

May 30, 2021

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Peace Be with All of You"

—In the Grace of God —

Text: 1 Peter 5:12~14

**5:12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.**

**5:13 She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.**

**5:14 Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.**

#### Introduction

This is the last sermon on 1 Peter today. Let us study his last greeting and give thanks to the Lord for His guidance and blessing until now.

By the way, the overwhelming coronavirus pandemic spreads all over the world. For that reason, our Sunday worship services were canceled many times since last spring, and now we have an on-line worship service. How many times could we, brothers and sisters, meet face to face and have worship services and fellowship during the pandemic days?

It had been just a normal thing to come to the church and have Sunday worship services together. Now we understand that it was **the grace of God** that we are allowed to worship together. I am sure that they, who have on-line worship services, think the same way. When we are under God's grace, we scarcely feel God's grace. It is said that we are **numb with grace**.

My friends, it is probable that the disciples of Jesus scarcely felt the grace of God at that time. They really realized **the grace of God** after Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead on the third day. They realized it after Jesus showed the nail marks on His hands to the disciples. They came to understand that He is the true Messiah (the Savior). The disciples also seemed to be **numb with grace**.

We, human beings, are so weak like this, aren't we? I have told you repeatedly that Peter sent this epistle to the saints who were dispersed and under hardships and persecution. However, he wrote to them as below,

**5:12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.**

He wrote to the saints in the midst of sufferings, “...**declaring that this is the true grace of God.**” Peter finished the epistle by writing that even though they had sufferings, it was **the grace of God**. Here we understand blessings of people who walk by trusting in God. Let us study today about God’s grace that Peter taught according to the following two important points.

#### Main Points

##### 1 . Standing in **the Grace of God**

**5:12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, have written briefly to you, exhorting, and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.**

##### 1 ) The True Grace of God

This grace is **the true grace of God**. Peter said that what he wrote in his epistle is the grace of God. My friends! Let us read the epistle again. It repeatedly records sufferings of the Jewish Christians at that time.

The Scripture below writes the content of the epistle.

**5:10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.**

We face various kinds of troubles and sufferings in our lives like these. We sometimes are criticized, misunderstood, attacked, ill-treated, and persecuted. However, there is not any trouble that continues forever.

God restores us after we have suffered a little while and confirms, strengthens, and establishes us. However, even though we know it in our mind, when we confront sufferings in reality, we may think that we are out of the grace of God. No, absolutely not.

We are in the hands of **the grace of God**. Isaiah, the prophet, spoke to his people who were under sufferings.

**Isaiah 63:9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.**

{Illustration} From *The Last Lecture*

I watched a certain program on NHK TV. It was very interesting and rich in content. The program asked leading persons in various fields what they would speak about if it was their last day alive and

they were to give one final lecture at a university. Young people were impressed by their lectures and grasped their heart. Yes, I really was one of them.

One of lecturers said, “Not all of the strong are the winners in the world. The weak may become the winner. The key to win the victory in their lives depends on how much they can apply things. (How much they adapt to the environment.)” It does not mean how much knowledge they can acquire, but the point is how they can put it in practice.

When I listened to the lecture, I thought that his lecture can be applied to Christians too. It is very important to study the Bible, but if we do not apply the knowledge and practice it in our daily lives, can it really help us?

Peter advised them, “**Stand firm in it.**” (5:12)

## 2) Applying the Grace of God

Then, how can apply our knowledge to our daily lives?

### ① We should trust in the word of God

We should believe in the word of the Bible that God spoke with His authority. Trusting in the word of God leads us to conviction.

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

### ② We should ask God for His help so that we can apply the word of God.

If we sincerely ask Him to apply the word of God, He will give His helping hand to us.

**John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,**

The Holy Spirit, another Helper, helps us so that we can apply the word of God. As we gain experiences, our faith is strengthened, and it grows. We apply the words of God in different ways in our lives, and the Lord is surely with us and we come to be the winners through experiencing the work of the Lord.

When we have difficulties in our lives, it is a chance where we can experience the Lord. Grumbling is no help at all. We should calm down and trust in the Lord who lives in the words. That person is the very **one who stands firm in the grace of the Lord.**

## 2. The Grace of Fellowship in The Lord

**5:12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.**

Peter records about **the grace of fellowship** from here on.

### 1) The Grace of Fellowship in the Lord

## ① Silvanus

Silvanus is called Silas. He originally lived in Jerusalem. After Paul and Barnabas came to hold the Council at Jerusalem, Silas went down to Antioch with Peter and Barnabas.

After that, Paul chose Barnabas as his assistant for his second missionary journey. Paul writes about Silas, **“a faithful brother as I regard him.”** Silas faithfully fulfilled his responsibilities. On top of that, he seemed to have the gift of encouraging other people.

**Acts 15:32 And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words.**

That Silas (Silvanus) wrote Peter's letter by dictation and would take his letter to the church. Therefore, Peter just had to write the letter in brief because Silas would read the letter aloud and would teach the meaning of the content.

Peter was a great church leader, but he did not always work alone. He had good co-workers. It is very helpful to have the faithful co-workers.

When we work for church, it is very thankful to have faithful brothers and sisters. Who is your Silas (Silvanus)? Or are you someone's Silas (Silvanus)?

## ② A church in Babylon

**5:13 She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.**

Babylon refers to Rome here. In those days, Rome is the biggest city and symbolized the world. There were Christian churches there and Peter sent the epistle to the Jewish Christians in Asia Minor (Turkey today). Therefore, the Jewish Christians, who were exiles, and Christians of churches in Rome were brothers and sisters who were both chosen by God. The distance between two churches was approximately 2000km.

There was fellowship between two distant churches even though they never met nor seen each other. There was a blessing of Christian fellowship.

## ② Mark

**5:13 ...sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.**

Mark refers to that Mark who wrote the Gospel of Mark in the New Testament. He originally lived in Jerusalem. It is probable that Jesus and His disciples often visited Mark's house. He was still young at that time.

After that, he came to Antioch and followed Paul and Barnabas when Paul went on his missionary

journey. However, Mark separated from Paul and Barnabas on the journey and went back to Antioch.

For that reason, when Paul went on the second missionary journey, Paul did not want to take Mark with him. As a result, Paul and Barnabas went separate ways. Mark somehow seemed to be irresponsible or free and unrestrained. Anyway, he lacked self-discipline. Paul blamed him, but Barnabas took responsibility for him.

## 2) Growing in **the Grace of Fellowship** in the Lord

Mark must have matured through these experiences. He started to support Paul's work in Rome. Finally, Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark. Paul also came to highly regard him, who grew up to be a good disciple.

**2 Timothy 4:11 Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.**

My friends, every worker has a person who fostered and trained him.

When I look back my life, I was trained during the days in Dusseldorf in Germany. When I offered myself to the Lord at the age of 30, I was still young and inexperienced. On the other hand, the representatives of Japanese firms in Dusseldorf were middle-aged persons in the prime of life: businessmen, newspaper correspondents, journalists, doctors, musicians and so on.

They kindly supported me as a leader, whom God has chosen, even though I was younger than them. I still remember a quite a lot of things that they taught me. On top of that, the Lord blessed us so that our fellowship has continued for more than 40 years until now.

In terms of acquiring knowledge, I was given the exciting opportunity to study at Wiedenest Bible College. It was **the grace of God**. Studying at that theological school had a significant influence on my life. When I finished studying at the school and returned home to Japan, the principal said to me, "You should preach **the grace of God** in Japan that was given to you." It is unforgettable word. It still inspires me.

I also had these precious forerunners in my life.

The interactions between Christians trains each of us **to grow through fellowship**. This fellowship in the Lord makes us build up each other and grow by **the grace of God**.

Let us think now who helped you to grow? Do you give thanks for it? Do you encourage others to grow?

→ It is the **mutual shepherdship**.

## 3) Greeting of Love

**5:14 Greet one another with the kiss of love.**

A Jewish disciple was accustomed to kissing his Rabbi, his teacher, on his cheek. A church in the

second century recorded that the believers kissed each other on the cheek and showed their unity of love before they took Communion. If we look around the world, there are many churches that they hug and shake each other's hand.

That custom exists still now in the countries in the former Eastern Europe. It is important to show the unity of love to each other. Japan has different customs; however, it is also important to show unity of love to each other according to Japanese ways.

My dear brothers and sisters, Christians are guided and grow through lateral connections and Christian fellowship. And then, the church is built up as the church. And they experience certainty of **the grace of God** through fellowship.

The children of God are given peace even though they have sufferings, troubles, and battles. Peter closed the epistle with words for their peace,

**5:14 Peace to all of you who are in Christ.**

Shalom!

I would like to finish the sermon about the epistle of 1 Peter with 'Shalom' like Peter.

### Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Peace to All of You"

—In the Grace of God —

The Lord spoke to us through the last part of 1 Peter.

**5:12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.**

We studied two important things today.

- 1 . Standing in **the Grace of God**
- 2 . Having **the Grace of Fellowship** in the Lord

Christians belong to the blessed family of God. We have sufferings, sorrow, pain, battles, and so on. Peter sent this epistle to the Jewish Christians who were exiles under sufferings.

Now, let us carefully look at the following two verses again.

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

And,

**1 Peter 5:14 Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.**

\* God bless you!