

Address: 160 Paya Lebar Road, Orion@Paya Lebar #04-06, Singapore 409022
Sun Worship Service: 10am, Sun School: 11.45am, Wed Prayer Meeting: 8pm
Website: www.sovereignhopebpc.org
Rev Dr Jack Sin: 91160948 (hp) / jacksin710@gmail.com
Elder Loke Tat Luen: tlloke822@gmail.com

Four Areas to Grow Like our Lord Jesus This Christmas

*“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature,
and in favour with God and man.” Luke 2:52*

This Christmas is a sobering one as we remember the birth of Christ in the midst of a raging global pandemic that affected many nations adversely in 2020. Yet despite this, the true meaning of Christmas is the awakening of the heart in the humble realisation of our absolute helplessness in depravity and the appreciation of the Incarnation of the Sinless One who came, lived and died for us in our place, giving us a new life of peace, joy, humble service and obedience to the newborn King.



The Christmas account of the incarnation of Christ is covered in the gospel of Mathew and Luke. The virgin birth our Saviour by Mary is clearly stated in Matt 1:23,24. There is little on the growing years of our Lord but there is one important verse on the growth of our Lord in His formative years. Lk 2:52 is expectant with profound meaning and instruction on how our Lord Jesus grew in His early years as a child and how we can help ourselves and others grow in these 4 aspects of our lives as well.

1. Growing Intellectually/Mentally

God has given to each one of us a sound mind (2Tim 1:7). Growing in wisdom is a conscious and diligent endeavour when we seek to study and comprehend truths as we read His Word and other Christian books on relevant subjects. It is not just mere accumulation of technical knowledge but biblical discernment, godly prudence and so-called life skills to know what is right and we are committed to do it right (not what is liked). It is about applying the Word and being a workman of the Word of God and not a hearer or reader only (Jas 1:22, 2 Tim 2:15).

2. Growing Physically

We have a duty to take care of our own bodies too. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor 6:19, 20) and we need to take care of it. This means regular exercise during the week, good diet and sufficient rest besides others, especially to fight this virus with a strong immune system. Good stewardship starts at home and we start by being disciplined in life. Keeping a fit physical constitution helps us to be effective in our work or studies and to serve the Lord. The neglect of it may result in health consequences for this life. Remember the counsel of Paul to present oneself as living sacrifice to God in humble service and this means our entire being (Rom 12:1).



3. Growing Spiritually

You either grow or stagnate or even backslide in your faith. Growth in our spiritual walk of faith with regular devotion is commanded of the Lord and is a sign of health and vitality (2 Pet 3:18). Growth takes effort and commitment; we need to be diligent in our walk of faith.

Are we growing in our prayer life, stewardship, worship, the knowledge and fear of God with each passing year or do we just grow older?

Are we having our daily devotions in our walk of faith and *glowing* and *going* for Christ? Or are we *groaning* or *growling* daily

as we live in a fallen and decadent world? It is your call. You decide what you do with your life.



4. Growing Socially

The pandemic may have affected our social lives. A Christian is not called to be isolated, to live alone and be deprived of the rich resources that comes from the covenant people of God. The Zoom platform can never displace personal worship in the sanctuary of God with the covenant people of God (Psa 122:1). Virtual meetings cannot replace sound interpersonal communication. The concept of a gathered church is the divine idea for mutual encouragement and support from the fellowship of the saints during both good and bad times especially during this tumultuous year of a deadly pandemic (Heb10:24,25).

There are many who are disillusioned and distressed with life when they are disconnected from God and the people of God. Anomie is a function of a broken and depraved society with no regard for God and for the good of one another. We are created to be together in edifying Christian interactions

and socialisation. That interpersonal network and communication with the people of God is also vital for overall spiritual health and wellness. A sheep that is away from the flock of God and the shepherd is vulnerable to the wiles of the evil one and is weakened in its personal safety. We pray to reach out to such a one; he or she needs to come back to the shepherding of God and be connected to Christ and the covenant people in the local church.

Conclusion

Christ is our Example in His early years. These are four important areas of growth we can work on individually or a family as the new year beckons us. Strive to grow Intellectually In the knowledge and fear of God, Physically in good health and strength, Spiritually in the fear of God and Socially In fellowship and good relations with one another. Pray to God daily for wisdom and work diligently on growing like Christ with the help of God. Do not miss the reason of hope in this sacred season, even in this trying season of worldwide despair of a sobering deadly health crisis. It is our fervent prayer that this Christmas will be a sobering and fruitful time of knowing our total inability. Remember Christ's first coming with grateful hearts as you seek Him in God-honouring worship and prayer. Let us humbly and faithfully trust in the Lord, confess our sins, strive to know Christ as our God and Lord and grow to be like Him.

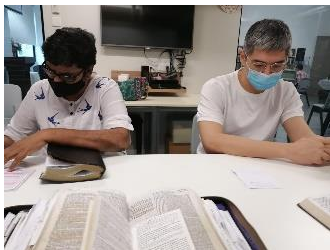
Jack Sin

***Remembering, Connecting, Supporting and Praying
for our Missionaries***

Salvation Testimony of Dennis Ong

I am eternally grateful to God for His mercy to a wretched sinner like me. Before I came to know God, or rather to be known by God, I was with the world. The worldly standards of success were my goals and I used all my energy pursuing it. This misbelief amplified my sinful nature and I became very proud of my abilities, covetous of other people's success, impatient and quick to anger. I lived a life full of anxiety and knew not a day of peace. To find fulfilment, I hung out with worldly friends, picked up smoking cigarettes, partying and drinking alcohol till silly while chasing after a false sense of happiness.

My life of excessive self-indulgences led me into woes after woes. It was in 2019 when I was going through the most difficult part of my life that God finally allowed me to know Him. By His grace and mercy, I am bestowed the wisdom of acknowledging that I am a wretched sinner. I learned and accepted that all the bad things that had happened in my life, happened because of my godless and undiscerning self that allowed it. The most important of all is God opened my mind to witness His great saving work of unconditional love. By God's grace, I learned that the Lord has blessed and protected me despite who I am. He raised me up when I fell, even though I never knew Him, He loves me all the same. In 2019, God did not relieve me of the consequences of my sins but He convicted me that He is God Almighty; He is a God of justice. The reverent fear of God came to me; I repented of my sins and submitted to the holy will of God my King. I may had lost the world but I gained the fear of the Lord, and to me that is a great gain.



During that time, God led me to meet many new Christian friends, one of them is Pastor Jack Sin of Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church (SHBPC). I am grateful to God for meeting Pastor Jack because he is a faithful servant of the Lord and faithfully teaches sound doctrine from the Holy Bible. Fast forwarding to 2020, I am now worshipping in SHBPC. May God continue to

guide me in the fear and knowledge of Him. May He make me a good testimony to bring glory to Him forever and forever. Praise the Lord!

“Dear Lord, your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

(Gal 4:8,9) Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or

rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage.”

Sincerely,
Dennis Ong

Salvation Testimony of Koh Poh Wee

I was born and raised in a household where Taoist beliefs and traditions were deeply ingrained. Growing up, Taoist rituals of making offerings and praying for blessings and protection were common practices in the family. Although I did not understand what they meant, I went along with these practices for the most part because it just



seemed to be what everyone around me did. However, rather than identifying with a certain faith, I was what one would consider as an agnostic. I believed that there was a greater Being who created me and held my future, and who determined my coming in and going out. That said, I was not really concerned with seeking out the answer to the question of who that greater entity was. It wasn't until 1996 when my teacher shared the gospel with me that I revisited the question of who God was. I do not really remember her exact words now but what stood out most to me in her sharing was that God loved me and wanted to bridge that gap between Him and me. We have sinned but He came to Earth to bear our sins and died for us. This God that my teacher was sharing about was reaching out to me first before I knew who He was. He loved me first, before I loved Him. The effect this realization had on me was profound. I was interested to find out more about this God my teacher talked about. I started visiting with my teacher where she would pray and share bible verses with me. I also started attending youth service at a local church. In March of that year, I responded to an altar call in church and asked God to forgive my sins. I then accepted Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour. I began to attend church services regularly and joined bible study classes to deepen my knowledge of God.

In the years that followed. I went through periods of spiritual growth, backsliding, and coming back to ask for the forgiveness of God. As it says in

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11, there is a season for everything. Throughout all the seasons in my life, God is always there for me. He has gone before me in every transition in my life. Over the years, He was constantly holding my hand and guiding me as I navigated through the ups and downs of living, studying, and working in different countries. In the present, He continues to lead me through each day as new opportunities and challenges present themselves in my life. I am assured that He loves me and knows what is best for me. God makes everything beautiful in His time.

These days, as I continue to work on my spiritual growth, I focus on deepening my knowledge of the bible and applying them in my life. There have been many opportunities to learn as well as to serve in Sovereign Hope BP Church (Catechism, Prayer meeting, sermons, resources), which I am thankful for. It has been a difficult year for everyone in the world and more than before, I am more aware of the failings of relying of my own strength and how dependence on Him is the way to go. Jeremiah 17:5-9 especially serves as a good reminder for me this year.

Dependence on Him starts with equipping myself with the Armour of God. Putting on the Armour of God to effectively engage in spiritual warfare, to be ready to share the gospel as we are called to do, and to grow in my own faith, is something that has been impressed upon me this year. I am encouraged to work on fortifying my faith. In the educational field which I work in, there is a concept known as the Peter Effect by Applegate and Applegate (2004). This term was coined in reference to Acts 3:5 and explains that a teacher cannot be expected to give/teach what he or she does not have/know. As a Christian, I want to be more deliberate in studying and internalizing God's Word to be able to better apply it in my daily life. I recognize that it is a process and I am thankful that there is still time to equip myself. All praise and glory be to God!

Koh Poh Wee



REACH US!
Pastor Jack Sin +65 91160948
sovereignhopebpc@gmail.com
www.sovereignhopebpc.org

160 PAYA LEBAR ROAD, ORION@PAYA LEBAR
#04-06 SINGAPORE 409022

PROPHETIC AND PRACTICAL INSIGHTS FROM ISAIAH FOR TODAY

Lord's Day Programme from Oct - Dec 2020

DECEMBER

- 6 The Only One True God of the World (Isaiah 45:5-28)
- 13* The Call to Extend the Kingdom of God. (Isaiah 54:1-17)
- 20 The Foundation for Contentment (Isaiah 55:1-13)
- 24 Christmas Eve: Mary and the Lamb of God (Luke 1:27-47)
- 27 Reforms through the Hand of God (Isaiah 59:1-21)
- 31* WATCHNIGHT SERVICE: Am I a Wise or Foolish Virgin?
(Matthew 25:1-13)

Come & Join Us!

WATCHNIGHT SERVICE

31 Dec 8pm

*Am I a Wise
or Foolish
Virgin?*

MATTHEW 25:1-13

Rev Dr Jack Sin

Memory Verse

Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Christmas Eve Baptismal Worship Service! Rev Philip Heng speaks tonight on “**Mary & the Lamb of God**” (**Luke 1: 27-47**). For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Rev Jack Sin speaks on Sun 27 Dec on “**Reforms through the Hand of God**” (Isa 59: 1-21).
3. Weekly Church ministries are:
 - a. Sunday School classes after the worship service:
 - WCF Shorter Catechism Class – Pastor Jack
 - “Rules for Walking in Fellowship by John Owen” – Dn Choo Siang
 - Studies in Leviticus – Dr Kwong Leen
 - b. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren.
 - c. Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom.
4. The Pandemic book can be purchased through Dn Yue Kay (Hp: +65 97450311) or via email at sovereignhopebpc@gmail.com.
5. Those who have a testimony to share may submit to Pastor for the weekly.
6. Pastor is still available for counselling via WhatsApp, Email or Mobile.
7. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**

SOVEREIGNHOPE
bible presbyterian church

**AN APPRAISAL AND
UNDERSTANDING OF
BIBLICAL REVIVALS**

JANUARY TO MARCH 2021

JANUARY

3RD
PSALM 85:6-11
The Call and Theology of Revival

10TH
DEUTERONOMY 31:6-20
The Focus and Foundation of Revival

17TH
1 KINGS 18:20-40
The Battle for the Revival of Hearts

24TH
2 CHRONICLES 7:1-14
Repentance, Humility and Revival

31ST
ISAIAH 37:14-36
A Jewish King's Triumph over the Foes

FEBRUARY

7TH 3RD ANNIVERSARY
1 CHRONICLES 16:8-20
Devotion and Gratitude to God in
Trying Times

14TH
2 KINGS 22:1-20
A Jewish King and the Covenant of Revival

21ST
EZEKIEL 37:1-14
The Valley of Dry Bones Revived

28TH
NEHEMIAH 8 :1-20
The Word of God and Revival

MARCH

7TH
HOSEA 14:1-9
Healing of Backsliding and Revival

14TH
ACTS 2:1-11, 39-47
The Holy Spirit and Revival

21ST
ACTS 6:1-9
The Church Priorities and Revival

28TH
ACTS 8:5-24
The Danger of False Revivals/Conversions

Pastor Jack Sin +65 91160948
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