

August 4, 2019

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "You, Who Are You?"

—I, Who Am Not Able to See My Real Self—

Text: James4:11~12

**4:11 Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.**

**4:12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?**

#### Introduction

As we have studied the Epistle of James, we understand the core of his message was **to be humble**. Chapter 4 focuses on this theme most.

What do you think about **being humble** (humility)?

We adults often try to be humble, however, a little child (about 1 or 2 years-old) seems to be always humble.

When a little child is not shy in front of strangers (the cutest time), they are not conscious of themselves even if they stand out in the crowd or no one looks at them, who is crawling around the floor on their hands and knees. However, they become conscious of themselves some day. From that moment, they are no longer attractive as a child who is not shy in front of strangers. For the little child, there is no difference between a genuine crown and a cheap, glittering thing.

My friends, humility that the Bible means is not to pull myself down in some state, but it means to be completely unconscious of myself. No adults have such humility. It is very difficult for us to be humble. Human nature always tends to appraise and be proud of themselves, that is quite opposite from being humble.

A little child is quite different. Jesus said as below—

**Luke 18:17 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.**

**10:21 At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.**

Then, what problems do the adults have, who have difficulties being humble?

James has taken up a problem of words. The words they utter make troubles. Today’s Scripture points out a subject of slander.

James teaches the saints how to live, who believe in God.

Let’s study the following two points.

### Main Points

#### **1 . You Should not Judge.**

##### **1 ) A Problem of Slandering**

**4:11 Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.**

James wrote above because there were many believers who slandered and spoke against other believers in those days and they did it in daily conversations.

When the church became too big, some people seemed to become a Christian by following other people without faith. They were not like Mary Magdalene, who completely repented and became a Christian. They probably didn’t think seriously before becoming Christians. Therefore, when these people came to gather, they didn’t talk about the principles of faith, rather they must have had a conversation about worldly things, gossips and slander.

Slander is to speak ill of people and criticize in order to make one’s situation better than other people. One of reasons not to speak ill of people that James pointed is that he **speaks against the law and judges it**. Those who speak against brothers speak against the law. The law refers not to the Moses’ law, but it does to the perfect law, the law of freedom.

**James 1:25 But those who look intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continue in it— not forgetting what they have heard but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.**

It refers to the law, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

**2:8 If you keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right.**

When they speak against brothers, they break **the perfect law** (the golden rule), so that they put themselves on the higher position than others. They are becoming really conceited.

## **2) God’s Authority**

The Verse 12 records an another reason that they must not speak against brothers.

**4:12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?**

James says to them to focus on authority of God who created the heavens and the earth. He clearly shows His will through the law and He is able to judge, save and destroy people to fulfill the purpose of the law.

My friends, to speak against our neighbors means that we exercise God’s authority that belongs only to God. We do a material breach against God. James told , **“You—who are you to judge your neighbor?”**

**\* The important thing is that we should understand that human beings are not given the authority to judge people. Only God has the authority.**

What do you think about what James teaches? Let’s examine ourselves to see if we are not boasting? Please understand that our mission is to love our neighbors, not judge them.

However, some people clearly do wrong things in their daily lives. And others have problems. When we have a conversation with people, we sometimes necessarily point out his/her mistakes. We need to admonish and correct others whenever we notice their mistakes in the home or at church. I don’t believe that this is judging people. Please don’t misunderstand what I mentioned.

## **2. Conditions for Those Who Give Advice**

The Bible teaches that we sometimes meet someone who makes a mistake or is caught in a sin. Then, what do you do? How will you handle the matter? Some of you might have a bitter experience when you offered advice without a good relationship of trust with that other person.

We need to learn some conditions to give advice to other people.

The Epistle to Galatians teaches us some conditions when we can give advice to other people.

### **1 ) With a Gentle Heart**

**6:1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.**

#### **Galatians**

In a word, if we give advice in a blaze of anger, nothing will change. First of all, we need to check if we have a gentle heart in us. It is very important that we are freed from anger to the other people. If we can't control our anger, we are not in a position to give advice.

Being gentle is one of **the fruit of the Spirit** (gift). (Galatians 5:22,23) Those who live by following the Spirit are given the fruit of the Spirit. They are given a gentle heart through God's mercy. We are not allowed to tell the others, "I think that is wrong," without checking inward if we have a gentle heart and love in us to them.

### **2 ) Carrying Each Other's Burdens**

**6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.**

#### **Galatians**

The result will usually come after mistakes and sin. We are asked if we are ready to carry the other's burdens that come out of their problems, mistakes and sin. It means to take the blame for them. If we are ready to take the blame for them, we have a right to give advice.

However, if we look down them with an icy stare, we should rather not give advice. We are really responsible for giving advice, because we, too, are not perfect. We need to be careful not to be trapped by an argument dragged on endlessly.

### **3 ) We Should Examine Ourselves.**

**6:3 If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves .**

#### **Galatians**

As I mentioned, we need to do self-examination, "How about me?" in various points. We have no right to give advice to other people without self-examination.

We sometimes criticize, "He does such a thing." However, we do the very same thing. We say, "He is nagging all the time." However, we also talk just like him.

God asks me , "You, Who Are You?" It is not right to criticize other people as if I am something, but I am not like that. Everyone has his own burden that he should take.

The epistle teaches that you speak about other people this and that, however, you should be more careful about yourself first of all. Paul says, “You have your own problem. You should first settle down it. Then, if you have love, you should care for other people.”

Let me summarize today’s message.

**\* We need to think about other people and sometimes give advice. And, it does not mean to judge them, when we realize someone’s mistake and give advice. However, the important thing is that we need to be illuminated by the God’s light first before we give advice to other people.**

We need to be illuminated by the light of God’s Word. If we are not in the light, we will be caught by selfish thinking. We are always exposed to danger. Therefore, we should be calm down before the Lord every day.

### Conclusion

Title of the Message: “You, Who Are You?”

—I, Who Are Not Able to See My Real Self—

James focuses on slandering people, which was a problem in those days. He teaches us **to be humble**. Some of believers in God began to speak against other people. James gave a warning that it was a very dangerous problem, because it will turn out just as Satan wished.

Then, why should we not judge people?

- ① Human beings who are not perfect have no right to judge.
- ② The authority to judge belongs to God. (We should not go across the boundary of God.)

**4:12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?**

We should remember that **to judge** and **to give advice** is quite different. On top of that, the Bible teaches that when we give advice we need to understand some conditions.

The Epistle to Galatians records them in Chapter 6:1~3. What did we study in Verse 3?

It is that we human beings, who are not perfect, should first need to be illuminated by the light of God.

**6:1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should**

**restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.**

**Galatians**

\* God bless You !