



Morning Sermon

by Rev. Shohei Tsuda
Episode 13

True piety (Faith) and kindness

January 13, 2021

Good morning. We have been able to welcome this day, January 13th (Reiwa 3rd).

Those who practice faith don't just worship Kami-Sama. They also sincerely help people in emergencies or in sudden adversity without expecting any money or thanks in return. If there's a fire, they quickly go and help extinguish it. Such is true faith and kindness. Bear this in mind in whatever you do.

(I Yamamoto Sadajiro 49)

This is a well-known teaching of “Shinjin-shinsetsu” or “faithfulness and kindness,” used in our walk of faith. This was the only teaching in which the word “Shinjin-shinsetsu” or “faithfulness and kindness” appeared.

The fundamental elements of faith are: Worship, Prayer, and Toritsugi (divine mediation), all of which are accompanied by prayer. Therefore, making it essential to visit the church. Still, it is also crucial to know this teaching taught by the Founder, “To have faith is not only to visit the church.”

“錢ももらわず (Zeni mo morawazu)” means to not receive payment, “御礼も言ってもらわず (Orei mo ittemorawazu,) means to not expect a word of thanks. “至急な時に(shikyuu na tokini) ” , I suppose this teaching means that “at the most urgent time, without expecting any thanks” or “during an urgent situation” to be exceptionally kind to people in time of need. The Founder mentions “exceptional.” Usually, we don't have the kind of relationship or interactions with people to make us act as such, but it means that people would act upon a problem with special attention, hastily. The phrase “with all due kindness and haste,” haste refers to a great and urgent need. For example, a fire or a sudden illness. When you help someone in distress, you would do so as quickly as possible.” “Isagiyoku”

means swiftly. It means that you should not ask them to thank you, and you should not act as if you have done something great. It is not about receiving compensation, not about being indebted, and not about showing off. “If you do that, you will be truly faithful and kind.” What is meant by the term “faithfulness and kindness” is that a person of faith expresses the heart of Kami-Sama and acts in kindness. It says, “Be mindful of everything and everything you do.”

“Quickly, quickly,” is the message I get when I read this. For example, it is essential to get to so and so location as soon as possible. Do the most extraordinary thing possible, and then come back immediately; not expecting any thanks or bragging about the act to others. That is what it means to follow Kami’s will. This is a teaching that we should bear in mind in everything we do. Apart from receiving blessings for oneself, this teaching describes the faith of rushing out to help others, even outside one’s own home and doing the work of helping others.

For some reason, I often come across people in trouble or falling down when walking. Some are bleeding. A few months ago, on my way to visit the Headquarters with my family, shortly after we left, I saw a man sitting on the side of the road, bleeding. Something didn’t look right, so I stopped the car. It was so sudden, so my children asked “what happened?” They were surprised.

I immediately got out of the vehicle and ran, maybe 100 meters, to the man. He wasn’t even wearing shoes. Not that there was anything I could do about it, I asked, “Are you okay?” Because in some cases, I can call an ambulance or the police.

He was a young man, maybe in his 20s, and a little dizzy. He said, “Thank you. I’m fine.” As far as I could tell, he didn’t seem fine, but there was something about the atmosphere that told me he wanted to be left alone—that he had a reason to be there.

I have had so many opportunities to meet various people at the Okekkai. This young man's appearance on such a cold day was not at all expected. His whole-body covered in tattoos were visible. Blood was everywhere, and there were indications of alcohol or drug use. When I asked if there was anything I could do, or if his house was close by, he answered politely, "Oh, I'm fine, thank you." Then I asked "Do you want me to call the police or an ambulance?" and he said, "No, no, that's all right, thank you." I gently patted him on the shoulder to encourage him, said "Okay" and returned to my car. Now all I could do was ask, "Are you okay?" I felt that all I could do now was to pray for him.

I prayed as I drove away. What was his background? He had tattoos all over his body, one bare foot, and his socks were torn and strewn on the road. He was bleeding and holding his face, but he could talk and was not in a condition to lose consciousness. He was able to sit down and have a conversation with me, and I felt that it would be better for him if I didn't cross any further boundaries. Maybe he was okay. So I left. I didn't know anything about him: his name, his history. I could only assume. I was in a bit of an awkward position, and I felt sorry for him. However, there was really nothing I could do, so I prayed for him.

I don't know what kinds of interactions he went through in the process of growing up, but I will pray that he will be able to stand up from this point on. I am sure Kami-Sama is trying to help him. Kami-Sama gave me this brief chance to encounter him, so I felt that I should pray for him. The energy that I got from him was that if people other than myself happened to see him, they might think, "Oh, he's a little scary," or may want to keep a safe distance from him. Some may even pretend not to see him. I wondered in my heart if it was a good idea to approach him, as I was not afraid. So I proceeded. I felt that praying was really the only thing I could do now.

This is the essence of faith. I think it is still important to care about Kami and to pray to Kami-Sama for those suffering and in need, apart from yourself. I did not act consciously because of my beliefs. It was just that my body moved on its own. It came as an automatic instinct. It is important to pray when you see someone in distress.

When I think about why I do such things, if asked, I would say that I myself was protected by and saved thanks to Kami-Sama. I might have been dead already, somewhere, somehow, and even in those times I was afraid of killing people or killing myself, I was protected. And on top of that, Kami kept me close. Kami utilizes me. That is an honor for me. So I think my body moved without even having to think, because I always wanted to help as much as possible. On the other hand, if helping others was never on my mind on a regular basis, I probably might not have acted the way I did. There have been a lot of yakuza, gangsters, drug addicts, and all kinds of people I have encountered among the people I have Toritsugi mediation sessions with. I felt that everyone is precious. Experiencing these many situations and people may have contributed to feeling sorry for that young man.

He used formal sentences, but it was quite difficult to look at him. I could only pray that this man's body and spirit will be saved. Even as I talk to you like this now, I think about that young man from time to time. I don't know his name and will probably never see him again. Nevertheless, I can still continue to pray when I suddenly think about that person. It would be nice if everyone could help out someone who is suffering, but there may be only so much that can be done.

I think of it as a prayer campaign. When we think about fundraising, it would be great if we could donate millions, tens of millions of dollars, but if we were living an ordinary life, we wouldn't be able to donate much. Let's say you are willing to donate a little money to help people in need. There is a limit to what one person can donate. But if

many people donate, even if it is only a little, whether it is a penny, a hundred, or a thousand dollars, it's a good thing. If a hundred, thousands, and sometimes ten thousand people donate just a little, it would accumulate to a great sum of money. The same may be true in disaster relief efforts. In the same way, to receive blessings, sincerity is essential, and sincerity, in a word, means prayer. It is a prayer that emanates from the heart. There is a limit to how much you can do on your own. People who realize that it is hard to help, yet feel sorry for someone will pray for others. Then Kami-Sama will provide a kind of piggy bank to help this person store up prayers. If five, ten, or a hundred people come together and pray with the desire to help a person, it will become a prayer-fund, and when it accumulates to a certain extent, Kami-Sama will give blessings to that person. That is the rules of Heaven and Earth. Such things actually happen.

So I pray for him occasionally, when it occurs to me. I might have been in his position, and you all might have been in mine. I happened to be born in a different place, at another time and met other people so that I can live like this now. But perhaps, if I had been born in another area, my life would have been entirely different. When you think about it, don't think of it as someone else's problem, but pray and offer a prayer campaign to Kami on the spot with a heart of compassion for that person, who is also Kami's beloved child, then Kami will give you the strength to help that person.

Belief in the power of prayer is faith. If you don't believe in it, you don't have faith. Believe in the power of prayer. That is really faith itself.

I could end here, but it is an excellent opportunity to introduce one more teaching.

One cold day, I met a painful old man on my way to the Hiromae. I felt so sorry for him that I gave him the clothes I

was wearing. When I arrived at the Hiromae, Konko Daijin said,

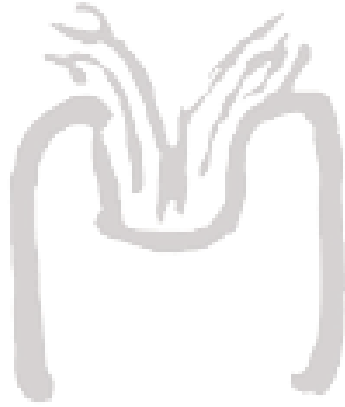
‘Jiroshiro, you received a splendid blessing today. When you met an unfortunate person, you felt pity for him and helped him wholeheartedly, putting your needs aside. The heart that feels pity is the heart of Kami. You are able to receive divine blessings through that heart of Kami. That is faith.’

Those who have received divine blessings understand their gratitude to Kami. Therefore, they should help unfortunate people with a heart of Kami.

(III Jinkyukyogoroku 168)

I was just thinking of what Konko-Sama was saying to Kataoka-san, who took off his own clothes and gave them to the old man, “You have received a tremendous blessing today.” Kataoka-san is the one who received blessings. He says that it is not the old man who accepted Kataoka-san’s clothes that received the blessing, but it was Kataoka-san, who felt sorry for him and extended his kindness, who was the recipient of Kami’s blessings. That is really true. The Founder said that the heart that feels sorry for others is a heart of Kami, and that you will receive blessings by having this kind of heart. I do not believe that Kataoka-san offered the clothes to the man for the sake of wanting blessings. I imagine he just saw an old man without being conscious of it and instantly acted from his heart, thinking, “I feel sorry for him; I want to do something for him.” From Kami-Sama’s point of view, it is only natural that the heart of Kami was surely present in his heart, thus Kami will be pleased and grateful. The focus was not on the old man that got helped and received blessings. The focus was on the person who saw the old man in the pitiful situation and wanted to do something about it and acted upon it. And to that act, the Founder said, “You have received a great blessing.” Indeed, that’s true, I thought to myself.

Today is today, and you never know where, how, or who you will meet. Today you have received this teaching, so when you see someone in need, please act on it with a heart to help. There is a saying that goes, “One day at a time, one good deed at a time.” I hope you can do one good thing. Please receive blessings. I will pray for all of you. It is great you have come today.



Morning Sermon
by Rev. Shohei Tsuda
Episode 13

January 13, 2021

Published by
Konkoyo Amagasaki Church
January 31, 2024

3-7-5 Higashinaniwacho,
Amagasaki-shi, Hyogo-ken 660-0892
Japan