



HEARING

the

HOLY SPIRIT 

for the



TIMES
WE LIVE IN

Revelation 2-3

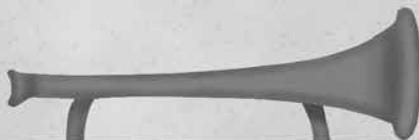


4 DAYS

FAST &
PRAYER

7.8-15.9.2020

NECF
MALAYSIA



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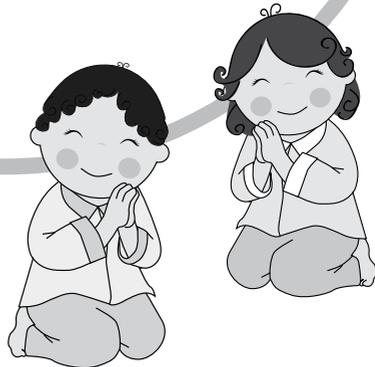
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Hearing the Holy Spirit for the Times We Live In

(Foreword by the Editorial Team)

Shalom, everyone!

This year, our theme for 40-Day Fast and Prayer is "Hearing the Holy Spirit for the Times We Live In." The key verses we use for this period of 40 days is found in chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation.

Revelation? Tough passage, right? Yes! However, we are living in a time where this book of the Bible becomes relevant to us because of the messages it carries! Read through the daily scriptures and devotions, and you will come to understand more of it.

As kids, we are used to listening to what the adults have to tell us, whether we are right or wrong, and whether we are obedient or disobedient.

It is a good practice for us to hear advice and warnings from our parents or teachers, and equally good practice to train ourselves to hear from God directly.

How do we hear from God? How does God speak to us? It is through the impression or conviction of the Holy Spirit with the Word of God, as the Holy Spirit will remind us of every word that we have read in the Bible!

Hence, when we say “Hearing the Holy Spirit for the Times We Live In”, most of the time if not all the time, we are hearing Him with the Word we meditate on every day, and God gives us the insights and understanding we need about His will and desires.

If we do not have the Word of God as our reference, we might wrongly think that our feelings and our emotions are what God is speaking to us! So, it is very important that we read the Word and meditate on it day and night and see what the Lord has to say to us!

There are 3 things you can do:

- 1) First, we encourage those who doing this 40-Day Fast and Prayer 2020 to set apart one hour (if not, half an hour) daily to at least read all the suggested daily passages (or some of them if you don't have the time) and meditate on His word. E.g. Daily passages for Day 1 will be Matthew 1-5.
- 2) Second, use the prayer guidelines provided daily to help us pray for ourselves, our churches and leaders in our nation.
- 3) Third, fast for the nation if you want to do so. Choose to fast from certain foods or drinks (especially your favourites.) Don't do certain activities (such as those games or toys you can't seem to live without) so that you can pay full attention to God and His Word!

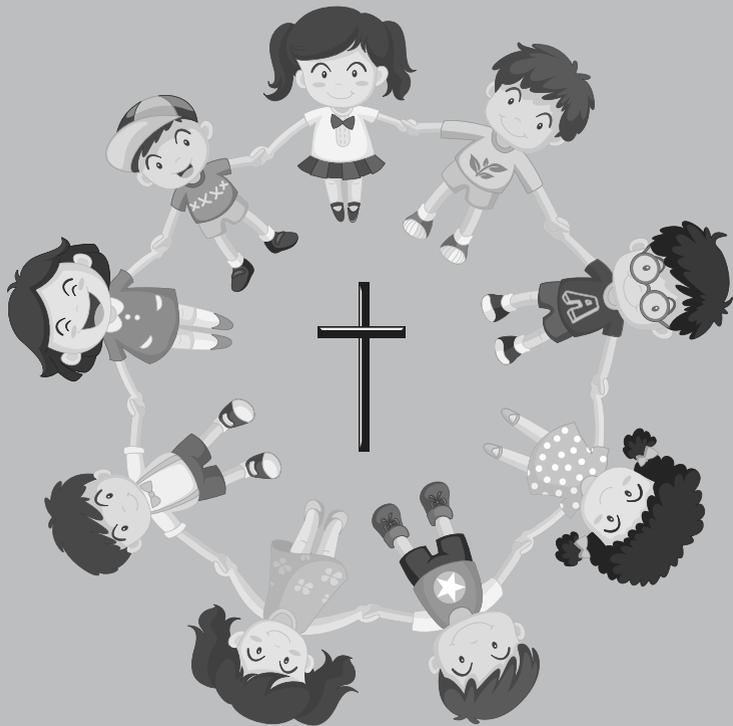
May God give you a fruitful time as you ride through this 40-day journey, and may He make you smarter in God, more on fire and more obedient to Him than ever before!

Let's enjoy God and His presence together!

DAY 1-3

Preparing Our Heart, Mind and Spirit to Hear

(Revelation 2-3)



A Man Who Did God's Will

Have you ever wondered why Matthew considered "only" Joseph a "righteous" man?

To Jews, a "righteous" man was someone born into a Jewish family and who followed the Law of Moses. To God, righteousness is knowing God personally and obeying His will and heart.

In our day, kids or adults may also follow churchy programs or traditions without knowing and following Jesus personally.

Joseph was about to marry a lady named Mary when he discovered that she was already carrying a baby a few months in her womb!

It must have been a nightmare to Joseph! How painful and angry he would have been!

A baby? Argh! He hadn't even slept with Mary!

Joseph had the right to ditch Mary or tell others about her ugly deed, and Mary would have been stoned to death!

That was what the Pharisees tried to do when a woman was caught sleeping with a man who wasn't her husband (called adultery)! They didn't care about the poor woman who needed God's love, grace and mercy.

Instead, Joseph planned to divorce Mary secretly in order not to shame her publicly. The angel of God appeared to him in a dream and told him Mary's pregnancy had to do with the Holy Spirit! He responded to God's message obediently by taking Mary to be his wife, knowing that the Baby would be God's salvation for His people.



Think for a moment:

Will you give up your rights for God? (E.g. forgive those who have wronged you?)

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that as children of God, we will be salt and light and choose to do His Will (heart) and reveal His Being (character). Be loving and merciful to others as God is to us.
- Pray that The Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah ibni Almarhum Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Al-Musta'in Billah, will continue to be wise in using his power and authority and in supporting the peace, harmony and success of the nation.





A Man Who Dispensed Light

This was how Jesus dispensed His light and life unto the darkness...

He came and lived among His people. He taught them the Truth, healed the sick, met their needs and showed them the Kingdom's lifestyle. Everywhere He went, He brought in new ideas, gave rise to new hope and stirred changes in others. He made people smart for God.

He encouraged them not to worry about food or clothing but to seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness. He taught them to love treasures in heaven instead of holding tightly to

their earthly possessions.

He corrected the wrong attitude people had for prayer and fasting, making clear that it should be done out of our love for God. It isn't a kind of religious act to show off that we are holier or better than others.

Most churches in Revelation 2-3 failed God and lived under the influence of darkness. They could have obeyed God's voice to be salt and light and make a difference in the communities, but like the priests, the Pharisees and most of the Jews in Jesus' time, they didn't.



Think for a moment:

Do we take time to pay attention to others' needs, care for them and share our extras with them?

Do we pray for them and tell them about the truth and the goodness of God?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will be smart heavenly kids, dispenser of His light and life, and that the world which is full of darkness, will be brightened through our actions.
- Pray for the Prime Minister of Malaysia, that the Lord will bless him with good health and excellent spirit, that he shall be the pillar of strength and exercise sound and wise judgment with a heart of integrity.



Hear What the Spirit Says

How do you react when somebody tells you that you are wrong?

King Herod was mad at John who said it wasn't right for him to marry his brother's wife.

The Pharisees were also driven crazy by Jesus as He allowed his disciples to pluck heads of grain to fill their hungry stomachs and healed a man with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath – the day where everybody was supposed to rest and not work.

They wondered who was this John, trying to rebuke the King? Who was this Jesus who dared to talk back to the Jewish teachers about their supreme laws?

Hence, Herod beheaded John whom he considered a "busybody". The Pharisees tried to kill Jesus, who simply said and did things the way "He liked".

The Jewish world was confused. They were told by these two men that they were wrong and that they were sinning against God and in need of repentance and salvation. They thought they were children of God, that they had done God's will and knew the Truth. Then Somebody came and said they weren't! This Somebody did horrible things against their culture. Worst still, many believed in this Somebody's teachings!

Churches in Revelation 2-3 were warned about their need to repent too.



Think for a moment:

Sometimes, we are wrong and God speaks through His Word, His Spirit or His people (who can be our parents, teacher, friend, or, yes, even our annoying little sibling).

Are we willing to take heed?



Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will be humble boys and girls who listen to good advice when we have done something wrong. For Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt 11:13).
- Pray that the Government (Religious Affairs Division within the Prime Minister's Department) will work hard to make sure that everybody will be respected, so that everybody will live together in peace and harmony.

DAY 4-8



Renewing Our First Love

(Revelation 2:1-7)

¹ *“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.*

² *“I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.*

³ *I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary.*

⁴ *But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.*

⁵ *Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.*

⁶ *Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

⁷ *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’*

Keep Your Lamps Burning

Aaron and all the high priests after him had a sacred task to arrange lamps on the golden lampstand before the Lord regularly.

The fire on the lampstand (or candlestick) was the only item that gave light to the tabernacle, and it had to keep burning and shedding its light on the table of showbread.

Jewish Rabbis/teachers see the lampstand as the nation of Israel. Some see it as the presence of God because Jesus said He is the light of the world. Others believe it to be a shining of the Holy Spirit as it sheds light on the

showbread, which is the Word of God.

Revelation 1:20 refers to the seven lampstands as the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3. Jesus walked among the seven golden lampstands and gave His words to the seven churches individually.

The Church of Ephesus threw away their first love for God. Jesus called them to repent or their lampstand would be removed from its place. That meant, the church wouldn't be there anymore - the presence of God, the people of God and the work of the Holy Spirit - would be gone.



Think for a moment:

What happened when the lampstand was removed from the tabernacle? The whole tabernacle became utterly dark!

Our light dims when we lose our first love for God. Eventually we cease shining. Soon and very soon, all will end up in the darkness!

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that our love for God will get stronger each day as we learn to fellowship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit through reading the Word, praying, loving others, and sharing the good news and testimonies with others.
- Pray that the Government (the Parliament and Law Division in the Prime Minister's Department) will write, change and abolish (or cancel) laws to make all laws fair and equal for all.





Check Our Fire

Do your parents spot check your school bags sometimes?

You might not feel happy about it. It is definitely not a good feeling when someone checks on you, especially if you can't handle things well, like finishing your homework on time.

However, they are helping us to be more disciplined in our attitudes, behaviour and minds.

If we are too tired and think that we can skip homework and do it "tomorrow", they come to sit beside us and make sure we finish it "today," before we go to bed. That is discipline!

If we are careless and leave some studies undone, they find out and help us go through it and, because of that, we will be spared from panic the next day in school. That is discipline!

God did His spot check on the Church of Ephesus and warned them of their wrongdoing, and asked them to get it right immediately.

God also does His regular spot check on us individually. He helps us examine our spiritual life, making sure that our fire does not go out, and that we do whatever we need to do as a Christian to keep our fire burning.



Think for a moment:

Can we learn to appreciate our parents' and God's spot checks?

We become better in our studies with those spot checks. Our spiritual lives become better too with God's constant spot checks, through warnings of our parents or Sunday school teachers!

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will have a humble heart to do self-checks today and respond to God in repentance in areas where we have gone wrong. Give thanks to God for His correction upon our lives and churches as His intention is always for our own good and to lead us back to His righteousness and light.
- Pray that the Election Commission will ensure fair and good operations are carried out in the coming Malaysian General Elections and that there will be no cheating or mistakes.

- Matthew 26-28
- Mark 1-2

“Fallen” and “Restored”

In Mark 2, Jesus called Levi to follow him.

Levi was his Hebrew name and Matthew was his Greek name. He was a tax collector.

Tax collectors in Jesus' time were seen by the other Jews as “sinners” because they were really, really bad. They collected very heavy taxes (more than the amount the people were forced to pay by the Roman Empire), even from the poor.

They were not allowed to go into the Jewish synagogues and Temple, and were cut off from all “church fellowship”. They could only have social fellowship with other tax collectors and sinners.

Levi heard Jesus calling him and he left his tax booth and followed Jesus. He gathered friends he knew, sinners and tax collectors who hang around with him. They had a big party eating and drinking at his house, listening to Jesus telling them about the Kingdom of God.

Levi might have been very sinful in the eyes of men, but Jesus offered him an opportunity to start a new life. Levi responded and even grew to become one of Jesus's disciples and the writer of the Gospel of Matthew. What a big change!

God is calling all sinners to return to Him through Jesus Christ. All of us have a chance to be restored to God, no matter how far we have fallen away.



Think for a moment:

Have you ever thought that somebody around you is too bad to be forgiven or to be treated as a friend?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will love sinners, even those who we consider bad and terrible, and will keep them in our prayers. Pray also we will be like Levi. If Levi can bring “bad” gangs to Jesus, we can bring “good” friends to Christ too!
- Pray that the Parliament of Malaysia will be very careful in passing, changing and repealing (or cancelling) acts of law. Pray also that bills (or suggestions for new laws or changes to laws) approved by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong will help bring peace, justice and fairness to our society.



Be the Good Soil

Jesus taught a parable of the sower and brought out the truth that our heart condition determines how the Word of God (the seeds) take effect in us.

Some seeds fell along the path and were devoured by birds (Satan). Some fell on rocky ground, grew but were scorched by hot sun (because they were treated badly or cruelly and because of troubles) and withered. Some fell among thorns (things we worry about, like exams; desires, like new phones; and hours and hours of computer games) and the seeds get choked. Some fell into good soil and produced thirtyfold, sixtyfold and a hundredfold.

Have we ever wondered why all the kids in church seem to behave

differently towards the Word of God?

Some seem to easily obey and follow all the instructions given by their Sunday school teachers or youth leaders. Some may take instructions a bit slower and will only respond well when certain incentives are given, like gifts, praises, etc. Some may have to be scolded before they submit. Sadly, some children just don't care what their teachers say and only live in their own world.

It all has to do with our hearts! When we have a good heart, it is like good soil that allows the seed of God to grow, and our lives will bear good fruit. However, if our heart is divided or hardened, we just can't obey!



Think for a moment:

Is your heart soft before God? Are you quick to obey Jesus and bear fruit in your life? Or do you pay no attention to what God says?



Today's Prayers:

- Pray that God will forgive us if we don't care about His Word or His voice. Pray that our hearts and spiritual ears will be sensitive and open to hear from Him, and that we will soak ourselves in His presence and seek Him with all our heart.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Finance) will set good policies, rules and budgets that will make our nation grow and help all Malaysians.



Be Giving & Trusting

In Mark 9:33-37, the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest. Jesus took a child in his arms and said, "whoever receives one such child in my name receives me...." He was like saying, "Hey, guys! If you want to be the greatest, serve these little ones for me."

Why? It's because serving children is often a free service! Children don't pay the servers (be they teachers or parents). They don't buy anyone gifts. They don't treat anyone to meals. They can't do favours for anyone, like, helping to get promotions at their jobs or even earning money for food for the family.

Children can't be of much benefit to the servers in almost anything! Servers

will only find themselves giving, giving and giving.

In Mark 10:13-16 we see that the disciples were trying to stop children from coming near to Jesus for prayers. Jesus was angry with them and said, "Let the little children come to me, and don't hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these".

He asked the adults to receive the Kingdom, just like we children can, in order to enter it! He was like saying, "Hey, guys! Be simple, honest, humble, and very eager, like children who trust Me easily!"

What a privilege to be used by Jesus as lesson examples to the adults!



Think for a moment:

Jesus taught us it is more blessed to give than to receive. As children without much money, how can we give to Jesus?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that God will teach us how to give as little children and that we will learn to trust God more and more. Pray that we will remain simple in our faith and will learn to be obedient as we grow up.
- Pray that the Government (The Ministry of Youth and Sport) will build a stronger bond and good relationship among all the youths using sports training and education. Pray also that youths who had done wrong things will be trained in good skills so that they can get good jobs and start a new and better life.



DAY 9-13



The Faithful Restored

(Revelation 2:8-11)

⁸ “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: ‘The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.

⁹ “I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

¹¹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.’



The Risen One. The First and the Last

In Mark 13-16, Jesus alarmed His disciples about the coming worldwide disasters and asked them to be watchful. Then He was crucified and died on the Cross.

Yet, the greatest news to all mankind is: He rose from the dead!

The faith of the disciples were strengthened to see the Risen Christ who conquered death, though it frightened most of them.

Jesus also warned the Church in Smyrna about the coming dangers and possible death. Yet they could be victors as He is the First and the Last, who died and came to Life (Rev 2:8).

Our world might become more

and more dangerous. Wars, diseases, earthquakes, fires, tsunamis, violence, etc. And, yes. Christians have been killed and thrown into prison everywhere.

Our journey on earth is like riding a roller coaster. We might be screaming our lungs out but if we hold tightly onto the handle, we will arrive at our starting point safely.

Our Lord Jesus travelled this journey and He knew how dangerous it was. He promised that He will be with us and that He will help us along the way.

Like holding onto the handle of a roller coaster, we hold on to His firm promises and ride through our rocky moments in the world.



Think for a moment:

Our parents cheer and applaud when we finish our roller coaster ride, right?

In about the same way, we have Jesus too standing right there at the starting and ending point. As we obey Him, He shall welcome us into His glory with crowns of life.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will know Jesus more and more, as the Risen Christ, the Eternal King, our Lord and Saviour, the First and the Last, so that we will experience peace and victory in our life journey.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Defence) will work well to keep our country safe and that they will be wise in buying weapons for their use.

Jesus is Our Lord and King

The biggest difficulties the Church of Smyrna faced was idol worship. People were forced to burn incense to their Roman emperors and confess that "Caesar is Lord."

Caesar was the founder of the Roman Empire. His name was used as a "title" to refer to all Roman emperors after him. His successor, Augustus (the ruler who took census in Luke 2), was first worshipped as divine in his lifetime.

In Luke 2, we read that Jesus was born at a time when the emperor worship started. Everybody could see and agree how big and powerful the Roman Empire was. The Romans even declared that they brought

"Pax Romana" (which means "Roman Peace") on earth.

Suddenly, there came Jesus, a carpenter's son, who proclaimed that His was the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Peace and Power, with its King calling forth His subjects to return to Him.

Christians in Smyrna who confessed that "Jesus is Lord" went against their rulers and they paid a big price for doing so. Some went to jail. Some were killed. Some became homeless.

How painful and tearful it was for them to insist that, "Jesus is Lord". However, they said it steadfastly.



Think for a moment:

Do you see two kingdoms both in Luke and Revelation? One physical and another spiritual?

Both kingdoms exist now and demand our worship, commitment and loyalty.

If Jesus is truly our Lord and King", then He deserves our time, energy, attention, obedience and worship.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will worship God in Spirit (with the help of the Holy Spirit) and in Truth (with the truth revealed in the Bible), and we will get rid of things or activities that cause us to lose our focus and interest to worship God and to know Him more.
- Pray that our Government (the Ministry of Transport) will do well in making sure our land, air and sea transport run well for the country, and that our people will get safe and good public transportation.



Do Not Fear

Do you know? Being a "real" Christian is never ever easy.

"Real" means you live the way Bible asks you to live, and you tell others that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Jesus told folks in the Church of Smyrna, that they would go through persecution, even thrown into prison.

They didn't go to jail because they did something wrong. Instead, they loved those who did bad things to them.

Now, what is persecution?

It means that "you are unfairly or cruelly treated because you believe in Jesus and you follow Him." People aren't happy with you because you

don't live how they live. You don't lie or gossip, drink or smoke, cheat or fight.

When you tell them about Jesus and ask them to believe in Him and not die in sin, it makes them really, really, angry.

They don't like your "holier than thou" style. They can't stand you singing praises to Jesus. Persecution can be as simple as these. They don't want to chit chat with you or play games with you. They may refuse to sit next to you.

So, what will you do?

Jesus said, fear not. He is the first and the last, and He came to life after death! We are safe in His hand. Continue to be kind to others and do what is right. We will be overcomers in His eyes!



Think for a moment:

Do you fear rejection and dare not do what is right?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that Jesus will remove any fears of rejection in us, and give us boldness to do the right things, to live to please Him and to obey His Word in all situations.
- Pray that our Government (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) will build good relationships with other countries so that we can help each other.



Be Faithful & Grateful

We often think that “the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence”. But is it?

Some of us might have friends who emigrated overseas with their family. There could be dozens of reasons why they left Malaysia for their new countries, like, a cleaner environment, a better learning place, a safer country, etc.

We might even envy them and think that they are “lucky” or “blessed” enough to live in a better place. Unlike us, who are still very much bothered by traffic jam, pollution, poor education system, etc.

When we look at the Christians in Smyrna, we almost can agree that

they were living in “hell” as they lived among people who wanted to take away their properties, or throw them in prison or kill them.

However, Jesus didn’t tell them to “flee!” He instructed them to “be faithful unto death”. (Revelation 2:10) They were told to remain in a place where there was nothing else but hopelessness.

Why? Because many people there had yet to come to know Jesus Christ, and this included those who wanted to harm them! Though the city was under the control of evil ones, the Church was called by God to be the Light Tower in the darkness.



Think for a moment:

Are you grateful to be a Malaysian and believe that God has placed you here for a purpose?

There is no better place other than the place God has called us, except Heaven, our eternal home.

Today’s Prayers:

- Pray that Malaysians will come to understand the reasons why we were born here and not elsewhere, and that we will be faithful to our calling, far above all the comfort and good future the world might promise us. Give thanks to God for Malaysia, a beautiful country that matters to God.
- Pray that the Government (the Sabah and Sarawak Affairs Division in the Prime Minister’s Department) will help build a good relationship and trust between the federal government and East Malaysians so that everybody can work well together towards a great nation.

Rich in Christ

The Church of Smyrna was one of only two among the seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation that received commendations by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said they were rich (spiritually) though they thought they were poor (physically) and afflicted because they were bullied by authorities and some had lost their houses and monies. Yet, there was something that the devil could not take away from them - their richness in Christ Jesus, which meant their faith and trust in God.

Believers in Smyrna were willing to let go of their wealth in order to follow

Jesus. In contrast, a rich ruler was unwilling to let go of his wealth on earth to enter God's Kingdom (Luke 18:18-25). He was so sad when Jesus told him to sell off everything and follow him empty handed.

We naturally think that richness has to do with lots of money or property. Jesus came and showed us that true riches has nothing to do with earthly possessions, but with our heavenly inheritance (our life in and with Christ).

We will remain poor in heart and spirit if we do not build our treasures in heaven.



Think for a moment:

How do we define richness? Does being rich mean having a big house, a big car and a big sum of money?

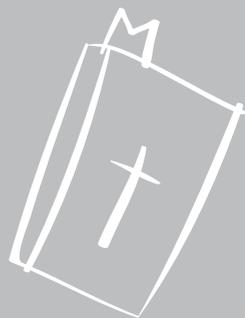
Or, does it have to do with good gifts we receive in Christ? E.g. eternal life, Holy Spirit, peace, love and joy?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will come to understand that true richness has to do with our heavenly and eternal inheritance, and we can only get it through a right relationship with Christ. In Him, we are called children of God and we are heirs of God's Kingdom.
- Pray for the media, e.g. television, radio, newspapers and all kinds of web-based media, to be channels that tell us the truth and not fake news. Pray that the journalists and the general public will know what is right and what is wrong when they present and make comments publicly.



DAY 14-18



The Sharp Two-Edged Sword

(Revelation 2:12-17)

¹² “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.

¹³ “‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

¹⁴ But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.

¹⁵ So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

¹⁶ Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.

¹⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’

- Luke 22-24
- John 1-2

The Sharp Two-Edged Sword

Many heroes in comics hold swords in their hands, right?

Like the Iron man. Wow! He even holds a sword of fire in his hands when he confronts his enemies!

The book of Revelation describes Jesus Christ as Someone who had a sharp, double-edged sword (Revelation 2:12) and this sword literally came out from His mouth! (Revelation 1:16) Whenever John heard Jesus speaking, he saw this sword wielding not in His hands, but out of His mouth!

The sword, which is the Word of God, is like a fire. (Jeremiah 23:29) It burnt so vigorously in the bones of Jeremiah that he became tired of holding it in and had to spill it out! (Jeremiah 20:9) God made Jeremiah's words like fire

in his mouth and the people of Judah like wood. His words were to consume them!

Hence, the sword of God could be used as a rod to strike the earth and a breath to slay the wicked! (Isaiah 11:3-4) Wow! Wonderful? The sword in His or His prophets shall destroy all evil and wickedness!

The sword of God deals with us, Christians, too. It is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

That means it helps us know whether we are in line with God's way and His thoughts!



Think for a moment:

Do we have this sword to destroy the enemies of our souls? (e.g. fears, jealousy, anger, etc.)



Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will read and meditate on the Word of God (that is, the Bible!) daily and allow His word to tell us our wrongs and change us inside out so that we can be kids who reveal God's glory.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of International Trade and Industry) will make Malaysia a place where people from all over the world want to come and do business and that our products will become hot items everywhere.

No Other God but Jesus

Antipas was praised by Jesus as His faithful servant in Revelation 2:13.

He was the pastor of the church of Pergamum who was martyred in the reign of Emperor Nero (54-68AD). His name, Antipas, described his faith in Jesus. "Anti" (means "against") and "pas" (means "all"). He stood up against all who worshipped idols.

Pergamum was a pagan city and idol worship was common. Antipas led the church and he preached Jesus fearlessly. Many turned to the Lord and stopped offering sacrifices to the idols.

This made the pagan priests really angry. They asked him to stop preaching about Christ and join them in offering sacrifices to idols too. Antipas refused to do so and insisted that he

would only worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The furious pagan priests dragged him to the temple of Artemis and threw him into an altar consisting of a red-hot copper bull where they put their sacrifices to the idols. They burnt him alive!

How did the church react on seeing their pastor being burnt alive? They remained strong. They refused to deny Jesus.

However, as time went on, there appeared two groups of people. One was faithful to Jesus, while the other followed the teaching of Balaam and Nicolaitans, both of which taught them to make sacrifices to idols and practice sexual immorality!



Think for a moment:

How do we keep our faith strong when nobody helps monitor nor teaches us the right way? By the power of the Holy Spirit!

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that the Holy Spirit will fill you afresh today, making you trust in Jesus. Let not your faith be shaken by the things the world brings to you everyday. For example, your friends might tell you some gods are more interesting or powerful and can bring you more good things than Jesus.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs) will keep the prices of goods fair so that we will all be able to buy them.



Love Jesus Above All

In Numbers 22, Balaam was asked by Balak, the king of Moab, to curse the Israelites.

When Balak's officials came with money the first time, Balaam allowed them to stay overnight so that he could ask God what to do. Because God said, "No," he refused to go with Balak's officials.

Then Balak's officials came again, bringing with them a much higher pay. Balaam, again, asked them to stay overnight so that he could hear from God. This time, he heard God say, "Go!"

So, the next morning Balaam happily went to Balak riding on his donkey. The angel of the Lord appeared to them three times. You would be surprised

- Balaam was so eager to go that he couldn't see the angel!

However, his donkey saw it and behaved in some strange ways. Balaam was so angry that he beat his donkey three times until the poor donkey complaint!

Then God opened Balaam's eyes and he saw the angel at last! The Lord rebuked Balaam and told him the right thing to do. Balaam obeyed and blessed Israelites three times, instead of cursing the Israelites.

Balaam must have been bribed by Balak after that because he taught Balak to get the Israelites to eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality (Revelation 2:14). He betrayed God in the end because of his love for money.



Think for a moment:

Do we do things that God has told us is wrong to do? Do we love anything more than God?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will obey Jesus in every area of our lives, and that we won't let anything take away our love and obedience to Jesus. Also pray that we won't falsely think what Jesus has said "no" to in the Bible will be "yes" sometimes for us.
- Pray that the Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM) will keep our country safe so that we can become a successful nation.

The Vine and the Branches

In John 15, Jesus drew a very beautiful picture about relationships. He talked about a gardener who planted a vine.

What does a gardener usually do? He takes care of the vine, waters it, fertilizes it and prunes it. He makes sure that it bears a lot of fruits. Jesus said that the Father was the Gardener, and He was the Vine, and His disciples were the branches.

Where do the branches receive their lives? From the vine! Any branches that fell off from the vine wouldn't be useful anymore and were fit only to be thrown into the fire and burnt like rubbish!

Jesus was telling His disciples that, like branches not bearing fruits or were

detached from the Vine, they couldn't have life by themselves. They would only be treated like rubbish or firewood to be burnt!

However, if they remained on the Vine, they would receive their pruning and nutrition for life and fruitfulness!

This is how Jesus relates with His Heavenly Father. He lets God the Father take charge of His life fully. He also asks us to remain in Him, rely on Him and allow Him to be the center of our lives.

By doing so, we can remain in Him, His Word and His love, and we can love one another like how Jesus loves us.



Think for a moment:

Do you find it easier to love others when you make Jesus, instead of yourself, the center of your life?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we, our families, our churches and our church leaders will continue to remain in Jesus, to receive the Word into our hearts. Pray that we will let Him shape our behaviors so that we can have life with love and grace, and whatever we do will give life to others too.
- Pray that the Government (Ministry of Home Affairs) will do well in their duties in all areas so that all Malaysians will be safe and all our rights will be protected.



God's Promise for Overcomers

Jesus will give the hidden manna for him who overcomes, and a new name shall be written for him on a white stone. (Revelation 2:17)

"Overcome" means "conquer, overpower or be victorious" in a contest or military conquest. In ancient Rome, a victor of an athletic game was awarded a white stone with his name inscribed on it and it was like a ticket for him to enter a banquet for celebration.

Paul saw our journey on earth like running a "race". He encouraged all Corinthians to exercise self-control in all things, so that they ran at their best to receive their imperishable wreath (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

In Philippians 3:14, Paul said he pressed on to get the heavenly prize of God. When he knew that he was about to die, he said he had finished his race, fought the good fight and kept the faith and knew he would be awarded with the crown of righteousness from the Lord (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

So, our lives on earth is a race we run to get our heavenly prizes. The new name on the white stone reminds us that we have to run in order to receive our "tickets" to the heavenly banquet where we will sit with Jesus Christ who have overcome and make us overcomers in Him.



Think for a moment:

What are the things that can stop or distract us from running the race? Could fears, bad habits, laziness, lack of self-control and so on, do that?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will be overcomers and believe strongly in Jesus' promise that those who overcome shall inherit all things, and Jesus will be our God and we will be His sons and daughters (Rev 21:7).
- Pray for more good teachers to teach in preschool, primary, and secondary schools as well as universities whether they are public, private, international or homeschooling schools so that our education system will produce excellent people who will become skilful and responsible workers.

DAY 19-23



The Power of Holiness and the Prophetic

(Revelation 2:18-29)

¹⁸ “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

¹⁹ “‘I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.

²⁰ But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

²¹ I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality.

²² Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works,

²³ and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.

²⁴ But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden.

²⁵ Only hold fast what you have until I come.

²⁶ The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations,

²⁷ and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.

²⁸ And I will give him the morning star.

²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

Spiritual Discipline

Peter and John were two spiritual giants in the Bible.

They didn't become spiritual giants overnight. Peter was once a very-quick-to-act man, and John was once a son of thunder, whose temper frayed easily.

Peter said that Jesus was the Word of life and that he won't leave Him. He swore even to die with Jesus. However, Peter denied Jesus three times when He was put on the cross because he was afraid to suffer together with Him.

John was very keen to sit next to Jesus with his brother James when Jesus became king. He followed Jesus because he wanted to become someone great.

Both these men followed Jesus and were busy with healing activities, seeing miracles and handling big groups of people. Yet, the Gospels never mentioned that they prayed to God. They failed to understand the true meaning of following Jesus.

It was only after they had spent time in the upper room for 10 days praying and were filled with the Holy Spirit that they started praying regularly.

They were never the same again with such spiritual discipline in their lives. They understood who Jesus was and what the Kingdom was that He had been talking about. They followed God and served Him with kingdom character, mindset and purpose.



Think for a moment:

Somebody said we can cultivate a good habit by doing it 21 days in a row. Do you want to make prayer and seeking God a habit in the next 21 days?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will build a habit of prayer and that we will spend time praying for our families and churches, that our families will experience healing from God, and that our churches will become holy people of God.
- Pray that the Education Ministry will design an education system and school curriculum that meet the needs of students, building a generation of noble and ethical people who know our citizenship rights and responsibilities.



A Spirit-filled Life

In Acts 6, Stephen was one of the seven deacons chosen in the early church. His main job was to serve the tables, making sure that food was well distributed to all the believers, both the Hebrews and the Hellenists.

The seven deacons were said to be men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom. They were not chosen to do some "great" things, like preaching or leading worship sessions. They basically stayed behind the scene helping to make sure everybody was well fed.

To do a good job, they needed wisdom to handle costs, food choices and manage people. They also needed the Spirit of God to be sensitive

in handling all needs and situations.

However, Stephen did not remain in the kitchen or market or any of the other places related to meals only. He was full of grace and power, doing great wonders and signs among the people.

He spoke to people about Jesus. He prepared not just physical food but also spiritual food for them. Nothing could stop him from talking about Christ, not his busy errands, nor the enraged crowd who stoned him to death.

He preached Jesus until his last breath, and even blessed those who stoned him until, peacefully, he fell asleep in the Lord.



Think for a moment:

What made Stephen so gracious and courageous? What contributed to his wisdom and Spirit-filled life?

It had to do with his personal walk with Jesus. A spiritually disciplined life.



Today's Prayers:

- Pray that, like Stephen, we will always be reminded that whatever we are doing, we are doing it for the Lord. Pray too that we will do it with an excellent spirit, with His wisdom, power and grace. Pray that we will not forget to share Christ in all that we do.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Works) will carry out good and useful projects for highways and other public works, and that we will have excellent professional people such as engineers, architects and quantity surveyors to do these jobs.

We are the “little Anointed”

Do you know why we are called “Christians”?

Well, the book of Acts tells us that it all started in the Church of Antioch, in the year when Barnabas and Saul (Paul) ministered there (Acts 11:26) when many came to believe in Christ.

Believers in Antioch were called “Christians” (“Christianos” in Greek) by their fellow countrymen who didn’t believe in Christ. They saw that these people were very fascinated with someone called “Christos”, and His name seemed to be always on their lips. The unbelievers jeered at them, calling them, “Christianos”, which originally means “little christ” or “little anointed”.

However, did you know that Christians were later known as “Chrestos” (which sounds exactly like “Christos” in Greek) in some historical texts? In Greek, “Chrestos” means “kind and good”.

These two names tell us something important about our nature. We are supposed to be the “little anointed”, kind and good.

Luke tells us that Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith (Acts 11:24). Because of his goodness and kindness, he was able to train Paul and Mark, who were rejected once, and helped them to become great men in the Kingdom of God.



Think for a moment:

Are we good and kind Christians in the eyes of others?

Do they find us safe, friendly or helpful? Do they see a Barnabas in us? A good “little anointed”, full of the Holy Spirit and faith?



Today’s Prayers:

- Pray that Christian families (that includes our parents) and churches will train us and disciple us in the way of the Lord, and that we will follow their godly examples to serve Christ, so that we will grow up in faith and good deeds.
- Pray that the Attorney General's Chambers in Malaysia will serve well in advising the Malaysian government.

- James 1-5
- Acts 16

Faith Produces Fruit

James taught us about faith and work. He meant that, if you believe in what God says in His Word, you have to live it out in actions!

One of the things James mentioned was the "tongue". It is a small member in our body, like a small fire, yet it can set the whole forest ablaze if it is not under control! Scary, right?

So, if we are careless in our words, we may cause big quarrels or misunderstanding among members of our family, church or friends.

God gives us tongues to tell of His wonders and words to praise Him and bless others. Do you realize this?

Sometimes unknowingly, we use tongues and words for bad purposes! Some use it to gossip. Some use it to criticize and slander. Some use it to say all kinds of unkind, hurtful or angry words. Worst still, some might use it to curse people!

To James, it would be something strange. He said that a spring can't pour out both fresh (clean and alive) and salty (unclean and dead) water. Neither can a fig tree bear olives or a grapevine produce figs (it's impossible!).

By right, good things and bad things just should not come out from the same source – our mouths!



Think for a moment:

Do we simply say whatever we feel like saying without controlling our tongues?

If we have faith and live by the Spirit, we will produce fruit, and our words will glorify God and build others up.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that kids like us will continue to hear the Spirit of God as we meditate on the Word of God. And that we will love to practise whatever the Bible says, making our lives testimonies of His living Word!
- Pray that the Malaysian Anti-corruption Commission (MACC) will look into all corruption cases, and deal with them fairly and honestly for the good of all citizens.



- Galatians 1-6
- Acts 17

Holiness & Holy Spirit

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament tell us ways to live a life of holiness.

Have you read Leviticus? The entire book is about holiness. Many rules were given to help the Israelites live in the holiness of God. Other books in the Bible might not spell out the word "holiness" but they all show us how to be holy.

Why? It is because we are worshiping a holy God, and the book He gave us is called the Holy Bible!

Holiness is God's very nature. He said, "...You shall be holy, for I the

LORD your God am holy."(Leviticus 19:2) God declares Himself holy and He demands that we are holy too. The seraphim, angels who served God, cried out, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts..."(Isaiah 6:3). The heaven declares His holiness!

We are called the holy nation of God when He set us apart. However, we can only maintain our holiness when we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us continually. Paul in Galatians 5:16-24 showed us many differences between the flesh and the Spirit. It's only those who live in the Spirit who can enter the Kingdom of God!



Think for a moment:

Paul said in Acts 17:28, "In him we live and move and have our being"; ...For we are indeed His offspring."

Are you sure you are God's offspring? Then live and move in Him and we shall become who we are supposed to be – a holy people of God dwelling in His Spirit.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will train ourselves to think and respond in God's ways in every circumstance, so that kids around us will see God in us as they feel our love and care with the fruit of the Spirit bearing in our lives.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Rural Development) will help the 7.3 million rural people who live in 26,400 villages all over Malaysia (especially in Sabah & Sarawak) so that they will have better living conditions and job opportunities.

DAY 24-29



Awakened to be Alive

(Revelation 3:1-6)

¹ *“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.*

“‘I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

² *Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.*

³ *Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.*

⁴ *Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.*

⁵ *The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.*

⁶ *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’*

Awaken & Alive

Have you ever fallen asleep or dozed off during your classes?

I'm guessing some of you have.

You might be too tired physically because you didn't sleep well the night before. Or the class might have been boring. Or the breakfast you ate might have been so heavy that you just couldn't help but doze off.

Yes, you were in the class. You were supposed to pay attention to the lesson and study, but your mind was wandering away, even to point of shutting down.

Have you then ever been awakened by your teacher? Did he suddenly appear and yell at you, causing you much embarrassment because everyone was looking at you?!

Oh no! You might have to stand there to keep yourself awake as a punishment from your teacher!

The church in Sardis was found to have their sleeping mode on when they were supposed to stay awake and serve God. Hence, Jesus sent them His stern warning!

Just as your teacher might appear before you in your most "relaxed" mode, the Lord Jesus could appear to them like a thief at a time they least expected!

Just as the sleeping mode causes us to study badly, the sleeping mode also gives us poor spirituality. We have to stay awake and pay attention to our teachers and our God.



Think for a moment:

Have we been sleeping away in church, Sunday school or our walk with Jesus because other things (like smart phones) have distracted us and put our spiritual lives in sleeping mode?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will make some adjustments in our priorities so that we can stay awake on the things of God, e.g. read Bible, pray, and do things we are asked to do as a way to serve God.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Women and Family Development) will be successful in creating a caring people of all races without being unfair to women, and providing hope and development for children, old folks, the homeless and other people who might not be taken care of or harmed.



It is Foolish to Quarrel

After risking his life for one and a half years in the city of Corinth and preaching Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, Paul was happy to see a church started in Corinth.

Sadly, after he'd left, Paul found out that the church was in a total mess. People were fighting against one another because they followed different teachers.

Some supported their pioneer, Paul. Another followed their eloquent teacher, Apollos. Yet another preferred their Jewish bishop, Peter. The rest said they wanted Christ only.

So they quarrelled and quarrelled, argued and argued, all with human foolishness. It had nothing to do with Paul, Peter, Apollos, or even Christ! Instead, it had to do with people's preferences! They just wanted to make their preferred man their leader!

Paul scolded them, saying that it was foolish to do so. He reminded them that, except for Christ, none of them had ever laid down his life for them. So it was utterly nonsense to fight and divide! Christ should be the Head. He should be preached, exalted, honoured and embraced by all!



Think for a moment:

Don't we often also have our preferences? We prefer certain teachers because they treat us better. We support certain leaders because they do things better, work smarter, look cooler or speak with more charm. We fight for all sorts of crazy reasons.

Hence, the advice of Paul is applicable to us: Don't fight! Preach Christ. Share Christ! Unite ourselves in Christ!

Today's Prayers:

- Pray for unity in Christ, for Christ and with Christ as it is a sweet spirit we can cultivate since young. Let the aroma of Christ flow naturally out of us as we pray and serve in unison.
- Pray that the spirit of Merdeka, the spirit of caring, sharing and working together will come alive again among all Malaysians as we celebrate Merdeka Day 2020.



Don't Play Play. God is Serious

Sometimes blessings from God can cause us to fall away from Him if we don't appreciate God for them and don't use them for His glory.

The city of Sardis was rich. The River Pactolus that ran through it was literally filled with gold sand! Yes. Gold sand!

So, Christians in the Sardis Church were very rich. They had so little to worry about in life that they thought they didn't need to worry about anything, including their relationship with God. Therefore, Jesus told them that they were dead in their spirit!

Rich physically and dead spiritually! How sad!

The same sickness plagued the

Corinthian church. They were rich not merely physically, but also in their spiritual gifts. They spoke in tongues like angels. Their prophecies came out non-stop.

However, Paul pointed out their problems one by one. They had misused their good gifts without love for one another. Lawsuit, adultery, division, rebellion, just to name a few here.

Both churches were warned to turn over a new leaf before they came under the wrath and judgment of God. God is serious about getting us right with Him whenever we go haywire spiritually.

He wants us to use His blessings in a right manner.



Think for a moment:

Do you know how sad God is when we behave badly?

What blessings has God given to you that you can use to please Him?



Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will be serious in keeping a good relationship with Jesus and with others. Loving others shows that we love God and that we are alive in our spirit, for faith without love is nothing.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Human Resources) will have good and successful plans to train up good workers for our country.

Boast in Christ

Paul gave us a good example of how to boast, if we ever need to do so.

From a man who made people suffer because they followed Christ, Paul became a believer when he met Jesus face-to-face in Damascus. After that, he was willing to suffer at all costs for Christ.

He was beaten. He was put into prison. He was caught up in riots. He went through sleepless nights and sometimes had no food to eat. (2 Corinthians 6:4-10)

Do you notice something? Paul seemed to be “boasting” about his sufferings. He was showing his audiences all the medals he had collected, all in relation to his hardships and pains.

You can be sure the Corinthians did not think all these sufferings were anything good. In fact, they rejected Paul because he didn't look or sound too great when compared with the super apostles who used big words to talk about big dreams and great blessings.

It is natural that worldly men and women will boast about themselves. Sometimes, we do that without knowing it too.

Yet Paul reminded us to boast in Christ. It was Christ who made all of Paul's sufferings worthwhile. It was because of Christ that Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel he preached. Paul was willing to look foolish because Christ was wisdom to him.



Think for a moment:

Do you like to boast about yourself or something you have?

Why don't you boast in Christ instead? Boast that you know God and understand that He is the Lord who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth. (Jeremiah 9:24)

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will continue to read the Word of God and pray with the help of the Spirit so that we can be wise and understanding, and will magnify Christ and His wisdom.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities) will be able to find more international buyers for our local products, such as palm oil, rubber, timber, cocoa, pepper and furniture, and will take all actions to increase money earned from those industries and products.

- 2 Corinthians 11-13
- Romans 1-5

Judging Others

A man was riding a train with his 24-year-old son.

Leaning out of the window, the son kept shouting with excitement about what he was seeing.

“Dad, you see! Trees are going behind us!”

While his dad just smiled, the couple behind them found the younger man’s behaviour greatly disturbing.

With a high note the son shouted again, “Dad, you see! Clouds are running with us!”

Again, his dad smiled warmly.

After hearing a few more rounds of loud talking, the couple couldn’t stand it any longer. They advised his dad, “Why don’t you bring your son to see a doctor?”

The dad smiled politely and replied,

“Yes, in fact we just came out of the hospital. My son had been blind since birth but he just got an operation so that he can see.”

You see, the couple judged. They thought the young man was mentally ill, and that the father was irresponsible to let his son make so much noise in the train.

By judging, they could be seen as ignorant, merciless and intolerant by the one who was being judged.

Paul advised the Romans not to judge others because they were doing exactly the wrong things they had judged other people about! By judging others without self-examination, they would come under the judgment of God.

Instead of judging others, they should live lives that please God.



Think for a moment:

Are we quick to judge others?

Why not learn to examine and judge ourselves first with help from God’s Word?



Today’s Prayers:

- Pray that we will be quick to appreciate and encourage others of their goodness and be slow to judge and criticize. Always do a self-check before we point fingers at others.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Tourism, Art and Culture) will make Malaysia known as a world-class tourism and cultural place.

Garments of Righteousness

What does a typical mom do when she sees that her little boy has gotten himself dirty and muddy after playing with friends in the field?

She may scold him a bit. Warn him a bit. Spank him a bit. Nag him a bit.

However, she will do the necessary: Take off his dirty clothes. Wash him with clean water. Dress him up with clean clothes.

She might follow all that with another stern warning: "Don't dirty yourself again!"

This is exactly what our Heavenly Father does to us if we seek His forgiveness after having been dirtied by sin.

He will wash us with His living water, cleanse us with His Son's blood and clothe us with His righteousness, no matter how dirty and smelly or how bad a shape we had been in.

He would also warn us: "Don't sin again!"

The Romans were told to die to sin and to live for Christ. They had to put off their dirty nature and put on the new life in Christ.

The faithful believers in Sardis kept their garments unsoiled, and Jesus said they walked in white robes and were worthy of Him. Their names will be confessed before the Father and kept in the Book of Life.



Think for a moment:

Are our garments white before Jesus? Are we doing right things and not soiling them with our careless thoughts, speeches and actions?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will be sensitive to those "little sins" (lies, greed, jealousy, gossip, etc.) in our lives that turn our character bad and cause us to lose our purity in Christ. Pray that we will be quick to confess our sins and set our hearts right before God.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia) will improve the telecommunications systems so that we can always enjoy high-speed Internet access wherever we are and at a price everyone is able to pay.



DAY 30-34



An Open Door No One Can Shut

(Revelation 3: 7-13)

⁷ “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

⁸ “‘I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

⁹ Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.

¹⁰ Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.

¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

¹² The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

¹³ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

- Romans 14-16
 Acts 20-23

Door That God Opens No One Can Shut

Do you believe that when God opens a door for you, no one is able to shut it?

Paul traveled across Asia Minor and Europe and preached Christ to the Gentiles. After his missionary trips, he would go back to Jerusalem and make reports to the elders of the Church.

In Acts 21, a prophet named Agabus came from Judea to Caesarea to warn Paul of the danger that awaited him in Jerusalem. He took Paul's belt and tied his own hands and feet and said that the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem would bind Paul and hand him over to the Gentiles.

People there pleaded with Paul not to go back to Jerusalem. Paul told them not to weep and break his heart, for he was ready to not only be bound but also to die in Jerusalem! Hence, he sailed off to Jerusalem and things happened exactly as what Agabus had said. Though Paul was arrested and brought to trial, God kept him from all harm because he had an unfinished mission – preaching Christ to Caesar in Rome!

Paul was fearless because of his intimate relationship with the risen Saviour. Christ had shown him the way he should go, and he went on confidently with the power of the Holy Spirit.



Think for a moment:

Jesus was backing Paul up because he obeyed Him. Can you trust God to back you up in your life situations whenever you follow His Word and instructions?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that even kids as young as we are, will make a firm and sincere decision to follow God fully and focus on cultivating a spiritual hunger and thirst after Him; and that we will be free from any fears and instead trust God and do our best with school work, tests, and examinations, and competitions, etc.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Federal Territories which takes care of mosques and religious matters in the territories of Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan) will work to keep all Malaysians peaceful and happy, and enable them to live as friends with one another.

Living Our Lives to the Fullness of God

Paul lived his life to the fullness of God. He finished his race well in God. What does it mean to live our lives to the fullness of God? It is to live in a way that follows the calling and purpose of God in our lives.

Many of us may not know our specific call from God though we may have dreams to become someone great in future. Some dream of becoming a doctor, scientist, engineer, lawyer, etc., and some hope to become a missionary or pastor!

However, the Bible does show us the general call for all, whether we are boys or girls, young or old. We have to

obey His Great Commandments, i.e. to love God and others.

How do we love God? We show our love to our parents by living with them, obeying them and chatting with them, right? Yes. We love God by living in His presence, obeying His commands through reading His Word and applying them in our daily lives, and we chit-chat with God through prayers.

So, we can love people the same way. We befriend them, be with them in times of need and pray for them that they will be touched by God, and we share Christ with them so that they can come to know Him personally.



Think for a moment:

Do we set our hearts to obey the Great Commandments? Are loving God and loving people our life goals now?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that God's salvation shall come upon your loved ones, especially your family members and relatives, friends who are close to you, and neighbors you see day in and day out, who have yet to come to know Jesus Christ personally.
- Pray that our Malaysian courts will make fair and good judgment in all the cases that they hear.



Breaking Free from the Grip of the Devil

"The Duck and the Devil" is a story about a boy who played with his slingshot and accidentally killed his grandmother's duck. Afraid of being punished, he buried the duck in the woods and his sister saw what he had done.

His sister used that as a way to control him, making him do all her chores. The boy, being very afraid that his sister would tell on him, did everything she demanded.

One day, he couldn't stand it anymore. He went and confessed to his grandmother. To his surprise, his grandmother already knew everything for she had also seen what happened that day. Yet, she waited patiently

for him to admit it and was ever ready to forgive.

As a result, the boy broke free from his sister's control and felt so, so free and happy. No more fear and guilt.

In about the same way, the devil controls us when we refuse to confess our sins to God. God is all-knowing and there is nothing we can hide from him. When we sin, God knows, and the devil also knows. Yet God is ready to forgive us when we turn to Him in repentance (or when we decide to turn from our sin.) On the other hand, the devil is right there using every possible means to condemn (or say that we are guilty and bad) and control us, keeping us from doing what is right in God's eyes.



Think for a moment:

Have we done any wrong that we have kept secret, allowing the devil to grip us with fear and fright?

Tell God and He will bring us into His light and we will be free from the devil's grip.



Today's Prayers:

- Pray that God will heal any wounds in your heart, in your family relationships and in all races among Malaysians so all of us will be able to live with one another in the spirit of love and forgiveness.
- Pray that we will have good and fair judges in our courts so that we will have a peaceful and successful nation.

God's Power in Us

What comes to your mind when you hear the word "power"?

We may think about certain cartoon or comic figures. He-man, Superman, Bat-man, Spider-man, Iron-man, Transformer, Agent Ali, Wonder Woman, etc.

They are strong characters born with an innate power to conquer evil and perform the supernatural. Most of them have a mission to save the world!

They are highly admired because we all have a strong desire to see the good win and the bad lose.

However, do you know that Jesus Christ, who is not just someone from a storybook, and whose power is more powerful than all, has placed within His followers a "dunamis" (miraculous power) or a power that is explosive

in nature?

The power of the resurrection! The power of evangelism! The power of the Holy Spirit! The power of the Son of God! A power that performs signs and wonders!

Paul said in Ephesians 3: 20 that it is power that can do much, much more than all we ask or imagine, and it is working within us!

Are you excited to hear that? The power is inside of us when we receive the Holy Spirit!

The church of Philadelphia was said to have "little power" (Rev 3:8). They were a small group of people with not much influence over their city. Yet Jesus Christ made their enemies fall down before them!



Think for a moment:

Why don't we shift our admiration to Jesus? Only He has the true power, and His power will work through us as a blessing to the world!

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that churches in Malaysia will continue to rely on the power of God, His Word, His Spirit and His name, but not on our own human strength, especially when we have resources, abilities and skills to get things done easily.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry) will make our agricultural fields or farms better and help our farmers and fishermen earn more money.

Train Ourselves to Be Godly

Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus and instructed them on how to be good leaders.

In 1 Timothy 4:7-8 he said, "Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."

The Ephesian church was from a pagan background (which means they worshipped many gods), and believers there were familiar with godless myths and old wives tales (all kinds of faith in magic or luck). They carried with them all this baggage even after they had become Christians.

As a pastor, Timothy might have been so involved in their discussions about all these that Paul had to stop him and advised him to train himself to be godly (to learn the things of God).

In Timothy 4:1, Paul warned Timothy and the Ephesian Church that people might later start to follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

Do you realize? Sometimes, we might show more interest in myths and tales rather than in the Word of God. We like to hear rumors and made-up stories, but we don't really spend proper time to read the Word to train ourselves to be godly.



Think for a moment:

Is it worth our time and attention to learn something that is untrue?

Why not discipline ourselves to learn the things of God, which have value for both the present life (now) and the life to come (eternity)?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will not be busy with all kinds of myths and tales that will not do us any good spiritually. Instead, pray that we will encourage one another to pursue holiness and godliness in Christ Jesus, so that we can stand strong even during the challenging times in our lives.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Environment and Waters) will make Malaysia a place that is clean and free of pollution.



DAY 35-40



Refiner's Fire. Prepare to Overcome

(Revelation 3:14-22)

¹⁴ *"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.*

¹⁵ *"'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot!*

¹⁶ *So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.*

¹⁷ *For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.*

¹⁸ *I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.*

¹⁹ *Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.*

²⁰ *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.*

²¹ *The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

²² *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"*

Jesus is the Greatest

On a cold Christmas day, a man was invited by his wife to go to church. He refused, and made fun of the idea of Jesus' birth on earth; to him, it was just silly!

While staying home alone that snowy day, he heard something banging on his window. A flock of geese were flying low in his yard. They were caught in the heavy snowfall and were trying to find a place to keep warm.

The man had a vacant barn. He pitied those geese and wanted to offer them his barn. He tried his best to "tell" them to go into his barn. He made

all kinds of noises and hand signs but nothing changed. The geese just went flying around and around hopelessly.

The man wondered how he could make the geese understand him. He came to realize that, unless he became a goose and lived among them and spoke their "language," he would never be able to make them understand his heart!

Suddenly, he understood that Jesus came into the world as a common man so that he could live among sinners, speak their language and show them the way to salvation.



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Think for a moment:

Do you ever wonder why Jesus had to come as a baby?

Do you see that He lived to tell who God is and what God's love is all about? Additionally, do you know that His is the greatest revelation throughout history?!

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we can understand the heart and intention of the Father and the Son, that the Son has come so that we all can have life, and that we can see His love and the love of our Father through the life Jesus went through on earth.
- Pray that the Ministry of Economic Affairs will work well looking after the other agencies, and that it will make Malaysia a place other countries will put in their money and businesses so that our skilful workers will have good jobs.





Be “True”

In Malaysia, where the weather is hot, we often crave and thirst after a glass of ice-cold drink, especially after a walk under the hot sun!

In the same way, we love to hold a cup of hot drink when it is cold, right? For example, in Cameron Highlands, where the cool wind blows, we can become chilled!

We don't like consuming “lukewarm” drinks as it does not help to cool us down on hot days nor warm us up on cold nights!

The city of Laodicea had a lukewarm water problem. The water they consumed daily came from two springs. One was a hot spring which was located 8 kilometres away in the city of Hierapolis and the other was a

cold spring located 16 kilometres away in the city of Colossae.

When the water piped in from these two springs reached Laodicea through the aqueduct they had built, both became lukewarm, neither hot nor cold! They lost their original flavour! Not only that, they couldn't be used for drinking, washing and gardening or anything else that the citizens there needed!

The Lord Jesus was saying that the water is like those “Christians” who have lost their original flavor, and hence have lost their usefulness. Like the useless lukewarm water which would be spit out from His mouth, lukewarm faith greatly displeases our Lord and if they did not turn away from their sin, they would be rejected by Him!



Think for a moment:

What causes you to spit something out of your mouth? It must be something terrible, inedible, tasteless, smelly, etc., right?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that God will forgive us for not caring about His business, His heartbeat and purpose for this generation and nation, and about the voice of His correction and encouragement. Pray that we won't be lukewarm, but will be “hot” for Jesus and keep our spiritual passion.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Health) will keep us safe from public health threats and that they will take the advice of the World Health Organization on all important health matters.

Beware of Lukewarmness

How do we know whether we have become "lukewarm", i.e., neither hot nor cold, in our walk with Jesus?

When we are hot, we sweat. If we have two layers of clothing on, we take one off. If we see an air-con room, we walk into it. We turn on fans, we take big gulps of water to cool down our body.

When we are cold, we shiver. If we have an extra piece of clothing, we put it on. We turn on a heater, we make a hot drink. We tuck ourselves into bed and cover ourselves with extra blankets.

We feel varying temperatures. We respond to them. We adjust to them. We make an effort to make our situation or condition better, because our body

system is sensitive to all these changes.

However, if we can't feel the heat or cold, we will stay put. We won't make any changes or adjustments. We just go on with life as usual.

It is our numbness that causes us not to feel anything or react to any changes. When our spiritual life goes numb, we will not respond to Jesus either. We do not feel how He feels. We do not see what He sees. We do not care about what He cares about.

That was the life of the Laodicean church. They became lukewarm. They weren't aware of their spiritual condition. They thought they were rich, but indeed they were poor, spiritually naked and blind.



Think for a moment:

Do we often have something to do or to change when we hear the Word of God? Or do we feel numb all the way?



Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will come to realize those wrong priorities in our lives that have caused damage to our passion and love for God. Pray also that we will do our best to adjust and change wherever they are needed, according to what God tells us to do in His living Word.
- Pray that the Government (the National Unity and Social Well-being Division in the Prime Minister's Department) will build harmony among all communities, and that it will help the B40 who are the poorest group in our country.

Bible Reading		
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 John 1-5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 John 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 John 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Revelation 1-3	

True Blindness

Laodicea was famous for producing and selling balm, an ointment which helps treat eye problems.

Sadly, though they were experts in eye treatment, they themselves were spiritually blind. It sounds familiar right? When Jesus healed a man who was born blind, as we read in John 9, He told the Jews that though they could see the miracle with their eyes, they were indeed blind (as they couldn't see the Son, Jesus)!

Imagine, men with wide-open eyes but not able to see anything! Why was that?

Their blindness had to do with the problem of failing to see God and seeing with His point of view! Their

blindness had nothing to do with their physical eyes, but everything to do with their spiritual eyes!

Have you ever seen blind men walking quickly and steadily? It seems like they have another pair of invisible eyes that helps them look clearly ahead as they travel along the path.

How do they do that? They train their senses. They hear, they feel, they touch. They exercise their inner discernment which we seeing-people don't bother about!

Similarly, when we depend on what we have physically, we lose touch with what we should have spiritually. Jesus asked the Laodiceans to buy the spiritual ointment from Him so that they could put some on their eyes.



Think for a moment:

Do you see that spiritual blindness is something that God is very concerned about? For Jesus said in Matthew 6:23, *"but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"*

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that God will heal our spiritual blindness, and that we will be sensitive to the things and mind of God, to be able to understand His will learnt from His living Word, and see things with His heavenly perspective.
- Pray that the Government (the Ministry of Housing and Local Government) will make sure that people will be able to buy houses, especially first-time homeowners, the younger groups of people, and the poor.





Giver and His Gift

Maybe you have heard “The Apple Tree and the Boy” story.

chopped them off and built a shelter for his family.

A little boy loved to play under and around an apple tree. He would climb up the tree, pluck its apples and eat them. Then he would take a nap under its shadow.

Coming back years later as a middle-aged man, he pondered how he could afford a holiday. The apple tree allowed him to cut its trunk to make a boat to go sailing.

He enjoyed a close fellowship with the tree until he grew up and became occupied with lots of other stuff.

So, he got all his wishes granted. He kept coming to the apple tree to get something, but never intended to fellowship with it.

One day, he came back as a grown-up boy. He needed some money to buy toys he liked. The apple tree suggested he pick all its apples and sell them to get what he wanted.

One day, he came as an old man, weak and dying. The apple tree had nothing to offer to him. All he could do was sit quietly, leaning against it and gaining some support from the stump.

The next time he returned, he was already a full-grown adult. He had no money to build a house. The apple tree offered its branches. Happily, he

We may forget our Giver but He is always there, ready to support us should we ask.



Think for a moment:

What causes us to forget about the Giver and be concerned only about the gifts? Could it be due to our endless wants and needs?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that, even though we are children, we will start pursuing God, His Kingdom and His Righteousness more than anything that we desire to have, and that we will put our trust in the Giver of all gifts rather than the gifts themselves.
- Pray that the Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) will help Malaysians be more aware of our basic human rights and basic liberties , and that it will help the Malaysian government handle human rights more effectively.



God and Master of Our Home

The Lord pleaded with the Laodiceans to open their doors and invite Him in (Rev 3:20.)

First, Jesus stands at the door knocking. Anyone who hears His voice and is willing to open the door to invite Him in, Jesus will eat with him. Second, the one who is victorious will be able to sit with Jesus on His throne (Rev 3:21).

So, there is a time of feasting and a time of ruling with the Lord. A time of fellowship with Jesus will be followed by a time of having authority in His Kingdom. It all starts with a willingness to open our hearts to invite Jesus in!

When Jesus is invited into our hearts, He will be the centre of everything. Yet, do you realize that we keep Him outside most of the time?

Imagine you are living in a gated community. There is a guard who helps keep watch for us. Like the residents, you might treat Jesus like your security guard. He is there to keep you safe from break-ins by thieves or robbers, but He is never allowed to enter your house.

Some may invite Jesus in, but only as a guest, and a short stay is welcomed with some meals offered.



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Think for a moment:

Do you know that Jesus comes not as a Guard or a Guest? He comes as our God. And He comes to be our Master. Will you let Him in as your God and Master?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that Jesus will be the Head, the King, and the Lord of the Church when we worship as the Body of Christ. Repent if we have not been making Him the Master but, instead, a waiting servant to satisfy our worldly desires. Declare His Kingship over our lives and our churches that His glory may fill the earth as the waters cover the sea!
- Pray that the National Audit Department will submit good accounts and reports on all government agencies to Parliament in a timely and fair manner.



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(All Bible verses are excerpts from English Standard Version except otherwise stated)



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