

June 28, 2020

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Living a Life as the Redeemed"

—A Christian's Guidelines—

Text: 1 Peter 1:17~21

1:17 Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.

1:18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors,

1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

1: 20 He was chosen before the creation of the world but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

1:21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Introduction

Generally, Japanese seem to be very religious people. There are shrines and temples all over Japan. One of the Japanese religious perspectives is the fear of a curse. They fear punishment for what they have done. They may fear a mysterious creature. In ancient times, people often said that **they were punished by Heaven**. When they did something against their conscience, they spoke like this. The days when they did not know teachings of God the Creator yet, their standard of life was based on their consciences.

There is a common phrase called, cause and effect. It means that there is a close relationship between cause and effect. Therefore, people thought that a harmful effect came from a bad cause, and when they had a good consequence, it came from some good cause. It depended on their consciences. Therefore, when they had a bad result, they said that **they were being punished by Heaven**.

The God of the Bible never **punishes** like this. The Bible teaches that even though there is a bad result, it does not mean punishment, rather, it is used for revealing God's glory. Then, what is God like who reveals His glory, and does not **punish** like we imagine? He is God of love.

My dear friends, when we understand how God is one of abounding in love, we do not come to fear Him. God is One of love, not One of fear. The Bible teaches that we are allowed to call God, who created the heavens and the earth, **Father in heaven** and have a close fellowship with Him.

However, we should not be too familiar with Him just because we have close fellowship. The Father in heaven is righteous and He judges.

Peter records that God **judges each person's work impartially**. (1 Peter 1:17) It seems that the Christian life is to understand God's love.

Then, what is the Christian life like to see God's love? Let's study the following three points today.

Main Points

1 . Keeping God's Judgement in Mind

1:17 Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.

Peter called God, Father. He called Him **Father in heaven** with an intimate feeling. We are saved by Jesus Christ and became **God's children**.

My friends, we are allowed to call the Creator as God the Father, who created the heavens and the earth. A relationship between Father and a child is not the one of today that is broken. Yes, we can have a close fellowship with Father. It is the kind of Father who warmly welcomed back his son who squandered his wealth in wild living.

Let us think for a while. We are not worthy to be saved, but we are saved by God's grace. We are forgiven our sin and made God's children by grace.

2 Corinthians records as below—

5:10 For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

The Bible teaches that we will be judged on how we led our lives someday. It records that God **judges each person's work impartially**. He does not show favoritism. We look man's appearance, but God looks at his true character. God knows everything and judges impartially even though it is invisible to human eyes.

It is recorded in the latter half of Verse 17, **live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear**. (1:17)

All people argue about what they like and do what they want. God gives us freedom; however, freedom involves responsibility.

My friends, God who watches everything judges each person's work impartially, whether good or bad. Therefore, we need to live by keeping God's judgement in mind.

The next important thing is to understand how great the price of love is.

2. Recognizing How Great the Price of Love Is

1:18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, 1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

The reason that Peter wrote this is because of the religious life of Jewish people. They eagerly followed the law.

We are not Jewish people, but we also have the empty way of life handed down from our ancestors. There are quite a few people who can not stop following Japanese manners and customs and throwing away Buddhist and Shinto altars, so they follow them on the surface.

However, there is no life there. Even if they worship them, there is no power to save them. They merely do it to ease their mind. It is an **empty way of life**.

We are redeemed from such situations. The word **redeem** means to make a slave free from slavery. The slave becomes free by paying the price. The slave can be freed by silver and gold.

However, silver and gold cannot make us free from the control of sin. Silver and gold are perishable. They are only useful in this world, not the eternal one. On the contrary, our redemption was fulfilled **with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect**.

The word above was recorded against a backdrop of **the feast of the Passover** that the Jewish people celebrated since the days of the Exodus. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt. They left Egypt by leading Moses.

God said to them to slaughter a year-old lamb without defect and take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of each house. God, would strike down Egypt, passed over the Israelites by seeing the blood on houses (the Passover). The Israelites could escape the judgement of God through the blood. They left Egypt safely and were made free from slavery.

Jewish people celebrate the Passover every year and give thanks to God for their salvation.

However, we do not celebrate the Passover, because the salvation(emancipation) that was foretold through the event of the Exodus was fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

The New Testament records as below—

Hebrews 9:12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.

Therefore, we do not need to repeatedly make a sacrifice to God every year. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, obtained eternal redemption with His precious blood on the cross. We live by realizing this great redemption of love.

3. We Should Realize that Everything is in God Again.

1: 20 He was chosen before the creation of the world but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

1:21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Firstly, we come to know that our salvation was prepared by God's eternal plan. It was not His mere idea but a well-thought plan. We can receive His grace now.

God knows everything about us before we are in our mother's womb. He knows our present and future. It is too great to understand.

{Illustration} Mr. Shigeru Yokota, the father of Megumi, who was abducted by North Korea. Mr. Shigeru Yokota's funeral was held at a Christian church on June 8th.

Mr. Tsutomu Nishioka, who is a chairman of the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea, spoke at the funeral as below.

"I have known Mr. Yokota for 23 years. I visited throughout Japan, America, Korea and various other places with Mr. Shigeru Yokota and his wife Sakie. When Sakie and I had free time on Sunday, we went to attend Sunday worship and opened the Bible and prayed at a hotel.

Shigeru did not like that his wife attended a church. He said, 'If Sakie is able to reduce her mental stress and sadness by faith, it is good for her to believe in Christianity. However, as for me, I do not believe in God. If He is present, why He would he allow my daughter to be suddenly kidnapped? If a certain god brings back Megumi, I will worship him. We human beings worship gods to make our weak mind stable and peaceful. My daughter, who was caught by North Korea, is under the hardest situation. I, her father, hardly get peace in mind by trusting in gods, while my daughter is suffering.'

I heard a few times that he said something like this. I, who am only a human, could not explain to Mr. and Mrs. Yokota why God gave them such a cruel trial and why they still have not had an answer. There are more things that I do not understand than things that I understand.

However, Shigeru later believed in God and was baptized. It was not due to the efforts of Shigeru and Sakie, or the reward for his good deeds. It was just a mysterious gift from God.

The Bible says that God prepared in advance for us to do good works. Good works for Shigeru seemed to be the compelled good works. However, he bravely fought to the end. God said to him that he must have to work hard. That is enough. You should take a rest in heaven and wait for Megumi there. He left for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Shigeru kept fighting for 23 years. I also fought with him and I really understand his brave heart. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also said that he fought with him and Sakie for realizing the return of abducted people. I feel as if my fellow soldier was killed beside me. (Continue)

Mr. Tsutomu Nishioka gave a speech like this. He said this about Shigeru who became a Christian, **“Shigeru was not baptized in reward for his good deeds, but it is only God’s amazing gift. Man is prepared in advance to do good works in this world. For Shigeru, good works might have been a forced one, however, he kept fighting hard at the end.”**

I think that life of Mr. Shigeru Yokota is God’s gift for him. Everything is in God’s hand. Everything refers to faith, hope and love. Peter said, **“Your faith and hope are in God.” (1:21)**

2) God made the Savior, Jesus Christ **raised from the dead and glorified him.** One day, Tolstoy a Russian writer was asked, “What do you have to do to begin a new religion?” He answered, **“You must crucify yourself and rise on the third day.”**

Do you really understand what Tolstoy means? God has done a precious thing for us that is impossible for human beings. Christ fulfilled it; it is a sacrifice on the cross and a miracle of resurrection.

We are saved by God’s works. Our salvation is in God’s hand.

1:21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Faith is not our own power or our own wisdom. It is beyond our power. Our faith and hope are in God. We just receive the salvation that God prepared for us through God's grace.

Therefore, we give thanks to God and worship Him.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Living a Life as the Redeemed"

—A Christian's Guidelines—

Today we studied a Christians' Guidelines, who believe in the living God. How should we live, us who are saved by God's love?

How should we understand God's love in our daily lives? We are taught the following three points for our lives as below —

1. We should keep God's judgement in mind.
2. We should recognize the greatness of the price of love.
3. We should realize that everything is in God's hand.

* God bless you!