

April 25, 2021

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "You Will Receive the Crown of Glory"

— A Flock of the Saints —

Text: 1 Peter 5:1~4

5:1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:

5:2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;

5:3 not domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock.

5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Introduction

It is said that this epistle was probably written at the beginning of AD 60. It is 1960 years ago. What was Jerusalem like in those days?

James, who was Jesus' brother, a pillar of Jerusalem church, was killed (AD62) and the church disappeared as if it fulfilled its mission. In those days, Judea was lawless, and burglars were rampant, even though there was a governor (AD62~66) in Judea.

Rome was controlled by the Emperor Nero (AD54~68) and persecution to Christians gradually became severe. When the epistle was written, it was probable that Paul was already martyred.

In such a social background, Peter advised and encouraged Christians in Asia to believe in Christ and live faithfully and courageously until the end of their lives.

In this meaning, it is difficult for us, who live in a peaceful era, to read and understand the content of the epistle. However, Peter wrote the epistle by foreseeing severe trials, so we should study **the essence of faith** and keep it in mind.

5:1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:

The Scripture above is the one where Peter, one of twelve apostles, encouraged his fellow elders. Knowing his days were numbered, Peter advised the elders (the church leaders) of the churches in Asia, "**Shepherd the flock of God.**" (5:2)

In those days, probably there were no pastors. Elders and overseers were leaders and the persons in charge of churches. They were teachers like pastors, missionaries, and evangelists today. They were

people who work for the church. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, and the leader of a church is a little shepherd under the great shepherd.

Let us study today about church and the shepherd who serves the church.

Main Points

1 . A Shepherd's Work in the Church

5:2 ...shepherd the flock of God that is among you

The Bible compares the work of church leaders to that of a shepherd. Nomadic people naturally know the work of the shepherd, so Peter does not record about it in detail here. However, let us look the work of the shepherd first according the following four points.

1) To Feed

The most important ministry of the leaders of a church is to preach the word of God correctly and spiritually feed (cultivate) brothers and sisters at every Sunday worship. Therefore, we should study the Bible more than anyone else.

We should know what God is speaking to us, what God is like and what God's plan is. We also should understand lives, hardships and problems of our brothers and sisters. On the other hand, we should know the reality of this world, and people's needs. If we do not understand people, we cannot meet people's needs.

2) To Protect

The next important ministry is to protect brothers and sisters. Jesus said about Himself as below,

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

10:12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

10:13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

Sheep are sometimes involved in dangerous situations. They are attacked by wild animals. Sometimes they are in danger of falling off a cliff. Like this, sheep in this world (Christians) are exposed to danger.

Satan is seeking after a newborn Christian. A toddling Christian is easy to attack. There are many things to tempt them. They may experience a spiritual battle. A false teaching may tempt them. They may stumble in their relationships. A shepherd should protect sheep from such danger.

3) To Guide

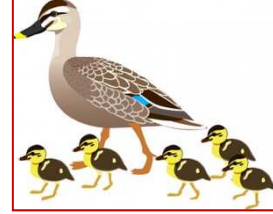
The third ministry is to guide the sheep.

John 10:4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

It is not easy to lead the flock. Brothers and sisters who belong to the flock are quite different in character, background, and social status. On top of that, there is **a generation gap** between young people and elderly people.

{Illustration}

This happened a little while ago. It was heartwarming news that when a spot-billed duck parent and a brood of ducklings crossed a road, a patrol car was on duty and ready to stop traffic, so that they could safely cross the road. There was similar news in Russia and in the United States.



The point I want to focus on is that the parent duck took the ducklings followed them. The parent duck goes first until the up. Here is the true sheep that follow the shepherd who takes

lead and the ducklings grow care of them.

This is the work of the shepherd.

4) To Heal

The fourth ministry is to heal.

34:16 will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. Ezekiel 34:16

Our world became corrupted by sin and many people live in suffering from various wounds. A child who is brought up without his parents' love would be deeply hurt in his heart.

He, who did not experience his parents' love, may find it difficult to trust in God. Some people inherit negative effects from their parents. They are sometimes threatened by sickness or an accident. Some are bothered by a sense of guilt because of their past sins. A certain man said, "A flock of sheep looks like people who are seriously wounded at the hospital." So many people have some wound in their hearts.

The shepherd should pray for such people to be healed and listen to them and walk close with them who are deeply hurt. It is the work of the shepherd of the church.

* My friends. The work of the leader of church who is the shepherd is primarily divided into these four ministries.

Peter advised church leaders to **shepherd the flock of God (5:2)**, even though there was no teaching system, and the flock was suffering and persecuted in the days of the early church. He continues encouraging the readers by giving concrete instructions.

2. Shepherd the Flock of God.

Peter used an expression, "**not**," three times here. It is a kind of an emphasized text. Let us study one at a time.

1) Peter's Pastoral attitude

① Willingly

5:2 ...not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;

There is a big difference between doing things compulsively and willingly. When someone does a thing under compulsion, they have no satisfaction, but they feel only dissatisfaction. And if they keep doing it, they may come to have stress. A certain person may lose his/her temper because it is impossible to stand any more.

On the contrary, if they do a thing willingly, even if they are tired, they also feel relaxed and comfortable. That is the same in an office or in a church. A person who works willingly attracts many people.

Now, let us think of an important thing. People need some reason to work (to serve) willingly. It means to think about what motivation people have. In a company, people are motivated to get money. However, we have a different motivation in church. We are motivated by giving thanks to the Lord. How much do we give thanks to the Lord? It inspires us to be highly motivated.

② Eagerly

5:2 ...not for shameful gain, but eagerly.

There are lots of various kinds of people in this world. Some people always calculate the loss and gain for themselves. Sometimes people who wanted to help and look after people in the beginning, gradually come to work for their own benefit and satisfaction without noticing it.

The Lord Jesus did not seek His own benefit, on the contrary, He literally gave His life to us. Therefore, when we serve people, we do not expect anything in return, but expect to have boundless joy by sharing what we are given.

③ Be an example.

5:3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

The word **domineer** seems to have a kind of dangerous meaning. If he wants to make people move and follow as he wishes, he **domineers** people. However, when he has to lead a group, and if people of the group do not follow him, he becomes troubled. What should he do?

(1) The Church is **a flock of God's sheep**. A pastoral leader should think that they are his own people. He always needs to realize that it is not his own church, nor are they his own flock, but they are the flock that God entrusted to him. He should be more conscious that God is the Chief Shepherd, and he is a small shepherd who works under God.

(2) The leader should be **a good example to the group**. The leader should do for other people **what he wants other people to do** for him. He should become the example whom other people want to be like.

* Like this, if he ① feeds the flock, ② protects it, ③ heals it, and does so ④ willingly, he becomes a

good example, and God Himself rewards him. **The reward** is the crown of glory.

5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

How blessed we are!

2) The Universal Priesthood

Many of you may think that today's sermon is spoken to pastors who are the leaders of the church. Yes, it was. However, the Religious Reformation that began in 16 century insists on **the universal priesthood**.

In the days of the Old Testament, the tribe of Levi, one of 12 tribes of Israel, served God and only the chosen priests were allowed to come before God. On top of that, they had to meet various regulations.

However, the Religious Reformation taught that Jesus Christ, who is the High Priest, came before God to give His body as a sacrifice for an eternal offering.

When Jesus was crucified and died, the curtain of the holy of holies of the temple of Jerusalem was torn in two, from top to bottom. As a result, the same privilege was given to all people who believe in Jesus Christ, that the high priest was allowed only once in a year to enter the holy of holies by slaughtering an animal. It is called **the universal priesthood**.

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,

10:20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,

10:21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

10:22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

10: 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

My friends. As we have studied the word of God until now, we come to understand that the privilege is not given only to the pastor, the leader of church, but also to all brothers and sisters. We are given it and we are also priests according to the word of God.

In this sense, if each of us is the priest, we should guide and teach one another. I call it **mutual shepherdship**.

When we look back on our Christian lives, we were fed and brought up by our elder Christians, weren't we? When we realized blessings, he also helps (① feed the flock, ② protect, ③ heal ④ willingly) other people.

And we become mature by helping other people. It is like the parents who are matured by taking care of their children. The church is the flock that is raised and guided by each other. It is the **mutual**

shepherdship.

The more we realize our mission as priests, the more we eagerly pray for other people. The degree of our eagerness depends on how much we realize that 1. God loves us and His grace is amazing 2. How unworthy of God's love and His grace we are or 3. how much our faith grows under such a spiritual situation and experience.

I have been taught that mutual shepherdship is the true nature of the church, that one leader does not do the pastoral work by himself, but church members help one another. And the Holy Spirit willingly teaches what they aim for under **mutual shepherdship**.

We need to be inspired to follow the Lord's word willingly. We should create an environment where we become honest and accept one another frankly.

I believe that a good relationship between the elder and the younger in faith develops under a spiritual environment like this. The younger learns from the elder and grows. And the elder feels that improving the younger makes his life worth living. As a result, both of them grow mature in the Lord. The crown of glory is prepared for such people.

5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

How blessed Christians are! We are blessed under a **mutual shepherdship**.

Conclusion

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— A Flock of the Saints —

We give thanks to the Lord for His teaching today. Peter, who was under hardship and persecution in the days of the early church, taught blessings to the believers to shepherd the flock of Christ. For those who follow the way of **mutual shepherdship**, they receive the crown of glory.

Let us go forward as brothers and sisters of the same flock under **mutual shepherdship** even though we have hardships. It is the way of the saints that receive the crown of glory. Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd, will appear in His time. Until then, let us work as His small shepherds.

5:2 ...shepherd the flock of God.

* God bless you!