

2005

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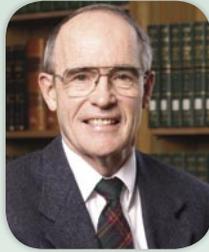
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An Abundant Entrance into the Kingdom of Our Lord 2 Peter 1:1-11

Introduction

“For so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:11).

All believers will enter the kingdom of God. But Peter says that some believers will have an abundant entrance. Peter may be referring to the honors paid to athletes who won in the Olympic games. Sometimes their home city would want to welcome them home in a special way. Instead of receiving them into the city through the usual city gate, they would make a new hole in the wall and give their hero a special entrance into the city. What kind of entrance will we have into God’s kingdom? Will it be rich and lavish with praise from God? Or will it be quiet, with no praise and no reward? Peter tells us in 2 Peter 1:1-11 how to achieve a rich entrance into the kingdom of our Lord.

All Things Necessary for Godly Living, v. 3

He tells us in verse 3 that God has “given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.” It is through faith that we have an entrance into God’s kingdom. It is through godliness that we will have an abundant entrance. Peter says that God has given us all provisions for a life of

godliness. We never need fail. We are never so overwhelmed so that while others could stand, we cannot. Further this godliness is “through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.” Christian living in godliness is developed through Christian knowledge. It is particularly the knowledge of a person. Paul says



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that it was his great aspiration to know Christ (Phil. 3:10). Progress in the life of godliness requires progress in knowing Christ. Through knowing Him God has given us all things necessary for godly living.

The Promises of God, v. 4

The all things given to us for godliness include “exceedingly great and precious promises” (v. 4). God has given us his precious promises that we might through them escape the corruption that is in the world and that we might be partakers of the divine nature. This is the goal of our Christian lives. It will insure us a rich entrance into the kingdom. Partaking of the divine nature does not, of course, mean that we will be deified. The Revised English Bible translates this “come to share in the very being of God.” This is not a good translation. It is not talking about God’s essential being; it is talking about His moral character or qualities. It means developing holy characteristics like God’s. Peter says in 1 Peter 1:15, “But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.” In 1 John 4:11 we

are to love because God loved us. In Man was originally created in the image of God. As we become like Him in our Christian lives, as we escape the corruption that is in the world, we will be assured of a rich entrance into the kingdom.

The Christian life is lived by the power unleashed by the excitement of the tremendous promises of God. There are two of God’s promises that Peter is going to emphasize in this book, the promise of our Lord’s coming and the promise of a new heaven and a new earth. If a Christian has his hope on these promises, his life will be changed. He will not be centering his life on the temporary things of this world which will pass away. He will become more and more holy as he is focused on Christ.

Godlike Character, vv. 5-7

Verse 4 gives us God’s provision. Our activity is mentioned in verses 5-7. These are the godlike characteristics which will give us that abundant entrance. To faith is to be added virtue, knowledge, self-control,

perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. The one who has these characteristics will not be barren or unfruitful in his Christian faith (v. 8). But notice also that these godly characteristics do not come automatically. They require diligence (v. 5). Serious effort is required.

Conclusion

Today I see many Christian young people striving zealously to succeed in sports. I see many businessmen striving diligently in order to succeed in their work. I see many who will work for this cause or that. But I do not see many Christians whose greatest efforts are directed toward godliness. This does not mean that we can achieve anything in our own efforts. But through the provision of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, the Christian can make his life count for something. His life will not be useless or unfruitful (v. 8) and he will have a rich welcome into the kingdom of God.

Jack Fish +

AssemblyNews

Our newly-received saint

24/4/2005 – Stephanie Grace Teo from another church

We welcome with joy our sister who wished to be identified with us into the fellowship of the Lord's people. Let us find every occasion to encourage her and bear one another's burdens as members in Lord's family. +

Farewell

7/4/2005 – Ramen Stanly who returned to India to join his wife after the completion of his work contract in Singapore for the past 6 years.

We are grateful to the Lord for the faithfulness of Stanly in attending the meetings of the assembly for the past many years. Let's pray for him and his wife in their joint testimony and task that will give further growth to their home and assembly. +



Our newly commended worker

17/4/2005 – Commendation of Kurien Kurian

We thank the Lord for His call and commendation of our brother Kurien into full-time service for Him. Brother Kurien, aged 45, was saved in March 1997 and baptized in September 1997. He is married to our sister Reni; they have two children, Sonia (11) and Shaun (9). Presently he is actively involved in our assembly in the following activities: Bible Reading Fellowship, Mission group, SS, RFG, TBF and YP. Besides these, he has the burden for foreign mission work and would explore ministry opportunities in Asia and even as far as Zambia, as the Lord so leads him. Let's extend to him our love and fellowship and remember him and his family in our prayers. +

Our new deacons

3/4/2005 – Jeffrey Jee Kim Tian & Collin Leong Weng Tuck

praise the Lord for raising another two new deacons to share in the temporal and spiritual work of the assembly. Let's rejoice with them and to remember them in our prayers. +



Birth

18/4/2005 – *God's gift of a baby boy, Lye Jae Vir (1st child) to Lye Ray Sen & Janice*

We are grateful to the Lord for His grace and goodness to the mother and her baby. Pray that the Lord will enable the above couple to fulfill their stewardship and commission as parents in preparing their child for His purpose. +

Bereavement

11/4/2005 – *Sonny & Juno Ng on the home-calling of Juno's mother.*

30/4/2005 – *Boey San Fei & Jan on the home-calling of Jan's mother*

We are indebted to the Lord of grace in assuring those who are in bereavement. Please remember the bereaved family members that the Lord will be their sympathy, sufficiency and shelter during their bereavement. +

Combined boys' brigade enrolment service (23 Apr, 9.30 am)

Venue: Bethesda Hall (Ang Mo Kio), Main Hall

Guest of Honour: Lo Sheu Ming (Principal of Mayflower Sec. School)

Speaker: Khoo Oon Soo • Chairman: Victor Ng • About 100 attended.

We thank the Lord for having helped our Christian officers to hold the BB enrolment service at our hall for 29J, 43rd and 51st Companies respectively. The service started with the open parade at the car park with the guest of honour, Lo Sheu Ming, Principal of Mayflower Secondary inspecting the parade and giving a short speech to the BB boys. After which all the boys and invited guests proceeded to the main hall to witness the enrolment service. The meeting was very well chaired by Victor Ng with Oon Soo giving the gospel message. Enrolment of the BB boys was conducted by Daniel Panneersalvam (Chaplain). Boys from the 29J company presented the song items. The guest of honour gave away prizes and awards at the occasion. There was an AV presentation on the ministry of BB. The meeting ended with a lunch reception. Let's remember our Christian officers in

their weekly involvement in the three schools in conducting the BB ministry to meet to the spiritual, physical and social needs of the boys. +



Our BB Christian Officers



Boys from the 29J Coy



Bethesda Hall (Depot Walk) thanksgiving & dedication service *Date: 2 May, Mon, 10.30 am*

Theme: "... the good hand of my God was on me" & "... let us arise and build...". (Neh 2:8,18)

Venue: 10 Depot Walk • Chairman: Kan Shik Lum • Opening Prayer by Khoo Oon Soo

Testimony by Sum Siew Tak • Bethesda Choir presented a medley of songs.

AV Presentation on activities of Bethesda Depot Walk (Vision and Tasks ahead)

Exhortation by Harry Tan • Prayer and Benediction by Chong Kim Chow

We rejoice in the Lord at this service, to thank Him for what He had done in and through His people and also the opportunity to dedicate His people afresh to His work that He has entrusted to them. It was a glorious occasion to hear the Bethesda Choir rendering a medley of songs of thanksgiving to the Lord, witnessed by more than 480 people comprising members, friends invited by members, representative elders from other assemblies and consultants involved in the A & A works. We were once again



reminded by the testimony given by Siew Tak that it was all of the Lord's doing in turning a mint into a gospel hall amidst the obstacles. The AV presentation was a timely reminder regarding the good hand of the Lord being upon His people in making it possible to start the new work at 10 Depot Walk. The meeting was very well chaired by Shik Lum with the message given by Harry on Nehemiah 2 with the following sub-headings: Nehemiah caught the Vision (2:1-8); Nehemiah composed the Mission (2:9-16) and Nehemiah challenged the Population (17-20). Commemorative

CDs and T-shirts were given at the occasion. Lunch was served after the service. We are indebted to the planning committee comprising Kan Shik Lum (Chairman), Loh Geok Bee, Poon Kum Meng & Christina, James Yim & Siew Mai, Andrew Sng, Gerald Sim, Harry Tan and Wong Tuck Keong. Not forgetting those who work behind the scenes, either in helping or contributing to make this occasion a memorable one for the Lord's glory. The task is great but the labourers are few, let's rise up and put our hands to build lives with God's Word and to reach others with the gospel of Christ. +

The Person of Christ - (2) Revelation of the Incarnation

In this study, we shall consider some of the things that we just would not have known about the Father, Son or Holy Spirit unless it were for the incarnation. By the very nature of this study, we shall refer to things we have looked at in our previous papers in this series.

In the person of Jesus of Nazareth, we find true humanity. Jesus of Nazareth was not a mirage, a figment of someone's imagination. He was real flesh and real blood (Jn 1:14). It was this real body that became the sacrifice for us (Heb 10:10). He had a real human history; counting King David as one of His ancestors (Rm 1:3).

In the person of Jesus of Nazareth, we have the full deity of the God head dwelling (Col 1:15-19). The God who once was concealed is now the God who is revealed (Jn 14:9); this is a mystery (1Tim 3:16) and at the same time, a historic fact.

If it were not for the incarnation, we would not know anything as to the inner nature of God, that is, the nature of the Godhead. If our only knowledge of God came from the Old Testament (i.e. pre-incarnation), we would undoubtedly come to the same conclusion as the Jews that the Godhead is Unitarian. Indeed we would not even think in terms of the Godhead. It is only the incarnation that leads us to think in the terms of Godhead.

Through the incarnation God, in grace, reveals to us His creatures, His inner nature, His Trinitarian nature, the fact that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit (cf 2Cor 13:14). We see this firstly in the person of the Holy Spirit. The conception of Jesus by the virgin Mary was through the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:35) who is not an impersonal force but a member of the Godhead. It was by the same Holy Spirit that Jesus was sent

into the desert at the beginning of His forty days of fasting and temptations (Mk 1:13). The one who is sent as another Comforter (Jesus being a Comforter as well) is the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:16).

The relationship between the Father and the Son would have remained hidden if it were not for the incarnation. We would never have known that the logos was the eternal beloved son had it not been for the incarnation (cf Jn 1:1ff, Mt 17:5, Mk 1:11).

When Isaiah had a vision of God, God was high and lifted up (Isa 6:1), only His train filled the temple. The way Isaiah saw God is correct for He is the one who is high and lifted up. It was from this exalted position that God, in the person of the Son, in grace and love, became poor for us (2Cor 8:9) by taking



to Himself humanity; he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death on the cross (Phil 2:8). Yet there is a sense that through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus, there is a greater glory for God. The twenty four elders (Rev 5:9ff) sing that the lamb is worthy for He was slain. The great depth of humiliation He went to has led to a greater height of exaltation for our Lord Jesus Christ.

John, in his record of the crucifixion of the Lord brings together the themes of humiliation and exaltation in just one verse: Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. (Jn 19:19). What could be more humiliating than a death on the cross (Cf Gal 3:13)? Yet our Lord suffered the curse of God on the cross and the humiliation of the crucifixion. The exaltation is in the title King of the Jews. Of course Christ is more than this, but in the scene that is before us, we have the exaltation of one who is crucified; we have Jesus reigning from the cross.

To the Greek way of thinking, it was impossible for God even to enter

human experience, let alone suffer and die. The god of Greek thinking and philosophy was all that man was not. Man is mortal; God is immortal. Man is visible; God is invisible. Man is finite; God is infinite. Man changes; God is immutable. Although we would agree with these statements, we would not agree with the inferences taken from these. For example, God is immutable to the Greek philosophical mind meant that God could not change at all whereas from the Biblical perspective, it means that God cannot be changed by any external event, person, force etc, which is a completely different thing. To the Greeks, God could not intervene in human affairs as he was everything that man was not.

The Jewish understanding of God was, and is still, incomplete, simply because the incarnation had not taken place. God is one (Deut 6:4). He takes care of Israel (Cf Ps 121), delivering them from their enemies (cf Ps 44, 136). He had given the nation His Holy Law on Sinai (Ex 20); they were a privilege people (Rom 3:1ff). They certainly thought in material terms rather than in spiritual terms. For example, the Jews

expected a messiah who was going to be a conquering messiah, one who would deliver them from the rule of the Romans (cf Lk 24:21). Blessings to Jews were in material terms, not in spiritual terms (cf Ex 23:25f). The Jews had such a reverence for God that they would not say His name. The Jews expected that there would be a judgement at the end of the world when God would set all things right. The Jews also would have thought it impossible for God to enter into human history as a man. At the time of Jesus, God had been silent for nearly four hundred years.

The cross of Christ revolutionised our understanding of God. The love of God is exemplified in Christ on the cross. Here we see the God who cares for His creation. Here we see God who is prepared to enter into His own creation, adding humanity to Himself, to suffer and die. Prior to the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus, no one, Jew or Greek, would have thought that it was possible for God to become man, and something even more unthinkable (if that



is possible) that, as a man, God, in the person of the Son would die as a sacrifice for His own creatures. However, the fact is that God has done what was unthinkable in order to save us. Praise His Name!

We have already mentioned that, prior to the incarnation, it was generally accepted that God could not suffer. Yet in taking to Himself human nature, entering His own creation, God, in Christ, suffered (cf 2Cor 5:19). The suffering that the Lord Jesus Christ endured was real as was the death that He suffered, because He had taken on real humanity (cf 1Pet 4:1, 1 Pet 3:18, Mk 15:33ff).

Sin had to be dealt with where it had taken place, in the flesh. Only through the incarnation could this happen. The Son took on the likeness of sinful flesh and condemned sin in sinful man (Rom 8:3). In taking humanity to Himself and dying on the cross, Jesus became our substitutionary sacrifice, dying in our place and on our behalf (cf Heb 10:10). Through the death on the cross, the law, and the power it had against us, was abolished (Eph 2:15), effecting

a reconciliation between God and man (Col 1:20, 22 Eph 2:16). The possibility to mankind and actuality to the believer of eternal life, which is not just quantity of life but also quality of life, is brought by the incarnation (cf Jn 10:10).

As Christ had a bodily resurrection so every believer will have a bodily resurrection (1Cor 15:35ff, Phil 3:21).

We have outlined the “benefits” which the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ imparts to the believer. However, this is not the whole picture. There is knowledge that is imparted and things that come into being that would not have been unless it were for the resurrection.

God’s self-giving love (agape) is very clearly shown in the incarnation (Jn 3:16) and crucifixion (Rom 5:8). We see the grace of our Lord Jesus (2 Cor 8:9) who reveals the Father (Jn 14:9) who otherwise would have remain hidden. We see the eternal Son as the servant of Jehovah (Jn 13:2ff), a servant whose delight is to do the will of the Father and complete the work (Jn 4:34, Jn 19:30).

If it were not for the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, there would be no church. It was Christ who loved the church and gave Himself for her (Eph 5:25ff).

The consequences of the incarnation, as we have seen, are not just those of our salvation. God also, in grace, has been pleased to reveal something of Himself to us. These are things that He did not need to do but has chosen, in love, to do. In grace, and it is grace, He reveals to us things about Himself. We are indeed a blessed people who are in a privilege position. The question is what do we do with this knowledge that has been revealed to us? Do we hold it to ourselves, not letting other know about it? Of course not! We should firstly see that our knowledge of God should lead us to a deeper appreciation and worship of Him. Secondly, it should impel us to share the Good News with those who do not have it.

Ernest Abbott July 1994
slightly amended January 2005 +

Arise and Build

The Exhortation by Dr Harry Tan

We see God's good hand upon us, when God did the impossible for us. He raised the \$7 million right at the very last minute of the deadline. I know because I was one of the two elders who signed the cheque for \$7 million right on the day when it was to be delivered to the seller," recounted Dr Harry Tan to a rapt congregation comprising more than 500, including special guests from almost all the assemblies in Singapore.

Harry was giving the exhortation during the Bethesda Hall Depot Walk Thanksgiving and Dedication Service on Monday, 2 May: a time set aside to praise and thank God for His grace and faithfulness.

He shared about his "moments

of serious doubt" as the sum was staggering and overwhelming. But he was personally challenged by the thoughts of Hudson Taylor, who wrote: "God's work done in God's way shall never lack God's supply. Often in God's work, it first seemed impossible, next it became possible, finally it is done".

Sharing from Nehemiah -- in line with the theme -- here is an outline of Harry's message.

1. Nehemiah caught the Vision (Nehemiah 2:1-8)

The temple in Jerusalem was in ruins, despite having been rebuilt by two groups of Jews led by Zerubbabel and Ezra respectively at separate times.

When Nehemiah received news of the sorry state of Jerusalem from his brother Hanani and some men from Judah, he was very sorrowful. He felt burdened. The fact he was 700 miles away living in the lap of ease and luxury in Susa, the capital of Persia, made no difference. He committed himself to fast and pray for the city day and night.

Humanly speaking, only one person could make it possible for Nehemiah to help the Jews -- king Artaxerxes whom he served as cupbearer. King Artaxerxes had written the decree to stop the work years earlier, and only he can reverse the order.

That is why Nehemiah prayed (1:11) "Give thy servant success today, and grant him compassion before this man". In this prayer, Nehemiah recognized two very important things:



Firstly, God is Sovereign; He sits on the Throne in Heaven. Proverbs 21:1 says: “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.”

Secondly, Nehemiah waited for God’s timing – in God’s economy time is immaterial, but timing is everything. Nehemiah prayed over this matter everyday, but there was no answer until four months later.

Why did God delay 4 months before answering Nehemiah’s earnest prayers for Jerusalem? It probably was for God to give Nehemiah time to catch the vision of what He can do through one’s surrendered heart.

Rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem for Nehemiah is not the Vision. Rebuilding the walls is only the task; the means to an end. The vision is rebuilding the spiritual life, worship and testimony of

the Lord’s people in Jerusalem, as seen in Nehemiah 8.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” Proverbs 29:18

We must not see the building of Bethesda Depot Walk as the end all. The building project is only the task. We have only just begun, and the real vision for us is to see God use this place for witness and testimony of the Lord’s good hand upon us. The real work is the spiritual battle for souls to be won, and saints to be built up, to the glory of God.

2. Nehemiah composed the Mission (Nehemiah 2:9-16)

Nehemiah was prepared to go to Jerusalem. His motto is like that of Isaiah’s: “Here I am Lord, send me”. The minute God granted him favour through the king, he wisely used



Lunch after the Thanksgiving Service held at the sheltered car-park





Physical sustenance after spiritual exhortation & Harry Tan (extreme left) with some of our guests enjoying a sumptuous lunch

the opportunity to get the necessary things done for the rebuilding of the walls. He asked for letters from the king for safe passage through the king's land. He asked for a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest to get timber for the gates and the temple fortress. To top it all, the king appointed him governor of Judah, and gave him a cavalry unit to

serve as his personal bodyguards. Truly God's good hand was upon the man and the mission.

It took about 3 months for Nehemiah to arrive at Jerusalem. A man of patience, he spent 3 days in private study and meditation of the state of the walls. By night, he conducted his

recce, keeping counsel to himself and a few trusted men. He was awake while others were asleep, and burdened while others were at ease. He saw more of the situation at night than others could see in the light.

When we see the state of the walls, many would break down in despair, and give up hope. But not Nehemiah. While others saw the rubble, he saw what the God of the impossible can do with the rubble.

3. Nehemiah challenged the Population (Nehemiah 17-20)

Nehemiah did not believe in a one-man ministry; he challenged the leaders, the priests and the common people to work with him (not for him) in repairing the walls. What was the motive? "That we no longer be a reproach". He was concerned for the glory of God, as well as the good of Jerusalem.



They rebuilt the walls in a record time of 52 days. What is the secret of their success? The good hand of the Lord was upon them. They rose to the challenge and built.

In Nehemiah 4 we see the ingredients for the successful church. The people had a mind to work (4:6), they had

a heart to pray (4:9), they had eye to watch (4:9), they had ear to hear (4:20), and they had the will to stay and fight for the Lord (4:22).

Nehemiah and the people knew that their dependence is not upon themselves, their wisdom, abilities,

wealth or human resources. Their real dependence was upon the God of Heaven, whose good hand was upon them to give them the success.

May this also be true of the saints at Bethesda Ang Mo Kio and Bethesda Depot Walk. +

Sidebar

All hands on board

Behind the scenes, many have been working to ensure that the Bethesda Hall Depot Walk Thanksgiving and Dedication Service on Monday, 2 May, would be a memorable one.

Working with the theme “Arise and Build”, the committee worked with one heart to put together a programme that would not only capture the essence of the believers’

vision but also make the experience an enriching and inspiring one for all who attended the service that day.

The committee decided to put up an audio-visual presentation tracing the history of Bethesda Hall and one was quickly sewn together. A CD of this presentation was included in the souvenir programme given out that day. The choir was roped in to present an item on the occasion. A sumptuous

lunch was prepared. And all hands were on board to help put up tables and chairs for the 500 expected guests just before the big day.

And it is testimony to God’s amazing grace that the hymns, the message, the audio-visual presentation, the items presented by the choir, gelled together to form a cohesive thematic whole.

To God be the Glory.

Judy Kan +

Exhortation at the Senior Christian's Gathering on 19 March 2005

We are all Senior Christians. Like it or not we are regarded as Senior Christians. If any one doesn't feel it that way — well congratulations! It is good to feel and act younger than our age. Some of us are 50; others 80 years and over. It's quite a wide gap in age.. 30 years or so. But that shouldn't really bother us; after all a Senior Christians' gathering is not to think about age or compare ages but really an occasion for us to interact with our peer groups

- over a meal
- catch up with one another since our last meeting at Jumbo Restaurant
- and also for spiritual reflection and challenge

At these annual meetings you will hear "senior citizen talk". If your hearing is still good just listen and

you'll know what I mean. You will hear remarks about – hair colour, wrinkles, teeth, walking aids, hospital bills, grandchildren etc. Now that is senior citizen's talk!

You will also hear compliments – and that is the best part of it! Such as.... "you really look good", "what, you are already 85? ..I thought you were 58!" And so the senior citizen's talk goes on. But we all enjoy it especially when we get flattered.. and we pretend to enjoy it when the remarks become uncomfortably honest and blunt: here we get flattened.. there our ego just collapses!... at these meetings it is a gamble.

But there is more to a Senior Christians' gathering than friendly exchanges (friendly fire?); there is a message to take home.

Most of us have gone through a fair part of life. We remember our school days..then leaving school for a working life.. romance and marriage.. then come the kids... and by God's grace kids' own kids. For some of us the home has never been noisier – toys, diapers, screams, sarongs on springs... And then for some the home had become quiet again .. just the 2 senior citizens or even 1; and we get invited to the Senior Christians' gathering.

Thinking back it's quite a change. Though we may expect the change we are still affected; we sense the loneliness, the loss .. and other negative feelings come in ... useless, helpless ... Yes, old age is marked with many challenges.



We can really thank God if we are still blessed with a close-knit family, friends, financial stability, health etc..

But the reality is many find old age hard; and this is where the Word of God comes in. We need God's Word not only in our youth but also in our years. We are not only senior citizens but Senior Christians; we are Christ's own. It is Jesus Christ who makes that difference.

Let us turn to Psalms 92 :12-14. These 3 verses tell us the blessings of the righteous – in contrast to those who are wicked. First : Look at God's judgement on the wicked. We read :

V7 “ **the wicked spring as the grass – works of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed forever”**

V9 “ **shall perish . . . be scattered”**.

Now let us spend the rest of the time knowing God's blessings on the righteous.

V12 : **the righteous shall flourish ...like the palm tree**

The righteous shall grow ...like a cedar of Lebanon

V13 **The righteous planted in the house of the Lord... shall flourish**

V14 **..shall bring forth fruit in old age.**

Just 3 points for our consideration :

- a. **who are the righteous?**
- b. **what are their blessings?**
- c. **what about us?**

a. **Who are the righteous?**

Clearly those who have turned from sin

– from darkness to light

– 1 Peter 2: 14 - “ we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness”.

They have Christ's righteousness imputed on them (Rom 10:10)

Now this is a judicial act of God : it is our position in Christ –and because of His atoning work we are righteous

before Him. And so by grace we are the righteous.

b. **What are their blessings?**

In this Psalm the righteous are described as those who – flourish like a palm tree or like the – strong tall cedars of Lebanon These are figures of speech. What Psalms 92 is trying to tell us is that as we look at a palm on a cedar, we can see God's blessings on the righteous, and that includes us! A little description will make it clearer.

A Palm Tree :

It has a single stem that never branches; rising straight and tall to some 40-50 feet. At the top is a crown of large feather-shaped leaves. As old leaves drop from the bottom, new ones grow from the top keeping the crown always full and green. A palm tree is productive, yields up to 270kg of dates/year. Its sap can be



made into a drink : it's leaves woven into mats and baskets.

All in all it speaks of fruitfulness.

A palm tree in a desert also speaks of endurance and growth where everything else dries and withers.

A cedar tree:

It is a deep-rooted coniferous tree, tall, large and of great age. The wood is durable, insect resistant, used for making musical instruments, furniture e.g. (temple of Solomon). It is an evergreen tree.

A cedar speaks of maturity, freshness and being green

So as symbolized by a palm and cedar, we see God's spiritual blessings on the righteous – on all of us - fruitfulness, endurance, freshness and being green.

c. What about us - our blessings and fruitfulness?

God's faithfulness never changes and we all continue to be

objects of His mercy and grace. Age may make us less active, less attractive, less useful, but God never looks at us that way. He seeks those who are faithful and obedient. To this end we are reminded of the OT patriarchs:

Abraham at 75 – uprooted his family to go to a land he knew not where

Moses at 80 – led his people out of Egypt

Joshua at 84 – took over from Moses

Caleb at 85 – wanted to conquer giants!

And in the NT we are told of :

Aged Simeon and Anna at 84 – both saw and handled the infant Christ at the Temple (I would like to believe that they were the first man and woman who carried the infant Jesus in their arms after Mary and Joseph).

Brothers & Sisters – God used these aged saints because they were faithful to Him.

Here follows a vital question : How did they remain faithful till old age?

Look at v13 :”Those who are planted in the house of the Lord... shall flourish”. Planted means rooted – that is how the palm and cedar get their nourishment.

Likewise the believer who is rooted in a living relationship with God will flourish: he is connected to the Source of life and blessing. Only then can he continue to be fruitful in old age.

May I end with John 15:5, “ I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.”

Chong Kim Chow ✚

A Reflection on John 14: 1

Part 2

The next secret to untroubled heart is to pray. Jesus said this in John 14: 14 and again in John 16: 24, “Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.” Remember the time when Paul and Silas were in prison in a place called Phillipi? Paul had just cast out a demon from a slave girl and made the people there angry. When the demon left the girl, she could no longer predict the future and her owners no longer able to make use of her to make money. So, they brought Paul and Silas to court and falsely accused them, and as a result, they were severely whipped and thrown into prison.

And what did Paul and Silas do while in prison? Acts 16:25 tells us that at about midnight, Paul and Silas, tired and hurting from all those punishment inflicted on them, were singing hymns and praying to the Lord!! What an expression of courage,

what an expression of trust. Paul and Silas prayed and sang with un-troubled hearts, and the Lord heard their prayers. An earthquake shook the prison, all the prison doors opened and the chains that bound the prisoners came loose. Thereafter, Paul and Silas were set free; the jailor and his whole house came to know the Lord. A seemingly hopeless and depressing situation turned into a happy and joyous occasion because Paul and Silas trusted in God!

When you are discouraged, when you are depressed, when you are in despair, do not wallow in your sadness. Turn to the Lord, pray to Him and trust Him, and you will witness the glorious blessings of the Lord. One door may be closed right in your face, but He will open up another one.

Several believers from this church lost their jobs over the past few years. They were deeply troubled because they

had bills to pay, loans to service, and children to feed. Instead of wallowing in despair and depression, they put their trust in God. They prayed to the Lord and the Lord answered their prayers. One of them testified that the trials of our lives are like sandpaper in the hand of God. And He uses that sandpaper to polish the rough edges, areas that we have not placed complete trust in Him. When I heard their testimony, I was moved and touched by their faith in God. They are living proof that prayer works and we do have a loving God who takes very good care of us!

The third thing that we should do to calm our hearts is to live the kind of body life that Christ meant for us to live. We must love each other. In John 15: 12, the Lord commanded the disciples to love each other as He had



loved them. He knew that the only way they could weather the storms of life was to love each other. And love each other they did!

When Peter was put in prison, the rest of the disciples prayed for him; when one church was in need of money, the other churches sent money. When the poor needed money, the rich sold all their properties and gave them to the needy. The early churches were not perfect. They had their problems, but they had many glorious moments, and they are still what every church should be: loving, caring, and sharing.

In today's context, when the believers in Sri Lanka suffered gravely from the recent Tsunami tragedy, our assembly went into action, collecting tons of clothing, blankets, etc., and we quickly shipped them to help the needy people. Look at the Depot Walk project. It was formidable when we first started. But we came together to pray; we inspired each other to give and we mobilized members to serve. The Lord blessed us and the building was up way

before our expectations. We have just started worship services there; other ministries like Youth Work, Sunday School, CEP, etc have all started. That place is surrounded by strong spiritual forces that are not exactly friendly to Christian evangelism. Yet, I am confident that given time, Depot Walk will one day be like Bethesda AMK, a place where weary souls can find comfort, peace and rest. If we love each other, if we stand together to comfort each other and help each other, we can overcome all kinds of difficulties!!

So, let us behave like a family by putting aside our pride, tolerate minor differences, and forgive petty offences. Let us trust and take care of each other instead of tearing one another down. Let us share our problems with each other, so that we can pray for each other and help each other. When we behave like one big family instead of some kind of spiritual lone rangers, we have nothing to fear!

And so, when we are troubled, first, we must look to the Lord! Remember that we have a great God and Saviour

who loves us. Second, pray to Him. Prayer releases the power of heaven here on earth. And finally, show love by working as a team to overcome whatever difficulties we face in life.

That is the same formula that kept the early church strong and helped the disciples overcome difficulties and challenges (Acts 2: 42). They looked to the Lord by devoting themselves to the teachings of the apostles (today, we have the complete Word of God; read it), they prayed, fellowshiped and broke bread to remind themselves of what Jesus did on the cross for their sake, His soon return (today we do the same thing every Sunday morning). The context may have changed, but the formula to a peaceful heart remains the same all through the ages: remember the Lord, remember to pray, and remember to help each other. When all three are present, you will have a peaceful and un-troubled heart.

William Koh +

Bible basics on Elders (Part 2 of 4)

Obey Your Elders

In our last lesson, we stressed the importance of submission to the elders at a local assembly. As we look again at Hebrews 13:17, we find that we are also commanded to obey those that rule over us.

Being submissive and obedient does not mean we shut off our intellect, and carry on like robots. The practices of a local church and its doctrinal stand must be based on the teaching of the Word of God. The responsibility of the elders is to outline, teach, and defend those biblical principles. The Berean Christians were commended by Paul for checking his teachings with the Scriptures (Acts 17:11), and we all have a responsibility to know from the Scriptures what we believe and why we do what we do in our assembly.

But sometimes there is a genuine difference of opinion regarding a practice or doctrine, or an extra-biblical issue arises. At this point, it is up to the elders to establish what, the stand of the assembly is going to be (see Acts 15 for an example of this in the early church). Once the elders have come to a decision, it is the responsibility of all those in the assembly to follow the elders' stand. It is not wrong to privately ask for clarification of an issue. In some instances, it is not even wrong to be in silent disagreement, but it is wrong to not support the decision or be obedient to it. If it requires action from us, we must do it. To do otherwise is disobeying God. We are to be obedient. If our conscience simply won't allow us to accept the decision, we should leave quietly and go to a fellowship where we fool at peace.

To publicly question a decision, undermine it by gossip, or openly refuse to act on it, is to invite the judgment of God. Only one thing can come out of such actions – division – and God commands that habitual dividers (heretics) be rejected (Titus 3:10). Oh, how much grief would be avoided if we would just quietly obey!

Sadly, the biggest impediment to obedience is often pride. May God help us to set self aside, to follow His command, and be obedient to our elders.

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Coming Events

Assembly Bible Camp 2005

13th to 18th June

Venue: The City Bayview, Malacca

Theme: "Great Is The Mystery Of Godliness"

1 Tim 3:16

Camp Teachers:

Adult group: Jack Fish (USA)

Cantonese Group: Herbert Chan (Hong Kong)

J1: Shirley Holland

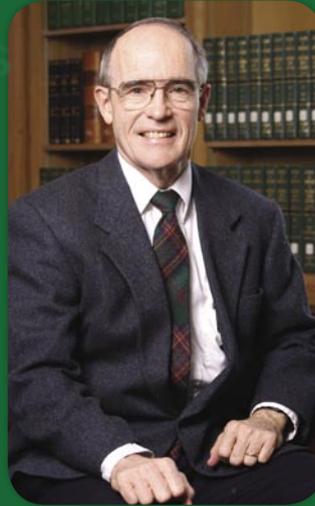
J2: Dennis Loh

J3: Wong Tuck Keong



Herbert Chan

has been a commended worker serving the Lord for more than 40 years (1st 12 years in Peru and the rest in Hong Kong) in the area of preaching and teaching. +



Jack Fish was born August 7, 1941. As a result of listening to Billy Graham in his junior year of high school, he trusted Christ as his personal Savior. He graduated from Brown university with a B.A. in Linguistics and went on to receive Th.M and Th.D. degrees from Dallas Theological Seminary. For the past thirty-six years Jack has taught at Emmaus Bible College. He teaches the biblical languages (Greek and Hebrew) as well as courses in Bible and Theology. He currently serves as Editor of The Emmaus Journal and is an elder

at Asbury Community Chapel in Dubuque, IA. Jack met his wife Nancy in the young peoples group of their assembly in New Jersey while they were both teenagers. They were married in 1963 and have four children, all of whom have graduated from Emmaus. They also have six grandchildren, three boys and three girls. +

See you there!

Bethesda Hall (Ang Mo Kio) & Depot Walk 2005 Speakers & Chairmen List

	Morning Ministry		Gospel Service		Tuesday Prayer Meeting		
2005	Speaker (AMK)	Speaker (DW)	Speaker	Chairman	2005	Bible Text	Speaker
5th Jun	Jack Fish	Ho Kuang Cheng	Jack Fish	Chua Teck Koon	7th Jun	Heb 7:11-17	Tan Jin Song
12th Jun	Jack Fish	Ho Kuang Cheng	Jack Fish	William Chew	14th Jun	Heb 7:18-22	Tan Hin Oon
19th Jun	Jack Fish	Harry Tan	Jack Fish	William Chew	21st Jun	Heb 7:23-28	Tan Ah Beng
26th Jun	Eric Choa	Harry Tan	Aaron Wong	Kurien Kurian	28th Jun	Heb 8:1-6	Yeo Ann Kian
3rd Jul	Kan Shik Lum	David Goh	Felix Lim	Soo Chai Chew	5th Jul	Heb 8:7-13	Dennis Loh
10th Jul	SV Ramalingam	David Goh	Edmund Yong	Soo Chai Chew	12th Jul	Heb 9:1-5	Ng Kim Khoon
17th Jul	SV Ramalingam	Adrin Loi	SV Ramalingam	Tan Chee Hwee	19th Jul	Heb 9:6-10	Kenneth Khong
24th Jul	Tay Kim Swee	Victor Ng	Andrew Prensundar	Tay Teng Hwee	26th Jul	Heb 9:11-14	Lee Chong Kiat
31st Jul	Tay Kim Swee	Sum Siew Tak	Dennis Loh	Robert Hmar	2nd Aug	Heb 9:15-22	Tan Ah Lim
7th Aug	Wong Kok Seng	Chong Kim Chow	Lim Kim Wah	Lee Chong Kiat	9th Aug	Heb 9:23-28	Tan Li Sheng
14th Aug	Wong Kok Seng	Eric Choa	Peter Wong	Wong Chuan Peng	16th Aug	Heb 10:1-4	Tan Li Sheng
21st Aug	Victor Ng	Harry Tan	Tay Kim Swee	Choy Sai Choong	23rd Aug	Heb 10:5-10	Robert Hmar
28th Aug	Tan Chee Hwee	Harry Tan	Tan Jing Poi	Edmund Yong	30th Aug	Heb 10:11-14	Leong Chee Tiek

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)