

July 30, 2023

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: “My Great Joy”

— The Glory of God —

The Bible: 3 John 1:3-4

1:3 “It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth.

1:4 I have no great joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

Introduction

- **Good morning, everyone.**

- To everyone, “When do you feel joy?”

For instance:

- Joy when you accomplish your goal (Achievement in sports, academics)
- Joy when you feel useful to others (Fulfillment from helping others)
 - Joy of visiting Disneyland, Universal Studios and enjoying the moment (Experiencing a different world)
- Joy that parents have watching their kids (Fulfillment of expectations)
- And there are others. There are so many kinds of joy.

- There are two types of joy:

- ① The joy I receive.

- ② The joy I give.

⇒ The two are interrelated

- Furthermore, joy leads to a “grateful heart.” In this sense, we can say that “joy” and “gratitude” are connected.

1 Thessalonians 5:16 Be joyful always;

5:18 Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

- For the author of 3 John, joy is the following:

3 John 1:4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

- His joy is the joy that parents have for their children. As written in the first verse, this letter was written to his dear friend Gaius. John couldn’t be happier for him. Why did John feel so joyful?

- His joy is a joy that reaches our hearts today, even 2000 years later. Let’s look and learn what kind of “joy” he had. There are two points:

Main Points

1. The Apostle John's Joy

1:1 The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 1:2 Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your souls is getting along well.

- The joy that John received is from:
 - 1) Gaius walking in the truth
- The truth here has a “connection” with the words that Jesus said. John was someone who lived with Jesus for about three years of His public life. Jesus said this.

John 14:6 I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

- In those days, churches as we know them today had not been built. The New Testament was not yet completed as it is today. Itinerant evangelists visited house church to house church, preaching the gospel of Christ Jesus.
- Hosting travelers was never easy. For someone who was well off it was not an issue; however, not everybody was well off. In such times, Gaius warmly welcomed travelers.
- Gaius was obedient and faithful to God and His teaching.

(“Show hospitality to travelers”).

⇒ For John, Gaius' faithfulness to God was his "joy".

It was not just a figure of speech - His actions matched his words (put in practice).
- Thus, John's joy was that Gaius faithfully obeyed God and walked in the truth.

2) Being informed of the good reputation about Gaius

1:3 It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. 3 John

- John heard about Gaius' “good reputation.”
- “Good reputation” ⇒ This reminds us of the standard for selecting deacons during the days of the early church.

Acts 6:3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them.

- John couldn't have been more joyful after he heard about Gaius' “good reputation.” A “good reputation” is a blessed testimony. During the days of the early church, Stephen and Philip were deacons. Their precious work had a lasting impact. Gaius also was a man of “good reputation.”

2. John had Blissful Happiness.

1:4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

- These are the words from John.

1) The joy of seeing spiritual growth

1:3 It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth.

- When we look at 1 Corinthians Chapter 3, it tells about the Corinthian church at that time. The city of Corinth was a port town where ships came and went, and it was economically very prosperous. There were many kinds of joy, particularly worldly joys there. Also, there were gods associated with Greek mythology, idolatry was prevalent, and prostitutes were numerous. (It is now overgrown with weeds and is in ruins.)

- The Gospel was brought to Corinth through Paul's evangelism and the church was born. However, believers in Corinth were affected and influenced by society. Here are some examples.

1 Corinthians Chapter 6

6:9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolater nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders

6:10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

- The Corinthian church looked less like the temple of God and more like the world around them. There were 2 types of Christians.

⇒ "People who are worldly" and "People who belong to Spirit"

Paul said the following.

1 Corinthians Chapter 3

3:1 Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ.

3:2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

3:3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

- However, in 2 Corinthians Chapter 4, Paul said the following to believers of the church in Corinth.

2 Corinthians Chapter 4

4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

- It is said that treasure has been given to those who are saved in Jesus Christ. There are at least three privileges given to Christians:

- ① Christ's blood on the cross purifies us from all sin.

1:7 The blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin. 1 John

② Overcomers of the world

5:5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. 1 John

③ The inner man grows as saints who enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

2 Corinthians 3:18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

As such, Gaius walked faithfully in the truth and grew in the inner man. He obeyed the truth and followed God's instructions. There could not have been a greater joy to John.

2) The work of John was not wasteful

The Bible tells us in

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

- For John, sharing the Gospel of Christ and mentoring his disciples was surely not wasteful. All things happened according to God's plan. As disciples walk in obedience to God their faith is displayed.

3) The joy of the saints

- Even these days, there is joy for the saints who believe in God. There are 3 points.

① To be used by God

⇒ To give God glory

② To share the Gospel

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season

③ Serve the Word of God

⇒ Service shows God's glory and is a joyful thing.

[Example]

- In 1976 (About 47 years ago), I received God's calling to start a Japanese-speaking church in Duesseldorf, Germany. It was simply God's grace. Looking back now, it was indeed a fearful thing.

- I was called out when I was a student. God used a small person with no theological education. And then the Japanese-speaking church was founded. Forty-seven years have passed since the Japanese speaking church was founded. During this time, pastors have been raised up. Currently, Pastor Haegele who is

the 6th pastor, leads the church.

- Furthermore, who could have imagined that this Japanese-speaking church in Duesseldorf, would be the first Japanese-speaking church in Europe? This was God's plan.
- As an evangelist, I have great joy.
 - ⇒ Soli Deo gloria [To God alone be the glory]
- What is joy to you?

Conclusion

Title of the Message "My Great Joy"

— The Glory of God —

- The Apostle John said
3 John 1:4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.
- For us as Christians, the display of God's glory is our greatest joy.
Let us live such a life of faith.

* God bless you!