

February 13, 2022

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "So That Our Joy May Be Complete"
—The Eternal Life—

Text: 1 John 1:1~4

1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—

1:2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—

1:3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1:4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

Introduction

We will start to study *The First Epistle of John* today.

It is written in the beginning as below,

1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—

John writes the beginning of *The Gospel of John* in a similar manner.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1) The Writer of the Epistle

These two epistles have common style of sentences because they were written by John, the same person, who was one of Jesus' 12 apostles. After this, John wrote The Revelation of Jesus Christ. Most of Jesus' apostles were martyred. John was sent to Patmos.

John wrote *the Revelation* under a special divine protection. That John wrote the author of the epistle. Many biblical scholars think that these two epistles that have a similar beginning was written by John, one of Jesus' 12 apostles.

2) The Receivers of the Epistle

The receivers were people whom John called **my little children, beloved, young men, and brothers**. They are people whom John couldn't stop loving. They believed in Jesus and followed Him. They were saints who lived in Asia Minor (Turkey today). However, their surrounding environment was like a dark world.

3) The Purpose of the Epistle

For what purpose did John write the epistle? There is a special reason in sending an epistle. John wrote about the time in which he lived and said it was **the last hour** in Chapter 2:18 as below,

2:18 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore, we know that it is the last hour.

John wrote that the **antichrist, deceivers** and **false prophets** were coming as they have heard.

In those days, Gnosticism occurred, and its advocates denied that Jesus Christ came to this world as a human.

John prayed for his beloved, so that they were not overwhelmed with the heretical teaching but overcome this world and became winners. Therefore, he wrote the epistle.

He wrote in Chapter 2 to fathers, young men and children as below,

2:13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father.

2:14 I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

John really directly told his beloved to lead a victorious life. He pointed to Jesus Christ who was the source of life. He taught them to lead a victorious life and taught them how to be blessed and healthy,

John continued showing the actual way to live. He emphasized that faith is revealed by the way of life. Therefore, the receivers were encouraged very much by the epistle.

My friends, when we continue reading this epistle, we understand that it teaches us many relevant and important things. Now, let us study what John, the author, wanted to teach his beloved through two points from the first sermon. The theme is, *So That Our Joy May Be Complete*.

Main Points

1. The One Who is Eternal Life

1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—

1) John's view on Christ

Then, what is Christ like?

1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—

① Who was from the beginning

He has been already present there when God created the heavens and the earth. He is the eternal One and God the Creator.

② He was the One whom they have heard and have seen with their eyes

John have directly heard and seen with his eyes and still he had his vivid impression. He was Jesus Christ who came as a human.

John continued,

③ John looked upon Him who has touched with his hand

John said that He was the One (Messiah) who was seen and touched by others.

John lived with Jesus for 3 years and was close to Him when they had the last supper. He listened to what Jesus spoke and was a witness to His ministry. He really experienced Jesus' ministry.

Therefore, different from the advocates of Gnosticism in those days, John did not think intelligently nor rationalized his teachings. He really saw the cross of Christ and met Him who resurrected from the tomb. Therefore, he could not accept the advocates of Gnosticism who insisted that Christ was not God. Probably, there was no stronger faith than John's view on Christ.

For John, Christ was not a mere product of a fantasy. He experienced that God appeared as a human whom he could directly touch.

My friends, this is John's view on Christ. What about you? What view on Christ do you have?

2) The Eternal Life

1:2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—

We really understand that **life** is very precious. Especially, many precious **lives** were lost because of Coronavirus infection. Everyone realizes its dangerousness. However, the Bible points out the more precious **life** as well as the physical life.

John said it **the eternal life**. He earnestly taught that **the eternal life** itself was **Jesus Christ** Himself. Jesus Christ is the source of **the eternal life** that we are given.

My friends, one of the desires that human beings have is to see God. Therefore, they have made various kind of gods. They are idols.

However, the true God came to this world by taking the appearance of a man. John saw Him in person. At that very time, human beings encountered the greatest incident since the history of human beings began. And afterwards, human beings entered a new history.

He is Jesus Christ who is **the Word of life, life** and **the eternal life**. John wanted to teach Christ to the readers. It is a very important point that John wanted to tell.

John continues to teach the way of Christian life that follows Jesus Christ who is the eternal life.

2. The Life that Joy is Complete

1:3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1) Our Fellowship

We human beings have broken fellowship with God since Adam and Eve rebelled against God. At first, human beings were made in the image of God, so we have a desire to see God the Creator.

Therefore, human beings made many religions, theologies and ideologies until now. However, no one cannot find the true God even though he is very excellent and try hard to do. Human beings could not see God until God showed Himself.

Thankfully, God the Creator sent Jesus Christ to this world approximately 2000 years ago and allowed us to see God.

Jesus said to His beloved people as below,

John 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.

14:7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

14:8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

14:9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

The word **fellowship** means to **share** and to **have in common**. Here, it means to **share the life of Christ**. When one becomes a Christian, it means that they enter a relationship that shares the life of Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

① A vertical relationship

The first important thing is a vertical relationship. It means the relationship between Jesus Christ and us.

② A horizontal relationship

It is the relationship among Christians, and it improves us specifically. At first, we share our experiences, and then we share our joy and sadness.

{Illustration}

I preached the Gospel in the former Eastern European countries from 1970s to 1980s. The countries were so-called **the Iron Curtain** and were controlled by atheism. In those days, many Christian churches and Christians were seriously oppressed and persecuted.

I was taught many things through the fellowship of brothers and sisters in those countries. When I look back on those days, I realize that I was under the Lord's amazing plan.

In the beginning, my main work was to bring needed materials (Bibles, religious books, food, daily necessities, etc.) to the saints under persecution. However, as I repeatedly visited them, I began to know that I was given spiritual blessing from them.

2 Corinthians 8:14 your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness.

Some wealthy Japanese churches could share their richness with brothers and sisters under hardship. As a result, we received lots of spiritual blessings. I remember **our fellowship** went on late at night without ending even until it was 11 and 12 o'clock. Nobody would return home. We had great joy and fellowship in the Lord.

It was like the first church that was recorded in *Acts*, Chapter 2. I was taught there the blessings from the two kinds of fellowship, the vertical relationship, and the horizontal relationship.

My friends, let us think about the two relationships. When the vertical relationship

with Jesus Christ and the horizontal relationship with brothers and sisters, improves, we come to see the Church of Christ. John wanted the receivers to have such fellowship.

John 15 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.

We all are the branches of the vine, the tree trunk. The branches only abide in the trunk so that they can bear fruit.

2) Our Joy

If those, who believe in Jesus Christ, live by the blessed vertical and horizontal relationships, they will come to have true joy among them.

John records as below,

1:4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

The Christian life is to make our joy **complete** in Jesus Christ. We originally had no life. It belongs to Christ and joy is the same as well.

However, what do you think about our real life? We have lots of troubles, problems, conflicts and struggles. The saints who were in Asia Minor were under circumstances like us. Those who have life have joy that springs up from their inside and they make the circumstances the place of joy.

Then, what is the problem? ⇒ The problem is with man himself. The problem is that he separates from God the Creator.

Joy is a by-product of life. Wherever there is light, there is joy. However, from inside of people who have no life, the smell of death comes out. Those people make their place the one of death.

We did not see Jesus Christ with our physical eyes like the readers of those days. However, we are able to have a fellowship with the Lord Jesus, the vertical relationship, and with brothers and sisters, the horizontal relationship. And God completes our joy. It is the gift from God.

Conclusion

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—The Eternal Life—

The Lord spoke to us this morning through the beginning part of *The First Epistle of John*. We are taught about the great joy that is given by God who created the heavens and the earth.

It is **the eternal life** that is given to those who believe in God. It is the hope that they may soon enter into the kingdom of God. It is given through the salvation of Jesus Christ on the cross, not because of our work or achievement. It is the grace that is unilaterally given to us by the Lord. Let us rejoice the fact and give thanks to the Lord.

Let us conclude today's message by reading the following Scripture.

1:3that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1:4And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

* God bless you!