

May 2, 2021

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Clothe Yourself with Humility Toward One Another"

—The God of Humility—

Text: 1Peter 5:5~7

5: 5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,

5:7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Introduction

When Peter sent the epistle to the Jewish Christians who were dispersed, they were under various hardships and persecution. The churches were founded mostly in the western and the northern part of what we know as modern-day Turkey. They were controlled under the Roman Empire and were forced to take an oath of loyalty to Caesar. They were eventually compelled to worship the Emperor.

Japanese people were compelled to worship the Emperor about 75 years ago. Most of us do not know the fact, because we only hear about the days of the war from our parents or teachers at school. However, we should not forget about the pastors who were persecuted and prisoned in those days. It is a real gift to be allowed to have the freedom of worship as today.

In Germany, People were forced to take an oath of loyalty to Adolf Hitler who controlled Germany in those days. Young people who were called *Hitler Jugend* (Hitler's youth) were instilled with a political ideology. And the Christian churches experienced a great tribulation. As you know, some pastors were martyred like Dr. Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Both in Germany and Japan, the Christian churches were divided into two in those days.

- ① The churches (or believers) that followed the authority at the time.
- ② The churches that did not follow the of authority at the time.

Regrettably, a deep rift developed between both kinds of churches.

North Korea is a modern example, which is under a dictatorship. People have no choice of freedom. They must follow Kim Jong-un, the supreme leader. There are Christians in North Korea, but they are not allowed to have faith in Christ. Christian churches in Korea are severely restricted under the dictatorship.

My friends, history repeats itself, doesn't it? However, please remember that there are Christians in every age, who believe in God the Creator.

It is this epistle that Peter wrote to encourage believers who were under hardship. Each of the groups (churches) need to stand on solid faith. On top of that, the leaders of churches and believers need to have the mutual shepherdship. Therefore, Peter advised them, **"Shepherd the flock of God."** Let us study further according to the following two points.

Main Points

1 Clothe Yourself with Humility.

5: 5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

1) Clothed with Humility

The verse above begins with the word **likewise**. It means that as the elders should follow God and faithfully fulfill their responsibilities, and the brothers and sisters of the churches should mutually shepherd and help one another.

The verse does not teach that the leaders unilaterally make those under them follow. Therefore, Peter wrote, **"Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another."**

Some of you may have thought this morning, "What am I going to wear to church?" The spring weather is changeable. It is pretty cold in the mornings and in the evenings. However, it gets very warm during the day.

My friends, putting aside what clothes you put on, there is the indispensable garment that Christians should put on. It is the garment of **humility**. The phrase '**clothes yourselves**' means to put on clothes. That is to put on the garment of humility.

It is important for people both to lead and to be led so that they should be humble to one another. However, it is very difficult to do so. If someone thinks, "I am right. They do not understand me," and does not step aside, their attitude makes it difficult to serve the church with them.

Peter said,

5: 5 Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

My friends. You may imagine that being humble is generally to be courteous, bow deeply and take a modest attitude. However, **humility** (**tapeinophrosyne** in the original language of the Bible) **means self-hatred**. It means that he accepts that he is a sinner before God and literally hates himself. He

hates himself who commits sin and recognizes that he can not live without God's forgiveness. It is this humility that the Bible teaches.

Then, what is the process of putting on the garment of **humility** like?
Let us study the following three points.

2) The Way Toward Humility

① Recognizing that humility is the way of blessing.

Peter quoted the Scripture of Proverbs in Verse 5 as below,

5:5 "...for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

It is the way of humility that we receive God's blessing. The Bible repeatedly teaches about humility.

Proverbs 18:12 Before destruction man's heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.

He, who is haughty, perishes, but he, who is humble, becomes highly regarded.

James 4:10 humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

② Humility is being humble before God.

5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,

We have nothing to be proud of before God even though we have something proud of before people. All we have is given from God. Job, who was in the height of prosperity, had an experience where he suddenly lost his family and properties.

At that time, he said,

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Job 1:21

When we realize that our lives and properties and everything in our lives are in God's hand, we become humbled before God.

③ God cares for us and He may exalt us at the proper time.

5:6... at the proper time he may exalt you,

5:7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

I find some key words in these two verses.

Verse 6 at **the proper time, exalt.**

Verse 7 your **anxieties, cast on Him.**

It would be blessed if we can study about them some other time.

{Illustration}

I came back to Japan in August 1981 with my family from Germany. As I lived in Germany during my adolescence, it was very difficult for me to get used to the rhythm of everyday life in Japan. On the other hand, our children quickly got used to life in Japan.

Getting a cultural shock, I was really happy that I could live in the countryside of Wakayama prefecture where my wife came from.

I, who was called by God, came back to Japan, offered Him myself. I had lived a quite different life from other people, so I could not find a job in Japan. I had no money, who was a student and also had to support my family. I remember that I prayed to God for His guidance and help.

At that time (December 1981), I founded **The Voice of Mission** for the purpose of ① Evangelizing Japanese people living in abroad,

② Supporting the churches (saints) that were persecuted because of faith in Christ. I remember that the Lord guided me in the prayer. 31 years long has passed since then. The work of **The Voice of Mission** has developed over the world to the present day.

On the other hand, the Lord allowed me to start **Grace Foreign Languages School** to support our economic problem. In those days, there were not as many foreigners as there are today, and people who wanted to study foreign languages were gradually increasing. Christian language teachers began to do evangelical work through the language school and the Lord founded Sakai International Bible Church. This process of God's work naturally took place and developed.

When I look back on my life in Japan, I realize that God led our life. I always prayed to God. We often had come up against a brick wall, and I had to pray to God.

5:6 ... so that at the proper time he may exalt you,

5:7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

We do not need to feel worried. Our God works **at the proper time**. We do not need to be troubled. We believe that if we follow the God's word faithfully, it will yield results.

Therefore, it is blessing to 1) be clothed with humility, 2) go on the way to humility. Peter encouraged the Jewish Christians in this way.

Let us study another point.

2. God Is the One Who Humbles Himself

1) To be humble before God

5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,

Let think twice about our lives. We were born in this world without anything. However, a child grows receiving warm help and care of his parents and people around him. Then, he will choose a job that is suitable for him.

There is nothing that belongs to us, such as our competence, status, qualifications, and even our life.

Everything is a gift from God. Therefore, we should be humble before God. God knows about us more than that we know about ourselves. He may exalt us at the proper time.

To be humble refers to **the way to humility** that we first studied.

5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God

The important thing that we study is that God is the One who becomes humble.

2) Jesus Christ is God Who Became Humble.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became a man by giving up His glory. He was humiliated and walked a thorny path and suffered on the cross. God the Father in Heaven also suffered the fact that He put His only one Son to death on the cross. God Himself is **the God of humility**.

Philippians 2: 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,

2:7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

2:8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Jesus Christ is the God of humility who walked the way of humility. How blessed are we who walk by following Him!

God Himself is the One of humility. Therefore, how could we be haughty, who follow that God? How could we be proud?

Let us be humble before the Lord so that He puts on us the garment of humility.

Conclusion

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—The God of Humility—

Let us give thanks to the Lord who spoke to us today. Our God is the One of humility. Let us remember the following two points what we studied today.

1. Be clothed with humility.

5: 5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

2. Lead a life by following **God of humility**.

Philippians 2: 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,

2:7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

* God bless you!