

April 11, 2021

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "God's Love is Better than Life"

—A Blessed Life—

Text: Psalm 63:1~8

**63:1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.**

**63:2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.**

**63:3 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.**

**63:4 So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.**

**63:5 My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,**

**63:6 when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;**

**63:7 for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.**

**63:8 My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.**

#### Introduction

Today I would like to preach on our Bible verse of 2021.

1 ) Generally speaking, it is said in our society that **nothing is more precious than life**. There are many natural disasters in Japan, so everyone knows the preciousness of life. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that life must be our first priority.

Life is very important because it is given us only once. On top of that, human relationships are important parts of our lives.

The smallest unit of the human relationship is a '**you and I**' relationship. The most beautiful 'you and I' relationship is a **romantic relationship (a marital relationship)**, isn't it? There is no problem if a couple understands and loves each other. However, romantic relationships often fall apart. Why does this happen?

The reasons are:

- ① We are not perfect.
- ② We expect others to be perfect.
- ③ We have a difficult time giving way to another.

2 ) **The 'you and I' relationship** can also be a **relationship of 'God and I'** for Christians who believe

of God. In verse 1, David praised, **“O God, you are my God.” (63:1)** God never breaks His relationship with us because He is the **God of the Covenant**. Our relationship with God is never broken by Him. David praised his relationship of God in his life in Psalm 63, verses 1~8. It was like the relationship of two beloved.

However, David did not always live a satisfying and sweet as honey life. Not at all. He sometimes was a target of assassination. Then, how could he keep **the relationship of ‘God and I’** under those

hardships? **In summary, David was a man who successfully brought out the best relationship from his worst circumstances.** And we see the secret of faith there. David praised, **“...in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.” (63:7)**

Psalm 63 is a beautiful song where David praised **the relationship of ‘God and I’**

We absolutely do not know our future days in 2021. Even so, if **the relationship of ‘God and I’** becomes the best one, we do not need to worry or fear.

Let us study the following two points from Psalm 63, our year’s verses and have a blessed relationship with God this year.

#### Main Points

#### 1 . My Only Hope is God

##### 1 ) The God of Israel

We should firstly understand what **the relationship of ‘God and I’** means for David. The Psalm was made when David asked God for help in the wilderness.

The wilderness of Judah is a bleak and bare field. Nothing can be seen. David fled to that wilderness. However, he did not ask for help without knowing God.

Yes, David had steadfast faith in **the relationship of ‘God and I’**. Then, what is his God like?

**Genesis 17:8 And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojourning’s, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”**

**Exodus 6:7 I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.**

In hardship, David praised the living God who saved Israel **“O God, you are my God.” (63:1)**

What about us? When we are in the middle of hardship, don’t we feel that God is far from us? We easily change, but God is unchangeable. How blessed we are because the unchangeable and eternal God is with us even though we are under hardship.

When David escaped to the wilderness of Judah, he sang, “**...as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.**” (63:1) We can imagine how severe his situation was. He sang his feeling frankly, “**my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you.**” (63:1)

On top of that, David continues, “**So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.** (63:2)

He used to worship God at the magnificent temple on the Mount Zion. He was in the wilderness of Judah at that time. However, David did not care whether he worshiped God on Zion or in the wilderness. God was not limited to the sanctuary in Zion.

My friends, the God of Israel, the One we believe in, is present at the sanctuary of Zion and also “**...as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.**” (63:1) How blessed are we?

{Illustration}

As you know, it was in 1945 that **the Dead Sea Scrolls** were found in the wilderness of Judah. And the Israel Antiquities Authority issued a statement that the new Dead Sea Scrolls were found after 65 years, on May 16, 2021.

The scrolls were 80 fragments of the books of Zacharias and Nahum. They were found in caves where the people who fled from the Bar Kochba revolt evacuated to about 1900 years ago.

The fragments were restored by digital technology and the parts of the Bible appeared. They were written in Greek and only the name of God was written in Hebrew.

It is a miracle of today. Surprisingly, some parts of a manuscript copy of the Bible were found, that were hidden for more than 1900 years. Even though archaeologists of the world have been interested and have been looking for more, nothing was discovered until now. The manuscript copy of the Bible was found. Isn't it a miracle? And it adds to the reliability of the Bible.

**Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.**

We confirmed by discovery of the manuscript copy of the Bible that the word of God will never pass away.

## 2) The Relation of 'God and I'

By the way, we need to study from the David's Psalm that the point of **the relationship of 'God and I'** is that he experienced the presence of God.

David met God at a new sanctuary, the wilderness of Judah. The wilderness was the place to experience the presence of God that was impossible to put into the words, feeling, and actions. When

David experienced the presence of God he praised, **“Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.” (63:3)**

My friends! **When we experience God’s grace (affection) our souls become full of life. At that time, we give thanks to God, praise Him, and shout for joy.** On the other hand, when we break our relationship with God, we are trapped in the dead world.

David experienced the presence of God through **the relationship of ‘God and I.’** It encourages the saints who believe in God. **The relationship of ‘God and I’** is given not only at the sanctuary but also in the wilderness of Judah, the place of hardship. What an amazing plan of God!

① Then how can we realize the presence of God?

It does not mean that we are filled with a special spiritual feeling or that an unnatural phenomenon occurs, or some strange things happen. Yes, sometimes they happen. However, he himself understands the presence of God even though his situation does not change, or other people do not realize it.

{Illustration} Mark 5:25~34

There was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years. She had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. The Bible records about the woman at that time.

**Mark 5:27 She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment.**

**5:28 For she said, “If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.”**

**5:29 And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.**

**5:30 And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my garments?”**

**5:31 And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’”**

**5:32 And he looked around to see who had done it.**

**5:33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth.**

Jesus felt that power had gone out from him. And the woman also felt that immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she was healed of her disease. People around them did not understand it. The woman who had had a discharge of blood for a long time experienced a personal encounter with Jesus. It means that she experienced God’s presence. The presence of God seems to be like that.

② Then, how did David experience the presence of God?

Psalm 63, verse 2 provides us a clue for the answer.

**63:2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.**

It is only one verse, but it gives us a glimpse of his attitude of faith. ① David, beholding God's power and glory (purpose), ② looked upon God in the sanctuary (the attitude of faith).

Like this, he had **the relationship of 'God and I'**. There was the presence of God. The attitudes of ① and ② refer to **devotion**.

It is to look upon God in the sanctuary and behold His power and glory. It is our purpose and our attitude of faith.

The sanctuary where we first worship God in 2021 is the chapel of Kitahama International Bible Church. Sometimes we may walk on the way of suffering and stay in a barren land like David. However, no matter where we are, we can have **the relationship of 'God and I'**. We can experience the presence of God. For that reason, we should become quiet and look upon God.

David, who met the living God in the wilderness, continues praising God.

## 2 . Only God is My Joy

### 1 ) Rejoicing in God

**63:5 My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,**

**63:6 when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;**

Like this, David praised God and rejoiced in Him. We come to know that it contrasts with verse 1 **“a dry and weary land where there is no water.”** **“Fat and rich food”** refer to the best products and symbolize richness. We try to avoid taking fat; however, it actually is the best thing.

#### {Illustration}

In Siberia, the extremely cold area, it drops to 50~60 degrees below freezing. I have heard the story from a resident who lived there for more than 20 years. When it reached extremely cold temperatures, he could not move and became powerless. The most precious gift at that time was a fatty mass (lard). It was the most joyful food. He said that the fatty mass provided power and joy under the severe circumstances.

David rejoiced in God and praised Him with his soul.

**63:5 My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,**

David studied **the relationship of 'God and I'** in the wilderness of Judah. He found a way to change the worst situation to the best situation and expressed his experience through the Psalm. We learn the secret to overcome a trial. He did not get a special knowledge from his experience. Yes, the secret is

hidden in the following verse.

**63:2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.**

He experienced true satisfaction. **The inward part strengthens the outward part, and the outward part strengthens the inward part. We come to know the happiness and blessing.**

We understand David's faith and perseverance. It was in his attitude of faith to **behold God's power and glory** so that he experienced joy from hardship. He continues praising.

## 2) Praising God

**63:7 for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.**

**63:8 My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.**

David studied God's secret in the shadow of His wings. He praised God with joy. God's love looks like a hen that gathers her brood under her wings.

Jesus said as below,

**Luke 13:34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!**

Jesus spoke God's love to Jewish people before the city of Jerusalem collapsed. God's love is like the hen that keeps her brood under her wings. David put himself under God's wings which was His love and shelter and praised Him with joy. David walked like this under the protection of God.

My friends. We, who believe in God, surely are in the shadow of His wings. We are absolutely protected by God.

Isaiah said as below,

**Isaiah 40:31 but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.**

- ① We are blessed ones who are protected in the shadow of God's wings. And as Isaiah said,
- ② We live a life with the power of God.

This is Christians who have **the relationship of 'God and I.'**

## Conclusion

Title of the Message: "God's Love is Better than Life."

—The Blessed Life—

David sung the beginning of Psalm 63, **“O God, you are my God.” (63:1)** He had **the relationship of ‘God and I.’** It looks like a romantic relationship.

We hope that we will have the blessed relationship with God this year. **The relationship of God and me** is the true key to live the blessed life. We are given comfort, power, encouragement, joy, and praise through the relationship with God.

Then, what should we do to have a blessed life?

1. Putting ourselves in God’s sanctuary (God’s presence)

**63:2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.**

2. Staying in the shadow of God’s wings

**63:7 for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.**

**63:8 My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.**

\* God protects us like the hen that gathers her brood under her wings. It is God’s affection (grace).  
The saints have joy and God is pleased. It is **the relationship of “God and I.”**

\* God bless you!