

August 6, 2023

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "John's Word of Encouragement"

—True Fellowship—

Text: 3 John 1: 5~8

1:5 Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are,

1:6 who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God.

1:7 For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.

1:8 Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

Introduction

Good morning, everyone.

There are some proverbs

- ・「善 は 急 げ」 Make hay while the sun shines
- ・「急がば回れ」 Make haste slowly

These are quite opposite proverbs, but we know we should understand them case by case. Are you aware that there is a right word for us? That is the word of God, Bible, because it is God's word and truth. Walking in the truth is so great, we have such a wonderful privilege

John the apostle was truly pleased to know that his beloved Gaius was faithfully following God and walking in the way of truth. He wrote as below,

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

It is also a great joy for us Christians to walk in the way of truth and to see the glory of God being revealed. And we sincerely hope to live such a life of faith.

John used Gaius as an example of a faithful life. He taught that his attitude of faith was something that Christians should follow. That is today's text. Let us study according to the following two points.

Main Points

1. Gaius' Attitude of Faith

1) The words of John

1:5 Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are,

1:6 who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God.

1:7 For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.

1:8 Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

These words of John contain the basic information for Christians who gathered in churches (congregations) at that time. How did Christians have fellowship with each other in those days when church organizations and institutions had not yet been established?

Let us first consider this point.

2) The days of the early church

In the days of the Early Church, spiritual leaders who were called traveling evangelists visited house churches. They preached the Word of God and taught the blessings of a life of faith in Jesus Christ. They went from house (congregation) to house (congregation), encouraging their brothers and sisters through the Word in anticipation of Christ's Second Coming. Christians received comfort and strength by them.

In such a society, **hospitality** to the travel evangelists and travelers was important to deepen their **fellowship** with each other.

Gaius was a man of hospitality in his service of love. What was his hospitality like? Here we need to understand the context.

① **First, the traveling evangelist was a man who gave up everything for the sake of Christ and dedicated his life to God (devotion).** They had no promise of a salary or wage at all. They received no financial support or any kind of help from unbelievers.

This was important so that people would not think that they were just trying **to make money**. The faith of the evangelists was that Almighty God would provide for their needs.

② **John taught that it was an important ministry to support such a worker of the Lord financially as well as giving prayer for them.** Gaius certainly offered blessed **hospitality** in that regard.

Hospitality that was born of this kind of faith was a fundamental matter of faith in the days of the Early Church.

Romans Chapter 12 records as below,

Romans 12:13. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

Jesus also taught the blessing for people who would enter the Kingdom of heaven as below,

Matthew 25:35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

25:36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'

25:37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?

25:38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?

25:39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'

25:40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

- ③ The **hospitality** to the traveling evangelists and travelers was not only important in a spiritual and economic sense but they deepened their **fellowship** with one another as brothers and sisters. The saints shared their properties and had fellowship with one another, just as the church did immediately after Pentecost.

The word **fellowship** (Greek: koinonia) means **to share**, to give each other. In German, **fellowship** is called **gemeinshaft**. It means to **share**. **Share** is its noun form. Therefore, the church is called **Gemeinde**. It was a place of sharing with each other. That is the Christian church.

In the days of the Early Church, such **fellowship** in the Lord was natural for Christians. They deepened their faith through **fellowship** with the blessings they had in Christ. Gaius, whom John loved, was indeed a faithful brother in this point. To have an attitude of faith like Gaius is what the Bible teaches Christians to do, and it never changes.

2. The Fellowship that the Bible Teaches

John wrote to Gaius whom he loved.

3 John 1:2 Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.

One of the characteristics of the days of the Early Church was **fellowship** in the Lord. That fellowship had a very important meaning. What does the Bible teach on this point?

I will list at least three points below.

1) Seek hospitality.

Romans 12:13. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

1 Timothy Chapter 3, verse 2 record as below,

3:2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

Let's see in this context, one of the necessary elements of an overseer (elder) who is a church leader is **hospitality**. It was important for leaders and other Christians to deepen their **fellowship** in the Lord through **hospitality** to one another.

2) Hospitality is the fulfillment of a need.

Jesus continued Matthew Chapter 25 and said as bellow,

25:42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,

25:43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

25:44 Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?'

25:45 Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'

25:46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

What we are taught here is that **hospitality** is to **offer hospitality** to Christ Himself. Therefore, it is important to always be faithful without cutting corners before God, who sees all things.

Hospitality that the Bible teaches is to offer hospitality to Christ Himself. We come to understand the correct attitude of our faith.

Hebrews 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

1:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

We also would like to offer that kind of **hospitality** to other people.

3) What is the purpose of the hospitality?

Hospitality gives us **fellowship** with one another. And the goal is that the saints belonging to **the Body of Christ** will be connected into **the One Body**.

We are members of God's family. Each is an organ. The head is Christ Jesus. Christians have the goal to be **one** as the organ of **the Body of Christ**. It also is a privilege of Christians.

Paul the apostle records as below,

1 Corinthians 12:13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

12:26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

12:27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

The following hymn is one of my favorite hymns that is often sung in English-speaking countries.

“We Are One In The Spirit” (Peter Scholtes, 1966)

We Are One In The Spirit
 We Are One In The Lord
 And We Pray That All Unity
 May One Day Be Restored
 And They'll Know We Are
 Christians By Our Love, By Our Love;
 Yes, They'll Know We Are Christians
 By Our Love!

We Christians have been made members of the family of God through Jesus Christ. We are the organs of God's family that will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. We come to be a community of God with similar goals by loving one another, by being united with one another, having fellowship with one another, and by practicing **hospitality** with one another. What a blessing!

Conclusion

Title of the Message: “John’s Word of Encouragement”

—True Fellowship—

The Lord spoke to us this morning. Gaius, whom John loved, was a faithful saint of God. He is said to be a good example for us. His story has been told until today. How thankful it we are!

Let us close the sermon today with the following Scripture.

Hebrews 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

* God bless you!