

June 7, 2019

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Let's Receive More Grace"

—The Seven Advices—

Text: James 4:6~10

4:6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble and oppressed."

4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

4:8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

4:9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.

4:10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Introduction

Recently, one of issues that was debated in the Diet is "A Pension Problem, 20 million Japanese Yen in Retirement Savings." The Financial Services Agency reported that couples will require up to 20 million yen (except public pensions) in retirement savings. The government said that the report was inappropriate, and Finance Minister apologized. There are various opinions about the problem of 20 million yen in retirement savings. The Financial Services Agency estimates that this sum of money is required in order to have a happy retirement life.

My friends, people think that they need money to live happy lives. Yes, it is true in some respects. However, we Christians think that our happy lives are not based on 20 million yen but based on the real salvation of our souls and eternal life that is given to us.

We are blessed more that we are able to live victorious lives. Christians who believe in God become the winners in life, not the losers in life. It is the way of life that pleases God.

Let's think the seven ways that we become winners in our lives today.

Main Points

1 . The Seven Ways to Achieve Victory in Life

1) **Submit to God.**

44:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God.

James quoted from the Proverbs;

3:34 He mocks proud mockers but shows favor to the humble and oppressed.

The proud doesn't realize that he or she needs God's grace. The proud refers to a friend of the world and one who rejects God. Sin originally means to reject God, therefore, the way to overcome sin is to follow God. That is the real way to overcome sin.

The first step to follow God is to confess our sins.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

2) **Resist the Devil.**

4:7 Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

When we realize that the devil tempts and attacks us, we should not submit to it but should resolutely stand up to it. The secret is that it is impossible for us to face by ourselves. To overcome the devil is **to stand up to it**. The devil is a horrible and powerful being. We should not treat it lightly. However, when we carefully face to the devil, God helps us and gives a victory.

The devil comes to denounce us.

1Peter 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

However, those who face the devil by faith are promised to win a victory.

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

3) **Come Near to God.**

4:8 Come near to God and he will come near to you.

Those who are friends of the world are those who went astray from God. To come close to God means to change their direction towards God. To come to God is to attend worship and also to read the Bible. We sometimes are busy and tired, so it is very hard to read the Bible everyday, but it is a way to come near to God.

To pray and have a fellowship with brothers and sisters is also a way to come near to God. The important thing is to willingly try to come near to God by using these various ways.

Jesus is always watching us and pours His love and intercedes between God the Father and us. However, if we don't willingly come near to God, it is difficult to receive the Lord's blessing.

My friends, if the parents help their child too much, they ultimately spoil them. God doesn't do everything for us, who just wait for Him without doing anything. Of course, we are saved by God's love and grace, however, it is not prepared to receive His grace by doing nothing. If we are this way, we will be spiritually spoiled children.

We need to willingly come near to God.

4) Wash Your Hands.

4:8 Wash your hands, you sinners,

You sinners means those who commit sin among believers. It gives a warning to them not to keep their outward sins. They should not continually commit sins.

When he feels sorry that he made someone troubled, he should visit him/her and apologize. When he realizes that he is careless with money or stolen money, he must pay it. He must not keep it and not let it leave alone. This is what it means to wash your hands.

5) Purify Your Hearts.

4:8 and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

James teaches to wash our inward selves as well as washing of hands that is an outward deed. It is to **purify your hearts**. To purify hearts is to look up Jesus' cross and trust in His blood on the cross. It is impossible for us to purify our hearts by ourselves.

A cross is hung on the front wall in our sanctuary. However, the cross is mere a symbol. We don't pray to the cross. However, when we come to worship God and become quiet and look at the cross, we are able to look up to His cross.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

The blood that Jesus shed on the cross cleanses my sin.

6) Grieve

4:9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.

It means that they grieve, mourn and wail because of their own sin.

Jesus said in **the Gospel of Matthew** as below —

5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

James also teaches the same truth as Jesus taught. But why did James and Jesus teach them to grieve, mourn and wail? Because, when they grieve so, they will realize their true selves.

Paul said,

2 Corinthians 7:10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Paul who grieved and wailed for his sinful nature and realized how wretched he was became a man of sorrow. A man really realizes that Jesus took his place for him, the worst of sinners, and died on the cross only after he experiences godly sorrow. Then he is given real happiness and hope.

Therefore, the Bible teaches that to grief and sorrow is useful for us, because the greater blessing is promised than grief and sorrow.

7) To Be Humble before the Lord.

4:10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Generally, the Epistle of James is said that it emphasizes deeds, but a center of his message is **“To humble yourselves before the Lord”**.

We easily behave humbly before people. It is not so difficult to be said that he is humble, or she is courteous.

However, the Bible teaches **“to humble yourselves before the Lord”**.

It is very important point to solve the problem of sin. We are not able to overcome sin without being humble before the Lord. The Lord will lift us up.

* As we studied, James taught **the seven ways to defeat sin** to Jewish Christians.

Let's study further about the victorious Christian life.

2. The Seven Ways to Win A Victory in Life

1) To Follow God

What do you think of the today's message? James taught **the seven ways to overcome sin**. You may keep some of them in mind. Please follow the way that you keep some in mind. I mean, you should respond to what God taught you.

{Illustration}

I had a memorable experience. We offer a Love Monetary Offering at every opportunity to show our thanks to God. Usually we willingly offer money to God with joy and thanks. God shows His glory by using the offering of love and thanks.

One day, the Voice of Mission received a thanks offering. I opened an envelope with joy; however, it was empty. The sender might have forgotten to put money inside.

There was another, opposite case. A certain church built a new building. We offered some money. After a short time, the Pastor of the church called me, and said "Thank you for your offering, but it was empty." I was so embarrassed that I wished the earth would swallow me up. His words made me blush. My friends, it was a careless mistake. But I also should act carefully with a sense of urgency.

We sometimes make careless mistakes in our Christian lives, so we need a feeling of moderate tension, because we are not perfect.

We listen to God about **the seven ways to overcome sin** and the victorious life.

How do we respond to God's teaching?

I was taught another important point to lead the victorious life. It is a key word to lead the victorious life.

2) The Important Key Words

A word, **and**, that is appears once in Verse 7,8,10 is particularly important one.

4:7...and he will flee from you.

4:8...and he will come near to you.

4:10 ... and he will lift you up.

The verses above are applicable to the seven ways that I mentioned.

God fulfilled salvation through the cross and resurrection. He sent the Holy Spirit He promised on the day of Pentecost and promised a victorious Christian life. He prepared the way to overcome all sins and to live as a friend of God. And it has been already prepared.

However, the reason the Bible record the word "and" means that if we don't respond

them, we are not able to apply them. If we ignore them, we are not automatically purified or be lifted.

If we don't listen to God and follow Him, He doesn't do His work. If we listen to and follow Him, **and**, He will do His work. It doesn't mean that God is small-minded (Please don't misunderstand.). We have led lives for a long time that are spiritually insensitive to God's grace, therefore, we intentionally need to listen to and follow to receive His grace.

We should not blame someone for our uncleanness and weakness. Instead, we are given salvation after we have painful and sorrowful experiences with tears and look up the cross before God.

God loves us. The Spirit, who God jealously longs for, lives in us, therefore, let's stand before the Lord as those who He loves.

Conclusion

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Today, we listened to the voice of God about **the seven ways to win a victory in life**. God prepared the way of salvation through Jesus Christ for those who are spiritually dead in the world. He also gave the Spirit as He promised. On the top of that, He prepared the way to win a victory so that we are not defeated by sin.

How blessed we are! This is Christianity.

Then how should we lead lives?

- 1 . To faithfully follow the seven advices
- 2 . To live with the living God

* God bless you!