

January 14, 2024

KIBC Sunday Worship Service by Pastor Teiichiro KURODA

Title of the message: "We are Jars of Clay."

-Be Children of Light-

Text: II Timothy 2:20

Introduction

• Good morning

• The Bible teaches us that we are, "Jars of Clay."

A jar is simply a vessel for putting something into. And in Bible days, jars were made of clay.

• Characteristics of jars of clay:

- ① Breakable (vulnerable to external pressure) ⇒ It is fragile, even if people say a few things about it.
- ② Jars have a Maker (potters put energy into creating as the maker wishes)
- ③ They are for putting things inside (something of value is put within)

• The Bible says we are the masterpiece of God, the Potter's "Jars of Clay."

• II Corinthians 4:7 states

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

• Here are some terms (words) to keep in mind:

- ① "Treasure"
- ② "Power"
- ③ "All-surpassing power is from God."

• Today, let's look at what it means for us to be described as, "Jars of Clay."

There are three points.

Important points

1. A Large House with a Jar

12:20 In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use.

2:21 Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master, and prepared to do any good work.

- The large house in this context refers to Christ's Church. There are a variety of instruments. Specifically, it refers to church members. There are instruments used for noble things, such as gold and silver; however, there are also instruments made of wood and clay, which are used for lowly things.

- A lowly instrument refers to false teachers. If we want to be used for something noble, we must leave the fellowship of false teachers. In other words, we must keep our distance. Paul put it this way.

Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master, and prepared to do any good work.

- Then, we can begin to walk as sanctified by God. We can be useful instruments to do all kinds of good works. In other words, we must make a clear distinction between "what to avoid" and "what to seek (pursue)."

- Judgment and discernment are proportional to a person's growth. When a person is a child and is young, he or she sees things from a child's point of view and has little ability to make judgments (discernment). However, as one grows up and becomes an adult, one develops judgment (discernment) by looking at things from different perspectives.

- However, there were saints who, although they were supposed to be adults, did not yet have the appropriate judgment (discernment). Although the Maker (God) put "treasure" and "power" in the "jars of clay" they had not become the work of God the Potter.

- Then Paul exhorted the following:

2. Paul's Specific Exhortations

II Timothy 2:22 Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

“The evil desires of youth” does not only mean physical desires.

① Strength of Ego

- If we all face ourselves honestly, we each have a battle with our ego. There is conflict. And sometimes we even hate ourselves. Sometimes the battle with the ego becomes desire.

② Argumentative Personalities

II Timothy 2:23 Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.

II Timothy 2:24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

- It is clear that arguing with words makes no sense; however, we cannot keep our mouths shut. As a result, heated disputes occur. This is also a desire. Verbal disputes are futile.

③ Hasty Decision-making and Ambition

One of the mistakes we make when we are young is making hasty decisions. We may also have high-risk ambitions. Later, we regret that we should have made decisions more calmly and carefully.

- What did Paul exhort regarding this fleshly nature?
⇒ Flee from unrighteousness and lust.

- Paul taught that we should pursue righteousness, faith, and love. We obtain these by pursuing God. Specifically, we can have fellowship with the Lord through the Word of God. The Spirit of God works there.

- The Bible further recommends a specific way of life. That is the next point.

3. Be Children of Light

- Paul's request to Timothy and to the saints of the Church was to be children of light.

This means to resist false teachings and to avoid conflicts that comes from the fleshly nature.

Paul urged them to Seek God.

- In other words, it is important for those who desire blessings from God to have a firm grasp of "what to avoid" and "what to seek." Therefore, Paul gave specific exhortations to the church in Ephesus.

1) Basic Teaching

II Timothy 2:24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

II Timothy 2:25 Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,

- If you are a servant of the Lord, you should not contend. That is the basis of being a Christian. But human nature is the opposite. The Bible teaches the following.

2) The Precept of a Meek Heart

II Timothy 2:24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

II Timothy 2:25 Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,

Living with meekness means that if/when we admonish those who oppose us we do so with gentleness, teach constructively, and with patience.

[Illustrations] The Cost of Silence

- I recently heard the following story which I would like to share with you. This happened in the United States. There was a couple who had an argument and stopped talking to each other. The silence lasted for a week. Then something troubling happened to the husband.

- He was going on a business trip to Chicago and needed to get up at 5 am. He wanted his wife to wake him up, but he did not want to speak first. So he wrote

on a piece of paper, "Wake me up tomorrow morning at 5:00 a.m.," and handed it to his wife.

- The next morning he jumped out of bed in surprise. To his surprise, it was 9 o'clock. The plane had already left. He looked to the side and saw that his wife was already awake.

- When he was about to question his wife, he found a piece of paper by the bed. It said: "It's 5 o'clock. Wake up."

- Dear beloved brothers and sisters, I'm sure you've figured out the point of this illustration.

If we live and act with meekness, those who are willing to see things in truth will realize their error and be led to repentance. Of course, therein lies the sovereignty of God. Without God's help, it is impossible for that to happen.

- If we are able to live and act meekly, the opportunity will present itself. Paul said the following.

II Timothy 2:25 Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,

II Timothy 2:26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

- Dear beloved brothers and sisters. The war of words produces nothing. How often have we used our words as weapons when doing evangelism? But consider, **against false teachings, our greatest weapon is to become "children of light" ourselves and to walk as clean vessels.**

- But do we have such a weapon? Unfortunately, we often have hearts of strife, which should not be preferred over hearts of meekness.

- Then, what should we do?

We must go before Jesus Christ. **We must honestly confess our weakness and pray. Then, we must ask that the blood of Christ Jesus wash away our weakness (sin), which we cannot do on our own.**

- The Bible: I John Chapter 1

I John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

I John 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

• Dear beloved brothers and sisters, Here is the salvation that God gives us. It is that He makes us Children of Light. Let us, therefore, walk as "Children of Light" in God's grace and mercy.

Let us walk as "Children of Light" in God's grace and mercy.

Conclusions

Title of the message "We are Jars of Clay."

-Be Children of Light-

• Today we learned that we are jars of clay.

In our daily lives, we may face temptation and at times be misled by false teachings.

We are fragile, weak "jars of clay." How should we live?

II Timothy 2:22 Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

II Timothy 2:23 Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.

I would like to summarize today's message in two points.

As "Jars of Clay":

1. Know "what to avoid."
2. Know "what to seek."

* God bless you!