

September 26, 2021

KIBC Open Church Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "You Are All Right Even Though You Are Weak"
—God's Gift—

Text: 2 Corinthians: 4:7~15

4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

4:8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair;

4:9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

4:10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

4:11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

4:12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.

4:13 Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak,

4:14 knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

4:15 For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

Introduction

Today we will have **an open church worship service**.

We really want to welcome you who are attending at our morning worship service today. We give thanks to the living God that we can worship together.

By the way, Japan and the world have a crucial situation because of **Covid-19** pandemic. The fifth wave of Covid-19 has come into Japan. We are horrified of Coronavirus because we still can't see a light at the end of the tunnel.

In Osaka, a **field hospital** is urgently prepared for infected people who cannot be hospitalized. The increasing number of Covid-19 patients has started to overwhelm the hospitals. We hope that Coronavirus infections will settle down soon.

When we are experiencing a world-wide severe trial, we keenly realize our helplessness as human beings. We have to know how we are powerless we are because we cannot defeat this tiny virus.

In this situation, some may lose their strength, and some may lose their courage. They probably cannot find the purpose of life. What do we, human beings, exist for and what do we live for?

My friends, the Bible records these strange words.

4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

The Bible teaches that even though we are mere jars of clay, we have treasure inside of us.

A jar of clay refers to a piece of pottery and its characteristics are below,

- ① It is delicate and fragile.
- ② It is hard to see what is inside (It is hard to see even if someone peeps through the mouth of the jar.)
- ③ Long ago people used to put valuable items inside. ⇒ Long-term storage is possible.

{Illustration} The Treasure of the Jewish People: The Dead Sea Scrolls

In 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were called the greatest archeological discovery in the 20th century, were found in the cave near the Dead Sea. They are scrolls of the part of the Bible, which were carefully kept in the clay jars.

The whole book of Isaiah (Chapter 1~66) was found among them.

It is very interesting that they did not find any difference between the newly found book of Isaiah and the one of Isaiah that we read now. It is the greatest discovery in the 20th century that proves **the authenticity** of the Bible.

The Old Testament is the book of God for the Jewish people, and it was a very precious one. The owners probably were chased by an enemy and came to the area around the Dead Sea. They put their precious Bible (it was made of scrolls in those days) into **jars** of clay and hid them in the cave.

They were coincidentally found for the first time after more than 2000 years. Now let us remember the following points that the Bible teaches.

- ① The Bible refers to us, human beings, as jars.
- ② The Bible teaches that there is pleasure in every jar.

Let us study the following two points from the Bible.

Main Points

1 . The Contents of the Jar Is Hard to See

We cannot see the contents of the jar and vessels from the outside. It is just like the inside of a person's heart. In this day and age, we can see details of the body by X-rays, CT scans and MRIs etc. However, we can't see a person's mind.

The Bible records the contents of the human heart as below,

Matthew 15:18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.

15:19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

The contents of the vessel is really hard to see. There are evil thoughts in a person's mind, and it spreads in society. Various crimes and incidents occur one after another, every after day. They come out from the inside (of the heart).

However, God sees everything. God is the Creator who created the world. He sees deep down in our heart. He is the One who knows us more than anyone.

God the Creator gave conscience to human beings. The conscience is **a moral sense that judges what is good or evil**. Therefore, if he thinks something evil, his conscience feels pain. He feels pain for the first time, however, if he keeps doing evil things, he is gradually used to it and finally the evil grows bigger in him.

The Bible teaches that we all are judged for what we have done, whether good or evil. We feel unpleasant if the evil is not judged. If the evil deeds of society or other people are not judged, we get angry by shutting our eyes to our own faults.

The Bible teaches,

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

The inside of the jar is hard to see, however the first point that we should know is:

- ① There is God who sees deep inside of the jar.
- ② The God makes fair judgements.

God judges what we have done, whether good or evil. God is the One of supreme authority.

However, God's first priority is not to judge us. On the contrary, He wants to bless each of us. The Bible teaches that God is love. God prepares treasure for our lives. It is the second point.

2. A Treasure is Put in the Jar of Clay

1) The most precious treasure

God prepares **the treasure** for us.

What is your treasure? Is it gold and silver treasure? It may be wonderful.

However, you cannot take them with you after death. No one takes anything with them when they die even though they might have had much gold, silver, status and honor. They must leave behind everything. Then, what is the treasure that God gives?

The most precious treasure ⇒ It is **eternal life**.

God is the One who gives **the treasure** that is **the eternal life**. Yes, indeed, God is the only One who can give it. The eternal belongs to God's authority. Human beings are limited in existence, but God is the infinite so that He is the eternal One. It

means that He puts **the treasure** that is **the eternal life** inside the jar of clay.

My dear friends, if the treasure is put in you, the jar of clay, you are given eternal life, peace, comfort, joy, thanksgiving and so on.

2) Then what should we do?

We all want to get treasure in our lives.

Let me tell you the following two things.

① You should sincerely stand before God.

Being honest means being sincere. Sincerity is the most important thing in our personal relationships. We usually cannot betray a sincere person. Needless to say, God is sincere to us when we are honest and sincere before God.

What does it mean to stand honestly before God? First of all, let us become quiet and put us before the Bible, the God's book. And you should pray to God with your own words. Praying is just like breathing, inhaling and exhaling. You should breathe (**pray**) before God.

When we stand honestly before God, what do we see? We come to see our imperfect selves. We come to remember that we had evil thoughts, we did bad things, we made other people sad, we hurt other people, we judged other people and so on. Even if we do not commit legal crimes, we have consciences.

Sin originally means **off the mark**. Human beings who were created by God should originally have been continue towards the mark, God, however, we all stray. We are hardly interested in God. Therefore, our lives stray from God, and are thus **off the mark**. ⇒ It is called sin.

The Bible teaches,

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

However, God put our sins on Jesus Christ. Jesus shed His precious blood on the cross and cleansed our sins.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

② You should trust in God.

Even if you are weak, it is all right. You are allowed to live.

Romans 10:11 For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

You need not to live by your own strength. The treasure that God gives does not depend on your own power. It is a gift of God. You should stand before God sincerely and trust in Him. Trusting means to believe. God gives that person the eternal life as a gift. How happy we are!

{Illustration} Testimony by Oliver Schalk

Approximately 2000 years ago, there was a man whose name was Paul in the days of the ancient churches. He was a sincere Judaist, so he caught Christians randomly and persecuted them. However, he met the risen Jesus. Then his life was completely changed. He experienced a dramatical change and became one of the great leaders of the New Testament. There is a man like Paul today.

A while ago, a big Evangelical Meeting was held in Chemnitz (the former Karl Marx City), in the former East Germany. Mr. Oliver Schalk shared his amazing testimony before the congregation.

He grew up in the former East Berlin. He attended at church school, but he was hardly interested in God and the Bible. When he was ten years old, his parents divorced. Later, he joined anti-government activities at Alexander Platz, the central place of the former East Berlin.

When the police searched his house and found a book that is a satire on Honecker who was a General Secretary of East Berlin in those days. He was arrested and sent to a juvenile reformatory for one year at the age of seventeen. He suffered boys' violence there and filled with hatred.

After he released from the reformatory, he registered as a fan club member of Berlin soccer team. He was not interest in games, but he just wanted to stir up a riot at the second half of the game as a hooligan. He attacked fans of the opposing team. He became a man out of control.

In 1990s, he began to run a bar with his friend, but the bar became a place where

alcoholics and drug addicts regularly hung out. On top of that, motorbike riders also came to hang out. He talked with them for many hours. One of them gave him the Bible.

He suffered worsening of his conditions. To run a business, he needed money, so he needed a new way to get money. He became desperate and went to see a doctor to get a proof that he was unable to work and pretended that he had depression. As a result, the doctor sent him to a sanatorium to get medical treatment. He pretended there for six months as if he had depression

In those days, he did know how to control himself and what to do. He said that he tested God and prayed. ⇒ “If God really exists, please appear before me.” He wandered and ran through a forest for many hours. He suddenly found small boxes here and there in the forest, which contained Scripture cards. They were the boxes that a certain Bible college put there for persons who were strolling in the forest. He took one of them unintentionally and took out the card.

It was a flier on which was written, “A life that changes from a negative to a positive one.” Immediately he felt that a strong electricity passed through his body.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord

At that moment, he clearly understood that God spoke to him. He repeatedly committed violent incidents, taking drugs, and did crimes, but he could experience God alone in the forest.

He prayed there to God, and he understood that God entered into him. Then, he remembered faces of people whom he made troubles with violence and damage. He asked God for His forgiveness. Immediately, his life completely changed.

Jesus Christ who was crucified, who had died and risen, forgave him. He experienced God’s forgiveness. He decided to offer his life to God. Halleluiah!

He experienced a miracle in his life. ⇒ He experienced God’s immeasurable power. He was changed by God. God became his **treasure**. How thankful!

He met Jesus Christ, his treasure and accepted Jesus Christ in his life. He shared his

testimony before tens of thousands of people at Chemnitz (the former Karl Marx City), the former East Germany. The meeting was broadcasted live to 1,500 places and there was a big response.

My dear friends. It is all right even if we are weak. You may lose strength and be exhausted, but you are all right. Jesus gives you the most precious treasure, which is **eternal life**.

Jesus was crucified and rose in the third day so that you may receive the treasure. You are all right because the One who defeated death enters into your life.

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "You Are All Right Even Though You Are Weak"

—God's Gift—

This morning, God spoke to us. God loves us. He wants us to give the treasure that is **eternal life**. It is His desire to give us **eternal life**.

However, we should satisfy the following conditions.

1. We should honestly stand before God.
2. We should trust in God.

Let us conclude the today's message with the following Scripture.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 2 Corinthians 4:7

* God bless you!