

May 1, 2022

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "It is the Old and New Commandment."

—One Word—

Text: 1 John 2:7~11

2:7 Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard.

2:8 At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

2:9 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

2:10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

2:11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Introduction

It has been five weeks since we began studying the first Epistle of John. Let us review the previous message.

Last time, I listened to the Lord's voice and spoke the sermon entitled **God's Commandments Are Not Burdensome** (the subhead: God's Love). We studied how to live as a Christian. We should live like the wise man who built his house on the rock as Jesus taught.

What does it mean exactly? The Scripture records as below,

1 John 2:5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him:

The verse above clearly teaches the following things.

Keeping God's word ⇒ God's love is fulfilled ⇒ We come to know that we are in Him

Therefore, it is important for us to keep God's word. He who believes in the cross of Christ is changed into a person who God's reveals his blessings through by growing in God's grace. It is God's work in him, and he is allowed to live a blessed life.

Therefore, his life does not become a burden, because Jesus Christ took everything for him on the cross. On top of that, the Holy Spirit, who is God's Spirit, helps him. A Christian life is not the life where we must begrudgingly follow the commandments.

Now let us open the today's text, 1 John 2: 7~11. The author John records what a Christian life that is not a burden is.

1 John 2:7 Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard.

John records here **an old commandment** and **a new commandment** (a commandment is a precept in another word.). Then, what are the old and new commandments like? Let us study the following two points which is today's theme of the message.

Main Points

1. Those Who follow the New Commandment

1) The Old Commandment

2:7 Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard.

The commandment that John writes is to love their brothers and sisters. The Israelites knew the commandment that had been taught since ancient times.

Leviticus 19:18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

My friends! John is not introducing novel ideas. The Scripture says that this commandment (precept), **"You had from the beginning."** The beginning may refer to the days that God created human beings.

Brotherly love is a precious commandment that God the Creator put in human hearts. The Israelites especially should have known that commandment.

However, John said that **the new commandment** had a new meaning and content. What does mean?

⇒ It is the commandment that was fulfilled by the cross of Jesus Christ.

The Israelites knew the old commandment (precept), but they could not follow it. Our flesh hinders us doing it. It is very difficult to love other people because human nature hinders it.

What do you think of that? We try hard to love other people by ourselves. However, God allowed us to love others through Jesus Christ.

⇒ It is the new commandment (precept).

The new commandment is the old commandment (precepts) that follows through Jesus Christ.

John said the following point.

2) The New Commandment is True

2:8 At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

① John says that the new commandment is true both in Jesus and in us. The truth is the absolute standard. Jesus who was crucified is the perfect standard and the truth. It is also our truth (the absolute standard).

② The perfectness of the standard is because the true light (*phos* in Greek: the light from the source of light) is already shining.

When Jesus Christ, who is the light, lives in those who trust in Him, nothing can block the light. The light is too strong so the darkness is passing away. How amazing the new commandment is! It is the new commandment (precepts) that John taught.

{Illustration}

I heard a testimony of a certain man a few years ago.

He was weak and his family environment was not good. He grew up in the country and transferred three times to a new school in remote places because of his father's job. He failed his college entrance examination and entered a local college.

When he met good parents and people who lived a wealthy life in a fine house, he became timid and discouraged. He was caught by a sense of defeat and was discouraged and thought, "I know I can't."

However, after he believed in Jesus Christ his negative feelings about himself were changed. He accepted by faith that he was a precious being that God loves. His feeling was changed from "I know I can't," to "Yes, I can." Until then, he thought that man's life is predestined, and he despised himself. However, he began to look at his life by trusting God's plan and will and found the meaning of life.

Since then, he was changed. He wanted to save young people who went astray like him and he became an evangelist. Even now that he is past 70 years old, when he speaks God's love to young people, he is excited.

He comes to realize that his struggles and tears were not waste when he saw young people, who were studying the Bible together, met Jesus and their lives completely changed. He says that people are allowed to live meaningful lives by God even though they are weak and have a strong sense of inferiority.

We are encouraged by the testimony of a person who lives in the new commandment. John says that he who lives in the new commandment becomes to live in brotherly love. The One of *phos* (Jesus Christ) lives in him.

2. Those Who Live in Brotherly Love

2:9 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

2:10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

2:11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

1) Checkpoints

Let us examine ourselves now.

① The Scripture above encourages people to check their real lives and observe the essential condition. In those days, there seemed to be people who hated their brothers.

On the other hand, **to hate your brothers** mean in a broad sense including a cold heart, indifference, and a despising attitude. If we are in the darkness, we naturally stumble.

Chapter 2 records their situation.

2:11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

The brotherly love naturally reveals itself. One's inward being comes out to outer walking. Verse 9 teaches that it is true.

2:9 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

The word brother means Christians (including sisters) of the same family of God.

1John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

It is a check point ①.

② The brotherly love starts between Christians and its circle of relationship grows wider as they abide in the light.

2:10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

They have fellowship with God who are the light and there is no cause for stumbling in Him.

However, they stumbled in the days of John and also today. Stumbling will occur in the future. Why do they stumble?

The Bible teaches because they are not with the light.

We should love one another and live in brotherly love.

2) The Whole Law is Fulfilled in One Word

Galatians 5:14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

The whole law refers to the word of the Old Testament. It is God's commandment

(precept), and the verse above teaches that the commandment is completed in one phrase. It is **“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”**

My friends, why was Jesus Christ was crucified and shed His precious blood? We should not waste His death.

Jesus died to fulfill the commandment, **“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”** God gave us the Holy Spirit, another Helper, to fulfill the commandment. **John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,**

The true Christian is to live in the new commandment (precept). And, their life reveals love for brothers and sisters. There is no darkness there nor do they stumble. They remain in the light.

We, who have flesh, have the battle but we also are given the Christian privilege that leads to victory.

The church of Jesus Christ should be the community of brothers and sisters that faithfully follow the new commandment.

{Illustration}

In the winter of 2014, a roof of a certain gymnasium of a resort in America collapsed. It was a terrible disaster and ten people were killed. The building looked splendid and was beautifully decorated. However, they disregarded the foundation work so the building could not hold under the weight of the snow. It finally collapsed. It was the cause of the accident.

The church is same as that building. We should work for a stable foundation. Of course, various gatherings, training programs church activities are important. One of the important foundational goals is to set up a pillar of love. The barometer of a sound church is **how much the congregation can unite into one by love.** We should love one another as Christ loves us.

Jesus said,

John 15:12 “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

The church of Christ is the community that is maintained with love of Christ. They are people who live by following the new commandment (precept). We do not fight

working hard through our flesh. On the contrary, we keep living with Christ and in His love.

Conclusion

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—One Word—

The Lord spoke to us this morning. **The old and new commandment** is fulfilled by Christ Jesus. Anyone who is in Christ follows the new commandment.

What privileges are given to people who live in the new commandment?

1. They are allowed to live in brotherly love.
2. They are allowed to live in the light.

2:10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

* God bless you!