

February 6, 2022

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Let Us Live a Stable Life"

—Listen to the God's Word—

Text: 2 Peter 3:15b~18

3:5 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,

3:16 as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

3:17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Introduction

We have studied the epistle of 2 Peter and we will finally study its last part today. What did Peter want to teach the receivers of this epistle? Let us study the content of the last part.

We studied Chapter 3:15a **"And count the patience of our Lord as salvation."** He was really given God's salvation through **the patience of the Lord**. (We studied it last Sunday.) He records that Paul also wrote them about it.

3:15b...just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,

The Acts of the Apostles records Paul's work in detail. Paul built the foundations of many churches in Asia Minor and kept preaching the Gospel with deep love and patience until his last day. On top of that, he did not only lead many souls to the Lord but also, he made the nature of the Gospel clear. He was certainly God's instrument.

Paul was brought up in Tarsus, an academic city in those days, and studied under Gamaliel, one of the most noted Rabbis (a teacher of the law). Therefore, he was an elite theologian of Judaism. It is amazing that God greatly used Paul's knowledge of the law and his ability for founding the churches of Christ.

Paul was honest and did not allow any compromise. He was a person who saw through the essence of the matter and resolutely cut off unnecessary things. Therefore, he sometimes had disputes with other disciples but God Himself gave him His wisdom and entrusted His mission to him. It was God's master plan.

Peter spoke about Paul, his brother in faith. Let us study God's will from today's Scripture.

Main Points

1. Paul Our Beloved Brother

3:15b...just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,

Peter called Paul **our beloved brother Paul**. Peter writes as below,

3:16as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

1) Some things that are hard to understand

As Peter writes **some things that are hard to understand**, many biblical scholars think that what Peter worried about was a particular doctrine about how men are made righteous. People who heard Paul's word that they had been saved through faith, not by their own doing (justification), sometimes misunderstood that **they did not need to change themselves**. They also heard that they were free from everything and sometimes thought that **they could do anything**.

There were people who lived Christian lives separating their **faith** and **their day-to-day lives**. It is a problem of today, too. It is called **dualism** of faith.

James, an apostle, records as below about his society.

James 2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

Paul did not insist on separating **faith** and **life**. He said as below,

Romans 3:31 Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

6:2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

This problem about faith and life was probably the reason that Peter said that some things were hard to understand. Then, some people twisted God's word and finally ruined themselves.

2) Christians who live in the present

Then, how should we live? Christians live in the present. Last Sunday, we studied God's patience. When we come to know how patient and how deep God's mercy is, we are overwhelmed by depth of God's mercy and so come to repent and only think about returning to God. Therefore, it is impossible that we can keep leading a dissolute life.

Peter tried to confirm it in 3:16. The important thing is to listen carefully to the Gospel that the apostles taught. We should study the whole Bible with a good balance and listen to God and what He wants us to do with a serious manner.

Even today, it is important that we continue to examine if our understanding the Bible is not self-satisfied or biased by light of teaching of the Bible. Such examination affects on our deeds and our way of life in this world. We need to examine our lives as Christians with a good balance.

Peter said, **"The ignorant and unstable."** Being unstable means to wave in one's situation. It refers to a person who has not established a firm enough foundation in God to declare, "My faith stands on here."

James said as below,

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

We should firmly establish our foundation on God's word and walk steadily. Peter's word encourages us, the Christians of today.

Let us study the important point.

2. Knowing God Personally

1) Knowing the Lord Jesus

Peter records this in the beginning of the epistle as below,

2 Peter 1;1 Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

1:2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

This is a greeting and also Peter's prayer. **Be multiplied to** refers to add more and to grow up.

It is the prayer that God's grace may **added more and more**, and God's peace and grace be filled over our hearts. It means that peace and grace spreads from the inside to the outside, to our brothers and sisters, our partners, and our precious families. In order to do that, we should know God and the Lord Jesus through God's word and actually walk in faith.

My friends, the important thing is **to know**. **To know** does not mean only to read through the Bible or to increase our knowledge. Of course, we need to open the Bible to know God. We should read through the Bible.

The Bible is a really strange book, because it does either record only success stories, nor it does only record only human failures. The Bible frankly records human nature and also records a real history of human beings who are imperfect and easily go astray.

{Illustration}

My friends. Let us imagine an iceberg that floating in the Arctic Ocean. We only see a part of the whole iceberg. The greater part of it is hidden under water. As the hidden part supports the iceberg, our problems and troubles that are deep in our heart greatly control our life.

The Bible exposes the hidden part to light and shows us the reality of sin that appears and disappears during thousands of years of history.

In the Bible, to know means to have fellowship. **To know God and the Lord Jesus** means that we come to have **personal fellowship** with God. We also meet friends throughout the course of our lives and come to know each other. As the intimate relationship is formed, they begin to pray for each other and share their thoughts and desires and become deeply understood. God also wants us to have fellowship like this.

As we live, we experience joyful moments, such as when the prayer that we prayed for a long time is answered. How many joyful times we are given? "Lord! How thankful, I praise your name!" We come to know the Lord through the experiences of answering these prayers. We also know the Lord through hardships.

It means that **we know God and the Lord Jesus** in the days of prosperity and the days of adversity. And we receive the Lord's **grace** and **peace** more and more. How blessed we are!

2) Returning to the original position

Now, the important thing is that we should constantly return to the original position. The original position is that the starting point that God created us in His image. Who are you? For what purpose did God create you? What direction do you go? We find the answers for these questions. Therefore, we should return to the starting point.

Since Adam and Eve sinned, human beings inherited the nature to avoid the Lord's face. Like a lost lamb, we do not realize where we are or to where we have to return to, and we are at a loss of what to do. A sheep cannot find the way by itself. It is lost until someone comes to find it or call it with a loud voice.

My friends. Do you remember that God's first question to mankind was, "[Where are you?](#)" (Genesis 3:9)?

Peter continues,

3:17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

"The error of lawless people" is the problem when people, who once followed by the sense of value of this world, become God's people. In a sense, it is an

unavoidable problem.

It is our Christian life that shifts toward the value of the Bible from the value of this world. God is present in Christian lives and accomplishes God's kingdom there. On the other hand, there is a trap and instead of making God's kingdom bigger, we make it small. Then, how should we live lives?

3) We should be careful

We should **be very careful**. The important thing is that the church makes much of the preaching God's word in worship. We should listen to God's word from the pulpit and live Christian lives. The most effective way to identify the fake ones is to see only the real ones. We need to keep looking our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to keep staying in the Gospel of Jesus and continue studying from His intimate fellowship.

He who lives such a Christian life is a person who lives **a life in where his axis does not shake**. The secret of unshakable life is hidden here.

Let us read the Peter's benediction in the end.

3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Conclusion

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We studied the last part of the Second Epistle of Peter by the lecture sermons. Peter, an apostle, wrote the epistle to the Messianic Christians who were exiles and under hardship.

Peter sincerely prayed that the saints, who were exiles, would not be carried away with the error of lawless people, but **live an unshakable life**.

Then, how should we live a life as Christians?

3:17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

Let us remember the following important points.

1, We should not lose our own stability.

For that, we should **be careful**.

2. We should **know** the Lord Jesus personally.

* God bless you!