

December 15, 2019

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (The 3rd Advent)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Testimony: "Are You the One Who Is to Come?"

Text: Matthew 11:1~6

11:1 After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee.

11:2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent his disciples

11:3 to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"

11:4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see:

11:5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

11:6 Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

Introduction

We have the third Advent Sunday today. Christmas is just around the corner.

Every early morning, NHK TV broadcasts a short program entitled *To Stop from Being Swindled. I Never Become a Prey*. Surprisingly, the Public Prosecutors Office reports that 95% of the aged are victims of an, "It's me" scam that is a big problem in Japan in recent years.

It is said that the scammers steal approximate one hundred million yen in a day by those people who impersonate one's son and grandson. The scam seems to have spread to China, Korea and Taiwan. It does not seem to be stopping at all. I think it is disgraceful for Japan.

Recently, a schoolgirl was abducted through social media SNS by a man (35-year-old) who lived in Tochigi Prefecture. It was lucky that the girl was taken care of by the police. Details are unknown, but the girl seemed to be deceived by his alluring words. Astonishingly, another 15-year-old junior high school girl was found at the man's house, who was also deceived by social medial.

My friends, we are living in a society that we should not easily trust in other people. However,

when a man gets lost and troubled, he sometimes fails to judge correctly.

Today, it is the third Advent Sunday and the third candle refers to **light**. We are getting into a dark age where we hardly trust in people and are not able to see light in future. John the Baptist was also uncertain about Jesus and felt uneasy.

11:6 Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

Why did Jesus speak to John like this? Let's study the Scripture according to the following two points today.

Main Points

1. Who Is Jesus Christ?

1) Jesus Christ

Matthew 3:11" But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.

The Gospel of John records as below—

1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

1:30 This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'

1:31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

My friends, John said about Jesus **"“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"** However, John was eventually imprisoned. In those days, the majority of people supposed that when the Messiah came, the Messianic Kingdom would be fulfilled. However, this kingdom had no sign of fulfillment. On the contrary, John was kept in prison.

2) John's Doubt

By the way, John the Baptist, who was called the last prophet before Jesus' coming, was arrested and in prison. He believed in Jesus who was expected to arrive, but he was in prison. John had anxiety about the future, so he sent his disciples to Jesus.

11:3 to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"

His question is asking if Jesus was really the Messiah or not. John was not completely sure.

Jesus said,

11:4 Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see:

11:5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

11:6 Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

Why was he not confident in Jesus? Even John who was a great man, wasn't confident in Him. Therefore, Jesus said, **“Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.” (11:6)**

By the way, what expectation do you have of Jesus? We are living in an age not where we cannot trust in people and we also can't find any things to believe in. Our society seems to be one where the dark clouds are gathering over. Where are we able to find light?

You probably think that you get nothing profitable even though you have expected Jesus. You may think that your business doesn't go well as you have expected. Don't you stumble on Jesus?

The Bible records many people who sought and asked God questions. We find many people in the Old Testament such as Moses, Elijah, Job, Jeremiah, Daniel and so on. They asked God many times, because they had a gap between themselves and God. John the Baptist was also like them. When we look back, we find many people who asked God.

They asked God many times, because of some gap between them and God. John the Baptist was also such a person. If some of you have some gap between Jesus and stumble on Him, why don't you ask Him as they did?

2. Jesus Christ Responded.

1) Jesus' Messianic Nature

11:4 Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see:

11:5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

Jesus' response comes from prophecy of Isaiah 35:5-6.

I read the 35:6 that is not written in today's text.

35:6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

It means that Jesus insisted by quoting the Scripture that He was the Messiah and said to look

at what the Word taught.

11:4 Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see:

Jesus said to the disciples when they heard and saw what the Word of Isaiah was fulfilled, they should report it to John.

Now, let’s study the following things.

1) Two Steps of Faith

Jesus appeared before Thomas after He had resurrected. Thomas didn’t believe Jesus’ resurrection and said,

John 20:25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

20:29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

My friends, faith seems to have two phases as described below:

- ① Faith by seeing
- ② Faith without seeing

⇒ Jesus quoted the Scripture and taught faith without seeing.

Jesus also wanted John the Baptist to have faith like Thomas.

Hebrews 11.1 “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

Like this, doesn’t God ask you to have **faith without seeing**?

Faith that God wants Thomas, other disciples and John the Baptist was

⇒ **Faith without seeing**

And Jesus wants us to have the same faith.

2) Doing Response Under Having Doubt

First of all, we should remember that John the Baptist was a Nazirite. He lived in the wilderness and ate wild honey for 30 years. His lifestyle was simple and led a godly life by looking forward to meeting the Lord. On top of that, he was a Nazirite and the works of Nazirites was mainly to

study God's Word and to recite it. He must have memorized almost all the Book of Isaiah.

The reason that John was able to believe Jesus as the one who was to come (the Messiah) was that he was a Nazirite and stored the Word of the Old Testament in his heart.

My friends, we sometimes have doubt in our lives. We also come to be under trials. We sometimes become unfaithful. When we feel anxious, the reason is that there is a gap between our thoughts (plans) and God's ones.

We live in the days that we are not able to see Jesus with human eyes; however, we are able to trust in God through the Scripture that is God's Word. It is **faith without seeing**. This is the key point of faith without seeing.

Human beings are not God who is perfect. On the contrary, imperfect human beings have lots of things that they can't understand. As a result, they come to ask, "Why?" And this feeling of why is very important. Where do you take this question "why" to? You should take it to God.

Isaiah said,

Isaiah 55:9 As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Jesus sent the message said he should remember the Scripture (the Old Testament) to John the Baptist, who asked a question. The Scripture is the Book of God that gives answers to questions in life. Therefore, it is particularly important that we should know the Word of the Bible.

If you store the Word of God, it becomes significant help when you meet trials in lives, you become unfaithful and you must decide.

{Illustration}

I remember Rev. Jakob Esau, who is a world circuit evangelist and my friend in faith.

He, who was a Russian-German and pastor was sent to a concentration labor camp because of faith in Christ. He was persecuted in a land of severe cold. His life was one of constant suffering.

One day, he told me a story. When he was put in a prison cell for three months, the room was too small to lay down and no one come to see and talk to him, he felt like he was going crazy. On top of that a prison keeper told Rev. Esau, "Everyone, your wife, your children and church people have forsaken you."

He became desperate. At that very moment he remembered the Word of God.

“I will not leave you as orphans.” John 14:18

Matthew 6:29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

6:30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

Then he was filled with joy even in the prison cell and began to praise God. He said it was true that Paul and Silas praised God in prison. It was the Word of the Bible that encouraged Rev. Esau who was alone in prison.

How about today's message? What faith do you have?

Christmas is the day that Jesus was born who is **the light of the world**. We are not able to see Jesus Christ; however, we are able to meet Jesus Christ through the Bible. It is faith without seeing.

Let's conclude today's message!

Conclusion

Title of the Testimony: “The One Who Was to Come”

Today we have the third Advent Sunday. The third candle refers to **light**.

The light is stronger than darkness, even if it is extremely dark. Jesus said, **“I am the light of the world.”** He who is the light guides us and lives in us. Christmas is the day that the One who is the light was born. How thankful we are!

What should we do who live in the difficult days to trust in the word of other people? Today, we studied a particularly important point about John the Baptist. It is faith that trusts in God and His Word even though we are not able to see or understand or is difficult to accept.

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Hebrews 11.1

Let's trust in the Word of the Bible with humble heart because the One who is the light of the world came to this world.

* God bless you!