



# മുന്തിരിത്തോട്ടത്തിന്റെ കാവൽക്കാരൻ

“എന്നെ മുന്തിരിത്തോട്ടങ്ങൾക്ക് കാവലാക്കി, എന്റെ സ്വന്ത മുന്തിരിത്തോട്ടം ഞാൻ കാത്തിട്ടില്ല താനും” - ഉത്ത. 1:6.

പഴയ പുതിയ നിയമങ്ങളിൽ വളരെയധികം പരാമർശിക്കപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ഒന്നാണ് മുന്തിരിവള്ളിയും, മുന്തിരിത്തോട്ടവും. പഴയ നിയമ യിസ്രായേലിനെ അഥവാ യെഹൂദാ ജാതിയേയും പുതിയ നിയമ സഭയേയും മുന്തിരിത്തോട്ടത്തോട് ഉപമിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതായി നാം കാണുന്നു. അതുപോലെ തന്നെ, കർത്താവായ യേശു തന്റെ പരസ്യ ശുശ്രൂഷാ വേളയിൽ മുന്തിരിത്തോട്ടവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെടുത്തി പല ഉപമകളും പറഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്.

വളരെയേറെ പരിചരണം ആവശ്യമായ ഒരു ചെടിയാണ് മുന്തിരി. തോട്ടക്കാരൻ തന്റെ സമയവും, പണവും അദ്ധ്വാനവുമെല്ലാം ചിലവഴിച്ച്, ഫലത്തിനായി കാത്തിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ ഫലം ലഭിക്കാതെ വരികയോ, കാട്ടുമുന്തിരി കായ്ക്കുകയോ ചെയ്താൽ തോട്ടക്കാരനാണുകുന്ന മാനസിക വ്യഥ വളരെ വലുതാണ്. മുതൽ മുടക്കിയവനെ വേദന വരു - വേലക്കാരൻ അത്ര വേദനയൊന്നും കാണുകയില്ല. ദൈവസഭയും മുന്തിരിത്തോട്ടത്തിന്റെ ഉടയവൻ കർത്താവും അതിനായി മുതൽ മുടക്കിയത് തന്റെ സ്വന്ത രക്തവുമാണ്.

തന്റെ തോട്ടത്തിൽ നടപ്പിരിക്കുന്ന മുന്തിരിവള്ളികളെ ചെറുകുറുക്കന്മാർ നശിപ്പിക്കാതിരിക്കാൻ തോട്ടക്കാരൻ അതിന് വേലികെട്ടി വീളവെടുപ്പിനുവേണ്ടി ചക്കു കുഴിച്ചു, ഗോപുരവും പണിതു. അതിനെ പരിപാലിച്ച് ഫലമെടുക്കുവാൻ കുടിയാന്മാരെ ഏൽപ്പിച്ചു (മത്താ. 21: 33-41). എന്നാൽ തങ്ങളെ ഏൽപ്പിച്ച ശുശ്രൂഷ വിശ്വസ്തതയോടെ ചെയ്യാതെ യജമാനനെ ധിക്കരിച്ച വേലക്കാരെ ഉടയവൻ തൽസ്ഥാനത്തുനിന്നു നീക്കുന്നതായി നാം കാണുന്നു.

യജമാനൻ കെട്ടിയ വിശുദ്ധിയുടെ വേലികളെ പൊളിച്ച്, പല മുന്തിരിത്തോട്ടങ്ങളും നശിപ്പിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള ചെറുകുറുക്കന്മാരെ അകത്തു കയറ്റുന്ന പലരെയും ഇന്ന് കാണുവാൻ കഴിയും. മുന്തിരിത്തോട്ടത്തെ കാത്തു സൂക്ഷിക്കേണ്ടവർ തന്നെ അതിന്റെ വേലി പൊളിക്കുന്ന അവസ്ഥ നിർഭാഗ്യകരം തന്നെ.

ദുർന്നടപ്പ്, അശുദ്ധി, സമ്പത്തിക ക്രമക്കേടുകൾ എന്നിവ മൂലം സഭയിലും സമൂഹത്തിലും

മാന്യത നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടവരെ ദൈവസഭയുടെ പുറത്ത് നിർത്താൻ വചനം പറയുമ്പോൾ, അവർക്ക് ഓശാന പാടി അകത്തിരുത്തുവാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നവർ ആരായാലും അവർ ദൈവസഭയെ ദ്രോഹിക്കുകയാണ് ചെയ്യുന്നത്. ആധുനിക പെന്തക്കോസ്തു സഭകളുടെ മൂല്യഗോഷണത്തിന് കാരണവും ഇതു തന്നെയാണ്. “അനേകം ഇടയന്മാർ എന്റെ മുന്തിരിത്തോട്ടം നശിപ്പിക്കുകയും, എന്റെ ഓഹരിയെ ചവിട്ടിക്കളയുകയും, എന്റെ മനോഹര ഓഹരിയെ ശൂന്യമരുഭൂമി ആക്കുകയും ചെയ്തിരിക്കുന്നു” (യിര. 12:10) - എന്ന് പ്രവാചകൻ പറഞ്ഞത് എത്രയോ സത്യം!

“ഞാൻ എന്റെ സഭയെ പണിയും, പാതാള ഗോപുരങ്ങൾ അതിനെ ജയിക്കയില്ല” എന്ന് യേശു കർത്താവ് പറഞ്ഞു. സഭയുടെ നാഥൻ കർത്താവും, അത് പണിയുന്നത് പരിശുദ്ധാത്മാവുമാണ്. അങ്ങനെയെങ്കിൽ ദൈവസഭയെ പിളർത്തുന്നവരിൽ വ്യാപരിക്കുന്ന ആത്മാവ് ഏത്? അകാരണമായി സഭകളിൽ ഭിന്നിപ്പുണ്ടാക്കി, അതിനെ പിളർത്തുന്നവരെ കുറ്റപ്പെടുത്തേണ്ടതിനു പകരം, അവർക്കു വേണ്ടി തണൽ മരങ്ങൾ വെച്ചുപിടിപ്പിക്കുന്നത് തികച്ചും അപലപനീയം തന്നെയാണ്.

ദൈവസഭയുടെ ചിലവിൽ പണവും പ്രതാപവും ഉണ്ടാക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്ന പലരെയും ഇക്കാലങ്ങളിൽ കാണാൻ കഴിയുന്നു. തോട്ടത്തിന്റെ കാവൽക്കാരൻ ഉടമസ്ഥൻ കൂലി നൽകാതിരിക്കില്ല. എന്നാൽ ‘കിമ്പള’ത്തിനുവേണ്ടിയുള്ള തത്രപ്പാടിൽ അവിഹിതമായ പലതിനും കൂട്ടുനിൽക്കാൻ പലരും പ്രലോഭിക്കപ്പെടുന്നു.

ദൈവസഭയുടെ സുരക്ഷയും, വളർച്ചയുമാണ് ഏതൊരു വിശ്വാസിയുടെയും ശുശ്രൂഷകന്റെയും പ്രഥമ ലക്ഷ്യമായിരിക്കേണ്ടത്. അതൊരു കർത്തവ്യമായി കാണാതെ, മുന്തിരിവള്ളികളെ പിഴുതുമാറ്റുകയും തോട്ടത്തെ തുണ്ടുകളാക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നവർക്കെതിരെ സഭാ വിശ്വാസികളും, നേതൃത്വവും ഏറെ ജാഗ്രത പുലർത്തേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു.

നൂറുമേനി വിളവ് യജമാനന് നൽകുന്ന തോട്ടങ്ങളായി നമ്മുടെ സഭകൾ തീരട്ടെ. ദൈവം നമ്മെ ഓരോരുത്തരേയും മുന്തിരിത്തോട്ടങ്ങൾക്ക് കാവലാക്കിയിരിക്കുന്നു. നമ്മിൽ ഭരമേൽപിക്കപ്പെട്ട തോട്ടവും സ്വന്തതോട്ടവും കാത്തുസൂക്ഷിച്ച് ഉടമസ്ഥന് ഫലം കൊടുപ്പാൻ ദൈവം നമ്മെ സഹായിക്കട്ടെ.

മുന്തിരിവള്ളികളെ പിഴുതു മാറ്റുകയും തോട്ടത്തെ തുണ്ടുകളാക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നവർക്കെതിരെ സഭാ വിശ്വാസികളും, നേതൃത്വവും ഏറെ ജാഗ്രത പുലർത്തേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു.



Mathews Paul

# "Agape - love"

The Bible teaches us that love is a fruit of the Spirit and it has supremacy over the gifts of the Spirit. In fact St. Paul argues that the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit is useless if devoid of love. Being devoid of love is a state of existence which can be very well described as "being nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2) and such lives "gain nothing" (1 Cor. 13:3).

The love mentioned in this passage is a entirely different type of love, very different from what we usually mean by it. The Greek word AGAPE is consistently used throughout the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 13, the greatest poem on love.

It was a common word for love which found a new meaning in the New Testament because of the experience of love that the writers had. Their experience was different from those who lived before their era, before Christ came in to this world to put up a magnificent show of this special love.

The translators of the Old Testament into Greek who lived about 200 years before Christ had many Greek words to choose from to translate the word, "love." So, they chose as they thought fitting for the context of each occurrence in the Hebrew bible. The word AGAPE is used for love only 20 times in the entire Old Testament in Greek though the word love comes more 500 than times! However, the New Testament writers use the word AGAPE 116 times (75 times by Paul alone) though the New Testament is only one third the size of the Old Testament! The reason for this use is their experience of God's love through his Son, Jesus Christ which the Hellenistic Jews missed.

This love is not a convenient love or a congenial love but a love for the most unlovable. Most of the time we love whom it is convenient to love. Inconvenience hinders such love. Haven't you seen people break up when one of the lovers change universities or move away from the other. The distance and new circumstances becomes inconvenient for love and love ends there. AGAPE love is not congenial. Congenial love is the love for the things that we like or for those of the same kind. Crows peck away the alien birds who enter their tree because they cannot love birds of other kind. Their love is congenial. Human beings also have the same mentality. It is easy to love people of our family, our country, of our skin colour and the like. Though, we may not hate people who are different from others, loving them demands effort.

However, the love that God displayed through

his son is qualitatively quite different from this. It is the love for the most unlovable, when they were most unlovable. In Romans 5:8 we see the nature of this love: "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." First of all Christ loved for the sinners whom God really doesn't like at all. The Bible says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth" (Romans 1:18). However, God is willing to love us though we do not deserve his love. The New Testament writers reserved this word for that sort of love. Secondly, God loved us with his AGAPE love when we did not deserve us. God's love for the sinners was not after their conversion to God's children. He loves them even before that, when they "were still sinners." Thank God that he did not say, "if you stop sinning I will try to love you."

The reason for the AGAPE love is not in the object of love, but proceeds from the character of the lover. God is able to love us with the AGAPE love because He is love.

John, who is known as the Apostle of Love says that God was so liberal in loving us, his love was unlimited. He uses the word "lavish" to express the manner of God's love! "How great is the love the

Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1 NIV). The most unworthy of all are the ones who are loved by this type of love.

Moreover, this love is transformative. It transforms the persons who are loved so that they look at the world and all around them with AGAPE love. This transformative power is expressed in the epistle of John. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death." (1 John 3:14 ESV). "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers." (1 John 3:16 ESV).

The reason for the AGAPE love is not in the object of love, but proceeds from the character of the lover. God is able to love us with the AGAPE love because he is love. We cannot love others with AGAPE love unless we are transformed by this love. That love transforms our world-views, the quality of service, and all that we do and think. That is why this love has the supremacy over all the magnificent gifts of the Spirit and display of spiritual power.

AGAPE love is transformative. It transforms the persons who are loved so that they look at the world and all around them with AGAPE love.



**Rev. Dr. Paulson Pulikkottil**

heads the Department of Biblical Studies at Union Biblical Seminary, Pune and pastors 'The Community of the Redeemed' Church, Pune. *His blogs can be read at <http://paulsonp.blogspot.com/>*

# Mourn *and be comforted!*

*"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matthew 5:4)*



**Dr. George Samuel**

formerly a nuclear scientist, is currently Director of Value Education Centre, Tiruvalla, Kerala.

The beatitudes tell how to be blessed. The kind of blessedness told here is about the happiness that is independent of outward circumstances. Two aspects of receiving comfort to those who mourn may be considered here.

## Mourning that leads to the Kingdom of God

One is related to the matter of inheriting the Kingdom of God. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). How does one qualify to be in God's kingdom?

The 'poverty in spirit' is something that the physically affluent may not be able to grasp properly. In modern days, we witness several people in the race of 'filling their pockets'. Many of them are not aware that they are trying to fill their pockets at the expense of 'emptying their hearts'. They are poor in spiritual matters, and they may not agree about their poverty in spirit, even if it is brought to their notice.

The tendency these days is to use God in order to be blessed. We witness large crowds

during certain events where such promises are announced, especially about the material benefits of trusting God and becoming a child of God. Their interest is to use God in order to enjoy 'things'. The fact is

that we are able to enjoy God when we enter into a relationship with Him. We read in Psalm 85:6 about God's people rejoicing in Him.

The motivation then must be to 'enjoy God', and 'use' whatever 'things' God gives us.

When a person becomes truly aware of his poverty in spirit, he is likely to mourn of his condition. Such an awareness of one's sinful condition that leads him to repent, paves way to the kingdom of God. Repentance and faith in Jesus make the person qualified for the Kingdom of God. Our sins distance us from God, others and ourselves. When we confess and repent, we renew our relationships. We

voluntarily submit to the rule of God. We, by distancing from other authorities like selfishness, lust for money, sin & sinful habits, pride, popularity, Satan, etc. and by coming under the authority of God, accept the totalitarian

authority of God over us.

The "mourning" part of repentance is to be considered seriously. I am reminded of a story. During an evangelistic meeting held in a school hostel the warden gave an invitation to the students to confess and repent of their sins. One student went forward and confessed that he stole three apples from the dining hall. When the warden approached the butler, he said only two apples were missing. The warden asked the student about this. He replied, "Today I stole only two apples. I confessed for three for the sake of the one that I plan to steal next Monday!"

It is contradictory that we confess and repent of our sins but go on to repeat it. In the story above, the student confessed a sin he was going to commit, well in advance. It is like

---

The "mourning" part of repentance is to be considered seriously. .... It is contradictory that we confess and repent of our sins but go on to repeat it. In the story above, the student confessed a sin he was going to commit, well in advance. It is like taking anticipatory bail!

---

taking anticipatory bail! This is never in the least advisable. But as there are greater chances of committing sins in this sinful world, we should confess with the motive of refraining from the sin. We need to remember that 'grace' is not the licence to sin but to avoid it. In order to confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed, and to develop the motive for refraining from sin, our desire of mourning is important. Not only that we are blessed by the joy that follows forgiveness, such a benefit leads us to serve others as unto the Lord. Others are also thus blessed and we get the joy of being used for noble purposes.

Being comforted in afflictions

The other aspect is the matter of being comforted, especially during suffering and pain that leads us to mourn. Jesus already told us that we will have trouble in this world (John 16:33). We read in 2 Corinthians 1:3,4 about the "Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles..."

When my son Johny (who was afflicted by a threatening illness for over 32 years) wrote about his sufferings, he commented about the comfort he received from the Lord: "I am going through sufferings and sickness all through my life for over 31 years now. I felt God's presence and comfort in such a way that I don't like to call these experiences by the term "suffering". God's enabling and comforting power I experience is much more than the measure of suffering I go through". He added, "God does not comfort us to make us comfortable, but to make us comforters". (Quote from Precious 'Thoughts for Better Living' by John George Samuel).

"God's enabling and comforting power I experience is much more than the measure of suffering I go through. God does not comfort us to make us comfortable, but to make us comforters"  
 - John George Samuel: *"Precious Thoughts for Better Living"*

The cross uniquely reveals, not a God who is disengaged from the human scene that makes us mourn. He came right down into suffering. He is right in the middle of our conflicts and struggles.

True, "we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God" (2 Corinthians 1:4).

The suffering in this world is real. We believers are not immune to the pain of this world. We share in it, and through this sharing, we become a redemptive community in this hurting world. We also get sick, meet with accidents, and become victims of evil-doers. But we can pray boldly to God in times of suffering. We can wait patiently for the good that will result from the suffering.

Biblical patience conveys the idea of positive endurance rather than quiet acceptance.

We can seek to make the best of the situation. God not only comforts, but also turns suffering into something good (Romans 8:28). God is sovereign over evil and He achieves something good out of all situations of suffering. When we consider the things that causes us to pain, the hope that God will sovereignly turn it to good fills us with unmixed joy.

The cross uniquely reveals, not a God who is disengaged from the human scene that makes us mourn. He came right down into suffering. He is right in the middle of our conflicts and struggles. God is at work through His spirit to comfort us. We can learn to live with suffering and at the same time receive comfort from the Lord.

Just as suffering is real, so are the promises of God and the power available to alleviate suffering. In this world of suffering and evil, we know that wherever we go, the God of all-compassion goes ahead of us and journeys with us, consoling, comforting and strengthening us until we see Him face-to-face. ■

"God does not comfort us to make us comfortable, but to make us comforters"

The cross uniquely reveals, not a God who is disengaged from the human scene that makes us mourn. He came right down into suffering. He is right in the middle of our conflicts and struggles. We can learn to live with suffering and at the same time receive comfort from the Lord.

# God's Book for Mankind:

- Part 7 -

## *The necessity of the Word of God*



**Dr. C.P. Varghese**

is the Founder & President of *Peniel Bible Seminary*, Peniel Children's Home & Peniel Academy, Keezhillam, Kerala.

One who is born again into the family of God desperately needs the pure milk of the Word of God. Those who are more mature in the Lord continue to need the bread, wheat, honey and such solid nutrients from the Word of God.

***Is the written Word of God necessary for any one to know that there is a God?***

**1. The written Word of God, the Holy Bible, is not necessary for any one to know that there is a living God.**

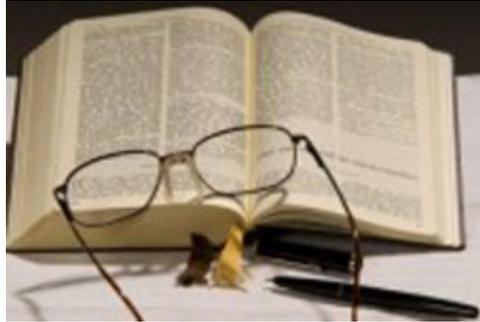
The Bible that is also called the Holy Scriptures does not argue to prove the existence of the one and only living God. The writers of the Bible presuppose that there is a living God. God the Holy Spirit who is the author of the holy Scriptures did not ask any one of the writers to prove that God is. But the holy scriptures say that those who come to God must believe that GOD IS. So the Bible begins with the majestic declaration, "IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED....."

King David, a man after God's own heart, wrote, The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky proclaims his handy work .Apostle Paul who is not any lesser than the greatest of the apostles wrote concerning this, that the existence of God is revealed in creation or nature. God gives mankind rain and seasons of fruitfulness Ever since the creation of the world His nature and power are very clearly shown. What ever can be known concerning God is very plain to any one who wants to believe.

**2. The written Word is not necessary to know a few moral laws of God**

We believe this on the basis of the writings of apostle Paul. He wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the gentiles who do not have the written word of God or Law of God do what the law requires by nature. They show that at least some of the moral laws of God are written in their heart or conscience.

***Now that we have seen that the written Word of God is not necessary for certain aspects, let us consider for what the written Word of God is necessary.***



**1. The written Word is necessary for us to know the creation history.**

Even though God did not give us much details concerning the creation of the universe, what ever information we do know and believe comes to us

through the written Word of God, which is the Bible. We know about the beginning of mankind, the fall of man and related consequences through the Bible.

**2. The written Word is necessary for us to know God's gracious plan of salvation.**

The communication of the Word of God by the Holy Spirit brings sinners under conviction and converts to Christ those who believe the Gospel. In other words the Word of God is needed to produce genuine repentance and regeneration in those who receive the word by faith in Christ Jesus. According the writing of apostle Paul, faith comes by hearing the Word of God. It is in the Bible that we have the correct information of God choosing a man by the name of Abram and through him making a nation of people and through that special line bringing His only son to be the savior of the world. Bible is necessary to know God's requirements for mankind for eternal life.

**3. The written Word is necessary for our spiritual growth and maturity.**

The Word of God is the unpolluted milk for new born spiritual babies. Just as much a baby needs pure milk for balanced healthy growth one who is born again into the family of God desperately needs the pure milk of the Word of God. Those who are more mature in the Lord continue to need the bread, wheat, honey and such solid nutrients from the Word of God. The mystery of the Church, which is the assembly of the people of God called out from both the Jews and Gentiles is known to us

# Standing in the gap!

Meditations on  
"Prayer" - 4

*"So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord God. (Ezekiel 22:30-31)*

In one of the saddest verses in the book of Ezekiel, God Himself confesses that He found no one who could stand in the gap in order to stem the tide that would inevitably bring destruction (v. 30). God could not find a qualified spiritual leader to stand before God in intercession and lead the people to repentance.

"Making a wall" gives an image of leading the people to repentance. This is what God had to say about the false prophets earlier: "You have not gone up into the gaps to build a wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle on the day of the Lord" (Ezekiel 13:5).

"Standing in the gap" gives an image of interceding to God for His people (Genesis 20:7; Exodus 32:11; Numbers 16:48). In the history of Israel, God had raised up "gap people" to stand in the breach and stay off the judgment. Moses and Phinehas were such men (Psalms 106:23,30), as were Joseph (Psalms 105:17) and Samuel (1 Samuel 3).

The imagery here is also that of a wall with a section broken down by a siege. If no soldier stands in the gap to repulse the enemy, the city surely will be taken. God represented Himself as

against His people, and He was unable to find anyone who could turn away the coming judgment. (See Ezek. 14:13–20). All classes of society were guilty before the Lord — rulers (v. 25); priests (v. 26); magistrates (v. 27); prophets (v. 28); and people (v. 29). Thus, not a righteous person, a

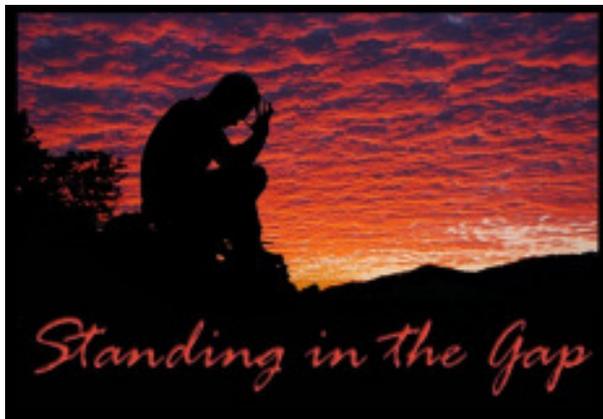
reformer or an intercessor could be found in Israel to stand before God.

God is not looking for new methods or programs, but is looking for "gap people" with the courage to stand for what is right, even if they must stand alone. They will not only build strong walls but become

walls by standing in the gap in the hour of danger. As the "gap people" we can act as go-betweens in the troubles around us by "standing in the gap" to bridge chasms of indifference and oppression. We can do what we can to stem the tide of evil and tell others of the opportunity to know God through His Son Jesus Christ. Above all, we can earnestly intercede to God on behalf of others in prayer.

Remember, one person can make all the difference!

***Will that person be YOU?*** ■



**Dr. Shibu Cherian**  
D.Min., Ph.D.

is an ordained Minister with the Church of God and serves as President of United in the WORD Ministries, Inc. He is a certified Clinical Chaplain, a Bible Teacher and a Premarital Counselor. Visit his ministry website @ <http://www.unitedintheword.com>

## The necessity of the Word of God ..... Continuation from previous page

through the written Word of God. How we would have ever known it without the Word of God?

### 4. The written Word is necessary to know the glorious future of the Redeemed

Yes, it is from the Bible that we receive knowledge that God has a wonderful plan and purpose for those who are washed by the blood of the Lamb of God who was slain on the cross of Calvary. The Bible tells us that Jesus is preparing

a bride to be spotless and blameless for the perfect bridegroom. It is only from the Bible that we know of the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. The Bible also informs that those who refuse Jesus Christ will suffer eternal punishment of those who do not obey the Gospel.. ■

**Scripture References: Gen. 1:1; Deut. 8:3; Psa. 19:1; Rom. 1:19,20; Rom. 10: 9,10,14-17; Eph. 5: 25-27; 2 Thes. 1:7,10; Titus 2: 12; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:1.**

# FAITH :

## *Mandatory For Christian Living*



**Pastor  
Shibu Joseph**  
Navi Mumbai.

Today in the age of consumerism, the television preachers have commercialized the concept of faith for their own personal advantages.

Often preachers and hearers do not comprehend the meaning of 'faith' in the way God has revealed in the scriptures. To many, faith is something like a medium to gain their ambitions and satisfy their desires. To some, faith is an escaping force from the turbulent situations they face in their lives. And for others, it is merely an optimism or a positive expectation. Today in the age of consumerism, the television preachers have commercialized the concept of faith for their own personal advantages. To an extent these sort of approaches may bring certain benefits in the life of hearers, but this, however, is not the genuine biblical faith.

On the outset it is worthwhile to understand what the possible misconceptions people do have about faith. Lim Kou, the author of a book entitled, *MAN OF FAITH*, points out a few such misconceptions. They are :

1. Our feelings / emotions about a situation indicate the quality of our faith. (But emotions are not the measure of quality of a person's faith.)
2. Believing and acting on something we do not understand is an expression of faith. (Example: Acts 19:13-16)
3. Doing something dangerous and risky are manifestations of faith. (The quality of faith cannot be judged by these kinds of acts)
4. Sincerity is the proof of faith. (But we can be very sincere and yet totally wrong. Sincerity also can be influenced by false teaching)

Besides these there may be many more aspects we can observe. However, we do not have enough time to explain. Let us therefore look into what is true faith.

Biblically, first, the true faith is to believe and rely on the truth of the WORD. The

Bible is the text book of faith. No other book in the world gives faith the way the Bible reveals and focuses. Belief in the truth is the essential element of Christian living. The truth includes total reality of divine revelations and total reality includes both seen and unseen realms of God. Paul rightly tells in 2 Thess. 2:13: "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth".

Secondly, the biblical faith is centered around the person God. Jesus said, "have faith in God" (Mark 11:22). It is in fact the foundation of Christian living. What Jesus intended is, that we cannot simply have faith in an outcome. We need to have faith in a Person. This is the unique difference of the faith of the Bible from the general concept of faith. On the other hand, we should know that what we believe is not necessarily true or what we believe do not have to be

true! Abraham believed God, not the outcome of what he believed for. Faith is not merely a symbol or a sign. But rather it is the foundation, focus and fuel to live out in the Kingdom. Many believe in the miracles and wonderful acts of God and are amazed by them. When Jesus went to His own village one day, He did a few miracles (Matt. 13:53-55). And they were all amazed at the works of Jesus, but they did not believe in Him. Even though they accepted the miracles, they refused to embrace Jesus as the Son of God.

This is today's problem too. Many look for results, outcome and miracles. When they see such miracles, they are mistified and amazed and start praising, shouting, screaming, whistling, jumping and so on. But what about the life in faith and having Jesus as the Lord? How many really want to make Him as the Master of their life? People are merely result oriented. They need only a piece of the garment of Jesus like the soldiers at the cross, not the Saviour of the cross. We must realize the fact that faith is trusting God. No matter what the outcome is, having Christ is what is essential.

---

When Jesus went to His own village one day, He did a few miracles (Matt. 13:53-55). And they were all amazed at the works of Jesus, but they did not believe in Him. Even though they accepted the miracles, they refused to embrace Jesus as the Son of God.

---

---

Many look for results, outcome and miracles. When they see such miracles, they are mistified and amazed and start praising, shouting, screaming, whistling, jumping and so on.

---

## A call to the youth

# Give Your Best, Always!

*"Skilled workers are always in demand and admired".(Prov. 22:29)*

How many times have we read over the Word of God and never really took full notice of what it has said. Very often also we do not understand the writer's intentions. It does help sometimes when we read a modern translation. Take for instance this scripture: Proverbs 22:29. In the KJV it reads: "*Seest thou a man diligent in his business*". In a modern translation (TM) it reads, "*Skilled workers are always in demand and admired*". Reading that version really got me thinking. You see, the development of our godly character will be seen in our workplace. Christians should be the best employees in the company not only achieving excellence in their special skills and work practices, but also excellence in the skill of promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to whoever they meet during the day.

Two men in the Bible that stand out as ideal men of character, excellence and diplomacy are Daniel and Joseph. These two men refused to give less than their best, both to God and those they were responsible to.

Alexander Bell's wife and mother were both deaf. Maybe that is why his



**Rev. Dr. Shibu Samuel**  
Dallas, USA

passion was to change the way people communicated with each other. For five frustrating and impoverished years, he experimented with a variety of materials in an effort to make a metal disk that vibrated in response to sounds, converting vibrations into electric signals and sending them over an electric wire.

During a visit to Washington D.C, he called on Joseph Hennery, a pioneer in electrical research, and asked for his advice. Should he let somebody else perfect the telephone or do it himself? "Do it yourself," the old pioneer told him. When Bell complained about his lack of

electrical knowledge, Hennery said, "If you don't have it, get it." So Bell studied electricity day and night. A year later, while obtaining a patent of the telephone, the officials at the patent office credited him with knowing more about electricity than all the inventors of his day combined.

Now I'm sure you will join with me after reading this story and ask: what are the keys to his success? Why did this man along with other great inventors become so successful? What keys did he use? In answer to these questions, let me list here the keys:

1. Vision, 2. Hard work, 3. Study, 4. Hope and 5. Persistence. You know the Bible emphasizes every one of them.

The question could be asked of you – what is it that burns within you? That unlocks your creativity? That energizes you? That could be the key to your future? Don't neglect it! Don't put it off!

Nehemiah started out as a writer, yet he ended up rebuilding the whole city of Jerusalem. Why? Because he heard the cry nobody else heard, saw a need nobody else was meeting and said, "Yes". That is all God requires of you today!

## Faith: Mandatory for Christian Living ..... Continuation from previous page

Look at the life of three young men in the captivity of Babylon (Dan. Ch 3). They never bothered about the consequences, but firmly declared their faith in true 'Jehovah-God' before false gods and an outrageous king. Definitely their faith was focusing in God alone and they proved the genuineness of their living faith in that foreign land. This is really marvelous and magnificent in the biblical history of faith-living. If we expect always the outcome alone we are not in the reality and truthfulness of the kingdom life.

Another aspect of true faith is doing the WORD of God. The crucial step of faith is not just to confess, '*I believe in God*' hundred times but preparing ourselves to OBEY Him. Obedience is the signature of our faith-living in God.

Obedience of faith is a challenge and may cost a heavy price in the long run. To live in the way of God is the expression of our true faith. Faith is not an answer to the question of the 'crusade preacher': '*do you believe that Jesus will do the miracle tonight?*' It is more than that. The true faith is true living, living in the WORD of the Father. Our life is not just based on what we feel to satisfy ourselves but what we have solidly imprinted in us. Jesus said to tempter in the desert that man lives not only by bread alone but by every WORD which proceeds from the Father. It is to love the truth and righteousness of God. No matter how intelligent we are and quick we are to grasp things, if we do not love the truth and righteousness of God we cannot be men of faith. The

righteous live by faith! For living in the Kingdom of the Father, faith is the air that we breath. The author of Hebrews rightly records, "and without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). This means, faith is mandatory in pleasing God. It is neither funds we offer nor sermons we preach nor programs we conduct nor the projects we plan that are pleasing to God. These things we do because God allows us to live in Him and provides His unending resources. We should be really grateful to Him for all these provisions. True faith however is much higher and supreme which enables us to relate ourselves with God the Creator and Redeemer.

*(To be continued)*



**90-day warranty for tithing: Full refund if God does not pay!**

Fellowship Church of Grapevine, a megachurch in Texas, has offered to its members a 90-day deal: Give your tithe to the church and if God does not follow His promise of blessing those who give within 90 days, a full refund of the tithe money will be given to the giver! The basis for the offer is Malachi 3:10: "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my temple. If you do," says the Lord of Heaven's armies, 'I will open the windows of Heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!'" Pastor Ed Young of Fellowship Church says: "If you are not tithing already, the 90-day Challenge is the best place to start. We commit to you that is you tithe for 90 days and God doesn't hold true to his promise of blessings, we will refund 100 percent of your tithe".

After reading the above news report, Ed Reed, a commentator has this to say:

"It turns God into a spiritual poker machine. How many families have I seen, pouring money into the church coffers, not because they want to bless the poor or are moved by the Spirit, but because they are expecting a jackpot! In the end, the few who receive the jackpot (and there are always bound to be a few) are put up on the pulpit to give their 'testimony'. The many who didn't, keep quiet, because they feel, there must be something wrong with their relationship with God. This is unsound doctrine at its worst!"

*Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7). God is not a slot machine that if you put money in you get stuff out!*

*You can give and not be blessed if you give for the wrong reason. Remember when Jesus and His disciples were in the temple watching the wealthy make a show of giving large amounts to the temple and there was a poor widow who gave two small coins. Jesus said she gave more than anyone because she gave all she had. She was giving to God from her heart, because she loved God.*

medical use.

*This is a very devious misuse of the Bible. Many people misuse the Bible to support their own agenda. We are instructed to be sober and in the right frame of mind to discern what is right and what is wrong. Being under the influence of marijuana (pot) or alcohol is just not christian behaviour!*

**Great news - A trend reversed!**

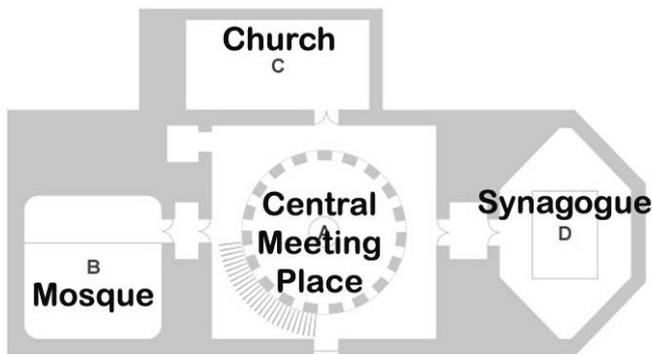
Bethany Community Church in Seattle, USA has bought a strip club known for its shady past and is transforming it into a Christian community center, as reported by Christian Post. They will have a church and a coffee shop as a form of community outreach. The church will also host community events and offer tutoring services. Pastor Scott Sund said: "When we first entered the building it had a very dark feeling; smoke filled carpets, black painted ceilings and walls, and mirrors everywhere. Before we started demolition, we met on Easter weekend and prayed and sang in the space to usher in the new story God was going to write through this place. It's God's story, we just get to play a small part". He added: "The former strip club sits beside a high school and in the midst of a place where the gospel is very much needed. We want to be a church that serves the neighborhood and brings light to the city. This location is perfect for this purpose".

*In these days, we regularly hear that age old main line churches, especially in western countries, are selling off their buildings to other buyers as they are not able to maintain them due to dwindling membership. Church buildings are being converted for other uses like theatres, temples and mosques. It is indeed heartening to read about a transaction in the reverse direction! Praise God!*

**Devil quotes the Bible**

A senator in USA is using a scripture verse (Genesis 1:29) to back her claim that marijuana should be legalized in the state. The scripture states, "Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.'" The senator interprets the scripture to mean God made the "wonderful, miraculous plant" so it should be legal for use. Her proposal is that one ounce of marijuana would be legal for recreational use and three ounces would be permissible for





**Three-in-one:  
church-mosque-synagogue!!**

Muslims, Jews and Christians are joining hands to build a place where they can all worship. The House of One, as it is being called, will be a synagogue, a church and a mosque under one roof. The winning design selected after an architecture competition is a brick building with a tall, square central tower. Off the courtyard below will be the houses of worship for the three faiths. It will occupy a prominent site in the heart of Berlin according to BBC News. Each space is designed according to the religious needs, the particularities of each faith. There are two levels in the mosque and the synagogue but there's only one level in the church. There will be an organ in the church. There are places to wash feet in the mosque.

The idea came from the Christian side of the triangle. Pastor Gregor Hohberg, a Protestant parish priest, says it will be built where the first church in Berlin, St Petri's Church, dating back to the 12th Century, was once situated. The Church was badly damaged at the end of World War Two as the Red Army liberated Berlin. The Pastor says that each faith will keep its distinctive ways within its own areas and the room in the middle will be used for dialogue and discussion.

*Let us hope that the three groups will continue to stay together under one roof!*

**Out reach program: 'Gun Raffle'!!**

A church in Missouri, USA held a Father's Day raffle and gave away two Black Rain AR15 assault rifles. All that dads had to do to enter was come to church. The church's Facebook page said, "Want to win a Black Rain AR-15? Dads, you earn an entry for yourself for each child you have". There were criticisms, but the pastor shrugged them off. He said: "The point is to get people to

church. If we get people in the door, we get to preach the gospel. If we can get more people to follow Jesus, I'll give away 1,000 guns".

*Can you believe this? Go to church to win a rifle? What kind of gospel will be preached by the pastor? Can you use any method to bring people to church? It is just unbelievable!!*

**Facebook User convicted**

International Christian Concern (ICC) reports that a Facebook user, Kerolos Shawky was sentenced to six years in prison and fined the equivalent of \$840 on charges of blasphemy and contempt of Islam for simply "liking" a Christian Facebook page by an Egyptian court. His defense lawyer plans to appeal and hopes the conviction will be reviewed soon. The lawyer said it was not Shawky's intention to insult Islam. Shawky didn't have much experience with the Internet and also suffers from poor eyesight. Shortly before the man's trial, Christian-owned property in the same village was set ablaze in what appears to be a related attack.

*Similar convictions are taking place on frivolous charges. Commentators say that the United States should use its role as a significant donor of funds to Egypt to ensure that the country protects the fundamental rights of its citizens.* ■

**Poem**

**Immanuel! Immanuel!**

Immortal is my God  
Immorality my God hates  
Indecency my God frowns at  
Irregular habits my God detests

Invite this great God into our life  
Inform this great God of our short comings  
Involve this great God in our problems  
Increase our faith in this great God.  
Illuminate ourselves with His light  
Impossible – such a state is not in my God  
Improve our relation with our Lord

Invigorate me with thy Holy Spirit Oh my God !  
Imbibe in me healthy values oh my Lord !  
Instil in me the behaviours you expect from me  
Impart in me the fruit of thy spirit  
Immerse me in thy river of life till  
I reach thy Holy Inn Oh my Lord !

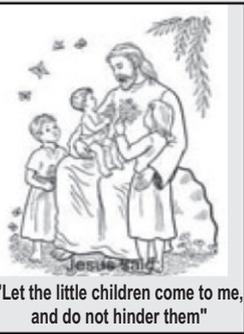
**Immauel! Immanuel! Immanuel!**



Mrs. Mary Mathew  
Mumbai.

# Children's

CORNER



## Pure in heart !

*"Blessed are the pure in heart, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mat.5:8)*



A care-taker lady tells a 3-year old child: "Anita, come quickly. It's time to take your antibiotic" and the child answers her: "Aunty, you can take the 'auntybiotic' but give me 'babybiotic' because I am only a baby. Another child tells his father matter-of-factly: "Papa give me all your money, I want to buy a 'Land Cruiser' for myself". Yet another little child tells her father who has hidden her toy to see her reaction: "Daddy, better tell the truth where you have kept my toy or else Jesus will not take you to heaven when you die". Little children are innocent. They tell what comes in their little minds. They are pure. Jesus said in Mat. 18:3: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven".

Again Jesus tells in Mat. 19:14: "Let the little children come to me..... for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these".

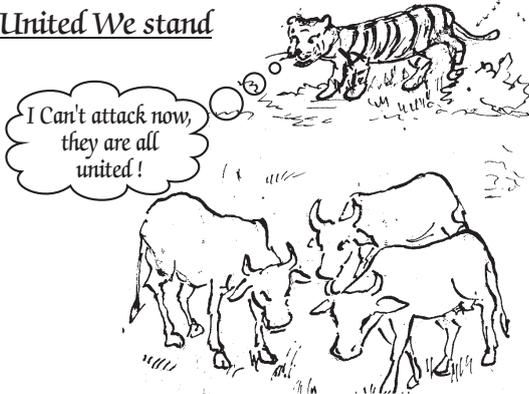
*Dear children,* God desires us to be pure and holy. Heb. 12:14 says: "...without holiness no one will see the Lord". Therefore we should keep our heart and life pure before God. We should avoid every thing that makes us

impure before God who sees our secret life. Avoid friendships with children who have bad habits. Avoid internet sites, books and movies that will corrupt your mind. Take time to read the Bible and meditate on it daily. Tell God to give you a pure heart and a right spirit (Psa. 51:10). God's word tells us in Psa. 119:11: "I have hidden your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against you". Psa.119:37 tells: "Turn my eyes away from worthless things, preserve my life according to your word". Eph. 5:5 says: "--- no immoral or impure person --- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God". *May the Lord help us to be pure and holy in His presence. God bless you.*

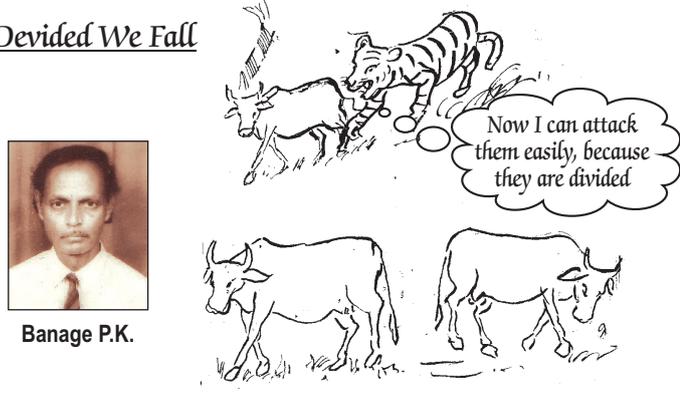


**Shiny Aunty**

### United We stand



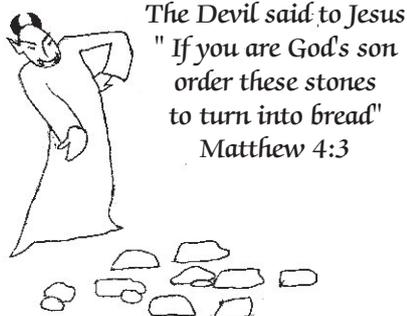
### Divided We Fall



**Banage P.K.**



**Jeff Sam Scariah**  
Kerala



**Sheba Mary Roymon**  
Bahrain

*Mary Magdalene pouring perfume at the feet of Jesus*