

5 MARCH - 19 APRIL

LENT 2025

Devotional

Wesley
METHODIST CHURCH



WESLEYMC.ORG

LENT DEVOTIONAL 2025 | PASTOR'S MESSAGE

REV RAYMOND FONG

Dear Wesley Family

Starting with Ash Wednesday, Lent is a 40-day period (not counting Sundays) of repentance, reflection and renewal through an intentional focus and reflection on the life, ministry and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The 40-day period represents the time when Jesus went into the wilderness to fast and pray (Matt 4:1-11). During these 40 days, Jesus overcame temptation in preparation for the kingdom work He was to do before eventually going to the cross.

This Lent, I pray that you will experience God's renewing grace as you dedicate these 40 days to a more intentional pursuit of God. As you desire to do that, you may practise the following spiritual disciplines:

a. Confession and Examination

The 40 days are set aside to examine and confess the areas of recurring sin in our lives (Ps 139:23-24) as we seek God's grace in earnest repentance. Allow God's Word to show you how much you need Him.

b. Fasting and Prayer

We may either fast from food or "fast" by giving up something that occupies our time and attention, e.g. phone games or engaging in social media, so we can use that time instead to pray. This is to cultivate the practice of holy abstinence and self-control from worldly pursuits.

c. Giving and Service

We can serve others through generous giving and volunteering. We can donate the money we would normally use to buy the things we are fasting from. These make us aware of the suffering and needs of others and also compel us to deeper sacrifice as we meet the needs of others.

As we engage in these spiritual disciplines this Lent, may we be transformed into the likeness of Christ and grow in our appreciation of the sacrificial love of Christ.

During Lent, we will have a sermon series on the seven signs of Jesus based on the Gospel of John. This special Lent Devotional has daily reflections on Scripture readings from this book. These daily reflections are personal, heartfelt and authentic. I pray that you will be deeply encouraged as you take time to reflect and respond to God's word to you.

May we encounter our Lord Jesus anew this Lent. May His transforming love cause us to grow in our discipleship as we engage His Word in reflection and respond in obedience.

May we develop a more disciplined and intimate prayer life as we take time to draw near to God, listen to His voice and respond to love our Lord and others.

On a journey this Lent with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raymond', with a stylized, cursive script.

Rev Raymond Fong
Pastor-In-Charge

LENT 2025

5 MARCH TO 19 APRIL 2025

A Time of Preparation for Easter

1. Lent is a season of 40 days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday (5 March 2025) and ends on Holy Saturday (19 April 2025). It is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter (20 April 2025).

Daily Devotions on the Gospel of John

2. Lent is also a time of self-examination and reflection. For this Season of Lent, our Bible Reading Drive will take us on a journey through the Gospel of John. For the third consecutive year, members of the Local Church Executive Committee (LCEC), together with Pastoral Team Members, have put together this special Lent Devotional Booklet.

36 Heartfelt Devotions by LCEC Leaders and PTMs

3. In this Devotional are 36 heartfelt devotions written by these church leaders, each applying the day's Scripture reading to their personal lives. The devotions will continue till 23 April 2025, three days after Easter .

Personal Solitude with God

4. Let's commit to a time of personal solitude with God every day, and wherever you may be. You may follow the steps for personal devotion on page 6.

Sermons on the Seven Signs of Jesus Every Weekend

5. We will not be publishing any devotions written by church leaders on the seven Saturdays and Sundays.
6. Instead, during the worship services on these seven weekends, our pastors will preach on the Seven Signs of Jesus, as recorded for us in the Gospel of John (see page 5). Listen to the sermons as you worship God in church or online, and reflect on what the Lord may be saying to you.

Lectio Divina on Saturdays

7. To prepare yourself for the sermons, we invite you to do a personal *lectio divina* or reflection on Saturdays, using the same scripture passage for the sermon that weekend. You may follow the process in a pre-recorded audio guide.

Together as a church family, let us read and reflect on the daily Scriptures and, more importantly, respond to God's Word and rest in His loving goodness.

Lent Sermon Series / Seven Signs of Jesus

SERMON 1: Sunday, 9 March 2025

1st Sign: Turning Water into Wine

Scripture passage: John 2:1-12

SERMON 2: Sunday, 16 March 2025

2nd Sign: Healing the Official's Son

Scripture passage: John 4:46-54

SERMON 3: Sunday, 23 March 2025

3rd Sign: Healing the Man at the Pool

Scripture passage: John 5:1-11

SERMON 4: Sunday, 30 March 2025

4th Sign: Feeding of the 5,000

Scripture passage: John 6:1-15

SERMON 5: Sunday, 6 April 2025

5th Sign: Healing the blind man on the Sabbath

Scripture passage: John 9:1-16

SERMON 6: Palm Sunday, 13 April 2025

6th Sign: Raising Lazarus

Scripture passage: John 11:1-45

SERMON 7: Easter Sunday, 20 April 2025

7th Sign: Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Scripture passage: John 20:1-31

Information is correct at time of printing.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™
Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version”
are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

For Internal Circulation. Not for sale.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

GUIDELINES FOR LENT DAILY DEVOTIONS

PREPARE:

Step 1: Find a quiet place for your daily reflection and personal solitude with God. You will need only this devotional booklet and a pen/pencil. Wherever you are, sit comfortably. Pause for 2 to 3 minutes of uninterrupted silence to prepare yourself to meet with God. To help you anchor on God with your undivided attention, you may use a name of God, such as Jesus, Emmanuel (God with us), El Shaddai (God Almighty) or Jehovah Jireh (The Lord will Provide), as your prayer word. Say the prayer word slowly to help you return to God each time you find your mind wandering away. This helps to focus and settle your thoughts before you begin your devotion.

PRAY:

Step 2: Once you are ready to start the day's devotion, say a prayer asking God to speak to you through the Scripture passage and the Devotion written by a church leader. Ask God also to open your heart to be receptive to His Word.

READ:

Step 3: Read the day's Scripture slowly. If necessary, read it a second or even a third time.

REFLECT:

Step 4: Reflect on the Scripture as you read. What word or verse caught your attention? What is God saying to the people of that time? What is God saying to you? How may you apply what the Scripture says to your personal life? Write down your personal reflections in the blank pages at the back of your devotional booklet.

Step 5: Now read the daily devotion written by a church leader. Each day, members of the Local Church Executive Committee (LCEC) as well as Pastoral Team Members (PTMs) will take turns to share how they have applied the particular passage in their personal lives. Reflect on what God may be saying to you through their sharing. Write down your reflections in your devotional booklet.

RESPOND:

Step 6: Respond to the three Reflection Questions at the bottom of the written devotion. What is the one takeaway for your personal life, or one thing you would commit to do to reflect the Light and Love of Jesus in society? If you are doing this devotion in a small group, share your responses with your group members.

REST:

Step 7: Rest deeply in God's loving presence. End your daily devotion, whether individually or in a group, with a prayer, thanking God for guiding and speaking to you, and for wisdom and strength to respond in obedience.

[**John 1:1-18**]

The Word Became Flesh

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'")

¹⁶Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

The Word Became Flesh To Show Us The Way

By Alvin Chia, Lay Leader

In the passage, we read that the Lord Jesus was with God from the beginning. Through Him, all things were created. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The key message in verse 14 provides the hope that we as Christians hold on to dearly, to live purposeful lives in our present dark and fallen world. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." In simple terms, our Almighty Heavenly God has reached out to us humans by becoming a human. The simple message to us is the glorious God has shown up among us as a vulnerable child, a poor carpenter, and a foot-washing servant to show compassion and love to people, and assure us that He knows what we are going through.

The passage also affirmed that He came down to reach out and offer us the right to become children of God. More amazingly, our Lord Jesus Christ came to die in our place to save us from condemnation. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." This is beyond human comprehension and shows the immense extent and depth of His love to redeem and restore us to a relationship with Him. What amazing love!

On this Ash Wednesday, we are reminded of the sacrificial love of God. On our own, we will never be able to overcome and pay for the sins in our lives. The Lord Jesus has come and taken our place to atone for our sins. It is by the grace of God that we can be reconciled with Him. As we approach the season of Lent, may we come in true repentance to accept the grace of God and allow His light to shine in the darkness of our lives and to follow His teachings and ways whole-heartedly.

As He has shown the way by going through human sufferings and enduring the pains of betrayal, rejection and persecution, I am encouraged that we have a God who truly understands our human agonies and struggles. I will continue to fix my eyes on Him and trust and obey Him in all things. As a beneficiary of His sacrificial love, I will also testify of His mercy and grace so that others may also come to know and experience His love.

Dear Lord, thank You for Your love and mercy on me. I am sorry for the many occasions that I have failed You. May You grant me the strength and discipline to surrender control in all aspects of my life so I may yield to You and live my life to honour and glorify You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. How does God coming down to earth and living among humans encourage you?
2. In this season of Lent, what are some areas in your life that you are struggling with? Are you prepared to surrender them to God?
3. As a Christian, are you witnessing boldly for God? If not, why? How would you challenge yourself to be missional and share your faith boldly with people around you who need to hear the Good News?

[**John 1:19-34**]

John the Baptist Denies Being the Messiah

¹⁹Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

²²Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

²³John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"

²⁴Now the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

²⁶"I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know.

²⁷He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

²⁸This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

John Testifies About Jesus

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ³¹I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

³²Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."

Pointing People To Jesus

By Chan Wai Lup, Chairperson, Discipleship and Nurture

This passage presents John the Baptist as having a very clear sense of who he is and the calling that God has for his life. His sole purpose was to lead the people to God by revealing Christ as their Messiah. His focus was never on himself or what he did, although he was prominent in baptising the people in the Jordan River.

I am reminded that as God's child and bondservant, I too have been called by God to various roles, be it in my work or church ministry. Although the roles may vary in the different seasons of my life, the purpose remains the same: to point people to Jesus.

When I was in my mid-forties, God gave me a vision on building marriages on God's Word in our church. I was tasked by our pastor to start a marriage enrichment ministry. Marriages were breaking down and Christian couples were not spared. My wife and I felt convicted that the answer is to proactively build Christian marriages by pointing people to Jesus and God's Word right from the start. We created and conducted marriage enrichment courses and retreats with a focus on God's Word as a basis for building marriages and resolving marital issues. God brought more than a hundred couples, young and old to participate in the programmes. As a result, a community of couples who desired to proactively build their marriages was established over the years we served in the ministry.

It was easy for people to identify my wife and me as the faces behind the marriage enrichment ministry. While we encouraged mentoring in marriages, God also reminded us that the purpose of our ministry is to point people to Jesus, not to ourselves. In the words of John the Baptist in John 3:30 – "He (Jesus) must increase, but I must decrease". It was hence timely for my wife and I to step out of the marriage enrichment ministry and serve in a totally different one. So often, God brings me out of my comfort zone in ministry so that I may always depend on Him and not on what I have achieved. Yet, no matter which ministry I serve in or what role I play, the purpose remains the same: to point people to Jesus. This is one thing I have to constantly remind myself of. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. John the Baptist has a very clear sense of who he is and the calling that God has for his life. How about you? How would you know that what you are doing is God's calling for you? How can you go about determining God's role for you in this season of your life?
2. Have you experienced God calling you or taking you out of your comfort zone in your work or your church ministry? What have those experiences taught you?
3. Consider how your current work and ministry can help point people to Jesus. What are you led to do?

[John 1:35-51]

John's Disciples Follow Jesus

³⁵The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

³⁷When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

³⁹"Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). ⁴²And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

⁴⁴Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

⁴⁶"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.

"Come and see," said Philip.

⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

⁴⁸"How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

⁴⁹Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."

⁵⁰Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." ⁵¹He then added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' the Son of Man."

3 Phrases

By *Alex Lai*, LCEC Vice Chairperson; Associate Lay Leader

In John 1:35-51, Jesus begins His ministry by calling His first disciples. Jesus invites them to come and see and abide in Him. As I read these verses, three phrases stood out for me.

1. What do you want?

When John the Baptist pointed out to his two disciples that Jesus was passing by, they started to follow Him. Jesus turned around and asked them, "What do you want?" Jesus did not ask the two disciples who they were seeking but what they were seeking. Jesus wanted to know why they were following Him. Likewise, Jesus is asking me the same question today. What am I seeking? Why am I following Him? Am I following Jesus for my personal agenda? Am I following Jesus out of habit as I have been a Christian for a long time?

2. Where are you staying?

The two disciples replied to Jesus, "Rabbi, where are You staying?" Interestingly, the word "stay" is the same Greek word that means to abide or remain. Jesus used the same word in John 15 when He told His disciples that He is the vine, and they are the branches; if they abide in Him, He will abide in them. The two disciples wanted to get to know Jesus more by spending more time with Him. They wanted to be in His presence. Am I just going through the motions every morning when I read my bible? Or am I immersing myself in His word and seeking to be in His presence? Am I abiding in Christ as He abides in me?

3. Come and see

Jesus replied to the two disciples, "Come and see." Jesus invited them to spend time with Him and they remained with Him the rest of the day. They followed Jesus and became His lifelong disciples. Later, Jesus called Philip to follow Him. Andrew and Philip were so excited to follow Jesus that they went to find their brother and friend and said, "Come and see". Both were new disciples and they were not trained or equipped, but they went ahead to tell everyone about Jesus.

Truth be told, I struggle to share the good news and to invite others to church. This passage reminds me of two things. First, good things must be shared. Second, I just need to say, "Come and see" and God will do the rest. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Why are you following Jesus? What are you seeking?
2. Are you abiding in Jesus? Are you seeking to be in His presence?
3. In this year's focus on Discipleship in Society, who will you invite to "come and see"?

1st Sign of Jesus: Turning Water into Wine

[John 2:1-12]

Jesus Changes Water Into Wine

¹On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ²and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴"Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."

⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

⁷Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, ⁹and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

¹¹What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

¹²After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.

[*Lectio Divina* 1]

1. Today's Scripture passage is on the 1st sign of Jesus. Our pastors will be preaching on this Scripture passage at this weekend's worship services.
2. There is no devotion written by a church leader today. Instead, a church leader will lead you in a time of *lectio divina* (Latin for sacred reading) using the 4Rs (Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest). Click on the link: <https://wesley.sg/lectiodivina1> or scan the QR code on the right for the pre-recorded audio guide.
3. Alternatively, you may do your own reading and reflection using the guidelines (less steps 5 and 6) on page 6.



[John 2:13-25]

Jesus Clears the Temple Courts

¹³When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

¹⁴In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!” ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

¹⁸The Jews then responded to him, “What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?”

¹⁹Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

²⁰They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” ²¹But the temple he had spoken of was his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

²³Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. ²⁴But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. ²⁵He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person.

The Cleansing Of The Temple

By *Justin Ong, Associate Lay Leader*

The passage from John 2:13-25 describes Jesus cleansing the Temple in Jerusalem. Upon witnessing merchants and money changers exploiting the sacred space, Jesus drove them out with a whip and overturned their tables. This dramatic event underscored His fervent devotion to God's house and emphasised the need for reverence and purity in worship.

By expelling those who had turned the Temple into a marketplace, Jesus highlighted the sanctity of places dedicated to prayer. His actions served as a powerful reminder of the essential holiness of worship spaces, which must remain free from exploitation and distractions.

Moreover, Jesus' prediction of His death and resurrection marked Him as the true Temple, the ultimate meeting place between God and humanity. This act reinforces the necessity of focusing exclusively on God, free from worldly concerns.

The cleansing of the Temple serves as a profound metaphor for the purification of our hearts. Jesus' forceful actions remind us to eliminate anything that diverts us from genuine worship, including internal attitudes such as greed, pride, and selfishness. We are called to demonstrate a fervent dedication to God and maintain the reverence of our worship through prayer, adherence to God's commandments, and bringing honour to His name in every aspect of our lives.

There was a time just after my graduation where I would immerse myself in building my career. With the added responsibilities of marriage and children, I often found myself pressed for time, frequently skipping church on Sundays to meet project deadlines. My dedication in the professional realm bore fruit with several promotions, and I felt gratified by my achievements.

However, with the tragic event on September 11, 2001, the economy took a downturn, and my company decided to close down my division. The news hit me like a storm, leaving me in a state of shock and helplessness. It was in that moment of profound uncertainty that I turned back to God, seeking His guidance and comfort through earnest prayer. In His boundless grace, God provided me with not just one, but two job offers, giving me the opportunity to choose my new path. This divine intervention was a turning point in my life.

Since then, I have felt a renewed sense of purpose and gratitude, leading me to serve actively in church. I joined various ministries, dedicating my time and efforts to serve the Lord. This journey of faith has not only enriched my spiritual life but has also been a transformative process, shaping my attitude and temperament. Through service, prayer, and obedience to God's commandments, I strive to honour His name in every aspect of my life, maintaining the reverence of my worship and demonstrating a fervent dedication to Him.■

[Reflection Questions]

1. How can you ensure that your places of worship and your heart remain free from distractions in order to focus on God?
2. What internal attitudes or external habits might you need to "cleanse" in order to deepen your relationship with God?
3. Reflecting on your own experiences, how has God intervened in your life during times of uncertainty

[John 3:1-21]

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

¹Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. ²He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

³Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

⁴“How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

⁵Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

⁹“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰“You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things?

¹¹Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹²I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. ¹⁴Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. ¹⁹This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

Who Is Jesus To You?

By Sylvia Yeo, Associate Lay Leader

Nicodemus was a senior rabbi who knew the scriptures. Having known what Jesus had been doing, he conceded that this Rabbi Jesus must be God-sent; in Nicodemus’ circles, it was heretical to even think that. Still, he sought Jesus under the cover of darkness.

Jesus recognised Nicodemus' sincere desire for the Kingdom of God but was trapped by years of accumulating what he thought could get him in - a righteous standing. It was true that only the righteous could enter the Kingdom, but there is more. Nicodemus, as teacher of Israel, did not understand that the issue was also spiritual. Man does not need to work to get in.

Nicodemus must be 'born again' to enter the Kingdom of God. This new birth is not physical, but spiritual. No one can enter God's kingdom without being 'born again'. How are we to be born again? By faith in Jesus, the Son of Man who would be lifted up. Nicodemus would eventually see the light and the truth when Jesus was raised upon the cross (John 19:39-40).

Nicodemus came to Jesus seeking truth. It was until he saw Jesus on the cross (John 19), that he understood and believed. The apostle John understood, having witnessed both the death and the resurrected Lord and saw the deeper truth. From verse 16, John explains that God sent Jesus to be punished for our sin because He deeply loves us.

From verse 19 to 21, John uses the imagery of Light and Darkness. Those who are truly God's and desire Him, live in the light of His truth. To stay in the dark is to avoid the truth. To avoid the truth is to avoid Jesus.

My family was living in a church when I was born because the pastor was my father. The parsonage and the church environment was my childhood. For many years and even now, I have benefitted from the love, and prayers of uncles and aunties growing up in the church community. Being born into a Christian family is a privilege I do not take for granted. I learnt a long time ago that growing up in church and surrounding myself with Christian friends does not make me more 'holy' or right with God. It is only when I personally accept the Lord Jesus into my life and acknowledge Him as my Saviour that I am born again as a child of God. Jesus awakened Nicodemus to the truth. That righteousness is not found in human status, or work, but in Jesus.

It's not who I am. It's who Jesus is to me.

Regularly attending service, or even serving in church or ministry does not necessarily bring me closer to God. In today's reading, God is asking me to reset my ideas of being right. May I receive Jesus in simple faith. He is the One who is my righteousness. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Who is Jesus to you?
2. V16 says: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." What steps are you taking to heed this truth?
3. All God wants is for us to have faith and believe in Jesus. Who can we share this with?

[**John 3:22-36**]

John Testifies Again About Jesus

²²After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. ²³Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptized. ²⁴(This was before John was put in prison.) ²⁵An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. ²⁶They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."

²⁷To this John replied, "A person can receive only what is given them from heaven.

²⁸You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.'

²⁹The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. ³⁰He must become greater; I must become less."

³¹The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. ³²He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony.

³³Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. ³⁴For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. ³⁵The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. ³⁶Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

Decreasing So That He May Increase

By Yeo Su Chen, Chairperson, Communications

John 3:30 resonates with me: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (ESV).

This verse, spoken by John the Baptist, encapsulates the essence of humility and purpose within the Christian life. John, the forerunner of Christ, understood his role was to prepare the way and elevate the Messiah, not himself.

In my own life, embracing the principle of me decreasing and God increasing presents a lifelong challenge. In a world obsessed with self-promotion and the pursuit of recognition, John the Baptist's example seems radical. Yet, it is precisely this radical humility that allows God to work through us most effectively. To truly "decrease," or "become less", I must prioritise fulfilling God's purpose above my own selfish desires. I must decrease so that God can take over the wheel.

To decrease so that God can increase in my life, I must focus on:

1. Prioritising prayer
2. Surrendering to and trusting God
3. Practising servant leadership

I will:

1. Intentionally create space for God in my daily life, to become more attuned to His will and less reliant on my own limited understanding. This means reducing my time spent on distractions like social media, unnecessary social or unproductive activities and excessive worry, and increasing time dedicated to prayer, Scripture reading, and solitude with Him.
2. Surrender to God allowing Him to take the lead. By releasing my anxieties and fears to Him, I can experience the peace and freedom that come from trusting in His plan. This involves decreasing my compulsive need to control every aspect of my life and increase my willingness to let go of outcomes.
3. Practise servant leadership by putting the needs of others first and allowing God to work through me and demonstrate His love to the world. This requires decreasing my focus on personal desires and control and increasing my efforts in serving and empowering those around me.

Lord, help me to put aside my own pride and desires so that You may be glorified in my life. Show me how I can decrease so that You may increase. In Jesus' name, Amen. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. What is your understanding of verse 30, "He must become greater; I must become less"?
2. Is Jesus taking centre stage in your life? If not, why not?
3. What is the one thing you need to surrender to God so that He will increase in your life, and you decrease?

[John 4:1-26]

Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman

¹Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—²although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ³So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

⁴Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"

⁸(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

¹¹"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

¹³Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

¹⁵The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

¹⁷"I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

¹⁹"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹"Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

²⁵The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

²⁶Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

Meeting Jesus: A Life-Changing Encounter

By *Tho Lye Sam, Chairperson, Lay Personnel Committee*

This passage tells the story of Jesus meeting a Samaritan woman at a well. He surprises her by asking for water, breaking cultural barriers as Jewish men didn't usually speak to Samaritan women. Jesus then speaks of "living water" that gives eternal life, reveals His knowledge of her life, and teaches that true worship is about worshipping God in Spirit and truth. Finally, He declares that He is the Messiah.

I imagine myself as that woman, having such a life-changing encounter with Jesus!

Reflecting on this, I draw three lessons:

1. Verse 10, 'If you knew the gift of God...,' takes me back to when I first received salvation through a friend who invited me to an outreach event. Her action changed my life, and I'm very grateful she planted the seed of faith in me. Now, I ask myself, how can I be a 'seed planter'? As I reflect on Discipleship in Society, I feel God nudging me to step out of my comfort zone - perhaps to go on a mission trip, something I've never done before.
2. Jesus sees right through me, just as He did with the Samaritan woman. He knows my struggles, past, and weaknesses, yet He meets me with grace and mercy. I can't hide from God; I must come to Him honestly, sharing my heart. In the same way, I should strive to be genuine with others, reflecting Christ's love through my words, actions, and intentions.
3. "Worship God in Spirit and in truth" (verse 24) reminds me that God cares more about the state of my heart than the place of worship. While attending church is important, true worship happens when I honour Him with sincerity and align my life with His Word. By staying rooted in scriptures, praying faithfully, and living in His truth, I can worship Him daily and reflect His love wherever I go.

As I strive to live out my faith, I pray for the courage to share His gift of salvation, the humility to come before Him with honesty, and the commitment to worship Him in Spirit and truth. May my life point others to the living water that only Jesus can give. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. How would you describe the "gift of God" to someone who hasn't experienced it?
2. How can you show grace and love to others in our community, especially those who are marginalised?
3. How can you cultivate a heart of true worship?

[John 4:27-45]

The Disciples Rejoin Jesus

²⁷Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

²⁸Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people,

²⁹“Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?”

³⁰They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

³¹Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”

³²But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

³³Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”

³⁴“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

³⁵Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest?’ I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. ³⁸I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

Many Samaritans Believe

³⁹Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹And because of his words many more became believers.

⁴²They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

Jesus Heals an Official’s Son

⁴³After the two days he left for Galilee. ⁴⁴(Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.) ⁴⁵When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, for they also had been there.

The Best Good News Is Knowing The Saviour Of The World

By Eric Ang, Chairperson, Finance

I am encouraged by my assigned Scripture passage to share this story.

In December 2014, about a week to Christmas, I attended the funeral of my friend’s wife. At the funeral, his daughter asked that I keep in touch with her dad who was baptised together with her mum but she wasn’t sure of his salvation. I politely acknowledged but felt inadequate to follow up.

That evening, I was burdened as the question kept popping up "Does he know the Messiah?" The prompting intensified. "Just invite him to the Christmas service." I texted my friend and he acknowledged. The little faith in me concluded that he wouldn't come but I had done my part. I was therefore very excited when he accepted my invitation.

I felt very encouraged after the Christmas service and asked God, what's next? "Invite him to the Watch Night Service", and my immediate response was, "God, are you kidding! That's on New Year's Eve and a service over midnight!" Well, I felt the same burden so I invited him. To my surprise, he came. By then, I knew this wasn't me but God doing the work. I therefore asked God what was next and the prompt was to invite him to join me for BSF every Monday evening. I obediently sent out the invitation, telling myself that God was testing my obedience. As the saying goes, the rest is history. My friend joined BSF and attended class faithfully.

The story doesn't end there. We were in the 2nd year of BSF studying the Book of Revelation. During the one-week break in March, my friend made his first visit to his ancestral village in China. One week later, his daughter notified me that he had collapsed and died at the airport whilst waiting for his flight back. It was the most shocking and devastating news.

His daughter brought his ashes back and told me she felt assured of her father's eternal salvation. For her, there is closure and God even granted him his wish to visit his village.

As I end this story, I can't help but wonder in amazement how God had reached out to my friend. I am glad my friend chose to spend the last 15 months knowing that Jesus is his Messiah. I am thankful for the opportunity God has provided me to join him in his journey.

What have I learnt from John 4:27-45 as I recounted my friend's story:

- * My best good news is knowing that Jesus really is the Saviour of the world (v42).
- * The best gift that my Saviour brings is eternal salvation. Unfortunately, many still do not know.
- * I have the best partner in God, who wants me to intentionally sow and/or reap from the work that has already been done (v36). Jesus is asking me to open my eyes to the field that is ripe for harvest (v35).

This Lent, let us honour God in partnering Him for His purpose that Jesus came to fulfil and give eternal life (v34).

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of Jesus, Saviour of the world.

[Reflection Questions]

1. Jesus' food "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work" (v34). What is your food?
2. Open your eyes and look at the fields (v35b). Is there anyone you know who is ready to hear the good news and hence ripe for harvest?
3. Is God sending you to share the good news with this person, so that you may reap the benefits from what others have sowed?

2nd Sign of Jesus: Healing the Official's Son
[**John 4:46-54**]

⁴⁶Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

⁴⁸“Unless you people see signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”

⁴⁹The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”

⁵⁰“Go,” Jesus replied, “your son will live.”

The man took Jesus at his word and departed. ⁵¹While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. ⁵²When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, “Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him.”

⁵³Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and his whole household believed.

⁵⁴This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

[**Lectio Divina 2**]

1. Today's Scripture passage is on the 2nd sign of Jesus. Our pastors will be preaching on this Scripture passage at this weekend's worship services.
2. There is no devotion written by a church leader today. Instead, a church leader will lead you in a time of lectio divina (Latin for sacred reading) using the 4Rs (Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest). Click on the link: <https://wesley.sg/lectiodivina2> or scan the QR code on the right for the pre-recorded audio guide.
3. Alternatively, you may do your own reading and reflection using the guidelines (less steps 5 and 6) on page 6.



[John 5:1-18]

The Healing at the Pool

¹Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. ²Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. ³Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. ⁴⁵One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

⁷“Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”

⁸Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” ⁹At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, ¹⁰and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”

¹¹But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”

¹²So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”

¹³The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

¹⁴Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.” ¹⁵The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

The Authority of the Son

¹⁶So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. ¹⁷In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” ¹⁸For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

Am I The Invalid?

By ***Cheryl Seow***, President, Women's Society of Christian Service

Jesus' healing of the invalid man at Bethesda was one of the many miracles He had performed. The invalid was not only paralysed - verses 1 to 18 also give a glimpse of his spiritual condition. This, in turn, has made me wonder if my own spiritual health is like that of the invalid.

The invalid evaded Jesus' straightforward question, the response to which should have been an obvious "Yes, I want to be healed". Instead, he took the opportunity to complain to Jesus about his helpless state. Jesus told him to get up, pick up his mat and walk, and thereafter returned to urge the healed man to stop sinning. Yet, the man reported Jesus to the Pharisees, when he should have had a sense of gratitude and repent of his sins.

I see two main learning points for myself from these verses.

First, I ask myself if there is any part of my life where I have lived in a state of prolonged helplessness, blaming others for my predicament, and evading God's questions and prompting. Upon much reflection, it is sadly true that there are such periods in my life. I now know I need to surrender these to God, and trust in His love for me and His plans for me to prosper. I am His work-in-progress.

The second lesson is that it is entirely possible for God to bestow blessings on me, while my spiritual health may be poor. Such is God's amazing grace! In times of hardship or in seasons of waiting to hear from God, it has been easy for me to lose hope, feel that God is "far away", and to have a complaining, critical and controlling spirit when things do not go my way. It has been harder for me to instinctively count God's blessings showered upon me, even though I am an undeserving wretch.

In my ongoing journey towards a closer walk with God, I have found that practising the daily spiritual disciplines of silence and solitude time with God have been helpful, in terms of self-reflection and hearing from God (instead of me constantly doing the “talking” and not listening). The spiritual communities I have are also equally important, for these are where I can be my authentic self, where I receive (and in turn, give) agape love, encouragement, support, and guidance, as I press on in living out God's commands. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. How does the invalid's character traits speak to you?
2. Have there been situations at work, home, church or elsewhere where you have experienced conflict or legalism? How has God been at work during those times?
3. There are many brothers and sisters in our society who are suffering from illness and/or disabilities. Following in Jesus' footsteps, what ways can you or your small group reach out to them, build friendships, journey alongside them, so that they may have a glimpse of God's love and goodness?

[**John 5:19-47**]

¹⁹Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. ²⁰For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. ²¹For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. ²²Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

²⁴“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

²⁸“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned. ³⁰By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

Testimonies About Jesus

³¹“If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. ³²There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is true.

³³“You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. ³⁴Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. ³⁵John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

³⁶“I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me. ³⁷And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, ³⁸nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. ³⁹You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰Yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

⁴¹“I do not accept glory from human beings, ⁴²but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. ⁴³I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. ⁴⁴How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?”

⁴⁵“But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. ⁴⁶If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. ⁴⁷But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?”

Choose Life!

By Adam Leong, Chairperson, Family Life Ministry

As I read today's passage to reflect and write this devotional, I asked God to reveal an area in my life that has not been pleasing to Him.

Verse 40 “yet you refuse to come to me to have life” jumped out at me.

Being a follower of Christ is a challenging undertaking. It is not about behavioural conditioning but heart transformation. It is not so much what I do as a believer but why I do what I do.

I used to think that being a follower of Christ is all about bible study, quiet time, praying, etc. Don't get me wrong. All the above are good spiritual disciplines and should be practised.

However, when I do not allow His Word to change my heart and attitudes, when I allow sinful areas of my life to take precedence over my spiritual walk with Jesus, I am not choosing Life!

John 14:6

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

LENT 2025 | DAY 12

Tuesday, 18 March 2025

Let's be real here, it is not easy choosing Life (Jesus), sometimes.

I have a bad temper. I can get easily offended by others and if I am not careful, I will retaliate by taking revenge. I have learned that my bad temper has its roots in pride. So deep down in my heart I am prideful.

God has been gracious to me, showing me the error of my ways in what it means to forgive others (even before they ask for it), to love your enemies, and to have a humble and gentle spirit.

Ephesians 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

It is not easy to obey Jesus, to be like Him, but He has given me the Holy Spirit to help me in my darkest trials.

You see, Jesus is not interested in what I do for Him. He is only interested if I am being transformed by His Word, the life that He lived, His amazing grace. If I am being transformed by Him, then what I do will be a response to His work in my heart.

This transformation is on-going. Day after day, as the trials come my way, how will I choose to live my life? Will I choose to allow His humility and gentleness to mould my heart or will I be stubborn and go back to my prideful ways?

I am still a work in progress and by His grace, He will carry me through as I continue to choose Life!

My prayer is that as you reflect on His Word, you will choose Life too! ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Is there an area in your life that has not been surrendered to Jesus?
2. Why has this not been surrendered yet?
3. What will happen if you surrender this area to Jesus?

[John 6:1-15]

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

¹Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), ²and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. ³Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. ⁴The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

⁵When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” ⁶He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

⁷Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!”

⁸Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, ⁹“Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”

¹⁰Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). ¹¹Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

¹²When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.” ¹³So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

¹⁴After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” ¹⁵Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

Offering What I Have For God To Use For His Purpose

By Koh Geok Cheng, Chairperson, Wesley Glowing Years Ministry

Today's reading tells the familiar story of Jesus feeding the five thousand with 5 loaves and 2 fishes.

What struck me this time was the little boy. No one would have paid attention to him with his five loaves and two fishes. Yet Jesus used him and the little he had that he was willing to offer, for a greater purpose.

I have been a homemaker for over 20 years. The first time I started serving God was not in church, but in my sons' primary school 20 years ago. I was asked to help out in children's worship during their chapel time and FunTime, programmes ran by parent volunteers. I remember saying no as I was not serving in Sunday school in church and I never went to Sunday school. However, with the encouragement of other parents whom I had formed friendships with, I took a step of faith and agreed to do it together with them. God taught me and I learned action songs, powerpoint and even led in worship and prayer. I didn't expect that even today, my sons' primary school friends remember that I did worship during their primary school days! There was one very mischievous boy in particular back then who was inattentive during the programmes. I was encouraged that he remembered the worship songs, and is now a mature Christian, walking closely with God and serving in youth ministry in church.

We often think that we don't have the skills and someone better can do it. The truth from today's reading is that we will never know how God can use us and the little we have for His greater purpose until we say yes and be willing to offer what we have and trust Him with childlike faith like the little boy.

In this year's church theme, Discipleship in Society, we are called to reach out to the least, the last and the lost through outreach and missions. We may think that what we can offer and do is not much, but God can use it to fulfil His greater purpose when we offer it up to Him for His use. I need to be willing to avail myself for God to use me.

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for showing me that nothing is too small or insignificant for Your use. Help me to be willing to avail of my time and my gifts to be used by You when You ask me to. Give me the faith and trust that You will work through it for Your greater purpose to help me be an effective witness for You to help more know You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Can you recall a time when God called you to offer what seemed small and insignificant but God used it for a bigger purpose? Give thanks and remember it as an anchor of faith.
2. What is God calling you to do now that you think is impossible to do? Offer it to the Lord.
3. Will you offer your five loaves and two fishes to reach out to the least, the last and the lost in society as you are called to do in this year's theme, Discipleship in Society, and be a witness for God?

[John 6:16-21]

Jesus Walks on the Water

¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, ¹⁷where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. ¹⁸A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. ¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. ²⁰But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." ²¹Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

The Eye On Your Storm

By Lynn Lau, Honorary Treasurer, Local Church Executive Committee

What storm of life are you in today? Are you confronted by illness, loss, broken relationship, financial hardship, unfair treatment, and things which frustrate, frighten, and despair you?

The disciples certainly felt the frustration, fear and despair. Here they were, obeying Jesus (Matthew 14:22) and yet, their **obedience still led them into a storm** which they couldn't overcome themselves.

In an earlier incident (Matthew 8:23-27), Jesus and the disciples also experienced a great storm on the sea and they saw Jesus rebuke the winds and calm the raging seas.

Were they frustrated because they thought they could have done better by themselves, this time without Jesus? After all, they were experienced fishermen. Were they afraid this time because Jesus was not on the boat with them? Were they in despair because they had no way out?

Perhaps they forgot or did not know that **Jesus' eye was on them all the time** from the start of their boat trip. And He saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. Jesus was just waiting for the appropriate time to intervene. That hour had come and it was about the fourth watch of the night that He came to them, walking on the sea..." (Mark 6:47-48). His eye was on them all this time.

So it is with us in our daily struggles. We often ask, "Why do you not answer my prayers, Jesus? Why are you taking so long? Do you not see the difficulty I am in?" Jesus may not rush over to remove the source of my pain, frustration, fear and despair immediately. But His eye is on me.

On another note, Jesus walking on water was like the 20th miracle Jesus performed with his disciples around. Most of His miracles were shown to unbelieving people to help them believe. Why did Jesus show a miracle to those who were already followers, and who had witnessed 19 other miracles?

"The disciples were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, .. **their hearts were hardened.**" (Mark 6:52) So it is with me. Jesus has helped me countless times throughout my life. I have seen His supernatural power, I have seen His miracles. Yet, when I am confronted with a new problem, I often turn to rely on myself and am impatient to see immediate results, and end up feeling frustrated, fearful and in despair. I forget that Jesus has His eye on me, and helps me as I surrender the problem to Him. That's perhaps why Jesus lovingly continued to meet the disciples at their level, and showed them one more miracle. Just as He would for me.

"And when they (Jesus and Peter) got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying "Truly you are the Son of God."" (Matthew 14:33). May that be my daily praise. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Recount how Jesus has been faithful and helped you in the past. Praise Him and worship Him for what He has done in our lives.
2. What storm of life are you in the midst of today? Do you see God's hand to help you? Would you trust Him to meet you at your level? Would you turn to Him and surrender your pain, frustration, fear and despair?
3. What does our Lord wish you to do for His Kingdom? His eyes are upon you and He will empower you even if you feel that it is beyond your own strength. Would you take a step of faith and boldness for His Kingdom, at home, in the marketplace, in our communities?

[**John 6:22-71**]

²²The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. ²³Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

Jesus the Bread of Life

²⁵When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

²⁶Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

²⁸Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

²⁹Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

³⁰So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

³²Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

³⁵Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

⁴¹At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” ⁴²They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven?’”

⁴³“Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered. ⁴⁴“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. ⁴⁶No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only

he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. ⁵⁰But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

⁵²Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

⁵³Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. ⁵⁶Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Many Disciples Desert Jesus

⁶⁰On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”

⁶¹Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶²Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! ⁶³The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. ⁶⁴Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. ⁶⁵He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.”

⁶⁶From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

⁶⁷“You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve.

⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

⁶⁹We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

⁷⁰Then Jesus replied, “Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!” ⁷¹(He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

Food That Lasts

By Lim Bi Xiu, Pastoral Team Member, Children's Ministry

For this devotion, the following verses stood out to me:

v27: Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.

v29: The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.

LENT 2025 | DAY 15

Friday, 21 March 2025

v33: For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

v35: I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

v51: This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

v68, 69: Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."

In today's reading, Jesus described Himself as the bread of life, superior to the manna that came down from heaven to Moses and the people, for those who eat of it would live forever. He told His disciples and the Jews that instead of focusing on gathering and working for food that spoils, they should work for food that gives eternal life, and the work is simply to believe in the one God has sent. This is a profound and difficult teaching, especially for the people at that time, as they had no idea how Jesus would give His flesh for the world.

Now, knowing that Jesus has sacrificed his life by dying on the cross for us, giving His flesh and blood for the world, how do I hold on to Jesus as the Bread of my life? It is easy to be caught up in the world's chasing after tangible things, trying to satisfy my appetite with material things I can see and food I can eat. However, working for these things can never truly satisfy me; instead, they distract me from the true Bread, Jesus. Physically, it is wonderful to never go hungry and never be thirsty; how much more wonderful is it for my spirit to never hunger and never thirst!

The faithful response of Simon Peter to Jesus really encourages me. Having recognised Jesus as the Holy One of God, who has the key to eternal life, he boldly proclaimed it! I want to be more disciplined in holding fast to the Word of God, to boldly trust and proclaim that God can give me what I need. May my life be a testimony to those around me.

Heavenly Father, forgive me for the times I put the things of the world over You, and got distracted by what can only bring temporary joy. Help me to fix my eyes on You, and to long after Your Word, the spiritual food that never leaves me hungry or thirsty. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Reflect on this statement of Jesus: "I am the bread of life" (v35). What was Jesus trying to teach His disciples?
2. Do you work for food that spoils? What steps can you take to work for food that endures to eternal life?
3. Why do you think many disciples found this teaching hard to accept and hence deserted Jesus (vv60-66)? What about you?

3rd Sign of Jesus: Healing the Man at the Pool

[John 5:1-11]

The Healing at the Pool

¹Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. ²Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. ³Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. ⁴ ⁵One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

⁷“Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”

⁸Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” ⁹At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, ¹⁰and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”

¹¹But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”

[*Lectio Divina* 3]

1. Today's Scripture passage is on the 3rd sign of Jesus. Our pastors will be preaching on this Scripture passage at this weekend's worship services.
2. There is no devotion written by a church leader today. Instead, a church leader will lead you in a time of lectio divina (Latin for sacred reading) using the 4Rs (Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest). Click on the link: <https://wesley.sg/lectiodivina3> or scan the QR code on the right for the pre-recorded audio guide.
3. Alternatively, you may do your own reading and reflection using the guidelines (less steps 5 and 6) on page 6.



[John 7:1-31]

Jesus Goes to the Festival of Tabernacles

¹After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him. ²But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near, ³Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. ⁴No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." ⁵For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

⁶Therefore Jesus told them, "My time is not yet here; for you any time will do. ⁷The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil. ⁸You go to the festival. I am not going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come." ⁹After he had said this, he stayed in Galilee.

¹⁰However, after his brothers had left for the festival, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. ¹¹Now at the festival the Jewish leaders were watching for Jesus and asking, "Where is he?"

¹²Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He is a good man."

Others replied, "No, he deceives the people."¹³But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders.

Jesus Teaches at the Festival

¹⁴Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. ¹⁵The Jews there were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having been taught?"

¹⁶Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me.

¹⁷Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. ¹⁸Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. ¹⁹Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?"

²⁰"You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered. "Who is trying to kill you?"

²¹Jesus said to them, “I did one miracle, and you are all amazed. ²²Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a boy on the Sabbath. ²³Now if a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing a man’s whole body on the Sabbath? ²⁴Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.”

Division Over Who Jesus Is

²⁵At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill? ²⁶Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? ²⁷But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.”

²⁸Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, ²⁹but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.”

³⁰At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. ³¹Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, “When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?”

God Makes All Things Beautiful In His Time

By Audrey Ng, Chairperson, Children's Ministry

From John 7:6-8, Jesus explained that the time had not yet come for him to reveal Himself. He also said the same thing to His mother in John 2 before turning water into wine. Jesus knew the will and plans of God and He also knew that there was a time for everything. He was working on a divine schedule and He was managing the pace at which people would be confronted with the reality of who He was.

A recent example of God's divine timing to me was in the running of our inaugural combined Children's Ministry (CM) camp in December 2024. Two annual camps for 155 children (preschool camp and primary level camp) were only possible with the support of an intergenerational team of CM and Between ministry teachers, and an army of tweens and youths who have stepped up in increasing numbers over the last three years. The tweens and youth made up more than half of the

LENT 2025 | DAY 17

Monday, 24 March 2025

volunteers at the camp, enabling intergenerational discipleship to take place and injecting exciting elements into the camp games!

I have learnt that, in God's time, He will raise up workers to carry out His plans. Sometimes when I get a glimpse of His next new and exciting plan, the thought of additional resources required makes me anxious, but He has shown me that He will provide the resources in His time, and He will confirm the time for His plans through corporate agreement and wisdom.

I pray that as God reveals His good plans for my career, family and in His ministry, I will act according to His divine schedule, wait expectantly and patiently for Him to "make the way" and not run ahead or become frustrated at long runways. Waiting on God's timing builds patience, trust, and reliance on Him. He makes all things beautiful in his time (Ecc 3:11). ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. We believe God's timing is perfect, but sometimes we get frustrated while waiting. Is there a plan that God is asking you to wait for according to His perfect timing?
2. What can you do or work on while waiting?
3. How are you preparing yourself, your family, your church ministry or small group to fulfil the plan which He has revealed to you in line with Discipleship in Society this year?

[**John 7:32-53**]

³²The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.

³³Jesus said, “I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me. ³⁴You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.”

³⁵The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?”

³⁶What did he mean when he said, ‘You will look for me, but you will not find me,’ and ‘Where I am, you cannot come?’?”

³⁷On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” ³⁹By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

⁴⁰On hearing his words, some of the people said, “Surely this man is the Prophet.”

⁴¹Others said, “He is the Messiah.”

Still others asked, “How can the Messiah come from Galilee? ⁴²Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David’s descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?” ⁴³Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. ⁴⁴Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

Unbelief of the Jewish Leaders

⁴⁵Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?”

⁴⁶“No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied.

⁴⁷“You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted. ⁴⁸“Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? ⁴⁹No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them.”

⁵⁰Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, ⁵¹“Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?”

⁵²They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”

⁵³Then they all went home,

Embracing Unconventional Ideas

By *Woon Kee Yang, Associate Lay Leader*

Jesus spoke with unparalleled authority and wisdom (v46) that provided hints of renewal, transformation, and salvation. As His words and actions of the day were out of the norm, some were intrigued with them, and some could not understand them. Furthermore, the Pharisees and priests were increasingly concerned about His influence over the common people.

Throughout history, unconventional or radical solutions that were forward-thinking have often been proposed by leaders to address deep-seated challenges. For instance, John Wesley's street preaching to those who would never set foot in a church and his emphasis on social justice and service to the poor brought renewal to the community. Similarly, Bishop William Oldham integrated education and faith-based Christian community service to uplift society that helped shape generations.

Unfortunately, an unintended consequence of doing or saying things differently can sometimes lead to rejection or misjudgement, no matter how well-intentioned the advice may be. Similarly, if we do not understand the will of God or what is to come through Him, like the Pharisees, we also tend to resist change especially when it unsettles our comfort zones.

Jesus was born to a commoner and raised in a humble community. However, His words and actions, rooted in divine purpose and eternal truth, were radical and counter-cultural. He welcomed sinners, tax collectors and outcasts, teaching love, forgiveness and humility which were seen as a threat to the status quo of social and religious norms; it certainly was not business as usual when Jesus claimed Himself to be the Messiah (Jn 4:25-26) and the Son of God (Jn 5:17-18).

Heavenly Father, we come before You with open hearts, seeking wisdom and guidance. Grant us the patience and humility to reflect deeply on Your Word, that we may better understand Your will and grow closer to You.

Help us to resist the temptation to be stubborn or close-minded; instead, give us the courage and curiosity of Nicodemus, that we may seek Your truth with sincerity and humility.

Teach us to foster understanding within our communities, that we may listen to others with grace, learn from different perspectives, and foster an environment of love, compassion and transformation.

May we remain open to Your transformative work, as Your Spirit renews our hearts and minds, even when it challenges us. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. How open are you to listening and embracing unconventional ideas or solutions that challenge the status quo, especially when they come from unexpected sources?
2. In what ways can you avoid being judgemental but instead approach others with curiosity and humility in seeking the truth (John 3)?
3. How can you foster better understanding and connection in your community at work, ministry and family?

[John 8:1-30]

¹but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

²At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” ⁶They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

⁹At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

¹¹“No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

Dispute Over Jesus’ Testimony

¹²When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

¹³The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”

¹⁴Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. ¹⁶But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. ¹⁷In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true.

¹⁸I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.”

¹⁹Then they asked him, “Where is your father?”

“You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” ²⁰He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.

Dispute Over Who Jesus Is

²¹Once more Jesus said to them, “I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come.”

²²This made the Jews ask, “Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, ‘Where I go, you cannot come?’”

²³But he continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins.”

²⁵“Who are you?” they asked.

“Just what I have been telling you from the beginning,” Jesus replied. ²⁶“I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.”

²⁷They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. ²⁸So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. ²⁹The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” ³⁰Even as he spoke, many believed in him.

I Can Conquer Sin Through Freedom In Christ

By Foo Yu Da, Chairperson, Witness & Evangelism

Despite the unbelief of the Jewish leaders (John 7:45-53), Jesus again went to the temple courts at dawn to teach (v1-2). There, the woman caught in adultery was brought before Him. Jesus' encounter with the woman showed me His heart in reaching out to sinners. He did not condemn the woman but instructed her to leave her life of sin (v11b). In the following verse, Jesus called the people to follow Him so that they “will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (v12). The final portion that spoke to me in relation to the above was to believe in Jesus to conquer death (v24).

The ongoing struggle with sinful inclinations is a real challenge to me. They strike when I least expect it, making me feel discouraged when I fail to live up to how I know I should. Today's reading is a powerful reminder that Jesus feels for sinners like me and is always reaching out to me. First and foremost, I am reminded that despite my sinful inclinations, He does not condemn me. It is by His grace that I am able to live a life without giving in to my fleshly inclinations. I cannot do it by

LENT 2025 | DAY 19

Wednesday, 26 March 2025

my own strength and I certainly will never be able to escape from this struggle by condemning myself. Instead, I need to focus on Jesus, to follow Him in His grace, truth, love, and to believe in His divine nature and power to transform me towards the light of life, and away from a life of sin. No matter how many times I fail, I will continue to focus, follow and believe in Jesus' transformative power for my life.

I will pray daily and remind myself that I have been freed from condemnation through the grace of Christ. I will have the light of life by focusing not on myself, but on following and believing in the divinity and power of Christ my Lord and Saviour. ■

[Reflection questions]

1. How have you been trying to overcome temptations?
2. What has been helpful or unhelpful?
3. How would a close relationship with Jesus empower you in your struggles and to "leave your life of sin"?

[**John 8:31-59**]

Dispute Over Whose Children Jesus' Opponents Are

³¹To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³²Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

³³They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

³⁴Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷I know that you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word. ³⁸I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father."

³⁹"Abraham is our father," they answered.

"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do what Abraham did. ⁴⁰As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. ⁴¹You are doing the works of your own father."

"We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."

⁴²Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. ⁴³Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! ⁴⁶Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? ⁴⁷Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

Jesus' Claims About Himself

⁴⁸The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"

⁴⁹"I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. ⁵¹Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death."

LENT 2025 | DAY 20

Thursday, 27 March 2025

⁵²At this they exclaimed, “Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. ⁵³Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?”

⁵⁴Jesus replied, “If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. ⁵⁵Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word.

⁵⁶Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.”

⁵⁷“You are not yet fifty years old,” they said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!”

⁵⁸“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” ⁵⁹At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

Liberating Truth

By **Gordon Tan**, Associate Lay Leader

John 8:31, 32 (Amplified Bible, Classic Edition)

³¹*So Jesus said to those Jews who had believed in Him, If you abide in My word [hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly My disciples.*

³²*And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free.*

Reading the passage, I was struck by how many times the word 'truth', and words related to knowing or knowledge appeared. This knowledge is about who knows God. I noticed that Jesus was addressing two sets of people amongst his audience - "the Jews who had believed him" and those who challenged his authority. The discourse that ensued concerned who the true children of Abraham were. In other words, it was about who belonged to God, in contrast to who belonged to the devil.

The essence of today's reading is crystalised in verses 31 and 32. I found the Amplified Bible version most instructive. To truly know God and become God's children, we need to abide in Jesus' Word. To abide is to "hold fast to My teachings

and live in accordance with them". In other words, to abide requires me not only to accept and believe in God's Word, it requires me to live as the Word of God instructs me. Head knowledge alone is insufficient to enable me to learn the truth. I believe that I must also adopt biblical principles to receive the truth that will set me free from sin's bondage.

As I reflect on what bondage to sin is, I see that it refers to my old habits, my carnal desires ("carry out your father's desires" [the devil's desires], v44). As long as I continue to yield to my will, to give in to my longings and addictions, I will not live in truth. In contrast, "whoever belongs to God hears what God says" (v47) will live in truth. It is only by living in this truth that I will be set free.

In addition, I need to hear what God says and live as He tells me to. When I do this more and more, the truth will set me free and allow me to live 'above' the bondages that bind me. It will free me to live as God has designed from the day He created me in His image.

Dear loving Father, I want to thank You that Your Truth will deliver me from my sinful ways. I thank You that You know me more than I know myself, and You continue to love and forgive me. I want to obey and walk in Your ways. Help me when I stumble and fall because I know I will. But I ask that Your everlasting love will pick me up and deliver me from evil. Thank You for Your abundant patience and forgiveness. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. How well do you know Jesus' teachings? What will you do to raise that awareness?
2. How has your journey been as a disciple of Jesus? What steps would you take to live out Jesus' teachings in your life?
3. Think of one experience or incident in which verse 32 ("Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free") came true for you. Thank God for it.

[John 9:1-41]

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

¹As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. ⁷“Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

⁸His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some claimed that he was.

Others said, “No, he only looks like him.”

But he himself insisted, “I am the man.”

¹⁰“How then were your eyes opened?” they asked.

¹¹He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

¹²“Where is this man?” they asked him.

“I don’t know,” he said.

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.”

¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.”

But others asked, “How can a sinner perform such signs?” So they were divided.

¹⁷Then they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”

The man replied, “He is a prophet.”

¹⁸They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man’s parents. ¹⁹“Is this your son?” they asked. “Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?”

²⁰“We know he is our son,” the parents answered, “and we know he was born blind. ²¹But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.” ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³That was why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. “Give glory to God by telling the truth,” they said. “We know this man is a sinner.”

²⁵He replied, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!”

²⁶Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

²⁷He answered, “I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?”

²⁸Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses! ²⁹We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.”

³⁰The man answered, “Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. ³²Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

³⁴To this they replied, “You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out.

Spiritual Blindness

³⁵Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

³⁶“Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.”

³⁷Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.”

³⁸Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.

³⁹Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.”

⁴⁰Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, “What? Are we blind too?”

⁴¹Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

Open The Eyes Of My Heart, Lord!

By *Jonathan Huang, Director of Administry*

Today's passage gives an account of Jesus healing a man who was blind from birth. Many had attributed this affliction to sin, either the man's, or his parents'. Jesus said that it was neither, and declared that "this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him" (v3).

The Pharisees were perplexed. Jesus had performed this miracle on the Sabbath! They simply could not believe that He was a godly man. Even after the blind man himself testified to Jesus' goodness, the Pharisees still did not believe.

It seems clear that John was contrasting the blindness of sight with the blindness of the Pharisees' hearts. We read in the surrounding chapters a series of exchanges with the Pharisees regarding Jesus' identity and actions. John demonstrated Jesus' divinity through His teachings and actions, including miracles such as this one. Simultaneously John showed Christ's rejection by the religious people of the day.

What good is physical sight if in having the ability to read and study the scriptures we lack the ability to believe with our hearts? Perhaps their physical sight had in fact blinded the Pharisees' hearts.

I grew up in a faithful Christian family, and read the scriptures daily, sometimes even zealously. However, I had not truly believed, just like the Pharisees. It was only after a spiritual awakening in my teenage years that I finally came to a genuine faith in Christ.

It was the same for John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, who, though being a Christian and Anglican priest for many years, had not truly believed. It was only on that fateful day at Aldersgate Street that Wesley came to believe in Jesus. He described his life-changing experience in these words, "while the leader was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation."

In the book "The Little Prince", the fox shares his secret – that "one sees only with the heart. What is essential is invisible to the eye." Spiritual blindness is a condition of the heart, and in this journey to the cross during Lent, we must examine ourselves, to ask God to remove the blindness in our hearts that prevents us from truly perceiving Christ.

My prayer: "Oh God, please remove my blindness, and allow me to seek you with all my heart. May I constantly seek your help to heal me so that others may say that the good works of God were displayed in my life. Lord I believe, help my unbelief!"

Lord we believe, help our unbelief! Amen. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Reflect on the passage today – what is God opening the eyes of your heart to?
2. Our blind spots are hard to detect – are there trusted spiritual friends you can give permission to in order to keep you in check?
3. Pray for yourself, and all your friends and loved ones, to receive sight from the Lord, so that the "works of the Lord might be displayed" in all of them!

4th Sign of Jesus: Feeding of the 5,000
[John 6:1-15]

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

¹Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), ²and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. ³Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. ⁴The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

⁵When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” ⁶He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

⁷Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!”

⁸Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, ⁹“Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”

¹⁰Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). ¹¹Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

¹²When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.” ¹³So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

¹⁴After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” ¹⁵Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

[**Lectio Divina 4**]

1. Today's Scripture passage is on the 4th sign of Jesus. Our pastors will be preaching on this Scripture passage at this weekend's worship services.
2. There is no devotion written by a church leader today. Instead, a church leader will lead you in a time of lectio divina (Latin for sacred reading) using the 4Rs (Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest). Click on the link: <https://wesley.sg/lectiodivina4> or scan the QR code on the right for the pre-recorded audio guide.
3. Alternatively, you may do your own reading and reflection using the guidelines (less steps 5 and 6) on page 6.



[**John 10:1-21**]

The Good Shepherd and His Sheep

¹“Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

⁷Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

¹¹“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

¹²The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

¹⁹The Jews who heard these words were again divided. ²⁰Many of them said, “He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?”

²¹But others said, “These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

Jesus The Good Shepherd

By *Estella Lau, Steward, Local Church Executive Committee*

In the passage, Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd, as opposed to the Pharisees who were supposed to shepherd God's people but instead behaved like a "hired hand". He also elaborated on the difference between a good shepherd and a hired hand.

A good shepherd:

- knows his sheep personally and intimately - "... calls his own sheep by name" (v3)
- provides guidance and protection - "leads them out, and goes before them" (v4)
- keeps his sheep safe and provides sustenance (v9)
- places his flock's welfare and interest before his own
- is willing to sacrifice his life for them
- does not abandon his sheep in the face of danger (v12)
- cares deeply for his sheep as they matter to him

Knowing that I have a Shepherd who knows me intimately, who has my welfare at heart, who watches over me night and day, and has even laid down His life for me, I can face every life situation - whether heart-lifting or heartbreaking - with hope and blessed assurance. This is the life that truly satisfies, the "life to the full" that Jesus promised in John 10:10.

I need to guard myself from settling for less when I stake my happiness on the temporal - things and personal achievements, my identity on job titles and accolades, and my security on my bank account.

How do I avail myself of this abundant life? Jesus said in John 17:3 that eternal life is knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ. Knowing Jesus is much more than knowing who He is; I need to develop my relationship with the Shepherd, place myself under His authority and entrust my life to Him.

The sheep will follow the shepherd because they know his voice. Jesus has called me to follow Him, but will I recognise my Shepherd's voice? I need to be intentional

in making space to encounter Him and to know Him more deeply. He has demonstrated the way to live life to the full - transformational habits which are good for my soul such as reading and living out His Word, prayer, solitude and service.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, because You are my Good Shepherd, I shall not want. You restore my soul and lead me in paths of righteousness. I want to know You more, give me grace to follow You no matter what it costs.

Life with You is what truly satisfies as Your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. Amen. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Jesus said in verse 14: "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me." How well do you know your Good Shepherd?
2. Do you follow Jesus the Good Shepherd when you hear His voice?
3. What is the one thing you would do to know Jesus better and hear His voice more clearly?

[**John 10:22-42**]

Further Conflict Over Jesus' Claims

²²Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. ²⁴The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

²⁵Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, ²⁶but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. ²⁷My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one."

³¹Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, ³²but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"

³³"We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

³⁴Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are "gods"?' ³⁵If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be set aside— ³⁶what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son?' ³⁷Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. ³⁸But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." ³⁹Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.

⁴⁰Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days. There he stayed, ⁴¹and many people came to him. They said, "Though John never performed a sign, all that John said about this man was true." ⁴²And in that place many believed in Jesus.

Listening To The Shepherd's Voice

By Tina Khoo, Pastoral Team Member, Membership & Volunteer Care

At the Feast of Dedication, Jesus was asked, "If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." His response pointed to His works: "The works I do in my Father's name testify about me" (v25). Yet, the deeper issue isn't clarity—it's receptivity. Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (v27).

This passage invites me to reflect on what it means to truly hear and follow the voice of Jesus. He speaks plainly through His Word, His Spirit, and His creation, yet much like the religious leaders in the passage, I find myself easily caught up in doubt, distractions and self-reliance.

Jesus assures His followers that those who listen to Him are safe in the Father's hand (v29). This isn't just a promise of protection—it's an invitation to rest in the security of His care. Lent is a time for me to examine my heart in order to remove barriers between me and God, and this passage challenges me to consider whether I'm truly tuned in to His voice or whether I have allowed other "voices" to drown Him out.

Two key practices that help me hear God's voice amidst all the daily distractions and noises are centering prayer and examen. Centering prayer disciplines me to be still and sit in silence daily at least once a day for 10-20 minutes. Silence is the gateway to experiencing God's presence. During this prayer time, I don't busy myself or occupy my mind with a lot of words, asking God to do this or that. Instead, I surrender myself into God's presence and allow Him to do whatever He wishes. The other practice that I do regularly is examen, usually in the evening. I reflect back on my day in terms of how aware I was of His presence and how I allowed my ego to direct my actions. Where I fall short of being Christlike, I resolve to do better not by my own strength but by relying on the Holy Spirit's promptings and strength. These two practices have been the mainstay in my spiritual formation. I'm keenly aware that God is speaking to me all the time, but it takes discipline to receive His word and live a life that is led by Jesus, my Lord and my Messiah. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. What voices or distractions in your life compete with your ability to hear the voice of Jesus?
2. How can you trust more deeply in the Father's assurance that you are held securely in His hand?
3. In what ways can you follow the Shepherd's voice more faithfully during this Lenten season?

[**John 11:1-44**]

The Death of Lazarus

¹Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²(This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) ³So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

⁴When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” ⁵Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, ⁷and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”

⁸“But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?”

⁹Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. ¹⁰It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.”

¹¹After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”

¹²His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” ¹³Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

¹⁴So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

¹⁶Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

Jesus Comforts the Sisters of Lazarus

¹⁷On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

²¹“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

²³Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

²⁷“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

²⁸After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” ²⁹When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

³²When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴“Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

³⁵Jesus wept.

³⁶Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

³⁷But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

³⁸Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹“Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

⁴⁰Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

⁴¹So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

⁴³When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

New Life In Christ

By *Felix Yeo, Senior Pastoral Team Member, Pastor-in-Charge's Office*

The passage promises a new life, a resurrected life, not one in the distant future but one that begins now and continues into eternity. As it says, "And everyone who lives and believes in me will never die" (v26a, ESV). This means that our journey with Jesus starts immediately, the moment we believe. Our transformation into this new and eternal life begins when Jesus calls out to us, "Come out!" (v43, ESV) and commands the release from the sins that bind us, saying, "Unbind him, and let him go" (v44, ESV).

For some, this transformation happens dramatically and quickly, like a sudden awakening. They experience a profound and immediate change in their lives. For most, it is a slow and struggling lifelong journey. This gradual transformation involves daily steps of faith, continuous learning, and persistent effort to overcome personal challenges and grow closer to Jesus.

One of the many lessons I have learned in my own journey of transformation is to surrender to Him and to let Him redirect all that I am to Himself and His purposes, to surrender to Him my sinful nature, my anger, my pride, my desires for worldly experiences and material wants. So that my anger can be redirected to righteous anger, toward injustice, to right wrongs and defend the weak. So that my pride is redirected to witnessing and boasting of His work and grace. So that my desires are redirected to desiring the things of God, things that belong to Him. Transformation happens when we are redirected, where our beliefs, values, habits, thoughts, and actions are redirected from serving our sinful nature and self-interest to serving our Lord who has given us new life.

Let me encourage you to let this redirection transform you. It happens day by day and is strengthened through daily reflection and prayer, bible study, Christian community support, and acts of kindness and grace, putting on Christ daily. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. What is it that the LORD wants to unbind in your life? Is it wilfulness, anger, envy, greed, pride, lust, or laziness?
2. What is it that the LORD has directed you to surrender so that He can give you a new life and purpose?
3. What are some steps you can take to obey God, so that you can turn away from darkness into His marvellous light?

[**John 11:45-57**]

The Plot to Kill Jesus

⁴⁵Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. ⁴⁶But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

“What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many signs. ⁴⁸If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.”

⁴⁹Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, “You know nothing at all! ⁵⁰You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.”

⁵¹He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, ⁵²and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. ⁵³So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

⁵⁴Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the people of Judea. Instead he withdrew to a region near the wilderness, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples.

⁵⁵When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. ⁵⁶They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple courts they asked one another, “What do you think? Isn’t he coming to the festival at all?” ⁵⁷But the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who found out where Jesus was should report it so that they might arrest him.

Am I Blinded And Stubborn?

By Alex Seow, Secretary, Local Church Executive Committee

Reflecting on the passage, verses 45-46 spoke to me: "Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done."

"What Jesus had done" ... Prior to this, Jesus had raised the dead Lazarus still wrapped with strips of linen like a mummy (v44) - an amazing miracle! Yet we see the Pharisees and priests scheming to kill Jesus.

What Jesus had done since His birth was saving, healing, loving and caring for the least, the last and the lost. His ministry was selfless yet costly. His opponents would have known and even witnessed firsthand the many good deeds and miracles that He had performed. Jesus was IN their midst. He was present and actively doing these works. Yet there were those who remained ardent sceptics and "went to the Pharisees."

I reflected honestly on my life and thought about the instances when I have acted like the Pharisees.

1. Am I Blinded?

God showed me warning signs and sent people my way to highlight the things in my life that were not right; yet I ignored these to my detriment. I was unable to think clearly and act reasonably due to being blinded by my biases, deep-rooted beliefs and self-deception.

2. Am I Stubborn?

Stubbornness is a conscious refusal to change despite knowing what God desires of me. This is an issue I grapple with. Like Paul wrote in Romans 7:19, I too know the good I ought to do and yet I choose to do evil things. This equates to disobedience to God. I have learnt to seek reconciliation and to say "sorry" in my relationships. Stubbornness is often the by-product of pride and so I need to remain watchful in the following ways:

- I will reflect on the “blind spots” I hold onto.
- I will ask someone to point out to me areas of stubbornness in my life.
- I will seek God daily and put on the mind of Christ.
- I will ask God to help me surrender my stubborn and wilful human nature, and to hear and obey what He wants to do in my life. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Could there have been other reasons why the Pharisees and Priests were “blind” to what Jesus was doing?
2. Reflect on your life over the past year. How have you been “blinded” and “stubborn” in your actions?
3. What actions will you take to address them?

[**John 12:1-19**]

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

¹Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ²Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. ³Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

⁴But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ⁵"Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." ⁶He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

⁷"Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. ⁸You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

⁹Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, ¹¹for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

¹²The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. ¹³They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Blessed is the king of Israel!"

¹⁴Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

¹⁵"Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;

see, your king is coming,
seated on a donkey's colt."

¹⁶At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

¹⁷Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. ¹⁸Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. ¹⁹So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

What Should I Bring?

By Liana Seah, Chairperson, BeTween Ministry

As I read this passage and the other passages about Mary, I long for the closeness that Mary had with Jesus - how she treasured Jesus, how much she longed to spend time with Him and how she wanted to give the best that she had for Jesus. It was with love and humility that she poured out a pint of pure nard on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. Such a beautiful picture.

I am sad thinking about how Jesus must have felt that night. He knew that the time that He had with His disciples, beloved family and friends on earth was coming to an end. He wanted to let them know how much He loved them. On the other hand, He also knew Judas was going to betray Him and that Judas loved money more than Jesus.

I love giving gifts, especially to those whom I really care about and love. I want them to know that they have been blessings in my life. I want them to know that I love and treasure them. But finding the right gift is so hard. It is challenging to know what they like. It gets easier when I have more conversations with them. When I prioritise spending time with them, I know what they desire and what will make them excited. Just like how Mary longed to spend time with Jesus, I, too, want to have the same desire to know Him more and to love Him more. Just like Mary, I want to bring Him the best gift to thank Him for all that He has done for me.

I will follow His leading to bring Him my gifts, my dedication and joyful obedience, as an expression of my love and gratitude for Him. He suffered and died so we can be freed from sins and come to the presence of our Holy God. In Matthew 25:40, it says "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

Thus, I need to remember that He wants to save everyone; therefore, I need to share His love and His salvation with others more boldly. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. If you were one of the disciples at the dinner held in Jesus' honour (v2), what would you say if you saw Mary pouring expensive perfume on Jesus' feet and wiping his feet with her hair?
2. What gift, if any, would you bring to Jesus?
3. Now, assuming you were in the crowd welcoming Jesus to Jerusalem, what would be your thoughts if you saw Jesus riding on a donkey? How would you respond to Him?

5th Sign of Jesus: Healing the blind man on the Sabbath

[John 9:1-16]

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

¹As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. ⁷“Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

⁸His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some claimed that he was.

Others said, “No, he only looks like him.”

But he himself insisted, “I am the man.”

¹⁰“How then were your eyes opened?” they asked.

¹¹He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

¹²“Where is this man?” they asked him.

“I don’t know,” he said.

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.”

¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others asked, “How can a sinner perform such signs?” So they were divided.

[**Lectio Divina 5**]

1. Today's Scripture passage is on the 5th sign of Jesus. Our pastors will be preaching on this Scripture passage at this weekend's worship services.
2. There is no devotion written by a church leader today. Instead, a church leader will lead you in a time of lectio divina (Latin for sacred reading) using the 4Rs (Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest). Click on the link: **<https://wesley.sg/lectiodivina5>** or scan the QR code on the right for the pre-recorded audio guide.
3. Alternatively, you may do your own reading and reflection using the guidelines (less steps 5 and 6) on page 6.



[John 12:20-50]**Jesus Predicts His Death**

²⁰Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

²³Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

²⁷“Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name!”

Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

³⁰Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

³⁴The crowd spoke up, “We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this ‘Son of Man?’”

³⁵Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. ³⁶Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.” When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

Belief and Unbelief Among the Jews

³⁷Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. ³⁸This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: “Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

³⁹For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere:

⁴⁰“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them.”

⁴¹Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him.

⁴²Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³for they loved human praise more than praise from God.

⁴⁴Then Jesus cried out, “Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. ⁴⁵The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. ⁴⁶I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

⁴⁷“If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. ⁴⁸There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. ⁴⁹For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. ⁵⁰I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”

The Paradox Of Discipleship

By Daryl Tay, Pastoral Team Member, BeTWEEN Ministry

The text uses paradox to convey profound spiritual truths and highlight the countercultural nature of Jesus' message. The passage begins with some Greeks seeking Jesus, foreshadowing the universal scope of His sacrifice. This prompts Jesus to speak about His impending death, introducing the central paradox of glorification through death.

Jesus illustrates this concept with the metaphor of a grain of wheat dying to bear fruit, redefining glory from worldly acclaim to sacrificial love. He extends this paradoxical principle to His followers, teaching that those who love their life will lose it, while those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. This depicts the radical nature of discipleship, where true fulfillment comes through self-denial and sacrifice, not self-preservation and worldly success.

The passage presents a series of inversions that challenge human expectations: glory through suffering, life through death, gain through loss, exaltation through humility. These paradoxes underscore the fact that God's ways often oppose human wisdom, revealing the “upside-down” quality of His kingdom. By using paradox, John creates contrasts between God's ways and ours, challenging readers to reconsider their assumptions about glory, life and discipleship. Ultimately, these paradoxes invite me to embrace a transformative worldview centered on Christ's sacrificial love.

LENT 2025 | DAY 29

Monday, 7 April 2025

The passage presents a challenge to embrace a countercultural mindset aligned with Jesus' teachings, rather than conforming to worldly wisdom. At its core, it calls me to a daily practice of dying to self, which involves surrendering my plans and allowing God to direct my path. This surrender is not a passive, but an active choice to trust in God's wisdom over my own.

The text also emphasises the importance of humility, reminding me that in God's upside-down kingdom, true greatness is found in service. This challenges me to serve others selflessly, to forgive quickly, and to be slow to take offence. Instead of seeking personal glory, I am called to redirect praise to God and others, recognising that any good in me is a result of His grace.

Most importantly, I want to make a daily choice to trust God's wisdom over worldly wisdom. In doing so, I hope to believe more and more each day that laying my life down for Christ leads to discovering a true and fuller life. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Are there instances in your life where you find Jesus' teachings contrary to worldly wisdom? How might you embrace a counter-cultural mindset to follow Jesus?
2. What are your assumptions about glory, life and discipleship? How do these assumptions square with Jesus' teachings in this passage?
3. Are there instances where you refrained from openly acknowledging or sharing your faith because of concerns over how others may respond? How would you overcome these concerns?

[**John 13:1-20**]

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

¹It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

²The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

⁸"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

⁹"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

¹⁰Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Jesus Predicts His Betrayal

¹⁸"I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.'

¹⁹"I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. ²⁰Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."

Accepting Christ's Lordship In My Life

By *Song Tao*, Chairperson, Youth Ministry

In verses 14-15, Jesus commanded the disciples to wash each other's feet, just as he has washed their feet. Often, we focus on this instruction to serve each other in humility and servanthood.

However, the act of feet washing actually began first with the disciples' having their feet washed, not with them washing each other's feet. Even as Simon Peter resisted, Jesus said, "If I do not wash you, you will have no share with me." It is sometimes difficult to allow somebody with so much authority, as Lord Jesus has, into our lives and bare before Him our dirtiness and sin. This is perhaps especially true when we have been Jesus' disciples for a long period of time. Yet, until we can be vulnerable and bare our dirty feet to Jesus, and give in to His authority to wash us, we have no share in His ministry.

Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet and subsequent instruction to them is but a foreshadowing of God's redemption of man on the cross, and the Great Commission He has given to His Church.

As a church leader, I personally find it very easy to fall into rhythms of service and doing. Can anyone deny how good it can feel to be able to serve others, to love them and to speak into their lives? Alas, this scripture reminds me of a first priority – of accepting Christ's lordship in my life, of my confession of sin, and my response to His costly grace.

As we as a Church embrace our missional call, I think God is not very much concerned with the outcome of our striving for Him. It is not about how many people's feet we washed, are washing, or will wash. After all, it is the Holy Spirit that works within each person to sanctify them.

Instead, I think it is about how we respond to God and to others, having had our feet washed and sins forgiven. To wash each other's feet, I think, is to recognise each other's dirtiness, and in remembering what Christ has done for us, to love and spur each other on towards Christian perfection. Let us be such a church community that all who pass by us, and all who we pass by, may have a glimpse of a God who has washed their feet too. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Give thanks for the work God has done in your life.
2. Reflect on areas of your life that you have not opened to Jesus' Lordship. Invite Him there.
3. Encourage somebody in their discipleship journey. Acknowledge the work that God has done and is doing in their life.

LENT 2025 | DAY 31

Wednesday, 9 April 2025

[John 13:21-38]

²¹After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, “Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.”

²²His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. ²³One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. ²⁴Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, “Ask him which one he means.”

²⁵Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?”

²⁶Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

So Jesus told him, “What you are about to do, do quickly.” ²⁸But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. ²⁹Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. ³⁰As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denial

³¹When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. ³²If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

³³“My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

³⁴“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

³⁶Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?”

Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

³⁷Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

³⁸Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!

Jesus Knows

By *Sarah Khoo, Pastoral Team Member, Children's Ministry*

John 13:21-38 gives us a picture of the last gathering of Jesus and His disciples. Jesus predicted Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial. What caught my attention were the reactions of the disciples to Jesus' words and actions. The responses of Judas and Peter offer much to reflect upon. I imagine myself in the scene, wondering how I would react to Jesus' words and actions. Would I be like Judas, the betrayer, or Peter, the denier?

"Jesus was troubled in spirit". His distress over Judas' impending betrayal expressed His human side. Being fully human, Jesus may have wanted to stop Judas because He knew the consequences of Judas' betrayal would only destroy Judas. But being fully God, Jesus knew that Judas' betrayal had to happen. Jesus allowed Judas to choose and do what he intended to. By this time Judas, who had been following Jesus for some time, might have realised that following Christ did not end with personal gain but rather required a selfless act of being a servant of God. This might have caused him to lose the motivation to follow Christ and subsequently lose his faith in Jesus. Judas gave in to Satan's temptation, indicating the spiritual darkness of his soul. Jesus knew this was coming.

Jesus knew that His act of obedience to the Father's will had reached its climax. After Judas left, Jesus gave His disciples a new commandment: Love one another. By imitating His love for them, they would show the world that they were His disciples.

Then He predicted the denial of Peter. Jesus knew Peter's heart and His intention was to humble him. Peter boasted about following in the footsteps of Jesus and being willing to lay down his life for his Master and Friend. But Jesus knew Peter would deny Him when he faced pressure that threatened his life. Peter needed to face his weakness. He needed God's guidance and strength to carry on the mission that Christ had for him. Jesus' prediction was to humble him without breaking Peter's faith and his commitment to obey God.

We know the end of the story: Peter was remorseful after his denial. Jesus knew Peter would repent. He saw Peter's heart and knew that despite his denial and boasting spirit, Peter would ultimately be faithful. This event helped Peter understand what it means to serve God in humility.

LENT 2025 | DAY 31

Wednesday, 9 April 2025

As I reflect, am I like Judas or Peter? The posture that I need to take is to come to God and allow the Holy Spirit to search my heart, just like the Psalmist says in Psalm 139:23: "Search me, O God, and know my heart."

I may have the same motivation of either Judas or Peter. I know Jesus loves them both. Jesus restored Peter for his pure heart and faithfulness, but Judas fell into spiritual darkness because of his choice to follow the enemy.

Jesus knows me, that I am neither Judas nor Peter. I am one of His disciples who desires to be faithful to God's will till the end and remain close to Him, my Lord and my Companion. Like Peter, if I fail and give in to temptation, He will restore me. Jesus knows my heart for the Lord God. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. In what ways do you see yourself acting and making choices like Judas and Peter?
2. How can you cultivate a pure and faithful heart like Peter? How can you avoid the spiritual darkness that Judas fell into?
3. Jesus gave His disciples a new command: Love one another. How are you faring on this?

[**John 14:1-14**]

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

¹“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ²My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Jesus the Way to the Father

⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

⁶Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

⁹Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ ¹⁰Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹²Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Trusting Jesus

By Tony Tng, Steward, Local Church Executive Committee

During His last days on earth, Jesus revealed to His disciples that one of them will betray Him and He will be leaving them. If I were one of the disciples then, I would be overwhelmed with confusion, fear, anger, doubts and insecurity for my future. After all, they have been with Jesus for three years, sharing life together and witnesses to the many signs and wonders with promises of Him as their Messiah. They have just begun to understand and accept His divine identity and the Messiah is not supposed to die. Who are they to depend on if Jesus were to leave them? In the midst of all these emotions, Jesus

LENT 2025 | DAY 32

Thursday, 10 April 2025

was not far away and He knew their troubled hearts. So, in chapter 14:1, Jesus assured them of His identity, the One in whom they can trust if they would believe. He reminded them to remain in Him.

I had an almost similar experience some 14 years ago, when I experienced a roller coaster ride of emotions. At that time, my younger son was accepted into University of Adelaide to study medicine. I was happy but at the same time there was fear, uncertainty and doubts. All the roller coaster emotions ran right through me for a couple of days as I pondered over the decision. Fear because I had never been to Adelaide and didn't know how to guide my son. Fear because I did not know of anyone residing there that could look out for him. Fear because I did not know anything about the society of Adelaide. There was uncertainty over issues ranging from his choice of lodgings to the type of food available and whether it is a secure environment. Then, doubts started to surface: is it the right decision to send him so far away for so many years? Is it the will of God for him to study in Adelaide? It was quite tormenting as I tossed and turned every night, unable to have a good sleep.

After not finding a good answer, I finally decided that I should turn to God. God should have all the answers to my questions. So that was what I did. I prayed like never before, trusting God to provide what I needed to know. And, God did just that. Suddenly a distant relative's son was going to study in Adelaide and they asked if both our sons could share a flat in Adelaide. Then, my wife found out that an old friend had moved to reside in Adelaide and could help to look out for my son. Then, there was a friend's niece who was studying in Adelaide and was available to assist.

Whoa! God opened not one door but three doors to assure me that all would be well. My doubt if Adelaide was the right place to study just dissipated. God had reassured me that it is He who is sending my son to Adelaide and it is the right decision. Yes, Jesus can be trusted to open doors and smoothen paths. I then had the confidence that my son would be all right because it was God's will for him. Not only did he complete his basic medical degree, he is practising paediatric medicine there now. All glory to the only One God who is always nearby and I can always trust Him. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. What does it take for you to trust that Jesus will keep His promises?
2. With whom do you share all your troubles?
3. How do you often solve your problems?

[John 14:15-31]

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

¹⁵“If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

²²Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

²³Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

²⁵“All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷Peace 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.

²⁸“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. ³⁰I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, ³¹but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

“Come now; let us leave.

Holy Spirit In Us

By David Mok, Chairperson, Church Analytics Ministry; Associate Lay Leader

Verse 26 spoke to me, “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

In this passage, Jesus comforts His disciples by promising the presence and companionship of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father when Jesus departs from them in his human form.

LENT 2025 | DAY 33

Thursday, Friday, 11 April 2025

Jesus introduces the Holy Spirit as the "Advocate," the Spirit of truth who will teach and remind Jesus' followers of all he has said. The Holy Spirit is not an external presence but an internal residence within believers, empowering and teaching us to live in obedience to Christ's commands.

The Holy Spirit is often underappreciated in Christian life, yet the reality is that He plays a vital role in our spiritual growth and understanding. As part of the Triune God, the Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force but God Himself, dwelling within us to guide, empower, and transform us. In John 14:26, Jesus highlights the Spirit's critical work: teaching us all things and reminding us of His words. The Holy Spirit's divine presence ensures we understand Jesus' teachings, whose ways the world does not comprehend. How often do we credit our own cognition in the understanding of the Word whenever we read it? I know I am guilty of that. It is very clear, if we read the Bible through the lens of the world, we will find it perplexing. However, with the Holy Spirit enabling us, we will be given the grace to comprehend.

I am committed to pray to the Holy Spirit to enable me to understand the scriptures every time I read them. I will seek the Holy Spirit's help and guidance in my understanding of Jesus' Way, acknowledging that without His divine assistance, I cannot truly comprehend the Word of God.

Dear Holy Spirit, forgive me for not recognising you as the enabler of my understanding of Christ's teachings. Forgive my pride in crediting my own cognition in understanding God's Way. Help me to always sense your prompting in all that I do. Guide me and transform my heart. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Why do you think the Holy Spirit is often overlooked or underappreciated in the Christian life, even though He plays a crucial role in our spiritual growth and understanding?
2. How can we practically invite the Holy Spirit into our daily reading of Scripture and decision-making to ensure we are guided by His wisdom rather than our own understanding?
3. Have you experienced moments where the Holy Spirit helped you understand Scripture or apply Jesus' teachings in a new way? How did that impact your faith journey?

6th Sign of Jesus: Raising Lazarus

[John 11:1-45]

The Death of Lazarus

¹Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²(This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) ³So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

⁴When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” ⁵Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, ⁷and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”

⁸“But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?”

⁹Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. ¹⁰It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.”

¹¹After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”

¹²His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” ¹³Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

¹⁴So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

¹⁶Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

Jesus Comforts the Sisters of Lazarus

¹⁷On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

¹⁸Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

²¹“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

²³Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

²⁷“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

LENT 2025 | DAY 34

Saturday, 12 April 2025

²⁸After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” ²⁹When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

³²When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴“Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

³⁵Jesus wept.

³⁶Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

³⁷But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

³⁸Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹“Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

⁴⁰Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

⁴¹So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

⁴³When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

⁴⁵Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

[*Lectio Divina* 6]

1. Today's Scripture passage is on the 6th sign of Jesus. Our pastors will be preaching on this Scripture passage at this weekend's worship services.
2. There is no devotion written by a church leader today. Instead, a church leader will lead you in a time of lectio divina (Latin for sacred reading) using the 4Rs (Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest). Click on the link: <https://wesley.sg/lectiodivina6> or scan the QR code on the right for the pre-recorded audio guide.
3. Alternatively, you may do your own reading and reflection using the guidelines (less steps 5 and 6) on page 6.



[John 15:1-27]

The Vine and the Branches

¹“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

⁴Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷This is my command: Love each other.

The World Hates the Disciples

¹⁸“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. ²²If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. ²⁴If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. ²⁵But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’

LENT 2025 | DAY 35

Holy Monday, 14 April 2025

The Work of the Holy Spirit

²⁶“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. ²⁷And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

Enjoy Deep Koinonia With Jesus And Others

By Nijendra Mahendra, LCEC Vice Chairperson; Chairperson, Prayer & Praise

The last 2 years, the 2 main messages that the Lord has been speaking to me through John 15 are:

1. What kind of branch am I? Am I a branch that has leaves and fruit? Am I a branch that is supporting other branches? Am I the main branch that supports the large branches that support branches that are bearing fruit? What does it mean to be different types of branches?
2. Jesus highlights the deepest form of koinonia (Greek word for fellowship) from verses 9-17. As I reflect upon this form of koinonia, I ask myself, how am I expressing this with others? Do I set aside time to build and develop deeper spiritual friendships with those that I am connected to? Do I slow down sufficiently to listen, care and love, the way Jesus wants me to?

During my long walks in nature, observing various types of trees with their many unique branch systems has helped me understand how important it is that branches remain connected with each other for the entire tree to flourish. This has helped me renew my perspective that as I serve in various roles at church, home and work, there are times I just need to cheer on and support 2-3 others. There are times when I need to receive encouragement and support from others. And there are times I need to do more leg work to accomplish a task within the team. But no matter the type of branch I am, I am reminded to always remain and abide in Jesus as my vine, being clear minded of the type of branch He wants me to be for the various roles I play.

The koinonia experienced by Jesus here reminds me to slow down and build deeper spiritual friendships with others, especially those that I serve with. There is such beauty in having deep koinonia with others that I try to prioritise and cherish this koinonia even while accomplishing the tasks that the Lord has set for me.

Going forward, I will be faithful to be the type of branch that Jesus calls me to be. It could mean being different types of branches for different purposes, but to always put my focus and trust only in my vine, my Jesus.

I will also intentionally slow down, be more present with others and enjoy deep koinonia with Jesus and others. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. What type of branch has Jesus called you to be?
2. How are you supporting or being supported by others to bear fruit?
3. Where and how can you grow in spiritual friendships with others?

[John 16:1-33]

¹⁴All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. ²They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. ³They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. ⁴I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, ⁵but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. ⁷But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹about sin, because people do not believe in me; ¹⁰about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

¹²‘I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. ¹⁵All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.’”

The Disciples’ Grief Will Turn to Joy

¹⁶Jesus went on to say, “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”

¹⁷At this, some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father?’” ¹⁸They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”

¹⁹Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me?’” ²⁰Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. ²¹A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. ²²So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. ²³In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

²⁵“Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. ²⁷No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

²⁹Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. ³⁰Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.”

³¹“Do you now believe?” Jesus replied. ³²“A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.

³³“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Assuring Promises

By Lucas Chow, Steward, Local Church Executive Committee

In John 16 we read that Jesus warned His disciples that a time is coming when they will face hardship because of Him. But He also gave them the assuring promise that the “Spirit of truth” will be with them even as He returned to His Father.

Many of us are familiar with the scene of the first day in a kindergarten. It’s chaotic! Crying children looking for their parents, eager parents peeping through the window to assure their child they are around. And teachers trying to bring some order in the classroom so they can start the class. Very quickly the child learns that everything will be fine. Kindergarten is only a temporary separation from their family and they start to enjoy the time in the kindergarten.

As I reflected back on my faith journey, it took me a long time to accept the assuring promises from God, that is, that my sins will be forgiven, my prayers will be heard and I can seek the Spirit for comfort and guidance.

LENT 2025 | DAY 36

Holy Tuesday, 15 April 2025

When I was a new Christian, I struggled with the simplicity of the forgiveness of my sins. I doubted whether my sins are really forgiven and my salvation is secure. I wondered whether my prayers were heard when things didn't turn out the way I imagined they would. I hesitated to ask God for guidance and tried to take on everything on my own.

But thanks be to God that my confidence in His promises grew as I spent more time with Him in reading His words and prayers (in particular, praying for wisdom), journeying with fellow Christians and participating in various ministries. I experienced unconditional love and witnessed answered prayers in ways that I can't even imagine.

In this season of Lent, may you experience God and His assuring promises afresh. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Do you have any doubt in God's assuring promises? Why?
2. How would you build up your trust in God?
3. How can you help others who are struggling in trusting God?

[**John 17:1-26**]

Jesus Prays to Be Glorified

¹After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:
“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ²For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

⁶“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

¹³“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Jesus Prays for All Believers

²⁰“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

LENT 2025 | DAY 37

Holy Wednesday, 16 April 2025

²⁴“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

Coming Together In Oneness

By Charis Lim, Chairperson, Digital Wesley

The following passage from John 17:21-22 (ESV) stands out for me:

²¹that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one...

John 17 is commonly known as Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. In His final and longest recorded prayer before His crucifixion, He prays for us. He prays that we may all be one just like He and the Father are one.

When I was young, one of my favourite Peanuts cartoons features a dialogue between Lucy and Linus. Linus was this sleepy little boy who struggled to stand up for himself. In this sketch, he is watching TV with a remote control in his hand and Lucy suddenly comes and snatches it out of his hand to change the channel. Linus stands up for himself and says, "What gives you the right to take that remote control out of my hand?!" Lucy said, "You want to know what gives me the right?" She raises each finger and says, "One, two, three, four, and five. Separated, they don't look that intimidating, but when they come together, they create a formidable foe." Linus looks at his hand in defeat and says "Why can't you all come together like that?"

Jesus prays for us. This is His farewell message for the church before He is crucified. And I believe the essence of His prayer is encapsulated in Linus' words. He is praying that we would all "come together". And when we "come together" in oneness and unity, we become a formidable foe against the darkness of the world.

This is Jesus' vision of oneness. He says it looks like what He and the Father have. The glory of God is waiting to be released in the church. And in order for us to fulfil God's Mission, we are called to be a people showing the world the oneness of God in our families, schools, workplaces and communities, wherever God has placed us. We are all different, but when we come together, we will be a formidable force for the Kingdom of God!

How can I "come together" in oneness with others?

- Prioritise unity with fellow believers, putting aside differences.
- Celebrate unity amidst diversity by appreciating different gifts and perspectives.
- Recognise that unity is not the same as uniformity.
- Regularly pray for unity, acknowledging its impact on our witness.

Lord Jesus, would You make us one as You and the Father are one. May we know the perfect oneness in the Father and reflect the glory of the Father. May we not go alone. May we do it together as a formidable foe against the darkness of this world. In Jesus' name. Amen. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. How is the oneness of the Father exhibited in your family, school, workplace and community?
2. Are you regularly praying for unity just as Jesus prayed for unity among His disciples?
3. How can your witness to the world be demonstrated by your unity with fellow believers?

[**John 18:1-40**]

Jesus Arrested

¹When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.

²Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. ³So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

⁴Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?”

⁵“Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied.

“I am he,” Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) ⁶When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

⁷Again he asked them, “Who is it you want?”

“Jesus of Nazareth,” they said.

⁸Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go.”

⁹This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.”

¹⁰Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.)

¹¹Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?”

¹²Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him ¹³and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. ¹⁴Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.

Peter’s First Denial

¹⁵Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest’s courtyard, ¹⁶but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

¹⁷“You aren’t one of this man’s disciples too, are you?” she asked Peter.

He replied, “I am not.”

¹⁸It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

¹⁹Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

²⁰“I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus replied. “I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. ²¹Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.”

²²When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. “Is this the way you answer the high priest?” he demanded.

²³“If I said something wrong,” Jesus replied, “testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” ²⁴Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Peter’s Second and Third Denials

²⁵Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, “You aren’t one of his disciples too, are you?”

He denied it, saying, “I am not.”

²⁶One of the high priest’s servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, “Didn’t I see you with him in the garden?” ²⁷Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

Jesus Before Pilate

²⁸Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹So Pilate came out to them and asked, “What charges are you bringing against this man?”

³⁰“If he were not a criminal,” they replied, “we would not have handed him over to you.”

³¹Pilate said, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.”

“But we have no right to execute anyone,” they objected. ³²This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

³³Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

³⁴“Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

³⁵“Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

LENT 2025 | DAY 38

Maundy Thursday, 17 April 2025

³⁶Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

³⁷“You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

³⁸“What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews?’”

⁴⁰They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

From Denial To Restoration

By Irwin Seet, Chairperson, Worship and Music

When I read this passage, I often feel a sense of disappointment in how Peter denied Jesus three times in the face of fear and pressure. After all, this was the disciple who had confidently vowed to stand by Jesus through thick and thin, even to the point of death.

However, when I reflect on Peter’s actions, I realise that I often resemble Peter in denying Jesus in various ways, even if not as dramatically or overtly as Peter did in the courtyard. While I may never outright say, “I do not know Him”, my actions and attitudes often reflect moments of denial which are often driven by fear, comfort or conveniences. Some examples include:

- Denying Jesus through my silence or inaction – this happens when I do not speak up or avoid difficult conversations about faith or shrink back from sharing the gospel or standing for truth out of fear of judgement, rejection or discomfort.
- Denying Jesus through compromise - this happens when I compromise my values and beliefs to fit in with societal pressures or to avoid conflict.
- Denying Jesus through self-sufficiency – this happens when I rely too much on my own strength, wisdom or plans rather than seeking His guidance and trusting in His provisions.

In Matthew 26:75, it reports that when Peter heard the rooster crow, he remembered the words Jesus had spoken and, struck with a deep sense of guilt and remorse, he wept bitterly. After His resurrection, Jesus sought out Peter, not to reprimand or condemn him, but to restore him. In a tender moment on the shores of Galilee, Jesus asks Peter three times, "Do you love me?" – a direct mirror of his 3 denials. Each time Peter responds affirmatively, and with each response, Jesus affirms his calling, "Feed my sheep" (John 21: 15-17). Jesus doesn't just forgive Peter; He reinstates him, giving him a new purpose and mission. This exchange reveals that no failure is too great to be redeemed, and God's love is always greater than our mistakes.

Through my reflections, I have learnt Peter's denial is not just about failure but of profound grace. When I have denied Him through silence and inactions, through compromise or through self-sufficiency, I will ask for God's forgiveness and restoration. I believe that His love and forgiveness offers me the opportunity to rise again, restored and renewed, to fulfill His purpose for my life. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. When you fail or sin, do you allow yourself to experience God's forgiveness and restoration, or do you remain stuck in guilt and shame?
2. In moments of pressure or fear, do you stand firm in your commitment to Jesus, or do you, like Peter, deny Him in small ways?
3. How do you respond to God's call in your life, especially after you have failed? Do you trust that He can restore you and still use you for His purposes?

[**John 19:1-42**]

Jesus Sentenced to Be Crucified

¹Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ²The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe ³and went up to him again and again, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!” And they slapped him in the face.

⁴Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.” ⁵When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!”

⁶As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!”

But Pilate answered, “You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.”

⁷The Jewish leaders insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.”

⁸When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, ⁹and he went back inside the palace. “Where do you come from?” he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰“Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?”

¹¹Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”

¹²From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.”

¹³When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge’s seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). ¹⁴It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon.

“Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews.

¹⁵But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!”

“Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked.

“We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered.

¹⁶Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. ¹⁷Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). ¹⁸There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

¹⁹Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁰Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. ²¹The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.”

²²Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

²³When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

²⁴“Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.” This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said,

“They divided my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment.”

So this is what the soldiers did.

²⁵Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” ²⁷and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

The Death of Jesus

²⁸Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” ²⁹A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. ³⁰When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

³¹Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. ³²The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other.

³³But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

³⁴Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. ³⁵The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows

LENT 2025 | DAY 39

Good Friday, 18 April 2025

that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. ³⁶These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken,” ³⁷and, as another scripture says, “They will look on the one they have pierced.”

The Burial of Jesus

³⁸Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. ⁴⁰Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴²Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Denial, Dissonance, Devotion

By Adriel Loh, Chairperson, Church Governance and Risk Committee

John 19 tells us the Good Friday story about the trial and crucifixion of Christ. Looking beneath the surface, we see a debate raging on His identity - was He really the Son of God? Within the narrative, we find three actors with three very different responses:

The chief priests – the response of denial. The chief priests refused to believe that Jesus was the Son of God. To accept Him as such would go against everything they stood for and threaten their very position in the religious and political order. Their desire to maintain the status quo created a bias so strong that it clouded their judgment and blinded their minds to the truth. To them, Jesus had to be an imposter and He had to be crucified.

Like the chief priests, many of us refuse to face the truth of who Christ is. This is because if Jesus is really the Son of God, then we can no longer live our lives the way we want. For there is now a God who lays claim over our lives. And so instead we live in denial, insist that God does not exist, and go about our lives unaware that one day, we will all have to stand before Him to whom we must give account.

Pilate – the response of dissonance. Pilate suspected and may have even believed that Jesus was the Son of God. But when faced with threats of political repercussions, he gave in. He had the power to free an innocent man but lacked the moral courage to do so. In short, he lived in dissonance – he believed one way but acted another.

Like Pilate, many of us are living in dissonance. We know what the Bible says and what God asks of us, but we lack the courage to obey. We fear obeying Christ because of the consequences that would bring. We fear offending others and we fear having them reject us. And so, we live in dissonance. But the sad thing is that it tears our souls apart. We will never really be at peace, and we will never truly be happy.

John - the response of devotion. Throughout this chapter, John sought to establish that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, that He was the prophesied Messiah, and that His death fulfilled the Father's plan of salvation. The narrative reaches a climax as Jesus breathes His last and cries out "It is finished!" The work was done, the sacrifice paid. Yet amidst his agony, we see a tender moment when Jesus asks John to take His mother as the latter's own. Jesus, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, is intensely personal and takes time for each of us. John knew this. He called himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved". Unlike the priests who lived in denial, and Pilate who acted in dissonance, John responded with devotion. And so should I. My response can only be to fall at His feet, to love Him who first loved us and gave His life for us. ■

[Reflection Questions]

1. Are you living in denial of who Jesus is?
2. Or in dissonance with what you know He asks of you?
3. Or will you respond as John did, with devotion of love for Him who loves us and gave Himself for us?

7th Sign of Jesus: Death and Resurrection of Jesus

[**John 20:1-18**]

The Empty Tomb

¹Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ²So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

³So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. ⁸Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) ¹⁰Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹¹Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹²and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

¹³They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?”

“They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.”

¹⁴At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

¹⁵He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

¹⁷Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

¹⁸Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

[**Lectio Divina 7**]

1. Today's Scripture passage is on the 7th sign of Jesus. Our pastors will be preaching on this Scripture passage at this weekend's worship services.
2. There is no devotion written by a church leader today. Instead, a church leader will lead you in a time of lectio divina (Latin for sacred reading) using the 4Rs (Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest). Click on the link: <https://wesley.sg/lectiodivina7> or scan the QR code on the right for the pre-recorded audio guide.
3. Alternatively, you may do your own reading and reflection using the guidelines (less steps 5 and 6) on page 6.



Today is Holy Saturday and we have come to the end of the 40-day Lent. Yes, Sunday is coming. May you experience anew the wondrous resurrection hope of Easter.

This Lent Devotional will continue for three more days after Easter, from Monday to Wednesday, so as to complete the entire Gospel of John.

Monday, 21 April 2025

[John 20:19-31]

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

²²And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”

²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

²⁸Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The Purpose of John’s Gospel

³⁰Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Do We Need Proof?

By John Chan, Steward, Local Church Executive Committee

This passage describes Jesus appearing to His disciples after His resurrection, and offering His disciples peace and giving them the Holy Spirit.

Jesus’ appearance to the disciples is a reminder that Jesus is with us in the midst of the storms in our life, and when we have doubts and fears. Having Jesus’

presence with us, we can have the peace which surpasses all understanding, peace which the world cannot give us, and peace that comes when we most need it.

When I am faced with challenges, doubts and fears, whom do I turn to for advice and what do I do to manage the stresses? I am reminded that I should turn to God first before anyone or anything else in prayers and reading of His word to get the peace, clarity and wisdom needed.

Although we cannot see Jesus' physical presence, He has given us the Holy Spirit so that we can experience intimacy with Him . Through the Holy Spirit we are empowered to do His work and do not have to rely on our own strength.

Very often I have doubts about my ability to accomplish certain tasks or feel inadequately equipped to handle certain issues. However when I turn to Jesus, laying bare my doubts and inadequacies, and entrusting the situation to Him, I have the confidence to press on knowing the Holy Spirit has empowered me and Jesus' presence is here with me.

But some of us may still have doubts like Thomas. Thomas said, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side" (NLT). Jesus replied with a punchline, "Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!" How Jesus allowed Thomas to doubt, to touch the wounds on his body shows patience, forgiveness and mercy.

Faith before action, or action before faith? This was a yo-yo tension I used to struggle with. I have no doubt Jesus is here. I have no doubt I have the Holy Spirit's empowerment. I have made the decision to believe. So now my faith is in action, and in action I have faith. How about you? ■

[Reflection questions]

1. In the midst of your storms, doubts and fears, whom do you turn to and what do you do to get peace, strength and clarity?
2. How have you depended on the Holy Spirit to be more intimate with God? Recall an occasion where you felt inadequate but overcame certain challenges through the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. How can you not be faithless any longer? How can you express trust in God in your life?

Tuesday 22 April 2025

[John 21:1-14]

Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish

¹Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: ²Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. ³“I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

⁴Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

⁵He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?”

“No,” they answered.

⁶He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

⁷Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. ⁸The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. ⁹When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

¹⁰Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” ¹¹So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. ¹²Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Kopi With Jesus

By **Benedict Tay**, Associate Pastoral Team Member, Youth Ministry

Simon Peter and the disciples decide to return to what they know best, fishing. After a long night of fishing that ends up with nothing, a familiar voice calls out to them telling them to cast their nets. Miraculously a great haul of fish awaits them. But more than just the provision of fishes, Jesus sets up a fire and invites them to have breakfast with him.

Whenever I read John 21, I'm reminded of a season of toil and exhaustion that I went through. Physically drained, mentally fatigued and spiritually dry, I recall being at the end of myself. Everything around me seemed to be falling apart. I became snappy with colleagues, was easily annoyed with friends around me and my relationship with my loved ones suffered as a result.

I knew that I needed Jesus. Yet, I felt like I had to do something, which meant continuing the toil and meeting the demands of everyone around me. I felt like Simon Peter, choosing to go back to what I knew best, to work with my hands.

It was only when I decided to take an extended period of rest through a silent retreat that I realised that Jesus was simply waiting to have breakfast with me. Just while I was thinking that I needed to do something to find God, God reminded me that He had already done the work and invited me to be still and be with him. Just like Jesus had set up the warm fire and delicious meal for His disciples, I found myself waking up each morning meditating on Psalm 100 while drinking a cup of coffee in the sweet presence of our Lord Jesus.

Coming back to Jesus is not about what I can do. Coming back to Jesus is recognising that the fire is already set, that the kopi is made and Jesus is inviting me to *Lim Kopi* (drink coffee) with him.

Every morning, let me endeavour to enjoy the sweet fellowship with Jesus

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for your Word and how You are always with me. Thank You for constantly drawing me towards You. Teach me, Lord, to desire You all the days of my life. ■

[Reflection questions]

1. Is Jesus inviting you to take a break from whatever you are doing and just come and have breakfast with Him?
2. Do you seek the presence of God alongside you whenever you are called to do His work?
3. What is your takeaway from v6: He (Jesus) said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Wednesday, 23 April 2025

[John 21:15-25]

Jesus Reinstates Peter

¹⁵When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

¹⁶Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

¹⁷The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. ¹⁸Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” ¹⁹Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

²⁰Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) ²¹When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?”

²²Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.” ²³Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”

²⁴This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

²⁵Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

Welcoming, Missional, Caring

By Alvin Tay, Chairperson, Local Church Executive Committee

When I was in university, I could memorise only one Bible verse: John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

I thought that was all I needed to do – just believe in Jesus. For me, it was just head knowledge.

As I grew older and started attending Bible Study classes, I realised the magnitude of God’s sacrificial love in giving His one and only Son, Jesus. For Jesus would be crucified on the cross for our sins. Yes, Jesus died for me; He died for all of us!

‘Believing in Jesus’ took on a new significance for me. It is not just head knowledge or information but heart transformation. In today’s passage, Jesus led Peter through an encounter that would remove the guilt of Peter’s disowning Jesus three times. Three times Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him. When Peter answered yes, Jesus asked him to “Feed my lambs”, “Take care of my sheep” and “Feed my sheep”, respectively. Jesus also said to Peter, “Follow me!”

In other words, Peter was instructed to follow Jesus, and to feed and care for Jesus’ sheep, those who follow Jesus.

Earlier in this chapter (yesterday’s reading), I read that Peter went fishing with six other disciples but failed to catch any fish. A resurrected Christ met them and told them to throw their net on the right side of the boat. They did and they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

This episode reminded me of Jesus’ encounter recorded in Luke 5:1-11: “Then Jesus said: From now on you will fish for people”. Also, in Mark 1:17, Jesus said: “Come, follow me and I will send you out to fish for people.”

As I reflected on this passage, I realised that to believe in Jesus means for me to follow Jesus, to be a fisher of people, and to care for His sheep.

Wednesday, 23 April 2025

Which is why as LCEC chair, I pray that Wesley Methodist Church will live up to our initials: WMC.

W – A **W**elcoming Church

M – A **M**issional Church

C – A **C**aring Church.

May Wesley MC be a Welcoming church to all who seek to follow Jesus; a Missional church whose members seek to be Jesus' witnesses to the Least, the Last and the Lost, and a Caring church which cares for our seniors, our young, our caregivers, our volunteers, our pastors and staff.

Together with like-minded church leaders and members, and with God as our provider and guide, I will work to build that WMC culture as we celebrate the 140th Anniversary of Wesley Methodist Church. ■

[Reflection questions]

1. If Jesus were to ask you: "Do you love me?", what would your answer be?
2. And what do you think Jesus' response would be?
3. What is one thing you can do to be more welcoming, more missional and more caring?



Wesley Methodist Church
5 Fort Canning Road Singapore 179493
T 63361433 W www.wesleymc.org