

June 27, 2021

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "A Christian Life that Is Built on the Grace of God"
—Being Made in the Image of the Lord Jesus—

Text: 2 Peter 1:5~9

1:5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,

1:6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,

1:7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

1:8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1:9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

Introduction

The other day, repainting and rust prevention of our apartment were performed in the middle of the rainy season. The apartment was built more than 20 years ago, and the outer wall became dark with mold and stains. On top of that, the door of the important fire hydrant was dusted. It is matter of grave significance if the door does not open when a fire breaks out. Therefore, repainting and rust prevention of the whole building began even though it was the rainy season.

Anyway, it was the rainy season, and repainting and rust prevention were done between rain showers so that it took nearly 4 weeks. Now the building has become beautiful beyond recognition. I can clearly realize the difference of before and after. The building became incredibly beautiful after painting by putting in a great deal of work.

We would not want our faith to rust, but when we look back our Christian lives (before), we understand how far we grow (after) in faith. How many differences are there between our former lives our lives after we believed in God?

In today's text, Peter records about the growing in faith of the Jewish Christians

who were exiles. Let us consider about their growth in faith and **its before and after**. How much do we grow day by day by the help of the Spirit?

Let us listen to the voice of the Lord according to the following two points.

Main Points

1. Christians Who Stand on the Grace of God

1:5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,

1:6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,

1:7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

1) A Christian Life Built on Grace

“For this reason,” refers to Verses 1~4. Let us read the Verse 4 now.

1:4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Christians receive God’s grace so that they become partakers of the divine nature. Therefore, we **make every effort to** build a house of faith on God’s grace. The most important thing is the foundation. Peter teaches us how we should build on the foundation of **faith**.

In any case, we should keep it in mind the fact that we are called to have faith by the grace of God.

Hebrew 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Faith is the foundation on which we build our house. First of all, the foundation should be laid. Everything starts from laying the foundation.

Let us consider this for a moment. The epistle was written to the saints who were suffering, wasn’t it? However, the content of the epistle was not an ordinal encouragement such as, cheer up! Why did Peter write like this? It was the secret to live under sufferings.

2) Making Every Effort

In verse 5, Peter wrote “make every effort”.

Some people may feel pressure from the word effort because we are living in a stressful society.

Therefore, we respond insensibility to words like enthusiasm, effort, devoting oneself, and perseverance. These words seem to be very strict. In particular, some people manage to come to attend worship, who are also pushing **to give all their effort** and **to work harder so as to increase sales**. They are exhausted in a competitive society.

In fact, some **effort** gives us stress, adds pressure and makes us tired. It can even ruin us! On the other hand, **some** effort makes us free, encouraged, and makes use all of our ability. We should identify them correctly.

Then, what is **the effort** like that makes use all of our ability?

→ It is **the effort** in the Lord Jesus.

God really wants us to be faithful, achieve our best, and lead lives to love God. It does not mean to live by devoting ourselves to false efforts and pursuits. It is the life with the Lord Jesus who gives all things that pertain to **life and godliness (1:3)**.

We should not forget that **we are genuine Christians who stand on the grace of God**. Therefore, we should not forget to give thanks at any rate. Then, what fruit do Christians bear, who stand on God’s grace?

2. Christians Who Bear Fruit

1:5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,

1:6 and virtue with knowledge and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,

1:7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

Let look seven qualities that are picked up here.

1) The qualities of the seven graces

① Faith with virtue

Virtue is **greatness of morality**. It is the virtue that reveals in the Lord Jesus, that is the nature of God. When Christians keep walking with the Lord Jesus and supplement their faith with virtue, they transform into the image of the Lord Jesus and learn holiness, humbleness, gentleness, and the meekness of the Lord.

② Virtue with knowledge

We should make effort to increase the knowledge for the purpose of learning the nature of God. However, we should not seek only the knowledge, because we may become Christians in name only. We can learn many negative examples of this in the Christian history of the past.

We need to be guided by knowledge in practicing Christian lives. We need a way to judge things correctly, and that is developed by the God's word. And wisdom protects us together with that knowledge. Therefore, increasing the knowledge is important.

③ Knowledge with self-control

Self-control is to control ourselves correctly. In the days of Peter, Christians were facing various kinds of immorality in a pagan society. Their environment was full of temptations even though they tried to live righteously. The same may be said of this day and age.

Even though our hearts burn, we easily lose God's will. We have weakness to be attracted to our desires. The important thing is how much we realize our weakness.

God fulfilled His salvation for us who have weakness. God provides with us the way of escape and the way of salvation so that we will not go toward eternal destruction.

The following Scripture teaches,

1:4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

We know that the law was abolished by the cross of Christ, and we are made free. However, the point is how to use that freedom, for what purpose we use it, or if we

use it to make ourselves rejoice or God. It is important to control ourselves. We are asked how we control that freedom and lead lives as Christians. For that purpose, self-control is important.

Self-control is also involved in managing things, for example managing our time. He who is busy needs wisdom to manage his time. We think we don't have enough time in our busy lives. However, it is said that we should control our time.

Let us control our time and create time to do God's righteousness and love since we are very busy. In that sense, we need to have self-control.

In addition, we need to control our health that God has given us. We should be ready to do our work and activity according to the energy we have. It is important to control everything that God has entrusted to us including our health. Like this, it is natural that we should control ourselves in our daily lives,

④ Self-control with steadfastness

1Peter repeatedly records about steadfastness. The steadfastness does not refer to patience, rather refer to trust in God absolutely and expect God's guidance. It does not mean to endure without any reason.

⑤ Steadfastness with godliness

Godliness refers to living by fearing God. It means to love God.

Jesus said,

Matthew 22:37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

22:38 This is the great and first commandment. ◦

It means that we honor God's sovereignty and live with love for Him with true humbleness. It is steadfastness.

⑥ Godliness with brotherly affection

Of course, brotherly affection means love between not only brothers but also love between sisters. Godliness, the former love, is for God and this brotherly love is for people. This is also given to Christians who stand on God's grace.

⑦ Brotherly affection with love

The last one is love (agape) that sums up the mentioned qualities. It begins with faith and completes with love. They are seven virtues, the qualities of the seven graces.

When Christians grow in these qualities of the grace their Christian lives become active and bear fruit. It is an amazing life to accumulate experiences. If we acquire these qualities in increasing measure, we come to lead Christian lives in earnest.

Peter advised to [make every effort \(1:5\)](#) to lead such lives. In particular, our faith is gradually fulfilled by acquiring six qualities that begins with virtue. It is God's grace that is given to Christians.

Let us sort out the qualities of grace now.

God provides us with **seven wonderful qualities of His grace**.

Peter taught Jewish Christians, who were experiencing persecution, sufferings and trials, that God had provided the saints **with seven qualities**. It is for those who believe Jesus as Christ (the Messiah). It means that we become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption in this world. It is 100% God's grace.

- ① **The quality of the grace** grows in the soil of **the preceding quality of grace**. It means that the personality of Christians grows by God's grace.
- ② **The quality of the grace** molds the character of the grace by becoming compatible with the others, being in harmony and being linked together as in a chain. He who is rich in the first faith will become one who is rich in the last love.

2) Staring to Bear Fruit

1:8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

① A healthy spiritual eyesight

My friends. If "faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love" is provided to us and we increasingly become rich in it, we will not become ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Scripture continues further,

1:9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

He who is nearsighted can clearly see things near him, however he cannot see things far away. He can see the thing before him, but he cannot see over a great distance or cannot look about correctly. The characteristic of the spiritual nearsighted is to not be able to correctly see their direction of life, their purpose of life, or God's will.

Peter records as below,

1:9... so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

My dear friends, do you remember the important thing? Do you remember that our sin is redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ? Do you remember that the great sacrifice was offered on the cross?

Peter said,

1:4 ...so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Don't we become spiritually nearsighted? Let us remember what God says and faithfully respond to the Lord.

② **Acquiring the knowledge of the Lord Jesus**

Come to think of it, we do not originally have **the seven qualities of the grace** within us. We become a new creation through the work of redemption of Jesus Christ and receive **the qualities of the grace then**. It is the unilateral grace of God. The lives of Christians **are built on the grace of God**.

Peter said as below,

1:8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter taught that receiving the qualities of the grace is first step to acquiring the knowledge of Jesus Christ and there is no ineffective person. How blessed we are!

Then, what does it mean to acquiring the knowledge of the Lord Jesus? Do we

know Jesus personally? Knowing the Lord Jesus personally is to become someone who has the divine nature of God. It is through only the grace of God.

As we live in the busy society, we need time to be quiet. We need to keep time to be quiet before the word of God and listen to His word because Jesus Christ speaks to us in meditation. It just means that we come to know Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "A Christian Life that Is Built on the Grace of God"
—Being Made in the Image of the Lord Jesus—

The Lord Jesus spoke to us today. He taught us that **Christians lead lives that are built on the grace of God**. Let us remember the following two points.

1. **The quality of the grace** grows in the soil of **the preceding quality of grace**.
2. **The quality of the grace** molds the character of the grace by becoming compatible with the others, being in harmony and being linked together as in a chain.

Peter records as below,

1:8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

* God bless you!