

May 10, 2020

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Remember, You Have a Great Privilege"

— A True Hope —

1 Peter 1:10~12

1 : 10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care,

1 : 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow.

1 : 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Introduction

There are **business seminars** in Japanese society that entrepreneurs and businesspersons attend. They pay a lot of money and go to listen to the lecture that is useful for them. If they thought the lecture was useful, they say that the lecture had a useful content. By the way, some of our daily conversations have useful content and others do not. The seminar that has no useful content is worthless and helpless, and it sometimes makes us feel depressed. On the other hand, the seminar that has useful content is helpful and worthy. We feel excited and become interested. When we know that the seminar is (was) useful, we feel excited and become happy.

My friends, **a seminar about the salvation** that God gives has meaningful content. Salvation mainly has three aspects: the future, the present and the past.

- ① **The aspect of the future of salvation is to have a living hope.** (1:3-5)
- ② **The aspect of the present of salvation** is to greatly rejoice even under hardships.
- ③ **The aspect of the past of salvation** is that the prophets **searched intently and with the greatest care.** (1:10-12)

1:10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care,

Peter said, **"The prophets searched intently and with the greatest care."**

Moses, Isaiah, many other prophets and the authors of Psalms prophesied of **God's salvation**. They didn't do it for themselves, but they did for people after Jesus Christ who would come.

The nature of God the Creator is love. God who is love teaches us **the salvation** by these three aspects: the future, the present and the past. This morning, we hope to see ③ the third one, what the prophets in the Bible searched for intently and with the greatest care. Jesus said in the Gospel of John as below—

John 5:39 You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life.

As Jesus Christ said, it is not too much to say that the Old Testament is the writing that the prophets recorded about Christ (the Messiah). The salvation of God has two meanings that we will discuss today.

Main Points

1 . The Prophets in the Ancient Times

The salvation by Jesus Christ was not first revealed approximately 2000 years ago.

Isaiah prophesied in B.C. 6 as below—

Isaiah 53: 1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

53:2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

53:3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

53:4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

When we read the Scriptures above, we understand that God speaks about the Messiah before Jesus Christ appears in history.

Peter records as below—

1:10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care,

The prophets did not understand who it was. Nothing more than that was revealed. Therefore,

they **searched intently and with the greatest care**. They eagerly wanted to know and worked hard to try to understand it. On top of that, they did not know how the prophecies they spoke would be fulfilled.

1 : 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow.

The important thing was that the Spirit of God was in them (the prophets). The Spirit of God predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories. However, they hardly understood that the sufferings were reconciled to the glories. It was really fulfilled in the later days.

The prophets also searched intently and with the greatest care for who was and what time it would be. The Scripture below writes the reason why they did—

1 : 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

It was a man (a prophet) of God in the days of the Old Testament. Now, it is the days of the New Testament. How does God approach us? Let's study the next point.

2 . Those Who Became Christians

1) The Blessed Saints in the Days of the New Testament

We who live in the days of the New Testament came to understand what the prophets in the Old Testament could not know. How blessed we are! It is clearly showed to us.

We are clearly taught that we are forgiven our sins by the cross of Jesus Christ and are given a new life by His resurrection.

Peter said that we have been told **by those who have preached the gospel**. On the other hand, we clearly understand through the Scripture **by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven**.

When we become humble and read the word of the Bible, the Holy Spirit teaches us. We can believe the God's plan of salvation and receive it.

2) The Saint Who Is Told by the Spirit

Verse 11 records **the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow**. And Verse 12 records they **preached by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven**.

My friends, the Spirit who is the Holy Spirit tells us the truth. We sometimes cannot realize straight away even though we understand as knowledge. However, when we ask the Spirit to teach us, we immediately come to understand the teaching of the Bible. "Oh, yes! That makes sense!" Like this, we live in the days that we are told more and more by the Holy Spirit.

{Illustration} The Gospel According to John, Chapter 8

When Jesus performed many of God's works, the leaders of Israel thought to snare and arrest Him. It is one of stories that they plotted against Jesus.

A woman who was caught in adultery was brought to Jesus. In the law of Moses, adultery was sentenced a death penalty. If Jesus forgives the woman, He denies the law of Moses that is very important for the Jewish people. If Jesus said to stone such woman, His command contradicts His teaching of love.

People came to Jesus together. The Bible records as below —

8:7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

8:8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

8:9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.

8:10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

8:11 "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

This is the meaningful story that Jesus saved the woman.

How do we read the story? Some people are interested in Jesus' attitude that **he stooped down and wrote on the ground. (8:8)** It is very interesting to analyze it as knowledge.

Others are interested in that **"The older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there." (8:9)**

And some cannot take their eyes from **"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." (8:11)**

My friends, when I read the Bible, its word sometimes directly speaks to me. When I read the story from the context, I focus the word; **the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. (8:9)** And the word strongly came home to me; **"Let any one**

of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” It is the work of the Holy Spirit. Like this the word of God works with the Holy Spirit.

There is another point that is remarkably interesting. Peter said as below—

1:12 Even angels long to look into these things.

Peter wrote to, **“long to look into these things”**. **To look into** refers to the word bending over, of same meaning, that Peter and other people looked into the empty tomb after Jesus has resurrected.

Luke 24:12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen by themselves.

The angels who served God must have seen God’s amazing works. Even such angels wanted to see their fulfillment through **the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories by looking into them.**

We realize how great that the privilege given to us is.

Let’s read Verse 12 again.

1 : 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

The thing that the prophets in the days of the Old Testament were not told is something that even the angels wanted to see. We are living in the days to see it clearly.

The epistle was written approximately 2000 years ago. We are given the greater privilege than the receivers of the epistle. In those days, the Bible was not completed yet. People had only a part of it. However, we are given a complete revelation of the Bible. We can read it in our native languages: Japanese, English, Chinese, etc. In the days of Luther’s Reformation, people did not have the Bible. On top of that, when the priest read the Bible in Latin, the ordinary believers hardly understood the content. We can read the Bible at any time. We can read various kinds of the Bibles. We can read and listen to the digital version on a smart phone. And the Holy Spirit comes close to us as the Advocate.

However, even if we can read the Bible at any time, it does not mean that we always read it. Even though I recommend reading through the Bible, it depends on everyone’s determination.

{Illustration}

In March 2020, Burna Opinion research center in Ventura, California reported that people who regularly read the Bible were decreasing in the last 20 years.

According to the research in 2000, it pointed 39 % and it was 35 % in 2020. It is attracting an attention that the spiritual and religious principle in American society is expressed in figures. The survey was done by 96,000 opinions in the last 20 years.

How about you? We are given **the great privilege**. It is given to people as a gift, who believe in Jesus as Christ. How much do we trust in it? Do we experience the privilege that God has given? Let's take time and think.

On top of that, let us preach the grace to our neighbors, that God has given. We need to experience God's grace first and then we can preach it to our neighbors.

Conclusion

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— A True Hope —

Today, we listen to God's precious voice. We live in the blessed days that people in the days of the Old Testament could not know at all. God's greatest desire is that people receive His **salvation**.

Peter taught God's **salvation** has three aspects.

1. The three blessed aspects of the salvation

- ① The aspect of the future of salvation is **to have a living hope**.
- ② The aspect of the present of salvation is to greatly rejoice even under hardships.
- ③ The aspect of the past of salvation is what the prophets **sought for intently and with the greatest care**.

Peter said that these three aspects were for us in the later generation.

2. We understand the secret of God through the Holy Spirit.

We are allowed to know the secret of God by the help of the Holy Spirit. The time of grace is now.

How about today's message? How much do we know God's gift (salvation) of grace? Let us take time and consider it now.

* God bless you!