

June 19, 2022

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Abide in the Truth"

—The Saints Who Live in the Kingdom of God—

Text: 1 John 2:22~25

2:22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.

2:23 No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

2:24 Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.

2:25 And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

Introduction

Good morning, everyone!

Last time, we studied that we live in **the last days**.

John, the author, taught that **the last days** have come by the sign of antichrists. An antichrist denies that Jesus is Christ (the Savior).

In the days of John, antichrists had already appeared. And, it also actively works in today. Even though it has been approximately 2000 years since then, antichrists are still active. It is the sign that **the last days** are here.

Then, John advised them not to be deceived by the teaching of antichrists. And he taught the way to distinguish antichrists.

2:20 But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.

The **anointed oil** refers to the Holy Spirit. He works on the saints of God and guides us not to be tempted. Therefore, we are able to distinguish antichrists with help of the Holy Spirit. That is what we learned last time.

John taught another important thing, so that they would not be tempted by antichrists in **the last days**. It was that they should abide in the true faith.

Let's study the following two things today.

Main Points

1. **Jesus Christ is the Truth**

2:22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.

The liar referred to here are those who went astray from the true faith.

John emphasizes here that Jesus is the real Christ (the Savior). He said that Jesus was **Christ** who was brought up at Joseph's home, a carpenter, and preached the word of God at Galilee (it was the country compared to Jerusalem).

He taught that **the truth** was the faith that confessed Jesus as the promised Savior (Christ) and the Son of God. He who denies this confession is **a liar** who denies God the Father who sent the Son. It is the spirit of the **antichrist**.

What John argued is written in the beginning of the epistle.

1 John 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—

4:2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

4:9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

4:10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Jesus Himself said as below,

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 reason that John was driven by a strong impulse was that the influence of the

false teachings that denied the truth seemed to become too big to ignore.

For example, in those days (about A.D. 85) there was a man whose name was Cerinthus who lived in Ephesus like John.

He thought that Jesus was not a man and Christ at the same time. He insisted, "Jesus as a man was just good and wiser than other people. When he was baptized, Christ as the God came down on Jesus. Christ as the God left him immediately when he was crucified." As a result, only Jesus as the man received suffering on the cross."

Later, Gnosticism, which was heresy, taught that substance and the body were evil. Therefore, it insisted that Christ did not have a human body. It is said that Cerinthus had an influence over the idea of Gnosticism.

Like this, John said it was the **antichrist** that separated the nature of Jesus Christ and of God and denied any one of them. It is the fact that the antichrist is actively working even today.

{Illustration}

Earlier this year, a certain conference that was themed "The Powerful Miracles" was held in Johannesburg, Africa. The speaker was Joshua Selman, a self-proclaimed apostle, who was born in Nigeria. He is called **an apostle of reformation**. His image was playing on YouTube.

When he arrived at Johannesburg International Airport and came to appear in the lobby, a few people who seemed to be his believers fell on their knees and eagerly asked for his blessing.

Then, Selman went out to the entrance of the airport and got into a luxurious limousine. Suddenly, a few cars with sounding sirens came to encircle his limousine. They probably are security cars.

They usually see such a scene when a president or a prime minister visits a foreign country. However, even the person who are accepted by the believers as **an apostle** seemed to be treated like a national guest.

My friends, do you know there are many people who have the title of **apostle** over

the world? It is heresy (a cult) that is called **the New Apostle Reformation**.

They believe that they are given the same power and authority of the apostles of the early church. Selman who has the absolute authority is thought to be **the spiritual general**. It means that believers must be obedient unconditionally to the commandment with absolute authority. The apostles have an excellent ability to lead an army. Each of the soldiers who are under their controlled society attempts to reform the society.

When you who live in Japan and hear this story, you may think it strange that such a new movement occurs. However, it is salvation for many people of the present age who do not have confidence in themselves. An expert of cults says that the message that **you need not think for yourselves, instead you should follow God's instrument who is specially chosen** is very attractive and gives people a sense of relief.

Actually, when people develop a relationship like this, they are under the influence of mind control and as a result their ability of thinking and judgement becomes lower. It leads to a desperate end where they stop growing as human beings. This is the word of my friend who is an expert researcher of cults.

It is a very strange sight to see Selman at the airport and his believers who eagerly ask for his healing words.

It is quite opposite from the attitude of Peter, a true apostle.

Acts 10:25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him.

10:26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man."

Hersey works actively today like the days of the early church. In fact, it works by using all its strength that is left in **the last days**. We should always be cautious about their work. John says that Jesus is the truth now and forever. The truth never changes.

2.The Church of Christ is in the Middle of the Battle

1) The church fights against various enemies.

The enemy takes various forms depending by the era and on each church. Let us

see the churches that appeared in the days of the New Testament.

① The church of Corinth

It had the problems of morality, of dissensions and factions, of marriage and divorce, of resurrection, and of adultery, etc. The problems covered every field that are the same problems in this day and age. The church of Corinth was greatly shaken and thrown into confusion.

② The church of Galatia

The problem about salvation was brought up seriously. Some of them said that just trusting in Jesus Christ was not enough, but they needed to have circumcision. Then, the opinion about salvation was divided among the Jewish people and the Gentiles. They were thrown into confusion.

③ The church of the Thessalonians

The main problem was about the Second Coming of Christ. People who denied His Second Coming came out. There were various opinions raised, even though they were taught that His Second Coming was a real fact. Will His Second Coming occur? Is He really coming? They were thrown into confusion.

④ The first epistle of Peter records,

It strongly discusses the problems of hardship and suffering. The saints hardly maintained their faith due to severe hardship. Some of the saints were persecuted because of their faith. Some of them gave up their faith. Peter records that Christians have power to overcome hardship.

⑤ The churches of Asia Minor around Ephesus

The problem of arguing about Christ occurred. Many churches were founded in Asia Minor. However, there were lack of people who did pastoral work and preached the Gospel. They also needed church leaders. Without good and faithful leaders, there were many opinions approaching from various angles about Jesus Christ. They were also thrown into confusion.

* Like this, the church of Christ are keeping fighting in all ages.

These problems were very serious ones that has bearings on the fundamental character of the truth.

Then, John advised them as below,

2:24 Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.

They should abide in what they heard from the beginning and the correct confession of faith. On the process of growing faith, many people start to speak different things and some of them gradually strayed away from the Gospel of Jesus Christ that they first heard.

My friends, a Christian is not always good just because they are faithful. They should discern the truth and abide in it.

Jesus said about **abiding in** as below,

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

What does it mean to **abide**? It refers to a relation (connection) between a tree and a branch as the example of the vine. If the branch does not connect to the tree, it cannot bear fruit by deriving nutrients from the tree. It means that it is important to connect to Jesus Christ who is the vine.

The fruit testifies it.

2) You should abide in the truth

Those who connect to Jesus Christ who is the vine are the ones who abide in the truth. They bear the following two fruits.

① They abide in the Son and the Father

2:24 Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.

In fact, they abide in the truth, and they are able to abide in fellowship of God who is Light.

② Eternal life

2:25 And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

Eternal life is the nature of God, God Himself. Those who abide in the truth inherit

eternal life that God promised. They enter into the Kingdom of God and live there. They are with God eternally. How blessed they are!

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Abide in the Truth"

—The Saints Who Live in the Kingdom of God—

The Lord spoke to us this morning. The saints who believed in Jesus as the Christ in the days of the early church had various battles such as hardship, trouble, temptation and heresy that made them turn away from their faith.

However, Christians are able to live courageously in such a society.

The saints who believe in Jesus as the Christ are given eternal life even though antichrists and the heretical teaching get stronger. Therefore, we should abide in the first faith.

Let us conclude today's sermon with the following Scripture.

2:24 Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.

* God bless you!