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Feature

“It is the Lord”

-- Surprise at the Dawn after a Night in Vain (Jn 21: 1-7) --

Huang Jin

Opening Scripture: Jn 21: 1-7

Without the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit to the disciples, how frail and helpless they were. They had once received direct teachings from Lord Jesus for three years; having the understanding of every word, every way. Prior to the crucifixion, Lord earnestly admonished them; after resurrection, He showed Himself to them repeatedly. Yet, “after these things,” the disciples still could not re-ignite their beginners’ faith of following the Lord.

“These things” refer to how Lord Jesus showed Himself twice to the disciples in the previous chapter. The ‘present time’ thereafter, Lord Jesus once again showed Himself the third time to the disciples. This was also the last appearance.

The night Lord Jesus was captured, the disciples fled and scattered like birds and beasts for the sake of their own lives. Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross. After His resurrection, the disciples who were like dogs of the grieving household, gathered once again in Jerusalem. For

the fear of the Jews, they kept their door tightly shut. For this reason, the first and second time the location Lord Jesus showed Himself to the disciples were always in a house with “doors tightly shut (Jn 20: 19, 26).”

The Bible does not have a clear recording of when the disciples went up from Jerusalem to Galilee. Now, they took the initiative to assemble together. There were seven of them, who were mostly Galilean. A name list was published. They were Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, John, James and two other disciples. These seven disciples gathered together; while naturally the number “seven” leads us to a positive direction of completeness and revival. Who knew, when the seven were gathered at one place, they looked at each other without knowing what to do. Then Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “we are going with you also.”

Peter’s simple “calling” immediately caused six to act in one accord. On one mind, they have summoned the revolutionary spirit they once had. Perhaps, Peter was simply expressing his intended direction of “going fishing” amidst his own helplessness, but unexpectedly everyone echoed to his calling saying, “we will go with you.” In such “calling” and “answering”, the seven-member fishing team was beautifully formed. The career they had once forsaken can now be revived on a greater scale of planning and restructuring. Without any hesitation, they got up and “went out,” and “got onto the boat.” They were faithful, doers of their words, helping one another and united in one spirit.

Not only did Simon Peter fail to strengthen his brothers’ faith (Lk22:32), he led them to the old path. Now, he gathered everyone to go back to the old business, going down to the Sea of Galilee. In the tiresome and bitter waiting of the groom, the five foolish virgins who had prepared lamps without oil had fallen asleep. The five wise virgins also fell asleep. With all ten virgins asleep, the wise and foolish could not be discerned. In a long night waiting for the descending of the promised Holy Spirit, the seven disciples had dedicated their heart to the Sea of Galilee where they once sold their lives to. Not one of them was watchful, not one could say “no” to Simon Peter’s calling to go fishing.

“That night,” meaning a certain night; which was a very long night. In the seven fishermen group, there was no lacking of experienced fisherman. This is just as the saying “The power of seven people in one accord can break the gold.” In common people’s expression of “three ingenious conditions” ; which are perfect timing (fishing in the night), perfect environment (in Sea of Galilee they are familiar with), and perfect interrelationship (working together in one accord for 3 years), their big gain in a night seemed to be unmistakably expected. Experienced fisherman team casted each net with infinite hope, apparently they

pulled up nets of emptiness. Experiencing the continuous successes of fishing in the nights, their heart were filled with contentment like the shining stars; yet this day under the moon with empty net, frustration pressed onto their mind.

Their empty nets did not cause them to give up. Their experiences and endurance kept them going; once again casting down nets of hope. "That night," they struggled between hope and disappointment. Every net of hope casted had resulted in disappointments. With courage they casted down hope, yet still pulled up disappointments. Just like this, the author concluded solemnly, "that night nothing was caught."

After an entire night of effort, they caught nothing. The long and dark night slowly slipped away. At dawn break, Lord Jesus came and stood by the shore. At this moment, it was also time for the tiresome disciples to return to shore. After a night of drifting in emptiness following the light of daybreak, Lord Jesus waited for them on the shore; asking them to leave that boundless night of salvage.

Lord Jesus who had resurrected from the dead stood on the shore. While facing the dear Lord whom they had lived with for three years, the disciples did not know it was Him. Like the scene on the path to Emmaus (Lk 24: 13-32), they could not recognize the form of Lord Jesus. They could not even recognize the voice of Jesus' calling. Right then Lord Jesus asked whether they had eaten. From their short response of "no," we can sense their frustration and gloom after a night of vain labor. Dear Lord Jesus did not rebuke them, but taught them how to fish.

Lord Jesus called them the "children;" with compassion, showing merciful kindness and utmost care. After dear Lord called out to them and asked, "Have you any food?" The "food" here (**prosfagion**) does not refer to "main meal" rather means "side meal" or "side dish." After a night of toiling, what they lacked was not the main meal, but the "side dish" that could add more brilliance to the main dish. In Luke 24:41, Lord Jesus asked the disciples, "Have you any food here?" Lord Jesus used (**brwsimo**), referring to "food" originating from the verb (**bibrwsko**) (eat, eating), referring to the "main meal" in the process of eating.

This is not the first time Lord Jesus taught the disciples to fish. Long before the disciples were called, some miracles had already taken place. A miracle that seemed to have happened three years before, had re-occurred once again; a long night of toiling with nothing been caught, following Lord's instruction to cast nets and caught a full net of fish, nets at risk of tearing....(Lk 5:4-11) Lord Jesus' instruction cannot be explained with rational reasoning and logic. Why must they "cast the nets on the right side of the boat" and not the front, back or the left side? Once they have casted net, it could not be pulled up. Only to cast net once following

Lord Jesus' command far exceeded all the labor and effort they put out throughout the entire night.

It was in this crucial moment, the "faith" of spiritual experience was showing its effectiveness (Rm 12:6). It was Jesus' beloved disciple who first called out, "It is the Lord!" He possessed unique spiritual sensitivity toward Lord Jesus' coming that had far exceeded other disciples. His calling of "It is the Lord!" soared across the morning sky of dawn, and awakened Peter who was deep asleep after fighting hard in the Sea of Galilee.

One night of hopelessness was just like the parable of the ten virgins. Both the wise and foolish had fallen asleep (Mt 25:5). After walking through the valley of the shadow of death, once again coming to experience the Lord profoundly. Although Jesus' beloved disciple was amongst the weak, he followed Peter's utterance, "I am going fishing" and became one of the members of the seven-fisherman team. He had also gone through the disappointment and frustration of catching nothing after the whole night. Despite his physical and mental state of exhaustion, he still possessed sharp and in depth spiritual sensitivity. When Lord Jesus appeared to them once again, he was the first to recognize the Lord; because he was "Jesus' beloved disciple." Jesus' loved what he had gone through; his following of Jesus, living with the Lord, leaning in his bosom, entering into the high priest's courtyard where Jesus' was judged, accompanying Jesus to the cross of suffering and death, replacing Jesus' role and title on earth to receive Jesus' birth mother Mary whose heart had been pierced, witnessing the fountain of blood and water (Jn 19:35). Even before understanding the Bible, he believed when he saw the tomb (Jn 20: 8-9). His spiritual sensitivity was sharp; recognizing the one standing on the shore truly was the Lord.

The exclamation "It is the Lord!" at dawn break brought forth striking realization of "It is the Lord!" From the frustration and helplessness of the "disciples not knowing it was Jesus (Jn 21:3) to thanksgiving and hope of knowing "it is the Lord (Jn 21:12)" Such surprise exclamation at dawn break, "It is the Lord!" was a breakthrough crucial moment.

Concluding Scripture

And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed (Rm 13:11).

But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him (Lk 9:32).

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Current Holy Work in UK

Africa Voluntary Worker's Training 2013 was held on January 6 to 11 in London Church and there was total of 25 members from UK, US, Europe, and Sabah attended this event. The instructors, Pr. Darren Liang (The Book of 1&2 Timothy), Pr. H.H. Ko (Sabbath), Pr. F.F. Chong (Baptism), Pr. T.K. Chin (The Book of Ezekiel), Bro. Michael Hsu (Religious Education), instructed practically to the attendees, so that they can understand various needs and the importance of evangelical work in Africa.

In order to prepare the Ministry Volunteer Program (abbr. MVP, which was for training the volunteers in supporting the gospel works, literary ministry and Sacred Music Writing) , a "Sacred Music Writing Camp" was held through the internet joint system during the weekend from February 16 to 17, instructed by Sis. Josephine Ho in Newcastle Church. There were about 70 members from the local churches in UK attended. Based on our basic belief, attendees learnt the theory and skill of music composition so to apply on the Children Song's writing. Thank God, the attendees gave a lot of positive feedbacks to the "Sacred Music Writing Camp" after the event.

As scheduled, UK National Adult Theological Training 2013 was held on February 18 to 21 in Newcastle Church. The topic is "Open the Book of the Century End- Reveal the Seven Seal"; Pr. HH Ko has fully focused on the Revelation Chapter Four to Six in 30 sessions, revealing adequate and precious messages given by God to the True Church. There were about 80 brethren from local churches in UK attended this precious opportunity of spiritual cultivation and learning in these four days. Every attendee was edified and received spiritual satisfaction and joy.

The 11th UK Executive Council Meeting was held on March 4 to 5 in London Church. The interview with Bro. CM Liu from Portsmouth Church for preacher was approved in this meeting and UKGA's Evangelical & Pastoral Department will arrange three years theological training for him. At the same time, UKGA Evangelical & Pastoral Department will propose to National Church Conference in 2014 to recruit one more preacher for the future plan and need. The selected candidate will attend USGA's Theological Training Program in September next year. After the Executive Council Meeting, the Truth Research Committee Meeting was convened in the afternoon of March 5 for the preparation of the IA Truth Research Committee (IA TRC), held at the end of this March. The meeting was smoothly concluded on March 6.

Four UK's Delegates, two Truth Research Committee members, and one International Youth Ministry delegate took the same flight to California, US to attend the meetings held by IA. In addition to the IA Executive Council (IA EXCO) Meeting, the delegate of UKGA also attended the IA TRC Meeting on March 28 to 29, Holy Work Symposium (Theme: Increase the Nation, Expand the Borders) on March 30 to 31, World Delegate Conference (Theme: The Globalization and the Prospect of the True Jesus Church) on April 1 to 2, and the re-election of IA EXCO members; meanwhile, the International Youth Ministry Symposium was held in Irvine Church. Moreover, the director of UKGA Literary Department attended the Internet Ministry Program Advisory Committee (IMPAC) Meeting held on April 5 to 7. May the resolutions of these meetings promote a concrete improvement in various aspects of the True Church in the world. UKGA and all the local churches will re-elect the EXCO members at the end of this year. We pray to God to continually guide and bless us to fulfil His will. May we glorify the holy name of the Lord in everything, so that we are able to reveal "True" and the True God we serve to mankind.

Cultivating "the next generation" is the foundation of the holy work, valued by UKGA and IA. In order to strengthen youth ministry, UKGA set the topic "We, Who Work for the Next Generation" for the National Brother Fellowship of UKGA this year. We are hoping parents or the brothers in the middle age can realize the responsibilities they are carrying for God, for church, for their children and family, so they may lead the next generation step by step for faith. The Youth Volunteer Seminar was held at the end of May in Sunderland Church to provide the encouragement and skills of holy work to the determined youths. To cope with IA, the International Youth Fellowship was held in Newcastle Church in June 12 to 16, giving opportunity for the youths from many countries to gather together. We have asked the preachers who are in charge of this event to give courage by the word of God according to the topic "The Mission of TJC Youths in the End Time", Through communication and discussion in youth fellowship, we look forward to their solid faith in God, love, and hope for God, so they may live in the likeness of Christ in front of men, bring out the fragrance and glory of our Lord Jesus.



The 3rd National Adult Theological Seminar in Newcastle Church

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Church News

Current Holy Work in New Zealand

There are total of two True Jesus Churches in New Zealand, which are Auckland Church and Christchurch Church. With the population of 4 million people in New Zealand, the City of Auckland has one third, while Christchurch has one tenth. There are 220 members in Auckland Church and about 180 members attending Sabbath Service. There are 100 members in Christchurch and about 70 members attending Sabbath Service; apparently, the church attendance has highly exceeded the capacity of the chapel, thus the construction of eastern Auckland Church is attempted to complete in July of this year. Church service will start in the new building thereafter and the church will branch out in the beginning of next year. In the future, the gospel will actively spread across the western, northern and southern region.

There are three joint holy works between these two churches. RE Seminar was held on March 28 to 31, 2013 at Auckland Church and 14 members attended. A Student Spiritual Convocation is scheduled to be held on July 15 to 21 in Christchurch Church. A Youth Spiritual Convocation is also scheduled to be held on November 17-21 at Eastern Auckland Church.

Christchurch Church has held BBQ activity on March 24 to warm up for the Spiritual Convocation. On April 1 to 5, there was Bible Seminar with topic; Forty Two Stations in the Wilderness by Pr. Daniel Chin. The evangelical service was held on April 1 to 12 and Spiritual Convocation on 13 to 14. The church has tried to sponsor airfares for members who live in Wellington and Dunedin. 97 members received cup, 2 members received the Holy Spirit, and 7 members received water baptism.

Due to the branch out of the church, Auckland church has held Sermon Speaker Training on Sundays Feb 17, 24, and March 3. There were bible seminars on April 15 to 19 with topic; Forty Two Stations in Wilderness by Pr. Daniel Chen, who was assigned by the IA. Before the evangelical service, small gospel works to different target groups were carried out; senior homes in the western region on April 16, Brother HR Huang's house in the southern region on April 20, Brother Li Chang's house and Auckland University in the northern region on April 21. The Evangelical Service was held on April 23 to 26 and Spiritual Convocation on 27 to 28. 193 members received cup, one received the Holy Spirit and 11 received water baptism.

Thank God. Although New Zealand's members still in need of brethren's intercession in spiritual wisdom and virtues, the power of God manifested unexpectedly. There are truth-seekers actively contacting the church, and even more so, with the guidance of God from

vision and dream. The ministry is growing along with the members who grow in the church. The church has gradually adapted the environment. Although Chinese is the majority of the new baptized, we can gradually see the attendance of some local people. Thus, in the future of gospel work, youths shall be trained to explore new region through campus fellowship in addition to the group of Chinese. May God show His mercy in leading us, the salvation of Jesus could spread to all nations, peoples, and tongues early in time.



Group picture of baptism in 2013 Autumn Spiritual Convocation in Auckland Church.(2013.04.13)

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 *Intercession*

1. IA WORK IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES:

Date	Location	Program	Personnel
6/3-7/1	Malaysia	Regional Malay Speaking Spiritual Convocation	Pr. from Sabah GA & Ind.GA
6/1-30	Malaysia	Pastoral / Evangelical / Training-Central Region	ET Lin

6/1-10	Sabah	Theological Seminary	Ezekiel Chang
6/24-7/8	Hong Kong	Divine Worker Seminar/ Divine Minister Spiritual Nurture/ National Church Conference	Fuming Tse
6/3-7/10	Philippines	Theological Seminary	Ezra Chong Malachi Lee
6/28-30	Myanmar	Pastoral	MMC
6/30-7/14	Canada	Canada National Youth Theological Course–Vancouver	Enoch Hou Tae-Hoon Jung
6/3-10	FOZ	Pastoral Work / Training	Enoch Hou Ming Tang Kuo
6/12-16	UK	International Youth Fellowship- Newcastle	Timothy Yeung Steven Shek SH Ho
6/27 – 7/15	South Africa	Pastoral Ministry / Youth Seminar / Spiritual Convocation	Steve Hwang
June	East Africa	Student Spiritual Convocation-Tanzania	Volunteer / Kenya Workers
6/6-8	Dubai	Bible Seminar/ Spiritual Meeting/ Evangelistic Service	Peter Shee

2. DEVELOPMENT OF DIVINE WORK IN ALL NATIONS

3. WORKERS IN ALL PIONEERING AREAS

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✧ ***May our Lord remember your contribution and bless you abundantly!***

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