

March 10, 2024

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (Open Church Worship)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "People Are Energized by a Spirit of Respect"
—The Word of God—

Text: Deuteronomy 6:1~9

6:1 "Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it,

6:2 that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.

6:3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

6:5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

6:6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

6:7 You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

6:8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

6:9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Introduction

Good morning.

Education is very important because it helps people grow and changes society. In schools, we often hear the terms **Yutori (pressure-free school) Education** and **Cramming Education**. Both of these concepts started with the idea of developing children's abilities.

In the midst of the Corona disaster, children's motivation for studying

tended to decline for three years from 2019 (MEXT). The number of children (from 4th grade of elementary school to 3rd grade of high school) who affirmed "I don't feel motivated to study" was 45.1% in 2019, but it increased to 54.3% in 2021, more than half of the total. We found that the willingness to study was changing among children due to the Corona disaster.

Since 2000, the International Program for the Study of International Achievement (PISA) has been conducted for 15-year-olds. There, it was found that there is a difference in performance between A. children who read newspapers daily in the third grade of junior high school and B. children who do not read newspapers.

Japanese: A 76.5% correct (read every day),
 B 69.2% correct (rarely or never read)

Math: A 61.8% correct
 B 50.1% correct

English: A 58.0% correct
 B 44.6% correct

*** (2023, National Survey of Academic Progress, MEXT)**

By the way, for a large number of Japanese children, learning is closely related to taking entrance exams. In other words, learning is for the purpose of taking an entrance examination. However, when that goal disappears, the will to learn declines.

We should learn throughout life, shouldn't we? We have a lot to learn not only in school but also in the working world. This is how we grow and produce results.

There is much to be gained from learning. Learning enhances creativity and moves us toward a positive life.

So, how can we motivate ourselves to learn in order to improve ourselves? It is important for everyone, not just for students.

Let's think about learning to improve ourselves according to the following two points.

Main Points

1. Growth Begins with a Chain of Admiration

There are two kinds of things in our society: those that nurture us and help us grow, and those that don't. The former is a spirit of respect.

1) The Spirit of Respect

My friends, first of all, a will to learn (desire to learn) is not acquired alone. Few people are born with a desire to learn. Therefore, if they do not change, then they will not change.

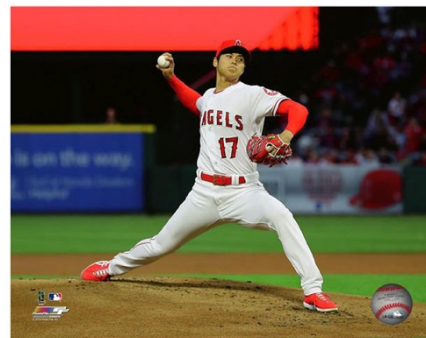
However, God the Creator wants us to learn and grow. Therefore, He gives us motivation. Motivation is the driving force that makes us move forward. One of the things that motivates us is **longing** for someone.

{Illustration}

The person in the spotlight now => Rintaro Sasaki of Hanamaki-Higashi High School is well-known in the high school baseball world.

He had 140 home runs in his high school career. He was a sure-fire first-round pick by any professional baseball team, but he chose to attend Stanford University in the United States. It is said that only one or two students a year are admitted directly from Japanese high schools to the prestigious Stanford University, which is ranked second in the world in terms of university rankings. Sasaki has become the object of attention in the town.

The university, on the other hand, had been featuring the big-name player on its website since before he entered the university in April. In fact, Sasaki's decision to go to the U.S. was based on his **idol**, Shohei Otani, who was from the same high school as him. Sasaki had said that he wanted to play in the U.S. majors as well and that he had a dream of becoming a famous player in the U.S.



Admiration fosters a spirit of respect. And it increases motivation. Therefore, if you have **a longing to be smart too**, it is a good thing for you.

The Bible teaches us to be motivated.

⇒ Learning from a tiny ant.

Proverb 6:6 Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.

6:7 Without having any chief, officer, or ruler,

6:8 she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.

The author of this Proverb was a Jewish wise man. To be wise is **a longing** that has never changed. What a blessing it is if we gain the wisdom that the wise have!

Learning (study) helps people to develop their minds, ideas, judgment, and discernment abilities. The common denominator is **respect** (reverence). The habit of feeling respect for someone, admiring them, and building yourself on them is important.

When one enters a chain of longing, it becomes a good pattern (a positive rhythm) and one can be energetic.

One day, a young businessman came to Jesus and asked,

Matthew 19:6 And behold, a man came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?"

Jesus said to him to keep the Jewish commandments.

19:17 And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments."

19:18 He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness,

19:19 Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus taught him an important thing.

19:19 Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

That is to respect his parents and love his neighbor.

⇒ the Spirit of Respect

However, how is it in our society?

2) **No-Respect Society**

The problem is that there are fewer and fewer people to admire in this day and age. Where are the people you admire, whether at school, at work, or in your circles? In this day and age, **many people are probably searching around for something interesting to do**. The world calls it **self-discovery**. In the past, generating information and presenting what you had researched was respected.

Reading a book is a way to do this. We take quiet time to read to ourselves alone and to probe deeper into ourselves through that experience. Sadly, fewer and fewer people are reading these days.

The reason for this is the popularization of social networking sites, YouTube, etc. There is a perception that **information is free** on the Internet. We are surrounded by a flood of information (including fake news). On top of that, it is free. The recipient is like a buffet, taking what he or she needs and putting it on his or her plate. But there is a problem. **There is no respect**.

My friends, living in a no-respect society, we tend to lose our mental richness and energy. The spirit of respect enhances the spirit of learning and study.

Then, how can we cultivate the spirit of learning? It is to gain wisdom from the Book of Wisdom (the Bible).

2. **Wisdom that the Bible Teaches**

What does the Bible, with its 5,000 years of Jewish history, teach?

Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

6:5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

6:6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

6:7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

6:8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

6:9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

This is the word of God who is the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and it teaches us something very important.

1) The Bible Teaches the Basics

If you read the passage of Scripture above carefully, it becomes clear that:

When? ⇒ Day and night (at home, on the street, when we sleep and get up)

Who? ⇒ Children of the next generation

How? ⇒ A sign (tied to the hand)

Jewish parents have certainly instructed their children in this way. This is because the Bible contains all the wisdom necessary for life.

My friends, why are there so many Jewish Nobel Prize winners?

We understand the reason from the Bible.

Isaiah 42:6 "I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness;

I will take you by the hand and keep you;

I will give you as a covenant for the people,

a light for the nations,

The Bible teaches the basics.

2) The Bible Teaches Standards.

By the way, Japanese society is unfortunately losing its precious credibility.

The amount of money for "kickbacks" from Diet members is not small!

The "place of origin" perjury (meat production area, shellfish production area, eel production area, etc.) ⇒ The cost of losing credibility is not small, but it is a big loss.

These are cheating acts, and everyone knows that they should not be done. However, people repeatedly make the same mistakes. Why do we repeat such mistakes? ⇒ Because that is the way human beings are.

In other words, human beings can be derailed if they do not live up to the standard of judging right and wrong. The Bible teaches us that important standard. What is the standard by which one lives as a human being?

If you don't know the Creator God, then your own standard will be your standard. Your own knowledge, your own experience, and what you are proud of would be your standard. However, if something happens to you, those things will fall apart, won't they?

The standard of God is not like that.

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

What is your standard for life?

{Illustration}

Ms. Helen Keller (1880-1968), was a blind, deaf, and mute woman who suffered from a triple handicap, and devoted her life to helping the disabled in her homeland of the United States and around the world.

Among those who nurtured her, Ms. Sullivan played a particularly important role. She was Helen's tutor from the age of seven and remained by her side for 27 years.

After much trial and error, Ms. Sullivan finally made Helen, who had been deaf-blind since the age of two, understand the alphabet with the flick of her hand. It is hard for a normal person to understand how difficult it was. After all, Helen could not hear, see, or speak. Ms. Sullivan began to teach Helen that things have names.

As soon as she touched a plant or animal, she would write its name in the alphabet on the palm of her hand. Through this kind of teaching, Helen learned one by one and her world expanded. It is a learning process that requires patience and perseverance.

However, Ms. Sullivan was at a loss. She could teach her the names of things, but how could she teach her **love**, which she could not touch? One day, Ms. Sullivan was unable to convey **love** to Helen, and she was very depressed because she knew the limits of her ability. It was then that she took Helen's hand and cried. As soon as her tears fell on Helen's hand, a deep emotion welled up in Helen's heart. **Love** had

been felt.

The willingness to teach and learn is the driving force and impetus for our lives. It is rooted in love. God teaches us the words of the Bible with love and patience. We can be energized by the spirit of respect, a reverence for others, and by loving and honoring those whom God has created.

Conclusion

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6:5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

6:6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

* God bless you !