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# The Vine

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# HOM'S Reflections

members of JCC, our dear brothers and sisters, came to celebrate with us for the last time in the old building.

This is the last issue of 2014. About a week ago we organized the last fund raising event of 2014 – the JCC Rebuilding Fundraising Dinner. Many former



The last is as significant as the first. However The Vine was not around to cover the first event but hopefully we will be around to cover the beginning of a new era when new JCC is again at Tah Ching Road two years from now.

The past is a memory and the future a dream but now we are about to face the reality of moving to 101. There will be challenges but when I think of 4 years ago when I had to let my daughter go to Brisbane, 6155 km from Singapore, it seems like a memory now as we again fly off to Brisbane to witness her graduation.

We can surely bear with the 2 years away from JCC and come back with much joy. Should we fear that our members will leave because they cannot bear with the slight discomfort of 101? Do people leave the truth just because of a little discomfort? Maybe we should send every member on mission trips to really understand what discomfort is like. Churches without aircon in locations where there are no public transport for miles and toilet facilities to die for, and yet the believers come every week.

The challenges of 101 are actually opportunities. We will have a chance to learn to live with others from different denominations and be able to accept them. We will have to get used to having limited space for people and cars and still manage it. Best of all, we will learn to spend 3½ hours in church and enjoy it. Why do some people think that church service should be limited to 1 hour only? Is it from Matthew 26:40 “Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “**Couldn't you men keep watch with me for *one hour*?” he asked Peter.**” Is Jesus asking us to keep watch with Him only 1 hour or minimum 1 hour and not less? So more is good, right?



When we return to new JCC probably in 2017, we would have made good bonds with our Bible-Presbyterian neighbours and would surely appreciate more all the additional space after 2 years of cramping it out. We would have learnt to get along with various congregations and also gotten used to being in church for longer hours. If we attend all the pre-service DE classes, we will also be more well informed then.



It is like letting Debra go for 4 years so that she can come back better equipped. So let us enjoy our 2-year education at 101, we will come back more committed, wiser and resilient.

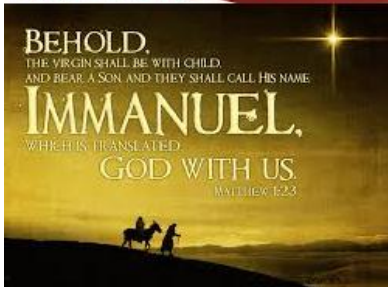
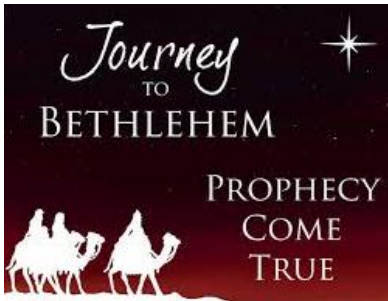


So dear brothers and sisters, we are going away from JCC for only 2 years, about the length of time boys spend in NS. It is God's timing for us to learn new things. Let us not dread this move but look forward to a new adventure with God.

*Martin Cheah*

*I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety.  
Jeremiah 32:37*

# Why celebrate Christmas?



Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, came into the world about 2000 years ago to save us from our sins. We don't know the exact date that he was born, but this is unimportant. The important point is that He was born to "save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21). We commemorate the event, which is well documented in history. Each year when the day of celebration comes by on December 25<sup>th</sup>, we remind ourselves of Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life, and that no one comes to the Father except through Him. (John 14:6)

There are people who are not interested about Jesus, yet they are interested (in a critical way) about the fact that we are not celebrating Christ's birthday on the actual day because we don't know what the actual day was. There are people who celebrate their birthdays not on the actual day every year (for e.g., those who are born on Feb 29<sup>th</sup> or those who happen to find it necessary to bring forward their celebrations due to incidental constraints), but they still deserve to enjoy the celebrations for their own reasons. Similarly, but for a more substantial reason concerning our eternal life and death, we commemorate the event, not the particular date, of Christ's birth as foretold by

numerous prophecies in Scripture (our Old Testament) that were fulfilled precisely:

- Gen. 12:3 –Jesus from the line of Abraham – Matt. 1:1
- Jeremiah 23:5 – Jesus from the line of David – Matthew 1:6
- Genesis 17:19; Numbers 24:17 – Jesus from the lineage of Isaac and Jacob – Matthew 1:2.
- Genesis 49:10 – Jesus, from the tribe of Judah – Luke 3:33
- Isa. 7:14 –A virgin birth – Matt. 1:18-23
- Micah 5:2 – Jesus born in Bethlehem – Luke 2:1-7

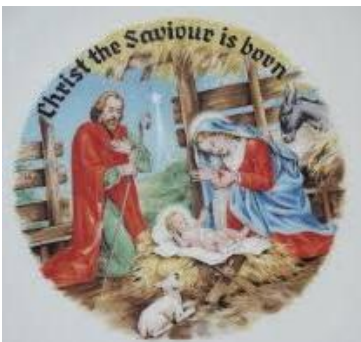
- Jeremiah 31:15 – Birth accompanied with lamentation and bitter weeping – Matthew 2:16
- Hosea 11:1 - Jesus called out of Egypt – Matthew 2:13–15
- Malachi 3:1 – Jesus will be at the temple to meet the messenger of the covenant – Luke 2:25–27

There were many other prophecies about Jesus that were all fulfilled – including for e.g., his crucifixion and resurrection.



Really, the birth of Jesus was an occasion that brought good tidings of great joy – “a Saviour is born” to bring salvation to all sinners. Isn’t such joy a good reason for celebration, especially when the birth brought hope for humanity?

Whether people in the whole world believe in Christ or not believe, whether they celebrate Christmas or not, they cannot escape the fact that CHRISTmas is very much about CHRIST. Cancel CHRIST from CHRISTmas and then we have ~~CHRIST~~mas. What becomes of it?



When people rejoice with a celebration feast and jolly activities, they enjoy one another’s company in good spirits in addition to the good food with games and gifts amidst beautiful decorations. They may decide to throw in Santa Claus to amuse the children. However, the jolly Santa can at most just be a small side-dish of entertainment. It is not a Santa Claus festival that we embrace. Whatever considered as acceptable and clean enjoyment must not leave out a most

important item at the centre of the celebration platter. This item is the must-have staple of a real Christmas celebration – a feasting on God’s Word, a spiritual appraisal of the Good News of the Messiah and a meditative contemplation of whatever personal Christmas message our Lord has for us. If we leave it out, then when the tinsels are stripped away and the laughter die down, what we have left will be emptiness in our soul.

The fear of death is common among people. Socrates said:

*“To fear death, gentlemen, is no other than to think oneself wise when one is not, to think one knows what one does not know. No one knows whether death may not be the greatest of all blessings for a man, yet men fear it as if they knew that it is the greatest of evils.”*

## Why Do We Need Jesus?

The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death and anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:13-15

Death is the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23) and men consider it the greatest of evils. While the Bible does not tell us to remember the Lord's birth, it does tell us to remember His death. (2 Tim. 2:8) The death of our Lord is important, because His dying for us is putting to death (putting to end) the eternal death that confront sinners. Without the Lord's birth to begin with, there would not

be His death, His propitiation for our sin, whereby instead of the wages of sin (the greatest of evils men fear), Christians now have the greatest of treasure – the gift of God – which is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The world is filled with crises – natural disasters and man-made conflicts. Many so-called “natural disasters” can even be traced to Man's poor husbandry of the Earth, and many man-made conflicts have their source in the pervasive machinations from power struggles in human relationships.

On the silent and holy night that Christ was born, the angel said, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” (Luke 2:14)

Who are those “whom his favor rests”, who can enjoy the peace on earth where turmoil rules – the peace of God which transcends all understanding, the peace that guards hearts and minds in Christ Jesus? (Phil. 4:7)

As **we celebrate** Christmas, we remember the Christ of Christmas and we are off the starting block. The next step is “**we believe**” (John 11:25-26),

followed by **“we obey”** – “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” (2 Cor. 10:5)



Steve Maraboli, author of *“Life, the Truth and Being Free”* said, “We all make mistakes, have struggles, and even regret things in our past. **BUT YOU ARE NOT YOUR MISTAKES**, you are not your struggles, and you are here **NOW** with the **POWER TO SHAPE YOUR DAY** and your future.”

The Lord is our power source as He was for Moses, Elijah, the Apostles, etc.

We seek to be a Christ-like Church, living out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. The Great Commandment comes from our Teacher whose birth we celebrate on Christmas:

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” (Matt. 22:36-38)*



While the Great Commandment is about loving the Lord, the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) is about loving the nations with our care and concern to share the Gospel. It carries the Lord’s

promise to be with us always. In whatever tumultuous environment, we can use the power of love to overcome the love of power and experience the peace in our soul.

The Christ of Christmas is the True Way to peace; if we follow the Way, we have true peace with the Creator of the universe by our side on our life’s journey – the true peace that money cannot buy, the rules of power-hungry rulers cannot guarantee, and even from well-meaning friends and relatives we find hard to procure. Sadly, many in the world choose to dismiss the

real Christmas and therefore they forgo the peace that the Lord has promised.

We have enough reasons to celebrate Christmas. You can think of more. It does not matter which date exactly the Baby Jesus was born about 2000 years ago. In fact, Christ existed well before the creation of the universe. As we are told by Scripture:

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.” (John 1:1-4)*

It is befitting the occasion to reflect on the lyrics of the Christmas song of worship “Light of the World”, which you can find easily on the Internet.

*John Lee*

## **Christians in a Marathon**



Congratulations to runners 15025 and 10533 for energetically and successfully completing the race in the Standard Chartered Marathon Singapore on Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> December! They are our brothers Kin Cheong and Zhenglin respectively.

It was no mean feat for them to take the challenge to prove their physical stamina; that at the end of the race, they were still able to walk despite sore and aching muscles.

Zhenglin, who was recently married, must have made his wife proud of him for the indomitable

spirit he showed in fighting a good fight and finishing the tough race despite the warm weather. Similarly, Kin Cheong's family must be proud of his achievement too. Thank God too that they completed the race well without any injury.

How is the Christian life the same as in a physical marathon? Apostle Paul often compares a Christian's spiritual sanctification with running a race (1 Cor. 9:24-27):

- It involves self-discipline.
- Everyone who runs goes into strict training
- Running with an aim for the prize, not running aimlessly

The illustration of a race and its prize is also found in the following verses:

- Not looking back: "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13-14)
- We are surrounded by witnesses, we run with perseverance the race that is already marked out, throwing off all hindrances (including the sin that entangles), fixing our eyes on Jesus. (Heb. 12:1-2)

With his family to thank for supporting him throughout his preparation and on the race day itself to cheer him on to the finishing line, Kin Cheong said, "Personally, I learnt that as I needed support and encouragement to cheer me on to finish my marathon, we also need the same to help us complete the race in our Christian journey ... That's why we need PPG & CG ..."<sup>1</sup>



Now, focusing on the spiritual marathon that we Christians are all in, our only aim is to complete the task the Lord Jesus has given us – the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace in front of all the witnesses who are watching us. (Acts 20:24)

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<sup>1</sup> PPG = Parents' Prayer Group; CG = Care Group



Thanks to Kin Cheong for helping us sense the meaning of “grit” in running to complete a race, and for sharing with us the following inspiration for our Christian Marathon:

*Hebrews 10:24 reminds us, “Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds”. As we model the love of our Savior (John 13:34-35), imagine the difference it could make if we all set out to encourage each other—if we always knew that behind us we had a group of friends cheering us on. If we took the words “comfort each other and edify one another” (1 Thess. 5:11) seriously, the race would be easier for all of us.*

*Help us, Lord, not to think that we can go through life without others. Cure us of our independent spirit. Use us to bless others and humble us to accept encouragement.*

*A word of encouragement can make the difference between giving up and going on.*

Like in a physical marathon, we Christians in our daily walk with God also face constant struggles, panting for breath, moments with temptations to quit and a whole host of distractions that may scuttle the race. To run a physical marathon, we need to grow our fitness gradually through a steady daily routine of physical exercise. Similarly, to run a spiritual marathon, we need the discipline of a steady daily routine of working out with God’s Word for our spiritual “bodybuilding” to keep fit.

We will have no greater sense of fulfillment than when the time arrives for us to say:

*“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

*Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” (2Tim. 4:7-8)*



*John Lee*

## Visit from JCC's first local pastor



Many former friends have come back for a nostalgic visit to JCC before the building makes way for the new one. On the first Sunday this month, JCC's first local pastor Rev Edmund Lim, dropped in for a visit. It was a time for catching up with the old

faithfuls who had been in JCC with him since the 1980's.

He graduated from Singapore Bible College in May 1982 with Bachelor of Theology (B.Th) and was assigned by LCMS (Lutheran Church in Malaysia & Singapore) to JCC to take over from American missionary pastor Rev. Ralph Kusserow. JCC made history to have the first Singaporean pastor installed in 1982. He and Yin Leng got engaged at JCC on 1st Jan 1983 and they got married 5 months later at QLC.

## Love is the beauty of the soul



A viral video on the Internet shows a young Chinese bride disguising herself as an old lady on her day of pre-wedding photo-shoots, purportedly to test her husband-to-be whether he would still love her when she grew older. Apparently, the groom "failed" the test, leaving in a huff and leaving

the bride crying tears in public. The wedding was broken off.

There were comments criticizing the man for worshipping beauty and many more criticizing the woman for being irrational or perverse in her prank. No matter who was to be blamed, one thing that surfaced in the outrageous incident was that

beauty or the attempt to act without it had become the destructive issue to an otherwise loving relationship. It might be because of the bride's lack of self-confidence towards the stability of her relationship by being herself or that she placed too much value on external beauty as an obligatory asset that she thought all men seek, whereby she sought to test the man out.

An important question raised is: Why must beauty or ugliness be made an issue by the bride on an important occasion like that?

In olden Chinese society, there were the sayings 男才女貌 (“An ideal couple is a talented man with a beautiful woman”) and 女子无才便是德 (“A woman's virtue is to have no talent.”) These sayings were founded on a feudal concept, with women's low social status in a patriarchal culture, that only talented men could gain a foothold in life and a woman could have a happy life as long as she had beauty to win the heart of a talented man. In other words, ugly women would have no hope to “catch” a talented husband and an untalented male would have no chance of winning the love of a beautiful girl. Nowadays, of course, this is no longer the reality.

Modern understanding with the benefit of observations is that external beauty of a woman married to a man of great talents is no guarantee of a delightful relationship “until death do us part” despite the time-honoured wedding vow. Gen. 2:18-24 can be said as God's sanction of man-woman union. Whether in these verses or in other New Testament verses that are often quoted in wedding ceremonies (e.g. 1 Cor. 13:4-13; 1 John 4:16-19), external beauty is never a pre-condition for love. In a holy nuptial, God is at the centre of the relationship, the love for God (not appearances) binds the love between man and woman. It is apt to borrow the words of Ruth and let them speak to signal a couple's lasting devotion to one another no matter what happens as time advances until death parts one from the other:

*Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.”*  
– Ruth 1:16-17

Have you ever seen beautiful women who are sour-faced and not-so-good-looking women with a visage of beauty in the soul? How about a beauty yoked in matrimony to an ugly man who possesses a tender heart?

Couples in love may like what St. Augustine said that encourages the right attitude: “Since love grows within you, so beauty grows. For love is the beauty of the soul.”

**If what you see by the eye doesn't please you, then close your eyes and see from the heart. Because the heart can see beauty and love more than the eyes can ever wonder.**  
<http://followwordblog.tumblr.com/>

A bride on her wedding day should have confidence in the love that grows within her, in her soul, so beauty grows and she becomes more attractive day by day. She should not be like the foolish bride in the viral video who needlessly cared too much about her outward appearance (or how it would be unattractive in the future). For indeed, love is the beauty of the soul!

May God bless all loving couples with beauty in their souls!

*John Lee*



We reached the airport at around 10:45 pm thinking we were very early for our 12.45 a.m. flight to Brisbane. Joo See had booked the SQ flight with an agent with the understanding that we would fly over on Friday night (12<sup>th</sup> December) and return on Saturday afternoon (20<sup>th</sup> December).

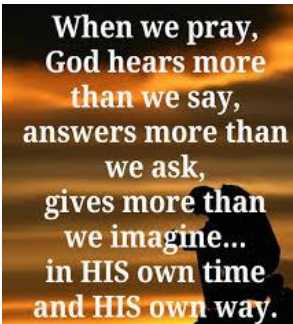
At the airport, the crew guided us to the shorter queue which we assumed was a blessing. However when it came to our turn, the counter staff could not find our names on the flight manifest. Upon further checking, he realized that we had missed our flight which was booked for Friday 12th December at 12:45 am. To the airline, once passed 12 midnight, it is the next day. The agent who did the

booking for us had made a mistake and we did not realize it. She should have booked the flight for Saturday, 13th December to be precise.

We were in a panic. The counter staff offered to help us secure seats on the flight that would be taking off in 2 hours' time. That was when I sent out a WhatsApp message to JWCG with a prayer request. Those still awake at that time of the night responded by praying for us. We were sent on our way to the ticketing counter to try and secure seats for the outgoing flight. At the ticketing counter, the helpful staff told us that we had incurred a "no show" and that would cost us about \$400 to re-book the new tickets. Since we were already there, we decided to go on with the journey.

She started to frantically try to get us tickets on the flight. Once our flight was booked, we had to go back to the check-in counter again. Here, another counter staff attended to us. Somehow she had a problem with my ticket and had to seek help from her manager. When both tickets were confirmed and we were checked in, the bad news was that we had separate seats in the centre. We were advised to seek help from the boarding gate staff to arrange for adjoining seats.

By the time we reached the boarding gate B10, it was already quite close to departure time. Thank God that He works all things in good time. We arrived early and were redirected to a shorter queue for a purpose, so that we could get on board the plane.



Later, when everyone was ready to board the plane, the staff told us that she managed to get us 2 adjoining seats. Did I mention that I like to have the aisle seat so that I can stretch out? When we reached our seats, Joo See saw that it was a man in the adjacent seat so she asked me to sit in the middle. The seat on the man's right was not occupied and some time during the flight he changed his seat so I had some space to stretch.

This was only the beginning of the journey. I wonder what other pleasant surprises will await us the next 8 days we will be in Brisbane. Like every journey we take, whether it is Rebuilding or flying to Brisbane, God is in control of all situations and prayer is our weapon.

*Martin Cheah  
(Reporting from Brisbane)*

# Fund Raising Dinner

We shared photos of the Fund Raising Dinner in the last issue but did not have time to share some of the stories that the photos could not tell. For one thing, I had to take part in the company's annual stock-take that same morning and usually this only finished around 4:00 pm. Joo See prayed for my counting to be completed by 12:00 pm so that I can attend the pre-dinner preparations by 3:00 pm.

In office, I was looking at my watch and it was already 11:15 am (I was in office since 8:10 am) and the count was still not completed. In my mind, I still had time since Joo See asked for 12:00 noon. Then around 11:55 am the counting team came back from their 3<sup>rd</sup> recount and this time the boss agreed that the variance was acceptable. My counting was completed. Unfortunately, I could not leave because my immediate boss could not complete counting her stock item, which in previous years she had completed before me. So I had to wait for her team to complete.

Eventually, I did arrive in church at 3:30 pm. As the performers went through last minute rehearsals and the caterers prepared the food and laid out the tables, the sky grew ominously dark. Then the rains came at about the time that the guests were arriving. Our traffic wardens had to double up as umbrella bearers.

Thank God the rain wasn't heavy and soon abated leaving us with cool weather. I am sure many of you would have forgotten that it rained but will remember that we had a cool evening dinner at JCC for the last time. Many would have feared the rain and hot



weather but God is in control of these elements.

I asked my colleague and my in-laws and they were satisfied with the food. They also appreciated the performances we put up.

The JCKK students were really professional in front of a crowd of more than 600 people. Our youth were perfectly synchronized in their performances. Our guest singers gave a fine rendition of some opera favorites and our Dialect team did a great job doubling up as ushers and singers.

I am very appreciative of our VIP, Mr Tharman for gracing our event despite his busy schedule.

In all, we thank God for another successful fund raising event. With three successful events in 2014, do we have the faith to trust God for more in 2015?

The Bible reveals we are healed by faith (James 5:14–15), we will be saved by faith (Ephesians 2:8) and rewarded according to our faith (Hebrews 11:6).



*“When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:8.  
Martin Cheah*

# PREPARING TO WELCOME 2015

Time flies. 365 days in the year 2014 are going to pass soon as we prepare to usher in another 365 days in a New Year. It won't be long before the New Year becomes old and then another year is born. This is the way time flies by, and year by year every one of us grows in age and, hopefully, in wisdom too.



Day 1 of this year (2014) that is now one by one and rejoice in what God has done in our lives despite the billows and tempest?

About National Service, it is often joked that young men start their countdown of days to ROD<sup>2</sup> on the day of enlistment. That is counting 2 or 2.5 years. It would be good if in addition to counting the days, a soldier can also count his gains. For us all who have already begun our countdown to a New Year celebration, did we count from getting old, and do we count our blessings



The Psalmist says that God crowns the year with His bounty and His carts overflow with abundance. (Ps. 65:11) Many people count their problems and lose sight of the bounty that is in the cart for them.

We enter a New Year with thanksgiving to God for the year that we passed through safely. Deu. 11:10-12 is a message about the Israelites crossing from a land they left and entering a new land to take ownership, envisioning a lot of blessedness ahead. Well, the thought that comes to my mind is that entering a New Year is also about leaving behind the old. The Year 2015 we are entering to take ownership isn't like Year 2014; it is refreshingly a new year with new hope, and it is so for JCC as we make preparations to move to 101 Yuan Ching Road. In the foregoing year, the Lord has kept His eyes on us, strengthening those whose hearts are fully committed to Him. We have our accomplishments with God's help. Let us praise the Lord and

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<sup>2</sup> ROD means Run-out Date, the date when one finishes his 2 or 2.5 years of National Service.



forget not all His benefits. (Ps. 103:2) Let us see the New Year as an opportunity for a restart, rejuvenation, regeneration, renewal ... Think of words that will encourage us to go for more. Study Scripture and let the Word of God inspire us to higher goals spiritually: Not conforming to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind so that we will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will – for us in 2015. (Rom. 12:2)

As we read the news, we know that Singapore is facing a population challenge. Our post-war Baby Boomers have all become senior citizens (age > 60 years), life expectancy is increasing and birth rates are decreasing. Looking at the JCC community, we can also see clearly the reality of an ageing membership. We see more white hairs, age-related skin blemishes and wrinkles. Positively thinking, the wisdom of older Christians is measured by the crease lines on their foreheads just like the maturity of trees is measured by their growth rings. The flip side of the wrinkles is that they constantly remind us the diminishing of our remaining days. Truly, we have to be wise to the fact that time and tide wait for no man:



*“The water of the fountain ran, the swift river ran, the day ran into evening, so much life in the city ran into death according to rule, time and tide waited for no man, the rats were sleeping close together in their dark holes again, the*

*Fancy Ball was lighted up at supper, all things ran their course.” – Charles Dickens*



If time and tide wait for no man, what are we waiting for? What does the Psalmist mean to tell us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom? Wisdom to reflect on our past to learn from it? Wisdom to cherish the days so that God

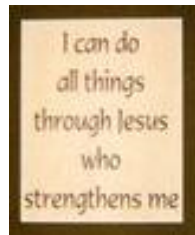
will be pleased with us at the end of our pilgrimage in this world?

Looking ahead to a New Year is usually with hope, not despair. This is why people celebrate rather than lament New Years. There is a Chinese saying, 长江后浪推前浪, 世上新人换旧人。 A literal translation is that in the Yangtze River, the waves from behind constantly push the waves in front; as the old waves in front pass on, the new waves from behind come in replacement. Is it the way in the world? Is it

the way in the church, where the young ones rise up from behind to take over the places to be vacated by the older ones? Looking ahead to a New Year is for older folk to think about how they can impart their accumulated experience and wisdom. It is for the younger folk to think about how they can imbibe lessons from the elders and improvise and innovate in service to God with the vigour of their youth. Whether we are young or old, as we number the days that we have, we know that the days are not infinite, the days are limited for us to cherish each and every precious moment. A sense of urgency is in order for the elders to prepare the way for the young ones from among whom the church leaders of tomorrow will emerge.

Whether you are young or old, “each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Pet. 4:10)

As Apostle Paul said, “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ” (Acts 20:35)

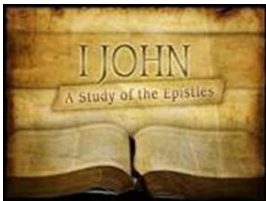


As we usher in a New Year, let us desist from deadening ourselves because of wounds from the past, resting on our laurels for the accomplishments we had, or weaving dreams. With dependence on God to lead us forward, let us “forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead, to press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called us heavenward in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:13-14)

Think about the Word of God and contemplate how we can make our New Year more meaningful.

*John Lee*

*Jurong West CG is currently studying The First Epistle of John*



It is very clear that the author of the epistle is same as the author of the Gospel of John. There are a lot of similarities between 1 John and the Gospel. For example, at the beginning of the epistle, he mentioned about the Word of Life ... the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. This bears a resemblance to the preamble of the Gospel.

John's epistle was intended for all age categories of the church membership (2:12-14) as a warning against the antichrists who were luring the believers in Christ astray. (2:18, 22, 26) As we study this epistle today, we still find the author's deep concern for his congregation relevant to us as we walk in the light and constantly have to keep vigilant against the false spirits and false prophets that are in the world. (4:1)

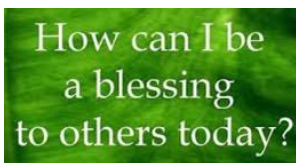
Apostle John said that Jesus Christ is our advocate with the Father and the propitiation for our sins. A man who claims to know God keeps His commandments. A man who loves his brother abides in the light; but a man who hates his brother is still in the darkness.

At the beginning of the epistle, we are reminded that God is light and we are to walk in the light. Do we love or hate our brothers and sisters if we claim to be living in the light?

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” (3:16-18)

In order to identify ourselves with the Truth, we must examine our hearts to see whether they are set to keep the Lord's commands and we do what is pleasing to Him. Showing our love as children of God means that we testify to our obedience to Christ's commands, and by our faith we can conquer the world. Although “the whole world is under the control of the evil one ... the Son of God has come and has given us understanding” we who are in Jesus Christ has eternal life because “He is the true God and eternal life.” (5:19-20)

### *Sharing your blessings*



In studying the Word of God, it is interesting to note that the Word speaks to individuals similarly as well as differently. This is because there is a Truth that is constant and there are application details that vary with individuals. As individuals make their distance in their walk in the light and then come back to meditate on the same Word, they will also get new insights which escaped them in their previous study effort. When you are studying the Word yourself, why not share with Vine readers what blessings come upon you? It is good to be blessed to be a blessing. God bless His children to be a blessing!

*John Lee*



Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December will be the last time we have our worship service at 2 Tah Ching Road before our big move to start a brand new year in a new place.

On the next day, i.e. Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December, the whole JCC, including the office, will be moving to No. 101 Yuan Ching Road where we will stay for the next two years while the present church building will be torn down to make way for a new building. The two years will pass by with a wink of our eyes, and then the day we eagerly await will arrive for us to return back to a brand new building at No. 2 Tah Ching Road where we will have more space and facilities to lift ourselves higher in service to God, reaching out to the community in Jurong, to fulfill our Vision of being a Christ-like Church living out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Our year-end Thanksgiving Service for 2014 will be held at 101 Yuan Ching Road. What a great time it will be for us to give thanks to God for all His blessings not because we deserve but simply by His grace. Our Main Committee for the rebuilding project with all its sub-committees (Design & Construction sub-com under Chairman Wong Mui, Leasing sub-com under Chairman Chee Haw, Relocation sub-com under Chairman Joel Lim and Fundraising sub-com under Chairman Alan Soh) have been working tirelessly with the wonderful support of hardworking members of the Church to bring to fruition our dream of being a refreshed church (body of Christ) worshiping in a new building and serving out of it with a reinvigorated spirit for Kingdom's glory.

Do you see yourself in the whole Move? It is more than just moving the church. IT IS THE CHURCH ON THE MOVE! It is JCC (including all the members of the body) in action, moving towards the goal of advancing our shared mission for Christ.

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” (Gal. 6:9)

Remember that we are A Church on the Move. Meditate on what this means to you and what is God's calling for you for the great time ahead in the Lord's service.



*John Lee*