



NECF
MALAYSIA

BE STILL

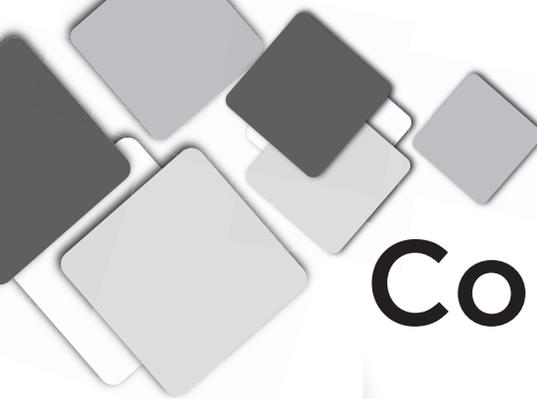
AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.

Psalm 46:10

4 **DAYS**

FAST & PRAYER

7 AUGUST – 15 SEPTEMBER 2021



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Cease From Striving

By Rev Dr Eu Hong Seng (Chairman of NECF)

In such tumultuous times as the world grapples simultaneously with health, economic and financial crises, we would do well to heed what the Lord tells us in Psalm 46:10, “*Be still and know that I am God.*”

The original Hebrew word used for being still is “*raphah*”. It means to stop striving, to cause yourself to let go, to willingly submit ourselves to God and His control, to surrender to Him, to slacken off, leave alone, become weak, relax, to let alone, to be quiet, to be silent, or to be inactive or still.

For most of us, this is a tall order. This is especially so in the wake of Covid-19 when our society has experienced the abrupt loss of freedom and mobility in daily life and routine indefinitely. Inevitably, our reactive tendency against such a major disruptive event is to tighten our grip as we see our businesses, dreams and future slip through our grasp. In the face of daunting circumstances, can we obey His call to “be still” and let go?

Consider some biblical reasons for doing so.

We can be still because He is our refuge, our strength and a very present help in times of trouble (Ps 46:1) Our God is present among His people and the help of our God is greater than any crisis.

We can be still because He is “*Yahweh Sabaoth*”, the Lord of hosts (v7). He is the commander of armies, both the army of His people and the armies of heaven. He is the God of all glory and might. This glorious God is with us, His people.

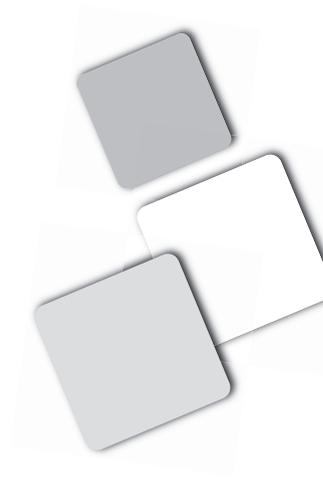
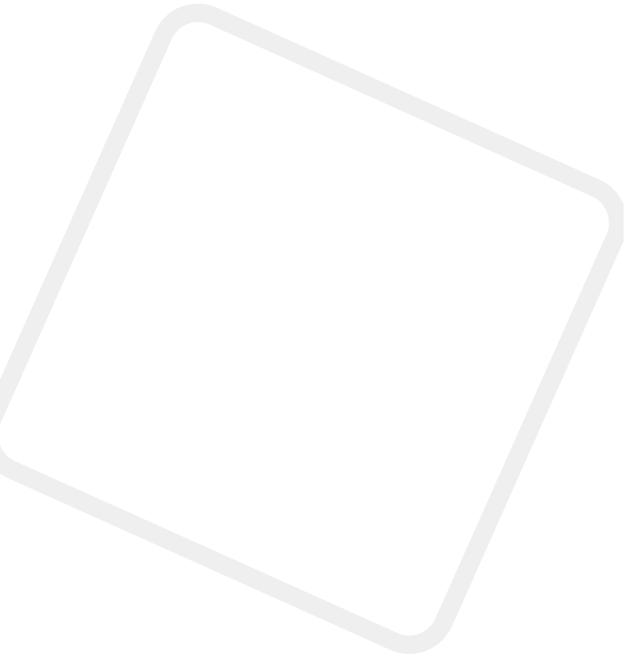
We can be still because He is the “*God of Jacob*”. This title not only emphasizes the aspect of covenant, but also grace – for Jacob was clearly less than honourable in character, known neither for integrity nor holiness. “*The Lord of Jacob is our refuge*” (v7) so we trust this gracious and merciful God to be an open refuge for His people. Just as God availed grace to Jacob, in like manner He would avail as much to us.

“Be still and know that I am God” is not a call to a contemplative life, important as that may be. Realize that God is essentially saying, “Lay down your arms, surrender, and acknowledge that I am the only one who can usher in indubitable victory.”

“Be still and know that I am God” - these two clauses are so interwoven that each may be the cause as well as the effect of the other. The way to know God is to be still, and the way to be still is to know God.

In this 40-Day Fast and Prayer, let us cease from striving, stop our frantic activity and look to the sovereign God for strength, breakthroughs and revival.

Perhaps it is time to lay our children, our career, our future, our finance, our health, our all ... on the altar. Indeed, there may be no other way to “Be still”.



The Way Forward

By Pr Sam Ang (Secretary General of NECF)

In Joshua 1, the phrase “*Be strong and of good courage,*” was mentioned to Joshua four times (v.6, 7, 9 & 18) when he took over the leadership from Moses. The Lord kept on reminding him “*Moses my servant is dead*” and that it was now up to him (Joshua) to take the Israelites into the Promised Land.

It was not as straightforward as Joshua expected. There was a need to prepare the people and in Joshua 3, after the return of the spies from Jericho, the instructions were, “*When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before.*”

Furthermore in v.5 God said, “*Sanctify (consecrate) yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.*” That was what subsequently happened, for when they stepped into the River Jordan in v.16, “*the waters which came down from upstream stood still and rose in a heap very far away.*”

The year 2020 has been a year of much change, lament, anger and disappointment. Our theme chosen well before we entered into the year 2020 was “**Hearing the Holy Spirit for the Times We Live in**” (Rev 2-3). The emphasis was on what God had spoken to His Church both in the past and the present. However, for 2021, as we enter into uncharted waters and having experienced a pandemic in the areas of both health and economy, there is a need to hear what God will speak to each one of us. We need to listen carefully and meditate on what Psalm 46:10 means to all of us, “**Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.**”

When you reflect through the devotions for 2021, you will discover that we, as God’s people, carry the message of hope in this broken and depleting world. We are to take the opportunity to share our experiences to this dying world and we will discover that:

- God has never left us nor forsaken us. He has been at work, preparing us for the new normal. We need to manage the risks that confront us.
- In the midst of the change, pandemic, fear and uncertainty that we went through in year 2020, we need to affirm that, “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*” (Heb 13:8) He is the unchanging God whom we worship.

- To this broken and depleted world, we carry in each of us the message of hope as the apostle Paul describes: *“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us”* (2 Cor 4:7). Yet we are to **“Be Still”** in the presence of the Lord.
- Our dependency and fervency upon the Lord have never been so treasured before. We should hold fast to the truth and stand firm against the tide that wants to destroy the foundation of our faith.

(All Bible verses in this article are excerpts from New King James Version)

Be an Overcomer that Rises Above the Storm

By Rev Looi Kok Kim (Chairman of Prayer Commission, NECF)

It is God's intention to nurture a people who will know Him, worship Him, love Him, and find their security in Him forever. We can be sure that Jesus who has all authority in heaven and on earth will most certainly accomplish His purpose.

The theme of this year's 40-Day Fast & Prayer is "Be Still and Know That I Am God" (Ps 46:10), where we are exhorted to put our confident trust in God in the vortex of troubled times, uncertainties, and fears. The battle against the Covid-19 pandemic will always be stormy. It has disrupted the livelihood norm, altered social lifestyles and, in the Christian context, has at least downsized the mass gathering of church services and activities. The vaccines have yet to be proven efficacious. The virus will be in the air for some years to come and there is always a risk that it will mutate.

In such situations, what does it take to be an overcomer?

Psalm 46 provides a roadmap to becoming an overcomer. Knowing God, who has worked in the past, is working in the present and will continue to work in the future, as well as the attributes of the overcomer are precious nuggets leading us to discover the battlefield within us. If we are going to succeed spiritually, among all the other necessary virtues, we will need to discipline ourselves and persevere. We will need to learn not only how to pray, but how to keep the edge of aggressiveness alive within us. In other words, it is a warfare in our carnal or fleshly aggression. It is a combination of discernment, authority and unwavering faith that needs to live within us even while other virtues and gifts develop.

The 40-Day Fast & Prayer is a spiritual journey that provides just such a roadmap to guide us to stay focused and disciplined to know God as in Daniel 11:32 and to become overcomers in times of great testing. The daily format that has a reading schedule of ten chapters per day is intentional and trains you to develop a lifestyle of reading the Word of God constantly while engaging with the Holy Spirit. By saturating our mind with the Word of God, it helps us overcome our daily temptations. The goal is for us to continue reading the Bible from cover to cover as a lifestyle, even after the 40 days have ended.

We trust that this year's 40-Day Fast & Prayer will be a good start for you to get into the habit of reading at least 10 chapters of the Word of God per day. "*Be Still and Know That I Am God*" offers overcomers insights that will help each one of us endure hardship as a discipline and serve as one who influences others to rise above the storm through knowing God.

Support NECF'S General Fund

By Pr Sam Ang (Secretary General of NECF)

The NECF 40-Day Fast & Prayer flagship event was launched in 2001. This year marks our 21st year in faithfully producing hard and soft copies of the prayer booklets to encourage churches and individuals to keep praying and interceding for our nation.

The Covid 19 pandemic has in many ways affected the way we do church. With the new normal, we are now a Church without Walls with the additional restriction that children below 12 and seniors over 60 are not encouraged to attend physical church.

The show must go on for the Fast and Prayer booklets. As you might expect, printing the booklets incur costs especially since we produce them in four languages. What's more, while selling the hard copies at the minimal amount of RM2.00 per copy helps to offset some of the expenditures, the soft copies are made available to you free of charge many years ago.

This year we have decided to designate the NECF 40-Day Fast and Prayer collection for the NECF's General Fund instead of charity projects as we foresee a decrease in donations and support in the near future. Hence, funds collected this year will be used to meet the operating costs of our office, including the salaries of our 12 staff.

If you have been blessed by the resource, please prayerfully consider giving a minimum of RM10.00 as your support for the NECF's General Fund. We have made the process as simple as possible - all you have to do to transfer the amount to us is scan the Touch n Go e-Wallet QR code found in the booklet (both hard and soft copies), our website, Facebook pages, promotional videos and NECF app.

We want to thank you for your kind cooperation and express our sincere appreciation for your generosity as we look forward to building our nation through the local church.

May this year's devotion bring many blessings to you and your family.

God bless you.

Support NECF's General Fund

National Evangelical Christian Fellowship AC3

**Public Bank Berhad Account No:
3218284529**

or

Scan the QR code to contribute:





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MALAYSIA

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AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.

Psalm 46:10

4 **DAYS**

FAST & PRAYER

7 AUGUST – 15 SEPTEMBER 2021

Day

1

Be Still and Know that I AM God!

In Matthew 24, Jesus forewarns of the turbulent times that will precede His return. We will see judgment for the nations with an increase of global catastrophes and turmoil. How do we navigate through such times victoriously with unshakable peace and faith?

Psalms 46 is a timeless message and God is extending His invitation for us to come, be still and hide in Him so that we can be an army of overcomers secure, resting in Him and shining forth with faith, hope and love amidst the darkness.

Psalms 46 presents three main ideas:

- 1) Vs 1-3 – Assurance of God's **divine protection** and His sovereignty as our refuge and security.
- 2) Vs 4-7 – Assurance of God's **divine provision** and help to bring us into tranquility, rest and security.
- 3) Vs 8-11 – Assurance of God's **divine presence and power** as we take on the posture of submission and stillness where victory is won, and where His glory will be seen in the nations.

Throughout the ages, God is consistent in demonstrating what He will do for His chosen people. Indeed, He will no longer hold His peace but will arise like a mighty man of war raising the battle cry. The battle belongs to Him! Be reminded of how He created the world with His life-giving Word! Be reminded that out of chaos and darkness, the world came into being in life, light, and order!

Let us “come and be still.” Stripping off strivings and fears, let us facilitate a divine shift of heart and focus so that we can come into a place of rest and BEHOLD Him!

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that as we start this 40-Day fast and prayer for the nation, we will learn to be still before God, to get to know Him more through His living Word and His works in our lives, and that we will be touched by His love, sparking growth in our love for others.
- Pray that Christians across Malaysia will encounter God in an intimate way during this stressful and difficult season. As a city of God, may the Church shine and illuminate our communities with the light of His Word and invite them to come to know Jesus, the light of the world.
- Pray that the children of Orang Asli and Orang Asal will receive the same rights as other Malaysians and that they will not be exploited in the labour market and be exposed to all kinds of unnecessary risks.

Day

2

Be Still, "Come... Enter Your Chambers"

Isaiah 26:20 says, *"Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself..."*. This verse extends an urgent invitation for God's people to come into their chambers and hide during the time of His indignation.

God is Spirit and He longs to commune with us not in temples made by hands but in the inner chambers of our hearts where changes take place as we repent, confess, and seek His face. It is there that we learn to see from God's perspective, knowing and discerning His will for the time and season. In His presence we transact our fear and uncertainty with faith and hope in God. Our burdens, strivings and heavy yokes cease, and we come to a place of rest.

To enter the chambers is an act of the will, a choice to submit and surrender. Staying on

the cutting edge in these crucial times is an imperative, not a choice. Abraham took that challenge to respond to God's call, to enter that chamber where he could commune with God and live in His daily presence.

Let's take this season to withdraw from the relentless demands and unceasing cacophony around us. In Psalm 46, the word "still" comes from the Hebrew word "raphah", which means to let go, to cease from striving, to surrender – to let your hands down or to weaken yourself. He is calling us to Himself.

May we respond to His invitation to surrender to this divine exchange to enable the supernatural grace and strength from the Holy Spirit to render us unshakable and to be men and women of faith.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will have a strong desire and determination to enter our chambers, and to commune with God in a way that we have never before experienced.
- Pray that as parents, pastors, teachers and leaders in our respective capacities, we will draw near to God and be able to hear clearly from God so that we will know the way to go and lead our families, churches, students, subordinates, etc., into the divine plans of God.
- Pray for the Orang Asli and Orang Asal who are experiencing enforced dislocation due to various uncontrolled reasons, that they will find good and balanced ways to settle themselves and continue to earn enough to provide for their households.

Day

3

Come, All You Who are Thirsty

Isaac gave his three wells to the Philistines. Instead of fighting over them, he surrendered his rights and moved on to dig another. He devoted his strength not to tracing the wrongs of his enemies but to pursuing the way of God. Those wells became the source to quench the Philistines' thirst. It reminds us of God's living water that is freely given to all.

Prophet Isaiah issued an urgent call to God's chosen people who were thirsty and had no money to come to the waters and to buy and eat freely without cost (Isa 55:1-2). They were urged to return to Him and to turn away from their rebellious ways, stiff-neckedness and waywardness.

Today we are no better as temptations and worldly pursuits dull our sensitivity, distracting and derailing us from the fullness of life that God intends. Instead of drawing from God, we are drawing from the

worldly cistern which cannot satisfy us nor profit the soul.

Until we recognise our spiritual bankruptcy or yearning for God, we will not return to Him who is offering us free sustenance. The water for life-giving, rejuvenation and cleansing, the wine for celebratory and joy-giving, and the milk to nourishing growth are abundantly available to us when we serve and labour for Him in submission and humility, with a teachable spirit and a childlike faith.

We need to reprioritize our time, focus, ambition, and resources toward that which has eternal consequences. We are His temple in which His Holy Spirit dwells to give life to those around, bringing hope to the hopeless and quenching the thirst of those seeking truth and life. Call on Him while He is near and drink from Him, our true Source!

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will seek God above all else and prioritize our time, focus, ambitions and resources in the things that build or yield the eternal value of God.
- Pray that churches and Christians will be confident of who we are as the promised children of God, and that we will not be terrified or wearied by what happens around us but will instead walk in the Spirit and trust in God's ways of handling challenging times in our nation.
- Pray that the deficient transportation systems found among the Orang Asli and Orang Asal's villages will be effectively solved by the relevant authorities soon.

Day

4

Come into Divine Rest

Jacob tried in every way that he could to outperform others and ended up losing his physical strength after the socket of his hip was wrenched when he wrestled with God. A generation that merely seeks performance at the expense of good relationships both with God and men will find an echo in Jacob's struggles.

We experience deep soul weariness and fatigue as we face the relentless demands of a performance-oriented culture. The accumulation of multi-layers of relational and emotional stress amidst the complexities of modern day-life, easily leads to burnouts. There is also the demand to be involved in a "respectable" amount of religious activity lest we be deemed unspiritual.

Jesus invites every weary and heavy-laden soul to come to Him for a powerful promise of rest, for His yoke is easy and His burden is light (Matt 11:28-29). When works of the flesh cease and we take on the yoke of Christ, we will enter into fruitfulness, joy and celebration in the Spirit. Taking on the yoke of Christ and resting in Him is not passivity as it is actively engaging with Him (John 15:5), trusting, watching, hearing and obeying His voice. This is the posture Christ desires for us. We need to be co-labouring with Him.

In this season of fasting and praying, let us be still and seek to break off all ungodly yokes (Isa 58) that we have unwittingly taken on. Which area of your life needs rest? Jesus is waiting to meet you and offer His yoke, relieving your burdens, fears and stress.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will break free from a lifestyle and culture that is performance-oriented, that our relationship with God will not be superficial but instead will be a deep interactive fellowship where we find rest in Him.
- Pray for people around us who have yet to know and accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour, that they will not be overwhelmed by heavy burdens and weariness, but will seek solutions and find rest in Him instead.
- Pray that more healthcare professionals and volunteers will serve the Orang Asli and Orang Asal who live in places with no close access to hospitals or clinics.

Day

5

Come, Behold the Works of God!

God is the master chess player who orchestrates and masterminds the final checkmate: the consummation of all things. Global shakings and shiftings will escalate. The final showdown will come, and He is inviting us to behold Him at work, bringing desolation to the nations and shattering the weapons of the enemy.

Nothing happens without God's permission. During shake-ups, God's ultimate goal is to prepare His glorious Bride by sifting and separating those with substance from the shallow, the godly from the ungodly, and the compromised from the steadfast. He is preparing an undefiled, single-minded army of overcomers to prepare the way for His glorious return. Additionally, He is preparing the way for the greatest harvest of all time before His return. There will also be a great falling away of believers and even some of the elect will be deceived.

So be set apart with an uncompromised lifestyle! Like Joseph, who was used by God in the critical period of the Ancient Near East. He kept God's principles staunchly without yielding to temptation, and he held on to God in his dungeon. It was through these shaking moments in his life that God prepared him to be a vessel of rescue and deliverance in the midst of severe famine!

Let us be prepared, firmly rooted in Him as we watch and pray without ceasing. Join Him in preparing the way, removing the stones and obstacles, ushering in the fullness of His kingdom inaugurated by Him! BE STILL, the Lord of hosts, the God of Jacob, has been, is, and will be our refuge; and will be with us. He is exalted over the earth!

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that, in the midst of God's work of shaking and sifting, we will be willing to be set apart and live an uncompromised lifestyle, and not flow with the tide of the world but will be wise instead, keeping watch and beholding the works of God.
- Pray that more Spirit-filled leaders as well as leaders with vision and a sense of kingdom purpose and destiny will take up leadership roles in all institutions, including those in government and churches, and that they will work and serve with the wisdom of God to bring blessings to all.
- Pray for more low-cost houses to be built to facilitate the needs of the communities of the Orang Asli and Orang Asal.

Day

6

Repent for the Kingdom of God is Near

By preaching repentance and the coming of the Kingdom, Jesus calls us to live a life that is extraneous to the culture that we are in. We often hear the term, "In the world, but not of the world." However, this cannot be explained or anticipated except by faith. John the Baptist, echoing Isaiah, proclaimed, "*Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God*" (Isa 40: 1-11, Mark 1:1-8).

The call to repentance, "*Make straight in the desert a highway for our God*" is about:

- A call to a process, practices, manner, lifestyle, course of action - and not a one-time, single event. It is a preparation for an extended journey, not just to a specific destination.
- A new focus for our lives; and the first step, which begins in our hearts, is ours to choose.
- Knowing God not in the same way we know others or anything else.
- A re-orientation of our misplaced motivations, pursuits, desires, preoccupations and goals.

Our deepest longings cannot be on material gain and God at the same time. (Matt 6:24) The journey to which Jesus invites us is more likely to take us among those that society rejects.

It is a long heart-journey that allows Christ to shine His light powerfully in and through us, away from the dazzling lights of fame, fortune, position and earthly trappings. Christ was born not in a lighted Inn of Bethlehem, but in the simplicity and bare conditions of a stable. Moses didn't encounter God in the grand palace of Egypt, but in the wilderness least travelled by men.

To repent is to change our priorities - focusing less on ourselves and more on others. Our priorities shift from success to meaning. As we turn our faces toward God, we are naturally pulled to a different direction, a direction our 'old-self' most likely would have avoided.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that, as people of God, we will be quick to repent and turn away from our sins or wrongdoings upon the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the witness of His living Word.
- Pray that, as the light of Christ shines forth, many will find their hope in Him and be illuminated by the work of the Holy Spirit, having their hearts softened by the power of God, and eventually giving their hearts to Jesus.
- Pray that the Malaysian government will look intently and responsibly into the issue of environmental pollution and harassment that threatens the health and safety of the many Orang Asli and Orang Asal villagers and grant them their needed aid.

Day

7

Repentance

The first command from Jesus is to “*repent and believe in the gospel.*” (Mark 1:15) This was also the core message of John the Baptist (Matt 3:2). It is safe to assume these words hold a distinct significance since they mark His ministry’s beginning.

What does it mean, exactly, to repent? The common understanding has mostly to do with being sorry for wrong attitudes, behaviour, lifestyle and more. As prescribed in the Lord’s Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13), we are encouraged to confess our shortcomings daily and receive God’s grace and forgiveness. (1 John 1:9)

The fuller meaning of repentance goes beyond being sorry for poor behaviour. The dictionary defines “repent” as “to feel such sorrow for sin or fault as to be disposed to change one’s life for the better.” The Greek word for repentance is *metanoia*, which means “a transformative change of heart: especially, a spiritual conversion.”

To repent is to turn around or to make a conscious choice to change the direction of

one’s life. It goes to the deep recesses and the core of our being and seeks to change us from there. Much more than saying, “I am sorry,” to repent is a determined, sustained, and conscious action that takes one’s life towards a completely different direction. It was Jesus’ first instruction for those who desire to follow Him.

Repentance invites us to prepare for something beyond our earthly comprehension. It is heaven “invading” our lives - God can do exceedingly, abundantly, beyond our imagination. (Eph 3:20) Jesus calls us to break free from daily life routines, yokes, dictates of our flesh, distractions, enticements - everything with which the Devil tempted Eve in the Garden.

Repentance is getting into God-routines, God-direction, God-focus and living the God-kind-of-life. The Israelites were called into that kind of life journey with God with their exodus. They received a new code of life and they followed God’s footprints to enter their Promised Land.

Today’s Prayers:

- Pray that our thoughts and behaviour will be agreeable to our belief and confession. Ask the Holy Spirit to convict us of areas where we need to repent and start responding to His impression.
- Pray that churches in Malaysia will shine brightly like the city on the hill where our good behaviour will be seen by all in our communities so that God will receive all the glory and praise that is due to Him.
- Pray that the Orang Asli and Orang Asal villages that are deprived of electricity and basic amenities will receive their supplies, so that their living conditions can be further improved overall.

Day

8

Placing Our Lives Before God: Repentance and Transformation

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.... (Read Romans 12:1-2 in The Message version)

The commandments and laws were introduced to the Israelites in the wilderness, covering almost every aspect of their lives. It seems that they must live their lives all over again, under the new instructions of God.

Repentance and transformation are more than just a change of mind. A transformed mind processes all that is coming at you, filtering life through God's values, always questioning your values, while allowing the Holy Spirit to continually shape you from the inside. We look at life through God's lenses!

True Repentance and Transformation is:

- Not just a change of morals, the company we keep, or our belief system but also a change at the

very heart of the way we live each moment - our entire lives.

- Not merely confessing our sins and falling into a moralistic trap.
- Not just about changing a few external attitudes, saying the right things, while our inner person, value systems, and worldviews remain self-absorbed, egotistic and non-accountable. You remain largely an "external" Christian, living a double life where faith is about external requirements, much more than an actual change of heart and mind.

The true understanding of repentance and transformation (Metanoia) will energise our entire life: prayer, faith, relationships, handling of finances, conduct in public & private life, integrity, forgiveness, and more. It would be filled with God's life and love. It is precisely here that His life takes over, even as our life is surrendered to Him. It propels us to see the fruit of our changed hearts, as we delight and walk in God's ways.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray and invite God to be the centre of our lives now so that a transformation in our minds and behavior will take place in both our inner and outer lives as we respond to His living Word and instructions.
- Pray that we, the Malaysian Church, will make God the centre of our worship, and that we will internalize the biblical values we receive each day, and connect and relate to one another as a Body of Christ and live under the blessings of more perfect unity.
- Pray that JAKOA, the Department that looks specifically into the Orang Asli's affairs and interests, will execute projects that help build and develop the infrastructure of the OA villages so that their real needs will be met promptly.

Day

9

Letting Go of The Old

Read Romans 12:1-2 in *The Message* version.

The word “change” speaks of new beginnings. On the other hand, transformation happens when something old is removed or falls apart. The Israelites had their living environment and position changed but no transformation took place in them. They still worshiped the golden calf when pressures set in.

When transformation happens in our lives, God’s Spirit invites us to listen deeper and more closely to His voice and promptings. He is leading us into a new place in Him because the old is being removed.

The choice is always ours - “Do I want this new place and obliterate the old?” It is the letting go of old rotting foundations, old ways of living and thinking. This is when you need patience, direction, and the determination to let go instead of tightening your controls. Jesus said, “*But the gate to life is very narrow. The road that leads there is so hard to follow that only a few people find it.*” (Matt 7:14 CEV) He knows how much letting go takes.

Transformation is usually a difficult reorientation. Change can either help

people find a new meaning or cause people to close up and turn bitter. The difference is determined by the quality you want and the desire for your inner life. Change happens all the time but spiritual, inner transformation must become an actual process of letting go and learning to let Jesus lead.

Repentance:

- * Is when we change our hearts and lives and reorient ourselves in God’s direction.
- * Begins with us acknowledging that we live most of our lives facing the wrong direction.
- * Helps us face God, seeing Him more than someone who has to answer our prayers.
- * Gives us the opportunity to participate in God’s work of changing our hearts and lives, as we discover new abilities for seeing and responding to His purpose for our lives - living our lives for His glory alone!

Today’s Prayers:

- Pray that real reorientation will occur in every one of us who professes Christ, and that we will let go of the old and embrace the new things Christ has for us.
- Pray that we, the Malaysian Church, will strive to make disciples wherever we reside. Pray that every effort that churches have devoted to disciple-making will enhance the spirituality of their members and make them Christ-centred disciples.
- Pray that there will be a breakthrough in the relationship among all Orang Asli and Orang Asal, that every tribe will be at peace and relate well with others.

Day

10

"Lord, make my heart pure!"

Many of us tend NOT to think of ourselves as pure because of the obvious negative feelings and thoughts in our hearts and minds – anger, vindictiveness, impatience, envy, etc. However, what is a pure heart? It is a heart that is open to God and one that desires whatever He wants. We purify our hearts whenever we seek God to show us the way and whenever we surrender our will to His will. (Heb 10:19-25) We can all do that, even right now.

Leviticus informs us that Aaron and his sons were installed as the high priests/priests of the Israelites. Aaron and the subsequent high priests were the only privileged ones who could enter into the Holy of Holies, through a thick curtain, where God's presence and glory dwelt.

When Jesus died, that curtain tore from top to bottom - Christ removed the barrier

between God and us. The passage above calls us to have the confidence to enter the Most Holy Place, into the presence of God now. (See also Heb 9:11-12; 1 Pet 2:4-9)

What might be "barriers" in your life (heart & mind) that prevent you from coming into His presence with boldness and confidence? We are the ones who construct barriers between ourselves and God. Our misconceptions and faulty perceptions cause us to move away from His loving gaze and transforming presence.

Today, just as you are without any barriers and in quietness, know that God is present with you. Open your life entirely to Him, seek Him passionately, rid yourself of anything that would separate you from His presence.

"He who has promised is faithful."

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will rid ourselves of anything that causes us to be separated from God or to hesitate to come before His throne of grace, and that we will set our minds and hearts to live holy lifestyles before Him.
- Pray that churches in Malaysia will partner with one another in prayer and ministries and lend our support to one another so that houses of God shall suffer no lack physically and spiritually wherever we are and whatever circumstances we are in.
- Pray that all the ministry work done among Orang Asli and Orang Asal groups will bear fruit and their young people and future generations will be blessed greatly by the work of the Gospel.

Day

11

God is Holy

When I was in secondary school, a disciplinary teacher was our worst nightmare. He was extremely strict. Some hated him, others tried to avoid him. Yet, surprisingly, he was awarded the best teacher of the year.

Later I realized that, though people may dislike discipline, it is necessary to have order in school. In a strange way, it is comforting to know that there is someone who can maintain order zealously in the vicinity.

In a similar way, we find it assuring that our God is holy. For certain, God's holiness is beyond the role of a disciplinary teacher. The Bible speaks of the holiness of God in a majestic way. His holiness exhibits his glory that fills the earth (Isa 6:3). His holiness separates Him from all creations (1 Sam 2:2). His holiness draws the creation to worship Him alone (Ps 99:9).

Since God is holy, everything that is associated with God must also be holy. Leviticus 11:44 says, *"For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy..."* The Scriptures give great details on how to sanctify every element that is presented before God. Why do we need Leviticus? The extensive instructions demonstrate the seriousness of God's holiness. As God is holy, He is pure and intolerant of any form of evil (Hab 1:13). Everything that is impure will be judged by the wrath of God.

So, how can we be comforted knowing that God is holy? Because God is holy, He will eventually vindicate the righteous and punish the wicked. He maintains justice in totality (no one can bribe God). The question is whether *you* are holy (1 Pet 1:15-16)? Believers who are sanctified by the blood of Jesus can be still in the holy presence of God.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that as the created and redeemed people of God, we will seek to live holy lifestyles that reflect the image of God and be assured of His holy presence whenever we present ourselves clean and blameless before Him.
- Pray for the B40 group who receives yearly subsidies and budget allocations from the government, that they will be assisted further with long term skill enhancement programs that will help them break their poverty cycle.
- Pray for the Kensiu group that is mainly found in Baling, Kedah, that they will be able to cope with the environmental and social changes brought forth by government projects and that they will experience God's holy righteousness when they call upon Him for aid.

Day

12

God is Mysterious

I enjoy watching movies that have unpredictable twists and turns. The genius directors lead us step by step into the world of the story and hook us with unexpected outcomes. For some movies, you may not even understand the ending unless you watch it a dozen times. Some scenes will only make sense when you consider the conclusion of the story.

God is like a genius director, leading us in our story of life in a mysterious way. God's plan is too profound for our human perception. Theologians talk about God being "incomprehensible". This does not mean that human beings are unable to know God at all. God has indeed revealed Himself to humans and expects them to recognize Him (Rom 1:19). Rather, it speaks of the finite human who is unable to *fully* understand the infinite God.

God is mysterious in the sense that His knowledge, wisdom, and judgments

surpass human understanding (Ps 139; 147; Rom 11:33-36). God is not simply doing things unexpectedly, He also does things *better* than what humans may expect (Isa 55:9). When we read about the festivals recorded in Leviticus and the roles of the Levites in Numbers, they seem like mundane information to us. Actually, they serve as the backgrounds to the ministry and priestly role of Jesus Christ. Amazingly, God makes all things work together for the benefit of those who love Him (Rom 8:28).

The story of our lives is in the hands of the supreme wise God. As we grow in spiritual maturity, we continue to increase in His knowledge (Col 1:10). We may face issues that make no sense. Yet, God in His mysterious ways continue to unfold His plan and purposes in our life. So, trust in the Lord, for He has made everything beautiful in its time (Eccles 3:11).

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that in times when we cannot understand God's ways, we will be assured of His heart that is full of lovingkindness for us so that we can gain confidence, hope and strength to move on in all circumstances.
- Pray that our social and work culture will help the younger generation excel in their talents and strengths, and that more young people will be willing to stay on to help develop our nation.
- Thank God for the effort poured out by different quarters in preserving the traditional culture and language of the Kayaman who live along the Rajang River, Sarawak. Pray that evangelism among them will be equally strong and active so that they will come to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

Day

13

God is Personal

During the pandemic crisis, many churches moved their worship services to online platforms. Some find it helpful as it cuts down traveling time, making the service accessible from their own homes. Others, like me, find it strange to relate “Church” with the screen of a TV or a computer. I soon realize that seeing my pastor “in person” is a blessing that is often taken for granted.

The Bible reveals to us that God is personal. He is not an abstract idea, a state of being, a mere philosophical concept, or even a force of nature. He is a Person whom we can relate to. He has feelings, wills, and actions. In Numbers, God revealed His wills to Moses personally. When the people reacted against God, He became angry and poured His wrath upon them. God personally descended upon the seventy elders of Israel and enabled them to prophesy (Num 11:25).

He personally guided the Israelites in the wilderness.

God desires to share Himself with humans with love. He was personally involved in the creation of the universe (Gen 1-2). He cares about and is mindful of all creatures (Matt 10:29-30). He made humanity relate to Him personally. People are called to love God (Deut 6:4). Ultimately, the incarnation of Jesus and His death on the cross present God's love to humanity (John 3:16). Even though God is sufficient by Himself, He still chose to create this world and shower us with His love.

Do you realize that God wants to commune with you just as a loving Father does with his sons and daughters? He is not a lesson, a sermon, or a service (though He may speak through them). God is the Person whom you can count on, converse with, and receive comfort and strength from.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will have a deeper encounter and personal walk with God, that we will discover Him more, and grow to become more like Him and less like us.
- Pray that Malaysians will always be entitled to the freedom of expression, that they will use this right with a positive and constructive manner, whether personal or corporate, online or offline platforms, and that religion will always be discussed sensitively and wisely.
- Pray for the Temoq group in Temerloh, Pahang, that they will experience the unconditional acceptance of Christ and be healed of the rejection they feel from being classified as wild and uncultured people who are not welcomed by others.

Day

14

God is Constant

Malaysian politics is full of surprises. In 2020, we witnessed the “Game of Thrones” (an American fantasy drama) in reality. The politicians led the citizens into a roller-coaster of hope and despair. The situation changed overnight: friends became enemies and vice versa; and insiders became outsiders and vice versa. Integrity seems to be lacking so much at the highest level of the national leadership.

Unlike human politicians, God is constant. He is eternally consistent in His character, will, and actions. The Scripture often describes God as unchanging (Ps33:11; 102:26-27; Mal 3:6; James 1:17). Numbers 23:19 asserts that God is not human that He would make compromises, His actions are unchangeable. When God said evil would be punished, it was punished. When God promised to save those who repent, they were saved (e.g., the bronze serpent in Numbers 21).

Does this mean God is totally detached from the creation and without any feelings as to its struggles? Can God be reduced into a mathematical formulation or a robot that only executes judgment heartlessly? Of course not! The Bible reveals that God was glad when creating the world (Gen 1) and when a sinner repents (Luke 15:10). He has compassion on His children (Ps 103:13). He deeply cares for them (Isa 41:10; Ps 34:17-18; 1 Pet 5:6-7).

Yet, unlike humans, God always acts consistently with His nature and precepts. God is the same, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He never fails to deliver His promises. He is the God whom we can rely on. People may disappoint us and the constant change in this world may drive us into the deep sea of uncertainty but, in the midst of obscurity and chaos, we can hang on to God. His steadfast love never ceases. He is our rock, our fortress, and our refuge.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that, as the people of God, our minds and actions will not be swayed by the patterns or winds of this world but will instead stand firmly on the solid Word of God and remain faithful to Him in all circumstances.
- Pray that those who are in different political camps will hold on to the beliefs and values of their parties as long as they are ethical so that their constituents will be able to trust them as their representatives to help air their needs.
- Pray for the Kanowit group in Kampung Bedil along the Rajang River, Sarawak, that their basic rights will be preserved even when they are losing their language by assimilation, and that they will regain their true identity in Christ Jesus.

Day

15

God is Living

The computer is a fascinating piece of technology. It can do lots of things and today can even provide human-like responses with the development of Artificial Intelligence. I realize some people talk to the computer as though it is alive. Technology will continue to advance and may eventually look almost like a living thing. Yet, fundamentally, it is still based on computation algorithm and simply lacks a living soul.

Our God is a living God. He is not a supercomputer that merely processes our requests. He is the true and living God who created the universe and who judges the world (Jer 10). Although the Israelites were redeemed by God, they still yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor, unfaithful acts that provoked God's wrath (Num 25). Those who worship the non-living gods will perish with their gods. But those who

worship the living and true God will live eternally (Mark 12:25-27; John 17:3).

The living God continues to reveal Himself to all generations. While He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exo 3:13-15), this is not to say that He is God of the past. Rather, we join the multitude of witnesses to discover God who speaks afresh to each generation. Just as the Israelites experienced God in the wilderness, believers today may also experience the powerful works of God in our lives.

The living God is the source of all life (John 1:3-4; 5:26). The Bible speaks of "life" as having more than just a heartbeat. It is the divine life-force that remains for eternity. When we trust in the living God, we can be still even in the storm. The living God will lead us, speak to us, and keep us living eternally.

Today's Prayers:

- As God is alive and living in us, pray that we will have fresh encounters with Him and lead vibrant spiritual lives as we fellowship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit on a daily basis.
- Pray for laws of protection over children's rights, that they will not be preyed on by others, especially in the states of Sabah, Sarawak and Kelantan where child marriage is actively practiced as seen in the statistics for the year 2020.
- Pray for the Jah Hut (or Cheres) group, who is mainly found in Jerantut and Termeloh in Pahang, that God will grant them justice and that they will find comfort and strength in Christ whenever they face exploitation in the labour market.

Day

16

Before You Move Forward, Be Still and Remember

"... Moses spoke to the people of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him in commandment to them," (Deut. 1:3)

Today we will begin our journey to knowing God through His works in the past. Why is this important? Because our faith is one that is rooted in biblical history - true events recorded and preserved for us over hundreds of years. They are stories and accounts that reveal who God is and unfold His Salvation Story to mankind. This is Scripture - the ancient but eternal Word of God.

In today's reading we come to the end of the book of Numbers and begin the book of Deuteronomy. Numbers ends with the nation of Israel poised to enter the Promised Land. Finally, after years of wandering in the wilderness, the Promised Land awaited them. But they didn't just rush in. Moses would not permit that. Instead, he gave them one last series of farewell

instructions recalling their historic journey and the things they needed to remember. Almost as if to say, "Slow down. Pause. Be still. Before we move forward into our promised future, let's take a look back at our past."

And this is what we shall look at in these next few days. Unlike the pagan gods of ancient times, Yahweh was not a fickle god who left His people guessing. Instead, His actions and His Words revealed to them His unchanging character. A Solid Rock in the midst of the shifting sands of time. In this Firm Foundation, our souls can find rest.

"The seasons change, and you change, but your Lord abides evermore the same, and the streams of His love are as deep, as broad, and as full as ever." -Charles Spurgeon -

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will learn to be still before new challenges or obstacles and look back to the wonderful acts of God and be reminded of His unfailing presence as we walk in His divine plans. Pray for new courage to move on as we put our full trust in Him.
- Pray for good communication and coordination among all the Cabinet ministers, that the entire executive team will be strengthened with solid brainstorming and a valuable and effective combination of expertise.
- Pray for the children of the Orang Kuala Duano who live in Pontian and Batu Pahat, Johor that they would cultivate a strong interest in pursuing tertiary studies as a proper education would give them options for better jobs and living conditions.

Day

17

Remember the Faithfulness of God

*"And you shall **remember the whole way** that the LORD your God has led you..."*

(Deut. 8:2)

One of the main themes found in the chapters we read today is the faithfulness of God. Of note, we see how Moses reminded the Israelites of their stubborn and rebellious attitude towards God. He brought to mind the sordid episode of the Golden Calf where the Israelites plunged headlong into sin just a short time after being delivered from Egypt. God could have destroyed them for their sinful ways - but He didn't. In spite of their unfaithfulness, God showed Himself faithful to Israel. He led them "the whole way."

In the rest of the chapters, Moses laid before them two paths - the path that leads to death and the path that leads to life. He gave them warnings against idolatries,

false prophecies, and disobedience - death inducing practices. He gave them commands on tithing, sabbaticals, and festivals - life-giving practices. Yet, Israel would eventually go down the path of sin and death. Strange, but not that strange at all. For how many times have we done the same - knowing the consequences of sin but still sinning anyway.

And it is here we see the faithfulness of God. One of the most beautifully encouraging verses in the Bible: *"If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself"* (2 Tim. 2:13). He is the Faithful God who will lead us the "whole way" and not abandon us half-way. Steadfast is His love for His people.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray, as we meditate on the Word of God, that we will constantly be reminded of His faithfulness in our lives, and how He had shown His grace and mercy throughout our lifetimes, that we will be grateful for all that He has done for us.
- Socso has reported about 10,000 cases of monthly unemployment in 2020 since the outbreak of Covid-19. Pray that the government will implement strategic economic plans that help stimulate economic growth and create more jobs for the people.
- The "Jakun," which means "slaves", is the second largest group among the Orang Asli groups who live mainly in Johor and Pahang. Pray that they will come to realize their true identity in Christ, and willingly serve Jesus as their One and Only Master.

Day

18

Remember that God is Lord Over All of Life

*“Now Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, “Keep **the whole commandment** that I command you today.” (Deut. 27:1)*

In today's Scripture reading, Moses brought to remembrance the laws of God to be obeyed in the Promised Land. A quick read-through would immediately show how comprehensive this set of laws were. They ranged from laws protecting life, laws protecting sexual morality, laws protecting property, laws on tithing and firstfruits and all manner of laws governing justice, marriage and business. The laws covered all areas of life. It was a means of bringing the Israelites out of their old identity as slaves into their new identity as a free people under God.

One of the gravest errors in the Christian life is the compartmentalisation of our faith whereby we profess one thing on

Sunday but act completely differently on Monday. Whereby the person at church and the person at home are two very different people. Whereby we say we give God our lives but leave Him out of some of the most important decisions we make. And we end up with a half-baked Christianity that is neither satisfying nor compelling because we are neither here nor there.

Maybe today we need to remember, as the Israelites did, that God is Lord over all of life. As the old saying goes, “Jesus is Lord over all or none at all.” May God bring each of us to the point of full surrender because a divided heart will lead us nowhere. Amen.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will be Christians who live a consistent lifestyle, that we will not allow our faith to be compartmentalized, but instead, live out what we do believe and profess.
- Pray for those who suffer depression and brokenness due to financial, family, health or relational stress, etc. during the pandemic season, that God will heal them supernaturally and that they will find strength, hope and light in Christ Jesus by various means.
- The Sian people is a small group. Pray that their voices will be heard, and that they will have the rights and welfare entitled to every Malaysian citizen. Pray that God will shower His grace upon them like how He showered His grace upon the Israelites, the smallest tribe among the nation.

Day

19

Remember We All Die

“And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,” (Deut. 34:10)

In the closing chapters of the book of Deuteronomy Moses gave the Israelites his final speech. He reminded them of the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience, he exhorted them to choose life by holding fast to God, he commissioned Joshua as his successor, he even taught them a song of remembrance. And after one final blessing he made the climb up to Mount Nebo and died.

The chapter on Moses' death (Deut. 34) is one we often rush by. Maybe because we are eager to get to the next book - the exciting one where Joshua valiantly conquered the Promised Land. But the death of Moses is a beautiful chapter worth meditating on. We read that at the top of Mount Nebo, God showed Moses the Promised Land and promised it to his offspring.

What else did Moses and God talk about in those final moments? Maybe they reminisced about their journey together - the burning bush where they first met, the ten plagues, the Red Sea, the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, the manna and quail, and the water from the rock. We don't know. But what we do know is that when Moses does eventually die, God himself brought him down to the valley to bury him. God himself. “But no one knows the place of his burial to this day.” (Deut. 34:6) It was one last secret between friends. An intimate picture of a man who knew God and was known by God.

What memories (or regrets) will we hold at the end of our lives? The line from the old poem rings true, *“Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.”* Amen.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will run the race and end it well towards obtaining the heavenly goals by keeping that unbroken and intimate relationship with our God.
- Pray for the many migrant workers in Malaysia who are suffering severely due to the consequences of the pandemic. Pray that those who are out of jobs will be able to find their way back home to their families, and that those who stay on will be protected and cared for properly by their employers.
- The Gospel has reached most of the Penan groups in Sarawak. Pray that they will continue to experience Christ in their daily walk with Him, and that God will open the door not only for them to find their identity in Christ but also to hold Malaysian identity cards and have access to free education and other welfare programmes.

Day

20

Remember the Cross of Christ

"When your children ask their fathers in times to come, 'What do these stones mean?' then you shall let your children know, 'Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.'"
(Joshua 4:21-22)

These early chapters of the book of Joshua are action-packed with the miracles of God at work among His people. He parted the River Jordan, He brought down the walls of Jericho, and He gave Israel victory over the Canaanites. The Lord fought mightily for Israel. Even the sun stood still to witness it. Joshua himself was strong and courageous in battle. Thirty-one Canaanite kings were defeated by a nation of wandering slaves.

Yet, among the war cries and victory celebrations we also see another dynamic taking place. One where the Israelites were called to remember the past in the midst of all the "conquering" that needed to be done. We see 12 memorial stones being set up in the Jordan river. We see the new generation circumcised - a sign of their covenant identity as the people of God. We see the Passover being celebrated - a

reminder of how God delivered them out of Egypt. We see the whole nation standing on opposite mountains, Ebal and Gerizim, reciting the words of Moses. We see Joshua reading the entire Book of the Law to the Israelites.

Memorials, monuments, covenant-signs, celebrations, recitations, readings - memory aids that engaged all their senses. Our own memories make up a big part of who we are - the ones we choose to remember and the ones we allow ourselves to forget. As we move forward, may we always remember the Cross of Christ. Celebrate it. Confess it. Partake of it. Go back to it. Meditate on it. Believe it. Depend fully upon it. *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."* (1 Cor. 1:18)

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will cultivate the habit of constantly recalling God's greatness and wonderful acts, be it personally or collectively as a church or family so that our faith can be strengthened each time we remember them.
- Pray for both the educators and the students to adjust well with changes that take place in the education sectors. Pray for all teachers that they would have the wisdom, skills and techniques to make their lessons more lively and interactive so that students would find them interesting to learn.
- Pray for the Murik groups that reside in longhouses built along the Baram River in Sarawak that they would embrace a life in Christ Jesus. Pray that those who have accepted Christ will be disciplined in the Word of God.

Day

21

Church Unity in the Pandemic

And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the people of Manasseh, "Today we know that the LORD is in our midst..." (Joshua 22:31)

Today we continue our journey towards knowing God through His works in the present. Our faith is not rooted in biblical history alone. Our faith cannot exist in a vacuum. Our faith is constantly being built up by experiencing God's hand in our lives today.

In today's reading, we learned that for seven years, the Reubenites, the Gadites and half of the tribe of Manasseh helped the other tribes conquer their enemies. They did so obediently and then it was time for them to return to their land east of the Jordan. Before crossing over the Jordan, their soldiers built a great altar near it.

The Israelites reacted upon hearing the news, thinking that the altar at the Jordan represented a rival place of sacrifice and worship to compete with God's tabernacle at

Shiloh. Fortunately, war was averted when the Eastern tribes explained that the altar was a memorial to future generations, thus peacefully resolving the misunderstanding regarding the altar's purpose.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, we have witnessed a greater unity amongst the churches in Malaysia. Bigger churches are helping smaller churches financially, giving free lessons on how to conduct online services on Zoom, amongst many other things. Events and seminars are freely shared and accessible to many online. Churches are praying together, with technology enabling churches to assemble from the four corners of the nation.

Truly, we can say that *"today we know that the LORD is in our midst,"* and has brought us closer to each other than ever before, as we serve Him together.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will put our full trust in God as we journey through the new normal, praying especially for Christians to be united as we serve Him, knowing that all we do is for the expansion of His Kingdom and His glory.
- Pray that the National Tourism Policy 2020-2030 implemented by the Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia Ministry (Motac) will effectively bring in economic and income growth through future projects carried out under the ministry.
- A significant number of Bajau Laut are still illiterate, uneducated, and impoverished because of their nomadic lifestyle. Pray for these "sea gypsies" in Sabah, that their young ones will have access to proper education channels and assistance.

Day

22

Commend the Works of God to the Next Generation

"... And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel." (Judg. 2:10)

At the end of Judges 1, the Israelites were enjoying their inheritance in the possession of the promised land. The leadership of Joshua truly had an impact on the lives of the Israelites. The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and this included all the elders who served under Joshua and outlived him. They served the Lord because they had known, seen and experienced all the great works that the Lord had done for Israel.

Sadly, as soon as Joshua and his generation passed on, there arose another generation who didn't know God or the works He had done for Israel.

We have experienced God's goodness, grace, and mercy over our nation during the Covid-19 pandemic. No doubt the economy has taken a beating with many businesses

struggling and unemployment on the rise, but when one considers the rate of infection and deaths in this country compared to many other countries, we can say that God is good and merciful.

That is why it is critical that we always remind our children and the youth in our church of God's works and His goodness. The Bible says: *"One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts."* (Ps 145:4)

If we don't reinforce this message, the consequences will be dire, and we could lose the next generation to the ways of the world ... *"And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the baals. And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, ... They went after other gods, ..."* (Judges 2:11-12)

Today's Prayers:

- Pray for your children and the youth, that they will constantly be reminded of His works and His mighty acts in their lives, and that they will hold fast to the faith no matter what happens in the world.
- Pray for awareness to rise among the youths so that they will value their chastity and see lives as sacred gifts from God, and that they will not violate the purity of one another or commit abortions. Pray that they will have proper channels to seek help whenever they encounter challenges in life.
- Pray for the overall relevancy of programs and policies run by the education system/schools in the villages where the indigenous people are, and that they will have enough teachers and manpower to facilitate the needs and holistic growth of the students.

Day

23

Confidence in God through knowing Him

Now she had men lying in ambush in an inner chamber. And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he snapped the bowstrings, as a thread of flax snaps when it touches the fire. So the secret of his strength was not known." (Judges 16:9)

God had a plan for Samson. He was to be a Nazarite to God from the moment he was born and was to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines.

Samson judged Israel for 20 years and by and large did what God planned for him despite his many character flaws. It could be said that what sustained Samson through his years was that he knew his Nazarite vows and kept them for the most part of his life.

He drew confidence from God knowing that keeping his hair uncut was his source of strength from God. However, this

God-confidence led to self-confidence as he pridefully thought he himself was the source of his strength and let out his secret to Delilah. When he woke up from his sleep, with his hair shaven by the Philistines, he still thought he could overcome the Philistines, not knowing that God had departed from him.

As mature believers, we should not fall into this trap of being self-confident. Day after day, we need to know God, His works and His promises in our lives and be God-confident, trusting in Him for everything. We must remember that anything good about us is from God alone.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will learn to throw off everything that hinders and weakens us and instead, keep depending on His indwelling so that we will be empowered to do all things through Him who gives us strength.
- Pray for the Malaysian medical teams who have been fighting against different contagious viruses and diseases as front-liners, that they will be vigilant in self-care and protection, and that the peace of God will guard over their minds and hearts.
- Pray that the government and NGOs will come out with measurable ways to help the general indigenous groups in Malaysia break free from their poverty circles that have existed for centuries.

Day

24

To Know God is to Trust Him

...and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel...."

(Ruth 4:11)

The story of Ruth is simply one of my favourites in the Bible. It starts off tragically with the death of Naomi's husband, Elimelech and then her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, leaving Naomi with her two daughters-in law, Ruth and Orpah.

Ruth's decision to stick with her mother-in-law and to follow her wherever she went was in stark contrast to Orpah's decision to return to her people and her gods. Ruth declared Naomi's people to be her people, and their God, her God.

What Ruth knew about God was through Naomi, and that was enough for her. She decided to fully put her trust in Him and said to Naomi, *"May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."* (Ruth 1:17)

And we all know how the story ended for Ruth, as she received the incredible favour of God and ultimately married Boaz. Ruth, once an outsider and alien to God, became not only part of Israel but part of the lineage of Christ.

During the course of the pandemic, we have heard testimony after testimony of God's people declaring His goodness and incredible favour despite the difficult circumstances. Some have experienced God's healing hand over serious illnesses. God is indeed doing a mighty work in those who know Him and trust in Him.

"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him." (Nahum 1:7)

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will continue to trust in Him and rely on Him for the well-being of our loved ones, our health, our careers, and our businesses.
- Uphold the national healthcare system before God and ask Him to grant our government the wisdom to solve the problems despite the overwhelming demands caused by the pandemic.
- Pray that the rights of the Orang Asli and Orang Asal will be upheld in the highest regard by all parties and that they will have free access to their ancestral land ownership and usage, and receive proper compensation for land losses.

Day

25

Know His Word and His Works

*As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to pass on before us, and when he has passed on, stop here yourself for a while, that I may **make known** to you the word of God." (1 Sam 9:27)*

The life of King Saul stands out as a tragic life that consisted of a series of situations and decisions that, resulting from his flawed character, caused his own death and the deaths of his loved ones.

He started off well, with a simple faith that relied on Samuel for revelation in locating his father's lost donkeys. He was a strong and courageous leader, was victorious in battle at Jabesh Gilead and, having experienced God's mighty hand in delivering victory to Israel, gave God the honor.

Unfortunately, things went downhill from there for Saul, and one thing that stood out was his repeated failure to obey God's

word and commands. Samuel famously said to Saul, "*Behold, to obey (the voice of the Lord) is better than sacrifice*" (1 Sam 15:22).

In our lives today, we know God's works because we see and experience His mighty hand moving in our lives and in our respective churches. However, our faith and trust in Him will stagnate if we simply rely on these "feel good" events. A few days ago, I wrote that our faith will be built up by experiencing God's hand in our lives. Today, I would add that our faith will grow exponentially if we know His word, trust in His promises and obey His commands, something that Saul failed to do.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that we will be strong in understanding God's word, be it through the reading of His word, listening to Bible-based sermons in our respective churches, or listening to the Holy Spirit's guidance so that our faith can be strengthened, enabling us to achieve great things for God.
- The latest National Health and Morbidity Survey shows that every 3 out of 10 Malaysian adults aged 16 years and above suffer from some form of mental health issues. Pray that Malaysians will find ways to relief their stress and that the Church will play an influential role in helping people who suffer from mental health conditions.
- Pray that the issue of environmental pollution suffered by the aboriginal people groups will be taken seriously by the relevant authorities and dealt with through proper means and implementation of concrete plans.

Day

26

Is There Not A Cause?

(1 Samuel 17:29b, KJV, NKJV)

Our theme for the next few days is **“Knowing God”** and knowing His works in the future. We will be looking at David’s life, success, failures and legacy. In Acts 13:22, God says, *“I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.”* That means, David did whatever God wanted him to do.

Wouldn’t you all agree that men need a cause to believe in, which is greater than themselves to live for and even die for? That was what David experienced for God. David was more concerned with God’s cause than with his own personal glory and honor. He had a passionate concern for God’s name and cause.

In his encounter with Goliath, David was misunderstood and publicly rebuked by his

own brother, probably amid the laughter of the other soldiers. Eliab took a stab at him and said, *“I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle”* (1 Samuel 17:28 NKJV). However, David didn’t let those hurtful words stop him. It wasn’t easy for him to shut out the negative and hurtful voices; in fact, they made success exceedingly important and propelled him to achieve that success. He went out to fulfill his God-ordained destiny and brought down the threatening giant.

In his battle with Goliath he told the Philistine, *“You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.”* (1 Samuel 17:45) David lived and breathed for the glory of God’s name, and the spread of God’s fame. He knew his God and became part of God’s plan.

Today’s Prayers:

- Pray that we will all have a biblical cause that is worth living and dying for, and that this cause is now shaping every area of our lives.
- Pray for churches and believers of Christ in Malaysia to live and breathe for the glory of God’s name, to be fervent in spreading God’s fame and to walk in His divine plans and purposes.
- Pray for the Berawan people (East, West and Central) who reside in longhouse communities along the basin of Baram River, Sarawak, that they will experience God’s tender touch in meeting their physical, mental, and spiritual needs.

David's road to becoming the future king of Israel was not an easy one even though he was anointed while still a shepherd boy by the prophet Samuel (1 Sam 16).

Saul (God's anointed) was the king and David knew that he had to wait for God's timing. In the next few years of David's life, it was uphill all the way. There were instances he had to flee from both King Saul and the Philistines, but this waiting period became part of a mentoring process from the Lord, giving him the opportunity to serve under Saul's kingship. David treasured the relationship he had with God and understood what God was doing was for his future.

The lesson to learn from David during this stretch of his success is not to lay hands on God's anointed. He had the opportunity to do that on two occasions and it would have paved the way for him to ascend to the throne on his own, but he never took that route (1Sam.24:3-7; 26:5-10). David knew that being anointed by the Lord did not give

him the right to take another person's life, especially when the person he served was God's anointed. Rather than initiating the action himself, David believed that God would handle Saul.

David's success was also costly because he lost his soul mate, Jonathan (Saul's son). Their relationship could be described as not just a spiritual bond but also a covenantal one (1 Sam 18:3). Meditate on David's lament over Jonathan's death in 2 Samuel 1:25-26.

David described the wonderful affection between Jonathan and himself under the most untoward circumstances. It was such an affection that could only exist between two noble characters who were united in the fear of God. Even though Jonathan was the rightful heir of King Saul, he knew that the next king had been divinely appointed by God. Jonathan also understood how God worked and that circumstances should not hinder God's plan for the future.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that God will help us to refrain from using harsh words on those who have been recognized as God's anointed, and that we will learn from David's wise response in handling this matter, submitting fully under God and those that He has placed upon us.
- Pray that young national leaders who will seek righteously for public interests instead of manipulating powers for their personal gains will rise in the political arena.
- Pray for the Batiq (or Batek) groups that are largely settled near Taman Negara National Park that, instead of seeking to maintain a community of sharing and peace to avoid invoking the anger of the spirits, they will come to share the life of Jesus, and receive His promised peace that is not of this world.

Day

28

Bathsheba - Woman of Influence

David and Bathsheba - their names are forever linked. Their story is one of the most famous. While, movies, books, and plays have been written and produced to tell how David fell, little has been recorded about Bathsheba.

What part did Bathsheba play in this affair? The Scriptures are silent. They do not provide us an answer and the only fact given is that David was the King!

Bathsheba has been the most challenging 'woman of influence' to study and to know. We don't know her inner thoughts or feelings, and it's difficult to accurately judge her reactions and emotions. Yet, she had a significant part in the life of David.

This seemingly one-night affair turned David's world upside down. She became a favored wife at court and ultimately the Queen Mother. Her name is found in the genealogy of Jesus.

Bathsheba helped save the kingdom for her son Solomon when her stepson Adonijah was about to forcibly take over the throne. If that had occurred, and David had died, she and Solomon would likely have been murdered. It was a life and death moment and she had to speak up and champion God's will for the Kingdom. The words she said required courage and conviction, knowing that the consequences were life-threatening.

A valuable lesson we can learn from Bathsheba's life is not what happens to us but how we should respond when we are required to speak up in difficult circumstances. Though Bathsheba became a woman of influence, she allowed God to work through her difficulties for His purposes. Bathsheba endured much suffering and yet she overcame. She knew her role in God's plan and reminded King David what He had decreed, "*He (God) has chosen Solomon my son to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.*" (1 Chron 28:5, NKJV)

Today's Prayers:

- Can you think of a time, when you needed to say something that might be risky or costly and you did it anyway because it was the right thing to do? Pray that God will grant you wisdom and courage to speak the truth with love and compassion whenever required.
- Malaysian women make up 33% of senior management teams which is above the global average according to the IBR 2020 study. Pray that every organization will make good use of womanhood qualities, and that Christian women will exercise God's gifts fully in exerting godly influence and love.
- Pray for the Lahanan (or Baram-Kenyah) group in Sarawak who believe in and look up to immortal superhumans, that they will pledge their allegiance to the real Superhuman, Jesus Christ, the Son of God who is immortal and lives eternally.

Day

29

What was David's Legacy?

(2 Samuel 22 – 23:1-7, NKJV)

The Psalm recorded in 2 Samuel 22 is virtually identical with Psalm 18, with very minor variations. As David looked back on his life, and his many military victories, he saw success in its proper perspective. The thrust of the Psalm is to give God the glory for all the victories and he (David) was only God's chosen instrument.

In Psalm 18:4-5, David described himself as being in turbulent water over his head in poetic language. He could not break free from the weeds or vines that were wrapping around him. In the terror of the moment, all he could think was, *"I'm going to die!"* He had come to the end of himself. What was confronting him provided no human way out unless the Lord delivered!

In the same breath, the more impossible the situation, the greater should be our praises to God and the more vital a part it should have in our prayers. Here we glean from David's life that we must know who our God is to

know how He acts. David became aware that any success at all was ultimately God's doing and that his rise to the throne, power and prominence was due to divine grace. It was crucial to David that, despite his personal failures, the covenant he had with God would remain firm and secure.

The last words of David in 2 Samuel 23:1-7 were not words that he spoke from his deathbed but rather deep expressions from his heart voicing the concern that he left behind a good legacy. Though David's reign was not perfect, it was blessed. He was aware of God's divine inspiration through him and that nothing was achieved with his own hands.

This remarkable relationship with God is the reason why David was Israel's greatest king and the most prominent ancestor of Jesus Christ. Matthew 1:1 says *"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David."* What a legacy he left!

Today's Prayers:

- Are you willing to give it all to God? Are you willing to put your full trust in God? Pray for determination to honour God with all we have, and to trust Him in every way throughout our lifetime.
- Pray for parenting approaches among Christian families, that parents will realize the importance and impact of family modelling, and they will set their hearts to live right and so leave a godly legacy for their children.
- Pray for the Kingdom workers among the Semoq groups in Jerantut, Kuantan, Maran, Hulu Terengganu and Kemaman, etc, that they will be culturally sensitive and effective, and that they will meet the groups' needs practically by enhancing their living standards and survival skills.

Day

30

The Last Words Well Taken

(1 Kings 2:2 – 1 Kings 3, NKJV)

How a man dies says a lot about how he lived. Examine the last words David said to Solomon *“Be strong and show yourself a man”* (1 Kings 2:2). What would it take to be a man in David’s perception?

The rise to kingship for Solomon as compared with his father David’s was entirely different. Solomon’s kingship came on a silver platter. He was never a warrior king and knew nothing of the struggles David went through.

The last words from David were important because he reminded Solomon that the promises of God were the source of assurance and strength (2:4). The man who knows how to “trust and obey” is confident that God will be proactive in his affairs and deeply involved in his life. Finally, to administer justice required responsibility to show kindness to those who deserve it (2:7).

Solomon realized what he was up against in fulfilling his father’s wish. He needed to

seek the great ocean of truth as he sought wisdom from God. The crux of his prayer in 3:9, *“Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”*

Solomon knew his limitations and where to take his shortcomings to. He turned to the One in whom all knowledge is found, the fountain of all wisdom. Humility was his right approach but most importantly the last words of his father David, *“Be strong and show yourself a man,”* was to be taken seriously.

Did David finally leave a great legacy? Yes, he did up to the point where he handed the reign over to Solomon. Though David was rejected (to some degree) by his brothers when he was a youngster, he learned to serve God faithfully in menial ways and, because he knew his God, he was able to align and allow God to work through his life.

Today’s Prayers:

- Pray that we will keep in step and know the presence of God in our lives, and will have someone looking over our shoulders to ensure that we are not out of tangent.
- Pray that the Malaysian education system will help groom our children to grow holistically, not just focusing mainly on their academic learning and skill training but also majoring on their character development and aspects of social and relational healthcare.
- Pray for the youth and children ministry among the Mendriq groups in Gua Musang, that proper kingdom values and perspectives will be implanted and flourish in the lives of the younger generations.

Day

31

Legacy for Generations

In reading the books of Kings, we get the feeling that we are watching some ancient palace drama series where the plot is repetitive and replete with the rise and fall of successive dynasties.

David was a man who pleased God and who was to replace King Saul. Even though David led an imperfect life, he is a godly model for generations to come. Solomon was favoured by God when he followed the example of his father initially. Subsequently when Solomon turned and followed other gods, he incurred God's wrath. As much as Solomon was favoured by God for David's sake, Rehoboam fell out of favour with God because of his father Solomon (1 Kings 11:10-13). While, in principle, a succeeding generation needn't be responsible for the misdeeds of the preceding generation, it is quite obvious here that the predecessors did impact their successors with severe consequences. We observe that the deeds of kings, whether from Judah or Israel, affected the rise or fall of fortunes in their nations. Moreover, the influence these kings

exerted on those who came after can be traced directly or indirectly to their own family backgrounds.

The Chinese expression for "nation" is composed of two characters literally translated as "nation-home" (guojia). Does "nation" precede "home" or vice versa? Truth be told, these two are such complementary entities as they invariably coexist, one with the other. In the book of Kings, the way the succeeding generations responded to God's commandments - be it in obedience or disobedience - has much to do with influences derived from their family backgrounds. This is true for kings and the lowly son of the widow of Zarephath - who received divine provision and was later resurrected from his death due to his mother's trust in God's promises (1 Kings 17:7-24). Thus, this bond and legacy linking a preceding generation and the next (somewhat akin to the father-son relationship, be it physical or spiritual) is of utmost importance if we are to honour and obey God's Word from generation to generation.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray for godly men and women in families, schools, churches and organizations, that they would live and walk as role models of Christ-likeness, leading and guiding the young in life and truth, and also for His salvation to reach to the ends of the earth.
- The divorce rate in Malaysia in 2019 increased by 12% when compared to that in 2018, while the marriage rate fell by 1.2%. Pray for stability in the family structure, and against plots of the enemy that seek to destroy marriages and family units.
- Pray for the Che Wong (Siwang) groups which are mainly found in Raub, Pahang, and places in Johor, Perak and Selangor, that measurable government plans will help rectify the poverty, underweight and malnutrition problems, and that they will come to realize Jesus Christ as their bread of life.

Prophets played major roles in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and they were endowed with the prophetic office to deliver the words and messages of God. God mainly spoke through prophets in those days. Elijah and his disciple, Elisha, were two prophets greatly used by God. Also mentioned were other prophets like Nathan, Ahijah, Shemaiah, Isaiah, and Huldah, etc.

Whenever kings or leaders took heed of the words of God spoken through the prophets, they received God's favour, e.g. King Jehoshaphat (2 Kings 3:11-27), Naaman (2 Kings chapter 5) and King of Israel (6:8-23). However, they would be judged by God when they refused to take heed of His commands, cases in point include King Ahaziah (2 Kings chapter 1), King Joram, King Ahaziah, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel (2 Kings chapters 9-10).

The prophets maintained their loyalties to the Lord wholeheartedly, making their stand against any political alliances or policies that threatened to destroy the faith of the Israelites in God. With such strict observances to the requirements of God's holy covenant, the prophets often found themselves in opposing positions with the kings or queens. For the latter often had no qualms in compromising with their neighbouring (pagan) nations in terms of their political and religious stances, hence violating the will of God.

While our nation and the world are confronted by many chaotic and uncertain moments at this juncture, has the Church failed to give her prophetic voice and deliver the message of God to this generation? Or worse still, has she lost her direction and is now being led by the world in her unending concessions to trends, tossed and swayed by, as it were, the waves and tides of this world?

Today's Prayers:

- Pray that the people of God would be faithful and honest in delivering the Word of God in their respective capacities, and that those who are involved in prophetic, teaching and preaching ministries will be men and women of integrity as they handle the Word of God.
- Pray for the check and balance system in the legislature body of Malaysia, the Parliament, that it will function according to its intended design, and that constructive and positive opinions will be aired and considered to help effect the process of legislation.
- Pray for the Orang Kanaq located mainly in Sungai Selangi, Kota Tinggi, Johor, and Pahang, that the good news of salvation will reach this small group, and that their children will receive proper education for them to be competitive in the job markets.

Day

33

Disobedience - The Cause of Unblessedness

The books of Kings describes the divided nations of the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel, and highlights their major differences. Judah was relatively stable politically under the rule of 20 kings from the same family line for approximately three and a half centuries when the throne remained intact with David's descendants. In contrast, Israel was volatile politically with kings and dynasties overthrown frequently. In its approximately 200 years of history, Israel had come under the reigns of 20 kings who came from nine different families. When concluding the history of the northern kingdom, the author points out that the main reason of Israel's destruction by the Assyrian Empire was due to their unfaithfulness to God, wherein they violated God's covenant and worshipped other gods according to pagan customs and rules. (2 Kings 17:7-23)

The Israelite kings of the northern kingdom did evil in the eyes of the Lord, as they clung to the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat (2 Kings 3:3; 10:29-31; 13:2; 14:24; 15:9,

18,24,28; 17:9). In comparison, some of the kings of Judah did right in the eyes of the Lord, yet they did not remove altars of idols where the people continued to offer sacrifices and burnt incense to idols (2 Kings 12:3, 14:4, 15:4,35; chapter 16). Approximately 150 years after the destruction of the northern kingdom, the southern kingdom too was destroyed by the Babylonians, and its people were exiled into slavery. The issue of syncretism, i.e. worshipping the Lord and other pagan gods simultaneously, was a very serious issue that offended the Lord, the worship of false gods being the main cause of the destruction for both Israel and Judah.

Let's reflect on whether the Church today has also mixed up our worship with idolatry, worldly thoughts and concepts which have diluted our godliness? Disobedience is the cause of unblessedness, and God demands pure and wholehearted obedience from the Church.

Today's Prayers:

- Pray against syncretism of worship that may come in subtle ways among God's people. Pray that the Holy Spirit will enlighten us in the issues of holiness in accordance with the Word of God, and that our hearts will return to Him in genuine worship.
- Repent on behalf of our nation and people, inclusive of the Church, for sins that we commit as a nation in idolatry and adulterous worships. Pray that the hearts of the nation will turn away from wayward desires that refuse to seek the way of life and truth.
- Pray for the Sonsogon groups who spread along Magandai River in Sabah, that their children in boarding schools will receive good care physically and mentally, and that they will hear the Gospel that ministers to their inner needs and heals their wounds.

The Unchanging Promises of God

The people of Israel and Judah went into captivity in foreign lands because of their continual rebellion. It proves that God's anger poured upon them and His judgments were completely justified. However, God exhorted His people to confess their sins and repent, and He promised them they would return to their homeland from their captivity.

God has kept His promises firmly to the house of David, and He affirmed to them that the kingdom of David would be an eternal royalty for His elect. God was gracious to David's descendants because of His love for David. Though some of his sons were wicked, and were punished for their violations of God's covenant, God would not take away the kingship from David's household. There was a significant moment recorded in the book of 2 Kings

where Jehoiachin the last king of Judah, though imprisoned by the Babylonians, was nevertheless released and received special favour during his exile in Babylon. This signified the hope that God had not given up on David's house (2 Kings 25:27-30).

The promise of God for the revival of David's throne was eventually fulfilled in Christ. Christ was David's descendant, and the rightful heir to David's throne as He had fulfilled all the requirements stipulated by God as David's descendant. After His resurrection, Christ was enthroned in the heavenly realm. He is leading His people into blessings and victories, and He shall reign until all His enemies are vanquished. The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal King who reigns forever, and He shall fulfil God's will and His eternal and unchanging promises in the end.

Prayer Points:

- Pray that, as God is faithful in keeping all His promises, we will be grateful for his unfailing love that showers upon us unconditionally and by faith, we will continue to be shielded by His power in Christ Jesus until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.
- Pray for our political parties to be promise keepers in whatever pledges they have made publicly in their election propaganda, that they will not just pay lip service but to diligently work out plans in the development of the nation.
- Pray for the small community of Tonga who lives at the border between Thailand and Malaysia, that they will catch up with the pace of urbanization with the help of non-government organizations as well as Christians who serve among them.

Day

35

Vessels After God's Heart that Obey God's Will

The first 9 chapters of 1 Chronicles is a long genealogy that starts from Adam and ends with David. Reading through it, we see how God's hand sorted through human history. He chose vessels who pleased His heart and were useful for His service.

Most of the hundreds of names mentioned in the genealogy are unfamiliar to us. Their appearances were short-lived and were never mentioned again. They left no ripples in the course of history. And yet, some were heroes and villains familiar to us and they left some indelible footprints in history. There are those who rebelled against the Lord, such as Achan and King Saul who brought bad and miserable ends to themselves and their families. There are, on the other hand, people who pleased God, like Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb, David and his family and his mighty men, etc.

After recounting the genealogy, the author moved to a new theme on the cause of Saul's fallen kingship and his death due to his unfaithfulness to God by not keeping God's word nor seeking after Him, and consulting medium for guidance instead.

Consequently, God gave the kingdom to David, son of Jesse (1 Chronicles 10:13-14). David, in contrast, greatly valued the presence of God, and he sought every possible means to bring the Ark of God back to the city of David so that he could seek God at all times. David was highly favoured by God and God covenanted with him to set him over His house and kingdom forever, promising him a throne that would be established forever (1 Chronicles 17:14).

The New Testament commended David as a man who was after God's heart, and one who obeyed God's will in everything to serve His purpose (Acts 13:22,36).

Today's Prayers:

- God is looking for people in this era who are after His own heart and who are willing to be used by Him to transform this generation. Pray that we, even as a minority, would be willing to offer ourselves to act in accordance with His will in this generation.
- More than 32,000 companies and shops have closed between Mar-Sept 2020, and 70% of them were small businesses. Pray for plans and subsidies of government to be effective and that small businesses will find creative ways to sustain their businesses.
- Pray that the Mah Meri groups in Sungai Pelek & Pulau Carey, Selangor, and those in Negeri Sembilan, Melaka and Johor would open their hearts to Jesus, especially the 5 villages along the Klang River which are easily accessible to outsiders via tourism.

Day

36

Posture of Worshipping God

(1 Chronicles 16-25, KJV, NKJV)

The theme of the last segment of our 40-Day Fast and Prayer is **“Rest in God”**. Now, we seek to ponder what are the practical ways to be still. 1 and 2 Chronicles tell the narrative of the monarchy from David’s reign to the split of the nation of Israel into two rival states. How do we know God and be still as we learn from the lives of the kings? To David, it was his heart that was filled with praises in the presence of God.

One of the components of our prayer altar is worship. As David brought the ark of God into Jerusalem, he was caught up in worship. Dressed like the other worshippers, without robes of royalty or warrior’s armor, David danced and praised God in the streets (1 Chronicles 15:27-16:2). His wife, Michal, watched contemptuously, apparently despising David as a religious fanatic. But David didn’t think like those observers. His heart

was filled with praise to his God. The joyful dancing before the Lord was no mindless abandon; it was part of wholehearted worship.

Chronicles also records a psalm which David gave to Asaph, the worship leader the day the ark is brought to Jerusalem. In the psalm, he recalled who God was and told of what God had done for Israel. The central theme was the goodness, glory, greatness, and majesty of God’s name.

As you poise yourself to worship God and rest in Him, meditate on Psalm 96:1-13 and do the following: -

- Sing unto the Lord a new song (joyfully sing)
- Reflect on Psalm 96:1-13

Today’s Prayers:

- Declare God’s glory among the nations and His wonders among all peoples (Psalm 96:3) and pray for your loved ones who have yet to receive Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.
- Pray that the young generation of Malaysians would combat against issues of narcissism and apathy. Pray that God will be the centre of their lives, and that they will see the world with godly perspectives and not out of their own self-centredness.
- Pray for the Lanoh groups in Gerik and Lenggong that they would find alternative ways of survival in spite of the thinning of forest resources, and that the believers in Christ will be disciplined well in the word of God.

Day

37

The Eclipse of World's Powers

(2 Chronicles 1:1-13)

During the nearly eight decades of the reign of David and Solomon, the great world powers that normally dominated Palestine were in eclipse. Egypt to the south and the Hittite empire to the north had been seriously damaged by the Sea Peoples, of whom the Palestinians were a branch. Assyria was weak, and Babylon had not yet expanded. David left Solomon a strong and dominating military that was not in active service. He developed close trading ties with the Phoenicians of Tyre and built a network of treaties with the nations around him. Israel prospered as the world's powers were eclipsed. Upon David's death, Solomon became king.

Solomon showed his love for God, firstly by obedience, and secondly by his worship. God appeared to him and instructed him to request whatever he wished. Solomon asked

only that God's promise to David be kept and that he be given the wisdom to "lead His great people," and to distinguish between right and wrong. This request pleased God. The king was promised wisdom and would also be granted riches and honor.

Being still and resting in His presence unleashes the power of God for ministry. God created us essentially as spiritual and physical beings. While it is true that we relate to the physical world as physical beings, our primary consciousness is our essential make-up as spiritual beings. Solomon did not ask for riches or wealth or honor or the life of his enemies, nor did he ask for long life. Instead, he asked for wisdom and knowledge that he might judge God's people. God indeed honored his requests.

Today's Prayers:

- Find a quiet place in your home or outside in the garden and remain quiet to reflect on Solomon's prayers. Pray that you will know God more so that you can enhance your ministry or calling.
- Pray that our government will exercise wisdom and discretion in combating the pandemic and the purchase and distribution of its vaccines.
- Pray that the Gospel work among the Penan-Nibong groups in Sarawak would be effectual, and that the Penan-Nibong peoples will find comfort and strength in their uncertainties when they are facing economic and social dislocations.

Day

38

The Presence Precedes

(2 Chronicles 7:1-10)

The ark was constructed in the days of Moses and was the historic focus of God's presence with His people. With the ark in place in the Temple, God's glory visibly filled it. Solomon recounted to the people how he had completed the temple which God had told David his son Solomon would build.

Solomon's prayer of dedication affirmed who God was, and he based his requests on promises made and principles laid down in the written laws. He concluded his prayer with a blessing on Israel, and a call to the people for commitment. Solomon exhorted them, *"Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day"* (1 Kings 8:61).

God told the young king that his prayer had been heard (2 Chronicles 7:11-22). God had consecrated the temple by His very presence, and Solomon was exhorted to walk before Him with integrity of heart and uprightness (9:4). God also warns us today.

Restedness in God's presence means a total surrender to Him and growing our character to yield the fruits of the Holy Spirit to be God's destiny achievers. What is my mission on earth? Solomon called his people to make a total commitment and live a lifestyle according to the precepts of God. Dr John Mulinde sums up on God's destiny and said, "It is the purpose for which the Creator made me, the unfolding course of fulfilling that purpose from the beginning of my life to the very end, even into eternity."

Today's Prayers:

- Take a walk in your "taman" (neighborhood). Find a nice quiet bench and sit there to enjoy God's creation. Then ask the Lord in prayer to show you your calling and purpose on earth.
- Pray for the many domestic workers who receive unfair treatment by their employers (passport seized, salaries withheld, no communication allowed with their families, cruelty, violence, no rest days given, etc.) that God will grant them justice and that their employers will come to appreciate their contributions.
- Pray for the Tring groups in Sarawak that they would encounter God through dreams and visions, and that their lives will never be the same again with such encounters with God.

Day

39

The Blind Spot

(2 Chronicles 17:1-19)

Jehoshaphat was the second good king of Judah. He battled against the penetration of Baal worship in Judah and sent Levites on itinerant preaching missions to communicate God's laws to all. His own faith was shining when Judah was attacked by enemies. He built a strong army and fortified many cities. He also revived the legal or judicial system to fit that which was ordained in the Mosaic laws (Duet.16:18). But there was a "blind-spot" in him. He made alliances with Israel, none of which prospered. He even married his son Jehoram to Athaliah, one of Ahab's daughters, who was as evil as her mother, Jezebel (2 kings 8:16-19).

Our core values define us. They tell us why we do what we do. Our values are the reason

for the choices we make, friends we choose, lifestyles we adopt and possessions we hold dear. King Jehoshaphat started well with clear intentions, but he became careless and allowed that "blind spot" to happen as he reigned later in his life.

There is a potential that we may fall into our "blind spots" of life if we are not careful and fail to be consistent in our daily prayer altar. To be still is often a good alignment to our core values. These core values of loving God, knowing Him, and seeking justice and righteousness are shields against our daily temptations. The Holy Spirit will alert us to the "blind spots" of life listed in 1 John 2:16.

Today's Prayers:

- Take 10 minutes of silence before God. Let your mind focus on enjoying His presence. If you can, have some instrumental worship music playing softly. Write down in your journal whatever the Holy Spirit brings to your mind. Look out for a blind spot and give thanks to God for revealing it to you.
- Pray that the National Disaster Management Agency (Nadma) will come out with concrete plans to help solve the flood disasters that have posed constant threats to areas that are affected during the rainy seasons, especially those in the East Coast states.
- Pray for the small group of Utik who mostly resides in Upper Rajom and Tatau Rivers, Baleh, Sarawak, that they will pick up new survival skills to cope with environmental changes, and that they will be touched by the Good News of Jesus Christ.

(2 Chronicles 32:1-19 c/f 2 Kings 19:1-19)

King Hezekiah was praised as one who did “right in the eyes of the Lord” (2 Chron 29:1-12). In his fourth year of reign, Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Israel and subsequently the people were sent into exile. Sennacherib threatened Jerusalem resulting in Hezekiah having to pay a ransom to the Assyrian from the temple treasury. The ridicule constantly increased, and Hezekiah was shaken. He spread the letters out before the Lord in the temple and asked Him to intercede for His glory. Isaiah brought God’s word to Hezekiah, telling him that the Lord had heard his prayer and that Judah would survive with not a single arrow released against Jerusalem (2 Chron. 32:20-23). Thus 185,000 men in the Assyrian army died! Sennacherib returned to Nineveh where he was assassinated by two of his sons.

Restedness in the Holy Spirit is a posture of coming before the Lord in humility and desperation for the Lord to intervene during moments of crisis. Because King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah prayed and cried out to heaven (2 Chron 32:20), God intervened, and the Assyrians were killed by the angels and Sennacherib was assassinated!

Dr John Mulinde’s remarkable comment on God’s corporate destiny asserts, “When there is a move of God over the land, there is a counter move in the land by the kingdom of darkness. if you stay on the course, God will release to you that you cannot engineer and produce by yourself. As these Christians men were discussing putting resources together, God began to release the Holy Spirit in waves, both in the “uncivilized” and the western world.”

Today’s Prayers

- Take 10 minutes of silence before God. Shut off all the voices from news, prophecies, signs and wonders, and friends. God’s voice is gentle and soft. Be still and acknowledge who He is. Don’t be in a rush. Just give thanks and ask what is that small change you need to make.
- Pray that the programmes carried out by TalentCorp under the Prime Minister’s Department (e.g., Returning Expert Programme (REP), The Malaysia Global Talent (MGT) and Critical Occupation List (COL), etc.) will accurately represent the shortages in key industries and help drive our nation’s talent strategies.
- Pray for the Semelai (man of the land) groups whose villages sit along the wetlands surrounding Lake Bera, Pahang, that their efforts in developing ecotourism will be successful and help create more jobs and businesses for them.

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Cease From Striving

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The Way Forward

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Be an Overcomer that Rises Above the Storm

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