

September 2, 2018

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Do You Have a Right Mirror?"

—The Secret to Being Blessed—

Text: James 1:22~25

**1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.**

**1:23 Those who listen to the word but do not do what it says are like people who look at their faces in a mirror**

**1:24 and, after looking at themselves, go away and immediately forget what they look like.**

**1:25 But those who look intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continue in it—not forgetting what they have heard but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.**

#### Introduction

We find various religions, traditions and customs all over the world that have been passed down for many years. People have been keeping them as important rituals and passing them down from generation to generation.

For example, the Obon Festival is a typical Buddhist event that is held every year in Japan. Actually, many traditions, customs and religions have a major influence on ceremonial occasions in our daily lives.

Some of you may be the only Christian in your family. Almost every family follows the religion that has been passed down from their ancestors. Japanese people have followed traditional events and customs that have derived from the family religion without any doubt or hesitation. Therefore, they don't think it strange to worship before a family Buddhist altar.

However, when we met the true God and believed Him, we came to think that such **religious deeds** have no significant meaning at all. On the other hand, it is very difficult to change our family religion, traditions and customs, etc. If we try to do so, we truly understand how difficult it is to go against these traditions.

By the way, Jewish people at the time this letter written by James believed that they were saved by observing the Law of Moses that had been passed down from their ancestors. However, they were then taught that they were saved by faith in Jesus Christ, not by the Law of Moses. Not much time had passed since the early church had started. The teaching was a great turning point for Jewish people in those days.

They had believed for many years that they were saved by observing the Law of Moses. What happens when those who made it a habit to follow the Law came to understand that they were saved only by faith in Jesus Christ? This may be an overstatement, but, instead of putting their faith in Jesus Christ and understanding the place of good works in the Christian life, some people mistakenly respond in the following two ways.

- ① He understands that **he is saved only by faith** as abstract knowledge, so he continues observing the Law.
- ② He **focuses on faith** too much and comes to make light of **deeds** done in faith.

James probably wrote his Epistle with these two responses in mind.

However, it is not only their problem in those days but also our problem. We are also in danger of making the same mistakes the Jews did.

Let's study the following two points from today's text entitled "Do You Have a Right Mirror?"

Unknown Author 2018-08-28 06:15 ㊦

コメント[U1]: Kuroda-sensei, I think adding this sentence will make what you are saying clearer. There is a correct response (which I added) and then the two incorrect responses you had listed. The original wording makes it sound like there are ONLY 2 possible responses (both which are wrong).

### Main Points

#### 1. **Those Who Merely Listen to the Word**

**1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.**

##### 1) **A Mere Listener**

The author taught how important it is to listen in his Epistle. He also taught that those who only listened to the Word deceived themselves. Therefore, he encouraged them to do what the Word says. Those who were merely listeners (who were Christians) were like the people the Scripture describes in verses 23 and 24.

**1:23 Those who listen to the word but do not do what it says are like people who look at their faces in a mirror**

**1:24 and, after looking at themselves, go away and immediately forget what they look like.**

Mirrors in those days were not as good at reflecting images as today's mirrors are. Hand mirrors were made of polished copper or bronze, and they were used when they put make up on their face at home. They didn't see themselves clearly in the mirror, but they could see their faces.

They looked at their faces in the mirrors and at the same time they saw their untidy hair, exhausted faces and found something strange on their faces. However, they immediately forget what they saw when they walk away.

The Word of God is like a mirror that reflects our hearts. Those who merely listen immediately forget their real natures even though they see their real natures and many faults in the mirror of God's word. They go away unchanged after looking at themselves in the mirror even though they need to restore their lives.

## 2) Those Who Deceive Themselves

**1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.**

The author writes that those who merely listen to the Word deceive themselves. What does this mean? Let's look at this point. Everyone can merely listen to the Word. We can read the Bible if we have will to read it. We can listen to the sermon and leave there saying, "The pastor is quite right!"

However, even if we have many opportunities to listen and read the Word of God and to be pointed our mistakes we eventually deceive ourselves if we merely listen to the Word.

Human beings aren't **always** deceived by other people (or Satan). We also deceive ourselves.

**I deceive myself. When my good conscience is enlightened by God's light, I come to understand what I should be. However, if I don't follow the right way, I deceive myself.**

James gives a warning here not to be such a Christian.

James emphasizes this point.

James used a very strict word – **deceive**. There is no truth in such deception. We are not being honest if we don't observe the Word of God, even though we are enlightened by God's light and understand what is right.

We are deceivers if we do the following:

- ① We deceive God if we don't obey God's will even though we come to understand it.
- ② We deceive our brothers and sisters if we don't observe God's will even though we come to understand it.

Chris Momose 2018-08-28 06:15



コメント [CM2]: I think it is best to add this because Satan does deceive people often.

Chris Momose 2018-08-28 06:15



コメント [CM3]: Kuroda-sensei, I am not sure what you are trying to say here. Can we deceive God? He knows our hearts perfectly, so it is not possible to deceive Him in the normal sense/meaning of the word.

③ We deceive ourselves if we don't observe God's will even though we come to understand it.  
(Dishonesty)

Therefore, James writes strictly, **"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. (1:22)**

Then he encourages his readers to do what the Word says.

## **2. Those Who Do the Word Says**

**1:22 Do what the Word of God says.**

### **1) The Word of God Is the Perfect Mirror.**

First we should understand that the Word of God is the perfect mirror.

**1:25 But those who look intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continue in it—not forgetting what they have heard but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.**

verse 25 mentions **the perfect law** and **the law of freedom**. It doesn't refer to the Law of Moses. It is the law of Christ. The reason why it is called the perfect law is the perfect and final revelation of God. The law of freedom means that this law set the Jewish people free from the Law of Moses and it also sets Gentile believers free from sin and death.

The Bible teaches that when we put the Word of God into practice we are set free.

**John 8:32 "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**

**Romans 8:2 ... because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.**

The mirror of the Word reflects our sin and faults. Those who keep intently looking in the mirror (those who always look in the mirror of the Word) don't immediately forget the Word. They become those who **practice** the Word of God. They will be blessed in future; in other words, God's blessings are given to them.

We learn now that our Christian lives in this world depend on how much we faithfully observe the Word of God. They are like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

**Matthew 7:24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.**

**7:25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that**

house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”

## 2) Put the Internal things into Practice.

Let's consider verse 22 again.

### 1:22 Do what it says.

When we hear the word **practice**, we generally think it is a positive external action toward; for example doing good things (to help other people and please them.).

These are deeds (practice). The good deeds please church members, family members and co-workers at the office, for example.

**However, to “practice” also refers internal deeds. Of course, the outward deeds are important, but it is more important for us to put internal things into practice. If we do this, we will also put outside deeds into practice.**

The following examples concretely explain this idea.

① For example, we previously studied the problem of **anger** in chapter 1. Human anger stops the progress of God's work. Getting rid of anger is an important example of what it means to “practice” **the Word of God**.

If someone among us has anger that is like **jealousy**, God tells him/her to get rid of it. God doesn't bless people unless they get rid of their anger.

If any of you get irritated and have unbearable anger toward the people around you, you should look up to God and imagine how patient He is with **you**. God tells us to get rid of our anger, no matter what people around us are like.

② Jonah is another example. Jonah got angry at God. He complained about the plan God had for his life. Do you get angry at God like Jonah did? God eagerly wanted to use Jonah, but I think He was disappointed at Jonah's anger.

③ If someone around you (in your family, at school, at the office, at church, etc.) needs your help and you understand that God tells you, “I want you help him/her”, what should you do? If you stand by and just watch him/her saying, “It's impossible. I don't want to help,” God wants you to get rid of such feelings.

When we examine the problem in the light of our consciences and we realize what God tells us, we should follow His Word. If we merely listen to the Word and do not humbly accept it and obey it, we will lose God's blessing. In other words, we will become an obstacle to revealing God's glory and fulfilling His righteousness.

So, what should we do?

**1:25 But those who look intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continue in it—not forgetting what they have heard but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.**

➔ The secret is in **the daily devotion time.**

Those who look at Jesus (the Word) intently are “...—**not forgetting what they have heard but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.**”

God gave us His Word. He wants souls to be saved and to use us as the light of the world. Therefore, let's get rid of all moral filth and the evil and faithfully live in the Word of God!

#### Conclusion

Title of the Message: “Do You Have a Right Mirror?”

—The Secret to Being Blessed—

Today we heard from the Word of God and He taught us some very important things. We learned how to put the Word of God into practice. James told us to not merely listen to the Word but do what it says.

Then, how can we observe the Word and do what it says?

It is absolutely impossible for us to do it by ourselves. Thankfully, God helps us to do it. The secret to practicing the Word of God is **not to leave the mirror**. The mirror reflects us and the Word of God reflects our hearts.

Those who are Blessed are “**Those who look intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continue in it.**” (1:25)

Let's conclude the sermon by reading the Verse below.

**1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.**

\* God bless you!

