

January 26, 2020

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (The Open Church Worship)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "How Is Your Life?"

—Is It All Right? —

Text: Proverb 3:1~7

3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart,

3:2 for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity.

3:3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

3:4 Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and humankind.

3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

3:6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.

Introduction

We would like to express a hearty welcome to you, who come to our church for the first time and also who come to our church every Sunday. I'm very happy to have a morning worship service with you. Let's consider our life today.

I will read a certain letter that was sent to an advice column of the newspaper.

I am a 60-year-old homemaker who comes to live in the latter half of life. I was shocked to have realized recently that I understand nothing.

I have lived a long life; however, I still do not have a detailed account of favorite flowers, history, politics, economics and the world. Since I've realized this, my desire to study and understand grows day by day, however, I don't know how to begin. I want to be learned in various fields.

Even though I want to study, there are no means of finding the ways to study. I want to study; however, I only hesitate and don't know what to do. Please give me a piece of advice what I should do to know about various things. (Mrs. H. in Hyogo Pref.)

It is the letter who sent by a 60-year-old woman. We may think that according to her age, she might have sufficient knowledge from her life experience, however, she was shocked that she still knew relatively little.

There are many people who have a problem with how they should live. Our society flourishes and we become rich so we are able to get what we want if we have money and time, however, many people don't know what they should do.

So, what should we do?

The Bible clearly teaches how we should live.

Proverb 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

3:6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Let's study the following two point from today's text.

Main Points

1. Trust in the Lord (God) with All Your Heart.

3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ·

1) Man Is Created.

We should understand first that mankind is created by God.

Everything is made by someone, for example, things in front of us (a desk, a chair, a piano, a pulpit) are made by some creators. No one thinks that these things are made accidentally. Like this, the Bible teaches that God created the world.

God created all animals, plants, living beings and also human beings. However, we haven't been taught about God the Creator. We are not often taught that God created the world and human beings.

Therefore, a number of people believe that living creatures (including human beings) have evolved into the existing beings today (the theory of evolution). They think that living creatures have evolved from a small cell. Some people think that a monkey has evolved into a man.

Is it true? A certain man says that the earth was produced by the big bang. The scholars try to prove the big bang theory.

However, the theory of evolution is not proved completely yet. It doesn't even answer the

fundamental question that where we come from, and where we are going.

The Bible clearly teaches about the creation of human beings, the world and every creature. And it argues the important theme before everything why human beings were born and why they live.

The first page of the Bible records as below—

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

When Jyo Nijima, the founder of Doshisha University, read the first page of the Bible cried **“This is it!”** He said, **“What I have sought is God who created the heavens and the earth.”**

My friends, if you read the Bible you are able to understand the world. You come to understand that what human beings are like, why they work and what direction they are going. In that sense, the Bible is the amazing book.

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th American president said, **“The Bible is the most precious gift that God has given to human beings.”**

To understand the Bible is to understand the value of our lives. Then, what does the Bible teach us?

2) We Need to Trust in God, the Creator.

It is very natural that man trusts in the Creator who created him, like a child trusts in his parents. However, we often do not understand who created us.

Then, is it possible that man is able to live without the Creator? No, it isn't.

Many people find gods (religions) over the world that are made by humans.

They find local religions in South America, and local gods are made and worshiped in Africa. In Japan, there are myriads of gods and deities.

There are lots of religions around us. What is a correct teaching? It is impossible to see every religion of the world for the rest of our life. Who tells the truth in the world?

{Illustration}

There is a shrine that is called Imamiya Ebisu Shrine in Osaka. Its festival that is commonly known as “Ebessan” on January 10th is very crowded with about one million people.

Ebisu is the god of thriving business, avoiding trouble and inviting good luck, and a good

harvest and a good haul.

The other day, I went to a drugstore near my house to buy medicine and I found a *fukusasa*, a lucky bamboo branch that is put on a high place right in front of the store.

A small tag that was written, “thriving business” was placed on the bamboo branch.

My friends, isn't it strange? Thriving business of the drug store means increasing sick people and selling medicine well. Increasing sick people causes the increasing sales of medicine.

That is contradictory, isn't it? This is reality of Japanese gods. Their first priority is to seek their own fortune. That is common with religions that are made by human beings.

By the way, there were religions in the ancient times like today. Approximately 2000 years ago, there were many philosophers, sociologists, ethicists and people who believed Greek myths. Looking at many people there, Paul who was an evangelist, spoke to them.

Acts 17:21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

17:22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious.

17:23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So, you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

Human beings seem not to change in all ages.

There was **“an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD”**. They thought as if there was a certain another god that they didn't worship yet. (religious)

The Bible records as below—

Ecclesiastes 3:11He has also set eternity in the human heart.

Another translation is, **“God has given human beings an awareness of eternity.”**

Eternity refers to God, who alone is present eternally. Human beings are given a sense of seeking eternity (God).

If human beings don't know the true God, they have a thirst in their hearts. As a result, they come to make gods (religions) according to their liking. Then, they do religious training to approach gods, maintain tight discipline, study, make efforts, make a wish to god and offer

money so that their desires are fulfilled. On the contrary, the Bible is the book that God who created human beings speaks through.

The most painful problem in our life is that we don't understand God the Creator (the Maker). We don't realize the presence of God who created the heavens and the earth and all things among them.

The Bible teaches as below —

3:5 Trust in the LORD (God the Creator) with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

Then, how should we live?

2. We Should Acknowledge the Lord (God) in All Our Ways.

3:6b he will make your paths straight.

1) A Life Walk with the Lord (God)

Colossians 3:17 and whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

⇒ This is the life walk with the Lord.

It means that **God is always with us “whatever we do, whether in word or deed.”**

The Bible records,

Acts 17:28 ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’

2) The Lord (God) Makes Our Way Straight.

What is the straight way like?

① The Righteous Way

It means the righteous way. We have a conscience in our hearts (even children). If we walk the wrong way, our conscience stings us. If someone does not feel pain, he may be dead to conscience.

② The Efficient Way (Not a Detour)

There is a club that is called Wandervogel club. Wander means to walk freely and vogel means a bird.

It really means to walk freely like a soaring bird.

When I lived in Germany, I was a single young man. There are lots of woods and forests in Germany. I often enjoyed Wandervogel with youth of church at the weekend. We usually walked 15~20 km with lunch and water in a backpack. It was really fun, especially, I felt comfortable in fresh green of spring.

I suggest to you an important thing that when we go Wandervogel. We must take a map. Without the map, we are not able to find the right way to the destination. Of course, when we go on Wandervogel, we walk freely, however, when we go on a wrong way, we make a detour.

We need to walk according to the correct map. My friends, in a sense, the Bible is like the map that guides our way. It is like a compass that guides an efficient walking so that we don't make a detour in our life. When I was 14 years old, I came to know God the Creator and believed Him as my personal savior. Since then the Bible has guided the way to go forward like the compass until now. God really led the right way. I am really happy.

③ The Safe Way

God guides us to the safe way. I used to work for ministry in former Soviet Union (Russia). One day, a pastor who safely left a labor camp in Siberia, a land of severe cold, told me a real story as below.

There was no end to number on prisoners in a concentration camp in Siberia who escaped from the camp because of food shortages. The prisoners were not payed for their labor. They were voluntary laborers. One day, a commandant of the camp made a rule.

The rule was that a runaway should be punished severely (death penalty). The runaways decreased for some time, however, as time passed the runaway gradually increased again.

Then, the commandant said, "I draw lots now. A man who the lot fell on would be punished instead of the runaway." And the lot fell on a boy of 17 years old.

The boy was pulled out, bound up his hand and blindfolded. He was made to stand at a distance. Holding his gun at the ready, a keeper was waiting for the commandant's order. It was getting dark under the extremely tense condition.

Suddenly an old man cried, "No! Hold on! He is still young. Shoot me instead of the boy!" Then, the commandant ordered to bind up his hand, blindfold and stand him before. Then he ordered his man to fire.

The old man fell down with a thud. The boy rushed at him and raised him in his arms. The boy cried, "Father!" and he burst into tears. The old man was the boy's father.

As it was dark and under the tense atmosphere the boy didn't realize that the old man was his father. The other prisoners also rushed at him and burst into tears. The father loved his son.

My friends, Jesus Christ took our place and was crucified. The crucifixion was a horrible execution in those days. What is the reason that Jesus Christ needed to be crucified?

The reason was that human beings keep committing sin before the sacred God who created the heavens and the earth.

The Bible teaches **"The wages of sin is death."**

The Kingdom in Heaven is the place that people who are sinless and clean are able to enter. Jesus Christ loved us and took our place. Jesus Christ, who committed no sin, died on the cross because of His love for us.

Pilate who judged Jesus said,

Matthew 27:24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

God makes the paths of life straight and prepared the way to enter the Kingdom in Heaven through Jesus Christ. It is the way that human beings live.

How is your life? Is it all right? Where are you heading?

Do you walk on the credible way to get true peace and comfort? Is it the safe way, not of a detour? The Bible is the God's book guiding our way to go.

The author of Psalm 119 praises God as below—

119:105 Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Would you like to start life that is blessed by God the Creator? I would encourage you to trust in Jesus Christ and put your life into His hands.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "How Is Your Life?"

—Is It All Right? —

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

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

3:6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

* God bless you!