

July 26, 2020

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastore Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Let Us Grow in Love"

—By the Lord's Goodness—

Text: 1Peter 2:1~3

2:1 So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

2:2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—

2:3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Introduction

{Illustration}

Recently, I read a delightful book entitled *Emotionally Free* by Grant Mullen, MD of Canada.

Dr. Mullen, who is a Christian psychiatrist, writes about healing of body, mind, and soul. He and his wife seem to be an ideal couple. He is a psychiatrist and his wife is a church school leader.

However, Dr. Mullen had depression and his wife became exhausted with her husband and at one time they were on the brink of a divorce. They are Christians and attended Sunday worship service, but they had no peace in their minds. In those days, they were healed by the genuine Gospel of Christ. Mrs. Mullen honestly writes the process (conflict) of contemplating divorce, so the book is their joint work.

Dr. Mullen observed agony in many Christians' hearts, and lived through his own depression and anxiety and finally found three keys for freedom from restraint on the human heart. They are also keys of leading a joyful life with others. Being a psychiatrist, he clearly wrote about the truth that he really experienced the genuine Gospel of Christ.

"Firstly, I confirmed again that how greatly the Gospel of Christ made our minds and other people's affected minds free. I was filled with joy and thanks."

I remembered the Word of the proverbs.

15:13 A glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed.

My friends, even the angels in heaven wanted to see the **Gospel of Christ**.

It is written in 1 Pete, Chapter 1 as below,

1:12...angels long to look.

By the way, Peter wrote **therefore** in the beginning of Chapter 2, Verse 1. It refers to what he wrote at the end of Chapter 1. Last time I mentioned about **the rose of Jericho**. Do you still remember it? It looked withered. But when I watered it, it surprisingly sprouted and bloomed. Like this, the Word of the Bible looks like a withered rose (flower) for those who have no faith.

On the other hand, those who have faith find the hidden treasure.

The Bible records as below–

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The very precious treasures are hidden in the Bible, the Word of God. Peter taught that it is important that a newly born life should grow. All parents naturally hope that their children grow to be good adults. However, there are various problems. Peter teaches two important points which we will study today.

Main Points

1 . The Necessity of Growth

1) Conditions of Growth

1 Peter 2:1 So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

Peter teaches the important things here. The first condition for growth is to rid. It is important to get rid of things that hinder us from growing. Then, what does hinder us from growing?

Peter listed up things (sins) that hinder us from growing: **all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander.**

When we carefully read, each of them is written in the plural form and the word **all** is repeated three times. We understand how seriously great the hurdles are!

It is true that we have these things in our heart, among many other things. We should throw these sins away thoroughly.

My friends, even us Christians may have **malice** for someone, **deceit, hypocrisy, and envy**. We sometimes may **speak evil** of about others behind their backs. Even a minister can do these things.

When we realize that we have **malice, deceit, hypocrisy, and envy** in us, we need to honestly

confess them to the Lord Jesus and ask for His help. When we want to speak evil of others, we need to frankly tell Him. We need to confess and to be forgiven. We need to be helped by Jesus.

All of our sins are forgiven by the cross of Jesus. His blood that shed on the cross cleanses us.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all righteousness.

The Holy Spirit makes us new beings and God's children. It is just God's grace.

My friends, our flesh conceives all these things and hinders us from growing. We need to be changed into likeness of Jesus step by step by throwing them away.

The first step of growth is to **throw away**. It means that the first condition whether we grow or not depends on us to throw the nature of flesh.

2) Longing for Spiritual Milk

1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—

The second condition of growth is to drink the spiritual milk. The key to our growth is to crave for the spiritual milk like a baby eagerly drink his/her mother's milk.

As we live as a Christian for a long time, we sometimes think, "I understand it completely." However, it is dangerous to think so. We should not think it is enough even though we have led a long Christian life. We should always have a fresh interest.

He, who is a Christian for a long time, sometimes utters unsuitable words as a Christian or behaves not like a Christian. The Christian life does not depend on how long one has lived as a Christian, but it depends on how much he drinks milk and grows. It is the second condition of growth.

{Illustration } Viktor Klimenko

I will never forget Victor Klimenko, who is a gospel singer in Finland and I think highly of him. He is still active as a singer now.

I went to Siberia to do an evangelical work in the summer of 1993 when the former Soviet Union collapsed. There was a labor camp where many people were prisoned. In those days, many Christians lived there. We visited many cities on boat along the large river and had evangelical meetings. Viktor Klimenko came together with us. Wherever

he went, the meeting halls were swarmed with a large audience. (Probably, more than 1,000 people attended.)

When he began to sing, I heard sobs here and there. His songs in fluent Russian touched deep in the congregation and sounded. We had blessed meetings and many people believed in Jesus and decided to follow Him. I was really impressed and I remember him and his praise clearly.

One day I asked him the secret of his praising. He always sang the same songs, however, they sounded like fresh songs every time. If a pastor gives a same sermon every time, can he make the congregation grow?

He answered, "I decide a theme when I praise. I put songs in order according to the theme and make it up and begin to praise." He continued, "I have sang these songs more than 1,000 times. And, I always feel like they are fresh." It was unbelievable. How could he always sing with a fresh feeling? What was the secret of his praising?

I came to the conclusion that the secret of his praising was hidden in himself. Viktor Klimenko never thought that he understood the Word of God well enough. He always offered prayer to God with a humble attitude. I really watched the person who grew up as the God's tool with the Word that is the spiritual milk. It was a blessed time.

2:2 Like newborn babies, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—

The Scripture above records **the pure spiritual milk**. We need to be careful. If milk contains something impure, it is harmful. Milk that is made from what mother takes. If mother drinks alcohol, a baby drinks alcohol too.

On the other hand, the Word of the Bible is **the pure spiritual milk**. There is nothing safer than spiritual milk. We can drink it at ease. It makes us grow spiritually.

My dear friends, we are given **the pure spiritual milk** and we can grow by taking it. Then, how can we grow by taking the Word, our spiritual milk?

2. The Outcome of Growth

1) Receiving Salvation

2:2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—

It records “**that by it you may grow up into salvation.**” You may think that you grow and then you are saved. No, you do not. The meaning of **salvation** here is to experience the blessing of salvation.

The Lutheran Bible in German sometimes translates **salvation** into **blessing**, and we understand it much better. Here, Luther used the word salvation in the Scripture above as **salvation** (*Rettung* in German) that is saved under hardships, not salvation of one’s soul (*Heil* in German). We are helped and to grow continually.

Man believed in Jesus and is forgiven his sin and is saved. He is baptized and starts his Christian life. It is the first step of salvation. Then, he is helped by the Word and grows every day. It means to **grow up into salvation.**

The person who has only cared for themselves grows by taking spiritual milk. How blessed are they! God makes them grow and love one another from a pure heart. The spiritual milk that Jesus gives is the pure milk.

1 Peter, Chapter 2 records as below—

2:22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

2) Encouraging to Grow

Peter pointed out two conditions so that our Christian life can be blessed.

He records in Verse 3,

2:3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The sentence above is a conditional sentence. Its condition is “If you have tasted~” and it means that he had already tasted that the Lord is good. It does not mean that he is not certain if he tasted it or not.

Therefore, the verse can begin with the word, **therefore**. (Luther translates it like this.) Peter encourages that they had tasted that God is good, so they should taste Him more and experience Him more.

When we look back our life, we realize that we are inexperienced and have various kinds of weakness and we really are sinners, yet we have experienced the Lord’s mercy and love in some way.

Therefore, verse 3 encourages us to taste and experience more and more. You should not think

that you are completely satisfied in your Christian life, so you need not to live eagerly anymore. Please do not think that you live a Christian life perfectly and that you do not need to change anymore.

God changes our heart and our personalities. Therefore, **put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, and long for the pure spiritual milk like newborn infants.**

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Let Us Grow in Love"

—By the Lord's Goodness—

We are saved by the blessed Gospel of Christ and live the joyful life because of God's grace. However, some Christians may be afflicted with their own battles. Some of them are probably still under conflicts.

However, you are all right. Jesus was crucified for us, the weak and He truly wants us to grow as God's children.

Today, God spoke to us through the message. What secrets are we taught?

1. We should put away all sin.
2. We should long for the pure spiritual milk and drink it.

* God bless you!