

## EASTER ISSUE

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## Pastor's Message

### **HE IS RISEN, AND WE RUN TO TELL**

Blessed and warm Easter greetings to you

As I pen this Easter issue of The Journey, I am marveled that in every Gospel account of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the act of 'running' is mentioned. What do I mean? Let me take you through a spiritual journey to understand the reason to 'run to tell' others about the risen Christ. Firstly, Matthew 28:8 tells us about the two women who left the scene in haste and joy. Then in Mark 16:1-8, we read that the women who had brought prepared spices ran to tell the others what they had seen. In Luke 24:12 and John 20:2-3, Simon Peter and John, the disillusioned disciples of Jesus raced to the garden to witness the empty tomb.

Christ's victory over the grave is an exciting, powerful and life changing truth. It is a truth that must be told to all. Edwin S. Johnson once said:

"One of the greatest missionary texts in the Bible is found in the words of the angel on that first resurrection morning. In Matthew 28:6-7, the angel said to the women, "He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. *Come* and *see* the place where he lay. Then *go* quickly and *tell* his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

Four little monosyllables summarize the program and plan of the Lord to reach people with the gospel. Meditate on those four words: ***come, see, go, and tell.*** Where can we find a more complete summary! How can it be more simply stated! Here is a salvation message and a missionary text all combined."

Once we have truly *come* to Christ for salvation and we have *seen* the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we shouldn't just stop there in our Christian walk. We are called to *go* into the world and *tell* others about Him. This is a powerful and profound truth that will make us run to tell the Good News to the world! However, if the resurrection account of our Lord Jesus Christ doesn't excite and motivate us at all, perhaps we have not yet fully appreciated its reality and power.

We need to remember in our hearts that the risen Christ guarantees our full salvation, fills us with hope and is the reason for our witness.

This season of Easter, our prayer to our Almighty God is to bless us with His amazing grace in our spiritual journey to understand our own identity and purpose in the light of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray. Also for a humble heart, a servant attitude and compassion for those who are living daily without Christ in their lives.

Since our vision as a church to be a "Church Without Walls", so, let us heed the clarion call and 'run to tell' about the risen Christ to all.

Grace and Peace

*Pastor Paul, Gladys and Silas*

## **Post Jeremiah School Thoughts**

Nathaniel Kovalan

It is very hard to put experiences into words, especially those experiences that successfully alter your way of life. The Jeremiah School journey is one of these experiences.

Before I stepped into JS, I had a prefixed mindset that JS was going to be a partial but intense course of theological studies. Indeed I was 100% right, but that was not all. What makes studying theology different from any other secular studies is that theology involves the soul and the spirit of a person. When I was younger, I always thought that I could pass all theological exams by memorizing the Bible. After all, how hard can it be to study a compilation of books? Well my distorted view of "studying the bible" was changed immediately.

After a month of JS, I ended up with a whole thick file of notes, several books, a tired body and so on. Imagine what 3 years of studying would do to a person! But all the JS students agreed on one thing at the end, that it was not enough, we wanted more. JS was not just about reading the Bible, it is also about building relationships both vertical (Man and God) and horizontal (Man and Man). The first 2 weeks of JS was the hardest because all of us had to build up trust amongst everyone there. Soon, we started seeing results whereby people started sharing deep secrets, society taboos and personal problems. We had been successfully knit together as one big family. All of us were generous with our tears and laughter. Happy times or sad and lonely moments, we went through it all together.

There were tons of activities planned for us, but they did not plan any games, we had to plan that ourselves. To put some of our programs in a nutshell, we took the risk of being vulnerable, we chocked each other with notes, we were disciplined spiritually, we drowned each other with prayers, we united in one voice in singing praises, we saw through the masks we had on, we worked through freedom in Christ, we bonded together with our "sabotage" plans and finally, after being pushed to the brink of insanity, we graduated as new Christians with sounder minds.

But our time in STM was rather comfortable, but God had other plans. He had to bring us out to the real world and put us to the test. The mission week was one of the most meaningful things I have ever done in my life. After 17 years of being called a Christian, finally I went out to share the gospel to the people in the streets. I wonder how many people in this age would do that! At first I shivered at the thought of it, but after going out and doing it, seeing the response and feeling the joy and fulfillment of spreading the gospel, it was indeed an experience never to be forgotten. The motto "Just Do It" applies here and I would have never known the joy of it if I had stayed back home.

In conclusion, I am never alone in my life, God was, is, and always will be omnipresent in my life just as he was in JS. I have told you nothing of significance through this little composition you'll have to live it to experience it. JS Rocks...

# Do You Love Me?

Anne Cherian

"Do you love Me?" asks the Lord  
"Yes, yes" we say in one accord  
"Do you love Me?" He asks again  
"Of course we do" we say, deeply pained.  
"Do you love Me, do you care?  
Are you willing My cross to bear?  
Do your hearts break for lost sheep?  
Do you for them pray and weep?  
When you hear them ask for bread  
Do you give them stones instead?  
When you hear my children cry,  
Is all you do just heave a sign?  
For My people unjustly thrown in prison,  
Do you ever show compassion?  
For those tortured and left to die

Because my name they won't deny,  
Are you ready to take their cause,  
without fear and without pause?  
When my church is knocked about,  
Do you ever give it a thought?  
When my shepherds cry in need,  
Do you pay them any heed?  
If you love me, show you care  
By your deeds and by your prayer  
If you love me, walk your talk."

"Do you love Me?" asks the Lord  
Can we honestly say, "Yes, yes" in one  
accord?

# You Are the Meaning of my Life

Catherine Goh

Matt 6:33

*"The thing you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what God wants."*

## Learning the word of God

Since I started my walk with Jesus, I realized that there were so much more to life. Indeed life becomes so meaningful when you know there is already a plan in place for us on earth. Delving into God's word opened up a whole new world to me. Before Jesus came into my life, my life was empty despite the busy schedule. I kept on working, working and working and not knowing where I was heading. I lacked direction. Loneliness was unbearable. My whole life seemed worthless even though I thought I had done well but it was all in vain, for no purpose. I had sufficient then and yet I was not content. Something was missing in my life. I did not have the spirit of God and the wisdom of God. My whole world came crashing down on me when I least expected it.

## Knowing the purpose of life

Until illness struck me, which led to me losing a part of me, my tongue, I had not heeded the warning sign in regard to my health. Had I known Jesus earlier, I probably would not need to undergo surgery to remove the tumor in my tongue, which affected my speech. After inviting the good Lord Jesus into my life, I am so thankful that I have a new direction. I am guided and inspired by the Lord to live a meaningful life. I no longer allow little things to worry or bother me anymore, or take control of my life. My life belongs to God and I have surrendered my all to God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Here I am still alive for a purpose!

At this stage of my life, I am no longer ambitious nor do I chase after a career. My priority is Jesus and my purpose is to help those in need, especially those who are put in my path. My work allows me the opportunity to reach out to those in need of the gospel, and to carry out the will of God.

### Learning to let go

Matt 6:19-21

*"Do not store treasures for yourselves here on earth where moths and rust will destroy them and thieves can break in and steal them. But store your treasures in heaven where they cannot be destroyed by moths or rust and where thieves cannot break in and steal them. Your heart will be where your treasure is"*

My heart, prior to Jesus coming into my life, was where my investments were. I felt weighted down by the heavy loads of property loans and interest rates. Interest rates were mounting and ate away all my earnings and savings. Credit cards were evil temptation, constantly encouraging me to shop and to spend on unnecessary items. Looking at all that I had purchased in the past, I realized that I do not need them at all and they are worth less than originally paid for. It became a chore to have to maintain and clean them every so often. What a lesson I had learnt!

Until recently, I learnt to let go of things. I realized an enormous burden just lifted off me when I let go of my "so-called investments" which actually became a burden especially when there are an oversupply of property developments and funds are lacking, unemployment soaring and assets dwindling. People are disillusioned. So are investments – shrinking and depreciating. Worst still, unoccupied properties deteriorating due to lack of maintenance! All these are signs telling us to focus on Jesus instead. We cannot serve two masters.

### Casting everything to Jesus in prayers

I learnt not to be uptight when things are not done rightly. I learnt to be patient and to focus on details of the matter. I learnt to curb my anger and re-examine why I allowed anger to creep in. Was it to do with my pride, or, my stubbornness? I would pray and

ask Jesus to give me the peace and the wisdom to discern. Thus, in so doing, it helps me to overcome situation.

My walk with Jesus never failed to amaze me. He is always there for me to answer my prayers. I want to share all the wonderful things that are happening in my life now so that you too may want to "seek Him first and all the things you want shall be granted to you".

### Healing and Restoration

My life is being restored slowly but surely as I walk with the Lord. He is paramount in my life and in all the things I do now, in my new job and my new home. It is indeed an exciting time of my life as I am experiencing the transformation right now. It is happening.

Each day, I prayed in my heart even though I could not speak properly or clearly, that I would be understood and that would be good enough for me. My prayers were answered. I prayed that I could eat and drink, to live. My prayers were answered. I admit that I am able to enjoy and savour my favourite meals. Thank God. The wounds in my tongue and in my heart were gradually healed. My strength is restored, and I am able to face the consequence of the surgery the effects of it, which affected my speech.

My confidence is now restored through faith.

## **LCEC Installation of 2005**

Tan Foong Luen, LCEC Chairman 2005

At the outset, allow me to put it in no uncertain terms that I am just a foot soldier for Christ. I am reminded by our Bishop Dr Hwa Yung's message at the recent December 2004 issue of the Pelita Methodist on the topic "Leadership or Servanthood?" Our Bishop said "We need to ask: what is the central emphasis in the New Testament? What is the heart of the Bible's understanding on this issue?"

It appears that the emphasis in the Bible's teachings is that we are called first and foremost to be servants and not leaders. Until and unless that is clearly grasped, taught and internalized into Christian lives, any talk of leadership tends to encourage self-seeking ambition.

Our goal, he said, should be to serve in whatever place or position we are assigned by God. The position is not the issue. The issue is whether we are truly willing to serve!

I humbly submit that what I see in this LCEC – is not individually brilliant people but a team of faithful people with hearts of humble and faithful servants.

John Wesley declared at Aldersgate that his heart is strangely warmed as he was touched by the Lord's love and grace. The heart is an important and essential component of our Christian lives. It is the core of our being as we respond to God and to one another. The trouble is that when we organize ourselves as churches and Christian organizations, we can become so focused on organizational concerns and structure that we forget what we are about. We become so concerned with caring for structures and projects that we fail to recognize the needs and concerns of real people who fit into these structures and projects.

In my view, it is imperative that Seremban Wesley must recognize the needs and concerns of the members in our congregations and attend to them.

What is the heart of the Church?

The heart of the church is in our hearts. I sometimes feel that the heart of the church is often hidden. It is not found so much in the big events we organize in church, but in unknown and unnoticed human interactions, which allow for love and justice to be experienced in human life. We have to lovingly reach out to our members. When a hungry person is lovingly fed and a lonely person courageously accompanied by someone who loves him/her, our hearts are exercised and our souls nourished, then the heart of the church is strengthened.

In our increasingly busy world, it is easy to neglect our hearts. It is easy to work together and yet not really know one another. It is easy to worship together and still feel hurt, un-helped and lonely. Henceforth in 2005, Seremban Wesley must find the heart of our lives and experience and celebrate our relatedness as the people of God.

As we embark on this pilgrimage in 2005, On behalf of the LCEC and my humble self, I thank God for this opportunity and privilege to serve. As Chairman for the last 2 years, may I say that, on reflection, we are at a moment in time, like hikers often discover when climbing mountains. We have not reached the summit at all, only the top of the first rise. From this new vantage point of sweat-earned insights, we can see things we have never seen before, things only made possible at the top of that hill. So we set our sights on the 'real' mountain and begin the new climb.

Each year, each time at our installation, we are being humbled into the realization that we have only risen yet another critical level of insight into our spiritual journey and there is another mountain ahead.

I firmly believe that the greatest and most inspiring mountain climbing achievements in history are not so much stories of individual achievements but are stories of the extraordinary power of a unified, talented, prepared team that stays loyally committed to

one another and to their shared vision to the end. Most climbing teams that set out to climb Mount Everest never reached the summit – only the very, very few.

For one reason or another, most people and teams, when pressed to their limits by the extreme conditions, drop out along the way and either chose to or was forced to turn back.

The story of our church leadership is no different. Were it not for the grace of God, and for the determination and unflagging commitment, patience, encouragement and synergistic contributions of the pastor and members of the congregation – this LCEC would not only have failed to become what it is, it would have never seen the light of day.

So it is with deep gratitude that I express my appreciation to:

- (i) To all our members who cared enough to give honest feedback and to willingly share their real-time, real-life issues, pains and hopes, all of which put us on a 'chain of mountain-learning climbs' that resulted in constant reinvention, precious insights and endless test of the team's patience.
- (ii) To all members of the LCEC for your extraordinary dedication, commitment, passion and vision to do God's ministry and above all for your spirituality, judgment, flexibility, patience, leadership and synergistic partnering in our team's efforts to realize our church's vision and mission
- (iii) To our office staff and extended office support team – who are selfless part-time helpers too many to name – for your truly uncommon devotion and loyalty
- (iv) To my dear wife, Li Li, my children who though taken to their wits end with this never-ending church work, chose to smile and encourage rather than to wring my neck
- (v) And finally a big, big thank you to our beloved God and Father of us all, for His plan of happiness for all His children.

Let us be united in our hearts and minds to make a difference. Let us all work together to leave behind a befitting legacy for our children.

To God be the Glory

Thank you.