

February 7, 2021

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "It is Quite a Misunderstanding!"

—Goodness Through Suffering—

Text: 1 Peter 3:17~18

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

**3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,**

#### Introduction

The biggest problem of today is the coronavirus pandemic. It spread over the world and the number of confirmed cases exceeded more than a hundred million. We hope that a vaccination against the coronavirus will immediately start to solve the problem.

By the way, you probably know that **fake news** about the coronavirus pandemic spreads on social medias and causes social disorder. Twenty three percent of people said that they believed that fake news. Four out of five people believed it. It means that fake news is a familiar thing to us.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications in Japan reported that according to a certain survey in May, that those who used internet believed various kinds of fake news that were spread on social media. For example, there are various fake news articles about prevention of the coronavirus infection as below.

28.7 % of respondents believed that drinking water frequently is effective.

14.8 % of respondents believed that eating a garlic is effective.

9.6 % of respondents believed that eating fermented soybeans is effective.

3.1 % of respondents believed a dangerous fake news article, that drinking bleach is effective.

15.5 % of respondents believed that when a state of emergency declared, 3 weeks lockdown will follow.

28.8 % of respondents believed that China intends to name the coronavirus the '**Japan pneumonia**.'

21.0 % of respondents believed that novel coronavirus was biological weapon that was made in China.

21.5 % of respondents believed that a certain traveler from Wuhan who had a fever denied quarantine inspection at Kansai International Airport and ran away.

These were all fake news! There were a few reliable pieces of information about the coronavirus, and many people felt regret for accepting fake news.

There was also fake news in Europe. The false information in England spread that the reception of next-generation communications (5G) caused coronavirus and some communication facilities were set on fire as result. It is reported that many people in Iran believed the fake news that drinking **methanol**

is effective and more than 500 people died from poisoning.

Social medias are very convenient; however, it is also very dangerous. **The news was absolutely wrong!** People cannot find the truth and are lost in a maze.

An expert point out three reasons why people are likely to get their information from social media.

1. Their work decreased because of the coronavirus crisis and their time to look at social media increased.
2. They overcame a language barrier thanks to accuracy improvement of an automatic translation machines.
3. Emotional transference (Everyone says so.)

Human beings are a new kind of challenge that they never experienced before because of the development of social media and the spreading correct information and fake information. We should seriously work on improving social medial.

It is said that promotion of literacy education is important to decode fake information. Literacy is ability of reading and writing. Finland seems to be one step ahead of other countries when it comes to literacy education.

By the way, the theme of the First Epistle of Peter that we study now is the **suffering of Christians**. Of course, even though the suffering of today is different from the kind in Peter's days (approximately 2000 years ago), we have suffering and hardship, nonetheless.

The words **suffering** and **hardship** appear 18 times in the first epistle of Peter. Words like them do not appear in the first epistle of John (both are the almost same length.) Those words appear 2 times in the epistle of James that has less than 7 pages and in the epistle to the Hebrews (three times of length) they appear 11 times. You may understand how many times the short epistle contains words like that.

Let us study about suffering of the Christians according the following two points.

#### Main Points

### 1. Jesus Christ Who Suffered

#### 1. For Sins

Peter records Verse 17 as below,

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

Peter focuses suffering of Jesus Christ according to Verse 17 and in Verse 18 he gives examples of suffering for doing good as below,

**3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,**

Christ had his hands bound, his robe stripped away, he was flogged, spit on, mocked, and nails were put into His hands and feet and he was crucified. And Peter said, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins.”** What does it mean **for sins**? Does Jesus own sins? No, not at all. It means **the righteous for the unrighteous.**

The righteous suffered for the unrighteous. Therefore, he **took other people’s place.** His suffering was in sacrificing Himself. He paid the price for our sins.

Originally, we should take suffering by ourselves, but Christ took our place. We should remember the word **‘once.’**

## 2. Once

Christ died **once** for us. He died **only once.** He does not need to repeat it, because Jesus Christ, who is the perfect Son of God, died for human beings so that salvation for human beings perfectly fulfilled. The Bible records,

**Romans 6:10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.**

**Hebrews 7:27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.**

**Hebrews 10:10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

Christ died only once for all and it was completely enough. He is the blameless Son of God, so He could perfectly redeem the sin of human beings once for all.

Christ had suffered death on the cross with a definite purpose. Let us study the following points.

## 2. Jesus Christ Died to Bring Us to God.

**33:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,**

The Scripture above teaches the purpose of Christ who suffered on the cross and died once. It is **“being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.”**

### 1. In the Flesh

In the flesh means the world that is visible for human beings. He **was put to death** physically. Jesus Christ was born in the shape of man approximately 2000 years ago and did many deeds. He was finally crucified. This is the fact of, **“being put to death in the flesh.”**

### 2. In the Spirit

However, Peter records that He was **made alive in the spirit**, which is the invisible world. That is how

Jesus Christ was raised. He was really raised with his body, but it was a different body. Paul records about witnesses of Jesus' resurrection as below,

**1 Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,**

**15:4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,**

**15:5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.**

**16:6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.**

**15:7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.**

**15:8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.**

The Bible records many other witnesses. Luke records it in Chapter 24.

**Luke 24:13 That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,**

**13:14 and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.**

**13:15 While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.**

**13:16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.**

Those two men saw the Lord who stood before them with the body of resurrection. However, His body was different from the natural one. They looked at Jesus, but they could not recognize Him. Jesus had a different body that was not the former one from before his death on the cross.

One day, Jesus came into a locked room. His body was available **to teleport**. It means that His body was not the one of the physical world.

Paul records in 1 Epistle to the Corinthians,

**1 Corinthians 15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.**

Like this Jesus was crucified and died and resurrected with a spiritual body and we are allowed to return to God. Peter records,

**1 Peter 3:18... that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.**

Like this, Christ crossed the abyss between God and human beings and brought us to God. Christ led us by the hand to the true God. How wonderful!

Let us look the Scripture Verse 17.

### **3. Good Things that Are Brought from Suffering**

Let us return the first Scripture.

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

The verse above teaches us to remember that even Jesus greatly suffered, who did good things. It means to learn from the example of Christ. It teaches that good things are often brought about by suffering, much like the way that Christ' suffering brought us salvation (an amazing result).

We usually try to avoid pain and suffering. We are seeking comfortable lives, lives without pain and suffering, and easy-going lives. However, we sometimes cannot avoid suffering. The coronavirus is an example of this. We cannot avoid it by ourselves.

Therefore, please remember the words of verse 18. It speaks about how greatly Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself for us. It is Christ, that He was judged as a sinner and took our place and died on the cross even though He was blameless and righteous. We are allowed to return to God because of His deed. We are allowed to have fellowship with the holy God and live as God's children by Christ's sacrifice and suffering.

My friends. We sometimes think that God abandoned us when we come to have a difficult problem, get sick and have hardship. You may not understand it. The suffering of Christ fulfilled salvation of human beings and our suffering brings good things.

Paul records in Romans, Chapter 5 as below,

**5:3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 5:4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,**

We could hardly look at the suffering of Jesus Christ. However, we are led to God by His suffering. Like this, hardship and suffering give us an opportunity to understand God better or they are used to be led to God. It is work of Divine Providence.

There are quite a few people who are troubled and discouraged under this great suffering, as the coronavirus pandemic is all over the world.

**3:18... that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,** Christ was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. He died for the purpose of leading us to God. God's purpose is hidden in hardship and suffering, and they are used for leading you to God.

We should not misunderstand the present suffering. God already prepares good things for us, that is produced from suffering. We can only accept it by faith.

#### Conclusion

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Today, we listened to the Lord's voice. We live in the days of spreading various information including fake news. It is very difficult for us to distinguish what we should believe or not. However, we are given an eternal best-seller, the Bible, which is God's book.

The Bible teaches us as below,

**3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,**

\* God bless you!