

Kirkspire



Psalm 69:30

SEPTEMBER 2019

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Word From the Pastor

Rejoice or Regret

*Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.
(1 Corinthians 16:13)*

Newspapers used a font type that is called 'Second Coming type'. It is the largest display type used for newspaper headlines, reserved for news of the highest importance. Isn't it interesting that it is not called 'Breaking News' or 'Big News'. I would agree that the greatest shocking news that the world will face and face it really soon will be something that will happen 'in the twinkling of an eye'. It is called RAPTURE.

The Bible is full of 'breaking news' that busy people were not willing to listen and learn from. Right from the days of Noah who warned of the impending flood in his time or the people of Egypt who saw nine plagues and still had to face the death of a loved one in every home or the people of Israel themselves who were warned of being captured and the exile to follow and still did not give heed and repent.

When the Messiah was promised, people were not prepared to believe

When the Messiah was born, people were not prepared to receive

When the Messiah showed Himself through miracles, people were not prepared to follow

When the Messiah foretold His death, people were not prepared to accept

When the Messiah rose from the dead, people were not prepared to worship

When the Messiah comes again, people will not be prepared to GO

Dear Church, how much of our plans, desires and even our worries are looked through the eyes of His Coming. Our greatness will not delay His Coming, our sons will not stop His Coming nor will man's indifference deny His Coming.

Matthew 24:42-43 reads, 'Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.'

We prepare for our work, our travel even, when we expect guests. Are we preparing for HIS COMING? This month and always, walk with Jesus to be with Jesus.

Isaac Johnson
Pastor

First Encounter with the stranger



My name is Gigi, born in the most orthodox Brahmin family, studied in the Presentation Convent, had no idea of who Jesus Christ was then, except that He was the God of Christians. Based on horoscope-match got married to another orthodox family following rituals and religious, chanting mantra. I was blessed with two boys. When my second son was 4 years old, I developed severe joint pains. I was diagnosed with lupus (SLE), a deadly autoimmune disease, in 1993. The rheumatologist to whom I went confirmed that there was no hope that I would live as the lupus (a kind of blood disorder) would quickly affect all organs, starting from the kidneys. Having the fear of death in front of my eyes, I visited many temples for a solution and peace of mind as I could not alter my fate, but my peace of mind was temporary and I felt something lost, a kind of vacuum within me. I went into depression. The advice given by one of my Christian friends was to do meditation (not yoga meditation).

Trying and searching for that inner peace, I started on it by sitting on the floor with the mat. Circumstances and problems at home prevented me from concentrating on it. But after a month or so, I went into the core of meditation, to find myself having an "out of body experience," yes, you read it right, I felt something being released from every nook and corner of my body and I felt myself being lifted up. Initially I was terrified, but later took a chance to find out, out of curiosity, what was there which was going to startle me. I felt the air around me very cool (all this was happening when when I was in the meditation with my eyes closed), and I asked "Who are you?" He says, "I am Jesus". "Where am I?" was my next question. He said, "You are with me and my Father".

Since I had absolute no idea about Him, I was very much scared and didn't want to talk to any spirits. Knowing my heart, Jesus immediately

said, "Do not fear, I will never leave you nor forsake you." He then told me to take a notebook and write whatever He told me. The next day, I did exactly what He asked me to do. He told me to check with my Christian friends "They will say who I am." But it did not matter to me who He really was and I did not expect any proof from Him. But He insisted I do it and to get back to Him the next day. I did check up and my friends were shocked as all those were Bible verses with Thee, Thou, and so on.

I noticed that this person was extremely kind and for the first time in my entire lifetime on earth, I experienced a kind of love which words cannot describe and human mind cannot understand. I got the fragrance of jasmine when which the Lord said, "wherever I am you will get this fragrance (aroma)," and I felt the peace in my heart which I had been longing for, for years. Felt as though I was sitting on the beach facing the sea with the gentle cool breeze blowing on my face. I felt as though my life was complete and there was nothing more I wanted.

Our friendship started than. I was adamant to see Him, but He said, "No, it will blind you." Due to my childish behaviour, the Lord revealed himself to me in my peripheral vision as a very bright white light on His profile, in three stages. I surrendered my "all" to Him then and prostrated before the Glorious, Mighty and Majestic Father. My life and everything holding on to it turned overnight. I was lost once but in my Lord I was saved, and today I have become one of His sheep, waiting to share the miracles and wonders He has done "in" and "through" me. The stranger then has become my Saviour now.

Gigi Kumar



Let the Lamps of Prayer Be Burning

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father...”
Ephesians 8: 14-21

With arrogant pride we at times claim to have an impeccable family background. What a foolish and empty boast considering we are all wretched sinners! Instead with ceaseless praise and thanksgiving we should acclaim that we belong to the Family of God. It is sheer amazing grace that we are in God's great plan of love and redemption. The pronoun in “Our Father” confirms our brotherhood to all, as well as God's Fatherhood to all.

This brings us down to our knees in humble submission and prayers of repentance. As a 10th century Scottish preacher memorably put it, “What a man is on his knees before God, that he is, and nothing more.”

Let us take our entire lesson on prayer from the portrait of Christ's humanity. What beauty, balance and power dwelt in Him! All the wastes of our sinful life He changed to fruitfulness. He stood before Pilate like a wounded deer and yet His dignity made a mockery of mighty earthly emperors. How was this perfection reached? Our Lord's life was rooted in deep and sacred communion with His Father. What did He achieve? In the night of agony He sweated blood – all for His love and involvement with filthy sinners like us. Death was vanquished at the Cross, and Christ won salvation and eternity for you and me. Staggering is the thought that if Jesus felt the need for constant prayer, what must our need be?

We are often asked to pray for loved ones and strangers in pain of body and mind. To do so we need to love them as God commanded us to do. Our Lord's tenderness and compassion is the perfect model for us. We can then grasp and feel the burdens and woes of others. We need the Holy Spirit to empower us. Christian kinship is captured in this beautiful hymn,

“Before our Father’s throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comfort and our cares”

Our age tries to find quick fixes for our maladies. But a Christian’s prayer expresses total dependence on the Father. We cry out as Paul the mighty prayer warrior of the prisons confesses, “And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling” till he was filled with God’s Spirit and power. 1 Cor 2:3,4

Here is a warning. Let us remember that God sees the deep centre of our hearts. We cannot let the worldly lights dazzle and tempt us and then profess to be with Jesus. Our Lord is wonderfully patient with humble sinners and their imperfections but comes down heavily on the hypocritical Pharisee. So, let us be careful not to sound the trumpet when we are giving alms, nor pray at the corners of streets to be seen by men.

A simple peasant said, “I just look at him and He looks at me”. “Be still and know that I am God” is a sweet invitation for our frail frames to rest on His bosom.

Let us keep the lamps of prayer burning bright – we are the wick and our Lord is the Holy Oil. He will lead us from the darkness and gloom into His marvelous light.

We are His!

Usha George

Like the Cloud of Witnesses



The Bible is the love book of God for mankind. God's word says, 'Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing' (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

From the book of Genesis to Revelation, we see God's anointing on His children. God teaches us through people's lives' experiences, be it good or bad. Every Bible character speaks volumes of God's faithfulness when they obeyed God and His rebuke when they disobeyed Him.

In Hebrews 12:1-2, we read 'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.....'. These verses have always been an encouragement for me in my Christian walk. Thinking about the cloud of witnesses, their journey on earth with many ups and downs and how they finished their course well, it has always motivated me to press forward.

Let me highlight how some of these men and women of God lived lives above the ordinary and became living examples for us to follow.

Be it Moses, who was transformed from being a man of excuses to being a great leader; or David, who realised and repented of his sin in Psalm 51; or Samson, who even on a death roll realised God's purpose in his life; or Deborah, who led an army courageously to bring victory to the nation when no one else was willing to step forward; or the saints mentioned in the Book of Revelation who died for Kingdom's cause, all of them have left a great legacy for us to continue being torch bearers for Christ.

A few similarities that are found in all these men and women of God are:

- a. Implicit obedience to God – 2 Samuel 15:22
- b. Complete dependence on God – Psalm 62:5

c. Zeal for God – Titus 2:14

God expects us to be prepared to pass on the baton of faithful living to many. Let us strive to be like the *Cloud of Witnesses* not only for ourselves before God but also to be influencers and living examples for others to follow.

As the Cloud of Witnesses finished their race well, let us daily **be prepared** to run well and finish well.

Mrs Roselin Johnson

Answers to Bible Quiz No. 102 – August 2019

A Choreographer's Quiz

1. David. 2 Samuel 6: 12-16
2. Psalm. Psalm 150: 4
3. Mourning. Psalm 30:11
4. The men of Benjamin. Judges 21:21
5. Jesus. Matthew 11:17
6. Salome, daughter of Herodias. Matthew 14:6
7. The "dance" was a percussion instrument used in very early times. Psalm 150:4. Praising the Lord with our all – answer accepted.
8. After successful crossing of the Red Sea. Exodus 15: 20,21
9. Jephthah's daughter. Judges 11:30,34
10. The elder brother of the Prodigal. Luke 15:25

The winners are:

1. Mrs Elizabeth Jayraj
2. Mrs Indira Rajanayakam
3. Mrs Minnie Devadoss
4. Mrs Suguna Joseph
5. Mrs Peace Rani Sudhakar
6. Dr (Mrs) Sujatha Elizabeth Prasad
7. Mrs Aruna Asir
8. Er Joseph M Manoharan
9. Mrs Gladys Vedavimali

Hearty congratulations!



Medical Corner

SLEEP DISORDERS Part -3

“Doctors treat but Jesus heals”

Anxiety disorder or sleep disorder?

The effects of sleep disorders can be so disruptive that we may want immediate relief. Many of us toss and turn or watch the clock when we can't sleep for a night or two. But for some, a restless night is routine. Unfortunately, long-term cases can take a bit more time to resolve. However, if we stick with our treatment plan and regularly communicate with our doctor, one can eventually find our way to better sleep.

Stress and anxiety may cause sleeping problems or make existing problems worse. And having an anxiety disorder exacerbates the problem. Sleep disorders are characterized by abnormal sleep patterns that interfere with physical, mental, and emotional functioning. Stress or anxiety can cause a serious night without sleep, as do a variety of other problems. Research also shows that some form of sleep disruption is present in nearly all psychiatric disorders. Studies also show that people with chronic insomnia are at high risk of developing an anxiety disorder.

The risks of inadequate sleep, extend way beyond tiredness. Sleeplessness can lead to poor performance at work or school, increased risk of injury, and health problems. In addition to anxiety and mood disorders, those with sleep disorders are risk for heart disease, heart failure, irregular heartbeat, heart attack, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, and obesity.

Sleep disorders cause more than just daytime sleepiness. They can take a serious toll on our mental and physical health, leading to memory problems, weight gain, and a negative impact on our energy and mood. But we don't have to live with a sleeping problem. There are many actions we can take to ensure a good night's sleep and improve our health. Even if we have struggled with sleep problems for so long that it seems normal, we can still learn to sleep better. We

can start by tracking our symptoms and sleep patterns, and then making healthy changes to our daytime habits and bedtime routine. If self-help doesn't do the trick, we can turn to sleep specialists who are trained in sleep medicine. Together, we can identify the underlying causes of our sleeping problem and find ways to improve our sleep and quality of life.

Frequently having trouble sleeping can be a frustrating and debilitating experience. We sleep badly at night, which leaves us feeling dead-tired in the morning and whatever energy we have quickly drains throughout the day. But then, no matter how exhausted we feel at night, we still have trouble sleeping. And so the cycle begins again, taking a serious toll on our mood, energy, efficiency, and ability to handle stress. Ignoring sleep problems and disorders can damage our physical health and lead to weight gain, car accidents,

impaired job performance, memory problems, and strained relationships. If we want to feel our best, stay healthy, and perform up to our potential, quality sleep is a necessity, not a luxury.

Circadian rhythm sleep disorders

We all have an internal biological clock that regulates our 24-hour sleep-wake cycle, also known as our *circadian rhythms*. Light is the primary cue that influences circadian rhythms. At night, when there is less light, our brain triggers the release of melatonin, a hormone that makes us sleepy. When the sun comes up in the morning, the brain tells the body that it's time to wake up. When our circadian rhythms are disrupted or thrown off, we may feel groggy, disoriented, and sleepy at inconvenient times. Circadian rhythms have been linked to a variety of sleeping problems and sleep disorders, as well as depression, bipolar disorder, and seasonal affective disorder (the winter blues).

To be continued.....

Dr. Rajini Kantha Narendranath



Bible Quiz No. 103 – September 2019

A Zoologist's Quiz (King James Version)

Questions on little-known animals in the Bible.

Give only one reference.

1. Of what animal does Job say, "Canst thou bind the _____ in the furrows"?
2. What swift animal of the canine family is mentioned in Proverbs, as one of the four against whom "there is no rising up"?
3. Are any of these mythological birds mentioned in the Bible?
 - a. Roe
 - b. Dodo
 - c. Phoenix
4. What animal skins were used on the roof of the tabernacle in the wilderness?
5. What members of the animal world did Solomon's navy bring back from Tarshish every three years?
6. What little animals are called "a feeble folk"?
7. Does the Bible narrative say that Jonah was swallowed by a whale?
8. Fill in the blank:
 - a. "Canst thou draw out _____ with a hook"?
 - b. "Behold now; _____ which I made with thee"
9. What animal does David use in a figure of speech, expressing his longing after God?
10. This mythological animal is mentioned only once in the Bible. In the prophecy of the desolation of Babylon, it is said that it would "dance there".

Kindly send your answers to the church office by 15th September 2019.

Usha George

John's Corner

Endless Thanks

Read Ps. 103 : 1,2 Ps. 107 : 1
(Sept. 8th is Thanksgiving Sunday)

If I were to thank You for everything,
The blessings, dear Lord, You shower on me.
No time would I have for anything else,
Except on my knees to always be.

Every breath I take is a miracle,
Each day a revelation of Your love,
And my every step without falling down,
Shows angels watch o'er me from above.

Open my eyes, Lord, and wisdom provide,
Your boundless grace to appreciate,
And whether I stand or am on my knees,
To give You thanks never hesitate.

John H. Bala Singh

The Look



As the soldiers lead Jesus to the High priest, Peter follows at a distance. Thrice questioned, Peter denies his association with Jesus and the cock crows. Jesus looks straight at him and Peter, remembering His words, weeps bitterly. That look sears his heart. No word is needed; that LOOK is enough to pierce His soul, convicting and crushing him for his renunciation. The look of Jesus, all powerful, all knowing and all loving, grips and holds; rips and builds.

The eyes of Jesus, shimmering pools of unfathomable depths, could be deep and penetrative, tearing away the masks and facades of the Pharisees. They could see the darkness in the heart of Judas and the beauty in that of the Samaritan woman. They noted the vacillation of the disciples and the silent yearning of the woman bent double, whom he called the 'daughter of Abraham'. Jesus' eyes could reflect a myriad hues. They radiated compassion when they met the eyes of the leper, joy when He commended the Centurion for his faith, warmth when He defended the woman who broke the alabaster jar, and probably danced with merriment when He attended the wedding at Cana with His disciples. The twelve year old Jesus would have looked with wise and pensive eyes at the teachers and elders in the temple, answering their questions. Everyone who heard Him was amazed at His understanding and answers. They still speak volumes - about the magnitude of His Love, the depth of His suffering and richness of His forgiveness.

Jesus' eyes look deep into our own. He sees our brokenness; He sees our pain; sees our despair and our anguish. He knows our doubts, our questions, our confusion and our debilitating fears. He sees beyond our brave but spurious smiles, beyond our look of confidence and His LOOK, deep and searching, reassuring and comforting, lifts us up from muck and mire to stand on level ground. "The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those who are fully committed to Him" (II Chron. 16:9). The flames of Love and Grace dancing in His eyes light up responsive sparks of Faith and Adoration in our own!

Chitra Bennett

ANNUAL REPORT 2019
ASHA CENTRE FOR THE DIFFERENTLY-CHALLENGED
ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH

*'Because of the Lord's Great Love we are not consumed
For his compassions never fail
They are new every morning
Great is your Faithfulness' Lamentations 3 : 22-23*

Looking back on the year gone by, we praise our heavenly father for his compassion and mercies each day and we at Asha stand as a testimony to his enduring faithfulness and grace to us at every stage!

Asha Centre which began in 1982 with the purpose of Counselling and Placement services for the differently-abled friends in society, shifted its focus to include children and young adults with 'special needs' in its mission. Since 1990 Asha functions as a Centre of Special Education and Vocational Rehabilitation, registered and recognized by the Government Of Tamil Nadu. We focus on children and young adults disadvantaged in their lives because of intellectual retardation caused by brain damage and developmental disorders, particularly from the lower economic strata of society. Presently there are Fifty Special children and young adults in the Chennai, Egmore campus and Nine in the village Thirupalaivanam centre undergoing individualized training in academic skills, daily living skills and vocational skills patterned on the basis of the Madras Developmental Scale, customized to individual needs and abilities.

As reported last year, four of our children who had been initiated into the mainstream school syllabus continue to cope and progress well.

Besides academics, the children are provided with ample opportunities to enhance their creativity and social growth by participating in various interschool cultural meets.

They regularly participate in the All-India art competition conducted by Ability Art, New Delhi, the Chennai Special Olympics, Tamil Nadu Government Sports meet, and other city cultural meets every year.

Therapy Units in Physio, Occupational and Speech Training are integral to the rehabilitation of these special children, helping them develop their mobility, self-care skills and other abilities, overcome speech constraints and improve their abilities to speak.

Early Intervention Programme for the very severely affected little ones is being imparted using a lot of therapeutic interventions to provide them with the best advantage.

Vocational training & Production Programmes are integral to Asha's vision, reflecting the ultimate goal of this ministry, which is to shape his/her personality, attain self identity and enhance self-esteem. Thirteen of our young men and one young woman who, after training at different levels in academic and vocational skills and now placed in appropriate jobs, continue to cope well and function to the satisfaction of their employers.

We praise God for leading our young workforce to compassionate, caring employers!

Boys Skill unit is focussed on mastering the skill of screen printing, making envelopes, printing bill and voucher books, business cards, letter pads. They are also trained in laundering skills i.e. washing, folding, ironing of clothes and housekeeping skills.

Girls Skill unit is involved in assembling eco-friendly paper cups and plates and trained in kitchen chores and cooking skills. Besides candle making and chappati and 'appalam' making, the girls unit has launched into making paper bags for shopping needs and paper covers for grocery stores and bakeries.

Weaving Unit provides a therapeutic experience for our young people, the skill of weaving enhancing their attention, concentration and patience and controls hyperactive behaviour. Colourful mats, towels and fabric are the products of this unit.

The young adults are continually trained in the concepts of time and money, reinforced in reading, writing and counting skills and in personal hygiene and grooming.

Outreach Efforts: The mission to reach the unreached 'special child' resulted in our partnership with the Village Project at Thirupalaivanam where nine 'special children' identified from

the villages around are undergoing special education and need based, appropriate vocational skills training.

Special Events during 2018-19:

- Independence Day 2018 was observed with Rev Paul Anbarasu hoisting the flag and addressing the children.
- Teachers' Day was celebrated with a special prayer service and message by Mrs Leena Chandramohan
- Children's Day and Christmas 2018 were joyful celebrations.
- The students of Christwood School & ladies of the Inner Wheel Club brought the Christmas spirit of caring & sharing to the children of Asha.
- The fun filled sports day in March 2018 was inaugurated by Dr CP Balakrishnan, Joint Commissioner of Police (East), Chennai.
- The talent meet for the caregivers in March 2019 on the occasion of 'Women's Day' provided an opportunity for the mothers to showcase their creativity in cooking with the core ingredient 'Red Rice' and 'Oil-less cooked dishes'.
- The Women Staff from the Corporate House TVS Logistics treated the mothers and the children on Women's Day'
- Students from the Moody Bible College USA provided the scripture through a fun filled, creative morning.
- The children also had an exciting afternoon travelling by the Metro train, to visit and enjoy at the ECO Park in Chetpet.
- Vacation Bible School in April 2019 was a blessed joyful experience for our children.
- Our joint monthly prayer fellowships for the caregivers of Asha and DCC continue to be a source of spiritual strength, to enable them to cope with their life situations

As a Resource Centre Asha continues to provide opportunities for study, training and research in the areas of Special Education, Social Work, Psychology, and Nursing. Also we provide internship opportunities for 'community social approach' concepts for various city college students.

'The grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant' 1 Tim. 1:14

We acknowledge with deep gratitude the unfailing love and abundant grace of our Heavenly Father who guides us every step of the way.

We place on record our sincere thanks to all our partners in this mission, whose steadfast, sincere support has helped us achieve many a goal and realize dreams.

We are grateful to the Chennai District Office of the Rehabilitation Welfare Officer for his deep interest and encouragement and the Office of the Special Commissioner for the Welfare of the Differently-abled, Government of Tamil Nadu, for extending their support to us.

We are deeply indebted to all members of St Andrew's Family for rising to the occasion and standing by us at all times. Your sustained support through regular donations and sponsoring has helped us attain many impossible goals! Your steadfast support has helped us realize the dream of creating a 'work shed' to house the vocational units and also venture into using solar energy to supplement our electrical energy needs towards effective cost management.

We acknowledge the support from the Johnnie Samuel Memorial Fund, Capt Surendra Moses Nathaniel fund Dr Philip Memorial Fund, James & Chandra Wilson Memorial Fund, the Swaminathan endowment fund, Sundar endowment, which help us maintain and sustain a Corpus. We place on record the steady assistance extended by Rev Peter Millar and the Rev Mackenzie family.

We are grateful to Dr Rajini Kantha Narendranath and her team from the RK Eye Hospital for the periodic eye care, Dr Praise Ambrose and Dr Bhaskar Dental Foundation for dental care, Dr RM Bhoopathy for neurological support and to the Institute Of Child Health, Egmore, Chennai.

'Let the roots of God's Love in your life be entwined with others who need your support.'

May our Lord continue to help us to remain steadfast in our vision, continually reminded of the needs and problems of the lesser privileged and to be sensitive to them.

'May the favour of the Lord our God rest upon us and continue to establish the work of our hands for us.' Psalm 90:17



Independence Day



Asha Sunday