

June 18, 2023

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (Open Church Worship)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "For You Who Want to Be Changed"

—An Encounter—

Bible: Matthew 28:1~10

28:1 Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

28:2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

28:3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

28:4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.

28:5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

28:6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

28:7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you."

28:8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

28:9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.

28:10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

Introduction

Good morning, everyone.

The other day, I watched a TV program entitled, "What's the reason you are living in Japan.?" It was a very interesting program that investigated the reasons **why** an increasing number of foreigners have come to live in Japan.

The man who appeared at that time was a man who came to Japan (Tokyo) from Ghana, Africa, more than 30 years ago. He came to Japan because he was interested in Japanese culture and wanted to know more about Japan.

Until then, he had learned from books that all men tied traditional topknots like sumo wrestlers and all women wore beautiful kimonos. But when he arrived at the airport, he was astonished. No matter where he looked around, he could not find anyone who looked like that. His first impression was how different it was from the Japan he had read about in books. He was shocked.

When he arrived in Japan, he had 150,000 Japanese yen (a lot of money in Ghana). However, he spent the money immediately. This was also a big shock for him. Then he started looking for a job to survive.

However, he was unable to find a job. He was disappointed that no one would hire him after all his searching and searching. That was the third shocking thing for him. He was so depressed that he had to return to his home country. However, he thought he had nothing to lose, and he should try again. He went to a certain company and begged them to give him a job.

At that time, a president of the company came to meet him. When he heard the reason for his visit, he said, "I understand." The president of the company was very kind to him and helped him with his problems. He was a good person and took care of him personally like one of his own family members and gave a workplace and residence to him.

If the president had not appeared before him, he would have had to return to his home country. He was able to stay Japan because of his **encounter** with this kind president and his life was greatly changed. He came to love Japan.

He later married and became the owner-chef of Ghana Restaurant in Tokyo, serving the ethnic cuisine of his hometown. It was the **encounter** with the president that changed his life.

An encounter with a good person has a good influence. On the other hand, an encounter with a bad person has a harmful effect.

How about your life? What encounters have you ever had in your life?

We **meet** various kinds of people in our daily lives. And these **encounters** sometimes change **our lives**.

Today's Scripture (Matthew 28) is about a story of two women who met Jesus. Jesus had been executed on the cross and buried in a tomb, and the two women were heading toward His tomb with disappointment.

However, the angels of the Lord were waiting for them. They said,

Matthew 28:5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

28:6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

28:7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you."

The women were horrified. Of course, they were. They had heard that Jesus had risen from the dead. But now Jesus appeared in front of them.

28:9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.

⇒ Two women **encountered** Jesus.

They are not the only people who have met the resurrected Jesus. No, hundreds and thousands of people met Jesus, including His 12 disciples.

Many people have had their lives changed through **an encounter** with Jesus Christ, the One who rose from the dead.

Encounters change people.

- ① Christians (saints) were born.
- ② Christian churches were born, and pastors and missionaries were appointed.

⇒ Nowadays, there are Christian churches and Christians all over the world.

Societies, communities, and individuals have also been changed.

What did **the encounter** with Jesus bring about?

Let us study the following two points today.

Main Points

1. Joy and Power Are Given

1) Joy is given

The word joy (Verb is chairein, noun is chara in Greek.) appears 132 times in the New Testament. The following is one example.

Luke 19:1~10

19:1He entered Jericho and was passing through.

19:2And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich.

19:3And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature.

19:4So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way.

19:5And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."

19:6So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.

19:7And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."

19:8And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."

19:9And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.

19:10For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

First, let us consider the job of a tax collector in those days. In the time of Jesus, the Jewish society was under the rule of the Roman Empire. Jewish people had to pay taxes to the Roman government. (On top of that, as Jewish people, they had to offer money to the Temple in Jerusalem.)

The Roman Empire was very clever and used the Jews to collect their taxes. It was called a **per capita tax**, and money above a certain amount of tax would go into the tax collector's pocket. Zacchaeus is believed to have pocketed a substantial amount of money from this capitation tax. Not only that, but it seems that he defrauded money from people by threat.

Zacchaeus was not liked in society. He probably had no close friends. But then Zacchaeus met Jesus. Jesus Himself approached him.

For Zacchaeus, the tax collector, the encounter with Jesus was most crucial thing. He welcomed Jesus with joy. He was so happy that he offered to give half of his wealth to the poor. He also said that if there was anything he had defrauded from anyone, he would give it back fourfold.

⇒ Encountering and welcoming Jesus to his house was more than money for him.

Why did Zacchaeus act like this? He was a vicious tax collector and was hated in society. No one wanted to be his friend. In the house of such a person, the great person Jesus would come and stay with him. It was an incredible gift and a surprise for him.

My friends. **Joy is the power of life!**

Jesus came to this world to save people. Jesus said as below.

2) Power is given

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

The verse above records that they will receive **power**.

Power (dynamis in Greek) is the word from which the word dynamite was derived. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit has come upon them, they will receive power. Indeed, it has been completed.

Acts 2:1~4

2:1 When the day of Pentecost arrived; they were all together in one place.

2:2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

2:3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.

2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

My friends! **Power is the driving force of life.**

* Like this, the Bible records that those who encountered Jesus Christ received **joy and power**.

When we meet Jesus, we also receive joy and power.

2. Hope Is Given

In recent years, the Covid 19 pandemic has brought the world economy to a standstill. Unfortunately, some people have lost their zest for life. This is because they are in a dark state with no light ahead of them.

However, the economy is gradually recovering now. The world is on the way to recovery. ⇒ We begin to see **hope** in the future.

The Bible records a certain woman who lost the zest for life.

Mark 5:25~34

5:25And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years,

5:26and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.

5:27She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment.

5:28For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well."

5:29And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

5:30And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?"

5:31And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'"

5:32And he looked around to see who had done it.

5:33But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth.

5:34And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease."

First, let us consider this woman.

To be afflicted with a discharge of blood for 12 years is to be in a state of constant bleeding. It means that she was unclean and sinful in Jewish society. She was a

woman who was placed outside of the Jewish community, and she was a really miserable person.

On top of that, she was said that she had suffered much under many physicians and was no better but rather grew worse. She must have suffered considerable loss and was emotionally damaged.

The Bible records her behavior as below,

5:27 She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment.

5:28 For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well."

5:29 And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

My friends, we may lose hope at times in our lives. But we have hope.

⇒ It is to touch the garment of Jesus.

Then, immeasurable power is given to us. This woman was suffering from the serious illness.

She was completely healed by touching Jesus. Then, how can we encounter the invisible Jesus today? ⇒ We should receive Jesus Christ in our hearts.

We should tell Jesus honestly who we are (through prayer).

Jesus said,

Matthew 9:12 But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

Jesus is our Savior. He promises us as below,

John 14:18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

We have **hope** that we live in God's promises.

Conclusion

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—An Encounter—

There are precious **encounters** in our lives. What kind of encounters have we had? Those who encounter Jesus are given joy, power, and hope. Do you want to change

your life? Or are you satisfied with your life? Would you like to have joy, power, and hope in your life?

The Bible invites you as below,

Mark 5:34 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease."

* God bless you!