

May 31, 2020

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (Pentecost Worship)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "How Can We Live Steadily?"

—The Inner Man Has the Key—

Text: Ephesians 3: 14-21

3:14 For this reason I kneel before the Father,

3:15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

3:16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,

3:18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,

3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

3:21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Introduction

Human beings are strange because we have two selves within us.

The two selves are:

- 1) An outer self (The outward man) ⇒ It is visible.
- 2) An inner self (The inward man) ⇒ It is invisible.

The two selves sometimes have conflicts between them. He who lives honestly has conflicts between the two selves and is troubled with them.

① One of the conflicts is a battle against oneself.

For example, we read the Bible and understand the importance of doing good. However, we also understand ourselves who cannot follow what the Bible tells us to do.

Even though we want to share testimony with our family and friends, we realize we cannot do it. Therefore, we have conflicts.

Romans 7:18 For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

Even Paul, who was a great instrument of God, had the battle against himself.

② The other conflict is the battle against other people

One of the most disastrous events is a war. Nobody wants to be in war. War kills people and

disrupts society and people's hearts. It is happy that Japan has not been involved in a war since the Second World War.

Even if it is not a war or a conflict, we sometimes are attacked by mistake. For example, sometimes the words sent on a phone or through social networking systems are delivered unilaterally without thinking about accepters' individual situations. It may be a small thing but the person who accepts may become a victim. There are lots of violence such as words, images, and writing. These things become the problem between people.

My friends, we live in the middle of many battles (they are difficult to avoid). Then, how should we live in this generation? The inward self holds the key.

The outer self is mere the outcome of the inner self. Please remember that the inner self supports the outer self. The outer self is getting older as time goes by.

However, the Bible teaches,

3:16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

Yes, indeed. The inner being is strengthened.

Today we celebrate Pentecost Sunday.

Let us consider **the inner being** according the following two points.

Main Points

1. **Characteristics of the Inner Man**

Outer beauty is good; however, you should understand that a person's real charms come from the inward part. The important thing is:

⇒ What is **the inward man** like, whom the Bible refers to?

It does not mean my sinful nature. It means a person who has been given a **new life** by Jesus Christ. **To be born again, in the way that** the Bible teaches does not mean to born physically.

It means:

- ① A person who has a sinful nature died with Jesus Christ and
- ② Was buried with Jesus Christ,
- ③ Raised (resurrected) with Jesus Christ and was made new.

⇒ It is the **man who was born again**.

It is the privilege given to those who believe in Jesus as Christ (the Savior). It is given only by faith. How great! Then, what characteristics do they have?

1) **The Inward Man Is Being Renewed Day by Day.**

4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

II Corinthians

One of the most miserable situations is when one has nothing to eat. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt. God chose Moses as a leader of the Israelites to deliver them from of Egypt and let them go to Canaan, God's promised land. They were in trouble by lacking food during the journey.

When the Israelites grumbled to Moses about food, God responded to them and gave them manna (bread) every day. It was a God's miracle. The Israelites survived. They were given new power by food and were strengthened every day.

When they looked up to God, they were given manna from above and survived. They kept alive with bread (manna) that God gave.

God gave Jesus Christ, who is **the bread of life**, to us who lived in the desolate days. We live spiritually by eating **the bread of life**.

Jesus said,

John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

He who eats the bread of life is being renewed every day.

II Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

What characteristics does the inward man have?

2) The Inward Man Grows.

The Bible teaches as below—

Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Man grows by taking food. Paul compares the growth of a Christian, who believes in God, to the process of growth of a small child, who drinks breast milk and gradually grows.

1 Corinthians 3:2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

3:3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?

It is taught that the important thing is that the child needs to progress by drinking milk, eating baby food, normal food and then solid food.

One of characteristics of a living thing is to grow. The living things grow by taking food that gives them energy.

Like this, the word of the Bible makes our inward selves grow.

{Illustration}

My wife has a house in Wakayama Prefecture and kiwi trees are planted there. We strongly prune it in winter (January, February). It puts forth its new leaves in spring. Once I thought it was dead because I pruned the tree too much.

However, the tree did not die. It has life in it. The tree that has life absolutely buds when its time comes even though it looks dead. How wonderful!

Therefore, if **the inner man** has life, he is strong.

Then, how can be **the inner man** strengthened?

2. The Way that the Inner Man is Strengthened

1) To Be Strengthened by The Scripture

Ephesians 3:18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Psalm 119:103 How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

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

119:114 You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.

How can be **the inward man** strengthened?

2) To Be Strengthened by Prayer

Ephesians 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Colossians 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Like this, the Word of God and prayer to God strengthens our inner selves.

How can **the inner man** be strengthened?

3) To Be Strengthened by Faith

Ephesians 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,

The Scripture means that Jesus Christ dwells in the believers who believe in Him.

{Illustration} (228 Church)

I returned home from Taiwan on the last repatriate ship in 1946. The following year, the February 28th incident occurred in Tai Pei. The incident started on February 28th in Tai Pei when a woman who sold bootleg cigarettes was regulated.

In those days, Taiwan's society was corrupted, and people were in poverty. They could not live without doing an illegal thing. The agents confiscated the woman's cigarettes and all her money. She pleaded them to return her property, but one of the agents struck her in the head with a butt of his rifle.

People who saw the bloody woman surrounded the agents and their anger was heightened. One of the agents shot his gun into the crowd and one of bystanders died. Their rage turned towards the government and it became anti-government movement. It spread throughout Taiwan and included Taizhong, Gaoxiong, Tainan and Taichung. It is called the 228 Incident.

The number of Taiwanese, such as a judge, a doctor and an officer, who received higher education under the Japan rule were arrested, prisoned and were tortured. It is said that approximately 28,000 people were killed and executed. However, correct figures of victims were not identified until now. It is one of the saddest incidents in history of Taiwan.

By the way, in May 2010, I was allowed to preach a sermon for the Sunday worship at the 228 Church. The church was built in memory of the 228 Incident. Brothers and sisters who were the elite under the Japan rule and regarded as a dissidents and were imprisoned for ten or sixteen years attended. They all spoke beautiful Japanese.

In those days, the church was always under watch and the Special Higher Police checked people who went in and out. In fact, a woman and her two children were killed in the basement of the church, but her other daughter survived and went to America and became a Christian.

Her husband became a Christian and works for God as a pastor. The 228 Church has such history. The pastor and brothers and sisters said to me, **"We don't have any hatred against the Kuomintang Party."** No one can say such word without faith in God. They can

forgive other people because they received love in Christ. Faith in Christ strengthens the inner man like this.

No one buys a bloodshed house in Taiwan. The Church bought the house and I was given the privilege to serve at the 228 Church. The service was really blessed at that time. The precious Lord was present, and His word directly reached the congregation and hearts of the congregation turned to the Lord! We praised and worshipped the Lord.

How can be **the inner man** strengthened?

4) To Be Strengthened by the Power of the Spirit

Ephesians 3:16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

Today we have the Pentecost worship. In the days of the early church, the Gospel of Christ greatly progressed by the power of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said,

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The Bible records as below—

Acts 1:9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

1:10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

1:11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

The saints of the early church were strengthened by the Spirit. They experienced of the power of God. What is the power of the Spirit like? Is it a special feeling? Yes, it may be a part of it. However, the power of the Spirit is greater than that.

The Gospel of Matthew records,

7:29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Jesus is full of grace and truth. It is not the human power. They really understood that God spoke to them. The word of Jesus has authority and the Bible speaks about that Jesus.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "How Can We Live Steadily?"

—The Inner Man Has the Key—

We have our Pentecost worship service today. The Christian church was started by the Pentecost that Jesus promised. When the Holy Spirit was poured on people who believed in God, they received the power from heaven and were strengthened. And the Christian church was born. We live in different days of the believers of the early church, but we also are in various battles. How should we live in battles? Our inner selves should be strengthened. The secrets to be strengthened are:

- 1 . To be strengthened by the word and prayer
- 2 . To be strengthened by faith and the Spirit

* God bless you!