

March 7, 2021

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "For the Glory of God Alone!"

—The Kingdom of Heaven—

Text: 1 Peter 4:7~11

4:7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be self-controlled and sober minded for the sake of your prayers.

4:8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

4:9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

4:10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

4:11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Introduction

4:7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be self-controlled and sober minded for the sake of your prayers.

The Scripture above solemnly declares that the end of all things is at hand. Do you think that this world continues far into the future? Some people think, "There are too many illegal acts and corruption. I have had enough of this world." Others hope that the beautiful nature goes on forever. There are different opinions about the future.

There are mainly three opinions about the history.

1. History repeats itself: A reincarnation theory (reincarnation)
2. History accumulates: Geschichte (in German) Ge: to accumulate schichte: a layer.
3. History has a beginning and a goal.

The historical perspective of the Bible is ③. God, who created everything, has the clear perspective of history. We all live in the historical perspective of ③, however, where are we in our present time?

Peter records, "**The end of all things is at hand.**" It teaches that we live in the End Times.

Peter recorded, "**The end of all things is at hand**" approximately 2000 years ago. You may think that the end will not come because 2000 years has already passed. This is true, but God's clock keeps time slowly.

2 Peter 3:8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

However, we, who live in the present, realize that the end of the world is closer than in the days of Peter. **The end of the world** is very possible. A nuclear power plant accident, environmental

destruction, global warming, ozone layer depletion, extreme weather, oligospermia caused by environmental hormones and others may cause a worldwide catastrophe. On top of that, the capabilities of human beings are deteriorating as artificial intelligence (AI) begins to take our place. Moral and ethical corruption is escalating more and more. The days of the end are not far off.

Then, with what attitudes should we live in the end of days? Let us study this from the text of Peter according the following two points.

Main Points

1. The End Times of the Bible

The End Times of the Bible is not **the absolute end**. Rather, it refers to the time when the salvation of God is fulfilled. Christ comes again and judges the world that is full of sin and immorality. Then, He creates **a new heaven and earth**. It is a blessed time for us to be made free from evil and suffering. Therefore, we are eagerly waiting for the end of the world.

History approaches its final stage. It means according to the historical movement. The Bible records that three **signs** will occur before the end of the world.

1) The Gospel of Christ Will be Proclaimed Throughout the Whole World

Jesus said as below,

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

The gospel of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed in every place of the world. The Scripture records the phrase, "all nations." It is fact that the gospel has reached the whole world in the beginning of 21st century, even though it is not clearly reported how far the gospel was proclaimed.

Social Networking Services are rapidly developing, and they quickly spread information throughout the world. Today, everyone can instantaneously connect with people on the opposite side of the world. The time has come when anybody can send and receive information. On top of that, the risk of fake news and cybercrime rapidly increases and throws the world into chaos.

Today, **online worship** becomes common among churches. There is absolutely no doubt that the gospel of Jesus Christ will be proclaimed throughout the whole world. The present age is the time when the gospel is preached throughout the world.

Jesus said, "**...then the end will come.**" The end of days has already begun.

2) The Return of Israel

The Bible is a book of prophecy. The movement of the Jewish people, God's chosen people, is like God's sundial. In 1948, the State of Israel was founded again in the Middle East. Since then, many Jewish people have returned to Palestine. It is the fulfilment of a prophecy in the Old Testament. Ezekiel, a prophet, once said,

Ezekiel 36:24 I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land.

37:1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones.

37:2 And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry.

37:3 And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And answered, "O Lord GOD, you know."

37:4 Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

37:5 Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.

3) The Increase of Messianic Jews

Generally, Jewish people are Judaists. However, some of them believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah (the Savior). They are called Messianic Jews. They keep their identity as a Jew, and at the same time they believe in Jesus as the Messiah. They are people like Paul and Peter.

Entering 21st century, the Messianic Jews are gradually increasing. There were several thousand Messianic Jews in 1967. It is said that there are 350,000 people, 17,5000 ~250,000 people in America, 20,000 people in Israel, (the exact number is not certain). Their group is not called a church, but it is called a congregation and there was not a single group in 1960s. Today, there are numerous groups.

The Bible records about a **sign** of the end as below,

Romans 11:25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

11:26 And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob";

The promise of the God' word comes ever closer to reality. Like this, it is clearly said we are living in the End Times according to the teaching of the Bible. Then, how should we live? Let us study the next point.

1. The Attitudes We Should Take

As the Bible teaches that the end of the world is coming, how should we live?

Peter records the following four points.

1) Be self-controlled.

1 Peter 4:7...therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

Peter did not teach that the given time was so short so that they should do this and that, and things what they like. Rather, he advised them to, "**be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of**

their prayers.”

We should be quiet before God. First of all, we should calm ourselves. Without becoming calm before Him, we cannot know what we should do, and we cannot experience God’s glory. Martin Luther, a German religious reformer, said, “Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree in my yard.”

2) Keep loving one another.

4:8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

The Scripture says, “**Above all.**” It says that we should love one another. It is the first priority. Peter said, “**Keep loving one another earnestly.**” We cannot easily love one another without effort. The word **earnestly** refers to a horse that gallops at full speed. It means that we can hardly love one another without great effort.

We need to try hard to love our neighbors. How many times do we give thanks to others? We need to try to keep praying for a person whom we cannot love.

The most serious problem is found in human relationships. Even a Christian, who has faith, fights, comes into conflict, and becomes stubborn.

Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.

The Scripture above records, “**love covers all offenses.**” The term offense means the sin of other people. We, who realize how we are loved by God and if we love other people by following the Lord’s command, our love covers all offenses. How blessed we are!

If we have love, we do not blame or become angry carelessly. On the contrary, we should speak warm words and build a peaceful relationship with other people.

3) Show hospitality to one another with kind hearts.

4:9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

The churches of the first century were house churches. There were people who were persecuted and lost their jobs because of faith. In those days, probably there were no hotels. When an evangelist and a missionary came to make their rounds, they stayed at a believer’s house. **Hospitality** was an important service of love.

Today, what is **hospitality**? It may be caring for the elderly or it may be helping people from the foreign countries. It means to support people who need help.

However, we should carefully read the Scriptures. It records **without grumbling**. **Grumbling** is to keep complaining. He, who first began to do things with joy, came to feel a burden without noticing and finally he begins **to grumble**.

Therefore, when we keep doing good things, we need to pray thoroughly. We should ask the Lord for love and wisdom. The Scripture advises us, **“Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.”**

4) **Serve one another by using our gifts.**

4:10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace:

Peter records, **“As each has received a gift”** because there were believers who did not realize their gifts or did not give thanks for them or did not use them.

“As good stewards of God’s varied grace” means that God entrusts you with gifts. He says to us, **“use it to serve one another.”** If we do not use the gifts, we fail to meet His expectations.

My friends. Please remember the parable of talents. The worthless servant who hid it in the ground was strictly punished ([Matthew 25:24~30](#)).

Peter continues,

4:11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies.

The two actual examples of gifts and services are given here.

- ① **He who serves to speak God’s word:** Pastor, minister and CS teacher are persons who speak God’s precious word. They should speak with humbleness, fear, joy, and confidence. They should speak trusting, (praying) in God who speaks through them.
- ② **He who serves appropriately:** He serves to help others. He does not serve with his own strength but by **the strength that God supplies**. **To supply** means to become a sponsor, like a sponsor of a choir team. God becomes the sponsor of it.

God is the most powerful sponsor. He gives us what we need. We should not be discouraged. We have the strongest sponsor.

Now, let us think about our way of life.

Peter gave the following four commands to Christians who live in the End Times.

- ① Be self-controlled.
- ② Keep loving one another.
- ③ Show hospitality to one another with kind hearts.
- ④ Serve one another by using your gifts.

Why did Peter advise us to live according to these four attitudes?

The reason is that our important purpose of life is to reveal God’s glory. It means that **the Kingdom of God** is fulfilled through us, because our future life is guaranteed by salvation by Jesus and our names are written on the book of life.

Revelation 3:5 The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

Please remember that the Scripture stands as a guarantee for us.

It is well-known that Johann Sebastian Bach, a German composer, did not sign his autograph JSB on his sheet-music. He signed SDG (Soli Deo Gloria: for the Glory to God Alone) on the bottom of the page.

4:11—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: “For the Glory of God Alone”

—The Kingdom of Heaven—

The Lord spoke to us through the word of God today. Let us give thanks to the Lord.

4:7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

How should we live in the End Times?

- ① Be self-controlled.
- ② Keep loving one another.
- ③ Show hospitality to one another with kind hearts.
- ④ Serve one another by using your gifts.

Why does the Bible teach the way of life like this?

→ Our salvation was fulfilled, and the future is guaranteed.

God wants the saints to reveal **the Kingdom of Heaven**.

4:11—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

God bless you!