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Reformation Banner
Publishers, Singapore.

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October to December 2009

“Christians Living in the Last Days”

by

Rev Dennis Kwok

About the Author



Rev Dennis Kwok serves in Singapore as the Pastor of Truth Bible-Presbyterian Church. A graduate of Far Eastern Bible College (Singapore) with a Bachelor's Degree in Theology (2001), Rev Kwok is presently upgrading himself in the same college in the Master of Divinity programme. He was ordained as a Minister of the Gospel on 6 May 2007. Married to Goh Yee Min, they have two sons, Ernest and Caius.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1

MATTHEW 24:35-51

JAMES 4:13-14

*“Ye know not what hour
your Lord doth come.”*

CHRISTIAN LIVING IN THE LAST DAYS

In May 2008, the deadly Sichuan quake with a magnitude of 7.9 hit China less than 10 days after Cyclone Nargis ripped through nearby Myanmar. Four months later, in September, the financial bubble burst with the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the surprise sale of Merrill Lynch, and the struggles of AIG. The year also ended with Israel launching its military operations against Hamas in Gaza, intensifying the trouble in the Middle East. Do not all these serve as good reminders to us that we are living in the last days?

While we still enjoy peace, comfort, security and prosperity in our little corners despite the economic recession, have we neglected or forgotten our spiritual obligation towards our God? Are we busy in the world with our own pursuit of career, studies and even pleasures, leaving us no time for God? The Bible asks, *“What is your life?”* The infallible and unmistakable answer is, *“It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away”* (Jas 4:14). How true! Do not waste any more time in futile pursuits of worldly things. Seek God first and all these things shall be added unto you (Matt 6:33). While we still have the strength, life and opportunity, let us get down to living for and serving the King of kings and the Lord of lords TODAY!

For this month, we will focus on Christian living based on Psalm 119 to 127. It is amazing how these Psalms provide great insight for us to get down to serious Christian living in these last days. At the same time, while going through Psalm 119, we can make our reading more exciting and challenging by memorising the Hebrew alphabet. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: The knowledge that I am living in the last days teaches me how to live my best in the last days.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me live for Thee in these last days.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2

PSALM 119:1-8

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-7

*“Thou shalt love the LORD
thy God with all thy heart.”*

**(ALEPH) SEEK HIM WITH
THE WHOLE HEART**

Psalms 119 (with 176 verses) is the longest chapter in the Bible. It is believed to be written by King David towards the end of his life when he was preparing for the kingship succession by his son, Solomon.

It is a psalm that exalts the importance and necessity of God's Word in a believer's life. Without God's Word, there is no true Christian living. There are a number of ways to seek God. We can seek Him through prayer, worship, service, and meditation. However, we must realize that in order to pray, worship, serve and meditate correctly, we must know how to do it correctly. Where is this knowledge found? Is it not found in God's Word? Many are seeking God using all the wrong ways for all the wrong reasons. Why do we have to seek God? A relationship that is broken must needs be restored. The wayward son who has run away must repent and come back to his father. However, in order for us to be restored completely, it must be based entirely on God's condition and not on ours. His condition is stated in His Word. All we need to do is to seek Him in His Word.

It is not only important to seek God through His Word, we must seek Him with our whole heart (Ps 119:2). Is our heart divided? One part for our work or study, another part for ourselves and family, and then the remaining we give to God? If this is so, then we deserve to receive left-over blessings from God! Let this not be our attitude. God has given us His all through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Let us seek God with our whole heart, giving Him the best of our time, attention and devotion, and be committed to live for Him by the way we behave, the words we say and the thoughts we harbour in our mind. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: If I give God all of my heart, does it mean I have an excuse not to be serious in my responsibility at home, in school or at work?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to seek Thee with all of my heart.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3

PSALM 119:9-16

DEUTERONOMY 6:12-13

“Beware lest thou forget the LORD.”

(BETH) I WILL NOT FORGET THY WORD

To err is human. I believe “to forget is human” too. We are forgetful people. That is why sometimes we need reminders. But the question we need to ask ourselves is: “Why do we forget so easily?” Since most of us do not have the medical condition of amnesia, what is our problem then? If it is an important instruction for us to follow, why do we forget it easily? Perhaps the instruction was never taken to heart in the first place! Or perhaps we have been distracted by other things and thus failed to remember. The spiritual condition of our heart may have something to do with it. It could be the very reason why we forget easily. Man does not easily forget that which he treasures dearly in his heart. The psalmist wrote, *“I will delight myself in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word”* (v 16). This reflects clearly to us the heart of the psalmist. God and all that He says are very important to him and are in his heart. And because of this, he will not forget His Word.

Does God have a place in your heart right now? If not, you will forget what He says to you easily. You may be having a difficult time at work, in your studies or with your children at home. Your life seems to be filled with worry and anxiety. But if God is in your heart, you will remember His Word. And if you remember His Word, you will trust in the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit to carry you through all your difficulties. There is no problem so big that He cannot solve. There is no mountain so high that He cannot surmount. There is no storm so violent that He cannot calm. There is no sinner so sinful that the blood of Jesus cannot cleanse till he is white as snow. Perhaps you have not been trusting Him enough, and therefore you have easily forgotten Him and His Word. Will you trust Him now and remember His Word now, and keep it now? May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: If I have a superb memory, does it mean I will never forget God?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me not to forget Thee.

LORD'S DAY, OCTOBER 4

PSALM 119:17-24

LUKE 6:39

"Can the blind lead the blind?"

**(GIMEL) OPEN THOU MY
EYES**

Is the psalmist blind that he had to plead with God to open his eyes? I believe so. But his blindness is not physical but spiritual. We may have perfect 20/20 vision yet we can be so blind to the wondrous things in God's Word. We need to cry to God as the psalmist did, *"Open Thou my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law"* (v 18).

The psalmist must have seen the wondrous things before or else he would not have prayed thus. But what wondrous things is he thirsting after? Spurgeon said, "The Scriptures teem with marvels; the Bible is wonder-land; it not only relates miracles, but it is itself a world of wonders. Yet what are these to closed eyes? And what man can open his own eyes, since he is born blind? God Himself must reveal revelation to each heart." Worldliness, self and sin have caused such great damage to our spiritual sight. Oh, how desperately we need to have our blinded eyes opened to see again! Such a longing and thirst for spiritual insights in the darkness of this world is a mark of a true Christian. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:7-16)!

May God be pleased to grant unto you that spiritual sight to behold wondrous things out of His law. However if you have seen it already, it is not the end yet, pray that the Lord will open your eyes to see more, again and again. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: A Christian may be blind to the things of this present world but he will definitely have sight of the heaven to come.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, remove my spiritual blindness that I may see Thy wondrous works out of Thy Law.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 5

PSALM 119:25-32

2 CORINTHIANS 6:11-13

*“Our mouth is open unto you,
our heart is enlarged.”*

**(DALETH) THOU SHALT
ENLARGE MY HEART**

According to Ivanhoe Broadcast News on 21 January 2009, heart disease is the world's number one killer. It was reported that one percent of the world's population has a genetic mutation that makes them almost guaranteed to have heart trouble. But in South Asia, the frequency of the mutation reaches four percent. How is your heart today? It is high time to take good care of our heart by changing our hectic lifestyle, taking care of our diet, and exercising.

What about our spiritual heart? The psalmist says, “... *Thou shalt enlarge my heart.*” Why should our heart be enlarged? We must realize that it is the heart that controls the emotion, feelings, zeal and all the passion we need to perform the will of God. When God enlarges our heart, we are “pushed” to do more. Our feet will run when our affections are aroused and set on divine things, and our actions will be full of force, enthusiasm and joy. That is why the psalmist in the same verse says, “I will run the way of Thy commandments.” There is no delay; no procrastination, no sitting on it but all swiftness and delight to obey God by the power and leading of the Holy Spirit.

We cannot enlarge our heart ourselves. This work belongs to God. He must work in us, and only then we shall will to do according to His good pleasure. Spurgeon says, God “must change the heart, unite the heart, encourage the heart, strengthen the heart, and enlarge the heart, and then the course of the life will be gracious, sincere, happy and earnest; so that: from our lowest up to our highest state in grace we must attribute all to the free favor of our God. We must run; for grace is not an overwhelming force which compels unwilling minds to move contrary to their will: our running is the spontaneous leaping forward of a mind which has been set free by the hand of God, and delights to show its freedom by its bounding speed.” May God be pleased to enlarge our heart today. Amen.

THOUGHT: My heart cannot be healed until Christ opens it!

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, enlarge my heart today that I may be swift to obey Thy will.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6

PSALM 119:33-40

MATTHEW 18:9

*“And if thine eye offend thee,
pluck it out!”*

**(HE) TURN AWAY MINE
EYES FROM
BEHOLDING VANITY**

If the heart is fixed and turned to God, surely the eyes would also turn away from beholding vanity. But the psalmist is not taking any chances. He is determined and committed to give God his heart's full devotion, and that includes what he sees.

Spurgeon says, “If the eyes do not see, perhaps the heart may not desire: at any rate, one door of temptation is closed when we do not even look at the painted bauble. Sin first entered man's mind by the eye, and it is still a favorite gate for the incoming of Satan's allurements; hence the need of a double watch upon that portal. The prayer is not so much that the eyes may be shut as ‘turned away’; for we need to have them open, but directed to right objects.” How true! The first look may be unavoidable. But the second look is definitely inexcusable and is a deadly hook that hangs your heart to the gallows.

Job has made a covenant with his eyes not to lust after another woman (Job 31:1). This is also what we need to do and pray as the psalmist says, “*Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.*” There are so many things in the world that have the ability to seduce and entice the lust of our eyes. But why should we look upon vanity? Why should we seek after temporal enjoyment and incur the wrath of God for eternity? Sin is vanity, worldly pursuit is vanity, and indeed, all that is not of God comes under the same judgment. We need to flee! We need to turn our eyes away from beholding vanity. This is our human weakness. We need to “turn our eyes upon Jesus and look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace” (Helen H. Lemmel). May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: It is better to enter heaven with one eye than to go to hell with two eyes! However, I am sure I will be given a new and glorious pair of eyes in heaven.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, turn my eyes away from beholding vanity.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7

PSALM 119:41-48

GALATIANS 5:13

“Ye have been called unto liberty.”

(VAU) WALK IN LIBERTY

Just as God heard the cries of His children in Egypt and delivered them from that land of bondage more than 3,000 years ago, today He has also heard our cries in our sins and delivered us from the bondage of sin after we believed in Him. God has set us free from the power of the chains that bound us to hell. Now, we are no longer condemned but can walk in liberty. But how are we to walk in liberty? Apostle Paul warns, *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another”* (Gal 5:13). And Spurgeon says, “The way of holiness is not a track for slaves, but the King’s highway for freemen, who are joyfully journeying from the Egypt of bondage to the Canaan of rest. God’s mercies and his salvation, by teaching us to love the precepts of the word, set us at a happy rest; and the more we seek after the perfection of our obedience, the more shall we enjoy complete emancipation from every form of spiritual slavery.” To be the servants of the Devil is doom; but to be the servants of the most high God is liberty.

But how should we walk in liberty? Some time ago, I read in the newspaper that a man was convicted of molestation and was sent to jail. After his release, within a month, he was back to his old ways and even attempted to rape a young girl. He was caught. Standing before the same judge, he pleaded for mercy. He hoped the judge would give him another chance. The judge slapped on him the maximum sentence. This man was given freedom and a second chance after his release from prison. But he abused it, and so now he has to suffer a heavier punishment. We too have been given a second chance. Before our conversion, we cannot but sin against God. And because of sin, we stand condemned before the righteous and just God. But God gave us a second chance. Because of Jesus, He gave us liberty. Are you going to abuse this liberty? Or are you going to use this liberty for His glory? The choice is yours. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Liberty in Christ is the best liberty that even the worst criminal who surrenders to Christ can enjoy.

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Lord, for my liberty in Christ Jesus.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8

PSALM 119:49-56

2 CORINTHIANS 4:17

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment.”

(ZAIN) COMFORT IN MY AFFLICTION

Affliction that is not painful and involves no struggle is no affliction at all. The man of the world turns to anything and everything that can give him comfort in the midst of affliction. The gambler holds his lottery tickets in his hands and says, “This is my comfort.” The drunkard lifts his glass and sings, “This is my comfort.” The smoker exhales the cigarette smoke like a “dragon” and says, “This is my comfort.” Still others will pick up their family portrait or bank passbooks or credit cards and say, “This is my comfort.” How many will hold up his Bible and say, “This is my comfort”? Perhaps not even pastors or preachers truly do it though they preach it!

Although we do not know what the psalmist’s affliction is, he says the Word of God is his comfort. The context of the psalm seems to point to some political conflict that David was facing. Whatever it is, he found comfort in God and His Word. He is likened to a man who was completely lost in the jungle until a navigator came to his rescue and led him to safety. When lost, it is so easy to give up and wallow in self-despair. This is when comfort needs to come in and do its work. God’s Word is like a road map that shows us the way out. The Spirit of God is like a torch that lights up the path before us. What a great comfort! Thank God for His Spirit and His Word.

Comfort is desirable at all times. Many are unable to find comfort in troubled times. This must not be so for us who are children of God because we have God’s promise: “*I will not leave you comfortless*” (John 14:18). Spurgeon says, “Some have comfort and no affliction, others have affliction and no comfort; but the saints have comfort in their affliction.” Oh, what a great comfort to every weary soul in his affliction who is absolutely safe in the hands of his God. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: If I have no affliction, should I pray for one?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to find comfort in Thee.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9

PSALM 119:57-64

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

(HETH) RISE AND GIVE THANKS!

Spiritual poverty and declension are everywhere. Some are falling and many others have fallen already. What about you? The psalmist was constantly under spiritual and physical attack from the evil one. He could have fallen too if he did not keep himself close to God, trusting in His Word. He can rise at midnight because God has been protecting him. His enemies may have robbed him yet he is not discouraged. His trust in God did not waver. Though his possessions may have been taken away, his faith in the Lord is still intact.

While everyone is asleep at midnight, the psalmist rose up not because he has to keep watch over his belongings, but because he was compelled to rise and give thanks to God. Spurgeon says, “Midnight is the hour for burglars, and there were bands of them around David, but they did not occupy his thoughts; these were all up and away with the Lord his God. He thought not of thieves, but of thanks; not of what they would steal, but of what he would give to his God. A thankful heart is such a blessing that it drives out fear and makes room for praise. Thanksgiving turns night into day, and consecrates all hours to the worship of God. Every hour is canonical to a saint.”

If you are still unable to sleep in the wee hours of the night, or if you suffer from insomnia, instead of counting sheep, why not talk to the Shepherd of the sheep? Why not rise up and give thanks to Him for all the blessings you have received from Him? A thankful Christian is a blessed Christian. And a blessed Christian will be able to sleep soundly at night. So arise and give thanks! May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: The list of thanksgiving can be unending. For that, I can give one more thanksgiving!

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to be thankful to Thee always.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10

PSALM 119:65-72

ROMANS 8:28

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

(TETH) GOOD TO BE AFFLICTED?

How can any affliction be good? Yet the psalmist says, *“It is good for me that I have been afflicted.”* How can we understand this? The verse that seemed to be most fitting here is Romans 8:28, *“For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”* Is this verse acting as a plaster to cover up any kind of wound? Once the wound has healed, we throw the plaster away? How many of us have taken God for granted? Do we forget God in prosperous and peaceful times and when we are enjoying good health and manifold blessings? Are we caught in the rat race that leaves us no time for God? Often it is only when we are hit the hardest by afflictions that we pause and reflect upon what we have done in our lives.

No one in his right mind would want to be afflicted. But how else would one come to his senses and realize his dire need for God? Affliction does slow us down. Affliction does cause us to stop what we have been doing day in and day out. Affliction does cause us to stop looking everywhere else and force us to look up to God instead. And we must be careful to keep looking up to God even after the affliction is over. Otherwise we will have to be afflicted repeatedly in order to learn this great truth of trusting in God.

If you are afflicted now and time is on your side, take the opportunity to “clean house” spiritually. Reorganize your life. Give God priority in your planning. Allocate the best time for your daily communion with God. This is how you can benefit from the affliction you experience. It is good to be afflicted, but only if you learn the spiritual lesson of drawing nearer to God. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: When I am afflicted with sickness, should I see a doctor?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for every affliction.

LORD'S DAY, OCTOBER 11

PSALM 119:73-80

1 CORINTHIANS 2:7-16

*"But God hath revealed them
unto us by his Spirit."*

(YOHD) GIVE ME UNDERSTANDING

One may be a professor in theology and yet have no understanding of God's inspired Word. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:7-16). The psalmist cries to the Lord, "... give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments" (Ps 119:73). King David is the number one man in the Holy Land. He has no lack of advisors and wise men around him. He can also easily rely on his own wisdom and understanding to rule the land. Yet he discovered the weakness and the limitation of his own ability and power. Most importantly, he acknowledged God as Creator and he His handiwork in the same verse. In the eyes of man, he may be the number one man in the land. But in his own eyes, God is number one. We need to submit to the same God who made the heaven and the earth by the power of His word. We have no power at all over our life. Ecclesiastes 8:8 rightly states, "*There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.*" God is in full control and we are to acknowledge that.

Why do we need understanding? Without understanding, we easily misunderstand. Moreover the object of understanding is God's Word and not any ordinary subjects such as geography, literature, or history. God's Word is no ordinary Word that can be understood through human wisdom and understanding. We need the Spirit of God to give us understanding of His Word and to apply His Word correctly to our life. A born again young Christian who is filled with the Spirit of God understands more of God's Word than an unregenerate Bible teacher with his string of academic degrees in theology. Are you born again? If not, there is no way you can receive the correct understanding of His Word. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Can an unbeliever score full marks in Bible knowledge?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, give me understanding through Thy Spirit.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12

PSALM 119:81-88

ROMANS 7:14-25

“With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

**(KAPH) I AM BECOME
LIKE A BOTTLE IN THE
SMOKE**

The wine bottles of old were not made of glass or plastic like today. They were made from animal skins. When the bottles were emptied, they were hung up to dry. The psalmist likened himself to a bottle in the smoke. When the place was filled with smoke, the wine bottle made of skin became black and sooty. Due to the heat, it also became wrinkled and worn. So the psalmist described himself as sorrowful and having a dark and grieving countenance. Christians are not super humans. They are not infallible. When a child of God is struggling with sin and is at his lowest spiritually, he can be so overwhelmed by the terrible circumstances that he cannot think clearly. What a description for a great man of God like David, a man after God's own heart, in his great spiritual struggle!

King David was filled with great distress. He needed to get the “smoke” out of his life. He needed to be restored to faith again. But how? David continued to say in the same verse “... *Yet do I not forget thy statutes.*” Spurgeon says, “Here is the patience of the saints and the victory of faith. Blackened the man of God might be by falsehood, but the truth was in him, and he never gave it up. He was faithful to his King when he seemed deserted and left to the vilest uses. The promises came to his mind, and, what was still better evidence of his loyalty, the statutes were there too: he stuck to his duties as well as to his comforts. The worst circumstances cannot destroy the true believer's hold upon his God.” There is always light at the end of the tunnel for the child of God. You may not see it now, but you will eventually. Do you believe? May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Where is God when I need Him?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to trust in Thy presence in my life, that I may know for sure I am not alone in my spiritual struggle, for Thou art with me.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13

PSALM 119:89-96

ROMANS 3:1-23

“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”

(LAMED) AN END OF ALL PERFECTION

The psalmist says, *“I have seen an end of all perfection”* (Ps 119:96). In other words, you cannot find anything perfect in this world. There is no such thing as perfection in anything that is of the work of man’s hand. Not everyone will agree with the psalmist. For some see no end to their own perfection. They really believe that they are perfect already, though they acknowledge they sometimes sin a little. But the moment they ask for forgiveness, they become perfect again. Such men are perfectly blind for believing in the folly of perfection in this life. A spirit-filled and mature Christian knows he can never be perfect in this life because of the old man and his sinful flesh. He also knows that Christ’s redemptive work on the cross is that which saved him from the bondage and power of sin. And one day, he will receive perfection. It is the day when he meets with his Saviour face to face, either upon his death or when the rapture takes place.

Since we are imperfect people living in this imperfect world (a result of man’s sin!) we need to have a perfect rule over us. Only the perfect God can give us the perfect rule. The psalmist continues in the same verse, *“... but thy commandment is exceeding broad.”* This is not a lamentation. It is an acknowledgement of our own shortcomings and limitations. The exceeding breadth of God’s law touches every act, word, and thought, and is of such a spiritual nature that it judges the motives, desires, and emotions of the soul. It is that perfect standard that convicts us of our transgressions and ungodliness. Spurgeon says, *“The divine ideal of holiness is far too broad for us to hope to cover all its wide area, and yet it is no broader than it ought to be. Who would wish to have an imperfect law? Nay, its perfection is its glory; but it is the death of all glorying in our own perfection.”* No wonder Romans 3:23 is so provoking: *“for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* May God be merciful to us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Since Christ has kept the Law perfectly for me, why am I still obligated to follow the same Law?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to keep Thy perfect Law.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14

PSALM 119:97-104

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-31

*“Because the foolishness of God
is wiser than men”*

(MEM) WISER THAN MINE ENEMIES

There is one book that can make us wiser than our enemies. It is the Book that God has ordained to be given to His children called the “Holy Bible.” The psalmist says, *“Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies.”* God was his teacher. The Word he received from Him gave him knowledge about his enemies, how to overcome and defend against them. Half the battle is won when you know your enemy. Jesus used the Word of God when tempted by Satan in the wilderness forty days and forty nights. He was prepared and was able to defend Himself with God’s Word in each temptation. Indeed Jesus is wiser than His enemy!

What is the best way to cope with our adversaries? It is more than just Bible memorization. It is the Bible put into practice at the right time at the right place to the right person. This requires great wisdom. Spurgeon says, “A holy life is the highest wisdom and the surest defense. Our enemies are renowned for subtlety, from the first father of them, the old serpent, down to the last cockatrice that has been hatched from the egg; and it would be vain for us to try to be a match with them in the craft and mystery of cunning; for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” Don’t leave your Bible on the shelf to collect dust. Read it, memorise it, study it, learn it, apply it! If we keep God’s wise law with us, we shall become wise. When our enemies attack, we shall be prepared to defend and overcome them with the *“twoedged sword.”* Never put aside this *“sword”* nor keep it out of our mind. It must be ever with us. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Half the battle is won when I know my enemy. But who is my enemy?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to be wise as serpents and yet harmless as doves.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15

PSALM 119:105-112

ACTS 5:1-11

*“Thou hast not lied unto men,
but unto God.”*

**(NUN) ACCEPT THE
FREEWILL OFFERINGS
OF MY MOUTH**

What if your offerings to God are not accepted? Can that be? Many have come to God for all the wrong reasons. I remember a man who walked into the church office many years ago. He handed me an envelope which contained a stack of \$50 notes and said, “God has blessed me much but I cannot come on Sunday. Please help me put this in the offering bag on Sunday. This is my offering to God.” I asked him why he is not coming to church. He said, “No particular reason. I know church is good. I know church will help people in need.” I was rather shocked as this is my first encounter with a man like this. I took him to a room and shared the gospel with him. He later left, with his money. He is not prepared to surrender his life to Jesus. He acknowledged God as the provider of his life but was unwilling to acknowledge Him as his Lord and Saviour. He thought God would be happy with his offering. Dear friends, how is your giving? Are you giving to Him because you want Him to close an eye to some sins in your life?

Note that the psalmist came before God and said, *“Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord.”* He came not with his gold, silver or precious stones as offerings but sacrifices of praise and worship out of his mouth, poured forth from a sincere heart. It is so easy to fall into the routine of doing for the sake of doing. Each time we raise our voices to sing the majestic hymns to praise and worship our God, how do we do it? Do we sing forth from our heart and out through our mouth? Do we meditate upon the words and reflect upon God’s faithfulness and kindness upon us as we sing? Each time we worship God, it must be a sacrifice of praise and offering of thanksgiving, starting from our heart. We give unto Him because He deserves our gifts, not because He needs it. May we implore Him to accept the freewill offerings of our mouth. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: How can my singing glorify God if I am tone deaf?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for accepting the freewill offering of my mouth.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16
PSALM 119:113-120
2 CORINTHIANS 4:8-15

*“... troubled on every side,
yet not distressed.”*

(SAMECH) THOU ART MY HIDING PLACE

During my National Service more than ten years ago, I was posted to Taiwan for seven months. I experienced a typhoon for the first time in my life. The entire land was darkened and rain kept pouring. If not for our watches, we would not know if it was day or night. We were stranded in our military base. There was no electricity and our food supply was running low. What can we do? We can only wait for the typhoon to pass. The flood waters overflowed into our dormitory on the ground floor. We had to scoop the water out and set up a wall of sand bags to keep the water out. After that, most of us would lie in bed to get as much rest as possible as we were told that once the typhoon was over, we would have to clean-up the entire camp.

I laid on my bed thinking of my family and loved ones. Then I used my little torchlight to shine on my Bible. As I had to conserve the battery power as much as possible, I read very quickly and then switched off the light. I spent the rest of my time praying and meditating upon what I had read. It was such a blessed time, just me and my God. Since then I learnt to cherish every Quiet Time with God. With God, I have no more fear. With God, I can run to Him whenever I am afraid. God becomes my hiding place. After a few days, the typhoon was finally over. It was such a relief. Life went back to normal again.

I thank God for that rare experience. It was through such an experience that God becomes my hiding place. I know I can depend on Him and no matter what happens, He will always be there for me. Will you depend on Him too? May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Am I not given the powerful weapons of the Bible, the Holy Spirit and prayer? Why do I fear?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to depend on Thee and hide myself in Thee.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

PSALM 119:121-128

COLOSSIANS 3:23-24

“... for ye serve the Lord Christ.”

**(AYIN) IT IS TIME FOR
THEE, LORD, TO WORK**

Have you ever wished you have forty-eight hours a day? I have. There is simply so much work to do each day, articles to write, people to meet, sermons to prepare, college assignments to do, etc. Sometimes I wonder if the work of a pastor has any boundary at all. When a member lost his job, I was requested to keep a lookout for a job for him. When a member called on the phone needing someone to talk to, I would be lying in bed talking to him in the middle of the night. In another incident, I almost became the guarantor for a member who tried to get a loan from a bank. At times, I wanted to give up because the ministry is so demanding. I feel so tired and weary. I feel as if I have reached the end of my rope. “Why?” I asked myself. Is it because I have been depending on my own strength? Is it because I have been going about my service and ministry relying on my own wisdom and power? The psalmist says, “*It is time for thee, Lord, to work...*” It is time for the Lord to work a work that is beyond human strength and power.

In the context of this verse, David was being oppressed by the ungodliness around him. He saw a great need for the Lord to intervene. Therefore he appealed to the Most High to judge against wickedness. When God works, the wicked tremble! When God works, all our works vanish into thin air and it is His works that count. When God works, it is not a matter of whether it will work or not; it is a matter of the degree of power and greatness He is pleased to perform.

When God works, let us pray that we be not found guilty as evildoers and be consumed by His wrath. Do not rely on our own strength. It is time for the Lord to work but let us make sure we do the right thing to please Him. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: When I entrust the Lord to work, I work doubly hard.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to trust in Thy work.

LORD'S DAY, OCTOBER 18

PSALM 119:129-136

COLOSSIANS 3:23

*“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily,
as to the Lord, and not unto men.”*

(PE) ORDER MY STEPS

By and large, sinful men do not like to be ordered around. Recently, in a food court, when I was ordering my food, the woman who took my orders did not even look at me. I wondered if she was listening. I would understand if she was busy. But she was not, as I was the only customer! Nonetheless, I repeated my orders twice. In the end, she still got my orders wrong. What was the problem? If she cannot take orders and instructions, she should be her own boss!

The psalmist humbly says, *“Order my steps in Thy word.”* Note that the psalmist is the king. He has thousands and thousands of men waiting twenty-four hours a day for his order to come anytime. Yet he, as a king, is willing to take orders, albeit from the One who is higher than him! Does David have a choice? Definitely! God did not point a sword at David to make him obey His orders. David willingly and lovingly receives God's orders according to His Word. What a beautiful picture of humility!

“Who are you to tell me what to do!” is what we often cry out in our heart. Our pride melts away any little bit of humility we may have. As a result, though we take the orders and put on the best smile, we do so with much bitterness and anger in our heart. Let us put on the humility garment and be the best children of God at work, in school and at home, taking orders lovingly and willingly in the Lord. We do well when we take heed: *“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord; and not unto men”* (Col 3:23). May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: If I can take orders, everything will be in order.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, may I be humble enough to receive Thy perfect orders.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19

PSALM 119:137-144

1 TIMOTHY 4:12

*“Let no man despise thy youth;
but be thou and example...”*

(TSADDI) I AM SMALL AND DESPISED

How can David be small when he was a king who had won countless battles for the Lord? It has nothing to do with his accomplishments or his position. It was his acknowledgement of God as his Creator and he His creature. When David confessed he was small and despised, he was not emotionally unstable or having a low self-esteem. I believe David was most conscious and sound in his mind. He said those words because he knew his real standing before the Almighty God. How about you? What is your real standing before God? We will always be small in the eyes of God. If we think we are somebody when we are nobody, we deceive no one but ourselves.

David also confessed that he was despised. Obviously, his enemies did not think well of him. They despised him and mocked at him. But what is amazing is that David accepted his situation readily and willingly ate humble pie. A less godly man would have fought back and would do anything and everything to gain the praise and recognition of men. Or at least he would try to “save” his own face. But not David. He humbly accepted it and refused to be distracted from his pursuit of God’s preceptive will. This too is what we must do. There will be those who will try very hard to provoke us so that we may lose our Christian testimony and become a laughing-stock. This is one of Satan’s ways to attack God’s children. Should we be taken in and be deceived by the evil one? All the more, we should endure mockery and keep ourselves focused on God’s Word. Let us not be fooled! Let us know the Word well, and we will be safe. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: When I acknowledge I am a nobody, God can turn me into a somebody for His use.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to find comfort and strength in Thy Word.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20

PSALM 119:145-152

HEBREWS 13:5-6

“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”

(KOPH) THOU ART NEAR, O LORD

Who is nearer, God or our enemy? Do we drag our feet to school because we know we are going to meet someone whom we do not like? Do we wish we can get out of our office as soon as possible because we just cannot stand a moment longer with an unreasonable colleague? Spurgeon says, “Near as the enemy might be, God is nearer: this is one of the choicest comforts of the persecuted child of God. The Lord is near to hear our cries, and to speedily afford us succor. He is near to chase away our enemies, and to give us rest and peace.” Where is God when we need Him? Has God forsaken us?

The psalmist said with confidence, “*Thou art near, O LORD...*” David did not make this up and create his own confidence that God was near him. This confidence is based on the infallible, inerrant and immutable Word of Truth. May we also have this confidence in our heart. This is so needful for such a time as this when truth has become a lie; and lie has become truth. Even church leaders today have been deceived and are deceiving others. How can they believe God’s Word contains mistakes? No matter how small and insignificant the mistakes may be, our confidence in God would definitely be shaken. Our faith in Him will surely waver if indeed there are mistakes in His Word. For God to be true, He cannot lie, and He cannot make mistakes. This is our absolute confidence in Him.

The psalmist believed with all his heart the Lord’s promise to him. God is near. He is not far away. He is not busy with something else and therefore has no time for us. God is near. This is our assurance and comfort. If God is not near, then we will fear and stumble in our faith. God will never do that to us. “Keep on believing, Jesus is near, keep on believing, there’s nothing to fear; Keep on believing, this is the way, Faith in the night as well as the day” (Alfred B. Smith). May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: If God is near, how is it that I can’t feel it?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to believe that Thou art near.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21

PSALM 119:153-160

2 TIMOTHY 4:2-4

“Preach the word...”

(RESH) SALVATION IS FAR FROM THE WICKED

Is it wicked to say that *“Salvation is far from the wicked”*? I don't think so. The wicked do not deserve to be saved and certainly not worthy of any favour or grace to be bestowed upon them. However, as wicked as they are, God still has the power to turn them around and transform them totally into a brand new man beyond our imagination. This is evidenced in many of us who were once prodigal sons. All of a sudden, we saw the light and truth in His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. We were strangely warmed by His great love. We were compelled by the special call out of darkness into His marvelous light. Was that your experience?

The psalmist cries, *“Salvation is far from the wicked.”* This statement is so true. If one is truly saved, he will not remain in his wickedness. If he continues in wickedness, it only shows he is most likely not saved in the first place. In the true sense of the word, salvation is indeed far from the wicked. Salvation is so far away that he can never reach it, though with his ears he heard the Good News of how he can be saved; though with his eyes he read the gracious words of how he can be forgiven of all his sins. Yet his heart remains hardened. He sees no eternal benefit in becoming good. So he continues in wickedness. Every step he takes in the path of evil removes him further and further away from the kingdom of grace. He may desire a place in the comfort of heaven, but foolishly he wants that on his own terms. How gullible and how foolish, not knowing salvation is far from the wicked!

Salvation is only possible on God's terms and conditions. The salvation motto has been and always will be: Only Jesus saves. Will you believe in Jesus? Will you come to Him and let Him save you from your wickedness? May God help you. Amen.

THOUGHT: The best of all sinners is still condemned if he is outside Christ. The worst of all saints is still saved if he is in Christ.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me not to harden my heart against Thee.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22

PSALM 119:161-168

HEBREWS 12:1-2

*“Looking unto Jesus the author
and finisher of our faith...”*

(SCHIN) AS ONE THAT FINDETH GREAT SPOIL

The psalmist exclaims, *“I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil”* (Ps 119:162). His heart stands in awe of God’s Word (v 161), and at the same time, he rejoices at the same Word in the next verse. The awe that he has does not drive him away from God, otherwise he would not have rejoiced in Him. Spurgeon says, *“His awe did not prevent his joy; his fear of God was not of the kind which perfect love casts out, but of the sort which it nourishes. He trembled at the word of the Lord, and yet rejoiced at it.”* This is the wonder and power of God’s Word upon His beloved children.

David compares his joy as one that finds great spoil. In time of famine, Jacob and his children found hope in the land of Egypt. Out of the Marah waters, the children of God in the wilderness journey found living water when Moses cast a tree therein. While everyone was hungry, the four lepers went by faith into the enemies’ territory and found no one except a great spoil that in the end saved all of them from dying of hunger. These are only a few of the many examples that describe the abundance of God’s blessing upon His children. Indeed this is the joy that only God’s children can experience. In such evil times, as we fight hard in every battle for the truth, may we not grow weary and give up. Each fight must spur us on and remind us that we are not fighting a losing battle but a victorious one. The battle is won already. The crown is waiting for us. All that is needed is to complete the fight by faith. The author of Hebrews encourages us, *“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”* (Heb 12:1-2). May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Since the battle against sin is won already, why must I still fight?

PRAYER: Help me, Lord, to fight the spiritual battle to the end.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23

PSALM 119:169-176

LUKE 15:3-7

*“Rejoice with me; for I have found
my sheep which was lost.”*

(TAU) GONE ASTRAY LIKE A LOST SHEEP

My first self-drive from Singapore to Kemaman in Malaysia was a disaster. A 500-km journey that normally would take about six hours to complete took me more than twelve hours! Why? I was lost! Before I set off, I looked up the relevant maps, and asked my knowledgeable friends for directions, yet in the end I still lose my way. What happened? All it took was one wrong turn, and I did not even realize it! The good thing was: I was not lost forever, for I did reach Kemaman in the end.

According to Spurgeon, “This is the finale, the conclusion of the whole matter: I have gone astray like a lost sheep, often willfully, wantonly, and even hopelessly but for Thine interposing grace. In times gone by, before I was afflicted, and before Thou hadst fully taught me Thy statutes, I went astray. I went astray from the practical precepts, from the instructive doctrines, and from the heavenly experiences which Thou hadst set before me. I lost my road, and I lost myself. Even now I am apt to wander, and, in fact, have roamed already; therefore, Lord, restore me.” It is high time we examine ourselves as to whether we have gone astray. Are we found in the company of ungodliness and godlessness? Are we getting impatient with spiritual obligations of prayer, worship and Christian service? Have we began our day without prayer and ended our day with no remembrance of the Lord? If your answers to the above questions are in the affirmative, you have gone astray and are a lost sheep. If you are really lost, you won’t know how to come back! The psalmist prayed the right prayer, “*I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant...*” (v 176). Pray that God will seek you. May His Word direct your path step by step. It is never too late or too wrong to come back to the right path. The only failure is to reject God’s direction and continue to walk in the wrong path. Don’t be lost forever while there is still time for you to make a U-turn! May God help you. Amen.

THOUGHT: To know I am lost is the first necessary step to know that I can be found.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, may Thy Word always direct my path.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

PSALM 120:1-7

JAMES 3:3-10

“But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”

LYING LIPS AND A DECEITFUL TONGUE

According to James the apostle, though the tongue is a small organ, it *“is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell”* (James 3:6). Our tongue is that powerful! Have you underestimated it? David prayed, *“Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue”* (Ps 120:2). He acknowledged that God’s help was needed to handle such corrupt and deadly instruments. Lips are soft, but the moment they become lying lips, they are the deadliest weapons that are ready to cut up anyone that comes along. The tongue is tender, but the moment it becomes a deceitful tongue, it is ready to deceive men into entering the devouring hell as if they were going to the glorious heaven. These are strong descriptions to drive home the point that we are to be careful with our words.

How careful are you with your words? Are they seasoned with grace or filled with poison that even a tiny drop of it is murderous? Not many have the privilege to be in the debating team to represent their school or country. But each one of us strangely has that natural gift even without ample preparation to “debate” in every quarrel, conflict and disagreement, using all the unkind, unloving, untrue, most hurtful and destructive words in order to win the argument. It is as if we are fighting to win the “Best Speaker” award. Oh, how badly we need divine assistance to control our deceitful tongue and lying lips!

Oh, how we need to dip our tongue and lips again and again in the soul-cleansing blood of the Lamb, that we may speak gracious words out of a pure heart to strengthen, edify and build up one another’s faith. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Even if I do not open my mouth, it does not mean I have spoken no lies. When the truth ought to be promoted, yet I keep quiet, I am equally guilty of lying.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, give me courage to speak the truth and to expose error by Thy Word and Spirit.

LORD'S DAY, OCTOBER 25

PSALM 121:1-8

JOHN 10:27-29

"My sheep hear my voice..."

THE LORD SHALL PRESERVE THEE

This is the Sunday which most Christians find exciting, not because today is Reformation Sunday but because of Halloween. Only a remnant would continue to remember this greatest event in church history when the Lord is pleased to turn the Church around through the 16th Century Reformation.

The psalmist says, *"The Lord shall preserve thee"* (Ps 121:7). Should the Lord withhold the Great Reformation from happening, the Church will be lost and remain "deformed" to this day! Our God is a God who preserves! He preserves His people, a remnant, for His Word and for the testimony of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. Are our hearts not warmed because God preserves us?

There is an unbroken cord that ties us to God. No matter how far we have gone from Him due to the weakness of our flesh and the spiritual bankruptcy of our soul, the Lord continues to preserve us. Satan, in his happiness, would have thought he has successfully caused a child of God to lose his place in heaven and have his name blotted out of the Book of Life. But God in His loving assurance says, *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand"* (John 10:27-29). There are many voices calling out to you. However, there is only one voice that is constantly speaking to your conscience. Other voices would appeal to the lust of your flesh, your eyes, and your pride. And you are given a choice. If you are God's sheep, you will hear His voice. If not, you will not follow Him. God's preservation only applies to His redeemed people. The rest are condemned and reserved for the Lake of Fire. Are you redeemed? Only you can answer for yourself. May God help you. Amen.

THOUGHT: If I am not God's sheep, then I must be a goat. What am I doing in His church?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to examine my faith if I am Thy sheep.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26

PSALM 122:1-9

ROMANS 11:1-12

“God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.”

PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM

Jerusalem means “teaching of peace” according to the Hebrew definition. But today, Jerusalem remains the hotbed of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As much as peace is sought after in Jerusalem as peace is her name, there is still no peace. Jerusalem was declared the capital city of Israel in 1948 but it was never a city of one and unity. This city is a divided city, especially with the prominent presence of the Palestinian Arabs in Eastern Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the Jews’ holiest city. It is the Muslims’ third holiest city after Mecca and Medina. Christians from all over the world would make their pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and one city not to be missed is the “City of David,” Jerusalem.

This holy city has a special place in the heart of the psalmist. He implores, *“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem”* (v 6). Indeed the people of God should unite and pray in one accord for the peace of Jerusalem. God has not cast His chosen people (Israel) away (Rom 11). The main reason for their trouble in the Holy Land traces all the way back to their incomplete conquest after forty years of wilderness wandering. God had instructed Israel to destroy the pagan nations in the Promised Land completely, both the people and their possessions. But Israel disobeyed. Those enemies whom they spared remain a threat and thorn in their flesh to this day. Peace was experienced in Jerusalem but it lasted only a short time under the reign of Solomon, Josiah, Hezekiah, etc. The moment they were gone, peace followed them to the grave, and unrest and trouble found their way back time and time again. In these last days, as we look closely at the events centering on Jerusalem, let us continue to pray that God will be merciful and gracious to His people in the same Promised Land that is still flowing with milk and honey. *“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”* May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee (Rom 11:21).

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, let me be in the remnant according to the election of Thy grace.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27

PSALM 123:1-4

LUKE 22:39-46

“Not my will, but thine be done.”

WAIT UPON THE LORD

I must confess that one of my weaknesses is the lack of patience to wait. I am one who always keeps an eye on the traffic lights (not meant for me but for the motorists on the perpendicular direction), so that I can zoom off even before the lights before me turn green. Why am I so impatient? Why can't I wait patiently?

In this modern time, we live in a fast-pace world, a world of fast food, instant noodles, 3-in-1 coffee, quick print and expressways. Everything must be instant. Thanks to advancement in technology, everything operates instantly. But how has this affected our spiritual life? I found out on the internet recently that there was a church in Florida providing a 22-minute worship service. They promise that everything will be over in 22 minutes and the sermon is only 8-minute long. How do you like that? Is there a formula or a 3-step program that can guarantee your prayer will be answered instantly? God forbid! It is high time we learn to wait upon Him.

Waiting upon the Lord does not mean sitting on the sofa and staring at the four walls in a daze, until He answers your prayer. To wait means to actively seek Him in prayer, dig into His Word, and then open your eyes to see the Spirit's guidance and direction made clear to you. The duration of this wait may be long or it can be instant depending on God's good pleasure and will. We need patience to keep waiting upon the Lord. It may be a difficult problem you have to solve, a broken relationship that needs to be restored, or the dire need of a job to provide for the family. By faith and in patience, let us not lose hope but wait upon our Lord. May His will be done and not ours! May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: The only way to pray according to God's will is to pray according to His revealed will – the Word of God.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to wait upon Thee, and may Thy will, not mine, be done.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28

PSALM 124:1-8

1 JOHN 2:18-29

“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”

GOD IS ON OUR SIDE

Humbly we know we ought and must be on the Lord's side. Because with Him, we are the majority! If we choose to stand with the world which is hostile towards God, then we are in great danger. Jesus says, *“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matt 10:28). It is this God whom we are to fear. And we better make sure we are on His side. However, it is thought-provoking when the psalmist says *“If it had not been the Lord who was on our side...”* Did the psalmist make a mistake here? Absolutely not! He wrote under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit who makes no mistake and is in absolute harmony with all other human writers under the same inspiration. What a great comfort to know that God can be on our side!

But, on what grounds? The fact that His covenantal name “LORD” which is “Jehovah” is invoked in the introductory statement reveals to us the fundamental reason. God remembers the covenant He made with His people. God has not forgotten even though His people may have forgotten all about it. It is truly based upon God's faithfulness and lovingkindness upon His chosen ones. Therefore, *“... all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins”* (Rom 11:26-27). Spurgeon says, *“When all men combined, and the whole race of men seemed set upon stamping out the house of Israel, what must have happened if the covenant Lord had not interposed? When they stirred themselves, and combined to make an assault upon our quietude and safety, what should we have done in their rising if the Lord had not also risen?”* Indeed we can rejoice because God is on our side more than we are on His side. May the faithful God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Although God is on my side, I am responsible for standing on His side.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, may I always be on Thy side.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

PSALM 125:1-5

PROVERBS 3:5-6

*“In all thy ways acknowledge him,
and he shall direct thy paths.”*

TRUST IN THE LORD

Even a contract with all the strictest terms and conditions cannot stop one from breaking it. That includes a marriage, a partnership, or a diplomatic collaboration, etc. Man cannot be trusted absolutely. Only God can! But it seems we have a problem with that too. Not that God cannot be trusted, but that we do not seem to trust Him enough. By our mouth we say we trust Him, but by our action, we do otherwise. We continue to worry, murmur, and doubt if God has heard our prayer. When we see that nothing seems to be happening, we prefer to jump ahead of God, making decisions and plans without trusting and waiting upon Him to answer. Where is our trust in Him?

No wonder we run into many problems. No wonder we get ourselves entangled in a bigger mess. When will we ever learn to trust God? Is it really necessary for God to prove to us that He is absolutely worthy to be trusted? The wisest man on earth who has ever lived has these words for us, *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths”* (Prov 3:5-6). We do well to take heed of these words of wisdom.

Indeed it is a necessary step of faith to trust in God’s power to direct our life. When facing an enormous task, with men it may be impossible, but with God, all things are made possible.

Let us learn to trust in Him today. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Since a contract can be broken, why do I bother to make it in the first place?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me not to take Thee for granted. Help me to trust in Thee always, in times of adversity as well as prosperity.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

PSALM 126:1-6

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6

“He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.”

SOW IN TEARS ... REAP IN JOY

This is a proverbial expression likened to a farmer who toiled on the hard ground for months before he can see the bountiful harvest at the end. In our modern day context, most of us will get our paycheck at the end of the month. The general principle is: We work first and get the reward later. According to the context of this psalm, the psalmist is praying earnestly for the return of God's people who have been taken captive by the enemies. Such is the tearful longing for the family and nation to be restored and reunited. Will God be merciful to answer such a prayer?

Spurgeon says, “It is not every sowing which is thus insured against all danger, and guaranteed a harvest; but the promise specially belongs to sowing in tears. When a man's heart is so stirred that he weeps over the sins of others, he is elect to usefulness. Winners of souls are first weepers for souls. As there is no birth without travail, so is there no spiritual harvest without painful tillage. When our own hearts are broken with grief at man's transgression we shall break other men's hearts: tears of earnestness beget tears of repentance.” It is the present sowing time that is trying and difficult. However we have the divine assurance that it will not last forever because one day we shall reap in joy. It may not be in this present life that we shall reap in joy. But surely the day when we shall meet our Saviour face to face, we will be ushered into His glorious and happy presence where there will be no more tears, sorrow, pain, disappointment, and death forever. Anything that prevents and robs us of our present joy will never be able to do so in our heavenly abode. The sowing in tears is temporal while the reaping in joy is eternal. Do you believe? Are you not comforted? May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Does the Golden Rule (Do unto others what you want others to do unto you) apply here?
PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to be faithful to Thee, not for reward's sake, but for Thy sake.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

PSALM 127:1-5

1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-17

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

**16TH CENTURY
REFORMATION 492ND
ANNIVERSARY:
THE LORD BUILDETH!**

A wealthy man decided to render a helping hand to his poor builder friend. “This is half a million dollars. Please build me a fine house in six month’s time. Design and build according to what you deem fit.” The wealthy man left and the poor builder starts work on the house happily. As he builds, he thought to himself: A fine house would not need half a million dollars to build. With this thought, he started cutting corners here and there. He used the poorest quality and the most inferior materials in order to cut costs. In the end, he pocketed more than half of the money given to him. The house was completed on time. The wealthy man came and was very impressed with the fine house. He took the keys and handed to him saying, “Actually I don’t really need this house. I just wanted to give you a helping hand. Look, you have just built yourself a fine new house. Here, take the keys. The house is yours now.” The builder almost fainted. Had he known that this house was going to be his, he would not have cut corners in the first place. Every material he used would be the best and not the inferior ones. Within a month after he moved in, he began to face problems with the house. The walls cracked, the pipes leaked, the wiring became loose, etc. In the end, he has to spend more than what he has “saved.” How is your “building”? Have you also cut corners?

The 16th Century Reformation is a faithful work of God that works till this day. Without the Reformation, what would become of the Church today? Without the Reformation, we would have all built the house in vain. Thank God for the Reformation. It is a living testimony that the LORD Himself has built His Church and reformed it. What reformed Church are we talking about? It is the Bible-defending Church that believes by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone according to the Scripture alone, giving all glory to God alone! May God help us.

THOUGHT: Is the Roman Catholic Church considered the militant church?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, by faith alone I believe in Thee.

LORD'S DAY, NOVEMBER 1

1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27

HEBREWS 12:1-2

"So run, that ye may obtain."

IT IS TIME TO RUN!

The Christian race is a tough, gruelling long distance race, in which we need to utilize every ounce of energy and exercise much discipline and perseverance till we finish the race and stand perfect in the presence of our Lord. We are given the assurance in Hebrews 11 that the saints of old have run and completed the race. They are the "witnesses" towering above us and cheering us on in the race. The chief Runner is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith. His completion of the race and the victory obtained ensure ours, from the first saint to the last. Is there any good reason why we should not look unto Jesus? Too often we are preoccupied with certain activities in our lives and we allow these to take away that "look" we ought to give Him. That is why the writer of Hebrews called us to lay aside every weight and sin that hinders our progress in the Christian race. These weights may not be sinful, yet they may slow us down in the race. We need to identify them and ask God for wisdom as to how to manage them properly so that our spiritual life will not be affected. As for sins, God hates them and the Bible warns us against them. Sins will not only slow us down in the race, but will also cause us to fall and hurt ourselves. Will you set aside your weights and sins, and run?

Dear brethren, we must run! Some may be idling or sleeping at the side of the race track. Some may be complaining about the condition of the course. Some may not be in a fit condition spiritually. Some may be offering multiple excuses for their inadequacy. Some may be facing a terrible sickness, a serious setback or failure in career or family. Whatever it is, it is time to run! The race set for each one of us may vary: the obstacles are different, the hindrances take different shapes and levels of intensity. But every one of us can finish the race because of Jesus Christ who has gone before us. So let us look unto Jesus as we run the race with great patience to His glory. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: No man is qualified to run the Christian race until he becomes a Christian.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to start running my Christian race today.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

MARK 12:28-34

*“Thou art not far from
the kingdom of God”*

THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD (I)

(a) Must we be commanded to love God?

It must be so because when left to ourselves we will not take that first step to love God. We must realize that because of sin, we will choose to love anything and everything except God. The Bible teaches us that our love for God can grow as we know more and more of His love. We do not love God because we do not know Him enough. Do you know God? Do you know Jesus who loves you so much that He is willing to suffer and die to save you from your sin?

God has taken that first step to love us. Our love for God is only in response to His love for us. On our own, we are incapable of loving God. We love Him because He first loved us. When we are most sinful, most wicked, most ugly and most unlovable, God loves us.

(b) We are to give God our priority

We are to put God first in our life. But giving God top priority is not going to be easy. Many people and things around us are constantly fighting for that position. It is indeed a big struggle to keep God on the top of our list of priorities at all times. If we want to know if God is truly number one in our life, just look at our calendar and year planner. These will tell us what our true priorities are. Where is God on our list of priorities? Does God get the best of our time? Why not? Don't we love Him? Do we really love Him?

We have to evaluate our life and make adjustment to give God our priority. Will you do it? May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Is it wrong to love our family when we are commanded to love God with all our heart?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me understand that the more I love Thee, the more I can love the people and things that Thou hast blessed me with.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

1 JOHN 2:15-17

*“He that doeth the will of God abideth
for ever.”*

THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD (II)

A story is told of a little 4-year-old girl called Martha. She was talking to her mother while hugging Dolly, her favourite doll, in her arms. And she said to her mother, “Mamma, I love Dolly. I love her so much, I dress her up, clean her when she is dirty and I call her my best friend and I let her sleep with me. I just love her. But why can’t she love me back?” Are we like this little girl?

There are so many things we love in this world. But Apostle John wrote, *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever”* (1 John 2:15-17).

(c) To Love God is to Surrender
Our All to Him

Jesus did not say we must love God with most of our heart, or with part of our soul or with a portion of our mind. It is the word *“all”* (Matt 22:37) that matters most to Him. All means all. We are to surrender our all to God: ALL our heart, ALL our soul, and ALL our might. We sing often about how we love God, but how much do we really love Him? Do we render our service to Him because it is by the way? If it is out of the way, will you still serve Him? Perhaps your problem is that you have never responded to God’s love by receiving the Lord Jesus to be your personal Lord and Saviour. Will you surrender your ALL to Jesus? Will you love Him with all your heart, soul, and might? May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: If I give all my love to God, does it mean then that I will have no more love left for my family?
PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me love Thee with all my heart.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4

EXODUS 3:1-10

1 SAMUEL 3:1-18

*“Speak, LORD; for Thy servant
heareth.”*

THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S CALLING (I)

We are living in the last of the last days. What better time than now to serve our Lord full-time? But how can I know for sure God is calling me to serve Him full-time? What are the clear signs of His calling? These are some questions asked by those who are not sure of God’s calling.

God’s call is mysterious because it can come in so many different ways. We know of Moses who was called out of a burning bush (Exo 3) or young Samuel who heard a voice calling him at least three times in his sleep (1 Sam 3). And there are countless others who were called by God and each had a different experience. Let us look at a few principles of God’s calling.

(a) **God is the One who Calls.** We have no part in the ministry unless God has called us. It is His call to us that counts. God does the calling, not man. It is also not based upon anything we have done but entirely by His good pleasure and will. He chose whomsoever He will to serve in the ministry. Paul testified, *“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace”* (Gal 1:15).

(b) **God Uses His Word to Call.** The whole congregation may have heard the same Word preached but you may be the only who responded because it ministered right to your heart. The Bible is God’s revealed will for His people. Through God’s Word, we know what God’s will is for us.

That is why we must always be connected to God through prayer and reading of His Word. Without which there is no way that we can know His will for our life today.

THOUGHT: Will God call a Christian to full-time ministry when he has no desire to do so at all?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to be ready to obey Thy command when Thou callest.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5

ISAIAH 6:1-10

JEREMIAH 1:1-10

*“Before I formed thee in the belly
I knew thee.”*

THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S CALLING (II)

(c) **God Uses His Spirit to Call.** Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. How can a mere man understand God’s Word unless God is pleased to reveal it to him? The Spirit of God enables one to understand God’s Word by opening his eyes and granting him illumination. As a result, his spiritual blindness is removed and he can see clearly.

(d) **God Provides His Spiritual Gift.** When God calls a person, He will also equip him with the necessary spiritual gifts for service. This is one good indication how one can be sure of God’s calling. Calling and spiritual gifts are inseparable.

One has to be very sure of God’s calling before he takes that first step of faith to enter the full-time ministry. As such, fervent prayer and self-examination are important to ascertain the call of God. There will be oppositions. There will be challenges. But if you are truly called by God, you will by God’s grace overcome all the obstacles one by one.

I cannot think of anything that is higher than serving the King of kings and the Lord of lords. God’s calling is the highest calling that anyone can receive when we consider from the eternal perspective. However, from the human and earthly perspective, many have despised this service because it is a “job” that is least lucrative.

If you think you are called by God, you may want to speak to your church leaders and let them pray for you. Amen.

THOUGHT: Is anyone too young that he cannot serve God? Is anyone too old that he cannot be used by God?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me not to look at Thy service from the earthly perspective but from the heavenly.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6

ACTS 4:32-37

PROVERBS 27:17

*“Iron sharpeneth iron, so a man
sharpeneth the countenance
of his friend.”*

BE A BARNABAS – A SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Barnabas was a leader in the early Christian church. His name means “Son of Encouragement.” He was first mentioned in the book of Acts, for his outstanding example of generosity when he sold his field and gave the money to the apostles to distribute to those in need (Acts 4:32-37).

Barnabas was also the one who recommended Paul to the Christian community before Paul became the great Apostle. Paul, who was originally Saul of Tarsus, had been known for persecuting and killing Christians. It is understandable why many Christians were suspicious of his motives after his radical conversion experience and became a preacher of the gospel. It was Barnabas who stood by him and introduced him to the apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 9:27).

Later, Barnabas stood up against Paul in defence of a young disciple, John Mark, who had left them halfway through their first missionary journey. Paul was not willing to give John Mark a second chance. But Barnabas thought differently. He insisted on bringing John Mark along. In the end, Paul and Barnabas went separate ways, with Barnabas taking John Mark under his wings. Later on, John Mark proved himself to be profitable to the Lord’s ministry. And Paul acknowledged that in his epistle (2 Tim 4:11). Barnabas was truly no respecter of persons.

Barnabas truly lived up to his name – a son of encouragement. Will you be a Barnabas for God’s sake?

THOUGHT: Some are very generous with their criticisms but extremely stingy with their encouragements. Is this true of me?
PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to encourage someone today.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

1 PETER 1:3-9

JAMES 1:2-12

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.”

MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

The trials of life can be very distressing and very emotionally-draining. The common question that often fills our mind when we are in the midst of trials is “Why?” “Why must this happen to us, Lord?” “Why must it be so painful?” The Lord answers with an illustration in 1 Peter 1:7, *“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”*

The refining process of gold is used as an analogy of the purification of our Christian faith through trials. When we first believe in God, our faith is like unrefined raw gold that has just been dug out of a gold mine. There are three stages in the whole refining process. The first stage is to separate the raw gold from sand and gravel by using flowing water. The sand and gravel get washed away, while the raw gold, which is heavier, sinks and remains. In the second stage, mercury is added to the gold. This liquid metal combines immediately with the gold and makes it very brittle, so that it can easily be separated from other materials. In the final stage of the refining process, intense heat is applied to the gold, so that it melts into molten gold. This vaporises away the mercury that was added in the second stage, and also burns away any remaining impurities. The end result of all this is the pure gold, which is both beautiful and precious. Gold is the most precious metal to man. For us Christians, our faith is even more precious than gold. Our faith needs to be refined like gold. Though painful, the refining process is most effective for the purification of our faith in the Lord. Our faith will reach its best form, a form that is many times more precious than the purest gold!

This is the kind of faith that will bring praise, honour and glory at the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As such, let us press on and pray that our faith will be built stronger after each trial of life. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: The more I crucify my “whys,” the stronger is my faith.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for giving me a strong faith.

LORD'S DAY, NOVEMBER 8

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

1 TIMOTHY 3:16

"...God was manifest in the flesh..."

KNOWING JESUS AND HIS HUMANITY (I)

To become a Christian, one must first know who Jesus Christ is before he can exercise faith and become His follower. But many today are following Jesus without even knowing who He is. If you claim to be a Christian, do you know Jesus?

Christianity is founded on a Person: Jesus Christ. He is unique in His birth, His life, His teaching, His works, His death and His resurrection. Jesus Christ is the foundation on which Christianity is built. He is the seed of the woman spoken of first in Genesis 3:15. He is the Son of God who *"made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men"* (Phil 2:7), and He dwelt among men.

(a) His Birth

Jesus was born in a supernatural way: a Virgin Birth! It was in fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy: *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel"* (Isa 7:14). His birth was not by the will of man, but by the power of God (Luke 1:35).

One prophecy demands one fulfilment. And if the object of prophecy is Christ, then it will be fulfilled by Christ and none else. Isaiah 42:8, *"I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."* Jesus' birth is unique and is not to be repeated again.

THOUGHT: Is it possible for the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 to present a double fulfilment: first by Ahaz's son, and then by Christ?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the humanity of our Lord Jesus.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9

GALATIANS 4:4-9

1 JOHN 4:1-6

*“Every spirit that confesseth that
Jesus Christ is come in the flesh
is of God.”*

KNOWING JESUS AND HIS HUMANITY (II)

(b) His Knowledge

At age 12, Jesus communed with the “doctors” in the Temple and “all that heard Him was astonished at His understanding and answers” (Luke 2:47). The uniqueness of His knowledge and spiritual wisdom must be set against the fact that Jesus had grown up in a humble carpenter’s home. As far as we can tell, He had never attended any school of higher learning. We conclude, therefore, that His source of knowledge came directly from God His Father.

(c) His Teachings

Jesus’ teachings were authoritative because they are the very words of God. He was able to expound the Old Testament Scriptures and taught sinful men how to apply God’s Word into their life. His teachings played down the traditions of men which the Pharisees and the scribes had been advocating and imposing upon the common people.

(d) His Human Development and Constitution

Like any other human beings, Jesus had to go through the process of birth and physical growth (Luke 2:41-52). His body was of real human flesh, blood and bones (Heb 2:14; Luke 24:39). His body was subjected to the infirmities of the natural human body like hunger (Matt 4:2), thirst (John 19:28), and tiredness (John 4:6; Matt 8:24). He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15).

THOUGHT: How can Jesus be fully God and fully man at the same time?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, strengthen my faith to believe fully that Thy only begotten Son is fully God and fully man in one Person.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10

JOHN 8:31-59

JOHN 10:24-39

“...because I said,
I am the Son of God?”

KNOWING JESUS AND HIS DEITY (I)

Jesus is Man. But is He also God? The Bible affirms that Jesus is God. The sincere seeker of the truth who reads through the Gospels with an open mind will not fail to see that Jesus Christ is God for three main reasons:

(a) His Words

A man's speech gives others an insight into his personality and character. The words uttered by Jesus recorded in the Gospel accounts are of great significance. They reveal to us His heart and mind. John 8:58, “*Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*” John 10:30, “*I and my Father are one.*” To know God is to know Jesus; to see God is to see Jesus; to believe in God is to believe in Jesus.

(b) His Works

If Jesus is God, then His works must be supernatural as well. By His miracles, Jesus demonstrated His power as the Lord of life and Master of the physical world. He turned water into wine (John 2:1-11), fed the 5,000 (Matt 14:17-21), walked on the Sea of Galilee (John 6:19), healed the lame (Matt 11:5), cleansed and healed the lepers (Luke 17:12-14), raised the dead to life (John 11). Even the winds and seas obeyed Him (Luke 8:25), and the evil spirits also (Mark 1:27). Man demands to see “*signs*” and “*wonders*,” or they will not believe. But when they do see them, they remain in their unbelief because their hearts are hardened. So our Lord pleads with those who are looking for the Saviour: “*Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake*” (John 14:11).

THOUGHT: If Jesus is not fully God, what would be the consequences?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to believe that Jesus was fully divine when He was on earth.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11

JOHN 20:26-31

1 JOHN 1:1-4

*“...our hands have handled,
of the Word of life.”*

KNOWING JESUS AND HIS DEITY (II)

(c) His Resurrection

Of all the recorded miracles and signs in the Gospels, the resurrection of Jesus is the greatest. Never before or after has there been any event like it. Jesus had predicted His resurrection in several Bible passages. John 2:19, *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”* Even His disciples could not understand Him until His resurrection. Matthew 12:40, *“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”* Jesus meant that He would die and be buried in the grave for three days and three nights. Matthew 16:21, *“... began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”* He predicted not only His death, but also His resurrection. If He did not rise from the dead, then He must be a great liar. And if He is a liar, how can we believe Him or His Word?

It is not easy for a man to claim that he would lay down his life and then rise again. If he cannot do it, the reputation as a liar will remain though he be dead. But Jesus is different. He truly rose from the dead according to what He had claimed. That set Him apart from human kind. The resurrection of Jesus therefore set Him apart as the unique Son of God, God in the flesh, who had come to earth as the Son of Man to redeem fallen man and restore him back to God.

If Christ is God because of His Word, Works and Resurrection, should not all men acknowledge Him and bow down before Him?

THOUGHT: If God is a Spirit, how can Jesus be fully God and fully man?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I acknowledge Thy only begotten Son Jesus is fully God and fully Man at the same time.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

ROMANS 5:6-21

MARK 10:45

“... while we were yet sinners
Christ died for us.”

KNOWING JESUS DEEPER IN HIS DEATH (I)

The one purpose of Jesus' coming to earth is to save fallen man and redeem the lost creation. “*For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*” (Mark 10:45). The death of Jesus is central to the Gospel message. It is the heart of God's plan of salvation for fallen man.

(a) His Sacrificial Love

It is God's sacrificial love that sent His only begotten Son to be nailed to the cross for our sins. His love for us is so deep that nothing can ever separate us from Him (Rom 5:8; 8:35, 38-39).

(b) His Death is a Historical Fact

It is a historical fact that Jesus died on the cross of Calvary. The soldiers had to ensure that those crucified were really dead before allowing their bodies to be taken down from the cross. Those still breathing will have their legs broken to ensure that they cannot run away and to further speed up their death. Because the soldiers were satisfied that Jesus had really died, they did not break his bones. However one of them pierced His side with a spear and out flowed blood and water. Then Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus, wound it in linen clothes with nearly a hundred pound weight of myrrh and aloes, and buried Him in the new garden tomb. The entrance was then sealed with a stone and Roman guards were stationed outside. All these were recorded and proved that Jesus had indeed died and was buried.

THOUGHT: If Jesus was strangled to death or drowned, can He still be our Saviour?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for the great sacrifice that the Lord Jesus Christ has made for me.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13

ROMANS 5:6-21

MARK 10:45

*“... by his blood, we shall be saved
from wrath through him.”*

KNOWING JESUS DEEPER IN HIS DEATH (II)

(c) His Victory

Christ's death on the cross is the very heart of the Gospel. It was there the spotless Lamb of God gave His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). Christ's obedience to the Father's will won Him a mighty victory over sin and death.

By His death on the cross, Christ removed the barrier between man and God. Just before Jesus died, He cried *“It is finished!”* and the veil of the Temple was rent in two, opening the way into God's holy presence for all who turn to Him. Christ has opened the way to Heaven to all who would believe in Him.

Apostle Paul gave us these comforting words, especially for those who needed to be assured of God's forgiveness of their sins: *“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life”* (Rom 5:6-10).

THOUGHT: If Jesus died without shedding any blood, could He have saved us?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for Jesus who is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-8

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

*“We shall meet the Lord in the air:
so shall we ever be with the Lord.”*

KNOWING JESUS DEEPER IN HIS RESURRECTION (I)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ makes Christianity unique, for only Jesus (among all other major religious leaders who ever lived and died) rose again from the dead. Indeed our God is a living and true God. We have not a dead Saviour but a living One!

If there is no resurrection, our Christian faith would be useless, our preaching false, and worse still, our sins remain yet in us.

(a) It is a Historical Event

The Gospels record more than ten separate appearances of our risen Lord to His own disciples and other “*witnesses chosen*” (Acts 10:41). Not only that, more than 500 brethren saw Him at the Ascension (1 Cor 15:1-8). It is a universal law that a truth is established when two or three witnesses vouched for it. And Christ’s resurrection has more than 500 witnesses. If this is a false account, it could not have passed through more than 20 centuries. The resurrection of Christ is true, and it is the truth. It has stood the test of time no matter how sinful men have tried to deny it. “*For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth*” (2 Cor 13:8).

The Lord’s Day was also instituted as a result of Christ’s resurrection. Christians kept their Sabbath on the first day of the week (Sunday) instead of the Jewish Sabbath which is on the last day of the week (Saturday). Every Lord’s Day is a reminder of Christ’s resurrection. It is a preview of that “grand finale” when “*in the moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*” (1 Cor 15:52)

THOUGHT: Will my glorified body be able to feel any pain?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me the blessed hope of a future resurrection in Christ.

LORD'S DAY, NOVEMBER 15

1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-19

1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-58

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

KNOWING JESUS DEEPER IN HIS RESURRECTION (II)

(b) Its Impact on Christians

Jesus' resurrection confirms the truthfulness and trustworthiness of all His words, works and teachings. This is the confidence we have in God and we should not waver in our trust in all His promises. Indeed we have the absolute saving gospel in our hands. With this confidence, we can share the Good News without need for compromise or apology whatsoever.

This is the Good News that Jesus has indeed overcome sin and death and hell, and through Him we have the same victory. Therefore we need not fear death. Death is but a transition to that which is eternal in heaven and we shall be with our Lord forever.

Without Jesus, how can sinful man ever be saved? Jesus is the God-Man: fully divine and fully human in one Person. He is most worthy to be God's representative and man's representative to make this reconciliation between God and man possible (1 Tim 2:5).

Let us always come before Him with a grateful heart full of thanksgiving as we continue to know our Saviour and Lord Jesus deeper in His humanity, deity, death and resurrection according to the Scripture. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Is there any valid reason why I should not believe in Jesus?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for Thy only begotten Son Jesus Christ who has saved me from my eternal misery and the power of sin by His sinless and perfect life, His sacrificial death on the cross and His glorious resurrection that has secured mine as well.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16

ROMANS 1:18-32

LEVITICUS 18:22

“Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind, it is abomination.”

HOMOSEXUALITY: A GENETIC OR MORAL ISSUE? (I)

Singapore had its first Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual (GLB) Festival in August 2005. The conservative ruling against homosexuality seems to have lost its grip and power. This is confirmed when Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew, in his 1998 CNN statement, said: “What we are doing as a government is to leave people to live their own lives so long as they don’t impinge on other people. I mean, we don’t harass anybody.” Most gay business owners have taken these words to heart and the gay scene has quickly become more open, diverse, and world-class. MM Lee even publicly acknowledged that homosexuality may indeed be a natural genetic variation. Such words from the mouth of MM carry a lot of weight! Is homosexuality indeed a genetic issue? Or is it a moral one?

Today, every one does that which is right in his own eyes, as in the days of the Judges in the Old Testament. One thing is sure: Every one stands guilty before the sin-condemning gospel of Jesus Christ. But sad to say, there are Christians who have caught on this terrible “disease” of homosexuality. They have grown to sympathise with the homosexuals and are prepared to accept their homosexuality as an alternate lifestyle. What was abnormal and perverted in the past has become a normal and accepted lifestyle.

The sin of homosexuality used to be a clear-cut issue that every Christian agreed on. Now, it has become an issue that divides even the most conservative of Christian denominations. Romans 1:22 describes such people as *“professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”* Are you a fool?

THOUGHT: Why can’t I sympathise with the homosexuals?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to stand straight for Thy truth and never to bend the truth, not even a little bit, not even for my brother.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17

ROMANS 1:18-32

LEVITICUS 20:13

*“For this cause God gave them up
unto vile affections....”*

HOMOSEXUALITY: A GENETIC OR MORAL ISSUE? (II)

We must realize that it is God who condemns homosexuality and therefore we must also condemn it and have nothing to do with it (Lev 18:22; Lev 20:13; 1 Cor 6:9, 10; 1 Tim 1:9-11, etc). Our only infallible basis against homosexuality is God’s Word. Actually it is not difficult for homosexuals to see the serious (often fatal) consequences of their lifestyle. If a homosexual lifestyle is normal, why is there such a horrible disease as AIDS? When homosexuals claim they were born that way, do they know that what they claim is only a theory? There is no scientific or medical proof. The “gay gene” has yet to be found and verified simply because it is non-existent. Homosexuality is certainly not a genetic issue but a moral one!

Homosexuality is a sin. It was so in the past, it is still today, and it will always be! The only way out of homosexuality is to repent and submit to the gracious counsel of God’s Word. If a homosexual refuses to repent and accept the offer sealed on that Cross and evidenced at that Resurrection, but decides instead to live openly in sin and try to fool God in the process, he shall have no part in the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10).

Homosexuality is a sin, period. It is a moral issue. Anyone with such sexual orientation must repent of it immediately. Be warned, homosexuality is an abomination to God. Have nothing to do it! Amen.

THOUGHT: How would I respond if one day there is a scientific and medical proof that the “gay gene” does indeed exist?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, save my soul from this perverted world.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-8

2 KINGS 23:3-5, 13-25

*“Thou shalt love the LORD thy God
with all thine heart.”*

WHERE IS YOUR HEART?

(I)

Where is your heart today? Are you walking with the Lord? Or are you drifting away from the Lord's arms of love? Has the fire that once burned with passion for Christ grown cold? If your heart is not with the Lord, it could be that idolatry has invaded your heart.

We must remove all the “*high places*” of idolatry in our lives. While it is important to remove idolatry, it is also important that we start seeking God. We cannot just empty our heart of wickedness and then leave it empty. We must let God fill our heart. If God is not in your heart, may He help you today, to revive you and grant you renewal and spiritual refreshment.

A new beginning is not impossible. God longs for His children to leave their waywardness and come back home to Him, just like the prodigal son. God can send a spiritual revival to bring all prodigal sons back. Are we ready for a new beginning with God? Each time the people of God were oppressed by foreign superpowers and they cried out to God for deliverance, He never failed to come to their rescue. And each time they responded by preparing for a new beginning with God by putting away the idolatry of the land.

This is also what we must do today. The idols in our heart today can be anything ranging from a favourite person to favourite pastimes and material things. We may put God in our heart in the beginning, but very soon His position is slowly pushed out and other things begin to take over. Is this happening to you? Arrest it immediately and may God fill our heart today. Amen.

THOUGHT: If a man has no love for anyone or anything, including God, can he still be guilty of idolatry?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, may Thou and Thou alone fill my heart today.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-8

HEBREWS 10:22

“Let us draw near with a true heart....”

WHERE IS YOUR HEART? (II)

God’s children had been so long in idolatry. Imagine: day in and day out, wherever they went, they saw the idols of stones, clay and precious stones, and they bowed down to them and worshipped them. But at last, these idols were removed. At last they came back to the true worship of the one living and true God. But this was not for long. Soon, they went back to their old way of idol worship again. The conclusion is probably that they did not really have a true heart for God in the first place.

For how long will such a rebellious and stiff-necked condition continue to prevail? I am not referring to the Jews. I mean YOU and me. How long will we continue to grieve the heart of God by our indifference and stubbornness? We may not be able to control what the world does, but we certainly are given the power to overcome and put away the idols that are constantly trying to usurp the throne of our heart.

If this describes your condition now, how should you help yourself? Rev Timothy Tow of Far Eastern Bible College says, “Self help with God’s help is the best help.” Will you help yourself by giving your true heart to God today? *“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water”* (Heb 10:22). May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: The Bible says, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it”* (Jer 17:9). How can such a heart be saved?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for opening the door of my heart that Thy comfort of peace and assurance may flow freely into it and fill up its well.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20

1 KINGS 3:16-27

PROVERBS 23:22

*“... despise not thy mother
when she is old.”*

THANK GOD FOR MOTHERS

What would we be without mothers? Unwashed clothes? Packet food for every meal? Are you thinking of similar answers? If so, then you must apologize to your mum for treating her like a maid. God has provided us with mothers to love, nurture and care for us. A mother is not a maid, and so we have to stop treating our mothers like our personal slaves.

In order to present the Mothers' Day song item, my three-year-old son had to practise and rehearse for nearly two months. The day finally came, and as I watched my little Ernest singing (as did other parents watch their own children), my heart was warmly touched. Although the song was meant for mothers, I could not help but thank God for His timely reminder that as Christian parents, we are to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph 6:4).

We must give credit to whom credit is due. Our mothers certainly deserve the gift of our appreciation and thanksgiving. Very often on Mothers' Day, we will bring our mothers out for a meal with the good intention of sparing her from cooking. Food and love may seem to complement each other very well. Around the dining table, we may not say very much, for a good dinner almost always says everything. However, this is a high risk to take since a bad dinner will surely spoil everything. Don't take the risk of allowing the good food to replace your filial piety. It may just fail you. Let us verbalize our appreciation for our mothers, and not just on Mothers' Day but every day. May we tell them how much we thank God for them. Thank God for mothers.

THOUGHT: If we have mothers who are irresponsible or unfaithful, can we still thank God for them?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for my mother.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

LUKE 8:41-42, 49-56

EPHESIANS 6:1-4

*“Children, obey your parents
in the Lord for this is right.”*

THANK GOD FOR FATHERS (I)

What would we be without fathers? I hope you need not have to scratch your head and think too hard for the answer. If you do, it is likely you have taken your father for granted and have forgotten the impact he has made on your life.

I believe some of us feel this way because from our perspective father is often out working to bring home the bacon, and to make sure we are getting by comfortably in the physical sense. We often forget the times father took the effort to find out how we are doing in school, in our relationships and at home. We assume father is too busy for us and would only care when we need him to solve a serious problem. If this has been our attitude, it is time we change.

Jairus is the father in the gospel account that expressed a father's great love for his sick daughter (Luke 8:41-42, 49-56). Instead of resigning to the fact that his daughter had died, he refused to give up hope. His remarkable faith in Christ and his deep love for his daughter are commendable.

Although we know that not all fathers demonstrate the same love towards their children, we still honor our fathers because they are our fathers. God designs fathers to guide, direct and demonstrate love for their children. Even when our father fails in his duty as a father, it does not give us the right not to submit to him. We must assist him and help him by praying for him and encouraging him.

THOUGHT: If my father is not a Christian, can I submit to him?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for my father.

LORD'S DAY, NOVEMBER 22

LUKE 8:41-42, 49-56

EPHESIANS 6:1-4

*"Children, obey your parents
in the Lord for this is right."*

THANK GOD FOR FATHERS (II)

Every Christian father has a critical role in the family. He is the prime protector, the first line of defence for his children. He is the head of the home and serves as the pastor of all who are under his roof. He is to lead, teach and guide the whole family that they may grow in the faith and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 4:13). Although the father is the main person to lead the family, he is also the main person to serve. He is not the lord who folds his arms and does all the commanding while the poor wife and children simply obey as if they are slaves. God forbid! The father leads by serving and serves by leading. Even Christ, being our Lord came not to be ministered unto but to minister (Mark 10:45).

A Christian father is often Satan's first and foremost target. The forces of darkness bring their best and most effective weapons against Christian fathers to seduce them to sin, temptation, complacency and pride. If Satan can stop father from exercising his God-given role, you can be sure that worldliness will invade the home and break up the family. Therefore the role of the father is very important.

Let us pray earnestly for fathers. If they are unbelievers, pray that they will come to know Christ and be able to exercise their role as godly fathers. If they are believers already, pray that they will not fall into Satan's trap or give up their role as responsible Christian fathers.

May God help all fathers. Amen.

THOUGHT: If my father has passed away, can I look upon my pastor or church leader as my father?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I thank Thee again for my father.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23

MATTHEW 6:5-15

ISAIAH 11:1-16

“Behold, I come as a thief.”

THY KINGDOM COME (I)

Each time we pray the second petition of the Lord’s Prayer saying, *“Thy kingdom come,”* what do we mean? Is this referring to the kingdom in heaven or on earth? Many would think it to be in heaven because that is the place where God dwells. However, if that kingdom is that of heaven, then the Lord should not have phrased it this way. It should be *“Thy Kingdom we come”!* Did Jesus make a mistake then? God forbid! This kingdom is not heavenly but earthly. And it is still in the future. According to the Westminster divines, this earthly kingdom is the kingdom of glory (see WSC Q102).

The kingdom of glory describes the kingdom of that day when the Lord’s prayer *“Thy kingdom come”* would be fulfilled and the angels’ glad tidings *“Peace on earth”* becomes a reality. Christ will set up His earthly kingdom as He promised. His reign will be during the Millennium (from the Latin word *“mille”* [thousand] and *“annus”* [year]). So it means *“one thousand years.”* What should we expect at the Millennium?

(a) Victory at the Battle of Armageddon

All believers who have gone on to heaven will return with Christ to fight the Battle of Armageddon at the end of the Great Tribulation on earth. After the victory over the enemies of God, these same glorified saints will rule and reign with Christ on earth for a thousand years (the Millennium).

THOUGHT: Who will get to dwell on earth during the Millennium?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, may Thy earthly kingdom come where Thy Son will rule as the King.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

REVELATION 20:1-6

ISAIAH 11:1-16

*“We shall reign with him for
a thousand years.”*

THY KINGDOM COME (II)

(b) Satan will be Bound

Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit during the Millennium (Rev 20:1-2). He is loosed today like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, but the time will come when he will be chained and locked up for a thousand years.

(c) The Saints will Rule with Christ

Over whom will believers rule? At the end of the Tribulation, some (all of whom will be believers) will survive and enter the Millennium. To them, children will be born and the earth will be populated again. So the glorified saints in glorified bodies will reign over these people and their children. And by the end of the thousand years, the earth's population will be *“as the sand of the sea”* (Rev 20:8).

(d) Christ will Rule the Earth with Spiritual Purity

Christ's reign will be one of righteousness (Matt 25:37; Isa 60:21; Mal 4:2), holiness (Isa 4:3-4; Ps 47:8-9), and truth (Dan 8:12; Isa 10:20; Ps 98:3). He will demand obedience from all the people of the earth (Eph 1:9-10).

THOUGHT: The saints with the glorified body are able to shuttle between the earth and heaven any time and anywhere.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, may Thy earthly kingdom come where Thy Son will rule as the King.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25

EZEKIEL 36:33-35

ISAIAH 65:17-25

“... the lion shall eat straw like the bullock.”

THY KINGDOM COME (III)

What is the biblical description of the Millennium? The Old Testament has many descriptions of the millennial reign of Christ. It is the event the Jews have looked forward to ever since they were told that the Messiah would sit on the throne of His father David (Acts 2:25-31). The following is a list of biblical descriptions of the Millennium:

1. Peace and joy (Isa 2:4; Mic 4:3; Isa 9:3-4). The earth will enjoy peace among nations. And the instruments of warfare will be made instruments of peace. Since there will be no war, no terrorism, and no riots, it is highly possible that there will be no need of policemen, army or any security personnel. The whole earth will be an absolutely safe place to live in.
2. Justice (Isa 9:7; 11:3-5). Christ Himself will mete out justice accordingly.
3. Removal of the physical curse (Isa 11:6-9; 35:1-7; Eze 36:33-35; Joel 2:21-24).
4. Agricultural prosperity (Isa 35:1-7; Eze 36:33-35).
5. No carnivorous animals (Isa 65:25). Even the appetite of the meat-eating animals changes drastically to eating green.

THOUGHT: Since the Millennium is such a wonderful time and Christ rules as the King of the earth, why will it last only 1,000 years? Shouldn't it last forever?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, may Thy earthly kingdom come where Thy Son will rule as the King.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26

ISAIAH 35:1-10

ZECHARIAH 8:20-23

*"We will go with you: for we
heard that God is with you."*

THY KINGDOM COME (IV)

6. Disease and deformity will be removed (Isa 33:24; 35:1-7; 29:17-19; Mic 4:6-7). There will be no need for doctors, nurses or any medical personnel. The whole earth will become a clean environment with no bacteria, germs, pollution, etc.
7. Family life continues on earth. People will live the typical life, having children, etc. (Jer 30:20; Isa 11:6; 65:23).
8. Longevity will be restored (Isa 65:20). The conditions of the Millennium may be similar to those before the flood, when life span was 700 to 900 years. If a person dies at one hundred years of age, he will be considered to be "just a child."
9. There will be a unified language (Zeph 3:9). During the Millennium, all people will praise the Lord in a common language. Circumstances will be similar to those before the Tower of Babel when all mankind spoke the same language. While men in Genesis 11 used that same language to glorify self, men in the Millennium will use the same language to glorify God.
10. Unified worship (Mic 5:10-15; Zech 8:20-23; 13:2). There will not be diversity or confusion of worship. All will worship in unity and love according to the divine directive laid down by Christ Himself. It is possible that there will be no need for a chairman to do the leading. Only Christ is seated on His throne and all we His subjects will bow and worship Him spontaneously.

THOUGHT: If a believer dies during the Millennium, is there a need to hold a funeral and burial service? Will the dead believer rise from the dead immediately and be given the glorified body right there and then?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, may Thy earthly kingdom come where Thy Son will rule as the King.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27

ISAIAH 62:1-12

EZEKIEL 37:28

*"... when my Sanctuary shall be in the
in the midst of them for evermore."*

THY KINGDOM COME (V)

11. Presence of God (Eze 37:28). There may not be a need to travel to a church to render public worship to God anymore. Right where we are in the community of believers, district by district, city by city, country by country, we shall all worship God before His presence.
12. Freedom from oppression (Isa 14:3-6; Joel 3:16-17). There will be no persecution for your faith in Christ. All enemies of the cross have been banished to hell. Christ the King will make sure all come under His reign and His people will enjoy peace and freedom forever.
13. Labour (Isa 62:8-9; 65:23). Evidently the curse upon the ground will be removed during the Millennium. Just as man enjoyed his work before the fall, so man will also enjoy his labour during the Millennium. No work will be considered tedious or meaningless.
14. Comfort (Isa 40:1). The nation of Israel, having been persecuted mercilessly during the Tribulation, will be comforted by God during the Millennium.
15. Instruction (Isa 2:3). Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus on Easter afternoon (Luke 24), man will be taught the wonders of God's Word by the omniscient Author during the Millennium.

THOUGHT: Will there be any sinners and unbelievers in the Millennium?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, may Thy earthly kingdom come and Thy Son will rule as the King.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28

EZEKIEL 36:24-38

ZECHARIAH 14:16-21

*“This land that was desolate is become
like the garden of Eden.”*

THY KINGDOM COME (VI)

16. Sacrifices reinstated (Zech 14:21). It may appear strange that during the Millennium the Old Testament sacrifices will be offered once again. The sacrifices will serve as object lessons to teach the people about the sinfulness of sin, and therefore, the need for Christ’s atonement on Calvary as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. As the Old Testament sacrifices point towards the actual Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the whole world, the Millennium sacrifices point backwards to what Christ has done once and for all.
17. Missionary witness (Isa 66:18-21; Eze 36:24-31; Zech 14:16-21). Christianity will become the world religion for the first time. Unbelievers who are born during the Millennium will be introduced to Christ and His gospel. Faith is still needed for them to receive salvation. Everyone has a responsibility to portray a Christian witness in his or her own life. Not one of the sinners would miss hearing the gospel.

The Millennium that teaches a literal 1000-year reign of Christ on earth is a biblical doctrine. The Bible-Presbyterian constitution in Article 4.2.7 reads: We believe in the personal, visible and premillennial return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to judge this world and bring peace to the nations.

The next time we pray this second petition *“Thy Kingdom Come,”* let us pray with understanding from the heart and mind that we are praying against Satan’s kingdom and for God’s kingdom of glory to come quickly. May the Lord help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: If the premillennial doctrine is biblical, why don’t many churches believe it?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, may I look forward with great excitement to the coming of Thy earthly kingdom.

LORD'S DAY, NOVEMBER 29

PSALM 24:1-10

1 CORINTHIANS 10:26

*"The earth is the LORD's,
and the fulness thereof."*

SAVE THE EARTH? (I)

Since the Millennial rule of Christ will be on this earth, is saving the earth our responsibility? Is this the biblical reason for us to go "green"? What makes us puny men who are but tiny specks in God's vast universe think that we have the power and ability to save the earth? Or that our actions can decide the destiny of this earth?

The Bible says, *"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof"* (1 Cor 10:26; cf. Ps 24:1). God is the One and only Supreme Being capable of controlling the planets.

The feminine noun form of the Greek word for earth is "gaia." According to Greek mythology in ancient days, this is the name of the Greek Goddess of the Earth. However in our modern day context, it is better known as "Mother Earth." The call to "Save the Earth" is more than just for economical, biological or environmental reasons. If one is not careful, it can lead to spiritual consequences of a religious nature. It will then become a movement to worship the Earth and oppose any action that seeks to threaten the life of the Earth.

No doubt, we are not to waste any natural resources which God is pleased to bless us with, but we must not go to the other extreme to condemn even the proper use of these natural resources.

We must remember that God is still our Creator. Let us be sure to worship the Creator and not His creation!

THOUGHT: Should the church support the "Save the Earth" movement?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to worship Thee and not Thy creation.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30

PSALM 24:1-10

2 PETER 3:1-18

“... the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

SAVE THE EARTH? (II)

No doubt the earth we are living in is in great peril. Of late, the warning of global warming is getting louder and there is an urgent call to change our current lifestyle into a more environment-friendly one. We are reminded of the 3 Rs: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. It is a good practice to conserve our resources and not to waste our resources unnecessarily.

But still, there is no need to try to frantically “Save the Earth” because God is the One who has the ultimate say on the destiny of this earth. He has already revealed to us what will happen to this earth in the end (see 2 Peter 3:10).

The Earth is in great turmoil, not because of the lack of manpower to save it. What is the real reason? Is it not because of the sin of man? Are we Christians going to be more concerned with saving the earth and let sinful men lose their souls?

What foolishness we see when earthly men would rather save the earth than their own condemned souls. Let us not lose sight of the mission which our Lord has assigned us. Let us save the people of the earth by accelerating the cause of missions by doubling up our efforts and moving on to labour and witness for Christ while He tarries! Amen.

THOUGHT: Save the earth? Or save the people of the earth?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, may Thou impress upon my heart to have the burden to reach out to my unsaved loved ones and friends with the saving gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1

LUKE 24:33-43

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

“Jesus asked, Have ye here any meat?”

IS IT WRONG TO KILL ANIMALS FOR FOOD?

Today, animals are mercilessly killed for wicked reasons. Elephants and rhinoceroses are killed for their tusks and horns, snakes and crocodiles for their skins, and their broken bodies are left to rot. Many other animals are slain just for the sport of it. Their heads and bodies are stuffed to be hung on walls as trophies of man's prowess, while the meat is discarded. In the light of such wicked killings, it is no wonder that some people conclude that killing animals is an evil thing. As a result, they become vegetarians because they simply do not want to participate in the killing of animals whether directly or indirectly. This may be a noble thing to do, but the Bible does not speak against the killing of animals for food. The Bible teaches us in Proverbs 12:27 that *“the slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.”* This verse supports the position that it is not wrong to kill animals for food.

The Bible says that in the earliest days of creation, men including animals were vegetarian (Gen 1:29-30). All creation was vegetarian until after the waters of the Great Flood receded and Noah and his family were left to replenish the earth. Genesis 9:3 says: *“Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.”* God's Word is clear that we can eat meat. Even Jesus the Son of God ate meat when He was on earth. Luke 24:42-43, *“And they gave him (Jesus) a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them.”*

It is not wrong to be a vegetarian, neither is it wrong to eat meat. But it is very wrong to eat without giving thanks to God in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. *“For whatsoever ye eat or drink, do it all to the glory of God”* (1 Cor 10:31) and let us *“in every thing give thanks”* (1 Thess 5:18). May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: If God did not give animals to man as food after the flood, what would be the outcome today?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to give thanks always for the food that You have provided for me.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2

ROMANS 7:7-25

1 JOHN 3:4

*“Who shall deliver me from
the body of this death?”*

MY SIN AND I

What is sin? Some would limit the meaning of sin to moral evils committed against man. Others would confine sin to mean the failure to meet the standards of the government under which they live. But how does the Bible define sin? 1 John 3:4 says, *“Sin is the transgression of the law.”* Westminster Shorter Catechism Q14 gives the answer based on this verse: **Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.** Sin as defined by the Bible is not just sin against man but against God; not just sinful behaviour but a sinful nature; not just sinful activity but also sinful thoughts; not just sins of violation but also sins of omission. Oh, who can stand before the righteous and just God? *“O, wretched man that I am!”* (Rom 7:24).

Sin brought disturbance to the entire life of man. His physical life falls prey to all kinds of weaknesses and diseases, which results in discomforts and often agonizing pain. The sufferings of life are often part of the consequence of sin. Man’s mental health also is subject to distressing disturbances which often rob him of the joy of life. It affects his daily tasks, and destroys his whole well being. His very soul becomes a battle-field of conflicting thoughts, passions, and desires. The true harmony in life is destroyed, and makes way for the curse of a divided life.

Is there a way out? Sin is an offence against God, therefore only God is worthy of removing the offence. By ourselves, we have no means of “making right” with God. The Bible says that even our best is not good enough (Isa 64:6). There is no way but for God to step in to help us fallen people. *“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Rom 5:6, 8). This is the only cure and remedy for our sin-infested, diseased body and soul. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Can God forgive me without Jesus’ sinless sacrifice on the cross?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, please forgive me of all my sins.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3

EPHESIANS 5:22-33

1 PETER 3:1-7

“Many waters cannot quench love.”

BUILDING A HAPPY MARRIAGE

A Christian couple contemplating marriage should give high priority to serious preparation in building their “love nest” on the foundation of Christ. In our modern society, the setting up of a new home with all the physical arrangements, financial matters and other concerns may overshadow the importance of spiritual preparation. As a result, the focus shifts and Christ is invited to be the Lord of the home only after the physical aspects are completed. There is no firm foundation to speak of because the focus is physical preparation. This is not pleasing to our Lord. Christ should be and must be the center of every Christian marriage including the wedding preparation.

No marriage is without problems. But how can a marriage be happy and blessed? Many Christian husbands and wives know their roles in the home. The problem therefore is not ignorance but their failure to fulfil their roles faithfully. When the Christian husband begins to neglect or refuses to assume his role to lead, to love and honour his wife or does not stay close to God; or when the Christian wife begins to neglect or refuses to assume her role to submit or respect her husband or does not stay close to God, the home is in danger of breaking up. To all Christian husbands and wives, do not take each other for granted. Help your spouse to perform the role expected in the home. Seek always how you can minister to your spouse. Remember Christ’s example (Mark 10:45)? Always know this: there is no such thing as a perfect husband or a perfect wife. Don’t start condemning your spouse when he or she failed in his or her responsibility. Crying, shouting or engaging in a cold war will not make the problem go away. The problem will only get worse. Always commit the problem to God and together calmly look for a solution. If the problem persists, do not be afraid to seek help from the Pastor, church leaders or any mature Christians who can offer biblical advice and encouragement. Pray and work hard together to build a happy marriage for the glory of God. Amen.

THOUGHT: What should I do if I do not love my spouse anymore?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to cherish my marriage.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4

PROVERBS 23:13-22

HEBREWS 12:11

“Withhold not correction from the child...”

**CANE THE CHILD?
YES! BUT WITH A
“SUGAR-CANE”! (I)**

The biblical practice of caning children (see Proverbs 13:24, 22:15; 23:13, 14; 29:15) used to be commonly accepted. But in these modern times, caning has actually been deemed illegal in some countries. Parents have refrained from disciplining their children by caning for fear that they might be reported to the authorities. Although caning our children is not illegal in Singapore, many parents have already thrown the rod into the dustbin.

The Bible is not advocating child abuse and a child should never be disciplined to the extent that he is injured or killed. Appropriate and restrained physical discipline of children can contribute to the well-being and correct upbringing of the child. Proverbs 23:13-14, *“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.”*

The Bible strongly stresses the importance of discipline. Children who are not disciplined are likely to grow up rebellious and having no fear of God. Parents today are either too passive or too aggressive when it comes to raising their children. Those who do not believe in caning their children fail to correct and discipline properly, causing them to grow up unruly and defiant. Then there are those who over-discipline and end up abusing or mistreating their own children. Discipline is used to correct and train little children to go the right way. *“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby”* (Heb 12:11).

THOUGHT: Caning a child without proper instruction is no different from child abuse.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to discipline my erring child lovingly.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5

PROVERBS 23:13-22

HEBREWS 12:11

“... provoke not your children to
wrath...”

**CANE THE CHILD?
YES! BUT WITH A
“SUGAR-CANE”! (II)**

No or poor discipline leaves the child to go further wayward and eventually brings heartache to the parents themselves. Poor discipline includes manipulating a child by using cruel words or threats. Very often, what an erring child needs is correction and not a cruel response.

God’s discipline is loving, as it should be between the Christian parents and their own children. Caning should never be used to cause lasting physical harm or pain, but a quick swat on the hand or on the bottom is meant to teach the child that what he had done was wrong. Never should it be used uncontrollably or to vent our anger or frustrations. It is not an easy task applying the rod when needed. When a child has committed a mistake that needs correction, we as parents need to calm down and say a quick prayer to God that He may control the whole situation. And then take the child gently to a private corner and explain clearly that his or her wrongdoing is a sin committed against God. Lead the child in prayer to confess and admit his or her mistake before the spanking is administered. After spanking, hug the child warmly to assure him or her of God’s forgiveness and love as well as yours.

This is how we “*fathers* (and mothers as well), *provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (Eph 6:4). Raising a child “*in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” includes restrained and corrective caning, and yes, using a “sugarcane.” May God help all Christian parents. Amen.

THOUGHT: Some parents refuse to use the rod to discipline their children, and yet their children may still turn out to be obedient. Does that mean the use of the rod by parents is only a matter of personal preference?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to patiently train up my child to walk in the right path.

LORD'S DAY, DECEMBER 6

ROMANS 6:1-23

EZEKIEL 18:4, 20

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

**IF SIN IS BAD,
WHY DOES GOD ALLOW
IT TO CONTINUE?**

When God allows man to do what He has forbidden, it is only because it will fulfil His purposes. When God permits man to sin, it does not mean that His Word or His will has changed. It means that He has purposed to allow us to sin, solely for His eternal purpose and glory. It pleases God to use our disobedience to instruct others and to bring about the destruction of wicked people. One significant example is Judas Iscariot. The sin of Judas Iscariot in betraying the Saviour was the instrument God used to secure our redemption through Jesus on the cross of Calvary. We also see that the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah by the nation Israel opened the door to the saving of the souls of Gentiles.

Although God uses the sinful acts of man to accomplish His purposes, this in no way minimizes or reduces the sinfulness of those acts or the responsibility of sinful man. How easy it would be for man to wrongly conclude: "Since my sin ultimately fulfills the purposes of God, I can then live in sin with impunity, as I would be doing God a favour!" This is not to be! God hates our sin, and He punishes us for our sins. His Word remains true: *"The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die!"* (Eze 18:4, 20). Don't take God for a fool and don't ever try to justify your sinful actions! Let us never seek to turn grace into a license to sin.

If God says plainly in His Word "No!", it means "No!". Don't try to change God's Word by playing around with sin and temptation. Let us keep ourselves close to God in His Word. Whatever God says in His Word, let us be sure to keep them and obey them willingly and fearfully in love. May God's grace abound more and more in our new life in Christ. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: Is it a sin if I do not serve in my local church?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, may Thy wonderful grace be ever near me and may sin be far away from me.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7

JOSHUA 1:1-8

ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14

*“Fear God and keep his
commandments:
for this is the whole duty of man.”*

IS GOD IN YOUR LIFE?

We live in a society that measures success with dollars and cents, position and authority. But what is success according to God? Joshua 1:8 writes, *“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”* This is the measure that God uses. But is this the way we evaluate our lives? We must re-evaluate how we consider success or failure in our lives. It may be that our concept of the value of our life is completely wrong! Do you feel you have failed just because you failed to become a millionaire by age 30? Do you feel you have failed just because you are coming to 40 years old and you are still single? Or have no stable income, no car, no family, no house of your own? The world may consider these as failures. But are you concerned about what God considers as failures? You may be an “old” Christian, you may be actively serving God, but will you feel miserable about the sins in your life? Will you be miserable if your work or family does not allow you to worship God in church? Will you feel the wrath of God burning against you when you have compromised your faith and belief for fear of people rejecting you or mocking you? Are you concerned about what God considers as failures?

Dear friends, our life is more than just the things we possess on this earth. Our purpose of living is more than giving ourselves and our family happiness, a comfortable life or an outward show of a godly family. Our life is to be truly centered on God. Where is God in your life right now? Have you failed to put Him on the throne of your life? Let us get back to the right path with God. Let Him and His precious Word show you the direction for your life. *“Meditate”* on His Word and *“do”* His Word. And the returns are guaranteed: Prosperity and good success. Do you believe?

THOUGHT: If God is with me, why am I still poor and sick?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to see Thy majestic glory beyond this life and world.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8

MARK 10:35-45

EPHESIANS 6:5-9

*“...as servants of Christ, doing
the will of God from the heart.”*

SERVE BY LEADING; LEAD BY SERVING

What are you? A leader or a servant? When we are called to emulate Christ or to be more Christ-like, what does that mean? To be like Christ as a leader? Or to be like Christ as a servant? Can we be both? If so, how? The model of Christ is built upon the following twin concepts: (1) a servant serves by leading, and (2) a leader leads by serving. This is known as servant-leadership. One example of Christ's servanthood is His washing of the feet of His disciples. This act of servanthood is commendable when you seriously consider who Christ really is. He is not an ordinary person. He is the eternal Son of the Most High God, He is higher than any human king. He has all the divine rights and authority to demand to be served by men and even angels! This is because they are His creatures, made by Him and for Him. Jesus is God, yet He voluntarily chose to give up the independent exercise of His heavenly prerogatives, take on human flesh, to be raised in humble circumstances, and ultimately to lay down His life for you and me. This is real servanthood!

To those who think themselves to be leaders, how are you leading? Are you leading by serving? A good leader is not one who gives commands all the time. He leads by his example. He takes the initiative. He trains and helps others to succeed. He puts his hands to work in humility, and not fold his arms to watch with pride. Will you be a leader who leads by serving others? Those who think themselves to be servants, how are you serving? Are you serving by leading? A good servant is more than one who just follows instructions faithfully. He serves with genuine love and care. And as he serves, he is also sensitive to the needs of others. He also uses his initiative and willingly does those things that are beyond his own duties. A true servant is not calculative but generous and willing. Will you be a servant who serves by leading in service? May God help us to be like Jesus – a leader as well as a servant. Amen.

THOUGHT: A good servant makes a good master.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9

2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-21

GALATIANS 2:20

"I am crucified with Christ..."

AM I A REGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN? (I)

There are two aspects of a regressive Christian. The first speaks of how, in its extremity, a Christian may revert to his old self. Although professing to be a Christian, he may not live as one. He lives an "old" life in Christ instead of a new life in Christ. Is this acceptable? Of course not! The Bible tells us, *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (2 Cor 5:17). Why should that which was old, has passed away and has become new, turn back to become old again? This is not supposed to happen, yet it can happen! This is why instruction after instruction, warning after warning, had to be given again and again to the children of God. God is not longwinded or nagging. It is because we are so dull of hearing and our hearts can turn hard so easily that God has to remind us again and again.

Christians are not immune to falling into sin. In fact, it is easier to fall than to get up. The Christian life is like walking up a slope. Along the way there may be sharp rocks and potholes that can make walking very difficult. You may trip and fall, hurting yourself badly. But, with God's help, you can get up and walk again. However, the worse part of such a walk is when a Christian decides to give up after he has fallen. He decides that it is pointless to persevere on and allows himself to continue to slide backward, all the way to the bottom. A regressive Christian is a back-sliden Christian. While back-sliding, this Christian may still attend church regularly. He may still serve in church and fellowship with other Christians. But his heart has changed. His love towards God has turned cold. His perspective of life is no longer heavenward. He no longer wants to live for Christ. Soon he finds himself reverting to his old way of life. He will slowly stop serving, stop fellowshiping, and eventually drop out of church altogether. This is the result of a regressive Christian in its extremity.

THOUGHT: How can a Christian prevent himself from backsliding?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to get up on my feet again.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10

2 TIMOTHY 4:1-8

1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27

*“So fight I, not as one that
beateth the air.”*

AM I A REGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN? (II)

The other aspect of a regressive Christian is more subtle. It speaks of one who may not have reverted to his old self in terms of his life, but who has found some good “excuses” to retire from his duties and responsibilities as a Christian. He is usually a long-time Christian who has served in the ministry for many years. Suddenly, he decides that he has served enough and he wants to take a backseat. In terms of duties, how is he going to “get out”? The best way is to get someone else to take over from him. He will look out for any potential young fellow out there and get him in immediately. Before you know it, he is out and the young fellow in. He can do this in one area of service and he can do the same in another. And he will go on and on until he is out completely and for good. No one can fault him, and he accounts to no one. People will still respect him for his past contributions and accomplishments. But his dark secret will remain with him and will probably be buried with him in his grave in the end. However, we know that is not the end, for he still has to answer to God.

I am not against good succession. In fact there is a place for succession, and succession is a good thing because it promotes continuity in the ministry. No one at any time is indispensable. But what is so wrong is that the real intention for succession is well hidden and self-centred. And that is what a regressive Christian will do. He hides his ulterior motive very well, convincing and deceiving others that it is good for him to give way to new blood so that the ministry can grow even more vibrant. Again, the warning is: he still has to answer to God concerning his real motive.

THOUGHT: Is there such a thing as retirement in the Lord’s service?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for giving me spiritual gifts to serve Thee.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

2 TIMOTHY 4:1-8

HEBREWS 12:1-4

*“Looking unto Jesus, the author
and finisher of our faith...”*

AM I A REGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN? (III)

The concept of retirement in the Christian ministry has been made popular in the West because the pastor's work is viewed as a job, just like any secular profession. Once you reach a certain age, you retire, that's it! This concept has infiltrated the East. Many old pastors easily give up their congregations when they begin to view their pastoral ministry as a job. Should age determine if one should remain in the Christian ministry? It is very unfortunate that such an attitude has also affected ordinary members of the church. Using their advanced age as an excuse, they call for new (and young) blood to take over from them. The Rev Dr Timothy Tow, Principal of Far Eastern Bible College and Pastor of True Life B-P Church, now 90 years old, has often said to his students, "I want to serve the Lord till He calls me Home." I was put to shame on hearing this. How many times have I thought of giving up the ministry? The Lord has rebuked me through his words. Why would I think of giving up unless I want the easy way out? Am I so lazy that I refuse to go through a little hardship in the ministry for the Lord's sake?

A regressive Christian is a lazy Christian. Is there such a thing as retirement in Christian service or even in Christian life? We cannot compare the secular professions with our service and life in the Lord. The secular world generally looks for results. You get the axe if you do not perform well or show poor results, even if you prove to be more faithful and diligent than others. In short, it does not matter how you do it, just show results. That's the world for you. However, in Christian service and life, our perspective must be completely different from the world's.

THOUGHT: Should we call the pastor the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of our church?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me not to be lazy but to occupy till the Lord Jesus comes again.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

2 TIMOTHY 4:6-7

"I am now ready to be offered...."

AM I A REGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN? (IV)

The world does not care how you do it, just produce good results and it is happy. This American concept and philosophy is spreading like wild fire everywhere, even into Christian churches. In Christian service and life, our perspective must be completely different from the world's. It must be different because of the different Master we are serving and living for. The world's god is Satan. But our God is our heavenly Father who loves us and saves us from our eternal damnation and misery under the bondage of sin. What our heavenly Father requires of us is entirely different! He looks from His heavenly and eternal perspective. He looks at our heart (1 Sam 16:7). So long as we are faithful to Him and give of our best to Him, trusting in His Holy Spirit, it does not matter if we "fail." The only failure according to His divine dictionary is the failure of our heart. If our heart is not right before God (though man cannot see our heart), God will not be pleased with us. Even if we try to, and can, justify our actions biblically, God will still not be pleased with us because He sees our heart.

We may make way for new blood to succeed us, but our service to God must not stop. We must not put our spiritual gift or gifts to rest. God forbid! Seek the Lord for His direction. It may be that He is leading you to another ministry or even to start a new ministry. There is no such thing as retirement from the Lord's service. As long as the Lord enables us, regardless of our age, do not be a regressive Christian, but be a progressive Christian. Keep serving the Lord till we see Him face to face. Paul says *"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"* (2 Tim 4:6-7). Like Paul, let us serve the Lord to the end of our life on earth. Guard your heart all the time. Do not let it turn cold but keep it warm for the Lord's sake. That is the heart of a Progressive Christian, not a Regressive Christian. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: The only time I retire from the Lord's service is when I die.
PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to serve Thee till the end of my life.

LORD'S DAY, DECEMBER 13

HEBREWS 12:5-11

PROVERBS 22:6

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous..."

SPIRITUAL PARENTING (I)

Being young parents, my wife and I are still learning to be good and godly Christian parents. I believe this is the hope and desire of every serious parent in the Lord. With our limited experience (only four years), you may identify with our struggles. Spiritual parenting is never easy. It requires immeasurable hard work, patience and endurance to train up a child in the way he should go so that when he is old, he will not depart from it (Prov 22:6).

We thank God for blessing us with two boys. Our present challenge is the older boy. He has become increasingly more intelligent and smart in his own sinful way. He tries to manipulate us to get what he wants. When things do not go his way, he flies into a rage. He is an excellent 'psychologist.' Sometimes, he will express his anger in such a way as to make us feel guilty or even confused at times thereby causing us to doubt our method of handling the whole matter. Being aware of his temperament, we sometimes try to plead and reason with him with the high hope of gaining his understanding and repentance. He seems to understand, we thought. But to our disappointment, ten times out of ten, he is back to his old ways almost immediately. How can he so quickly forget? Our hope is diminishing! When reasoning does not work, we turn to the rod of correction. Of course he cries in pain as if the whole world is coming to an end. Yet, he returns to his old ways the very next moment, forgetting how much tears he has shed and with the cane marks on his legs and backside still visible bearing witness to his disobedience and rebellion. I have lost count of the number of times we have broken the canes and have replaced them. Why is there still no repentance?

THOUGHT: When a child remains rebellious after caning, does it mean that the rod is not effective?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me not to give up my role as a parent to teach and train up my erring child.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14

HEBREWS 12:5-11

PROVERBS 22:6

“...without chastisement, ...then are ye bastards, and not sons.”

SPIRITUAL PARENTING (II)

You may be wondering: Is there an easy way out for spiritual parenting? Let me tell you this: There is none! The only solution we have is to depend on God's all-sufficient grace to grant us the patience and longsuffering to continue training our own children. It may take weeks, months, years or you may not even live to see the day when your hard work is being appreciated or rewarded! It is all in the hands of our sovereign God. Since He has blessed us with these little ones, I believe with all my heart that He will also provide us with the means to fulfil our parental responsibilities. We just need to press on, and not give up!

Many Christian parents have given up their spiritual parenting responsibilities by turning to childcare centres, domestic maids and doting grandparents. I have seen how a child would rather be in the company of his caregiver than his own parents. Whose fault is it? You and I know the answer. Dear parents, do not give up your responsibilities so quickly! Press on, for the Lord's sake, and for the sake of your children. Just as God has been longsuffering towards us time and time again despite our rebellion and waywardness, it shows that He does not give up on us. It is not because He is the all-powerful God, and therefore there is absolutely nothing that He cannot do. It is all because of the restored relationship that He has with us. A relationship that was once broken because of sin but is now effectively restored because of Jesus Christ. How can it be broken again? As our heavenly Father, He fulfils His role faithfully even though we have failed Him in our role as His adopted children. That is the kind of faithfulness we ought to exercise towards our own children. There is no perfect guarantee or “magic formula” to ensure our children will turn out to behave the way they should. Even then, we must never give up on them no matter how “hopeless” our children may have shown themselves to be.

THOUGHT: It is frightening to see my own bad behaviour and poor attitude reflected like a mirror in my child.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to be the best example for my children.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15

PROVERBS 23:13-14

2 TIMOTHY 3:1-2

“...in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be... disobedient to parents...”

SPIRITUAL PARENTING (III)

Why should we expect our children to obey us? Is it because parents are in charge and children are supposed to obey? Or is it because every one is expecting it and so I also expect my children to obey me? We must not forget the truth that while it is every child's duty to obey, it is also every parent's mandate to teach obedience to their children. This truth is given by God Himself. Parents are commissioned with this heavy responsibility of building up their children's spiritual and moral character so that they will grow up to obey God and their parents. This is no small task. The Bible has already sounded the warning: “*disobedient to parents*” is included by the Apostle Paul in the long list of sins that will be found in great intensity in the last days when perilous times shall come (2 Tim 3:1-2).

The Bible maintains the old but effective method of discipline: using the rod of correction. The world, however, hates this method. It is seeking more and more to “protect” children by making it a civil offence should parents spank their child. The world equates caning with physical abuse and cruelty instead of parental discipline. Under the protection of the law, children enjoy the freedom so much that they have no qualms disobeying their parents. Some older children even purposely spite their parents, knowing that their parents cannot cane them. While it may be true that parents are not to overly punish an erring child as to cause serious injury or even death, the rod of correction has its place to drive home the divine message to the child that he is accountable for every sin committed. Our children must not think that they can get away with sin easily. Indeed this saying remains true: Spare the rod, spoil the child. We do hope that every disciplinary cane that hangs on our wall will never get to be used. But if needs be, let us be bold to use it in order to save the soul of our children (Prov 23:14).

THOUGHT: If the use of the cane becomes prohibited, what should we do?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to use the rod of correction to restore my erring child gently.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16

PROVERBS 23:13-14

2 TIMOTHY 3:1-2

*“Thou shalt beat him with the rod,
and shalt deliver his soul from hell.”*

SPIRITUAL PARENTING (IV)

There is no need to teach our children how to disobey us. They know how to do that from birth and are already experts in disobedience right from day one. That is how great sin has seriously infected them. If Adam in his sinless state, can rebel against his Creator by eating the forbidden fruit which entailed the penalty of double death, what more our children when they are born sinners, condemned already even before they are judged by God!

Therefore, it is absolutely necessary and important for us as Christian parents to teach and train our children to fear God and to obey Him. We should not get too upset when our own words go unheeded or our own commands not obeyed. Rather, it should greatly disturb us when our children blatantly disobey God's Word, especially the fifth commandment of our Lord. When our children learn to obey God, we can rest assured that they will also be filial and obedient to their parents. There is no short cut. It is a long and tedious process in teaching obedience to our children. Don't give up!

If you are convicted to fulfil your parental responsibilities, I thank God for you and your children. However, be careful not to rely on your own wisdom and methods because spiritual parenting must always have God in the centre of the picture. May God help us to be the best Christian parents to our own children whom He has put in our care. Amen.

THOUGHT: What methods are non-Christian parents using to bring up their own children?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to fulfil my parenting duties faithfully.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

PROVERBS 23:13-14

2 TIMOTHY 3:1-2

*“For if thou beatest him with the rod,
he shall not die.”*

SPIRITUAL PARENTING (V)

Too many Christian parents leave God out in the bringing up of their children at home. Some conveniently shirk their responsibility and leave it to the church Sunday school teachers to teach their children about God. Do you know how many children each Sunday school teacher is responsible for? Even if it is one to one, how much time does the teacher have with your child? At most two hours each Sunday? And do you expect your child to receive all that he needs to know about God that will transform his life? Wake up!

We must take up our responsibility right now and train up our child in the most God-fearing way. If you do not know what to do, seek God’s help. Search the Scriptures and follow every biblical principle. Look up good Christian materials on parenting. Consult and learn from other mature Christian parents who have succeeded.

We must pray too for ourselves and for our children. Spiritual parenting is a spiritual warfare. The devil seeks to win our children over to his side. Will we let him succeed? We must save our children by bearing our own responsibilities to protect them.

In short, let us not give up. Let us do all we can to help ourselves and our own children. Our home needs to be, and must be, revived today. Is spiritual parenting dying in your home? All Christian fathers and mothers, do something for the sake of the souls of your own children!

May God be merciful to us and help us to be the kind of Christian father and mother that He wants us to be. Amen.

THOUGHT: A home without God’s love and truth is bound to break up sooner or later.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, protect my children from the wiles of the devil.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18

1 CORINTHIANS 7:6-8, 25-38

GENESIS 2:18-25

“Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.”

SINGLEHOOD – A GIFT? (I)

When God said in Genesis 2:18, *“It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him,”* does it mean there is no place for a man to be single all his life? Are we not warned that *“forbidding to marry”* (1Tim 4:1-3) is one of the doctrines of devils? Can singlehood be from God? Is there such a thing as the gift of celibacy? If so, how can we be sure?

Seeing that it was not good that Adam be alone, God made a woman for him and that concluded the whole creation works. After that *“... God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good...”* (Gen 1:31). Indisputably, the marriage covenant is a wonderful thing in the eyes of God. So then, should marriage be looked upon as a command by God to be kept by all men? The answer is no. Marriage is never seen as a divine command. It is a gift, yes, but not a command. Likewise, singlehood is given as a gift and not by command. That explains why *“forbidding to marry”* is one of the doctrines of devils. There is no biblical command for a single man not to marry.

How about the classic text on singlehood which is found in 1 Corinthians 7:25-38? Apostle Paul explained, *“Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful”* (1 Cor 7:25). The bottom line is: singlehood is a gift and calling of God. Paul also said, *“But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I”* (1 Cor 7:6-8). Indeed there is a place for singlehood.

THOUGHT: Can the burning lust of our flesh be the indication from God that we are to marry?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to know Thy will clearly if I should remain single or not.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19

1 CORINTHIANS 7:6-8, 25-38

GENESIS 2:18-25

“... *It is better to marry than to burn*”

SINGLEHOOD – A GIFT? (II)

One difficult question is: “How do I know if I have the gift of celibacy and know for sure singlehood is God’s calling for me?” Should one use sexual interest to determine if one has the gift of celibacy? I believe sexual interest may be one way since we are told that “*it is better to marry than to burn*” (1 Cor 7:9). So if you do have a sexual need and desire for companionship, singlehood may not be for you. But if your sexual need and desire diminish over time while you are still single, it may be possible that God’s calling for you is to remain single.

Why did Paul encourage his readers to stay single? I believe he said it in view of the “*present distress*” (1 Corinthians 7:26) and also the shortness of time (1 Cor 7:29). Already at the time of the Apostles in the New Testament, the believers were living in the last days. What more now, nearly 2,000 years after the Apostles’ time! We are indeed living in the last of the last days. We may not know exactly when our Lord is coming again but we know His coming will be as a thief in the night, and we are to expect His return any time now. But this does not mean that we are to reject marriage and embrace ascetic living like hermits. Apostle Paul provides an explanation why he desires “*that all men were even as*” himself (1 Cor 7:7). Here is his explanation: “*he that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord, but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife*” (1 Cor 7: 32-33). So Paul’s reason for singlehood is plain and simple: in order that one might serve the Lord fully and better without the cares of the world, and that his attention would not be divided between serving the Lord and taking care of the needs of his family.

THOUGHT: It is better to be a happy single than to be an unhappily married person.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to wait upon Thee patiently if I should marry or not.

LORD'S DAY, DECEMBER 20
1 CORINTHIANS 7:6-8, 25-38
GENESIS 2:18-25

*"He that is unmarried
careth for the things
that belong to the Lord..."*

SINGLEHOOD – A GIFT? (III)

There are very few singles I know who are single by choice. Each single person may have his or her story to tell, but not many chose singlehood because they want to serve God better. Some "missed the boat" because of their career pursuits, some because they had to take care of their ailing parents, some because of their own physical disabilities, etc. And so they simply have to accept singlehood since they had already passed the marriageable age, even though they are willing to be married. There may be some who may have set very high standards when they were still young, and by the time they realized that no one can ever fit the shoe, it was already too late. And there may be those who waited on the Lord and the Lord did not send them a life partner.

Even then, by God's providence, He may send some a life partner in their golden years. My aunt is one good example. She has been serving the Lord as a church full-time worker for more than half her lifetime. Since young, her parents have been nagging her to get a boyfriend and to get married. She was not looking because she was determined to be single and decided to serve the Lord all her life. As the years went by, and seeing she was so happy serving the Lord, going on one missions trip after another, all of us began to accept her decision to remain single for the Lord's sake. Then out of the blue, I received a wedding invitation card from her. Today, she is happily married (even though without children) and she is still serving the Lord as fervently as before.

Marriage is known to be a mystery. I dare say the same of singlehood. You may not really know you are called to singlehood until your final breath. However, if you are very sure that it is the Lord's calling for you to be single, thank God for that confidence and privilege.

THOUGHT: I cannot stand being single for the rest of my life and yet there is no one I can share my life with. What should I do?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to abide in Thy calling for me.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 21

1 CORINTHIANS 7:6-8, 25-38

GENESIS 2:18-25

*“The unmarried woman careth
for the things of the Lord,
how she may be holy
both in body and in spirit.”*

SINGLEHOOD – A GIFT? (IV)

Singlehood can be a very lonely experience. After a long day at work, you may come back to an empty home. And when you do marketing, buy groceries or cook a meal, it is all for one person and that is you and none else. You may feel forlorn and forgotten. In times of sickness or deep sorrow, there is no one there beside you readily available to give you a listening ear or to give you a bear hug. During those moments, that lonely feeling may be a torment. The thought that ‘no one loves or cares for me!’ may run through your mind like a marathon. “Oh, even if I rot and die in my bed, no one knows!”

Yes, singlehood can be lonely. But if you have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, you will know that you are not alone. God is there with you and for you. As the Psalmist says “*Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever*” (Ps 73:25, 26). “*The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want*” (Ps 23:1).

It is such comforting thought and hope that give you the strength to live on. With that conviction, you will learn not to envy others who are married. You will learn not to despise yourself for being single. Singlehood is not a transgression, neither is it a curse that stays upon those who are unlovable. Singlehood is a wonderful gift of God that allows you to fully serve God “*without distraction*” (1 Cor 7:35).

If the Lord has called you to be single for His sake, count it a blessing and privilege to be able to serve Him beyond what a married man or woman can do. Will you not thank Him for the gift of singlehood?

THOUGHT: Singlehood is a wonderful gift of God that can allow me to fully serve God “*without distraction*” (1 Cor 7:35).

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to serve Thee whether single or married.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22

1 CORINTHIANS 7:6-8, 25-38

GENESIS 2:18-25

*“... that ye may attend upon the Lord
without distraction.”*

SINGLEHOOD – A GIFT? (V)

Both singlehood and marriage are temporary states of living and service before God. Whether we are single or married, our chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever (Westminster Shorter Catechism Q1 answer). Whether you realize you have the gift of celibacy or not, you just have to keep on praying and waiting upon the Lord to show you His will. And it does not mean that while praying and waiting, you are to do nothing until ‘something’ happens. You should seize every opportunity to serve the Lord now as a single man or woman since you do not have the burden of family yet as compared to the married ones. Being single, you have the added advantage of being able to reach out and minister to others or be in missionary endeavours. Some have been enabled to give more liberally because of fewer financial commitments as compared to those with a family to take care of.

There are distinctive benefits of being single according to God’s Word. We should not despise those who have such a special calling in the Lord. There should be no social or moral stigma attached to singlehood. In fact, the Apostle Paul commends such people to the effective ministry in the Lord and the church. He encourages believers to do likewise and not to disparage against them. Let us be careful and sensitive not to tease or pass unedifying remarks about those who are single in our midst.

Whether you are married or single, may your goal and desire be to lay your affections above and to consecrate your life to Him in joyful worship and service, for the time is short and very soon we will see our Lord face to face. “Occupy till He comes” is the holy injunction and we do well to heed that. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: If being single is normal, why are parents so anxious if their children are getting married or not?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to glorify Thee whether I am single or married.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23

GALATIANS 6:1-10

JOB 13:6-11

“Be not deceived. God is not mocked...”

DON'T CUT CORNERS!

Two students, Mark and Judas, wanted to enrol in a well-established school. But there is only one vacancy left. Which student should the principal choose? Both had excellent records and perfect grades in their previous schools. The principal decided to test them. Both were given a folded treasure map but they were not supposed to open it until the end of the month. Both had to complete every assignment given. Both were diligent and hardworking. As the deadline drew near, Judas began to take it easy and thought to himself, “Why must I study so hard? I did well anyway. I don’t think Mark can do better than me.” Judas began to hand in his homework late. The principal then took his map and scissored off a corner of his map. “No big deal!” Judas said. Before the deadline, both were given a mock exam. Mark set his heart to do his best. But Judas decided to cheat. The principal caught him, and took his map again and scissored off another corner of his map. After the exam, Judas was to explain his action. Instead of admitting his mistake, he pushed the blame to Mark. “It’s all Mark’s fault. He took my books and that is why I did not study.” The principal then did an investigation and found that it was not true. The principal took Judas’ map for the last time and scissored off the last corner of the folded map for his lie. On the last day of the month, the deadline was up. Which boy will the principal choose? The answer is obvious. The principal asked the two boys to unfold their treasure maps and show him where the treasure is. As Judas’ map was incomplete, he was not able to give the answer. Only Mark can tell him where the treasure was with his complete treasure map.

How easy it is for us to become defiled, and ruin our integrity and reputation. In the eyes of God, every one of us can be the winner (2 Tim 2:5). But there is only one condition: “Don’t cheat. Be faithful.” As long as you work hard and do your best, God will be pleased with you. Don’t cut corners! Amen.

THOUGHT: To study or work smart does not mean cutting corners.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me not to cut corners but be faithful and honest in all my endeavours.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24

ISAIAH 9:6-7

LUKE 2:8-20

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

FOR UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN (I)

How time flies! December 2009 will be ending soon. God willing, we shall soon count down on 31st and usher in the new year. In this global economic recession, many are worried if they can still keep their jobs for long. With all the bills, loans, living expenses, children’s school fees, etc, how can one afford to lose his job?

Has God forgotten us? Or have we forgotten Him? If we were to look up to this God, what would we expect of Him? God has not forgotten us. Actually He has already given to us what we need. It is we who have forgotten Him and chosen to focus on ourselves and the things around us. Isaiah 9:6 says, *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.”* Twice the verse says, *“UNTO US”!* God makes no mistakes. This is His confirmation.

To most people’s disappointment, *“For unto us”* is not money dropped from the sky. We must realise that this Child that is born, this Son who is given, is far more important than all wealth combined. It concerns the destiny of our soul. We know that once a person dies, his life ends. No amount of money can bring back his life. The body may be dead, but what about the soul? The Bible tells us of two places, heaven and hell. After death on earth, the soul will end up either in heaven or in hell. But who will choose to go to hell? No one. But how is it that there are still those who end up in hell?

THOUGHT: *“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Mark 8:36-37)

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for giving me Thy only begotten Son that I may be saved through Him.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25

ISAIAH 9:6-7

LUKE 2:8-20

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

FOR UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN (II)

The superstitious Chinese non-Christians burn hell money for their deceased loved ones no matter how good they may have been when they were alive. Why do they assume they are in hell and not heaven? God Himself has given us His answer in Isaiah 59:2: Because of sin.

So how can man ever be saved? No matter how much good work we try to do to outweigh our sin, our sin will still be there. We are like a beggar trying to spray a whole bottle of perfume onto our body. Will that make us clean? Of course not! What a beggar needs is a good bath. It is the same for us. We need to be cleansed of our sin. But what can clean away sin? Only the precious blood of Jesus can wash away all our sin. But, why is that so? The answer is simple. Because Jesus has no sin. And therefore only He is qualified to be our Saviour. That is why God gave Him to us. *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.”* It is not just a child but a perfect child. It is not just a son but a perfect son. Do you believe in Him? Will you receive Him today?

It is time to come back to God if you have drifted away from Him. It is time to confess all your sins to Him and receive the Gift (which is His Son) for us. Remember, we can never save ourselves. Only Jesus and His precious blood can wash away all our sin. Do you hear Him calling out to you to return to Him? *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.”* May we never forget this wonderful Gift that God has given to us.

In this Christmas season, let us take the opportunity to reach out to our unsaved loved ones and friends that they too may come to the Saviour and be saved. People surely need the Lord at such a time as this. If we do not go and tell them, who will? May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: If I am not God’s sheep, then I must be a goat. What am I doing in His church?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to examine my faith if I am Thy sheep.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-20

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

*“For ye are bought with a price:
therefore glorify God in your body”*

EATING AND DRINKING TO THE GLORY OF GOD

“We are what we eat.” I think there is some truth in this statement. Apostle Paul says, *“Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”* (1 Cor 10:31). Can we be a glutton and at the same time say we are glorifying God? No, it’s impossible! Gluttony is a craving for food or drink that has conquered you. Don’t forget that we eat in order to live and not live in order to eat! We may enjoy our favourite food but we must not overeat. We ought to eat moderately, exercising self-control. Some eat excessively because of stress and pressure. They snack to calm themselves. Others indulge in overeating or drown themselves in alcohol to forget their troubles. These lead to serious eating disorders that can pose a danger to their health and lifestyle. However, we must be careful not to swing to the other extreme. There are those who suffer from anorexia (an eating disorder that leads to starvation), which is also considered a psychological disorder because it is derived from the fear of being fat or overweight. It usually starts with a weight-loss program to restrict the eating routine. It can become severe overtime and may lead to starvation and even death.

Our physical body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”* (1 Cor 6:19). We have a great responsibility to take care of our health by eating right. May God help us to eat and drink to His glory. Amen.

THOUGHT: If a person is fat, is this a clear indication that he might be a glutton?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to eat and drink to the glory of Thy holy name.

LORD'S DAY, DECEMBER 27

PSALM 16:1-11

PROVERBS 3:5-6

*"In all thy ways acknowledge him,
and he shall direct thy paths."*

GOD'S WAY OR MY WAY (I)

Psalm 16:11, *"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."*

Time passes by so quickly! It seemed like yesterday that 2009 has just begun. We are about to end 2009 and enter into a new year. God has given you and me a choice as to the path we will walk on; essentially you and I can choose between two different highways: God's way or my way.

The Path of Life is right before us! The Psalmist says to God, *"Thou wilt shew me the path of life ..."* This is the great confidence that the psalmist has in God: God will surely show me the path of life. God has opened His heart to us and He called us to walk with Him. We know how sinful and rebellious we are, yet God is ever so patient and willing to forgive us if only we will turn to Him now and today, not tomorrow. God wants to be our Guide to lead us in the path of life, but will we let Him lead us? Will we accept His direction for our lives? Or do we think we know which path we should follow?

Many paths lie before us. Which one will we choose to take? People pick a path for all kinds of different reasons. "Oh, does it feel good? Is the road smooth and straight? What's in it for me? How much money can I make? Is this path paved with gold? Will I gain recognition or fame? Is the walkway covered with red carpet and lined with people to congratulate me and be envious of me? Will it make me happy? Will there be things to satisfy me? Will friends or family approve? Will I find acceptance?" People make decisions for many reasons, often giving no thought to the way that God would have them go.

THOUGHT: There are many paths that are good in the eyes of man. But there is only one path that is good in the eyes of God: the path of life.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to walk in Thy path.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28

PSALM 16:1-11

PROVERBS 14:12;16:25

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

GOD’S WAY OR MY WAY (II)

God willing, as you are about to start your course for 2010, be very careful. Choose wisely the path you will walk. The Bible has warned us twice in Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25, *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”* What will we do when we discover that we have gone down the wrong path? Will we continue going that way with the mistaken belief that we can still make it right later and improve our course? Or will we make a U-turn now and change the direction of our life to God’s direction before it is too late? We must let God set us upon the right path! We don’t have to continue to walk down the path that leads to death because God has made the way for us to turn to Him and find the path of life! As you make the journey down the road called 2010, will you choose to take the path of life that God sets before you, or will you choose to make your own road? God will let you set your own course. If you choose to make your own way, God will let you go that way — alone. But if you choose the path of life according to God’s direction, then God will go with you on your journey!

We must realize that along the path of life, we have the joy of God’s presence. Psalm 16:11, *“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy ...”* You don’t have to make the journey alone, you can choose to let God walk with you down the road of 2010. You can have the joy of God’s presence with you each and every day of the year as you choose to walk with Him down the path of life. Do you know that the arrogant cannot stand in God’s presence because whenever they sense God coming near, they will run away! Those who are arrogant and full of pride choose to turn their back on God. They want to continue to walk down their own path separated from God. That is evil. Why would anyone choose to walk away from the God of love? Why would anyone refuse the joy of God’s presence?

THOUGHT: Don’t follow the voice of the world, follow God!

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, may I always follow Thee.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29

PSALM 37:1-13

PSALM 16:1-11

*“Commit thy way unto the LORD;
trust also in him; and
he shall bring it to pass.”*

GOD’S WAY OR MY WAY (III)

A story is told of an old sailor who continually got lost at sea, so a friend gave him a compass to help the sailor find his way without getting lost. The next time the old sailor went to sea he followed the advice of his friend and took his compass with him. But as usual, he became hopelessly lost, unable to find the port. After many days of being lost at sea, the old sailor was again rescued. His friend asked him, “Why didn’t you use the compass? The compass would have kept you from getting lost!” The old sailor responded, “I tried using the compass, but it wouldn’t work. I wanted to go north, but it kept pointing south.” That old sailor was certain he knew better than the compass, so rather than change direction he tried to force the compass to point in the direction he wanted to go. When the compass failed to point the way he wanted, he thought it is useless and so he discarded it. Without the compass, he was again lost. All because he refused to accept the guidance of the compass.

God will empower our life to move on. Yet we are responsible for submitting to His direction! God has given us His Word to act as our compass. We can choose to follow His direction and make it safely to our destination, or we can choose to ignore His guidance and find ourselves lost at sea, or worse, being shipwrecked upon the hidden rocks beneath the surface of the sea.

We can have the joy of His presence as we walk along the path of life, but we have to make the choice. People look for joy and happiness in all kinds of different places. Real joy can only be found in God’s presence.

THOUGHT: If a person is lost but does not even know he is lost, he is indeed lost!

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to have the joy of Thy presence as I walk along the path of life.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30

PSALM 126:1-6

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6

“He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.”

GOD’S WAY OR MY WAY (IV)

For all who choose to follow the path of life according to God’s direction, God promised to go with them. The Lord will set us apart with the joy of His presence as we walk the path of life according to His will. The path of life leads us to His eternal blessings. When we follow the path of life we will receive God’s eternal and abundant reward! You will not be lost when you choose to follow Jesus!

Many Christians will settle for half of what Jesus wants to give them. They believe Jesus died for their sins and will tell you that they are now “alive in Christ,” and that’s it! This is all they want Jesus to give them. What they do not want is Jesus to interfere with the way they live their lives. They prefer to go on living as if nothing has changed in their lives. In fact, some may even feel like they have been shortchanged in the process; that somehow they have given up more than they have gained. They are quick to point out what they gave up in order to be a Christian. What is their problem? The problem is: their focus is all wrong. Instead of looking forward and seeing the riches of God’s abundant blessing and provision in their lives, they look back at what they have left behind. It pays to walk forward with your focus ahead of you. What I mean is: you cannot look in one direction and move in another. Whichever direction you are facing is the direction you will be inclined to go, so stop looking at the past; stop looking at what you have given up to be a Christian. Look at the path of life God is showing you and see all that God has ahead of you!

THOUGHT: “Do unto others what you want others to do unto you.”

Does this Golden Rule apply here?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to be faithful to Thee, not for reward’s sake, but for Thy sake.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31

PSALM 139:1-24

JEREMIAH 6:16

“Stand ye in the ways ... and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”

GOD’S WAY OR MY WAY (V)

A story is told of three men who discovered a gold mine in a deserted land. They agreed to tell no one about what they found, but to go and buy that piece of land, purchase the equipment they needed and return to dig up their treasure. While none of them told anyone about what they found, when they left the town, a great crowd followed them. Why? What happened? The smile on their faces and the joy in their eyes had given them away! They could not keep to themselves what they had found. Though our joy must be so great that we cannot hide from any man, our heart must never be so selfish as to not share the “treasure” we have found in Jesus with others. Salvation in Christ is a wonderful Good News. Sometimes we share the gospel as though we are bringing to people a piece of bad news.

We look forward to the great reward that God has prepared for us. The path of life leads us to an eternal reward far greater than anything this world could ever offer us; much more than anything we might give up in order to obtain it. God offers eternal pleasures to us. What He gives us will not rust nor lose its value. What we receive through Christ has permanent value. Our reward endures; it lasts forever!

God has made the path of life known to us. His path of life brings us the joy of His presence. His path of life also leads us to eternal rewards. Are you looking forward to this New Year 2010? Let us walk in His path of life together. May God help us. Amen.

THOUGHT: *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”* (Isa 55:8-9).

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to follow Thy thoughts and ways, and not mine.