

December 27, 2020

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Let's Walk with All the Fullness of God"

—Just Walk by the Life-Size Faith—

Text: Ephesians 3:19

3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Introduction

We have the last worship Sunday of this year. First of all, let us give thanks to God for having Sunday worships through the year even though we faced many problems due to the coronavirus.

Let us read our year's verse (Ephesians 3:19) together. Let us be quiet and come close to God and listen to His voice from the sermon about year's verse again that I spoke in April of this year.

3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

The coronavirus has swept all over the world. Many people have been infected and killed in many countries including Japan and we are in the middle of the battle. **An Emergency Declaration** was declared in Osaka and requests our self-restraint.

One of serious problems about coronavirus is overwhelming hospitals: shortage of hospitals that accept infectious patients, shortage of medical workers who specialize in the virus, and shortage of medical supplies. We realize that the world is thrown in turmoil by such a small virus and human beings are helpless and in panic.

We pray that the horrible situation will settle down quickly. Let's cooperate and practice self-control so that we can get over this big trial. Many people are under trials and sufferings. Let's pray for them.

By the way, approximately 2000 years ago, the evangelist Paul was also in the middle of trials and hardships that were different from ours. He was arrested and put into jail because of preaching the Gospel. The Epistle to the Ephesians was sent from jail is called the "captivity epistle".

As we read on the epistle, we understand that Paul was a **strong person** who was not discouraged under sufferings and the trial. That is surprising. How could he become such a powerful person? He said as below—

3:14 For this reason I kneel before the Father,

3:15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

Paul kneeled before God and offered prayer to Him.

The purpose of his prayer is recorded in Verse 19 as below—

3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

It means that he didn't pray for his need in the trial, but he hoped that the receivers (the saints) of the epistle would lead blessed lives. He taught them how to live with **the fullness of God** even though they were under trials and hardships.

Let us study the following two points today.

Main Points

1 . Knowing the Love of Christ

3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Paul records the phrase, "**to know this love that surpasses knowledge**". The love that Paul taught is that Jesus Christ died on the horrible cross for the sake of our sins and rose from the dead on the third day. The love is agape love that fulfilled God's master plan of salvation.

Those who believe in Jesus Christ are given salvation from sins anytime, anywhere through **the love of Christ**. The church (Ecclesia) is the community of the saints who are forgiven of sins. God makes **the love of Christ** in shape through church.

Paul said as below—

3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,

Paul teaches that Christ dwells in our hearts through faith and we are established in love.

He continues,

3:18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,

Paul teaches about **the love of Christ** according to 4 aspects as below—

- ① Width ► The love of Christ reaches every nation in the world.
- ② Length ► The love of Christ reaches every generation in history.
- ③ Depth ► The love of Christ reaches every person in the depth of sins.
- ④ Height ► The love of Christ takes every people to a high peak of heaven (the Kingdom of heaven).

Paul prayed that **they had power to understand** these 4 points.

The original meaning of **to understand** is **to evaluate things based on experience**.

The love of Christ is **agape love** that is beyond human understanding.

The love of Christ is vast, extensive and perfect and it's also unlimited. **The love of Christ** is revealed by God Himself.

Paul said in the Epistle to the Romans,

8:38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,

8:39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

My dear friends, he who believes in Jesus and is held with the love of Christ is embraced by the love of Christ. ⇒ He never forsakes us.

Paul prayed for them that the love of Christ would become strengthened and established one among the saints.

The love of Christ embraces him who is established in **the love of Christ** and is rooted in **the love of Christ**. Paul taught how great the love of Christ was according to the 4 aspects. We need to gain a further understanding (based on experience) of the love of Christ.

Then, how should we do to become such a saint? The answer is that our inner being should be strengthened.

2 . Being Filled With the All of Fulness of God

1) To Trust in God

When Paul wrote the epistle, he was in prison. His desire was hidden in Verse 19 as below—

3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the

measure of all the fullness of God.

His desire came from the bottom of his heart and it also was his faith.

- ① He believed in Jesus at the risk of his life.
- ② He had experienced the power of prayer.
- ③ He had faith that was not controlled by circumstances.

These three points seemed to make his faith dynamic.

He said as below—

2 Corinthians 12:2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows.

12:4 was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell.

God blessed Paul with special grace, who lived by faith.

Yes, Paul really was a man of faith. He sincerely trusted in the living God. No one understands **the love of Christ** without faith. Faith is a precondition to know **the love of Christ**.

When we are rooted and established in love, we can understand how wide and length and high and deep the love of Christ is, and we may grow to be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Paul kneeled and prayed to God the Father. He prayed for us so that our faith is strengthened, and Christ may dwell in us.

3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,

Faith that sincerely trusts in God makes people strong, even though they are under hardships, trials and shortage. When we read the Epistle to the Hebrews 11, we understand that our ancestors in faith of the days in the Old Testament walked **by faith**. They triumphed over trials and temptations **by faith**.

Therefore, nothing makes us separate from **the love of Christ** in any situation. Those who accept that fact by faith are blessed. Let's trust in God.

Let's focus another important thing.

2) To be Strengthened Our Inner Being

3:16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his

Spirit in your inner being.

Paul said that human beings have two beings: **an inner being and outer being**

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

The outer being is wasting, but the inner being is renewed.

Paul taught that the inner being is strengthened and grows by the Spirit

The Spirit has power (*dynamis*). The word of dynamite comes from this word. We are strengthened by the Spirit of God, not by human power.

3) Living with the Life-Size Christian Life

When we read the Acts 19, we realize the extraordinary and powerful God's deeds by Paul.

19:11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul,

19:12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

19:13 Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out."

19:14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

19:15 One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?"

19:16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

19:17 When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.

This part of the Scripture is familiar with us. What we focus today is on Paul's **handkerchiefs and aprons**. Paul made his living by making tents. He put his sewing tools in his apron's pocket and wiped off oil and dirt with his apron. When he put up a tent in the open air, he wiped away sweat that ran down his forehead with his handkerchief. He always carried them with him. The Bible records that **God did extraordinary miracles through Paul (19:11)** by using his things.

Paul who put on everyday clothes was used by God to do His extraordinary miracles. God worked through his ordinary job. Now I remember *the Angelus* by Millet, my favorite masterpiece.

{Illustration}

A peasant couple says a prayer after finishing their daily work beside the bundles of wheat sheaf. A church bell behind them seems to begin to ring. Their clothes must have been dirty by working in the fields. The painting depicts the peasant couple who finished a day's work by God's grace.

They didn't go to a magnificent church or a temple, but they just finished a daily work by helping God and say prayer putting aside a plow and with wearing working clothes. We see their attitude of prayer. We see their humble attitude of prayer to God.

3:14 For this reason I kneel before the Father,

3:15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

We discover the secret to be strengthened here: to kneel before God and pray.

He who sincerely pray to God is gradually strengthened.

How about you? Is our faith the life-sized one? Do we only look at our outer beings? We are loved by God. Being loved by God, we need our inner beings to be strengthened and to walk with him.

Then what should we do? We need to be strengthened **by faith**. We need to trust in God and walk with the life-size faith before God.

Conclusion

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—Just Walk by the Life-Size Faith—

Today, we studied the way of Christian life from this year's Bible verse. How did we walk 2020 until now? Were our inner beings strengthened and did we have the blessed Christian lives? How about our trust and faith in God?

Let us read this year's Scripture together.

3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

* God bless you!