



**2020 Year Theme:
Be Strong and Courageous! Joshua 1:9**

Theme: Trial & Tribulation - Trust & Obey

Today's scripture texts: Ex 16:2-4, 9-15 ; John 6:24-35; Ex 16:2-4, 9-15

In the reading from Exodus, we hear Israel complaining to Moses and Aaron about wilderness food and God answering their complaint by promising meat and bread. The selection from Psalm 78 is a recollection on God's sending Israel "the bread of angels," or manna from heaven.

In the Gospel text, we have John's recall of the Exodus story in the form of a conversation by Jesus on the bread from heaven, climaxing in Christ's claim "I am the bread of life."

The story begins with a complaint, a death-wish, and a stark assertion of lack (Exodus 16:2-3). The congregation has left the land of Egypt only to find itself in a dry and barren wilderness (Ex 16:2). They are united by insecurity, anxiety, and hunger. Their complaint soon emerges as a central motivator in the narrative: the congregation is told four times that God acted because God heard their complaint (Ex 16:7, 8, 9, 12)..."

Verse 15 tells us that when the people of Israel saw manna, they said to one another, "What is it?" This is the perfect question for this odd stuff that just appeared in the wilderness every morning. A perfect question for this Sunday's worship service.

But Israel was not satisfied. The present often seems worse than the past. We often romanticize the "days of old" and think of them as better than now... we think back to when everyone just went to church because it was "what you did." And we assume that this was better. Maybe it was better, maybe not...

I could go on and on about the things we think were "better" in the past. But I think the main reason we romanticize the past is that we know that we can get through the past whereas the present and future is still undecided.

The God of Israel, however, is not a God of the past. This God is a God of the present and future, one who calls us to new places and new ways of being in relationship with God and with each other. Can we trust and obey God each step of the way?

In our gospel Jesus tells the crowd of the true bread of life, the bread from heaven. The bread which the Son of Man offers is more genuinely life-giving than the manna by which Israel was fed in the wilderness. More significantly still, do we believe that Jesus will lead us to eternal life?

No wonder the psalmist thanks God and keeps reminding Israel by telling the story of how the Lord sustain Israel in the wilderness after the escape from Egypt. Can we identify with God's grace in our own wilderness experience? Can we trust and obey Him?

EVENTS

Online Bible Class & Worship

16 August

9.30 am Bible Class
The Parable of the Ten Virgins by Lian Chye

11.00 am Worship
The Wilderness Period - Trust & Obey by Jason Mok

Wed Online Bible Class
19 August

7.30 pm
The Book of Psalms
Teacher: Lim Cher Yam

Zoom Prayer Warriors

8.00 pm
Every 2nd & 4th Tue
Lim Lian Chye

Gladiolus Place Devotions 7.30 pm
Every 2nd & 4th Mon



Use this QR code to access Online Worship



RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE CONTINUES TODAY. (UP TO 50 MEMBERS). MEMBERS WHO INTEND TO WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH PREMISES ON SUNDAY ARE TO REGISTER AND SUBMIT THE ONLINE FORM ON PPCOC WEBSITE EACH WEEK. MEMBERS MAY ALSO USE THE QR CODE ON PAGE 4 FOCUS NEWSLETTER.

YOU can join us in worship by going to www.ppcoc.org and click on our Online Worship under Resources tab or Quick Links. You can also check the Donate tab on how to make bank transfers to the church for tithes and offerings.

When Are Christians At Their Best?

By David Young

David Young will be the main platform speaker for our Online Disciple-makers' Workshop - "The Power of Coffee Time" to be held on Saturday 3rd October 2020. David Young serves as the senior minister for the North Boulevard Church of Christ in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. – Beng Chuan

The pandemic continues. While headlines focus on how politicians are handling the pandemic, we might ask how Christians throughout history have handled pandemics. What can we learn from our own history?

Sadly, the first thing to say is that we have not always risen to our ideals in the face of pandemics and other catastrophes.

We are, after all, still human beings. So there have been times where Christians protected themselves and neglected the sick and dying. And there have been even darker times, when Christians blamed others for national disasters, sometimes even persecuting others out of fear. For example, Christians in the Middle Ages participated in pogroms against Jews, sometimes fixing blame on their Jewish neighbours for pandemics and other troubles. We must be honest that Christians have often strayed far from the way of Jesus.

At the same time, however, Christians have often conducted themselves in ways that should make a disciple of Jesus proud—times when Christians displayed such heroic Christlikeness that the whole world took notice.

For example, a pandemic hammered the Roman Empire from AD 249-262. It is called the Plague of Cyprian, after Cyprian, a North African bishop who wrote about the plague. We're not sure exactly what disease it was, perhaps smallpox or Ebola. At its peak, 5,000 people a day were dying in just the city of Rome alone.

How did Christians respond? The church responded like the Marine Corps—running toward, rather than away from, the gunfire.

Christians ran in to help the victims. We opened hospitals and healthcare centres. We fed people who couldn't afford food during the pandemic. According to one church leader, Dionysius, a bishop in North Africa, Christians were so involved in serving the sick that we became "the nurses and doctors" of the pagan world.

The Christian response to the sick during the Cyprian Plague is even more impressive when compared to how other religious people responded. Worshipers of pagan gods fled the cities as the plague hit, even leaving behind their own ill and dying family members. They had no motivation to love the sick, as Jesus teaches us to do.

So, while Christians stayed and served the victims of the plague, pagans abandoned the sick.

This Christian response was so powerful that, about a hundred years later, a non-Christian emperor called Julian the Apostate expressed his shame over how pagan leaders respond to disaster. Not only did the Christians care for their own, Julian lamented, but the Christians even took care of pagans after their families had run away.

Rodney Stark is a sociologist who has written extensively on the influence of Christianity throughout history. He describes the courageous way Christians responded to pandemics in the Roman world during the first three or four centuries AD. It was this courage during pandemics, Stark explains, that propelled the Christian religion to the forefront of the Roman world.

And Christians have been doing it ever since. The great university system begun eight centuries ago in Europe were all Christian endeavours—efforts to educate humanity for a better world. Indeed, virtually every university founded in America up until the Civil War was a Christian university—started for Christian purposes. Cities, social services, orphanages, nursing homes, hospitals, and a thousand sources of care have all been started by Christians for the purpose of loving the world as Jesus loves the world.

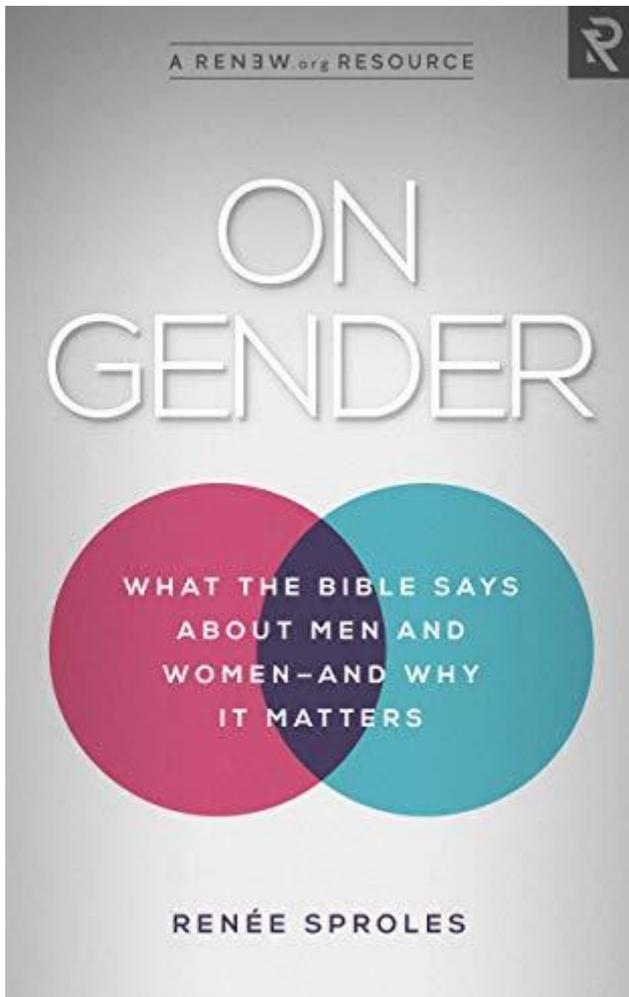
Why do you think hospitals carry such names as "St. Thomas," "St. Luke," "Methodist," "Baptist," and the like?

History has taken many turns, and often faced disasters on national and global scales. We Christians are at our best when we respond to such downturns in history as Jesus would: with love, compassion, mercy, and the heart and hands to service.

Or, put another way: We Christians are at our best in times like these.

On Gender: What the Bible Says About Men and Women - and Why It Matters By Renée Sproles

Renée Sproles will be the women speaker for our Online Disciple-makers' Workshop - "The Power of Coffee Time – Investing in A Few" to be held on Saturday 3rd October 2020 – Beng Chuan



BOTH MEN AND WOMEN UNIQUELY REFLECT THE IMAGE OF GOD—BUT HOW WILL WE TREAT ONE ANOTHER?

Being male and female means much more than figuring out who's "in charge" or whether men or women get to perform certain roles. Far from being bad news, God's word on gender is great news when we live as he intended.

Not pitting one gender against another—elevating women or men above the other—*On Gender* charts a third way, the way of embracing and enjoying our gender differences. Amid the arguments of rigid complementarians and liberal egalitarians, find clarity by reading this book. Renée Sproles challenges both men and women by inviting them to obey Scripture with imagination and joy. Brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, church leaders and lay persons alike will find in this book a fresh and winsome perspective on what it means to be male and female. We can glorify God in our daily lives and bring out the best in each other to give the world an in-the-flesh picture of Christ and the church.

"Biblically grounded and winsome, *On Gender* offers a generous and beautiful picture of complementarianism for the 21st century. It's not a mere list of prohibitions and restrictions but rather a lovely portrait of how God has designed males and females to live together in such a way that each person is elevated to their fullest dignity. Read this book and live its truths."

—DAVID YOUNG, Senior Minister, North Boulevard Church of Christ
"This book contains the best explanation of husband-wife relationships I have ever read. It's a much-needed woman's perspective that I will surely use in my own marriage and in counseling with married couples. Many of us never received sufficient instructions in this area, and boy do we need it. Sproles is spot-on."

—GEOFF GIESEMANN, Spiritual Growth Minister, Burnt Hickory Church of Christ

"*On Gender* is filled with relevant Scriptures and accurate interpretations, consistently buttressed with simple explanations of Hebrew and Greek words. If your congregation is struggling with this issue, use this resource in your church classes as well in your youth and college programs. Unlike any book I know on this subject, this one is uniquely both scholarly and self-confessional."

—JOHN HARRIS, former Orlean Bullard Beeson Professor of Education, Samford University

RENÉE WEBB SPROLES and her husband, David, married in 1992 and have taught parenting classes together for twenty years. A homeschooling mother of two, Renée helped launch the Discipleship Tutorial in 2016 as part of North Boulevard Church's School of Christian Thought. Discipleship Tutorial is dedicated to academic excellence, building a Christian worldview, and mentoring students. She is passionate about cooking, happy families, and homeschooling—all done as unto the Lord.

We rejoice with the angels in heaven over the two baptisms last Sunday 9th August. Pray for them to grow in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus.

- **Manuevo Grace Seguinte**, helper of Sarah Yu and Frederick Yu
- **Myan Cris Cabanting Fronda**, helper of Tony Zhang and Nancy Zhang

Praise and thank God for **Janet Gant** and **William Wong** that they were discharged to recuperate and rest at home.



God is Our Source of Hope

God delights in those who put their hope in His unfailing love.

Throughout the Bible, God proves His faithfulness to His people by leading them safely through or delivering them from all their dangers and troubles.

God wants us to trust in Him and He is delighted when we put our trust in Him, "the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love"

Hope in Difficult Times

Even the strongest people get tired at times, but God's power and strength never diminish. He is never too tired or too busy to help and listen. His Strength is our source of strength.

Even if you reach what you consider to be your lowest point, God's Word says He will never leave or forsake you, (Matt 28:20).

He will give you peace and comfort even in the worst of circumstances.



Sis Serene shared "Living Life with Hope" with the girls in Gladiolus Place this week. God should be our source of hope. Hope brings strength and joy in difficult and trying times.

RE-BUILDING: A MILESTONE IN THE HISTORY OF PPCOC

GOAL

Goal \$8.7mil

\$6,989,486

DATE:
16 Aug 2020

Pledged Donations	S\$ 5,894,372
Pledged Loans *	S\$ 720,000
Ad-Hoc BF Donations <i>(Cumulative collection to date)</i>	S\$ 375,114
Pledges & Ad-Hoc BF Donations	S\$ 6,989,486
Amount to achieve \$8.7m goal	S\$ 1,710,514
Total Collection <i>(Pledges Fulfilled & Ad-Hoc BF Donations)</i>	S\$ 3,827,766

Note: * Pledged Loans to be repaid from 1 year after TOP

SUNDAY GIVING



9 August - \$7,820

WAYS TO GIVE

(C) Donate via PayNow (QRCode)

1. Scan the QR code using your mobile banking app
2. Verify that it shows:
Church of Christ PPG,
S76SS0008AGFD
3. Indicate your name in the "Reference No." (optional)
4. Enter the amount you wish to contribute
5. Click next, verify the details and confirm.



Pasir Panjang Church of Christ Sunday Worship Attendance

Please read and follow the instructions carefully. Failure to do so may make your registration void. Do this only once. Thank you for your cooperation.

REGISTRATION FOR SUBMISSION IS OPEN FROM MONDAY AND THE CUT-OFF DATE/TIME FOR SUBMISSION WILL BE FRIDAY, 12 NOON FOR THE COMING SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE.



<http://bit.ly/2Wk8Qg8>

FEEDBACK on Church Matters



<http://bit.ly/38KH8wK>

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