

April 16, 2023

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (The Bible Verse of 2023)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Conditions for an Abundant Life"
—The Foundations of Grace—

Text: Psalm 37:30~34

**37:30 The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom,
and his tongue speaks justice.**

**37:31 The law of his God is in his heart;
his steps do not slip.**

**37:32 The wicked watches for the righteous
and seeks to put him to death.**

**37:33 The Lord will not abandon him to his power
or let him be condemned when he is brought to trial.**

**37:34 Wait for the Lord and keep his way,
and he will exalt you to inherit the land;
you will look on when the wicked are cut off.**

Introduction

Good morning, everyone.

Let us read our Bible verse (Psalm 37:34a, b) of 2023.

37:34 Wait for the Lord and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land;

April 2023 is here, and a new school year has begun. Schools, companies, and government agencies have all begun a new start. We hope that the new year will be blessed by God.

By the way, we wish that our one and only life is a blessed one. Because life is not repeatable. Life is precious. God is pleased when we spend our precious lives in a meaningful way.

Currently, world affairs have become increasingly chaotic. Unnecessary wars still continue, and ethnic conflicts are occurring in many places. On top of that, various natural disasters have occurred, including major earthquakes in various regions, droughts, food crises, forest fires, and the permafrost has begun to melt in Siberia.

It is regrettable that various evils are rampant throughout the world. Japan is no exception. Lists of rich senior citizens are being sold online, and the elderly are being mercilessly raided and robbed of cash and precious metals.

That is not all. Crimes are becoming more organized, and there are horrific robberies that take precious human lives by any means necessary. There are many unreasonable incidents. That is the society in which we live.

By the way, social standards change with the passage of time. Typical examples are laws and treaties. For example, laws 50 or 100 years ago are now out of date. Laws are required to be appropriate to the times.

However, the law (the Bible) of God the Creator has been never changed as the Bible says as below,

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

The word of God never changes through the ages.

God distinguishes between **the righteous and the wicked** before Him. And He has prepared very different consequences.

Romans 3:10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one;

10:11 no one understands; no one seeks for God.

10:12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

The Bible records **"None is righteous, no, not one."** It means that humans are born sinful and weak.

Then, why does God bless weak people and lead them to **a righteous life** and **blessed life**? Today let us study from the year's scripture (Psalm 37:34) about the foundation for our abundant life.

Main Points

1. The Righteous Keep the Word of God in Their Heart

1) Standing before the Word of God

- ① How can we, who are weak and have a sinful nature before God, have clean and righteous lives? It is because just as we need good mentors in life, we need equally good mentors (guides) before God. We need good mentors to lead us so that we do not make mistakes.

The mentor is God Himself. He gave us His Word (the Bible) to guide us to a righteous life.

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

The Word of God is the mentor who lights our feet and shows us the righteous path. The Word of God leads us not to go down the evil path.

- ② We can avoid the evil.

The author of Psalms sings as below,

Psalm 119:11I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

When we store the Word of God in our heart ⇒ a standard of conduct is established.

Therefore, it is important to walk the path of the Word of God.

2) Walking the Way of the Word of God

Psalm 37: 34 Wait for the Lord and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land.

Being saved people by God, let us listen to the Word of God and walk by remembering the Word of God so that we may live the life that is worthy of God's grace. We desire a life of abundance.

There are numerous ideas, philosophies, and religions in the world. However, no one teaches eternal truth. The Word of God is the eternal truth. It was, is, and always will be the Book of God that guides us to the righteous life.

In this new year, let us walk according to the Word of God in order to live the life of abundance.

Psalm 37 sings as below,

37:34 Wait for the Lord and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land;

2. The Righteous Seeks God's Help

1) The Real Image of Human Beings

We face many hardships in our lives, big and small, and there are two types of attitudes toward hardships.

- ① Those who approach God and ask for help.
- ② People who resent God and stay away.

Let us remember, when Jesus Christ was crucified, two criminals were also crucified. At that time, they said,

Luke 23:39 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

23:40 But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"

23:41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."

23:42 And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

A righteous person is one who sees himself honestly. He humbly admits that he cannot live by himself. The wicked, however, cannot abandon pride even in the midst of suffering. We must never become like the wicked one under any circumstance. The righteous person has fellowship with God.

The fellowship with God

- ① Begins with **daily devotion time**.
- ② Keeps the Sabbath and attends Sunday worship.

The person who listens to the Word of God and has the blessed experience of the presence of God.

2) Living in Blessed Fellowship with God

There is peace, rest, in fellowship with God. God ordained the Sabbath, which is **the law of God** that is also found in the Ten Commandments. The Sabbath is God's gift to us, and it contains God's lessons. The following points can be made.

- ① **Rest makes us look back on time that has passed.**

When someone is asked the reason for taking a rest they usually say it's because **they are tired**.

However, the Bible records as below,

Genesis 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2:2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.

2:3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

God did not rest because He was tired. He finished all His works so He rested. He looked back His creation of the past six days.

The purpose of God's rest on the seventh day, after all His works, was to enjoy rest and His grace with us, and to bless us. Rest is the time to restore our thanksgiving to God. We easily lose our spirits of thanksgiving when we are so busy and driven in our daily lives.

The rest makes us look back to see what grace we have received, where we went wrong, and what we should not repeat. Then, although we may regret it by looking back at the days, we can realize **God's grace** that has walked with us every step of the way until then. It is the time to feel God's hand and realize His grace. That is rest.

② Rest is to Stop for New Creation.

2:3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

The reasons of God's creation are hidden in the Scripture above.

(1) Blessing

God has blessed the Sabbath. When we keep **the law of Sabbath** and have a time of rest, God blesses us and opens the storehouse of heaven.

And,

(2) God makes it holy.

The word **holy** means to distinguish. God wants us to have a time, place, and encounter that is separated from our daily busyness. Sabbath allows us to reflect.

{Illustration}

The most dangerous thing about a car is when its brakes are out of order. When you must stop but you cannot stop the car, you will have an accident.

Stopping on the Sabbath day is the time for a new beginning (creation). In this sense, a pause in life is like breaks on a car.

It does not mean that we have nothing to do on the Sabbath. Rest becomes creation (a new beginning) when we distinguish and keep it to make a beautiful and meaningful life.

③ **Rest is preparation for the future.**

God placed rest on the seventh day, which has a profound meaning. God has planned that He cared for the human beings He had created and would be with them in future.

Migratory birds fly long distances, but their feathers are not a burden. Rest will not be a burden for us, but like a feather in the sky. The Sabbath is an opportunity to prepare for the future.

It is the result of our sin that we have truly lost our peace (peace of mind, rest). Sin deprives us of peace and the feeling of relaxation. It also gives us anxiety, complaints, and fear. However, if we come to Jesus on the Sabbath, we are given peace.

Matthew 11:28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Rest reminds us that we are pilgrims on the way to our true home, Jerusalem in heaven. Rest is the time to prepare for the future in the presence of God. How blessed we are!

☉ Let us summarize a few things here.

Rest is the time to hear the Lord's voice saying, "I will give you rest."

We are taught the following three points.

- ① Rest makes us look back in time in the past.
- ② Rest makes us pause for new creation.
- ③ Rest is the time to prepare for the future.

We become thankful to God in such rest. We should think direction more important than speed. We find God's Creation and providence there. It is through **rest**, the treasure of life, that we can taste God's blessings.

37:34 Wait for the Lord and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land;

We have entered a new year, the year 2023.

Let us receive blessings from God and live an abundant life.

Conclusion

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37:34 Wait for the Lord and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land;

The Lord spoke the important things to us.

1. Walking with the Word of God in our hearts, we should stand before the Word of God, the Book of God, and walk in the way of the Word.
2. We should live in fellowship with God.

Fellowship with God is found in daily **devotions**. We should live in **rest** that is **God's law**.

1. Rest makes us look back in time in the past.
2. Rest makes us pause for new creation.
3. Rest is the time to prepare for the future.

* God bless you!