

September 20, 2020

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Living in the New View of Life"

—A Positive Cycle—

Text: 1 Peter 2:18~23

2:18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.

2:19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

2:20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure; this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

2:21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

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

2:23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Introduction

One of the important points when reading the Bible is to understand in the context. For example, Chapter 2, verse 18 records the word, "**servants**". Some other Bible versions use **slave** and **domestic**. The original language is '**slave**.'

My friends, when we hear the word a slave, we usually think people who are in chains and are put to labor with a whip. However, the word a slave does not always refer such people.

Some of them were highly intelligent who tutored children of Roman aristocrats. Other slaves were greatly talented and loyal, so they were entrusted to manage properties. So, we can say that they are similar to what we now call **housekeepers**.

In the days of the New Testament, there were many slaves in the Greek and Roman world. Surprisingly, more than half of population seemed to be slaves and that number was approximately fifty million. Therefore, you may understand that slaves were like **housekeepers** who worked at their masters' house rather than slaves who were bound with chains. However, they were slaves after all; and they did not have freedom. They belonged to their masters. To understand according to the context is the way to understand this.

Peter sent the epistle to Christians in Asia Minor, who were persecuted. (1:1) He advised them

that as they were only sojourners and exiles in this world, they should remember that they were God's (the master) slaves (servants).

Chapter 2, verses 11~17 give advices to ordinary Christians and verses 18~25 give advices to slaves who served landowners and wealthy persons. Even though there is a distinction between a master and a slave in the world, there is no distinction before God.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

By the way, we meet various hardships in our life. We can study from today's Scripture what attitude we should take when we work together with people like our superiors, colleges, and younger colleges at the office. Let us study the following two points.

Main Points

1. Be Subject to Your Masters with All Respect.

2:18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.

Peter advises slaves who became Christians not to behave in an arrogant manner or ignore their masters. He teaches them not to behave high-handed even if they become free by the Gospel and are treated equally in church.

My friends. It is not so difficult to be subject to good and gentle masters. However, it is expected that there were unjust masters in those days. If a servant was treated unjustly, it is natural that they would become angry. It must be natural feeling as humans. Nevertheless, why did Peter advise to be subject to the unjust masters? The following verse gives us an answer.

2:19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

2:20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

We need to focus the phrase, "**be gracious in the sight of God.**" Another translation is, "**It is God's grace.**" Verse 21 records,

2:21 For to this you have been called.

In fact, Paul teaches the same thing like Peter writes.

Philippians 29 For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake

Let us sum up now. Peter taught,

To suffer for Christ's sake → God is pleased with it. (God's grace) →

To be called for it. Isn't it a strange structure?

It is difficult to believe that God is pleased with our suffering and we are called for it.

We probably would work hard under a good and gentle master. However, can we subject ourselves to an unjust master for the sake of Christ because the Bible teaches so?

When we think about this world, people avoid difficulties and hard things, and seek an easy life. Perhaps we are affected by the atmosphere of the current society without knowing. We hope to go through an easy life without difficulties. However, difficulties have some meaning.

My friends. Why is God pleased with us who endure suffering unjustly? Why suffering for Christ's sake means God's grace and God is pleased with it? It is the quite opposite of the logic of this world, doesn't it? Yes, indeed! God is pleased with quite opposite principles of this world.

The blessed principle that defeats the world is found in Christ. The secret of Christianity is hidden there.

It means that we should subject to our masters with respect in any situation that God gives us. It pleases God and it is His grace. The reason is found in the following points.

2. Defeating Evil with Doing Good

The Lord is pleased that we suffer unjustly and endure sorrow. It seems a negative teaching and we come to feel depressed, but it is not true.

The Bible teaches a new view of life and of the world that is quite different from the one of people who do not know God. How should we defeat evil with doing good? Let study the following three points.

1) Living Before God

2:19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

The Scripture above records the phrase, "**suffering unjustly,**" and before it is the word, "**while.**" It should not have been **suffering unjustly** for the slaves in those days, even though they suffered various hardships. Even though the slaves suffer, it is **suffering justly.**

In those days, their masters' deeds were always right. There was no room for a concept of unjust and unfairness. Such was the status of slaves.

Even if such an impossible thing could happen (an impossible thing), Peter said, "**For this is a**

gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows."

"Mindful of God" means to be honest with oneself. It means that even if we should endure **pain through suffering unjustly** that is impossible and beyond expectation we should live honestly before God. God gives us conscience. It is originally given to human beings to live a righteous life as human beings.

Therefore, the Bible teaches us to be **"mindful of God."** However, it does not mean to do with great perseverance. We cannot achieve it without focusing on a thing in the depth of suffering.

2) Defeating Evil with Doing Good

2:19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

The Scripture above teaches the positive ethics that defeats evil with doing good. The situation does not go well by blaming and resisting. If someone pays back, it causes so called a chain reaction of retaliation: paying back twice, three times and ten times. How many people are suffering from the tragedy in this world?

The important point that we should understand is that God knows everything. We should do good things expecting that God, who judges everyone, works in an appropriate way.

Please do not misunderstand what I mentioned. As we studied before, it does not tell you that we must not oppose or protest when we are asked to do unjust things. The Bible does not teach such a thing.

We need to seek justice of society. However, we should not have a grudge or try to retaliate personally, rather we should defeat evil with doing good.

For achieving it:

- ① Our conscience before God should work correctly. And,
- ② We should firmly hold on in the depth of suffering.

Then, how can we defeat evil with doing good?

3) Following the Example of Jesus Christ

2:21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

God Himself became a human and left the example **how to live a Godly life**. God the Creator became humble and was subjected Himself to be crucified.

The Lord did not curse or retaliate against people who crucified him. He left the example us to

follow Him like this.

The Lord Jesus Christ changed our life. He also changes the world that is full of battles. Therefore, it is important for us to follow in the steps of the Lord who is our example.

Then, what attitude did Christ take?

① **Christ Also Suffered Unjustly.**

2:21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

Christ Himself suffered and experienced pain. Therefore, He can understand our pain and suffering like us. How happy we are that Christ understands our pain and suffering!

Jesus is the Lord of healing. Let us look Jesus in detail. What attitude did the Lord take?

② **Christ Did not Retaliate.**

The One who could call the heavenly host did not retaliate at all. When Jesus was born, the Bible records as below—

Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

That is not all: Jesus prayed for people who crucified Him.

Luke 23:34 And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.

Why Christ did not retaliate against them?

- (1) He completely trusted God the Father who judges justly.
- (2) He trusted in the logic of the Kingdom in Heaven, not in the one of this world.

③ **Christ Completely Entrusted to.**

2:23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Christ entrusted Himself to the One who judges justly. It is Christian faith. We are God’s **servants** of the God’s house. How should we live as the **servant**?

We know that we do not have power to do good. However, the Bible teaches us to entrust to the Master, who is God, as His servants. We should not live according to the negative ways of the world by paying back or seeking revenge. We keep living according to the positive chains that defeat the world and continuing it.

Therefore, it is important to follow the Jesus Christ as His **servant**. He /she becomes a person

who lives in **the new view of life**.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Living in the New View of Life"

—A Positive Chains—

Today we studied about the way of life of God's servants who **defeat evil with doing good**.

Honestly, we do not have power to live as a servant of God. Then, how should we live?

1. We should live by following our conscience before God.
2. We should follow the example of Jesus Christ.

The true winner of life is the one who defeats evil with doing good.

Let us live by asking our conscience honestly and following Jesus Christ our Master.

* God bless you!