

January 21, 2024

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (Open Church Worship)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Prevention Trumps Medical Care"  
—Maintaining a Healthy Body—

Text: Luke 18:9~14

**18:9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt:**

**18:10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.**

**18:11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.**

**18:12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'**

**18:13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'**

**18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."**

#### Introduction

**Good morning!**

On New Year's Day this year, a major earthquake hit the Noto Peninsula. In the midst of a snowy midwinter, relief and recovery efforts are still frantically underway. We are truly heartbroken. Our hearts go out to those who have unfortunately been affected by this disaster.

This is not a man-made disaster, but **a natural disaster** caused by nature.

**By the way, last December, a fraud case was uncovered that was clearly a man-made disaster.**

#### **Daihatsu Motor's Quality Fraud Problem**

**There were 174 cases of fraud in the crash test procedures and methods stipulated by law at the stage before the vehicles were put on the market. On**

December 20, the company announced that there were 174 irregularities in the testing of 64 domestic and foreign models and 3 types of engines.

It was also discovered that the old fraud had been going on since 1989. This was an unforgivable act, as cars are required to be safe. It was clearly a man-made disaster.

In response, the company will cease production at all of its domestic plants (Osaka, Kyoto, Shiga, and Oita Prefectures) at the end of January 2024. The company has 423 suppliers in Japan, of which 47 companies are dependent on Daihatsu for 10% or more of their sales. 34 companies among them are small and medium-sized companies. How much economic loss will be incurred? Numerous affiliated companies have been affected immeasurably.

Daihatsu has been claiming to be the "No. 1" in the light car market share ranking for 17 consecutive years. It is said that the biggest problem was caused by "arrogance," which came from the company's conceit (pride). Once the company starts heading in the direction of arrogance, it does not listen to the voices from the other side. There is no one to consult with to warn them.

This fraud case did not start last year but has been going on for more than 30 years. The revelation came from a whistleblower. I am sure that someone's conscience did not allow it.

My friends, the problem of **arrogance** is always found throughout the generations. Even in the Bible, there is actually a story of a man who had **prideful** thoughts. Today, let's think about our lives from that story.

#### Main Points

### 1 . Two Different Prayers

#### 1 ) They Had Commonality

Luke 18:9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt:

18:10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

Two people went up to the Temple. At that time, there was the Temple in Jerusalem, and Jews always went up there to pray and worship. Therefore, this parable was easy to understand.

The common point of the two persons was giving **prayer** at the Temple. In this sense, they went up to the Temple to be blessed. This is because the Temple is the place where we face ourselves in front of God.

However, they were different.

## 2) They Had Differences

### (1) The Religious Pharisee

**18:11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.**

**18:12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'**

The Pharisees, a sect within Judaism, were the largest and most powerful group at that time. They emphasized the teachings of the Old Testament (the Law) and taught their people to keep the Law. It was the largest religious group that held great authority in Israeli society. They had power in the religious world, and in the political world. They could be considered **a faction**.

The Pharisee's righteousness is expressed in his prayer.

I am not like other men,

- ① extortioners (criminal point)
- ② unjust (ethical point)
- ③ adulterers (moral point)
- ④ not like this tax collector (comparison with others)

The Pharisee, a religious man, would not concede that he was wrong (nonrecognition). If we take the content of his prayer literally, he would indeed be an admirable man (**person of character**).

Even today, there are people who insist they are righteous and that they are not doing anything wrong. There are quite a few people who think that they are doing what they should do and that they are religious and charitable. That was the way

and the attitude of a religious Pharisees.

## **(2) The Tax Collector**

**18:13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'**

We understand the thinking of the tax collector in his prayer.

Tax collectors were hated and considered evil people at that time. This is because Israel was ruled by the Roman Empire at that time. The Roman Empire had enormous power and imposed a tax system called a **capitation tax** on the people. The Roman Empire forced the Israelites to pay a certain amount of tax. The tax collector collected the tax due to Rome, added more money on top of it, and paid that amount into his own pocket. The Roman state used the Jews to collect taxes from the Jews. Therefore, tax collectors were considered to be agents of the Roman Empire and were hated by their fellow people.

Let us look at the prayer of such a tax collector. Let us read it again.

**18:13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'**

⇒ **He understood his true self.**

He would have had a guilty conscience about taking taxes illegally from his fellow people.

- ① **standing far off (guilty feeling)**
- ② **would not even lift up his eyes to heaven (recognition)**
- ③ **"God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (confession)**

Jesus gave us examples of these different types of people.

Let us look now how Jesus Judges them.

## **2. Seeing Jesus' Evaluation**

### **1) Jesus' Perspective**

**18:14 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."**

Perspective of Jesus was different. He who humbles himself before God will be exalted. That is the principle of blessing.

My friends, people become prideful when things go smoothly, and that becomes arrogance. They would not listen to the advice of others. Therein lies the great danger.

### {Illustration}

There is a study called "Failure Studies," which collects only failures and pinpoints the causes of failures. There is a research record called "Failure Knowledge Database."

There are three major causes of failure.

- ① Human error
- ② Due to design errors
- ③ Due to organizational problems

It is interesting that an expert stated, "The causes of these human errors are actually avoidable."

Arrogance Syndrome" => Eventually declines on its own (human-caused mistake)

## 2) Where is the solution?

What should we do? Jesus said,

**18:14 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."**

No one who puts himself down causes problems, rather, his sincere attitude of humility will be appreciated.

Jesus said,

**Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**

**11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."**

A yoke is a farming implement worn around the necks of two (or more) livestock. In Japan, it is seen in rice paddies and fields for farming. To share the yoke with Jesus means to walk with Him.

Jesus' nature:

- ① I am gentle and lowly at heart.
- ② Learn from me.
- ③ You will find rest for your souls.

\* We should learn from Jesus Christ. It is **prevention** to maintain our health before we get sick.

Conclusion

Title of the Massage: "Prevention Trumps Medical Care"

—Maintaining a Healthy Body—

How is your life? What precautions are you taking to prevent failure in your life? Please remember the following words today.

**18:14 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."**

\* God bless you!