

May 22, 2022

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (Open Church Worship Service)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Our Life is Something Like a Puzzle"

—The Secret of a Blessed Life—

Text: Psalm 84:10~12

**84:10 For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.**

**I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.**

**84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor.**

**No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.**

**84:12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!**

#### Introduction

**Good morning, everyone!**

There are lots of strange things in this world.

For example, let us think about languages. It is said that there are approximately 6,900 languages in the world. They say that there are more than 120 languages in Nepal, which is such a small country. People live there and they have their own cultures, customs, traditions, and their history. It is something **strange**.

On top of that, people, who have different languages, cannot communicate successfully. In the African continent, I hear that there are countless languages (It is said that some of them do not even have a writing system.). They cannot have any conversation with people of the next village. It is something **strange**.

Let us look at Japan. According to a certain language scholar, there are 16 dialects, and they are categorized with regions. The languages between North Japan and South Japan are quite different. Sometimes we can hardly understand each other. It is something **strange**.

Even though language is a very important thing in human life, it is impossible to

understand them all. Why there are so many languages and races? It is really **strange**.

It is one of many examples. The other examples are differences in skin color, and differences of races, and so on. Like this, there are many strange things in the world. People who have different languages live on earth. It is really complicated, and it is just like a puzzle.

My friends, don't you think that our lives are strange? For example, why are we here now? It is because our parents are here. Then, from where did our parents come? Our parents **met** some time ago and were married. Therefore, I am here.

On top of that, a marriage cannot happen without two people meeting at certain place. Until then, they did not know each other. However, they **encountered** each other and then were eventually married. It is also very **strange**. There are many strange things in the world that we hardly understand. It is just like a puzzle.

However, when we fit each piece piece by piece, the puzzle is completed. We can finally see the beautiful picture of the puzzle. Like this, we can think of the stories of the Bible as pieces of a puzzle. When we see a strange part fit into another it can finally become the work that God plans.

We have lots of things that we cannot understand in this age. If you put the words of the Bible in your heart piece by piece, you will start to lead a blessed life after that.

The author of Psalm 84 praised as below,

**84:5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.**

The word **you** here refers to God who created the heavens and the earth.

The Jewish people, who are the people of the Bible, took a pilgrimage every year to the temple that was built on the hill of Zion in Jerusalem. Therefore, this Psalm is called the Song of the Pilgrims. The author wrote, "**in whose heart are the highways to Zion**" and "**Blessed are those.**"

My friends, the Psalm is the song of the pilgrims who take a journey to **the Kingdom of Heaven**.

What is **the Kingdom of Heaven** like?

**84:10 For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.**

**I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.**

There are lots of hardships, troubles and unreasonable things here on earth. The Bible clearly asserts the world after death. Therefore, the pilgrimage to the Kingdom of Heaven is not an escape from reality. It is the kingdom that God prepares for us. The life that leads toward there is natural and correct.

Let us study **the secret of the blessed life** from the Bible.

What things do we need to live a blessed life? Let us study the following two points today.

#### Main Points

### **1. Reflect on Yourself**

#### **1) Stop for a while and look at your life**

People can see other's behaviors, but it is difficult to see themselves. They remember deep sorrow in their hearts, an unavoidable disease, trials, and things where they greatly rejoiced. Lots of things occur in our lives so it is very important to look at our lives as a whole. The life is the accumulations of a small step of a daily life.

Then, what should we do to look at our lives?

⇒ We should **stop for a while and think**.

#### {Illustration}

There is Nakanoshima Park near KIBC that is loved by the citizens of Osaka city. There are many pigeons. Recently I found out a very interesting thing about the pigeons when I sit on the bench and look at them.

A pigeon flies in the sky freely and it has an excellent habit where it can absolutely return to its own nest far away, even thousands of kilometers. However, its behavior is quite different on the ground. It walks a few steps and stops, and then it

walks a few steps and stops again. It repeats the action by shaking its head. I have heard that the pigeon does this action means to confirm its location. It has the habit to confirm the location by walking a few steps at a time.

My friends, it is very important to become quiet and stop for a while in our busy daily lives, because we need to confirm our location.

Martin Luther, a religious reformer in Germany, said, **“The Bible is the mirror that reflects people’s hearts.”** First of all, we should stop for a while every day.

We should become quiet during the busy times and read the Bible, the mirror of the hearts. The mirror reflects our hearts.

## 2) God is always present

**Psalm 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.**

The author of the Psalm praises that God is our Lord, and a sun and shield. We have various problems in our lives. Everyone has problems.

It is not unusual that there are problems in life. The point is how we deal with the problems. ⇒ The appropriate judgement (wisdom) is helpful. Judging things correctly brings about a good result. On the contrary, judging things mistakenly brings about a bad result.

Then, what we should do? The Proverb of the Bible records as below,

**1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.**

The Bible is the book of God that is full of wisdom and instruction. Studying the Bible is the way to receive the appropriate judgement (wisdom). God is alive and speaks to us every day. The important thing is to fear God.

Looking back on my life, God has been always good to me like a poor man. He guided me like sunshine. Some time He protected me as a shield. I went to Germany

as an exchange student when I was 23 years old. When I was 30 years old God called me as His worker. Since then, 42 years has passed.

{Illustration}

I began to preach in Düsseldorf when I was 30 years old. As a Christian, I felt pain in my heart when I saw many Japanese people in Germany had various struggles, who did not know the true meaning of life without knowing God.

In those days, I began to have a Bible study gathering in Japanese even though I was a student. I wanted to preach the Gospel of Christ to my people. However, I didn't have neither theological knowledge nor experiences as a church leader.

I feared the living God. I could not turn down God's calling to preach the Gospel of Christ. God had mercy on me who was uneducated and had no theological knowledge. When I look back those days, I was filled with fear about what I did. (I was quite ignorant.) However, I was obsessed with preaching the Gospel of Christ. I kept having the gatherings at home 7~8 times in a week with great intensity for 3 years. As a result, a Christian church was founded in Düsseldorf. It was God's work.

My friends. God is alive. The living God used me like this.

The Bible says,

**Proverb 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.**

In fact, God used me who didn't have knowledge nor experiences. How thankful! Please experience God!

The next important point is to trust in God (the Bible).

## **2. Trust in God**

The author of the Psalm 84 sings about the pilgrims who make a journey toward the kingdom in heaven as below,

**84:5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.**

**84:6 As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs;  
the early rain also covers it with pools.**

**84:7 They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion.**

Blessings of the pilgrims who went toward to the temple in Zion are as below

**1) A place of springs**

**84:6 As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs;**

The pilgrims over the world took the hard journey so that they were exhausted and thirsty. However, they had hope that if they arrived at Jerusalem, they could meet the living God.

We compare our lives to the journey to Jerusalem in heaven.

The author sang, "**As they go through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs.**" It is an amazing joy to taste the water of life.

**{Illustration} The First Journey to Jerusalem, the Holy Land (1979. 8)**

**It was 42 years ago when I first visited Jerusalem. In those days I lived in Germany. I arrived at Tel Aviv International airport after about a three hours flight from Germany. I was deeply impressed in many ways in my first visit to Israel.**

**One of the unforgettable memories was an experience when I visited the fortress of Masada. It was the first week of August and was an extremely hot day, being over 40 degrees Celsius. I already drank down my water in one gulp. I went to Jericho in the car of a guide and driver. It was very hot, and I became thirsty, but I had no water. I asked the driver if I could buy water. But he said there was no place to get water around there.**

**Suddenly he said, "I know a good place!" He began to drive down a side road. After a while, I saw a place where palm trees were growing thickly, and water sprang out of the ground. We were very surprised. I changed into a swimming suit and dove into water. I could forget the heat of summer for a moment.**

**I really enjoyed the water as I was extremely thirsty.**

The author sang, "**As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of**

springs.”

## 2) The rain of blessing

### 84:6 the early rain also covers it with pools.

The climate in Israel has only a rainy season and a dry season. They hardly have rain in the dry season. The early rain refers to the rain in fall (October and November). The land is moistened by the rainfall. Then, farmers began to plant seeds of crops. Therefore, it is called **the rain for sowing**.

The following process is thus: Sowing ⇒ sprouting ⇒ growing ⇒ ripening (blessing)

The principle is applied to our spiritual lives. The word of God is planted, sprouts, grows, and fruits. What is the fruit like?

The Bible teaches as below,

**Galatians 5: 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**

**5:23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.**

Another blessing of the pilgrims who make the journey towards the Kingdom of Heaven is the following point.

## 3) Go before God

The author of the Psalm 84 sings that the journey of the pilgrims is to a place of a spring.

Why is it? ⇒ It is the privilege of people who believe in God. It means that they have **an encounter with the Lord**.

The Gospel of John, chapter 4 in the New Testament records the story of a Samaritan woman who came to Jacob’s well. Jesus was tired and sat down by the well. He asked the woman for a drink. In those days, Jews did not associate with Samaritans.

Jesus said,

**John 4:13 Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,**

**4:14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”**

**4:15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”**

The woman was tired in her journey of life. She asked Jesus for the living water, so that that **she would never be thirsty**. It is the privilege of people who take journey toward the Kingdom of Heaven. Those who go forward to God are allowed to ask God even though they are tired and thirsty on their way.

The author of the Psalm 84 sings as below,

**84:7 They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion.**

When the rain of blessing pours on our lives, what happens?

⇒ It bears the fruit of the God’s blessing.

My friends, our lives are just like a puzzle. The world is filled with unreasonable and strange things. However, we fit each piece into our lives and finally complete it. Each of piece is **the word of the Bible**.

If you put the word of God in your heart piece by piece, you will see the whole picture of the puzzle and you will be surprised at its blessing. We praise the work of God by looking at the completed puzzle.

The Bible teaches, **“Since you are precious and honored in my sight”**. God loves you. ⇒ Therefore, you should trust in Him.

The author closes the Psalm 84 as below,

**84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor.**

**No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.**

**84:12:0 LORD of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!**

### Conclusion

Title of the Message: “Life is Like a Puzzle”

—The Secret of a Blessed Life—

A day in the Lord’s courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

1. In the Lord’s courts, there is light (the sun) and protection (shield).



2. The blessed refers to those who trust in God.

**84:12:0 LORD of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!**

\* God bless you!