

February 16, 2020

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "You Are My Brothers and Sisters."

—The Work of Love—

Text: James5:19,20

**5:19 My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring them back,**

**5:20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the way of error will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.**

#### Introduction

When you came to the church for the first time, maybe you felt it was strange because Christians call each other brothers and sisters. Generally, we call brothers and sisters according to blood or family relationship. Therefore, you might have wondered why we call each other brothers and sisters when we are not real family members.

The Bible teaches that the church of Christ is the family of God.

We have no blood relationship, but we become a member of the God's family in Jesus Christ. We become spiritual brothers and sisters of **God's family** because of Jesus Christ.

By the way, we are ready to study the last two verses, the conclusion of the epistle.

James records there, "**My brothers and sisters.**" This expression has important meaning.

Matthew Chapter 12 records as below—

**12:46 While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him.**

**12:47 Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."**

**12:48 He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"**

My friends, the word of Jesus in Verse 48 seems to be a very cold answer. We don't know what

happened, but they came to see Jesus. The Scripture records that they are **“standing outside.”** They had some business with Jesus.

Maybe Mary, Jesus’ mother, wanted to be called “Mother!” by Jesus. Jesus’ brothers including James also wanted to have a conversation with Jesus. We understand that they could not talk to Jesus comfortably in those days even though Jesus was their family. I suppose that **they missed Jesus** and thought **He was called.**

At that time Jesus said to them,

**12:49 Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers.**

**12:50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”**

Later, when James realized that his own brother was the Christ (the Messiah) and believed in Him, he probably understood what Jesus meant (Jesus seemed to be cold.). When James became the leader of the church of Jerusalem, he better understood the true meaning of **God’s family.**

James called them, **“My brothers and sisters”** with greater love than if they were his biological brothers and sisters.

Let’s study the following two points about the last two verses of the epistle and for what purposes James used **“My brothers and sisters”**.

#### Main Points

### 1 . The Possibilities in You

**5:19 My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring them back,**

We are able to think three possibilities here as below:

#### 1 ) The Possibility of Wandering Away

There is a possibility that we will wander from our Christian lives even if we believed in Jesus Christ and are saved.

The Bible records **“My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth.”**

The Bible doesn’t say that if once we believe in God, we never wander from faith, rather it says that if we are not careful, we will wander from faith. On top of that, if we are careless, we will

never return to it.

Please do not misunderstand what I said. No one, including me, never say that those who seem to be a good believer never wander from God.

Please understand that the Bible teaches on the possibility of wandering from the truth.

As you know, the days of James were the days of persecution. There were some people who wander from the truth even though they once believed in Jesus and decided to follow Him.

It is very regrettable to accept that there are some people who **wander from the truth** even though they believed in Jesus, were baptized and began to live Christian life. There must be a good reason for them. It is not a problem who is good or bad, but we should understand that it is fact.

Here, we should look at the situation of **wandering away**.

It is recorded as **the way of error** in Verse 20. We sometimes miss the way. The situation is like that when we miss our way.

We never intend to lose the way. No one wants **to lose his way** from the beginning. He loses his way without knowing. He loses his way even before he realizes it. He doesn't understand his situation when it happens.

Therefore, it doesn't mean to forsake one's faith deliberately. (There is a difference between to forsake one's faith and to wander from one's faith.)

Then, what should we do? We should look up to Jesus Christ and follow Him every day.

Jesus said,

**John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one come to the Father except through me."**

## **2) The Possibility of Restoration**

Even if one wanders from the correct way, there is the possibility of restoration for them.

It is the second point.

**5:19 My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring them back,**

Happily, we are given the possibility of restoration even if we wandered from the way of faith.

It is written Hebrews Chapter 6 as below—

**6:6 and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.**

The Scripture above is a very strict one. Reading Hebrews, Chapter 6 from the context, **“have fallen away”** means to forsake one’s faith deliberately and **he is crucifying the Son of God all over again.**

It means that he regards the cross as meaningless. He denies the cross.

The author said, **“It is impossible to be brought back to repentance.”** Jesus Christ died on the cross only once. He isn’t crucified again. The work of the cross is perfectly fulfilled, and it is fully enough.

However, if one **wanders from** it, it is possible to be restored. When he becomes aware of his wandering, he can be restored.

We meet various events and unpleasant things and painful things occur in our life. When we wander from the faith, we are brought back to the correct way if we have friends who have the same faith and pray for us.

**The Gospel of Matthew** records about this,

**18:12 What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?**

**18:13 And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off.**

**18:14 In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.18:12**

### **3) The Possibility of Becoming Helpful**

The third possibility is to **become helpful** to bring back someone who wandered away. Verse 19 records, **“If one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring them back,”**

To bring someone back to the truth is not the work of pastors or ministers only. If only they work for taking the lost back, it would have been written like that. However, when we wander off, not only pastors and ministers bring us back to the faith, but also other people help us. We

all have experiences like this.

Some people have experiences that they were brought back from wandering by a small comment and a little act of brothers and sisters of church. **Someone** did it. I could be **that someone**.

Like this, those who are saved by Jesus should remember that we have these three possibilities. Verse 19 refers to this fact. Then, what advice did James give on how **brothers and sisters** should lead lives?

It is the second point.

## **2. The Great Work of Love**

**5:20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the way of error will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.**

It is great work of love to make those who wandered turn from the way of error.

What does it mean to turn a sinner to the truth?

Let's study the following two points.

### **1) To Save Souls from Death**

It is a blessed deed to bring people back again to the church, who wandered from the church after they once belonged to the church. The work does not only mean to bring them back to the former place and Christian life in Jesus Christ, the Lord, but it also mean to save their souls.

If one remains apart the church, what will become of his soul? He must have no peace in him. Therefore, to bring him back to the church is to save his soul from death. It means to save him from eternal death.

#### **{Illustration}**

**I have heard a story about a Christian church in Korea.**

**My mother's church was a beautiful church in a small village, that was always full of smiling. However, the church was suddenly split by a unexpected dispute. I, who was a college student at that time, had to leave the church.**

**Now, I am serving God as a pastor and in fact I have trials in my Christian life. When I do my ministries, I realize that Christians, who left church in their youth and are wandering, are increasing. Some of them do "church- shopping" like "window- shopping"**

Fortunately, I was able to return to church by my sister's scolding advise. I was taught many things by Psalm 131:1~3.

Psalm 131:1~3

A song of ascents. Of David

131:1 My heart is not proud, LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.

131:2 But I have calmed myself and quieted my ambitions. I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content.

131:3 Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore.

Psalm 131 refers to the Temple as mother, and examples a weaned child. The weaned child keeps crying, however, when his mother holds them in her arms, the child immediately stops crying.

The Psalm that is entitled, "A song of ascents" compares the peace of souls that is restored at the Temple to the child who stops crying when his mother pressed him to her heart. David declares that the Temple is the mother's bosom.

The Temple where the Israelites worshiped God could refer to church of today. The author of Psalm 131 sang peace (shalom) to worship at the Temple. (Pastor Lee Sang-hee)

## 2) To Cover Over a Multitude of Sins

5:20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the way of error will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Those who wandered from faith does not refer to non-Christians. They are people who once walked the way of the truth. Of course, we should work hard for the salvation of non-Christians.

However, it is written here, "**Whoever turns a sinner from the way of error will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.**" What does it mean? It means that if we don't turn him/her from the way, he/she would commit more sins. On top of that its influence will spread around them.

If we turn one person from the way of error, they may stop committing more sins and spreading its influence around him/her. Therefore, to bring back one person to the way of the truth is a great deed of love.

We don't need to try to do a big thing. But we can pray for someone when we think they are wandering, or we don't see them at church. On the top of that, we can write to them.

If we find such people, let's work for those around us by receiving Jesus' love.

**"Whoever"** (You and I) work for other people. In fact, it is the precious work as a member of the God' family.

Our work may be small, however, if it helps someone return to the way of the truth, how happy we are. God is pleased with our work. ⇒ It is **my brothers and sisters, God's family** that James points to. It is our work that we should do. It is our responsibility in **God's family** that we belong to.

### Conclusion

Title of the Message: "You Are My Brothers and Sisters."

—The Work of Love—

This morning, we listened to a precious message. James called **"My brothers and sisters"** at the closing part of the epistle.

We also are the members of **God's family**.

We studied that there are three possibilities.

1. Three possibilities

- ① The Possibility of Wandering Away
- ② The Possibility of Restoration
- ③ The Possibility of Becoming Helpful

2. We should remember as the members of the God's family as below.

- ① The great work of love
- ② The deed to save souls from death
- ③ The deed that covers over a multitude of sins

These are the great works of love that is given to us, **the members of God's family**.

As we are the members of **God's family**, let's walk this week with the Lord Jesus Christ by looking up to our God.

\* God bless you !