

January 16, 2022

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (Open Church Worship Service)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "A Turning Point for A Blessed Life"

—A Blessed Way—

Text: John 14:6

**14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."**

#### Introduction

We have open church worship service today. We welcome all of you who join us today.

By the way, I believe that you work very hard. Some of you must be active at the forefront of your work. Some of you are in the responsible position and try as hard as you can toward your goal. And some of you may be busy raising children.

It is generally said that Japanese people work very hard. I think it is right. Working seriously achieves results, however it has not always good. Sometimes it also has negative points.

It is said that French people work for going on vacation. On the other hand, there are few people who work for vacation in Japan. I remember that we had to take vacation when we lived in Germany. A baker and a butcher closed their doors for 3~4 weeks.

However, for many in Japan their work seems to be a hobby as if it is their life. For what purpose do they work? One of characteristics of a work-oriented person is overworking and having little **relaxed time**. They are physically tired, and above all, they are **mentally exhausted**. It means that they have no time to spare in their life. They become exhausted and as a result, they will build up negative **stress** in within.

Nowadays, we live in prosperity. However, there are many people who have trouble adjusting to work because they cannot satisfy their heart with prosperity. Some

people say that about 3~5 % of Japan's population are suffering with **depression**.

Then, what should we do? My friends. It is important to work efficiently in a busy society like in Japan. Living life efficiently is to not linger on our past. If we cannot separate from our past, our lives become **stressful**.

We live only once. If we live with stress, how empty we become. If God is present, does He want us to live such lives? No, not at all.

The most important thing is that we should live happy lives, receive true life, and enter the kingdom of God. The Bible records that there is a God Who created the heavens and the earth. It says that God can be clearly perceived by the things that have been made.

**Romans 1:20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.**

Let us think about our precious lives today.

#### Main Points

### 1 . **One Life to Live**

#### 1 ) **We live only once**

We live only once. It is very precious life. Then, where are you headed in life? Do you walk on the right way? I have heard a story as below.

{Illustration}

A certain Jewish rabbi asked his disciples a question, "When a traveler lost his way while travelling, how can he find the right way?"

One of his disciples answered, "Teacher! It is easy. He can find the way by looking at a map."

Another disciple said, "If he is in the desert, there is no road. However, if he has a compass, he can find a direction and keep going on."

The other disciple said, "Even if he does not have a map or a compass, he can

decide the direction by checking the motions of heavenly bodies. (If it is in this day and age, he picks a handy phone for finding the directions.)

However, their answers did not make their rabbi satisfied. The rabbi began to speak, "The map, the compass and stars. They seem to be good ideas. However, they are temporary measures. The best solution is to return to the starting place and find the right direction again. Why did he set out on a trip? For what purpose did he start? To what place did he go? When he goes back to the starting point, he will see the way eventually."

My friends, where is our original starting point? For what purpose do we lead our lives? Where do we want to end up?

## 2) **The Bible is a guidepost.**

The Bible is like a guidepost. The author of Psalms in the Old Testament praised, [Psalm 119:105](#) Your word is a lamp of my feet and a light to my path.

He sings that God' word is a light to his path.

Jesus said, "[I am the way. \(John 14:6\)](#) Let us think about the word of Jesus. Not everyone can show the way of life. However, Jesus clearly claimed, "[I am the way.](#)"

You may be seeking your way to live. You may try to fulfill your potential to seek a happy life. However, is that way a true one? God prepares for you the way to live. God created you and He also has a purpose for you. God wants to bless you.

**Beruf** in Germany refers an occupation in English. The word is made with **reufen** which is a verb and **be** which is a prefix and it means to **call out**. It is one's **own mission** in life that God calls out. Therefore, you are given your own occupation, the mission.

My friends, there are various occupations (a teacher, a doctor, a lawyer, an accountant, business worker, customer service jobs, a travel agency, a cook, and so on). There are various artists (a musician, an artist, a professional photographer, a film director, an actor, a craft potter, and so on.) Each of them is different and they are rich in diversity. God gives gifts (talents). Therefore, it can be said that occupations are the talents that God has given to us.

By the way, I spoke about returning to the original position. It means to return to the starting point; the origin that God created us. It is useful to understand our own starting point because we live **only one life**, and it begins by knowing the One (God) who created us.

Let us study the next point.

## 2 . A Turning Point for A Blessed Life

### 1 ) **We should stop for a while**

The important thing for busy people is to **stop**. We should stop because we are busy.

The following three points are concrete ways to stop.

- ① To take time to return to one's true self
- ② To have a place to return to one's true self
- ③ To have an opportunity to see one's true self

He who has all three points is **the one who is not bound by his past**. It is very important.

My friends, he who has **his own private place** to take time, and opportunity to see himself is blessed. You will become happy and are healed there. David, the king of Israel sings life with God as below,

*He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.*

*He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

*(Psalm 23:2,3)*

He had **his own place**. He became happy and was healed there. How about you? I hope you can take time to stop now. Do you have **your own place** ① To take time to return to true self, ② To have a place to return to true self, ③ To have an opportunity to see true self?

However, there are people who do not have **their own places**. They are people who just keep busy, and people who have pain in their hearts and become depressed. Their time has stopped. They live physically, but their heart is bound by the past and the present. Therefore, they keep saying regrettably, "I should have done such and such things." The important thing is that they should stop living unhappy lives and make up their mind to **live in the present**.

For example, we should determine **to live like this** according to what **we have learned in his life and from human relations**.

Keeping a diary is very helpful. He who keeps a diary records the past and also gets it straight. He who looks back on his past and sorts out things is blessed.

When we organize things, we need some criteria to judge. We judge according to the criteria of what we need or not. The Bible is the criteria to judge what we need or not in our lives.

The Bible teaches us what things are important or not in our lives. What is important for you?

- ① The most important thing ⇒ things that do not disappear, **eternal life**
- ② The things that are not important ⇒ things that disappear

**Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.**

Many things in this world change. However, the word of the Bible never changes. How powerful the word is! The word of God is the word of truth.

## **2) Receiving the eternal life**

The Bible records about eternal life. Before that, we should know that we have two kinds of life that is **life** of this world and **life** after death. The Bible teaches that our souls must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ after death and are judged what we have done whether good or evil. It means that the Bible teaches about **life** after death.

Let us read the story in the Bible, that occurred about 2000 years ago in Israel of today. A man ran up and knelt before Jesus and asked Him.

**Matthew 10:17 And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"**

Jesus said to him,

**10:18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.**

**10:19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery,**

**Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.”**

The man said, **“Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.”**

**10:21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”**

**10:22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.**

It is said that the story was a true story. The Bible records in another place that he was a rich young man. He seemed to be a capable young businessman. On top of that, he probably was the morally correct man because he clearly said that he kept the law, the most precious law for Jewish people, from his youth. He was perfect.

Then, why did the young man who was disheartened, go away sorrowful? Jesus said to him, **“You lack one thing.” (10:21)** The Bible records that **He had great possessions.** (10:22) He was discouraged by his possessions.

My friends. What can we study from this story?

Jesus said the following two points to the young man.

1. He should sort through his possessions.
2. He should sell all that he had and give them to the poor. Then
3. He should follow Jesus.

⇒ It is the way (the Kingdom in heaven) to receive eternal life.

We are not that young businessman. However, Jesus says to us the same thing, **“You lack one thing.”**

1. We should sort through our lives. Then,
2. We should follow Him.

My friends. What is the reason Jesus spoke to the young man like this?

⇒ The young man tried to get eternal life by his own strength. (He knelt before Jesus and asked very seriously.)

Jesus taught the young man, who tried to get **eternal life** by himself, to live by himself. However, he could not do it. (We also cannot do it.)

My friends, it is happy that we are not saved by our **deeds** like that young man. (Jesus just answered the young man to do deed, because the young man asked Jesus the eternal life by doing his work.) No one get **the eternal life** by his own strength. We are happy that if we believe in Jesus, we receive the eternal life.

**John3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.**

Jesus was crucified for us so that He bears our weakness. Therefore, Jesus opened the way that we are saved only by faith in Jesus Christ.

**Matthew11: 28Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**

**11:29Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**

**11:30For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”**

### Conclusion

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Jesus Christ said,

**John 14:6Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

Where can we find a turning point where we can enter the blessed way? Please remember, that it is impossible to enter into the kingdom of heaven by our own strength. However, God is the One of love. God sent Jesus Christ to save us. God prepared the way to enter the kingdom of heaven through Jesus Christ.

**John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.**

God prepared the way to enter the kingdom of heaven as His grace (gift) for those who believe in Jesus Christ. It is the true blessed way. What do you think about today’s message? I want you to believe in Jesus Christ and walk with Him.

\* God bless you!