



CCC Newsletter

True Jesus Church

Issue 21, Mar 2016

SPECIAL FEATURES

- SSC
- NATS
- Family Life Education
- Column: Seven Sentences Spoken by Jesus on the Cross
- Testimony

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Spiritual Leadership

By Pr. Timothy Yeung

In 2016, all our churches across Canada are electing new church council members. In order for the church to grow rapidly, there must be proper spiritual leadership. From the book of Acts, we can learn about the direction of our church expansion.

1. Apostles Must be Filled & Led by the Holy Spirit

After Jesus was crucified, He presented Himself alive by many infallible proofs, being seen by the apostles during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). The expansion of the church is inseparable from the apostle's faith and leadership. Therefore, before Lord Jesus ascended to Heaven, He specifically showed himself to the apostles so they can "see", by giving them spiritual experiences and by explaining to them things of the kingdom of God – the Truth. Finally, the apostles needed the Holy Spirit, to be fulfilled greatly by the Spirit, in order to apply the Truth in leading the church to advance in a spiritual direction.

Today, we do not have apostles who

play such historical roles within our church. However, present-day full-time pastors must take up the responsibility of leading the church, pursuing personal spiritual growth, being fully edified by the truth, improving sermon speaking techniques, cultivating members' spiritual growth, and using spiritual wisdom to lead the direction of church expansion, while through long hours of deep prayer, commune with God in the spirit and let the Holy Spirit fill and lead them.

2. Apostles Must Lead the Church

As we read Acts chapter 6, when the church chose seven deacons to manage the church's distribution of meals (operations), we may think that the apostle's works only involves praying and preaching, and that they should not manage or engage in the operations of the church. But in fact, this view is a misinterpretation of the Bible and a wrong concept. In addition to the seven's assistance in holy work, the apostles actually had many roles to play in the management and spiritual directions of the church, for example:

i. The apostles sent out workers (which is management of people and affairs) to preach to Samaria (the area of expansion)

ii. When the apostles held the

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council in Jerusalem to discuss the conflict over circumcision (chapter 15), apostle James made the final conclusion of this matter based on spiritual wisdom and judgment. (Acts 15:19)

iii. The apostles wrote to various churches, instructing them to use spiritual principles to resolve conflicts regarding circumcision and other day-to-day problems of the members (Acts 15:18).

“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.” (Acts 15:28-29)

In the True Church of our day, full-time pastors should also take responsibility in leading the church; be it internal affairs, missionary work, direction of members’ faith, or other operations at church (including important matters such as acquiring a new chapel, expansion of local churches etc.) Full-time pastors should use the principles of the truth in the guidance and direction of the church’s Holy Work. If the True Church is to advance and prosper, it must follow and walk in the ways of the Spirit, rather than the processes of worldly thought and logic.

3. The Church Submits to Spiritual Leadership under the Apostles

The apostles continuously uses spiritual principles to lead the disciples. The disciples also actively follows suit and cooperates.

i. The apostles led the disciples to pray earnestly while awaiting the Holy Spirit’s descent (Acts 1:13-14). “And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty)...” (Acts 1:15)

ii. “And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.” (Acts 16:4-5)

Today, newly elected church council members and elders/ ministers from all churches must be one in heart and mind, cooperate with the advice of full-time pastors, in order to uphold and exalt the Truth, to care for the members, and to spread the gospel - these are the messages of the Bible. If the churches of each area can faithfully follow these, God will surely guide and bless the holy work of our church across the land to prosper, and increase our numbers daily.

Bible study seminar

From October 9 to 11, 2015, Edmonton church held its annual bible study seminar on Book of Philippians with help from Preacher Ming-Yang Chao and Preacher Tony Kuo. A total of seven truth-seekers and forty-three members attended this event. This seminar highlighted the

AGM

On January 30, 2016, Edmonton church held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) for local members. This year's meeting includes board of council election and election results are listed as follow: Religious Education Officer(s) are Pr. Philemon Tsen (Chairperson) and Deacon Nathaniel Lee, General Affairs Officer(s) are Bro. David Shek and Sis. Rowena Chin, and Financial Affairs Officer is Bro. Brian Lau. Auditors are Sis. Jessica Shek and Nadia Wei.

Annual New Year's potluck lunch

On January 2, 2016, Edmonton church hosted annual New Year's potluck lunch. Brothers and sisters as well as truth-seeker friends enjoy both spiritual encouragement and various household specialties. In celebration to the first Sabbath in year 2016.



Canadian Counselor Seminar

From December 14 to 18, 2015, Edmonton church held Canadian Counselor Seminar with help from Brother Daniel Chu. A total of twenty-five attendees for this event. Thanks to the warm accommodations provided by Edmonton brothers and sisters, participants of the event can concentrate on the training. May them take home the learned material and continue to be watchmen for God's sheep.



Family Life Education

From December 19 to 21, 2015, Edmonton church hosted Family Life Education with help from Brother Daniel Chu. Participants of this event took in the information in a relaxed and playful ambiance. Children are indeed gifts from God. The way we treat the children is equal to the way we treat God. May God give us the patience and love to treasure our gifts with heart of thanksgiving, lest not offend Him in anyway.





New Year Service

Vancouver church held its New Year Special Service on January 1, 2016, with the sermon given by Pr. Luke Hsieh. The sermon gave us three plans to work on: to deny ungodliness and worldly lust, to live righteously or soberly, and to be godly in the present age (based on Titus 2:12). We also began our 2016 Bible Reading Plan for the whole church. A tip for keeping up bible reading is to put our bibles in a visible place - that can help us to remember to read it! Reading the Bible will help us become stronger and to do God's will this year!

Thoughts on the Vancouver Winter SSC

SSC experience? I can't tell you about that, you have to be there yourself. However, what I can talk about are the feelings and emotions I have gathered and so said 'experienced' from this particular, but not so particular SSC. To understand how it feels like to be in an SSC, one must also understand what not being near God feels like. For only by experiencing the famine one can be grateful of what is given unto them.

Popular comments of SSC include " oh I felt very spiritually edified" or " wow I learned so much" or " the food was good". However, for me, I found that simply being at the venue, at another world, gave a sense of true peace. Because I am not close to God in my worldly, everyday life, the environment of fellow brothers and sisters, and the abidance of God gave me, following a tormenting last weeks of school was a safe haven of rest. I felt I could truly be at peace, and continue with such a life of holiness back in this earthly environment.

Services in Surrey

The Surrey Family Service Region was branched from Vancouver Church in 2006, as the numbers of members increased in the Greater Vancouver Area. With approx. 50 members holding weekly Sabbath services there, they are currently renting a chapel that is shared with other Christian groups. We took some time to interview some of these brothers & sisters in Christ!

Q: What is your favourite thing or memory about services in Surrey?

“I really like the atmosphere among the youths. I feel we're like a family and we surpass our age gaps.”

“I really like how understanding everyone is. Fellowship is always a fond time.☐”

“Since our numbers are small, we are closely connected with one another and that helps in life.”

“I see children grow up in church (that's the best), youths grow stronger and closer and everyone is involved in doing Holy work.”

“I love how I am able to get to know each and every one of the members more, both young and old. It is easier to greet everyone and exchange a few words on Sabbath. It truly feels like a big family. A smaller church allows more opportunities to serve and I've

been blessed to witness how the youths have grown and matured in their relationships with God.”

“Love the atmosphere at Surrey church and how diverse and small our church is”

“You don't have to pretend to be something because whether we are on the same path or not, we are striving to become a better spiritual person.”

“Love the food and how we have more opportunities to do holy work. Also love being able to fellowship and eat with everybody at one big table every week. Oh and also serving together almost every week when we wash dishes!”

Q: What is a goal that you are trying to work towards personally, or trying to improve as a church in 2016?

“Being punctual”

“Have more love!”

“Church expansion & preaching the gospel.”

“Training more workers”

“Pray for the growth of the members and the

church”

Thank and praise God for their answers! As we look for a new chapel to purchase, let us all keep the growth of our members and expansion of TJC in our prayers. May God be glorified!



Reflections of NATS 2015

Thank God for the wonderful experience at the 6th NATS in Toronto! The main theme this time was “Building a Glorious Church”. Since my last NYTS 20 years ago in Garden Grove, and after I joined the workforce, I have never attended any theological seminars. This really gave me a good opportunity to make time and to learn the word of God, as well as to live together with church brothers and sisters for a week. It was indeed a wonderful spiritual moment for me.

I have learned a few things during this NATS:

1) The senior members, despite their advanced years, overcame their age and health barriers to come and draw near to God. I honestly admire their learning attitude toward the word of God and their spirits in serving the Lord.

2) I realized that as long as we are willing to open up and share, we can learn from one another. Through fellowship, I got to know members more from their testimonies of faith and their experiences in knowing God and receiving His grace. We have indeed formed a spiritual bond and become one family. I truly felt that

the testimonies were very edifying and practical in our daily Christian lives. Not to forget the hymn sessions, they certainly gave us bonding time and touched our hearts in a very special way as we all sang together as one.

3) We learned many precious bible teachings and insights from the preachers. One important lesson I learned is that we have to break the vessel inside us. By breaking down our pride, ego, past knowledge and experiences, we are able to once again come before God as broken and empty. From then, God will make us into the vessel that is fit for His use and fill us with His grace. It is true that as a long-time believer, I feel that I may have some thoughts and experiences that hinder my faith to grow. A preacher also reminded us that the bible is the one book we should bring along and keep with us always. Indeed, we must seriously study the words of God all of our lifetime.

4) In order for us to build a glorious church for the Lord, we have to rebuild the temple within us by praying and reading the bible, and we need to all humbly come together before God as one. To be united as one in the house of God, we must love one another. May the Lord continue to guide us in our respective churches, to grow in unity, in faith, in hope and in love. May each and every one of us be a vessel fit for His use according to His abundant grace and richness!

5) In the beginning of the seminar, I have asked my group to pray for one of my family members. In the entire week, I have felt that interceding prayers were efficient and powerful, and I have felt the suffering of that family member inside me. When one member of the body suffers, the whole body is in pain. For the first time in my prayers, I felt the pain in me acutely. In that moment, I knew that God wanted me to love the family member who may not be so lovable. If a part of the body is unwell, how can I not pray for God's healing?

For those of you who are thinking of joining the next NATS, I would strongly encourage you to break away from the comfort zone, to live together with one another, and make time to learn the word of God. You will be amazed how much you will learn! It is a spiritual platform for us to be recharged in the Word of God, just like we need to recharge our tablets and mobile phones every day. How much more do we need to revive our spiritual self, and be recharged by the power of God! With this, I shall end my sharing and may all glory be unto our Lord Jesus Christ, forever and ever, Amen! (By Debbie Thien)



New year service

Members young and old gladly gathered at Calgary Church on the very first day of 2016, to share good food, sing songs of praises, listen to God's words, and to reflect about the past and hope into the future. We thank God for the New Year Special Service and the fellowship of love, so that we can start off this new year on the right foot. God has abundantly blessed us individually and collectively in the year 2015, He has also trained us with the difficulties in our lives, so that we can grow and learn to rely on his power. May God continue to guide Calgary Church, so that we can love one another more, further His holy work, and build up His Church



Visit Agape Hospice

Praise the Lord, on Sunday, January 31, the Calgary Youth Choir had the opportunity to visit Agape Hospice, as part of our collective goals. This was the very first time that the youths in Calgary have come together to present hymns outside of church as volunteers. Choir members first gathered at church for prayer and a quick warm-up, before arriving at the hospice. We were warmly welcomed by the Agape staff, and after a short orientation, the youths walked down the hallway in unity to a common area, where patients and their caretakers awaited.

We presented a one-hour program of hymns, choir pieces, and words of encouragement, praising the Lord and hoping to bring comfort to our listeners. During the whole presentation, we could feel the power of music, and the presence and the movement of God. Many were moved to tears. It was a great first experience for all, an opportunity to learn about reaching out to our community, and sharing the love and peace of God.

A sister shared her reflection with us, saying: “ At times while volunteering or serving, we may do it thinking that we have something to offer that will help or teach another person. However, it often turns out that we are the ones learning and benefitting from the very ones we are trying to help; we are humbled by this experience and thankful to have this chance to share hymns of comfort and hope to the residents of Agape Hospice.”

As we were encouraged by this wonderful first outreach experience, the Youth Choir is planning to continue to serve God in this way in the near future. We thank all the workers involved who made this event possible, and we give all the glory to our Lord Jesus Christ!

Praise and thank God, we had the opportunity to learn the book of Philippians from October 14-17, 2015. Since most members were already familiar with this epistle of Paul, Pr. Chao MY decided to go through each verse in a meticulous fashion, meanwhile adding many testimonies and life applications in between. Although we only covered the first two chapters in greater detail, this approach was much more memorable and applicable to us.

One message that stood out to me is that our faith indeed influences others. Paul greatly encouraged the believers in Philippi by manifesting the hope, peace, and joy of Christ in him even though he was in prison. But he also warned that believers should "do all things without complaining and disputing" (Phil 2:14). This means that our speech and actions often show our faith, and they have the potential to either build others up or bring them down. Therefore, we should always strive to have a positive influence on our brothers and sisters by speaking words that are edifying, thankful, and harmonious.

Hymnal Evangelical Service

Toronto church held a hymnal evangelical service titled “Imperishable Life” in December 2015. The Evangelical Affair coordinated all available resources including 3 choirs and music ensemble, evangelical team, cooking team and flower arrangement team to work for this event. Everyone was sparing no efforts, striving for the best results and anticipating the truth-seekers to come enjoy this event with us.

Children’s choir started off with “A Child’s Prayer” with their somewhat shy and innocent clear voice, and continued with “He’s Everything to Me” to raise the question for the truth-seekers : Who’s Jesus Indeed? Does God really exist? English Choir started with a peaceful song “It is Well With My Soul” and again, finished with their characteristic high energy song ”Corner Stone”. Chinese choir incorporated the narrative storyline of hymn lyric writer John Newton’s life in search of God with cello solo, to create a highly reflective mood for the audience. The music ensemble played 2 classic pieces “Canon of Praise” and “Amazing Grace”, and the service concluded with a solemn and grandioso finale “Crown Him With Many Crowns” that was sung by the collaborative effort of the 2 choirs and music ensemble.

What touches me was the fact that everyone, young or old, had benefited and was edified in the process of preparing for the event. The Children choir learned a deep lesson that the eventual goal of hymn presentation is to glorify God.

The music ensemble was missing certain highly skilled players with limited time left. The ensemble director made a daring decision after communicating with some young kids’ parents, that she was willing to take efforts to train the young church musicians, so that they have a chance to be the lead players. On the one hand may God bless her for her dedication, patience, time and effort for the church work, on the other hand thank God that these young church musicians had learned and grown in faith as well. God is repetitively showing us that, as long as we have a heart willing to work for God, He is always there holding our hands. He will give us strength and talents and we shall ”let no one despise your youth” when it comes to serving the Lord.

Historically the majority of Toronto church members are Asians, mostly Chinese. However we can see a recent trend that in this multi-culture society, our truth seeker friends are also coming from a diversified background. We have international friends of our members, and also Caucasian friends who actually find their way to TJC through Yellow pages or advertisements. All these trends are reminding us, Jesus’ second coming is near. We need to not only prepare our own spiritual faith, but also sail to the deep sea to find the lost sheep and lead them back to the fold.

Student Spiritual Convocation

Thank God, the winter student spiritual convocation (WSSC) at Toronto held from December 21st to 26th, 2015 was successful. Many of the students and counsellors had edifying reflections from this event. The theme this year was a Life of Holiness, and both students and counsellors were able to learn from one another on how to live a separated and holy life.

All of the classes were centered on this theme, and taught us how to set ourselves apart from the remaining of this corrupted world for God. In E2, we learned from the story of Daniel and his three friends; how their determination to be special and faith in God were strong even though they were captured in a foreign land. We also learned from the examples of Joseph, David, Job and Samson, comparing and contrasting the differences between having and lacking holiness in the eyes of God.

The students especially enjoyed the workshops, which were focused on what we can do when we are met up

National Adult Theological Seminar





with things that may compromise our principles. We did skits, made posters and origami to emphasize that being holy means to discern whether what we do is right or wrong in God's eyes, and to sacrifice for Him. We also had many discussions within each group on topics that targeted the specific students in the group. All of us shared many things about our own lives that allowed the group members and the counsellors to bond on a

deeper level.

Thank God for guiding us through this very important holy work, and giving us the opportunity to set aside a week of our break to be closer to Him. This WSSC was very edifying, and all of us will strive to become a person dedicated to set ourselves apart from the world for God.

Oct 18 evening was the commencing ceremony for our annual Canada National Adult Theological Seminar, as well as the long awaited journey to our spiritual growth. There are many members coming from different parts of Canada who had joined us to embrace this upcoming busy yet fruitful week to come. It all came very naturally that we had very pleasant chit-chatting and numerous friendly conversation with one another as if we've known one another for a long time.

Thank God that I was able to take some time off from worldly burden of work to come to the bosom of Jesus and learn His words with my family and all the brothers and sisters. Our topic was centered around the Book of Micah and Ephesians taught by Pr. Jiao, the

Book of Ezra by Pr. Yeung and the Book of Jonah and Book of Obadiah taught by preacher Kuo. I feel deeply moved by a verse "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). Indeed, we have to give glory to God, for He has already blessed us with all. We shall never forget His teaching or be lost by the temptation from the world.

In addition to the busy curriculum, we also heard wonder testimonies from brother Bangxin Zheng, sister Amy, Caroline, Helen Ho, Rowena Chin and sister Winnie. I felt deeply moved by sister Caroline Ho's sharing about her understanding of the Ten Commandment. She was able to apply her 10 personal

experiences to demonstrate the in-depth understanding and teaching of the Ten Commandments, which became very impactful for me.

One week's time passed by quickly, we are just carried away just like the little river leading the streams to the great sea of spiritual faith. We all regret that it was coming to an ended all too soon long before we even wake up from the slumber. With mutual encouragement and resolution to come again for the spiritual feast, we each returned home with lots of treasured memories and growth from this seminar. We have to come gather again and see each other next year !

Youth Fellowship

Over the last few months, since last summer, God has brought more students from Mainland China to study in Montreal, in addition those who moved to Montreal before. In total, there are five students who live in downtown area currently. Under preacher Yeung's initiative, a new downtown student fellowship was formed and is now held regularly in sister Guo's apartment, sharing hymns and studying the bible on Friday nights.

One youth among them is named Marion Liu, who came from Shanghai. Originally she came to believe in the Lord by herself. She has believed for almost three years now. Before her came to study in Canada, she prayed for the faith of her family and asked the Lord to guide her parents' steps. Thanks be to God, He indeed guided and watched over her whole family. Her mother was baptized in one of the Spiritual convocations last year. Furthermore, the father of sister Liu, who worshiped idols for twenty years, has also started to seek the word of God and stopped worshipping idols. Now she considers her father the most serious about the Truth than the rest of her family.

Marion said that she at first did not believe in God. However, after being baptized and receiving the Holy Spirit, she felt a calm and peace in her heart. It made her not worry at all about coming to the cold country where she would not have the company of her family. She told her mother that God would take care of everything. In reality, God did watch over her and provided her a landlord who takes very good care of her: since she does not cook, they make sure that every meal is prepared. Just as stated in John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." He has shown us that as long as we ask him, he will surely watch and protect.

We ask the Lord to continue leading His Church in Montreal, and add to us daily those who are saved.

| 工作內容 PROGRAM | 教會 CHURCH | 日期 DATE | 聖職人員 WORKER | |
|--|--------------|------------|---------------------------|----------|
| 宗教教育教員進修會 RETW | Vancouver | 6/4-6/6 | LUKE HSIEH, JOANNE LEE | 謝宏駿, 李佑樟 |
| 巡牧 Pastoral | Alberta | 6/8-7/10 | FRITZ CHEN | 陳恆仁 |
| 聖樂研習營 Sacred Music Seminar | Edmonton | 8/19-8/21 | TINA YANG | 張慧如 |
| 靈恩佈道會(春季) ESSC (Spring) | Vancouver | 4/27-5/1 | QINRU WANG | |
| 靈恩佈道會(春季) ESSC (Spring) | Calgary | 4/29-5/1 | PR. YEH | |
| 靈恩佈道會(春季) ESSC (Spring) | Edmonton | 5/6-5/8 | PR. CHOU | |
| 短期巡牧「中國長執」 Short Term Pastoral Visit [Minister from China] | Toronto | 5/9-5/23 | QINRU WANG | |
| 靈恩佈道會(春季) ESSC (Spring) | Toronto | 5/11-5/15 | QINRU WANG | |
| 靈恩佈道會(春季) ESSC (Spring) | Montreal | 5/6-5/8 | RAYMOND CHOU | 周瑞霖 |
| 靈恩佈道會(秋季) ESSC (Autumn) | Vancouver | 9/7-9/11 | DERREN LIANG | 梁得仁 |
| 靈恩佈道會(秋季) ESSC (Autumn) | Edmonton | 9/16-9/18 | JASON HU | 胡真盛 |
| 靈恩佈道會(秋季) ESSC (Autumn) | Calgary | 9/23-9/26 | JASON HU | 胡真盛 |
| 靈恩佈道會(秋季) ESSC (Autumn) | Montreal | 9/16-9/18 | KC TSAI | 蔡恆忠 |
| 靈恩佈道會(秋季) ESSC (Autumn) | Toronto | 9/22-9/25 | VUTHY NOL- MANTIA | |



How my family came to believe ?

"On July 15, 2001, our dear daughter, Kelly, received water baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus... Our hearts cried out with joy: "Thank you, Lord!" By Mandy Huang

Thank the grace of God, my mother (Sis. Mandy Huang) wrote this testimony shortly after my baptism. How my parents and I came to believe was a testimony of God's great compassion. I thank the Lord for the opportunity to tell this story from my perspective.

In 1996, I was four years old; my father (Bro. Richard Ding) left his stable career in Kunshan, China, and headed to Los Angeles, California to start his own business. Having no family, friends, or connections in the US, my father's dream for a better future for our family was a daring and difficult one. In 1998, my mother decided to go to LA to help my father. I was to stay with my paternal grandparents for a while.

Our estimated six-month separation soon turned into almost two years. My parents came across challenges in both business and immigration. Human determination was no longer enough, and my atheist parents considered seeking faith. After unimpressed visits to nearby temples, my father's friend (also a truth-seeker at that time) brought my parents to TJC Irvine. With the intention of meeting friends at a "social gathering", my parents unknowingly walked into the true church during Holy Communion.

Without any pre-existing knowledge of Christianity, when my parents were invited to kneel down and pray, they did. Whether it was their search for faith, desperate need for God, or simply God's mercy, my mother

received the Holy Spirit in that very first prayer. My father, being quite confused at her spiritual tongue and trembling, asked her "What are you doing?" Yet, this experience, along with the love and support of Southern California brothers and sisters, gave my parents the desire to stay and seek the truth. Then, during one of the following Holy Communion, my father also received the Holy Spirit, thank God!

In May of 2000, my parents were baptized. Amidst their joy and gratitude in finding God, they were concerned about me. I was still living with my grandparents in China, enrolled in a school system that taught an anti-God and science-centered ideology. My parents decided not to tell me about their faith in our

weekly phone calls, but prayed fervently for my heart and for our reunion.

One evening, I had a dream that I had received a gift from the west. Upon opening the box, a glowing white dove flew out and circled above me. I held out my hand and it dropped a tiny seed into my open palms. When I placed the seed on the ground, it sprouted into tender leaves, and from it grew a strong, tall, vibrant apple tree. I held out my hands once more, and a beautiful red fruit fell into my hands. I happily told my parents about this beautiful dream. They sounded excited, but did not say why.

Soon after, my aunt took me to Shanghai for a health check as part of the immigration process. At one point, the doctor asked to speak with me alone. When we were finished the routine questions, the doctor hesitated. "I'm not sure why, but I feel like I should give you this", he said slowly, handing me what looked like a business card. I took it with suspicion, remembering all the times I've been told not to accept anything from strangers. I looked at the card; it had a picture of a teddy bear and a single line of writing: "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" (John 3:16).

"What is this?" I asked. I meant to ask, "Who is this?", because I had no idea who God, the Son, or John were. "This is from a book called the Bible, it's about a God who is the heavenly Father to all who believe in Him", he answered. "I don't believe in Him...this is superstition", I responded in the answer taught by my teachers. "Hmm, you said your parents are in America right? A lot of people in the west are Christian, they probably already

believe in God", he suggested. "No way, my parents won't believe in superstition", I insisted, suddenly a little panicked. "Hmm, you never know. Keep it anyways", he gestured at the card.

Obediently, I tucked the card into my pocket. I never told anyone about this card, but would often take it out and re-read the verse when I was alone, wondering what connection it could have to my parents. I took it to school, tucking it in a secret crevice in my book, feeling somehow comforted by its presence.

A few months later, my parents called, telling me that we received approval for immigration from the Canadian government. They were coming to China to pick me up in three weeks.

I remember the day I was waiting for my parents to arrive at my grandparents' house. A neighbour girl taunted over and over again at me, "Are you sure they will come?" I didn't respond, because I knew they would. Seeing my parent get out of their taxi was like watching two people walk out of the photographs I had under my pillow. I stood there in shock. My mother scooped me up and hugged me close; my father joined us in our embrace, years of separation evaporated in that one instant.

On April 22nd, 2001, we landed safely in Vancouver after a long, turbulent flight. Going to church for the first time that Saturday, I rejected church, prayer, God - everything to do with this faith. Jesus felt like a stranger I was now expected to worship. I told my parents "You can't force me to believe".

Yet slowly, through prayer, I felt my heart being moved, and my stubbornness soften; I felt the same kind of comfort that John

3:16 provided in the absence of my parents. One night, I awoke with a start, and felt peace wash over me as the Spirit said, "I am the Lord Jesus Christ" - a voice full of authority, love, and beckoning. That night, the Lord called out to me that I am His, and I decided to belong to Him.

Thank the grace of God, I received the Holy Spirit shortly before my baptism on July 15th, 2001. A year later, on July 14th, 2002, my brother, Alvin was born. We felt abundantly blessed as we settled into our new life of four; Alvin was baptized in the summer of 2003.

My journey of faith has not been trouble-free, nor is it over. While I am here and awaiting for the Coming of the Lord, the world is like the neighbour girl, taunting me repeatedly, attempting to spark doubt and fear in my confidence for the Lord's promise. I had confidence in my parents because we conversed regularly and knew one another in love; in the same way, I am encouraged to do the same with my heavenly Father.

"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ... Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet 1:6-9).

I am forever thankful to the Lord for bringing my family and me under His household. May all the glory, honour, and praise be unto His name. Amen!

(By Kelly Ding)

Seven Sentences Spoken by **Jesus** on the Cross

By Pr. Luke Hsieh

Near death, a bird's chirping is melancholy; near death, a man's words are kind.

When a person is about to depart from the world, his last words often bears the conclusive knowledge he gathered through his lives, the essence of his life experiences; they contain regret, repentance, thanksgiving, farewells, forgiveness, and hope.

For us, the Lord Jesus left behind precious wisdom of life. His seven statements spoken on the cross are our best guide to knowing and imitating the Lord.

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34).

Forgiveness is a person's free choice, no one is forced to forgive or not forgive – that's up to a person's will and decision. "If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two." (Mat 5:40-41). In demonstrating this kind of patience and tolerance, "...you will heap coals of fire on his head...[to] overcome evil with good" (Rom 12:20-21).

Behind forgiveness is a symbol of authority. Historically, only kings were able to forgive sins; in modern laws, only the president possesses the special right to grant pardon. If someone has wronged me, then I have the authority to choose revenge or to forgive completely. "His glory is to overlook a transgression" (Prov 19:11). Hence, by overlooking transgressions, one demonstrates the nobility of his own life.

Forgiveness can liberate oneself, allowing one to walk out from feeling misunderstood and angry, to soar freely in the open skies; forgiveness also gives the other party a chance to repent and be renewed. In this way, the world can become more kind. God will then grant us vast lands and help us strive towards the prosperity of "Rehoboth" (Gen 26:22).

The Roman soldiers were only obeying their officer's



commands without their own judgement or decision, and they nailed Jesus onto the cross out of the blindness and weakness of a group mentality. Yet how gracious and merciful is the Lord Jesus; he understands the situation they were put in and shows mercy in their dilemma. Forgiveness often begins from being more understanding and merciful.

"Woman, behold your son! ... Behold your mother!" (John 19:26-27).

At this moment, Lord Jesus bore the sins of all mankind and took the role of the sacrificial lamb. He called Mary as "woman" and not "mother" because He did not wish for Mary to mourn from the stance of a mother. He comes from God, and will return to God. Still, Lord Jesus made arrangements to provide for Mary's livelihood.

The beloved disciple of Jesus was John, the author of the gospel John (Jn 21:24). Mary's livelihood was handed over to John's care, in this way fulfilling the fifth commandment to honour one's father and



one mocked Jesus without repentance, while the other reflected with a fearful heart - he was willing to bear the punishments that he deserved. This criminal saw no hope in this life, but hoped that he could be remembered by God after his death. Repentance brings hope. Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Prov 28:13)

This criminal called Jesus "Lord", expressing his sincerity in worshipping the Lord. Moreover, he said that this Man has done nothing wrong. He believed that Jesus is the Messiah that the Jews had hoped to become the King and establish the Kingdom. His understanding of the Lord Jesus became the basis of his salvation.

Jesus "on the same day" gave him the grace of salvation, so he is able to enjoy the eternal blessing in paradise. How precious this is, that it was "on the same day" – he did not need to wait until tomorrow; on the same day the Lord's grace can be received. This is the best promise the gospel we proclaim. Although the criminal had no opportunity and time to be baptized, the Lord's words holds power, and judgment belongs to God.

Being with God is "Immanuel". It's paradise, it's the kingdom of heaven. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away (Rev 21:3-4). In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Lk 15:10)

["I am thirsty." \(John 19:28\)](#)

In order to fulfill the scripture, Jesus said "I am thirsty". This phrase was quoted from Psalm 69:21, which describes the servant suffering from mockery, insult, humiliation, eating gall in his food and drinking him vinegar to quench his thirst. It fully shows the Jesus's physical weakness from his human flesh: he was hungry (Matthew 4:1), he slept (Mat 8:24), he wept (Jn 11:35), rejected by His hometown Nazareth (Mk 6:1-4), tired and thirsty (Jn 4:6-7), alarmed and saddened (Mk 13:33-34). Therefore, for we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Heb 4:15-16)

Jesus was thirsty, he hoped for water or vinegar to quench His thirst. He also has hopes for the Church, for he expects disciples to love one another. As he has loved the disciples. By this everyone will know that you are Jesus' disciples. (Jn 13:34-35)

Is my soul thirsty? As the deer pants for streams

mother, which is also the first commandment to do with morals and ethics.

First of all, one must take care of their physical needs so that they do not lack in food, shelter, and clothing. Then comes spiritual companionship, emotional comfort, with constant full effort and commitment even in times of sickness and difficulties. One should constantly consider the factors that bring joy and gladness to one's parents (Prov 23:24-25), presenting to them the greatest gift of his righteousness and wisdom.

Mary will not be lonely since she can draw close to John as her own son. John was a very beloved disciple of Jesus; having received much love, he is able to give just as much love. Jesus can depart without worry. This statement deeply demonstrated Jesus' human nature, warmth and care.

["Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." \(Luke 23:43\)](#)

Of the two criminals who were crucified with Jesus,

of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? (Ps 42:1-2)

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, rivers of living water will flow from within them, and receive the Holy Spirit. (Jn 7:37-39) But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. (Jn 16:13)

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46)

Sinners dare not to face God. After Adam and Eve sinned, they were afraid when they heard the voice of God calling out to them. Therefore, they hid among the bushes, avoiding God, and in the end they were cast out of Garden of Eden (Gen 3:8, 23). After Cain killed his brother Abel, he was judged by God and since then accursed, being cast out from the presence of God to wander in the land. (Gen 4:11-12)

Prayers of sinners will not be heard (Jn 9:31), because sin has separated them from God (Isa 59:1-2).

The high priest offers sacrifices for the atonement of sin by placing both their hands on the head of a live goat, confessing their sins and transgressions and letting the goat bear the sin. The goat is then released into the wilderness, where no one dwells (Lev 16:20-22), meaning it's cast out to fend for its own survival.

So the Lord Jesus at this very moment bore the sins of mankind, He who knew no sin being sin for us. (2 Cor 5:21) This phrase is the prophecy in Psalms 22 concerning the suffering of Messiah, whose hands and feet are pierced through and his clothe torn. We need to remember the Lord's death because He loves us and sacrificed himself for us (Gal 2:20) by vividly remembering the crucifixion Christ before us. (Gal 3:1)

“Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” (Luke 23:46)

When life is at its end, knowing where one's soul will go and that he is in the loving hands of God, will prevent one's hearts from being uneasy. To everything there is a season and for every creation, there is a time to be born and a time to die. God created all things and made them perfect in its time. (Eccl 1-11)

The death of a Christian means being asleep, for they will be awakened and resurrected to be with the Lord forever. (1 Thess 3:13-18).

Jacob knew the time of his death was coming and instructed Joseph what to do for his burial, to not bury him in Egypt, but in his fathers' grave. Then bowed himself on the head of the bed (or “holding onto the staff”) worshipping God (Gen 47:29-31), and placing his feet on the bed then breathed his last. (Gen 49:33) Departing the world in peace is very wonderful.

When showing love to someone who is about to leave this world, there are four things to be done: fulfilling the task of taking care of the body and the heart; fulfilling the comfort of the family whose immediate member will soon be buried; fully mobilizing a team of medical, religious, and social workers and psychologists to show care; finally contributing through the entire process - before and after the

death of the individual.

God made man with dust, breathed life into the nostril of man, and thus he became a living person with spirit (Gen 2:7). After man dies, the dust returns to the ground, the spirit returns to God (Eccl 12:7). Before the presence of God, all deeds the man has committed, including those hidden things, whether good or evil, will be judged by the Lord. (Eccl 12:14)

“It is finished!” (John 19:30)

The purpose of Lord Jesus Christ coming to this world is to save men from sin (Mat 1:21), and this salvation has been fulfilled and accomplished.

Adam brought the sin into the world, and death comes from sin. Thus, death will be upon men (Rom 5:12). Now, men will receive even more grace from Jesus Christ, for in Christ, men are able to resurrect through water baptism. (Rom 6:4) Because of one transgression, all were condemned, and in the same way, because of one righteous deed, men will be called righteous and receive eternal life (Rom 5:18). This is the comparison between one man and the rest of mankind; the conviction of sin is for the later justification. The ways and methods exist for a purpose and result.

Men have trespasses against the law (ex. stealing), moral sins (ex. hatred), religious sins (ex. worship idols). One must bear the death of sins as punishment in order to regain the status of being ‘righteous.’ Originally, men would die, however, through Jesus Christ who died for us, we are able to live. “For God so loved the whole that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (Jn 3:16)

Thus, when Christ came into the world, He said, “I have come - In the volume of the book it is written of Me - To do Your Will, O God.” (Heb 10:5-7)

When the mission of His life was completed, He departed from this world without regrets or worries.

“To live is Christ, to die is gain.” (Phil 1:21) If we live, we live to the Lord, if we die, we die to the Lord. Thus, whether we live or die, we are of the Lord's. (Rom 14:8)

Lord Jesus Christ has set the example of life for us, we must follow His footsteps until we reach the heavenly home.

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