

August 28, 2022

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (Open Church Worship Service)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "The Importance of the Attitude to Live Wisely"
—The Wisdom of Jesus—

Text: Matthew 10:16

10:16 "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

Introduction

Good morning, everyone!

We have **the Open Church Worship Service** today. We welcome all of you who have come to join the service before and also those who come to us for the first time. I would like to give a message with simple words so that you may understand it well. Please open your hearts and listen to me until the end.

Have you ever tried to read someone else's deep psyche?

For example, if you have a rich cousin and you receive 50,000 dollars when he died, you would probably be filled with rapture, "**How lucky I am!**"

However, if you come to know that another one of your relatives received 100,000 dollars, how would you feel? Are you still filled with rapture?

My friends, all of our happy feelings and desires depend on comparing them with other people. We think we are happy or unhappy when we compare ourselves to other people.

Like this, he who is good at understanding human psychology firstly insists more than what he really wants. For instance, if he asks someone,

"We are going to Boy Scout camp for a week. Will you come along with them?"
When the person responds, "I can't do that." Then, he asks the person again, "Then, how about going to a weekend ski trip?" "Well, it might be possible..."

It means that the first person knows a technique of how to propose a big request (a

week) followed by a small one (the weekend). The person who was requested comes to think that he seemed to make a concession, so the latter proposal should be still better than the first one. Like this, this conversational approach makes him feel comfortable saying, "Well, it might be possible."

This is also the technique that businesspersons use when they carry on trade.

Then, how should we live lives in this chaotic day and age?

The Bible teaches us as below,

Matthew 10:16 "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

Let us study the following three points from today's Scripture.

Main Points

1. Live to Be Wise as Serpents

Jesus taught today's verse to His beloved disciples.

10:16 "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves,

Let us take notice of Jesus' word, "**Behold.**" "Jesus uses this word to draw attention to Him. He said that He was sending sheep (disciples) in the midst of wolves.

Jesus taught that the important thing was His disciple when He sent them to the harsh world. Our time is also the same. Our society is really cruel and hard.

Everyone knows that a wolf is a ferocious beast. Jesus said that He sent His beloved disciples amidst wolves. For what the purpose would He send them into that situation?

⇒ The purpose is to preach the Good News (the Gospel)

The verse teaches how to live carefully now; it teaches the right attitude.

1) Living in a careful way

It is very important to live with the careful attitude.

{Illustration}

A long time ago, there was a certain story in Southeast Asia.

A king told his four princes to teach them an important thing as below,

1. He told his first prince to go to a mango orchard in winter.

2. He told his second prince to go to a mango orchard in spring.
3. He told his third prince to go to a mango orchard in summer.
4. He told his fourth prince to go to a mango orchard in autumn.

The king called his four princes after a year and asked them what they saw. Each prince reported the king as below.

1. The first prince: the mango trees withered.
2. The second prince: the mango trees grew thick leaves.
3. The third prince: the mango trees were in full bloom.
4. The fourth prince: the mango trees bore fruit.

After listening their reports, the king said, "What you saw and reported was all correct. You saw different things because the seasons were different." He continued, "Do you understand? Each one saw according to his own way. Therefore, they may explain the same thing in numerous ways.

It means that if human beings raise their consciousness, they do not simply hear and see, but they are able to watch well and listen well.

⇒ It is **to live carefully** in the truest sense.

2) The important attitude to live carefully

(a) Paying Attention to Signs

It is said that one of the keys to know how the other person accepts your words is his physical movements. When he does not sit in front of you, but sits diagonally, it means that he does not open his heart.

On the other hand, when someone crosses their arms in front of their chest, they are thinking carefully and becoming cautious (in Japan). Like this, human attitudes and voices reveal **the signs**.

(b) Reading the Hidden Message

It is said that having an advantage over a discussion should mean to discern the opponent's private opinion and public stance. Sometimes, they may have a difficult experience because they took the opponent's word at its face value.

Regarding that point, Japanese language seems to be a troublesome language. "I'll do my best," and "Let me think about it," in Japanese means that they probably cannot answer their expectation. The expression, "**It's not such a big deal, but...**" means it is **the big deal**. On the other hand, "Here is a little something for you," means it is **not a little something**. The difficult point in Japanese expressions is to read **the message** that is hidden in the words of others.

(c) Observing What the Opponent Gives Importance To

A certain thing that is not so important for you is sometimes important to other people. We should use our eyes and ears to fullest extent to find out what is the crucially important to them. Then, the conversation may become favorable.

(d) The Principle of Behavior Under the Influence

It is important and useful to keep the concept of **behavior under the influence** in mind. Various research has been carried out in the contemporary psychology and pedagogy. The concept is that **human beings are greatly affected by the age and environment where they grow**. When we judge people, we should keep it in mind. If we keep **the principle of behavior under the influence** in mind, we are able to avoid judging people self-righteously or with a prejudiced eye.

* Like this, **living to be wise as serpents** is to live by paying attention.

The Bible records that the serpent tempted Eve in a subtle manner and also Adam who finally ate the fruit of the tree.

* **They broke the word of God**. The serpent used his craftiness. However, the Bible teaches its cleverness, not its evilness. There are some people who have such evilness in this world.

Jesus teaches another point.

2. Live to Be Innocent as Doves

A dove has various habits:

One of them is to fly a long distance. It usually flies about 50 km. Surprisingly, its longest flight distance in the world was 7000km, from Japan to Canada. Researchers try to examine this habit by the solar compass theory, the magnet theory, the sight theory, etc. However, they have not found the reason yet.

A dove makes its nest on the corner that is surrounded by 3 sides like the corner of a building and a shrine. The 3 conditions of making the nest are places without enemies, with food, and with water.

A dove lives in a flock of ten, of dozens and of hundreds. It does not live alone, but lives in a flock.

The habit of a dove is like a child who has dependency.

As you know the habits of doves now, the phrase “**innocent of doves**” really speaks to the dependency of doves, not of their other characteristics.

One day Jesus said as below,

10:15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”¹

A child cannot live without depending on his parents. Therefore, the child refers to being innocent.

3. The Secret to Living

Jesus said,

10:16 “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

¹

Jesus experienced many trials in His public life. The following is one of them.

John 8:2 Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them.

8:3 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst

8:4 they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery.

8:5 Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?”

8:6 This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.

8:7 And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."

8:8 And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground.

8:9 But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.

8:10 Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

8:11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

A devious trap is hidden in this story. The social leaders in those days approached Jesus to trap and accuse Him.

Their **trick** was that any answer of Jesus would cause Him in an unfavorable situation.

- ① If Jesus says He doesn't punish the woman, He would be against the Law of Moses that the Jewish people believed in.
- ② On the other hand, if He says He punishes her, they will argue Jesus why He could say such word in spite of that He was not a judge.

As a result, Jesus was at a dead end. However, let us look Jesus' reaction as below,

8:6 This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.

People must have looked at Jesus' fingertip. What did Jesus write on the ground? (The Bible does not record it.)

⇒ I believe that Jesus was writing the word of the Old Testament.

Then, what happened?

8:7 And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."

8:8 And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground.

8:9 But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.

Jesus dealt with the Jewish leaders wisely like the serpents.

My friends, why they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones? The words that Jesus wrote on the ground did this. The word of God spoke to their hearts. It is the authority of the word of the Bible. When they are touched by the authority of the Bible, they do not need an argument or a discussion, because the word speaks to them. The word of the Bible speaks to the hearts of people and encourages, inspires courage, and helps them.

How about today's message? Let us move on with wisdom of the serpents and innocence of the doves.

Then, what should we do? ⇒ The secret is to receive from Jesus Christ.

Jesus said,

John 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

Conclusion

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—The Wisdom of Jesus—

The Lord spoke to us this morning. The hearts of people today have not greatly changed compared with the days about 2000 years ago. When Jesus sent His beloved disciples to preach the Gospel, He said,

Matthew 10:16 "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

My friends, don't worry. Jesus made a promise as below,

Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

* God loves you!