

December 26, 2021

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (the Last Sunday Worship of the Year)

Messenger: Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: “A Letter to Those Whom I Love”

—The Content of the Letter—

Text: Philippians 4:10-20

4:10 I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

4:11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

4:12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

4:13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

4:14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

4:15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;

4:16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

4:17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account.

4:18 I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

4:20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### Introduction

1. Today we have the last Sunday Worship Service in 2021. We had worship services every Sunday until today. We thank God for His blessing and protection throughout the year. How was this year for you? When you take a look back over the past year, you must remember various

memories.

- You must have experienced lots of things: you had happy events, you were filled with joy, you were encouraged, or you had sad experiences and so on.
- If you will allow me to share my thanks, God supported me throughout the year so that I could attend Sunday Worship Service and gave sermons with perfect attendance for a year. Only few dozens of hours are now left in 2021.

2. By the way, if Jesus comes to attend our Sunday worship service today, what do we tell Him?

- 1) the word of making a request?
- 2) the word of complaint?
- 3) the word of thanksgiving?

⇒ **The word I speak represents my mind.**

- But what does Jesus tell me? I am sure what He speaks to me is the following, **“I truly love you, Kuroda!”**

The nature of God is **“love”** He has supported me with His love this year.

- How much did we learn God’s **“love”** this year? How much did we follow Him faithfully this year? Let’s look back on our life of this year.
- Paul the apostle said in the Epistle to the Philippians, Chapter 4, Verse 11 as below—

**“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”**

Let’s study about the life to be content that Paul teaches us today.

Two points follow.

### **Main Points**

#### **1. Paul’s Situation**

- It is written in Chapter 1, Verse 13 that **“I am in chains for Christ.”** We come to understand that the Epistle was written in prison. We also realize that a characteristic of the epistle is **“joy”**.
- Being a prisoner, how could Paul write **“the letter of joy”** ? His situation was not good one but he said, **“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”** (4:11)
- What do you think about our daily life? Do we learn **“to be content”**? Don’t we often make demands, a critical remark and complain? These words

come from our inside and make us weak spiritually. Paul said, **“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”**

- My friends, he spoke from his heart, not with his pride. I can say that even if Paul experienced trials, hardships and pains, he didn't think them of the first priority. Then, what was the most precious thing for him?

**It was ⇒ love of Jesus on the cross.**

Paul experienced the love of cross. As a result, he learned “to be content” under hardships. This is the content that his epistle teaches us.

- We have met various things and experienced difficult situations in 2015. We have met unreasonable things and been suffered from things that were beyond our comprehensions. Then, what lessons did we learn there? Were we overtaken by the situations we have faced? If we think awhile, we will easily understand that it is difficult to overcome all difficult situations with human efforts and power. Paul said, **“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”**
- Let's study about his word above in more detail.

## 2. Blessing of Paul's Life in Faith

### 1) Learning the secret

- Paul said,

**I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.**

**Philippians 4:12**

- The verse above is written contrastively :
  - poverty and richness
  - to be well fed and to be hungry
  - living in plenty and living in want
- The secret is ⇒ **to learn to be content in any and every situation,** He said in Verse 13, **“I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”** This is an amazing word.
  - ① He learned **“to be content”.**
  - ② He learned **“the secret of being content in any and every situation.”**
- He learned two situations in his life; hardship and blessing. If he only experiences richness and possessing material wealth, he will learn the only one side of the life. On the other hand, if he only experiences

poverty, hunger, he will also learn only the other side of the life. One side experience makes his personality distorted and unbalanced.

- Then, what was hidden in the secret Paul had learned?

⇒ **It was training by God.**

This is the secret that Paul kept a balanced perspective and became the instrument of God.

- He said in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians as below—

11:24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.

11:25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea.

11:26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own people, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers.

11:27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

11:28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

- Paul once got into the first lane as a scholar of Judaism. However, after he believed in Jesus as Christ, he came to experience the great hardship in his life. God gave him to train learning the secret of God.
- My dear friends, you might also have “a training year”, 2021, I can tell you the very word as below,

**It was the year ⇒ God had allowed to happen.**

It means that you had lessons at God’s school and at the same time you were surely given power to receive training. You should know that God’s training gives you pain but it is also useful for you. You will understand the real meaning of training in later. You should accept the real meaning in faith. This is real faith.

### ● **To learn how to give thanks**

- Even though Paul were in terrible hardships he had a thankful heart. He gave thanks deeply to the saints in Ephesus for their cooperation in preaching the Gospel of Christ.

4:14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

4:15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;

4:16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

4:17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account.

4:18 I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

- Paul supported himself by making tents and preached the Gospel. At the same time, he received gifts of love from the church of Philippi with thanksgiving. (Verse 15)

It means,

① **He kept his own rule.**

- He kept the rule not to become a loser.

1 Corinthians 9:27

“No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”

He kept the strict rule so that he might not become a loser.

② **He had “a thankful heart”.**

- We see his relationship with brothers and sisters in the Lord. He became conscious of his role as a part of “the body of Christ”. God promises that He will support an evangelist and uses people for doing His ministry. Paul received love of the saints in Philippi with a thankful heart.
- Looking back over this year, how much do we learn **“a thankful heart”**? We should know that God works in all things for the good of those who love him.

● **He was a man of faith.**

“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”  
Philippians 4:19

- He said “my God”. He called God by possessive form. We learn here a relationship between Paul and God. He had the faith that “my God will meet all my needs”

- ① He believed that God is incalculably rich in things.

- ② He believed that God met all his needs.

⇒ **It was Paul’s faith in God.**

- **Then, how could he get the faith like this?**

⇒ **He learned it through his life walking with the Lord.**

—“QT”(Quiet time) and “Practice”(Applying)—

He didn’t become a man of faith or a man of thanksgiving or a man who learned the secret around overnight. He became such a man through the daily life with the Lord.

This year, we had many private lessons from God. What did we learn?

- A man whose name is Job appears in the Old Testament. He was blameless and upright. He also feared God and shunned evil. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East. He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned seven thousand sheeps, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He gave a banquet every day.

- One day all his sons and daughters were killed. Unhappy and painful events occurred one after another. Finally, he lost all his possessions.

He was thrown in the mist of tragedy. Additionally his wife said to him, **“Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!”**

(Job 2:9)

- Job had experienced terrible events and disasters for a long period such as forty two years. It is impossible for us to understand his terrible experiences. However, Job led a faithful life even in terrible disasters. How did God finally step in Job’s life?

**42:10 After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord restored his fortunes and**

**42:12 The Lord blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys.**

**42:16 After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation.**

**\* We can point out the following three points of Job’s characteristics;**

- 1 . He trusted in God. (Even though his wife who was the closest person criticized him, he trusted in God.) Job 2:9
- 2 . He repented his sins (in dust and ashes.) Job 42:6
- 3 . He followed God faithfully. Job 1:22

### Conclusion

Title of the Message: “A Letter to Those Whom I Love”

—The Content of the Letter—

- We are looking back over 2021. With what attitude did we spend this year? How much did we give thanks to God? Didn't we lead a life with grumbling? God gave us Jesus Christ the Son of God. He showed His love for us.
- If God appears physically before me now, I am sure that He will tell me, “**I love you, Kuroda!**” Paul the Apostle wrote the Epistle in prison which was full of love. He said in his letter, “**I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.**” (Philippians 4:11 b)
- He had made an impressive confession as below. Why could he confess like this? The reasons are that
  - 1 . he had learned the secret of God.
  - 2 . he had learned a thankful heart.
  - 3 . he had learned the faith of God.
- \* Paul had learned those things through his life in Jesus Christ.
- He concluded the Epistle by glorifying God.  
 “**To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen**” (4:20)
- Let's pray and glorify our God like Paul!

\* God bless you!