

June 6, 2021

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "May Grace and Peace Be Multiplied to You!"

— Peter's Prayer —

Text: 2 Peter 1:1,2

1:1 Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

1:2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Introduction

We will begin to study The Second Epistle of Peter today.

1) In this day and age, we come to live in uncertainty due to the diversification of values.

In Japan, we can choose any vocation and we are allowed to speak freely under the law. We can mostly do what we like and want, and people's values are diversified. In a sense, we live in happy days.

However, on the other hand, people become selfish (their ideas and desires come first) and come to give priority to the way of life that they think is correct. Then, we come up against a brick wall and realize that there is no reliable or certain thing today.

Therefore, people live selfishly, and do not understand the presence of God the Creator and His revelation. We live in the days of the uncertainty and the diversification of values. Our society can not see the future more and more because of coronavirus pandemic that has continued for more than a year. COVID-19 vaccinations have finally started, but a new virus variant has appeared. The battle against the virus is endless. In uncertain times, our troubles and sufferings are increasing and there are quite a few people whose mind and body are both exhausted.

2) However, it is not the first time that humanity struggles and sufferings occur. It does not make much difference between Peter's days of about 2000 years ago and our days. As we studied the First Epistle of Peter, Jewish Christians, who were exiles in those days experienced severe suffering and persecution.

Peter wrote them the First Epistle of Peter. He wrote as below,

1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

Peter taught, “...**you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,**” even though they had sufferings and battles under trials. Christians have power to live.

Peter taught them in the First Epistle of Peter as below,

- ① They should stand firm in faith of the Lord even in sufferings.
- ② Faith is a joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.
- ③ They should have fellowship with other Christians and work for preaching the Gospel and doing love for neighbors.

We, who live in this day and age, are similar to Christians who lived in the first century, aren't we? Then, to whom and why did Peter write the second epistle?

Let us study the beginning part of his epistle today according to the following two points.

Main Points

1. The Sender and the Receivers of the Epistle

Peter first wrote in the beginning of the epistle as below,

1:1 Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

1) The sender

The epistle seems to be written approximately AD 67 by Peter.

Peter introduced himself, “**Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,**”

A person's position is regarded important in Japanese society. For example, when they make a business card, they print something that they think important educational background, an occupation, a degree, a social position, and so on. They write these things so that other people get to know them.

In Peter's case, he wrote words **a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ** in addition to his name.

You know the word **servant** is one who serves his master. And then, the word **apostle** appears. According to Acts 1:21,22, the apostle refers to a person who had accompanied with Jesus during His ministry life, from the beginning of the baptism of John until Jesus' ascension and became a witness of Jesus' resurrection.

It means that the apostles were reliable witnesses to Jesus' cross and resurrection, and Christ's Church was founded by them. When we look at them, we understand that they were chosen people. Apostle also means **the one who is sent** in Greek.

Therefore, Peter wrote two titles as below,

- ① A servant who follows Jesus Christ
- ② One who was sent by Jesus so that he will testify Jesus Christ.

These are the titles of Paul.

Like this, the second epistle of Peter writes that Peter is the witness to Jesus, who was sent to the world. This the introduction about the sender of the epistle.

Let us look at the receiver next.

2) The receivers of the epistle

“To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.” (1:1)

The receivers were people who have obtained a faith of equal standing with Peter. **“Those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours”** refers to **“those who are by the righteous of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.”**

They were people who were made righteous by the work of Christ on the cross. Christ made sinners to be righteous by His work on the cross. The receivers were people who had the same faith that Christ made them righteous.

Peter focuses on the receivers who were given the amazing gift of faith by the grace of the work of Jesus Christ.

Then, what are the key points of the faith that Peter described?

They are:

- ① The faith that was made righteous by the cross of Christ.
- ② The faith that understands God’s promise and trusts in it.
- ③ The faith that perseveres the trial of fire and grows

The receivers are people who had these points in common.

Let us study next what the second apostle of Peter teaches.

2. The Saints Who Live in Spiritual Grace

1:2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

1) Grace and peace

We all the descendants of Adam. We are a sinner by nature. We had to be judged by God as His enemy, however, He gave us forgiveness without paying anything. It is the grace of God.

Grace (charis in Greek) perfectly belongs to God. Let us remember the three characteristics of His grace as below,

- ① Grace is a unilateral one.
- ② Grace is a gift.
- ③ Grace is equally given to everyone.

The Bible clearly said, **“For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)** How blessed we are! The outcome of sin is death. However, Christians are given eternal life through Jesus Christ and allowed to live. We are shifted from God’s rage to **His grace**.

Let us read the following Scripture.

① **Psalm 23:1~6**

King David of Israel looked back his life in his later years and summarized it in song in only 6 verses.

Psalm 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

David praised God for his blessings that are given to him who trusted in God and followed Him.

② **Romans, Chapter 5**

The Epistle to the Romans records the blessings of people who were justified by God through the faith as below,

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We, who were forgiven by God’s grace and have peace with Him, came to have a peaceful relationship with God. Therefore, those who are in Christ are people who live in peace.

③ **The Epistle to the Colossians, Chapter 3**

3:15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

It is only by the grace of God.

④ **The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy, Chapter 1**

1:14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

* Like this, **grace and peace** are given to lives of people, who were forgiven their sins by the living God.

The grace and peace are the general term for the spiritual grace of God.

Those who believe in Jesus as Christ (the Savior), the cross and resurrection of Christ are given **grace and peace (the spiritual grace)**. We give thanks to God for the privilege and our status and worship Him.

However, even though we are taught about this privilege, it is sometimes difficult for us to understand it well. How can we understand this **grace and peace** better? The point is to

acquire the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Peter said as below.

2) Acquiring the knowledge of the Lord Jesus

1:2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

The key word is to acquire **the knowledge of the Lord Jesus**. On the other hand, the way of world is quite opposite. They say it is better not to know or to keep a distance from other people. And it is the secret of avoiding a problem. The reason is that when we get too close, problems often occur. It shows that we are imperfect and sinners.

However, what does it mean to acquire the knowledge of the Lord Jesus? It does not mean things like to know people and to understand the truth of mathematics and physics. It is not to know someone's name and body weight, but **to understand the personality of Jesus Christ**.

Peter said to the receivers that they could understand Jesus personally even though they did not directly meet Jesus Christ.

Peter records in the First Epistle of Peter 1:8 as below,

1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.

① A relationship between Jesus and I

Peter uses the title '**Lord**' to Jesus. It shows his relationship with Jesus that means that Jesus is his master. Like this, if we call the Lord Jesus, it shows the relationship that we are His servant. However, do we consciously call Him **Lord**? Or do we call Him **Lord** automatically? Let us take time and think.

② Acquiring the knowledge of the One Who is the Lord

It is natural that if we know that Jesus is our Lord, we want to know the One who is the Lord. There is no **servant** who does not know his master. It is natural that **the servant** should know his master.

When we read the New Testament, we realize that Paul did his best to acquire the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:8~14

3:8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

3:9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith--

3:10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

3:11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

3:12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

3:13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

3:14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul had a positive faith. He said, **“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.” (Philippians 3:8)**

Paul said in another part of the Bible, **“I am the foremost of the sinners.” (1Timothy 1:15)** On top of that, he said that the grace of the Lord overflowed for him. Therefore, he wanted to share **the grace** of the Lord with other people. He wanted to share God’s gift and encourage and strengthen them.

Those who really come to know Jesus Christ cannot sit silent about what he knows because they tasted His amazing grace.

The author of the Epistle to the Romans records as below,

1:11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you.

③ The Blessing of a Master-Servant Relationship

How can we receive **the grace and peace (spiritual blessing)**? It starts to acquire the knowledge of Jesus Christ. We also should know Jesus Christ. On the contrary, if we do not know the Lord Jesus, it is impossible for us to receive the blessings.

Then what does it mean to know the Lord?

① We should know the Lord Jesus by knowledge.

② We should know the Lord Jesus personally (or spiritually).

We can know the Lord Jesus in daily lives with these two points. **The more we listen to Jesus, the more our eyes will be opened to the spiritual things. We gradually come to see the God’s work and His dominion that we hardly see with our human eyes. On top of that, we carefully look at God’s works and blessings that He gives us.**

Our eyes gradually are getting open to what God plans to do for us, to where He guides us, and where our goals are. Our eyes are opened to these things. The world and the worldly desires make our eyes hard to see. Therefore, we should not be fascinated with these things. We should open our eyes widely and listen to the words of Jesus and follow His guidance.

1:2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Peter prays here, “May grace and peace **be multiplied.**” The grace acquiring the knowledge of the Lord infinitely pours on us. It is the inexhaustible grace. Acquiring the knowledge of the Lord is to receive the spiritual blessings.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: “May Grace and Peace Be Multiplied to You!”

— Peter’s Prayer —

Let us conclude today’s message. What did Peter the apostle write to the receivers of the epistle? It was his prayer that they become the saints who live in **grace and peace (the spiritual grace)**.

The secret to receive the grace and peace (the spiritual grace) is to acquire the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. We should keep in mind a master-servant relationship.

It is a relationship where we follow Jesus as our Lord.

2. We should keep listening to the words of the Lord Jesus.

We should read the word of the Bible and ask the Holy Spirit for His help, so that we come to know the Lord Jesus Christ in knowledge and based on a personal relationship.

It was Peter’s prayer that was sent to the saints under the severe trials.

* God bless you !