Sermon Anthology

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THANKS BE to the Almighty God, the Lord Jesus, for the preparation of these sermon outlines in response to the requests of many brethren who deliver sermons. Though they are intended to be as guidelines for sermonisers, they are also beneficial for Bible studies and individual spiritual cultivation.

Readers' comments are most cherished to improve future publications. May the words of God enlighten, purify and strengthen us for spiritual maturity and to fight a victorious spiritual battle for Him.

May Jesus bless the graphics designer (Peter Chong) and the two members (Angela Ho and Chunzhen Chin) who assisted in proofreading this Sermons Anthology.

Hallelujah! Amen!

TK Chin
“Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.” (1 Cor. 14:1).

**HOW MEANINGFUL** indeed are these words of the prophet that are worthy of our envy and pursuit in prayer! Indeed, it is even more meaningful and desirable to teach our brethren in the Lord, with love, these words of God. We sincerely hope that many people are willing to wholeheartedly serve the Lord, so that our spirituality can grow and every church prospers.

Our TJC preacher Thien Kiew Chin has provided this anthology. The contents may be brief, but the teachings are direct and are presented according to the Holy Bible. The materials of this booklet can be used as reference for bible study, family service, fellowship and as an aid for the preparation of sermons. Expectantly, with the Lord’s help, they can benefit many brethren.

The Administrator,
Africa Ministry Committee (AMC)
Abigail

A Woman of Understanding and Beauty

Introduction

Abigail means “father of joy” or “my father rejoices”. She was the wife of Nabal the Carmelite, a rich shepherd of southern Judea, whose home was Maon (1 Sam 25.2-3).

[Note: There was another Abigail, daughter of Nahash (Jesse) and sister or half-sister of David, wife of Jether or Ithar, an Ishmaelite and mother of Amasa, captain of army instead of Joab (2 Sam 17.25; 1 Chro 2.16-17)].

When David was hiding from the jealous King Saul, he asked Nabal (Abigail's husband) to provide food for himself and his men. Nabal, being a rude and hot-tempered person, brazenly refused. Provoked, David threatened to ransack Nabal's possessions and kill him. However, the wise Abigail gathered sufficient food for David's men, rode out to meet him, and prostrated before him to show her honour, agreeing with David
that Nabal had acted with immense disrespect. David's anger was then abated. Though Abigail had saved Nabal's life and his household, Nabal died shortly. David took Abigail as his wife (1 Sam 25.3, 14-42; 27.3; 2 Sam 2.2; 1 Chro 3.1; 1 Sam 30.1-18) and she later bore him a son, Chileab.

1. Abigail was a woman of good understanding and beauty (1 Sam 25.3).

1.1. Understanding must come before physical beauty.

1.2. Inner beauty outshines outward beauty.

1.3. Her understanding can be seen in sequence:

1.3.1. One young man (Nabal's servant) perceived and told Abigail (1 Sam 25.14) that Nabal reviled David's young men. The servant must have perceived Abigail's understanding and wisdom. We need to learn from Abigail to lead a life of wisdom to benefit others who emulate us. If Abigail did not do well, the young man would not have observed it.

1.3.2. “Know and consider what you will do” (1 Sam 25.17); the servant knew Abigail was capable in thinking and acting wisely; she must have demonstrated this in her dealings with people. We need to do the same with God's wisdom and power in times of adverse situations.

1.3.3. Her wisdom was turned into action (1 Sam 25.18), as she
“made haste”. As soon as we know what is good and important, we must act swiftly. Knowing but not putting into action is not profitable.

1.3.4. She did not tell her husband Nabal (1 Sam 25.19), and this showed her wisdom. If she did, Nabal would have prevented her action of wisdom. She knew when to tell and when not to (see also 1 Sam 25.36b, 37).

1.3.5. She knew how to put wisdom into appropriate actions (1 Sam 25.23, 24). She hastened to dismount from the donkey, fell on her face, bowed and fell at David's feet. Her actions came first, which were followed by words of understanding; she let her actions speak first.

1.4. Her words of understanding were also in good sequence:

1.4.1. Her first words were to admit her sins (not actually hers) (1 Sam 25.24); “On me, my lord, let this iniquity be!”, before saying too much to soften David's heart. Admitting our wrongs (sins) is power to remove grudges, etc.

1.4.2. “Please let your servant speak” (1 Sam 25.24); being tactful in words is vital.

1.4.3. “Please, let not my lord regard this scoundrel Nabal” (1 Sam 25.25). She did not protect and argue for her husband, declaring that by nature, her husband was a fool. She did not see the young men David sent, otherwise she could have pre-
vented her husband's folly.

Note: She attributed her husband's folly as his nature; therefore, it was not worth David to be angry. She knew how to soften David's heart, inferring that Nabal's nature was to insult and David should not pay much notice to him. If we can feel the same when we are insulted, we will become better Christians; not to quarrel with one who is not spiritually cultivated.

1.4.4. Abigail then quickly enlightened David that it was not David's nature to avenge his enemies by his own hands (1 Sam 25.26). She reminded David his sparing of his enemy Saul at En Gedi, (1 Sam 24.1ff esp in v5), when David's heart troubled him, even when cutting Saul's robe. David did not take revenge into his hands. How could he corrupt his nature by killing Nabal, a fool? Was it worth it? These were the words of wisdom from Abigail. Abigail knew how to inspire the good characteristics of a person, reminding David of his good nature which must not be overcome by sporadic folly.

1.4.5. Her words were followed by action, presenting gifts to David's young men (not David himself) (1 Sam 25.27). We need to support words with actions and deeds at appropriate time.

1.4.6. She asked David to forgive her rather than her husband (1 Sam 25.28) to further soften David's heart, which was immediately followed by “my lord fights the battles of the Lord”. What a godly and honourable status! This was as if to
say to David, 'Why should you corrupt your noble status by fighting a fool like Nabal; evil has not been found in your whole life so far. Why stain yourself now?' God will take care of you and build your house. It is vital to always remind ourselves that we are fighting God's battle and not our own.

1.4.7. Abigail reminded David further of how God had helped him to fight his enemies: “the lives of your enemies God shall sling out, as from the pocket of a sling” (1 Sam 25.29); reminding David of how God helped him to fight Goliath (1 Sam 17.50). David himself said this (see 1 Sam 17.45, 47, 50). Abigail reminded David of his honourable mentality when he was even very young; as if to say, “How could you now David, take revenge in your hands with swords?” These words must have pricked David's heart!!! Very often we make good and spiritual resolution; we need to be reminded to keep them.

1.4.8. Abigail immediately reminded David of his becoming future king of Israel (1 Sam 25.30). God has a better portion for us, why should we quarrel about and fight over trivial matters?

1.4.9. If David had avenged by his own hands, he would have suffered grief of the heart (1 Sam 25.31). David's heart had now been arrested by Abigail's sequence of wisdom and actions. David yielded; his anger faded and decided not to take revenge into his own hands. Forewarning with undesired consequences by acting foolishly would be indispensable in
order to not sin against God. We can see Abigail's wisdom in building up her intensity to change David's mind from evil to good.

2. **Abigail loved her husband.**

“On me let this iniquity be” (1 Sam 25.24); not on her husband “Please forgive the trespass of your servant” (1 Sam 25.28a). She was willing to take the blame (1 Sam 25.24, 28a), though it was the husband who was in the wrong.

3. **Abigail was not influenced by evil.**

She did not act evilly with her husband. She was not blinded by the wealth of her husband. We must not be influenced by evil people including our spouse, wealth, etc.

4. **Abigail was humble**

4.1. Her actions (1 Sam 25.23, 24, 27).

4.2. Her words (1 Sam 25.41).

5. **Results of her wisdom.**

5.1. Prevented the deaths of all males belonging to Nabal (1 Sam 25.22, 34); though Nabal's life was not saved.

5.2. Prevented David from committing great sins (1 Sam 25.32-35, 39).
5.3. Blessings from God to be David's wife (1 Sam 25.42).

6. **Other teachings.**

6.1. David knew how to give thanks to God and to Abigail who gave him advice. When someone tells us of our weakness, we must thank God and the one who dares to speak to us (1 Sam 25.32, 33). David recognised that it was God who sent Abigail to prevent him from sinning against God (1 Sam 25.32). We can become better and more spiritual Christians by having such an attitude.

6.2. The rich fool always fail miserably (1 Sam 25.37, 38).

6.3. God revenges; we do not take vengeance ourselves (1 Sam 25.38).

**Conclusion.**

Learn from Abigail.
**Be a Prophet More Than a Patriot**

**Introduction**

Briefly summarise the encounter of Jonah. Jonah loved his nation, his own people. He was a patriot. But he failed to see God's will to save mankind. He lacked God's love, mercy and compassion. He was more of a patriot than an obedient prophet. However, it was the Lord's will that he was a prophet more than a patriot. A prophet is one who is appointed to know God's message(s) first and to then preach the message(s) to others. We are the end-time prophets because we have been enlightened with the Perfect Gospel of Salvation and are commissioned to proclaim the Truth.

1. Be an obedient prophet.

1.1. A disobedient prophet (servant, worker), like Jonah causing tempests in sea, creates storms in church. A problem disciple induces much trouble in God's household. Make sure that our words and actions do not incite disharmony among brethren.
1.2. An obedient prophet is not a runaway servant. Jonah fled, not because he was a coward, but because he knew that God would be merciful to Nineveh if he had proclaimed the message (Jonah 4.2). Nineveh was the Jews' enemy. Thus, Jonah wanted Nineveh to be judged and punished by God. The patriot within him was stronger than the prophet. God's will is for us to preach to sinners, even our enemies. We must not run from God's commission.

1.3. A runaway prophet might prosper for a little while. Jonah fled, reached Joppa, found a ship about to sail to Tarshish, paid the fare and became a passenger. Runaway and disobedient prophets (workers) can sometimes find a convenient ship and misinterpret temporary favourable predicaments as God's consent of his avoiding God's work. Like a backslider accepting seemingly promising circumstances as justification for sins, Jonah welcomed the ship's provision as God's endorsement for his runaway action. One who runs away from God's work and prospers in worldly matters does not necessarily mean God that has blessed him.

1.4. An obedient prophet speaks and works according to God's instructions. It was not an easy task for Jonah to proclaim a message of doom to a powerful city at the time. Social pressures or our enemies must not deter us from preaching the Perfect Gospel of Salvation. We preach not to please men but God (Gal 1.10). When it is time to speak, we must not be intimidated as we may need to displease some in order to pro-
claim and uphold uprightness. A prophet pleases God but a
patriot pleases man.

2. **A patriot's quiet conscience is not always a good one.**

2.1. When there was a mighty tempest on the sea, Jonah was
fast asleep in the lowest parts of the ship (1.4, 5). His con-
science still seemed clear after running from God's mission.
But God did not embrace Jonah's alleged quiet conscience and
swiftly taught him a lesson.

2.2. It seemed that the Gentile mariners were more Godly than
Jonah after he lost his conscience. Jonah had to be aroused
from sleep by a Gentile to pray to God (1.6). If we lose our
good conscience, we may be worse than Gentiles.

2.3. Ignoring or running away from God's mission, or contin-
uing to sin, but still with a quiet (seemly clear) conscience,
will eventually invite God's punishment.

3. **Hatred and pride can blind a patriot.**

3.1. Nineveh, founded by Nimrod, the great grandson of
Noah (Gen 10.6–12), was, for many years, the capital of the
mighty Assyrian Empire. The Assyrian kings, cruel and ruth-
less, had already invaded and plundered Israel on numerous
occasions when Jonah visited Nineveh around 760BC. The
Jews did not want to share God's grace with the Gentile
nations in Jonah's days, as was so in Paul's days (1 Thess 2.16).
They had forgotten their original purpose as a nation which was “through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed” (Gen 22.18). Jonah, the patriot, desired the city to be destroyed.

3.2. Hatred confused Jonah's concept of value. He was willing to give up his life to save the mariners but he had refused to proclaim God's message of warning to save the 120,000+ Ninevites. It was difficult for Jonah, a patriot more than a prophet, to comprehend or accept God's compassion for the Gentile sinners. Hatred rendered him failure to recognise God as the God of all nations. How do we feel when we see one who always displeases and hates us, now facing calamities? Do we want the worst upon him or do we have compassion to save him?

3.3. The mariners seemed to have more compassion than Jonah had. They did not immediately throw Jonah into the sea. They tried their best to row back to the land (1.13). We, the end-time True Church believers, must be prophets more than patriots. Our love must be greater than that of the Gentiles. Beware: we might be harsher than God in dealing with people. Consequently, many of those we hate or condemn might turn out to be ones loved and delivered by God.

4. **We must be a prophet more than a patriot.**

4.1. We need to be spiritually patriotic, i.e. love the brethren in God's household. But this is insufficient. We must love many more other people by proclaiming to them the Perfect Gospel
of Salvation.

4.2. God's love towards Jonah was shown through His training him to be a prophet. God used His word, the great wind, the lowest parts of the ship, the Gentile captain, the mariners, the sea, the great fish, the land, the repentance of Nineveh, plant, worm, sun, vehement and scorching wind, to train Jonah. We must pray to God to train and inspire us with compassion to love and preach to many more Gentiles; to be a prophet more than a patriot.

4.3. We need to constantly pray to Jesus that our spiritual eyesight and conscience are not blurred. Jonah's spiritual vision was constantly blurred regarding God's will. He proclaimed God's warning to Nineveh after God's taught him a lesson. But he was angry because God spared the people of Nineveh and yet he had pity over a plant (4.6–11); what a confused mind and blurred spiritual vision! Let us pray to God to keep our spiritual vision clear so that we are a prophet more than a patriot.

**Conclusion.**

From Jonah, we can vividly learn that God's will is that we not only love the brethren in the end-time True Church, but also proclaim the Truth to many more people who have not been enlightened by Jesus' Perfect Gospel. This is the mission of the True Jesus Church.
Build God's Kingdom on Earth

Introduction

Read Rev 5.9, 10. From these two verses, we can see that to reign on earth we need (1) Jesus' blood, (2) God's people of different tribes and tongues, of all nationalities, redeemed by Jesus' blood, (3) Redeemed people, made kings to God, (4) Redeemed people, made priests to God. God's Kingdom on Earth, the end-time True Church, is established with these four indispensable ingredients.

1. Jesus' blood builds God's Kingdom on Earth (Rev 5.9).

1.1. It is God's principle that Jesus' precious blood cleanses sins and sanctifies believers (Heb 9.12-14, 22).

1.2. It is Jesus' blood that purchases the Church (Acts 20.28; see also 1Jn 5.6-8). The definition of “Church” must mean people whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus' blood during
water baptism (Acts 2.38). However, water baptism must be performed according to the Bible for one's sins to be forgiven.

1.3. Believers who have not received the one and only water baptism cannot form the Church. They can call themselves a “church” but they are not qualified to be Jesus’ Church.

1.4. “Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Mat 7.21). The will of God includes the One and Only Water Baptism for the remission of sins.

1.5. There might be many “churches” in the world, but there is only One True Church. “There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my perfect one, is the only one, the only one of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her. The daughters saw her and called her blessed, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her” (Song 6.8, 9).

1.6. How do we treat other “churches”? We love them and we preach to them the Perfect Gospel. “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd” (Jn 10.16).

2. **We need people to build God's Kingdom on Earth (Rev 5.9).**
2.1. God's Kingdom on Earth consists of God's people who form the highest mountain (Mic 4.1, 2; Is 2.2,3) in the end-time. To establish the highest mountain (the Church, God's people), three distinct steps can be seen in these verses:

2.1.1. Nations, all kinds of people, shall flow to it. That means they will come to the True Church. They will believe and be baptised. These people are from different “churches”, denominations, etc.

2.1.2. Having believed and been baptised, they will go up to the mountain (house of God or Zion) of the Lord. As they go up, the Lord teaches them His ways and they will walk His paths. That means God's people grow spiritually to maturity and holiness.

2.1.3. Out of Zion shall go forth the Lord's word, the Perfect Gospel of Salvation. That is, God's spiritually cultivated people will preach to many more people to lead them flow to the highest mountain, the end-time True Church of God.

2.2. God's Kingdom on Earth, the end-time True Church, is the One Pearl of great price (Mat 13.45, 46).

2.2.1. In the end-time, a truth-seeker may search for the Truth from “church” to “church” like searching for beautiful pearls.

2.2.2. Such a truth-seeker eventually finds the One pearl of great value, the One True Church in the end-time.
2.2.3. He sells all he has (i.e. forsakes all his previous wrong beliefs) and buys the One Pearl of great value, i.e. accepts the Perfect Gospel of Salvation, being baptised into the end-time One True Church.

2.2.4. Therefore, God's Kingdom on Earth is being built from people initially of other faiths (or people without faiths) after accepting the Perfect Gospel preached by the end-time True Church.

2.3. The True Church is being joined by many people from far away to build God's Kingdom on Earth (Zech 2.11; 3.10; 6.15).

2.4. The gates of the end-time True Church are open in all directions (Rev 21.13), i.e God's Kingdom on Earth is being established throughout the whole Earth.

3. **God's Kingdom on Earth, the end-time True Church, must consist of kings (Rev 5.10).**

3.1. Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim 6.15; Rev 17.14).

3.2. We are the kings. We must have the seal of the King of kings, the Holy Spirit (Eph 1.13). We must be sealed in order to be saved (Rev 7.2ff). This is the river of water of life (Rev 22.1).

3.3. As kings, we must have the Sword of the Holy Spirit,
which is the word of God (Eph 6.17).

3.4. We must hold swords (knowing God's words), expert in war (able to battle with God's words) and have our swords on our thighs (willing and ever ready to fight) (Song 3.7, 8; see also Jude 3).

3.5. We are kings. We must be victorious over our own weaknesses, sins, the evil one and death. Kings must be victorious.

3.6. We must not be swallowed by the river from the serpent's mouth (Rev), that refers to peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues (Rev 17.15), i.e. concepts, ideas, tides of the world. As kings, we must be victorious over the serpent's river by the river of water of life, that is, the Holy Spirit (Rev 22.1).

4. God's Kingdom on Earth, the end-time True Church, must consist of priests (Rev 5.10).

4.1. We must be spiritual priests, a royal priesthood, proclaiming His praises, delivering people out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Pet 2.9).

4.2. Priests in the ancient time made offerings to God. We are spiritual priests, we must offer prayers to God.

4.3. Before singing the song of victory (Rev 5.9, 10), the four living creatures and twenty four elders were each with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers (Rev 5.8). That is, only with prayers, can we have victory and build God's
4.4. God's Kingdom is being built with prayers throughout the ages (Song 1.10; 4.4, 9; 7.4).

4.5. Like priests, we must offer Gentiles to God (Rms 15.16), i.e. proclaiming the Gospel to many more people to build God's Kingdom on Earth.

4.6. “Let me see your countenance, let me hear your voice” (Song 2.14).

4.7. Priests must take care and build up the sheep - feed the lambs, tend the sheep, feed the sheep (Jn 21.15ff).

**Conclusion.**

To build God's Kingdom on Earth, the One True Church in the end-time, we must rely on Jesus' blood to purchase people. Those purchased must be transformed into kings and priests to build God's Kingdom on Earth.
Enoch Ascended Into Heaven

Introduction

Enoch means “teacher”, “dedicated,” “initiated”. He was a descendant of Seth, and father of Methuselah (Gen 5.21; Luke 3.37; Heb 11.5; Jude 14). “After he begot Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years - Enoch lived sixty-five years - he begot Methuselah - Enoch walked with God three hundred years - So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him” (Gen 5.19-24). Gen 5 - a record of births and deaths, a register of longevity. The life-span of all those named in the chapter = 8,575 years. Enoch lived the shortest - 365 years and his son lived 969 years. We know very little about him (6 verses) but there were two indispensable factors in his life. Firstly, he lived a sanctified life in this world and secondly, his translation. This little is enough to make his name great. {Another person called Enoch was the firstborn of Cain (Gen 4.17-18; 1 Chro 1.3). A city built by Cain was named “Enoch”, which lies E of Eden, in the land of Nod,
being the first city mentioned in Scripture (Gen 4.17)]. Both Noah and Enoch preached to the antediluvians (people before the flood) (2 Pet 2.5; Jude 14-15). Their preaching, however, was not heeded, and the sinful world was destroyed by the Flood.

1. **Enoch walked with God (Gen 5.22, 24).**

1.1. The repetition emphasises how conspicuous this phase of his life was; indicating it is vital to walk with God for translation, i.e. ascending into Heaven without going through physical death.

1.2. Worldly affairs (including daughters and sons) did not prevent him from walking with God. His devotion to God was not diluted by family ties, responsibilities and trials, which never quenched the fire of his piety. *Note: Only after Methuselah was born to Enoch at the age of 65, the Bible says he walked with God. This further enhances that to him, God was above all things.*

1.3. We must walk with God all the more after getting married, etc. This teaching was enhanced by Jesus (see Mat 16.24; 19.21; 8.22).

1.4. Enoch walked with God for 300 years. There must have been certain factors that facilitated such walk.

1.4.1. Enoch had agreement (peace) with God. (See Amos 3.3). He agreed with God’s will and God agreed with his behaviours and deeds. He agreed with God for 300 years; what
about us?

1.4.2. Enoch had intimate communion with God. They must have been good friends. (See Jn 14.21-23). We need this communion with God today.

1.4.3. The love between God and Enoch kept them walking together for 300 years. We need this love, generated from a pure heart and sincere faith (1 Tim 1.5).

2. **Enoch pleased God.**

2.1. Before he was taken, “he pleased God” (Heb 11.5). (Also see Mat 3.17; 12.18; 17.5). No matter what others say and how they behave (Jud 16, 18), we must please God in our lives.

2.2. Do we please God while we walk with Him? (See Jn 8.29; Rms 8.8; 1 Cor 7.32; Gal 1.10; 1 Thes 4.1; 2 Tim 2.4; Heb 11.6).

3. **Enoch had full faith in God.**

3.1. (See Jude 1.14-15). Because of his perfect faith in God, he must have been inspired to prophesy the second coming of Jesus (even before his first coming). His faith facilitated an intimate communication with God, qualifying him to be a prophet as well as a saint. Our strong faith in the Lord today can furnish us with inspired messages from God, i.e. He will direct our footsteps, in decision making, choice of career, etc.
Enoch prophesised, therefore, we have to prophesy today, i.e. preaching God's words.

3.2. “By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and was not found, because God had taken him −.” (Heb 11.5).

3.2.1. It must have been an encouragement to the faith and hope of the ancient saints. It should be to us also.

3.2.2. “He was not” and “He was not found” (Gen 5.24; Heb 11.5) - suggesting the idea that one day this Godly person was missed and could not be found. “God took him” - “God had translated him”. Enoch did not see death, i.e. no experience of it. He would not rise from the dead for he had never died. Enoch's translation serves as a type for the living saints at Christ's second coming (1 Cor 15.51,52).

3.2.3. We, who are still alive when the Lord returns, will be the same - transformed. By faith, we shall be taken to Heaven. Note: “As Enoch did not live like the rest, so he did not die like the rest.”

Conclusion.

Learn from Enoch to walk with God. When the Lord comes again, we shall be resurrected (Jh 5.28,29; Acts 24.15; Dan 12.2) and/or transformed (1 Cor 15.51ff) to enter into His Heavenly Kingdom.
He Must Increase, But I Must Decrease

Introduction

Read John 3.30. John the Baptist assumed a vital role in God's plan of Salvation for mankind. Long before he was born, Isaiah prophesied him to be “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God' ” (Is 40.3; Mat 3.1-3). We, the end-time TJC members, must undertake the same role of John - preaching the Perfect Gospel for mankind's salvation. “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge” (Rms 10.2). John was successful as a forerunner for Jesus because he recognised “He must increase, but I must decrease”. What made John great even though he proclaimed “He must increase, but I must decrease”? John's greatness was not because of his fierce denunciation of the evils of his day, or the burning eloquence and blistering words that pierced and exposed the hearts of his contemporaries. What made him more than a prophet? (Mat 11.9). What made him “among those born of
women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist”? (Mat 11.11). This was due to his seemingly unconscious but perpetually revealing affirmation: “He must increase, but I must decrease” (Jn 3.30). Let us learn from John's spiritual qualities.

1. “He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.” (Jn 1.15, 30).

1.1. This means recognising that God is the initiator of His salvation plan for mankind. He sustains His plan. He accomplishes His plan. He harvests His work. Always place Jesus as the Leader in our proclamation of the Perfect Gospel.

1.2. This means put God first in our lives, let Jesus lead!

1.2.1. Think of Jesus first in actions we take in our lives.

1.2.2. Think of Jesus first before we make a proposal in a meeting, before we embark upon an undertaking, before we choose our course of study, before we choose our career, before we choose a partner for life, etc.

1.3. This means prayers for God's guidance must precede (direct) our plans, ideas and actions. We must rely on the Holy Spirit wholeheartedly. John was filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb (Lk 1.15b).
2. “I am not the Christ” (Jn 1.20b).

2.1. This means we do not rob God's glories.

2.2. We must not crave for a name, unlike the people after the flood: “Let us make a name for ourselves” (Gen 11.4).

2.3. Present Jesus only, not ourselves. “For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bond-servants for Jesus' sake” (2 Cor 4.5). We must not magnify ourselves, but bury and deny ourselves while serving the Lord. There are no positions in the Church we should crave for.

2.4. We lay no other foundation apart from Jesus who is the only foundation of the Church (1 Cor 3.11). The believers' foundation is Jesus, not us, the workers of God.

3. “whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose” (Jn 1.27b).

3.1. This means humility.

3.1.1. Before honour is humility (Pro 15.33b; 18.12b).

3.1.2. “By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches and honour and life” (Pro 22.4).

3.1.4. In humility, correct those who are in opposition (2 Tim 2.25).

3.1.5. Showing complete humility to all men (Tit 3.2).

3.1.6. “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble”” (1 Pet 5.5).

3.1.7. Pride, when spread like cancer, is incurable.

3.1.8. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies (1 Cor 8.1).

3.2. We preach not to present ourselves, but to bring people to the Lord. We talk not to show how good we are in speech, but to inspire, encourage and edify one another with God's love and power of the Holy Spirit. We discuss not to demonstrate how able we can argue, but to present the Truth with Jesus' help.

3.3. We need to constantly question our motives as we serve God. What motivates us to work for Jesus? Self-glory? Exposition of talents? Craving for leadership? Fame? Worldly gain? Pride? Love for Jesus? Let all glories, praises and honour be unto the Name of the Almighty God, Jesus for “whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose”.
4. “Behold the Lamb of God” (Jn 1.36b).

“And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus” (Jn 1.36, 37).

4.1. We do not bring believers to ourselves but to Jesus. We present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, not in us (Col 1.28). It is God's power and inspiration that draws people to Him. But, we are entrusted with the mission to share the Gospel with others.

4.2. We do not take the place of Jesus in the hearts of the believers.

4.3. Believers today must know Jesus is the Leader of God's household, the head of the Church (Eph 1.22; 5.23). (John's disciples knew who the Leader was).

4.4. If a church does not continue to prosper after our departure from that church, we have not totally led the believers to “behold the Lame of God”.

5. Paul has John's spiritual qualities.

5.1. Early in his ministry, as he analysed his past and now abhorred chronicle, Paul conceded: “For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle” (1 Cor 15.9).
5.2. Later in his life, Paul presented himself: “I am less than the least of all the saints” (Eph 3.8).

5.3. When Paul's life was drawing to a cessation and he was anticipating to meet Jesus, he lamented: “I am the chief of sinners” (1 Tim 1.15).

Conclusion.

Self-effacement, not self-advertisement, is the indispensable qualification to work for the Lord. Let us learn from John the Baptist to say: “He must increase, but I must decrease”. God made John more than a prophet and the greatest among those who are born of women (Mat 11.7-11).
I Sought Him, I Found Him, I Held Him, I Brought Him

Introduction

READ Song 3:1-5

1. I Sought Him (Song 3.1,2).

1.1. Many people are now preaching another Jesus, a different gospel (2 Cor 11.4; Gal 1.6).

2.2. We must seek the true Gospel, the body of Jesus, the end-time True Church.

2. I found Him (Song 3.4a).

2.1. I have found the Perfect Gospel, the Truth, the one True Church.

2.2. To find the Truth, we need to go beyond human logic, customs, traditions, cultures.
2.3. The resurrected Lord was found by His apostles and disciples. We now find Him through His words and commandments which are for our eternal life (Mat 19.17).

2.4. Some still lead a life as if not having found Jesus. They sin in darkness. We must not.

2.5. One who has truly found his Beloved will not sin anymore!!! For he is satisfied with his Beloved (the Lord), and would look for no one else or do anything to sadden the Lord.

2.6. Having found the Lord, our Beloved, we have a goal, purpose and direction in our life. We do all things for Jesus.

3. I held Him (Song 3.4b).

3.1. Having found Him, we must hold on to Him, hold on to His body, the True Church.

3.2. Hold on to His teachings. Attend services regularly, serving Him always.

3.3. Hold Him by prayers.

3.4. Hold Him by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

3.5. Hold Him by putting Him first in my life.

3.6. Hold Him by immovable faith.

3.7. Hold Him by the power of His promise.
3.8. Hold on to Him in times of temptation, adversity, adversaries.

3.9. Hold on to Him even after being blessed by Him. Some abuse His blessings, sinning against Him.

4. I brought Him (Song 3.4c)

4.1. Before bringing Him to many more people, we need to bring Him to the house of our mother - the church of God. This means fellowship with His presence is vital for our spiritual growth. Recognise that Jesus is among us in all our activities, services, meetings, etc.

4.2. I have brought Him into the chamber of her who conceived me. Chamber of the church is the holy assembly of God. There are many assemblies in the world. Some are immoral. These must always be holy in the True Church.

4.3. Bringing Jesus into the chamber of the church can mean in-depth, Holy Spirit-filled prayers.

4.4. We must bring (proclaim) Jesus to others.

Conclusion.

The true Jesus and His True Church must be sought to be found. We must hold on to Him and not let go. We do not just bring Him with us, but bring Him to many others.
I Was Blind But Now I See

Introduction

Read Jn 9.25. There are altogether eight miracles in John. This is the 6th. It is about a beggar born blind healed by Jesus. At least four types of people are involved: Jesus, the Pharisees, the blind beggar’s parents, and the beggar himself.

1. Jesus.

1.1. Before the miracle, Jesus told the Jews that He was before Abraham. For this, they stoned Him. (Jn 8.58, 59; 9.1). Proclaiming the Truth might invite resentment and even persecution. Jeremiah and Paul were persecuted likewise. (cf 2 Tim 3.11; 2 Cor 11.23-28).

1.2. “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Tim 3.12), but the Lord delivers us out of them all (Ps 34.19).
1.3. Jesus escaped. He saw a blind man and healed him. In times of tribulation, persecution, etc., Jesus still loved. It is easier to love when we are in times of prosperity. We need to learn to love others, like Jesus, though we may be in adverse situations. This is true love.

1.4. Never be discouraged to work (Is 42.4). Grasp hold of all opportunities to save more souls. Be merciful, like Jesus who went to find the healed man (who was cast out of society) to comfort him (Jn 9.35).

1.5. May God enlighten us to see our mission to save souls.

2. Pharisees.

2.1. Separatists (separated ones), a Jewish sect, emerged about 200BC. They were upholders of traditions, lovers of display, covetous, cruel persecutors, righteous outwardly, blind to spiritual matters, perversion of scriptures and self-justified before men. Christ's description: vipers, blind, hypocrites, serpents, children of devil. They desired to test Christ, entangle Him, accuse Him and destroy Him.

2.2. They knew so much, but were the proudest, filthiest and the most lacking in love.

2.3. They were full of jealousy, becoming stumbling blocks to the Gospel. We must not be jealous of our co-workers. Mutually accept one another and work in harmony.
2.4. With God's power and wisdom, make sure that we are not blind; we might be blind, but now we see.

3. **Beggar's parents.**

3.1. The parents were crooked. They allowed their blind child to beg. We must have love and mercy towards those who are weak, lame as they need the most care. We must not be blind to those who need our help physically or spiritually.

3.2. After Jesus healed their blind child, the parents said they did not know who healed him. They ignored God's grace (Jn 9.21,22) for they feared to be cast out of the synagogue by the Jews. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (Jn 12.43).

3.3. We might be blind to God's grace, but we must now see His grace and love others all the more.

4. **The blind (beggar).**

4.1. Though he was blind, his conscience was clear. But the Pharisees' conscience were darkened though physically they were able to see. (cf Mat 6.22,23). Make sure we are not spiritually blinded by the world, pleasures of sins, etc.

4.2. The blind's faith was tested. Our faith is tested by Jesus to grow, so as many as those in the Bible, and even now. Jesus' treatment of the blindness was: Saliva, dust (into clay) and
washing in Siloam pool. This may seem abnormal in human perspective, but this is God's way. God's way must be accepted with humility and obedience. E.g. speaking in tongues is not invented by True Jesus Church. We must believe and accept.

4.3. Three elements deployed by Jesus to heal the blind: dust (soil), saliva, water of Siloam.

4.3.1. Dust (soil): God created man by dust. He created a new pair of eyes for the blind. We need Him to create us anew. (cf Ps 51.10; Eze 36.26). We might be spiritually blind, sick, but now we must be renewed in eyes, mouth, hands, feet, whole person, etc.

4.3.2. Saliva. We need our tongue, mouth, voice box (larynx, throat), and saliva to speak. These can refer to God's words. Saliva from Jesus' mouth can be likened to words from His mouth with which He created heaven and earth. He created the blind's eyes with His saliva (words). (see Ps 19.8).

4.3.3. Water of Siloam. This was from springs of Gihon (1 Kgs 1.33, 45). Water from Gihon was clean and pure - the best water used by kings. This pure water signifies the Holy Spirit. Siloam means “being sent”, i.e. being anointed by the Holy Spirit. (cf Is 61.1; Rev 22; Eph 1.17,18). The blind needed this water of life. We need the Holy Spirit to restore our spiritual eyesight. Paul was enlightened by the Holy Spirit.
4.4. After he was healed, his faith progressed.

4.4.1. A Man called Jesus, but I do not know Him (Jn 9.11,12).

4.4.2. “He is prophet.” (Jn 9.17).

4.4.3. He knew Jesus was not a sinner, but righteous (Jn 9.30,31).

4.4.4. “He is from God” (Jn 9.33). The blind recognised Jesus as the Son of God, as Jesus told him (Jn 9.36,37). This was the faith progress of the blind. We not only need our eyes opened, but further more to improve and grow continuously.

**Conclusion.**

Learn from Jesus to see God's work as most important. Make sure we are not Pharisees. We must not forget God's love and grace like the parents of the blind man and must not be blind to see others' needs. Learn from the blind to progress spiritually.
I Will Lead On Gently

Introduction

Read Gen 33.14. Undoubtedly, Jacob could have kept pace with Esau, had he been alone. With so many children and flocks, Jacob did not expect Esau to travel slowly with him. He furnished his reason plainly. If we need to go different ways at times, it is prudent to make clear our motive so that we are not perceived unkind. Let us not overdrive the tender and young sheep. Note the following:

1. Be positive, optimistic in our words of encouragement.

1.1. Do not always preach with severity, or with harsh warnings to the young weak sheep. Proclaim also God's promises and consolation of God's words.

1.2. Do not be engaged in constant fault-finding and never commending. (cf Col 3.21).

1.3. Do not set up a standard of experience, and frown at the
young sheep because they have not felt all the sorrows or ecstasies (bliss) which we have experienced. Our previous adverse encounter should serve as a means to comfort others, not to discourage them.

1.4. Recognise that it requires a high degree of faith, fortitude, patience, and other graces, which in their case can only be buds. It takes time for a bud to grow, branch out, blossom and bear fruits. (cf Rms 14.1).

1.5. Turn gossip into words of love and prayers.

2. **View Jacob as a type of Our Lord Jesus.**

2.1. “He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.” (Is 40.11).

2.2. Feed the little lambs or the big sick sheep (Jn 21).

2.3. Gather, not disperse; e.g. harsh words repel.

2.4. Carry: assist those with accidents, injured by the devil. “A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; he will bring forth justice for truth.” (Is 42.3).

2.5. Lead: set living examples in deeds; not as leaders to command.

3. **Learn from God's gentleness.**

“You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me
4. **Other reasons for not overdriving the lambs.**

4.1. Our own experience: when weak and young, when ignorant of God's words, etc., how much we need to be encouraged, comforted, with love and gentleness.

4.2. **We may become weak and need great forbearance from others, with compassion and gentleness.**

4.3. Jesus thinks so much of the feeble ones. Paul cared greatly for the weak, naked, ugly, etc. How much more must we do also?

4.4. **When a candle is just lit and is to be moved, it must be moved at a gentle, slow pace or it will be extinguished immediately if moved too fast. A little plant can be drowned if watered too much. Frances de Sales: “Nothing is so strong as gentleness: nothing so gentle as real strength”**.

**Conclusion.**

You can do all things lawfully if you only think of yourself, but you will not do any (though lawful) if it grieves or causes a brother to stumble. A genuinely kind act may cause as much grief as joy (or more grief than joy). A word does the same effect: what you say intends to benefit, but causes the opposite effect (if not delivered gently). But note: we do not mean to compromise; the weak ones should not be too slow to catch up.
If You are the Son of God

Introduction

Read Mat 4.3,6,9. Compare with Mat 6.30; 7.11. Note the how Satan uses “if” to tempt and destroy but Jesus uses “if” to encourage and build.

1. Temptation itself does not necessitate sinning.

1.1. There is no sin in being tempted. Jesus was tempted, yet without sins (See Heb 4.15).

1.2. When we are tempted, we must not be led into temptation. (See Mat 6.13; 26.41). i.e. Being tempted, but if not led into temptation is not sin.

2. Satan attacks with an “If.”

2.1. God confirms but Satan instils, implants doubts. Satan “ifs” a plain Scripture (See Ps 2.7).
2.2. Satan does not deploy a point-blank denial. He did not say, “You are not the Son of God if you cannot command these stones become bread.” (That would be too obvious to see the craftiness of the devil). Satan utilises doubt to tempt God's people. E.g. It is alright to drink if we don't get drunk or it is OK to be alone with an opposite sex (not spouse) if we are careful, etc.

2.3. Satan ifs a fresh, former, vivid manifestation and confirmation of God (see Mat 3.17). i.e. Satan contradicts our spiritual experience of God in goodness, grace, power and miracles. E.g. It was luck and chance that he was not killed in an aeroplane crash, or it is fortunate and a coincidence that he is recovering from a terminal disease, etc.

2.4. He grafts his “if” on a holy matter. (He made the doubt look like holy anxiety concerning the divine Sonship). E.g. If God is impartial, why this is the only True Church?

2.5. Satan attacks with an “if” when we are spiritually ready to fight a spiritual battle. (Jesus was tempted when He was ready to preach mightily). i.e. Satan wants us to doubt our purpose of serving God, in His blessings, in His providential care and God-given ability to serve, etc.

2.6. Satan craftily aims the “ifs” according to our circumstances. (Jesus was tempted after 40 days fasting; how could
the merciful Father let His perfect Son go hungry?). He attacks us especially when we are in adversities and most vulnerable, etc. He attacks and tempts us when we are alone (Jesus was tempted in the wilderness). E.g. When Joseph was with his master's wife (Gen 39.10-12).

**Conclusion**

Do not let Satan's “ifs” cause us to stumble in the journey of faith! Useful quotation: “God had but one Son without corruption, but He had none without temptation. Such is Satan's enemy to the Father, that the nearer and dearer any child is to Him, the more will Satan trouble him and vex (plague) him with temptations.”
There are two women named Deborah in the Bible. One, in Gen 24.59; 35.8, was Rebekah's nurse who accompanied Rebekah to her new home when she married Isaac. Another Deborah is in Judg 4,5. Deborah means “bee”, with the qualities of usefulness, intelligence, industry and patience, symbolising persistent activity, care, etc. Teachings of Deborah in Judges are as follows:

1. Deborah was a good wife (Judg 4.4).

1.1. Deborah was the wife of Lapidoth which means “torches” or “lighting flashes”. Behind the scene, Lapidoth must have admired, encouraged his wife Deborah who must have received advice, love, support and sympathy from the husband to do God's work.

1.2. According to the rabbis, she was a keeper of tabernacle
lamps. Now, with her faith in God, she was light to the Israelites.

1.3. Virtuous husband and wife yield a spiritual family. Spiritual families propagate spiritually prosperous churches to save more souls.

2. Deborah was a prophetess.

2.1. OT prophets and prophetesses were vital as mediators between God and His people. She held a spiritually prestigious office. She furnished God's people with knowledge, wisdom and instructions from God under the palm tree. She foretold the fate of Sisera, commander of Jabin's army (Judg 4.9).

2.2. We need to learn from Deborah to be equipped with God's words and wisdom to bring many souls to God.

3. Deborah was a judge (Judg 4.4).

3.1. To be used by God as a judge, she must have been righteous, with justice, mercy and love in dealing with God's people.

3.2. We must not have partiality when dealing with our brethren and other people. There is no partiality with God (Rms 2.11).
4. She was a mother in Israel (Judg 5.7).

4.1. Deborah's faith and trust in God were the greatest priceless adornment for a woman. She had learnt from the Lord to treat all God's people to be her children. She cared and loved all the Israelites.

4.2. We must have the love of a mother if we were to fight a victorious battle for the Lord.

5. She was a poetess (Judg 5).

5.1. After the battle was won, Deborah composed a song which was even more superior to the song of Miriam (according to the Hebrews).

5.2. She not only praised God in the song, but also rendered all credits to God.

5.3. We need to constantly praise God and give all credits to Him.

6. She was an inspirer who could motivate and enkindle.

6.1. She was able to arouse, excite the Israelites to wake up from their spiritual slumber. With God's power, she strengthened and enlightened God's people to free themselves from
bondage and degradation.

6.2. We must cultivate ourselves to influence others fruitfully so that they grow spiritually.

6.3. We must be inspirers, not stirrers to cause strife, divisions, gossip, etc.

7. She was a warrior.

7.1. She first battled using God's words and then resorted to actions to accomplish God's mission.

7.2. She spoke positively to the fainthearted Barak, Israel's general (see Judg 4.6)

7.3. She put words into action (see Judg 4.9).

7.4. She clearly recognised God was always their Leader (read Judg 4.14).

7.5. We must be God's victorious spiritual warriors.

Conclusion.

Learn from Deborah with all the above points.
Jesus Marvelled at the Centurion

Introduction

Read Lk 7.1-10. Jesus marvelled at the centurion (Lk 7.9). The centurion must have good reasons to surprise Jesus. The most important one was his faith in Jesus. Can we let Jesus marvel at us because of our spirituality? If we can touch Jesus to marvel at us, He shall astonish us with His blessings. For example, Peter's obedience to Jesus' words led Jesus to astonish them with two boats full of fish (Lk 5.1-9). Let us study the spiritual qualities of the centurion to see how he made Jesus marvel at him.

1. **No one in Israel had a faith greater than that of the centurion (Lk 7.9b).**

1.1. The centurion heard of Jesus and believed in Him (Lk 7.3a). He demonstrated his belief by sending the Jewish elders to come to heal his servant (Lk 7.3). Note that he only heard
about Jesus and believed.

1.2. Before Jesus arrived, the centurion sent friends to tell Jesus that it was not necessary for Jesus to come but sufficient to say a word to heal his servant (Lk 7.6-8). This was the centurion's great faith.

1.3. Jesus would not have marvelled at the centurion if he were a Jew because the Jews had Abraham as their father of faith. But the centurion was a Gentile as well as a Roman soldier who certainly did not have the training from young to have faith in God.

1.4. Jesus marvelled at the centurion for he had so little (he only heard of Jesus), yet made so much out of it. Jesus must have also marvelled at the Jews for they had so much, yet made so little out of it.

1.5. We need to astonish Jesus and let Him marvel at us not because of our lack of faith but because of our strong faith.

2. The centurion's faith was accompanied with great love.

2.1. His servant was dear to him (Lk 7.2a). Masters could treat the servants at the time with harshness but the centurion must have treated his servant with love. The centurion's love was
able to bridge the gap between master and slave. A slave at the time was nobody and yet the centurion's love towards the servant was clearly exhibited.

2.2. The centurion's love must have compelled even the Jewish leaders to plead with Jesus and begged Him to heal the servant (Lk 7.3b, 4a).

2.3. Note that the centurion, being a Roman soldier, was a member of a proud and conquering race and the Jews were an even prouder race though conquered, were able to live at peace because of love.

2.4. The centurion's love towards the Jews was further demonstrated by his building a synagogue for the Jews, and that he loved the Jewish nation (Lk 7.5). Note that it was the Jews themselves who proclaimed that the centurion loved them.

2.5. We should learn from the centurion to love each other all the more in the end-time True Church, even our enemies.

3. **The centurion's faith was accompanied with humility.**

3.1. He demonstrated his humility by taking action: sending his friends to tell Jesus not to come under his roof (Lk 7.6).

3.2. This was because he felt that he was not worthy for Jesus
to come under his roof (Lk 7.6) and that he was not worthy to
go to Jesus (Lk 7.7).

3.3. But note that Jewish elders said that he was worthy (Lk
7.4) of the Lord's healing his servant.

3.4. The important lesson is we must not say we are worthy.
Let others judge whether we are worthy or not, good or not.
Most importantly, let God judge. If we constantly praise our-
selves, we will leave no room for others to constructively crit-
icise us and we will not please God.

Conclusion.

Let us learn from the centurion to let Jesus marvel at our faith,
love and good deeds. Jesus will then astonish us with His
abundant blessings. ✩
Let Us Rise Up and Build

Introduction

Read Neh 2.18. Note: God's people voiced out “Let us rise up and build” after Nehemiah himself encouraged them (2.17). i.e. God's responsible workers must lead the way to prosper and build the church. Nehemiah was able to encourage the people to rebuild the walls because of the following:

1. **Nehemiah knew how to communicate and share with his brethren. (1.1-3).**


   1.2. Deep communication relies on true understanding; Hanani knew of the situations well (1.3).

   1.3. Results: Sharing, communication and fellowship prompted Nehemiah to take actions. We need to do the same today. (See Phil 2.1,2).
2. **Nehemiah recognised his status.**

2.1. God's elect.

2.2. A captive under foreign power.

2.3. Being a cupbearer was not his desired status.

2.4. Persia was not his nation.

2.5. King Artaxerxes was not his Lord.

2.6. He knew how to use his influence with God's power to do God's work.

2.7. He did not indulge in the palace but rather served God when there was opportunity. He was a dedicated layman.

2.8. He truly recognised that being God's servant was much more valuable than being an earthly king's servant. He truly valued being a Heavenly citizen more than an earthly nation's citizen.


3. **Nehemiah sorrowed in a Godly manner.**

3.1. We should not worry about tomorrow (Mat 6.34). But we should worry about our shortcomings, sins, church not grow-
ing, etc. (2 Cor 7.9-11).

3.2. He sat down, wept and mourned for many days (1.4a). King Artaxerxes saw the sorrow of his heart (2.1-3).

3.3. We should be sorrowful for God's work not being done properly or when brethren not growing spiritually, etc. (see 2 Cor 11.28-29).

4. **Nehemiah knew how to pray.**

4.1. He fasted and prayed (1.4b), like Daniel (Dan 10.2,3).

4.2. He prayed with honour, respect and understanding (1.5). He recognised that God was Lord who keeps His covenant; He is merciful and loves those who keep His commandments.

4.3. Persistent prayers - praying day and night (1.6a). From 1.1,4 and 2.1 we can see he waited for God for about four months. (cf Ps 27.14). Consequently, God granted him opportunities.

4.4. Prayers of repentance (1.6b). He admitted his sins and Israelites' sins. This was his humility and true repentance. He admitted that they did not keep the commandments (1.7).

4.5. Prayers of grasping God's conditional promise with faith (1.8,9).

4.6. Prayers of thanksgiving (1.10).
4.7. Intercession for co-workers (1.11).

4.8. Nehemiah always prayed first. He prayed first before answering the king (2.4). (It is appropriate to assume that he prayed in silence before answering the king).

5. **Nehemiah planned (2.5-8).**

5.1. He asked the king to send him to Jerusalem to do the rebuilding (2.5).

5.2. Nehemiah set the king a time (2.6). He knew how much time he needed to rebuild the broken walls.

5.3. He obtained letters of permission from the king to let him pass beyond the river to go to Judah (2.7). He obtained a letter of permission to have timber for the gates and for his house (2.8). His requests were granted. This was vital as can be seen in 2.19 when the enemies accused them of rebelling against the king. Indeed, Nehemiah had hindsight.

5.4. To do God's work, we need to accompany prayers with planning.

5.5. His answers to the king were instant (he did not say let me think). His answers were detailed, to the point and met his needs for the wall rebuilding. This showed that he had prayed, planned properly for about four months. Opportunities are given to people who are prepared in their hearts.
6. **Nehemiah took action to go to see for himself the situations of the walls. (2.9, 11-16).**

6.1. He went to the governors in the region beyond the River (2.9a). God's grace was manifested through the king's gift of captains, army and horsemen (2.9b).

6.2. He was in Jerusalem for three days (2.11) before making a private survey. He was a calm person in working for the Lord. He took about 4 months to pray and plan. Now, he wanted to see the problems for himself. This certainly paved a smoother way for the reconstruction work.

6.3. With a few men (2.12a), he arose in the night and went out (2.13a) to survey. He made certain that he knew the situations before announcing the project to rebuild the walls. His survey was done in the night. One reason was to ensure less opposition from enemies before the project started. He also did not blow his trumpet for his intended work. We need to conceal ourselves before, during and after doing God's work.

6.4. He told no one of what God had put in his heart (2.12b); nor were there other animals (2.12c). He tried his best to ensure that no evil schemes were deployed by enemies to hinder his work.

6.5. Though he was a cupbearer, dwelling in a palace, he cared to take the burden of practically doing the manual surveying work. We do not just command others to do God's work; we must also do it ourselves.
7. Nehemiah recognised the hand of God (1.10; 2.8, 18).

7.1. We need to constantly recognise God's power while working for Him.

7.2. Many workers fail eventually because they do not recognise that it is He who works with them with His mighty hand.

7.3. We need to deny ourselves while serving the Lord. (cf 2 Chr 26:16).

7.4. Recognising God Himself would prosper them (2.20a).


8.1. Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite did not seek the well-being of God's children (2.10).

8.2. Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem the Arab laughed, scorned and despised God's people (2.19a).

8.3. Threat with false accusations (2.19b).

9. Conclusion. “Let us rise up and build” (2.18b).

9.1. “Let us rise up and build” was said by the people themselves.

9.2. We need to guide, train and build up brethren so that they can say this themselves. God's work cannot be accomplished
by one person. All brethren must participate in God's work.

9.3. Nehemiah awoke the people to see their own distress and reproach (dishonour) and their needs (2.17). To do so, he testified God's grace, power and the king's approval (2.17,18). He stirred them up so they could see that they needed to awake, to change and to rebuild. We must not get used to our spiritually low status; we must be uplifted spiritually; from anger to gentleness, from jealousy to support, from hatred to love, etc.

9.4. To achieve this, the shepherds must say this first (2.17b). This encouragement shall then be put into action (2.18c).

9.5. Nehemiah was clearly a practical man as he completely relied on God. We need to work, not just talk, in order to build up the church.

9.6. The rebuilding was accomplished in 52 days (6.15).
More Love to Thee

Introduction

We love Him because He first loved us (1 Jn 4.19).

How do we love Him?

1. By keeping His commandments.

“If you love Me, keep My commandments” (Jn 14.15; see also Jn 14.21; 15.10; cf 1 Jn 2.3,4; 3.24; 5.2,3).

Keeping His commandments also leads to salvation. “So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments” (Mat 19.17; cf Mk 10.17-21).
2. **By working for Him.**

2.1 By taking care of Jesus' sheep. Refer to Jesus asking Peter three times (Jn 21.15-17) to feed His lambs, tend His sheep and feed His sheep.

2.2. By preaching the Gospel. “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Tim 4.2).

2.3. By loving others. “Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law” (Rms 13.8). Refer to Mat 25.34ff (not only the physical, but also the spiritual significance).

2.4. By doing other works. e.g. visiting, praying, etc. Working for Jesus is also related to salvation (refer to Mat 3.10; 7.19; 21.43).

**Conclusion.**

We demonstrate our love towards God by keeping His commandments and working for Him. Our work is not in vain (see 1 Cor 15.58; Rev 14.13).
Strangers, Sojourners and Members of God's Household

Introduction

Read Eph 2.19. One can see three types of people: strangers, sojourners (i.e. foreigners, aliens or guests), members of God’s household.

1. Strangers.

1.1. Strangers are without God and without hope (Eph 2.12). They are not reborn. We are not strangers for we have been baptised into Christ.

1.2. Strangers are unsure where they have come from, not sure why they are in the world and uncertain where they go after this life.

1.3. If we are not careful, we might become strangers even after
water baptism. We can have a form of godliness but deny its power (2 Tim 3.5). Safeguard yourselves not to turn into strangers again (Heb 10.26ff).

2. **Guests (sojourners).**

2.1. We must not be guests in God's household. Wrong motives in Church can turn us into guests for material gains (see Jn 6.26).

2.2. Guests need invitation. They need to be invited to come to church and come only occasionally.

2.3. They need special attention. If they do not receive this, they may be angered. They need constant care, yet do not care for others.

2.4. They want to be served. After baptism, we must not be constant guests in God's household.

2.5. We must learn to serve. Learn from Jesus who came to serve and not to be served (Mat 20.28).

2.6. Guests are temporal. They are not permanent in God's household. They are not rooted in faith upon Jesus.

2.7. They only come for social activities. But God's household
is for fellowship with God in His words and with each other, as well as a temple of prayers. If it is social rather than spiritual, it would do more harm than good (1 Cor 11.17,18).

3. **Members of God's household.**

3.1. After baptism, we are members of the same family. There is no distinction between races, background, etc.

3.2. Members of God's household are equal in God's eyes. Though we have preachers, elders, etc., they are not titles but posts of responsibilities and service. Of course, we respect God's workers and respect each other.

3.3. Members of God's household are concerned with God's affairs (cf Pro 31.27).

3.4. They are united to prosper the family, the Church and to save more souls.

3.5. They love one another, as disciples of the same family (Jn 13.34,35).

**Conclusion.**

We must not be strangers (not baptised) or guests any more. We must be members of God's household.
The Battle in the Garden of Eden

Introduction

Read Gen 3.1-6. From this passage, we can see the downfall of mankind. It took 7 steps to raise Eve's hand to sin and another three steps for Adam to fall. Adam and Eve lost the battle in the Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden can prefigure the end-time True Church. Relying on Jesus' power, we must not lose the battle in the end-time True Church. Let us study this battle so that we are equipped to fight a victorious fight.

1. Eve befriended the serpent.

1.1. The serpent, deployed by the devil, became a friend of Eve. The serpent can represent evil. We must not make friends with evil or crooked people, otherwise, we will be corrupted.
1.2. “The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray” (Pro 12.26). Eve was not careful and the consequence was expulsion from the Garden of Eden, causing the downfall of mankind.

2. The serpent caused Eve to doubt God's words.

2.1. Having made friends with the serpent, Eve provided the devil an opportunity to cause her to doubt God's words.

2.2. The serpent said to Eve, “Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'” (3.1). This devilish question caused Eve to doubt God's words.

2.3. We must not doubt God's words if we want to win the battle.

3. Eve did not uphold God's words (3.2,3).

3.1. Eve did not seem to remember the fruit of which tree she must not eat. She said “the tree which is in the midst of the garden” (3.3a), and not “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (2.9).

3.2. Eve also told the serpent that God told her not to touch the fruit (3.3b).
3.3. There is no record that God said this. Eve indeed did not uphold God's words.

4. **Recognising Eve did not uphold God's words, the devil changed God's words.**

4.1. The serpent said to Eve, “You will not surely die” (3.4).

4.2. However, God said, “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (2.17). Eve was not aware that the devil had changed God's words. After changing God's words, the devil shot Eve with three arrows of fire. These arrows were, and still are, lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life.

5. **Lust of the flesh.**

5.1. After seeing, in her mind Eve began to believe that the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was good for food (3.6a). She had never felt that the fruit was good for food until after she was enticed by the devil.

5.2. She had never thought of eating the forbidden fruit because she had more than sufficient, to use as food, the other fruits in the garden. She did not need to take this forbidden fruit.
5.3. But now she desired to eat the fruit. She desired and craved for what she did not need. This was lust of the flesh. We may do the same by desiring what we do not need.

6. **Lust of the eyes.**

6.1. Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was pleasant to the eyes (3.6b).

6.2. Eve did not feel that the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which had all the while been in the garden with other trees, was pleasant to the eyes until the devil deceived her.

6.3. The devil can cause us to venture out to see what we must not see. Eve's eyes, with the devil's deceit, caused her to sin. We must watch our eyes lest we are defeated by the devil.

7. **Pride of life.**

7.1. The devil deceived Eve to see that the forbidden fruit was to make one wise, like God (3.6c; 3.5).

7.2. Her craving to be like God caused her to fall into the snares of the devil.

7.3. The devil deployed the same three arrows to attack Jesus
after Jesus fasted forty days and nights in the wilderness (Mat 4.1-10).

7.4. Today, the devil still deploys the same three arrows to attack God's children (1 Jn 2.16).

8. **Eve raised her hand.**

8.1. After the devilish arrows were fired, Eve's hand was energised. She lifted up her hand and took the forbidden fruit (3.6d). She took and ate (3.6e) in a swift and continuous sequence without a stoppage or thought.

8.2. This was because the three devilish arrows of fire were full of energy. They are called the fiery darts (arrows) of the wicked one (Eph 6.16b). The devilish fire raised Eve's hand.

8.3. We must take the shield of faith to quench all the fiery darts (arrows) of the wicked one (Eph 6.16).

8.4. We must be energised by God's power (God's fire), not devil's power (profane fire).

9. **Eve gave the forbidden fruit to her husband Adam (3.6f).**

9.1. This was a transfer of emotion not love.
9.2. This emotion was polluted by the devil.

9.3. We must not act with impulses and emotions to sin against God.

10. **Adam ate (3.6g).**

10.1. Adam had completely forgotten God's words and warnings.

10.2. He blindly trusted Eve who was deceived by the devil.

10.3. We must trust God wholeheartedly. We must not trust each other blindly.

10.4. This caused the downfall of mankind.

**Conclusion.**

It took the devil at least seven steps to raise Eve's hand to sin against God and another three steps for Adam to sin, causing mankind to fall. The end-time True Church is a spiritual Garden of Eden. We must not lose the battle but must win this battle with God's mighty power.
The River of Life and The Tree of Life

Introduction

Read Rev 22.1-5. Testimony: In a prayer, a brother saw a vision of a tree: full of life, vitality and covered with leaves. He saw a flow of sparkling water, as bright and as clear as crystal, coming down from heaven, above the tree. The water passed through the leafy, healthy tree and formed a river, flowing far away. The river of water of life delineates the Holy Spirit. The tree of life portrays a reborn believer in Jesus Christ, or the end-time True Church.

We, the believers, the True Church, must have the river of life, the Holy Spirit, to aid us in our growth to maturity. The Holy Spirit in us is like a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life (Jn 4.10, 13, 14; also Jn 7.37-39; Jn 4.24; 2 Cor 3.17).
1. The river of water of life is as clear as crystal (Rev 22.1a).

1.1. The Holy Spirit not only makes us grow but is also the Spirit of Truth (Jn 14.17; 15.26).

1.2. As clear as crystal, He guides us into all Truth (Jn 16.13; cf 1Jn 4.6).

1.3. The Lord's statutes and commandments enlighten our eyes (Ps 19.8) and He purges us by the Spirit of burning (Is 4.4).

1.4. The Truth of God, like a crystal, is not only pure and clear but is definite, defined and certain. The end-time True Church proclaims the Perfect Gospel, like a crystal, with a definite pattern (2 Tim 1.13).

1.5. As clear as crystal, the end-time True Church is preaching the Truth, especially the ten basic beliefs.

2. Why is the river of life (Holy Spirit and the Truth) as clear as crystal?

2.1. Because it is proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb (Rev 22.1b), i.e. from God Himself.
2.2. The end-time True Church, the holy city, New Jerusalem, comes down out of heaven from God (Rev 21.2, 10; also Ps 46.4).

2.3. The end-time True Church is not built upon man's concepts, worldly ideas, but is built heavenly, i.e. from God's words.

3. **The river of water of life goes through the middle of the city** (Rev 22.2a).

3.1. The city, the Church grows with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

3.2. Tree of life on either side of the river. We, the believers, like trees, are planted and grow by the side of the river of water of life, i.e. we need the Holy Spirit to grow. We must pray for the in-filling of the Holy Spirit.

3.3. The brother's vision and John's vision are similar, with the message that the condition to grow spiritually is by the power of the Holy Spirit.

3.4. Holy Spirit is not only a pledge for our salvation, it is also an indispensable spiritual power for us to grow.
4. **Bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruits every month and leaves healing nations (Rev 22.2b).**

4.1. Bearing twelve fruits means doing good and perfect works for Jesus. God's expectation from us is to have high spiritual cultivation, to preach to many, to pastor His sheep.

4.2. Yielding fruits every month. We need to constantly bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5.22). Work diligently for Jesus.

4.3. Leaves healing nations. Through the Holy Spirit, and God's words, the spiritually sick and dead in Christ are healed and given life (Eze 47.8; Pro 4.20-22).

4.4. Leaves healing nations also means all for Jesus.

5. **There shall be no more curse in the city (Rev 22.3a).**

5.1. There is no curse but holiness in the city because the believers are sanctified. It is God's expectation that each end-time believer, each tree of life, is holy.

5.2. Sanctification is achievable because in the holy city is the throne of God and the Lamb (Rev 22.3b). God reigns in our hearts and we serve Him (Rev 22.3c).
5.3. No one defiled can enter the holy city (Rev 21.27).

6. **Jesus' name is on the believers' heads (Rev 22.4b).**

6.1. This shows that we belong to Him.

6.2. Other people can see Jesus in us. God expects us to magnify His image and glorify Him.

6.3. We must let Jesus see our countenance and hear our voice (Song 2.14), i.e. our behaviours (countenance) and what we say (voice) are to bring others to the Lord. We shall see His face too (Rev 22.4a).

7. **There is no need of lamp, sun or moon light in the city (22.5a; also 21.23).**

7.1. Lamp, sun and moon light represent worldly materials such as wealth, fame, position, status, worldly education, sinful pleasures, etc.

7.2. Without these, those don't have Jesus are terrified; many cannot continue to live on. But end-time True Church members are different - worldly materials do not attract them anymore.

7.3. End-time believers must be satisfied by Jesus, not by mate-
rial of the world. We must recognise that things unseen are forever.

7.4. God is our light.

8. **End-time true believers shall reign forever and ever (Rev 22.5c).**

8.1. By God’s grace, we must be kings and priests (Rev 5.10). God is the King of kings.

8.2. Kings can overcome sins, our weakness, etc.

8.3. Priests can offer fruitful prayers and offer up Gentiles to God. (See sermon entitled “Build God’s Kingdom on Earth”).

**Conclusion.**

Let us fulfil the expectations of the vision seen: We, the end-time believers, like the tree of life, are able to blossom and bear fruit as outlined above.
The Truth of Resurrection

Introduction

The Bible mentions three types of resurrection. These are physical resurrection, spiritual resurrection and last day resurrection. Physical resurrection is to glorify God. Spiritual and last day resurrections are to do with Salvation.

1. Physical resurrection.

This refers to one who has been raised physically from death to life.

1.1. This can be seen in OT. Elijah raised the widow's son in Zarephath (1 King 17:8-24). Elisha resurrected the Shunammite woman's son (2 King 4:32-37). The dead man who touched Elisha's bones (2 King 13:21).

1.2. This can be seen NT. Jesus raised Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:41-43) and Lazarus (John 11:43-44). Peter raised Dorcas

1.3. Testimonies in the True Jesus Church.

1.4. People having experienced physical resurrection will still come to an end physically (unless he is still alive when Jesus comes again and he will be transformed).

1.5. Physical resurrection is to glorify God (Jn 11.4).

2. *Spiritual resurrection.*

2.1. In God's eyes, before believing in Jesus, we are dead spiritually. Our faith in Jesus enables us to pass from death to life (Jn 5.24). The dead will hear the voice of Jesus and will live (Jn 5.25; Eph 2.1).

2.2. But this spiritual resurrection comes about not only by believing in Jesus. Our faith must be demonstrated with actions according to the Bible. The washing of regeneration (that is, the one and only water baptism according to the Bible), with the Holy Spirit, enables us to be regenerated (resurrected spiritually) (Tit 3.5).

2.3. We are buried with Jesus in water baptism and raised from death after water baptism (Col 2.12).

2.4. This is called the first resurrection (after water baptism).
Those who have part in the first resurrection shall not face the second death (Rev 20.5, 6).

3. Last day resurrection.

3.1. Martha recognised the last day resurrection.
“Martha said to Him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day’” (Jn 11.24).

3.2. This happens when the last trumpet sounds.
“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor 15.52; please also see v51-55).

3.3. Christ being the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
After the downpour of the Holy Spirit, the message of the resurrection of Jesus was preached (see Acts 2.24, 31, 32; 3.15, 26; 4.2, 10, 33; 5.30; 17.18; see also Mat 28. 6, 7 before the Holy Spirit downpour). “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15.20; also see v23).

3.4. If there was no last day resurrection, then our preaching is empty, our faith is futile and those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished (see 1 Cor 15.12-19). Salvation can only be realised through the step of resurrection. (Of course, for those who are still alive when the Lord comes again the sec-
ond time, they do not undergo physical death but transforma-
tion for salvation) (1 Cor 15. 51, 52).

{Note: Sadducees did not believe in resurrection (Mat 22.23); 
Pharisees believed (Acts 23.8) - they were confused; we must not be 
today}.

3.5. What form shall we be after last day resurrection? We will 
be raised a spiritual body, in glory, incorruptible, in power 
and immortal (see 1 Cor 15.35–53).

3.6. Resurrection of life (for those who have believed in Jesus 
and have done good) and resurrection of condemnation (for 
those who have not believed and for those who have believed 
but have done evil) (Jn 5.28, 29). Resurrection is for both the 
just and the unjust (Acts 24.15; see also Lk 14.14). Some shall 
awake to everlasting life, and others to shame and everlasting 
contempt (Dan 12.2; see also Is 26.19).

3.7. Order of resurrection. The dead in Christ will rise first; 
those still alive shall be caught up with them in clouds to meet 
the Lord in the air (1 Thes 4.16–18).

3.8. How to obtain the last resurrection?

3.8.1. Believe in Jesus (Jn 11.25; see also Jn 5.21; Phi 3.10, 11).

3.8.2. One who eats His flesh and drinks His blood, i.e. par-
taking the correct Holy Communion according to the Bible (Jn 6.54).

3.8.3. Correct Water Baptism. Must be united with Jesus in His death in water baptism (i.e. head bowing during water baptism) (Rm 6.5).

Conclusion.

“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints” (Ps 116.15). “Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."” (Rev 14.13). "But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (Mat 22. 31, 32). “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven” (Mat 22.30).
They Carried the Lame Daily to the Beautiful Gate

Introduction

Read Acts 3.1ff. This demonstrates the attitude and mentality we ought to have in serving the Lord.

1. Love.

1.1. First commandment (Mat 22.37,38). Love is the source of power to work for God.

1.2. To love a spiritually lame person (truth-seeker or member) is greater than ritual burnt offerings and sacrifices (Mk 12.31-33).

1.3. Love is a commandment from Jesus (Jn 13.34). Love motivated them to carry the lame.
2. **Unity.**

2.1. Oneness of mind is essential to serve and love God (1 Pet 3.8).

2.2. Dwelling together in unity is precious (Ps 133.1,2).

2.3. If one member suffers, all members suffer with it (1 Cor 12.25,26). Unity is indispensable to bring many more lames to the Church.

3. **Working in silence.**

3.1. There is no record of disharmony when the lame was being carried.

3.2. We need to work in silence (harmony) and not blow our own trumpet.

3.3. It is wise to safeguard our words while working for God (cf Eccl 3.7; Pro 17.28; 21.23).

4. **Endurance is vital to serve God.**

4.1. They carried the lame daily, not a few days.

4.2. Perseverance is needed to accomplish God's works (cf 2 Cor 12.12).
4.3. Patience is needed to help a person grow spiritually.

5. **People who carried the lame were not mentioned in names.**

5.1. We must deny ourselves when we serve God, and must not crave for a name.

5.2. Let's not make a name for ourselves, like the people after the flood (Gen 11.4).

**Conclusion.**

Only with love, unity, working in silence, endurance and total self-denial, can we carry more lames to the True Jesus Church.
Three Kinds of Joy

Introduction

GOD has created us with the ability to feel joy. However, not every experience of joy is of the same quality or nature. We can derive three kinds of joy according to the scriptures.

1. **Joy of sinful pleasures.**

1.1. This is a sensing of joy in satisfying the lustful desires of a carnal man. Explain lust. It is a low and debasing level of sinful pleasure.

1.2. Such joy fades away swiftly and leaves behind a bitter taste of guilt in a person's conscience.

1.3. Moses reckoned it as passing pleasures of sin (Heb 11.25).

1.4. Such joy is polluted by sins and is under God's wrath, lead-
ing to eternal condemnation (see 1 Cor 6.9,10).

1.5. “Folly is a joy to him who has no sense, but a man of understanding walks aright” (Prov 15.21). This folly can be sexual immorality and all other sins, etc.

2. **Earthly joy.**

2.1. This, to people, may seem a relatively nobler realm of happiness on earth. This can come from human worldly achievements and success. They may enrich and sweeten our physical lives.

2.2. This earthly joy can be from God (e.g. Job 1.10). But, such joy does not last forever.

2.3. If not spiritually alert, such joy can cause us to drift away from God and sin.

2.4. We must utilise earthly blessings to do God’s works, turning them into spiritual treasures (Mat 6.19,20). We must not abuse them to sin against God.

3. **Spiritual joy.**

3.1. This is the highest sphere of divine joy, a foretaste of the heavenly joy.
3.2. This is unchanging, everlasting and available to everyone who desires it. This is available in Christ and is complete (Jn 15.11; 16.24).

3.3. We can now feel this joy in His household (Ps 16.11), in preaching His word (Jer 15.16; Ps 126.5), in prayer (Is 56.7), even in affliction (2 Cor 7.4), etc.

3.4. This is joy of salvation (Ps 51.12; Rms 14.17; Is 35.10; 51.11).

**Conclusion.**

The joy of the Lord is our strength (Neh 8.10). “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels” (Is 61.10).
Three Kinds of Offerings

Introduction

It is evident from the Bible that there are three kinds of offerings. These are: (1) Spiritual sacrifices which include devoting ourselves totally to God's works and living for Jesus dedicatedly, (2) Offering earthly possessions which become treasure in Heaven, (3) Offering gentiles to God.

1. Spiritual sacrifices.

In the OT, many kinds of offerings and sacrifices were made. E.g. on the Sabbath, two male lambs, a year old and without blemish had to be burnt as an offering (Num 28.9). A burnt offering of two young bulls, seven male lambs, a year old and without blemish, and a ram was offered to God at the beginning of the months. Jesus has sacrificed Himself for us today (we do not need to offer as the elect in the OT did). We are living stones, a spiritual house and a holy priesthood. We need
to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet 2.5). These spiritual sacrifices demand our heart, mind, soul and might which are:

1.1. Presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Rm 12.1).

1.1.1. This can mean offering ourselves up to God to serve Him full-time. This is one of the best forms of living sacrifice. Serving Him full-time enables us to be dedicated wholeheartedly to His work.

1.1.2. This also means that after we have been purchased by Jesus' precious blood, we wholly belong to God. We live for the Lord and die for the Lord (Rms 14.7, 8). “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal 2.20).

1.2. Singing praises to the Lord.

1.2.1. We need to offer praises to the Lord in the form of singing hymns, from the bottom of our heart. “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that
is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name” (Heb 13.15). “My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh shall bless His holy Name forever and ever” (Ps 145.21). We must worship God in spirit and in truth (Jn 4.23, 24). This means we offer praises to God in moments of in-depth spiritual communication whenever we sing a hymn (not just external loudness).

1.2.2. As we sing we must make melody in our hearts to the Lord, “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph 5.19). Melody means tunefulness and harmony, i.e. unity in the Church is indispensable when offering praises to the Lord. Unity is good and pleasant (Ps 133.1, 2).

1.3. Prayers as incense before the Lord.

1.3.1. Prayers are not only a source of power from God. We pray not only in times of need, illnesses, suffering, tribulations, etc. Prayers are a form of offering to render Him our praises and gratitude, etc.

1.3.2. My prayer, like incense, is a sacrifice to God (Ps 141.2).

1.3.3. Our prayers are golden bowls full of incense, i.e. we must be holy as we offer prayers to God (Rev 5.8).

1.3.4. Jesus also prays for us and with us (Rev 8.3, 4).
2. Offering our possessions to God to gain treasure in Heaven.

2.1. Earthly possessions can be spiritually transformed into heavenly treasure. “Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me” (Mat 19.21; see also Mk 10.21; Lk 18.22).

2.2. “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal” (Mat 6.19, 20). A rich man can carry nothing away when he dies (Ps 49.16, 17).

2.3. We must offer tithes. Not offering tithes is robbing God (Mal 3.8-10).

2.4. Offer with willingness and joy (2 Cor 9.6, 7).

3. Offering Gentiles to God.

“that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (Rms 15.16).

3.1. Jesus chose the twelve apostles to proclaim His Gospel. He
sent the seventy to preach His word. He commanded His believers to preach before His ascension (Mat 28.19; see also Acts 1.8).

3.2. We all are spiritual priests in the end-time (Rev 5.10). A priest must offer spiritual sacrifices, Gentiles, to the Lord. That is, we must preach the Perfect Gospel throughout the world.

3.3. We must be constantly motivated by Jesus' love to preach to more people.

3.4. Preach in season and out of season (2 Tim 4.2). Our labour is not in vain (1 Cor 15.58).

3.5. Set a goal; preach at least once a week; bring at least one to the Lord a year.

**Conclusion.**

We must offer the first kind of offering, which can then be followed by the second and the third. Offer when we are still alive and able.
Transformation for Salvation

Introduction

Transformation means change. A caterpillar undergoes metamorphosis - change of forms during growth - before developing into a butterfly. A tadpole does likewise to mature into a frog. A person needs to transform for salvation.

1. Unbelief to belief.

1.1. A person needs to transform from unbelief to belief. Since human ancestors sinned against God, the seed of unbelief has been planted in the human heart, which prompts people to rebel against Him.

1.2. Fate of man is death spread to all men (Rms 5.12) and judgement (Heb 9.27) because of sins.

1.3. Our life is short, like a pilgrimage (1 Chr 29.15); flower
and grass (1 Pet 1.24); shadow (Ps 109.23), dream (Job 20.8) and sleep (Ps 90.5); cloud (Job 7.9), vapour (Jas 4.14), smoke (Ps 102.3); and like a breath (Ps 144.4) and sigh (Ps 90.9).

1.4. Belief in Jesus gives us hope. We are justified by faith (Rms 5.1), by His grace (Rms 3.24) and His blood (Rms 5.9) during water baptism.

1.5. We are transformed from death to life in Jesus through baptism of water and the Holy Spirit (Jn 3.5; Tit 3.5).

2. **From old into new**

2.1. Transformation continues after we have believed and having been reborn of water and the Holy Spirit (i.e. having been justified).

2.2. The inner being still needs to be spiritually renewed and purified constantly, which is sanctification, an on-going process towards holiness and perfection, needed for salvation (Heb 12.14; cf Mat 5.48; Rev 21.27).

3. **From barren ground to fruitful field.**

3.1. God's Kingdom is given to a nation producing the fruits of it (Mat 21.43). A tree not bearing good fruit is cut and burnt (Mat 7.19).
3.2. After we have been renewed (cleansed and reborn), we may be barren. This barrenness must be transformed into fruitfulness.

3.3. A barren ground can mean a fruitless field or a field of corruptible fruits. We must bear good fruits, not wild grapes for salvation (see Is 5.2-6; Gal 5.19-21).

3.4. A fruitful field is ever full of sap and green (Ps 92.14) and bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5.22).

4. **From physical body to spiritual body.**

4.1. Having been spiritually transformed in the present life, we shall be transformed into a spiritual body when the Lord comes again (1 Thess 4.13-18; 1 Cor 15.51-54).

4.2. This spiritual body is indispensable for salvation (1 Cor 15.35-50).

**Conclusion.**

We must believe in Jesus (unbelief to belief), be reborn (from old into new), spiritually renewed (barren ground to fruitful field), and transformed into a spiritual body for salvation. (See Ps 116.15; Rev 14.13; Jn 5.28,29).
Two Boats Full of Fish

Introduction

Read Lk 5.1-12.

1. Jesus' diligence.

1.1. From Lk 4.40ff; 5.1, we can see Jesus' diligence.

1.2. A clear contrast between Jesus' diligence and the two boats left behind by the fishermen (Lk 5.2).

1.3. The two boats can be likened to gifts and talents given to us by God. We must make use of them rather than leaving them idle.

2. They toiled all night and caught nothing (Lk 5.5), but they washed the nets (Lk 5.2).
2.1. Work done but without harvest and they were not discouraged (because they still washed the nets).

2.2. Spiritually, we need to wash our nets after working for God.

2.3. This involves examining our motives and reasons for not harvesting.

3. **Gifts must be accompanied with Jesus' presence.**

3.1. Jesus got into Simon's boat (Lk 5.3). Simon's boat was accompanied by Jesus. We might have gifts from God, but we still need Jesus to work with us.

3.2. With gifts and Jesus' presence, we put out from the land (5.3), i.e. we must take action with gifts and Jesus' presence.

3.3. Jesus sat down and taught (Lk 5.3), setting us a good example to do His work. With His help, we can work for Him steadily and calmly.

4. **To ensure the “two boats full of fish”, we need to take further action.**

4.1. We need to “launch out into the deep” (LK 5.4). That is, we need to take the initiative to work diligently, in different places, etc.
4.2. In the course of working, we need to let down the nets for a catch (Lk 5.4). Only when the nets are under water, can we catch. Make sure we do not expose ourselves when catching fish (working for Jesus).

5. “At your word I will let down the net” (Lk 5.5).

5.1. Without Jesus' words, Simon toiled all night and caught nothing. Without His words, we can do nothing.

5.2. He did the same again to catch, but this time after Jesus had told him to do so. He obeyed totally.

6. Obedience furnished “two boats full of fish”.

6.1. They caught a great number of fish (Lk 5.6).

6.2. They filled the two boats with fish (Lk 5.7).

6.3. Diligence and obedience ensures great harvest.

7. Be alert when being blessed abundantly.

7.1. Their net was breaking (Lk 5.6) and the boats began to sink (Lk 5.7). Recognise success and achievement are from Jesus.

7.2. Helping each other is vital to receive God's blessings. The
disciples assisted one another to fill the two boats (Lk 5.7). We need to work together and in harmony to receive God's grace.

8. **Recognise that we are not worthy of the Lord.**

8.1. Learn from Peter who admitted he was a sinner (Lk 5.8).

8.2. We are not worthy of the Lord or His service (Lk 5.8) if God does not have mercy upon us.

**Conclusion.**

Jesus can astonish us with His blessings (Lk 5.9) if we obey Him and work for Him diligently. Jesus has taught us how to catch fish spiritually. Apart from obedience, diligence, holiness, we must not be afraid (Lk 5.10). We must deny ourselves (Lk 5.11) to serve Him and to save souls victoriously.
Wait on the Lord

Introduction

Read Is 40.31. Waiting on the Lord must be accompanied with appropriate actions. Saul waited but with inappropriate actions (1 Sam 13.8ff). Abraham, Noah, and the 120 believers in an upper room in Jerusalem waited with appropriate actions.

1. Renew with strength.

1.1. All members, after water baptism, need to renew their fervency to serve God, their urge and desire to preach the Gospel. These can be done through constant Bible reading, prayer, services and fellowship.

1.2. Like a sword, an arrow, we need to constantly remove rust. May God make us like a polished arrow (Is 49.2).

1.3. Rust can represent spiritual blindness, sins, pride, arrogance, self-righteousness, etc. Let us walk upright (Ps 84.11),
like a straight arrow. (cf Heb 12.12,13).

2. **Mount up with wings like eagles.**

2.1. Soaring high. Deny the world and look upon Jesus as the most precious in life. Put God first in our life.

2.2. With sharp spiritual eyesight. We look for things not seen (2 Cor 4.18). We see what others cannot see.

2.3. We live in this world but our hearts are not in this world, like an eagle whose nest is not built on the ground.

3. **Run and not be weary.**

3.1. “We will run after You” (Song 1.4). With willingness and devotion, we can fight for the Lord with His power, without being wearied.

3.2. We are like a lion, never tired or bored, in serving the Lord and caring for His sheep with full commitment and love.

3.3. Learning from Jesus, we are not discouraged (Is 42.4).

**Conclusion.**

We shall walk and not faint. With the above three conditions, we shall eventually walk and arrive at God's Kingdom. Like an ox, with endurance, we shall not faint on the way towards the Heavenly Kingdom.
Where is the LORD God of Elijah?

Introduction

Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over (2 Kg 2.14). We can learn many teachings from this incident.

1. God is God of all.

1.1. God is not only God of Abraham, Jacob, Isaac but also God of Elijah.

1.2. God is our God. “For this is God, our God forever and ever; he will be our guide even to death.” (Ps 48.14). With Him all things luxuriate. Without Him is our diminution and demise. How else can Jordan (i.e. great obstacles and tribulations) be obliterated (divided) but by God of Elijah - Jesus?

2. “Where is the LORD God of Elijah?” Not “Where is Elijah?”
2.1. After Elijah was translated into Heaven, Elisha did not look for him but God!! Elisha knew how to rely on God not on man!

2.2. We must build our faith on God not on people. Will our faith decline when our environment changes?

2.3. Elisha knew what to seek for. He prayed for “double portion of your spirit” (2 Kg 2.9). He did not ask for power. He knew God's Spirit would grant all things he needed. (He performed miracles twice that of Elijah).

2.4. We must know how to grasp hold of the source of power - the God of Elijah, not Elijah himself.

3. **He took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him (2 Kg 2.13).**

3.1. Elijah's old mantle worked (2 Kg 2.14) and the River Jordan divided.

3.2 The ancient old Truth for Salvation cannot be changed. To preach the Perfect Gospel, we do not rely on antiquities (archaeological find) from the past, novelties (new things) of the present, or marvels of the future. We only need the God of Elijah with the old mantle of Elijah - the power of the Holy Spirit to do His mighty works.

**Conclusion.**

We must rely on the Almighty God, the God of Elijah.
Who Touched Me?

Introduction

Read Lk 8.41-48; Mk 5.25-34; Mat 9.20-22. From these verses, we can see that Jesus asked the question “Who touched Me?” after a woman with a flow of blood for twelve years was healed by touching Jesus. Jesus performed this miracle on His way to resurrect Jairus' twelve year old daughter. From the woman and the question “Who touched Me?”, we can learn much spiritual teachings.


1.1. An astonishing question asked by Jesus. Anyone of the hundreds or even thousands of people pressing against Jesus could have touched Jesus. No wonder Peter and all those with him said, “Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?”’ (Lk 8.45b).

1.2. Jesus knew what the disciples did not know. Not satisfied with Peter's answer, Jesus affirmed, “Someone touched Me,
for I perceived power going out from Me.” (Lk 8.46).

1.3. Jesus must have rejoiced because of the touch. Perhaps, the greatest grief of Jesus is that He longs to do and give us so much, yet we allow Him to do so little.

1.4. The Lord Jesus desires many more people to touch Him with their hearts in sincerity and love.

2. **Who was the woman who touched Jesus?**

2.1. She was one who had suffered from a haemorrhage of twelve years. Twelve years is a relatively long time when one is with good health. It is many times longer when one is battling against an ailment. It is much longer still when one is losing the combat.

2.2. Her illness brought with it ceremonial uncleanness (Lev 15.25, 27) and banishment from the male community. This might have accounted for the sense of shame which made her reluctant to confess after she was healed.

2.3. She was not only a frail, sick woman, but one who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed (Lk 8.43).

2.4. Note that Jairus' sorrow was sudden after twelve years because of his daughter's death. The woman's life was transformed with joy and hope after twelve years of suffering and pain. Calamities can strike when we feel that we are leading a
secured life. Our health, especially spiritual health, could have been in frantic ruins (like an issue of blood for twelve years) but it is time to wake up to touch Jesus for transformation.

2.5. She was a woman who clung intimately to life. In her distress, pain, sorrow and physical weakness, she was determined to fight with her soul and spirit. Her faith was fearless, prompt, and resolute. She believed, resolved and acted. She touched Jesus with her hand of faith, she clung to the source of life and she was healed instantly. In times of adversities and adversaries, we must hold on to Jesus and continue to fight on to victory.

3. How did the woman come to touch Jesus?

3.1. She heard of Jesus (Mk 5.27). Faith comes from hearing (Rms 10.14). A friend of hers, having experienced Jesus' grace, could have shared with her the wonderful powers of the Lord. Her friend could have encouraged, strengthened her to give herself a chance to touch Jesus. Many are waiting and are in need to touch Jesus. We must bring them to Jesus.

3.2. She heard and believed. Hearing and not believing is to no avail. Some comment that her faith was with some defect; she was somewhat superstitious and depended on touching Jesus' garment for healing (i.e. she could have been healed just by praying in faith). Yet weak and defective though her faith was in the eyes of many, Jesus did not despise the alleged supersti-
tions associated with her touch. The Lord did not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax (Is 42.3). Jesus healed her although her faith might not have been perfect. But her faith was true and thus effective. Remember! Little faith can move mountains.

3.3. She heard, believed and sprang into action. Actuated by curiosity to see Jesus on His way to perform a miracle at Jairus' house, the multitudes must have pressed, pushed and elbowed Jesus. In spite of her physical weakness, the woman's faith empowered her to spring into action. She pushed through the multitudes and eventually touched Jesus. With faith, there is not a problem in our life that is not solvable with God's power in prayers.

3.4. She knew how to speak to herself. If a friend of hers had testified to her God's power, she must have said to herself, “I believe. I will give myself a chance. I must find Jesus”. “If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well” (Mat 9.21). In spite of her physical weakness, and possibly being seen by others as ridiculous when forcefully making her way through the multitudes, she said to herself, “If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well”.

4. Events after the woman touched Jesus.

4.1. The woman was instantly healed and she was aware of the healing (Lk 8.44; Mk 5.29). We can see the power of faith that worked this miracle and many others in the time of Jesus.
Today, Jesus, still all the more, performs miracles when we have faith.

4.2. The woman tried to hide from Jesus after being healed (Lk 8.47). It was possibly her intention to steal away God's blessing in silence and not tell the story of her ailment any more. We may be like this woman: once we have touched Jesus (i.e. received His blessings), we may turn away from Him. We may very busily indulge in God's blessings; we may become less involved in church work, etc. We may hide within the blessings and security of Jesus. But Jesus says, “Let Me see your countenance, let Me hear your voice” (Song 2.14).

4.3. Not being able to escape notice, the woman came trembling. Falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately (Lk 8.47). Are we better than the woman? Do we declare God's wonderful blessings and grace bestowed upon us?

4.4. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth (Mk 5.33). She feared and trembled because she knew she had tried not to recognise Jesus' blessing. This fear in her was vital, for it allowed her to be more spiritually productive. We need this fear too - fear that we have not done sufficient work for Jesus, fear that we are not spiritually cultivated, etc. Paul says, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phi 2.12).
4.5. Jesus asked, “Who touched Me?”. Jesus asked, not because He did not know who touched Him, nor because He was ignorant regarding this woman. It was rather because Jesus knew that the woman was still ignorant of Him. Jesus asked, not because He wanted her to reveal to Him, but Jesus was seeking to reveal Himself to her. He had something more for her than just physical healing. Jesus said to her, “Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.” (Lk 8.48). He desired to give her peace - the eternal peace of salvation. It was as if Jesus was telling her, “Receive your physical healing with thanks, but it is more important for you to enter into the heavenly peace that I have come to give people in the world.” Many are satisfied with temporary physical blessings, but we must seek to be satisfied with the heavenly reward.

Conclusion.

From the woman, the miracle and the question “Who touched Me?”, we must learn to be more spiritual and be satisfied with His spiritual blessings rather than physical blessings. We must be touched by Jesus, not by the world.
Whoever is On the Lord's Side, Let Him Come to Me

Introduction

Read Exo 32.26. During one of the darkest days of the American Civil War, a speaker said, “We trust the Lord is on our side, Mr. Lincoln.” Lincoln replied, “I do not regard that as so essential as something else”. All visitors looked dread-struck, until the president added, “I am most concerned to know that we are on the Lord's side.” Teachings we can learn from this verse are as follows:

1. The correct side is the Lord's side.

1.1. Not on your side, my side, or the devil's side but on the Lord's side. There is no in-between.

1.2. Not on the side of a golden calf. If we are not vigilant, we might build golden calves in our lives. This can be money, position, fame, bad habits, worldly enjoyment, evil motives for church work, etc.
1.3. Nothing can displace God from our hearts. These include atheism, evolution, and worldly education.

1.4. Beliefs of other religions, churches and denominations cannot influence our faith in the One True God, One True Church, etc.

1.5. Dancing will follow when we are on the side of a golden calf, i.e. sinful activities will follow when one's mind is set to worship a golden calf.

2. Manifestations of coming to the Lord's side (Exo 32.26-29).

2.1. “Let him come to me”; i.e. to Moses (32.26). Why? Because Moses was on Lord's side. God's workers must have learnt from God, causing the sheep to follow them, who follow God. (See 1 Cor 4.16; 11.1). Not on Aaron's side, the golden calf's side.

2.2. “Let every man put his sword on his side” (32.27). Sword represents God's words. (See Eph 6.17; Song 3.8). We need God's words to battle against a golden calf.

2.3. With the Sword, the Levites went in and out, from entrance to entrance throughout the camp (32.27). The camp can represent the church and the entrances can represent believers' hearts. Those without God's words will perish by God's words. Those with God's words will live.
2.4. “Let every man kill his brother, companion, neighbour” (32.27). This seemed to be a very merciless act commanded by God through Moses. But, spiritually, we learn (a) Not to compromise with sins, otherwise we will be on the devil's side. (b) We do not kill today, but if we do not equip ourselves with God's words and act upon them, we will fall and be judged by His words. (c) If we love each other, we must warn each other with God's words, not compromising, or even siding with our closest ones if they are wrong. We must change them with God's words lest they are punished (killed) by God's words.

2.5. “Consecrate yourselves today” (Exo 32.29). Those who are on the Lord's side must be holy. Pursuing sanctification is indispensable to draw near to God and for salvation.

3. Willingness to be a minority.

Only the Levites went to Moses. Though most sin against God, we must not. Jesus is our leader and commander (Is 55.4). Horses and chariots of fire are around us (see 2 Kg 6.17).

Conclusion.

We shall be blessed like the Levites if we come to the Lord's side (Deu 33.1,8-11). We must be the end-time Levites.