

Sermon message is a weekly Bible reading material published by the Calvary Bible-Presbyterian Church (Singapore). It is freely downloadable quarterly from [www.calvaryjurong.com](http://www.calvaryjurong.com). If you have been blessed by this ministry, do let us know at [info@calvaryjurong.com](mailto:info@calvaryjurong.com).

-----

01 Jul 07

The bible and spiritual growth

1 Peter 2:2

Rev Isaac Ong

First Peter is a general epistle, meaning to say that Peter was not addressing the problems of a specific church, like Paul did when he wrote to the Corinthians. Peter was directing his words to Christians scattered over a wide area, who shared a common faith and had the same spiritual needs. That need in the context of 1 Peter 2 is spiritual growth. Christians need to leave behind these childish attitudes and mindset to spiritual maturity.

### **Born by the Word**

A person has the capacity for growth presupposes that he is alive. A person can only grow spiritually if he were born spiritually. A believer can grow in likeness of Christ; he grows up "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph 4:13) because he has been born again.

- A man is "born again not of incorruptible seed," meaning that it is not by human descent.
- A man is "born again...by the word of God" "Faith cometh by hearing the word of God" (Rom 10:17).

The true spiritual birth must come by way of the incorruptible Word of God, by the preaching of the unadulterated Gospel.

- Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures (James 1:18).
  - The holy scriptures...are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3:15).
- + Are you born again? (John 3:3)

### **Desire for the Word**

Spiritual birth must be followed by spiritual growth. Just as we need to eat to grow, so we need to feed on the spiritual food to grow in our faith. The nourishment for the soul is the Word of God.

Peter is using the picture of the baby's natural and intense desire for milk to illustrate the believer's intense need for the Word of God in order to grow.

- + No matter how long you have been a Christian, you must have an intense desire for the knowledge of God's Word (Job 23:12; Jer 15:16; Ps 1:1-2; 2 Tim 4:13).
- + Are you reading the Bible daily? Are you studying the Word of God?

### **Live in the word**

There are two verbs in 1 Peter 2:2 – desire and grow. “Desire” is the active verb. Believers are commanded to desire the sincere milk of the word. “Grow” is a passive verb; meaning to say that growth is something that is being done to believers. As we desire and feed on the Word of God, God will bring about that growth in our lives.

Spiritual growth is not just getting more Bible knowledge. It also involves laying aside certain things. “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings” (1 Pet 2:1; see also Eph 4:22-24; Rom 13:12-14).

- + There must be a definitive break from sin. Your life must be transformed, your mind must be renewed, and your affections must be set on things above.

To grow to be like Christ is the real measure of the man and woman of God. It is the mark of the new man. It is proof that you are “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet 1:23).

There is no secret to spiritual growth. The basis for spiritual growth is doing the simple truths. Our Lord Jesus said: “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 18:3).

Here is the irony of spiritual growth – we grow not to be sophisticated in our faith, but to grow to be like the little child with a simple faith – to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our Lord.

- + Are you growing spiritually to be like a child of God?

13 Mar 08  
The Chief end of man  
1 Corinthians 10:31  
By Rev Dr Tow Siang Hwa

*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31).*

What is the chief end of man? What is the purpose of a human being given seventy or eighty years of life? Where do we come from and where are we going? These questions have always puzzled us.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,

How I wonder what you are.

Up above the world so high,

Like a diamond in the sky.

We have learnt one thing since young. When we gaze upon the night sky, even the heavens declare the glory of God; For every design there is a designer, for every structure, there is an engineer — a divine engineer.

We have a body. We marvel at the complexity of our body which is made up of trillions of cells. God has fashioned us from clay and shaped us after His own image; we have a mind. We are different from the monkeys; we are able to come out with sophisticated constructions and organizations; and we have a soul, which is breathed into us by God. Six and a half billion people in this world are created with a purpose, of whom out of them, come men and women who glorify God and are able to enjoy Him forever.

According to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, man's chief end is to glorify God, and to fully enjoy Him forever. Our God is not a terrifying being that we need to offer sacrifice to appease, but is rather a loving Father to whom we glorify. If there comes a time when we question the reason for going to church to worship Him, Psalm 50:23 gives a good answer: *Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.* May we be children of faith and worship him like how a child greets his father every morning. As we sing hymns together, we are enjoying Him. It is such a wonderful thing to sing hymns together with fellow believers in a godly, sober, uplifting and glorifying way.

The “whatsoever” in 1 Corinthians 10:31 is a big “whatsoever” for it covers everything we do in life, in every of our encounters and interactions, behaviour and responses. We are not free bodies, God has put us here for a purpose. *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Cor 6:19-20).* We are a new creature, a new person in Christ, of which old things have passed away. It is so wonderful to belong to God.

To glorify God is actually a very reasonable purpose. If God loves us so much as to sacrifice His son to save us from our sins, the least we can do is to glorify Him. We read in Romans 1 of how people, who thought that they are masters of their own destiny, refused to acknowledge God and fell into sins of all kinds — and we can see this happening in the present world too. The human race is fallen, dead in sins and is thus rebellious, but with God's grace, we are to make known the name, glory and gospel of God.

We are not here by chance, out of nothing or going nowhere. We are here for a purpose, and are to examine ourselves day by day, and in our plan for everyday, we should plan according to God's will. God is love — He has made us, saw us fall in sin and has come for us. Christ is our greatest gift, so whether we are a student, a businessman or a housewife, we must glorify Him in everything we do, for we are bought with a price — the precious blood of Jesus, and are in this world but not of this world. Whatever we do, be it the vocabulary we use, the manner we think, the way we treat others, or even the manner we drive, we are to show Christian love and graciousness, demonstrating courtesy and a spirit of accommodation and giving.

And not only can we enjoy Him now, we can enjoy Him forever, because *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is* (1 John 3:2). For that day will come when Christ will take away the wretched man within us and we will be with Him in our glorified bodies, and realize that all the sufferings and persecutions we faced as Christians are all worth it. *For Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created"* (Rev 4:11). Amen.

20 Jan 08  
Obedience  
Matthew 7:13-23  
By Rev Isaac Ong

Matthew 5-7 are known as the Sermon on the Mount. From Matthew 7:13-28, our Lord Jesus concluded up His sermon by making applications to the hearers. Our Lord Jesus uses several pictures: two kinds of gates (7:13-14), two different ways, two kinds of trees with two kinds of fruits (7:15-20), and two kinds of builders (7:24-28).

The intent of our Lord Jesus Christ was to bring the hearers (and readers) to a point of decision. One gate leads to one way and one destination. The other gate leads to another way, and a totally different destination. The audience of our Lord Jesus were not just the irreligious. He was speaking to those who were religious, and confident of their religious profession and works.

The church in our day is cursed by the teaching of easy-believism – just believe, and all will be well. There are people who think that to be a Christian is just about “getting saved.” However, their lives after “gotten saved” bear little or no evidence of their conversion.

- + Are you saved?
- + Salvation is by faith, but saving faith must be evidenced by a transformed life (2 Cor 5:17).
- + Salvation (enter the strait gate) must be followed by obedience (walk the narrow way). Paul exhorts us to “examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Cor 13:5). Peter says that we are to “give diligence to make your calling and election sure” (2 Pet 1:5-10).

### **False prophets (7:15-20)**

The Bible compares the Christian life to a race and a battle, and the Christian to a soldier that must endure hardness (2 Tim 2:3). Paul said that he kept his body under subjection (1 Cor 9:27). Yet there are false prophets who teach a different Gospel. These prophets are known by their fruits.

Bad fruit comes from a bad tree. Good fruit comes from a good tree. Sinners cannot produce good fruits. False teachers also cannot produce genuinely good fruits. However, it is also true that a good tree **cannot** bring forth evil fruit (7:18a).

- + A true believer cannot bring forth evil fruit. What kind of fruit does your life?

### **False professors (7:21-22)**

The first danger comes from the false prophets. The second and more pernicious danger comes from false professors. Self-delusion is worse than deception (Prov 16:25; 30:12).

#### **A. False Confession (7:21)**

The evidence for conversion is not what one says, but what he does. It is not just to hear; it is not even enough to say. The Christian must do (7:21, 24; James 1:22; Matt 21:28-31). Doing the will of God – obedience – is evidence of true saving faith.

- + Christians, are you for real?

## **B. False Confidence (7:22)**

A man's false confession is followed by a false confidence in his religious works. Our Lord is **not** saying that He has no use for these wondrous works (Matt 10:1), but our works will never earn us our salvation.

The false believer trusts in his works. The true believer trust in the work of Christ alone. "Nothing in my hand I bring/Simply to the cross I cling."

+ On what do you based your grounds for salvation – on your own works or on Christ alone?

## **Fearful Conclusion (7:23)**

A false confession and a false confidence lead to a fearful conclusion: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23).

What does it mean to be known by God? How can be we sure that God knows us? "If any man love God, the same is known of Him" (1 Cor 8:3). To be known by God is to love Him. To love God is to keep His commandments (John 14:15, 21).

Conversely, those who are not known by God are those who "work iniquity" (lawless); those who do not obey His commandments. Our Lord is saying, "Depart from me, you who claim to be My disciple but live in disobedience to My commandments."

+ Do you only know about God? Does God know you?

+ If you are known of God, are you walking in the narrow way? Do you love God and demonstrate that love by obeying His commandments?

27 Jan 08

The reality of heaven, Who will go there?

John 14:1-6

By Rev Dr James Tan

*Is Heaven real to you?*

*Do you really believe in the existence of Heaven as God's promise of a holy city? Are you absolutely certain that you will enter Heaven after this life?*

'Heaven' is the word used for God's abiding place. It is neither an atmospheric heaven that is above the earth and waters nor a mere celestial heaven that is scientifically referred to as outer space. We are talking about God's habitation, where the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Corinthian church, mentioned of having a glimpse of this paradise (2 Cor 12:1-5).

This is where we long to see, not by naked eye, but by faith and through faith in the person of God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Although Karl Marx said that "man makes religion, religion does not make man", we know that it is by God's Word that such wonderful revelation regarding heaven, the paradise of God, is given to us. Heaven is God's promise to His children, the true believers in His Son, Jesus Christ.

God is so immense that even the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. There is no place in the domain of the whole universe that the presence of God is not. He is the omnipresent God. How wonderful that our God is the God of all presence!

As God's children, we have to come to God in faith. In the days of the Patriarchs, Abraham, by faith, obeyed God's call to sojourn in the land of promise, going from city to city to look for "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb 11:10). His faith and trust in God rest upon God's promise of this city. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others before us have "all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb 11:13). They desired a better country that God has prepared for them, a fairer place of perfection.

There is no intermediate state between our life on earth and in heaven. True believers will go straight to heaven after this life, the place that is prepared by our Lord Jesus Christ for His people. This is what our Lord Jesus promised the thief who believed in Him, that "today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:39-43).

Heaven is a wonderful, God-created city, made of such splendid materials that we can only imagine (Rev 21:1-22:5). In heaven, there shall be no night, and no need for the sun and moon, as the glory of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, will light up Heaven (Rev 21:23). In heaven, "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev 21:4). In heaven, God will abolish sin and implement joy and peace, uniting His people together.

Dearly beloved, do you yearn for heaven? What preoccupies your mind while you are on this pilgrim journey in this world? Are you living for God as a heaven-bound pilgrim or as an earth-bound person? Even as we are sojourning on earth, as God's people, we must have a deep conviction of His truth about heaven. We must bear in mind and heart that the Gospel is not for speculation. All earthly things will cease, but heaven is eternal. We should labour towards the city of God, while sitting loosely upon the things of this world. Only by setting our sights on heaven will we be able to resist the temptations we face today. Let us all remember that whoever believes in Christ and does the will of God shall abide forever.

03 Feb 08  
The filling of the Holy Spirit  
Ephesians 5:1-8  
By Rev Isaac Ong

*Ephesians* can be divided into two main sections. In Chapters 1-3, Paul deals with the Christian's position in Christ (doctrine). In Chapters 4-6, Paul deals with the Christian's walk in Christ (duty). He begins with a general statement – "I therefore...beseech you that ye *walk worthy* of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (4:1). As God's people, we are to walk in unity (4:1-16), in purity (4:17-32), in charity (5:1-6), as children of light (5:7-14), circumspectly (5:15-18), and in victory by putting on the whole armour of God (6:10-24).

The Christian's walk refers to his spiritual life, and that life must be characterised by being filled with the Holy Spirit and not being drunk with wine (5:18).

### **Be not filled with wine**

"Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess." This is a warning against being drunk and that wine can be intoxicating. The fact that Paul gives this warning to the church at Ephesus implies that there were believers who were drunk with wine.

People drink to forget their troubles or to make themselves happy, not knowing that alcohol is a depressant that inhibits a man's ability to control himself. There are many passages in the Bible that warns about being drunk (Prov 20:1; 23:29-34; Isa 5:11; Hab 2:15-16; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Pet 4:3). Drunkenness is a hindrance to a person's being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Drunkenness is also a counterfeit of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesus was known for its worship of Diana (Acts 19). Ephesus is also known for the worship of Dionysus, the god of wine. The worship of Dionysus included wine which was consumed in huge quantities as a means of communing with the gods.

- + The worship of God is one of order and not chaos (1 Cor 14:40).
- + Beware of things that will drive you to excesses and riotous living (Luke 15:13).
- + Christians are to be sober, mentally alert and spiritually vigilant (1 Thess 5:6-8; 1 Pet 1:13; 5:8; Lev 10:8-9; 1 Tim 3:3; Tit 2:2-6).

### **Be filled with the holy spirit**

The Christian is not to be drunk with wine but be filled with the Holy Spirit because we have been redeemed, and we have been "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (1:13), united to God "through the Spirit" (2:22), "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (3:16), united together in "one Spirit" (4:3-4), and "renewed in the spirit of your mind" (4:23).

### **The filling of the Holy Spirit is not...**

- Baptism by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13). The baptism by the Holy Spirit joins believers to the body of Christ.
- Indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16; Rom 8:9). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the act of the Holy Spirit taking residence in the heart of the believer. It marks you as belonging to God.

- Sealing of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 4:30).

These three works of the Holy Spirit are universal, instantaneous, permanent, non-experiential one-time events. It is also the work of the Holy Spirit.

### **A. Command to be Filled**

There is no command for us to be baptized by the Holy Spirit, or to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit; or to be sealed by the Holy Spirit. But we are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit because there is no other way to live.

- It stands at the top of all other commands. No Christian can do God's will apart from being filled with God's Spirit.
- It is in the present tense, meaning to say that it is a continuous activity. Paul also describes it as walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16).
- It calls for present obedience. We must live each day being filled with the Holy Spirit.
- It is given in the passive voice. The filling of the Holy Spirit is something that is being done to us.

### **B. Preparation to be Filled**

When God gives a command, we have to obey. It also presupposes that we are able to obey.

To be filled means [1] to be full, to have completeness (Col 2:9-10); [2] to be soaked (Matt 27:48); [3] to be under the control of something (Luke 5:26; 6:11; Acts 5:17; 6:5; 13:45). To be filled with the Holy Spirit means that our lives are full of Him, and that we are under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, as Christians, our lives must be under the control of the Holy Spirit. This calls for us to **yield** – to surrender our will, talent, time, and possessions. Specifically, it calls for us to be saturated with the Word of God. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom..." (Col 3:16).

- + Are you yielding to the Holy Spirit in your life by saturating yourself in and obeying the Word of God?

### **C. Results of Being Filled**

The Spirit-filled person is the one who fully understands and enjoys the benefits of that work of saving grace that has been wrought in his heart. And he shows it in his life.

- The Spirit-filled Christian is a singing/joyful Christian (5:19).
- The Spirit-filled Christian is a thanksgiving Christian (5:20).
- The Spirit-filled Christian is a submitting Christian in his various relationships (5:21).

### **Conclusion**

The non-believers are under the bondage of sin. There is no Spirit of God in them.

- + The only deliverance from slavery to sin is through Christ Jesus.

The Christian has a choice and a command to be filled with the Spirit.

- + The way to live the new life in Christ is to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

10 Feb 08  
Confession  
Psalm 51  
By Rev James Chan

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Life of David.
  - a. At the height of his power, David committed a grievous sin.
  - b. What sin did David commit?
    - (1) David had an affair with Bathsheba.
    - (2) David tried very hard to cover his sinful deed.
  - c. Anyone who had committed such sin would be in great trouble.
2. Psalm 51 pictures David's confession of sin.
  - a. He was overwhelmed with guilt. Under this weight of guilt, David pleaded to God for mercy.
  - b. The whole Psalm 51 is about confession.
3. Confession of sin is one of the essential keys to spiritual growth.

It is part and parcel of our Christian life.

  - a. What happens if one tries to cover-up?
    - (1) He will forfeit God's blessing in his life.

**Proverbs 28:13** *"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."*

- (2) Physical illness may be the result of covering up.

David testified this in Psalm 32:3-4:

*"When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.*

*For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer."*

- (3) The one who covers his sin in this life will be uncovered in the next life.
  - (a) According to Jesus, the day of judgement is coming, and every sin will be revealed.

**Luke 12:2-3** *"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.*

Therefore **whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light**; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."

(b) God will judge all sins that have been covered up, and all sins that are hidden will be revealed (Rev 20).

b. But the sin that is confessed in this life, and cleansed by the blood of Christ will not be exposed again.

**1 John 1:9** "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

He has removed them from us as far as the east is from the west (Ps 103:12).

c. Each of us, regardless of who we are, stands where David stood.

(1) The Bible tells us that if we look with lust, we are guilty.

(2) But the good news is, we can know of God's forgiveness.

(3) Let us now look at Psalm 51 which gives us the steps leading to the joy of forgiveness.

#### **I. DAVID ADMITTED HIS SIN (51:1-6)**

This is one of the seven penitential psalms (Ps 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 & 143).

1. In this psalm, David did not make any excuse for his sin.

He took all the blame. It's "me" and "mine" – all the way through.

(a) He talks about "mine iniquity" (v29), "my sin" (v2b), "my transgressions" (v3a).

(b) He did not blame the circumstances, society or his human weakness.

(c) All of these factors may have played a part in David's sin.

(d) He assumed full responsibility.

2. I am very sinful (51:1, 2)

*"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*

*Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."*

a. David cries for mercy out of the anguish of his heart (v1).

b. He uses three great words for sin.

(1) "**Transgression**" – overstepping and breaking of God's law.

(2) "**Iniquity**" – perversity, unrighteousness.

(3) "**Sin**" – missing the mark.

c. He knows that forgiveness alone was insufficient.

(1) So, he pleaded to God to “**blot out**” his transgressions (51:1b).

The word “blot out” means to wipe away (cf Ex 32:32; Num 5:23).

(2) “**Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity**” (51:2a).

The word “wash” is connected with the laundering of clothes.

(3) **Cleanse** me from my sin (51:2b).

(a) The word he used for “cleanse” is a ritual term for pronouncing a leper who was ceremonially clean.

(b) David looked at himself again; he saw a disease – a deadly and incurable disease.

(c) He needs to be cleansed from that disease.

3. I am very sorry (51:3-6).

a. David cannot escape from his sin (v3).

(1) He is unable to escape from the consciousness of guilt.

(2) Now, he turned around and confessed before God:

*“For I acknowledge my transgressions: and **my sin is ever before me.**”*

b. No matter how much David has sinned against others (specifically against Bathsheba and Uriah), in reality his sin was primarily against God.

(1) He confessed “*Against **thee, thee only** have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.*” (51:4a)

(2) In fact, he broke all the commandments that refer to man’s duty to his neighbour.

(3) So, we see that David had sinned against God’s command.

He had sinned against the holy God.

c. He accepted God’s verdict of his sin without any complaint.

(1) He said, “*that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*” (51:4b)

(2) He was saying, “God, you are absolutely justified in any sentence You hand down, and no one can find fault with Your verdict.”

## II. DAVID PLEADED FOR PERSONAL CLEANSING

1. “*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean...*” (51:7a)

1.

a. David felt contaminated.

b. He wanted to be purged with hyssop (51:7a).

David asked God to sprinkle him so that he will become even whiter than snow (Isa 1:18).

c. “*Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow*” (51:7b).

(1) It is a thorough and repeated scrubbing, a complete cleansing from the pollution and the power of sin.

(2) Today’s believers find their cleansing in the work of Christ, accomplished on the cross (1 Jn 1:7, 9).

### III. DAVID ASKED FOR RESTORATION

1. *“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation” (51:12).*

In other words, David asked that God would let him have the peace and joy he had with Him again.

2. Perhaps, you have lost the joy that you had with God before. Pray as David did, for restoration.

### IV. DAVID REDEDICATED TO GOD'S SERVICE

He wanted to regain his ministry and lead his people.

1. He wanted to witness to others.

He said, *“I will teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be **converted** unto thee” (51:13).*

2. He wanted to praise God for what He has done.

- a. He said, *“My tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness, and shall shew forth thy praise” (51:14b, 15b).*

- b. But once the Lord set him free he wanted to serve the Lord and to praise His holy name.

- c. What He had done for David, He can also do for you.

3. Conclusion

- (1) Are you living a defeated life?

- (2) God's forgiveness is available to you.

If you ask Him, He will restore you again.

17 Feb 08  
Love  
Matthew 22:31-40  
By Rev Isaac Ong

As our Lord Jesus gains popularity in His ministry, there was also increased hostility against Him from the religious and civic leaders. They had attempted to trap our Lord by asking Him a series of three questions. The first was political nature (Matt 22:17). The second was a doctrinal question (22:24-28). The third, asked by a lawyer, was a question about the Scriptures (22:36).

Our Lord Jesus answered the questions by quoting from two passages in the Old Testament – Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18. Our Lord Jesus did not tell the scribes something he did not already know. Deuteronomy 6:4-5 was part of a prayer recited by the Jews twice a day.

+ As Christians, we must adorn the sound doctrine in our lives (Tit 2:10).

### **description of love**

The world defines love as an emotion. The Bible, on the other hand, describes love as an action (1 Cor 13). Biblical love is a determined act of the will that seeks to act in the best interests of the person whom you love even to the extent of making a sacrifice. Example: *“God so loved the world, that He **gave** [an act] His only begotten Son...”* (John 3:16).

While biblical love is not all about feelings, it does not mean that biblical love must be devoid of feelings. Our Lord Jesus agonised at Gethsemane (Luke 22:44). The two disciples who met the risen Saviour said that their hearts burned within them (Luke 24:32). The angels in heaven rejoiced over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:10). The Psalmist says that they who sow in tears shall reap in joy (Ps 126:5-6).

+ Because of the greatness of God’s love for us, we must worship and praise God with a deep and real emotion.

The great commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul and mind, which also means that to love God is our great responsibility. And failing to love Him with all our heart, soul and mind is our great sin and reveals our great inability. Our great sin and inability, in turn points to our greatest need, which is forgiveness. Our greatest need is fulfilled by the greatest demonstration of love, which is the sacrifice of God’s Son on the cross of Calvary.

+ From birth we are unable and incapable of loving God. That is why we must be born again (John 3:7). Are you born again?

### **degree of love**

Our Lord Jesus also established the degree to which we must love Him. We are to love him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind. To love God with all your heart is to love Him more than all other persons and things. To love God with all your soul is to be willing to give up our lives to Him. To love God with all your mind is to submit our wills to His will.

+ To love God with all our heart, soul and mind is to love Him with all our faculties or power; to love Him with all that you are.

Immediately after his three denials, Peter could not declare that he loved the Lord Jesus sacrificially (*agape*). Then, Peter could only claim to have deep affections (*phileo*) for the Saviour (John 21:15-17). However, our Lord Jesus did not turn Peter away. What amazing grace of our loving Saviour!

+ To love God with all our heart, soul and mind means to love Him with all your personal capacity. Your love for God and the expression of that love does not have to match anyone else.

+ Our Lord Jesus has loved you with all that He is. Do you love Him with all that you are?

### **Demonstration of love**

It is easier to express our love for God with our lips than to show it by our lives. How can we show that we love God?

#### **A. Sacrifice for God's Sake**

We know we love God by what we are willing to sacrifice for Him. Example: God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son whom he loved (Gen 22:2). For Paul, he was to sacrifice his Jewish pedigree. For the rich young ruler, he was told to sell all that he had. The man went away sorrowful because he was very rich.

+ What are you willing to sacrifice for Christ?

#### **B. Obedience to God's Commands**

We know we love God by our obedience to His Word. "If ye love me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15; 23; 1 John 2:3-5).

+ What are you doing with the Word of God? Are you defying it? (Exod 5:2). Or are you delighting in it? (Ps 40:8).

#### **C. Love Thy Neighbour**

We know that we love God by loving our neighbours. To love our neighbours as we love ourselves means to apply the love that we have for ourselves to other people (John 13:35; 1 John 3:16-17; 4:20-21).

Who is your neighbour? He is the one whom you know who is in need. Your neighbour could also be your own family members who need your forgiveness; your child who needs your attention.

### **conclusion**

God gives us the Ten Commandments. Our Lord distilled these into two laws – love God and love men. The Apostle Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, brings it down to one word – love. "*He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law*" (Rom 13:8).

Our love for God grows out of His love for us, and our love for other people grows out of our love for God. And we cannot love others truly and biblically without first loving God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind.

24 Feb 08

The reality of hell, who will go there?

Matthew 23:13-33

By Rev Dr James Tan

As much as we look earnestly towards heaven, we must also feel constantly constrained and compassionately burdened to share with others on the subject of hell, because it is only by reflecting upon the truth of hell, can we, by the grace of God, balance our lives with His Word and feel the urgent need to speak to those who are without heaven — those who are so close to heaven yet have neglected so great a salvation.

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb10:26-31).

For many people, hell is not a subject to contemplate and worry about. To them, it is at most a passing thought – hell may exist and again it may not. However, the 8 woes pronounced upon the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:13-33, heavy yet true, should be considered prayerfully. In fact, if we examine the New Testament carefully, the person who talked most about hell is not any one of the apostles, but rather, our loving Saviour, Jesus Christ Himself.

Some have argued: “Why would a loving God send anyone, even the ones that have not heard of Christ, to hell?” The truth is God is justified to do so because the whole of mankind has already been condemned through the sins of Adam – not because of our actual transgressions, but because of our inherent sin – we are children of wrath. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23) – this is God’s declaration and indictment against the human race.

God, in his infinite justice and glory, cannot allow sins to go unpunished, if not He will be unjust. And it’s God’s mercy of mercy and grace of grace that He should send His Son, to be born of a virgin, taking upon the sins of man and made accursed, to die in our place. Only so is justice not compromised.

God did not enjoy creating hell; it is necessary, because of the sins of the world. We have read of what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah; to the old world in the days of Noah; and we have seen the natural disasters these days. It was written, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15), for the unrighteous “shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt 25:46). Punishment is everlasting — the separation from God is for eternity.

How is hell like?

It is pitch-dark, an “outer darkness” (Matt 25:30); whereas heaven “had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev 21:23).

Jude 7 tells us about “eternal fire” in hell; and Matthew 5:22, about “hell fire.” Hell fire is so hot that it is totally invisible — that is why it can burn without lighting hell up. And let us remember how the rich man “cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send

Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame” in Luke 16:24.

There will be rotting of the flesh caused by the feeding of worms that die not (Mark 9:44-48) and the stench of it.

There will be immense pain and suffering as we know from the weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matt 13:42, 50).

Being cast to hell will be like continuously falling into a bottomless pit (Rev 20:3), without a place to stand or rest.

That being said, we need to know that God did not spare three:

1. He did not spare the fallen angels, casting each and every one of them down to hell;
2. He did not spare the old world in the days of Noah; and
3. He did not spare His own Son.

And thus “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Rom 8:32).

God’s justice is unflinching, but He so loved us that He did not spare His only begotten Son, to bear afflictions and to die for our sins, to spare us from the condemnation of hell and to bring us to heaven.

Hell is no laughing matter, nor is it something we should brush aside lightly. We have gotten to know the goodness of God through our hearts and experience it in our lives and we should bear the gospel and spread it forth, like how the hymn goes:

We have heard the joyful sound: Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Spread the tidings all around: Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Bear the news to every land, climb the steeps and cross the waves;

Onward! 'Tis our Lord’s command; Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

02 Mar 08  
Hope  
1 John 3:1-3  
By Rev Isaac Ong

The Gospel of John was written so that the people “*might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing [they] might have life through His name*” (John 20:31). The epistles of John were written to believers so that they might know and be assured of what they had already believed (1 John 5:13).

The assurance was needed because there were people in the church who were influenced by Gnosticism, which taught that spiritual knowledge belonged only to an elite group of people. But the Bible tells us that spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and all believers have “*an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things*” (1 John 2:20).

### **Nature of the Christian’s Hope**

The world’s definition of hope is to be wishful in thinking, to desire to have but without certainty. In the Bible, hope is an **unrealised certainty**. The Christian’s hope is absolute confidence and certain expectation in a promise that is given by God.

· The Christian’s hope is not seen – “*hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*” (Rom 8:24-25).

· The nature of the Christian’s hope is the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, [our Lord’s first advent] Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; [our Lord’s second coming]*” (Titus 2:11-13).

+ You are not what you should be. When our Lord Jesus returns, you shall be changed into His likeness. Do you have and live with this blessed hope?

### **Basis for the Christian’s Hope**

Unbelievers have hope too, but their hope is based upon the human fortitude to rise to the occasion and overcome challenges. The Christian’s hope is not based on what man can muster, but it is based on the love of God manifested through His Son, and the promise of God revealed in His Word.

#### **A. God’s Love Manifested Through His Son (1 John 3:1)**

The Christian’s hope is based on the love of God (1 John 3:1-2). We have hope because we are the sons of God. “*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God*” (1 John 3:1).

“*What manner of...*” John described God’s love as being foreign to man’s understanding and experience. The same phrase was used to describe the uniqueness of our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 8:27, and the uniqueness of our lives (2 Pet 3:10-11).

+ In light of what you know about our Lord’s coming again, what manner of person ought you to be in holy living and godliness?

### **B. God's Promise Revealed in the Scriptures (1 John 3:2)**

The Christian's hope is founded on the Word of God. "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is*" (1 John 3:2).

- + Let the Word of God saturate your heart and mind (Rom 15:4).

### **marks of the Christian's Hope**

John gives two possible outcomes when Christ comes again. There will be people who have confidence, and there will be others who shall be ashamed. If the believer abides in God, when Christ comes again, he will have confidence.

If a Christian is inconsistent in his devotion and his service to God; at the coming of our Lord Jesus, he will be ashamed of himself because his work – like wood, hay and stubble – will be burnt up (1 Cor 3:12-15). In the case of the false believer, he will not be put to shame by our Lord Jesus (Luke 9:26).

- + The future reality of your hope must have a present effect upon your life.

### **A. Doing Righteousness (1 John 2:29)**

Every one who knows God knows that He is righteous. God is not the author of sin. He is not the perpetrator of evil. It follows that those who are His children must have a pattern of righteousness in their lives.

- + Doing righteousness is proof of your new birth. As God's children, we must behave like our heavenly Father.

### **B. Purifying Self (1 John 3:3)**

John states this point again in 1 John 3:3.

And every man that hath this hope in him [in Christ that is] purifieth himself, even as He is pure (1 John 3:3).

The hope we have in Christ is not just theological, but it also has moral, ethical, practical dimensions. The one who has hope in Christ purifies himself. The word "purify" literally means "to become holy."

First, this purifying is a personal pursuit. "**Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure**" (1 John 3:3). Sometimes, it requires fleeing as Paul told Timothy – "flee youthful lusts." Other times, it requires denying self as Paul said of himself that he kept his body, and brought it into subjection.

- + Are you constantly engaged in the pursuit of holiness?

Second, this purifying is reflexive. "**Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure**" (1 John 3:3). The pursuit of holiness is more about getting the beam of our own eyes than it is about getting the mote out of someone else's eye.

+ *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps 139:23-24).*

Third, this purifying is progressive. *“Every man that hath this hope in him **purifieth** himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3).* The work of purifying is on-going. Every man who has this hope in him is purifying himself.

+ Are you daily striving for holiness?

### **Conclusion**

When John wrote these epistles and the book of Revelation, his life was coming to an end. John was in his last lap, and he was not giving up, and he was urging the people not to give up.

The Church of Christ is into the last lap too. We are into our last days. At the personal level, today could be your or my last lap. And when you feel like giving up, remember what God has promised: *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).* Keep on keeping on. There is victory in Jesus.

09 Mar 08  
Fellowship  
Acts 2:42  
By Rev Isaac Ong

The *Book of Acts* gives us the historical account of the first century church. The first century church was a dynamic church. It was a preaching church. It was a mission-minded church. The church began with 120 people, and by a space of thirty years, the Gospel had spread from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria and to the uttermost part of the world.

The first century church was also a Spirit-filled church. In Acts chapter 2, in the account of the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down in mighty power, and 3,000 people were saved that day. These new believers *“continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”* (Acts 2:42).

The first century church is marked by four things – (1) apostles’ doctrine (2) fellowship (3) the breaking of bread and (4) prayers. These are the four non-negotiables of the church of Christ. These non-negotiables cut across time and space, across language and culture. They are not dependent upon the size of the church. The Church of Christ at any time, at any place, of any size must be continuing stedfastly in apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayers.

These four non-negotiables are also the four sails of true spiritual revival in the church. While it is true that genuine spiritual revival is the sovereign work of God, it is also true that there can be no revival in the church if God’s people do not continue stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayers. The early church was blessed because the believers *“continued stedfastly”* in fellowship, meaning that they *“gave continual and devoted attention”* to the life in the body of Christ.

+ Are you continuing stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine (Bible study), fellowship, the breaking of bread (Lord’s Supper and worship) and prayers?

### **Fellowship Explained**

“Fellowship” in Acts 2:42 is also translated as “contribution” (Rom 15:26), “communion” (2 Cor 6:14), “distribution” (2 Cor 9:13), “communication” (Phile 6), “communicate” (Heb 13:16).

“Fellowship” is used to describe two things – (1) the giving of our substance to help the poor, and (2) it is also used to describe the common things that Christians share. To have fellowship is *“to have things in common”* (Acts 2:44; 4:32). Christian fellowship is not communism. The communist says, “Give me what you have.” The Christian says, “Take what you need.”

+ The early Christians had fellowship because they had all things in common. They were willing to give up what was rightfully theirs so that others may have their needs met. What are you prepared to give up for the sake of biblical fellowship?

### **Fellowship established**

Biblical fellowship is about being committed to people with whom we share a common experience – the experience of salvation. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross and His resurrection from the grave is the basis for our fellowship. We can fellowship with one another because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us (1 Cor 1:9; 1 John 1:3).

### **A. Partakers of the Divine Nature**

Christians are made partakers of His divine nature. *"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"* (2 Pet 1:4). To be a partaker of the divine nature means that believers are given the moral nature of God.

+ Are you conducting your life by the principles of grace? Do you purify yourself even as Christ is pure (1 John 3:3)?

### **B. Partners in Christ**

The Christian has an inseparable union with the Saviour. Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches (John 15:5). To be a partner in Christ means that whatever our Lord has, we have (Luke 11:2). It means that where He is, there will we be one day (John 14:2-3). It means that what He is, we shall be also (Rom 8:16-17; 1 John 3:2). It also means that where He walked, we must follow (John 15:20; Phil 3:10; 1 Pet 4:12-13).

We can be partners in Christ because of what He has done. We come to God the Father through the Son, but it is the Son who has called us and chosen us (John 15:13-16). We are not servants. We are not just friends. We are sons of God in Christ.

+ Are a child of God? Do you know God as your Father?

## **Fellowship exercised**

The believers heard, believed, and they brought into spiritual union with Christ. But they not only entered into a relationship with Christ, they also entered into a relationship with the church of Christ. They became members of the body of Christ, of which He is the head.

### **A. Sharing with Others what Christ has Shared with Us.**

Biblical fellowship means sharing with others what Christ has shared with us. There are two parts to sharing – intangibles and substance. Believers in fellowship are to *"rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep"* (Rom 12:15). Believers in fellowship are also to share with others our substance. *"He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise."* (Luke 3:11; 1 Tim 6:19).

+ Open your hands so that you can give as well as receive.

### **B. Accepting Others as Christ has Accepted Them.**

Fellowship is shown when we honestly accept others in the same way as Christ has accepted them. When the prodigal son returned home the father saw him in the distance and *"fell on his neck, and kissed him"* (Luke 15:20).

+ Be *"kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"* (Eph 4:32).

## **Conclusion**

Today, the church is inundated by all sorts of methods and techniques to grow the church. But church growth and true biblical fellowship need not be a church programme. True biblical fellowship has to flow from the Christian. It is not a church programme, but it must be the Christian's priority.

16 Mar 08  
Bible study  
Colossians 2:6-7  
By Rev James Chan

#### Introduction

1. The Bible is the Word of God.
  - (a) It is our guide for daily living.
  - (b) When the Bible speaks, God speaks; we must listen and obey.
2. If the Bible is God's Word, if the Bible is our guide in our daily living, we must learn what it says.

#### I. It is necessary for spiritual growth

1. Five times, the Bible refers to Christians as babes.
2. When you received Christ as your Saviour, you were born into God's family (John 1:12).
  - a. Now, you must grow as a child of God.
  - b. As babes in Christ, there is a capacity for spiritual growth.

How are we to grow?

- (1) Peter gives us the answer. He says "*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*" (1 Pet 2:2).
- (2) Jeremiah said the same thing. He said "***Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts***" (Jer 15:16).
- (3) Paul knew that it is very important for believers to feed on the Word of God.

He wrote to the Corinthian Christians.

**1 Corinthians 3:1, 2:** "*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*"

*"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."*

- (a) Paul gave the Corinthian Christians **milk**, not **meat** – solid food, due to their spiritual immaturity.
- (b) Paul's metaphorical reference to milk and meat (solid food) should not be misunderstood.
- (c) For example: John 3:16.

- John 3:16 can be “milk” for a young Christian.
- It can be “solid food” for mature Christians, when they study deeply and try to understand the love of God.

(4) Paul wrote to the Colossian Christians.

**Colossians 2:6, 7** “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”

(a) He encouraged them to grow spiritually. **Colossians 2:6** “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:”

That is, since they had started with Christ, and acknowledged Him as Lord, now they must continue to **walk** with Him.

[1] The word “walk” is often used of the Christian life. It speaks of action and progress.

[2] So it is, in the Christian life.

(b) Then he used two expressions, one from the agriculture and the other from architecture in verse 7.

[1] The expression “rooted” refers to what took place at the time of our conversion.

[2] Then, Paul switched from agriculture to the figure of a building.

[3] It is interesting to note the two tenses being used.

\* The word “rooted” is perfect tense.

\* The phrase “built up in Him” is in the present tense.

(c) And Paul says “*and established in the faith.*” (v2).

[1] The word “established” can be translated as confirmed or strengthened. It is also in the present tense.

[2] The word “faith” refers to biblical doctrine and practice.

- In view of the false teachers around, and trying to influence the believers with their false or new teachings, the believers must know the doctrine well, and to stand against them.

- Therefore, it is essential to study the Word of God.

(5) Paul’s farewell message to the elders of the Ephesian church. **Acts 20:32a** “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up...”

It is the Word of God that build us up in the faith and causes us to grow spiritually.

## II. It is necessary for victory over sin

1. Are you experiencing a defeat in your battle with sin?
  - (a) Do your defeats outnumber your victories?
  - (b) We will never be able to defeat sin, unless we fight it with the Word of God.
2. Henry was invited to the Gospel meeting.
3. The Word of God protects us from sin.
  - a. Psalm 119:11 *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."*
  - b. Psalm 119:105 *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."*
  - c. What defeats sin and temptation?

Answer: Ultimately, the Word of God.

- (1) Knowing the Bible is a wonderful weapon against sin.
- (2) Proverbs 23:7a says *"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."*

What we fill our hearts and minds will inevitably show up in how we behave.

- (3) The same is true of our minds.
  - (a) Filling your mind with the truths of God's Word will result in holiness and godly behaviour.
  - (b) What do you fill your mind each day?

### **III. It is necessary for effective service**

1. A thorough understanding of the Bible is absolutely essential for effective service.
  - a. The Bible gives us the insight and support we need to handle difficult situations.
  - b. The Bible also teaches us how to do God's work in God's way.
2. In **Joshua 1:8, 9**, we see how God prepared Joshua to conquer the Promised Land. *"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."*

*Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."*

- a. How did Joshua prepare for this very important assignment?
- b. Joshua's top priority was to study and meditate on the Word of God.

3. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, and gave him this wise advice on how to be a success in the ministry. **1 Timothy 4:6** *“If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.”*

What makes a good servant of Christ?

- a. It is constant feeding on the Word of God and of sound doctrine.
- b. When you know the Word of God, you make a good servant of Christ.

#### **IV. It is necessary to make us effective counsellors**

1. What is the best way to help people who are struggling with their problems?

- a. Answer: by showing them God's solutions to their problems from the Bible.
- b. Paul told the Corinthian Christians in **2 Corinthians 1:4** *“Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”*
- c. Paul told Timothy to pass his knowledge of Scriptures to others.

**2 Timothy 2:2** *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”*

2. It is also essential in evangelism

- a. If we want to be effective in evangelism, we must know the Word of God. **1 Peter 3:15** says *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:”*
- b. Therefore, knowing the Bible is crucial to effective counselling and evangelism.

3. Conclusion:

1. The Bible is the essential key to spiritual growth.
2. We must know the Word of God, study and apply it to our daily living.

Will you do that?

23 Mar 08  
They have seen Him  
John 20:11-25  
By Rev Isaac Ong

Welcome, happy morning! Age to age shall say:  
Hell today is vanquished, Heaven is won today!  
Lo! The Dead is living, God forevermore!  
Him, our true Creator, all His works adore!

The disciples had been hiding in fear since the day when our Lord was taken and crucified, but they were glad when they saw the Lord. God's people are always glad when we see Christ (Ps. 27:4).

### **They Have Seen Him**

The disciples had some special quality about them that made their testimony believable. They had seen Jesus alive before. They had seen Jesus die and buried. Now, they had seen Him alive again.

They saw Him alive. They communed with Him. They saw His miracles. They heard what He taught.

They saw Him died. They saw Christ on the cross. They saw the body of Jesus being placed into the tomb, and sealed with a heavy stone (Luke 23:48-49).

They saw Him alive again. Peter saw (20:5). John saw (John 20:8). Mary Magdalene saw (20:14, 18). The disciples saw (John 20:20). Thomas saw (John 20:29).

The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is not a figment of the disciples' imagination. The disciples believe in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that is why they were glad.

+ Do you believe? Are you glad to know that Christ has risen from the dead?

### **They were glad**

The disciples were glad when they saw the risen Lord because the resurrection has certain implications.

#### **A. Resumption of Communion with Christ**

At the superficial level, the disciples were glad because the One whom they loved, and the One who loved them was alive again. He is to them – "altogether lovely."

+ Does Christ bring gladness into your heart?

#### **B. Reconciliation of Sinners to God**

At the spiritual level, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus is the basis for the sinners' reconciliation with God. The empty tomb proves conclusively the Person and the works of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:4). The resurrection demonstrates our Lord's ability to save (Rom. 4:25). In Christ, we

“have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:6-7)

+ Are you reconciled to God?

C Restoration of Hope in Christ

The death of our Lord Jesus Christ had robbed and diminished the hope of the disciples. But their fears were dispelled by the resurrection. In Christ, their hopes were now realized, and their confidence was restored.

+ Does the God of hope fill you with all joy? (Rom. 15:13)

D Reaffirmation of Truth and the Purpose of Our Life in Christ

The disciples were glad because God’s truth and His purpose for their lives were reaffirmed by the resurrection. In Luke 24:8, after the angels had told them that Jesus was not in the tomb, the disciples remembered His words concerning the resurrection (John 2:19-22).

After the resurrection, the apostles were fearless in the proclamation of the truth (1 John 1:1-4).

+ Are you doing the will of God?

**Conclusion: they were changed**

The death of our Lord Jesus could not sever the relationship between our Lord and the disciples. It would so mean that their deaths also could not sever their relationship with Him (Rom. 8:35-39).

Thomas was a doubter of the resurrection until our Lord Jesus appeared to him (John 20:24-28). Our Lord said to Thomas, “because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” (John 20:29). Believers today are the blessed ones because we have not seen the risen Christ and yet we believe. To believe in Christ is to know that we are His servants.

A. A New Life

The resurrection gives sinners a new life. “The resurrection confronts the Christian with the necessity of godly living” (Rom. 6:3-11). This newness of life in Christ is the gift of God.

+ Do you have this new life in Christ? John’ Gospel is written for you that “ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31).

B. A New Attitude of Service

The resurrection also made several demands on the believer. The resurrection also gives us a new heart to serve Him. When we fail to fully grasp the blessed truth that our Lord Jesus Christ is alive working in and among us now, we are easily discouraged in our Christian walk and service.

+ The resurrection of Christ is the inspiration in the life’s work of the Christian. Are you a faithful servant of our Lord Jesus?