

September 15, 2019

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (Respect-for-the-Aged Day Worship)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Testimony: When We Realize What is Really Important

—The Lord Speaks—

Text: 2 Corinthians 4:16~18

4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

4:18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Introduction

Today, we have **Respect-for-the-Aged Day Worship**.

We celebrate this joyful day by remembering our seniors in life. Each of them, who walked a long journey, has a special and different story that is like a drama. It is a curious thing to understand, for we don't know who the playwright is.

By the way, Ryotaro Shiba, a novelist, said, **"A face of one's younger days reveals his rough nature of his birth."** However, **"As he grows older, his face reveals his real character and the content of mind as if chiseled by a sculptor.** Therefore, each of faces of our teens, 30s, 60s and 90s is chiseled by each life event and story.

The best-selling book, *Life Shift*, that is about how to live a 100-Year-Life reports a certain example. A painter drew a portrait of a young man with his aged face in detail (with deep lines on his face and color and volume of his hair). After he looked the portrait, he saved twice amount of money for his future. If I had seen my aged portrait when I was young, my past days would be quite different.

The Bible says, **"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)**

We all are God's handiworks. We allowed to live life only once, so it is very precious one.

How did we live and how do we live? With what portrait do we live life?

We are able to see a great portrait of Paul in the Bible, who is our forerunner.

Let's listen to God's Word entitled "When We Realize What Is Really Important" and study the following two points.

Main Points

1 . The Power of the Inward Man

4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

Paul said that man has two selves that are **the outward man** (a visible self) and **the inward man** (an invisible self).

Let's think first about the two selves.

1) The Outward Man

The outward man is our body that finally dies, that is a jar of clay that is easily broken.

Every human body begins to decline as he grows older and there is no exception. When he becomes old, it becomes difficult for him to do things that he was able to do when he was young. Then he becomes to need other's help. He needs to be cared for.

In short, man is limited. Everyone understands it. However, Paul said, "**We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away.**"

We usually see the outward man. However, it is limited even though we are outwardly dressed beautifully. The limited thing finally decays.

The Teacher of the days of the Old Testament said as below—

Ecclesiastes 1:2 "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.

1:3 What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun?

What was the Teacher like?

2:4 I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards.

2:5 I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them.

2:6 I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees.

2:7 I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me.

2:8 I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man's heart.

The Teacher was what is so called a successful man, but he said everything was meaningless.

Paul who lived in the days of the New Testament also felt the meaninglessness of **the outward man**. He was highly educated and man of ability in the Jewish society of that day. However, he realized that the outward man was limited and meaningless.

Paul was blessed and he was able to declare, **“Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”**

My friends, why could Paul speak like that? The reason was that he experienced his inward man being renewed day by day.

2) The Inward Man

4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

What is the inward man like? He believed Jesus Christ as his Savior and walks with Him. He trusts in Jesus Christ (the Savior) who crucified and lives life with Him. Jesus was crucified and died on the cross, but he resurrected on the third day from the dead. Jesus who defeated death appeared before many people and showed His body of resurrection. Then He was taken up into heaven (Ascension) before many people.

Therefore, Jesus is alive today. When Jesus was taken up into heaven, the two angels appeared and said as below—

Acts 1:11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “Why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Jesus comes to this world again (His second coming). He who trusts in Jesus is the one who walks with Jesus who is alive today. Paul said such a man **“the inward man”** not **“the outward man”** is one who trusts in Jesus has Jesus in his heart.

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

Every time I read the Scripture above, I remember Rev. Karl Bayer who was a teacher of Missiology. He always set melody to the verse above and sang acapella. And then he began a lecture. His face was blight and filled with joy. His inward man was really convinced that he became new. He shared a testimony that **“Yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”**

My dear friends, which is more important, the outward thing or the inward thing? Of course, I know that the outward thing is important, however, the inward thing that is eternal and renewed day by day is more important. The eternal value is far precious than that of limited one.

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

Therefore, Paul said, **“We do not lose heart.”** It means that **it is impossible for us to be discouraged or we are not left alone or not get tired.**

Those who understand the value of **the inward man** are those who understand an eternal glory that is lighter than momentary troubles.

The inward man is renewed means that some part of our inward is renewed as we get older. It is our souls that are renewed by the Holy Spirit. Our body is declining day by day; however, our inward man is renewed by life of Christ day by day.

How blessed we are!

Then, the important thing is what thing we fix our eyes on and walk.

2. Our Viewpoint Should Be Fixed on The Important Thing.

4:18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

The inward man who is renewed day by day sees his life from the different point of view. He doesn't see the outward man. Of course, the outward thing is important, however, he fixes his eyes on the more precious thing.

Paul said about his life as below—

1 Corinthians 9:26 Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.

9:27 No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Then, how can we have the viewpoint like Paul?

The Bible examples an amazing **portrait** of Paul, who is a great forerunner of faith. We learn lots of things from Paul's life.

We can not grow without studying. On top of that, studying should be positively done and we are not able to take actions until we willingly begin to study.

Therefore, the important thing is that we have to set aside time to be quiet before the Lord every day.

It is the devotion time for us Christians.

- ① To set aside the time to be quiet
- ② To set aside the time to pray sincerely
- ③ To read the Bible willingly

These three points are fundamental for Christians.

My dear friends, our big problem is how set aside the time to perform the three points. We have too many things to do such as work, house chores, sports, hobbies and so on.

Therefore, we often say, "I am too busy. I don't have time to spare for it." I, a pastor, also say the same thing.

If we just lead too busy life like this, we hardly learn what God wants to teach us from the forerunners of faith.

{Illustration}

As you know, I was allowed to be hospitalized for three weeks. I had a surgery for four hours and I have remarkably recovered. I really give thanks to many friends at home and abroad who have prayed for me.

My blood test showed that everything was normal in two weeks after the surgery. I completely finished my rehabilitation menu at the hospital.

Then I had a final medical examination with my operating surgeon. But he said that the wound didn't close up yet so I had to stay at the hospital another week, because the wound will be easily infected and could mature outside of the hospital.

The doctor's diagnosis was far from what I expected. I had many things to do at church. At that time, I was reading a book in bed. The book was entitled *The Cultivated Life* and it

deals with mental counselling for American businessmen who lead extremely busy lives and also people who lead busy life. (I recommend that you read the book.)

I was taught clearly that God made me stay at the hospital another week so that I became quiet before God, set aside the time to pray and read the Bible. I really give thanks to God. Formerly I had more than 300 meetings and delivered messages in a year. I was terribly busy. (Now I decrease the number of meetings.) God taught me the most important thing through the surgery. I give thanks to God.

Let's go back to the original topic. The important thing for us is where we should fix our eyes on.

4:18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Today we have **Respect-for-the-Aged Day Worship**. We are all middle-aged people, young people and children are taught to fix our eyes on the correct viewpoint.

The purpose that Jesus saved us was to bless our life. We are given salvation of souls through Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection. On top of that, Jesus wants us to lead to a high peak of faith. What life do we lead?

Conclusion

Title of the Testimony: "When We Realize What Is Really Important"

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Today we had **Respect-for-the-Aged Day Worship**. We all lead extremely busy days, however, what direction do we go and what do we fix our eyes on?

Let's conclude today's message by the following Scripture.

4:18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

What are we asked? → Faith in God

It is the most blessed life that we fix our eyes of faith on God.

* God bless you!