



True freedom in Christ

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance" (Psalms 33:12)

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed"

All nations on the earth, even though politically independent, are in a continuing struggle for freedom from economic and social problems. True freedom comes through **Christ Jesus** who sets us free!

Our nation celebrated Independence Day on August 15. We are, indeed, justifiably proud of the fact that we gained independence from foreign domination through nonviolent means. Yes, we are politically independent. But the nation is still subject to economic and social problems and we are trying to get over them. It is a continuing struggle for freedom. This is true for any nation on the face of this earth.

But Bible speaks of a blessed nation: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance" (Psalms 33:12). That nation is the 'Kingdom of God'. World's nations rise and fall, come and go. God uses nations as part of His plans and people from all nations will be part of His Kingdom. The people whom He chooses for His inheritance are those who enter the Kingdom of God through Jesus Christ. "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed"

So let us talk about that 'Nation', the Kingdom of God, whose God is the Lord. The passage, Psalms 33 speaks of the characteristics of such a nation:

A. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord:

1. A nation who acknowledges and worships the Living Lord (vs. 1-3)
2. A nation who seeks to know and does what the Word of God calls it to do (vs. 4,6)
3. A nation who FEARS the Lord and shows Him reverence (v. 8)
4. A nation who seeks the Lord's plans, not its own (vs. 10-11)
5. A nation who knows that it is accountable to the Lord - because He watches it and considers everything it does (vs. 13-15)

B. Blessed is the nation that seeks righteousness (v. 5):

We have to remember three Biblical principles about righteousness: *one*, we are not righteous by nature, *two*, we do not become righteous just by doing what is good and *three*, we are made righteous through Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:21).

C. Blessed is the nation that trusts in God (v. 21):

We are called to trust in the name of the Lord! *"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm" (Psalms 20:7,8).*

As people of God, we can live for Christ, be salt and light where we are, pray: for our leaders and depend on the Lord who is our true source of freedom, courage, and spiritual power. Let us enjoy the true freedom that we have in Christ Jesus who has made us free.



**Johnson
K. Samuel**

True freedom in Christ

What I told the incoming students: **"St. Paul has a message for the Campus Community!"**

Oral Roberts University opened today for fall semester, 2012. Thousands of new and returning students have flocked to campus with excitement, enthusiasm and optimism. Deans are welcoming students to their respective colleges and leading the orientation sessions. I welcomed a large group of undergraduate and graduate students to the College of Theology and Ministry. They have come from all corners of the United States and multiple nations of the world. They have come in obedience to God's call on their lives.

I am pleased to see so many students who chose to study Bible and Theology at a university where they could have majored in more than 60 other subjects including Engineering and Pre-Medicine. These have chosen to study theology because they have been called to preach the Gospel, teach God's people, and heal the sick. I feel encouraged and grateful to see this many

individuals called to prepare for work in the Lord's vineyard. They are of all ages and demographics. Eighteen year olds and fifty year olds are in this group. All kinds of Christian denominations and non-denominational groups are represented among them, and they have come from all walks of life. What they all have in common is the fact that they feel called to do God's work in their generation. I am encouraged.

What should I say to these students in my welcome speech? As I prayed about this, I felt led to read the pastoral epistles 1st and 2nd Timothy. As I read the books again, I felt Paul's words to Timothy might be the best message to this incoming class.

Apostle Paul met Timothy in Lystra, a tough place of ministry for the apostle. Timothy who was the son of a Gentile father and a Jewish mother became Paul's disciple and a lifelong companion in ministry. Paul loved him like a son and trusted him with many responsibilities. It is interesting that Paul's last letter was addressed to this son in the Lord. His last epistle to Timothy ends with

Paul's desire to see him one more time. The apostle asked him to come and see him before winter. He asked Timothy to bring his cloak and books which were left in Troas.

There was a strong spiritual tie between Paul and Timothy. Paul knew Timothy's godly heritage. He made reference to the faith of his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois. It is interesting to note that a mother's faith is as important and influential as the "faith of our fathers." That heritage contributed to Timothy's ministry as Paul's companion, coworker, emissary and spiritual son.

Timothy was a sincere young man. He may

have been a timid person because Paul told him not to let anyone despise his youthfulness. Timothy was told that he did not receive a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of love, power and of a sound mind.

Paul's instructions in these pastoral epistles are too extensive to be fully included in a welcome

message to theological students. So I highlighted the following four points in my message.

Keep the faith:

Paul told Timothy to keep his faith and to fight for it. A university is a place of ideas. Many young people have gone to universities where unfamiliar ideas derailed their faith. Faith is more than a belief system. Christian faith involves a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. A person can lose his faith even in a Christian university if he does not pay attention to his relationship with the Lord. Timothy was not only expected to keep the faith, but also to fight for it. This applies even more intensely today because there are many who are committed to destroying genuine faith in God and His Son Jesus

I am pleased to see so many students who chose to study Bible and Theology. ---- and they have come from all walks of life. What they all have in common is the fact that they feel called to do God's work in their generation.



Dr. Thomson K. Mathew

Dean, College of Theology and Ministry, Oral Roberts University, speaks to under-graduate and graduate students



Sovereignty of GOD



Jefreys K. Samuel

quotes several instances from history where God's sovereignty is clearly demonstrated

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 13:15)

SOVEREIGN means highest in power. God is OMNIPOTENT which means He has power over all things. God is OMNIPRESENT which means He is present everywhere at the same time. He is OMNISCIENT which means He knows all things at all times, past, present and future. Nothing is hidden from Him.

When God first created man, He created him as a perfect being. But the Sovereign God knew that man would fall even before He made man, and thus Jesus Christ was appointed from the foundation of the earth to be a sacrificial lamb to redeem man from sin. As it reads: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (the beast), whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

We are still waiting for the Lord to come and rule the earth. In Revelation, Jesus showed John His everlasting kingdom. In Revelation 11, John

heard the seventh trumpet and a loud voice echoed from heaven which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever" (v: 15).

This promise is yet to be fulfilled. God's people are anxiously waiting for that glorious day, when He shall return and make all things right.

God made a covenant with Abraham. God promised that his offspring would be like stars in heaven. Abraham called God "Sovereign Lord". Abraham trusted that God knew the future, but he wanted assurance, and so God, through a vision, made a covenant with Abram and said that his descendants would inherit the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. There was nothing Abraham or his wife Sarah could do to change God's eternal plan, and though they may have tried

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What I told the incoming students continuation from previous page

Christ. This includes scientists and philosophers who have lost their way. Paul wanted Timothy to say some day as he himself did, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim 4:7).

Guard the truth:

Truth was under attack during Paul's day. It is even more so today. False teachers were everywhere and Paul spent much of his life fighting them. He was committed to guarding the truth that was entrusted to him. He wanted Timothy to do the same. Paul wanted Timothy to guard the truth, declare it in preaching and commit it to trustworthy people. We must do the same.

Watch doctrine and life:

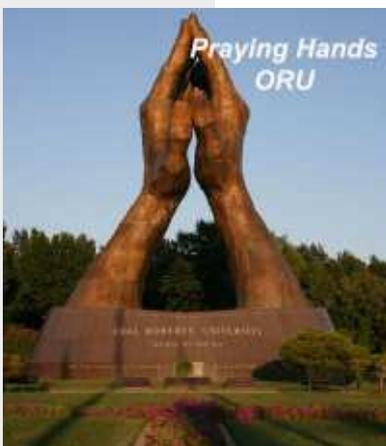
Paul wanted Timothy to pay attention to the content of his faith and his personal character. He told him to flee ungodliness and greed and to follow after

righteousness and holiness. There was a generation watching his life and ministry. The current generation also is looking for authentic faith. It is looking for people who practice what they preach. There is a shortage of integrity in the world today and the people of God must supply it.

Fan the flame:

Paul wanted Timothy to stir up the gift that was within him. Many Spirit-filled young people have gone to the university and allowed people and ideas to steal their joy. Some stopped walking in step with the Spirit. Paul told Timothy to live a Spirit-filled life. Timothy needed the leading and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to do what he was called to do. The same is true of today's ministerial trainees. They must be filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit. They must allow the gifts of the Spirit to flow through their lives and the fruits of the Spirit to grow in their lives.

The new students I addressed responded to my message in a positive manner. As they bowed in prayer, I realized that the message was not only for them. It equally applies to the faculty and the dean.



to take matters into their own hands, God's ultimate plan still prevailed. Sarah came to Abraham and said, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant (Hagar). Perhaps I can build a family through her". Abraham obeyed Sarah and slept with Hagar, and Ishmael was born, but God's plan never changed. According to God's promise, Isaac was later born to Sarah. At the same time, the Sovereign Lord purposed that there should be two nations to come out of Abraham. That was the eternal purpose of God. Perhaps if Isaac had been born before Ishmael, Sarah never would have asked Abraham to go to Hagar. There would not be a nation from Ishmael. God saw two nations live in hostility toward all his brothers. This is still going on now and it will be until second coming of Jesus.

The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23)

Isaac too could not alter the plan of God. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Esau was older and he was a skillful hunter, a man of open country while Jacob was a quiet man, but he was cunning. Isaac loved Esau because he had a taste for wild game. Rebekah loved Jacob. As the firstborn, Esau was to receive Isaac's blessing, but that was not the plan of God. Instead, Rebekah and Jacob together tricked Isaac into giving the blessing of the firstborn to Jacob, the younger son.

Thus instead of the blessing, Esau received a curse and that curse continues to this day. Jacob's children and the children of Esau are still fighting. God's promises are for Jacob and his children.

Nebuchadnezzar, was the powerful king of Babylon, who in his pride, did not recognize the Sovereignty of God over the kingdoms of men. In a dream, Nebuchadnezzar was compared to a tree that was large and strong and its top touched the sky. It was visible to the ends of the earth. It was full of beautiful leaves and fruits. In a vision he saw a holy one coming down from heaven with a loud voice saying: "Cut down the tree and trim off

its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and birds from its branches. But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field" (Dan 4:13-15).

Daniel interpreted the dream for King Nebuchadnezzar and told him that unless he renounced his sins, his kingdom would be destroyed. Daniel said: "This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my Lord the king: you will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven" (Dan. 4:24-25).

The king ignored the warning and suffered the consequence as predicted by Daniel. In one moment he prided himself for building the great Babylon, and in the next moment he was driven away from people to live with wild animals until he acknowledged that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms.

Saul was determined to wipe away the new religion (Christianity) and persecuted Christians all over the country. But the sovereign Lord chose Saul to be a powerful evangelist to spread the gospel all over the known world. Christians were fearful of him. But Saul was arrested by the light from heaven and blinded on the way to Damascus to persecute Christians. Saul (Apostle Paul) became a powerful evangelist for God. He wrote many books in the Bible demonstrating that Jesus Christ is the only Savior.

Christian brothers and sisters, do not be anxious about anything. God knew you even before you were born. He knows your future. Jesus is coming soon. Hold on to Him whatever happens to you. He will carry you through. Amen.



"Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'" "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," the Lord replied. "Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me (Acts 26:15,16)

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God's Book for Mankind:

A brief history of the English Bible



Dr. C.P. Varghese

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

Dr. Varghese begins a series of Bible Study on the Books of the Bible

Since the beginning of human history millions of books have been written generation after generation by men and women of many cultures and languages. According to the library of congress website there are thirty million catalogued books in the library of congress.

But there is only one book which can be called "The Book of God", that is the Holy Oracles of the One and only true Triune God. It is known around the world as The Holy Bible. God is the Author of this book who over the span of 1500 years inspired forty men by the Holy Spirit to be the writers of God's Word. From the Greek word "Biblos" the English word "Bible" is derived.

The Bible is called The Word of God, the Word of the Lord, The Word of Christ, the Word of Life, the Word of Truth, the Word of the Gospel, the Word of Reconciliation, the Law of the Lord, the Testimony of the Lord, the Statutes of the Lord, the Precepts of the Lord, the Commandments of the Lord and the Ordinances of the Lord.

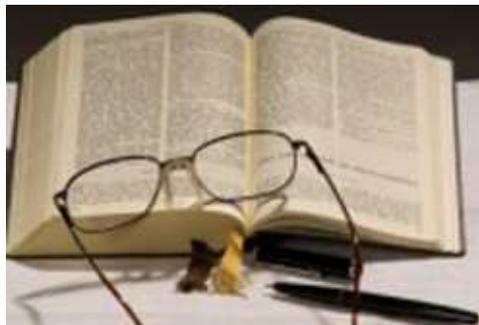
The Bible is divided into two major sections known as the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word "testament" means covenant. Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and most of the New Testament was written in Greek, with a few phrases in Aramaic.

Septuagint: In Alexandria, Egypt about seventy two Hebrew and Greek scholars and scribes, six from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, translated the Old Testament into Greek. This is called the Septuagint. This happened about two hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ. Greek was the most common language of the people of the known world at that time.

Latin Vulgate: St. Jerome (A.D. 342- 420) from Italy translated the Bible from Greek and Hebrew to Latin known as the Latin Vulgate. Since Latin became the common people's language at that time in Western Europe instead of Greek. This is a very influential translation of the Bible.



John Wycliffe



English: John Wycliffe (A.D. 1320-1384) was a Catholic clergyman and a popular professor at Oxford University in England. He translated the Bible from Latin (Latin Vulgate) to English for the first time with the help of many who were also interested in the same. His followers,

known as Lollards, shared the Word of God to the common people. They were willing to lay down their lives to make the truth of God known. After the death of John Wycliffe many of his followers were burned at stake and some of them had their Bibles hanging from their necks to be burned with them.

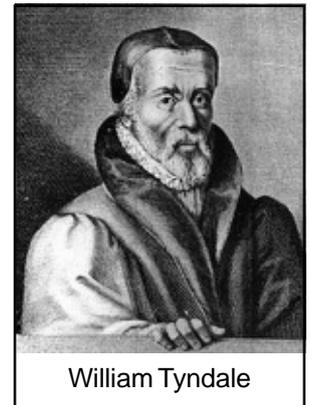
William Tyndale

(A.D. 1485 -1536) had a burning desire to translate the Bible into the common people's language of that day. He studied at Oxford and Cambridge, and became a tutor for Sir John Walsh's children. Tyndale observed the ignorance of the priests of biblical teaching and at one point Tyndale told a priest,

"If God spare my life, ere many years pass, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost."

Translating the Bible was illegal in England. So in A.D. 1524 Tyndale sailed for Germany. In Hamburg he translated the New Testament, and met a printer who printed it. However, news of Tyndale's activity came to an opponent of the Reformation who had the press raided. Tyndale himself managed to escape with the pages already printed and made his way to the German city Worms where the New Testament was soon published. Six thousand copies were printed and smuggled into England. The bishops bought many of them and destroyed them. Tyndale used the money to print an improved edition.

He continued his work and began to translate



William Tyndale

Let the Spirit rest upon you!

Meditation

“Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him --- and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but did not do so again” (Numbers 11:25)

Modern man is so restless that his ability to concentrate on anything is almost zero! He cannot watch the same television channel for more than an hour. (Curiosity leads him to restlessly keep changing channels). We do not allow any one or any thing to "rest upon" us.

God asked Moses to select 70 elders from the congregation of Israel, so that He could pour His spirit upon them. He did so and when the Spirit "rested" upon them, they prophesied! The Spirit has to "rest" upon them. Only then, He can work on us.

Should the governor of your province come to your home to help you ---- to



Saju John Mathew

bestow upon you a merciful gift, what would you do? Won't you invite him in, seat him comfortably, offer a drink and make him rest? Only then, he will enter into his business. The Spirit, likewise, is seeking to "rest" in you.

The word 'rest' means, "settling down" in the original text. It also means 'sleep' or 'slumber'. What does it tell us? The Spirit should feel comfortable in you. Only then, He can "settle down". It is like carrying someone on your shoulders and walking. If you keep moving, the person seated on your shoulder cannot rest.

We seldom concentrate on God. We

Saju John Mathew

Reading passage:

Numbers 11:16-17; 24-30

do ask the Spirit to come upon us but we seldom prepare room for Him. Even when we sit in the presence of the Lord, our body rests there, but our minds wander to a hundred places. How then can the Spirit settle down upon us? Remember, each time our minds go after worldly things, it is a hindrance for the Spirit upon us to "sleep".

Also, remember the Spirit doesn't just come, help and go. He comes to live with you and become your permanent helper for your entire life. He is very sensitive. You also should be sensitive to the Spirit. If He becomes restless, He may retreat!

Prayer: Lord, I understand your Spirit seeks to rest in me, O God! Let me be sensitive to the Spirit, Amen!

For further reading: Eph. 4: 30-32; Matt. 12: 30-32

"God's Book for Mankind" Continuation from the previous page

the Old Testament. But he was put in prison for more than five hundred days in terrible living conditions and on October 6, 1536 he was strangled to death and burned at the stake. His last words were, "Lord, open the King of England's eye". Tyndale did not know it then, but before his death, an English Bible had been printed with the date October 4, 1535. This was the first printed edition of the entire Bible in English. A few years later God answered Tyndale's last prayer. In May, 1541 King Henry VIII ordered that the scriptures were to be read, "humbly and meekly, reverently and obediently." So the Bible was placed in the churches for the first time in English. This was a revision of Tyndale's translation by Myles Coverdale. When King Henry's son, Edward, became king he exhorted the clergy to encourage every one to read the Bible "as the very living Word of God, and the special food of man's soul that all Christian persons are bound to embrace, believe and follow if they look to be saved."

Geneva Bible: Sometime after this Queen Mary outlawed the printing of the Bible in English. Due to this many Christians left England and made another English translation in Geneva in 1557. The Geneva Bible became popular with many Christians. They returned to England when Elizabeth became queen in 1558. Queen Elizabeth tried to restore the Church of England to the practices of her father, King Henry VIII, and The Bible was again placed in the churches.



King James Version: Later King James assumed the throne of England as James I. By the middle of the summer of 1604, King James had appointed fifty-four scholars to translate the Bible. The translators were divided into six

companies, with each given responsibility for one section of Scripture. Oxford, Cambridge, and Westminster each had two companies of translators. What they finally presented to the King in 1611 became known as the Authorized or the King James Version of the Bible. In the Twentieth Century numerous English translations have been made. It is important to note that the message is the same, that is, the salvation of mankind through Jesus Christ, the only Savior.

Today the complete Bible is available in hundreds of languages and portions of the Bible in thousands of languages. Let us not forget that so many have made great sacrifices so we could have the Word of God in our languages. Read it carefully. Study it diligently. Meditate on it day and night. Memorize to hide it in your heart. Apply it to live holy. Share it so others may also come to know and believe the Words of Eternal Life.

(In the next issue we will continue this study.)

“Those who honour ME, I will honour”

At the commencement of London Olympics - 2012, I remembered an inspiring story that I read some time ago about a committed Christian named, Eric Liddell who was also nick named, the 'Flying Scotsman'. When he was just 22 years old he made it into the 1924 Olympics for 100, 200 and 400 meters races. He was stunned when he realized that the 100 meters race had been scheduled to be on Sunday. Liddell flatly refused to run on a Sunday and withdrew from the 100 metres race, his best event. So instead of being on the track that Sunday with all the other runners, Liddell was in a church service. He believed that Sunday is a day set apart for the Lord. Liddell held onto his beliefs; even to the point when the Prince of Wales begged him to change his mind! Liddell's resolution not to run was so strong that he turned down even the Prince's pleadings, as well as his country's. Three days later Liddell ran for 200 meters race and won an unexpected bronze medal. That's not all! Liddell took up the 400 metres in which he was not



Jaison Varghese

expected to win, or so the experts thought! As Liddell went to the starting blocks for the race, an American slipped a piece of paper in his hand with a quotation from 1 Samuel 2:30, "Those who honour me I will honour." Liddell took it as a promise from God to him and ran with that piece of paper in his hand. This time he not only ran to victory and won a gold but also broke the then existing world record with a time of 47.6 seconds! He later went to China as a missionary.

This is the best example which shows that taking a stand for God will never be in vain. We can see a lot of

examples in the Bible too. God blessed the life of Ruth when she took a firm stand and decided to serve the living God. She became the grandmother of the greatest king of Israel. God lifted Daniel to a high post when he resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine. Daniel also resolved to pray three times a day even if it caused him to be thrown into the lion's den. God honoured Mordecai when he decided not to bow down in front of Haman and thus disobey God's commandment. God promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to a higher post when they honoured God and did not bow down to the golden image. Joseph decided that he will not dishonour God by sinning with Potiphar's wife and God honoured him making him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

All the great men and women of God in the Bible placed God first in their life and God highly honoured them in due time. Thus ordinary people became

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Trials are here to make us better, not bitter!

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have [its] perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (James 1:2-4)

This verse is from the epistle by James, who scholars say is the brother of Jesus. He wrote this letter to strengthen and encourage the faith of the oppressed Jewish Christians. He knew that they were struggling with how faith should impact their lives, so he wrote this to them at around 45 A.D. He stresses that when we are faced with tribulations, we shouldn't be depressed, we shouldn't be anxious, we should even forget about it. James writes that we should be joyful, praising God. This is a mind- blowing statement, yet is so beautifully true. "In everything give thanks!" (1Thes. 5:18).

What are trials? Trials are tests. In Godly terms, they are to test our faith, to try to improve it. What is faith? "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews



Andrew Koshy

1:11). When God tests us, the testing develops more endurance and perseverance, thus, making us stronger in our faith. But it doesn't stop there. No, not only will we get patience and perseverance through this, but we get perfection! Therefore, suffering is a privilege. Phil. 1 :29 says, for it has been

granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him. Trials are here to help us- to make us better, not bitter. On top of that they prove that we are Christians. Isn't it wonderful!

So now that we know how all this works, how can we apply this to our day to day lives? I think the best summary of this is 1 Peter 5:7: cast all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you. All we have to do is give it all to God, who will help us go through these trials. God will walk us through all this. This is amazing- trials bring us to perfection, God will help us through them, and as it says in Romans 8:28, it all works out for good.

A great example of all of this is Job. Job's life is such a role model for us. It

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Identity crisis:

The struggle of a Christian in an enticing world

"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it" (Genesis 4:7)

Picture this. You are wedged in a realm where your personality is not of your true nature. Unwanted character creeps out of you, involuntarily. Romans 7:15 says, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do". Trapped between chaos, leading toward your doom, you are surrounded in a sea of confusion where it seems as if there is no place to escape. Sin, the untreated disease that poisons, annihilating slowly, coursing through your veins. The darkness shrouds you from reality, enticing you into a perpetuating spell. This transgression can allure you to the verge of termination, a brink where the mournful wails of a miserable man cannot be heard. Your identity is disjointed; you attempt to splice yourself to discernment, but feels to have surrendered to the entanglement of sin. The debt of sin becomes an unbearable load, leaving you vulnerable in your weakest state. You struggle to resist the inducement, wailing toward the heavens as a susceptible mortal. Sin begins to create an illusion of amusement; simplifying the seriousness of immorality. Romans 7:19 states, "For I



Crystal Chacko

do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do - this I keep on doing". You desire to surrender to fleeting pleasures of sin, signifying the admission of defeat. This black cloud attempts to overshadow your figure, consuming your very being. It becomes like the silhouette of your shadow trailing your movement.

Thrashing about with bewilderment, you are fixed in an appalling state. You make attempts to resist the enticing allurements of sin, skirmishing with intensity. Sin seems to strive intensely in hopes of dominating. Defending yourself becomes a constant mission that is like an irritating itch, unreachable.

Ephesians 2:8 says "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and

this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."

Reliance on His grace and not on our works becomes the key in winning this battle against sin. Sin vigorously toyed with humanity from the beginning, creating a prevailing domain. The earth reeks of the black gloom that has engulfed the planet and only specks of morality glimmer. Humans were predisposed to surrender to the clutches of the darkness, but the Lamb of God surrendered Himself to eliminate the perils we would face. The Savior shunned evil abolishing the entire establishment. After being redeemed by this Savior, you possess vital supremacy to eradicate darkness. Jesus Christ the Savior converses with your heart to discern right from wrong.

Your firm resistance to duplicity will free you from the darkness of your existence to bask in the everlasting pleasures and radiance of the King of kings. You possess the authority to decide which identity you desire: sin, a treacherous everlasting sorrow or righteousness through Jesus Christ Himself relying on His grace.

"Those who honour ME, I will honour"

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rulers, kings, ministers and advisors to kings! These great lives show, God will honour us too if we give first priority to God in our lives no matter what circumstances we are in. Thus even if we are weak in studies, lacking in intelligence God will honour us if we honour God in our daily lives by giving first priority to God and His Word more than our secular studies and activities. Let us not neglect reading God's Word, prayer, the gathering of the saints or other spiritual activities. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 12:1: "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth". So when you stand for God and His word you can be assured that God will honour you among your friends and colleagues. Some may feel that to honour God seems to be too demanding but we should be sure that God will give the grace to obey Him whatever it might involve. Therefore dear friends, let us honour God with our wealth, health and talents in our schools, colleges and workplaces because God will honour those who honour Him.

"Trials are here to make us better, not bitter!"

..... continuation from previous page

amazes me how much he trusted God through all of the circumstances he was in. He says: "My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh, and I have escaped by the skin of my teeth" (Job 19:20). Yet, in verses 25 and 26 he counters, "For I know my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this [I know], that in my flesh I shall see God". How amazing is this? It is incredible how even though he is in total agony, he believes that God had a purpose, and that his God was still on the throne. He didn't even need to be told that he was being tested: he just had faith. And he was right: the last verses of the book tell us that God blessed him abundantly. "Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning" (Job 42: 12).

So to conclude, let us listen to James, and rejoice in our tough times. Let us be assured that God has a plan, and that trials will make us better Christians. We should cast all our cares and worries upon God who hold the world in His hands. Lastly, we should be like Job, who had faith in God and trusted upon His promise.

Who am I?

**I am defined in your dictionary as 'hurt felt in body or mind'.
I am just the opposite of 'pleasure'!**

Let me tell you about myself. In sinless age I was dormant. I couldn't work on any one for quite sometime. Ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed God I started working among human beings. Since then I became very active.

"With painful labor you will give birth to children", God told Eve. I am very happy to inflict myself on anybody Satan is using me to create suffering in people especially those who worship God Almighty in Spirit and Truth. Neither I have any rest nor do I like to take rest. I am indeed very happy to see human beings groaning as a result of my work.

I give misery to body, mind and soul. When somebody remarks "He is a pain in my neck" or "There is no gain without pains", I feel exalted. I rejoice watching people fighting, stealing, robbing and indulging in any indecent activity through which my power is being effected. I have left no nation outside my field of activity. I am there even in the midst of the richest people. Rich and wealthy ones think there will be total bliss for them. Do you think I will leave them alone? No! Never!

I work and work causing my effect and strength on men and women, young

The writer of this article,
Mary Mathew
(IPC Kanjurmarg),
adds a personal note:
"I was suffering from
Jan. 2012 to April 2012 from a
very painful skin ailment. I thank
the Lord for relieving me from
pain and agony and inspiring me
to pen this article"

and old, through divorce, corruption, losses, miseries, suffering, chaos, riots, accidents, hospitalization, sabotage, war, conflicts, sleeplessness, drugs, drinks, debauchery, aches ---- . The list is endless.

The only time I was struck in awe was when the Son of God was bought in front of Pilate. At that time I was in cloud nine when the Jews brought Jesus for crucifixion. When Jesus was attacked by me from head to foot, I was stunned to

see such a supercool reaction from Him which I have never seen from anybody else in the world till today.

"Forgive them for they know not what they do": These words from Jesus made me feel too small. But my true nature cannot be changed. I was working in the past, am working in the present and I will work with more vigour in the coming days because I can hear these "Children of God" shouting that their King of Kings is coming soon to take them to a land devoid of misery, tension and problems. Therefore I don't want to waste any time. I am determined to turn their "hallelujahs" into grumbling and transform them into miserable people.

But I know that my days are numbered. The count down has already started. Hence let me trouble as many as possible through different ways and means. Let me finish my mission in top gear.

Now by this time you must have recognized me. You must have realized who I am.

I am Mr. Pain. *I know I will be dismissed to the darkest place very soon!*

Prayers of a fourth grader!

- Joy of getting answers -

A nine-year old boy finished school and was starting summer. He was really excited! Every night he would pray and ask God for a nice fourth grade teacher when the school re-opens in the new year and also for the blessing of his four close friends in his class. Well, he kept on doing it all through the summer holidays. Then just before the school reopened for the new school year, all the kids had an open house where they could meet all the teachers and hear them tell all the stuff about the new year. Then the Principal introduced the fourth grade teacher to them! He believed she would really be a nice teacher as answer to his prayers to God. He knew a little about her because she was the fourth grade teacher for his older brother also.

He walked into the class room on



Jeremy Ninan

the first day of school and he saw all his four friends. So all the friends were once again together in the same class. He was so happy!!

He had Sunday School Competitions in the church. He participated in two items - Memory verse and Bible quiz.. He prayed

for God's help in doing well in the competitions so that he should come out first, second or at least third in all the items. When the Sunday School principal announced the results, he was overjoyed to know that he came second in both. In the final Sunday School examination he was tied for the first place with another student! He believes all these things happened only because of his prayers.

Moral: *If you ask God for something, He will say 'yes', 'no' or 'later'. Even if God says 'no', that does not mean that He does not love you. If you ask for something which is needed and important for you, He will surely say 'yes'. If you ask for something which is really not needed, like 'can I have a phone?' God may say 'no'!*

Children's

TODAY



GOD'S PLAN



One day while the mother was stitching; her son looked up from the floor and asked her what she was doing. She told him that she was embroidering. The child complained that it looked like a mess from where he sat. Mother smiled and gently looked down and said, "My son, you go and play for a while, and when I am finished with my embroidering, I will put you on my knee and let you see it from my side."

The son wondered why she was using some dark threads along with the bright ones and why they seemed so jumbled from his view. A few minutes passed and then the mother

called out for her son and said, "Son, come and sit on my knee." The son was surprised and thrilled to see a beautiful flower and a sunset. He could not believe it, because from underneath it looked so messy. Mother said to him, "My son, from underneath it did look messy and jumbled, but you did not realize that

there was a pre-drawn plan on the top. It was a design. I was only following it. Now look at it from my side and you will see what I was doing."

We too may not understand God's plan for our life and it may look messy and jumbled. But one day we will sit on God's lap and see the whole plan from His side and it will surely be beautiful!

Bible says in Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future"



Juby Varghese

1970-1985 കാലം

1985-2000 കാലം

2000-2012 കാലം

By : Sakshi

God please make "Thrissur" The Capital of Kerala

A FUNNY PRAYER

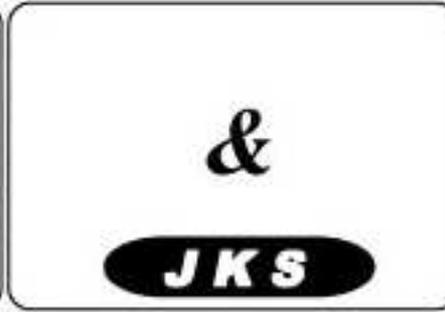
Why So, my daughter ?

Because in my exam I wrote "Thrissur" the capital of Kerala

By J.V. Arts

God feeds Elijah

Atish Vijay Gangurde
Mumbai



Christians in Syria

The 15-month-old conflict in Syria has killed between 13,000 and 19,000 people, most of them civilians. Although Assad regime has been extremely cruel to the opposition movement, the fact remains that Syrian Christians are free to express their beliefs and practices under the current regime. It is doubtful whether the opposition (if they come to power) would grant such a freedom to Christians. The story of the happenings in Iraq is well known. After the fall of Saddam Husein regime, many Iraqi Christians who were following Christ for generations were forced to flee the country. While Iraqi Christians could flee to Syria, where would Syrian Christians flee? In a similar situation, the Christians in Egypt are feeling increasingly vulnerable after the fall of Hosni Mubarak. One of the hardest questions is this: What will become of Syria's substantial Christian population? Syrian Christians, who comprise 10 percent of the population can trace their roots back to the first people to be called "Christians" (see Acts 15).

Dictators are certainly autocratic and sometimes cruel. But they keep religious fanatics in control because the dictator's 'religion' is just wielding power. But if the fanatics wrest power, they tend to oppress other minority groups.

Majority of Christians hate Christian TV

'Christian Post' reports that according to a survey, majority of Christians surveyed hate Christian TV and do not watch it. The respondents indicated several reasons for their attitude: too much begging for money and fund-raising telethons, false prosperity teachers manipulating people for donations, a lack of quality programming, and a lack of integrity of the preachers.

Pastor David Wright who polled 100,000 respondents for the survey said: "I am flabbergasted. I expected there would be a few Christians who thought Christian TV was too boring or not relevant for the times. Unfortunately, the greed for money has replaced the need for ministry among many of our ministers and Christian TV networks. We can't have pastors indulging in sin and expect people to listen to them".

Most TV preachers are prosperity vendors sucking money from gullible public. No wonder, one gets tired of them!

Kansas Governor bans use of Islamic law

Gov. Sam Brownback has signed a decree which prohibits Kansas courts and government agencies from basing their decisions using 'foreign legal codes'. Supporters of the law cite cases around the country where judges or state agencies took Islamic law into account in their rulings. The new law will ensure that courts will rely solely on state and U.S. laws. A Muslim group is planning to appeal.

At least a few among the authorities have the courage to stand up in the face of attack from pressure groups.

Ancient mosaic discovered!

A glittering mosaic of colored stones was discovered in the ancient Jewish village of Huqoq by archeologists of the University of North Carolina. The mosaic decorates part of a synagogue dating back to about A.D. 400 to 500. The mosaic depicts several scenes. In one, two female faces flank a Hebrew inscription about rewards for people who perform good deeds. In the other, Samson ties torches to pairs of foxes, an event described in the

Book of Judges. Archaeologist, Jodi Magness, leading the excavation, describes it as an "unusual" subject and suggests that, for whatever reason, Samson was popular in the local area. The mosaic is remarkably of high quality and Magness thinks this was probably by far the most exciting moment she had as an archaeologist in her life.

Biblical stories come alive through such excavations!

Fatherhood is good for men!



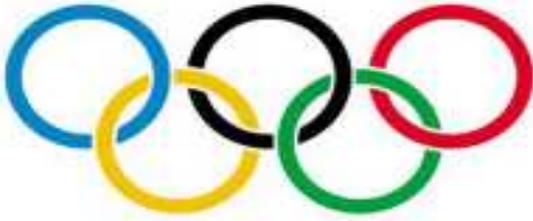
It is a well known fact that a father's involvement improves a child's well-being. New research have established that fatherhood affects the men, too, according to a report in USA TODAY. Studies

have shown that fatherhood gives mental and physical health benefits to the father. When a father is more involved with his kids, he is prompted "to be less self-centered, more giving and more outward-focused". It can prompt them to be more responsible and to have more positive attachments and relationships.



One of the mosaics discovered

Christian US athletes
in Olympics



Tervel Dlagnev, 26, an atheist and a troublemaker in high school became a believer through the influence of Christian teammates on his wrestling teams. He competes in men's 120 kilogram free style wrestling and says: "Jesus is my life and it's been cool to experience Him through this sport". Women's basketball forward **Maya Moore**, 23, says: "Of course, I want to win and play well, but no matter the result, I want to look back at the performance knowing I've honored the Lord". **Reid Priddy**, 34, of men's volleyball team became a Christian in college, and in 2010 told a Russian volleyball fan magazine, "I am a Christian. Bible is the most powerful book I've ever read in my life". **Ryan Hall**, 29, runs men's marathon, says God is his coach. He believes in faith healing and enjoys worshipping at his Pentecostal church. He adds: "I really believe God is always wanting to speak

to me and reveal secrets to me and tell me what I need to be doing". **Lolo Jones**, 30, who runs women's 100 meter hurdles, says, "to cope with stress, I listen to a lot of Christian music, and reading my Bible calms me down immensely. But when I'm standing in a stadium packed with 80,000 screaming fans, that's when I start praying!"

Hunter Kemper, 36, who runs in men's triathlon, is participating in his fourth Olympics. When he committed his life to Christ, he says, "Sports used to be my idol. It felt so good for me just to realize that there's something bigger that I need to be focusing on" **Jacob Wukie**, part of the U.S. men's archery team says, "I want to use my new platform to share the gospel with other Olympic athletes. Since I am confident that He is in control and has a plan for my life, I am able to give my best and let the rest lie in His hands. He has given me the talents and abilities that I possess. He has taught me to love those around me". **David Boudia**, the 23-year-old U.S. diver unexpectedly won Olympic gold. He said: "The coolest thing about this is that I know that God is perfect and sovereign". He became a Christian during college when his coach led him to the Lord. Now instead of chasing glory for himself, Boudia only wants to chase glory for

Christ. Boudia added: "My faith is the most important thing in my life, and this is what's brought me through this 2012 Games".

It is joyful, indeed, to know that there are, at least, some celebrities who give thanks to the Giver of their talents!

Churchgoers struggle
in sharing their faith

According to a recent study of churchgoing Americans, they have to struggle to share the gospel with non-Christians. Even though 80 percent of Christians believe they have a personal responsibility to share their faith, 61 percent have not told another person about the gospel of Jesus Christ in the previous six months. 25 percent said they shared their faith once or twice over the previous six months. The survey also asked how many times they have personally invited an unchurched person to attend a church service. Nearly half of church attendees responded "zero". Interestingly, the survey found that new Christians are most active in sharing their faith. According to Stetzer of 'LifeWay Research' who conducted the study, "If you are going to be intentional about sharing your faith, praying for others is a great way to start".

It is the duty of believers to share the gospel with unbelievers. Praying for others will be a good beginning! ●

Waiting for the 'Big Gun'!

Leighton Ford, one of Billy Graham's associate, related this incident: "I was speaking at an open-air crusade in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Billy Graham was to speak the next night and had arrived a day early. He came incognito and sat on the grass at the rear of the crowd. Because he was wearing a hat and dark glasses, no one recognized him.

Directly in front of him sat an elderly gentleman who seemed to be listening intently to my presentation. When I invited people to come forward as an open sign of commitment, Billy decided to do a little personal evangelism.

He tapped the man on the shoulder and asked, 'would you like to accept Christ? I'll be glad to walk down with you if you want to'.

The old man looked him up and down, thought it over for a moment, and then said, 'No, I think I'll just wait till the big gun comes tomorrow night'

The 'Vacuum Cleaner' Salesman

A vacuum cleaner salesman went down to a rural village. He had his vacuum cleaner, all of his tools and everything and knocked at a door. He told the lady of the house: "I've got the most exciting vacuum cleaner you have ever seen. It will clean your house from top to bottom. You only have to pay Rs.500".

And the lady said: "It sounds real good!"

He said: "You see that big pile of dirt right there on the floor. My vacuum cleaner will just pick up all those things up just like that and if they don't get picked up, I'll eat the lot".

She said: "Well, you might as well get your knife and fork and get ready to eat because we do not have any electricity out here in this village!"

Power is the one thing nations, politicians and businessmen covet. But the power that we need is not an earthly power. God has promised us the power of the Holy Spirit. ●