

Kirkspire



Future & Hope

Proverbs 10:28

DECEMBER 2020

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Usha George



Word from the Pastor

Worth the Wait

In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious. (Isaiah 11:10)

Many of us must have experienced both the following emotions in some context or the other. One is a long awaited event that turned to be a flop and did not live up to our expectation and the other is a long awaited result that was so worth the wait. How many times we thought of giving up on the wait and every time, we would tell ourselves, let me wait one more day, give one more chance and hope that it will turn out for the good. When it did, it was all worth it.

Right from the fall of man, when God announced the crushing of Satan's head, through all the prophecies of the Old Testament, there was a long wait, a very very, very long wait. Then one day, the day came, when JESUS came into the world in the most unexpected fashion, through the most unexpected vessel and in the most unassuming simplicity. Almost all of mankind failed to see the magnitude of this arrival, but the father of lies, the old serpent, the devil knew that the beginning of his end was at hand. That evil one did not want the child to live, so happened the death of thousands of toddlers, he did not want the Messiah to rise, he tempted in his most conniving ways but failed miserably. He worked in the hearts of the 'religious teachers, pharisees and even the Roman rulers' and nailed the Saviour to the Cross. Nothing, no one can stop the work of God. No one can stop God.

Fast forward to the present. We read in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe,

lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." That liar could not touch the Sinless Saviour, so he is wielding his sword against us and many fall prey without realizing their fall or the eternal consequence of that fall. But wait. We read in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. The church (The Bride of Jesus) is waiting in eager expectation. Keep waiting, keep believing, keep obeying, keep worshipping, keep avoiding sin, keep relishing God's word....

In the most unexpected time, in the most inexplicable manner, in the most shocking moment, there will be THE RAPTURE. Jesus will come, capture and rapture us to glory, everyone who has believed and is living daily in eager expectation. 1 John 3:3 says, 'He who has this hope must purify himself'.

Remember: Jesus is interceding for us. Our future, this month, the new year and all of eternity is under His Sovereign total control. God bless you all.

Rev. Isaac Johnson
Pastor

The Wonder of the Christmas Season

*“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,
and comes down from the Father of lights” James 1:17*

Christmas is an old, old story and its message streams as a powerful beam of light to all mankind. The joyous event at Bethlehem has retained its serenity, beauty and freshness through millenniums of assault and scepticism. The story of the Holy Babe in Bethlehem is “as simple as the silent dawn, unbelaboured as the bursting rose, as unsophisticated as a child’s cry, as spontaneous as a child’s laughter”.

For centuries before the divine Event, prophets have toiled ceaselessly, often under great tribulation, to convey the radiant and heavenly promise of a Messiah, to save the world from the unrelenting grip of sin and bondage. With the birth of the Babe at Bethlehem, the world itself was Born Anew. “A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices”. Our Gospels record the fascinating experiences of our first responders to this wondrous Event.

The angelic appearance of Gabriel into the ordinary life of Mary, an obscure, humble, godly virgin, is a unique happening. Gabriel bursts into her life with an equally astounding news, that she, a virgin would conceive a Baby and He would be called the Son of God. Her Baby would be King, her Baby would command great power and His reign would be forever (Luke 1:26-33). Mary is blessed with a radiant faith and God-given strength of mind to bear the weight of this revelation.

Next, consider a bunch of rugged, illiterate shepherds minding their flock by the hillside – usually a monotonous and routine job. All of a sudden, a luminous light fills the place and their ears are filled with the soul-stirring words of an angel announcing the birth of a Saviour. The shepherds are drawn into another world as it were - a world glowing with a crowd of angels singing “Glory to God in the

highest heavens". With joy filling their hearts, they eagerly rush to the humble manger and are the first to worship the Holy Babe. God chooses the ordinary shepherds to be His first messengers of the Good News!

On the trail to see the Babe are the wise men from the East. They were perhaps scholars, astronomers, but surely belonged to the elite of their people. They offered gifts – incense valued for its aroma and healing properties, myrrh a valued spice and gold the most precious metal in history. The important fact is that they were seeking a divine Babe and humbly accepted the guidance of God's hand. They were courageous and ready to face the dangers which could have befallen them on their journey. They knew that the heavens declared the glory of God. They were among the first to fall on their knees and worship the Holy Babe.

The tempest of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused upheavals all over the world. We desperately need to hear our Master's Voice "Peace be still" to calm the storms in our hearts. We need Mary's brave and faithful acceptance of God's Word; the spiritual receptivity and obedient hearts of the lowly shepherds; the discipline and persistence of the wise men to follow unknown paths under God's leading to seek and reach the Holy Babe.

'Glory to God; goodwill to men!
Come! Feel it, show it, live it, then.

- Whittier

Usha George

"For somehow, not only for Christmas, but all the long year through, The joy that you give to others, is the joy that comes back to you."

Whittier

ASHA through the lockdown

On the 16th March 2020 when the Tamil Nadu Government ordered all educational institutions to be closed in view of the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic, we at Asha were in the midst of preparing for the annual “Women’s Day” celebrations scheduled for 18th March, an event held every year to provide a platform for the caregivers – the mothers of the children-to showcase their talents. It was a hurried closure and we thought it would be for a month or so, our summer vacation being advanced. The special educators carried notebooks home to write the “holiday homework” for every child. With months of the lockdown extending our anxiety for our “special children” increased – the financial status of families, their ability to care for their special wards with their limited resources and their intellectual progress for which we strive. We wondered how we would reach out to our children.

But, like the psalmist said, “With my God I can scale a wall” (Psalm 18:29), we moved forward committing our efforts to our Lord, trusting in Him to make a way (Psalm 37:5). A compassionate, caring donor came forward to support each family in caring and providing for the child’s and the family’s needs right through. We began to focus on ways to help the child move forward and progress, and not allow this lockdown to hamper their development. Towards the end of June 2020, even before the mainstream schools decided on “online classes”, we at Asha launched our “online efforts” through video calls, whatsapp, to help the child continue in his/her path towards development of their skills. There were many issues that did crop up. Both the parents and the siblings are involved in helping the special educator tutor and train their wards. The development may not be great but the regression has been arrested so that children have not lost all that they had gained during the pre-lockdown days at Asha. Regular assessments and evaluations have been conducted to gauge progress, and to study reasons for any lack of improvement. With the MTC bus services resuming, parents regularly meet the special educators at the Asha centre to collect worksheets and submit them and the “online efforts” continue.

“Those who seek the Lord lack no good thing”. We praise and thank our Lord for His steadfast love and faithfulness to us at Asha.



Medical Corner

EMOTIONAL HEALTH

PEACE – 6

“Doctors treat but Jesus heals”

Everyone wants peace in their lives. Lack of peace leads to innumerable health problems, like Peptic ulcer, Hypertension, Sleeplessness, Depression, Anxiety, Eating disorders etc.

“A heart at peace gives life to the body” Proverbs 14:30. Seek peace and pursue it. Ps. 34:14. God has called us to live in peace. (1 Cor. 7:15), Righteousness is important to have peace. “Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.” Psalm 85:1.

Contentment is essential for peace to abide within oneself and the family. “Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.” (Proverb 17:1). Trust in God and a steadfast mind gives peace. “You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast because he trusts in you.” (Isaiah 26:3-4). A good and righteous person, who trusts God will find peace. God’s favour also is essential for peace. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests” (Luke 2:14). Jesus said “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27).

Apostle Paul instructs Timothy. “Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Tim 2:22). Apostle Peter talks about peace to the believers. “For whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.” (1Pt. 3:10-11).

Now as children of God and citizens of heaven, how should we use our words, for spreading peace at home, workplace and Church?

1. Kind Words: "An anxious heart weighs a man down but a kind world cheers him up (Proverbs 12:25).
2. Pleasant Words: "Pleasant words are a honey comb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." (Proverb 16:24).
3. Apt Words: "A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in setting of silver. (Proverb 25:11).
4. Fountain: "The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life" (Proverb 10:11).
5. Gentle: "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh world stirs up anger" Proverb 15:1).
6. Encouraging: Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers at Antioch. Acts 15:32.

"Encourage one another daily, (Heb 3:13).

So, what do we do to get peace? The answer is given in Philippians 4:6-7. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanks giving present your requests to God and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." "Peace is part of the priestly blessing. "The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:26).

Persons with Suicidal thoughts, severe depression, anxiety neurosis and physical illnesses due to loss of peace must take appropriate medical treatment. Permanent peace can be obtained by reading the word of God and obeying it. "Great peace have they who love your law and nothing can make them stumble. (Psalm 119:165). "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you." (2 Thes:3:16).

Dr. Rajini Kantha Narendranath

Bible Quiz No. 111 – December 2020

A Clothier's Quiz
(King James Version)



Give only one reference.

1. On what occasion did Elisha "rend his clothes in two pieces"?
2. Who said: "Can a man take a fire in his clothes and not be burned"?
3. Concerning what great future event did Jesus say: "Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes"?
4. Who was 'wrapped in swaddling clothes'?
5. At whose death scene did the participants 'lay down their clothes at a young man's feet'?
6. What man came forth from the grave 'bound hand and foot with graveclothes'?
7. What name is given to the Sunday when people "spread their clothes in the way"?
8. Who "took the body of Jesus and wound it in linen clothes with the spices"?
9. Who, in his despair, pleaded with God: "Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch and mine own clothes shall abhor me"?
10. What leader of the Israelites, in the desert said: "Your clothes are not waxen old upon you"?

Kindly send your answers to the church office by 20th December 2020.

Usha George

The Will of God



Everyone is driven by the desires of their hearts. The popular saying 'Where there is a will there is a way' does not tally with the word of God. Even though this subject is vast, I present few verses in the Bible that highlight God's desire and His will for each one of us.

My first verse is taken from 1 Thessalonians 5:18. "Give thanks to God in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus". David did not know this verse but he fulfilled God's will in praising Him at all times. Most of his Psalms talk much about his pain and brokenness but he never forgot to give thanks to God in every circumstance. In reality, it is very hard for us to give praise to God in difficult circumstances but David was able to do what seems very difficult. He did it because he kept his relationship with God alive and never quenched the presence of God in his life. David was not only a man after God's own heart but also a man who did God's will as is recorded in Acts 13:22, which says, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'

God has given us many examples in the Bible for all of us to follow. His people held on to God in all circumstances even without having the revealed word of God as we do. The God of grace has given us His word to help us move and do His will in our lives. Let us ask Him for His help to do His will.

My second verse is from 1 Thessalonians 4:3, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality". Purifying ourselves by keeping God's word as the plumb line is God's will for us. God has already provided us His gift and we are not burdened with going to a place or doing rituals in order to be sanctified. Jesus' blood on the Cross is His precious and priceless gift, wherein we go with our uncleanness and come out as pure as snow washed by the blood of Jesus.

Let us look at the life of Joseph in the context of doing the will of God. Joseph kept himself pure, running away from the lust of the flesh. There was nobody to check on him but he knew that the God

of his father was watching him. He knew the commands given by God to his forefathers and he kept the word of God by not giving in to immorality. For sin to give birth, it should first be born as a desire and then, there will be the fruit of sin. Joseph killed the desire in his heart before it gave birth. God is asking us to be pure in our thinking whether it is the lust of the eyes or the lust of the flesh or the pride of heart. When we bring our thoughts under subjection to God's authority, we are doing the will of God.

In Matthew 7:21, we read, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." The disciples were not learned people but did what the Lord commanded in obeying His word, thereby fulfilling the will of the Father. It is our responsibility to do God's will and He in His great mercy will reveal his purposes and plans for our lives. Let us do our part and experience His guidance every step of the way. I close by quoting Hebrews 13:20-21, "Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

Roselin Johnson

Obituary

Mr. Deepak Augustine Edwin, aged 55 years, passed away in Oman on 03.11.2020 and was buried in St. Mary's Corporation Christian Cemetery, Mandaveli. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

Answers to Bible Quiz No. 110 – April 2020

A Nursemaid's Quiz (King James Version)

1. Mephibosheth – 2 Samuel 4:4
2. Moses. Exodus 2:9
3. Deborah. Genesis 35:8
4. Naomi. Ruth 4:16
5. Joash. 2 Kings 11:2,3
6. Elisha. 2 Kings 4:35
7. Elisha. 2 Kings 2:23, 24
8. Sarah. Genesis 18:12
9. Jacob & Esau – Pharez & Zarah. Genesis 25: 25,26 and Genesis 38: 29,30
10. No. See Proverbs 13:24

The winners are:

1. Ms Gladys Vedavimali
2. Mrs Indira Rajanayagam
3. Mrs Aruna Asir

Hearty Congratulations!

John's Corner

Endless Celebration

(Read Luke 2:10,11, John 10:10)



Christmas comes only once a year,
The calendar says that is true,
But the hope and cheer it brings,
Should stay alive the whole year through.

Christ came to give us lasting joy,
Not yuletide thrills that fade away,
And even when the season's done,
Its gladness should not dim each day.

May Christ be truly born in us,
And may our celebrations be
The fruit of joy that never ends,
Not echoes of our vanity.

John H. Bala Singh

"I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,
When at His bidding every storm is stilled,
Or who can say how great the jubilation
When all our hearts with love for Him are filled.
But this I know, the skies will sound His praise,
Ten thousand thousand human voices sing,
And earth to heaven,
And heaven to earth, will answer,
"At last the Saviour, Saviour of the world,
is King"

William Young Fullerton, 1857 – 1932



BTS of Online Services

(BTS-Behind The Scene)

It is by the Grace of God we were able to continue our Sunday worship service without any break during the breakdown period. God has graced us to have well-equipped gadgets to overcome the issues caused by this sudden total closure. As soon as we got the information that there will be a complete lockdown, we quickly planned and recorded the immediate Sunday service. Retaining one camera in the Sanctuary and sending the other to Assistance Pastor's house along with green screen and the audio mixer, the recordings for the virtual services thereon, were done from their respective places. The Pastors were casually informed, about the location of just the recording & Tele/zoom buttons and rest of the controls were figured out by themselves.

Team - 1

It was amazing to see how Pastor Isaac and his wife Roselin recorded every Sunday service without anyone's help. Like professionals, they adjusted the audio settings and camera angles and focusing. It shouldn't have been easy for they have to switch on all lights, connect the microphones & adjust the audio levels in the mixer before they do their ministerial part. Just the two of them recorded and saved the video & audio files in the system week after week without the help of the office staff.

Team - 2

Similarly, our Assistant Pastor Paul and his wife Beulah recorded from their home by setting up the green screen with proper lighting and mixing the audio. Here again, like pros, they set the camera angles and audio settings. They recorded all the opening prayers and introductions as well.

Team - 3

Mr Dulip Singh and his daughter Rhea recorded all the announcements from their home. Here again, they have handled the technical aspects well.

Team - 4

With Mr Shanthakumar's idea and Mr Arul Siromoney's readiness, 'The Kirk Virtual Choir', was formed. Every week, till date, Mr Arul Siromoney coordinates with the choir by sending the click track and getting back all the vocal tracks individually from various parts of the city and the world. Mr Shanthakumar synchronizes all the audio tracks and the instrumental tracks together and produces the Hymns every week.

Mr Arul Siromoney, (Late) Immanuel, Rufus, Mark and other musicians played all the Preludes and Postludes.

Late Mr Immanuel T produced all the Hymns sung before the Bible reading each week taking complete effort to forward and collect all the audio tracks, and also did the Mixing faithfully week after week.

Team - 5

Various Praise and Worship Teams recorded their voice tracks and instrumental tracks separately. Mr Jim Satya helped in editing and mixing the audio tracks for the teams. Whereas, they recorded the videos from their respective places.

Also, whoever did the Bible reading recorded from their homes and this was produced as though they were reading from the Sanctuary.

The highlight of the virtual production was the VBS Theme song sung by about 48 children from different locations.

All glory and praise to our God for giving these excellent, talented, and technically savvy teams to work with in producing meaningful and spirit-filled worship services during the entire lockdown period.

May our Lord alone be exalted.

Rajan Paul



How Did I Spend This Year???

I will lift up my eyes to the hills – From whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:1-2)

2020 – This year will be remembered for a very long time for the kind of effect it has had globally across all sections of the society. Nations of great repute have struggled (are struggling), great plans and boastful declarations have been put to shame and the power of wealth and human prowess has left us with more questions and anxieties and even anger and fear. The reality of death has hit us all hard whether you have lost one of your own loved ones or have seen it from a distance via news. Every year, every day, every minute people die but this year it has gripped our hearts more severely. Many have lost jobs; businesses have collapsed and families are struggling financially and emotionally. In all this, the Bible has much to teach us how to live. This is not meant to be a comprehensive list but a chart to analyse our attitudes and adjust our perspectives. So, let's begin with the list. The objective is to test where we are, how we should think and what should be our attitude as we go through life's experiences.

1. Revering God daily (Psalm 1:2)
2. Reflecting on God's blessings (Psalm 103:2)
3. Relishing what is and who are in our lives (Romans 12:10)
4. Realizing the importance of God's Word (Psalm 119:105)
5. Respecting elders and those in authority (1 Peter 2:13-17)
6. Spending time in prayer for yourself and for others (Matthew 6:6)
7. Supporting those who are weak (1 Thessalonians 5:14)
8. Sharing with those who have less (Proverbs 11:24)

9. Stop complaining and don't spread rumours (Ephesians 4:29)
10. Slow down in the rat race of life (Luke 12:15)
11. Don't neglect family prayer (it is family time) (Philippians 4:6)
12. Don't hide in or be enslaved by social media/video game addictions (1 Corinthians 6:19)
13. Don't blame others for everything, take personal responsibility for your life (Matthew 7:3-5)
14. Don't look for heaven on earth, prepare for the Coming of JESUS (Mark 13:33-35)
15. Don't be deceived by false promises by false teachers (Matthew 24:4-5)
16. In Grief, remember that your Heavenly Father loves you dearly (1 John 3:1)
17. In Grief, remember that God understands your pain and will strengthen you (Hebrews 4:15)
18. In Grief, remember God's promises for your daily living (Psalm 46:1)
19. In Grief, remember God's presence is with you (Psalm 34:18-19)
20. In Grief, remember that God will wipe all your tears and there is a hope that will not be cut off (Revelation 21:4)

Look at this list, where did I/you fall short? What are the areas of improvement? How can I alter my attitude and perspective and avoid unnecessary pain, anger or anxiety? We can prepare for the New Year 2021 by altering our attitudes this year. Every year (day) has its own share of joys, griefs and a mixture of many emotions. The only certainty is that God will never leave us nor forsake us. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

Don't blame God, walk to Him

walk with Him

walk in Him

Rev. Isaac Johnson



Being at home in the dark

May I learn to be
at home in the dark
discovering
that the night
brings new horizons
further than the eye
can see.

For darkness
also gives birth
to love, to truth
and to the poet's song,
even if we at first fear
its embrace.

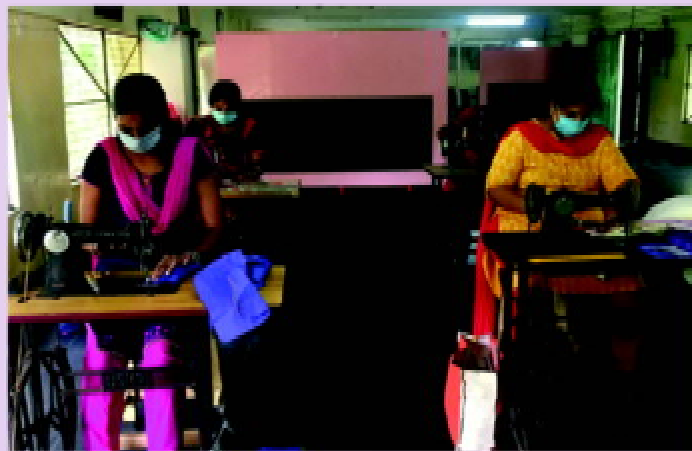
Morning may not quickly come,
but even in the dark
we are
companied by Light
and One who is
gently smiling
is calling our name.

A poem by Rev. Peter Millar
(Former Presbyterian, St. Andrew's Church)
From his booklet "The Small Owl Calling"

RMDCC DURING LOCKDOWN



Online class - 'Five Loaves And Two Fish'



Tailoring with masks and social distance

