

June 11, 2023

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (25th Anniversary Worship of KIBC)

Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: Learning the Lesson from “the Faith of But”

—Simon’s Faith—

Text: Luke 5:1-5

5:1 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God.

5:2 He saw at the water’s edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets.

5:3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

5:4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.

5:5 Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.

Introduction

1. **Good morning, friends.**

Kitahama International Bible Church (Kitahama Church) celebrates its 25th anniversary today. Many sisters and brothers have supported us by giving prayers and services until now. As we realize this is only by God’s grace and compassion, we give thanks and rejoice over it. We sincerely praise and worship the Lord.

2. Today the Lord gives us Luke chapter 5 as the text.

The text writes about Simon’s calling, who met Jesus. We would like to think about the Lord’s guidance from the meeting of Simon and Jesus.

- Simon was a fisherman of the Lake of Gennesaret. He worked hard all night that day, but he couldn’t catch anything. It must be an unusual thing because he was a professional fisherman.
- The professional can predict a certain amount of fishing. They read weather, the temperature, the wind currents, waves, the water temperature, and other conditions. However, Simon had not caught anything that day. Jesus said,

5:4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.

- Jesus said an unbelievable thing. Simon thought it was astonishing. I guess that Simon might have thought, “Master Jesus, aren’t you a son of carpenter? I am a professional fisherman, so I know fishing more than you.” Simon had doubt about what Jesus said. He must have thought it must be impossible to catch fish at such hour (it probably was before noon in Japan time.)
- Everyone has doubts and feels uncertain. There is no life without hesitation and doubts. Now this story is unfolding under the important assumption below.

① First have a look into Verse 3.

5:3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

It is written that he, “**asked him to put out a little from shore.**”

The German Luther Bible writes “**begged (bitten) him to put out.**” The term “bitten” means an intense desire as if a beggar begs for some food. It was unbelievable that Jesus, the Son of God the Creator, begged a man of Galilee to put out the boat, who was nothing but a fisherman. The story began to unfold when Simon obeyed Jesus.

- If Simon hadn’t followed Jesus, the story wouldn’t have developed. The very beginning was that Jesus begged Simon to put the boat out first and Simon responded to Him.
- My friends, God sometimes humbly approaches in our life and begs us. The problem is that we don’t realize it.

② Another assumption is Verse 4.

5:4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.”

This sentence is written in imperative form. Jesus gave Simon an order. This is quite different from Jesus who begged Simon in Verse 3. Jesus strongly ordered Simon, who responded to this way of speaking. You should carefully read the context between Verses 3 and 4.

- Let’s think about the case that if Simon hadn’t responded Jesus’ order, the story wouldn’t have developed. Like this, God sometimes gives us

an order to lead us to the higher place. God has a plan for us like He had a great plan for Simon.

- My friends, these two assumptions leads to Verse 5.

5:5 Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.

- Today’s key word is in Verse 5.

What should we learn here in Verse 5? I pay notice to the word **“But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”** “But” is “however.”

Simon’s doubts and feelings of uncertainty are showed in the term “but”. When he didn’t agree 100 % of what Jesus said, he continued saying “but”.

- For example, “The weather man says it will be rain tomorrow, but we will go on a picnic.” Like this Peter didn’t agree 100 % what Jesus said, but he said, **“I will let down the nets.”**
- Let’s think about two points today.

Main Subjects

1 . Walking by trusting in the Word of the Lord

- It is written in Verse 5, **Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”** It was his experience. Man usually sets his rationale on his experiences, competence, ability and judgments. And Peter told Him his experience. Was it OK for him to say so? I think so. If I happened to be there, I would tell Jesus the same thing.
- However, Simon did not need to insist on his experience. Why? ⇒ The reason was that Jesus was present there.

Man’s experience, competence, ability, and judgments are small things before the presence of Jesus. Therefore, Simon didn’t need to tell Jesus of his experience. My friends, we are sometimes like him, aren’t we? Jesus knew that Simon was a professional fisherman. However, Jesus did a miracle (grace) beyond human common knowledge.

- Then, what is the problem? ⇒ Human experiences, competence, knowledge is needless before the presence of the Lord Jesus. My

friends, you should not be confused. I mean that God uses our competence, ability, and experiences, however, the more important thing is whether we are faithful and trust in “the word of the Lord” or not.

2. Faithfully walking in the Lord

5:5 Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”

- Let’s focus on “But because you say so”

The Luther Bible: “auf Dein Wort”

Auf: on (something)

Dein: Your (Jesus)

Wort: Word

The literal meaning is “On Your (Jesus’s) Word”.

Simon said that he would let down the nets trusting on what Jesus said.

- Then Jesus accepting Simon’s word and blessed his “faith of but”.

Hallelujah!

{My Testimony} by Teiichiro Kuroda

Our Kitahama Church has started from nothing, from zero literally speaking. We have lots of unforgettable memories. We began the first worship in a room of the public facility, “El Osaka” near here, renting per hour. I brought the Bibles, hymn books, handouts of services, weekly bulletins in a box every week. There was no room even for keeping them. It was the small service of a group of about a dozen sisters and brothers.

- And then we were given the church at Uchihirano-machi. Many people from outside of the church supported us at that time. The floor of the building was 53 tsubo (about 170 square meters). Five institutions moved in there: Kitahama Church, The Voice of Mission, LCJE Japan, JEEQ and Grace Language School. It was used as a place to give services. It was also used as an office room, a room for meeting and counseling and a guest room. The most difficult experience for me was that I had no room to have quiet time. The room was just partitioned with bookcases and thin curtains. It was a

nosy room full of people and guests and the loud phone of 5 instructions constantly ringing. Can you imagine how the room was?

- In addition, I was also a pastor at Sakai International Bible Church (SIBC).

On Sundays, I preached a sermon from 9 to 10 at Kitahama Church in the morning and as soon as I finished it, I drove to Sakai on the Hanshin Express highway. SIBC worships began at 10:30. After finishing lunch I drove back to Kitahama Church again and had the Bible study and various meetings in the afternoon. My friends, I spent a year like this. It was thankful that God protected me and there was no single accident or trouble during that year.

- Many sisters and brothers prayed and supported me. I never heard complaints or discontent. Everyone thought that he belonged to church and served the Lord faithfully. Actually, we didn't have any savings. However, I had given a prayer to God at that time. The prayer note I wrote on "my prayer notebook" was "Please give us the space for 200 seats in the Kitahama area." ⇒ This is it, our church close to the Osaka Stock Exchange. God really answered us, and the miracle has occurred like this. Let's give thanks to God.
- When we moved into VIP Kansai Center we had no savings. It was incredible that the costs of about 10 and several million Japanese yen for the renovation of the church was given only during 2 weeks. It was a miracle. Everyone offered and cooperated. When we had the dedication ceremony of the church, the Scripture which was given was "On the mountain of the Lord, it is provided." When we look back the history of our Kitahama church, God has taught us many things. I really thank God.
 - ① God leads everything like with the pillar of cloud in daytime and of fire at night led the Israelites. Our God is, "the One who creates things from nothing".
 - ② Our sisters and brothers served and offered with joy. When we did offerings (money, services and so on) with joy, God opened the floodgates of heaven and poured out so much blessing like what is written in Malachi. Our Lord is the One of Truth and surely responds to us.

- **The Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 2 writes the blessing of the church in Jerusalem. What a great blessing God has given us.**
- When we look back the history, we can meet the living God today. This is faith. We trust in God who is alive and is still working today.
- Now, let's think about today's message again. Simon caught a great number of fish when he followed faithfully what Jesus said and was given a great blessing. He realized who Jesus was. He said,

5:8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"
- It was the word of Simon Peter who came to realize the presence of the Lord.

My friends, Simon's "the faith of but" ⇒ Yet, the Lord blessed him.

Jesus said, according to the gospel of Matthew:

17:20 He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there, and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.

My friends, "faith as a mustard seed" and "the faith of but," ⇒ When we walk in that faith, God reveals His glory to us. How thankful are we!
- How about today's message? What faith do we have? When Simon moved on practicing "the faith of but," Jesus blessed him. Let's come close to the Lord now!

Conclusions

Title of the Message: Learning the Lesson from "the Faith of But"

—Simon' faith—

- Today we are celebrating 25th anniversary of our church KIBC, how He built our church which was the beginning of our church. The 25th anniversary of KIBC is just the beginning of next stage to go forward.
- As the encounter of Simon Peter and Jesus was a start of Simon's faith journey, we can also start an encounter with Jesus Christ. Simon Peter

experienced the living Jesus Christ.

You know, experiencing the Lord is a great step to start and grow. That is His grace.

- How about our Christian lives? Do we experience and encounter the living Jesus Christ? We learned two points today.
 - 1 . Trusting in the Word of the Lord
 - 2 . Faithfully walking with the Lord

* God bless you!