

Bible Witness

Heavenly-Mindedness (Part II)

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Christians' Heavenly Cause



Editor

Prabhudas Koshy

Assistant Editor

Ho Kee How

Publishing & Circulation

Co-ordinator

Lok Kwok Wah

Technical Editors

Jenny Lok, Lok Kwok Wah,
Mah Lean Choo

Layout & Illustrations

Matthew Peh

Children's Page Illustration

Andronicus Koshy

Publisher

Bible Witness Media Ministry of
Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church
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Printer

Ee Tai Press Pte Ltd

Mailing Address

Bible Witness Media Ministry
33 Ubi Crescent
Singapore 408584

Tel: (65) 6741 1910

E-mail: bwmm.gbpc@gmail.com

Website: www.biblewitness.com



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Christians' HEAVENLY CONSIDERATION

Prabhudas Koshy

As a people with a heavenly calling, we do have—and must take heed to—a heavenly consideration. Christians on this earth who are guided by the calling of the Lord Jesus Christ are constantly exhorted to give due attention to the heavenly source of that call. “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Hebrews 3:1).

Now, the word “consider” is translated from the Greek word *katanoeo*, which has the idea of having our minds being carefully directed. This word impresses upon us that as Christians, we cannot go about without a certain settled mindset in life. We are here told to direct our minds to Christ who is exalted in heaven. We can’t move about in life allowing our minds to embrace all and sundry voices and counsels which do not harmonise with one another, let alone agree with Scripture. Otherwise, we would end up allowing the world, and even the devil, to present ideas to us. Our consideration has to be *singular*—and that’s Christ, and Christ alone. We are enjoined here to ponder thoroughly who and what Christ is for us, carefully/attentively having “the eyes of [our] understanding

being enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18a) concerning Christ’s dignity, His excellency, and His authority over us.

Consider Christ Throughout Your Christian Life

Note that in Hebrews 3:1, it is not the unsaved who are told to consider Christ, but the saved. “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling ...” constitutes a call to believers who have been set apart and sanctified by Christ. Dear Christian readers, you can’t just say, “Oh, I have already considered Jesus when I accepted Him as my Saviour and Lord.” No! You will need to continually consider Him so, not only, say, 20 years ago when you first heard the Gospel and accepted Christ. Believers, from the novice to the most mature, need to consider Christ in everything they do to maintain a heavenly conversation (or conduct) on this earth. But you might ask, “Why should we consider Christ when we are already in and united with Him? Are we not baptised into Christ with the Holy Spirit? Why should we keep on considering Him?” Simply because you and I have not discovered all of His glories, or experienced all of His beauties, or understood all of His

powers and virtues, or comprehended all of His greatness and purposes. So, we must keep the eyes of our mind on Christ. Keep gazing on Him. Don't be distracted by all the earthly religious ideas/practices, worldly temptations and trials, or the enmity/hostility of this world. Keep considering Jesus, for He is the supreme Reality that we need to keep our attention on.

In my past thirty years of pastoral counselling, it is apparent that the greatest shortcoming manifested by many professing Christians in grappling with life issues is their failure to consider Christ first and foremost. If only they would consider what Christ would have done in their case and what biblical prerogative He has given to them, challenges would look a lot less intimidating and life's problems easier to solve. But by thinking about the affairs of this life in terms of earthly welfare and its betterment, their heavenly-mindedness is sort of lost! In the process, some even plunge into degrading things in their life. On the contrary, a very high and noble way of dealing with situations in life is to first ponder who Christ is and consider what He would have done. Indeed, how wonderful it is if every Christian in the church would consider Christ first. After all, Christ has promised He will lead us individually by His hand, having called us specially and said: "My sheep hear my voice" (John 10:27).

Now, this consideration of His voice can come through preaching, through

counselling, or through a conversation with a spiritually mature brother who is a fellow partaker of the heavenly calling. The crucial factor is this: no voice should be greater than the voice of Christ. Beware of the voice of the eloquent preacher in the church who may appear to be very holy, but has no real calling from God. Scripture warns believers to be vigilant against "false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies", and "by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Peter 2:1-2). Such deceptive voices belong to those pursuing their own ungodly materialistic agenda. If you indiscreetly regarded their words without considering Christ, you'd get ensnared! But if you have been considering Christ all the time, you would be able to recognise these "wolves in sheep's clothing" readily. In these spiritually perilous times where there is "a famine ... of hearing the words of the LORD" (Amos 8:11), it is not uncommon to hear of believers leaving their former church as they recognise their pastor, preacher, elders not fulfilling their biblical roles, and not faithfully preaching/expounding the truth. Such discerning brethren can be said to be considering Christ.

Consider Christ in All Your Daily Concerns

It is instructive to be specifically told that Jesus is to be considered as "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession". The word "Apostle" means "the sent one". It was a title given to those people who

have been sent as official ambassadors by a king. As the Apostle, Jesus speaks to us on behalf of God the Father from heaven. Jesus came to call sinners; He came to call us who were lost, that He may bring us back to God in heaven. As much as He is sent by God, He has gone to God as our High Priest, having sacrificed Himself as a perfect atonement for our sins. Today, before God the Father, He as our High Priest intercedes for us. Truly, He came from heaven to this earth as God's Apostle to us, and from here He entered the presence of God as an Intercessor for us. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, ... For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:17-18). "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Are you burdened by the cares of this life? Assuredly, you can come to Christ pertaining to all sorts of daily concerns you may encounter in life. Maybe you lost your job and you don't know what to do next, having many financial burdens to bear. You could be making life's crucial decisions like choosing a spouse, or making important choices on a course of study or a profession, or dealing with difficult bosses and employees, or having to handle a fellow church member who is not behaving properly towards you or towards others, and so on. Consider

Jesus in each of those situations. You will become too earthly if Christ is not the main consideration. Though Jesus promised that He will not forsake His followers, He will not be where He hasn't directed you. Only if you stay with Him and believe that is the most excellent place to be, then will you have His presence, wisdom and glory.

Interestingly, Christ as Apostle and High Priest is alluded to in John 13:3—"Jesus knowing that ... he was come from God, and went to God". As Apostle, He "was come from God", and as High Priest, He "went to God"—all for our sakes, thus making it possible for us to be partakers of the heavenly calling. Don't think of anything or anyone or any pursuit in life without considering Jesus. Indeed, to all our children and young people: Only through Jesus decide on who your friends should be, and what places/activities you want to be part of. If you will always consider Jesus, you can be assured of Christ's strengthening/provisions (cf. Philippians 4:13, 19)—simply because He was sent from God to this earth as God's Ambassador (i.e. Apostle) to you, and then He ascended from this earth for you, that He may intercede for your sanctification, your safety, and your eternal glory. Won't you always keep him in your sight? That's divine wisdom operating in your earthly endeavours!

Brethren, whatever void you feel while tending to daily concerns on this earth, remember Christ is the link between you

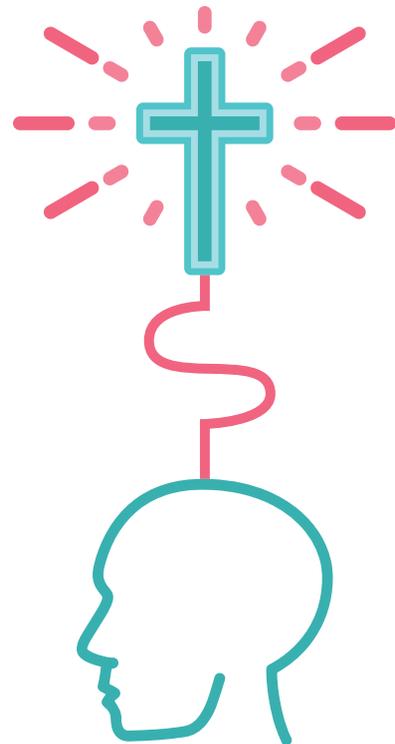
and heaven. You may feel you have come to your wit's end, but do not try to make sense of your predicament with your own warped thoughts, misguided feelings and misleading voices of other people. Put them all aside—don't regard these as important! Consider the whole thing through Christ! He fills the whole space between God and us. As Apostle, He is close to us; as High Priest, He is close to God on our behalf.

Be Single-Minded in Considering Christ

Arguably, one of the greatest Christians who ever lived was the apostle Paul. It is difficult to think of anybody who is so passionate and so driven for Christ more than Paul. Yet listen to the astounding confession of this singularly heavenly-minded saint in Philippians 3:12-14—”Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Paul is saying that he had not attained the full knowledge of the glory of Christ, so he humbly sought to know Him more and more richly, deeply, intimately. Christ as High Priest would, on Paul's behalf, be praying to God the Father that he may have all the blessings of God relentlessly

flowing to him. Needless to say, he would want to have Jesus to guide him so that he may receive all things.

Notice that he is very focused; he doesn't consider too many things in life—he is a “one-thing” (i.e. single-minded) man. In fact, he considers the elevated calling of God in Christ Jesus as the only thing worth pursuing in his life, to the extent that he would let go of all things that he once enjoyed—so unlike many modern Christians who may sing wonderful hymns, declaring “The world behind me, the cross before me”, or “All to Jesus I surrender, all to him I freely give”. But upon facing trials/oppositions not long after following Christ, they are unwilling to deny themselves and suffer for Christ's sake. They are actually



chasing after ‘golden crosses’, not the cross experience. They want God and the comforts/pleasures afforded by the world; they want to “serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24)!

Sometimes we really wonder why some so-called Christians want to go to heaven when all they can think about heaven is that it is a place bedecked with all manner of precious stones, and where streets are paved with gold (cf. Revelation 21:19-21). It’s as if they are going to heaven because it is a beautiful place, not because Christ is there. Bluntly put, you can’t have a heaven if you don’t consider Jesus as the most precious thing. If He is not your single-minded focus, heaven is not yours! Contrast this perverse attitude with Paul’s heartfelt conviction: “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (Philippians 3:10-11). Paul is simply saying whatever be his experiences, he just wants to be like Christ in all these experiences. Considering Christ was Paul’s “one thing” here on earth and, by extension, also in heaven.

This is the same single-minded consideration that the writer of Hebrews alluded to in Hebrews 12:1-2a—“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that

is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith”. We have “so great a cloud of witnesses”, referring to the holy brethren with whom we partake the holy calling, many of whom have already gone to eternity because of that holy calling. Like them, may we also lay aside all the burdens/concerns of this world as we run our Christian race. Do not let the struggles of this life be your major consideration in life; put aside those cares of this world, and even the sins that easily beset you! Train your mind to focus on Jesus, the “Author” (i.e. the Apostle who came from heaven to call you to God) and the “Finisher” (i.e. the High Priest who went to God) of your faith. Remember how He finished His race on earth by enduring the cross, despising the shame—all because of “the joy that was set before him”, which is the exaltation at the right hand of the throne of God the Father (Hebrews 12:2b). And there as High Priest, He intercedes for us, so that our faith may have its glorious fruition at the end.

Conclusion

It is not enough that we study about Christ. We must be like Him in all things, having fellowship with Him. We must know Him and learn of Him, until we be like Him. Only when we single-mindedly consider Christ in all our daily concerns throughout our Christian life, can we be truly able to manifest a conversation (i.e. conduct) on earth that is befitting heaven. Help us, O Lord, we pray. Amen. ◇

CHRISTIANS' HEAVENLY COMPORIMENT

Prabhudas Koshy

As heavenly-minded people living on earth, though our physical body is here, our spirit rises to heaven and absorbs the 'air' of heaven. That is to say, our soul soaks in the beauty, virtues and powers of heaven, and we bring all that to this earth. As a heavenly people, God has given us a heavenly comportment. The word "comportment" can refer to the way a person carries himself, positions himself, and orders his life, or it can refer to the posture of the person. A similar word would be "deportment". How we carry ourselves on this earth will tell whether we belong to heaven or not.

Our heavenly Father wants us to be exactly like Him on earth. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Christians are expected to emulate their Father in Heaven. We are not in the slightest way expected to be like the celebrities of this world. We are never told in the Bible to fashion ourselves after the kings of this earth, or politicians, philosophers, prominent people in this world. In fact, we are warned not to be conformed to this world (cf. Romans 12:2). Scripture consistently and specifically exhorts us to have a heavenly behavioural pattern, which would give witness to the fact that we are God's children and a heaven-bound people on earth. As His sons and daughters, our actions must reflect our heavenly inheritance as children of the heavenly Father. Consider the following important aspects of the Christian's heavenly comportment.

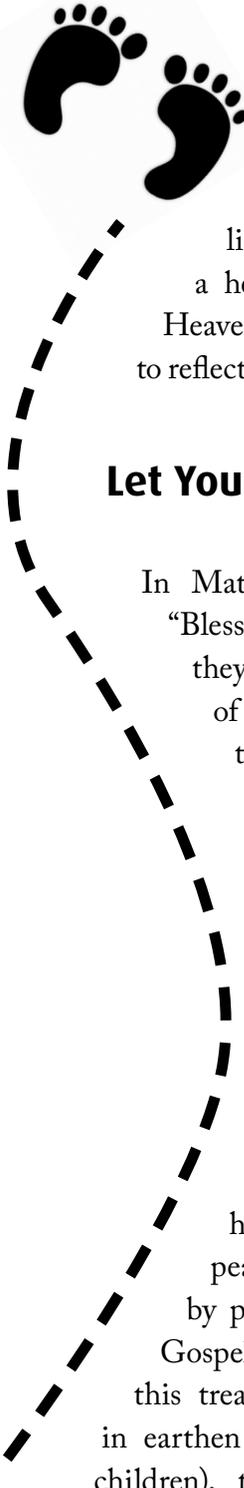
Let Your Light So Shine

In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus says, “Ye are the light of the world ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Letting our light shine before men allows them to see our good works, which is the beauty of the Lord who worketh in us. Remember Jesus also says, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). So, Jesus is not talking about any personal light inherent within us, because we are all children of darkness transformed into the children of light (which is a spiritual work). Being fallen beings, we have been moved from our inherent darkness by the Lord who has created within us the aspiration of His kingdom of light. We have been transformed and He now worketh through us. Now that we have the light of God in us, Christ says that we His followers are to be bearers of the light so that men would see our good works, which are actually God’s good works. The Greek word (*kalos*) translated as “good” here speaks of outward beauty. It has a specific reference to outside goodness, which is closely related to how we appear. So our works have to appear beautiful—the beauty of heaven must wrap our actions. Jesus is here emphasising our beautiful “appearance” that attracts people to God.

How great a duty we have to carefully posture ourselves in this world! The way

we appear before people is important. True, “the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7b). But that doesn’t mean external appearances don’t matter—it simply means that God cannot be tricked by our external appearance, because He searches our inner thoughts and motives. Do not casually brush off another truth at the same time. If your inner motives are right, and your imaginations and passions are godly, then what comes out of your heart will also be good. A tree is known by its fruit. A good tree yields good fruit, but a bad tree will not. So, what is on the outside is important in that it represents a goodness inside, which is the Lord’s work in your soul. No man can see the heart; only God can. Fellow men can only see the outward expressions of a true Christian’s faith. Thus, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works (i.e. outward expressions of your faith)”, and praise God. Oh, we do not want to look like worldly men at all; we should conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the glory of God.

To do that, we need to think of the Father’s will, and fulfil it. This can only be a reality when we align our life and practices with the instruction of our heavenly Father as revealed in His Word. Faith does not exist in name only. It is demonstrable and evidenced by outward appearances of good works. True faith cannot be hidden. Whether you are earning a living, or conducting



a business, or discharging your responsibilities in your employment, or fulfilling your role in society as a professional—indeed, whatever be your earthly affairs in your day-to-day life—God expects you to be a heavenly child in that place. Heaven’s children are set on earth to reflect the Father’s heavenly nature.

Let Your Feet Bring Gospel of Peace

In Matthew 5:9, Jesus also says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” Children of God are to be distinguished by their blessed role as peacemakers. While people of the world, who walk “according to the course of this world” and are “by nature the children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:2-3), bring people to eternal damnation, children of God are given the privilege to bring people to heaven’s joy. We act as God’s peacemakers in this world, by preaching and living out the Gospel of peace. For “we have this treasure (the Gospel of peace) in earthen vessels (referring to God’s children), that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:7). Being entrusted with

the Gospel, our comportment on this earth always has to be peace-making, and not creating further sadness and trouble because of sin.

No wonder Paul says in Romans 10:15b, “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” The beautiful feet come with the message of heaven. This is an ugly world. All beauty is tarnished by sin and corruption. There is only one eternal, beautiful, harmonious thing that we can bring to this world, i.e. the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which tells people: “O sinners, be ye reconciled to God, for God has reached out to you for your salvation and your rescue through the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe on Him, and be ye reconciled!” Because we are carriers of this beautiful heavenly message, we are deemed to walk with beautiful feet. Let your beautiful feet bring you wherever the Lord leads—yea, even around the world—to preach the Gospel. As Gospel-bearers, we “have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Corinthians 4:2). We will be recognised by our heavenly deportment in our life, which must constantly be ordered by the knowledge that we are peacemakers.

Now, the word “peacemakers” intimates that as Gospel-bearers, we must know how to talk even to troublemakers. We must, in all circumstances, present

ourselves not as an irritable, easily provoked people who react with bitterness and agitation of heart. We must take advantage of even hostile situations to preach the Gospel. Sometimes an agitated person could come to you, pouring contempt at you, but if you, with the intention to glorify God, prayerfully discern the opportunity to tell him about Christ, God will grant grace to help. Though we all get easily provoked by the errors of others and wish to confront others in anger, we must remember our calling as peacemakers. Our heavenly deportment as God's peacemakers is reiterated by Paul's exhortation to have "your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15). May our manner of life be constantly framed by this foundation of the Gospel, which makes us ever ready to preach it!

Let Your Peaceableness Prevail

That's not all. Scripture enjoins all of God's Gospel-abiding children to live on earth not as contentious, quarrelsome, troublesome people—"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18). As much as possible, we want to be peaceable, amicable people, not troublemakers. While we must not condone error and wrongdoing, we do not deal with people belligerently or harshly. Our intention is always to restore, not to retaliate or destroy. It is hard enough to have peace in a world of quarrels and conflicts. This world is full of earthly people with

"bitter envying and strife" in their hearts (cf. James 3:14-15). The apostle James hits the nail on the head—"For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:16-18). Our comportment as peaceable people must be guided by heavenly wisdom. Unquestionably, we need extraordinary wisdom of heaven to also keep our mind in perfect peace.

Notice "the wisdom that is from above" is firstly pure. It will not allow you to be impure in your motives. It gives you pure motives and clean thinking, resulting in peace, as opposed to impurity, which causes quarrels, strife, envy and commotions. We all know (from observation and, unfortunately, experience) that when one gets all agitated and worked up, one tends to pick a quarrel easily. Peaceable people, when guided by heavenly wisdom from God's Word, know that "he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly" (Proverbs 14:29b). They realise that "the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with" (Proverbs 17:14). They also happily embrace the truth that "the discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression" (Proverbs 19:11). Truly, when a pure-hearted person yields his mind to God's

holy and infallible counsels sent from heaven, wisdom will assuredly be given to manage issues peaceably.

Moreover, we are easy to be entreated, that is, we will not be difficult to deal with but rather, easy to talk with. Whether we are in a superior, or inferior, or peer position, we stand ready to be persuaded if it is for the (especially spiritual) betterment of others. We will not allow our reaction to be blown out of proportion or degenerate into an accusatory stance. This “entreat-able” disposition will stand us in good stead in tense situations, especially when subject to very wicked and vicious slanders. This aspect of the Christian’s heavenly comportment will enable us to go through a lot of hurts in our life and service for the Lord. This is nothing surprising, for “even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Peter 2:21). It’s okay to suffer wrongfully for Christ’s sake (cf. 1 Peter 2:19), because Christ Himself came down from heaven to suffer and die for the salvation of sinners. Our God is a compassionate God. He is longsuffering; He is forgiving. And so must we in letting our peaceableness prevail, if we are to sow “the fruit of righteousness ... in peace”.

Let Your Love be Shown in Kindness to Others

It goes without saying that the highest, noblest, purest deportment we can ever have on this earth is encapsulated in the

word “love”, i.e. the kind of love that manifests itself in showing kindness to others. “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Galatians 5:14). Indeed, “If ye fulfil the royallaw according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well” (James 2:8). This point is further expounded by Jesus in Matthew 5:44-45—“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” How gracious God is to all. We are to be like our heavenly Father, even to love those who have shown hatred towards us. The same counsel is reinforced in Luke 6:35—“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” What an astounding manner of dealing with fellow human beings that is simply out-of-this-world; it’s nothing short of heavenly!

This same heavenly comportment is alluded to in the loving kindness that Christian masters ought to display towards their subordinates. “Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven” (Colossians 4:1). “And, ye masters, do the same things unto

them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him” (Ephesians 6:9). Christian employers are here reminded by Paul that they have a Master in heaven (even God the Creator). They are to treat their employees working under them fairly, honestly, purely, and with respect, even being courteous and patient. They are not to be unjust, nor to ill-treat or take advantage of them. They are also to refrain from any abusive, intimidating or threatening demeanour towards those under their authority. Though their superior, Christian bosses must not be high-handed or insist on their right of way, but be ever prepared to show mercy, compassion and forbearance. God is a good Master, so all Christian bosses must remember to behave like their Master in heaven. Have a royal, kingly comportment like Christ. Be it in our home, church, workplace or society, such loving kindness shown to others (irrespective of their status or position in life) goes a long way in reflecting the Christian’s heavenly comportment.

Conclusion

God’s children on earth constantly seek to do the Father’s will. Those who think they are heading to heaven but behave not according to the heavenly principles of the Father, prove by their own deeds that they have not even entered the kingdom of God. Jesus unequivocally warns, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of

my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). Only those who are heavenly in their conduct, by obeying the will of the Father in heaven, can ever make a rightful claim to the kingdom of heaven. In other words, if you are truly saved by the grace of God, then that grace will always remind you: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Otherwise, you would just be fooling yourselves if you think you are going to heaven without a heavenly comportment! ◇



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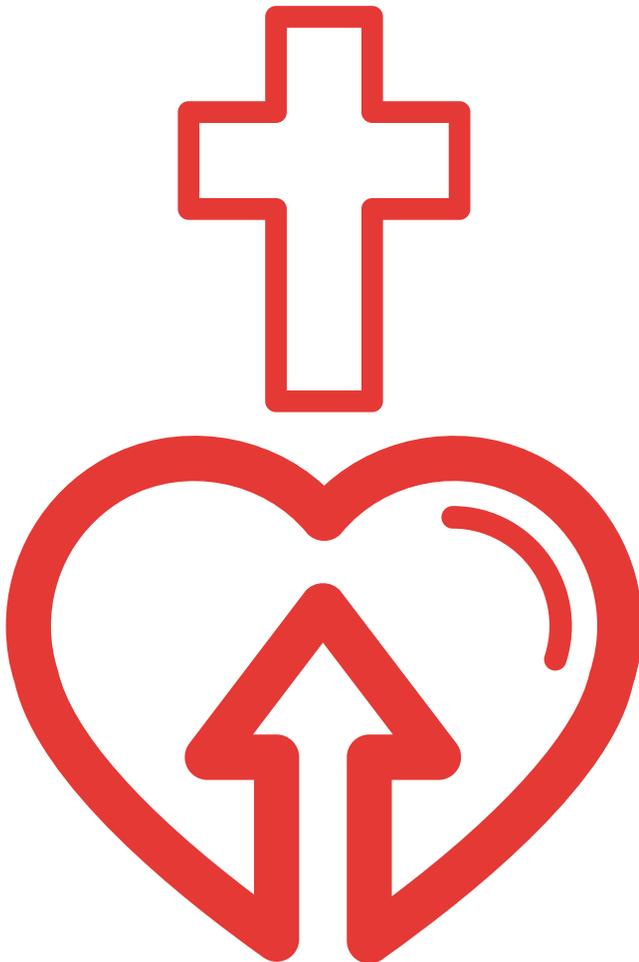
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Please continue to pray for the BWWR ministry as we endeavour to improve our broadcast.

Christians' HEAVENLY CAUSE

Prabhudas Koshy

Christians have a heavenly cause. Everything we do on earth is motivated by an ambition that is governed by a heavenly perspective. While we are to work hard and save up if necessary, we are prohibited from being ambitious in the earthly sense. The Bible teaches us not to be lovers of this world—“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world” (1 John 2:15a). Our greatest ambition on earth is to lay up treasures in heaven. The rewards in heaven, together with the great and wonderful honour that the Lord will bestow on His faithful servants, ought to fill our hearts as we stay singularly, totally, fully committed to the heavenly cause while on earth.



Fix Heart's Longing Constantly Upward

There is a saying amongst the Puritans that no man ever went to heaven whose heart was not there before—nobody ‘accidentally falls’ into heaven. The work of grace is long begun in a Christian’s life before he goes up to heaven. That is manifested in his constant upward gaze, and the desire that worketh in his heart due to the faith that God has graciously created within him. That faith is full of hope, being “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). It knows it has taken hold of eternal things which it has not seen yet on this earth, so it continually

hopes for these things. This element of hope is not something that he imagines or speculates, but a settled assurance of God's sure promises concerning things that He prepares in the eternal home. Through his constant reading of the Scriptures, he takes note of all those promises therein, with his heart yearning for them and not being at all content with earthly possessions and comfort. He doesn't crave for things of this earth; he cries for heaven: "O Lord, come quickly! Help me to be a valiant soldier in my homecoming. May I be there as a man preoccupied with Your glory, Lord."

In fact, nothing is more stirring to a Christian's heart than his eternal destination and the glory that awaits him, as highlighted by Hebrews 11:14-16—"For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

Now, these 3 verses in Hebrews 11 remind us of the story of Abraham. Though Abraham remembered the land of his nativity, Ur of the Chaldees, from whence he came out, he did not look back for the purpose of return; instead his heart was steadfastly set towards the heavenly city. His heart's yearning was directed to things/affairs more glorious, nobler, higher than all of this

earth's possessions, so much so that he thenceforth desired a far better kingdom that is heavenly. What makes heaven so much better than this earth is the fact that it is a pure and perfect place where there is no sin, no sickness, no death. It is a place where everything is well with God's people, with God as the King, the Defender, the Provider, the Nourisher of His people. In fact, we read in Scripture about this eternal city, where nothing "that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" shall enter into it (cf. Revelation 21:27). Truly, a far "better country"! Likewise, those whose heart's longing is fixed constantly upward will not regard so greatly the things of this world. Whether it be a nice car, or a big house, or enormous bank savings, or lucrative investments here and there, they will not love those things and hoard those things as though they are going to provide them eternal comfort. Because they have a heavenly cause, they know all these can suddenly vanish, or others may take them away.

Lay Not Up Treasures Upon Earth

This brings to mind the words of Christ in Matthew 6:19-21—"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Nothing you

keep in this world will last forever; they are very temporal. That's how things are on this earth, therefore make no needless accumulation of the temporal things, but lay up your treasures in heaven.

If your ambition while you live on this earth is simply to make more and more money on this earth, Scripture pointedly says your heart is not in heaven, nor are you seated with Christ in heavenly places. Yes, God will give material increase to His people who are industrious (cf. Proverbs 13:11b – “he that gathereth by labour shall increase”). As faithful stewards of all our worldly goods, we are to manage them well. Whether it is \$10 or \$10,000, you are to manage it in a biblically reasonable manner. Certain things you think is reasonable may not be so in the sight of God. Some Christian men sentimentally but mistakenly think that whenever they travel overseas for business or holiday, they must (on their return) buy a diamond ring, or diamond necklace, or expensive branded clothing to shower on their wives. While there is nothing wrong in being generous in giving good gifts to your wife/children, some foolish men do so at the risk of accumulating debt. Be that as it may, how much more wonderful and worthwhile it is to use that money for divine purposes. Honestly, it's very sad to see people waste their time and money God has given for earthly pleasure. Far better it is for these well-to-do people to pay the needful expenses to attend a bible camp, or church retreat, or missionary conference than to go for holiday all over the world. Alas, many

of these so-called Christians have little regard for anything spiritual; bringing their wives and children to sit and listen to God's Word being expounded is the last thing on their minds!

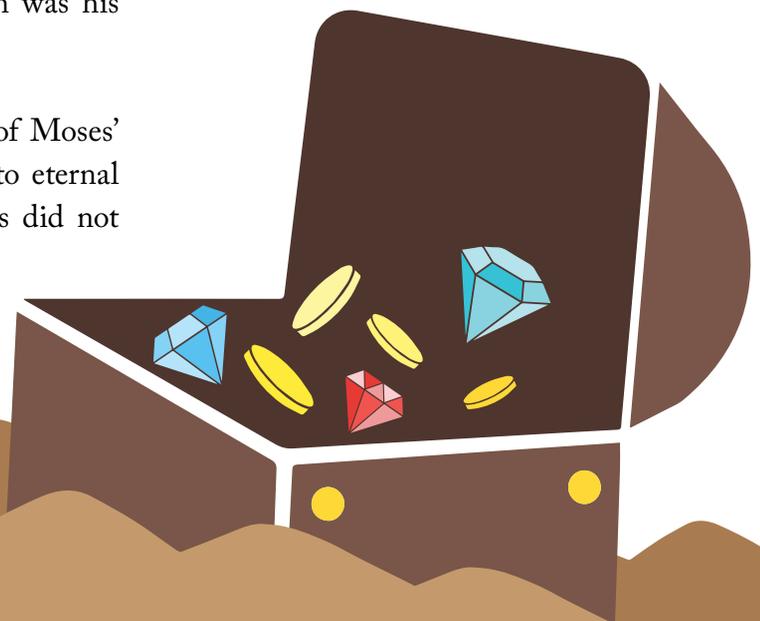
Lay up your treasures in heaven, not upon earth. Though it is necessary to be industrious and frugal to save up enough money for earthly necessities, believers should not over-value even such essential and cherished possessions. Whether it is time, or substance, or energy, or ideas and skills, always remember we are a heavenly people here on earth working with a heavenly and eternal perspective. In short, we have a heavenly cause here to fulfil. Indeed, we can be instructed on how a heavenly-minded man considers his earthly goods by considering Job's testimony in Job 31:24-28—“If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; If I rejoice because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much ... This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.”

Job knew that all the material abundance that God had given—the fine gold, the big house, the livestock, etc.—is only for his stewardship. He did not love material possessions more than God; neither did he worship God in order to get external benefits in return. The devil insinuated that Job's piety was because of the great substance God had blessed him with, and if God allowed him to remove those earthly goods, Job would

quickly deny the Lord. Though severely tested, Job was shown to be a worshipper of God, not of things. He cherished and worshipped God even in his abject poverty and suffering. God was still the object of his heart's devotion: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15a). He didn't love material things more than he should: "the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). While he poured out his woes before God, he did not complain about his lot (though he did lament about his friends' unreasonable and unjust accusations). Please realise that in his insistent requests for God to give him a reason for his horrendous sufferings, Job never rebelled or resisted against God's sovereignty over his possessions and life. In fact, Job proclaimed, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25-26). Such was his hope and integrity!

Time would fail us to tell of Moses' testimony of how he held on to eternal possessions. Briefly put, Moses did not complain about how much he had to sacrifice in the service of the Lord. On the contrary,

we read of how "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Hebrews 11:24-26). He had no problem parting with his earthly possessions; he was willing and ready to give them up for the cause of heavenly riches and rewards. Similarly, our chief enjoyment should not be found in the abundance of material possessions. We should be prepared to leave these things as quickly as possible. While sojourning here on earth, Paul's exhortation to Timothy (in 1 Timothy 6:8) should sum up the disposition of those having a heavenly cause: "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."



Keep Eternity's Values in View

We do well to remember that life on earth shall come to an end and we shall soon be with the Lord, who will reward His faithful servants. What we have in heaven has everything to do with what we have done on earth. God's people, having great regard for the reward that God is preparing for them, are willing to live gladly in the loss of material things and lack of many earthly comforts. They embrace their Saviour's words in Mark 10:29-30—"Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." We may have to give up many things, but the Lord makes sure He takes care of us in this world—ten times more, nay an hundredfold, than what we have given up.

People tend to labour much for this world's goods (which perisheth) because they exaggerate the importance of what their physical eyes can see right before them. They diminish the value of heavenly realities because they can't perceive them; they walk by sight, not by faith (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7)! By giving prominence to and striving for the material wealth of this present world, they detrimentally put eternal realities

out of the equation. But as Christians, you must see things differently. Your attitude towards your earthly treasures is a test of your estimation of the things to come. In other words, you don't love these things more than the things to come; you only treat what is present at hand in view of what is yet to come. While Christians live in the here and now, they live and work with a heavenly cause, constantly adhering to Paul's exhortation to keep eternity's values in view: "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:19). Prudence and biblical wisdom teach all Christians to free themselves from the subtle, dangerous tendency to love this material world, which is only temporal. True spiritual life is not only heavenly, it also summons Christian men and women to factor into the spiritual equation "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17b).

Conclusion

Charles Spurgeon used to tell a story about an eminent Christian doctor who was treating a professing Christian lady frequently troubled by imaginary diseases, what modern medical experts would call psychosomatic illnesses. (These are not physiological or organic illnesses, but sicknesses triggered by/ associated with depression and emotional illness.) And what was the good doctor's prescription? Well, it consisted of these simple but profound words: "Do good to somebody." When the previously

despondent lady started to move out of her self-imposed emotional shell by seeking out others who needed her help, she gradually became more cheerful and, not to mention, more healthy. Indeed, “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine” (Proverbs 17:22a). That Christian woman began to experience real joy, for she had an object to live for and found joy in doing good to others, with eternity in view.

Dear Christian, are you sick, moody, or even depressed? Check if you have been too self-centred and inward-looking. You will never amount to any good to yourself or others unless you take heed of opportunities and means to live for others. Lay up your treasures in heaven for the Gospel’s sake, and do good to those around for Jesus’ sake. May the Lord grant you a heavenly cause, as you “do each day’s work for Jesus, with eternity’s values in view” (Alfred Smith). ◇

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9. Let Jesus Come into Your Heart
10. Christ Returneth!

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John Calvin

(1509 - 1564)

Theologian of the Reformation

Part IV

(Retold from "A Glimpse of the Life and Works of John Calvin" by Timothy Tow, published by Christian Life Publishers, Singapore;
 "This Was John Calvin" by Thea B. Van Halsema, published by Baker Book House for I.O.E.A. Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan;
 "Heroes of the Reformation" by F.G. Llewelin, published by Gospel Press, London, Great Britain;
 "Trial and Triumph: Stories from Church History" by Richard M. Hannula, published by Canon Press, Moscow, Idaho)

Retold by Jenny Lok

Illustrated by Andronicus Koshy

Sometime in October 1540, Calvin received a letter from the Council of Geneva asking him to return to his "old place and former ministry". Calvin wept, torn between the urgent needs in Geneva and the work that was flourishing in Strasburg. Many wrote to him, persuading him to return to the church in Geneva. One such letter pleaded with Calvin: "Come, honoured father in Christ, you belong to us, the Lord Himself has given you to us. Everyone sighs for you!" Farel, Calvin's closest friend, also wrote to him, urging him: "Are you waiting for the stones to cry out?" Calvin could actually sense Farel's angry roar in those words. Moreover, Bucer (his friend in Strasburg) also reminded him not to run from God, like Jonah, but to obey His will. After much wrestling within his heart, Calvin finally decided to return to Geneva. The Council of Strasburg, though unwilling to let their French pastor go, had no choice but to yield to the will of God. It sent a letter to Geneva commending



Calvin for being “incomparable” and a “rare instrument of the Lord”, adding that there was “no other like him” in Strasburg. Calvin decided that Idelette would stay behind in Strasburg until he was ready to send for her. With that, he left for Geneva.

13 September, 1541 saw Calvin back in Geneva. To the people, he seemed older, though much more “dignified”, “gracious” and “courteous”. This time, he was welcomed with “a new robe of black velvet, trimmed with fur, and a house on Canon Street, a short, narrow street near the cathedral”. Calvin was ready to offer himself to do whatever the Lord commanded. Shortly after his return, a special service was conducted at the cathedral in Saint Pierre, where Calvin called the people to humble themselves before the Lord and repent from their sins. When his wife Idelette was finally able to join him in Geneva, they settled down into their cosy house on Canton Street and were very happy to welcome guests to their home. Meanwhile, Calvin was glad to get back to his ministries of lecturing and writing letters/books again. He also helped to establish the Presbyterian system (patterned after the New Testament church), whereby elders ruled the church with the help of deacons.

In July 1542, Idelette gave birth to a baby boy whom they named Jacques. Calvin was delighted to baptise his little boy, but alas, he lived only for 2 weeks before the Lord took him home! Though deeply saddened by this loss, Calvin comforted himself that God, his heavenly Father, knew what was best for him and his family. Subsequently, two more children were born to them, but both died—one in infancy and the other at birth. Idelette’s health started to deteriorate after

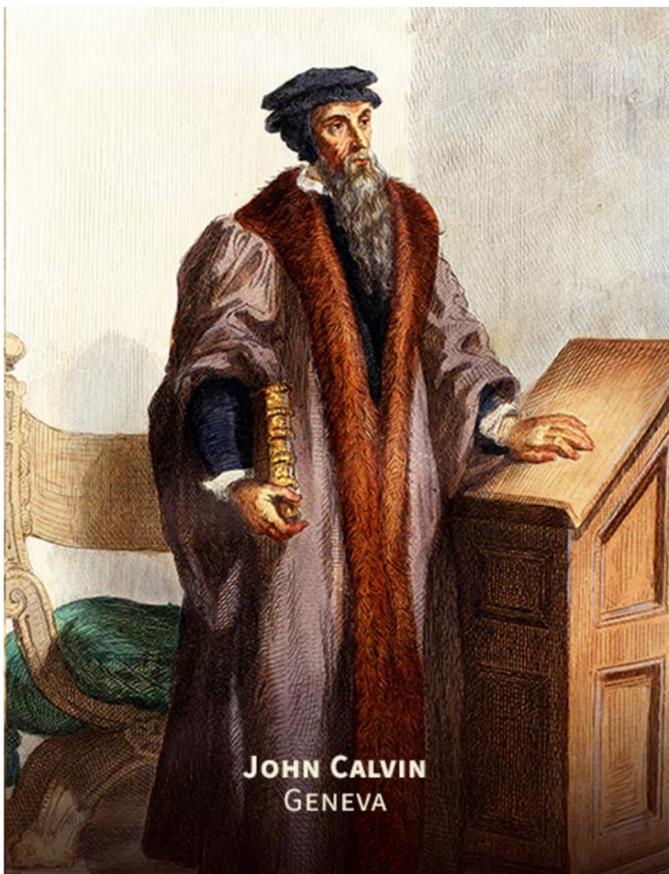


that. The situation became worse when she contracted tuberculosis, which caused her to have difficulty in breathing and to cough incessantly. Though often plagued by sickness, Idelette remained a loving, quiet and patient wife. The godly and skilful housekeeper in her made the home a peaceful and orderly one. This was most helpful to Calvin who had to labour tirelessly throughout the week. He would get up at 5am in the morning and, for the rest of the day, would be preaching, giving public lectures, conducting session meetings with the elders/leaders of the church, visiting church members (particularly those who were down and out). Calvin was also fond of writing letters of encouragement and advice to those who needed them. In addition, he wrote countless tracts, treatises, pamphlets and books. His lectures were based on books of the Bible. Out of these public lectures came his precious commentaries on the various books of the Bible. His work kept him very busy, along with other pastoral duties such as conducting marriages, baptisms and attending to the needy. In the midst of all his responsibilities, he still had to battle against those who did not hold to the same doctrine as him.

Idelette, Calvin's wife, gradually became so sick that she could hardly support herself. On 29 March 1549, Idelette died peacefully, having committed her soul to the Lord. Though Calvin was sorrowful over the loss of "the best companion

of [his] life", he tried his best not to let this trial overwhelm him. Providentially, God sent many friends to comfort him, among whom was Theodore Beza. Calvin had in his early days met him at the home of Wolmar, the Greek professor in Bourges. Beza eventually became leader of the Geneva church after Calvin's death.

After his wife's death, Calvin never married again but devoted all his time to God's work. In Geneva itself, Calvin was widely known as "a famous warrior for Christ, but just as much, a faithful friend for Christ's sake". To those who opposed him or



took advantage of him, Calvin was always gracious though he never backed down on his stand on the truths of God's Word. This was clearly seen in the way he treated Michael Servetus, a Spanish physician, who was sentenced to death at the stake in 1553 because of blasphemy (denying "the Holy Trinity, and the eternal Sonship of Christ"). Though Calvin disagreed with Servetus, he still visited him and reached out to him, hoping that he would repent. Despite his pleading for Servetus to be spared the death sentence, the Geneva Council went ahead with their



(*The Geneva Academy*)

decision to execute him. Not surprisingly, Calvin's diligence and godly influence helped transform Geneva from a sinful city to one that is holy and acceptable to God. Slowly, the enemies were weeded out and Geneva enjoyed peace like never before. It became the "Reformation city of the world"!

The Lord continued to bless Calvin in many special ways, especially in the year 1559. On 5 June that year, the Geneva Academy was officially opened. It was "the first Protestant university in the world". Calvin's intention was to train great servants for God by giving them the best education and training. The funds for building the Academy were mainly contributed by the citizens of Geneva, from the poor baker's wife to the rich printer. What cheerful and sacrificial giving unto the Lord's work! About a month later on 10 July, Calvin celebrated his 50th birthday. His heart was filled with joy and thankfulness to God who had spared his life despite many illnesses. In August that year, "the Protestant masterpiece"—the final edition of the *Institutes*—came hot off the press. By then, it had expanded from

6 chapters to 80 chapters in 4 volumes. Today, the *Institutes* have been translated into many languages. To complete his joy, Calvin was invited to be a citizen of Geneva by its Council on Christmas Day, 1559.

Calvin's unceasing labour soon took a toll on his health. He started coughing blood, which was a sign of late-stage tuberculosis. On 6 February 1564, Calvin preached for the last time in the church of Saint Pierre. While speaking, a fit of coughing suddenly seized him. He coughed so badly that blood began to fill his mouth. It was impossible to preach anymore. From then on, Beza, his fellow labourer at the Academy, took over his preaching. Calvin grew weaker and weaker by the day. His good friend Farel came by to spend some quiet moments with him—though this was unlike 28 years ago, when Farel stormed into Calvin's room to demand his help in reforming the city of Geneva. Not long after, on 27 May 1564, John Calvin peacefully departed from this world of pain and sorrow into the glory of his Master, the God Almighty. As Calvin had frequently mentioned before, in agreement with Paul, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

John Calvin, the theologian of the 16th century Reformation, would always be remembered as a humble yet mighty servant of God. Though he is dead, his ideas and writings continue to speak to Christians all over the world. For the glory of God alone, he was willing to put aside his personal comfort and difficulties to serve the Lord with his God-given talents. May we likewise serve God with whatever gifts He has bestowed on us for His glory. *Soli Deo Gloria* ("Glory to God alone")!

John Calvin on his deathbed, with members of the Church



Credits for the Children's Story's images:

John Calvin portrait (p. 21): <http://shadow.sombragris.org/?p=831>

John Calvin portrait (p. 23): <https://www.9marks.org/article/the-story-of-john-calvin-and-martin-bucer>

The Geneva Academy (p. 24): <http://themuseumofhistory.weebly.com/geneva-academy.html>

John Calvin on his deathbed (p. 25):
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TESTIMONIES

from Bible Witness Media Ministry's

16TH BIBLE WITNESS RETREAT

(Kerala, India)

Amoz Choy: It was truly a great blessing to be part of the 16th Bible Witness Retreat in Kerala, India. I thank God for the six messages on the theme, “Church – A People of Prayer”, through which we heard God’s voice. In thanksgiving to God for His Word and as a reminder of the truths learnt, I would like to recount 4 key lessons learnt.

Firstly, we realise that there are souls that are given to our generation to save. God has given our spiritual forefathers lost souls to save in their generation, and by His enabling and the saints’ obedience, God has indeed saved them. In our generation, it is now up to us to preach the Gospel and reach out to the lost of our time. God has no other way to save the lost around us today but through the declaration of the Gospel – through us, the church!

Next, we learnt that preaching yields prayer, and prayer yields more preaching. They are likened to the two wings of a bird, both extremely vital and complementary for every church.

We also were taught that God’s decrees and promises do not negate the necessity of prayer on our part. It is part of God’s plan and will that we seek Him in prayer. We do not pray to the Lord because we do not believe His promises, but because we have faith and trust that He will accomplish His decrees.

Finally, we learnt that even in persecution, compromise is not the option. Rather, prayer is the divinely ordained means of help.

It was also a wonderful blessing to have the opportunity to meet and have Christian fellowship with Pastor Koshy’s parents and relatives. In this trip, we had the opportunity to see how God has truly worked in our pastor’s life and providentially brought him from so far away to have a far-reaching ministry in our midst. Indeed, God works in mysterious ways. May His name be greatly praised!

Jenice Choy: Praise and thank the Lord for this wonderful opportunity of Bible Witness Retreat in India, where we

were taught on the topic, “Church – A People in Prayer”. Thank God for the timely reminder on the importance of prayer, and how we ought not to forsake or neglect the priority of prayer and the Word. Truly, how many blessings we often miss when we forget to pray! Thank God also for a blessed time of fellowship with Pastor Reggor, Pr Sujith and friends from Vizag, and Pastor Koshy’s family and relatives. All glory be to God!

Jean Tindaan: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1).

I praise and thank the Lord for the opportunity and provision for my daughter and me to join the 16th Bible Witness Retreat in Kerala, India, our beloved Pastor Koshy’s hometown. It has been a great privilege and honour for us to meet his parents and relatives, to see the environment and area where Pastor grew up, and to witness the kindness and hospitality of his family in accommodating a large group of us in their home. On top of that, it is also our joy to have a time of fellowship with our missionaries, Pastor Reggor from the Philippines and Pr Sujith Samuel, together with his students from GBI and friends from Vizag. And of course, I will never forget the food that we had in Kerala - savoury, authentic Malayalee curry and delicious fresh banana chips!

However, the most important thing in this trip was learning God’s Word through Pastor Koshy, who taught us

mainly from the Acts of the Apostles, as well as the books of Matthew and Luke. The theme “Church - A People in Prayer” was indeed timely for me.

The preaching of God’s Word from the first message up to the last has taught, corrected, rebuked and revived me. It was emphasised that we need to pray in unity and there must be an appointed time and place for prayer in our family devotion. Truly, a home that lacks prayer will lead to spiritual deadness. Only the Lord can help us, as King David also acknowledged in his prayers in Psalm 127:1, “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” I pray that my family will never cease to have family devotion every day.

As a mother, it has been a big challenge for me to teach and guide my daughter in God’s Word, even in the area of prayer, because I was not taught the right doctrine in my previous church. Without a strong foundation in God’s Word, my life was most ungodly back then. Through my earnest and sincere prayers, the Lord brought my family to GBPC in the year 2014 and has sustained us till now, though the enemy never fails to attack us through trials/temptation, and even persecution. It has been a very difficult journey for me, having to face so many struggles, burdens and sorrows in life, but I know with full submission to the Lord and constant prayers, I have the assurance that the enemy will flee and my family is safe in His arms. Indeed,

“The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower” (Psalm 18:2).

Last but not the least, I thank God for preserving His faithful servant Pastor Koshy, preachers and co-labourers in our midst. Through them, godly materials are easily accessible and a great help to me, my relatives and many afar. May the Lord continue to grant me understanding and a more intimate prayer communion with Him. All praise and glory be to God!

Judy Chan: Praise the Lord that I could attend this Bible Witness retreat. I signed up the minute I knew the theme was on “A Study of Prayers in the Acts of the Apostles”. I have been praying that God would give me understanding on this vital spiritual aspect and teach me how to pray. I need help!

In this retreat, I learned about prayers through various examples of faithful men in the Bible. Jesus Himself never ceases to pray! Prayer is about praising God, as well as faithful waiting according to God’s promises. Not only did I learn about the format of prayer in Acts, I also learned that it is God’s decree that we pray, and so we must carry out this command. Furthermore, the Bible teaches us the importance of praying for our church leaders, as seen in the example of Paul in Romans 15:30. May the Lord help me to understand and apply what I have learned. “Call unto

me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jeremiah 33:3). I am so grateful that God has given me greater understanding in this area.

I thank God for the fellowship with like-minded brethren. I am particularly touched by the hospitality extended by Pastor Koshy’s parents and relatives in Kerala. (Incidentally, it was there that we got to see “teh-tarik” in action!) Thank God for all the brethren who have laboured in organising this retreat. May the Lord greatly bless each of them with strength and wisdom to continually serve Him with a joyful heart!

Guesstine Leong: I thank and praise God for the wonderful time of learning God’s Word, sweet fellowship in Christ, and the chance to meet with like-minded brethren from Kerala, India. Indeed, it was an eye-opening moment for me. Comparing my life in Singapore to India, I have to be very grateful to God our heavenly Father for what we have in terms of transportation and housing. Their lifestyle is simple, yet I could see the joy in their faces. What struck me was: truly the harvest is plenteous – may we pray therefore the Lord will raise up faithful men to serve Him. If the LORD tarries, I would love to go to India again.

Thank God for this retreat’s emphasis on the importance of prayer, and the reviving messages preached by Pastor Koshy. To God be the glory. May Gethsemane Church be a prayerful

church. I learnt that passion leads us to pray, and prayer leads us to wait upon God. The true voice of the church of God is not singing, but the preaching of God's Word – by the will of God, through the preaching of God's Word, souls are added to the church. That was what we learnt from the book of Acts of the Apostles. Though believers of the early church were being persecuted, yet instead of decreasing, we see more souls added! "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers ... And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:41-47).

Food for thought: is the Christianity of our time out of the Book of Acts or out of our own mind? Are we prepared to suffer and die for the Gospel if it is for His glory? We ought to pray for our leaders, that the Lord will strengthen them, that they will be prayerful leaders. Especially in times of troubles and difficult circumstances, may they stand firm in the Truth of God's Word, that they may be a godly example for us to emulate. Lastly, as the body of believers, it is our duty to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Christ.

Carolyn Koshy: I thank God for the recent 16th BW Retreat in Kerala on with the theme, "Church - A People in Prayer", which is essentially a study of prayers in the Acts of the Apostles. Following are some thought-provoking pointers learnt:

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). Pastor Koshy emphasised that the preaching of the Word and prayer are God's instruments of blessings, both of which, like the 2 wings of a bird, are vital to the apostles in God's kingdom. They shake a man's heart out of sin and draw his heart towards God. They also set his affections on things above and not on the materialism and carnality of this earth. Therefore the apostles gave themselves "continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (cf. Acts 6:4).

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:3). Gethsemane needs deacons as it grows. Pastor encourages us to start praying for deacons of such calibre. Prayer acknowledges our dependence on God.

"But he (Stephen), being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, ... And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus,

TESTIMONIES

receive my spirit” (Acts 7:55, 59). Stephen was empowered by the Holy Spirit; he had no fear in preaching Christ. And he died a martyr’s death. “Do we dare to stand alone like Stephen?” was the challenge posed to us.



▲ Participants outside the home of Bishop & Mrs Koshy

▼ Participants at Holiday Inn Cochin



HOW TO SUPPORT OUR MINISTRY

By God's grace, we have obtained the new premises at 33 Ubi Crescent. We request prayers for God's guidance and provision that the renovation works may be completed by the end of August 2019.





Gethsemane Media Centre

The new home of Bible Witness Media Ministry

If you would like to aid Bible Witness Media Ministry in the purchasing of new equipment and renovation matters of 33 Ubi Crescent, you may send in your love gifts and cheques to "[GETHSEMANE BIBLE WITNESS LIMITED](#)", 33 UBI CRESCENT, SINGAPORE 408584.