

March 19, 2023

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (Open Church Worship)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "The Life that Walks With the One Who Never Changes."

—Happiness—

Text: Hebrews 13: 8

**13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.**

#### Introduction

Good morning, everyone.

The society in which we live is changing at a rapid pace.

Kitahama Church is celebrating his 25th anniversary of foundation this June. What was Kitahama like 25 years ago?

Kitahama was the center of Osaka's business district. Nearby was Semba, Osaka's representative merchant town, and Doshomachi, a "business town" with many drug wholesalers and related stores. The Osaka Stock Exchange stands on the corner of Kitahama 1-chome.

Kitahama Church is located in the building (VIP Kansai Center) in front of the Osaka Stock Exchange. It was 25 years ago that Kitahama Church started in Kitahama. At that time, the elementary school in Kitahama had only one class, and it was said that if things continued as they were, the elementary school would probably downsize. However, the school has now become an elementary school with many children attending, with two or three classes, and the school building has been expanded. Every morning, we hear the cheerful voices of the children.

The reason is that the area has been transformed from a business district to a residential area. A tower apartment building (46 stories high) has been built nearby, and mothers are seen directing traffic in the mornings as they see their children off. It is a big change.

In the past, Kitahama used to be crowded with businessmen in suits on weekdays

and almost deserted on weekends. Now, however, condominiums and hotels line the street, transforming the business district into a residential area.

**Change** occurs with the passage of time. I heard that Kitahama was originally named the “**beach of north,**” where merchant boats came up the Tosabori River and would stop and load and unload their cargo. Considering those days, the present Kitahama has changed even more drastically.

The world is changing, just as society is changing in this way. Human beings are also finite. Although the length of time varies, people are born and eventually leave this world. This is because they are finite.

The Bible records as below,

**Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.**

Jesus Christ said to His disciples 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.**

What kind of person is Jesus Christ who spoke these mysterious things? Let us study the following three points today.

#### Main Points

##### **1. I Am the Way**

**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.**

##### **1) The Path of Life**

People are seeking for a way to live. They are looking for a way how to live. In politics, in business, in education, in sports, in the family, etc., they are seeking for a way, “This is it!” How about you?

Every time I read the newspaper; I am struck by the many problems in our society. Someone said, “**The greatest threat of our time is tolerance.**” Tolerance means, “**To express one’s mind with respect to those who differ from oneself and one’s opinion.**” Tolerance also means, “**To show respect to those who disagree with you.**”

But in this age of pluralism, this definition of tolerance has also become more diverse. If we do not accept the diversity, individual rights are being ignored and it becomes a human rights issue.

They say Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism are all good in their own ways, so long as the person believes in them seriously. However, even if people believe in them seriously, false things do not become true. It is similar to the idea that there are many ways to the top of Mt. Fuji, but once you reach the top, they are all the same.

Jesus said,

**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."**

This Word above is hard to accept in an age when **tolerance** is considered a virtue. But you should know that truth is singular and there is exclusivity.

For example, our own father and mother are only one. No matter how kind, gentle, tolerant others are and even they substitute for a parent, our biological mother is only one. It is true (the truth). Therefore, we cannot tolerantly accept another.

## **2) Jesus Leads Us**

As it has been said recently, the number of mature divorces is increasing. Most of the reasons are, "I don't want to put up with him/her any longer." or "I don't want to be with him/her any longer."

Tolstoy, the great Russian writer, said, "Everyone wants to change the world, but no one wants to change himself." He was right. It is true. People do not want to change their own will, character, or arguments. So, when hatred, anger, and stress build up, they will burst into a rage, and suffering will increase. As a result, they will live a painful life.

The Bible says that what one attempts to do in the hearts is always inclined to evil.

**Genesis 6:5 The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

When the evil of man increased, people thought they could live without God. But

that is evil. The unwillingness to welcome God into one's heart is evil. As a result, man's heart is filled with iniquity, evil, greed, malice, envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil plots, etc. No matter how much one learns and strives, the world's methods cannot correct the corrupted human heart.

Then, God sent Jesus Christ into the world. By believing in Jesus as our Savior and welcoming Him into our heart, the foolish heart is renewed. God knows our weakness and foolishness. Even though we have many failures and sins, if we walk with Jesus Christ our Savior, He will give us strength and leads us.

Jesus Christ said,

**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.**

What kind of person is Jesus Christ like?

## **2. I Am the Truth**

**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."**

### **1) God Who is the Truth**

The God of the Bible is not the god of man-made religions. He is the One who created the heavens and the earth and everything in them. So where is this God?

In the Japanese view of God, He has a form and is visible. When they are asked, "Where is God?" many Japanese people reply, "God is in the shrine. This is because God is tangible and visible. But is that the real (true) God?

When we ask the same question to the Jews, the people of the Bible, they say, "**God is in history.**" God in history is not a visible God. But He is real in history, and He reveals His presence to us.

### **2) God Who Intervenes in Our Lives**

God, who created the world and still rules over it, is not only merely in time but also intervenes in our lives. He knows you well and does the best way for us. The Bible tells the following story.

One day, a certain rich young man came to Jesus and asked,

**Matthew 19:16** And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”

**10:17** And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.”

**19:18** He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness,

**19:19** Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

**19:20** The young man said to him, “All these I have kept. What do I still lack?”

**19:21** Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

**19:22** When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

**(1) He was young and successful in business.**

He would have been a fine young businessman and was also a morally upstanding person (he kept the commandments from a young age).

From the world's point of view, he was a perfect man.

But he came to Jesus and honestly asked Jesus this:

**19:16 “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”**

He wanted eternal life. The Jews believed that life did not end on earth, but that there was an afterlife.

**(2) He had two problems.**

① His perspective was on **deeds**.

**19:16 “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”**

Even in this day and age, there are those who seek to gain eternal life through **deeds**. They seek to gain eternal life through charity to the poor and distressed, in other words, through good **deeds**.

② Practicing **deeds**

However, Jesus said to the young man who was looking at **deeds**.

**19:21** Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

He could not do it. Because he had so much property that he could not let it go. His heart was tied to his possessions that he could not let go. Here was his

problem. How about you?

### **3) God Who Asks For Our Faith**

My friends. Here is something important. People are not saved by deeds. No, we cannot reach salvation by **deeds**.

The Bible teaches that one is saved by faith (trust) in God.

**Galatian 2:16 yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.**

My friends. Man cannot reach eternal life **by deeds**. It is only by faith in God.

\* What kind of person is Jesus Christ like?

### **3. I Am the Life**

**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"**

Life is precious. Everyone recognizes the importance of human life.

The Bible: **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.**

**{Illustration} I Have Heard a Story Like This**

**One day, a father asked his seven-year-old son what he thought heaven would be like. The son began to speak with a look of remembrance on his face. He said, "I think, when we get to heaven, the angels will call us by our names looking at a big book."**

**First, the angel would call dad's name. Then you would say, "Yes". Then he would call Mom's name, and Mom would say, "Yes". Finally, the angel will call my name, and I will jump. I'm so short that the angel might not see me. Then I will yell out, "I'm right here!"**

**A few days later, a tragedy happened to the family. Their son was hit by a car while trying to catch the bus to school. At dawn, the comatose child's body moved slightly. The family's eyes focused on the child's body.**

**The child's lips moved slightly. It was "I'm right here!"  
It was the last word the child said. But it brought peace and hope to the family  
in grief. They could clearly hear the boy's voice.**

God loves us. He created us as His workmanship.

**Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good  
works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**

Some time ago, my cornea was damaged. It was very painful. But we have the  
ability to regenerate, and my cornea recovered.

God gave us the ability to regenerate. He can also save human souls. He is the One  
who can solve all our problems.

#### Conclusion

Title of the Message: "The Life that Walks With the One Who Never Changes."

—Happiness—

God spoke to us this morning. We only have one life, and we want to have the **life  
that walks with the One who never changes.**

Let us conclude today's sermon with the words of Jesus Christ.

**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.**

\* God bless you