

November 22, 2020

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (Open Church Worship Service)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Peace Be with You"

—My Peace—

The Bible: Psalm 23:1~3

23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

23:3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Introduction

Today, we have an open church worship service. We welcome all of you who have come to our church for the first time and also those who join us through our online service. I will try to speak plainly as much as I can. Please feel relaxed and listen to me.

If you are asked, **"What is the most important thing to you?"** What do you answer? You must have many important things.

We are now living in the days of an information-oriented society. Nowadays, the world news and information reaches us in an instant because of developing social networking services (SNS). The scary thing is that anyone can offer information through the internet and YouTube. A substantial majority of people use the internet, and many people compete against each other or critique one another.

Probably, there is fake news. There are many things where we cannot judge what is correct. We can become victims and are deeply hurt. Our society is developing and becomes convenient in many ways. However, is a human heart really satisfied?

"What is the most important thing to you?"

My friends. Time is given to all the people of the world. The piling up of that time forms our life.

Our life is particularly important, because we are allowed to live only once, we have **one chance**. We cannot reset it. Then how should we live this precious life?

The world today becomes the days of the COVID-19 pandemic. The order of society is broken, and the economic status is seriously damaged and confused due to a small

coronavirus. We hope the COVID-19 pandemic will be over tomorrow. However, the reality is that the light at the end of the tunnel is not seen yet.

{A Note} The Size of a Virus

- A cedar pollen and a Japanese cypress pollen is approximately 30~40 μm .
- Yellow sand is approximately 4 μm .
- PM2.5 is less than 2.5 μm .
 μm (micrometer) a unit of length
 1 μm is one thousandth of 1mm, 0.0001mm
 * Virus (virus nucleus) is approximately 0.1 μm ,

Coronavirus is extremely small. On the other hand, when the coronavirus spreads over the world and the number of cases is increasing, people lose their presence of mind. European countries are suffering from the second wave of COVID-19. As their lives and societies are changing, they began to realize that things they thought valuable were not so important. Even though medical science, chemistry, industry, and AI is developing, they have not yet stopped the spread of the virus.

A few weeks ago, in New York City, America's cultural and economic center, a well-known Japanese Jazz pianist was attacked by someone. He was involved in an unreasonable fight and suffered mob violence. His arm and shoulder were broken and received a severe injury. He still has pain and cannot say for certain when he can resume his musical activity. It is very regrettable.

I have heard that unemployed people are increasing in NY and those who are stressed caused such kind of violent incidents. The crime rate of New York City, as of October 8th, reports 362 cases of murder (increased by 32.6% compared with last year) and 1235 cases of shootings (increased by 92.4%). Everyone has anxiety about their daily lives in such an unusual society.

Fortunately, Japanese society is not escalating that badly. However, people in these days are really seeking a place where they feel peace and comfortable, aren't they? The Bible teaches that God created human beings and the world. Does God really intend for a troublesome world and life? Not at all. He wants us to live life in peace that we can live only once.

Approximately 2000 years ago, Jesus Christ was crucified and rose again. His disciples who followed Him feared to be arrested and brutalized. They ran away in different places. Jesus, who resurrected, appeared before the disciples who feared for their lives.

His first words were **“Peace be with you.” (John 20:19)** Jesus said, **“Peace be with you”** to the disciples who were discouraged, disappointed and afraid.

It is the peace that we need most.

The various persons appear in the Bible. David is one of kings who played an active role in the days of the Old Testament. He was a great man who was a shepherd and later became the king of the nation of Israel, the supreme authority.

David looked back his life in his later years and described it with only six verses. It is Psalm 23, today's text.

He celebrated that his life was blessed even though he had suffering and battles. He looked his life and sang, **“I shall not want.” (23:1) “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life”** What a blessed life he had!

He who can praise God is blessed even if he has suffering and battles. Approximately 3000 years has passed since the days of King David. However, many people still love and quote Psalm 23. Isn't it interesting?

How could King David celebrate with such a song?

Today, I would like to study the following two points from the first part of the Psalm 23.

Main Points

1 . King David Had His Place

He praised as below.

23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

There are four important key words. Let us study one by one.

① The Lord is my shepherd.

King David sang about the wonderful relationship between him and the Lord (God) like this. A sheep easily loses his way. He loses his way without the shepherd. Therefore, the sheep hardly lives without the shepherd (a herdsman).

Meanwhile, the shepherd gives sheep water and food and protects the sheep from wild beasts. It is the work of the shepherd. It is the relationship between sheep and the shepherd.

King David compared the relationship between him and God (the Creator) like this. It means

that David who became the king compared himself to the lost sheep. At the same time, it is our relationship with God.

We did not acknowledge the God Creator. We did not want God and lived without Him. It is the reason why many people do not know the purpose of life and lose their way.

{Illustration}

Guenter Stein is my friend in faith. He got Abitur, a qualification for admission to a university). But he did not go to the university straightaway, but he went on a journey to India for seeking the meaning of life.

He went to India and practiced ascetism at a Hindu Temple day after day. However, he could not have peace of mind. Then, he went to Afghanistan and prayed to Allah at a mosque to seek the purpose of life. However, his heart did was not satisfied and spent many discontented days.

In those days, he started smoking opium that was of a poppy flower growing in colonies in Afghanistan. By smoking opium, he got a sense of freedom and peace in mind that he had never felt. He was immediately enslaved by opium.

He understood that he would become like an invalid if he kept smoking. His money was running out. He looked back at his life that he was attracted by Eastern philosophy and came to India and Afghanistan for seeking the meaning of life and almost become an invalid there.

He was depressed because he had no money. However, suddenly he heard a voice, "Zurueck nach Deutschland!" Then, he went to the German Embassy in Afghanistan and told them of his situation and asked for a ticket to go back to Germany.

Soon after returning to Germany, he was walking alone in his native village, he met his childhood friend who was a Christian. He heard about God and Jesus Christ for the first time. He realized that he left the shepherd (God) and became a lost sheep. He became a Christian.

Guenter Stein had an experience like this, and he entered a Bible college. We sat and studied side by side in class. It was his real testimony that I heard directly from him.

Jesus Christ said, **"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the**

sheep.” (John 10:11)

My friends! Our life can be changed.

① I shall not want.

It means that **I do not lack anything**. It also reminds us of the Israelites who left Egypt and the days of journey in the wilderness.

The Old Testament

Deuteronomy 2:7 “For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He knows you are going through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you. You have lacked nothing.”

David substitutes and sang about himself for the Israelites. My friends! What a blessed life. God took the Israelites from Egypt and let them to walk in the wilderness and led them to Canaan, the promised land, for 40 years. During their journey, they had lacked nothing. Like this, David sang that those who believed in God and were led by Him are the same.

② He makes me lie down in green pastures.

It is written **green pastures**. The green pasture refers to a field with fresh grass that sprouts from the land wetted by rain. The pasture is not a stock farm, but it is a grazing land for sheep and goats.

The green pastures and land of green grass was a dream for the Israelites who lived in the wilderness. He who put himself in the green pasture is blessed.

③ He leads me beside still waters.

David continued to sing, **“He leads me beside still waters.”** It was **a place of refreshment and resting**. It was relaxing space. To lead meant to herd sheep and goats.

God the Lord led King David **beside still waters**. It was the place of green grass and to relax completely. It is the blessed place where God leads us. It was the place that was given to David.

How about you? Do we have a peaceful place, **beside still waters**? We need the place to be relaxed. Where do we find that place in our busy society?

The God of the Bible is the good God. He leads us, who are sheep, **beside still waters**. It is God’s blessing that is given to those who trust in God and walk with Him.

* King David looked back his life and praised God like this. His life was greatly blessed by God.

It was **his place**. King David continues further.

2. King David Was Given Power to Live

23:3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

The verse has important key words.

1) He restores my soul

23:3 He restores my soul means to restore the power to live. King David often had wars and his power to live was restored by his relationship with God. It is the life that trusts in God.

God restored my power to live when I experienced weakness, when I was disappointed and, when I was exhausted. The way I was restored was through the word of the Bible.

God gave me appropriate words from the Bible at the perfect time. Once I spent days feeling uneasy, God gave me the word from 1 Peter, Chapter 5 and was given peace in heart.

1 Peter 5:7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Then, where is the secret for us to get power like this? It is in Jesus Christ.

Jesus said,

Matthew 11:28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

11: 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Jesus took my every burden. It is on His cross. Jesus took our weakness, debts, sins, and every other thing on the cross. We find salvation here. King David put Jesus in front of him and walked with eyes of faith. Therefore, he was blessed by God.

God still works today like this and restores our souls.

2) He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

23:3 He leads me in paths of righteousness refers to the correct paths (the paths led to righteousness). One of God's natures is righteousness and correctness. As God is righteous, He leads those who walk with Him in the paths of righteousness. King David experienced it in his life.

I would like to look back my life. I have trusted the God of the Bible for 60 years and I tell you that God is faithful. **God protected me from temptation and danger throughout my life.**

① **God blessed me in its time.**

② **God gave me hope in future.**

My friends! God promises peace (shalom) those who believe in Him and walk with Him. In recent years, we have lots of things to disturb our mind, however Jesus Christ speaks to us, **"Peace be with you."**

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Peace Be with You"

—My Peace—

Today, we listened to the Lord on how to live our lives in peace. Psalm 23 is the poem that was written by King David who reigned the nation of Israel. In his later years, he wrote his life in the poem of just 6 verses. Today, we studied its first half.

23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

Why could he sing about his life like this?

1. King David had his own comfortable place.
2. King David was given the power to live.

23:3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

How about today's message? Let ask God for a blessed life like King David.

Then, what should we do?

⇒ We should believe in God.

* God bless you!