

June 30, 2019

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Do You Want to Become Great?"

—Do You Know What You Are Asking? —

Text: Matthew 20:20~28

20:20 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

20:21 "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."

20:22 "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered.

20:23 Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."

20:24 When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers.

20:25 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

20:26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,

20:27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—

20:28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Introduction

We sometimes think that we really understand each other, however, we really don't know anything. In some cases, we have difficulties communicating no matter how much we try to understand each other.

{Illustration}

I am embarrassed to say that my wife and I sometimes speak on different wavelengths. For example, when she says "that" (referring to a thing in her idea) or "he" (his or her idea), I really don't understand things what she means, because I am not in her idea, on equal footing. When she says "he" it could mean almost half of the world's population.

Once we stand on an equal footing, we “understand” each other. My example is a small matter, however there is “a talking on different wavelengths” in the world and it causes strife and problems.

There was such a situation between the Lord Jesus and His disciples about 2000 years ago. It is written in today’s text.

It happened just before Jesus’ passion. Jesus predicted His death a third time.

Matthew 20:18 We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death

20:19 and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked, flogged, and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!

At that very moment, the mother (Salome) of Zebedee’s sons (James, John) came to Jesus and asked as below—

20:20 Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

20:21 “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.”

When the ten other disciples heard it, they were indignant.

20:24 When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers.

Jesus said as below—

20:22 “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” “We can,” they answered.

The conversation was on different wavelengths. Let’s consider what they really thought in their hearts.

Main Points

1 . The Heart That is Revealed

1) Man’s Heart

20:21 “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.”

Salome must have eagerly desired that her two sons (James and John) might sit at Jesus’ right and other at His left. It must have been a great desire in her heart.

What attitude did Jesus’ beloved disciples take toward them?

18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

16:22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

Then, the disciples were indignant with James and John and Salome their mother.

20:24 When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers.

Their attitudes show their thoughts. There were no unity or harmony among them. Why? Each of them considered himself first. We see an evil nature of human being there, however, it is also our nature, isn't it?

It causes a problem even now in our society.

2) Christ's Heart

Jesus Christ said to them as below—

20:22 “You don't know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” “We can,” they answered.

20:23 Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.”

The disciples who followed Jesus for about three years didn't understand His thought. There was a gap between Jesus and the disciples even though He predicted His passion three times.

However, Jesus didn't get angry or rebuke them, but taught carefully.

The attitude of Jesus was completely faithful.

Philippians 2:5 In your relationships with one another, have the same attitude of mind Christ Jesus had:

2:6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

Why was there such a big gap between Jesus and the disciples? The disciples were human beings (the flesh). They seemed to be selfish to the core.

Only God can break the strong flesh. It is beyond human power.

When the Holy Spirit, who is the God's Spirit, works on human beings, He breaks them who are like lumps of selfishness. In order to be broken, the first thing they have to do is to experience Jesus' cross. The Redemption of Jesus needs to be perfectly fulfilled for them. The Redemption refers to **atonement** (at-one-moment). God's atonement is fulfilled at one moment.

It is God's work of atonement that is fulfilled at one moment.

{Illustration}

A short time ago, when I took a mission trip to Sydney, Australia, I met a certain Japanese woman one day before I returned home. She loved Australia and married an Australian man.

However, their marriage ended in failure. A few years later, she married another Australian man again. However, regrettably, she failed in the marriage life again and divorced. She was desperately hurt and finally became to be distrustful of human beings.

She could not have hope in her life and distrusted men. She began to cut her body with a knife and finally attempted suicide. At that time, she met God in the Bible. The word of salvation touched her heart. Then, she realized that Jesus Christ was her true Savior. She confessed her sins before Jesus Christ and believed in Jesus as her personal Savior. The Atonement (at one moment) was fulfilled. Her life was greatly changed since then. It was an amazing work of God.

People have various thoughts in their hearts. We are really broken after we met Jesus Christ and experienced His Atonement.

Then, let's think of how we are able to receive God's blessing.

2. The Way that Receive God's Blessing

1) A Desire to Become Great

20:26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,

A **desire to become great** is not a bad thought. Please don't misunderstand what I said. **The desire to become great** means here to try to attain what one wants by ignoring all the others. It refers to a haughty heart.

20:25 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

The verse above means that the chosen people (the Israelites) are ruled by the Gentiles. It is that Christians are ruled by the people of the world.

A haughty heart makes one's future hopeless, but a humble heart opens his future. The haughty heart absolutely draws disgrace and destruction.

Some put too much confidence in their faith because they read many books of faith and listen to many sermons.

Another person rejects to be taught anymore because of his haughty heart. We should open our ears and listen to the word of warning, so that we don't disgrace and regret ourselves.

Then, how can we receive God's blessing?

2) **Become a Servant.**

20:26b Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant

When we look ourselves, we understand that we are selfish to the core. Therefore, we need to be broken. Jesus looked through the disciples' desire **to become great** in their hearts. And He taught them the principle to receive God's blessing. ⇒ **To become a servant.**

Jesus taught them to become a servant if they wanted to become great like Salome, James and John. It is a paradoxical truth and a difference between the worldly standards and the ones of the Kingdom of Heaven.

What does it mean to serve? It means that our haughtiness, pride and boasting are broken. Then, how can we be broken? The disciples did not understand the secret of being broken until the day of Pentecost.

The secret to understand the principle of receiving God's blessing is to fix our eyes on Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus willingly received reproach, slander, pain and persecution. He did not have any haughtiness, pride or boasting. He became a servant under his master to fulfill **the Atonement** for us. It is the true way to receive God's blessing in our lives.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Do You Want to Become Great?"

—Do You Know What You Are Asking? —

Today we studied a very important topic that is the secret to receive God's blessing.

The haughty desire (to become great) in the hearts of James, John and Salome also mirrors our attitude in hearts, doesn't it?

The Bible teaches us the paradoxical truth that is quite different from the worldly teaching.

The verse below teaches it.

20:26b Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.

* God Bless You !