

August 2, 2020

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "A Stone Chosen by Zion"

— The Living Stone —

Text: 1 Peter 2:4~6

2:4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,

2:5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

2:6 For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

Introduction

The Bible records the various **parables** that are used to teach the Word of God in a plain way. Parable is called *parabole* in the original language and it means **side by side** or **abreast**.

There is an express highway called a Parallel, the Autobahn in Germany. The Rhein river runs through the middle of Germany from south to north. The Autobahn runs on both sides of the Rhein river side by side so that the expressway called the Parallel Autobahn.

The expressway is very convenient because when the one of autobahn is under construction or an accident happens, we can use the other one to reach our destination.

Parables of the Bible teach us by setting two things side by side that are equal: things of the natural world that are easy to understand and God's truth on the other side.

For example, today's text records,

2:4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,

The Scripture says that the Lord is **a stone**.

2:5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The Scripture teaches that we are also **living stones**.

It means that the Lord (God) is like the precious **living stone** and you are also **living stones**. It teaches God's precious secret.

Now, let us study the God's secret about the two parallel **stones** today.

Main Points

1. Jesus Is a Precious Cornerstone.

2:4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,

2:6 For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

When I was studying at the University of Trier in Germany, I was boarding in a stone-built house. The room maintained a constant temperature throughout the year. I felt it was cool in summer and warm in winter.

I have heard that Jerusalem (Zion) is built on a hard bedrock. There are many stone-built houses in Jerusalem. Recently, the locally produced stones are exported as Jerusalem stones. Therefore, stones are and were familiar and ordinary things to people in Jerusalem (stone culture).

1) Jesus is the Cornerstone.

In today's Scripture, Jesus is called **a cornerstone** (Verse 6). Another part of the Bible describes a cornerstone as a foundational stone. The stone is the pivotal stone of a whole building. The stone supports the other stones to build a magnificent building.

Matthew records as below—

21:42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes"?

The Lord was rejected by people and crucified. The Lord is **the real living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious. (1 Peter 2:4)**

2) A Marvelous Thing in Our Eyes

My friends, let us think a while.

- ① Why was Jesus who saved people and helped so many cruelly killed?
- ② Why was Jesus, who declared Himself the Son of God, killed? If He is the Son of God, He could have come down from the cross.

The word **rejected** here means to examine a thing in different ways and finally throw it away because it is useless. Unhappiness and the sorrows of human beings today result

from rejecting Jesus Christ. Their mistake is that they thought they could manage to do everything without Jesus who is the source of life. Human beings have changed from their proper state and have become hopeless. They have thrown the cornerstone away and could not build a house. People rejected Jesus. It is the helpless mistake of human beings.

3) The Strange Living Stone

By the way, Jesus is called **the living stone**. A stone is not a living thing; however, it is said to be alive. It is the hard rock that becomes the true cornerstone, but it is said to be living. It means that **the living stone** gives life to us and makes us alive.

He who is spiritually dead becomes **a living thing** by Jesus.

Isaiah records as below—

28:16 therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’

The Scripture above is a prophesy that was told before Jesus’ birth. The Christian era, **A.D.** is used since the birth of Jesus Christ. It refers to the cornerstone that has laid in Zion.

Peter continues recording the blessed truths in subsequent verses.

2. He Who Believes in God is Also a Living Stone.

2:5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1) Being Built up Like Living Stones as a Spiritual House

Peter teaches that we ourselves are living stones. One stone seems not to be impressive or useful, but many **living stones** come together and **are built up as a spiritual house**. We ourselves do not build it up, but the Lord God uses us to build it.

The spiritual house refers to **God’s temple**. It is the place where God’s presence is revealed. God’s temple is the place of our fellowship, of any Christian group. A church is God’s temple and the place where God’s presence is revealed. The invisible God reveals Himself among our fellowship today.

It means that God builds the church by using the saints who believe in Him. It is a very important point. Peter, the author, teaches us another important point.

2) Being Priests to Offer Spiritual Sacrifices

Being built up as a spiritual house is for the purpose of becoming a priest.

The Scripture says that we become **the priests** because we build up **the spiritual house, the Lord's temple**. The church that is **a spiritual house** is also a group of priests. The situation of a priest is one of great blessing. They are given great honor to serve God at the temple.

As you know, in Judaism only the descendants of Aaron became priests. It was impossible for people who were not the descendants of Aaron to become a priest even if they wanted to be. They are the chosen people.

However, every saint in church who believes in God become **a holy priest**. We do not need to be of a privileged class. Every Christian can serve as a priest. Martin Luther, the religious reformer, declared **the universal priesthood** 500 years ago. He restored the truth that the Scripture teaches here.

① What is the Work of a Priest?

The priest offers **spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God** through Jesus Christ.

(1) Micah 6

Micah the prophet in the days of the Old Testament said about priesthood as below—

6:6 "With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

6:7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you

but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

(2) Hebrews 13

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews records about the priesthood as below—

13:15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

13:16 Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

(3) Romans 12

The author of the Epistle to the Romans records about the priesthood as below—

12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as

a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

These are the work of a priest.

② What is the Sacrifice a Priest Brings?

The spiritual sacrifice is to sacrifice the priest himself. He sacrifices his body as the priest. However, it does not mean to offer a physical body. It means to sacrifice ourselves spiritually. Our spiritual sacrifice means the following things according to the three Scriptures above.

- To do justice
- To love integrity
- To be humble and walk with God
- To praise God and pray
- To do various good deeds
- To help others
- To live by offering oneself

We are **the spiritual stones**. Even though each stone is small, but when many stones are combined, a splendid building is built. It is the church. Like this, each of us are small being, however, when we are combined as God's people, the splendid **spiritual house** is built.

We all become **priests** who serve God. And we offer ourselves by doing good deeds, having faith, praising and prayer.

③ Then, How Can We Live Like Preists?

It is to be united one with Jesus who is **the living stone**. If we are not united with Jesus, we cannot become **the living stone**. Therefore, Peter said, **"You come to him." (2:4)** Let us come to the Lord! The priest should come to the Lord. But how can we come to the Lord?

Peter said in the beginning of Chapter 2. Let us remember. He taught about the growth of the saints.

There are at least 4 things that are necessary for the growth of a baby.

- (1) To breathe (prayer)
- (2) To be cleaned (to be holy)
- (3) To be warmed (fellowship)
- (4) To take food (the God's Word)

These 4 points are applicable to the spiritual growth.

What do you think about today's message? It is very important for us, who are **the living stones**, to come to the Lord. Therefore, Peter said, **"You come to him." (2:4)**

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "A Stone Chosen for Zion"

— The Living Stone —

Today we studied God's blessing through the message entitled *A Stone Chosen by Zion*. Jesus Christ is **the precious living stone, the corner stone**, which was rejected by people. The blessing that is given to those who trust in the stone is recorded as, **2:6 and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."**

On the top of that, Peter teaches the blessing that we who trust in God are also **living stones**. God has chosen us as His priests. How blessed we are.

We are allowed to come close to God and are given His blessing in His presence as His priests. God has the plan to build His **spiritual house** (the church) by the priests. It is **God's holy temple** that He builds.

How about today's message? We know better than anyone else that we are not worthy to become the priest. We are only chosen by God. Therefore, we praise and worship Him.

Let us read the following God's Word and pray.

2:4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,

2:5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

* God bless you!