

May 3, 2020

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Joy in the Hardships"

—God's Mystery—

Text: 1Peter 1:6~9

1:6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

1:7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

1:9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Introduction

We started to study the First Epistle of Peter and this is the third lesson today.

1:6 In all this you greatly rejoice,

My friends, Peter said, "**You greatly rejoice.**" What do we rejoice in? "Your work went well! You have a successful life! You passed your first-choice school!" Of course, it is happy to give thanks. On the contrary, there are some cases that don't go well. Actually, there are often more bad cases than good ones. When things don't go well or what we wanted does not happen, we are discouraged.

Then, do you think that prayer to God is helpless? Do you think that trusting in God is meaningless? What about our faith?

Let's consider what things we are pleased with.

Peter said, "**In all this**". It refers the content of verses 3~5; that we were given a **new birth** and as a result we are given a **living joy**. Moreover, we are given the inheritance in heaven, that is never perish. And we **are protected** by the God's power still now. Therefore, he said he couldn't stop rejoicing.

My friends, Christians' supreme joy is the outcome of what God has done and His promises.

Peter said as below—

1:6 ...though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

The receivers of the epistle were opposed by people around them. They were called wicked, and received unfair treatment. They were threatened and even would be harmed. How hard

and miserable they were! However, Peter's heart was filled with wonderful joy. Peter wrote about the unbelievable joy. Let's study God's Word today according to the following two points.

Main Points

1 . Why do Christians Have Hardships?

Why do the children of God have hardships even though the Scripture says that God protects us? We understand its reason by the Scripture below—

1:7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

God allows the children of God to face hardships and there are some reasons as below.

1) **Our Faith Is Refined.**

One of the reasons is that our faith is refined by hardships. Peter reminds us of the refining of gold. Gold is refined by fire and becomes a precious thing. However, even gold doesn't guarantee our eternal life or support us. It fades and perishes. The Scripture records that greater things than gold are mold by hardships.

{Illustration}

I can tell you that faith is refined by hardships through my experience. I rarely used my health insurance card except going to the dentist for 69 years. However, I gradually became weak with age.

As you know (You prayed for me.), I had two operations and was hospitalized. Physical hardship is not small one for me. My legs severely hurt even now. I have painful days. However, when I look back a few years, I think that my small faith was refined by hardships (pain). In God's view, I needed more training, however, hardships and sickness were useful for me.

Hardship really change us. How about you?

Paul records in the Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 5 as below—

5:3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance.

5:4 perseverance, character; and character, hope.

5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Why do we have hardships?

2) **Result In Praise, Glory and Honor**

1:7 ...may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

The Scripture above seems to have two meanings. One of them is when Christ comes again, the reason of our hardships is revealed, and our faith may result in **praise, glory and honor**. The other is that those who were suffered will receive **praise, glory and honor**.

Jesus taught the proverb as below,

Matthew 25:21 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

The Scripture refers to the praise that a good and faithful servant will receive. We hope to receive the word from the Lord like the servant above.

Paul continues **“when Jesus Christ is revealed”**. To reveal is **apokalypsis** in Greek. It doesn't mean that a person came to appear from a far distance, but it means that a person is revealed, who were always with him, but the others didn't know it.

28:20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

We can't see with our physical eyes, however, we can see the Lord, who is always with us, with our eyes in faith.

For your information, **Aapokalypsis** is the title of the Revelation of John. The Revelation of John is written at the end of the Bible. It is about how Christ, who had suffered, will come again, and the new heavens and the earth will appear. The world is freed from sins and death. At that time, our faith may result in **praise, glory and honor** and we will worship God and receive **praise, glory and honor**.

The sufferings of today compared with **praise, glory and honor** in future is a small thing. Therefore, Peter says that the Christians are filled with joy.

Like this, there are two reasons that we have hardships. The saints who believe in God have these experiences.

2. Joy in Faith and Love without Seeing

1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

It is a beautiful verse. I think it is the most beautiful verse that describes what Christians are like.

1) Peter, The Former Disciple

As you know well, the author of the epistle is Peter. He was one of Jesus' twelve disciples, who was one of the closest ones and lived under the same roof for about three years. He was always with the Lord, listening to His teaching, watching miracles and was directly touched by His love

for people.

At the same time, Peter made a great mistake. He denied his relationship with Jesus his Lord, "I don't know that man," said Peter. However, Jesus didn't forsake Peter.

After Jesus resurrected, He first appeared to Peter among His male disciples. A few days later, when Jesus saw Peter on the Sea of Galilee, He said to him.

21:16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

Peter met the Resurrected Jesus and was completely changed. He once was proud of being Jesus' top disciple. He had an ambition in his heart that he would occupy a high position in the kingdom of heaven. On top of that he determined and was ready to be put in prison for the Lord.

However, when Jesus was arrested and crucified, his ambition, determination and pride were smashed to pieces. After he saw the Resurrected Lord, he realized that the center of his faith was love to the Lord.

2) Peter, the Later Disciple

The resurrected Jesus was with them for forty days and then was taken up into heaven before His disciples. God sent the Holy Spirit, another helper, who was invisible, as He promised. Then Peter was dynamically changed to an evangelist.

Peter proclaimed Jesus Christ from Jerusalem to Palestine, Syria and Turkey. As a result, Jewish people, who were exiles, and the Gentiles, who came to Jewish synagogues, came to believe in Jesus Christ as their savior.

Peter was with Jesus, who lived His public life for three years, and he probably never thought to become the evangelist like this. However, he became the evangelist as Jesus said to him.

Luke 5:10 Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people."

When Peter preached the Gospel, even the intellectual people in Jerusalem believed in Jesus Christ.

Acts 2:37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

The phrase, **to cut to the heart** means to drill a hole in. The words that Peter, who was a mere fisherman in Galilee, spoke, drilled a deep hole in the heart of the intellectual people and teachers of the law in the society of Jerusalem. It was the work of God.

Peter's word was not a theory or a mere idea, but Jesus who was resurrected was with him (his presence). The Lord's word worked on the souls of each of congregation. It was real joy of salvation that they understood.

{Illustration}

It was a real story that happened in the days of the former Soviet Union in Komi Republic in the northern part of Siberia. The place produced coal and minerals and the concentration labor camps were built around there. Many prisoners (Robbers and Christians who were political prisoners) were forced to work involuntarily .

One day, Rev. Chrahoff, an evangelist, was sent there. He did not commit robbery but was a prisoner. He was arrested in the days of former Soviet Union because of preaching the gospel of Christ and put in prison for 26 years. Astonishingly, he spent 26 years (one third of his life) at the labor camp. There were only burglar criminals in the room that he was put. He slept in the middle bunk of the triple bunk iron bed. He slept vertically between burglars.

As he lived with the burglars for a while, they were interested in Chrahoff's way of living. One day, they finally asked him, "Chrahoff, you are quite different from us. Who are you? We know the reason why we were sent here. However, we can not comprehend why you came here. Why? tell us the reason."

Chrahoff said, "I am Christian."

"Christian? What is Christian?" Since then, they kept asking him about Christianity.

God opened the burglars' heart and they accepted Jesus Christ as their savior. They were born again at the labor camp. They were freed from death and judgement before God.

As a result, many of them became prisoners who preached God's grace. Like this, a spiritual revival occurred in the days of the Soviet Union. Chrahoff studied until his fourth year in elementary school. (In those days, Christians were allowed to study only until the fourth year.) However, God used such an instrument.

My dear friends, Peter also was not a theologian of Judaism. He was a mere fisherman of the Sea of Galilee. People saw Jesus through Peter's message. The prisoners in the concentration labor camp in Komi Republic saw Jesus through Chrahoff's way of living. The verse below really describes what they experienced.

1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

As our God is the living One, we are given amazing promises. We are given the **joy of new birth** and as a result we are given **a living joy**. On top of that, we are promised **the inheritance that will never perish and is protected by God**. In the beginning of the epistle, Peter wrote, **“In all this”**. Let’s give thanks to God and praise Him like Peter.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: “Joy in the Hardships”

—God’s Mystery—

We received the Lord’s word today. God is alive still now. The God spoke to us through Peter.

Now, what did we study today?

- 1 . There is meaning in hardships of faith.
- 2 . There is the joy in faith and love without seeing.

* God bless you!