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A Journey of Faith



“Though your sins be as scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they be red like crimson,
they shall be as wool.

Isaiah 1:18

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Editorial



Rev. Vijayesh Lal

The cross is one of the most powerful and enduring symbols in human history representing the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ and the redemption of humanity.

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the ultimate selfless loving act and one that has inspired generations of Christ followers to live lives of service and compassion. The cross reminds us of the power of forgiveness and the importance of putting the needs of others before our own.

But the influence of the cross extends far beyond the religious and spiritual domain. The cross has been used as a symbol of

resistance and revolution throughout history. In South Africa, the cross was a symbol of the anti-apartheid movement, representing the struggle for freedom and equality. In Latin America, the cross has been used by theologians to advocate for social justice and the rights of the poor. The cross has also been used by indigenous peoples around the world to represent their spiritual and cultural identity.

The symbol of the cross has been used in the civil rights movement in the United States as a powerful symbol of faith and resistance against injustice. One example is the Selma to Montgomery marches in 1965, which were

organized by civil rights activists including Martin Luther King Jr. and led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. During these marches, participants carried crosses and recited prayers as a way of affirming their commitment to nonviolent protest and their belief in the justice of their cause. The use of the cross in this context represents the intersection of faith and social justice and since then has become a powerful symbol of the civil rights movement.

The cross of Christ is central to understanding issues of justice, equality, and fraternity in society. The cross is not just about individual salvation but also about social transformation. It remains the ultimate expression of God's justice and love for it is through the cross that God addresses the problem of human sin and injustice.

On the cross the love of God and the justice of God meet. This tells us that God's love and justice are not contradictory but rather complementary. This understanding can have several implications in our quest for justice in the world today.

The cross challenges the world's systems of power and oppression. We are called to challenge unjust social structures and work towards greater equality and fraternity in society. Dr. John Stott famously wrote, "The cross is not just a symbol of salvation but also a symbol of revolution."

The cross is also seen as a symbol of healing and hope. The Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations providing aid to those in need have the symbol of the cross to represent them. The cross is also used as a symbol of hope for those suffering from illness or addiction. The power of the cross lies in its ability to inspire us to overcome adversity and to work towards a better future.

The cross is also an emblem of unity. Through his death on the cross, Jesus reconciled humanity to God, and by placing our faith in Him, we too can be reconciled with God and with one another. In this way, the cross of Jesus Christ represents a unity that transcends national, cultural, and even religious boundaries. It unites Christians of different

denominations and traditions, who may have different beliefs and practices, under a common banner of faith in Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, the message of the cross is one of love and compassion, and it calls on Christians to love one another as Christ loved them. This love is not limited to fellow believers but extends to all people, regardless of their background, beliefs, or actions. In this sense, the cross of Jesus Christ serves as a unifying force for all humanity, inspiring us to love and serve one another as we journey through life together. In a country as diverse as India, where tensions between different religious and cultural groups can run high, this message of unity and peace is more important than ever.

Some have used the cross to justify violence by claiming that they are fighting for a righteous cause or defending their faith against perceived threats. However, the message of the cross is one of love, forgiveness, and non-violence. The Lord Jesus taught his followers to turn the other cheek and to love their enemies. Using the cross to

justify violence goes against the teachings of Christ and the principles of Christianity. It is a misinterpretation of the message of the cross and a betrayal of the very essence of the faith.

In the face of persecution and opposition, Christians in India and elsewhere can take comfort in the fact that they are following in the footsteps of Christ, who himself was persecuted and killed unjustly.

The Bible tells us that those who follow Christ will face persecution and hardship in this world. Jesus himself said, "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first" (John 15:18). In India, many Christians have experienced persecution firsthand, with reports of violence, discrimination, and even death for those who refuse to renounce their faith.

Despite the challenges they face, however, believers in India can find strength and hope in the message of the cross. The Apostle Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). This powerful

truth reminds us that through the cross, we are united with Christ and can draw strength from his example.

Ultimately, the cross of Christ represents the triumph of love over hate, of light over darkness. For believers in India who face persecution for their faith, it is a powerful reminder that they are not alone, and that their suffering is not in vain. As the Apostle Peter wrote, "Rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed" (1 Peter 4:13).

The cross reveals both the depth of God's love and the extent of human suffering. On one hand, the cross demonstrates God's love for humanity by showing that God is willing to suffer and die for us and so the cross becomes a symbol of God's self-giving love. In his book "The Crucified God," the famous theologian Jürgen Moltmann writes, "The cross is not the wrath of God, but the glory of God's love."

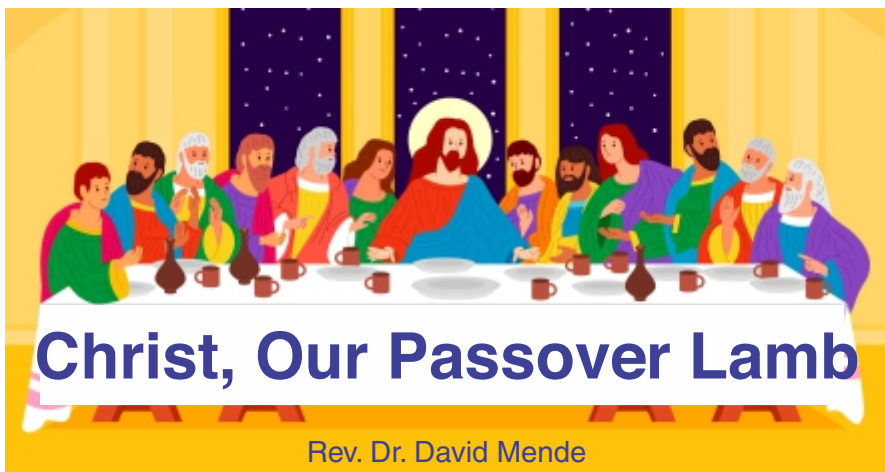
On the other hand, the cross also reveals the reality of human

suffering and the injustice that exists in the world. Moltmann sees the cross as a symbol of solidarity with all those who suffer, and as a call to Christians to engage in the work of justice and compassion. He writes, "The cross is the nonviolent way of overcoming violence, the nonviolent form of revolution."

The power of the cross, then, is transformative, both for individuals and for society as a whole. Through the cross, we are called to live lives of love and service, and to work towards a world that reflects God's justice and compassion.

The power of the cross, like any symbol, is ultimately determined by how it is used. When used for good, the cross can inspire us to lead lives of compassion, service, and hope. When used for evil, the cross can be used to justify violence and oppression. As a society, we must be vigilant in how we use this powerful symbol and ensure that it is used for the betterment of all.

Rev. Vijayesh Lal



Introduction

A student asked a question on quora.com (Quora is a question-and-answer website where questions are asked, answered, edited, and organized by its community of users in the form of opinions): "What is one thing you want to do before you die?" One person said that she wants to get married. Another user said that he would skip the bath as he doesn't care about germs anymore and that he would eat his favorite food. But some responses were meaningful. One user wrote that she wants to donate her organs after she dies. Well, hours before the Lord Jesus was crucified and put to death, he chose to spend time with his disciples and instituted the Lord's Supper even as he had his last

Passover meal. We find this in Mark 14:12-26. Based on this text, I've entitled this article **"Christ, Our Passover Lamb."**

In this passage, we see that Jesus prepares to give himself as a sacrifice for many, though his own disciples will betray him, abandon him, and deny him. Jesus does not appear to be fearful or anxious as he approaches the cross; rather, he is in control and he voluntarily and willingly went to the cross. Allow me to take you to the first century and discover what the Lord is saying to us today through this passage.

1. Jesus and His Disciples Prepare for the Passover Meal (14:12-16).

a. The disciples ask Jesus where he wanted them to prepare for the Passover meal (14:12).

This incident happened on Thursday night of Passion week. Jesus and his disciples were probably in Bethany at this time. The Jews were supposed to have the Passover meal within the walls of Jerusalem. So, the disciples ask Jesus where they can prepare a place in Jerusalem to have a Passover meal. Jesus would preside over the Passover meal. Just as the disciples asked the Lord's plan about the Passover, we must seek the Lord's will and plans for our lives. He is the Lord who is in control of everything; he is our Good Shepherd. He will guide us if we seek him.

b. Jesus sends two of his disciples to the city to meet a man who would prepare a room (14:13-15).

Just as Jesus sent two of his disciples to prepare a colt, he now sends two of his disciples to prepare a room to have the Passover meal (v. 13). Luke 22:8 tells us that it was Peter and John. He asks them to "go into the city" (Jerusalem) and tells them that they would find "a man carrying a jar of water." During the

Passover, there were lakhs of pilgrims in Jerusalem. It's very difficult to find a person in the midst of such a huge crowd. But the Lord gives the sign of "a man carrying a jar of water" which was unusual in those days as usually women did the job of fetching water. In those days, they didn't have running water like we do today. Having running water is a luxury. So, this man, who was probably a slave, fetched water from a public fountain.

The disciples were to follow this man and then tell the Master of the house, "The Teacher says, 'Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" (v. 14). During the Passover, the Jews within Jerusalem generally provided space to the pilgrims since the Passover meal had to be eaten within Jerusalem. Jesus told the disciples that the owner "will show you a large upper room furnished and ready" (v. 15). Furnished doesn't imply that the upper room had furniture. The room probably had a table, carpets, and cushions. Some say that this is the same room where the early church met, which is mentioned in Acts 1:3.

c. The disciples found a large upper room as Jesus told them and they prepared the Passover(14:16).

The disciples went to Jerusalem and remarkably "found it just as he had told them." Then, they prepared the Passover. The owner of this house seems to have willingly given his house for the Lord and his disciples to use. We too must give our resources—cars, houses, time, children, and whatever we can, for the Lord's work. Jesus is our Master and we are his stewards. Let's be good stewards of the resources God has given us.

2. Jesus Announces That One of the Twelve Would Betray Him(14:17-21)

The story of the Last Supper is set in a sandwich form. In this sandwich structure, the middle part provides the key to understanding the whole structure. Here, Jesus' self-sacrifice is contrasted with the unfaithfulness of the disciples.

a. Jesus announces his betrayal as they had the Passover meal (14:17-18).

In the evening, Jesus came with his twelve disciples to the upper room (v. 17), after walking for about 3 kilometers from Bethany

to Jerusalem. In those days, the Jews would recline at a table and eat their meals. As they were enjoying their Passover meal, Jesus makes a solemn, yet painful announcement: "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me" (v. 18). I'm sure the disciples were shocked and probably their throats were choked as they heard the words of Christ. Betraying a friend after sharing a meal with that person was considered to be the worst form of treachery.

b. The disciples became sorrowful and asked Jesus, "Is it I?" (14:19).

The disciples were sorrowful and one after the other they kept asking Jesus, "Is it I?" The Greek word for this phrase is *meti*, which expects a negative answer. It could be translated as "It is not I, is it?" Matthew 26:25 says that even Judas asked this question to which the Lord answered him quietly, "You have said so." Probably, Judas left the room before the institution of the Lord's Supper.

c. Jesus announces that one of them who is dripping bread into the dish with him would betray him (14:20).

Jesus says that "one of the twelve" would betray him. He further emphasizes that this traitor is the "one who is dipping bread into the dish with me." Here, Jesus is alluding to Psalm 41:9. The Jews would dip their bread into a common bowl of garnish. In ancient days, when a person betrayed his close friend, it not only brought emotional pain but also dishonor to the person betrayed. Also, a disciple's betrayal would shame the master. Commenting on Mark 14:20, Craig Keener writes, "Eating together established a covenant relationship, so one who betrayed a table companion was counted particularly despicable."

d. Jesus pronounces woe upon the man who would betray him (14:21).

Jesus says that the Son of Man will go as prophesied. Jesus' death was already prophesied in the Old Testament. Also, Jesus himself prophesies about his impending death in Mark 8:31; 9:30-31; and 10:33-34. Jesus pronounces a woe upon the one who would betray him. This shows that though Jesus' death was already prophesied, Judas was held responsible for his horrible crime. Jesus wishes that

"It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." James R. Edwards notes that "Divine providence neither cancels human freedom nor relieves responsibility for moral choices."

Jesus announces his betrayal beforehand so that the disciples will not think that Jesus was caught off-guard. Even as Jesus approached his death, he was still sovereign and in control! Saints, as we follow the Lord and serve him, we too can expect betrayal. It's painful, but unfortunately, it's a part of Christian life and ministry. We need to trust the Lord when people betray and abandon us.

3. Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (14:22-26).

As seen earlier, Mark's main focus is on the Last Supper in this sandwich structure. Jesus gave new meaning to the Passover meal and also instituted the Lord's Supper. So, Mark records Jesus' last Passover meal and the institution of the first Lord's Supper. In 1 Corinthians 5:7, Paul says that Jesus is the Passover Lamb.

a. He took bread, broke it, gave

it, and said that it represents his body (14:22).

Mark doesn't merely record this event since it's the last Supper of the Lord. He records it because Jesus connects the elements of the meal to his atoning death. As we know, Passover recalled the deliverance of Israelites from the bondage of Egypt. During the Passover meal, the father would give thanks to God and explain the significance of the Passover meal to his family. However, in this passage, Jesus gives a new meaning (or I would say the ultimate meaning) to the unleavened bread. Here, the Lord talks about a new deliverance, a new act of redemption.

Jesus says, "Take; this is my body." The essence of this phrase is "This is myself." Jesus' presence will be with his disciples whenever they would celebrate the Lord's Supper. As Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, it served as an acted-out parable. Just as Jesus broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, he will soon be broken and his death will benefit his disciples and many others.

b. He took a cup, gave thanks, gave it, and said that it

represents his blood of the covenant (14:23-24).

After giving the bread, Jesus took a cup, gave thanks (Greek: *eucharisteo*), and gave it to the disciples, and they all drank from the cup (v. 23). Then, Jesus announces that "This is my blood of the covenant" (v. 24). Jeremiah 31:31-34 announces about the coming New Covenant. The Jews sacrificed the animals and then the blood of these animals was poured out on the altar as a sin offering to make atonement for the sins of the one who offered the sacrifice (Lev. 4:17, 18, 25, 30, 34). Here, Jesus is saying that his death is a sacrifice offered to the Father.

Exodus 24:3-8, 11 shows that blood sealed a covenant. Jesus alludes to this passage when he talks about the "blood of the covenant." Jesus inaugurated a new covenant through his blood. Here, we move from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. Jesus is probably alluding to Isaiah 53:12 in verse 24.

c. Jesus pronounces that he will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God fully comes (14:25-26).

In verse 25, Jesus makes a vow

of abstinence. The Jews saw the time of the kingdom of God as a banquet. The Bible promises that there will be an unending supply of wine during this time (cf. Amos 9:13). Here, Jesus probably looks forward to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9). This clearly anticipates Jesus' resurrection and victory.

From Jerusalem, the walk to the Mount of Olives took about 15 minutes. Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn and went to the Mount of Olives (v. 26). After completing the Passover meal, the Jews would sing the remaining songs (Pss 115-118) of the Hallel (Pss 113-118). They would sing Psalms 113-114 earlier in the evening.

Conclusion

The main message I want to share through this article is: **Be faithful to Jesus because of his amazing sacrifice.**

As we live in this world, may nothing distract our focus from Christ and his cross. Jesus poured out his life as a sacrifice for our sins. Let's make a commitment to remain faithful to him. Let's not deny Jesus. Let's not turn our backs on Jesus by

loving this world. Let's examine our lives each day and make sure that we are living faithfully for the Lord.



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He is married to Sis. Susan Mende, who is also actively serving the Lord. They are blessed with a daughter, Karis Ruth. Dr. Mende can be reached at +91 9848004094 and davemende@gmail.com.



"Man does not live by bread alone." All human philosophising is an affirmation of this truth, though philosophies are merely the products of human minds. As speculations, one man's opinion is as good as another's. But when contrary voices proclaim that each is proclaiming the Truth, we need a single point of reference outside all speculation – an objective standard of truth. Divine revelation is that one Truth.

The "Received" Gospel

Belief in God's revelation is basic to Christianity. It is not human speculation about the nature of God and eternity. The "received" nature of the Christian faith is borne out in the apostolic writings (1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Pet. 1:16, 20-21).

Christianity is rooted in the person of the historical Jesus. Those givens consist of the historical events of the incarnation, the atoning death of Jesus, and His victorious resurrection. There is also a further given that there is a historical record of these events, namely, the Scriptures. This history of God's dealings with Man, constitutes revelation. This self-disclosure of God is a manifestation of grace. It is nothing but God's grace that He reveals Himself to humans who turned away from Him, desiring to be equal to God. But humans, in their pride, have never found grace acceptable. So, rejecting the revealed Gospel they concoct their own gospels.

In Galatians, Paul argues vehemently against Christians accepting "another gospel." In fact, he contends that when it is another, it is not the Gospel (1:7) and curses those who preach any gospel other than Christ's (1:9).

Paul's stand will be described as dogmatism. However, it was Jesus who asserted that He alone is the Way to the Father (Jn. 14:6).

Such a stance is unacceptable all over the world. Hinduism may seem to be philosophically sophisticated because of its capacity to absorb new gods and add them to its pantheon. Hinduism does not lose by such a transaction and can even claim to be enriched by such absorption of gods that are foreign to Hinduism. In being inclusive, Hinduism does not give up its character.

On the other hand, Christians cannot do that and remain Christian. Belief in Christ is not the same as belief in some indeterminate and amorphous body of philosophical thoughts. Jesus Christ was a historical person. Christ's teachings and

claims are fixed by His own history. They cannot now be changed. As long as Christianity acknowledges Jesus as its author, the content of His teachings will remain the basis of belief.

Paul notes in his Galatian letter that the diversion from the once given Gospel takes place when the focus shifts from Christ to men and their pleasure (1:10). Thus, when Christians fail to stand for their beliefs, it is because they do not wish to pay the high price of following Christ, namely the rigours of discipleship—bearing the cross (of shame, harassment, ostracism, isolation, persecution, possibly martyrdom). That is when men make up their own little gospels.

Christ's Sufficiency

The different gospel that was plaguing Christians at Galatia was the controversy about Judaizing gentile converts. This was the earliest theological controversy of the Church (see Acts 15). It was fairly widespread. Basically, the Judaizers insisted that faith alone was insufficient. They said that the Law needed to

be adhered to. Since the object of faith is God's grace, in essence it was a denial of grace.

Other gospels always advocate that we must have Jesus plus something or the other that they offer as a super-spiritual experience. "The plus factor" however serves only in pushing Jesus out. First, the person who opts for the plus is alienated from apostolic witness (Gal. 4:17), and ultimately Jesus Christ Himself becomes worthless (5:2). The plus factor becomes the high watermark for the group and Jesus becomes secondary. When a plus factor finds acceptance with a Christian, he has in fact "lost connection with the Head" (Col. 2:19). The liberty in Christ is eroded and bondage to the plus sets in (Gal. 2:4). Some of these groups are heretic in theology, but others simply require mindless conformity in behaviour. Either way, the members have been made slaves.

When the plus factor becomes the high watermark of practising the faith, achieving this mark of spirituality then becomes the main pursuit. Very often, the

desire to belong makes people pretend they have the special mark.

Where there is slavery there are always slavers. That is how Paul describes those who mastermind the gospel of Jesus+. They are as devious as spies who infiltrate other nations, and are in the vanguard of the army that takes away people's liberties (2:4). It is a mark of cults that they are led by overbearing personalities that demand absolute mindless allegiance to their will. Wherever there is a tendency to subdue and regiment believers, there is the danger of the group becoming a cult—if not heretic in doctrine, at least one centred on human personalities, and for Christians the shift of focus from Christ to human personalities is heresy.

In All Things Charity

It must be recognised that some things are not essential to faith, and the regimentation of behaviour not stipulated by Scripture falls into this category. The lists of do's and don'ts drawn up by various groups are arbitrary and depend a lot on their background. For example, the Judaisers tried to bring their own

background to the forefront and to colour Christianity with it. However, the biblical position is well summarised thus:

"In essentials unity,
In non-essentials diversity,
In all things charity"
—Rupertus Meldeniu
(1582-1651)

The essentials are the historical givens of the faith. In non-essentials such as traditions, customs and rituals, diversity needs to be permitted. Such non-essential differences should not divide, for in all things we are to show love, for love can bridge all differences. But when the cultural extras get added on to the original Gospel and forced on others, love is thrown out, whereas Jesus specifically said that the mark of His disciples would be their love for one another (Jn. 13:34-35) and that their unity would be the only convincing proof that Jesus was indeed from God (17:23).

Finally, the plus factor is an avoidance of the cross that is so essential to Christian identity and discipleship (Gal. 6:12).

The Cross of Jesus

The apostolic understanding of identification with Christ was described in terms of "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. 4:10).

The word 'crucified' occurs four times in the letter to the Galatian church.

One reference is to the historical crucifixion of Jesus (3:1) – the entire basis of Christian living. It is on the basis of our Lord's crucifixion that Paul talks of Christians crucifying themselves (2:20; 5:24; 6:14).

The centrality of the Cross to apostolic preaching is evident in any examination of the New Testament. The last public event in the life of the Man Jesus was His shameful death on a cross. The apostles had to explain how God Almighty could hang shamefully and helplessly on a cross. The idea of God hanging on a cross was ridiculous to the Greeks and scandalous to the Jews, but for Paul there was nothing else to preach, but Christ crucified (1 Cor. 1:23). There was

nothing else to boast about except the Cross of Jesus (Gal. 6:14).

The importance of that historical event is not minimised when Paul talks of the crucifixion of Christians. Saying that Christians need to themselves experience crucifixion spiritually does not imply that the crucifixion of Jesus was mythological or allegorical. For Jesus it was a physical experience, as well as a spiritual one. The pain and the agony of the cross were real. The reason Paul talks of crucifixion as the personal experience of Christians is that, in his view, God's purpose is to reveal His Son in the life of the follower of Christ (1:16).

Second Adam

Paul was not writing about some exclusive mystical experience that made him a special saintly Christian. He said that his ministry aimed at the formation of Christ in the lives of those he ministered to (4:19).

We are not called to be imitations of Christ. As He once was the Light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5), so now we are no less than

what Jesus was to the world—the Light (Matt. 5:16; Jn. 12:36). But to take the place of Christ is an impossibility, unless Christ Himself possesses us.

Not only is Christ "in" the Christian, but the Christian is "in Christ". Adam was what his name meant: mankind. What Adam did and experienced became our experience. We were party to it (Rom. 5:12-21). But if Adam is the First Man, the beginner of the first race of Man, Jesus is the Second Man, the beginner of the second race of Man. If Adam is the First Adam, Jesus is the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45,47). As we were in the First Adam in the garden of Eden in his revolt against God, so we were in the Last Adam on the hill of Calvary in the Atonement. That is why Paul wrote, "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20).

Our status is that of being "in Christ" and we do have a calling to live a life in harmony with the resurrection life of Jesus (Rom. 6:3-5, 8-11). Paul suggests that this should be a matter of reckoning (6:11). That is, we calculate that we are in Christ. This logic and rationale should lead to an attitude of submission

to God (6:13, 17, 18). However, there exists a constant struggle with sinful tendencies (7:14-20). For all the spirit's willingness, the flesh has its weaknesses and our weaknesses are greater than our strengths so that our strengths are overpowered and undermined by our weaknesses. Paul almost despairs, but concludes triumphantly that the deliverance and the victory are in Jesus (7:25). As long as I seek the strength within myself, I discover only my weaknesses. But "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4: 13). It is not I, but Christ who has to do the living in me (Gal. 2:20). For the Christian, living is simply allowing Christ to live in the Christian. Paul wrote, "For me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). Christian living is just Christ living in the Christian.

While we struggle with besetting sins, the focus of our attention is on the problem. The more we struggle, the more it besets us. When we shift the focus from the problem, no matter how serious it is, and look to Jesus in love instead of having any sense of compulsiveness, then we find release from our slavery. I struggled against sin and kept on

losing. When I stopped feeling compulsive about conquering the sin, when I stopped giving attention to the problem, and gave my attention to Jesus just as I was, the problem withered. It was starved to death.

While being born again is a one-time experience, looking away from our sins and looking to Jesus has to go on for the rest of our lives. It is possible to discover that one is crucified with Christ. The life which we now live in the body is lived by Jesus living in us (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:16-17). Such a total identification with Christ in His crucifixion must result in not responding to the stimulations of the flesh (5:24) and of the world (6: 14).

(To be continued next month)



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The Cross We Keep Dropping

Dr. Shantanu Dutta

Jesus requires a radical condition for his followers: to enjoy the crown of life, we must first endure the cross of death. Not many would respond enthusiastically to this counter-intuitive claim. While it's tempting to think that Jesus is speaking only to some elite class of cross-bearing disciples, the words "anyone" and "whoever" don't allow for any exceptions. This is the call for all who claim the name of Christ: Deny yourself. Take up your cross each day. Lose your life if you want to save it! This way of thinking does not come naturally, does it?

It is in our nature to protect and preserve our lives and livelihoods at all costs. By nature, we insulate

ourselves against pain, hardship, and loss. It's why we buy insurance or put a little extra money aside in "emergency funds". It's why we look at crime rates in neighbourhoods before buying a house and settling our family in a given community. It's why we lock our doors at night. And that natural inclination is not inherently bad. Jesus says, "whoever loses his life for my sake" (Lk. 9:24), so we are called to sacrifice on account of Christ, not carelessness. Yet, Jesus' radical call does stretch us to think beyond our natural instinct to selfishly pursue comfort and avoid sacrifice.

Practically, this may mean giving

up good things—like discretionary income or time watching TV—for the sake of helping others in need. It could mean forgoing the security that comes from living in a "good" part of town in order to have a gospel presence in a dangerous neighborhood. It could mean leaving the comfort of our home town, state, or country to share the good news of Jesus with those who haven't heard. In these situations, self-denial is motivated by a supreme love for God and others, the very heartbeat of what it means to be a Christian (Mk. 12:28-34).

Stephen is the first martyr, the first Christian to die because of his faith in Jesus. True faithfulness to Jesus in most times and cultures has always been likely to lead to opposition and persecution. If everyone loves us, there is a good chance that we are not truly following Jesus but simply adapting our Christianity to the spirit of the age. In the earliest days of the church, Christians suffered public insult and the seizure of their property (Heb. 10:32-34)

Polycarp was publicly executed for his commitment to Christ as Lord. Medieval Christians like Francis of Assisi committed themselves to lives of poverty and preaching the gospel in obedience to Matthew 10:5-15.

Most of us, if we have any care for others, prefer to live in peace with people, even if that means toning down what we believe or sanding down the rough edges of our faith and doctrine. But this world is a battleground. Jesus came to rescue people from Satan and sends us out to do the same. And so, we will face opposition from the forces of evil. This can take many forms.

There are some crosses that are voluntary. Tasks, for example, that we know will be difficult, but that we choose to do anyway, because we believe that God wants us to. There are many stories these days of people, especially in the health community, putting themselves in harm's way on our behalf. The cross that we are asked to take up by Jesus changes over our lifetime. The cross that we are

asked to take up as a young person is very different from the cross that we are asked to take up as an older person. As a young person, our cross might mean standing up for what we believe, even when it's unpopular.

When we get married, there are new crosses, including those times when we are called to put our spouse's needs and interests before our own. If we are blessed to have children, there are new crosses as well. Including caring about our child so much that it hurts you when they are hurt. As we continue to age, new crosses present themselves. Giving up independence, as we no longer are able to drive. Learning to humble ourselves and rely on others for help. Of course, these crosses are not mostly voluntary. But part of what it means to follow Jesus, I believe, is to accept them gracefully, and humbly, and courageously. Accept the cross, trust Jesus, and follow him. And oftentimes when we do this, we will be telling the world much more about what we believe than any words that we might say.

These are just a few examples of what our cross might look like right now. There are obviously many more. There is a cross that is mine and no one else's. There was a cross that was only for Jesus. There was a cross that was only for his first disciples. There is a cross that is only for me. And there is a cross that is only for you. And if we want to follow Jesus, we must take it up. Take up our cross and follow Him.

When we read or hear these words, "take up the cross," we mostly think of Jesus on the way to the cross, carrying his cross, hanging on the cross. The cross has become a symbol of hope, of redemption, of God's love for us. Jesus doesn't tell us to deny ourselves because he wants us to be miserable. He wants us to be alive. The way to save our lives is to put them in God's capable hands.

Cross-bearing also involves the items Jesus listed in Matthew 25:31–46: *feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, receiving the stranger, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and*

visiting the one who is in prison. These things involve denying ourselves time, money, and convenience, even when our efforts seem utterly fruitless. Our gifts are abused; we are slighted even by the ones we help. And yet, we are to live like this anyway, since doing so is saying yes to Jesus.

We look at how companies and organisations grow in this world, and we come to the conclusion that the church will grow in the same way, through flash and marketing and innovation. But the church grows when we follow Jesus, staying faithful to Him and

to His Word, not loving our lives more than Him. The church grows when we lay down our lives in service to others as He laid down His life for us.



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**The LORD your God is with you,
the Mighty Warrior who saves.
He will take great delight in you;
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
but will rejoice over you with singing.**

Zephaniah 3:17



The Power of the Cross

Mr. Chacko Thomas

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" 2 Corinthians 5:18, The Apostle Paul.

"The Cross is the most famous symbol in the world. And the death of Jesus is the most famous death in history." Rev. Michael Green, Former Advisor on Evangelism to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

The Cross as a Christian Symbol
I wonder which city in the world has the most number of Crosses. My take is Seoul in South Korea. I remember flying into Seoul one night and seeing what looked like a sea of crosses, brightly lit up in

red, blue, and green neon lights, visible for miles. You would think that you had landed in a Christian country. It is significant because about 140 years ago there were hardly any Christians in Korea. Then God sent many Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Assemblies of God missionaries at the close of the war against the Japanese. And many found faith in the Lord.

It did help that America came to the aid of Korea to liberate the country from the Japanese, and thus good will was created with the west. Today, some of the largest congregations in the world are found in South Korea. And what impressed me from my

few visits was that these denominations seemed to emphasise what they have in common more than how they differ. This is a great witness to those outside the church. Although, the seeming unity may be a simplistic explanation of what actually takes place, but I do believe that some of the world's most active Christians are found in South Korea.

We Christians have no better symbol than the cross for identification. What an eloquent witness the Cross is to what God has done to save us through the suffering, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some Christian denominations make much of the symbol of the cross, while others ignore or oppose it totally and refuse to have a cross at their places of worship or in their homes. Many others draw the cross on their forehead or make the sign of a cross over their chest. Many wear a necklace with a cross around their neck as an ornament or a declaration of their Christian

identity. For others, it may be a kind of superstitious charm. I have heard that in Iran, a cross is an acceptable ornament to wear among young people, and it can be bought in shops. Interestingly, it is a country where more Muslims turn to the Lord than any other Muslim country, with the exception of Indonesia. And most of them are young people.

I recently read the story of an evangelical Anglican priest who stopped a knife attack on him by making the sign on the cross in the air before the aggressor got to him. He is also known for making the sign of the cross in casting out demons. Why not (although I have never tried that)? I have heard of Christians in China calling on the name of Jesus when faced with danger of a tiger or Python on their jungle routes. And these wild creatures change their direction and go away subdued.

The Centrality of the Cross

Whatever is our persuasion, we cannot deny the fact that the cross is central to the teachings of the Bible. Large parts of the

four Gospels are taken up with the historical narrative of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a recurring theme in the New Testament. It was prominent in the preaching of the Apostles in the Book of Acts.

It has been said that the theology of the Apostle Paul was "Christ died for me." The Bible says, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" on that awesome cross. (2 Corinthians 5:18). The Bible says, "God laid on Him the guilt and sins of every one of us" (Isaiah 53:6 The Living Bible). Again, "He was wounded for our transgressions ..." (Isaiah 53:5).

On that Cross was "no mere man; no third party, no angels but God Himself was present in a unique way in the person and the sufferings of Jesus on Calvary," to quote Michael Green. "The Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me", wrote the Apostle Paul.

Why is the Cross so special?

Thousands are known to have

been crucified in Israel by the Romans. But they never had one like the Lord Jesus for a crucifixion. Who is He? Writes Michael Green:

"On any showing his was the best and the greatest life the world has ever witnessed. He should never have been put on that terrible cross. More, he was the fulfilment of the hopes of the Old Testament. Here was the 'prophet like Moses'. Here was 'Elijah returned'. Here was the Son of David's line.' Here was the Son of Man that Daniel had predicted. Here was Isaiah's suffering servant. Never in all history had all these threads from centuries ago converged into a single knot." The cross of Jesus was so special because of the one who was suffering there."

A n d O h , w h a t H e accomplished from the Cross!

Luke tells us about Moses and Elijah appearing to speak about "the Exodus he was to accomplish at Jerusalem." Luke 9:31.

To quote Michael Green again in

his book, *The Empty Cross of Jesus* (subtitled, *Seeing the Cross in the light of the Resurrection*): "His dying and rising again was the main film of which the historic Exodus was only the trailer. ... This exodus would free mankind from the final death of the soul in irreversible alienation from God. ... It broke the entail of human sin. It broke the ultimate grip of death. It meant hope for the hopeless, pardon for the guilty, a future for the dying. His death was not for himself. He died for others, of the whole world of men and women. And He rose again. There has never been anything like it."

The power of the blood of the Lamb

Roy Hession wrote: "There is only one thing in the world that can cleanse a sinner from sin, with all that means of liberty and victory – and that is the power of the blood of Jesus." Roy Hession's Book, *The Calvary Road* is now available in over 80 languages, thanks to George Verwer. It used to be one of the Required Reading Books for those of us who joined OM in the 1960s and

70s. Below are six points Hession made about the power of the blood of Christ with its references to which I have quoted the verses from NIV.

- By the power of His blood Peace is made between man and God – "and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." (Colossians 1:20)
- By its power there is forgiveness of sins and eternal life for all who put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ – "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:14) and "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." (John 6:54)
- By the power of His blood Satan is overcome – "They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 12:11)
- By its power there is continual

cleansing from all sins for us – "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

- Set free from the tyranny of an evil conscience – "How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (Hebrews 9:14)
- By its infinite power with God the most unworthy have liberty to enter the Holy of Holies of God's presence – "Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus." (Hebrews 10:19)

Thank You for the Cross Lord

Perhaps you are familiar with the chorus: "Thank you for the Cross, Lord". Well, by the Grace of God, I have never become accustomed

to what Christ has done for me on the Cross, after all these years since coming to Christ at the age of 13. It was primarily through a gospel tract ("the tract [straw] that broke the camel's back") entitled *Five Wounds of Christ*, based on the words of Isaiah: "He was wounded for our transgressions."

One way I can show my gratitude to God is through witnessing to others. I have no greater joy than to tell people what Jesus has done for us (and them). I am especially thankful for about seven years of open-air preaching in the towns and villages of North India as part of a team, five to eight hours a day, five or six days a week, along with selling "Gospel Packets", a plastic bag filled with two Gospels, two booklets and a tract. It wasn't easy. But they were precious years. It is because I am convinced that "No man comes to the Father but Me", as Jesus said. And that "There is only one mediator between God and mankind."

Allow me to close with the story of a French philosopher who had

intended to find a new religion, which would sweep away Christianity and everything else in its wake. Thomas Carlyle to whom he said this responded, "Splendid! All you need to do is to speak as never man spoke, to live as never man lived, to be crucified, rise again the third day, and get the world to believe that you are still alive. Then your religion will have some chance of success." [a paraphrase of Michael Green, from the *Empty Cross*].

Worthy is The Lamb

Thank You For The Cross, Lord,
Thank You For The Price You
Paid

Bearing All My Sin And Shame,
In Love You Came
And Gave Amazing Grace.

Thank You For This Love, Lord,
Thank You For The Nail-Pierced
Hands
Washed Me In Your Cleansing
Flow,
Now All I Know
Your Forgiveness And Embrace.

Worthy Is The Lamb
Seated On The Throne,
Crown You Now With Many
Crowns

You Reign Victorious,
High And Lifted Up,
Jesus, Son Of God,
The Darling Of Heaven
Crucified.

Worthy Is The Lamb
Worthy Is The Lamb.



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Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths.

Psalms 25:4



Seeking God's Direction: Are we on the Right Track?

Rev. Dr. Samuel Richmond,

William Barclay tells of an old man who, as he lay near death, was obviously troubled. When asked what was disturbing him, replied, "One day when I was young, I was playing with some other boys at a crossroads. We reversed a sign post so that its arms were pointing in the wrong direction, and I've never ceased to wonder how many people were sent in the wrong direction by what we did." God has called us to be a channel of blessing. If we are in a right direction then definitely, we will expect others to walk in the same direction. Direction requires – commitment, dependence on God and Obedience.

What will this year be like? New

Year inspires us to do something new and different, which we could not do in the past years. There are still unfulfilled dreams which we hope will be accomplished this year. To bring visions and dreams into reality, we require discipline, proper direction, zeal, motivation and divine intervention in our lives. We start well at the beginning of the year, but after a few days, we go back to our old system and habits. Directions help us to reach a particular destination. It is essential to check where we are heading. Thank God! for the GPS (Global Positioning System), a satellite navigation system that directs us to reach our goals. Interestingly, sometimes GPS also fails and takes us in the wrong direction.

As God's children, we need divine direction to accomplish something great because His ways are trustworthy. Heroes of the bible were able to fulfil the plan of God and lived their lives holy by following His direction.

- Are we on the right track?
- Are we careful in our walk?
- Who is directing us?
- The power of the Holy Spirit guides or the company in which we live?

God's Direction

As we grow spiritually and physically, we need to assess the importance of God's direction in our lives. Without divine intervention, our lives are purposeless and directionless. Whether old or young, educated or literate, weak or strong, we all need God's direction. It is a matter of trust. Satan wants us to move in the opposite direction. Many people start their journey in the right direction, but when the outside force influences them, they eventually fall on the wrong track. We need to be aware of those people who try to mislead us. Jesus said, *'For false christs*

and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect' (Matthew 24:24). And Paul writes, *'let no one deceive you with empty words...'* (Ephesians 4:25).

Bethlehem to Egypt (Mt. 2:13-23)

In Matthew 2:13, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream: "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." Here, God is directing Joseph to take baby Jesus and mother to Egypt. Throughout the birth narrative, God was directing Mary, Joseph, Wisemen, Shepherds so that they may witness and participate in the divine plan that He made for the world. While delivering His plan, God was mindful of the protection of every individual who said Yes to the Lord and No to the world.

- ***God's Direction Plans our Future:***

A licensed pilot was flying his private plane on a cloudy day. He was not very experienced in instrument landing. When the control tower was to bring him in, he began to get panicky. Then a stern voice came over the radio, "You just obey instructions (our direction), we'll take care of the obstructions."

By analyzing the ambience where Joseph and Mary were staying with the baby, they must have some strange feelings about their stay in Bethlehem. They must be thinking

- How long will they be in Bethlehem?
- What will their future be?
- When will they be shifting to a better place?

In all confusion, the Word of God came to Joseph and said, "*Get up....and escape to Egypt.*" It was not easy for them to move to a foreign land with a little child, but Joseph obeyed the command, and the family remained in Egypt until Herod's death. Transportation and accommodation must be a real challenge in those times. The

depiction of Joseph's journey to Egypt reminds readers of the patriarch Joseph's journey to Egypt.

Proverbs 16:9 *"In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps."*

Many a times we think and plan, but God's ways and plans are different. He wants us to listen to Him and act accordingly. The Story of Missions in more modern times tells of missionaries whose plans have been changed by the Holy Spirit.

- Judson wanted to go to India, but his course was changed, and he went to Burma (Myanmar) instead.
- When David Livingstone was twelve years of age, he read an appeal for missionaries to go to China and was ready to go to China but finally landed in Africa.
- William Carey originally planned to go to Tahiti or West Africa but became a missionary to India.
- Sam Higginbottom wanted to go to China but came to India.

God knows where He has to send

His chosen ones because He sees the bigger picture.

Abraham began His journey without any knowledge of his ultimate destination. He took one step by trusting the One who was directing him. Because of this, he was credited as righteous. Young people should understand the importance of God's direction in their lives because they have a long way to go. Bible says: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight* (Proverbs 3:5-6). Those who trusted Him with all their hearts, they were blessed, but those who trusted themselves had to face problems. When Jonah leaned upon his understanding, his life became directionless. God was directing him to go to Nineveh, but he ran towards Tarshish. Because of this, he was thrown into the water and had to spend three days and three nights in the fish belly. As God's servants, we must fully submit to God's will.

- ***God's Direction is for our Protection:***

In Matthew 2:13, The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream: *"Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."*

The purpose of God in shifting Jesus and His parents to Egypt was to save the child from the deceiving plan of Herod. From the beginning, Joseph and Mary depended on God's direction. Their faithfulness to God led them to be safe from the wrath of Herod. When Herod felt that the wise men fooled him, 'he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi' (Matthew 2:16). After finding Jesus and worshipping him, the magi were warned by God not to return through Jerusalem as they had intended. They were not scared of Herod because they believed in God's authority and protection.

We often have to change our direction as per God's instruction, but we don't have to fear. We need to recognize God's grace in our lives. Satan is ready to attack

us, but the power of God always protects us. When we give ourselves to Him, His responsibility is to carry us. Because of His love and mercy, we are redeemed, and He has promised to carry us (Isaiah 63:9). There was a hedge of protection around Job. As long as there was a hedge around Job, satan had no authority to touch him. Bible says, in Deuteronomy 31:8, *'The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.'*

On Wednesday night, March 26, 1862, Dr. Joseph Henry Gilmore, a young 28-year-old preacher, was invited to speak at the First Baptist Church. He was filling the pulpit for the pastor, who was out of town that night. Those were dark days in American history – the Civil War was still raging. There was concern in the minds of most Americans as family members and friends were fighting in the war.

Dr. Gilmore focused his message on the thought *He leadeth me* based on the Psalm. Dr. Gilmore

said, "I set out to give the people an exposition of the Twenty-third Psalm. I had given this exposition on three or four other occasions, but this time I did not get beyond the words 'He leadeth me.'"

• ***God's Direction is for our Betterment***

In Matthew 2:19-20 The Word of the Lord came to Joseph - 19 *After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt* 20 *and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."*

God never forgot His plan. He never abandoned Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus. After Herod's death, again, God sent His angel to give direction to Joseph to go back to the land of Israel. What does it mean – 'After Herod died'.... It is the end of the wicked and ruthless reign. It is the end of pride and power. It's the end of fearful reign...end of the devil's scheme... In other words, the time has come to leave Egypt (a land of darkness and slavery) and return to Israel (a land of

freedom and prosperity). God wants us that we should excel, grow and move on. Bible says in Jeremiah 29:11 – *For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.* If you find yourself pulled in several directions, remember that God teaches the humble his way. His plans for us are beyond comprehension. He leads the humble in what is right, teaching them his way (Psalm 25:9). According to Matthew Henry, 'the meek are those who quietly submit themselves to God, to His Word and to His rod, who follow His directions, and comply with His designs, and are gentle toward all men.'

- ***God's direction brings Unanimity to Him***

If two men are at the wheel with opposing notions of direction and destiny, how will it fare with the boat? If an orchestra has two conductors both wielding their batons simultaneously and with conflicting conceptions of the score, what will become of the band? The confusion comes

when there is a conflict between my plan and God's plan - my will and God's will. One of the biggest obstacles to our growth is understanding the mind of God. If we grow in God, we must know who God is and what he is like. Initially, Joseph was not able to know the plan of God fully. According to Matthew 1:19, *Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.* When God started to direct Joseph, the misconception of Joseph became clear and He could witness and participate in that plan. It took courage for Joseph and his family to leave Egypt. They were not safe even coming back to Israel because of the new king. The whole episode is a good example of how God leads His children. Indeed, Joseph and Mary prayed, waited, and sought God's will. Common sense told them to be careful; faith told them to wait. In due time, God spoke to Joseph in a dream, and he took his wife and her Son to Nazareth, which had been their home earlier (Matt.2:19–20).

One of the prime purposes of Jesus' coming into this world was to reveal God and change our perspective about Him. According to J Henry Jowett, 'there is no stagnancy for the God-directed soul. He is ever guiding us, sometimes with the delicacy of a glance, sometimes with the firmer ministry of a grip, and He moves with us always, even through "the valley of the shadow of death." Therefore, be patient, my soul!' Jesus had been on a mission to show people what God was really like. "Immanuel"—one of the names given to Jesus—means "God with us." And when Jesus walked the earth, he showed us a very different God from the one we might expect. People do not grow until they shift from a natural human view of God to a real, biblical view of God. The first aspect of that shift has to be the shift from a God of law to the God of grace. God's direction has two important implications: (a) *God is for us and not against us.* (b) *He is on our side and desires good for us and not evil.*

Psalm 23: 1-3 *The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He*

makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

Isaiah 42:16 "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."

<https://enjoyingthejourney.org/hymn-history-he-leadeth-me/>



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POWER OF THE CROSS

Dr. Babu John Vettamala



"Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it"(Colossians 2:15).

The cross, a vertical-horizontal structure, is a powerless object in itself. An abject object of torture, it evoked no sense of adoration but abhorrence. Though originally devised by the Persians as an instrument to inflict the worst ever possible pain to kill a political enemy, the blood thirsty Romans later on used it for cursing, shaming and killing their Jewish opponents. They had so many of this object of curse rampantly all over Palestine to cause terror and fear among the Jewish rebels. An honourable Jew would always hide his face from seeing it lest

the very sight should pollute him.

And then came the decisively fatal moment in the history of mankind, when Messiah the Son of God known as Jesus Christ of Nazareth was nailed on a cross placed on Golgotha two thousand years ago.

Jesus went to the cross not carrying any crime that He had committed, but to conquer the author of sin and death who had enslaved human beings from the very origin of their creation. Hands and feet nailed on the cross, battered and stripped off, a sight too gruesome to look at, Jesus accomplished for mankind six acts of victory which eventually made cross, the object

of shame and cruelty, become the symbol of victory and blessing. This saga of the cross from humiliation to sublimity is the greatest single act of victory, and the power that worked it out is now called the power of the cross.

This victory of the cross has been inscribed by Apostle Paul against the military and legal background of the ruling Romans. If the Roman court found a person guilty, they would write down a verdict against him. If he cannot pay the penalty it involves, another person can pay it off and release the criminal. This person could then pick up the inimical verdicts and blot off the words written against the criminal. That means it is made invalid. Then he tears it off, which means it has been nullified. Then he removes it from the court file to ensure that it does not exist anymore. Finally, he nails it on a tree to show that he has made the verdict, a shame.

These are all what Jesus did during the silent hours of darkness on the cross. In that impenetrable darkness, Jesus' soul soared to the court in

Heaven and accomplished these things.

In heaven's court, mankind is guilty. There is a verdict written there against mankind which reads – "the wages of sin is death". This means every sinner should die.

But, the crucified Jesus changed this verdict and blotted this inimical writing with His own blood.

In the Roman court, a person who saves a criminal by paying his penalty can tear off the verdict written against him. This is what Jesus also did, says St. Paul in Colossians 2:13.

And thirdly, he can remove the verdict forever so that it will never stand against the guilty. With the power manifested on the cross, Jesus removed forever the verdict of curse and death pronounced on mankind.

The hands of Jesus nailed on the cross might appear rather powerless to an unintelligible onlooker. But those hands, in fact, had nailed with them the obnoxious verdict on mankind.

But the Jesus saga does not end there. In heavenly realms, Jesus had disarmed Satan the avowed enemy of mankind by taking off every weapon that he had used to destroy human beings. The disarmed enemies of human beings were made a public show of disgrace, which marked the starting of Satan's inevitable fall.

Thus, the cross became the acme of victory, and the power of it has been marching forward conquering dominions and principalities one after another for the last two thousand years.

However, it is a part of applicability. It has been indisputably proved that a power that saves man from sin and leads him to eternal life is most manifested on the cross of Jesus Christ. This saving power was not exclusively for any community whether it be Jews or Christians or anybody else. But it is for all mankind. That is the theological world view of the cross.

That does not mean that this knowledge or understanding of it saves people just like that. Here is an obscure exclusivity in the power of the cross, the

applicability of which is not self-determined but by the attitude of a person that approaches it. And, that attitude is belief.

The majority world believes that Jesus died on the cross. But that belief is absolutely inadequate for anything. The need of the hour is **BELIEF IN** Jesus who died on the cross. Then, the cross works in that person that operates as a transformational generative power that renews every sinner as a saint.



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Obedience is Supreme

"But it shall come to pass,
if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God,
to observe and to do all his commandments and his statutes,
which I command thee this day; than all these
curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:"

(Deuteronomy 28:15)

Emeritus Prof. Henry Shepherd

God addressed the quoted verse to Israelites through Moses before he left the earth. He admonished people to obey God rather than to man (Nu 12:2). God has been talking to leaders in dream; e.g., Solomon, who was appointed king after David, was a young man having no experience as to how to rule the nation. But God interacted with him because he was son of David, whom God loved for his obedience and zeal for God. From deathbed, David admonished Solomon... "keep the charge of the Lord your God, walk in His ways and keep His statutes, his commandments, his rules and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses that you may prosper in all that you do

and wherever you turn" (I Kings: 2:2-3). But King Solomon forgot the teachings of his father in his old age & and got involved in idolatry with his wives and concubines. Thus, he lost the way in the journey of life, unlike his fathers (Ps 24:1-4)! Because of Solomon, his son lost the ten tribes and ruled only two, thus dividing the nation in two Israel and Judah.

The book of the law explicitly tells the new kings of Israel to write for themselves a book by copying the law from the approved book available with the priest. And it was mandatory for kings to read from their book, all the law daily (Deut. 12:18-19). The law also

prescribed for kings in the following words, "And he shall not acquire many wives for himself lest his heart turns away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold" (Deut 17:17). So, one can safely presume that Solomon must have also written a book of the law and read it, several times if not daily. Thus, he knew his duties, statutes, law, and testimonies. Solomon's behavior, attitude, and love for God was true in the beginning of kingship. However, unfortunately, at some point of time he seems to have lost the track, he followed the desires of his flesh and took blessings of God for granted. He became worldly and even worshipped other gods with his non-Jewish wives.

King Solomon was a shrewd, progressive, and business-minded person but quite materialistic; which resulted in flaunting a few statutes, rules and laws. Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh's daughter and brought her to live in the City of David (1Kg 3:1) in the beginning of his tenure though it was against God's

Commandments (Deut 7:3). The law prohibits intermarriage of Jews with non-Jews. He flaunted this law knowingly time and again, this then devil used as a trap for him, particularly when he had become old and physically weak. Initially, as a novice he acted contrary to the law (Ex 34:16). God ignored this as he wanted to give him time to mend his ways, as he does with all of us. He cannot be pleased by offering animals but demands obedience more than offerings of animal's blood (Mal 2:11-12). In order to help him out, God established a personal rapport with Solomon in dream. God knew that his underlying purpose was materialistic gain, seeking prosperity through business, he developed relationship with the most developed country of his time. God appeared to Solomon in a dream in Gibeon and gave him a blank cheque saying, "Ask what shall I give you? (1 Kings: 3:5)". God wanted to convey that for prosperity he need not use his business acumen, for his God was sufficient to provide everything he may need to rule His people. At this stage,

Solomon loved God and offered sacrifices of animals only to His God (1 Kings 3:3). Also, God wanted to test his mind so gave him an open offer to ask from God everything of his choice. In the dream Solomon thanked God for the favours to his father David. He also stated the reasons to favour David were his faithfulness, love, and obedience, up to the end. He was also thankful for making him king in David's place. In the end, he asked from God the following:

- Blessings concerning duties as king,
- An understanding mind to govern Israel,
- Discerning power to distinguish between good and evil, and
- Wisdom (intellect) to make right judgements.

It naturally must have pleased God for he did not act greedy in asking. He did not ask God for worldly riches, fame, glory, or everlasting kingship etc. So, God gave him what he asked for and needed as King and gladly appreciated him for his attitude and added other blessings also from his side, including long life for him. But with a few common

conditions, 'provided he walks in God's ways, and keeps all his statutes and commandments alike his father David'. These conditions were imposed to make him realize the significance of Godly rules, commandments, law, statutes, and testimonies, so that he would refrain from annoying God in future. However, the anti-climax followed the dream. When he woke up, he took the whole incident merely as a common dream and said, "Behold it was a dream" (1Kg 3:15).

The reminiscence of joy of dream soon got erased from his memory for his subconscious mind took it as a routine happening, or wishful thinking. It can be extrapolated that he asked for worldly wisdom and received it, not the divine wisdom, God gives to prophets, teachers, preachers, believers and chosen ones, who are commissioned to serve the Lord God. Solomon's acts were contrary to the law and statutes, yet God allowed him to continue as king Solomon, in order to satisfy his guilt, used to sacrifice numerous oxen, goats, camels,

bulls and sheep perhaps as compensation (Mal:2:12). He lacked godly wisdom and never felt hunger and thirst to receive the gift of spiritual wisdom. He was content with the wisdom needed for good administration. Solomon did everything he desired (Ecc 2:4-26) and eventually concluded – "All is in vain, under the sun". He failed to see God's hand and favours due to prosperity in plenty.

James (Jam 3:13), and Paul have educated the church, and have described the difference between two kinds of wisdom, we shall discuss in forthcoming para. the author used to wonder as to why and how could a wiseman like Solomon could do things which cannot be called wisdom of a wiseman with a gifted background, until he read Paul's letters carefully. The king displeased God to please his foreign wives (1 Kg 11:1-2, Mal. 2:11) He had 700 wives and 300 concubines who turned his heart away from God (1 Kg 11:4-8). He collected enormous riches of the world, had imported fleet of ships, horses, and chariots, got

500 shields made of gold, silver was not considered as precious metal in the days of Solomon (1 Kg. 10:1-2). Watching the same attitude king of Samuel had told Saul God appreciates obedience more than sacrifices (1 Sam 15:22-23). God does not change with time so the same stands true in every dispensation. Later, God made second visit to Solomon again in a dream after king Solomon's long prayer in the temple (1 Kg 9:3). And lauded the completion of temple work. But God's primary purpose was to directly reproach the king for laxities (1 Kg 9:49). In spite of the second encounter, Solomon continued on his own path, and eventually came under God's wrath (1 Kg 11:9-13). The writings of Solomon are full of worldly wisdom and understanding of life on the Earth (1 Kg 4:29). He wrote 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs covering all aspects of life on earth. The wise people used to visit him to hear the words of wisdom from him and no other man could match him in history. Paul says, "It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;

the intelligence of intelligent, I will frustrate, where is the one who is wise?... has God not made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom; it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. for Jews demand a sign and Greeks seek wisdom for foolishness of God is wiser than man." (1 Cor 1:19-25) Paul admonishes further, "And my speech and my message were not in plausible word of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Cor 2:4-5). The Lord knows the thought of wise, and they are futile. Paul adds further, "But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understand this (1 Cor 2:6-8) thus, Paul has defined the true wisdom that comes from God is supreme.

Worldly wisdom is the outcome of knowledge and intellect purported to merely give

understanding as to how to judge between right and wrong and managing worldly affairs. Common people often apply knowledge and understanding gained in the world in divine matters, but it does not help.

God's wisdom is spiritual power which lacks nothing but also knows the mind of the Lord. Wisdom rests with believers of Christ. The Spirit teaches to remain committed to God above every other commitment, and to love and serve him wholeheartedly. The spiritual person judges all things, but himself is to be judged by no one (1 Cor 2:15). The Spirit searches all things i.e., both worldly or spiritual and helps in a discerning God's will. Paul said, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand things freely given us by God" (1 Cor 2:12). So, one can now perceive the difference in these entities. The Spirit of God is obviously exceedingly superior and gives the wisdom that we usually get from knowledge and experience in the old age. The

Spirit helps in obeying law, loving God and fellow men faith in life and also saves us from getting cold toward God. All the saints, prophets and evangelists have been blessed with the Spirit, to do God's work and will. Apostles were asked to wait for the Holy Spirit. David is a glaring example how he behaved as a shepherd boy, killed Goliath, wandered for ten years as fugitive in jungles but honoured God in every situation. He looked to only God for help and pleaded God to Judge him, if there was any evil in him. He did fall but soon realized and repented saying, "Have mercy on me, O God according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions; wash me from iniquities and cleanse me from my sin" (Ps 51:1-2). But his son Solomon did not make him his role model consequently his grandson lost ten tribes to the newly appointed king of Israel.

Paul admonishes, "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in his age, let him become fool that he may become wise. For the

wisdom of this world is folly with God. for it is written, "He catches them in their craftiness (1 Cor 3:18)." If Solomon had diligently proved himself faithful in the eyes of God, He would have definitely given him the Spirit he needed the most, but Solomon never ever asked for it (Ps 1:28). Probably Solomon judged himself much superior to others (Prov 1:23) kings of his time. Thus, due to overconfidence he got trapped in self-righteousness and got arrested in the desires of his flesh (Ps 3:7) Our God is God of mercy and grace but to them who obey Him. He does not enjoy giving punishment.

The Bible says: You are a temple of God. If anyone destroys it, God will destroy him (1 Cor 3:16-17); for he is also a just God. Our God merely desires us to act justly, for our Lord God is holy, Love and walk humbly with him (Mic 6:8). Solomon wasted God's opportunity given to him by remaining satisfied with riches, intellect, and kingships. It is a great lesson for them who consider themselves wiser than other on the basis of degrees,

certificates, position, and authority they are enjoying, for a worldly wise it is difficult to yield to the word of God. They lack humility, and get puffed with pride and ego, so to accept themselves as a sinner and slave to sin is not easy for them. A proud thinks he can manage on his own in due course of time and would earn righteousness by good works. A large number of worldly wise have missed the salvation by grace through faith, Salvation is gift of God and cannot be earned borrowed or purchased. There is only one God, one Christ, one faith, one way, one truth and one life, and that is in Son of God. The lesson is clear: one should not take dreams casual if it is from

God. Such dreams are privilege and indicates favoured calling of God. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to His commands (2 Jn 1:6), and obedience comes from faith (Rom 1:5). Jesus said, "You are my friends if you do what I command (Jn 15:14).



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

John 16:33



Barren Bones Breathing and Bouncing

Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj brings out crucial lessons
from the most famous Bible Chapter on Revival,
a topic we are thinking about now, thanks to Asbury Revival

The Asbury Revival which started on 8 February 2023 has rekindled the interest in Revival among the church. The passage of dry bones coming to life in the book of Ezekiel is perhaps the best known of all chapters on Revival in the Bible. In this article, I attempt to explain some self-evident and foundational truths on Revival from this passage.

1. The Requirement of Revival

Without revival we can do nothing. We cannot get by without a genuine reawakening of our spiritual lives. Often, we are so spiritually blind that we don't see the need for a revival amidst us. In this passage, we find that the LORD took hold of Prophet Ezekiel and carried him away by

His Spirit to a valley filled with dry bones (Ezek 37:1). If the LORD had not taken the initiative, chances are that Ezekiel would have never got to see the valley of dry bones. In other words, God was telling Ezekiel: "Revival is indispensable." The phrase, "a great many bones" implies that the whole community of people in the Babylonian exile was living on without spiritual fervor (v 2). Even today, much has not changed. Every Christian needs revival whether he realizes it or not. We, sadly, like the believers of the Laodicean Church strut, "I am rich and do not need a thing" while the truth is that we are "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked" (Rev 3:17). But this is what God has to say to us: "You are neither hot nor cold and I am

about to spit you out of my mouth!" (Rev 3:16). Leonard Ravenhill hit the hammer on the head of the nail when he wrote, "I offer it as my considered judgment that the main reason why we do not have heaven-born Spirit-operated revival in our day is that WE ARE CONTENT TO LIVE WITHOUT IT. Lesser 'blessings' make us happy. Another bus for Sunday school is all that we ask for. A bigger attendance this year at Easter and Christmas elevates the joy of many promotion-gear'd Churches." I have read that John Kilpatrick, a pastor of a Church in Pensacola, United States, would drive to his Church evening after evening and simply cry out, "There's got to be more, LORD!" And the Pensacola Revival in the United States broke out on Father's Day in 1995 where 1,22,000 people were saved! Here was a man who was not content to live without a revival!

2. The Reservoir for Revival

In this passage God quizzes Ezekiel, "Son of Man, can these bones become living people again?" To God's question, Ezekiel gives an insightful answer. "O Sovereign Lord, you

alone know the answer to that!" (37:3). Here Ezekiel correctly acknowledges that revival can result only if the "Sovereign LORD" wills it and supplies power for it. Only when God breathes into these "very" dry bones, they would come again to life the same way He brought the lifeless Adam to life (v 5). Otherwise, they would continue to be cold and lifeless. Without God, we cannot dream of being alive. God is the only Reservoir for revival. Without His endowment no true revival can ever take place. Human efforts at best can only bring about a "rattle." We need God's hand upon those efforts to make it a "revival!" That is one reason why we must positively pray for a revival and keep at it. Whenever we pray, we are telling God, "we can't do it on our own." Our Lord Jesus said, "apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5). Paul understood this truth. That is why he penned, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow!" (1 Cor. 3:6).

The rule of revival in Psalm 126 still holds well: "Those who plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy!" (126:5). The context of this Psalm is revival (please See v 4). Tears in prayer are like an

irrigation pump that waters hard soil and makes it soft and supple for revival. But alas, we live in a generation who prefer cheers to tears; who choose travel to travail; who opt to be organizers rather than be agonizers; who fancy being singers than be clingers; who feel compelled to be pastors, than be wrestlers; who favor fashion than passion; who like to be writers rather than be fighters (as Leonard Ravenhill creatively put it). If only all of us set aside a time every day to cry out with tears using the words of the Psalmist, "Will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you?", a soul-stirring revival would come storming in! When we make personal that impassioned plea, a heaven-sent revival would come bursting forth!

3. The Route for Revival

In this passage, the dry bones come to life when Prophet Ezekiel obeys God's command to speak His Word to them (37:4,7). In fact, Ezekiel had dedicated his life for the ministry of preaching Yahweh's word to His own people who lived at Tel Abib, by the Kebar River in Babylon (1:1; 3:15). And his repeated message was "Repent and live!" (Ezek 18:32).

The faithful preaching of God's unchanging Word and especially the message of repentance will definitely bring about a revival among the audience it is preached to! This is the only route to revival! It happened during the time of King Josiah. When he read to his people from the just-rediscovered Book of the Covenant, it resulted in such a terrific Passover celebration that was never seen in Israel since the days of the judges (2 Ki. 23:2,22).

The same happened when Jonathan Edwards read a sermon he prepared on the basis of Scripture, titled, "Sinners in the hands of an Angry God" on 8 July 1741, to a congregation at Enfield (in the US). He began his sermon with the little-known but bone chilling words from the book of Deuteronomy: "Their foot shall slide in due time" in order to explain the danger the wicked Israelites would be exposed to if they persisted in their wayward ways (Dt 32:35). Baptised in "the terror of the Lord," Edwards oozed with holy wrath as he preached "the Word" that day. He quoted from Psalm 73 to warn his listeners that they could be brought into desolation "in a moment" (vv 18-19). Using a

scarcely used verse from the writings of Prophet Nahum he compared God to a "Devouring Flame" (1:10). He made a reference to John 3:18 in order to teach that sinners were already under a sentence of condemnation to hell if they failed to repent and trust Christ. He wound them with this stirring sermon that was absolutely anchored on the Bible from start to finish with these scorching yet scriptural words: "The wrath of Almighty is now undoubtedly hanging over a great number of you. Let everyone fly out of Sodom: *'Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed'* (Gen. 19:17)" What was the result of such a daring preaching of the Bible? After the hurricane of Edwards' judgment message was over, the crowd collapsed. Some clung to the posts of the Church out of fear that they might all of a sudden slip and fall into the depths of hell! It was this kind of straight-out-of-scripture, that blew in revival fires into New England.

The Asbury Revival which started on February 8, 2023, began after a message which had a focus on

repentance and confession, reports *Kentucky Today*, a newspaper published in the American State where Asbury is located, in its 11 February, 2023 edition!

4. The Reason for Revival

Why was God so interested that the dry bones would take up muscles, skin, and breath to come to life again? Simple: so that they would know that He is the LORD (37:6; See verse 13 also). The reason for revival is that God's people would grow in their knowledge of Him. Hear God's lament: "The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand" (Isa 1:3). Because Israel stubbornly refused to know and understand God, they were sent out of the Promised Land of Milk and Honey to a 70-year exile to Babylon. Prophet Isaiah records God's words in this regard: "My people will go into exile for lack of understanding!" (Isa 5:13). That is why He now shows Ezekiel who was one among the exiles in Babylon that the whole purpose of reviving His dry-bone-like people was that they should now take time to know Him. One

indication that revival fire is already lit in our hearts is that we would constantly look for opportunities to know God better. We can practically know God by taking unhurried time to study His Word. Why do I say that? The word "knowledge" is used interchangeably with the word, "the law of God" in the Bible. For example, we read these words of God from the writings of Prophet Hosea: "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you my priests, because you ignored the law of your God, I will ignore your children" (6:4). The sad fact that we have time (or shall we say 'take time') regularly to see Television Serials, Cricket, Games, Political Trends and the like but not for the life-long process of knowing God shows how backslidden we are and where our priorities are. We need a revival, at any cost.

5. The Reach of Revival

Prophet Ezekiel describes for us what finally happened at the end of his vision of dry bones coming to life: "So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet— a vast army!" (37:10). It is

interesting to note that he describes the people who are now revived as a "vast army" and not as an "audience!" What is the use of an army that does not march out and capture new territories for its commander? The lesson on revival from Ezekiel 37:10 is not difficult to grasp: we are revived to revive others. The reach of revival should be worldwide to reach the whole world—the unchurched, unreached, and untouched! Revival rain was not only for the people of Israel but for the people "surrounding" the hill of God (Ezek 34:26). Please note that this revival chapter signs off with a missionary promise. "Then the nations will know that I make Israel holy!" (37:28). Prophet Ezekiel was a missionary at heart. He wanted the people living in Babylonian captivity to know that God cannot be locked in "geographical" boxes— the same God who was with them in Jerusalem is also with them by the Kebar River in Babylon.

Revival fires will invariably spread. When Samson set the tails of the foxes, they started sprinting, destroying the vineyards of the Philistines (Judg. 15:4-5). If this is the case,

imagine what could be the effect if our hearts are set on revival fire— won't we seek to run to the last man on this planet seeking him to win him into God's vineyard (as someone has brilliantly pointed out)? Why did David ask God to "restore" to Him the joy of Salvation?— so that he could merely jump up and down in delirious joy? No! He did so, so that He would be able to teach transgressors, God's ways (Psa. 51:12,13). The book of Acts is undoubtedly a handbook of Revival. Apostle James quoted from Prophet Amos in this book to show how a God-sent restoration would result in reaching out the lost. After God returns to rebuild and restore David's fallen tent (symbolic of the backslidden Church) the rest of humanity, including the gentiles will "find the Lord," he explained in the Church council in Jerusalem (Am 9:11-12; Acts 15:16-18). Only because the apostles had experienced "times of refreshing" they could preach it to others (Acts 3:19). What were these "refreshed" people up to? Just praising and rejoicing inside the Sanctuary? No! We also see them getting involved in proclamation of the Gospel outside the sanctuary in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria

and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The message in this passage is very clear that after we are revived, we should first take steps to reach the unreached in our village/city, then other places in the State, then the neighbouring States and finally, in the ends of this earth. A voluntary job transfer to a needy town far from your native place, sacrificing a lucrative job to join a missionary organization, pumping missionary blood into your children's veins—these are only a few practical ways to spread the revival fires that God has graciously lit in your heart.

Suzanne Nicholson, Professor of New Testament at Asbury University, writes about how the revival fires at the Asbury Revival are uniquely spreading: "Word about this movement of God has spread like wildfire on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms. In the past, teams of evangelists needed to travel from town to town to spread the word, but now in a matter of days people on the other side of the planet have heard about what is happening in Wilmore, Kentucky."

Ezekiel's vision of "Barren Bones

Breathing and Bouncing" is one of his talked-about visions. But strangely no date is given for this vision, as is the case with his other major visions (See 1:2; 8:1; 40:1). But by leaving this vision deliberately dateless, is the Lord telling us, "The Dry Bones of your times too can live again?" I think, yes! The folks God is using to lead the ongoing Asbury Revival will shout a resounding "Yes"!



Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj,
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functioning from Chennai. God has graciously opened doors for him to preach in over 20 Indian states and in a few other nations, by invitation, with the organisers paying for the travel, right from the first time Duke preached, as a school boy of 16, in the year 1991. He has authored three books: 1. Straight Talk (Sex, Love, Marriage, Porn, Phone Addiction, married-sex, etc., – what the Bible says), 2. Daniel in Dell (practical study of the book of Daniel for modern working professionals), 3. Goodnews for the Google Generation (the Gospel presented the way Jesus did in Luke 13 and the way Paul did in Acts 17). Reach him via emailduke@gmail.com or WhatsApp, +91-8886040605, in case you want to buy these or have a question. Duke is married to Evangelin, an Odisha Missionary's daughter who has a post-graduate diploma from SAIACS in Biblical Leadership, and this couple are blessed with two children – Dale, 19, a St. Stephens Delhi student, and Datasha, 15, a Class X student.

**But you must return to your God;
 maintain love and justice,
 and wait for your God always.**

Hosea 12:6



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8.	Male Receptionist cum Clerk	Fluent in spoken English, soft spoken and with pleasant demeanour. Diploma in Front Desk Receptionist, good typing speed and should be well conversant to use MS office.	5200-20200 with Grade Pay of 2400

Only Candidates who have done their Schooling & College Education in English Medium need to apply.

Interested candidates please apply with your Curriculum Vitae to the Principal, Grace Academy, 21-C New Cantt. Road, Dehradun-248 001, Uttarakhand in a sealed envelope clearly stating the post applied for at your earliest or can send their application by e-mail to principal@graceacademyindia.com. Only shortlisted candidates will be called for a personal interview.

A leading church planting agency (having hundreds of church plants) is looking for...

A Technical Lead

- 1) We are recruiting for a talented backend or full stack developer who can lead our technology department and meet its rapidly expanding needs
- 2) The role is full-time, remote working and could be based anywhere in India
- 3) Salary: Rs 60,000-65,000 per month
- 4) Our technology department currently comprises one full-time staff member and various volunteers

Requirements:

- Sound evangelical belief and a passion to support church planting.
- Backend or full stack developer with minimum 5 years experience with version control tools (e.g. Github, Bitbucket) and cloud database tools (e.g. SQL)
- Fluent English and experience working with Westerners.
- A vision for developing the platform in keeping with our ambitious growth targets and technology goals.
- Experience managing other developers.
- Proficiency in one of: Python, Java, C, C++, PHP, Javascript.
- Willingness to learn additional programming languages and technical skills as needed

If you think we are looking for you or would like more information on the different roles, please send your CV with a photo to

gracy.ligy@gmail.com

Last date to apply is 20th March 2023



SAMARITAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

ADMISSIONS OPEN

CLASSES KG - VII

Samaritan Residential Schools is a Christian Residential and Boarding School located in Elagiri Hills, Tamil Nadu. Our unique curriculum is drawn from the National Institute of Open Schooling, Montessori, Forest School, British Schools and Outdoor Learning.

This is a fully residential programme and children will be raised with Christian and Biblical values. Learning will take place both inside and outside the classroom. Emphasis is placed on outdoor education and a hands-on approach to character development, skills and abilities of each child.

SEATS ARE LIMITED!

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE – contact us for eligibility criteria

FOR APPLICATION AND DETAILS, CONTACT:

WhatsApp/Phone: +91-7305765469/+91-9962765469

Email: admission@samaritanschool.com

www.samaritanschool.com



IMMEDIATE APPOINTMENT AT ELAGIRI HILLS, TAMIL NADU RESIDENTIAL STAFF & WORKERS REQUIRED

SPORTS COACHES NEEDED URGENTLY

Teachers – English, Math, Science, Arts & PE Dorm Parents, Nurse, Cook, Security, Admin, Maintenance Workers & Farm Workers.

Applicants must be ministry focussed, God-fearing, honest and hardworking.

MARRIED COUPLES AND FAMILIES WELCOME!

BENEFITS

Campus Quarters

Community Living

On the Job Training

Experiential and Holistic Growth

Send your resume/CV by WhatsApp

+91-7305765469/+91-9962765469 | Email: hr@samaritanschool.com

MASTER'S COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY

(A Theological Wing of Vision Natives)

Affiliated to the Senate of Serampore College (University)

Accredited by Asia Theological Association (ATA)

Admissions Open 2023

Committed men / women above 18 years age may apply

Partial scholarship is available to deserving candidates

The College trains dedicated individuals as Godly disciples and
Dynamic leaders, to serve the Church and Society at large

Medium of Instruction is English. Academic year begins in June

Classes for BCS, Dip CS start in January

Serampore Courses	Duration	Requirement
Bachelor of Divinity (B.D)	5 Yrs	Inter/+2 Pass
Bachelor of Divinity (B.D)	4 Yrs	Degree Pass
Bachelor of Divinity (B.D)	2 Yrs	B.Th. Pass
BCS (External)	4 Yrs	Degree Pass
Dip. C.S (External)	2 Yrs	Inter/+2 Pass

ATA Courses	Duration	Requirement
M. Th. (Missiology)	2 Yrs	BD/M.Div ('B')
M.Div. (Internal & External)	3 Yrs	Degree Pass
M.Div. (Internal & External)	2 Yrs	B. Th. Pass

MCT Courses	Duration	Requirement
Certificate in Theology (C.Th.)	1 Yr	10th Pass



Library with Digital Facilities
Faculty with Academic Doctorates
Excellent Spiritual Nourishment
Focus on Practical Commitment

For Admissions Contact

Principal

Master's College of Theology

Plot No. 5-7, Kommadi Road, Visakhapatnam - 530048

Mail: mctvizag@outlook.com (or) mastersprincipal@gmail.com

Call: 9704171117 (or) 9840268990 * Website: www.mctvisakha.com

Intercessory *Prayer* Points



March 2023

1 WEDNESDAY Thank God for His amazing grace and mercies that are new every morning.

2 THURSDAY Pray that believers would spend more time in self-evaluation and reflection. Pray that there would be repentance and change of hearts during this Lent.

3 FRIDAY Pray that all the Group members, Life members and Individual members of Evangelical Fellowship of India would glorify God through words and deeds.

4 SATURDAY Continue to pray for children who are writing their board exams. Pray that God would refresh them, strengthen them, and enable them to do their best.

5 SUNDAY Continue to pursue personal holiness and close relationship with the Lord. Pray

that your life would be a good example of personal holiness.

6 MONDAY Pray for the Art of Survival meetings in different parts of our country. Pray that the servants of the Lord would get encouragement through these meetings and be more effective in their mission.

7 TUESDAY Pray for EFI Children At Risk (EFICAR). Pray that God would give strength and encouragement to leaders for the smooth functioning of this department. Pray that children who are at risk would be helped and restored both physically and spiritually.

8 WEDNESDAY International Women's Day. Pray for all the women in our country to live confidently with the knowledge that they are equally created by God. Pray that with this inner strength they would live

meaningfully for God's glory.

9 THURSDAY Continue to pray for Pastors and leaders who are wrongfully charged for forceful conversion. Pray that God would hear the cry of His children and work on their behalf.

10 FRIDAY Pray for Christian lawyers in our country who are actively involved in the wellbeing of believers and their fundamental rights. Pray for courage as they give counsel or represent them in the courtrooms.

11 SATURDAY Pray that you may live out the Gospel and share it with someone today. Pray for right words at the right time. Pray that the Holy Spirit would take the Word of God and work in the person's heart and mind and bring forth changes.

12 SUNDAY Pray that God would raise up men and women of prayer for the revival of your Church.

13 MONDAY Continue to pray for EFI AIM magazine. Pray for resources, increased readership, and also pray that it will impact more people and strengthen their relationship with the Lord.

14 TUESDAY Pray for religious liberty in our country. Pray that every individual would have the freedom to worship without fear. Pray for strength and God's comfort for those persecuted because of their faith.

15 WEDNESDAY Pray for the Global Outreach programs to be successful and pray that many would be confident to share the Gospel on one-on-one basis.

16 THURSDAY Pray for the elderly people in your neighbourhood today. Pray that each one of them would be provided and cared for. Pray that the people who provide and care for them will have a compassionate heart.

17 FRIDAY Pray for all the Sunday School Teachers in your church that they may love the Word of God and pass it on to the children.

18 SATURDAY Let us pray for all the orphans in our country. May God hear their cries and envelop them with His unconditional love. May we know God's heart and support the cause of the orphans.

19 SUNDAY Pray for hunger and thirst for righteousness among the people of your state. Pray that

God would fill their spiritual desire with His Words and His presence.

20 MONDAY Pray for the leaders of our nation. Pray that they would understand the needs of the people and sacrificially serve them. Pray also that they would uphold justice in all their dealings.

21 TUESDAY Pray for your city today that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ would shine bright, and people may enjoy His abundant blessings. Pray that the presence of God would be felt by many.

23 THURSDAY Continue to pray that God would heal our land and make it fruitful so that we will be a blessing to people around us.

24 FRIDAY Pray for safety and protection of our country. Pray for peaceful relationship with our neighbouring countries.

25 SATURDAY Pray for a teachable heart and willingness to obey His commands for yourself. Pray that you would be a blessing to many people.

26 SUNDAY Pray that every believer would trust God in the difficult seasons of life and hold

fast to Him. Pray for comfort for those who are struggling in life.

27 MONDAY Pray for the emotional and physical strength of the children. Pray for safety and protection. Pray for diligence and hard work in studies. Pray that they would start new session with joy and zeal.

28 TUESDAY Pray that the Lord would give renewed strength and commitment to all the EFI staff and bless the programs they are conducting in different parts of the country.

29 WEDNESDAY Pray for people who are struggling with their faith. Pray that the good Lord would reveal Himself to them at their level of understanding.

30 THURSDAY Pray for your Church as you prepare for Good Friday and Easter Sunday services. Pray that Church members would renew their faith and commitment to follow Christ faithfully.

31 FRIDAY Thank God for His protection over us and our families. Thank God for His goodness, His mercies that are new every morning.

Form IV. (SEE Rule 18)

- Place of Publication : New Delhi
- Periodicity of its publication : Monthly
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I, Mr. Vijayesh Lal, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: March 1, 2023

Sd/- Mr. Vijayesh Lal
Signature of Publisher

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Lent

**"The time is fulfilled,
and the kingdom of God is
at hand; repent and
believe in the gospel."**

Mark 1:15

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