

MARANATHA messenger

Weekly Newsletter of

MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Private Circulation Only

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"Present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28)

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Sunday School: 9.45 am

Sunday English / Chinese Worship Service: 10.45 am Sunday Chinese Worship Service: 7 pm

Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8.00 pm

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jack Sin (HP: 9116 0948)

The Testimony and Duty of the Christian Overseas

Introduction

We are all called to walk worthy of the Lord in our several vocations (Ephesians 4:1) including those who are Christian students or workers overseas. We live in a global interconnected village today. Some of us have the privilege and joy of studying or working overseas and that comes with certain responsibilities. There are three outstanding overseas workers among others in the Old Testament. Daniel was religiously faithful to his spiritual convictions in a foreign land, Babylon (Daniel 1:1-11; 6:10) and Joseph was morally tested and passed the test in idolatrous Egypt and was promoted to be a top civil servant to the Pharaoh in the end (Genesis 39:1-12). The third is Nehemiah who was the cupbearer to the Persian King Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 1:11). Abraham was posted overseas permanently to start a new generation of people in a new land of Canaan (Genesis 12, 15, 17) and God blessed and prospered him greatly. We need to emulate their worthy examples and fare well working or studying in a foreign land as good witnesses and testimonies for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord, the apostles Paul and Peter and others used six metaphors to depict and describe the Christian life appropriately in a global context and here they are.

1. Stewards of God

The world emphasises ownership but the Bible says stewardship and that we are not owners but we are called to be custodians, managers or trustees of the manifold grace of God. There is to be accountability to God one day at the Judgement Seat of Christ.

1 Peter 4:10, 11, *'As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.'* Everyone has a gift and we are to be using it for the glory of God and to edify others and not ourselves (Romans 12:6-8).

1 Corinthians 4:2, *'Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.'*

There is a requirement for all stewards to be faithful and accountable to God one day and that is a grave duty.

Our Lord has given to each one of us different talents as He wills. **We are not to hoard our talents or gifts but to discover, develop, demonstrate and employ them fruitfully as good and faithful stewards to the blessing of others.** We are all accountable to God at the bema (2 Corinthians 5:10) and He will reward us one day for our work done for

Him in eternity (Matthew 25:15-30; 1 Corinthians 3:10-13). Let us serve the Lord faithfully wherever you are in a reformed church overseas to the edifying of the saints and the saving of souls.

2. Soldiers of Christ

2 Timothy 2:2-4, *'And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a **good soldier** of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.'* Every male, 18 years or older, will know something about soldiering in our National Service in Singapore. I have an announcement to make. We are all conscripted in the Lord's army. We are all in a spiritual warfare zone and there is a vicious enemy waiting to devour us if possible (1 Peter 5:8). **We need to be alert, disciplined soldiers and be readily equipped and vigilant to potential dangers in a foreign land** and not be entangled with the affairs of the world but look to please only our Supreme Commander, The Lord of hosts, our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Athletes in the Race of Life

Hebrews 12:1, 2 says, *'Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and **let us run with patience** the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.'* We are all involved in a long race of life and we are to keep spiritually fit and healthy and run carefully, keeping to the rules that are set for us with perseverance and endurance, looking up to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:1, 2). Christian athletes are not to disqualify ourselves by going against the regulations set for us by God (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). There is to be no deception in the race and no spiritual or moral compromise or cutting corners. **Let us run patiently and look up to Jesus and not to men and win the eternal prize and bring glory to God** (Philippians 3:13, 14).

4. Farmers in the Wide Harvest Fields

1 Corinthians 3:7-10, *'So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are **labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.'* We are to be hardworking and patient in sowing, watering and also reaping spiritual fruits in due time as our labour for the Lord is not in vain even (1 Corinthians 15:58) in a foreign harvest field while working there. Remember we reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7-10). **Farmers are industrious and faithful workers** so let us do our part diligently for the Lord in the wide harvest fields of souls in His vineyard, wherever the Lord puts us.

5. Pilgrims and Strangers

1 Peter 2:11, 12, *'Dearly beloved, I beseech you as **strangers and pilgrims**, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the*

*Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.’ and Hebrews 11:13-16, ‘These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were **strangers and pilgrims** on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.’*

This is John Bunyan's favourite analogy in his much celebrated allegorical work, Pilgrim's Progress, in the 17th century. Pilgrims have a religious objective to seek God. We are depicted not as long term citizens of a fallen world or permanent residents but temporal travellers on the earth amidst spiritual dangers and trials (i.e. The Slough of Despond, Apollyon, Vanity Fair, Castle of Fear, etc.) yearning for the imminent coming of our Lord when we will be forever in His presence of the Lord over the delectable mountains and into the celestial city one day. **While a vagabond has no home, a fugitive is running away from home, a pilgrim is on his way home.** Let us live with this mindset while we are overseas that we may set our affections on things above and not on the earth (Colossians 3:1).

6. Ambassadors of Heaven

2 Corinthians 5:20 says, *‘Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.’*

It is a great honour to be an ambassador of a country (Ephesians 6:20). To be an ambassador is also a grave responsibility and duty. We represent our heavenly country, where our Lord Jesus is King, so let us be worthy and honourable envoys of Christ while we are in a foreign land. Our conduct and speech is to be honourable and compatible with our high calling. **We can bring fame or shame to the name of Christ by our words, conduct and actions and we are to be effective and exemplary diplomats for our Lord.**

Conclusion

We are spiritual ambassadors, soldiers, athletes, farmers, pilgrims and strangers on the earth and we are to be good witnesses and stewards as well for Christ's sake. That means that our Christian testimony and duty is more than making money or earthly promotions or achievements in the work place. Godly demeanour, consistent prayer life and regular worship and service of the most High God is not to be neglected. There is much to be done while we are overseas other than just excelling in our studies or in our work. The secular marketplace (which is equally important). **We are responsible stewards and ambassadors for Christ to witness for the Lord and honour and serve Him first** on earth wherever He puts us. We represent the Almighty Jehovah, the King of kings and the Lord of lords and that is a grave duty and prerogative to be discharged fearfully to His glory.

Jack Sin

Email from Cambodia

I would like to thank you so much for your wonderful attached message on Halloween. Yes, we have a day similar to Halloween day called Bun Pyom Ben Festival. Generally, Cambodian people go to a pagoda to give an offering to their forefather or relatives who died. They believe those people are hungry so during this festival their spirit will come and eat what they offer. It will take place during October. Your Halloween article will be my reference in my sermon on this coming Sunday too.

Pastor Sok Nev
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

(NB. Article available from the tract rack in front of the church.)

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Email from Myanmar

Thank you very much for your email. We are very happy in the Lord that Maranatha BPC has been used by the Lord to help poor and fatherless children in Myanmar. I strongly believe that those children from the families of Buddhists and Animists will be used by the Lord one day to turn their families and relatives to the true knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ. This is our greatest hope and prayer for them.

One piece of good news, through one of our church members, a Roman Catholic girl come to accept and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as her own personal Saviour and Lord. Her name is Khin Khin Htwe, from Rakhine State. I met her last night and talked with her for hours and I could see that she has been really changed. She told me that she wanted to be baptized, but I told her not to rush it, because I want to make sure of her salvation before she gets baptized. Please pray for me, so that I can help her find real assurance of her salvation in Christ, as I need to baptize her before she comes to Singapore in early October, 2013 as house helper. She has an employer already, and she has been waiting for her documents. I will introduce with her to Dorothy Luai, so that Maranatha BPC may be able to help her in Singapore for her spiritual growth during the next two years. I am also very grateful to hear that she has a heavy burden for the salvation of her family who are still Roman Catholics. Let us pray for her and her family, so that the Lord may have mercy on the whole family.

I will edit your article (i.e. *10 Commandments for the Christian Students*) which is translated by Dorothy, and add it in the book. I could not finish my Burmese translation yet due to other work. I hope I can give time to it and finish it very soon.

I called our Chin pastors and conveyed your greetings to them. They are so happy to hear it. And they said that they have been praying for Maranatha BPC's ministries as well as for the individuals who visited us. I thank the Lord that they are much strengthened by your visit. May the Lord keep us to continue growing in Him.

Rev. Salai
Immanuel Evangelical Presbyterian Church
Yangon, Myanmar



Too Little Children

Said a precious little laddie to his Father one bright day,
“May I give myself to Jesus? Let Him wash my sins away?”
“Oh my son, but you’re too little wait until you older grow,
For bigger folk ‘tis true do need Him but little ones are safe, you know.”

Said the Father to the laddie as a storm was coming on,
“Are the sheep all safely sheltered safe within the fold, my son?”
“Ah—the big ones are, my Father but the lambs, I let them go
For I didn’t think it mattered, little ones are safe, you know.”

Oh my brother, oh, my sister; have you too made that mistake'
Little hearts that now are yielded may be hardened then too late.
Ere the evil days come nigh them “Let the children come to Me
And forbid them not,” said Jesus “Of such shall my Kingdom be.”

Author unknown

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Theme for the Quarter :
Life Changing Moments with the Master
Rev Peter Tan
Eternal Destiny With God (Luke 23:39-43)

[End of MM]