

January 13, 2019

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "What Is the Dead Faith?"

Text: James 2:15~17

2:15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.

2:16 If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?

2:17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Introduction

Last Sunday, I gave the sermon entitled *What is the True Faith?* The Lord talked to us about the true faith and it also was the message for me.

While we hear about **the true faith**, we come to think if there **the false faith** is. James called it **the dead faith**. Therefore, I entitled today's message *What Is the Dead Faith?*

James records as below—

2:15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.

2:16 If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?

2:17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

My friends. What do you think the Scripture above? I accepted it as the really strict Word. I was penetrated by the Word as well as the Word of the last Sunday message.

How about you? The Scripture asks us that our faith has deeds or not. When I honestly think my attitudes, I should say, "No." When we carefully read both Scripture of the last time and today, we understand that they don't examine whether we are qualified or not as Christians. **It is a rhetorical question. It is a question that expected an answer "No."**

No one answers the question "Yes". There is no one whose faith has deeds. James said such faith is **the dead faith**.

2:16 If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?

2:17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

The summary of verses 15~17 is that if they merely say, "Go in peace" to brothers and sisters who have no food and no clothes (there were many poor people in the church of Jerusalem at

that time.) and don't help or support them, their faith is the dead faith.

The dead faith is,

① **"Go in peace"** was the ordinary greeting for farewell in those days. Jesus said in the Gospel of Mark as below—

5:34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

"Go in peace" meant Good-bye in those days.

② Even if they say, **"Keep warm and well fed"**, if they don't give anything to people in needs, they must leave there in hunger and cold. Their word is **helpless**, so **it is the dead faith**.

The point is that the spoken word and its responsibility for the word. The important thing is that human beings are live in God.

Acts 17:28 For in him we live and move and have our being.

The Verse above teaches that the dead faith is displeasure to God because we live and move and have our being in Him.

However, that is reality that our faith does not accompany by deeds. Then, why did James pose us the rhetorical question that seemed impossible to carry out?

Let's turn and face the reality of our Christian lives today according to the following two points.

Main Points

1 . **Paying Lip Service**

1) **Lip Service**

Lip service is to serve only by saying word. When I think about myself, I have to repent my attitudes.

For example, I sometimes easily say and write, "I will pray for you." Of course, giving a prayer is not lip service. As I really do it with praying in my mind, it is not a lie, however if I don't put it in practice, I give lip service (service with a mere word). This is a problem.

If we come to give habitually lip service, our service will be not the practical service, service with a mere word. As a result, people around are leaving us. Our God sees deeply into our hearts. He never fails to see through our **lip service**.

How do you think? I was taught that I have to walk faithfully before God.

2) **Service with Love**

There is precious service that is service with love.

{Illustration}

My great joy and gratitude of last year was that I didn't cancel giving a sermon at every Sunday worship. I was given a privilege to preach the Word of God throughout the year. It is unbelievable that I could preach the Word of God through the year without canceling. I give sincere thanks to the Lord.

One Sunday morning, I felt sick. I felt my body heavy and it made me worry if I could stand and preach the Word of God.

However, when I stood before the pulpit, I was filled with the power from above and I could give the sermon well. It was a miraculous experience. I knew that your prayers helped me. I know there are many people who keep praying for me who is such a small man. I really understand that their prayers are not lip service. They really give sincere prayers for me and God answers their prayers. I am full of gratitude and just give thanks to God.

We study the importance of faith with deeds, not lip service.

The Bible teaches as below—

1 Corinthians 13:1 And yet I will show you the most excellent way. If I speak in human or angelic tongues, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

13:2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

13:3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

My friends. We need to understand God's will through the whole Bible. Faith is very important but that is not all. Deeds are also important, but that is not all. However, when faith and deeds are filled with God's love, they come to be the true faith and deeds. James records, **"In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (2:17)** It is important that we should correctly understand both faith and deeds according to the whole Bible.

Then, how should we practically live Christian lives?

2. We Should Put Faith in Practice.

1) We Should Read the Word of God

The Bible records **"Do not merely listen to the word." (1:22)** Practicing begins with listening. It is very important to listen to the Word, but listening is not the end. Reading the Bible first means for us to listen to the voice of God. Let's practice first to read the Bible. Reading the Bible by ourselves is significant, comparing to listen to someone reads the Bible.

However, it is not always easy to keep reading the Bible. The Bible is a thick book. When we read the book cover to cover, we need our determination (will). On top of that, the Bible is not only the thick book but also it has many difficult points to understand.

It took about one thousand and some hundreds of years to complete writing from the beginning to the end. It records the quite different cultural background from Japanese one. Its religious concept is also quite different from Japanese polytheism. Of course, people who appear in the Bible have quite different thinking. The Bible is quite strange thing for us.

However, the Bible is given by God. Even though there are many difficult barriers, we are able to get helpful words beyond barriers for our hearts, daily lives, whole lives. You are never able to obtain the amazing things from the Bible if you leave it on your desk because it is the difficult and thick book. My friends. Let's finish to think the Word of God is tasteless and dull but rather pray to God to realize that the Bible is the most precious source of life and joy and refreshment for us.

By the way, this is **the mini Bible** (The Gospel of John. 3 cm× 4 cm in size) **The mini Bible** were hidden in bread and baked and brought to prisoners at the labor camp in Siberia in Russia in the days of an atheism-socialism (1970s). The small Bible encouraged and gave power to many prisoners. The Bible is the Book of God.

We can get the good Bible today in Japan. If we want to read it we immediately get and read it, however, it is difficult to read even though we can read it.

The one of reasons that they don't read the Bible is that they don't recognize the value of the Bible. They are interest in the worldly things, they are busy and they have many things to do. These things keep them away from reading the Bible.

A devotion textbook helps us to understand the Word of the Bible and its value. If we use it effectively, our Christian lives are blessed. The devotion textbook that we use is contributed articles by pastors and biblical scholars who deeply studied the Bible. They clearly explain and teach the Word from the different perspectives. It is a very precious tool and helpful to read and understand the Bible. (If you use your favorite textbook, please use it.)

Anyway, God's blessing starts from reading the Bible. KIBC has **the Bible sharing meeting** twice in a month and it is really blessed. It is very useful that each of us shares what we learn from the Bible.

Let's start the new year in 2019 by **reading the Word of God**. It is the way to receive God's blessing.

2) Putting the Word of God that We Read into Practice

When we continue reading the Bible, we meet the Word that penetrates our heart so we want to stop reading it. The Word comes to urge us to change our lives, to repent or to apologize to someone in order to follow the Word.

To tell the truth, it is the important point.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

My friends. We come to meet the turning point to change our lives, either we merely listen to the Word of God or to put it into practice. What do you think? What should we do? We should not avoid it, but we should face the Word that penetrates our heart. Is it that we should accept that we are wrong and come to before God and change ourselves. Because God speaks to us.

We need to be courageous and to pray. The Bible teaches,

“Do not merely listen to the word. Do what it says.” (1:22)

My friends. It is important to do for other people the verse above says, but first of all we need to do it for ourselves.

We need to practice our faith into our heart, our Christian lives and the ways of lives. And then, we should show our faith by deeds. Even if we say that we trust in God but our daily lives and lives are far from God’s expectation, God feels sad.

We would like to make our lives, our work and our Christian lives to please God. Such people put the Word of God into practice. The Word guides us to help the weak, the poor in the miserable situation and the sick through deeds. It is God’s **work**. How thankful we are.

How about today’s message? Listening today’s message, some of you may think, “I understand the importance of practicing faith, but it is impossible for me” or “If the Bible asks me to do so, it is too much for me.”

However, please don’t worry about it. You need to start what you can do first. No one can perfectly do from the beginning.

As I was helped by someone’s prayer, I am glad to pray for other people. Your deeds in faith greatly help and encourage other people. I hope you to practice faith a little in your Christian lives.

Title of the Message: "What Is the Dead Faith?"

We listened to the voice of God by the message entitled *What Is the Dead Faith?* today.

When God gives His love to our faith and deeds, we begin to practice our faith and it is not **the dead faith** any more. It becomes a blessed Christian life. It is joyful life to be loved and thanked by people.

Then, what do we need to put our faith into practice?

- 1 . We should read the Word of God.
- 2 . We should practice the Word of God that we read.

"Do not merely listen to the word. Do what it says." (1:22)

* God bless you!