

June 25, 2023

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Let Us Live Under the Word of God"

—Obedience—

Text: 2 John 1: 12, 13

1:12 Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

13The children of your elect sister greet you.

Introduction

Good morning, everyone.

We have been studying the short epistle of John, and today's text is **the greeting** at the end of the epistle.

John the apostle was growing old and knew that there was not much life left in him. He wrote of the importance of **living in true love** in the epistle. In those days, as well as today, there are forces of evil that interpret the Bible differently and try to lead people to heresy.

John the apostle wrote to his beloved saints of the importance of **living in true love**.

Then, how should we live?

John records as below,

1:5 And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another.

1:6 And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.

We would like to walk in love, which is God's commandment.

Now, let us study John's feelings from the last verses of his epistle today regarding the following two points.

Main Points

1. The Purpose and the Content of John's Epistle

1) Love one another

As we studied John's epistle, he encouraged the saints who believed in Jesus Christ to **love one another**. He said it was God's commandment.

One day, a certain teacher of the Law asked Jesus as below,

Matthew 22:36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" **22:37** **And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.**

22:38 This is the great and first commandment.

22:39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

22:40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

The law and the prophets refer to the Old Testament. Jesus taught that on two commandments hung on the entirety of the Bible (In those days, there was only the Old Testament).

- ① The first commandment that Jesus taught was:
⇒ to love the living God who created the heavens and earth (the vertical relationship).
- ② The second commandment that Jesus taught was:
⇒ to love the neighbor (the horizontal relationship).

It means that the relationship with God and neighbor that is bound by love is the vertical and horizontal relationship.

It is indeed that he who lives in the first commandment is the one who lives in the second commandment. Like this, the Bible teaches that relationships are bound by love. It is very important for us today.

Love one another. These are the first and second commandments that the Bible teaches.

2) The purpose of the epistle

Let us consider again the purpose of the epistle that was written. John encouraged the saints to **love one another** in his epistle. Therefore, the epistle is called **the**

letter of love. On top of that, John also gave a warning about the false teachers. In those days, the circuit evangelists preached the Gospel of Christ to the churches.

It was not days like today when there are church buildings, pastors, and various systems and disciplines. Many were house churches. Therefore, people received spiritual nourishment from the circuit evangelists.

The number of people who believed in God gradually increased. The resident pastors were appointed in large towns to provide spiritual care for brothers and sisters. Deacons were also appointed in the churches to care for widows and the poor. However, it was done among a flock that had reached a certain number of saints in the church.

The travel evangelists were supported by their outside supporters and collaborators. They taught at churches and the believers kindly entertained and supported the travel evangelists. However, there were false teachers who brought false teachings to the early churches.

The false teachers greatly shook the faith of the saints and the church. Some saints fell away from the faith. In the midst of this reality, John gave a warning to beware of false teachers. That was the purpose of this epistle.

3) The content of the epistle

1:5 And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another.

1:6 And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.

As the Scripture records above, to love God is to walk by following the commandments of God. God's commandments are to stand firm for the truth and to love one another. However, there were people who denied Jesus Christ, who came to the world as a human, and deceived the believers.

The Church must watch out for such people and not accept or have fellowship with them. That is the content of this second epistle of John.

In these early church days (when the Christian church was not yet firmly established, when doctrine, institutions, order, etc. were not yet completed), John the apostle taught **love one another** and abide by his teachings,

The content of the epistle that was taught in those days is extremely important. The core of the Christian faith is contained within it. It teaches the attitude that we Christians should take.

{Illustration} Ukraine in War

According to Missionary Masato Funakoshi, who is on mission in Odessa, a baptism was held at the May 28 service. He reported that four people (Sasha, Andrei, Ilya, and Alina) were baptized at that time.

Under the chaos during the war, houses and church buildings were destroyed, and recently a hydroelectric dam was destroyed. However, God's work is progressing there as well. In the midst of extreme difficulties, many Ukrainians are opening their hearts through the gift of love from the West. This is because they sense the **love** of Christians.

Let us love one another.

2. Living Before God's Word

1) To love God

We came to understand that there is a connection between loving God and obeying God's commandments. Being obedient to God's teachings is to obey God's commandments and is also to love God. It means:

- ① Walking by following God's commandments ⇒ **to love one another.**
- ② The attitude in faith is ⇒ **to love one another.**

On the other hand, it is also necessary to stand firm against heresy.

2) The saints who live in obedience to God

John said in verses 12, 13 as below,

1:12 Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

13The children of your elect sister greet you.

My dear friends! **To love one another** is to enjoy fellowship and feel happy.

John recorded in verse 12, "I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

He said, when Christians are united by love, they first wanted to meet and share their joy. It would be very natural.

{Illustration} Romania under Persecution

On December 25, 1989, the Ceausescu dictatorship in Romania collapsed. Ceausescu persecuted many Christian churches and Christians. During those times, God often led me to enter Romania.

My purpose was to visit underground churches and have fellowship with local Christians. We also delivered Bibles and books of faith, as well as foods. Under the socialist regime, the people were forced to live in poverty.

However, the saints who believed in the living God were indeed numerous. Whenever I visited the underground churches in any town, they were filled with people. Sometimes, they took the inside furniture and put it out in the yard since they could not enter the houses and hold meetings. In those days, if they were discovered, they were arrested and heavily fined.

In those situations, I strongly felt that the Romanian saints had an attitude of **love for one another**. Although they were suffering, they shared the joy they had in Christ. When the meeting ended, people did not leave until after midnight. They remained there, discussing face to face and sharing their joy.

It is still an unforgettable **memory** for me. The Ceausescu dictatorship, which denied God and persecuted the Church and Christians, collapsed. He was shot and executed while on the run. The terrifying scene was broadcasted to the whole world as news.

Let us remember, the Church of Christ and the Christians did not disappear under such difficulties. Christ's Church and Christians does not disappear under such difficulties. And they are still alive today. There was joy in **the fellowship** of the saints. ⇒ They had the fellowship **to love one another**.

Let us remember the two precious **commandments** that Jesus taught us.

Matthew 22:37 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

22:38 This is the great and first commandment.

22:39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

22:40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Conclusion

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—Obedience—

We have studied the Second Epistle of John.

John the Apostle encouraged the saints to love one another.

Love is the driving force for us, the saints.

Let us close the message by the Scripture below.

1:5 And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another.

1:6 And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it

Let us faithfully walk before the Word of God.

* God bless you!