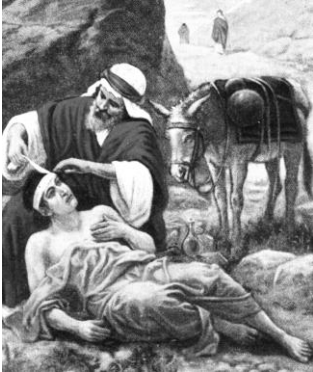




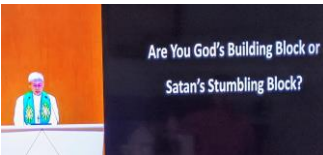
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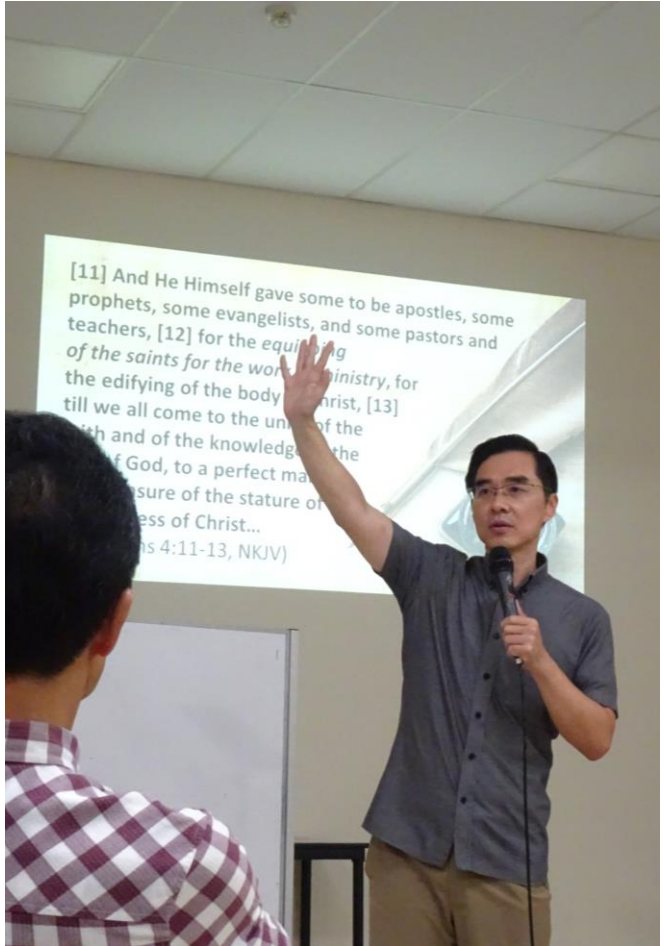
THE GOOD SAMARITAN
by John Lee



REJOICE, REJOICE
by Joyce Tan



GOD'S BUILDING BLOCK....
by Rev Fredric Lee



1 Sep 2019

Last year Rev Philip Huan proposed the idea of

Core Team and now 1 year later, we have formed Core Teams through ZOOM trainings and meetings.

The Vine This Month
Editor:
Alicia Wong

Writers this issue:
John Lee
Joyce Tan
Bryan Tay

Photos:
ZOOM Sources

Cover Photo:
Presentation by Rev
Philip Huan at MPH5



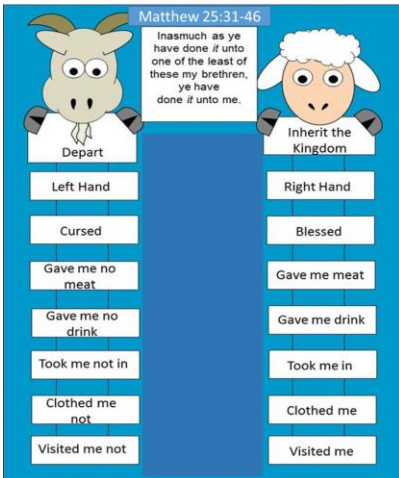
HOM Editorial

In the Parable of the Wheat and Weeds (Matthew 13: 24-30) *“The servants asked the Owner, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’*

“No,” he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.

Have you ever worried that you are a weed and will only find out at the harvest? Jesus made known to us that false teachings which look very similar to the truth will appear after His ascension. Satan’s religion often speaks highly of Jesus, but it frequently denies His deity, or it denies His universal atonement, or it denies what is and isn’t sin, or it denies justification by grace...and the list goes on. The sons of the evil one also include those who brazenly live in unrepentant sin, behaving as if sin did not matter.

Another endtime parable is the one on the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25:31-46 (graphic from Swee Leong’s presentation). The core message of the Parable of the Sheep and Goats is that God’s people will love others. Good works will result from our relationship to the Shepherd. Followers of Christ will treat others with kindness, serving them as if they were serving Christ Himself.



My 94 years old, home bound mother just realized that COVID-19 affected the whole world. When I visited her recently, she excitedly told me the end of the world is coming. Maybe she is getting senile or maybe she is prophesying but it is good to know now whether you are a Sheep or Goat, Wheat or Weeds.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. 2 Peter 1:10

Martin Cheah

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! (Philippians 4:4)

The Abundance Cell Group (ABCG) rejoices with Shermaine and her mother who believed in Jesus Christ and was baptized by Deacon Peter Cheong in mid-August 2020. Let us continue to pray and share this moment with Shermaine and her family.

Many of us may not know that the ABCG has been praying and walking with Shermaine and her family all these years. We are very thankful for this family who has been with us. Please pray for Madam Ng Yock Kee and her new-found journey with our Lord Jesus Christ. The heaven and earth rejoice in His Name! Hallelujah Amen!



The Steadfast Love Of The Lord Never Ceases,
His Mercies Never Come To An End,
They Are New Every Morning, New Every Morning
Great Is Thy Faithfulness (Oh Lord)
Great Is Thy Faithfulness

As We Gather May Your Spirit Work Within Us
As We Gather May We Glorify Your Name
Knowing Well That As Our Hearts Begin To Worship
We'll Be Blessed Because We Came
We'll Be Blessed Because We Came

The Steadfast Love Of The Lord Never Ceases,
His Mercies Never Come To An End,
They Are New Every Morning, New Every Morning
Great Is Thy Faithfulness (Oh Lord)
Great Is Thy Faithfulness



When Tony shared the good news with us that he and Deacon Peter were meeting Madam Ng, we were delighted! The rejoicing cannot be described more aptly than in the song, “Steadfast Love of the Lord.”

Shermaine has been looking after her mother for many years. Madam Ng is on kidney dialysis.

We would like to take this time to introduce Shermaine and her family to you with a photo taken before COVID-19 days. Do reach out and chat with Shermaine when you have the opportunity to do so.



Giving thanks to God! His Love never ceases 😊

On behalf of ABCG,
Joyce Tan



Parable of The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

- *Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road." – Lk 10:30 (NLT)*



In the parable, a Jewish man was left seriously injured on the side of a road after being robbed. Note what happened then:

- A priest and a Levite passed by. They belonged to 2 eminent classes of religious personnel.

One would most expect them to help their fellow man. Instead, they crossed to the other side of the road to avoid the man.

- A Samaritan passed by. The Samaritan was a member of a despised group in the Jewish society.

One might least expect him to help the injured man (by contemporary sentiment). However, he did stop to take pity on the man – not just doing the minimal of bandaging his wounds, but going the extra mile to accommodate the man in an inn at the Samaritan's own expense.

I believe it resonates with us that even in today's society, we do encounter situations where offers of help come from individuals least expected because of their negative stereotype while individuals who are well-regarded by their outer appearances avert their eyes.

Here is an interesting “The Good Samaritan Experiment” (abridged from an email):

The Good Samaritan Experiment

Malcom Gladwell, in his book The Tipping Point, describes a social experiment that two psychologists from Princeton University conducted.

In their experiment, seminary students were asked to give extemporaneous talks on a Bible story. The group giving the talk on the Good Samaritan was instructed to walk across campus to a nearby building where they would speak to a group of undergraduates.

While walking to the building each student encountered an actor who was bent over coughing and groaning. The assumption would be that those speaking on the Good Samaritan would be the ones most likely to stop and help. The researchers found, however, that it made no significant impact on whether they stopped.

Instead, it appeared that the one thing that mattered was whether the student was in a rush. They found that only 10% of those who felt rushed to get to deliver the talk on time stopped to help the man. Of those who were told they had a few extra minutes, 63% stopped!

Here is what the researchers, John Darley and Daniel Batson, said, “It’s hard to think of a context in which norms concerning helping those in distress are more salient than for a person thinking about the Good Samaritan, and yet it did not significantly increase helping behavior.

Indeed, on several occasions, a seminary student going to give his talk on the parable of the Good Samaritan literally stepped over the victim as he hurried on his way.”

I note the failed assumption in the experiment, that those speaking and thinking about The Good Samaritan would be most

likely to demonstrate helpful behaviour. Instead of displaying spontaneous charity due to a consciousness of The Good Samaritan message, they were more occupied with their own business. In brief, the speakers of the moral story about The Good Samaritan neglected to walk the talk, reminiscent of the hollow attitude of the priest and Levite in the story.

Jesus used the parable to make the point that the measure of a man is in his heart, not in his personal or social identity.

Perhaps most of us could identify with this point with some discomfiture when we ourselves were caught out to be not walking our talk and struggled in search of explanations.

On one hand, it is right to encourage charity. On the other hand, it is not unheard of that good Samaritans fell victims to tricksters, criminals or false accusations. Examples:

- On a mission trip, you give alms to poor children begging on the streets. Unfortunately, the alms are misappropriated by managers of the beggars.
- You stop by the side of a quiet road to help someone in distress. You realise too late that it is a set-up when you are waylaid by villains.
- There was this infamous incident in China in 2006 when a good Samaritan going to the aid of an injured woman accident victim was sued by the woman for causing her injury. Sadly, the court ruled in favour of the false accusation.

Well, if you had on an occasion “wisely” decided not to help someone apparently in need, but then it turned out differently from what your “prudential consideration” cautioned, you would have missed an opportunity to be a Good Samaritan!

Here is a test for you:

You are walking on the streets and approached by a Dubai tourist who asks you to lend him a few hundred dollars because he has lost his wallet and phone. He promises that he will transfer the amount to your account once he returns to his country.

Will you believe him, giving him the benefit of the doubt and be happy that you are doing a great (not foolish) act of charity?

Will you turn your back on him, thinking that only a fool would believe his plea?

Something like this happened in in 2017. A person lent the Dubai tourist the requested sum of money. On return to Dubai 7 days later, the tourist transferred a reward a few 100 times (\approx \$1 million) to the Good Samaritan's bank account.

Were you the person who chose to ignore the tourist and now dwell in envy at the Good Samaritan who was the next person after you approached by the tourist?

Oh, the Dubai Tourist incident happened in South Korea, not in Singapore. You can read the report here:

<https://mothership.sg/2020/01/south-korea-dubai-tourist-1-million/> .

The Bible says, “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.” – Heb 13:2

Next time, when you encounter a stranger appearing to be in need, would you be missing out helping an angel?

It is a sad state of human conditions that being a Good Samaritan is fraught with reservations.

John Lee



This year's emphasis in JCC is **DISCIPLESHIP**. In today's Gospel text, Jesus explains to us what it means to be His disciples.

We read of Peter's shocking act of rebuking Jesus and trying to stop Him from fulfilling God's mission. If Peter and His fellow apostles who were personally discipled by Jesus could get it wrong, we would better be careful and learn from their mistake. We may think that it won't happen to us. Think again; we should realise that discipleship is not as simple or easy as we think.

Do you struggle to be a consistently faithful disciple of Jesus?

As we read today's passage, I would like us to consider the following question: **Are you God's building block or Satan's stumbling block?**

1. *From God's Building Block to Satan's Stumbling Block*

Firstly, we look at how Peter fell from being God's building block to become Satan's stumbling block.

- **Failing to understand Jesus' explanation (v21), Peter fell from confession (v16) to confusion (v22).**

In v16, he confessed that Jesus is the Messiah (or the Christ), the Son of the living God.

In v21, Jesus explained what his messiahship means: that He has first to suffer, to be killed and then be raised to life on the

third day. The disciples heard it, but they did not understand why and thus they did not accept it.

“Peter’s harsh rebuke resulted from his failure to understand and to envision a Christ who must suffer and die. Such a Messiah was not part of Jewish thinking at that time.” (TLSB)

They did not understand the role of the Messiah or the Christ in the redemptive plan of God, nor the larger picture of the Messiah’s role in the salvation plan of God for the world. According to the disciples’ understanding (or rather, misunderstanding), the Messiah was expected to arise as King of Israel to save them from the Roman oppression.

Peter fell from confession to confusion.

- **Jesus’ spiritual discernment (v23)**

Jesus’ spiritual antenna discerned something suspicious:

- ❖ *Satan’s work* — Jesus discerned the source of the disciples’ rejection – i.e., Satan, the adversary of God, who tried to block Jesus’ mission to the Cross.

“Jesus addressed Peter as Satan’s spokesman because his counsel would keep Jesus from fulfilling God’s purposes.” (TLSB)

Like Peter, we are vulnerable to mistake Satan’s ideas as good ideas or God’s ideas. Our journey of faith is not always clear and straightforward.

- ❖ *Human concerns* — Jesus discerned that Peter had human concerns in mind, and not the concerns of God. Peter’s thoughts were governed by human values rather than divine values. He did not understand the theology of the Cross.

At times we may fail to understand God's ways, thinking that we know better. We have our own expectation of what God or the church should be or should do. Is there a breakdown in communication, or a misunderstanding? We all like things to be done our way, to persist in our own belief or mindset so much so that we even tell Jesus what to do.

When we follow Jesus, it is not democracy; it is servants learning to do things the Lord's way.

- **Can we fall like Peter and Jeremiah? (Jer 15:18f)**

Think for a moment, how often have we failed to understand God's will? We have our own thoughts about how things should be. For example, we may have raised our voices to God, saying:

Why did you let this happen to me? I don't deserve this. I worked so hard; I studied so hard; God, you are not being fair!

Oh, why did this evil and bad thing happen to such an innocent victim? God, aren't you supposed to be a good, merciful and gracious God? If you are almighty and sovereign, good should be rewarded to your people. This is only right and fair.

Even the prophet Jeremiah also felt angry with God. In Jer 15:18, he said, "Why is my pain unending and my wound grievous and incurable? You are to me like a deceptive brook, like a spring that fails."

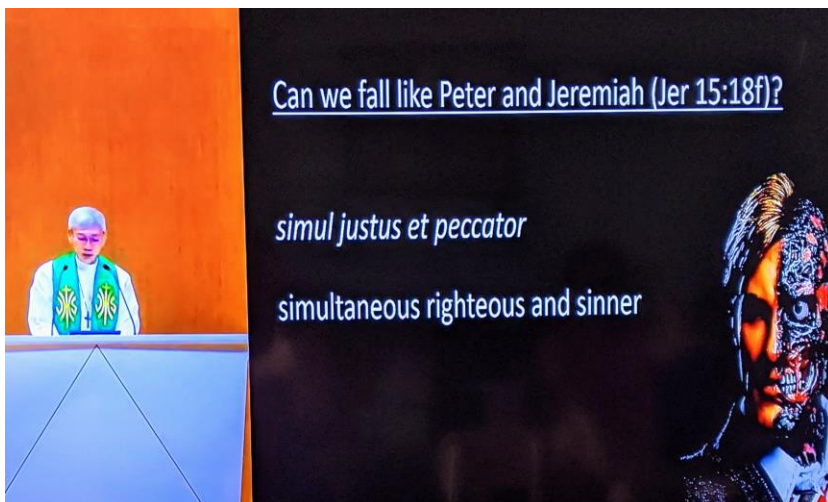
What is happening is that we are telling God that he should do things our way. "He is mistaken, and we are right. God needs a rebuke, a scolding sometimes."

In so doing, we fall from submitting to God to fighting God and that is exactly what Satan is seducing us when we are

frustrated in life, in our studies or our jobs or ministry or with God's leaders or even with God Himself.

We need to ask ourselves: Is it because we do not understand God's ways, or are we trying to achieve some goals that are not God's will but ours or our parents' or the world's expectation of what success is meant to be or what is normal in society?

- **simul justus et peccator – simultaneously righteous & sinner**



Luther's phrase "*simul justus et peccator*" means that we, as people of God, are simultaneously saints and sinners. Discipleship is not easy or simple because there are other forces that are opposing God. Besides Satan and his dark forces, there is the sinful nature in all of us. Our sinful nature can fall into Satan's schemes to fight God. Jesus has imputed His righteousness to us; but while we wait to be glorified and perfected in Christ, we remain sinners.

We are simultaneously saints and sinners. That's why discipleship is not as simple as knowing the truth or theology but applying it. So, I call it Jesus' 'App' For Discipleship.

2. Jesus' 'App' for Discipleship

It is neither an Android nor Apple App. You can't download it because it is not a computer program. It is the Cross. Without the application of the Cross, we are not disciples. No cross-carrying, no discipleship!

Jesus says, **“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (v24)**

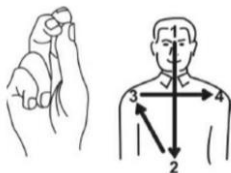
Jesus told Peter, “Get behind me.”

The problem with Peter was that he was trying to get ahead of Jesus, rebuking the very plan of God. Peter's place is not ahead of Jesus. Peter's place, our place, is behind Jesus. We are called to be followers.

How do we follow Jesus? Take up the cross, forsake the world and all its entertainment and be prepared to lose our lives for Jesus. This is discipleship, to follow Jesus, carrying the cross. But Peter wanted to wield the sword. He didn't know that discipleship is carrying the cross, not a sword. How do you carry the cross?

- **It's a gift of God – “take up their cross”**

The cross has been given to you at your baptism. Jesus says to take up your cross. It's already given to you. You have to take it up and apply it to your life.



How do we apply the cross? One helpful way is to sign the cross on yourself. Use it every day like your favourite app when you wake up and before you sleep; so next morning when you wake up and are

tempted to reach out for your phone, you should first sign the cross on yourself and pray.

Luther suggested signing of the cross as a daily practice in his Small Catechism. “In the morning when you get up, make the sign of the holy cross and say: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

It is a matter of Christian freedom whether you want to practise it or not. It’s given to you at your baptism when a pastor signed it on you.

Now, how does signing the cross apply its work on us?

Signing the cross is applying the work of God in our baptism. It is not the act of signing the cross itself that magically confers something. It is acting out in faith the act of God in baptism. It is applied to put the sinful nature to death and a new person is raised up in a daily discipline of repentance and faith.

Die to our sinful desire to live our own life apart from God to gain the whole world. Don’t underestimate the power of the sinful nature. Some would even give their soul in exchange for a good life on earth.

Some people would rather die than suffer because the sinful self does not want to deny our self to live in pain or poverty, but they forget about judgment day when Jesus comes with his angels to reward each person accordingly.

- **How To Carry The Cross**

How do we apply the cross in our day-to-day living? How do we practise denying ourselves to follow Jesus? How do we live out our baptismal faith as disciples of Christ? Carrying the cross is not just about the negatives of denying and dying. The cross gives us new life – loving, joyful way of life.

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” (Rom 12:9-10)

What should characterize Jesus’ disciples above all is loving one another as Christ has loved us. Unconditional love, practical love.

Are we really devoted to one another in love? If we are, how much do we see our brothers and sisters? Do we even take the effort to connect with each other? Do we remember to pray for each other? We’d usually pray for ourselves, our studies, our jobs, our family, our children’s exams.

Let’s carry the cross by looking beyond ourselves to our brothers and sisters. For application, carry your cross by reaching out to someone in love this week.

“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” (Rom 12:11)

Are you discouraged and losing your spiritual fervour in serving the Lord? It happens to all of us. Why? Because we encounter stumbling blocks. How can we revive our zeal and spiritual fervour? Turn our eyes to Jesus. In 1 Sam 30:6, we read that David strengthened himself in the LORD, His God.

Whenever I feel discouraged and my zeal is flagging, and my spiritual fire is low, I would wait upon the Lord. I may need to rest from serving, but I will recharge by seeking the Lord.

“Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run

and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” (Isa 40:30-31)

That is how we can **“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”** (Rom 12:12) Even in these tough times, when we are stressed and frustrated, we can still be joyful. We can be patient and be prayerful. When we die to depending on our own strength, resources and abilities, we can be joyful because our hope is in our gracious and mighty Lord.

I have a friend whose wife was afflicted by lung cancer, 4th stage. When the children knew about it, they blamed God. It is not so easy (in fact, impossible) to be patient in affliction except when we are prepared for death by placing our lives and our loved ones in the hand of a good God who is our resurrection.

Faithful in prayer — Did you pray before service today? We are faithful to our own pleasures. We must have our twitter, our Instagram, look at our Facebook, or have our coffee fix first thing in the morning; but prayer, well, it is not a habit.

“Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.” (Rom 12:13)

This seems straightforward, but the key word here is “practice”. What is hospitality? I’m afraid we may not appreciate it because we don’t practise hospitality as a way of life.

Yes, we do it in church or for S3P (for the homeless). But when was the last time we opened our homes for the needy? We should also share with the Lord’s people when they are in need whether they are our members or not, other Christians from other churches, tenant churches, and beyond Singapore.

Up to this point, we realise that we all fall short of being the Christians our Lord desires us to be. It is not easy to be practising disciples. It is not easy to carry the cross. This is also true for Jesus' disciples. However, our Lord is gracious.

3. [Grace for Christ's Disciples](#)

Matthew wanted to show the fulfilment of Jesus' promise that **“some standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom”** in the Transfiguration.

We see Jesus' promise in Mt 16:28 being fulfilled in the passage immediately following, in Mt 17:1-8. On the mountain, Peter, James and John saw Jesus transfigured in glory. He was in His Kingdom, with the Father and the saints like Moses and Elijah. The Good News is that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is given to all his disciples including Peter who was used by Satan to block Jesus' mission to the Cross.

Like Peter, we often fall in our journey of faith; and like Peter, we can have hope – he was given the grace to see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom.

We know Peter would later fail Jesus again by denying him 3 times.

We know that we will struggle to carry the cross as disciples. However, the Good News is we know that God's grace is sufficient for us. We shall see Jesus coming for us in His Kingdom one day and we look forward to it.

Thanks be to God!

Ω

W.A.T.C.H. your steps...if you want God's Blessings



Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it - not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it? They will be blessed in what they do.

James1: 23-25 (NIV)

Wait upon God

Find that quiet moment to talk to Him, sing, pray and read a passage of scripture. Reflect on the key points in the message. What has God said to you? Only you know it. Take a moment to write it down.

Assimilate the Word

Digest it. What does it mean for you? Chew on each part or different parts of the key message. What God is saying to you? Only you know it. Take a moment to write it down. Which part of the message means the most to you?

Take action

Only you know what God has asked you to do through this message. Choose the issue that bothers you most and take action within this week to settle it, God's way. Take a moment to write it down. What specific action would you take? E.g. spend time on something, with somebody, settle an issue.

Commit to your plan

Finish what you decided to do. One of the best ways is to be accountable to someone, so that you are not easily tempted to give up. Make clear what you want him/her to do to help you stay focused E.g. When to check in on you, what questions to ask you to check on your progress of your intended action. Take a moment to write it down. Who is the person that you want to be accountable to? Contact that person as soon as possible.

Help someone

Help someone based on your assimilation of the message. It is more blessed to give than to receive. Here are some ideas to help in the "A.G.A.P.E. way" (God's love): Offer **A**dvice; **G**ift; **A**dmonition; **P**rayer; **E**dification. Take a moment to write it down. Who will you help? What will you do for/with him or her? How much time or resources are you prepared to offer?

You say...



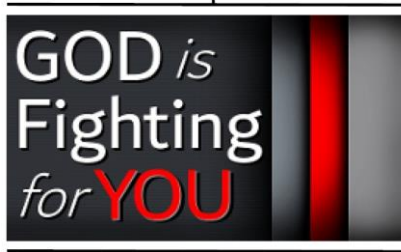
God says...

Dear God,

I can't do it. I have limited strength and resources. I am human and I am afraid. This battle is too big for me to win.

My child

I know. I never expected you to do it alone. I will fight for you. Remember the story of Gideon in the Old Testament?



Read the story of Gideon (Judges 6:11-8:32). Although the Bible describes him as timid, Gideon is known as the greatest of all the 15 judges. *When God tells us to do something, He already has it all figured out.*

He knows our weakness and fears and is prepared to comfort and assure us of victory. Isn't that great? If God is on our side, who can be against us? Fear not.

Although God told Gideon that He would give the Midianites into his hands, He knew that Gideon was afraid because he only had 300 men (which God had chosen). He told Gideon to go the enemy camp to find out the situation. Interestingly, God let him hear a conversation in which a Midianite had a dream that a big barely loaf tumbled on them. More interestingly, God even gave the Midianite the interpretation that the dream spelt trouble for them (that Gideon was coming to destroy them with God's help).

Bryan Tay



Stories to dare

Hi, I'll like to share with you my short testimony as a mentee for the past few years.

For some of you who may know, my mentor is Uncle Patrick. Back then when we first met up, I felt awkward because I didn't know what to expect, or what mentoring was all about. I thought that it was a program where perhaps someone senior would train me in the areas of bible study. But what impressed upon my heart was that whenever we met up, the first question that Uncle Pat would ask is "How was your week?" or "How have you been?". Naturally, for the first few meetings, I wasn't that keen at first to share much about my life with someone I didn't really know. But over time, I became more comfortable and confident in opening up and we started meeting consistently before cell started on Sundays.

When we meet, we'll usually keep updated on how we've been doing for the past week, test each other on memory verses before moving on to bible study or quiet time and then ending off with praying for each other.

Of course, the mentoring process is not easy and there are many challenges. For me, one of it was really having to set aside time faithfully to meet up no matter how busy, tired or lazy I may have felt. But what makes mentoring fulfilling or reassuring for me is truly knowing that there is someone who is willing to go the extra mile to invest that same amount of time and energy into guiding me, journeying with me in my spiritual walk. More than just growing in the Word through doing bible studies together, it is this relationship, built over time and interaction that has also molded me towards Christlikeness. This has also inspired me to set aside time to bond with those around me.

I just want to say: Thank you Uncle Pat for all these years and I am blessed having you as my mentor.

For those of you who have yet to explore mentoring or are curious on what it is about, I hope that my sharing has given you a glimpse on what mentoring entails – it is about investing in lives and journeying along with someone in their spiritual walk.



Thank you and God bless.

Clement Lim