

January 31, 2021

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "They Rejoice Even in Suffering"
—Peter, the Apostle—

Text: 1 Peter 3:17

1Peter 3:17For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

Introduction

Big cities of eleven prefectures are in the midst of a **state of emergency**. Osaka is one of them and we are suffering various hardships. The coronavirus is spreading all over the world and the victory against coronavirus pandemic is not yet in sight. We hope that we can overcome these hardships and that COVID-19 comes to end immediately.

By the way, how should we accept the hardship we face and live our lives? We always seem to have hardship in our lives. We can learn important things from the history of our forerunners.

{Illustration}

Let us study from Rev. George Duffield who wrote the lyrics of the hymn 380 "*Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus*" that was made in the beginning of 19th century. The hymn is written in a military-style with a stirring melody. It sounds quite different from other hymns. How were the lyrics of "*Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus*" created?

The days of the beginning of the 19th century in America was very blessed in spirituality. One of the revivalists was Rev. Dudley. A. Tyng. When he had a big meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, more than 5,000 people gathered, and a revival occurred. Amazingly, about 1000 people decided to believe in Jesus.

He was 29 years old at that time. He was a revivalist who made his mark on history and was God's instrument who led many people to Jesus Christ with fervent faith without making any distinction of denominations.

However, Rev. Dudley. A. Tyng, the young evangelist, met with an unexpected disaster. A certain morning after three days of evangelical meetings that many people decided to believe in Jesus, he went out of his study room to a barn for a brief time, to have relaxed time. There was a **mule**, and it was threshing corn on the cob. He went to **the mule** and patted it on its neck. The sleeve of his dressing gown was caught in a machine.

His arm was caught in the machine in an instant it was cut to the root. He lost a large amount of blood and was in a critical situation. His family and friends came together at his dying hour.

The father of Rev. Tyng looked his son on his deathbed and asked, "Do you have any words to leave us?" He said with eyes wide open, "Father, please tell the pastors and the people of the YMCA who worked hard for God with me, 'Stand up, stand up for Jesus.'" Then he was called by the Lord.

My friends, the death of Rev. Tyng, who was still a young and talented evangelist, became big news in those days. Why did God allow him to suffer such an unhappy incident?

Why did the young and talented evangelist suffer such a horrible disaster? We have many whys around us. However, God does not allow things to happen accidentally, even though we do not understand its meaning.

1 Peter 3:17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

It means that the Bible assumes that there are hardships in our lives.

Everyone has hardship. Everyone has suffering. We all have hardships to greater or lesser degrees. The Jewish Christians in those days lived under great hardship by risking of death. The Epistle (the 1st Epistle of Peter) was sent to the Jewish Christians under various hardships.

Today, different from that time and situation, we are living with the COVID-19 pandemic that is a great hardship. The experts say that the cases of the world will reach one hundred million before long. New cases increase, and people die every day. Many cities in Western countries have been in lockdown and curfews have been imposed.

It could happen to anyone. How should we live under great hardships?

Let us study according to the following two points.

Main Points

1 . The Teaching of the Bible

3:17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

1) Be Zealous for What Is Good

We should keep in mind to do what is good. It is advice for people who were under hardship. It means to do what is pleasing and beneficial for others. It is a paradoxical teaching in the days when people live by pushing other people away for their own benefit.

The Bible teaches as below:

3:13 Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

We should remember doing what is good. In those days, Jewish traditional teaching was to do good deeds (charity).

The Bible records that one day a rich man came to Jesus and asked as below,

Matthew 19:16 And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”

He focused on good deeds (behavior). However, he could not put this particular deed, that Jesus taught, into action and went away sorrowful. **Good deeds** are what people are pleased with. However, here is a barrier which makes it impossible to practice good things.

① The Barrier of fear and anxiety

Man has no power to do **good things**. The Bible teaches, **“Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?” (3:13)** However, they may not have any power to do good.

We are sometimes afraid and scared in this world because of the lack of power even though we understand it is good. We need stronger power to overcome hardship.

Happily, we come to have the power to do **good things**, because Jesus is with us and we do not need to keep on trying hard by ourselves.

② Jesus’ Yoke

Matthew 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.

It is a very important point. Christians do not need to keep trying hard when they face hardship. Jesus takes our yokes. Let us look the Scripture carefully, **“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me.”** It means to take the same yoke of Jesus.

Looking at it from a different angle, Jesus said it was **“my yoke”**. When we have hardship, we think that it is our own hardship, however, Jesus says it is **“my yoke.”** What an amazing word! When we have hardship, we try to manage it by ourselves. Jesus Christ our Lord is the One who takes our hardships. How happy we are!

If we take Jesus’ yoke together, God does His work for us.

Peter said as below,

3:16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

The Scripture above shows us the blessed way even if we have hardship.

Peter encouraged the Jewish Christians in those days to be zealous for what is good.

We are all right even if we are frightened. When we take Jesus’ yoke, we overcome hardship. The reason is that Jesus Himself accepted His cross, died and was buried. However, He showed His powerful victory by His resurrection. He is the victor who overcame death. What a great power we have that we take His yoke together! It is the way to live even though we have hardship.

2. The Faith that Rejoices in Suffering

3:17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

Peter taught that Christians rejoice even in suffering.

1) God's Will

He first records the phrase, **"if that should be God's will."** We understand that God sometimes allows us to have suffering. Yes, indeed, every suffering occurs under God's permission. The point is that it is His will or not. Even if we cannot rejoice suffering, if God allows it, then He is present with us.

Then what should we do? ⇒ We should pray to God honestly.

We should take Jesus' yoke and God listen to our prayer. Then something will happen.

2) God's Plan

God has His plan for the suffering that He gives.

{Illustration}

I will continue the story about Rev. Dudley. A. Tyng that I mentioned before. Rev. George Duffield, who was his good friend and at his deathbed, was impressed with his words, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus."

Rev. Duffield immediately wrote a poem. He brought it to the memorial service of Rev. Tyng. Many people mourned with deep grief and were telling memories of the deceased. When Rev. Duffield gave a eulogy, he quoted Rev. Tyng's words "Stand up, stand up for Jesus" in its climax.

By the way, Rev. Tyng, who was a young revivalist and died at the age of 29, had a son named T. S. Tyng, and he came to Japan as a missionary. How surprising!

T. S. Tyng came to Japan at the beginning of the Meiji Restoration. One of his good works was to baptize Mr. Motoda Sakunoshin in 1866. Later he was called by God and became a pastor.

As you know, Mr. Taki Rentaro who was one of Japan's leading musicians and composed the famous piece of music, **Kojoyono Tsuki**. He was baptized by Pastor Motoda Sakunoshin on October 7, 1900 at Seiai Church (Anglican Church) in Tokyo.

Mr. Taki Rentaro was an organist at church. Pastor Motoda became the first Japanese episcopal bishop and became the first president of Rikkyo University in 1907.

Pastor Motoda Sakunoshin was a very intelligent person and exerted strong leadership. He is said that he was an uncommon person who displayed a truly Christian charity. We easily imagine how greatly Mr. Taki Rentaro was influenced by him. His works show it.

An encounter with Rev. T. S. Tyng who was sent from Anglican Church in America greatly changed the life of Pastor Motoda Sakunoshin. He was the son of Rev. Dudley Tyng, who died because of an unforeseen accident. He truly stood up and was inspired by his father's last words, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus" and came to Japan as the missionary. We understand God's miraculous plan.

God has His plan for hardship that He allows to occur. The hardship had God's plan. God's will have another blessing.

3) God's Promises

3:17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

Peter writes here, "**It is better to suffer for doing good.**" Japanese Bible (2017 version) simply translated "it is better" (*kreitto* in Greek).

The word refers to two meanings as below,

- ① **Good, a good thing** - It refers to be better than other things
- ② **Powerful, full of power, effective**

The word *kreitto* has these two meanings.

Suffering for doing good is really a good way of life that is **better than others and powerful and inspiring.**

Why is that life so great? The reason is that it reveals **God's kingdom**. On top of that, we do not need to achieve it by ourselves. Jesus reveals His glory and **God's kingdom** through those who take His yoke. It is the privilege that is given to Christians who believe in God.

Therefore, Christians who believe in God rejoice even under hardship. In this way, the Kingdom of God is revealed until we enter the Kingdom in heaven. Hallelujah!

Conclusion

Title of the message: "They Rejoice Even in Suffering."

—Peter, the Apostle—

Today, we studied how to live under suffering. Peter had faith that rejoiced even under hardship and when severe persecution occurred to Christians. He taught that life **is better when suffering for doing good**. That life reveals **the Kingdom of God**.

Like this, the Christians of today are given the promise to enter the Kingdom of Heaven in due time. The kingdom of heaven begins from now on. When we practice God's word, the Kingdom of Heaven begins. It is God's **grace**.

Then, how should we live under suffering and hardship?

3:17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

The Scripture above teaches how to live. Matthew Chapter 11 teaches that we must take Jesus' yoke and learn from Him.

Matthew 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.

* God bless you!