

MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

18 August 2019

English Worship Service

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

Address: 63 Cranwell Road, Singapore 509851

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Sunday School: 10 am

Sunday English / Chinese Worship Service: 10.45 am Sunday Chinese Worship Service: 7.30 pm

Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8.00 pm

Rev Colin Wong (HP : 9665 8160); Elder Daniel Tau (HP : 9761 5415); Elder Peter Ong (HP : 9626 7045)

The Spirit of Co-labouring in God's Church

Text: II Kings 6:1-7

And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! For it was borrowed. And the man of God said, where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast *it* in thither; and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take *it* up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it (2 Kings 6:1-7).

Taking Interest in the Things of God

The above scripture text recorded that some of the prophets' disciples had asked Elisha to go with them to cut down some trees to build a new house, as the former place could not accommodate increasingly new disciples. This is a good sign. The growing number of young prophets – goes to show that there are devout and diligent young men willing to learn from the man of God, and living with him! It is like a seminary where teachers and students live together. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1) The young prophets had keen eyes that see the needs around them.

Looking up and Respecting Leadership

After identifying the problems and the way to resolve it, they sought the consent of Elisha. The young disciples would not cut down the trees without the Elisha's consent and approval. That is commendable. They esteemed the leadership of the man of God. They were not overly self-confident and self-reliant and they desired to go with Elisha. Our confidence should be based on God's Word and His wonderful promises. Do we have the tendency to take matters into our own hands? How often do we make decisions privately without enquiring church leaders, as in counselling others, answering biblical queries, giving advice to others, or making certain

decisions? Be cautious lest our misjudgements lead to unfavourable consequences.

Co-labouring in Unity as a Body of Christ

The disciples did not ask for cedars to be brought in, but they volunteered to cut down common trees themselves to expand their dwellings, using whatever resources which God had provided. They decided to take a beam each (2) and with many disciples working together, the job would be completed in no time! This is the efficiency of supplementing and co-labouring in the Lord. Are we willing to step out to do our best, utilizing the gifts which God has given us?

What was Elisha's answer to the young disciples? To them he said in verse 2: "Go ye." He gave consent, and in verse 3 he said: "I will go." Elisha was very glad to go with them. Indeed, he loved these young sheep of God, nurturing and feeding them, and be their constant companion (John 21:16).

When co-labouring in Church, we need to work closely with one another, as the apostle Paul said: 'and the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you (1 Corinthians 12:21). It is not a one man's show.

Treasure your God-given gifts and Resources

Upon reaching the river Jordan, they got down to cut down trees, but as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water! And he cried, "Alas, master! For it was borrowed!" The disciples were so poor that they had to borrow the tool for felling trees. Do we recognize that we are nothing if the Lord did not give us gifts for His service? We are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked (Revelation 3:17).

The disciple cried out: "Alas! Master, for it was borrowed!" He did not deem it as no concern of his. He felt the severity of losing it and did not shirk the responsibility of retrieving it. When we borrow some thing we ought to be responsible for them. Similarly, we ought to treasure and put to proper use whatever gifts and resources that the Lord has bestowed upon us, not taking them for granted. A Commentator once said: "A muscle that is not exercised tends to degenerate and lose its power." We ought to serve God using whatever gifts He has given us for His glory. Matthew Henry said: "The slothful servant is sentenced to be deprived of his talent." Oh, how terrible, and how pathetic a plight it will be! Our Lord said: "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (Matthew 25:29).

Serve with a Sacrificial Spirit and for the Glory of God

I have learnt that while giving our best as we serve, we also need to 'synchronize' with the others, not exerting our strength nor running ahead of others. When we meet with setbacks, let us not be discouraged nor disheartened. Perhaps we may not be recognized, appreciated, or even criticized, but let us remember that the Lord is observing us privily, and He knows the intent of our heart (Matthew 6:4).

Have we use God's gifts to build up one another and the Church of God, do we have the right mind-set bend on loving and glorifying Him, not exalting and gratifying ourselves? God delights in our humble service before Him, be it in charity, fasting, prayer, or comforting others (Matthew 6:4,6,18), and He will reward us in secret (Mathew 6:4).

Some of us have served in the same ministry for years. Some may feel spiritually or physically tired, hands full with other commitments, gradually losing the burden and joy of service. We

begin with enthusiasm but tend to be discouraged for some reasons, forgetting that we are serving the Lord out of love and for His Glory and approval.

Conclusion

Have we lost the right spirit in labouring for the Lord? If so, have we shared it with the brethren of the Church? I pray that we are honest and true to ourselves. Let us bare our hearts to one another, especially to our Church leaders, who can give good counsel and help and pray for us, with wisdom from on high.

Elisha asked: “Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim!” Elisha showed him the exact location. Where have we fell our axe head (the joy and fervency of serving the Lord)? Tell it to God. The Prophet did not dive into the water to retrieve it, but cast down a stick! God can work miracles, beyond what we can imagine, He can cause the heavy iron axe head to swim!!! Nothing is impossible for God! Ephesian 3:20 says: “Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us!” Commit your frailties, short comings and problems to Him, remember, The One who has given us the cutting edge is the One who can restore our strength and zeal for His service!

Amen!

Pancy Siam

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Theme for the Quarter :

THE MINISTRY OF DISCIPLESHIP

English Worship Service :

Elder Daniel Tau

speaks on

The Joy of Reading God’s Word

(Scripture Text : Jeremiah 15:16; Responsive Reading : Psalm119: 90-114)