



# **Bedok Methodist Church**

## **Daily Devotions**

**3 – 30 January 2022**

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17



## FOREWORD

Dear sisters and brothers of Bedok Methodist Church

By the grace of God, we see another year upon us in our lives and church. We learn from 2 Peter 3 that God will indeed bring this current world to an end and judge it, but the reason that we have a new day, indeed a new year, is revealed in Scripture, “He is patient with us, because He does not want any to perish, but all to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

Therefore, we should follow the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus in John 9:4a, “As long as it is day, we must do the works of Him who sent me.” One of the most important things God has called us to do, is to be like our Lord Jesus Christ.

We become more like Christ when we allow the Holy Spirit to use God’s Word to transform us from within, to desire what He desires, to believe and think according to His will.

Spending time with the Lord, using devotions that help us to read and reflect on His Word (and then to act in faith), is a means of grace for us to grow to be disciples of Christ, to be more like Jesus.

These devotions are written by our pastors, leaders and members of our church. They write them not as an academic exercise, but a reflection of their own spiritual journey towards Christian maturity.

I pray that you will use these devotions – reading Scripture, observing what it says, boldly applying the truths, praying and trusting the Lord to transform us inside out. Together, may we be holy as God is holy (Leviticus 19:2, 1 Peter 1:16), and may BMC grow deeper and richer in Christ.

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**BMC Daily Devotions 3 – 30 January 2022**

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## QUIET TIME WITH THE FATHER

Mark 1:35

*And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.*

Jesus' habit of going to a quiet place to pray is His way of spending undistracted, alone time with the Father. His preferred time was early in the morning before sunrise but apparently this quiet time with the Father is so important that Jesus would withdraw from the crowd (Luke 5:16) or even send the crowd away (Matthew 14:23) in the middle of the day when He felt that it was necessary to have a quiet moment with God.

### **What is this quiet time with the Father and why is it so important?**

- It is the time where you separate yourself from the busyness of the day to just be alone with God, whether your heart is heavily burdened or light with joy.
- It is the occasion where you open your heart to the Father, and the Father opens His heart to you, to exchange your praise, petitions and penitence for rejoicing, reassurance and restoration.
- It is the place where you learn how your circumstances intersect with His plans, knowing that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose.
- Clearly, spending regular quiet times with the Father is beneficial to our intimacy and relationship with God. It is a habit worth developing.

### **So how do we spend quiet time with the Father?**

1. **Remove Distractions** – It is important to find a time and place that is distraction-free. Like Jesus, get up early before the rest of the household. Alternatively, if you are working, go someplace quiet during your lunch break. Put away our phones and laptops.

2. **Focus Your Attention** – Start by praying for God to speak to prepare your heart and mind for what He will say to you. Pray according to Proverbs 2:2, for God to turn your ear to wisdom and your heart to understanding. Ask God to help keep your eyes looking straight ahead; fixing your gaze directly at Him according to Proverbs 4:25, so that you would not be distracted.
  
3. **Have Unhurried Conversation** – Read the daily scripture passage slowly and repeatedly, observing the details – who is speaking to whom, when is this taking place, what is being said and why. Use the “Observation” in the devotion to guide your thoughts. Be unhurried, allow God to speak His truth through the passage. Resist the urge to turn this time into a Bible Study. Reflect instead of research. In the stillness and quiet of where you are, say to God “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” Then remain still and wait upon God. It is good practice to write down – journal – what God has spoken to you through the scripture passage.
  
4. **Commit to Transformation** – Based on what you have read and what God has revealed to you, what changes do you need to make? What must you start doing? What must you stop doing? What must you keep doing? Make a commitment to follow through on what needs to be done.
  
5. **Offer Thanksgiving and Supplication** – Close with a prayer of thanksgiving and confession and present your needs and petitions to the Father.

This is just a guide. As you continue to do your quiet time, the whole process will become more familiar and more natural. Just like how you don't follow a script or flowchart when you meet a good friend, your regular quiet time with the Father will also become less procedural and more dynamic.

The important thing is that as you press on with the daily devotion in this book, your quiet time with the Father will become as important to you as it is to Jesus.



## HOW TO USE THIS S.O.A.P. JOURNAL

### **STEP 1**

- Read the Scripture for the day with an open heart
  - It is good to find a quiet space and the best time to do this is when you are at your best.
  - Jesus deserves your best; so, give Him the best part of your day.

### **STEP 2**

- Journal your devotion as Jesus has shown you for the day
  - Scripture: Read the Scripture for the day
  - Observation: Write out your own observation/s in addition to what has been written
  - Application: Note how you are being transformed as you respond to the application questions
  - Prayer: List your own prayer items

### **STEP 3**

- Conclude your daily devotion by spending time in prayer and continue to focus on God throughout the day

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF SOLITUDE AND SILENCE

**Solitude and Silence** is a time specially set aside to quieten your soul, draw near to Jesus and hear His voice. It is time-out from the busyness of life to find rest for your soul as you spend time with Jesus.

In this daily devotion, each Sunday has been set aside as a time for you to practice the spiritual discipline of solitude and silence, where you spend time with Jesus in silent reflection, to hear Him and respond to Him.

*“In **solitude**, we voluntarily abstain from our normal patterns of activity and interaction with people, for a time, in order to discover that our strength and well-being come from God alone.” (Richard Foster, in his book entitled Prayer)*

*“**Silence**, the absence of speech, is a crucial component of solitude. Silence prepares us to hear God’s voice and receive revelation and guidance.” (Siang Yang Tan & Douglas H. Gregg, in their book entitled Disciplines of the Holy Spirit)*

### **Prepare your heart to hear God’s voice**

1. Find a quiet place (within your home or outdoors) where you can be alone and undisturbed (from people or devices).
2. Close your eyes, relax, still your mind and draw near to Jesus. You can play a worship song to help you focus on the Lord.
3. If you find your mind whirling with thoughts, write down the things you need to do later and turn your attention back to Jesus. Initially, it may take some time for your mind to quieten but persevere.
4. Read the Scripture passage. Ask the Lord to speak to you as you think about each question.
5. Take your time to respond to Jesus, then journal what He says to you or shows you.

Mark 6:30-32

*The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.*

Jesus' disciples went away with Him to a quiet place to get some rest.

Won't you do the same?

## WHO IS YOUR KING?

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### OBSERVATION

Today's scripture passage describes a coronation of a different kind. It shows that the kingship of Jesus is different from the kings of this world.

As Singaporeans, we might find it challenging to fully understand what it means to live under the kingship of someone. It is because we have not experienced this situation ourselves, so we have a somewhat movie-like impression of what it is.

We think of them seated on their thrones in their fabulous robes and wearing shiny crowns with servants attending to their every wish. We see them with much power and authority. They control armies, governments and hold the lives of the people in their hands.

And then we have Jesus in this passage, without a throne, with no beautiful robes or a shiny golden crown. In fact, we see Jesus dying on a cross, which shatters our image of a mighty king. Power, riches, wisdom, strength and glory do not seem very obvious on the cross.

Yet, the cross is the very heart of the revelation of Christ as King. The cross is the sign of God's victory over sin, death and the power over evil.

### APPLICATION

- Think about what you daydream. What captures your mind? Christ? Or things of this world? How do you spend your money? Earthly pleasures?
- What do you turn to on a bad day? Christ? Or some other comforts like food, the television or online shopping? What makes your emotions uncontrollable? Sports? Finances? Relationships?

- How should we respond to the revelation that Jesus is King? How will you focus on Jesus and allow Him to reign in your heart and be your all in all?

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help us surrender each and every part of our lives to you. You are the King who reigns over all. Help us allow you to reign in our hearts, that our lives may express and live out that submission with joy. In your holy name we ask, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise our Lord Jesus, Word made flesh, through whom our Father speaks to us

- List the things to give thanks and thank the Father for each of them
- Pray that we jealously guard our time with Him each day

## MY REFLECTION

## RETURN TO YOUR FIRST LOVE

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### OBSERVATION

Our Lord Jesus knew His church well. He recognised their diligent toil and perseverance, how they endured hardship for the sake of their faith in Him and did not grow weary or give up.

They exercised discernment so that they would not fall prey to false apostles and did not tolerate those who practised evil. The church in Ephesus was well grounded in both good works and sound judgment.

Despite all the good in the Ephesian church, there was something seriously wrong – they had left their first love. They were no longer loving Jesus fervently. Though they looked fine on the outside, Jesus looked deeper into their hearts and saw that their motivations and actions were not rooted in love for Him.

And 1 Corinthians 13 clearly states that without love, our good works count for nothing and we gain nothing. Jesus calls us to return to a first-love relationship with Him because if our love for Jesus turns cold, it will gradually affect our love for others and eventually our good works can become an obligation instead of pure joy.

### APPLICATION

Will you return to your first love? Jesus shows us how:

- Remember  
Recall what it was like when you first came to know Jesus, the unconditional love of God and His amazing grace. Remember how you spent time with Jesus and began to know Him and learnt to put your trust in Him.

- Repent

Think about what has replaced Jesus as your first love and what has taken the place in your heart as the object of your love and desires. Will you surrender these thoughts and things to Jesus?

- Return to Jesus

Ask Jesus to give you a new heart to love Him fervently once again. Think about how you can prioritise to spend time with Jesus daily in the Word and in prayer.

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I am sorry for allowing other things or people take centre stage in my heart, a place that belongs to you alone. Please give me a new heart to love you fervently and restore to me the joy of deep fellowship with you. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen!

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise Jesus, the True Vine, who bids us to abide in Him

- Pray for strength to walk daily with God like Enoch (Genesis 5:24), in obedience and surrender to Him
- Pray that our plans this day will be aligned with His good, pleasing and perfect will

## MY REFLECTION

## TURN YOUR EYES TO JESUS

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### OBSERVATION

Mary sat at the Lord's feet listening to what He said.

When we sit, there is this immediate sense of rest, a putting up of our feet and making ourselves comfortable. Mary sat and listened.

In the following verses, Jesus told her sister Martha, "...few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better..."

Why is it then, that something so seemingly simple, yet so important, eludes so many of us? The key lies in the second part of the verse – listening to Jesus.

Who is Jesus to you?

"But what about you?" Jesus asked. "Who do you say I am?" (Matthew 16:15)

If we like Peter, can wholeheartedly respond with "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God", then sitting at His feet will naturally become a clear and certain priority for us.

With this attitude, our times of sitting at His feet will be one with humble hearts and keen spirits. It will be expectant, attentive, submissive and in reverence, awaiting His counsel.

Turn your eyes to Jesus. It is not in the doing but being with Jesus. Let us look full at His wonderful face, full of glory and grace!



Sing like the psalmist in Psalm 73:25

“Whom have I in heaven but you?

And earth has nothing I desire besides you.”

And as we praise, His Spirit rejoices. He will take us into His inner courts, and we will find ourselves lost in wonder, gazing on the beauty of the Lord.

Turn your eyes to Jesus. Let us be like Mary and sit at the feet of Jesus and listen.

#### APPLICATION

- Who is Jesus to you?
- How can we be more like Mary?

#### PRAYER

Lord, you, are all I need. I surrender myself to you. Help me be still and listen to you. Teach me your way so that I can be more and more like you. When I stray, bring me back to you. When I stumble, help me stand. When I am lost, show me your righteous path. In Jesus' name, Amen.

#### PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise our good Father, who calls us His children

- Thank our Father for every good gift He has given, even for His Spirit that dwells in us
- Pray for understanding for our identity in Christ, that we walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8)

#### MY REFLECTION

## IN CHRIST

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### OBSERVATION

The Bible says that the moment we believe in Jesus, we are connected to Him, just like a branch is organically connected to the main vine. When the branch is disconnected, it withers and dries up.

In the epistles, the apostle Paul's most often used phrase is "IN Christ".

This powerful understanding kept Paul joyful, confident, at peace, anointed for ministry and fruitful in spite of many physical beatings, being stoned a few times, barely surviving a shipwreck, being pursued out of places and imprisonment.

Paul experienced what Jesus promised for being IN Christ "...my burden is light and my yoke is easy; and you will find rest for your soul." What is the secret to this manner of amazing peace, strength and also fruitfulness?

### APPLICATION

Biblical meditation of being IN Christ...

- In order to comfortably be in something, you have to be somewhat smaller in order to fit into it.
- Now picture a radiant and risen Lord Jesus in all His magnificence, power and whose stature encompasses a huge space (Ezekiel 1:26-28).
- Next see yourself being welcomed to enter into that radiance and energy (Ephesians 2:6). Walk in to that wonderful person of Jesus Christ and be still. You are now being encased in the One Most High. Nothing can touch you unless it is through Him.

This was the wonderful understanding that Paul had, which kept him going.

So, he was able to say “...neither death nor life...neither powers nor principalities, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation can separate me from Jesus’ love for me.” (Romans 8:38-39)

#### PRAYER

Thank you, Abba Father, for keeping me in your Son Jesus. Thank you that IN Christ is my true security, joy and my best placement. Holy Spirit, continue to open my eyes to see and to experience the abundance of my fruitfulness in that blessed place. Yes, I will live my life, and go about my daily functions as one who is IN Christ. IN Christ, Amen.

#### PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise our Good Shepherd, who guides and cares tenderly for us, His sheep

- Pray for our ears and heart to hear and know our Shepherd’s voice
- Pray for godly wisdom to lead us on righteous path in our thoughts, words and deeds

#### MY REFLECTION

## DOING LIFE WITH JESUS

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### OBSERVATION

When we hear phrases like “live in the Word” and “abide in Christ”, we often have a vague idea of what they mean. Imagine you felt unwell and went to see a doctor and your prescription just said, “Be healthy”. The scripture verses tell us that we have everything we need to live victoriously like Jesus. Yet, how many can say we are living this way?

So, what is stopping us from taking hold of what God has promised as His beloved children and co-heirs with Christ? The answer lies in what it means to “remain in” Him, or to abide.

Living in the Word is actively abiding in the living Word – Jesus. This means doing life with Him and taking Him at His Word. This is not the same as the “name-it-and-claim-it” false teaching.

It is about investing in the most important love relationship we have with God, by spending time with Him, reading and hearing what He is saying and learning from Him. It is about talking to Him and believing in Him even when the world and enemies think otherwise. More than that, it is about letting Him transform us to be more like Him.

This will be the most fulfilling, rewarding and joyful life we could possibly have, so choose to take hold of your full inheritance in Christ today.

### APPLICATION

- Reflect and ask the Holy Spirit to identify what is stopping you from fully believing how God’s Word can apply in your life.
- Surrender these to Him joyfully; ask Him to reveal a promise He has given you for your situation.

- Meditate on the promise and claim on His wonderful attributes, e.g. healer, provider.

## PRAYER

Abba Father, thank you for putting me in Christ and Christ in me and through this, giving me everything I need to abide in you and your Word. I give you all that is holding me back from believing you fully. Reveal to me your great and precious promises through which I can step into my full inheritance as your beloved child and co-heir with Christ. In your name I pray, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise Christ, our cornerstone, our church's one foundation

- Pray against the spirit of spectatorship
  - that we move out of the pews and put our hands to the plough in His kingdom work
  - for Godly discontent that stirs us into action and service

## MY REFLECTION

## THE FEAR OF THE LORD

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### OBSERVATION

In life, we face many kinds of fears. Though biblical fear can carry some elements of terror, it is quite different. Biblical fear (of the Lord) has a positive characteristic as read from the bible verses.

Some people speak of the fear of God as being afraid of the wrath of God or fearing God's judgement. Is this Godly fear?

“Yir’ah” is fear in Hebrew which means awe, respect, reverence and worship. The awe is likened to the feeling of being overwhelmed; like seeing the grandeur of the Grand Canyon or the Swiss Alps. This sense of awe draws us towards God rather than make us flee from His presence.

The yir’ah fear of God is centred on worshipful admiration and appreciation of all He is in His personhood – His holiness, wisdom, creativity and love. This fear evokes our wholehearted devotion and we delight in His presence. It inspires a love within that propels us to want to love, serve Him and others beyond the call of duty. This godly fear is the impetus that frees us for joyful obedience to what the Lord calls us to do.

The fear of the Lord comes from a friendship with God through times of worship and intimacy in knowing Him and be known by Him (Psalm 25:14). It is characterised by the knowledge of His character, familiarity with His ways and obedience to His will.

The fear of God will keep us from compromising God's truths for personal gain. It restrains us from sinning even when no one else is looking. It is a keen awareness that God is watching and He holds us accountable for every thought, word and deed.

May we as disciples of Jesus Christ in BMC cultivate the fear of the Lord in our lives as the early disciples did in Acts 9:31.

## APPLICATION

- How has your perspective of the fear of God changed after understanding the biblical definition of “yir’ah” of God?
- How has the fear of God helped you in your discipleship journey towards Christ-likeness?
- Share an area of your life that having the fear of God would have made a difference (eg. in speech, action, marriage, decision-making).

## PRAYER

Dear God, help me to learn the fear of the Lord for it is the beginning of wisdom. Let me walk in fear of you in all circumstances. May the fear of the Lord purge out the sins in my life, in thought, word and deed and may this fear be the searchlight that seeks out any unholy motives in my plans, agenda and intentions of the heart. Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise Jesus, light of the world, who called us out of darkness into His wonderful light

- Pray the light of Christ will illumine our heart and mind as we read His word each day
- Ask the Lord to show us how we can be salt and light for Him this week

## MY REFLECTION

In this devotion, each Sunday has been set aside as a time for you to practise the spiritual discipline of solitude and silence, where you spend time with Jesus in silent reflection, to hear Him and respond to Him.

Mark 6:30-32

*The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.*

Close your eyes, relax, still your mind and say to Jesus, "Lord Jesus, I'm here!"

Be still. Wait. Rest.

- Think about something that brought you joy this week. Give thanks to God.

Matthew 11:28

*Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

- Talk to Jesus about the things that troubled your heart this week. Give these burdens (worries, fears, anger, hurts, etc) to Jesus. Receive rest from Him.



Proverbs 3:5-6

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*

- Commit your upcoming week to Jesus (name the key events and activities). Ask Him for wisdom and guidance for decisions that need to be made and strength for the week ahead. Be open to anything Jesus may want to say to you or show you.

MY REFLECTION

## LOVE CONNECTS US TO JESUS

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### LET'S READ

John 14:23

*Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."*

### LET'S LEARN

ACTIVITY: Get two pieces of paper and some glue. On one piece, write "JESUS" in capital letters. On the other piece, similarly, write the name of your child.

Make extra sets if you have more children. If you have time, let your children decorate the names before you begin the devotion.

When everyone is ready, ask your child to hold up both pieces of paper back-to-back so that "JESUS" is on one side, and your child's name is on the other side.

ASK: "If you want to join these two pieces of paper, what can you use?" After getting some answers, say "Obviously, the best way to stick them together is with some glue!" Let your child put a bit of glue on both pieces of paper and stick them together.

ASK: "What do you think is the glue that helps us remain close to Jesus?" Get some suggestions, then get everyone to read John 14:23.

SAY: "When we show our love for Jesus by obeying His commands, we draw close to Him and Daddy God, and the Holy Spirit will come and live in our hearts. Love is the glue that keeps us connected to Jesus."

## LET'S DISCUSS

Read out and discuss the following questions:

- Jesus says that all who love Him will obey His commands. Can you remember what are some of the commands? (e.g. have faith, be courageous, don't worry, seek God first, help the poor, comfort the sad, etc.)
- Which ones have we obeyed and which ones have we failed to obey? (Everyone should only share their own – don't point out each other's failings.)
- Discuss how you can help each other love Jesus by obeying His commands.

## LET'S PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank you for the great love you have for us. Because of what you have done for us on the cross, we love you too. Help us to show you our love by obeying your commands always. Amen.

## OUR REFLECTION

## LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER

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### OBSERVATION

These two verses were addressed to the believers during Apostle John's ministry. The message was a call for the believers to love one another as God is love and love is from God.

The verses point out the reason why it is important for us to love one another because all who love are born of God and know Him.

This shows that a person cannot love adequately unless we are born again (through accepting Jesus as our personal Lord and Saviour) and by having a relationship with Him.

As love is the very nature of who God is, we are unable to love others apart from God's love. Simply put, we need God Himself to help us love Him and others.

Therefore, if we are true children and disciples of God, He dwells in our hearts filling us with His love, which then helps us to love others just as He has loved us.

Love is not an optional virtue we practice, but a distinguishing mark of a believer.

For love to increase in my life, God must increase in me; for love is of God. The way we relate to one another reflects the extent to which we truly understand the love and character of God in our lives.

When we fully grasp the love of God, it would be a natural outpouring of our hearts to love one another just as we have been loved.

## APPLICATION

- Picture yourself as a vessel and ask God to pour out His love into your heart to “overflowing” so that you will be able to love others with the love of the Lord.
- Think of a time when God’s love transformed the way you see others. Journal this experience.
- Is there someone you are struggling to love? Will you ask Jesus to help you to love him/her? Will you say a prayer to bless this person now?

## PRAYER

Dear Abba Father, we thank you for your love shown to us through Jesus Christ. We thank you for the opportunity to know you and to be loved by you. Lord, we pray for our hearts to be renewed by your truths and for a fresh revelation of your love. Abba Father, we pray that as you love us, help us to overflow your love to those around us. Help us to love one another so that others will see your love and goodness through us and glorify you. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise Jesus our great High Priest, who is ever interceding for us

- Intercede for those suffering from illnesses
- Intercede for those facing loss of livelihood

## MY REFLECTION

## UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

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### OBSERVATION

After reminding the Gentile converts in Ephesus of God's grace in calling them to salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9), Paul exhorted them to walk in a manner worthy of their calling. It is the calling of every believer to be united in Christ and it comes with a command – walk accordingly!

As Christians, we are chosen, adopted heirs, saved and reconciled by God. Walking according to our calling means our lives must reflect our salvation by our love for others. How do we live out our calling? What are the characteristics of a worthy walk?

The central theme is about our relationship with others. We are to live our lives with humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness.

This attitude has often been stressed by Paul in many of his other letters. In Colossians 1:10, we are to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him.”

In Colossians 3:12-13, he exhorts us to “put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other.”

In Philippians 2:3, we are to “do nothing from rivalry or conceit but in humility consider others more significant than yourselves.”

When we live our lives in this manner, there will be unity in the church. When the body of Christ becomes united, Jesus' priestly prayer for us, “that they may be one, as you, Father are in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me”, (John 17:21) will be fulfilled.

This spiritual oneness is what we inherited the day we are born again by the Spirit of God through faith in Jesus Christ and it is this unique oneness that binds and unites all believers.

As believers, we have one Lord Jesus and one God and Father. We all believe in one faith and one baptism. We are one body in Christ. We have one Spirit that indwells in us and we share one glorious hope for the future.

#### APPLICATION

- What are your thoughts regarding behavioural disunity in church in light of the strong call to Christian unity?
- What can you do to allow diversity in opinions and perspectives while preserving unity?

#### PRAYER

Lord, as a spiritual family, bind us together in your love. Fill us with your grace to resolve any differences and disagreement with mutual respect. May the common eternal hope we share as Christians compel us to pursue unity and peace with one another. We ask in your name, Amen.

#### PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise the El Roi – God who saw and comforted Hagar when she felt alone (Genesis 16:13)

- Pray for the lonely and isolated
  - to find fellowship in a community of believers
  - that the Lord brings to mind someone who might need us to connect with

#### MY REFLECTION

FORGIVE THEM, FATHER

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## OBSERVATION

It is almost instinctive. We see something and touch it to confirm what it is like. That is why the passage says that the eye can never reject the help of the hand because it is the part of the body that supports its own function. So too, the head. How can it get anywhere without the help of the feet?

Yet, we sometimes find ourselves rejecting help from those in the body whose support is vital to us. Why is this so? It is likely we have issues with them, which is often the result of an unforgiving spirit.

It could be our needs were trampled or our pride crushed. The result is the same. We reject their help or intervention or offer of kindness, whether our interaction with them is commercial, family-focused or even ministry-related.

God gave the members of the body different strengths, varied gifts, so all would need to rely on one another to serve Him. That reliance would not only strengthen the church but bring great joy to the whole as every member is part of the shared outcomes.

Prophets share the vision with evangelists who rely on administrators to see to the organisation. When the altar call is made and the people come forward, all rejoice to see the harvest.

“But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins,” Jesus warns, in Matthew 6:15, because the unforgiving spirit hurts the body life. It prevents us and the body from receiving everything God has to offer. So, He tells us, in Luke 17:4, to forgive. “Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”



## APPLICATION

- Is there someone I need to forgive? What is the issue about?
- Have I brought the issue to Jesus? Why not? Why am I holding back?
- What is the Spirit prompting me to do?

## PRAYER

Father, I feel upset every time I think about \_\_\_\_\_ (name of person). I do not want to feel this way anymore because I know it grieves you. Though I struggle to let things go, I choose to obey because you have asked me to. Lord Jesus, I surrender the hurt \_\_\_\_\_ has caused me and those I love. I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ (name the incident). Change my heart, Lord, and give me a desire to make things right with this person because it pleases you. Teach me to be open to your leading and provide me with direction, so that in all my ways, I can glorify you. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise our Prince of peace, who has overcome the world (John 16:33)

- Pray for those struggling with worry and anxiety
- Pray for troubled minds to be renewed by His word and guarded in His peace

## MY REFLECTION

## RESTORING IN A SPIRIT OF GENTLENESS

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### OBSERVATION

The two-fold instruction from the Apostle Paul in Galatians 6:1 is clear:

- The spiritual person is to restore the person caught in any wrongdoing in a spirit of gentleness
- The spiritual person is to look to himself or herself so that he or she is not tempted as well

The spiritual person is not perfect; otherwise, there is no need for the second point. Rather, following from Galatians 5:25, the spiritual person is one who has Christ in him or her and therefore lives and walks by the Spirit. Such a spiritual person is to restore a wrong-doer in a spirit of gentleness, not in a harsh or condescending manner.

Also, as Matthew 7:1-6 reminds us, we need to “...first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye!” We need to guard ourselves from falling into the same temptation as we restore the wrong-doer.

A small couples-group discovered that a brother had been caught in an adulterous affair. His wife of more than 30 years was devastated. The other couples in the group were shocked; after all, this brother was a mature Christian whom they had known intimately over many years.

The group decided to apply Galatians 6:1. Instead of berating the wrong-doer, they gathered often to intercede for him, often weeping in tears.

They recognised that this sin could happen to anyone of them. Over time, God worked and answered their prayers. The wrong-doer came to his senses and left the affair to be restored to his wife again.

## APPLICATION

- Referring to Galatians 6:1 and Matthew 7:1-6, how would you restore a brother or a sister caught in sin?
- What would be your attitude towards the wrong-doer?
- What steps would you take to restore him or her?

## PRAYER

O Lord, help us restore anyone caught in any wrongdoing in a spirit of gentleness, always looking to our own vulnerabilities. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise our God who ordained marriage and instituted families

- Pray for marriages to be upheld in God's intended design
- Pray for families in BMC to rise up against spiritual attacks on relationships

## MY REFLECTION

## ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

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### OBSERVATION

Do you know anyone that might be discouraged? Do things around us seem hopeless?

Paul reminded the church in Thessaloniki who was facing much suffering and affliction to continue to encourage one another. They had much reason to be hopeful and so do we.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 says, “God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Our destiny gives us confidence for our journey as the people of God and it does not stop there. Paul urges us that we can and are to continue to “encourage and build up one another.”

Interestingly, the word “encourage” is translated from the Hebrew word “parakaleo”, which means “to come alongside”.

This brought to mind the time my daughter took part in her first biathlon at eight years old. After 10 laps in the pool, she then had to run many laps around the track. Seeing her tiredness, we ran alongside her to cheer her on to finish her race well.

### APPLICATION

Likewise in our faith’s journey, let us encourage one another to run and finish our race well.

Thankfully, unlike the world’s rat race, we are not competing with one another but we are all on the same team. In 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24, Paul shows us some things we can do.

- v12-13 ...appreciate and esteem your spiritual leaders
- v13 ...live in peace with one another
- v14 ...admonish the unruly
  - ...encourage the fainthearted
  - ...help the weak
  - ...be patient with everyone

...do continue and list them but most importantly, do them.

## PRAYER

Abba Father, we thank you for our destiny in Christ and the confidence we have that we can come alongside and encourage one another in our faith journey. Holy Spirit, open our eyes to the needs and struggles of those around us so that we may encourage one another by our kind words, a gentle nudge or a helping hand. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise our ever-present help who never leaves or forsakes us

- Pray for the lonely and isolated
  - to seek comfort in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
  - to remember that Christ who was forsaken on the cross brings promise of God's eternal presence

## MY REFLECTION

## SERVING THE CHURCH WITH OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

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### OBSERVATION

The passage first establishes that each one of us is gifted with a spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit. This means that every one of us has a gift (or gifts) that we can use to serve in church.

Not one of us is left out and no gift is greater than the other. Each gift will serve its purpose in the body of Christ.

Some examples of spiritual gifts include speaking in tongues, prophecy, administration, healing, encouragement and teaching.

The scripture text helps to categorise spiritual gifts into two broad but simple categories – spiritual gifts in words and spiritual gifts in deeds. The driving factor for us to practise the gifts we are blessed with stems from us being good stewards of God’s grace.

We are unworthy, for all of us fall short of the glory of God. But by His grace, the Lord extends His arm and invites us to come to Him in worship and repentance. We can extend this grace given to us by serving others with our spiritual gifts.

A spiritual gift can be defined as the ability given by the Holy Spirit for us to express our faith to strengthen another person’s. Imagine this – a tech savvy lady serving on the Change Makers AV team and getting her friends on board too; a reserved young adult prophesying over his disciple group leader and a retired teacher mentoring several ladies healing from relationship wounds.

It is most certain that we would be strengthening each other’s faith and growing together in Christ-likeness What a beautiful sight to behold.

## APPLICATION

- What is hindering you from practising your spiritual gifts openly?
- What changes do you need to make in order to better serve each member in your disciple group with your spiritual gifts?

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, what a privilege for each of us to be blessed with spiritual gifts. Help us Lord to be zealous in using our spiritual gift(s) to serve one another in church. May each of our faith be strengthened and the church grow stronger and stronger in your love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise our one Lord, one God who binds us in one Spirit

- Pray for unity in the Body of Christ, each to be completely gentle and humble (Ephesians 4:2-3)
- Pray for wise use of spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ

## MY REFLECTION

In this devotion, each Sunday has been set aside as a time for you to practise the spiritual discipline of solitude and silence, where you spend time with Jesus in silent reflection, to hear Him and respond to Him.

Mark 6:30-32

*The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.*

Close your eyes, relax, still your mind and say to Jesus, "Lord Jesus, I'm here!"

Be still. Wait. Rest.

- Think about something that brought you joy this week. Give thanks to God.

Matthew 11:28

*Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

- Talk to Jesus about the things that troubled your heart this week. Give these burdens (worries, fears, anger, hurts, etc) to Jesus. Receive rest from Him.



Proverbs 3:5-6

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*

- Commit your upcoming week to Jesus (name the key events and activities). Ask Him for wisdom and guidance for decisions that need to be made and strength for the week ahead. Be open to anything Jesus may want to say to you or show you.

MY REFLECTION

## PURE AND UNDIVIDED HEART

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### LET'S READ

Matthew 5:8

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

### LET'S LEARN

DO (OR IMAGINE): Fill a glass with water from the tap. Take a good look at the water – it is clean, you don't see any impurities. Now take a spoonful of garden soil and put it in the water. What do you see now? The water is no longer clear, it is contaminated with dirt.

ASK: If our hearts are like a glass of water, which would be more pleasing to Jesus – clean or contaminated with impurities?

EXPLAIN: What does “pure” mean? Something that is pure does not have other things mixed in it. In the example above, the pure water from the tap was no longer pure after soil was added to it.

In today's Bible verse, Jesus says that those whose hearts are pure are blessed and they will see God. Jesus is more concerned about what is in our hearts than about our achievements, status or wealth.

If our heart is pure, we are honest and seek to do the right thing in our relationships with others. Jesus will be more important in our lives than anything or anyone else.

When we sin, Jesus wants us to confess our sins and turn from them. He wants us grow to be more like Him and follow Him closely.

## LET'S DISCUSS

- Sin is like dirt in a glass of water – it makes our hearts impure. Name some of these sins. (Some examples from Galatians 5:19-21: idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, envy, drunkenness.) What is in your heart now? Is there something you need to ask Jesus to help you change?
- A pure heart is undivided – it puts God first and worships Him alone. This means that we set aside time to pray and read the Bible and we obey His commands. But in our daily lives, it is hard to do. What are some things that take our time and attention from God? (Examples: school, work, social media, friends, sports, hobbies, following celebrities and sports stars.)

## LET'S PRAY

Dear Jesus,

See what is in my heart.

Know what is there.

Test me.

Know what I'm thinking.

See if there's anything in my life you don't like.

Help me live in the way that is always right.

Amen.

- Psalms 139:23-24

## OUR REFLECTION

## WITNESS TO THE WORLD

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### OBSERVATION

Jesus told His disciples in advance that they would be baptised with the Holy Spirit and when the Holy Spirit came upon them, they would receive power. He went on to say that they would be His witnesses to their friends and family in Jerusalem, to people in the wider region of Judea and Samaria and even to everyone in the world.

As followers of Jesus today, we too, have the Holy Spirit in our hearts. We are called to be His witnesses to our family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and everyone and we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, just like His first disciples.

While they waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' disciples devoted themselves to prayer.

Likewise, we need to regularly and diligently meditate on God's Word and devote ourselves to communion with God to draw on the Holy Spirit's strength and power.

We need to take time daily to go to our "upper room", a quiet place away from the many things that distract us from focusing our eyes and hearts on the Lord.

Let us use this time of prayer and meditation on God's Word to allow Him to speak into our lives so that He can empower us through His Holy Spirit to be His effective witnesses to the world.

## APPLICATION

- Think of three people with whom you can share the gospel message. Commit them to God in prayer.
- How can you build friendships with these three people?
- How will you draw on the power of the Holy Spirit to share the gospel message with them?

## PRAYER

Dear God our Father, empower each one of us through your Holy Spirit to be your effective witness to the world as we seek your face in our time of prayer and meditation on your Word, in our “upper room”. Thank you, O Lord, for your love and your empowerment through the Holy Spirit. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise the Lord of the harvest who sends His labourers into the fields

- Pray for our missionaries
  - their physical/mental health
  - protection against spiritual attacks
  - against opposition and persecution

## MY REFLECTION

## THE GREAT COMPASSION

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### OBSERVATION

Lost people matter to Jesus. In Matthew 9, we see Him healing a paralysed man, eating with tax collectors and sinners, reviving a dead girl, making a sick woman well, and restoring two blind men and a mute demon-possessed man.

Then we see His gaze turning to men and women in the crowds – people who were “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd”.

The children of Israel were not flourishing – misguided by religious legalism, injustice, fear and ungodly leadership. Jesus was filled with compassion for the multitudes.

In the Greek meaning of the word “compassion”, Jesus was “moved in the inward parts”. His heart overflowed with extravagant love and empathy for people who had no spiritual direction or purpose.

The Lord’s Great Compassion prompted the Great Commission—the call to pray, the call to disciple.

Jesus said: “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”  
(Matthew 9:37-38)

Our commissioning to make disciples of Christ must go hand in hand with the ability to care deeply for others. This compassion is a gift from God. It compels us to reap a harvest of souls for Jesus.

## APPLICATION

- Are we one of the faces “in the crowds” – harassed and helpless? Jesus our Great Shepherd invites us to cast our cares on Him. Let us call out to Him, our help and hope!
- When we look at people “in the crowds” in our neighbourhoods or workplaces, what is the Holy Spirit revealing to us? How can we respond to them with the Lord’s Great Compassion?

## PRAYER

Everyone needs compassion  
Love that’s never failing  
Let mercy fall on me  
Everyone needs forgiveness  
The kindness of a Saviour  
The hope of nations  
– Mighty to Save (2006)

Lord Jesus, the world is full of troubled and lost people who need you, ourselves included. We ask for hearts of compassion, filled with love and kindness for the people around us. We ask for hearts commissioned, to bring the good news to them, that they may respond to your salvation and hope. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise Jesus who loves His Church as His Bride

- Pray for the body of Christ
  - to be instruments of peace and reconciliation
  - to fulfil the Great Commission as we live out the Great Commandment

## MY REFLECTION

## BESEECHING THE LORD OF THE HARVEST

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### OBSERVATION

From the time of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see the kingdom of God advancing, impacting all levels of society, bringing transformation and healing.

The Lord Jesus Himself set the example for His disciples by proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and setting lives free.

He carried the heart of reaching the lost wherever He went and had compassion for them.

The task of reaching every tongue and tribe is global and massive. It is still a very real and urgent need today because the workers are few.

God is looking for responsive hearts and issues a call for His disciples to partner in prayer. Prayer is integral if we want to see lives saved.

### APPLICATION

God invites us to partner with Him in prayer for the lost and for workers to be sent out. Some areas for us to pray about:

- Mission work of advancing the gospel – ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth workers in these areas:
  - missionaries to go the nations, especially the unreached people groups
  - bible translations in various languages
  - new creative ideas to reach people globally through technological means and platforms
  - provision of the necessary resources



- Loved ones, friends and people around who have yet to know Christ – ask the Lord of the harvest to send believers and divine appointments along their path to reach out to them.
- God is looking for responsive hearts to be His messengers to reach out to the people around you. Am I willing to be that vessel to share God’s love with those who are lost?

## PRAYER

Father God, we ask for your heart of compassion and love for the lost. Give us your deep desire for all to be saved and none to perish. Lord, we know that people need you. We ask earnestly that you send many workers around the world to reach the lost. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise Jesus who came to seek the lost

- Pray for the mission fields
  - that souls be ready for harvest
  - that more will see Christ as their Living Hope in the midst of the pandemic

## MY REFLECTION

## SOW IN LOVE AND KINDNESS

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### OBSERVATION

Sowing refers to the act of scattering seeds. As Christians, we are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus, scattering seeds of love and kindness wherever we go.

Ecclesiastes 11:1-4 gives us godly principles to follow when sowing. It reminds us to sow generously, even if the reward cannot be guaranteed or immediately seen.

Although casting bread (also known as seed-corn or grains) upon the waters may seem wasteful (v.1a), we are challenged to sow broadly.

We are called to sow generously – doing good as much as we can, trusting God to bring its reward in due time (v.1b).

We are called to sow diligently as we do not know what will happen in the future, whether we will have the opportunity to do good (v.2). If we are always waiting for favourable conditions to sow (v.4) rather than sow in faith, we may miss any chance of sowing and not reap at all.

Just as the formation of rain and the falling of trees happen according to laws beyond the control of the human will, likewise we do not have full control over what our future holds (v.2b and v.3).

It would be wise to face our unforeseeable future with a generosity of love and kindness, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16).

Paul exhorts us in Galatians 6:9 to “not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

## APPLICATION

- Have you been generously sowing in love and kindness? Who can you be generous towards today to demonstrate Christ's love and kindness?
- Have you been diligently sowing in love and kindness? What changes might you make in your everyday life to be more generous and intentional in sowing seeds of love and kindness?

## PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, help us apply the principles in Ecclesiastes 11:1-4 in sowing seeds of love and kindness. Give us your grace and faith to sow broadly, generously and diligently. Forgive us for the times we have been calculative or overly cautious, resulting in self-centred living. Teach us each day to cast our bread upon the waters because you will make the seeds produce a harvest in due time. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise Jesus – the Way, the Truth and the Life

- Pray that we stand on the Word of God and persevere on the narrow road (Matthew 7:14)
- Pray for those entangled in sin of addictions – that the Truth will set them free (John 8:32)

## MY REFLECTION

## DISCIPLES MAKING DISCIPLES

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### OBSERVATION

The things of God (commandments of God) are to be entrusted to faithful men – this point is emphasised consistently in both the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT).

In the OT, God specifically instructed Moses to appoint Joshua as his successor. Joshua had faithfully obeyed the commandments and instructions given through Moses, especially when Moses sent him and the other spies into the Promised Land.

God later spoke to Joshua and confirmed the calling on his life, and Joshua 11:15 testifies to Joshua's faithfulness to God's command.

In Matthew 28:20, our Lord Jesus gave the command to His disciples to multiply, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you". Jesus commanded us to focus on making disciple-makers who are obedient to His commandments.

Just like Moses taught Joshua and Jesus taught His Twelve disciples, Paul taught Timothy because he understood the importance of continually passing on God's teaching to others.

Similarly, we ought to use our knowledge to teach others and make disciples who will make disciples of others.

## APPLICATION

- If you are new in your faith, how will you learn from others so that you can share the love of God with someone who does not know Jesus yet?
- Whether you are a young Christian or one who has known Jesus for many years, how will you help others know Jesus better and grow them to become disciples of Christ?

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we thank you for reminding us about the imperative of disciple-making. It is not an option as people will be lost forever without you. Therefore, we earnestly ask for your help, to discern, to teach and to walk alongside them as they grow in maturity in Christ until they too become your disciple-makers. In Christ most precious name we pray, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise the Holy Spirit, our Divine Mentor who teaches, grows and sanctifies us

- Pray that God builds up in BMC a culture of nurturing and mentoring
- Pray that each mentoring relationship be fruitful, that each one's tent be enlarged (Isaiah 54:2)

## MY REFLECTION

## COMPETING WITH HORSES

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### OBSERVATION

In his life and ministry, Jeremiah faced great opposition. Many opposed his call to repentance. Leaders persecuted him for his message. He had to compete with false prophets who were preaching a sweeter message to the people.

At times, Jeremiah grew weary of following God as that often meant “unfollowing” the world.

In his moment of tiredness, Jeremiah complained to God about His seeming absence in dealing with wicked people and even allowing them to prosper.

Waiting for God to act and contending with the ways of the people around him both frustrated and drained Jeremiah.

As people following God today, this is a picture we can relate to as there are moments when we grow tired of trusting in God.

It becomes difficult to believe that God is present and He is making all things work together for our good and His glory. It becomes difficult to trust that His timing and ways are much better than ours.

God, unperturbed, responded brilliantly with a question that turned the complaint on its head – “they have worn you out” almost seems to imply that Jeremiah had chosen to allow all that he had seen and experienced to affect his mission and calling.

Jeremiah lamented and complained that God was absent. God, however, questioned Jeremiah’s endurance – “how will you compete with horses?”

## APPLICATION

- Life's circumstances can wear us out. Are there any circumstances in your life now that you have allowed to do that?
- As we follow and serve God, we might question His presence as we see that nothing has changed. Are there any such questions running through your mind?
- At the heart of God's question to Jeremiah is a call to persevere and that is a call for us today. Let us respond to Him.

## PRAYER

Father, help me persevere in all that you have shown me and called me to do. Even when I meet trials of various kinds, Lord, may I count it as joy knowing that the testing of my faith produces perseverance and when perseverance has done its work, I may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. This, I pray in your name, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise Christ, the Head of our church

- Pray for ways we might, like living stones, build up His spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5)
- Pray for each disciple group to live up to its calling of making disciples for Jesus

## MY REFLECTION

In this devotion, each Sunday has been set aside as a time for you to practise the spiritual discipline of solitude and silence, where you spend time with Jesus in silent reflection, to hear Him and respond to Him.

Mark 6:30-32

*The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.*

Close your eyes, relax, still your mind and tell Jesus, "Lord Jesus, I'm here!"

Be still. Wait. Rest.

- Think about something that brought you joy this week. Give thanks to God.

Matthew 11:28

*Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

- Talk to Jesus about the things that troubled your heart this week. Give these burdens (worries, fears, anger, hurts, etc) to Jesus. Receive rest from Him.



Proverbs 3:5-6

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*

- Commit your upcoming week to Jesus (name the key events and activities). Ask Him for wisdom and guidance for decisions that need to be made and strength for the week ahead. Be open to anything Jesus may want to say to you or show you.

MY REFLECTION

PUT ON CHRIST

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## LET'S READ

Colossians 3:12-14

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

## LET'S LEARN

ACTIVITY: Using Charades or Pictionary, take turns to act or draw out acts of kindness you have experienced. Talk about when this happened. How did you feel showing and receiving kindness?

EXPLAIN: As God's chosen ones, we connect others to Jesus. We are to put on His character of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. We are to extend forgiveness and love to one another so that others can see Jesus in us.

Every day, we can choose to be self-centred or God-centred. Do we only think of what we like, what we want, or how we feel? For example, we are rude, insist on getting our own way, throw tantrums and refuse to do assigned household chores or school work.

Or we can choose to let Jesus' love flow in us and obey His call to be helpful, kind, loving, gentle, patient and forgiving. For example, we share what we have, befriend our neighbours and the people who keep our estate clean, look out for lonely relatives and give to the poor and needy.

Every day, as we put on our OOTD (outfit of the day) remember to first put on Christ and His loving character and walk with others!

## LET'S DISCUSS

- Who can you show kindness to?
- Is there anyone you are upset with and need to forgive?
- Have you made someone sad and need to seek forgiveness?
- Who is God showing you to cheer with a visit, phone call or video call?
- Is there someone you can make a card for or send a gift to?

## LET'S PRAY

Dear Lord Jesus, thank you that we belong to you. Please fill us with your love every day as we choose to put on Christ. Lead us to reach out to others and show them your love. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

## OUR REFLECTION

## YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

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### OBSERVATION

Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians that we are God's creation, a citizen of His kingdom and a child of God.

You are God's creation. You were created in Christ Jesus with a purpose, that is to walk in the good works that the Father meant for you walk in even before you were born. You were made to be a blessing.

You are a citizen of God's kingdom. With other fellow believers, you have access to the privileges, rights and responsibilities of a citizen of God's kingdom. As representatives of the kingdom of light, we walk in all that is good, right and true to the world.

You are a child of God. It is by God's will and grace that we are adopted as sons and daughters. Through the sacrifice of Jesus, you and I are now members of the household of God and His dearly beloved children.

We who have tasted and continue to taste God's love can now walk in love.

### APPLICATION

How are you living out the different aspects of your identity in Christ?  
What is one thing you can do to grow in each of these aspects?

- God's creation – walking in good works
- Citizen of God's kingdom – walking in all that is good, right and true
- Child of God – walking in love

## PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for Christ's great sacrifice for me. Thank you that in Christ, I am your creation, a citizen of your kingdom and a child of yours. Direct me to walk in good works, in all that is good, right, and true and in love that I may glorify you. Hallelujah! In Jesus' name, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise Jesus who calls us to be His disciples

- Pray for BMC to nurture disciples who will
  - impact the different spheres of influence in Singapore and the world
  - serve the needy in our community through outreach and social concerns activities

## MY REFLECTION

## HARD SAYINGS BUT LIFE-GIVING

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### OBSERVATION

1. A huge crowd – a multitude of 5000 witnessed Jesus healing the sick and were miraculously fed. The following day, they went in search of Jesus. He perceived their intent and exhorted them not to be satisfied with material things but to seek spiritual and eternal things. Piqued by Jesus' challenge, they wanted what Jesus offered – the bread of life.
2. The Jews – Jesus began to teach them about the sacred topic of His body and His blood that will lead to eternal life. They started to grumble against Jesus and His teaching.
3. Many disciples – even so-called disciples could not comprehend Jesus' hard teachings and started to argue sharply among themselves. But Jesus insisted that His words were spirit and they were life. Many disciples could not take it, turned back and no longer followed Him.
4. The Twelve disciples – a trend had been set by those who left Jesus; that once an unacceptable teaching was broached, people opted to leave. Will these Twelve, the close associates of Jesus also leave due to His hard teachings? Remarkably, Peter mouthed what must have been supernaturally revealed to him, that “you have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God!”

### APPLICATION

- Do you have your favourite Christian “heroes”, preachers or writers in your life? Go ahead and name them in this private exercise.
- Now just imagine that 15-20 years later they somehow flipped and returned to become “secular”. Whose “religious” words would sustain you now?

- What is your own experience of Jesus and His personal word to you that you know will not be diminished by any upsetting or powerful trend?
- Start reading the gospels with this mantra at the back of your mind: “Jesus, I want to see only you more clearly.”

## PRAYER

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for being my jealous lover. You want me only for yourself and not to share me with anyone else. Indeed Lord, like Peter, I want to say there is no one else that I can go to because only you are the giver of life and eternity. Holy Spirit help me in this wondrous journey of following only my Lord Jesus; and in that measure heal, deliver and bless others like He did. Amen.

## PRAYER & PRAISE

Praise our faithful God who sustains us even to our old age (Isaiah 46:4)

- Pray for the elderly in our midst
  - protection of physical, mental and spiritual health
  - renewed zeal to pursue Jesus and His cause

## MY REFLECTION

## YET NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS YOU WILL

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### OBSERVATION

This passage reminds us how Jesus was truly man despite His divine nature.

As the Son of God, He was given a very difficult task. He was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Thank God not many of us truly experience sorrow to the point of death in our lives. Jesus, in His short life, had to experience this sorrow.

Jesus prayed and asked His Father, “if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” (Matthew 26:39b) Jesus prayed once, then a second time.

After that, Jesus prayed a third time. When we pray repeatedly about something, it means a lot to us.

And Jesus ended His prayer saying that God’s will be done.

### APPLICATION

We like to take things into our own hands. As Christians, we are reminded to surrender everything into God’s hands.

There was a time when I wrestled with God regarding my career. Being an accounting graduate, I could be an accountant. But I did not want to remain in the profession forever. I wanted to be promoted and I was good at what I did. At the cross, I struggled. Like Jesus did, I prayed that His will be done and not mine. Finally, I surrendered and felt so much happier.

I prayed that if it was His will that I remained an accountant, I wanted to be a happy one. I want to do my work well wherever He places me.



- What is the one thing you are struggling to surrender? How will you surrender and trust His will in your life?
- Share a recent incident or situation when you surrendered to His will and it set you free.

## PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for the struggles you have placed in our lives. Use them to draw us nearer to you. Thank you for sending Jesus as the perfect example for us. He taught us to surrender to Your will and not choose our own. Help us to learn from Jesus daily, freely and joyfully. In Jesus' most precious name, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise Jesus who bids the children to come to Him unhindered

- Pray for the young in our midst
  - the children to be discipled in God-fearing families/communities and not by the world
  - the youth to be established in their faith, to pursue a personal relationship with Jesus

## MY REFLECTION

## THE JOY OF OBEDIENCE

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### OBSERVATION

As His disciples, the Lord continually invites us to experience Him through “joyful obedience”.

To many, “joyful obedience” seems an oxymoron. The word “obedience” conjures up the image of painful sacrifice – we must give up something precious to obey. Perhaps “grudging obedience” is more accurate.

As Jesus’ disciples, it means following His footsteps. Jesus valued and looked forward to what would come from obeying the Father so much that He was willing to go through the horror of everything He had to endure.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus means intentionally looking away from all else and choosing to look only at Jesus. He is our perfect example and our ultimate reward! He gives us complete joy.

Our obedience is joyful because it brings freedom from all bondage. Jesus paid the price on the cross, so we do not need to. We only reap the benefits of obedience in the victorious and abundant life.

We stumble when our eyes are fixed on the world, the shiny distractions or the disasters before us. We take our eyes off Jesus, who is the solution, the way, the greatest prize.

We will never get to the right destination by looking in the wrong direction. We will never experience the all-surpassing joy of obedience if we fear missing out on the world’s counterfeit happiness.

Jesus came so we can live life to the full, in complete joy, for His yoke is easy and His burden light.

## APPLICATION

- Consider what brings you the most joy. If it is anything/anyone else but Jesus, ask yourself what is of greater value/importance to you.
- Meditate on what fullness of joy in Jesus means.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to uproot all idols/distractions so you can see Jesus clearly and He can take His rightful place in your life for you to experience His fullness of joy.

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we praise and worship you for who you are. Thank you for giving us Jesus as our example to follow. Thank you, Jesus, for demonstrating what joyful obedience is. For the joy set before you, you endured the cross in obedience to the Father, that we may be the recipients of our full inheritance as sons and daughters of the King. Help us Lord, to choose you to the exclusion of all else every day. In your name we pray, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise our sovereign God who establishes all authorities

- Pray for Singapore's leaders
  - to lead with wisdom and hearts of compassion
  - to be led by the spirit of the fear of the Lord

## MY REFLECTION

## WALK BY THE SPIRIT

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### OBSERVATION

What is the “flesh”, according to this portion of Scripture?

It is the part of our nature that is prone to sin and opposed to God. The flesh refers to our passions and desires that are opposite to what the Spirit wants. When we are proud and boastful or envious of others, when we cause division between friends or hurt others with careless words, we are behaving in the flesh.

What are we to do with the flesh? We are to crucify the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24). That means we nail the flesh to the cross of Jesus. This is of course not a literal act but a deeply spiritual one that signifies a decision to surrender our fleshly nature to Jesus.

Because Jesus took our sin and iniquity upon Himself when He was crucified on the cross, those who belong to Him can crucify our flesh by nailing it to His cross. Crucifying the flesh is often painful because we struggle to let go of the sinful pleasures or something we love that is not good for us. But dealing with our flesh is very necessary if we want to grow to become more like Jesus.

Galatians 5:16 gives the key to not gratifying the desires of the flesh: walk by the Spirit. How do we walk by the Spirit?

God has given the Holy Spirit to live in those who belong to Jesus. The Holy Spirit helps us to know God as we feed on His Word and empowers us to obey God. To walk by the Spirit is to live in dependence on the Holy Spirit continually, to let Him influence the way we conduct ourselves and to let Him direct our steps. In the face of temptations, turn to Jesus and let the Holy Spirit help us overcome the desires of the flesh.

## APPLICATION

- Think of an area where you are struggling with the desires of the flesh.
- Picture yourself going to Jesus at the cross and nailing this fleshly desire on the cross of Jesus. Then pray the prayer below.

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I am very sorry for \_\_\_\_\_ (name the fleshly behaviour). I choose to surrender this behaviour to you. I crucify the flesh with its passions and desires by nailing this on the cross of Jesus. Thank you for giving me the Holy Spirit to live in me. I choose today to walk by the Spirit and not to gratify the desires of the flesh. I choose to depend on the Holy Spirit for power to obey God so that I will become more and more like Jesus, my Saviour and my Lord. In your name I pray, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise our Redeemer, who redeems our failures and regrets and restores us

- Commit all our regrets to the One who makes all things new
- Pray for disentanglement from past regrets, to be healed by Christ's redemptive grace

## MY REFLECTION

## COME TO ME AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST

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### OBSERVATION

Matthew 11:25-30 can be understood in three parts.

The first is Jesus' declaration that it is the Father's will that the things of the Kingdom of God are revealed not to the wise but to those who are like little children (vv.25-26). Many intellectuals eschew religion and consider those who follow a faith as weak.

Jesus upturns that notion, thanking God that it is, in fact, His will to hide the things of the Kingdom from those who rely on their intellect. Dependence upon self and overconfidence in what we know leads to our downfall.

We need to have our logic and intellect intact and simultaneously engage our spirit of humility and exercise our faith, in order to see the truth of God and His Kingdom and most of all His Son Jesus Christ.

Christ says here in the second part that the Father has handed over to Him, not some things, not many things, but ALL things (v.27). That makes Jesus the equal of God. God has handed to Him not just the universe but all power as well. The Father knows the Son and vice versa. And the knowledge of the Father is revealed, not to everyone, but to whom the Son chooses.

This is the second level of knowing. First, one must exercise faith in conjunction with intellect. Second, the Son must be acknowledged and believed in, for the Father to be revealed.

The third section of this passage gives us the incentive to believe in the Lord Jesus (vv.28-30). He extends a personal invitation to those who are weary and burdened to go to Him directly and He will give them rest.

Christ provides the rest we seek. He did not say “you will get rest”, but “I will give you rest”. What an assurance this is, that the Son of God, equal to God, invites us to go directly to Him with all that troubles us. Seek Jesus directly, He will give you rest. It is what He has promised.

## APPLICATION

Think of what has troubled you in the past, what is troubling you in the present and what might trouble you in the future. Make a conscious decision to hand over these troubles to Jesus and trust Him for the outcome. No burden is too small (or too big) to present to the Lord Jesus. He never said, “don’t trouble me with your small problems.”

## PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, today I come to you with my own particular burdens. I am worried about my health. I am worried about my finances. I am worried about my relationships. I am worried about my work or studies. I am worried about my sin. I hand them all over and ask you to give me your yoke instead, the yoke of joyful obedience, knowing that you grant joy when I obey and trust in you. Thank you for hearing my prayer, Amen.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise our King of kings and Lord of lords

- Pray for the nations
  - the rulers will rule with mercy and act justly on behalf of the people
  - the churches will grow and stand firm on God’s truth and righteousness

## MY REFLECTION

In this devotion, each Sunday has been set aside as a time for you to practise the spiritual discipline of solitude and silence, where you spend time with Jesus in silent reflection, to hear Him and respond to Him.

Mark 6:30-32

*The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.*

Close your eyes, relax, still your mind and tell Jesus, "Lord Jesus, I'm here!"

Be still. Wait. Rest.

- Think about something that brought you joy this week. Give thanks to God.

Matthew 11:28

*Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

- Talk to Jesus about the things that troubled your heart this week. Give these burdens (worries, fears, anger, hurts, etc) to Jesus. Receive rest from Him.



Proverbs 3:5-6

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*

- Commit your upcoming week to Jesus (name the key events and activities). Ask Him for wisdom and guidance for decisions that need to be made and strength for the week ahead. Be open to anything Jesus may want to say to you or show you.

MY REFLECTION

## LIGHT OF THE WORLD

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### LET'S READ

Matthew 5:14-15

*You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.*

### LET'S LEARN

ACTIVITY: This is best done in a dark room just before the children sleep. Get the children in bed and switch off the light. Shine a torchlight on yourself.

ASK: "If you are in a dark room, what would you want to have?" After getting some answers, say: "Obviously, you will want lights so that you can see things around you!" Now hand out flashlights to the children and let them play as you explain.

ASK: "If you have the light, would you keep it hidden?" Listen to their explanations, then say: "Yes, if you have the light, you will want to shine your light so that you and others can see around you."

SAY: "Jesus says in Matthew 5:14-15 that we are the light of the world. No one having a light in a dark room will keep it switched off. So, as you are shining your torchlights around now, you are to let your light shine so that others might see God and His good works, giving glory to our Father in heaven."

## LET'S DISCUSS

Read out and discuss the following questions:

- How can you shine your light before others? (For example, doing good things and giving glory to God; having good relationships with everyone, including your siblings, so that people will see the love that is in your hearts; telling your friends about your faith so that they may know our Father in heaven.)
- Which ones would you do this week/month? (Each family member, including parents, should share and commit to something and track it over the week/month.)

## LET'S PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross for our sins. Help us as we commit to shining our light to the world as you have said in Matthew 5:14-15. May your love that you have freely given to us be what people see in us wherever we go, Amen.

## OUR REFLECTION

## KEEPING THE HABIT OF DAILY DEVOTION

If you have been using this devotion regularly, by now you would have established a rhythm in your daily routine where you are able to spend time with the Father.

Experts believe that it takes an average of 66 days to form a habit, but these devotions only cover half of that! The goal now, therefore, is to keep up this rhythm and turn it into a lifelong habit.

To help you achieve this, here are some tips and resources.

### **Tip 1. Put it into your lifestyle**

The philosopher Desiderius Erasmus said, “A nail is driven out by another nail; habit is overcome by habit.” For daily devotions to become a habit, it needs to have a place in your lifestyle. This means you might have to give up some other habit.

For example, to get up early for devotions or quiet time, you’ll need to stop keeping late nights. If your habit in the morning is to grab your phone to scroll through social media feeds, then you’ll have to change that to opening your Bible app to scroll through your Bible reading plan!

What habit do you need to change?

### **Tip 2. Put it into your friendships**

An old saying goes, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” I’m sure you can think of past hobbies or activities that you used to enjoy but have stopped because of lack of interest or time.

To ensure you continue your daily quiet time journey, get a disciple group member or a good friend to journey with you. Encourage and excite each other by sharing what you have learnt or heard from God daily or prayers that have been answered.

### **Tip 3. Put it into your journal**

Besides helping us to remember what we learnt from each daily devotion, here are three good reasons to journal:

1. It helps you organise and focus your thoughts. This is the difference between a deep and meaningful time with God and a merely superficial one. Writing forces you to slow down and think.
2. It creates a record of your spiritual growth journey. Years, or even months from now when you flip back the pages of your journal, you'll be surprised to see how your quiet time with God has influenced your words and thoughts.
3. It leaves a great legacy for your children. It shows them what an honest, faithful journey with God looks like and it encourages them to have their own quiet time journey.

You can write down a prayer, a commitment, a thanksgiving or a Biblical truth that spoke to you. It can be a sketch or an essay. You can even write your own SOAP! All you need is a notebook and a few minutes.

## Devotional Resources

*Our Daily Bread Ministries* – Beyond the usual Daily Bread booklet we are familiar with, ODB Ministries publishes lots of resources for personal devotions such as the *Journey Through* series for free.

You can browse them here:

- <https://odb.sg/library/> or try their reading plans  
<https://odb.sg/reading-plans/>

*Scripture Union* also publishes devotionals such as the *Remember Jesus* series.

- <https://www.su.org.sg/product-page/remember-jesus-volume-i-ii-iii>

Or you can consider *From Seed To Fruit*, a personal devotion for spiritual growth.

- <https://bit.ly/1017BookOrder>

If you prefer electronic resources, the popular YouVersion Bible app has many Bible reading plans.

If you don't have the phone app, you can browse them here:

- <https://www.bible.com/en-GB/reading-plans>

Bible Gateway also has many classic devotionals here:

- <https://www.biblegateway.com/devotionals/>

In addition to the above, there are countless choices available in Christian bookshops. We hope your quiet time journey with the Father will be fruitful, edifying and long-lasting.

Let's start the habit today!