

# My Recent Bereavement



My dad passed away on 9 Feb 2019. Noting his advanced age of 85 years, I had been through an anguish-fraught time regarding his health and his salvation, especially since he was persistently resistant to any Christian prayer for him.

Over a period, I talked to him about the light and peace of God. I kept telling him about his good fortune to have so many children, children-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren – 子孙满堂。Yet, I could discern that he was lacking in the inner peace despite the physical possessions he had.

On one occasion when I prayed for him, he opened his eyes. I asked him what he saw and he answered, “Light.” I was not too sure what he meant by that. At that time, the room’s main light was off and there was just a small light bulb nearby not directly in his line of sight. I told him that I wanted to pray for him and he answered, “No need.” This was quite a softened response, different from the usual outright rejections (“Don’t pray for me!”).

I pleaded with God to prolong his life for me to have more time to speak with him.

On 6 Feb, daytime, I had this opportunity to be alone with him to talk about the inner peace from God. He said the following 3 times (in Hokkien) after me:

- “I want peace.” (我要平安。)
- “Peace in God.” (上帝内的平安。)
- “Jesus loves Tan Leong Huat” (耶稣爱陈两发。) Amen!

He repeated 3 times that evening.

During this CNY, I would visit him every night.

On 9 Feb (Saturday), after my dialect visitation, I was beside him at about 8.30 pm when I felt that he got something to talk to me. He spoke in a feeble but calm voice. I reminded him to have the inner peace of God and to blink his eyes if he agreed with what I said. Yes, he blinked his eyes a few times in a clear receptive response to my ministering and prayer effort compared with the usual outright rejections. I prayed for the peace of God to be with him and for God to accept him into His presence if this was the right time. Shortly after, my father left us.

The timing of my father's passing on was not incidental; it was after celebrating his last CNY with all his children and grandchildren; and after God had given extended time for me and one of my sisters (who is a Christian) to minister to him. During this time, we witnessed the gradual softening of his original hard opposition to even a mere suggestion of any Christian praying for him. In his final moments, he became amiable to offers of Christian prayer and was positive towards my communication about the peace in Jesus for him to have.

At the moment of his passing, I cried but not so much as my other siblings cried, because I felt that the peace of God was with me that he is in good hands. The next day, during my QT, I was reminded of this "inner peace" when reading the passage of Scripture: "... in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world." – John 16:33.

God gave peace – not a fickle peace; but a deep, long-lasting one. God's kingdom of shalom is with us, to be experienced as an inner peace that can't be destroyed. We experience this long-lasting peace by a relationship with God through Jesus, the Prince of shalom. (Isa 9:6)

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned." – Isa 9:2

The Lord re-assured me that my dad is in His loving hands. Throughout the wake, I felt the inexplicable peace of God in me. I deeply appreciate my friends/relatives and fellow brothers and sisters in Christ in JCC for the prayer support and condolences in my recent bereavement.

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