

March 17, 20019

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "The Destructive Power of the Tongue"

—To Live with Jesus—

Text: James 3:5b~6

3:5 b Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

3:6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of one life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

Introduction

The world-wide extreme weather conditions continue. The wildfire that broke out in California in the USA on November 8, last year was put out after 15 days of burning. It was the greatest wildfire in history of California. The fire spread over the area that corresponds to Tokyo 23 wards (6,2000 hectares). 88 people were killed, 200 people were missing, and more than 1,3000 houses were burnt down.

There is a Japanese proverb saying, "A match may cause a fire." A small fire causes a great wildfire. Like this, a tongue that is a small organ has a major results and effects.

James records the great influence that is caused by the small tongue as below.

James 3:5 Likewise, a tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

3:6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

The Scripture teaches about the following three points.

- ① **It corrupts the whole person** : It effects our present situations.
- ② **It sets the whole course of one's life on fire** : It effects on our lives.
- ③ **It is itself set on fire by hell**: It effects on the eternal life.

These three points teach that our words effect on not only our present days but also the whole course of our lives and eternal lives. The Scripture above gives us a big warning.

Now let's study these three points today.

Main Points

1 . The Great Boasts of the Small Tongue

3:5 Likewise, a tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

Have you ever seen an advertisement that misleads people's hearts by the exaggerated description that is not true to its real quality? Some of you may have a very a regrettable experience in falling for such an advertisement. Likewise, our small tongue makes great boasts like the exaggerated advertisement.

There is an expression "to tell a lie after a lie." When someone tells a lie, they must tell another lie to hide their first lie and finally the lie grows bigger and bigger. We sometimes have such an experience.

We sometimes utter words that we should not have said. Then we repeatedly make mistakes to cover it. It is a really regrettable experience and a tragedy of the word. Like this, our tongue is very small (It can't be seen from outside), however, it does a significant work.

The small tongue leads us to undesirable results even today.

- ① We are labeled as failures by making mistakes of the tongue.
- ② We a come to have problems that effects our whole lives.
- ③ We are also given eternal judgment by making mistakes of the tongue.

Undoubtedly, the tongue is a terrifying organ. Did God originally intend for the tongue to be used like that? No, not at all. Human beings that were made in God's image were not originally like that. However, it is regrettable that we could not control and use our tongues correctly after we denied God's will. Therefore, we come to have various problems caused by our tongues.

The tongue is a small organ; however, it causes serious problems.

Let's study the problem of the tongue in more detail.

2 . The Tongue is a Fire.

3:6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

1) The Tongue That is Left Uncontrolled

A small fire that is left unextinguished has destructive power. The tongue that is uncontrolled also has destructive power. This world (the cosmos) that was created by God is controlled by Satan now. Therefore, the nature of this world that is under control of Satan is an evil one.

Jesus said about human beings that are controlled by Satan as below—

Matthew 15:11 What goes in someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.

What comes out of someone's mouth refers to words that are in their minds.

The tongue that is one of organs of the body expresses the evil of the world. There is nothing but the tongue that consequently causes the evil things. In this respect, the tongue is the special organ. The tongue carries out the evil ideas in our mind and they defile the whole body and finally our lives are destroyed.

{Illustration} Adolf Hitler, the Leader of Nazi Germany

One of central persons of World War 2 was Adolf Hitler. It is said that he practiced many times before a mirror how to speak to win people's hearts and minds.

When we watch his speaking manner on film, we see his eccentric gestures and speech that greatly touched and misled German people. No one could block his tongue. We have to say that what James teaches here is true based on Hitler's speeches.

His tongue was really like a fire that mislead German people towards their terrible mistakes. In those days, the hatred towards Jewish people gradually increased and caused the abnormal act that killed more than six million Jewish people (the Holocaust).

On top of that, the Holocaust resulted in establishing a new constitution where Germany often receives the weak (refugees). It is said that one of the sources of the refugee problem in Germany originates from the evil acts that Nazi Germany had done.

The wrong words that one leader uttered misled the nation to the incorrect direction. And that fire of that problem continues burning even today.

2) To Control the Tongue

My friends. We studied the great influence and the power of the tongue. It is very difficult to control the tongue.

James records as below—

3:2 We all stumble in many ways. Those who are never at fault in what they say are perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

The verse above teaches us, who also live today, that it is very difficult to control the tongue. However, if we don't control our words, something very terrible will happen.

Then, what should we do?

① We need to understand the problem of the tongue.

When we decide something, we need to understand what the problems are beforehand. If we understand the problems, we are able to carefully deal with them. On the other hand, if we don't understand the problem, we feel uneasy and eventually will be broken under the strain. At the same time, it is important to understand the problems so that we might not get into trouble.

When the situation is too formidable for us to handle, we should not utter any words and keep silent.

The proverbs record as below—

“Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.”(17:28)

What do you think about the tongue? To understand the problem of the tongue is to acquire wisdom.

If we want to avoid being involved in unnecessary problems, we should understand first that the tongue is like the fire and has the power to burn down the forest.

② Jesus Who Is in Us

Everything that comes out of us is evil because we are controlled by the evil of this world. However, even though the world is like that, we have hope that we don't need to live under evil.

The Bible records as below—

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” 2 Corinthians 5:17

It means that he who is in Christ is a **new creation**. He is no longer the old one who is controlled by the evil heart of the old sin. It is true that Jesus Christ died on the cross so that we were changed into the new creation from the old one.

The old man should have died with Jesus Christ and now he becomes the new man like Jesus who has resurrected. It is the blessing that is given to those who believe in Jesus.

Jesus Christ is the only way that we are freed from the problem of our tongues and able to control them. If Jesus lives in us, our old selves are gone because Jesus, who is perfect, controls us. It is the privilege that is given to those who believe in Jesus as Christ (the Messiah). How happy we are!

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "The Destructive Power of the Tongue"

—To Live with Jesus—

Today we studied the fearful and destructive power of the tongue. No one can control the tongue.

James records as below—

3:2 We all stumble in many ways. Those who are never at fault in what they say are perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

Then how should we live?

- 1 . We need to understand the problem of the tongue.
- 2 . We should live with Jesus. (Jesus' presence in us.)

Let's conclude the sermon with the following Scripture.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"
2 Corinthians 5:17

* God bless you!