

January 30, 2022

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "The Saints Who Are Without Spot or Blemish"
—The Lord's Patience is Salvation—

Text: 2 Peter 3:14,15

3:14Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

3:15And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,

Introduction

Peter repeatedly emphasized to live **a godly life** in his second epistle. As we studied last Sunday, Peter taught **the qualities of the seven graces** in chapter 1 verses 5~8 as below,

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

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

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

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

They are **God's gift** that is given to us as His grace.

Then, why does God give **the qualities of the seven graces** to us who are worthless? ⇒ The God's secret is hidden there.

Let us study about this point today.

Main Points

1. He Who is Seeking Spiritual Growth

1) He who is without spot or blemish

Peter had an earnest desire for those who believed in God and were waiting for the

kingdom in heaven as below.

3:14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

The verse above is Peter's desire and hope that they could stand with peace before God.

In the days of the Old Testament, they thought that an offering to God must be without spot or blemish because God Himself was holy and sacred. Like them, we should know what God is pleased with.

Romans 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

We need to come before God by examining ourselves and living a healthy life.

By the way, it is written **to be diligent** in chapter 3 verse 14. However, it does not mean that they should keep making human efforts. It means **to do one's best** in the original language. Now we should clearly understand that we should not confuse receiving salvation with what is expected of a saved person.

① The former is faith refers to being saved (being justified) only by faith in redemption of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is grace of God.

John 1:12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

12:13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

② The latter means that anyone who has received the grace to be justified before God, studies God's righteousness so that they grow up steadily to become **without spot or blemish**. On top of that, they do their best so that they can stand before God.

When should we start preparing to enter **the kingdom of God** where God's righteousness rules? It starts **right now**. It starts **right now** when we are taught

2) Growing of the inner man

When we get used to some kind of situation, we think it good even if we have the feeling that something is wrong. When we are in a comfortable environment or in a dreamy situation, we easily remain there. It is very dangerous. There are many examples in this world that certain systems go on the defensive approach.

When a Christian life goes on the defensive approach (which is easy to do) the growth of an inner man stops. When a church life becomes defensive (just attending a worship gathering, just reading the Bible, just praying), the inner man stops growing. Therefore, it is very important to stand before the Lord and seriously look into one's inner part during the devotion time.

He who grows in spirit firmly establishes an invisible part. As you know, the hidden part of the iceberg is far bigger than the visible part of the iceberg. Let us grow up through the intimate fellowship with God, our Lord, and firmly establish our invisible parts.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

The branches bear fruit through their tree.

The growth of church depends on the growth of each member who is part of the branch. As Jesus told the parable of the vine and the branches, we are expected to **grow** to stretch as branches and bear much fruit.

How much have we grown up from the day that we were given faith until now? We probably walked without thinking how we've grown up and how we walk toward a goal as our important purpose. We might have hardly considered the problem because we were pressed by our busy everyday lives and devoted in worldly, interesting things.

Proverb 4 in the Bible records as below,

4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Jesus told the parable of **the mustard seed** to teach us how to grow. The seed is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it becomes a tree and the birds come and perch in its branches. The small seed (faith) grows to become a great tree. Each

branch is expected to bear fruit. A gardener prunes the branches. He cuts off every branch that bears no fruit.

We are taught by God's word to distinguish important things and extra things. If we remain within the important branch, we will bear fruit in future. Let us seriously face the hidden place (our hearts) and grow spiritually. We should be pruned by God's word that speaks to us every day and makes us new every day and we keep walking ahead.

2. The Patience of the Lord is Salvation

3:15 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation,

The Bible writes down the **word patience** many times.

- ① Romans 5: 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,
5:4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,
- ② Hebrews 10:36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.
- ③ James 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
1:4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

1) **Patience** leads to a positive life

The important thing is that **patience** does not mean a negative life that **just patiently endures**. The patience of the Bible teaches of a positive life that bears something.

- ① In Romans 5:4, Paul notices **development** that **the patience** produces **character** and character produces **hope**.

5:4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

- ② In Hebrews 6:12, it records that we absolutely need **patience** to inherit the promises and receive God's abundant grace.

6:12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

- ③ It records in James 1:4a as below,

1:4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and

complete, lacking in nothing.

We need a perfect **patience**, not an incomplete **patience**.

James teaches about the **incomplete faith** and **the incomplete patience** as below,

James 1:8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

1:12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

God works in **patience** and reveals His glory in His time of patience. Peter has encouraged the saints who were persecuted and faced sufferings. He taught them to live faithfully so that their labor would be absolutely rewarded. He encouraged them to believe the day that God judges according to His righteousness so they should not lose hope but live faithfully.

However, there were people who did not follow the voice of the Gospel and lived a self-indulgent life. They did not doubt the whole Gospel. They probably believed the Gospel of the cross and the promise of the last day. However, they did not accept them as an impending matter or a serious problem. They understood God's word like this. Regrettably, there are people like them today.

Peter said that God's judgement has occurred before, but He did His will with **patience** for human beings. The reason that the judgement of the last day has not come yet was because of God's patience.

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) We should not ignore God's patience

① The Bible speaks a lot about patience. In the days of the Old Testament, Jonah, the prophet of Israel, was sent to the city of Nineveh in Assyria. However, Jonah did not like to follow God's command because he thought that Assyria was enemy of Israel and God would judge its people.

However, God dealt with Jonah's narrow-mindedness and taught His deep will by using a plant.

Jonah 4:10 And the LORD said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night.

4:11 And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

Eventually, God did not destroy Nineveh and made them repent.

② In the New Testament, Jesus also taught the patience of God the Father in heaven.

Luke chapter 15 records the parable of the lost son. Jesus told the Pharisees and the teachers of the law in those days.

There was a father who had two sons. The younger son took his share of Father's property and set off for a journey. And he squandered his wealth in wild living.

Then he remembered that there were lot of food at father's house and even the servants had food to spare. He decided to go back to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and ran to welcome his son. His father was waiting his son for a long time **with patience**.

The father said to his older son who became angry as below,

Luke 15:31 And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.

15:32 It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"¹

We understand God who has deep **patience** for sinners.

Jesus said to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law,

Luke 15: 7Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

③ Peter himself deeply understood God's will more than anyone.

When Peter was at the courtyard of Caiaphas the high priest, a servant girl said to Peter, **"This man was with him."** (Luke 22:56) But he denied it three times.

Peter said,

Luke 22:59 And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted,

saying, “Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.”

22:60 But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.

22: 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.”

22:62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

However, Jesus did not abandon Peter. His experiences of few years with Jesus supported Peter’s word, “**And count the patience of our Lord as salvation.**” (2 Peter 3:15)

God keeps waiting for us to repent with **patience** for a long period. With God’s **patience**, we are allowed to receive salvation that God prepared for us. Therefore, we must not disregard God or His patience.

Conclusion

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—The Lord’s Patience is Salvation—

The Lord spoke to us through His word this morning. We are people whom God loved and chose. We are given **the qualities of the seven graces**. How blessed we are!

What Christian life we should live?

⇒ We should live by fearing the Lord.

Let us conclude today’s message by reading chapter 3 verse 15a.

3:15 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation,

* God bless you!