

THE VINE

for internal circulation only

Vol 4/98 April 1998



Therefore being made right with God we have peace (Hebrew "shalom") with Him (cf. Rom 5:1). This is our assurance as Christians. Praise the Lord! Allelu Yah ! This month we have the AGM of our church and we will be celebrating her 30th Anniversary soon by the grace of God. This month we also remember the death and resurrection of our Lord on Good Friday and Easter.

To live under the Lordship of Christ is to be ever living under the shadow of the Cross. The Cross was the place of redemption as well as the basis of all Christian commitment. That is why Paul could write: "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal 2:20).

The way of the Cross is the way of self-crucifixion. No one who has committed his life to the Lordship of Jesus has any rights to himself. For he has already given up all rights to himself when he surrendered. When the Lord called disciples to Himself, He charged them "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). To deny self is basically to think nothing of oneself, which is so contradictory to the ego of man. It is the abandonment to all of self and letting go as to allow someone else to take control.

Our Lord Himself showed the true meaning of self-denial when He after much struggle even to the point of his sweat becoming like blood, finally surrendered to the father's will: "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done". He suffered humiliation, shame and pain, and finally death, as the price for yielding to the will of the Father.

Thanks be to God for the council members Bros Tan Swee Leong, Ronnie Lim, Martin Cheah, Soon Eong, James Tan, John Lee and Sis Margaret Chew who have been serving faithfully the past term. We

specially thank Bro John Lee & Sis Margaret Chew who has finished their term of office, Bro Ronnie Lee who served for a one year and Bro James Tan who has agreed to continue another term. We also warmly welcome to our council this year our beloved Bros Wilfred Kao, Roy Ang, Peter Cheong and Khoo Teng Choon. Besides making administrative decisions, finance and development, the new Council will perhaps be able to lead the church with longer term vision and planning.

Who are Council leader? The Council leaders are God's authority over the church and the pastors. They have to make right decisions, and to enforce rules and order in the church. They are also the leaders in spiritual matters of the church.

All authority is given by God. No one can actually make the claim that authority is the result of hard work or conquest. It is given by someone beyond our understanding. God gives authority as a tool to carry out the commission that accompanies it; to engender faith and lead to the service of others.

Formal authority is the focus of Dr Martin Luther's explanation of the fourth commandment. The Book of Hebrews 13:17-18b reminds us "Obey your leaders and submit to their

authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you. Pray for us".

Finally give full support your Council leaders/elders of the church so that we can be one in mind and work together for the glory of God. Amen.

Pastor Martin Yee

A Note from the Treasurer :

During the AGM, I presented a Capital Budget of \$10,000 verbally because the projector was already switched off. However, I promised to provide you with the details on print, so here it is:

1 Cry Room	
Laying of vinyl sheets	1500.00
Cover the stage opening	2500.00
2 Curtain for meeting rooms/ class rooms	2000.00
3 Cabinets for meeting rooms	1800.00
4 Installation of spot lights	2200.00
	10000.00

Martin Gbeah

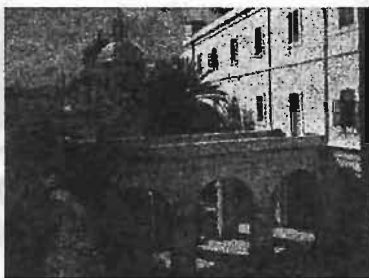
<p>Boy : "Since I met you, I can't eat... I can't sleep.... I can't drink..." Girl : "Why not?" Boy : "I'm broke!"</p>
--

VIA DOLOROSA

If I were to be given a choice of songs for our Good Friday service, the *Via Dolorosa* would be first on my list. I recall that the first time I heard it sung by our choir, I felt that the choir sang beautifully, giving the listeners a poignant reminder of the suffering of Jesus forming the backdrop to our hope of eternal life.

Unfortunately, the two words of the song title were Greek to me and so I missed out on a fuller appreciation of its meaning until December last year when I was physically there in the Old City of Jerusalem, retracing the very route that Jesus followed while bearing the Cross from the place of Judgement to Calvary:

*“Down the Via Dolorosa called the way of suffering
Like a Lamb came the Messiah Christ the King
But He chose to walk that road out of His love for you and me
Down the Via Dolorosa all the way to Calvary”*



↑ The Franciscan Chapel of the Flagellation & Chapel of Condemnation commemorate the sites where Jesus was scourged & given the Cross. (Jn 19:1, 16)

Having touched and smelled the Way of the Lord's Passion as a pilgrim, assimilating its geographical location and physical layout, I wonder what was so good about Good Friday that man had to witness the climax of a long journey of suffering and shame along winding City streets that the Lord had to go through all for our sake.

Did sinful man have a sadistic streak - feeling gladness in an event calling for sorrow and exulting in the torment of another person?

When we observe Good Friday every year, we know that it is a solemn occasion for reflection:

*“Down the Via Dolorosa called the way of suffering
Like a Lamb came the Messiah Christ the King...”*

*He was bleeding from a beating
There were stripes upon His back
And He wore a crown of thorns upon His Head
And He bore with every step the scorn
Of those who cried out for His death*

*The blood that would cleanse the Souls of all men
Made its way through the heart of Jerusalem”*

How did Jesus feel during those excruciating moments of both physical agony and mental anguish? What was it really like to walk down the *Via Dolorosa* bent under the weight of the Cross? Do we care to ponder about the pain in our Father's heart for our sinfulness?



←Part of the eastern entrance to the Roman City Aelia Capitolina.

According to tradition, this is the spot where Pilate ordered Christ to be brought forth to the Jews. (Jn 19:5)

To me, the adjective describing the special Friday is a misnomer. It is an awful feeling that by our sin we crucified Jesus. What I feel great about, and thankful for, is the amazing grace of God that He even sacrificed His only begotten Son to die on the Cross for our sin. I also feel grateful that “Jesus ... shared our humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.” (Heb 2:14)

Perhaps we should affix the adjective to the special Sunday we call Easter. So we rejoice every year in Good Easter Sunday which reminds us that He is Alive! Yes, HE IS ALIVE INDEED! And because He is alive, we have bright hopes for tomorrow. We have a living guide to help us with our problems.



The Good Friday when Jesus was crucified was not a day anybody, except His enemy, looked forward to. At the pathetic state of Jesus, there were people

↑The sculpture above the entrance to the Polish chapel depicts Jesus falling under the Cross.

sobbing. Pilate felt uneasy about having to pass judgement, and declared himself “innocent of this man’s blood”. (Mt. 27:24) Mary Magdalene watched numbly and, at Jesus’ death, buried her face and wept. Peter was tormented by his denial of Jesus thrice (Mk 14:72)

Easter made the difference. It turned sorrow into joy. On Easter Morning, Mary’s old tears of grief were washed away and replaced by new tears of joy when she realised that the “gardener” she met at the tomb was really her beloved and resurrected Lord. (Jn 20:15, 16)

Easter made the difference. By the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the bondage of death was broken. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” (Jn 11:25)

Down the *Via Dolorosa* (also called *Via Crucis*, the Way of the Cross), there are different Stations, each reminding us of some incident along the way. For example, Jesus was sentenced to death at Station I, helped by Simon to carry the Cross at Station V, and nailed to the Cross at Station XI. Noting the story behind each station, I become aware that the Way was not just a stretch of journey as any other journey with a start and a destination, but a forced trek punctuated by painful episodes of the Passion, yet culminating in a victory of unsurpassed glory and magnificence, a victory of life over death that we celebrate every Easter.

Doesn’t victory taste sweet at the end of an arduous battle? So it is with our life, a long and arduous trek with a surfeit of difficult situations we do not bargain for. However, taking a leaf from Jesus as our model of meekness in suffering, of charity in the face of injustice, surely there is hope. In fact, Jesus taught that the meek are blessed. (Mt 5:5) He has conquered death and promised eternal life to those who follow Him.

“And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily ...” (Luke 9:23)

“ Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:27)

So we have our own cross to bear in our life. In the hymn 'The Old Rugged Cross', the Cross is described as an emblem of suffering and shame. As we bear our own cross, we ought to take stock of our own suffering and shame because of our sinful ways. However, whatever pain we experience in our battle with sin, we will, as Timothy had done, fight the good fight, finish the race and keep the faith. (2 Tim 4:7)



Ultimately, we will have the Victory as Jesus had at the end of His journey down the *Via Dolorosa*! "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)

John Lee

↑The tomb of Jesus, the holiest place in Christendom, lies in the centre of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in a beautiful decorative chapel. The sacred rock is covered with marble & above it are paintings depicting the Resurrection.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST is ...

- ✝ The revealed truth of God's judgement of sin
- ✝ The way for sinful man to be restored to a right relationship with God
- ✝ The way for all men to have fellowship with God
- ✝ The central event of History and the answer to all men's problems

THE CROSS OF CHRIST is not ...

- ✝ Martyrdom but the supreme triumph over sin and death
- ✝ Something that happened to Jesus, for He came to die and the Cross was His purpose in coming.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST is not the CROSS of man but of GOD.

THE HEART OF SALVATION IS THE CROSS.

THE REASON SALVATION IS SO EASY IS BECAUSE IT COSTS GOD SO MUCH.

Tan Swee Leong



Easter Celebration

See how lovely the children are as they join in the celebration of Easter!

Do reinforce in them the true meaning of Easter. Teach them about Jesus, a man who is God's Son, who came to show people the love of God. Tell them how evil people crucified him, how he was buried, and how the Roman soldiers were powerless when Jesus walked out of the tomb alive.

Give them Easter eggs and jelly beans if you want, but do not let these goodies for the mouth replace Jesus in the heart.

Give them Easter eggs and jelly beans if you want, but do not let these goodies for the mouth replace Jesus in the heart.

Easter Baptism

Faces of a happy family with Jesus Christ as Head of the household →



We rejoice with those who were received into the Kingdom of God by baptism during Easter:

Children

Koh Xin Yi, Sylvia
Koh Kit Jay, Victor
Leong Mun Yee, Genevieve
Leong Jia Hao, Timothy

Adults

Leong Kok Hwa
Chan Sau Lai, Marilyn



Easter Transfer of Membership

We welcome Bro. Harry Jee, Bro. Paul Leong Kok Weng and Sis. June Tan Kiat Mui who transferred their membership to our Church:

Our Visitors in March

Certainly we won't forget the visitors in our midst. The following joined us for worship in March. Let us continue to extend them our friendship, fellowship and love:

Sanjay Prem Kalidas
Kevin Chong
Cha Wi Ai Wan, Becky

Jeffrey Oei
Peter Ram Er
Poh Wee Siang



SENGOI

A Mother & Daughter's View

Our recent visit to the Sengoi Church in Cameron Highlands (March 18-22) had provided me with a deeper understanding and hands-on experience about mission work in a different environment and culture.

I could feel the powerful presence of God working among the Sengoi community while we were there. The warm laughter and cheerful faces of the Sengois reflected very much their joy and contentment in the Lord.

Our visit had certainly given them much encouragement and support. It touched my heart to see how Pastor and Mrs. Sin persevered in carrying out their ministries faithfully among the Sengois. It must have been a tough but rewarding seven years for them. May God bless and guide them as they continue to serve Him.

Praise God for opening the way for us to serve Him through this mission trip.

I joined my mother, Auntie Julie, Uncles Khoo, Wilfred and Yoke Meng, and my friends Hui Wen and Hui Ling on a trip up Cameron Highlands to visit the Sengoi Church during the March school holidays.

Their Church is different from ours. It is an open space. It is surrounded by trees, bushes and attap houses. There were dogs, hens, chicks, cant and cockroaches everywhere. They do not have tables and chairs. They sat on a big canvas sheet.

We taught them art and craft and coloring. Hui Wen, Hui Ling and I also helped in the tele-match games.

Mrs. Sin taught us two Sengoi songs. I enjoyed the trip very much and hope to visit them again.

Debbie Cheong

Jessie Cheong

SENGOI

THE LATEST PHOTOS UPDATE.



The Sengoi Mission Team from JCC with Pastor Sin.



THE 7 Deadly SINS

by Rev Dr Kang Ho Soon & Leslie Quah

... Continued. from previous issue

ENVY (Gen 4: 1 - 10)

Nature of Envy

The first murder recorded in the Bible was the result of envy. Cain was angry, not because his own offering was rejected, but because his brother's was accepted. And that is the nature of envy: It tends to be preoccupied with what has happened to someone else. Envy leads us to believe that others are always having more than ourselves. This preoccupation causes us to strive after things that may not be of any good to us.

Envy prevents us from being able to look at our own faults. Look at Cain. He never paused

to think why his offering was not acceptable to God, or how he could make his offering acceptable to God. Cain was too preoccupied with the fact that his brother Abel was receiving blessings from God.

Venom of Envy

When Cain allowed himself to feed on envy, envy finally took control over him. It then led Cain to deceive and finally to kill.

Maybe few of us would resort to physical murder. But what about character assassination? The weapons of this devious crime are gossip and rumours. Such attacks can be as vicious and as ruthless as any act of murder. Envy is often the

reason for character assassination. The rationale: If I can't do better, at least I can make him appear worse.

In the final analysis, envy seeks to destroy simply because others are better. It can come to a point where we are willing to suffer just so that others don't do better than us.

A story is told of two rival businessmen. An angel was sent to one of the businessmen and told him that he can ask for anything and he would be given. Only his rival would receive twice as much. The businessman thought for a long time and finally said, with a smile on his face, "I wish to be blind in one eye."

Yield of Envy

The final harvest of envy is encapsulated in this epitaph: "Here lies one who was saddened by the happiness of others." The Apostle James warned us that the result of envy is disorder and every evil practice. Envy will lead to the death of the soul. An envious heart can-

not worship God because it is never satisfied with what God has given. To such a one, God is eternally unfair.

Answer to Envy

"Be thankful in all circumstances." This is what God wants from you in your life. (1 Thes 5:18)

GLUTTONY (Mt 11:16-19)

Appetite is a sign of health. It's not the love of food or the enjoyment of it that is sin. Gluttony only comes when we are enslaved by food.

Pointers to Life

1 The body is not evil. God is good and declared all His creation good. Our appetite is not evil. In fact God has given us good things freely to enjoy and joy should characterise us as followers of Jesus Christ. Enslavement to our appetite is sin. But God has given us His Holy Spirit to direct our lives and control our appetites.

THE 7 Deadly SINS

2 The answer to gluttony is not asceticism. Both gluttony and asceticism are preoccupations with the self. In the first instance, we are always thinking of what to eat; in the other, with what not to eat. The key to Christian living is balance. We must learn to give and receive. Balance is pictured for us in a church service where we come to God to receive from Him the gifts of life and, in our tithes and offerings, to return to Him a portion of all He has given to us.

3 Life comprises of both the physical and the spiritual. If we concentrate on only the physical, we miss out on being truly human. Life is more than appetite. There is a time to laugh and

a time to cry. A time to eat and a time to refrain from eating.

Answer to gluttony

Take our eyes off ourselves and live for God and others.

LUST (Mt 5:27 - 30)

Misconception

Lust equals anything sexual or physical. This denies that God made us sexual beings. He made us physically attractive to one another. This physical is part of a greater whole - that of love.

Definition

Lust is a distortion of our desire for personal value. Jesus said, "Anyone who looks at a woman and want to possess her is guilty



of committing adultery with her in his heart." It is not just the physical act. It is in the wanting to possess another person, to take value from another person that we lust. It is a violation of our God-given sanctity.

Answer to Lust

Recognise that the problem is not physical. As a community

of faith, let us affirm each other. Let us help each other focus on God. As we do so, we will find that He gives us value.

We must acknowledge the need for self-control. We must look to Jesus. He was not afraid to have a woman kiss His feet and wipe them with her hair. Being fully human, He must have feelings too. But he can exercise self-control.

Letters from **THAILAND**

Dear Sponsor,

Thank you for sending Sompong and I the Christmas cards. When we opened the gift, we were very happy to see your photograph. It helped us to know more about you all. We also found two bookmarks with the words "...fisher of men". That verse has encouraged me and motivated me to press on.

Last year, the person in charge of SAC brought Sompong and I with others brothers and sisters to the "Mei Yao" Church and attended their Christmas celebration. Sompong and I were needed to help in evangelism because there wasn't any pastor in that church. Others help up in sweeping the floor and other works. There were many programs, like song presentation, and one of the Bible college students shared the message. That has encouraged brothers and sisters in Mei Yao. There is another church which do not have any pastor. We went there and helped them in preparation of Christmas celebration. There were many people. There were many programs, for example, Sompong, some elder brothers and I presented some dance and songs. We also had some games which were lead by some big sisters.

I will end my sharing here and others will share with you in the next letter. Lastly, I hope and wish everything of ours will be fine and better. In everything, do with a clean heart. May the Lord bless you and love you.

In His Name.

Pronsak.

Dear Sponsor,

How are you? Pornsak and I are fine. In Thailand, the weather keeps changing. Please do not worry about us. We will take care of ourselves. Please remember us in your prayers.

Thank you for sending us the Christmas card which included 2 bookmarks. We are very happy to receive the gifts. Once again, I would like to thank you for supporting me, so that I could be able to go to school. I will study very hard and will not let you feel disappointed and your support will not go in vain.

The examination is coming soon, it will be held around 9 - 13th March. We will put all our effort in it. During the school holidays, we will go home and help our parents in farming. During the school holidays, the department of SAC will organize a camp for all sponsorship children. It will be held on 25 - 28 March. Last year, we joined the event. We have learned and benefited from the camp. We also study the Word of God.

Pornsak and I hope that you will visit Thailand. In Thailand, there are many places that you can visit and many beautiful sights. Every Wednesday, students of our school will put on their traditional costumes. There are 11 types of minority groups in our school. It will be wonderful to see all of them put on their costumes.



Traditional costumes of the Thais.

Lastly, I would like to wish you a happy day in your work and family.

Emmanuel!

Sompong(SP004B)

Letter Started: 20 Feb 1998 Completed and printed: 1 Mar 1998

Dear Jurang Christian Church

Happy New Year! We trust that you had a good Christmas and are looking forward to this year.

THANK YOU for your gift of Ors. (35749.-)

We appreciate your gifts for us in 1997. They were vital in enabling us to see that our full support for 1997 was raised. We are thankful to God that He is indeed Jehovah Jireh as we serve Him in this place at this time. Thank you for making your resources available to Him.

Malaysia, like many Asian countries is having an economic downturn and the currency has devaluated greatly. Overseas gifts to us are worth a lot now. But we are concerned for the Malaysians & other Asians serving abroad. We have heard that many Korean missionaries (the largest Asian missionary force) may have to be recalled back if their support level drops below the sustainable level. Retrenchment is also in. Pray that those who are supporting missions will keep their jobs.

December is a month of birthdays. Jeswyn celebrated her first birthday on 12th and JD's on the 29th. On 25th, we try to teach them that it is the birthday of Jesus.

Just before turning 1, Jeswyn took her first walk by herself and now she's walking very far, sometimes trying to run! Her stability in mobility has been much better than JD. JD is now into the "why?" of conversations. His wide range of vocabulary has been noticed by many but he has also picked up the Malaysian English, sentences punctuated with "lah", "neh", "bah"...

The OM "Blessing The Nations" camp was good though we had fewer participants than targeted. The highlight for the campers was the ministry trip. Many shared that for once they were the ones ministering to people instead of being ministered to. We hope this will be the beginning - going forward to be a blessing.

The planning & running of the Camp did leave us exhausted. Taking the close friends' cue, we got away to a beach resort for a much-needed break on 4-6 Jan. Probably this is the first time we were able to do something like this. No agenda, just relax and take the kids for swim and beach. Aaahh!! JD loathes the water in the big pool but loves the sand at the beach but Jeswyn loves the water but can't stand sand on her feet. But we had fun and were refreshed.

In February we finally finished most of our 1997 reports/summaries and 1998 goals & plans. Pray for strength & wisdom as we press on towards the 1998 goals in Christ.

Do keep in touch!

Pressing on in Jesus