

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. If you have been blessed by this ministry, do let us know at info@calvaryjurong.com.

01 Apr 07
The Testing
Genesis 12:10-13:14
Rev James Chan

Introduction

1. The life of a Christian can be difficult.
2. A faith that cannot be tested, cannot be trusted.
 - a. **Peter** compared the Christian's trial of faith, to the furnace.

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:7).

- b. **Job** used the same image. He said *"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold"* (Job 23:10).

3. God's purpose in allowing trials in our lives, is not only to verify our faith, but also to purify it, and remove the dross.

- a. He knows what kind of faith we have. He knows everything about us.
 - b. But we do not know. So, the only way to know, is to go to the "school of faith" and take the examination.

I. CIRCUMSTANCES (Gen 12:10)

1. God's call

- a. God called Abram to leave his country, and family, and to go to an unknown land.
 - b. Abram obeyed, and came to the land of Canaan.
 - c. We would expect Abram and Sarai to settle down and enjoy their new home in the Promised Land.

2. God permitted a famine to come to the land.

- a. There was no record that Abram ever faced a famine in Ur or Haran.

- b. The Testing
- c. The Failure
- d. Beloved, this can happen to anyone of us.

(1) Peter had this problem

(2) The Israelites

3. **Abram** *“went down into Egypt”* (Gen 12:10b).

a. Egypt

(1) There are times where God allows His people to go to Egypt.

(2) However, in the biblical language Egypt stands for the world, and wrong alliance with it.

Isaiah 31:1 reflects this viewpoint, *“Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!”*

(3) Spiritually speaking, *“went down into Egypt”* means “doubting God’s promises, and running to the world for help” (Num 11, 14; I sa 30:1, 2; 31:1; Jer 42:13).

b. What should we do?

When circumstances become difficult, and you are in the furnace of testing, **remain where God has put you and wait till He tells you to move.**

Isaiah 28:16 says, *“He that believeth shall not make haste.”*

c. The failure of Abram

II. PEOPLE (Gen 12:11-13:4)

1. Once in Egypt, Abram faced a new set of problems.

2. God was faithful.

3. Abram learned his lesson.

a. He repented and *“went up out of Egypt”* (Gen 13:1).

b. You might conclude that what happened to Abram was not too bad after all.

- (1) Pharaoh gave Abram a lot of wealth (Gen 12:16; 13:2).
- (2) He gave Hagar to be Sarai's maid (Gen 16:1).
- (3) God forgave Abram's sin, and he started life all over again. So, what is the problem?

c. The big problem is that everything that Abram received in Egypt later caused trouble.

d. What are the lessons we can learn from Abram's mistakes?

(1) **Scheming**

(a) When you find yourself scheming in order to escape problems with people, beware — worse trouble is coming!

(b) *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding (v.5).*

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov 3:5–6).

(2) **Fear**

(a) Abram feared the people *"will kill"* him (Gen 12:12b).

(b) When you are in the will of God, you do not need to be afraid.

Isaiah 12:2, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."

(3) **Self**

(a) Why did Abram tell half-truth and lie?

(b) A husband out of the will of God can bring untold troubles to his wife and family.

(4) **Judgment**

(a) God called Abram to be a blessing to others (Gen 12:1–3).

(b) If you want to be a blessing to others, then stay in the will of God.

Abram lost his testimony before unbelievers, and had to face embarrassment and rebuke (Gen 12:18–20; 20:9, 10).

(5) The practical lesson from all this is simply **never abandon your altar**.

We must keep on believing and trusting the Lord all the time.

08 Apr 07
The Great Commission
Mathew 28:16-20
Rev James Chan

Introduction

1. The most important passage of Matthew's Gospel is the passage we have read just now.
2. If you study the New Testament carefully you will notice that nearly all the resurrection appearances of Christ end with Jesus telling the people to announce the Good News.

I. THE DISCIPLES MET JESUS IN GALILEE

1. The disciples were gathered at the appointed place.
 - a. Matthew says, "*the eleven disciples*" went to Galilee to meet Jesus (Matt 28:16a).
 - b. They made themselves available for the Lord to use.
2. They worshipped Him.
3. But some doubted (Matt 28:17b).
 - a. The identity of the doubters is not given.

It is probable that among the hundreds of believers who were present, some doubted (1 Cor 15:6).

- b. Exactly what was doubted is also not specified.
4. Jesus "*came and spake unto them*" (Matt 28:18a).

II. CHRIST ASSURED HIS DISCIPLES OF HIS POWER (Matt 28:18).

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (v.18).

1. Jesus' power is a given power.

During His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus had demonstrated His power.

2. His authority was given to Him by His Father (Jn 5:22, Acts 2:36).

- a. It is given by God for one reason.
- b. That is to exalt Christ above and over all.

"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil 2:8-9).

3. His authority is over the universe at least in three areas.
 - a. To reign
 - b. To govern
 - c. To forgive and to judge
4. In regards to the authority of Christ, there are two points we must always remember.
 - a. His supreme reign is not yet fully seen.
 - b. However, the reign of Christ over the universe is assured.

III. THE GREAT COMMISSION

1. The Lord Jesus commissioned us to *"go ye"* and make disciples of all nations.
 - a. In the light of His absolute authority, Jesus commanded, *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations"* (Matt 28:19a).
 - b. Jesus tells us to *"make disciples"*
 - (1) In the KJV, this is rendered *"teach all nations"* (Matt 28:19a):
 - (a) But the word *"teach"* is not the same as the "teach" in verse 20.
 - (b) In verse 20, the word "teach" in the Greek is *"didasko."*

It actually means "teach."
 - (c) However, in verse 19a, the Greek word is *"matheteuo"* which literally means *"to make one a disciple."*
 - (2) The word *"go"* is not a command.

(3) The term *"disciples"* was the most popular name for the early believers.

2. He commanded us to baptize all nations.

"Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"
(Matt 28:19b).

a. Baptism has no part in the work of salvation.

b. However, those who truly believe must baptize.

3. He commissioned us to teach all that Christ had commanded.

a. The church's mission is not simply to convert, but also to teach.

b. The convert is called to a life of obedience to the Lord.

c. What must we teach the believers?

4. He promised to be with His disciples.

He said, *"and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen"* (Matt 28:20b).

a. Note the word *"lo"*

b. Note the great promise — *"I am with you."*

c. Note the boundless limit of His promise: *"always, even unto the end of the world."*

d. Jesus will be with us as we carry out His order.

22 Apr 07

Jesus and the woman caught in adultery

John 7:53-8:11

Rev Dr James Tan

Extending hospitality to others

And every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the mount of Olives (Jn 7:53-8:1). Jesus had retired to the Mount of Olives after a tiring day of teaching in the temple. It is sad to see that when everyone had gone home, no one actually invited Him to his house. This shows how our Lord had suffered. He is in the world created by Him yet the world acknowledges Him not, probably due to the fear of offending the Pharisees and scribes. Though the people do not deny the truth in Christ message, no one is willing to take up the honour of inviting our Lord into his house. As Christians, we should extend our hospitality to people who do not know Christ and also brethren in the faith. We should love not only in words alone, but also in deed and in truth.

Having a prayerful life

Many a time Jesus retires into the wilderness, praying to the Father until the break of day. After a day of physical fatigue, He retired to the Mount of Olives to the presence of His Father, to be rejuvenated so as to meet the people that will gather in the temple for another day of teaching. Indeed the Lord has told us: *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matt 11:28).*

Guarding ourselves against adultery

And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act (Jn 8:2-4). By committing the sin of adultery, one violates the seventh and tenth commandments. According to the Julian marriage laws, adultery is a crime punishable by exile, confiscation of property or death. Similar laws can be found universally in African tribal laws too. This goes on to show how grievous a crime, adultery is. However, with the onslaughts of media that make light of adultery nowadays, our moral condition has laxed. As Christians, we should remember that God condemns adultery. *And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death (Lev 20:10).*

Remaining silent when facing accusation

Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not (Jn 8:5-6). Jesus seems to be facing a "lose-lose" situation here. If He approves of the adulteress' act, it

would have been against the commandments; whereas if He disapproves, He would have to throw a stone at her. However, instead of saying anything, Jesus wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not*. Many commentaries have tried to conjecture what Jesus wrote, but what is important here is, Jesus is disinterested in the accusations hurled by the Pharisees and scribes. Similarly, we do not have to pay attention to accusation when it was made to assassinate anyone's character. And in times when we face non-believers who went to great extent just to prove their point of unbelief, it will be good if we keep silent, for they do not understand the power of God whereas we know that with God all things are possible (Matt 19:26).

Understanding what constitutes adultery

So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her (Jn 8:7). The Pharisees and scribes continued to press Him. However, they were wrong in thinking that the commandment against adultery covers **only** acts of adultery. *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old times, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I said unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart* (Matt 5:27-28). Mischief does not come from the act without but from the heart within. No one can stand righteous in front of the all-seeing God. This is also a reminder to us to turn away from pornography and all sorts of fornications.

For all have sinned

And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst (Jn 8:8-9). Conscience does its work. *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God* (Rom 3:23). *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags* (Isa 64:6a). Jesus is the only One who can save us from our sins.

Jesus is our only Saviour

When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? (Jn 8:10). All left except the woman; she understands well that Jesus is the only One who can save her. Many have let precious salvation slipped, but not the woman. Admit that we are sinners bankrupted and conscience-stricken, in despair and in destitute, and only then will we realize the preciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

My hope is built on nothing less

Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,

But wholly lean on Jesus' Name.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,

All other ground is sinking sand,

All other ground is sinking sand

For there is Abundant Grace

She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more (Jn 8:11). The Pharisees and scribes condemn sins to accuse but not to save. One can even say that they do that in order to establish themselves among the people. However, our Lord, though He hates sin, is here to save us. His grace is so absolute and free and above all sins, that whosoever comes to Him repenting, there is forgiveness enough to pardon even the worst sinner. And poor sinners like us will find great comfort and joy in believing in Him. Amen.

06 May 07
The promises to live by
Genesis 15:2-15
Dr Tow Siang Hwa

"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor 1:20).

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad (Jn 8:56). God gave Abraham three promises and he lived by them for a hundred years till he died. The only difference for us is that He did not appear to us directly, but this only goes on to show the more we should live by faith.

1st promise: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee" (Gen 12:1). Abraham heeded God's call and followed Him to the Promised Land. To do so, he has to pull up his deep roots from his fertile land with the firm belief that this is the only way to a better land. But He is not afraid. *"After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen 15:1).* God knows our worries and He is our shield. *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:8-10).* Abraham died in faith and he received the true country. *"These 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. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country" (Heb 11:13-14).* The fact that although he was able to live in better condition and yet had chosen to live in tents, should inspire us: we are only pilgrims in this world.

2nd promise: "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing" (Gen 12:2). Abraham and Sarah were married for 50 years but yet have no children. In spite of that, God promised to give them a great nation. Our Lord is a God that can accomplish even impossible things: *"And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be" (Gen 15:5).* And Abraham simply believed. *"And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen 15:6)* and God did eventually keep His promise with the birth of Isaac (Gen 21). However, sadly Sarah did not trust God and she enlisted Hagar's help, giving birth to Ishmael (Gen 16) and the beginning of troubles.

3rd promise: "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen 12:3). And it did come true. *"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before*

the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal 3:7-9). If we dwell in the promises of God, we can never go wrong. Whatever He said, He will deliver; whatever He promised, He will fulfil. Amen.

13 May 07

What did Abraham believe?

Genesis 15:6

Mr Mark Chen

And he believed in the LORD;
and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Abraham Believed in the LORD

He Believed in God's Sovereignty

He Believed in God's Salvation

He Believed in God's Success

Abraham Believed in the LORD'S Promise

He Trusted God for a Seed

He Trusted God for the Seed

Abraham Believed in the LORD'S Grace

He Trusted God for His Eternal Life

He Trusted God in this Present Life

20 May 07
10 Take Heeds
1 Timothy 4:16
Rev (Dr) James Tan

1 Timothy 4:16 - Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Our Lord Jesus asked His followers to take heed or pay special attention to matters of important consequences. Ten of which as listed below are taken from the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Take heed 1: Matthew 6:1

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven."

Alms-giving reflects a person's attitude in life. The world beats the drum when it comes to philanthropy — the donors are often seen on newspapers and televisions showing off their charitable acts.

Christians are taught to give alms in secret and in a spirit of humility.

"Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly" (Matt 6:2-4).

Take heed 2: Matthew 16:6

"Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

The Pharisees were known to be self-righteousness people while the Sadducees were modernists who held liberal doctrines.

Christians are reminded that "a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ... for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal 2:16).

Take heed 3: Matthew 18:10

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

At present, there is hardly any report of genuine Christian revival on a national scale. Revivals are confined to churches and communities. The Lord takes care of His congregations; it is the quality of believers, not quantity, that counts.

Take heed 4: Mark 13:5

"Take heed lest any man deceive you."

Man is God's instrument but he can also be used by the devil to mislead believers to modernist faith. Christians are to be discerning and not be influenced by corrupted and deviated teachings or the "health and wealth gospel". All approaches to faith must be based on the Bible.

Take heed 5: Mark 13:9

"Take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them."

Take heed when persecution comes. In China, India and some African countries, Christians are still being persecuted.

Take heed 6: Luke 11:35

"Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness."

The light in us can be dimmed and lost in darkness. Therefore, take heed to keep the light burning and go to the Lord for replenishment. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

Take heed 7: Luke 12:15

"Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Wealth in itself is harmless but the way people use it or regard it may be harmful.

Take heed 8: Luke 8:18

Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

Take delight in the work of God, just like the Berean Christians recorded in Acts 17:11 "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. "

Take heed 9: Mark 4:24

"Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given."

Take heed, make sure you hear the truth. The hearer is responsible for hearing the truth, he is also responsible for what he hears. The measure to which he gives himself to know the truth determines his reward. Believers who give themselves to know the truth shall be given more truth.

Take heed 10: Luke 17:3

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him."

Offence is prevalent in church and has always been difficult to handle. People tend to have elephant memory regarding offences others have caused to them but have strange forgetfulness about the offences they have caused to others. Personal offences or trespasses are not that difficult to overcome. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness " (1 John 1:9).

27 May 07

Jesus and the fisherman

Luke 5:1-11

Rev (Dr) Jack Sim

Introduction

The life of Christ can be studied in His encounters with the people during His three years of public ministry. This is an excellent section that deals with Christ's calling Peter and Andrew to be fishers of men (Matt 4:18 and Mark 1:16). Consider this miraculous draught of fishes at that time, the calling of His disciples (and their response) by Luke who gave us this account. Let us consider the following prayerfully:

1. The Necessity of attending to Christ's preaching or the word of God (vs. 1, 2)

Christ was a popular preacher; and was well liked by many. The people relished and cherished good preaching, which is much lacking today. Do we cherish and love the preaching and teaching of God's sacred word? They pressed to hear the word of God with great interest, by the divine power of God that went along with it. Never despise or take lightly the expository preaching of God's holy word, but read, study, memorize and meditate on His word daily and pay attention when the word of God is taught or preached to us.

2. The readiness to obey the command of Christ (vs. 4, 5)

Though they have taken nothing, after much toil, if Christ bid them let down for a draught, they will hope to take something. Note, we must not abruptly quit the secular callings wherein we are called because Christ has called us and obey Him. The preachers of the gospel must continue to let down that gospel net at His command, though they have perhaps toiled long and caught nothing; and this is noteworthy, to continue unwearied in our labours for the Lord, though we may not see success in the short run (1 Cor 15:58). Adoniram Judson waited for 7 years before he saw his first convert in Myanmar.

3. The fruitlessness of human endeavours without God (vs. 5)

"Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing" (Luke 5:5). Man's extremity is God's opportunity and God is interested to solve man's problems. Let us not forget we may have toiled all night, and would be blessed in our labour if it is done in the name of the Lord and not in our strength.

Even those who are busy in their business often meet with disappointments; many toiled all night yet caught nothing; for the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. God will have us to be diligent, purely in duty to His command and dependence upon His goodness, rather than with an assurance of worldly success. We must do our sacred duty, and then leave the rest to God. We are to obey the commandments of God without delay. There is joy and blessing when we do the Lord's bidding without question. When we have done our worldly business and affairs, and failed, we are to come to Christ, and spread

our case before Him, who will take cognizance of it. And He will greatly reward us when we honour and put Him first and seek His kingdom and his righteousness (Matt 6:33)

4. The sure reward for total obedience and compliance to Christ's command (vs. 6, 7)

All concerned were astonished at the result. All the boat's crew were astonished at the draught of fishes which they had taken (Luke 5:9); because they understood it better than others did. They that were well acquainted with this sea, and it is probable they had fished upon it many years, had never seen such a draught of fishes fetched out of it, nor any thing like it before. It greatly corroborates the evidence of Christ's miracles that they are true and authenticated by all. God's blessings are abundant and often beyond our expectations. William Carey, the father of modern missions had good success in India when he obeyed the call of God and laboured for 41 years.

5. The recognition of our sinfulness before a thrice holy God (vs. 8, 9)

Peter, above all the rest, was astonished and he fell down at Jesus' knees, in sincere confession and repentance, "*Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord*" (Luke 5:8). Not that he feared the weight of the fishes would sink him because he was a sinful man, but that he thought himself unworthy of the favour of Christ's presence in his boat. This word of Peter's said that they did exceedingly fear and quake showed Christ's divine glory and majesty. It was the language of Peter's humility and self-denial. What would we do if the Lord Jesus, the Son of God called us one day to follow him?

His acknowledgment was just, concerning what will become us all. We are sinful men, and even the best men are sinful depraved men, and should be ready to confess and repent of our sins and serve Jesus Christ; for to whom else can we go, but to Him alone who came into the world to save sinners.

Depraved and sinful men have to tremble before the holy Lord God and to fearfully dread His just and righteous wrath. Peter may well be excused, if, in a sense of his own sinfulness and vileness, he cried out on a sudden, "Depart from me". We must all acknowledge ourselves as sinful men, and that we must therefore fall down at His knees and repent, to pray Him that He would be merciful and forgive us and cleanse us from all our sins.

6. The summon of Christ to Christian discipleship (vs. 10)

Soon after to James and John (Matt 4:21), His purpose was to make them His apostles, and instruments of planting His kingdom in the world. He said unto Simon, who was surprised at this prodigious draught of fishes, henceforth they shall catch men, by enclosing them in the gospel net, and that shall be a greater instance of the Redeemer's power, and His favour upon them when they follow and serve Him.

With Peter's powerful evangelistic preaching and the sovereign hand of God, three thousand souls were saved on the day of Pentecost, in one day, added to the church (Acts 2:37-40).

This great draught of spiritual fishes was abundantly realized in the greatest revival of the church.

7. The forsaking of all secular interests and preoccupations in order to follow Christ (vs. 11)

When they had brought their ships to land, instead of going to a market for the lucrative sale of their fishes and make money that they might gain from this miracle, they forsook all and followed Him, being more willing to serve the interests of Christ than to advance any secular interest of their own. That is true biblical discipleship. They left all to follow Christ, when they were called and prospered and had good success because of the Lord's hand upon them. It is absolutely necessary for every true disciple. Do we truly surrender and give up all, take up the cross daily and follow Christ daily (Luke 9:23)? We need to follow Christ at His terms. That is the distinguishing mark of a genuine disciple and one who is worthy of the calling of the Lord in self denial. Will we do the same today and dare to trust and follow Christ without condition and doubt and surrender ourselves totally? Seek the Lord while He may be found. Something to think and pray about.

03 Jun 07

The joy of walking with God

Genesis 17

Rev James Chan

Introduction

1. Today's society thrives on big events, speed, noise, movement and drama.
2. Many mistakenly think that walking with God is a quick and easily acquired discipline.
3. Abram had great faith in God.

His faith in God led him to struggle and try to understand the promise of God in making him to be a father of a great nation (Gen 12:2, 15, 16) and father of many nations (Gen 17:4).

4. So, you see, walking with God is not easy and simple. We need discipline and understanding.

What was Abraham doing after he left Egypt?

He live a quiet life, waiting for God to do His work.

I. WAITING ON GOD (Gen 17:1, 2)

1. Silent waiting (Gen 17:1a)

"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram."

- a. Thirteen years of silence between Genesis 16 and 17.
 - b. Abram and Sarai knew that God had promised them a son (Gen 15:4).
 - c. In Genesis 16, we read that Sarai made a proposal to Abram, *"Go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her."*
 - d. Such proposal was accepted in those days.
2. Reassurance
 - a. Abram was 99 years old (17:1a).

God said unto him, *"I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect"* (17:1b).

- b. God had not forgotten Abram.

c. Sometimes we pray and there is no answer from God.

II. WALKING WITH GOD.

God told Abram to “walk before me” (17:1c).

But what does it mean to walk before God, or walk with God.

From this passage, we learn at least 4 ingredients of walking with God.

1. Being quiet so God can speak (17:3-8).
 - a. When God speaks — He speaks through His Word.
 - b. When God appears to Abram, Abram closes his mouth, and opens his ears.
 - c. God not only reaffirms His covenant, He also changes his name from Abram to Abraham.

He reminds him of a Promised Land for his descendants.

- (1) God reaffirms His covenant (17:2).

God said, *“I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly”* (17:2).

- (2) God changed his name Abram to Abraham (17:5).
 - (3) God reaffirms His promise to give him the land for his descendants (17:8).
2. Listening for specific directions (17:9-14).

Because Abraham listens closely to God, he learns how he and his children will receive a mark of distinction, and that will set them apart as God's special people (17:10, 11).

- a. Circumcision was practised by primitive people.
- b. Now, God used the practice of circumcision and invested it with new meaning.
 - (1) Circumcision is a mark or sign of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants.
 - (2) Circumcision was to be strictly observed.

[1] He said, *“Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.*

This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.” (Gen 17:9, 10).

[2] Abraham listened to God's instructions and obeyed.

c. Christians also have an identifying mark.

“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Col 2:11, 12)

3. Struggling for understanding (Gen 17:15-21)

a. For the first time, Abraham was told that Sarah would bear a son.

b. Abraham collapsed in laughter at the prospect that he and Sarah would have a son (17:17).

(1) But God patiently repeated His promise.

“Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac” (Gen 17:19).

(2) Finally Abraham understands.

4. Obeying swiftly and completely (17:22-27).

a. As soon as God had finished speaking with Abraham, he got up and acted.

b. So, we see that walking with God is not passive.

17 Jun 07

The ministry of intercession

Genesis 18:22-33, 19

Rev Dr Okman Ki

Introduction

Intercession means "The act of interceding; mediation; interposition between parties at variance, with a view to reconciliation; prayer or solicitation to one party in favour of another, sometimes against another."

- I. Compassionate ministry
- II. Sacrificial ministry
- III. Worthy ministry

Conclusion

1 Timothy 2:1 says, *"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men."*

24 Jun 07

Jesus and the tax collector

Matthew 9:9-13

Rev Andrew Seet

Matthew 9:9 — Jesus saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

This is Matthew's personal testimony. The disciple recalled how Jesus called him, a tax collector and a publican, most despised by the Jews. He not only responded to the call of Jesus decisively but also became an instant witness for the Lord. He held a feast for Jesus and invited his sinful friends so that they could hear the good news too.

Jesus went where the sinners were. He did not avoid or shy away from them. He sought Matthew and his friends out. He had meals with immoral people whom the Jews and Pharisees rejected and avoided.

There are lessons for both believers and non-believers in this passage.

Lessons for believers

Many of us are like the Pharisees who are so taken by outward appearance. Like them, we are also fond of passing judgements on others. The Pharisees were so self-righteous that they questioned Jesus' disciples "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" They failed to see that all men were sinners and in need of the Saviour.

Matthew responded to the call of Jesus and was filled with the joy of salvation. He invited his fellow tax collectors to meet and hear Jesus. These people had not met Jesus before. Matthew wanted them to taste the fruit of salvation too. God calls every believer to be a soul winner. We should not be afraid to reach out to people who are still ignorant of the gospel. The souls of our loved ones are our concern. Invite them to Gospel Sundays to hear the good news of salvation. God loves us and wants everyone to hear the gospel.

Matthew began to witness immediately upon his conversion. How often do we come short in witnessing to our unsaved loved ones?

Lessons for non-believers

Human love is so conditional that we don't love people for all kinds of reasons. But God loves the people of the world regardless of their status in society. In Matthew 9:12, Jesus said: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." The world needs a spiritual physician. Our God is the Great Physician who will heal us of our spiritual sickness. Matthew and his friends were spiritually sick and they needed the mercy of God. They put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. To those who believe, God will bring about a glorious new world through His power.

The first step for non-believers to take to be a part of this glorious new world is to acknowledge their sins and repent. Romans 3:23 says "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." No matter how good we think we are, we need God. We cannot change ourselves. But God can. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

What are the consequences of unrepentance? "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 6:23). Death means eternal separation from God. But people who trust in the Lord have hope. John 3:15 says "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). One day God will bring us to the place He has prepared for us. The planet Earth was not designed for us.

A long time ago Jesus "saw a man, named Matthew" and He said to him: "Follow me". Jesus saw his heart and knew his thoughts. Our Lord "saw a man" — a man who needed the Saviour. Matthew's response was clear and non-hesitant — he arose and followed the Lord.

Today, Jesus is still calling: "Follow Me." He added: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt 9:13). Christ came to show mercy upon sinners. We simply need to repent of our sins and follow Him. He will then dwell in our hearts until we see Him face to face in the glorious world.

---The End---