

# *Kirkspire*

Let us  
rejoice  
and exult  
and give  
him the  
glory, for  
the  
marriage  
of the  
Lamb has  
come, and  
his Bride  
has made  
herself  
ready;  
Revelation  
19:7



JANUARY 2021

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*Usha George*



## Unassailable - Matthew 16:18

*"...I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."*

It would not be an understatement if I say that we are living in one of the stormiest seasons of world history in every sphere of life. We are certainly not out of the storm of Covid-19, facing many a crisis in our nation and in the nations of the world and the church is facing persecution in more ways than one and there are unspoken storms that are shaking the very pillars of our Christian community. I can go on with a long list but I chose to return to the pages of Scripture and see the words of Jesus as mentioned in Matthew 16:18.

As we have stepped into 2021 with so many thoughts, dreams and questions, I would like for us to go back to this 'great promise' in the Bible and how powerful the message it conveys to our daily living. **God will and no one can stop it.** How about taking His word as a promise for every part of your life? The Bible is loaded with many many promises and we tend to take these promises more often with an emotional attachment and when the going is different from our expectations, we often throw the promises aside because our emotional attachment to the promises of God changes. Thank God, He does not change. Here are 3 quick lessons for us to firmly hold on to.

1. God has started His work and it is unfolding and progressing in His pace and His style irrespective of whether we notice any visible obvious improvements. Philippians 1:6 reads, 'being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ' Emotions fluctuate but God does not and He is working in you, around you and for you for His purpose and His glory all the time.

2. God is stronger by a million miles than all the forces of darkness. If you and I can say, I am stronger than the little ant that crawls, God is much, much stronger than even that comparison. We read in Isaiah 54:17, 'No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And their righteousness is from Me,' Says the Lord.'

3. Mark those words of certainty – ***will not prevail***. What in those words show uncertainty, if's, but's or may be's. God has declared and it will come to pass. It may come close to defeat, it may seem like a defeat, it may sound like a defeat, we may hear others call it a defeat but God will not, cannot be defeated. My mind races to the tomb where the body of Jesus was laid. The Pharisees and all those who conspired in the crucifixion of Jesus would have thought that they had won. Death was swallowed, conquered and that is why Paul says with great joy in 1 Corinthians 15:55-57 'O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What a beautiful landmark in the life of St. Andrew's church as we walk through this year *glorifying God* for this journey of 200 years. God was, God is and God will be before, during and after our lifetime. *To Him alone be all the glory*, honour and praise now and forever more. In Christ, you and I are unassailable, because our lives are built on the solid rock of Jesus Christ.

***Have a God-led, God-blessed and  
God-honouring year 2021.***

*Rev. Isaac Emmanuel Johnson*

## A Silver Lining



Sunday evening at 4 pm my otherwise drab laptop screen lights up with the faces of 60-70 extremely excited and eager children from classes 2 to 5. You can tell that they've been looking forward to it. And it's not just the kids, the teachers and volunteers are in equal anticipation to find out how the class is going to go and what new trick the kids have learnt this week to try on Zoom.

We start with a time of singing which usually includes a short game, following which we move into our respective break out rooms for our classes. On first Sundays we would have a special guest (someone outside Sunday School but still from church) share with us either a Bible story or a story of a missionary.

With the restrictions on physical meetings and the availability of technology platforms we were able to connect with children from all around the world in various time zones. We had teachers and volunteers connected from across the country, one even joining in from Canada!

Our Christmas program this year was on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Each class presented passages from the Bible covering the different sections of the Christmas story. Mary's visitation, Joseph's vision, the shepherds and the wise men were enacted by the four classes. Pastor Paul Anbarasu joined us and shared the Christmas message with the children and their parents. Though it was short it was enjoyable and very impactful.

Having moved out of Chennai, I have been blessed by being part of this wonderful group of people. And, if not for the pandemic I wouldn't have had the chance! While this year has been hard and disappointing to most of us, there's a silver lining and the virtual Sunday school is definitely one of them!

*Suchira Anya Durairaj*



## Follow the LEADER

"Lord, I would clasp Thy hand in mine,  
Nor ever murmur, nor repine;  
Content, whatever lot I see,  
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me."

The timeless, lilting music of Christmas carols, the spirit of gaiety, the sharing of our blessings with both the less fortunate and with our loved ones, still linger on. We hope and pray the joyful song of the angels rings down through the year 2021.

We stand on the threshold of a momentous year in the history of our church as we celebrate 200 years of the existence of St. Andrew's Church. It is natural for each member of the congregation to look back with immense gratitude and thankfulness that through trials and tribulations, joys and triumphs, we have been led thus far by our Guide and LEADER Jesus Christ.

The past year has certainly been one most bewildering and unpredictable. Our old familiar way of life has been drastically changed. The raging pandemic has locked down normal human activities. The menace has traversed east and west, north and south, bringing the entire world down to its knees. So much of life seems against us.

As a church let us take courage as we are comforted and strengthened by the fact that our God rules and overrules in all of life's complicated circumstances. 'My times are in Your hand;' Psalm 31:15. Let us be alert, alive and awake to the fact that we are under His Providential care. An individual spark may quiver and be quenched but together our flame will burn bright, protected and shielded by the One leading us on.

A beautiful year lies ahead. We dedicate the days to our Lord and Master Jesus Christ to use us as He wills. So, though we may walk

through life's chilling and treacherous waters, we are lifted and supported by the firm and gentle Hand of our LEADER and Sovereign God.

In the words of John Wesley:

“Commit thy ways to Him,  
Thy works into His hands;  
And rest on His unchanging Word  
Who heaven and earth commands.”

*Usha George*

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Open the door of your heart, my friend,  
Heedless of class or creed,  
When you hear the cry of a brother's voice,  
The sob of a child in need.

*Edward Everett Hale*

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The Christian life that is joyless is a discredit to God.

*M. D. Babcock*

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The healing of His seamless dress  
Is by our beds of pain;  
We touch Him in life's throng and press,  
And we are whole again.

*Whittier*

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## Brother Peter, Your Speech Bewrayeth Thee!



Bewrayeth ? This is a KJV (the King James Version) special, occurring only thrice in the entire Bible. Our focus at this time is on Matthew 26:73 where we find Peter making a desperate attempt to disassociate himself from the Lord but could not stifle his Galilean accent that is giving him away. I guess he wasn't particularly conscious of this phenomenon. And I am certain he would be bemused that his faltering assertions to the contrary should merit such a grandiloquent description in quaint words of archaic English that likely were not part of his fisher-folk vocabulary.

He was losing this game of deception; his words were saying one thing but his spontaneous Capernaum dialect - gaining credibility with every utterance - quite another.

Sometimes our accents give us away.

We are all familiar with this phenomenon. To people in India, utterance of a simple word like "simply" is a sure give away of a particular linguistic group in the South of the country. The North fares no better. When we were in Delhi, there were two little girls in the neighbourhood who were - sorry - simply called "Simpal" and "Dimpal". Not hard to guess the family's state origins.

The way "opportunity" is pronounced will tell you if the speaker is from the North or South of the Vindhyas. Countless comperes talking about people in the "dias" announce themselves to be Indian, first and foremost. I once heard a preacher relate a story about a North Indian man who said there is no difference between "lawyer" and "lier"! Now that may not be very strange to folks Down Under who think nothing of cheerily wishing each other a "good die"! And if you find someone in South Indian Christian circles who is "greevously" mourning over his sins, more often than not, he is a Methodist Minister!



And so on.

Everyone has his or her favourite example. Lest we feel superior, those of us bending over with laughter at others' expense would do well to remember that we ourselves may be the butt of similar language based jokes.

But with Peter, it was no laughing matter as he found himself in the grip of a cruel irony; while he was at great pains to deny the truth of his relationship with the Master, his accent was actually affirming it!

It is important that our words and our accent say the say same thing.

It is important that our words and our attitude say the say same thing.

It is important that our words and our actions say the say same thing.

It is important that our words and our demeanour say the say same thing.

It is important that our words and our behavior say the say same thing.

It is important that our words and our conduct say the say same thing.

It is important that our words and our thoughts say the say same thing (that's a tough one!)

If not, we might be losing the plot.

Poor Peter. Little did he imagine the pit falls when he chose to walk with the Master. Focused on the Kingdom as he was, he failed to factor in the suffering that inevitably results in this pursuit. We can see it plainly in Matthew 16:22: "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!". Far from patting him on his back for his concern for His well being, Jesus turned around and called him Satan, for savouring human concerns more than divine, only five verses after He'd commended Peter for receiving a revelation from the Father Himself.

Sometimes revelations go to our head. We kind of get carried away, thinking we are the cat's whiskers. We begin to speak like the oracles of God – even to Jesus! Jesus lost no time in putting Peter in his

place. Though he later made a glib declaration "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." (Luke 22:33), Peter didn't really mean it from his heart.

High sounding declarations, but little intent. Airy fairy words spoken with a fine flourish from a vacuous heart; no ballast of thought. Missing the big picture altogether owing to preoccupation with our own fanciful imaginations.

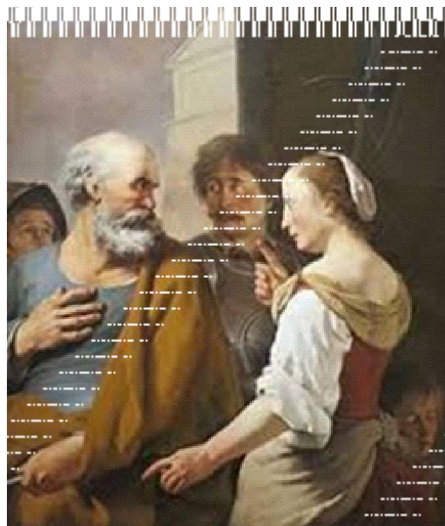
Empty vessels make much noise.

The moment crucifixion began to take on the contours of reality, Peter back pedaled.

Still waters?	Welcome
Green pastures?	Wonderful
Valley of the shadow of death?	Never
Via dolorosa?	No way

You get shown up for what you are, sooner or later, when push comes to shove. It's so difficult to accept suffering as being a part of God's plan.

Brother Peter, you have a long way to go.



(credit:en.wikipedia.org)

Let's not pretend. An ordinary maid with no high attainments in education saw through Peter's sham. Well does the Psalmist say, "you desired faithfulness even in the womb" (Psalm 51:6).

Sounds like stretching it a bit?

Walking the talk or let's say driving, is so very uncommon. When a car sporting a Bible verse sticker prominently, treats traffic rules with scant respect, the Master is denied a little bit, I think.

Absence of congruence sends confusing signals.

In the state of Tamil Nadu in South India, people in the street are generally helpful with directions. But in one particular town I motored into, the signals were confusing. "Take a turn right" I heard time and again but outstretched was the person's left hand and vice versa!

Ah, but even before they hear you speak, people are looking at you. The narrative in Mark 14:67 is quite pointed: "she looked closely at him"

If you've been with Jesus, spending time walking with Him, talking to Him, doing the works that He did, people tend to notice. And they are looking for integrity.

Are you genuine or are you just another fake?

Flip this over again, shall we?

Brother Peter, Your Speech Bewrayeth Thee!

**Judah S.G. Vincent**

*To Be Continued....*

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We shall do so much in the years to come,  
But what have we done today?  
We shall give our gold in a princely sum,  
But what did we give today?

*Nixon Waterman*

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**Answers to Bible Quiz No. 111 – December 2020  
A Clothier's Quiz (King James Version)**

1. When his friend and master, Elijah, was taken up into heaven. 2 Kings 2:12
2. Solomon. Proverbs 6:27
3. The Second Coming. Matthew 24:18
4. The Infant Jesus. Luke 2:7
5. Stephen. Acts 7:58
6. Lazarus. John 11:44
7. Palm Sunday. Luke 19:36
8. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. John 19:40
9. Job. Job 9:31
10. Moses. Deuteronomy 29:5

The winners are:

1. Mrs Elizabeth Jayaraj
2. Mrs Victoria Basker
3. Mrs Gladys Vedavimali
4. Mrs Indira Rajanayakam
5. Dr (Mrs) Sujatha Elizabeth Prasad

***Hearty Congratulations!***

## **'From Now on'**

*Henceforth* and *Hereafter* can easily translate into the phrase '*from now on*', even in our daily routine. Working out a game plan and wondering whether it will fall into place the way we want to, is a real challenge henceforth isn't it? In spite of his untiring efforts to preach the gospel, the apostle 'Paul' never forgot his occupation of tent making. All young rabbinical students had to learn a trade and this could have been Paul's training ground too! Tent makers were leather workers hailing from the province of Cilicia which was noted for its cloth made from goat's hair which literally gave Paul a lot of advantage herein.

Hereafter the narration in Acts chapter eighteen moves on to a familiar scene of Paul becoming acquainted with Priscilla and Aquilla. By occupation we can see that they were all tent makers but by the power of the Holy Spirit Paul ministered at Corinth! By human standards it can be a point of reasoning but the love of Christ compelled Paul to testify even in the midst of opposition from the familiar Jewish background. '*From now on I will go to the gentiles*' was his bold cry!

Here and there whenever crisis strikes, where is our next step? For the apostle the opportunity to tell of Jesus was just next door. Justus welcomed him and what an unfamiliar turn around we read about! The entire household of Crispus the synagogue ruler believed Jesus and the power of His Name! Oh! What a delight as Paul heard the voice of the Lord himself in a vision at night; *Do not be afraid but speak and do not keep silent for I have many people in this city!*

From now on things are never going to be the same again. But wait a minute! We are never meant to be the same again. Oh! Yes. We are never meant to be the same old patchwork in our Master's hand. He changes us from glory to glory; intercepts every feeble prayer, sets us free and moves us on to His familiar ground – the throne of Grace! Feeble, familiar and free originally translates into the formidable word 'Intercessor'! From now on, the call is not just routine for an intercessor and imitator of the Lord! Greater things do start with forgiveness and *His* faithfulness!

*Dr. Christina Ambrose*

## John's Corner

### THE OPTIMIST

(Read Ps:42:11, Isa 9:2, Mat 11:28, 2Cor 12 ;9, Ps 33:22)  
A blessed New Year to all

'Another gloomy year has dawned',  
So says the pessimist,  
Who has no hope in Jesus Christ,  
When he with trials has a tryst.

The optimist trusts in the Lord,  
With joy he faces each new day,  
And even when the path seems rough,  
Knows God will guide and show the way.

Cast all your cares on Christ who said,  
'Come unto me and you'll find rest.'  
Sufficient for us is His grace,  
Abide in Christ and you'll be blessed.

*John H. Bala Singh*

### OBITUARIES

Dr Surya Prakash passed away on the 3rd of April and was buried in Kasimedu Cemetery.

Mr SL Russell passed away on the 16th of May and was cremated at Arumbakkam.

Mrs Ruth Annapoorani Kanagaraj passed away on the 22nd of May and was buried in Kasimedu Cemetery.

Mrs Rosalind Jayachandra Dass passed away on 27th July and was buried in - Nagercoil.

Mrs Shantha Daniel passed away on 9th December and was buried in Kilpauk - Cemetery.

*We convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.*



## PEACE – 7

**“Doctors treat but Jesus heals”**

We have entered the new year 2021 with hope that the pandemic will get over soon and God will restore all that was lost in 2020. 2021 is going to be the year of vaccination for covid-19 virus and different vaccines will be available for developing immunity against the virus. Millions of people lost their lives, jobs and businesses.

Entire world is anxious, about the future. **Matthew 6:31-34** “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

### **WISDOM:**

**James 3:13-18** “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

### **LOVE IS THE FOUNDATION OF PEACE:-**

Apostle Paul says **1 Corinthians 13:1-8** “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have

not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 Does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

**LOVE NEVER FAILS:-**

Lack of love and understanding, in the family, in society and in the work place, leads to a lot of conflict, and loss of peace.

**CLUE TO PEACE:-**

Apostle Paul gives us the clue to peace. **Philippians 4:6-8** "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy- meditate on these things.

Many sessions of counselling and medications may be required for people with acute anxiety, depression or suicidal tendencies.

*Dr. Rajini Kantha Narendranath*

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Truth is always strong, no matter how weak  
it looks; and falsehood is always weak, no  
matter how strong it looks.

*Phillips Brooks*

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**Bible Quiz No. 112 – January 2021**



## **A Hymnologist's Quiz**

From which well-known hymn is each of these lines taken?

1. "Love's redeeming work is done"
2. "Help me walk from day to day"
3. "All for sin could not atone"
4. 'I rest my weary soul on Thee'
5. "Let the healing streams abound"
6. "Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away;"
7. "When other helpers fail, and comforts flee"
8. "Take all my guilt away"
9. "Bring forth the royal diadem"
10. "And in God's house forevermore  
My dwelling-place shall be."

Kindly send your answers to the church office by 15th January 2021.

*Usha George*

## Going by The Master's Plan

Looking back exactly at Last Christmas 2019, it was the first time when we brought our new born second daughter to the Church service. It was a very pleasant experience as we were stepping into the New year 2020 with the new addition in our family. We were praying that the Lord should guide and strengthen us as a family so that we would be able to take care of our young one's early growing phase, amidst our First Daughter's school , Work and other routines. Little did we know the great Master Plan the Lord had for the entire world with the turn around of events in 2020.

Towards the end of January, we received an imported Material sample from an international vendor, at the Office. As usual, we unpacked the sample and got through the work, but within minutes, I developed a fever and cough, unable to work, and returned home. That was the toughest time between late January and early February, when all four of us fell terribly sick with fever, cough and breathlessness, including both little ones who couldn't manage this. But the Lord was so gracious, that each day, and especially in the nights, for almost 20 days amidst this great sickness, HE gave us the strength we needed when we felt so weak ourselves, besides attending to our little ones. It was then that I shifted my office computer home as I had to attend to work and my presence at home with my wife was important especially during this period of sickness. We didn't know that the Lord was preparing us as a family by allowing this sickness, in advance of the Lockdown which was bound to happen in March, which only He knew about.

God's ways of preparation are always surprising. He equipped us ahead of March when lockdown was declared and the whole world moved to a virtual online environment. This turned out to be the biggest blessing for us. My wife and I were able to holistically attend to all aspects of Personal routines, Work and Schooling without any compromises or hassles. Things were continuing

without much change as He had already equipped us. In fact, we became more productive than our normal. All through the lockdown we had a close time with family and my daughter soon adapted to the online schooling. More surprising was how the Lord had aligned all our professional Project cycles with this humanly unexpected lockdown, where most of my projects were in Incubation and in preparatory stages, but the work went on seamlessly without hassles, in spite of things turning upside down. It was so clear that God had personally and professionally aligned our life in accordance with this pandemic.

We always in our daily Family Prayer ask God, to make us walk according to HIS will for that day, and guide us in perfect alignment, whether it be Joy or sickness, so that each day ends with a fullness that we have walked in HIS will and for His glory. The sickness was in fact HIS will to make us ready for the larger things to come, Praise God! None of our usual routines went haywire nor was our table empty. We had all our supplies without any hassle. I did not have to wait for even a day in long queues or come back empty handed because the shop ran out of stock. He is our Provider indeed. In fact, we were able to share food and essentials with our Neighbours when they had a shortfall. Thus God led us through all our health, emotional and financial needs through this lockdown from March till now and he has graciously protected us from all Sickness during this period. Every day was a surprise gift from God and every day and every moment God made us witness His miracles in our lives both during lockdown and post the relaxation in lockdown.

But in one thing we still find a void: we miss being in the house of the Lord, and worshiping Him in the sanctuary as a family together with other fellow believers. But we know this is also according to HIS perfect Will and He will facilitate the same very soon in the times to come. Maybe He has a larger plan for this too. Nevertheless, He is our Master who brings all things for Good to those who believe Him and walk according to His Will. He is our Provider, our Guide, and all we need to do is to Love Him, have a strong faith in Him and walk in the ways He has taught us to. May the Lord be our everlasting support as we all enter this New Year 2021. Happy New Year and Praise God!

*Sathish Moses & Sweetlin*



