

September 6, 2020

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Let Us Carry out Our Responsibilities"

— For the Lord's Sake —

Text: 1 Peter 2:13~17

2:13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,

2:14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

2:15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

2:16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

2:17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Introduction

Last time, we studied that we Christians are sojourners and exiles in this world. The present days are not all we have. We have a future and an eternal life. How happy we are!

Then, should we live by thinking only about the life in heaven? The present life is not worthy to worry about, is it? No, not at all.

Let us read the following Scripture.

2:12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

My friends, this is our attitude to live by. By the way, what does it mean **to conduct yourselves honorably**? We want to be a person whose conduct is honorable. Does it mean that we, Christians, live humbly, generously, and friendly to be an example for people? Do we live to gain a reputation that his /her conduct is honorable?

Of course, he who lives an exemplary life is happy, however, everyone cannot always **conduct themselves honorably**.

Peter, the author of the epistle, teaches the way of life in verses 13 through 17.

Peter teaches that Christians should live by carrying out their responsibilities as a citizen in

today's Scripture. Let us study what Peter teaches us through them.

Main Points

1 . **Be Subject to Every Human Institution.**

1) **Social Institutions**

2:13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution,

There are various institutions in our society. When we decide on a place to live, we submit a notification of our change of address to the city office. When we are married, we register our marriage to the city office and when our children are born, we register our child's birth to the city office. We should carry out our responsibilities as a member of society.

When we drive a car, we need a driver's license. It is quite natural that you follow the traffic rules as a driver. If you think you are an exception and drive a car without following the traffic rules, you break the social institutions. It is common sense.

However, some people cannot follow the rules of society. When we look back the Christian history, there were only a few radical groups of people who could not follow the natural things.

In the days of Reformation, there were some people who took different views from the Reformation of Luther and Calvin.

People of these groups tried to make an ideal society according the Bible. They tried to establish kingdom without having a right understanding of the Bible. It is true that there were people like that in those days.

On the contrary, Peter teaches, **"Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution." (2:13)**

Then, why do human beings make institutions, orders, and rules of society? I raise at least two points as below.

- ① The reason to make institutions, orders, and rules is that the society falls into disorder without them. Please imagine a society of disorder. Chaos develops all over the society and people become unhappy. Therefore, it is important for Christians to follow the institutions that human beings have made.
- ② The reason is that God gave us the ability to make orders and rules. Those who make rules are not always people who worship God, even though they use the ability that God gave them.

God gives ability to politicians, who do not fear God, to make orders and keep them, even though their orders are not perfect ones. It is God's grace.

Peter said to be subject **for the Lord's sake**. It is important to be subject to institutions and orders **for the Lord's sake**. It is important **for the Lord's sake** to subject institutions and orders that were made by people who do not know God, because it leads to **an honorable life**.

2) God's Institutions

2:13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,

2:14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

Peter advises that they should be subject to the emperor, who controls his domain, and governors, who sent by the emperor and control smaller regions. They are given power by God to punish those who do evil and praise those who do good; therefore, we should be subject to them.

Should we be subject unconditionally to what the governors or those who have authority say? No, we should not. Every human institution is not always right. It is not an absolute command. Therefore, we sometimes take a quite opposite attitude for the Lord's sake.

Let us look at the examples in the Bible.

① Let us read the attitude of Daniel in the days of the Old Testament.

Daniel 6:7 All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.

7:8 Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked."

6:9 Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

6:10 When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

② How about Peter and John in the days of the early churches?

Acts 4:18 So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

4:19 But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,

4: 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

Peter and John did not subject themselves to the order of the leaders.

Like this, the Bible did not teach to subject to the authorities thoughtlessly. It advises that remembering the point, we generally follow the social rules and do good willingly.

The verse 15 records as below.

2:15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

Therefore, we Christians follow God. The Bible does not teach, **“If you can’t beat them, join them.”**

{Illustration} The Voice of Mission

As you know, I have supported churches for more than 45 years with the saints in the countries that have not accepted God the Creator. Countless brothers and sisters have been persecuted because of their faith in the former Soviet Union (Russia, Rumania, Ukraine, and Central Asia, etc.) and North Korea.

The battle between light and darkness continues on. However, please remember that the reality is proven by history. The Berlin Wall fell, the Soviet Union was corrupted, and Europe drastically changed. However, the word of the Bible never changes.

I know many saints who did not join them, if they couldn’t beat them, but faithfully followed the word of the Bible. It is impossible to tell you all the stories. (Please read my books.)

I understand that the word of the Bible never changes from the experiences of my short life. It is the Bible that teaches us how to live happy life. How blessed we are!

2 . Live as People Who Are Free

1) People Who Are Really Free

216 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

Peter records that the Christian is free. He is nobody's slave. He is free. Nobody forces him. He is free to do anything. However, his freedom is different from **self-indulgence**. It does not mean that he can do whatever he wants. It is not the freedom that he can control other people or hurt them. Therefore, it is written **not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil but living as servants of God.**

Christians are free and are also **God's servants**. Therefore, it is important to follow God who gave us freedom. When we trust in Him perfectly, we are made free from power of sin and become free. On top of that, we are made free from pride, fear, and anxiety.

Life to follow God is the way that we are made free from the power of restriction.

Galatians 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

5:13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

On the contrary, when we do not follow God, we become a slave of selfishness, sin, and pride. We are controlled by fear and anxiety. Therefore, Christians are free and become slaves of all people. It is the attitude of Christians.

{Illustration}

I will tell you about my Christian acquaintance who is an industrial counselor. He holds a seminar regularly and supports entrepreneurs and businesspersons. He is in a position to lead businessmen; however, he regards participants as company presidents and speaks to them politely. He thinks himself as a servant of the participants.

The company that has a corporate mission like this expands and develops. His seminar expands its business goes abroad. I seldom hear that Japanese industrial counseling expands its work internationally. The company stands on the principle of the Bible.

We are free and God's servants. These two things seem to be in conflict each other. However, Christians can achieve it. How blessed we are!

2) Honor Everyone

2:17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

We sometimes measure others by our own standard and judge them.

However, God teaches the following four important things.

① He wants us to **honor everyone**. It is difficult for us to **honor everyone**. We lack power in

us to fulfill it.

Let us remember! Jesus gave his example to us. What love did Jesus show before he was crucified? He washed disciples' dirty feet. (It was servants' work.)

Jesus said,

John 13:14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

3: 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

"To honor everyone" is to follow Jesus' example.

② Jesus continues, **"Love the brotherhood."** It means to love friends who have the same faith. Schlatter, a biblical scholar, translated, **"There is love in brotherhood."**

Jesus said as below in the Gospel of John.

3:35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

It is very difficult for us to love. We hardly love one another because of our innate natures. However, if we change our perspective, it becomes possible: **God created that person in His image and loves him/her.** Then we come to love other people.

③ It records, **"Fear God."** We easily become arrogant and selfish without fearing God. Everything is difficult for us: respecting all people, loving brothers, and fearing God. The reason is that we are not afraid of God in our heart.

④ It records, **"Honor the emperor."** We should honor the king whom God makes as the king. We need to live under the king **for the Lord's sake.** As we already studied, all institutions, orders and rules in this world are under God.

Peter taught these four points and it is very hard to achieve them by ourselves. The important thing is to change our perspectives. **God created that person in His image and loves him/her.** Then, the impossible things change into the possible things. It is God's **work.** Hallelujah!

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Let Us Carry out Our Responsibilities"

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Today we studied the importance to subject ourselves to human institutions and also studied the importance of following the institutions that God made. We studied that we Christians are given privilege to live freely.

We should honor all people, love brothers, fear God, and honor the king more than anything. It is the way of life that Christians carry out their responsibilities in society.

Let us read the following Scripture and conclude the message

2:17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

* God bless you!