

February 3, 2019

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Do You Know Your Father?"

— Faith and Deeds —

Text: James 2:21~24

**2:21 Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?**

**2:22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.**

**2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.**

**2:24 You see that people are justified by what they do and not by faith alone.**

#### Introduction

My friends, we sometimes meet someone who **is a great example**. They are a good example to other people as a human and as a person of character. On the other hand, there are people who are not great examples. It is very difficult to become a great example, because this person should not be condemned for his or her behavior. Naturally, they must have an excellent personality.

Let's assume that you have a child. Can you absolutely say to your child, "**You must imitate me?**" If you can do it, you must be an exceptional person. Generally, it is very difficult to say, "**You must imitate me,**" because we understand it best that we are not always great examples. Therefore, we often say to our children, "**Don't follow my example.**"

However, Paul said, "**Therefore I urge you to imitate me.**" (1Corinthians 4:16)

In those days, the Jewish disciples who followed their teacher always carefully watched and followed him. Therefore, the disciples of Paul carefully listened to everything he said.

When we read the Bible, we understand that Paul was a great evangelist. However, we also find that he did not seem to be a good example because of his faults as a human. For example, he was irritable and quick-tempered. Even so, Paul said, "**I urge you to imitate me.**" Why do you think he said this?

I don't think that the reason why he said, "**I urge you to imitate me,**" was because he thought of himself as an excellent man. He had weaknesses and also made mistakes. He sometimes was not a good example. However, he said, "**I urge you to imitate me.**" I think that Paul said this as a human who was not always an excellent man but also included his weakness and faults.

**Paul seemed to frankly accept his weakness and urged his disciples to imitate his way of life with weakness. This attitude is the way of life of believers who believe in God.**

Abraham is father for Jewish people. He is called **God's friend** and **father of faith**. James records as below—

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**2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.**

That Abraham was not a perfect example. However, God highly regarded him even though he had weakness and made mistakes. He became the father of every people who believed in God. How about you? ⇒ **Do you know that father?**

Let's study the following two points today.

### Main Points

#### 1 . **Abraham Our Father**

James records **Abraham our father** and it is an idiomatic expression that Jewish people often use even now.

Paul records as well James as below—

**Romans 4:16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.**

**4:17 As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not**

Let's read Galatians Chapter 3.

**Galatians 3:7 Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham.**

**3:29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

James records as below—

**James 2:21 Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?**

The verse above is a rhetorical question. ⇒ It expects the answer, "You are absolutely right."

Does what James teach here contradict the Christian doctrine that **we are saved through faith by God's grace**? No, it does not. As we already have studied, James repeatedly teaches the truth that the faith that is given salvation is proved by deeds.

The following points are that James argues.

## **2 . Faith and Deeds of Abraham the Father**

### **1 ) Abraham Was Made Righteous by Faith**

**Genesis 15:6 Abraham believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.**

It records that Abraham was credited as righteous only by his faith.

The Scripture above followed the Word below that the Lord said to Abraham.

**15:5 He took him outside him and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."**

As you know, his wife Sarah was a barren woman, so it is impossible to believe as a human. However, Abraham believed and accepted the God's Word. Faith is a really simple deed. It is to accept the God's Word with a simple heart.

When Mary who was told to conceive and give birth to a son, she simply received the Word of God like Abraham.

**Luke 1:38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.**

It is also difficult for us to believe and receive. However, I mention again that faith is sufficient for us by accepting it with a simple heart. God teaches us about faith through the story of Abraham. The story is mentioned below.

### **2 ) Abraham's Faith Was Tested. (Adonai Yireh)**

**Genesis 22:1 Sometime later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied.**

**22:2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."**

**22:3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.**

My friends, Isaac was the only precious son of Abraham. He was a promised son, given to Sarah who was a barren woman. He was to Abraham a precious treasure.

God said, **"Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."**

His commandment departed from our common sense. And it was a great challenge for Abraham.

My friends. If Isaac had been a burnt sacrifice, God's promise that his offspring should be like the stars would have not fulfilled. As a result, Abraham's genealogy would have broken. Abraham was asked to completely believe the Word of God.

As we know the end of Abraham's story, we may not feel so terrible and cruel. However, it was a severe trial for Abraham. It is faith, indeed and God already prepare something for him.

**Genesis 22:9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.**

**22:10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.**

**22:11 But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied.**

**22:12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."**

**22:13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.**

**22:14 So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."**

We understand God's grace for those who believe in Him. Abraham who appears in Genesis,

Chapter 15 believed in the Lord and accepted His Word. At that moment, **“Abraham believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” (15:6)**

Abraham. was made righteous before God by his deed and he became to be called **God’s friend.**

**2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend.**

When Jesus taught **the Lord’s Prayer** He said as below —

**Matthew 6:8 For your Father knows what you need before you ask him.**

Faith is to trust in God's Word and accept it. It is impossible to do so immediately, but we gradually master it through training. Faith is to believe in the fulfillment of His promise and trust and accept His Word.

**My friends. We understand the very important thing here. That is the secret to receive God’s blessing. Abraham, Mary and other forerunners in faith had the same experience that they were on the mountain of the Lord (the place that the Lord is present.) They listen to the God’s Voice and accepted it faithfully. It is a place called Adonai Yireh.**

It doesn’t mean that they don’t listen to God’s voice and to go their way by themselves. They were the saints who listened to His voice and responded it.

We are able to listen to the God’s voice from the Bible through the daily devotional time. We need first to listen to His Voice. His voice is still alive and speaks to us.

**Psalm 119:129 Your statutes are wonderful; therefore, I obey them.**

**119:130 The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.**

The psalm above is made by a person who had experienced God’s mercy. We are able to receive His Word today and it gives us His power and encouragement.

Let’s go back to the epistle of James.

Abraham had faith. His faith grew and was encouraged and almost became perfect through his deed in faith to sacrifice Isaac. Therefore, Abraham became **father of faith** of not only the Jewish people but also of the saints of all human beings. Now you understand that faith and deeds are inseparable things.

**Conclusion**

Title of the Message: “Do You Know Your Father?”

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Today, we listened to the Lord's voice through the message entitled, "Do You Know Your Father?" The father refers to Abraham.

Abraham is the great father of faith. We learned what faith is like through the God's Word.

Let's conclude the message by reading the following Scripture.

**James 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.**

**2:24 You see that people are justified by what they do and not by faith alone.**

\* God bless you!