

November 7, 2021

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "God's Forbearance and Mercy"

—The Kindness of the Lord—

Text: 2 Peter 3: 8,9

3:8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance

Introduction

There is a saying, "**a teacher by negative example.**" It means that sometimes we learn what not to do rather than what to do. It was originated with Mao Zedong, the chairman of the Chinese Communist Party. The translation of the original Chinese is '**a schoolteacher by negative example.**' We have a similar expression in Japan "**Hito no furi mite waga furi naose.** (Learn wisdom by the follies of others.) It is a common idiom used in Japan with the same meaning.

The **reason** that **the saying** came into being is that man can see the back of other people, but he cannot see his own back. We should become humble when we study this fact.

We who believe in the living God of the Bible can learn from the Israelites that God has chosen. The Israelites are our **teachers by a negative example.** We learn precious lessons by their mistakes that they made before God.

By the way, we live in the last days, the hardest days. Coronavirus rapidly changed the world including Japan. A microscopic virus has changed the world. As a consequence, the world is becoming digitized and the phrases **digital worship (worship through the internet)** and **also hybrid church** were born.

Hybrid means low fuel consumption. Hybrid cars are very economical because they run double the mileage of a normal car. Nowadays, many Japanese cars are hybrid cars.

Like this, many tasks that churches have traditionally done have been sped up and simplified to enable them to work many times more than they did. The world is overflowing with information (including fake news) and people quickly get it in an instant.

Therefore, the Christian lives of our present-day society become more difficult than ever before. How should we, the saints who believe in God, live in this society? Let us study two important points today.

Main Points

1. What We Should Focus On

3:8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance

1) The viewpoint of an opponent

The opponents of **the last days** say as below,

3:4 They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

The opponents said to Peter and other saints, who were told that the last days were coming, 'When will the days come?' This question is also asked to us who live in the present day.

Peter quoted the psalm from the Old Testament as below,

Psalm 90:4 For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.

Psalm 90 praises God's eternity and man's finitude.

God is the One who is from everlasting to everlasting. On the other hand, human beings are things that disappear as quick as a blink. Many people died this year. Human beings have limits even if they are outstanding people. Nevertheless, human beings arrogantly demean God who is eternal,

3:4 They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation

Those who perish in an instant say to God of eternity as above. How arrogant human beings are! They try to understand things by their limited knowledge. However, we do not know things that we should know. The following Scripture teaches us.

3:8 ... that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Psalm 90:4 For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday ...

Psalm 90 is a prayer of Moses, the man of God. He praised,

Psalm 90:12 So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

We cannot measure divine province nor the hour that God sees. It is impossible. Therefore, Jesus said,

Matthew 24:36 "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

Acts 1:7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

We want to know the time, but it is completely impossible. It is God's wisdom, and it is very profound. Then, what should we see? We should see the word of God.

We should be careful of some points as below,

2. Things We Should Remember

1) What the Father in Heaven Wishes

Knowing the viewpoint of the people of those days, Peter taught them God's will that they should correctly understand

3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance

Let us carefully look at the words **"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you,"**

The opponents in those days said that God was helpless and slow to fulfill His promise. However, Peter's viewpoint was different. It was Lord's love and patience for people even though they thought God was slow.

When God created the world, He made human beings in the likeness of God. It means that they are precious beings in the image of God so He should never ignore them. God has not forgotten what He promised.

God strongly feels His responsibility and has intense interest in human beings. Therefore, He kindly refrains from His judgement. He is the God of love, so He does not want anyone to perish. Therefore, He patiently continues speaking to people.

2) God's Patience

My friends, let us remember the people in Sodom and Gomora. God did not suddenly unleash His judgement. Abraham asked God as below,

Genesis 18: 23 Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?"

18:24 Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it?

18:25 Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

18:26 And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

Abraham harassed God with repeated questions wondering if there were forty, thirty, or twenty righteous people in the city.

18:32 Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.”

God is not slow to fulfil His promise nor hesitates to do it. He is patiently waiting for our foolishness, sinfulness, and slowness to understand. It is God’s patience.

God mercifully wishes that people realize their sin and as many people as possible to be saved by the Gospel of the cross.

Now we must remember that God absolutely fulfills His promise in His time. He does not forget His judgement forever. He will fulfil His promise in His due time.

3) God’s Kindness

God absolutely fulfills His promise. Therefore, we should live faithfully today. Scripture teaches as below,

Romans 2:4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

God’s forbearance and kindness are part of His grace so that we are led to repentance. We should not disregard His grace.

God patiently waits for us to think, “I have to change something.” God really wants us to repent, we who repeatedly make mistakes and turn back on Him. He mercifully waits for us to leave our sinful lives and receive salvation and decide to walk with Him. It is God’s mercy.

In the days of Peter, some people doubted if Jesus would really come again or when would he come, and if His promise would be true.

Peter taught them that God’s thoughts of human beings were greatly different from what they imagined.

In conclusion, no one knows the time of Jesus’ second coming.

Then, what is the important thing for us to do? → It is important to know how to live today before Jesus' second coming. The day when Jesus comes again is the last day and the time of judgement. No one can escape from God's judgement at that time.

Therefore, it is very important how we live now, with the precious time we have.

What do you think about today's message? Let us become quiet and come close to God.

We should never fail to respond to God's forbearance and kindness.

Conclusion

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—The Kindness of the Lord—

The Lord kindly spoke to us through His word. What should we remember? It is the one fact that we should not overlook.

Let us read the Scripture of today and conclude the message.

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* God bless you !