaches another important thing; "**accept the word**" And James records "**get rid of all moral filth and the evil**" before he writes to accept the word. He teaches that we should get rid of all moral filth and the evil. **To get rid of means to take our clothes off.** James teaches that we should take off all moral filth and the evil. Because they are absolutely incompatible with the Word of God.

### **1) To Plant the Word in You.**

The Word of God compares to the seed here. Those who received the message of the Gospel are people who the seed of the Word is planted in. The seed takes root in them and grows.

When we willingly read the Bible and listen to the message with humble hearts, the Word of God is planted in our heart as if the seedlings are planted one by one.

### **2) Humbly Accept the Word of God.**

We need to humbly accept the Word of God so that we bear fruit. If the soil doesn't accept the seed, it will dry up and wither. To humbly accept means that we eagerly accept it and apply it to our lives.

What about you? Do we accept the Word that God planted in us with His blessing? Or do we react against God's grace and try to get rid of it? We sometimes feel the Word of God is uncomfortable. We feel disgrace to accept the Word and sometimes we feel shame because it points our sin, yet we should humbly accept it. We should not be just a listener.

James sent the epistle to the believers, however, he writes "**which can save you.**" (1:21) What does it mean?

**The Salvation** of the Bible refers two meanings.

1 The salvation by faith in Jesus and of soul that is saved by God

② The salvation that is completely fulfilled in future (Luther translated it blessing.)

James refers to the salvation ②.

When they accept the Word of God they are saved. And they begin to walk the road of grace to become perfect ones. The Word of God saves us and leads us to His blessing. How blessed we are! Following the Word of God fulfills lives toward God's blessing.

### Conclusion

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We studied very important things today. The days of the early church, persecution came from outside and some believers in the church gave in to sin and left the church.

The author of the epistle taught them very important things.

1. We should listen to the Word of God.

Specifically, we should **be quick to hear, be slow to speak and be slow to anger.**

2. We should accept the Word of God.

Specifically, we should **plant the Word of God in our hearts and humbly accept it.**

\* God bless you!