

# *Kirkspire*



JULY 2019

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## Word from the Pastor

*John 13:35: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

### **God's honour through my Obedience**

There are many times when the name of one person or institution is weighed, judged, honoured or shamed because of the actions of other people. This could happen in a family setting where one person's loose behaviour shames the family reputation. It could happen in a company where one person's behaviour tarnished the character of the whole company or it could happen in a church where outsiders judge the faith claims of the church because of careless actions of the members of the body of Christ. What happens is that we do not realise 'what's at stake'.

Our heavenly Father chose this model of calling us to be His disciples and more so as His representatives on earth. In this, our actions, words and attitudes end up either honouring God or dishonouring His name. ***The fruit defines the tree.***

Here are three examples of exceptional statements made by heathen people in the Bible just because of the fruits whereby God, whom they did not know, worship or even benefit from, was glorified.

1. Joseph in the court of the Pharaoh (Genesis 41) – The lifestyle of Joseph had not changed one bit from the time he was in his parents' house to the time he stood before the Pharaoh on this occasion. Integrity was his life's principle and while he stood before the Pharaoh, he did not deviate from his integrity for personal gain. After he gave the interpretation to the Pharaoh's dream, the response of the Pharaoh stuns the listeners. In Genesis 41:38, the words of the Pharaoh are recorded as, "Can

we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?" About an unknown God, Pharaoh said this just because of Joseph.

2. Daniel before Belshazzar (Daniel 5) – Daniel gave a very grim, gloomy and judgmental statement to Belshazzar after reading the writing on the wall. However, instead of killing Daniel for his audacity to say that the king was at fault, Belshazzar honoured Daniel. It is recorded in Daniel 5:29: Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.
3. Roman Centurion before Jesus (Matthew 8) – The stunning words of faith made by a heathen man that put every Jew to shame. Most importantly, what is recorded in Matthew 8:10 is phenomenal. When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. This doesn't happen every day.

What tree are our fruits representing? Does our life show that we are disciples of Jesus Christ filled with the Holy Spirit and that we have a Heavenly Father? Do we mean what we say when we sing the song, 'This earth is not my home, I'm just passing through, if heaven's not my home, then Lord, what will I do'?

Live representing Jesus, Live for God's glory. Have a FRUITFUL month.

*Rev. Isaac Johnson*



## Spreading The Aroma of Christ

*2 Corinthians 2:15*

Someone wisely said that we should “preach the Gospel to ourselves every day”. We must have Jesus as the hub and centre of our lives. As advised by Paul, we need to “stand fast” in the midst of today’s bewitching culture that so subtly penetrates our thinking and living. Only then can we boldly proclaim that Jesus is “the way, the truth and the life”, the Messiah of the world whose power can transform our lives through the “costly grace” of salvation purchased by His precious blood.

Christians through the centuries have faced brutal oppression and martyrdom. Our age faces assault at a different level. It is done in a seemingly civilised and intellectual way. The time-honored tradition of A.D. and B.C. which means “In the year of the Lord” and “Before Christ” has had a significant shift as CE (Common Era) and BCE (Before the Common Era) thus deliberately replacing the traditional style.

Our century questions the authority of the Bible and terms it as a “book of prohibitions” and deems it “old fashioned”. Children are taught that our cosmos and universe are not “designed creations” but have evolved by chance. When even a car needs a carmaker and a watch a watchmaker, does not an eye or ear which are so much more intricate and complex need a Creator?

Beguiling arguments glorifying self and individualism are strongly promoted. In the USA, I recently met Christian parents who proudly asserted that their young children should be given a chance to build their own beliefs. Parental care, nurturing and guiding seemed to have taken a back seat. In contrast, I quote the words spoken by a dear relative on the occasion of her 94<sup>th</sup> birthday, “I get my strength

by being faithful in prayer and from the Word. I tell my children to 'be a Bible-based family' and advise each one to be an encourager".

To spread the aroma of Jesus we need to be gripped by His grace and the power of the Holy Spirit. We need to pray and turn our "heart-eyes" on Jesus. His glory and majesty become tangible to people when we encounter Him in our daily lives.

The river of the Church's story continues to swell and flow into the whole of our postmodern world – north and south, east and west. Frail as dust as we are, Jesus has chosen us to be His ambassadors and workforce to build His Church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. Jesus said, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch". The compelling words of The Great Commission "Go ye therefore..." necessitate human action. So, let us not be sleepy and slothful but alert, faithful and obedient – witnessing, teaching, encouraging and exhorting even as Paul at the Finish Line – even till our last breath.

*Usha George*



## **LOVE RAN RED!**

“Confirmation Sunday” is something we all hear, growing up in Christian homes, and I was no different. It is an important event in the Christian calendar. I enrolled in the confirmation classes at kirk, in 2017 during the month of August, taught by our Pastor Rev. Isaac Johnson. At first, it seemed like a gathering of familiar faces from Sunday school and the youth. But as days went by, I learnt that this was more than just a gathering; it was a milestone in my spiritual journey. It was a shift from a nominal commitment to a personal commitment.

Getting confirmed meant that I was making a very conscious commitment from my side, one that holds good for the rest of my earthly pilgrimage with eternal implications. When this hit me, I was both overwhelmed and excited- overwhelming because it meant responsibility for my thoughts, words and deeds and exciting because I was committing to a lifetime decision.

We had classes every Sunday after the 9 am service for about 3 months. We were each given a file to collect all the weekly lessons and handouts. It was a time of meditation, prayer and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has called us according to his purpose. The classes were very interactive with Pastor encouraging each of us to take active part in the discussion. I found this very stimulating and encouraging. It gave me room for reflection, long after the classes were over. The classes provided a firm foundation on which to build our Christian faith and life. Pastor was not only our spiritual guide, but also loved discipline, and he would expect us to be on time and attend regularly. He met with us all, individually and personally, in the weeks that led up to the confirmation Sunday. He also met with our parents, and prayed with us as family.

Three words that were impressed on my heart were love, grace and mercy. Everything about my salvation revolved around these three words. God has weaved his love, so abundantly into our lives and knit us together. Every wrong is made right through His blood, and we are

restored from the guilt of our past sins and have his resurrection power to overcome the power of sin in our daily lives. His mercy, grace and love carried my shame and nailed it to the tree, once and for all. Hallelujah!

Up until confirmation, I was keen to take part in the holy communion, as it was passed down the pew. Now having been confirmed, I feel it is a privilege and a joy to share in the Lord's Supper as a church family – One body in Christ.

Now that I'm confirmed, I have realized the importance of prayer (even a small prayer whispered in a moment of dire need, makes all the difference), the meaning of worship and the practice of reading the bible, the life sustaining word that gets me through each day. He is the Gardener who prunes, cuts, nourishes and makes our lives blossom and be fruitful as long as we abide in Him. Without Him we are just a leafless and lifeless tree. On days when things just seem hopeless, out of reach or impossible to accomplish, His grace and mercy constantly wash over us, as the sea kisses the shoreline.

A.W.Tozer has encapsulated my thoughts as he penned these words:

"The same grace that saved me, will save you. Therefore, I recommend, if you have slipped a little bit, and all of us have at some point, just take a plunge into the ocean of God's grace".

So if you are considering getting confirmed in the near future, do not hesitate. Just take the plunge and you will not regret it.

*Jerusha Santa*



## **ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH – VILLAGE PROJECT OUTREACH**

Being sensitive to the crying needs of the rural poor and strongly believing that the ministry of church should not be confined to its four walls, remote regions with minimal access to medical aid were surveyed in 1972 and Thirupalaivanam was chosen as the first outreach project. This village in the 1970s was extremely inaccessible with dry infertile soil, as the name predicts, and had large number of patients with Leprosy and Tuberculosis. 100-200 patients used to come from the nearby villages in bullock carts every Saturday to attend the clinic and collect their weekly dose of medicines. Now after 46 years these diseases have almost been eradicated, but poverty, unemployment, skin diseases and allergic bronchitis continue to be major challenges.

This project was the brainchild of Late Rev. Murdoch MacKenzie, the then Minister of St Andrew's Kirk, Dr. Kirk Patrick (Dr Chitra's grandfather) and other doctors. Over the years, many more churches have been planted at the neighbouring villages Awrivakkam, Kosapur and Karanodai.

The people employed in these projects belong to the local villages. Foremost is the medical aid rendered by the doctors from our church. Each clinic day starts with prayer and the good news of the gospel. Patients are treated for Dental Care, Diabetes, General Medicine, Eye and Skin ailments. Clinics are conducted twice a week Saturday and Monday at Thirupalaivanam. All patients are given a nutritious (multigrain) health drink.

Eye clinics are held on the first Saturday of every month. Cataract operations (IOL implantations) were being done free of cost. Dr Surya, the ophthalmologist, who has been part of this project for many years,

has unfortunately left to join her family in the US in March this year and there is a dire need for an eye specialist to cater to the growing elderly population. Skin clinics are held on the first Wednesday of every month by Dr Jean Menezes and the highly expensive medicines are provided in large amounts by Dr Senthamil Selvi. Many patients with skin ailments attend the skin clinic. We are badly in need of more volunteers. The Dental Clinic was started in September 2016 under the leadership of Dr. Praise Ambrose. More than 300 patients have been treated this year and dentures issued free of cost to several patients.

Through this project, we work with the families in these villages, identify their needs, help them experience the love of God and draw closer to Him. The Village project conducted three Medical Camps this year in 3 different locations around Thirupalaivanam. 603 patients benefited from these camps. A total of 7582 Diabetic patients were screened this year and treated for diabetes related complications by our Diabetologist Dr Pitchamuthu. Total beneficiaries of this project: 11,160 including 250 eye patients and 4580 patients benefited from the lab this year. 966 patients attended the Skin clinic. Asthmatic patients attend the clinic on all days for nebulization.

The well-equipped Lab carries out a wide menu of tests like HbA1c, Lipids, LFT and Complete blood count. The project participates in Quality Control programs from Biorad, USA & the Proficiency Testing Program from CMC, Vellore. Blood grouping is done periodically for the school children in these villages.

Day Care Centre has around 20 children attending on a daily basis. Counselling is also available for the mothers by our members. Spoken English classes are conducted by Dr Christina Ambrose along with the youth of our church every second Sunday.

Nearly 32 children attend each of the tuition centres newly started by popular demand at Awrivakkam, Karanodai and Thirupalaivanam this year. These are run entirely on funds rec'd from our committee member Mr Rajasekar. Karanodai project, handed over to the Church, by 'The Only Way' Trust, is functioning successfully for the past 3 years, with medical and evangelism work.

The IGP- Income generating plan, disbursing interest free loans has been restarted this year with 10 beneficiaries, empowering 5 women from the village and 5 students from the tailoring unit which provides complete training in tailoring skills to 67 students in Thirupalaivanam

& Karanodai. This year evaluation of skills was done, exams conducted and certificates issued. Embroidery classes have been started this year.

We need your prayers, time, resources, ideas and financial support for this project, which stands before our eyes as a visible testimony and monument of God's leading and guidance. It is also a testimony of the congregation striving to walk in the footsteps of the Master.

*"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord and He will reward them for what they have done." Proverbs 19:17.*

*Dr. S. Mohan Dhas Joe Chandra  
Village Project*

#### Answers to Bible Quiz No. 100 – June 2019

1. The 12 spies. Numbers 13:27
2. Job. Job 29:6
3. The Nativity Story. Luke 2: 1-16
4. Cows, sheep, goats, camels. No reference needed.
5. David. Psalm 55:21
6. Job. Job 10:10
7. Peter. 1 Peter 2:2
8. Jael. Judges 4:19
9. Milk – butter. No reference needed.
10. Paul. 1 Cor. 3:2

The winners are:

1. Dr (Mrs) Sujatha Elizabeth Prasad
2. Mrs Leela Coilpillai
3. Mrs Victoria Basker
4. Mrs Peace Rani Sudhakar
5. Mrs Aruna Asir
6. Mrs Snehalatha Bright
7. Mrs Alverna McGrath

Hearty congratulations!



Medical Corner

## **SLEEP DISORDERS**

**“Doctors treat but Jesus heals”**

### **What are sleep disorders?**

Sleep disorders are a group of conditions that affect the ability to sleep well on a regular basis. Whether they are caused by a health problem or by too much stress, sleep disorders are becoming increasingly common.

Most people occasionally experience sleeping problems due to stress, hectic schedules and other outside influences. However, when these issues begin to occur on a regular basis and interfere with daily life, they may indicate a sleeping disorder.

Depending on the type of sleep disorder, people may have a difficult time falling asleep and may feel extremely tired throughout the day. The lack of sleep can have a negative impact on energy, mood, concentration and overall health.

In some cases, sleep disorders can be a symptom of another medical or mental health condition. These sleeping problems may eventually go away once treatment is obtained for the underlying cause. When sleep disorders aren't caused by another condition, treatment normally involves a combination of medical treatments and lifestyle changes.

It's important to receive a diagnosis right away if we suspect we might have a sleep disorder. When left untreated, the negative effects of sleep disorders can lead to further health consequences. They can also affect our performance at work, cause strain in relationships, and impair our ability to perform daily activities.

### **What are the symptoms of sleep disorders?**

Symptoms can differ depending on the severity and type of sleeping disorder. They may also vary when sleep disorders are a result of another condition. However, general symptoms of sleep disorders include:

- Difficulty in falling or staying asleep
- Daytime fatigue
- Strong urge to take naps during the day
- Irritability or anxiety
- Lack of concentration
- Depression

To be continued.....

*Dr. Rajini Kantha Narendranath*

### **John's Corner**

## **YOUTH**

(Read 1 Tim 4:12, 1 Pet 5:8, 9, John 14:6)

Youth is a time to be enjoyed,  
You'll never pass through it again,  
But don't go overboard or else  
You will regret with grief and pain.

Be watchful always, God's word warns,  
Satan your soul tries hard to take,  
And when you least expect he strikes,  
Beware lest you make a mistake.

Take care to hear God's still small voice,  
Your conscience don't forget to heed;  
Christ too was tempted and prevailed,  
He knows the way, trust Him to lead.

Follow the Saviour and rejoice,  
And use the radiance of youth  
To shine for Jesus and show all,  
He is the Way, the Life, the Truth.

*John H. Bala Singh*



## Bible Quiz No. 101 – July 2019

### **An Executioner's Quiz (King James Version)**

Give only one reference.

1. What happened to Pharaoh's "chief baker"?
2. Who hanged himself, because of remorse?
3. What wicked son of a famous father was hanged by the hair, in an oak tree?
4. Who hanged the king of Ai on a tree after his warriors had burned the city?
5. What was the name of Saul's concubine, who kept watch over the gibbet when the seven sons of Saul were hanged by the Gibeonites?
6. Who suggested to her husband that he cause to be erected for his enemy "a gallows fifty cubits high"?
7. What did "one of the malefactors" which were hanged with Jesus call on him to do?
8. Who caused two men to be hanged, when they brought him the head of Saul's son, Ishbosbeth, whom they had murdered in his bed?
9. Why did Ahithophel hang himself?
10. Who boldly preached before the priests saying "the God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew and hanged on a tree"?

Kindly send your answers to the church office by 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2019.

*Usha George*



## Purpose of Life Part 20

### Creation of Man in God's Image and Likeness

The first passage that mentions the creation of man is covered in the book of Genesis 1:26, 27

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them **rule over** the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*

*So God created man in his own image, in **the image of God** he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26, 27*

The above passage conveys the significance and special status God conferred on man when He created him in His own **image and likeness**. No other creation has been made in God's image and likeness. This indicates the importance God gave to mankind compared to His other creations. Further, God gave only to man the authority to **rule over** His other creations.

### Man from Dust

The second passage is Genesis 2:7 records that God fashioned man from the **dust** of the earth, and gave him the breath of life to make him a living being.

*The LORD God formed the man from the **dust** of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Genesis 2:7*

The following passage describes how Eve was created.

*So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up **the place with flesh**. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib*

*he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. Gen 2:21-22*

Thus we may say God made from the **dust** of the earth the man of **flesh and blood**. It is not only that Adam and Eve were formed from the dust; even we are being formed from **dust (clay)**.

*I am just like you before God; I too have been taken from **clay**. Job 33:6*

However, we see God revealing through Apostle Paul later in the Scripture that **flesh and blood** cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

*I declare to you, brothers, that **flesh and blood** cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 1 Corinthians 15 [NIV]:50*

If the body made out of dust (flesh and blood) cannot inherit the kingdom of God then why should God create Adam out of dust?

#### **Illustration:**

When we plan furniture for a building, we size them in such a way that they could be taken inside through the doors. We won't make them larger than the door size and thus make it impossible for it to enter. But we find God using a material (clay) that cannot enter or inherit the kingdom of God.

#### **Building from God**

However we find later in the scripture that God had planned to give us **another body** which is **imperishable** as revealed below.

*Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2 Corinthians 5:1*

#### **Earth is a Temporal Abode**

We can thus infer that God had planned even earlier to keep mankind only for a short period of time on earth and then shift them to heaven - God's abode - with a different body that could inherit the kingdom of God.

This brings us to the crucial question as to why God should give to Adam and Eve and their descendents first the perishable body and then the imperishable body later unless and otherwise He had planned

to achieve something profound during that brief period of time on earth.

### **Earth is a School**

Just as we keep our children for a period of time at school to be taught so that they get equipped to take up assignments later in their lives, God is also keeping us here on earth for a period of time to be taught and trained to become like Him by imparting training to develop divine characters and qualities so that He can give mankind assignments to rule over in His kingdom Rev (3:21).

Like how children can be taught at school better than at home, God too had created **earth as a school** away from His home, the Heaven, to train mankind to become like Him - **the disciples** (Matt 28:19&20) on earth - before shifting them to heaven. One cannot be trained to develop divine characters like kindness, mercy, righteousness etc in **heaven (home) a sinless, favorable, positive place** but require an adverse environment like that on **earth (school)**.

*MM Narendranath*

## **SALT – The Special Koinonia Services**

In the book of Acts Ch 2:43-47, we read about the extraordinary fellowship among the believers where they shared their passion for their new-found faith; the Word; their needs and much more. Koinonia is this extraordinary fellowship among believers.

The Special Koinonia service - SALT (**Serve As Living Testimony**) was started to address topics related to young adults, especially young families and the unique challenges that they face in the current day.

This new endeavour was kick-started with a brainstorming – vision casting – fellowship evening led by Rev Isaac Johnson & Rev Paul Anbarasu. Several young families attended and actively participated setting the tone & direction for the SALT services.

A core group of young families worked hard to put together a plan to roll out the first SALT service on March 24, 2019. Starting with a survey among the congregation's young adults, the topic "The Power of Two" was chosen for the first SALT service, followed by a flurry of creative activities including designing and printing leaflets, banners, personal invitations & video announcement.

The special SALT service commenced with vibrant praise & worship. Pastor Isaac Johnson adequately covered the topic "Discover the Power of Two". Panellists for Q&A included our pastors and elders. Childcare was meticulously managed, and the service was followed by a fellowship dinner. Feedback was sought through additional questionnaire and all relevant points to fine-tune the service were taken into consideration.

The second SALT service held on June 23, 2019 featured the topic "Dealing with Conflict in Relationship – Fight Flight Freeze". Again,

the worship, message and Q&A were impactful and application-oriented, dealing with real life issues. Joel and Carol with long experience in the area of marriage counselling were part of the panel this time.

Many who attended these services appreciated the initiative and felt blessed after attending the program. Here are the words of one couple from the core team that sums it all up:

*"The special koinonia service - SALT, which was purposed to deal with topics related to young adults has been a good way to build families in truth and we believe it would enable more family fellowships in due course of time as God leads.*

*"Personally, with our involvement as a couple in SALT, we have faced challenging times in planning and preparation for this service and God has used this to teach us to accept each other's opinions and to work together towards a common goal.*

*"We were greatly encouraged by the young people who volunteered to help behind the scenes with childcare, video making, planning, ushering.*

*"From the last event on resolving conflicts in relationships – Pastor's sermon helped us both snuff out conflicts. One of the lines which Pastor said, "It does not matter who wins the argument, but it is important that the relationship wins," was valuable to us.*

*We are still growing in understanding God's purpose for our marriage and we believe that this initiative of the church will truly benefit many families like it did for us."*

So, come to the SALT special Koinonia services - be a blessing and be blessed!

*D Shanthakumar*



**Tuition Center Started 2018, Awriwakkam**



**Tailoring Unit, Karanodai**