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“The 5 Analogies of a Christian” (2Tim 2 :1-9)

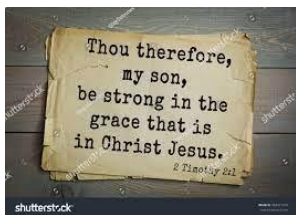
- A summary of the devotion
by Pastor at the church prayer
meeting on 11 Oct 2023 -



Pastor Jack welcomed the 12 attendees comprising a Deacon, regular members and friends, and 5 overseas brethren, namely Pastor Lazarus (Calvary Reformed Church, Bangalore), Elder Habakkuk (Gilead Balm Children's Home, Yangon), Pastor Benjamin (Biblical Reformed Seminary, Yangon), Pastor Myitta (New Vision Evangelical Church, Yangon), Sister Hla Pui (Mercy Church, Nay Pyi Taw) and bro. David (a Bible college student in Nairobi, Kenya).

We opened the Prayer Meeting with the hymn, “Go Ye Into All The World”, to duly remind ourselves of the Great Commission that Christ commanded His followers to execute after His Ascension to Heaven. Thereafter, Pastor Jack led us through a word of Opening Prayer. Next, we took turns to read out God's Word from 2Timothy 2: 1 – 9 before Pastor Jack expounded on that text with the theme of “The Analogies of a Christian” with the following 5 analogies.

I) The Calling of a Son (v.1)



In **verse 1** “*Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the **grace** that is in Christ Jesus*”, we are told to be strong, as we are all sons (and daughters too) of God and have been **saved by grace** and called **into** the kingdom of God, thus we have a duty to **obey** our heavenly Father.

Christians are called to be **strong** as they face much **trouble, testings** and **persecution**, especially in the first century, and even in current times now, and they may **not** be able to **survive** in such **hostile** circumstances if they are **weak**. Thus, it is **imperative** for Christians to have **strength** and **stamina** to **fight** the on-going **difficulties** and **harsh** circumstances in their **life** ahead.

II) The Calling of a Teacher/Mentor (v.2)

Verse 2 reads “*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*”.

This refers to the calling of a **teacher/mentor**.

We have **learnt** many things from our **Lord**, but **not** everyone is prepared to **pass** that knowledge onto others. Since one of the **duties** of a Christian is “**disciple-making**”, would you, as a Christian, **lead** and **guide** another person to be a **disciple** of Christ one day?

This task is **neither easy** nor **without much sacrifice**, but it is our **duty** to commit whatever we have learnt to **faithful men**.

This calling of a **teacher/mentor** is a duty of **all Christians**, not only for **pastors** or **preachers** but for **all of us too**.



III) The Calling of a Good Soldier (v.3-4)



Verse 3: “*Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*”

Verse 4: “*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*”.

Why do we need **soldiers**? They are needed as there are **wars** to be fought. Soldiers are **trained military** people who are **highly disciplined, fighting fit** and trained to **fight to defend the sovereignty** of their country.

However, there are also bad soldiers. They are **corrupt** fighters who will kill others indiscriminately.

For the **good** Christian soldiers, they are to **defend the faith** and **stand up** for the **Lord** and to **endure** toughness and hardships. When they are **at war**, they do not **entangle/enjoy** themselves with the frivolous **affairs** of **this** life, but to **accept** the ensuing **tough, harsh** and **difficult** situations of life in a country at war. Sometimes they may even have to face **persecution, imprisonment, negativity** or even **death** for upholding their faith, cause and commitment, just like the martyrs of old.

A Christian soldier must also **be willing** to **sacrifice** his life to **defend** his faith.

In the Apostle Paul's eyes, a soldier is **chosen** and in the first century, the soldier analogy was used to describe faithful Christians who **loved** the Lord and had **put on** the **full** armour of **God**.

Soldiers of Christ must be **combat-ready** and on the **alert**, like those in Taiwan and South Korea today.

Are you on the **alert** for the **attacks** of the wiles of the **evil one**?

Are you **ready** for **battle any time**?

Why is an analogy of a **soldier** used to describe a Christian?

He is in a **war** and there is an **enemy** to **fight** to **defend** and **uphold** the **gospel**, the **truth** and the **faith** against the **wiles** of the **evil one**.

In verse 3 & 4, the **soldiers** of Christ were **chosen** by the **Lord**, who called them to **disentangle** themselves from the **common affairs** and **vicissitudes** of this life, to **endure** tough hardships so as to **defend** their **faith**, **gospel** and **beliefs** in the Lord, their **commander**, and to **please** the Lord.

IV) The Calling of an Athlete (v.5)

Verse 5 reads: *“And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully”*.

Besides being called as son, teacher /mentor and soldier, the **Christian** is also called as an **athlete** in verse 5.



The word **“athlete”** cannot be seen in that verse. It comes from the word **“strive”** or **“atheleo”** in **Greek**. It means **“competing”**. To **“strive for masteries”** means a person wants to **compete to win**, for **success in victory**, to be **the best** in a particular sport, game or activity.

When you take part in a competition, you must **obey** and **stick to** all the **rules of the contest**, that is **“to strive lawfully”** otherwise you will be **disqualified or even banned** from **future competitions**.

Why then is an analogy of an **athlete** used for a Christian?

Christians are considered to be **involved in** some kind of a **race (competition)**, in which we require **perseverance**, **patience**, **tough training** and **great fitness** in order to **excel** and **succeed**, as we are reminded in **Heb. 12 :1** *“...let us run with **patience or endurance the race that is set before us.**”*

It is important for a runner/ athlete to complete the race, even if he does not win the race, just as it is for a Christian to finish his race (earthly journey) well, despite the many sins that he had committed during his lifetime that were forgiven by the Lord after accepting God's salvation plan for redeemed souls.

The life of an athlete is as such, and so is the life of a Christian too. Thus, the analogy of an athlete is also used to describe a Christian.

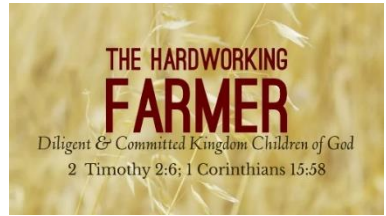
V) The Calling of a Farmer/Husbandman (v.6)

Verse 6 *“The **husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.**”*

The word **“husbandman”** refers to a **farmer**. He has a **hard** life as he has to work **tirelessly**, **carefully**, **diligently** and **laboriously** to ensure a **fruitful**,

successful and **bounteous** harvest that is very much **dependent** on the **climate change, freak weather, natural pests, diseases** and **market demands**.

The farmer **tills** and **cultivates** the land, **sows** the seeds, **waters** them, **takes** good care of the seedlings and **protects** them from **pests, weeds** and **diseases**. In the meantime, while **waiting** for a **much longer** time for the main cash crops to **grow up** and be ready for **harvesting**, he may also **rear** some other **animals** like sheep, cows, pigs, goats and poultry on the farm to **diversify** his income sources.



Thus, a farmer has to live a really **tough** and **busy** life, especially when his **income** from his harvest is **not assured**, even after so much **intensive labour** and **effort** have been invested into it.

A Christian should seriously think about the need to **sow** the **seeds** of salvation in the **hearts** of man and **follow up** with much **patience, labour of love, support, sacrifice, effort, time, energy** and **resources** to **await** the fruitful harvest of **redeemed souls** that may not even be assured.

The Christian who **shares** the gospel of salvation may **not** be the person to **reap** the harvest of redeemed souls, but he needs to **partake** of the “**spiritual growth process**” by “**watering**” or **encouraging** this affirmation of faith **via** the initial **conviction** by the **Holy Spirit**.

So, who is going to sow the seeds of salvation in the hearts of man?

For a **farmer** he needs to be **physically strong** and **healthy** to do all that **hard, strenuous** labour on the farm to manage it **profitably**.

A Christian need to be **spiritually healthy** and **close** to God to be able to **share** the gospel and **sow** the seeds of salvation in the hearts of unsaved man living in the vast harvest fields where they have **never** heard the **preaching** of the gospel.

Hence the relevant analogy of a **farmer/husbandman** has been used to describe a Christian.

Conclusion:

A Christian has been described (compared) as a **son, a teacher/mentor, a soldier, an athlete** and a **farmer** in the above text.

What can we do for the Kingdom of God?

We can give out a tract or a Bible, invite someone to church, give a personal testimony, reach out to others in need, go on mission trips and go on evangelism outreaches.

Have we been faithfully working in these 5 areas of analogies of a Christian?

- i) Are you a **faithful son**, strong in the faith and standing up for the Lord?
- ii) Are you a **mentor-teacher** to others, helping people to nurture them to grow in their faith?
- iii) Are you a **fit and disciplined soldier**, fighting a spiritual war for the faith and the defence of the Lord's gospel?
- iv) Are you a very **fit, disciplined running the race of life as an athlete**, making sure that you **win** without **breaking** the rules and going **by the laws of God**, but running with **patience** and **finishing well**?
- v) Are you a good and faithful **farmer** who is called to **till** the ground, and to **water** it and **harvest** it in due season?

These are the 5 important aspects of our lives that we can do for the Lord. Let us continue to pray to the Lord and to strive to practise them diligently.

Han Kin Hoong

A STEP OF FAITH

When Sovereign Hope BPC (SHBPC) announced her plans to resume her mission trips to Batam, Myanmar and India, I was in a prayerful consideration frame of mind to travel as a team member to Myanmar again.

My last mission trip to Myanmar was in 2017. A year later, I had a bad fall, requiring a Right Shoulder Hemiarthroplasty surgery.

Then, in 2019, everything came to a grinding halt due to the dreadful pandemic episode until now!



Thinking that it was alright to start planning for an overseas mission trip, it dawned on me that there were obstacles for me to clear off first. I had to reschedule my NNI appointment and to contact Ministry of Manpower (MOM) with regards to the procedure I needed to observe and comply with before I could bring along Naw Phaw, my sister's domestic helper, to assist me with my daily needs, just like carrying out her routine job scope in Singapore. However, the most difficult obstacle to clear was Naw Phaw's Myanmar passport status.

It looked like the ever ready evil one was out to create fears, doubts and confusion in my mind to give up the idea of fulfilling God's charge to every Christian to go forth and testify the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24).

The "deception" ploy was to strongly dishearten me when I was given differing news/information from supposedly reliable sources regarding Naw Phaw's passport status. From my understanding, for all Myanmar nationals returning home and would want to leave Myanmar again for an overseas job or to continue with the current job, they must have a "PV" passport status instead of a "PJ" or apply for an Overseas Worker Identity Card (OWIC). Otherwise, they would not be allowed to leave Myanmar. All these "latest" regulations imposed required a lengthy period of time (which the Mission Team did not have) and administrative charges.

Drained as I was spiritually, I was of two minds: To go or not to go. Of course, this was the best time/opportunity for the evil one to conclude for me in his favour! So, it came to a point when I had to tell sister Angie that Naw Phaw and I had to cancel the trip, thus, forfeiting all the expenses incurred so far.

BUT, God's word in Proverbs 3:5-6 *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths."* and Isaiah 26:3-4 *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."* comforted and encouraged me to focus on God, who is sovereign and in charge of the whole situation, and NOT the problem.



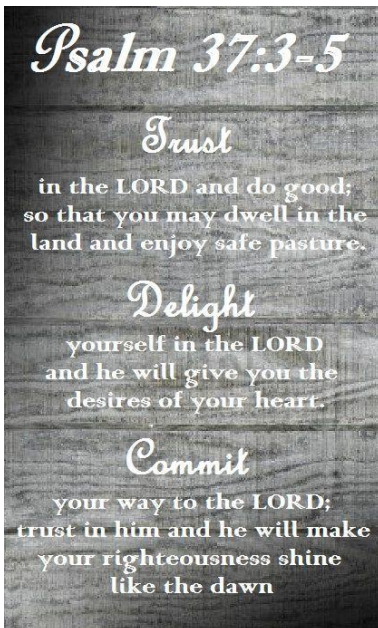
Lo, and behold, a ray of hope came along! Our missionaries, brothers John Ling and Rev Salai, were requested and tasked to oversee to Naw Phaw's situation. Well, the rest is now history. . . Naw Phaw did get her OWIC issue resolved successfully and did return safely to Singapore with the Mission Team. **ALL GLORY AND PRAISE TO GOD.**

I am grateful and thankful to be of service unto God as a Team Member in spite of all the inadequacies I had based on my own strength and best effort put in, for I serve the God who says, *"I will be with you"*, in Exodus 3:12.



I am so glad that I did go on this memorable trip after a lapse of 6 years. It was a great opportunity to meet up with brethren and their families like Rev Salai, John Ling, Rev David Khobal and Benjamin Chui. Besides, I was looking forward to see for the first time in person Elder Habakkuk and Pr Myitta who have been attending SHBPC Wednesday Prayer Meeting regularly. There were also new faces introduced to me: brethren Rev Timothy Khobal and Solomon at Hosana Bible College where Pastor Jack taught a group of 10 pastors for the Master of Ministry Course.

Through my interaction with the people of God, I am very blessed in all areas of my life. Indeed, I am very much encouraged by their enthusiastic and sincere attitude to want to earnestly seek and serve and humbly walk with God.



This mission trip experience reminded me of my retirement tag line, **“I retire to re-fire my life for God”, ten years ago.** It is my prayer, God willing, that I will still be of use for God’s work in my advanced age by **Trusting** and **Delighting** in the LORD and **Committing** the way unto the LORD. (Psalm 37:3-5)

TO GOD BE THE GLORY.

Han Kin Kheng

16th October 2023

Memory Verse

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

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Lord's Day Sunday Worship Service! If you are here for the first time, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave. Those who share the church vision to acquire a place of worship in due time, may designate your offerings to the SHBPC Church Building Fund.
2. Pastor brings us God's Word this morning on ***The Body of Christ & Stewardship (Matt 25:14-30)***, the quarterly series on ***The Nature and Duties of the Body of Christ***.
3. Next Sunday, Bro Joseph Wee will preach on ***The Cause & Case for a Zealous Reformation Spirit (Jude 1-13)***.
4. Sunday School classes after the worship service are as follows:
 - Westminster Confession of Faith - Pastor
 - Studies in 2 Chronicles - Dr Kwong Leen
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on every Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. We have systematic studies on Kingdoms, Covenants and Canon of the Old Testament and the Parables of Jesus. Join us for a time of profitable learning. [Zoom ID:883 9662 4157 Passcode:625551]
6. Pray for the **India Mission Team (Pastor, Angie, Dn Paul Tan, Eld Jeffrey, Sis Peng Ha)** as they minister at New Covenant BPCI (Ps Babu) and Calvary Reformed Church (Ps Lazarus) in **Bangalore** and CALM Church (Ps John Caleb) in **Hyderabad** from **31 Oct to 11 Nov 2023**.
7. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church. [Zoom ID:863 7527 5431 Passcode:218178]
8. We need willing hands and hearts to assist in the weekly cleaning of the premises. Do let Dn Yue Kay if you are available to serve in this area.
9. 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**

Kindly indicate **"Church Building Fund"** if you would like to designate towards this cause.
