

April 30, 2023

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Three Confidences Standing on the Confession of Faith"
— The True God—

Text: 1 John 5:13~21

5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

5:14 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.

5:15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

5:16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.

5:17 All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

5:18 We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

5:19 We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Introduction

Good morning, everyone!

We come to study the final sermon in The First Epistle of John.

John the apostle, in his old age, summarized what he had taught. He, as if with his last strength, encouraged us the saints who have received **the love** of Christ Jesus

and to walk in **His love**. John wants us to live with confidence in the faith of that **love**.

John's desire is written as below,

5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

{Illustration}

This is a real story. Some years ago, an orphaned Japanese man from China came to KIBC. He believed in Jesus Christ and was baptized. He was born in China during WWII, but when Japan was defeated, he and his parents had to return home.

However, his parents thought that it would be impossible to take their little boy to Japan. So they decided to leave their son in the care of a kind-hearted Chinese family.

Raised in a Chinese family, he came to know about his past. He made every effort to find his siblings. He even came to Japan to locate them. Unfortunately, he couldn't find any relatives in Japan and returned to China. Later, I heard that he passed away.

As an orphan, he suffered; why did he suffer?

- ① He was a Japanese orphan left behind in China.
- ② There were no clues or evidence (proof). Therefore,
- ③ He was not convinced that he was Japanese.

Even if a person claims to be an orphan left behind, it is impossible to be convinced that he/she is Japanese without evidence. To be proven as a residual orphan, one must have facts and evidence (proof) to be convinced.

I always remember him in my heart.

At the end of this epistle, John says that those who believe in Jesus Christ and stand by their confession of faith are not like his previous examples but have a firm **confidence**. He tells the believers to hold on to that confidence.

What is this confidence like, then? What kind of confidence does a person with the right faith have?

Let us study the following three points today.

Main Points

1. The Confidence to Have True Life

The Gospel According to John records as below,

John 20:31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

This is also the purpose for which John's Gospel was written. And the same author, John, writes as below,

1 John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

In other words, he wanted them to have confidence in the fact that they have life, and then walk victoriously as members of God's family.

With what clue do we have confidence? It is that we **believe in the name of the Son of God**. John records as below,

5:12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

John also says as below in Chapter 4: 9,

John 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.

Therefore, those who believe in Jesus, the Son of God, have confidence that **they have life** on the basis of their faith in Jesus.

And the fruit of that faith can also be confirmed through brotherly love.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.

* Those who stand on the correct confession of faith have the following confidence.

2. Confidence in Prayer

1) Confidence in prayer

Those who have the correct faith have the confidence that God listens attentively and hears their prayer.

5:14 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.

This is only natural, considering that we are God's children. Our God is not the One who ignores the desires and the cries of His beloved children. He is not the One to turn a deaf ear.

Psalm 50:15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”

The only condition for praying is to pray according to pray God's will. This is also natural thing when we think about it. The very way of life of God's child is to walk in His commandments.

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

God and His children are united in one mind, so they can boldly come close to Him.

1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

3:22 and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

What an amazing and precious Scripture it is!

5:15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

Of course, it does not mean that our requests will be fulfilled immediately. Rather, it means that we know that God will lead us to the best possible outcome when we pray to Him, and all we have to do is to wait in peace.

This is because of a solid relationship of trust with God.

James also records as below,

James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

God's children who trust in God have the confidence in prayer.

2) We Should Pray to God

5:16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to

death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.

5:17 All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

It is impossible that Christians live to be completely buried in sin, but they sometimes do make mistakes. What would we do if we saw our brother committing sin? There will be different reactions. You may turn a blind eye to it, or you may scorn it inwardly, or you may talk about it with others.

However, John said, “Christians shall ask God.” As a brother, if you have confidence in God who hears you, then of course you should ask God. Then God will hear your prayer and **give life to those who are sinning.**

It means that the prayer to God saves one’s soul from death and leads them to the eternal life. This is brotherly love.

James 5:19 My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back,

5:20 let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

3) Two Kinds of Sin

Verse 16 record as below,

5:16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.

The verse above records **a sin not leading to death** and **a sin that leads to death.** What is the difference?

① A Sin that Leads to Death

Injustice, unrighteousness, and anything that is not righteous is **all** sin, no matter how small or large, whether by deed or in the heart. And if we left sins unchecked, we are led to death.

Sin that leads to death is to reject Christ while sinning. It is to say I have no sin and to claim that I do not commit any sin.

1 John 1:10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.1

John says that there is another sin that does not lead to death. What is it like?

② **A Sin That Does Not Lead to Death**

It is the sin that Christ Jesus comes to step in between sin and death.

John 11:4 4But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

On one occasion, Jesus said of Lazarus' illness that, "**This illness does not lead to death.**" If a person gets sick and is left untreated, he will die. In order to recover, it is necessary to strengthen the body's own immune system and to take a doctor's prescription. Lazarus's illness that does not **leads to death** means that it is not terminally ends in death, because Jesus gets involved in it.

It means that **the illness does not lead to death is the sin that Christ gets involved in.**

Then, what does it mean, that Christ gets involved in?

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we confess our sins before God, He cleanses us. The holy blood of Christ Jesus cleanses our sins. Therefore, we are not led to death.

* Those who stand on the correct confession of faith have furthermore the following confidence.

3. The Confidence to Abide in the God

1) God's children

When we read carefully 1 John 5:18, 19, 20, we find the words **I know**. It means that **I know that I am truly a child of God**. We know that the One who has been born of God (Jesus Christ) protects us. This is the driving force behind our victory over sin.

1John 3:9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

A certain person said, "The devil can tempt Christians, but he can't catch them." Martin Luther said,

“Don't argue with the devil. He has five thousand years of experience. He has tried all kind of tricks on Abraham and David, and he knows exactly where our weaknesses are.”

My friends, if we fight against the devil with our bare hands, we will never win. We must rely on Jesus. We need prayer. We need the Word of God.

Jesus prayed for Peter,

Luke 22:32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

Jesus gives us help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

John said,

1 John 5:19 We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

John said that the whole world **lies in the power of the evil one**. What a hopeless **world** it is! The whole world originally belonged to God, not to the evil one (Satan). However, in reality, it is under the control of the latter (evil). Even in such a desperate world, we can live as **children of God** and as victorious ones over the world.

2) The Saints in Jesus

5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

The Son of God has come to make us **the ones who are from God**. John taught emphatically that Christ is God indeed.

The words, **“who is true”** and **“the true God”** are the same phrases that mean **“real”**. To be in the real God is to be in the Son of God. That is that the Father and the Son are one.

This Christ is the real God, the eternal life. The oneness of the Father and the Son and the divinity of the Son are the truth that have been repeatedly emphasized in this epistle.

3) Warning Against Idols

Finally, John said as below,

5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Those who know the real God and have been made His children should keep themselves from idols. An idol is to place something that is not the true God as God. Everything that denies Jesus Christ is an idol.

There are numerous idols in Japan that have captured the hearts of people and refuse to let them free.

Idols come from the spirit of evil, which is the same now as in the past. However, the saints who have become children of God have been given the power to overcome them.

The reason is that we **are in his Son Jesus Christ. (5:20)** Let us remember Daniel, who was forced to worship idols, continued to worship the true God in the midst of his opponents.

Daniel 3:18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Conclusion

Title of the Message: "Three Confidences Standing on the Confession of Faith"

— The True God—

We have been studying the First Epistle John so far. At the end of this epistle, John the author teaches that those who confess faith in God are given three **confidences**.

1. The confidence to have Eternal Life.
2. The confidence in prayer.
3. The confidence to abide in the God.

* God bless you!