

July 21, 2019

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Testimony by Ms. Mika Ooe

Nine years ago, on December 19<sup>th</sup>, I was baptized here at Kitahama International Bible Church. It was a sorrowful day because my father passed away on that day but at the same time, it became a joyful day because I came to have a new heavenly father.

At first, it was Mr. Horiuchi, who came to give me counseling, who taught me about KIBC, Pastor Kuroda and the Franklin Graham Festival. The festival was a large-scale, evangelical event that was held at Osaka Castle Hall on October 2010. Mr. Horiuchi told me about the evangelical event and gave me a book about Rev. Franklin Graham, the son of Rev. Billy Graham, a great preacher. I was looking forward to going to the festival.

Two days before the event, my former company's boss and two colleagues appeared in my dream and pointed a certain house and said, "A masseuse who stays upstairs is skillful. You should go to see her." I immediately went to the house. Two women came and gently said with a smile, "A dragon in your heart is swept away and you will be soon freed from pain."

When I look back my life, it has greatly changed from a cursed one into a blessed one during only three months in 2010: meeting Pastor Kuroda, attending Franklin Graham Festival and being baptized

I realized that I had once looked for the best life while I was against God. But now I understand that my life should be sincerely and faithfully following God by offering myself with a pure heart. I found that my life is full of great peace and it is just as I have always wished. I am really happy to understand that God blesses me.

I have experienced amazing things, including miracles, during the past 9 years. When I met Pastor Kuroda, I asked him first, "If I study the Bible, will I become rich?" When I think back on that time, I feel deeply ashamed of my attitude. However, I thought at that time even if my heart would become pure and beautiful by studying the Bible, I would not be happy if I would still be poor, therefore, I frankly asked Pastor Kuroda.

When I asked him, he answered, "Of course, God can make us rich." Hearing his answer, I was very surprised and at the same time, I was given a big hope. He did not say, "What a worldly question! Don't ask me such a thing." On the contrary, he told me a wonderful story that a certain American man who did tithing achieved great success in his business from extreme poverty. He runs three outlet malls now and he shares the blessing of tithes with many people.

In those days, I went independent from the company I worked (The former company offered development and self-development programs and I worked as a sales representative.). I was able to make an ordinary living by working without any monetary difficulties. Then, being taught by Pastor Kuroda, I began to offer a one-tenth part of my monthly income constantly by following this Scripture below.

**“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.” Malachi 3:10**

I decided not to be absent from Sunday worships in the next year. On top of that, when I worked in sales, I stopped giving any sales talks. I tried to grasp customers’ needs in detail and to take good care of them as if their needs were my needs. I decided to willingly help them. I continued working like that.

**“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Luke 6:38**

When I changed from my former ways of selling things to get money into giving joy, the sales of goods grew larger and larger. I didn’t need to sell by myself because my customers themselves came to buy or they kindly introduced other customers. I managed to achieve success. Equally important was that I was able to attend every Sunday worship throughout the year.

As a result, the amount of money offering continued to increase, however, my heart was tempted by the worldly thoughts, “Should I offer such a large sum of money?”, “Does money offering really bring enormous income?” or “Is this offering is really used with love for God?” I thought that these ideas were pieces of evidence that my sin was still lurking in me and I eagerly prayed to God that my life may show more of His grace.

I sometimes offered the tithes without joy as if it was my duty. I didn’t pray to God for giving me so many blessings. It became nothing more than a simple deed for me and after that, I came to spend too much money in my life. I understood that if we willingly offer the tithes, God surely pours us much money even if the economic conditions in the world become worse.

I still didn’t understand what a real pleasure it was. It was deeply hidden behind money. I understand through my experience that the truly precious thing was not money, but it was God’s truth. God taught me that when I willingly use the resources that He gave me for my neighbors like that good Samaritan, I will store a treasure in heaven and will be full of joy and God will abundantly give me more in reward.

**“Do not wear yourself out to get rich; do not trust your own cleverness.” Proverb 23:4**

Surprisingly, the title of the Sunday message that I first listened to was *The Cursed Cross*. Pastor Kuroda said, “The opposite meaning of being cursed is being blessed.” I felt something shining in **the blessed life that is loved and protected by God** at that time. Many people who I shared my miraculous experiences with never said, “I’m fed up of this religious talking!” On the contrary, they took something shining back in their eyes. That is the happiest moment for me. From now on, I would like to tell people God’s miracles through my experiences and teach how He loves and protects us. I believe it is my mission throughout my life. Thank you.

June 21, 2019

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Testimony by Mr. Yasuhiro Hirose

Title of the Testimony: "The Lord Our Savior Is Waiting For Me"

**Genesis 3:9 The Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"**

Good morning my brothers and sisters. I give thanks to the Lord that I am able to share my testimony today.

I would like to share about my relationship with God, and also my relationship with Kitahama International Bible Church under the theme of "The Lord Is Waiting". I would be very happy if I can show you God's love pouring over me like a humble man and His will for you.

### **1. The Lord Prepared — "Welcome Back!"**

When I look back on my Christian life, there was a strange relationship between my Church life and Nakanoshima business district in Osaka.

My classmate in high school took me to a certain special gospel meeting on the 19th floor of the Osaka OMM Building, in Tenmabashi, the station next to Keihan Kitahama, on December 1974 and I had met Jesus Christ first and believed in Him the following month.

I belonged to Izumi Christ Assembly that was a young and active assembly at that time. Its average age was in late 20s and they eagerly preached the Gospel to businessmen in downtown Osaka. The members were constantly increasing, and they planted new assemblies, Shinsaibashi Christ Assembly, Higashisumiyoshi Assembly and Higobashi Assembly. They planted assemblies closer to the center of Osaka business district.

I have good memories of those days that I worked very hard for Jesus with brothers at my assembly: preaching on a street corner at Shinsaibashi, a special gospel meeting of 1,500 people at Nakanoshima Public Hall. However, I gradually couldn't follow the tight schedule of ministry and I finally left it after 4 years of Christian life. I didn't go to church for 17 years since then by ignoring God.

However, the merciful God guided me to Tezukayama Lutheran Church on January 8, 1995 (the Great Hanshin Earthquake's year) and I began to attend worship service again. Next Sunday was the first Sunday of February, I attended Communion Service for the first time in 17 years.

Taking the Communion bread, I came to have an inexpressible sense of relief (peace of mind) that I finally came back to the Lord and my heart was filled with repentance, "Lord, I'm sorry." Tears welled

up in my eyes. At that very moment, I heard God's voice, **"Welcome back, Yasuhiro."**

## **2. The Lord Prepared — An Encounter with Pastor Kuroda**

I decided to pray for a year and then become a member of Tezukayama Lutheran Church. However, the more I prayed, the more I felt unconfident about it. Meanwhile, one year later, in January, the New Year Conference of Kinki Evangelical Lutheran Churches was held in Nara Prefecture and Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda came as a special guest speaker.

The encounter with Pastor Kuroda was the first step to KIBC. He testified about his ministry in the communist countries. I heard about Christians in those countries who risked their lives for faith. And I was taught that their testimonies and prayers in faith moved God's hands and broke down the Iron Curtain and the Wall of Berlin. I was impressed and thought, "It is his church that my soul was seeking." I kept praying about my church and came to have confidence in SIBC (Pastor Kuroda was the pastor of SIBC at that time) was the God's answer and I began to attend the church.

## **3. The Lord Prepared — "Welcome Back" Again.**

Around May 1996 Pastor Kuroda held Shalom Bible Study Gathering and Monday worship at EL Osaka (Osaka Labor Institute) in Tenmabashi for the ministry of businessmen.

When I attended those meetings, I felt as if I was looking out the window and returning to my hometown and also heard God's voice telling me, **"Welcome back home!"**

Since then I began to see that the work of the living God and Pastor Kuroda's ministry moved forward and forward.

And I began to attend Uchi-hirano-cho International Bible Church that was the forerunner of Kitahama International Bible Church.

## **4. The Lord's Plan — Let's Walk Together!**

IBC at Uchi-Hirano-cho was located within 1.5 km distance of Higobashi Christ Assembly, my former church. Both churches were located along Hirano-cho avenue. There was Nakanoshima Public Hall that was the stronghold for ministry of Higobashi Christ Assembly and Nakanoshima Library where I desperately studied for seeking my future way after I left church.

How amazing God's plan was! God gave me a chance to walk in faith again, "I know your life before you are saved, and I prepared your place here at Uchi-Hirano-cho. Now, let's walk together again, Yasuhiro" He gave me an opportunity to start again. God's message was, **"Let's walk together again!"**

## **5. The Lord's Plan — Our Company Became a Listed Company**

I made a special study in Civil and Environmental Engineering, however I put God's work before everything, so I decided to work for a company of about 20 employees that dealt in cloth for men's wear, because the company was about 150m on foot from the church.

However, I left God and the church during the time that I worked for the company. At that time, I was a 23-year-old man who thought that I had only myself to rely on, so I quit the company and went to school again to get a job in a leading company. However, I failed an employment examination twice.

In those days my father rebuilt his house and came to run into debt of twenty million yen at the age of 60. I began to work part-time to help decrease my father's heavy financial burden. Later in 1981, I was able to get a job in the company that I worked for part-time.

The company where I got a job was an IT company that was capitalized at three hundred million yen and of 1200 employees. I was in-charge of technical computing, the civil engineering field, bridge engineering and a manufacturing method.

Our company was on 14F, Higobashi Center Building and I saw clearly Higobashi Christ Assembly that I attended before from my office. I really thought, "I never thought I would be here, such a place!" When I went to work, I was careful not to meet brothers and sisters of Higobashi Christ Assembly.

Fifteen years later (February 1996), our company expanded operations and listed on the second section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange (listed on the first section 3 years before). It was one year after I returned to church. On top of that, on the same day I was promoted to be an assistant section chief by left my colleagues far behind.

I realized that becoming a head of section was a goal when I was 23 years-old, who left God and the church.

In those days, I had troubles in business, however, God knew everything, and He had been preparing that very blessed day for me as a reward, who came back to the Lord.

## **6. God's Plan — Prayer for Kobe City**

Two days after I met Pastor Kuroda, I had an unforgettable experience on January 17, 1996. On that day, a week after I began to go to church again, the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake occurred.

On that day, I had an appointment with Mr. I at Kawasaki Steel Corporation in Kobe city. He was killed by the earthquake, who rented a room in Kasuganomichi, Kobe for on a long business trip from Chiba Prefecture.

On the other hand, I had been blessed by the Lord. When the Earthquake occurred, I was taking part in restoring Han-Shin Highway Route 3 Kobe Line, Akashi-Kaikyo Bridge and many other places.

I was thinking to visit the vacant lot where Mr. I died and place flowers and give prayers, but I didn't know the place. And early in 1996, I had a request for an appointment from Mr. I's boss (Tokyo) of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries in Kobe on January 17th, the anniversary of the Earthquake. He taught me the place where Mr. I died. Finally, around at 7 pm I could offer prayers for the bereaved and sufferers and place flowers on the place where Mr. I died.

When I finished praying, I couldn't stop crying.

"Approximately 6,500 people were killed, who didn't know God."

"I am alive. No, I am made alive."

"Many people suffered a great deal of damage from the earthquake, but God makes me live a blessed life.

"It was me that should have been killed before God." "I had ignored God more than 15 years; even thought I already knew Him."

"However, I am really alive. It is God who makes me alive."

"God has been waiting for me."

I prayed to God, "My Lord, I am very unfaithful and disobedient, however, I really want to be your useful tool. Make me useful for your work."

Then, singing *O Jesus, I Have Promised*, I went back to Sannomiya station by taking a dark street, so that no one could see my tearful face.

## **7. God's Will — The Lord Savior Is Waiting.**

I had lost faith in God, however, He didn't forsake me and kept watching me with perseverance and He caught me in His expected time. The Lord Savior was waiting for me.

**"Where are You." Genesis 3:9**

### **The Lord Savior is waiting.**

I would like to keep walking and heeding God's voice and following His will.

Thank you very much.

Testimony Worship Service

July 21<sup>st</sup>. 2019

Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of Message: "Forget Not All His Benefits"

Text: Psalm 103:2, Joshua 1:5

### Introduction

Do not forget all His benefits. God is the one who fixes His eyes on us and watches with an eye of love by the various shapes.

**Psalm 103:2 says, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."**

Today I would like to consider three points.

### Important points

#### **1. Give Thanks to the Lord**

The people of Israel were slaves for 430 long years in Egypt. Moses was the leader and led more than 2 million people to the God's promised land, Canaan. Just before they entered the promised land, Moses died, and Joshua took over his position as a leader for Israelites. God gave him His word and encouraged him.

**Joshua 1:5 says, "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you."**

Here we can learn what God told Joshua, He said, remember the past deeds that God has done for Israelites.

He said in **Psalm 103:2 "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."**

We also want to give thanks to Lord what he has done in our Kitahama church which is spiritual oasis and also our personal lives.



## 2. Take Courage

God told Joshua His wonderful words three times: **“Be strong and courageous”**

in verse 6,7 and 9. God gave him encouragement. Do you know why He said so?

Because almighty God will be with Joshua, too. This is uncourageous word.

You know, one of His natures is faithfulness.

## 3. Be Encouraged

**Joshua 1:5 says, “No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.”**

You know, Joshua understood immediately His promises when he heard His words.

- 1) I will be with you as I was with Moses.
- 2) I will not leave you or forsake you.

How encouraging!

## Conclusion

Title of Message: “Forget Not All His benefits”

**“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” Psalm 103:2**

1. Give thanks to the Lord
2. Take Courage
3. Be Encouraged

\* God bless you !