



Growing Deeper  
In Christ

**40 Days of Devotional**



**Bedok Methodist Church**



# **Growing Deeper in Christ**

40 Days of Devotionals

*For Personal, Family and CG Devotions*

**Bedok Methodist Church**



## ***40 Days of Growing Deeper in Christ***

Lent is a special season in our Christian calendar. It begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Its name comes from the Anglo-Saxon word 'lecten' meaning 'spring'. Lent began as a period of preparation for Christians before baptism. Lent is a time to focus on Jesus; on His love for us and His sacrifice at the cross for our sins. It is a period for fasting, prayer, and acts of devotion to Christ.

This Lent, we will journey as a church family to grow deeper in Christ. This book is a guide for our daily devotions. It comprises contributions from BMC's pastors, leaders and members. May these devotions from the Scripture speak a personal Word to your hearts, as they have to ours.

Our weeks in Lent will focus on six aspects of our theme, "Growing Deeper in Christ"; that Christ be at home in our hearts, thoughts and wills. Week 1 will focus on Growing Deeper in Christ through Repentance; Week 2: the Word; Week 3: Prayer; Week 4: Worship; Week 5: Service and Week 6: Witness. The final week will be the Holy Week when we focus on Christ's Journey to the Cross for the sins of the world.

Our corporate worship during Sundays in Lent will also follow these themes. So too will our children in Change Makers and our youth in Frontliners. We hope that this will be a spiritual journey as individuals, as families, and as corporate body in Christ.

To benefit most from this journey, I encourage you to commit to this church-wide daily study. This book is a guide and spring-board for your daily thoughts and meditation. Journal your impressions or thoughts that the Holy Spirit gives you. Discuss these with your family, especially so if your children are also on the same study. Then join one of our Care Groups that meet weekly during Lent to share and encourage one another in "Growing Deeper in Christ".

Have a blessed Lent!

In His love,



**Rev Lim Jen Huat**  
Pastor-in-charge



## ***How to Use This “40 DAYS” Booklet***

As part of helping you to fulfill our BMC’s mission of “Growing Deeper in Christ” for 2011, this “40 DAYS” church-wide study is intended to build your devotional life in Christ.

Use the following four steps of GROW as a guide to maximise your devotional reading of the Bible to encounter Christ in a personal and corporate way.

### **G – Go to God daily**

Set aside time in your schedule to meet God daily at this divine appointment. Pray and ask God to show you His truth and will for each day. Minimise all distractions during this time. Have at hand the Bible, the “40 DAYS” guide and a devotional journal.

### **R – Read His Word**

Read the Bible passage several times; firstly to understand the original intent of the writer, to personalise your reading, and then to memorise any verse(s) that may impact you. Also remember take your time to meditate on His Word throughout the day.

### **O – Obey God**

Obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22). Biblical truths alone do not change lives. Biblical truths applied transform lives. And every day can be an exciting adventure for the Christian who listens to God and does His will.

### **W – Work out what God says to you in the Body of Christ**

Begin to journal each lesson or spiritual marker that God is teaching you. Only then are you encouraged to share with others in your Care Groups. When necessary, enlist the help of your Care Group members to encourage one another and hold members accountable to applying God’s truths in your life.

## ***My Commitment***

I pray for God's grace and strength to sustain me as I journey with Him in prayer and reflection for the next 40 days, that I will learn to love the Lord, my God, and grow deeper with Christ with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my strength.

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Signature / Date

“So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.”

~ Ephesians 3:17-18 ~

## *(Repentance)*

### **Key Verses of Week 1**

*“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and  
contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”*

*~ Psalm 51:17 ~*

*Pray daily before each reading:*

*“Keep your promise, Lord, and forgive my sins,  
for they are many.”*

*~ Psalm 25:11 (TEV) ~*

*“I am a wretched sinner; Jesus Christ is my Saviour.*

*This is the greatest of all my discoveries!”*

*~ Sir James Simpson, Inventor of Chloroform ~*

Read Ezekiel 36:22-27

## ***Remember Me, O Lord***

*"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." Ezekiel 36:26*

On 1 January 2011, I asked God for a new heart and a new spirit; a tender responsive heart that truly seeks Him. I thanked Him that I am His beloved, truly loved in Christ. I affirmed that God Emmanuel is with me 24 hours a day and I am more than conqueror through Jesus in all circumstances.

I asked God how I could join Him in reaching out to my loved ones, who like everyone, were born separated from God and seeking their own needs and desires without knowledge of God. I remembered those, who after accepting Christ, continue to be master of their own lives, calling Him LORD but living their own standard of beliefs, seeking worldly blessings, praying only in times of needs, or following strict rules, thinking that this will gain God's favour and yet, whose hearts are far from Him.

I asked God for forgiveness, having served Him for many years and still plagued at times by worries, anxiety, unrest and frustrations, complaining more than giving thanks, easily upset rather than joyful, seeking human intervention more than the LORD's when I encounter problems.

I repented of my stony heart that has little intimacy with God, at times just fulfilling requirements and Christian obligations. Yes, I asked God for a new heart to have an intimate relationship with Him, living as a child of God, loving God and man, giving glory to Him in all things, blessings others and building His Kingdom; a heart seeking Him and listening to His good and perfect will in all situations, knowing that Emmanuel is with me and obeying Him in whatever He tells me to do.

From dust we are created, to dust we will return. Praise the Lord. The Lord remembers us. What we do for Him will remain forever.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

How is my heart? What do I need to repent of?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** A new heart and spirit that love God and man. Seek His good and perfect will in all situations.

**Ministry:** Pray for families' protection, spiritual growth and unity. Thank God for the growth of generations of families in the church over the last 64 years. Pray that God will bless these faithful family groups to continue to grow the church from strength to strength.

Read Jonah 3:6-4:2

## ***Turning Point***

*"I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity." Jonah 4:2*

This passage reveals something about God that we seldom hear of. God does change His mind. God had called Jonah to Nineveh. Jonah finally obeyed and proclaimed judgement upon Nineveh. How could God not carry out judgement? How could He 'play-out' His prophet? How could the Almighty God go back on His Word? Wouldn't this become a precedent for doubting God in the future? God had a lot at stake here; He had a lot to lose in relenting.

This account reminds me of the father who ran out of his way to receive his returning son (Luke 15:20). In a similar way, at the risk of losing God's good name and of being misunderstood by His prophet, God was willing to make allowance for pagans who repented. Such is the magnitude of God's grace and mercy. In his disgust at not seeing judgement, Jonah rightly portrayed God's nature in his complaint. "I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity" (Jonah 4:2).

These were Jonah's words of disappointment, but to sinners they were words of assurance. God is not out for judgment but for reconciliation. He would relent for the penitent. He does not want anyone "...to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Lent is a season for repentance. Let us use this period to return to the Father. Take time to confess faults, failures and sins, to turn from our wicked ways and come to God for forgiveness. And when we return, we would find that He had already run a long way off to welcome us. Two thousand years ago, long before we were yet sinners, He had already come for us and offered us His grace and mercy.

"Lord, who throughout these forty days for us didst fast and pray,  
Teach us with thee to mourn our sins and close by thee to stay." UMH 269

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

What is the area in my life that I have greatest difficulty surrendering over to God?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** On my personal journey of returning to the Father's side.

**Ministry:** Pastors in BMC: Rev Lim Jen Huat, Liza and family; Rev Sng Chong Hui, Irene and family; Rev Fred Tan, Jasmine and family; Pastor Joshua, Patricia and family. Pray for growth in spiritual holiness and discernment in Christ for the faithful preaching of the Word at the pulpit each Sunday.

Read Matthew 4:12-17

## ***The Kingdom is Near***

*"From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."  
Matthew 4:17*

According to Matthew, it is interesting to note that the first subject Jesus preached, at the beginning of His ministry was repentance. Jesus reiterated the same two-fold message of John the Baptist. Both announced that one needs to repent as the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repentance involves the need to change one's mind and attitude. It is a decision to change the direction of one's life. Repentance is a prerequisite if fellowship with God is to be enjoyed. Repentance is turning away from sin to God.

We have two natures inside of us — the sinful and the spiritual. The one we feed will be the one that grows. The one we starve is the one that will die. The choice is ours. Will we feed our spiritual or sinful nature?

What is Repentance?

Repentance means to turn around. It means to turn 180° to God from whatever is taking His place or causing us to put Him aside. It may not be an obvious sin – it could be substitutes for God – anything that we put first before Him.

Repentance produces a strong need to correct wrongs. It brings a realisation that our God is holy and does not tolerate sin. Repentance brings forth action.

The time for His second coming is becoming imminent as each day passes. We need to turn away from sin and return to God. We need to experience God personally and to know Him intimately so as to enjoy Him forever. He is the author and finisher of our faith.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Have we put God in second place? Is there anything that has captured our focus and affection causing us to relegate God to the sidelines?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Lord, help me choose the path of repentance and follow the path You have chosen for me to know You intimately. I want to turn away from sin and look towards You for guidance.

**Ministry:** Local Preachers: Ms Carol Loh; Ms Judy Foo; Mr Peter Yong; Mrs Susan Chan and Ms Tan Li Diang. Pray for spiritual holiness, growth and discernment in Christ.

Read 2 Peter 3:1-18

## ***The Lord is Waiting***

*“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*  
2 Peter 3:9

“Why are we waiting? Why are we waiting?” This refrain is often sung out of our impatience when we are kept waiting for people. Although we may not chant this when God is seemingly not working according to our agendas, our attitudes may speak volumes about how we feel about waiting for God to move. In our inflated egos, we feel as if we are at the losing end of waiting and God is a bit too slow for our liking.

This verse highlights that God is not slow-paced nor One who does not keep to His Word. He is fully prepared and wants to act according to His promises. However, He restrains Himself only because we, His created beings, are lagging behind Him and not ready to receive the fulfillment of His promises. God is our Patient Father who understands where we are and is therefore willing to wait until we are all set to follow Him.

If we want to see the fulfillment of God’s plan and promises, let us:

- Learn to be God-focused and get to really know Him – God is the source of our lives.
- Look to Jesus who always keeps in step with God, thus fulfilling every promise and agenda of His Heavenly Father – Jesus is our Supreme Example.
- Listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit as He brings illumination of the Word that will get rid of the darkness of our souls and transform us into Christ-like disciples – Holy Spirit empowers us.

Just as we do not like to be kept waiting, let us also not keep God waiting. He is waiting to pour more of Himself into us as we linger in His presence to hear His heartbeat.

### **Personal Reflection/ Discussion**

What is the one thing that is hindering you from seeing the waiting Lord? The Holy Spirit is your Help and Guide. Find an accountability partner to help you keep in touch with Him.

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Be close to the Lord so that I will not keep Him waiting but will keep in step with Him daily.

**Ministry:** LCEC Leaders: Chairperson Mr Low Chia Wing; Lay Leader Dr Ho Boon Tiong; Vice-Chairperson Mr Issac A; Associate Leaders: Mrs Susan Chan; Mr Ng Hock Ching; Mr Ong Aik San; Dr Tan See Seng and Mr Winston Wong. Pray for personal revival and wisdom to lead as they plan and make decisions for the church.

*My Journal*



*My Journal*



*My Journal*



## *(The Word)*

### **Key Verses of Week 2**

*“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”*

*~ Psalm 119:105 ~*

*Pray daily before each reading:*

*“Treat me according to your constant love,*

*And teach me your commands. I am your servant;*

*give me understanding,*

*so that I may know your teachings.”*

*~ Psalm 119:124-125 (TEV) ~*

*“Come, Holy Ghost, for, moved by Thee the prophets*

*wrote and spoke; Unlock the truth, Thyself the Key,*

*unseal the sacred Book!”*

*~ Charles Wesley ~*

Read Psalm 119:9-16 & 105

## ***Light that Differentiates***

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." Psalm 119:105*

Imagine entering into a big room that is full of things. Without light, you will not be able to see and know where to find the things which you are looking for. You might not even know if you have found the right things, and could have mistaken one thing for another (try differentiating a red colored crayon from other crayons in the crayon box while doing this in a dark room).

The Psalmist who wrote Psalm 119 equated the Word of God as the light for his life on an earthly journey in search of God's Way. The Psalmist understood that his world was full of darkness in terms of the wickedness and evil inclination of the sinful heart.

We are living in a world today that is no different from the days of the Psalmist because of our sinful nature. Our world views and opinions of things are constantly being influenced, shaped or even dictated by the language of a post-modern culture, which is geared towards materialism.

A world without the light of truth is a world that does not know how to differentiate right from wrong. However, the Word of God enables us to know the difference and helps us to choose the right path to take.

The Gospel of John testifies that our Lord Jesus Christ is THE Light of the World who dispels darkness and points us to God (John 1:3-9). To have the Light of the World is to have Jesus in our lives to light our path to eternal salvation so that we will walk in truth and not in darkness.

In this season of reflection and repentance, let us remember that the more we have of Jesus in our lives, the brighter and clearer the path and the lesser the darkness will be. "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me shall stay in darkness" (John 12:46).

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

What area(s) in my life that need(s) the Light of Jesus to shine upon?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Surrender your life to the Father and ask for His forgiveness and healing.

**Ministry:** LCEC Hon. Stewards: Mr Ng Ser Hock; Mr Woon Sui Cheong and Mrs Woon Ee Lin; Stewards: Mr Benjamin Hong; Mr Francis Lim; Mr Gerald Chew; Mr Roger Tan; Mr Yee Weng Choong and Mr Yeo Chin Iuan. Pray for submission to the Lordship of Christ in all corporate decisions.

Read Joshua 2:1-24

## ***Does God Exist?***

*"For the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below." Joshua 2:11*

Today's devotional title may seem inappropriate for Christians. However, it is not unusual that Christians do question God's existence, especially during times of difficult circumstances and trials.

If that is you today, I beseech you to take a few minutes to reflect on the wonders of nature around us – the majestic Niagara Falls; the calming beauty of the rainbow; the unfathomable wonders of the galaxy; the marvels of the human brain and the unexplained uniqueness of each and every human thumb print.

Surely the awesomeness of nature will point us to the fact that there has to be a supreme, infinite, master creator of the universe. The Psalmist rightly pointed out, "The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of His hands" (Psalm 19:1). As you reflect on God's wonderful creation, let faith arise to believe that He is there with you even when you do not feel His presence.

Yes, we all need faith to believe God exists. Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." In today's text, Rahab had the faith in the God of the Israelites to help the spies to escape. We need faith to hold on to God's promises and believe Him to the end.

May I add that an intellectual knowledge of God is not enough. That knowledge has to be translated to heart knowledge. When we hunger and thirst for more of God, His spirit brings a deeper revelation of His nature, His character and His transforming power in and through us. Surrender every area of your life to Him and allow His Spirit to be totally at home with your spirit.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

When was a time that I doubted God's existence? Or share, when was a time that God's existence was more real than ever before in my life.

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Pray for faith to believe even in dark times. Thank God for his grace and faithfulness to you even at times when you doubt His existence.

**Ministry:** LCEC: Treasurer Mr Christopher Cheong; Recording Secretary Mdm Chia Koon Hong; Asst. Recording Secretary Mrs Suseelah Issac; PPRC Chairperson Mr Chou Fang Soong; Governance Chairperson Mr Chan Wing Leong; Archivist Mr Winston Wong. Pray for more labourers who are committed to the ministry of the church.

*Mr Winston Wong, Associate Lay Leader (Equipping)*

Read Psalm 119:1-11

## ***Do I need God?***

*"Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord." Psalm 119:1*

Psalm 119 deals about the beauty of God's words and how it helps us to stay pure and grow in faith. King David sought God only and also diligently. David prayed for the preservation of the good work done by God in him. His pleadings for his child's life through prayer and fasting (2 Samuel 12:16), may have been in earnest but the child's death found David not depressed but ready to face life joyfully in God.

David faced many political and family problems of an order that would have embittered a lesser man. When he had discovered the secret of restored life with God, he went on to become the greatest king of Israel. Because of the good work God had done in his life, he prayed to seek God's precepts and keep them and not to wander from them.

He hid the word of God in his heart and put to good use whenever he needed to use them; that he would not sin against it. God's word is a treasure worth laying up and there is no laying up safely, but in our own hearts, that we may answer every temptation, as our Master did with the word – It is written (Matthew 4:4).

Temptations are common to all men. But we can be pardoned and restored through confessions and repentance and the blood of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:9). God's word keeps us from sinning. Knowing God's word is a way of knowing His revealed will and that we will more likely please God by doing what is right, when we understand what He wants.

We need God. Just knowing the word of God does not help us. We need to build a personal relationship with God to help us overcome temptations which only draw us to eternal death.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

How have I been devoting my time to build a personal relationship with God? His words will save us from yielding to temptations (Psalm 1:2).

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Ask God to help me to lead a lifestyle of obedience and faithfulness to Him.

**Equipping Ministry:** Chairperson Mr Charles Kum; MasterLife Dr Tan See Seng; DISCIPLE Rev Fred Tan. Pray for the teaching of the Word that transforms lives. Ask God to raise generations of more faithful disciple-makers.

## ***Authority of The Word***

*“Jesus replied, ‘You may go. Your son will live.’ The man took Jesus at his word and departed.” John 4:50*

Imagine the power and authority of a king in his kingdom. How much more God’s Word reveals Himself, His love, power and authority. “For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm” (Psalm 33:9). God spoke and the heaven and earth and everything in them were created. The Word brings about its fulfillment because God is infallible and true. This means that God is a faithful and a promise keeping God.

Jesus said, “You may go, your son will live.” While we may not know much about the official from Capernaum, but we can draw from the passage that he must have heard about Jesus and the many miracles Jesus did.

At that time, Jesus visited Cana, Galilee after his encounter with the Samaritan woman and the many Samaritans who believed because of His words. (Capernaum is about 18 miles from Cana, Galilee.) The official set out with the hope to bring Jesus back to his house to heal his son who was close to death (v.47). Jesus said, “Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders; you will never believe.” The official pleaded; “Sir, come down before my child dies.” Jesus replied, “You may go. Your son will live” (v.50). Without any doubt, the official took Jesus at His word and departed. He was still on the way home when his servants met him with the news that his son was living. It was the exact time the son was well when Jesus gave His Word.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Do we dare take Jesus at His Word, believing Him with all our heart, mind and soul? Is there anything that is holding you back from taking Jesus at His Word? How does God’s Word become alive in your daily walk with God?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Let the Word of God be living and active in my life.

**Children Ministry:** Chairperson Mrs Christina Ong; Admin Assistant Paula Intaramunee. Pray for the equipping of all ChangeMakers servers to teach the children to know and love Christ personally. Pray for children who are wayward that they return to the Word of God. Pray for anxious parents to allow some space for their children to grow freely to maturity, knowing God is watching over them.

Read Proverbs 7:1-3

## ***Obey and Live***

*"Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye."  
Proverbs 7:2*

The passage of Proverbs 7 tells of a father who warns his son of giving in to temptation and falling into sin. He gives an example of a youth falling into the trap of an adulterous woman. Verses 1-3 tells the importance of keeping the teachings in his heart, as this would convict him from doing wrong and help him obey and live a righteous life.

Is this applicable in our lives today? Yes. Today, the Bible (God's written word) is our guide. As it is written in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

During DISCIPLE 1 class, we learnt many valuable lessons in life from the characters in the Old and New Testaments. We can follow the good examples and avoid the mistakes done by some of these characters. We can also learn from our parents/ friends who give us good advice.

The above are only tools that God has placed in our hands, but tools are tools – they need to be applied. In the same way, God's Word and our parents/ friends' wisdom are only useful when used in the proper and correct time. We must ask ourselves the question - do we listen and obey or does it "go into one ear and out the other". Do we treasure the advice given to us? The Amplified Bible version states in Proverbs 2:1, "MY SON, keep my words; lay up within you my commandments [for use when needed] and treasure them."

We do not know if the young man heeded his father's words, but what we know is by listening and doing what is right will help keep us from trouble and live a righteous life. A life that is pleasing to God.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

What advice have my parents given to me? Have I followed them?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Ask God for an obedient heart.

**Family Life Ministry:** Chairperson Mrs Suseelah Issac. Pray for the preservation of family relationships to be built on the covenant of God's agape love. Lift up any bitterness in single parents who have to raise their children all alone. Move in your forgiving power, O Lord, on those whose marriages are under threat. Break the hold of stubborn pride for the restoration of godly families.

Read John 1:1-12

## ***We Can Trust the Bible***

*"Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."  
Revelation 21:5*

The word of God – the Holy Bible – is God's special Book, written by many different people under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is made up of 66 smaller books but with only one central theme: God's loving plan to rescue mankind.

It is divided into two sections: the Old Testament that tells us about God's preparation work with His people for the birth of Jesus. Secondly, the New Testament that tells us about Jesus' birth, His life, His great ministry of healing and forgiveness for sick and sinful people, His death on a cross, His resurrection and His ascension. It also tells us about the continuation of His healing, forgiving ministry through those who follow Him and also the miraculous works that He said He would do (John 14:12).

We can trust the Bible because John 1:1-2 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." I believe the 'Word' here refers to Jesus, the Son of God. Also, verses of scripture that prove God's Word is eternal are:

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

"And we also thank God continually because when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is the word of God, which is at work in you who believe" (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

"All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correction and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

When did I last read the Bible? Believe and obey, for it is our spiritual food for life and growth.

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Pray that I accept the Bible to be the authority of my life.

**Care Group Ministry:** Chairperson Rev Sng Chong Hui and his District Leaders. Pray for unity of growth and spiritual hunger for God's Word and His presence among 62 BMC care groups. Grant opportunities that these care groups can be beacons of light to their communities and neighbourhood.

Read Galatians 3:26 - 4:7

## ***God's Gift to the World***

*"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." Galatians 4:4-5*

These verses tell us how God in His own timing and according to His plan, decided to intervene in the lives of His children. What a wonderful way of showing His love and His care by giving His own Son, in the flesh to save all of us who have ignored and neglected Him. God is a compassionate Father who believes that all of us need to experience the grace of His salvation and the redemption of our sins.

The time has come for all humankind to know that God the Creator in Jesus Christ fully understands what it means to experience the spirit and what it means to be governed under the Law. Jesus fulfills the Law to give us the freedom to be made holy in the sight of God.

By giving us His Son, God allows each of us a chance to be redeemed and to enjoy all the privileges of being called His children. Without this, our lives are directionless and hopeless. We have no anchor to base our lives on.

"Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father' " (Galatians 4:6). Abba our Father releases us from being a slave to sin, transforms us into His children and makes us heirs to His Kingdom.

What a wonderful gift in Jesus Christ our world has received to transform all her people to be shaped by God's law and grace.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

How can a redeemed son/ daughter show gratitude to our Father?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Reflect on the times I have received God's grace and redemption.

**People in preparation for full-time ministry:** Mr Benjamin Lee; Mr Nathanael Goh; Mrs Suseelah Issac and Ms Hazel Mui. Pray for each student to finish their study of the Word of God and to be obedient to God's guidance to ministry opportunities. Pray also for their family members who are waiting for them to complete their training.

*My Journal*



*My Journal*



*My Journal*



**(Prayer)**

### **Key Verses of Week 3**

*“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”*

*~ Romans 12:12 ~*

*Pray daily before each reading:*

*“I pray to you, O Lord; you hear my voice in the morning;*

*at sunrise I offer my prayer and wait for your answer.”*

*~ Psalm 5:3 (TEV) ~*

*“Prayer does not change God, but changes him who prays.”*

*~ Soren Kierkegaard ~*

## ***Prayer - Dearest to God's Desire***

*"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." Romans 12:12*

Prayer is the closest thing we can get into the flow of God's Presence. From the beginning of time in creation, God's desire is always to call out, "Adam, Adam, where are you?" There was sweet communion when God walked with man in the Garden of Eden.

We are created to communicate with God in a relationship of a father and his child. In the cool of the evening, there was lots of sharing in laughter and discovery after the day's activities of Adam and Eve. How they must have enjoyed God's creation in this paradise with no distraction and fear. However, judgement came when man disobeyed. As a consequence, man lost that paradise.

Has God given up on us? No. His desire remains unchanged. The divine grace of God continues to woo us to return to Him. God even let us experience the dissatisfaction of life without Him. In effect, it causes a longing in our hearts to hear His voice again. This expectant joy in hope to hear from Him; the patience to believe during tribulation and the faithfulness to persevere in prayer will bring us into God's presence fairly quickly. However, His calling us has often been confused by the noises of this world and the demands within our own desires.

In His priestly prayer in John 17, Jesus taught us how to pray. He prayed that we may be one in Him as He and His Father are one. Jesus would only speak and pray what He has seen with His Father. Jesus always knew His Father's will and He would always obey. They are One. To experience the fullness of what God has always desired, seek first the scripture to know God's will and then allow the flow of God's Spirit to prompt us to pray. Prayer is an activity when we are caught up with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in oneness, restoring the paradise that we have lost. That is the joy of the Lord.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Do I accept the challenge to seek and live as Jesus lived to be at one with the Father? Am I ever ready to live out my life to the will, initiative, vision and spoken word of the Father?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Pray for the surrender of our lives to be at one with the Father as Christ is one with Him.

**Prayer and Intercession Ministry:** Chairperson Mrs Susan Chan. Pray for a revival in making prayer an integral part of the church where Thursday prayer meetings be yet another service. Members may come freely to enjoy God's presence and seek His wisdom and healing.

Read Luke 11:1-4

## ***Divine Persona***

*He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father,..." Luke 11:2*

Jesus taught his disciples about prayer. Jesus gave them an example of a prayer and two stories that emphasised the importance of seeking God in prayer.

Once again in Luke 11:1, Jesus had been out praying. Luke presented several instances where Jesus was praying, making it clear that prayer was a regular part of his life. Something about Jesus' prayer life prompted one of His disciples to approach Him as He finished. He wanted Jesus to teach them to pray, just as John taught His disciples. It was common for religious leaders to teach their followers how to pray – to be able to pray as their Master prayed would give them assurance of expressing themselves favourably to God.

The prayer Jesus taught His disciples in verse 2 was not a formulaic prayer; rather it was a "how to" prayer. These were not meant to be magical words prayed like an incantation over and over. Instead, He was giving the disciples a pattern.

The pattern of praise, intercession, and request helps us to understand the nature and purpose of our personal prayers in our relationship with our Father.

Phrases like:

- \* "Father, may your name be honoured" focuses on God as majestic and says that the person praying is committed to honouring God's name.
- \* "May your kingdom come" refers to God's spiritual reign.
- \* "Give us this day our daily bread" is for a personal need to be met.
- \* "Forgive those who have sinned against us" focuses on the true repentance of a believer who understands the greatness of the forgiveness he or she has received.
- \* "Lead us not into temptation" is a request for spiritual protection from trials and temptations.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

What concepts about a father are we to attribute to God? Which ones do not fit Him very well? What is so astounding about the fact that Jesus tells us to pray to God as Father?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** To bring me back to simplicity of my relationship to our Father in heaven. Remove my prayerlessness or any pat prayer formulas I have.

**Altar Ministry:** Pray for prayer intercessors who intercede for members at the end of each Sunday service, that they will continue to walk in spiritual purity as they stand in the gap for others. Lord, bring BMC to her knees to be constantly praying. Let there be great rejoicing in answered prayers.

*Mrs Suseelah Issac, a second year student with Trinity Theological College,  
Chairperson for Family Life*

## ***Praying to an Absent God***

*"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Psalm 22:1*

David felt the absence of God when he was in an anguished state. He thought that God had forgotten him. But, in verses 3-5, he acknowledged God's sovereignty and he remembered that God always gave help.

On the contrary at Mount Sinai, the Israelites chose to build a golden calf to worship in the absence of Moses and God. God was angry and rebuked their actions. He called them 'stiff-necked people' in Exodus 32:9.

Similarly in Acts 7:51, Stephen quoted the same Scripture verse before he was stoned to death, "You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit!"

Thus, we would fall into the danger of being called stiff-necked (or stubborn) people when we always resist the Holy Spirit and when our hearts and ears shut out the voice of God.

Often than not, we hear people saying that they cannot hear the voice of God. It makes them feel that God is distant from them than those who are. Revelation 3:20 tells us clearly that every Christian would have already heard the voice of God the very moment we give our lives to Him. "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."

Some years back, the Lord gave me an impression of a "Just Married" car dragging along old, empty and noisy tin cans. It symbolised – we being His bride and dragging along the 'old, empty and noisy' things of our past. He wants us to snip those strings in order to have a brand new start with Him. Let go and let God take over. He is a God that is with us and in us. He is ever present and never absent.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

In what ways do I resist the Holy Spirit and how can I overcome this?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands... and purify your hearts... (James 4.8).

**Prison Ministry:** Chairperson Mr Martin Chia. Pray for the work among the prisoners that God's restoration be made whole to broken reeds.

## ***A Time-Challenged God***

*“The Lord said, I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt... So I have come down to rescue them ...into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey...” Exodus 3:7-8*

The words in Exodus 3:7-10 were the first words of God that set in motion all that was to follow in the Exodus story. It also revealed the character of God, who was to deliver His people out of Egypt. The first four words of God, “I have surely seen” indicated the intensity of God’s interests in the misery of His people. God heard the cries of His people and was deeply compassionate towards them.

Thus, God set about in motion His plan, not only delivered them out of Egypt, but to do more than that, to bring them to a land of plenty. God’s answer to their cry would exceed what they could ever imagine. But, God’s deliverance may not come immediately. God may sometimes choose to intervene immediately and miraculously, but most of the time, He set His deliverance plan in motion and the workings of His miracle would be bound by the passage of time.

In choosing Moses and sending him to the Pharaoh, the plan moved forward dramatically. But it did not result in an immediate deliverance. In fact, in the intervening time, the Israelites actually suffered more when the Pharaoh’s heart hardened. He commanded the taskmasters to work the Israelites even harder than before. But ultimately, God’s people were delivered.

When we cry out to God to deliver us from our trials and sufferings, God surely hears us and is exceedingly compassionate towards us. Sometimes, He may choose to deliver us immediately, but sometimes, His miracle may take a passage of time to be completed. We are to trust in Him, knowing that regardless of whether the outward signs of the sufferings seem not to lessen or even increase, He will ultimately deliver us, often in ways beyond our imagination.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Have I been crying out to God recently about anything in my life? Am I able to trust God that He will ultimately deliver me? In what ways and in what areas of my life do I think God is prompting me to trust Him more?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Ask God for peace that transcends understanding and in trusting Him. Ask God to help us see beyond the immediate circumstances.

**Ministry:** BMC Members. Pray for those who are physically sick and those mentally depressed, that they may find strength in God and through the support from family members. O Lord, be light in their darkness and give them rest.

Read Matthew 6:6-8, Luke 18:1-8

## *Investing in Prayer*

*"Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up." Luke 18:1*

The time we spend on prayers will never be lost because it will return dividends far greater than we can ever expect. Like any good investment, we cannot reap what we have not sown. God cannot answer prayers that have not been prayed for.

Prayer investment requires us to set a time each day to talk to God. In our conversation with the almighty God we can express our concerns to Him and also listen to His response. Like all good things, prayer requires some amount of discipline. It involves a renewing of the mind and purging out what displeases God and damages us. Prayer connects us with God and aligns our lives according to His will.

Yet many Christians today find it difficult to invest some time in prayer. Could it be that we allow the busy world to squeeze prayer out of our daily schedule? Or have we allowed our prayer life to fade when the seas of life appears calm? Or have we given up praying because we are disillusioned with God because our prayers did not work?

Matthew 6:6-8 tells us to reserve a time and place to pray daily and to avoid vain repetitions, but to pour our hearts out to our Heavenly Father. Get real! If you are struggling with something, tell God. If you are being tempted, don't hide, tell Him. If you are feeling hurt and discouraged, share with Him.

Luke 18:1-8 tells us that we should always pray and not give up. In our prayers and petition, we must be like the widow who persisted until the judge saw that she got her justice! Jesus is telling us not to lose heart as God does listen to every prayer we pray and care about every situation that is brought to His attention.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Where does God fit into my life that seems behind schedule? Is my prayer life taking a roller coaster ride? How do I keep this from happening? Am I a Christian who attends church but has given up on prayer?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Lord, make me a praying person, praying from the heart to You to reveal what You desire and secondly make me an investor in the greatest investment of all time... "PRAYER".

**Ministry:** BMC Members. Pray for those who are lonely, fearful and unhappy, that they find God's infinite love and fellowship. Pray for those who are struggling in the Christian faith, that they keep seeking God and in their seeking, God will reveal Himself to them.

Read John 17:1-26

## ***Unhurried Journey***

*"...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in Me and I am in you. May they also be in us..." John 17:21*

I am constantly in an unnecessary hurry. The best example of this: the moment I spot a car signaling to get in my lane, my go-to reaction is to accelerate and close off the space in front of me. All this effort is to stay one second in front of the car. And don't get me started on escalators. For me, there is more weaving on the escalator than on the highways – and no time to stand still!

Unlike me, Jesus was not in an endless hurry. He understood the importance of staying connected to the Father's heart, to His plan. Even though His greatest trial was around the corner, Jesus took the time to pray. That was what John's Gospel recorded for us in John 17.

The chapter provided a picture of the value that Jesus attached to prayer. Heading towards the climax of His earthly mission (v.1), Jesus chose to pray. He found the time to pray for His disciples (v.9) as well as those who would come to believe in Him (v.20). The other Gospels recorded that the last thing Jesus did before He walked into the arms of his accusers was to pray (Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-43; Luke 22:39-46). In fact, Jesus spent His last breath praying (Luke 23:46).

We live in a world that subscribes to the maxim, "Time is money". When Facebook suffered a two-hour outage in September 2010, the estimated cost to their revenue was close to half a million dollars. Being hurried lends itself naturally to living in the midst of a hectic world; yet, to pray is both the most and the least we can do. If growing deeper in Christ is our goal, we must learn to commit to prayer like Jesus did.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

John Wesley said; "I have so much to do that I spend several hours in prayer before I am able to do it." Why do I think Jesus chose to spend His last moments as a free man praying?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Pray that God will help us cultivate prayerful contemplation in the midst of a hurried world.

**Ministry:** BMC members. Pray for those who have to travel for their jobs and those stationed overseas on work assignments, that God's protection is over them wherever they are. As families are left behind, may God strengthen the relationships during their absence and they continue to be faithful in godly company.

Read Luke 22:39-46

## **Submission**

*“Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” Luke 22:40b*

In this passage, Jesus was seen praying to the Father on the Mount of Olives. Being at the last phase of His life and betrayed by one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Jesus was at the brink of sorrow and despair.

Knowing the will of the Father and His mission on earth, Jesus was seen kneeling and pleading with the Father “to take this cup from me”.

Jesus needed to draw strength from the Father to face the ordeal of humiliation, the arrest and the crucifixion. And at that moment “an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him” (v.43). God sent an angel to be with Jesus in this terrible time of fear, and perhaps even temptation far worse than what Satan tried.

The Son of God displayed all the qualities of the Son of Man on the Mount of Olives. In His humanity, Jesus suffered much during that night, battling what He knew had to happen. Jesus’ human will was distinct from God’s will but He did not oppose His Father’s will. His prayer revealed His inner suffering but He willingly placed Himself in His Father’s hands.

And when Jesus rose from His prayer, He told the disciples to “get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation”. The disciples would need extra strength so that these temptations would not overpower them.

As we face struggles and challenges that lie ahead, we need to turn our attention to how Jesus prayed to His Father. We need to get away from the distractions of this world and find time to be alone with the Father.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

What are the temptations I face when I am doing the will of the Father? In what ways does prayer help me when I am faced with temptations?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** God, make me the Christian soldier always in prayer; for victory depends much on my praying than fighting. Help me be watchful and persevere in all of my activities.

**Young Adult Ministry:** Chairperson Mr Daryl Gan. Pray for the young adults who are confused over their priorities in real life matters concerning their career and family life. Stand by them, O Lord Jesus, as they look for wholeness that only You can give.

*Mrs Suseelah Issac, a second year student with Trinity Theological College,  
Chairperson for Family Life*

*My Journal*



*My Journal*



*My Journal*



*(Worship)*

## **Key Verses of Week 4**

*“God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”*

*~ John 4:24 ~*

*Pray daily before each reading:*

*“O Lord, I will always sing of your constant love;*

*I will proclaim your faithfulness forever.*

*I know that your love will last for all time,*

*that your faithfulness is as permanent as the sky.”*

*~ Psalm 89:1-2 (TEV) ~*

*“God is to be worshipped by faith, hope and love.”*

*~ St Augustine ~*

Read John 4:1-42

## ***A Wordless Worship***

*“God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24*

Worship is about the encounter with the Presence of God rather than the preaching of man. Still many worshippers think that the sermon is the most important part of the Sunday Service. So they say to themselves when they are late for service that it is all right to miss the singing; it is okay to miss the welcome and announcements; it is even better to miss the offering – as long as you do not miss the sermon.

Years ago, when I was studying at Trinity Theological College, we used to have a cook who prepared all the meals for us. She was a very devout Christian. She knew neither English nor Mandarin except for Teochew, her own dialect. Yet, every evening when we had our Vespers, she would be there to join us in our worship. I was sure that she did not understand a single word that transpired during the worship. There was never any translation but she kept coming to worship God with us. For her, worship was wordless.

Many of us, when we get nothing from the sermon, we feel we have not worshipped God. But for this woman, worship is not just words. For her worship is not the pre-occupation with the preaching of man but the preoccupation of her heart with the presence of God. This woman taught me how to worship God in spirit.

It was not long after I graduated from the seminary that I went on a mission trip to Sarawak. And there were many occasions when we sat with the tribal Iban people in worship. I could not understand what was spoken or sung. Everything was conducted in Ibanese - the prayers, the songs and the messages. And still I could worship God because my heart was preoccupied with the sense of God's presence inhabiting the praises of His people.

I owed it all to this cook in the seminary who taught me to worship God in spirit.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Has my worship become so utterly cerebral that my mind only wants to be gripped by the words of a preacher but my heart is no longer gripped by the presence of God? When the sermon conveys nothing to my mind, do I feel I have not worshipped God? Does my worship rise or fall with the preaching?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Dear God our Father, Your Son Jesus our Lord once said, “These people honour Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me” (Mark 7:6). They worship Me in vain.” Save me, my God from such worship. Teach me how to worship in spirit with a heart that is preoccupied with Your Presence.

**Ministry:** Sunday Worship Services at 8.30am, 10.30am and 5pm. Pray for faithful attendance that more people will be drawn closer to our Lord Jesus - that they come because they want to come to worship the Living God.

Read John 17:20-26

## ***One in Jesus Christ***

*"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one."  
John 17:22*

We often talk and pray for unity at BMC. Rightly so, it is very much in the heart of God that we are one in His love. It pleases Him when He sees the way we consider and love each other as we relate, serve and grow together.

God alone knows that us being 'one' is humanly unattainable. There are too many differences, not to mention the fruits of our sinful nature. Therefore, He made it possible for us to partake in the glory of being 'one' – the beauty, splendor and sheer satisfaction of togetherness. He does this through His Son Jesus Christ.

Jesus brings us into God and brings God into us. We become one in Christ. When we are in His divine presence, we cannot help but be transformed unto His likeness. Through Jesus, we learn to become one with each other just as He is one with the Father. Here lies the secret to unity – beholding the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ.

How do we behold Jesus? Worship is essential to beholding God. When we choose to put aside our worries, our problems and instead look to Jesus, His person (glory) and His word, we are worshipping Him. We are putting Him first in our lives and in our hearts. Worship among Christians will be seen in the way we make music, speak, serve and relate with each other where God's will takes precedence. Here we will behold in greater measure, the glory of God amongst His people – we will be known to be His disciples by the love we have for each other.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

How big is Jesus in my life? To what extent do I include God in my daily decision making?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Lord Jesus, You reveal the Father's heart and will to us. Jesus, enlarge our vision of You, so that we may partake in the glory Your Father has given You.

**Worship & Music Ministry:** Chairperson Mrs Serene Gan. Remember the worship leaders and teams, choir members, musicians, dancers and Scripture readers and bless them with the joy of ministry.

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9

## ***Authenticity in Worship***

*"Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." Deuteronomy 6:7*

Sunday mornings can often be the most trying time for the character of a disciple. The children need to be woken up, dressed, fed and then off to the car. All these steps have to be executed with the precision of a military exercise. Each step of this process provides infinite opportunities for our frustrations and anger to build. And then we reach the Sanctuary and we feel obliged to turn on the "worship mode". But is that the kind of worship our Lord desires?

Today's Scripture text implores us to hear this command: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might (v.5). Verses 4-9, the famous passage known as the Shema (the Hebrew imperative translated "Hear"), commanded the Israelites to love God in an all-encompassing manner. All parts of the Israelite body life, family, time, domestic and civic space fall under this command. John Wesley was fond of this verse, often citing it as a summary of biblical religion, the epitome of Christian perfection.

If obeying this command seems impossible, fret not! In all of Scripture, only Josiah is credited with loving God the way verse 5 mandates (2 Kings 23:25). Yet the command remains all important: we are to love God not merely externally and ethically but with an internal devotion – and we are to do this in every time and season. Love God completely and perpetually.

Jesus taught that the Old Testament could be summed up in the commandment to love God and love our neighbour (Matthew 22:38). As we seek to grow deeper in worship, let us pursue the kind of authenticity that brings the Gospel to bear in every facet of our lives. After all, that is our "reasonable worship" (Romans 12:1).

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

The totality of the Gospel must be brought to bear in every arena of my life. Which area/s of my life display the kind of total commitment to God outlined in today's Scripture text? If not, why?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Pray that I will keep in step with the Spirit such that I am conscious of moments where I falter in my worship.

**Worship & Music Ministry:** Pray for all those working behind the scene dutifully each Sunday: AVA crews and the projectionists, floral arrangement teams, ushers, greeters and those who help out in folding service order bulletins every Friday and the stewards preparing the elements and those distributing them on Holy Communion Sundays.

Read John 4:7-26

## ***In Spirit and in Truth***

*"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth." John 4:23*

Location, location, location! To audiences from Old Testament times, Jesus' words must have sounded awfully strange. After all, isn't worship tied to a particular place? Jews from the time of David looked to Jerusalem (or Zion) as the City of God and the Great King (Psalms 46:4; 48:2). Samaritans viewed Mount Gerizim as their most holy mountain. For the ancients, possession of land was the embodiment of nationhood and community; it formed the most concrete expression of "home". No wonder the Jewish refugees wept by the rivers of Babylon as they remembered Zion (Psalm 137:1). Their experience of exile was doubly painful since it implied separation from God's very presence, which (supposedly) dwelt in Jerusalem.

Enter Jesus' outrageous newflash: God is seeking true worshippers who will worship Him in the Holy Spirit and in truth! That means, places are not particularly important; it is the God's presence (Exodus 3:5). If neither city nor mountain nor building, where could God's presence be? Where might the Glory reside? Paul offers the key: our very bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The human heart has become God's preferred dwelling and place of worship!

No one can worship in spirit and truth unless he has the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9). The Spirit testifies, guides, convicts and reveals to true worshippers about Jesus (John 15:26; 16:8-15). If we worship in spirit but not in truth, we risk sliding into an emotional state and mysticism that is not based on God's word. If we worship in truth but not in the Spirit, we veer into a legalism empty of God's grace and wisdom. Jesus has fundamentally changed the rules of worship. So worship the Lord in spirit and in truth, whether in the office or classroom, in your car or the MRT, alone in your room or on a crowded street, worship Him!

Invite the Holy Spirit, our Teacher and Counsellor who testifies about Jesus and reveals all truth and knowledge of God, to convict, guide, and teach us about true worship. Repent of past worship practices and traditions that, no matter how good or right they might have seem to us, deviated from Jesus' teaching in John 4:23-24.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

What might be my Jerusalem or Gerizim? Do I feel I can only worship God in church or some special place? Discover how you can worship God in spirit and in truth.

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Pray that God's presence and glory will so fill and overflow my heart of worship that the world will be drawn inexorably to Jesus.

**Glowing Years Ministry:** Chairperson Mr Steven Kok. Pray for a time of learning, caring and sharing among senior members that God will reward them with joy and strength to live for each day.

Read Hebrews 13:1-16

## ***A Sacrifice of Praise***

*"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of our lips that confess his name." Hebrews 13:15*

The meaning of praise (Longman Dictionary): To speak favourably and with admiration of; to offer thanks and honour to (God).

**P – Proclaim the praises of the LORD.** Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 150:6). Proclaim His name and what great things He has done. He is the great "I AM".

**R – Rejoice in the LORD,** O you righteous! For praise from the upright is beautiful (Psalm 33:1). Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! (Philippians 4:4) Sing Hallelujah to the LORD!

**A – Acknowledge God, our Father in heaven.** He is our Abba Father who loves us deeply and cares for us tenderly. He is our awesome creator! He is a very personal God who knows all about us and promises to be with us always. We are His children and He receives us with open arms. Love and appreciate Him with a grateful heart. Thanks and bless His holy name!

**I – In Jesus Christ alone is the sacrifice offered for our sins.** He is our Saviour and Lord! Blessing and honour and glory and power belong to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever! (Revelation 5:13) Jesus is our All in All. Praise the LORD!

**S – Surrender all to Jesus.** Let God search our hearts and we bear our souls to Him. Submit to do His will. God is Sovereign and He is in control. He knows best and He will lead us a step at a time.

**E – Enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.** Enter to worship and honour Him. Exalt the LORD our God, and magnify His holy name together (Psalm 100).

**S – Spirit of the living God,** help us pray and boldly share the Good News with the love of God till Jesus Christ comes again as our King of kings and Lord of lords. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Reflect and praise God for His attributes and great things He has done in my life.

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day (Psalm 71:8).

**Ministry:** Personnel Management Chairperson Mr David Chia. Pray for God's guidance and wisdom on personnel recruitment and supervising matters relating to administrative and ministry staff - that the right person is selected to fulfill a task.

*Ms Milly Koh, prayer intercessor*

Read Ephesians 5:15-20

## ***Always Give Thanks***

*“Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 5:20*

Always give thanks to God for everything – at all times and places and for all things! This is often easier said than done. When our prayers are answered, doors are opened and when everything goes well, it is easy to praise and thank God for His blessings. But, when things go awry, when illness strikes, relationships turn sour, in times of failure and when God is silent and seems so far away, can we remain thankful?

Paul reminded all Christians to “live a life and act in a way worthy of those who have been chosen for such wonderful blessings as these” (Ephesians 4:1). When we recognise God’s unconditional love for us, His sovereignty and that all good things come from Him, we have every reason to rejoice and be thankful for what God has done for us. And, even in times of adversity, we can still be thankful for the hope that we have in Christ and for His strength that will see us through.

Even in good times, we can become complacent and forget about expressing our gratitude to God, our Provider. In the story of the ten lepers who were healed, only one returned to thank Jesus. “Where were the other nine?” Jesus asked. Like any parent who would be overjoyed when his children respond with a thankful heart, we must be made aware that God notices a grateful heart. When we are grateful, we will not focus on what we do not have. Instead, we can be contented and thankful for the blessings that we possess. Hence, a thankful heart boils down to contentment. “Godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:6).

Let me share with you a story that I have read. A person was robbed of his purse. Firstly, he was thankful that he had never been robbed before. Secondly, the robber took his purse, not his life. Thirdly, though he lost his all, it was not much. Lastly, he was thankful that it was he who was being robbed, not the one who robbed. It goes to show that with a grateful heart, we can still give thanks even in the face of problems.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Jot down ten things for which I am thankful.

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Give thanks to God daily for everything and in all circumstances.

**Ministry:** Finance Chairperson Mr Eddie Liew. Accounts Executive Aileen Loh. Pray for the Committee and those in the Sunday teller teams; for good stewardship of funds to enable various ministries to function effectively and to advance God’s kingdom beyond the church wall.

## ***Anticipate Christ's Return***

*"Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book." Revelation 22:7*

Twenty years ago, a farmer's son, Clive, planted a seed. The next morning, Clive went to the spot where he planted the seed, dug it up to see if the root was growing. The father witnessed Clive's impatience and told him, "Let nature work under the soil. One day, the shoot will pop through the ground." Then Clive waited patiently. As years went by, he was overjoyed to see a gigantic tree arising from a tiny seed.

Many teachers of biblical prophecy have linked events in Israel to the coming of Christ. In 1988, several books appeared to predict the return of Christ to a 40-year period after the founding of the state of Israel in 1948. Jesus did not show up. Thereafter, more speculations arose which pointed to the Y2K end of the millennium sign. Again, there was a no-show.

Jesus likens His return to that of a thief in the night. We can adopt a lifestyle of certainty since we know He will return. The first is our expectation of life. Live now for eternity. Whether be it at our deathbed or at the Trumpet calls, it should not come as a surprise to us. Next is our spiritual preparation. By living with a heart of repentance and faith, we will not be caught spiritually undressed but instead, always be clothed with robes of righteousness. Finally, we are to be vigilant, "staying awake" to the voice of the Holy Spirit as He seeks to guide us through the spiritual hazards of life.

And when Jesus Christ comes, He invites all of us to join Him in His church to share the inheritance of being a child of God. Jesus promises to come for us. In Him, God will fulfill all promises for us to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Christ is coming. I must get everyone ready, too. Set my priorities right to yearn for Christ.

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Lord, make us comfortable to pray; come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

**Chinese Ministry:** Chairperson Mr Lim Nam Syn. Thanksgiving prayer for the establishment of a congregation. Pray for more members to study the Word and be grounded in their faith.

*My Journal*



*My Journal*



*My Journal*



**(Service)**

***Key Verse of Week 5***

*“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour,  
serving the Lord.”*

*~ Romans 12:11 ~*

*Pray daily before each reading:*

*“Teach me, Lord, what you want me to do,  
and I will obey you faithfully;  
teach me to serve you with complete devotion.”*

*~ Psalm 86:11 (TEV) ~*

*“Life is like a game of tennis; the player who serves well seldom loses.”*

*~ Anonymous ~*

Read Romans 12:1-11

## ***Joy in Service***

*"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord."  
Romans 12:11*

We must not imagine serving as a burden of the cross Christians have to carry.

Some people think of service as an obligation to Christ for saving us; as if He had redeemed us for His mission. The truth is, God can fulfill His goals without us. John the Baptist reminded the Jews that "out of stones God can raise children of Abraham" (John 3:8). The Maker can easily create a new race for His mission.

However, God gives us this privilege to serve. It is grace that He has allowed us to have a part in His mission. This is an honour because we are undeserving; we often fall short and do poorly. Yet he calls us His ambassadors, "as though God were making His appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 5:20) .

We must also not think of service as "biting the bullet"; forcing ourselves to do something needful. Our service to God is not something that "breaks" us and depreciates us.

On the contrary, Jesus said He "won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting" (Matthew 11:29 -The Message). Serving the Lord is not burdensome. It is a joy and a fulfilment in life. By serving, we carry on the works of Christ. Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21). Through service, we become His Body, His hands and feet reaching out in Christ's love.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

What is God telling me about my current attitude towards service?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Pray for those who are serving God under the worst of conditions; slums, war-torn areas, and religious intolerance.

**Ministry:** Property Management Chairperson Mr Joseph Seow. Technical staff Mr Mak Kam Hoi. Pray for the safety of the church building and protection from mishaps/ disasters. Pray for good stewardship of members at the car park each Sunday so that Mr Larry Teo may find it a joy to serve.

## ***Be Blameless in Worship***

*“First go and be reconciled with your brother.” Matthew 5:24*

Many struggle in their worship on Sundays in church for one reason or another. One such reason may be that we have an unresolved issue with oneself or with someone. Today’s passage teaches the correct attitude in offering our gift at the altar. It is about having a right attitude in our relationship with God. It is about being blameless before God, and thereafter experiencing the joy to serve men.

Jesus taught us to put our relationship right with a brother who has an issue with us before we offer our worship. Conflicts are not uncommon in our life journey. This is an unpleasant fact. We may not be able to avoid it, but we can learn how to manage it well. For some it is about broken relationship with families, or with friends, neighbours and the community, or even with church members.

Unmanaged relationships hinder our relationship with God and our service to man. We can avoid this pitfall by taking the initiative to resolve it when we recall this in our heart. First, put the gift at the altar, and go and be reconciled. Interestingly, Jesus taught us to reconcile with a brother who had offended us. We may think it is unfair to take the initiative because we are the offended party. In Matthew 18:15-16, Jesus taught that love is above “being right”. He also taught us to do it quickly.

In a nutshell, we are to “make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him” (2 Peter 3:14) when we address the issue of conflict and reconciliation. The teaching is not so much on the issue of who sinned, but to live in peace. Finally, we are to note that if the brother will not accept reconciliation after we have made every effort to do so, we trust God that He will do something good to bring both together again (Romans 12:17-19).

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

What were my conflicts, struggles or challenges with family members, colleagues or friends? How did I resolve them? How can I walk blameless before God?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Father, we seek guidance in maintaining relationships with one another. Teach us, to live in peace and be the peacemaker in all situations.

**Ministry:** Church Office Admin Manager Mr Lim Whee Beng and his staff, to build teamwork and communicate better between the pastoral team and various ministries of the church. Pray for unity and joy to support one another.

Read John 15:1-11

## ***Our Heavenly Coach***

*"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." John 15:5*

On 21 August 2008, Singapore's top male table-tennis player, Gao Ning, crashed out of the Olympics table-tennis singles competition. He lost 0-4 to an unknown player from Croatia in just 24 minutes. The surprising thing was not just the manner of the defeat but pointedly to the absence of a coach to guide him. Gao was so upset and unsettled that he hardly contested the last few points. Two coaches were assigned to the men's teams. The problem arose when his regular coach fell ill on the day of his match. The other coach had to take care of another player at an earlier match. However, that match turned out to be a close affair and took longer than expected. By the time that match ended, it was too late for him to attend to Gao.

Jesus was aware of the importance of His appointed apostles being with Him at all times. He told them that as long as they remained in Him they would bear much fruit; apart from Him they could do nothing. If we want to go deeper in service with God, we have to stay close to Jesus. He is the only way for us to fulfill God's plan to carry out His redemptive work for the world. He has promised in His Word that we can do everything through Him who gives us strength (Philippians 4:13). When we are weary from doing His work, we can go to Him for rest (Matthew 11:28).

He is like a coach to us when we go to the marketplace in His name. However, unlike any earthly coach, He can be at all places all times. He will never fall ill and He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Most importantly, when He sends us into the marketplace, He promises to always be with us, to the very end (Matthew 28:19-20).

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Have I ever served in any ministry? Were there occasions when things went wrong? Why?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Always remember to set my heart on Jesus; that apart from Him, I can do nothing.

**COSC Ministry:** Chairperson Mr Mark Wong. Pray for wisdom to manage the funds for the poor and needy and to help those who are jobless and retrenched. Pray for them that they will find meaningful jobs to support themselves. Thanksgiving prayer for those who are generous in giving of their time and money to help others.

## ***Dining with Jesus***

*“Jesus said to them, ‘Come and have breakfast.’ ” John 21:12*

This verse tells us in a matter of fact manner that Jesus prepared breakfast for his disciples. But more importantly, it answers the questions that we sometimes wonder: Does God care about the small stuff? Should I bother God with the small stuff?

God knew that after a night of fishing, the disciples would be hungry and so prepared breakfast for them. This verse shows that God is equally concerned about the lesser things. How sweet the fish must have tasted having been prepared by the Creator Himself.

Many times, we only go to God for the big things – change of career? A business venture or when we are in trouble or facing a crisis. It is comforting to know that the God who created heaven and earth also cares for the small things as well – so do not think you only need to go to Him for the big and important things – He cares so much for us and is happy to be involved in our daily mundane problems.

Praise God that He is indeed the Lord of all things. We can go to Him at all times. There is something that He is more than willing to do for us. Make it your daily practice to invite Jesus into your life and express the same attitude of Jesus; availing ourselves to others.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Invite your friends for a meal as your service for the Lord.

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Pray for a friend who needs your help. Grace from God to reach out and help your friend.

**Ministry in The Boys' Brigade:** Chaplains: Rev Lim Jen Huat, Rev Fred Tan and Mr Eric Cheang. Captains: Mr Low Jian Xin (40th) and Mr Ang Hoe Yong (97th & 103rd). Pray for the boys that they can have a meaningful relationship with Jesus as their Saviour. Pray for more adults to be officers and helpers to volunteer their time to build these boys and help them anchor their lives in Christ as true blue Christian men.

Read 1 John 3:11-24

## ***Live for Others***

*"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." 1John 3:16*

In this passage, Apostle John echoed Jesus' teaching of the second greatest commandment: to love your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:39). Jesus showed us the ultimate love when He was crucified on the cross 2,000 years ago for our sake. In return, as believers, we ought to follow Jesus' example by loving one another.

Jesus told His disciples, if one wants to become great, one ought to put others before self; for the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:43). We must be selfless like Jesus and to live for others.

We are called to lay down our lives for others but how can we achieve this? In today's context, love can be expressed as a form of service to others. We can be ready at all times to help someone who is in need. We can pray, care, encourage and provide moral support. We can also help in a physical way, emotionally, financially where we can afford, and the list goes on to the best of our ability. We should learn to bear one another's burdens as a point of obedience to Christ (Galatians 6:2).

If he does not love his brother, the love of God is not in him. Also, he does not live in God and God does not live in Him (1 John 3:24). We are expressing our love to God when we serve others (1 John 4:21). Hence, let us put love in action with a sincere heart. Jesus' words and life made it clear that love is always right. It is right to serve all people, in all places and for all times. By that, we will be acting as true children of our loving Father in heaven.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Do I love, serve and live for others as an expression of my love for God?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Pray that God will bring me deeper in love with Him.

**Care Network Ministry:** Chairperson Mr Richard Tan; Lay Ministry Staff Ms Alicia Cheo; Mr Anthony and Mrs Elaine Tan. Pray for discernment to bring comfort and cheer to people in need and in bereavement.

Read Matthew 26:36-46

## God with Us

*“Then he said to them, ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.’” Matthew 26:38*

Of the many roles and identities assumed by Jesus – King, Shepherd, Messiah, etc. – the one that intrigues me is that of the Servant (Isaiah 42; 49; 50; 53). Jesus did not come to be served but to serve (Matthew 20:24-28). He washed His disciples’ feet (John 13:1-12). But quite possibly the most important form of service God performs is by offering His Presence to us. For Moses, it was not enough that God directed His people where to go, but God’s Presence must go with them (Exodus 33:15).

Likewise, our service to and for God is best defined in terms of our being with Him. King David’s desire is that he may dwell in God’s house all his days, fixate on the Lord’s beauty and continually seek Him (Psalm 27:4). Mary chose to sit at Jesus’ feet while Martha preoccupied herself to the point of distraction (Luke 10:40). The action-oriented may find the idea of sitting and starry-eyed gazing as service to God somewhat odd. Yet there is busyness in waiting before the Lord, where intimacy with Jesus is developed and deepened through interaction and intercession.

But there is more: God invites us to serve Him by being with Him in His “time of need”! That Jesus could be “overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death” (Matthew 26:38a) may strike us as incredulous. But He who formed humanity also lived and experienced it to the fullest as the Son of God. Being with Jesus in His brokenness and participating in His suffering is likely the most intimate form of service to God (Philippians 3:10). It is easy to be with Jesus when He enters Jerusalem, to the waving of palm branches and shouts of “Hosanna!” But will you and I be found with Jesus among the olive groves of Gethsemane, weeping and interceding in the cold dark night for those for whom He died?

### Personal Challenge/ Group Discussion

How has God served me? How am I serving God? (Less in ministry terms, rather in your relationship with Him.) Am I serving God by staying and keeping watch with Jesus, especially when He weeps for the world’s brokenness and sinfulness?

### Prayer Focus

**Self:** How can I be of service to Him by staying and keeping watch with Him?

**Youth Ministry:** Chairperson Mr Boey Pheng Leong. Pray for the youths to set their priorities right to hunger for God’s word and that coming to church is better than elsewhere. Pray for godly friends to surround these youths for their personal growth and maturity.

## ***Devote to Serve Others***

*"You know the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints." 1 Corinthians 16:15*

Paul reminded the Corinthians of the family of Stephanas, some of the first believers, who had devoted their lives in faithfully serving in the ministry of the church at Corinth. He urged the people to give honour, respect and submit to the leadership of this family who had shown great love and concern for the church.

If we know and love God, we will serve Him. If we serve God, we will serve others. Just as Jesus taught that to serve Him is to serve others: "...when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me" (Matthew 25:45), and said, "So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other" (John 13:34).

I recall when I first accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour, my priority was to share the gospel with others and to avail myself to serve God by serving others in our church. I am thankful that He has called and led me to serve in various ministries since then. It has been and still is a journey of faith, trust and obedience; and being part of the church and serving has taught me the concept of community, accountability and family. It takes grace, humility, patience, and diligence to continually serve God by serving others: and we are rewarded with the joy and blessings of the Lord's presence and purpose in our life.

Today, it is still a challenge to find new leaders who are prepared to step forward to serve in obedience to God's call. Many who have been approached often cite work or family commitment or lack of gifting to serve. Others are concerned that a leader's work is often a thankless task, fraught with disillusion, misunderstanding and criticism. Are these convenient excuses to sidestep God's call to serve?

Perhaps we should follow the example of the family of Stephanas; to seek God for His will in areas of service within the church, and to give honour, respect and submit to those who serve in the leadership.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

How am I spending my life in service to God's people? Has the Lord been calling me to serve in any church ministry? Do I know God's will for my life? How am I encouraging and supporting our church ministries and leaders?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Pray to know your gifting and area of service in church, for God's call and confirmation of where you can serve in church.

**Ministry in WSCS:** President Mrs Cheng Lay Tin. Pray for God to touch the lives of women and mothers in a special way that the young ladies and children in the church be raised to love the Lord.

*My Journal*



*My Journal*



*My Journal*



**(Witness)**

## **Key Verse of Week 6**

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,  
and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,  
and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

*~ Acts 1:8 ~*

*Pray daily before each reading:*

*“There is no god like you,  
O Lord, not one has done what you have done.  
All the nations that you have created will come and bow down to you;  
they will praise your greatness.  
You are mighty and do wonderful things; you alone are God.”*

*~ Psalm 86:8-10 (TEV) ~*

*“It is not the business of Christianity to provide an organisation for the world  
but to infuse the spirit of Christ into the organisations of the world.”*

*~ Fred Fisher ~*

## ***Witness with a Passion***

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8*

God's desire is for the world to know the truth that all can be saved through Jesus Christ. Thus, the Great Commission calls for every Christian to fulfill God's desire. It will be fulfilled and God invites us to share in this glory. We can obey Acts 1:8 with a passion that we have a worthy message, a new insight into the purpose of life to share with all nations. Or wait for Acts 8:1 to happen, that is, the Lord scatters His people through persecution. As they scattered from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria, the gospel message was found to have spread rapidly.

Do not wait for persecution to move us out. We have this choice to make. Let us obey God willingly with a passion to preach the gospel of Christ wherever God has placed us. The Church is founded on the blood of martyrs who stood firm in their faith since the days of the early apostles. Christianity strives best under persecution for it is when God is real to His people.

Friends, colleagues and people around us are watching our lives, our behaviour and action. Therefore, be a worthy witness filled with a passion to shout it loud and the Lord will use it to change and transform lives that all who believe in Jesus and His saving grace will enjoy good life.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

As a Christian, how true am I to myself? Being true, God will draw the people to us to share the gospel message. Be ready at all times to share your testimony.

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Lord, I ask for boldness to take risks and the liberty of utterance to break new ground with my friends and relatives.

**Ministry in Missions:** Chairperson Mr Ng Hock Ching. LES Joseph Mannar. Pray for discernment in sending missionaries supported by BMC to labour in unreached areas where God calls. To train, inspire and challenge persons with rich work experience to serve in the field; sharing the Gospel across cultural borders.

Read Exodus 3:1-12

## Who am I?

*“But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’” Exodus 3:11*

This passage reflects something that is common to us. We desire to serve God, but when God calls us, will we respond readily or do we feel inadequate to serve Him?

Moses was tending to Jethro’s flock near Horeb, when he encountered a bush which seemed to be on fire, but was not burned up. From the bush, God spoke to Moses that He had heard the cry and seen the misery of His people in Egypt and wanted to bring them out of Egypt to the Promised Land. He commanded Moses to go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt.

This task seemed so overwhelming that Moses blurted out, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” Thoughts like this may have run through Moses’ mind, “How can I, a simple shepherd go to Pharaoh and bring God’s great nation out of Egypt – I am not qualified!” He felt so inadequate for the job.

In the next verse, God immediately replied, “I will be with you”; God was telling Moses that he was not doing the task alone. He was not to do it on his own strength but with God’s strength. He wanted Moses to partner Him. This reminds me of the verse in John 15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

When God calls us He will strengthen and equip us. He will give us the burden and the desire to serve the ministry He calls us to. He will slowly strengthen us as we yield ourselves to Him, doing it His way not our own. Our close walk with Him is important as He guides us. As we see in the life of Moses, he communicated daily with God and was led by God’s guidance.

### Personal Challenge/ Discussion

Have I responded to the burden/ call that God has placed in me?

### Prayer Focus

**Self:** God, use me to be a blessing to others.

**Ministry:** BMC Missionaries: Mr Ashok Kumar (East Asia/Pacific); Mr Kenny Gan (UK); Dr Victor Koh (Canada); Ms Carol Loh and Ms Tan Li Diang (Cambodia); Mr John and Mrs Samantha Tan (Japan); Ms Choo Peck Hong (East Asia); Mr Ling Kin Yew (MMS) and Ms Judy Foo (YWAM). Pray for grace and strength as they meet new challenges in various parts of the world. Pray for the persecuted churches that their faith remains “sure and steadfast”.

Read Exodus 4:1-17

## ***God Will Help Us***

*“Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.” Exodus 4:12*

These verses in Exodus 4:11-12 mark God’s response to Moses’ fourth objection to being sent by God back to Egypt to liberate His people. God had been patient with Moses, knowing that he had real and genuine concerns.

To each objection, God gave Moses answers that showed He cared about his concern. God’s answers consisted of revealing His divine name, giving Moses three miracles for which he could use to convince the elders of Israel. God gave Moses His assurance that He would help him speak and teach him what to say.

How many times have we acted like Moses? How many times have we objected to God’s invitation to join Him in what He is doing? When there are opportunities for us to be witnesses for the Lord in what He has done and is doing in our lives, how often have we shield away with protests of inadequacies and fears?

Our procrastinations may exist but God cares about our genuine concerns. If we come before God sincerely with our concerns and take time to listen to Him, we will realise that God is there to help us overcome them.

More importantly, when we trust in God to do His will, He will work in and through us to bring what He has started to completion. God knows our inadequacies all too well, yet He has chosen to work through us, just as He has chosen to work through Moses in spite of his inadequacies.

Moses yielded to God’s plan, albeit initially with the help of Aaron. Yet, in the later climatic chapters of Exodus 13 and 14, we see Moses speaking on his own. When we place our trust in the Lord, He will mould us accordingly to His given task. God will surely help us.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

What concerns or fears do I have in being a witness for God? Is there anything that I feel God is leading me to do, but reluctant to go?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** God, help me overcome my concerns and fears to be Your witness. Thank You God that when I am weak, You are strong to lift me up, and when I need help, You are always there for me.

**Ministry:** Baptism and Membership Coordinator Mr Peter Yong. Pray for the candidates that they will find warm fellowship, meaning in life to hold fast and stand firm in their new faith in Christ Jesus.

Read 1 Peter 2:1-12

## ***Live An Intimate Life***

*"Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, through they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." 1 Peter 2:11-12*

We only live once on this earth. From the time we are born, our life clock is a countdown timer! Despite the brevity of life and the certainty that we will one day return to our Maker, some continue to live the **wasted** life. Some have it better but without knowing Jesus as their personal Saviour, they live what I term as the **good** life. For most Christians, they realise life is a gift from God and they contend with living the **blessed** life. For some other Christians who trust in Jesus, they live their lives as **yielded** to Him who is their Lord. And for the mature Christians, they live the **intimate** life with Jesus as their Friend.

We are pilgrims on this earth. Our scriptural text today encourages us to live our lives with an eternal perspective to meet our Lord one day. The verses suggest that we keep our behaviour excellent in two ways:

### **Abstaining from fleshly lusts**

Temptations abound. If we do not deny ourselves, take up the cross daily and follow Jesus, we sin easily. Engaging in fleshly lusts wages war against our souls and as a people for God's own possession, such acts would not be in keeping with our holy calling and nature.

### **Doing good deeds**

This does not mean we act with the motive of obtaining returned favours or gaining recognition. The acid test is who do people glorify when you do the good deeds? In Matthew 5:16, we are encouraged to "let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

"He is no fool to give up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

Jim Elliot, 28 October 1949

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

How do I live my life? Are others glorifying God because of me? Do I abstain from fleshly lusts? Do I do good deeds?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Lord, enable me to live the yielded and intimate life to You, always.

**Witness and Evangelism Ministry:** Chairperson Mr Benjamin Lee. Pray for a lifestyle culture in evangelism among church members. Bring us closer to God that we may be more actively involved in His ministry of reconciliation and healing.

Read 1 Peter 4:1-11

## ***Be Stewards of God***

*"If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen." 1 Peter 4:11*

Some people can easily identify their spiritual gifts and use them generously in the ministry of the church. Yet, some others see themselves as good for nothing. Here, the Apostle Peter was speaking to both groups of believers, emphasising that everyone has different kinds of gifts from God. And as good stewards of God, we must share the gifts that are from Him with those around us, thus glorifying Him.

Our busy and hectic lifestyle adds pressure to our lives. Yes, some of the pressure we receive is good for us, as it can be seen as a motivational force to spur us on. We do what we can with the strength that God has given us but we should not go beyond that.

Whatever we do, we do so to glorify God and not ourselves. We are accountable to God in all that we do. If people only see our talents or successes but fail to see the image of Christ in our lives, then we have failed. As stewards of the life God has given us, we must let God be seen in us; this is the principle of our serving.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Have I been a good steward of God's gifts? Have I shared God's grace with others through His gifts in me? Am I a good image of God's characters and nature?

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** God, help me combine the gifts I have with the gifts of others, to edify one another in the body of Christ and let Your name be glorified.

**Ministry:** ALPHA Course Leader Mr Christopher Tan. Thanksgiving prayer for those who brought pre-believer friends into our fold. Pray for a heart of love among church members to bear witness for Christ.

Read Esther 4:1-14

## ***Take Action!***

*“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?” Esther 4:14*

This passage is considered to be the most important in chapter four. It is where Mordecai reminded Esther that her becoming queen was not on her own merits, but part of God’s plan to fulfill a mission to save His people, the Jews from destruction. This passage also shows us the highest degree of faith in Mordecai as he strongly believed that God would eventually deliver the Jews even if Esther did not respond. Yes! God will save them!

We are at times like Esther, put in a situation when we know something needs be done, yet we feel that we are tied down by rules and regulations. We hesitate and hope God will call another person. We try to justify our non action with excuses not to be involved. We usually place our self-interest and enjoyment above others so as to avoid inconveniences that will disrupt our daily routines.

As Christians, we need to know why we are placed in a particular situation or location. Could our current position or appointment save the company from collapse or help someone in distress from destroying his/ her life. The best gift we bring to our workplace and to our colleagues is the Presence of God - His Presence to bless and not to harm. His Presence in the form of God’s gifting in us enables something to happen miraculously to divert a difficult situation which others are unable to resolve.

We cannot just sit back and relax, take things easy and choose not to get involved. We are called for “such a time as this” that the glory of God be real to the people we work with.

Remember: “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13)

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

Have I been silent when I see something that is not happening right around me? Take action to stand in the gap to let God lead us to do what is necessary to prevent a worsening situation.

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** God, send me a ‘Mordecai’ to remind me to speak up what is right or I will miss out the joy of witnessing Your glory.

**Ministry in BMC Kindergarten:** Principal Mrs Ava Wang. Pray for teachers to have the loving heart of Christ for the children and a desire to share Christ with them.

Read Mathew 5:13-16

## ***Shine before Men***

*"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl." Matthew 5:14,15*

Jesus identifies us with "light". What is the function of light? It gives out light to show, guide, reveal to make things seen. It makes life easier for us. In fact, it brightens our lives. Can you imagine our world without light? The light is not to be hidden but to be placed in the proper place so that others around it will benefit from its light. Jesus further says that the light has to shine before men, to bring praise to God the Father.

As Christians we are to influence people around us, otherwise we are of little value to help them. If we are filled with selfish pursuit of world values, we have lost the light for Christ. It will become difficult to bear witness for Christ. Romans 12:2 reminds us not to conform to the pattern of this world but to be transformed. As we live and work among the people in darkness, we can certainly be a light to them. We do not have to get involved in everything they do, but in time of their needs, we should be ready to be there for them to shine a way out of their tense situation. We should affect others positively, just as seasoning brings out the best flavour in food.

Like honest, loyal and patriotic citizens, we need to strive to live the same for our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Don't hide your light by being quiet when you should speak.
- Don't go along with the crowd and compromise with them.
- Don't allow sin to dim our light.

Christ calls us to be "the light of the world" bringing hope. Be in the light and people will notice us. We are vessels with the indwelling Spirit of God and our lives should reflect the light of God that burns in all of us.

### **Personal Challenge/ Discussion**

The world will see the light that is within me. It shines brighter through the crack lines of the vessel of my life. For God loves a broken and a contrite heart.

### **Prayer Focus**

**Self:** Lord, use my broken vessel to shine brightly to save the people You have created.

**Communications Ministry:** Chairperson Mr Darius Chua. Pray for more people to come forward to serve in this ministry of creativity for effective communications.

Read Matthew 21:1-11

## A “Donkey” for Christ

*“If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them.” Matthew 21:3a*

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Passion Week. Often we remember the palm branches (hence the name Palm Sunday) and the children shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David.” Seldom have we remembered the donkey Jesus used as He rode into Jerusalem.

Jesus chose to use this animal not because it is the best animal or the most efficient way to do the job. The donkey was chosen so that the people might identify Jesus with the prophecy of Zechariah. “This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: “Say to the Daughter of Zion, “See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (v.4-5).

Five hundred and fifty years earlier, God already had a plan for this donkey to play a part in His redemptive plan. Today, He also has a plan for us. “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10). You are not a “nobody” in God’s plan. Just as He had plans for the donkey, He has prepared the good works for you to do.

Remember, Jesus, the Anointed One used a lowly donkey. Just like He used fishermen to turn the world right side down; He chose a tax collector to evangelise and former prostitutes to win cities; He used a child with a few fish to feed a multitude; He chose lowly shepherds to announce His birth; He chose me, who has no university degree and no work experience to become a pastor.

On that Palm Sunday, the donkey carried the Presence of Christ into the city. Will you be a bearer of Christ’s Presence? Will you give the King of kings a ride? Will you chauffeur the Lord of lords? Will you do your humble bit in this great work of proclaiming salvation to the whole world?

### Personal Challenge/Discussion

Will you be a “donkey” for Christ? What is stopping you from doing so?

### Prayer Focus

**Self:** Dear God our Father, Your Word tells us that many are called but few are chosen. You have called all to serve. Let us be prepared to become a donkey for Christ, to carry His Presence to where He wants us to go. For the glory of Him who came to serve and not to be served, Jesus our Lord and Master.

**Ministry:** Revival in the Methodist Churches and BMC. Pray for the outpouring of the fire of the Holy Spirit to bring about revival in each person beginning with the pastors and leaders. That each person in the congregation reconciles with one another to bring in God’s kingdom in our community and in our land.

*My Journal*



*My Journal*



*My Journal*



## ***Holy Week Meditations***

### ***Prayer for the Week***

Almighty God, You who have sent Jesus into the world to suffer, die, and rise again for our sake, help us to experience Your transforming resurrection power within our lives and ministry. Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and only Redeemer, Amen.

### ***Palm Sunday Service, 17 April***

Text: Matthew 21:1-11

Preacher: Rev Sng Chong Hui

### ***Monday, 18 April***

Read Hebrews 9:11-15

### ***Tuesday, 19 April***

Read Isaiah 49:1-7

### ***Wednesday, 20 April***

Read John 13:21-32

### ***Maundy Thursday Service, 21 April, 8.00pm***

Text: John 13:1-17

Preacher: Pastor Joshua Loo

### ***Good Friday Service, 22 April, 8.30am & 10.30am***

Text: Hebrews 10:16-25

Preacher: Rev Lim Jen Huat

### ***Holy Saturday, 23 April***

Read Hebrews 6:3-11

### ***Easter Sunrise Service at East Coast, 24 April, 6.30am***

Text: John 20:1-18

Preacher: Rev Fred Tan

### ***Easter Combined Sunday Service, 24 April, 9.00am***

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Preacher: Rev Sng Chong Hui



## ***Growing Deeper in Christ (GDC) Series***

### ***GDC Weekend for Working Men***

25-27 February 2011, Turi Beach Resort, Batam

Spiritual Director: Rev Sng Chong Hui

### ***Annual Church Camp (GDC)***

8-11 June 2011, Hotel Equatorial, Melaka

Guest Speakers: Bishop Dr Robert Solomon (Main), Mr Kenny Gan (Youth)  
and Rev Dr Yu Chin Cheak (Mandarin)

### ***GDC Weekend for Married Couples***

27-29 August 2011

Spiritual Director: Rev Sng Chong Hui

### ***BMC 65th Church Anniversary***

16 October 2011

### ***BMC Conference (GDC)***

21-22 October 2011

### ***GDC Holy Land Tour (In His Steps)***

7-18 November 2011

Spiritual Director: Rev Fred Tan

## ***Discipleship Programme***

### ***MasterLife (18 months)***

(The Disciple's Cross; The Disciple's Personality; The Disciple's Victory;  
The Disciple's Mission; Experience God; and On Mission with God)

Batch 15 commencing May 2011

***DISCIPLE 1 (Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study) – 34 weeks***

***DISCIPLE 2 (Into the Word Into the World) – 32 weeks***

Class of 2012 commencing July 2011



## **Bedok Methodist Church**

*Sunday Services (English): 8.30am, 10.30am and 5.00 pm*

*Sunday Service (Mandarin): 10.45am*

*Children Ministry (ChangeMakers): 8.30am and 10.30am on Sundays*

*Youth Ministry (Frontliners): 8.30am on Sundays*

*Migrant Workers' Fellowship (English): 8.30am on Sundays*

*Young Adult Ministry: Every Friday evening at 8.00pm*

*GYM (Seniors): Every Tuesday at 2.00pm for fellowship and games*

### **For more information**

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**(For Internal Circulation)**