



CHURCH of CHRIST
— PASIR PANJANG —

FOCUS

19 July 2020

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

Worship Theme: The Call and Commissioning of Moses – Revelation and Re-creation
Today's scripture texts: Ex 3:1-15; Rom 12:9-21; Ps 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c

What does God's call mean for us? What can we expect when we receive God's call? These are the questions at the heart of this week's readings and they flow beautifully out of last week's challenge. If you are following the Moses readings, the clear progression is from Moses' own personal salvation last week to his call to go back and save God's people.

If your focus is the Romans, its reading supports the Moses story as it calls God's people to live in love for one another & for enemies, giving themselves for the well-being of others in practical ways.

Finally, the Psalm expresses praise for God's salvation and the plea for God to recognise the innocence of the psalmist and God's people – even as Jesus suffered though innocent.

So, what **Revelation and Re-creation** are you hearing from God? God may be wanting us to hear this week that we are all called to follow Christ to be liberators of others, serving and loving all people, including our enemies, and that as we respond to this call we must be willing to lay our lives down and embrace the inevitable suffering and sacrifice that will come. Yet, even in the midst of this tough word is a light of hope. It is in this self-giving love that we find our 'souls' (our true, God-given selves) and we discover true, abundant life.

In our pain-avoidant world, the idea that we should embrace sacrifice and suffering as a response to God's call sounds ridiculous. Yet, as we seek healing and sustainability in our world, we cannot but see the wisdom in this call. We may not be a Moses or a Jesus, but as each of us embrace our "calling", we can have global impact in our own small way. But it will require us to leave our places of privilege, to turn away from our consumerism mindset, and to embrace the sacrifice of simple living, of greater financial contribution (if we are among the more wealthy – and if you're reading this, you almost certainly are), and of personal willingness to relinquish comfort and luxury.

We may find ourselves choosing to walk more or to ride a bicycle instead of using our cars as much. We may need to reduce our meat intake. We may need to allocate more of our income to giving and support of those with less. We may have to take stands in uncomfortable ways among our friends and families over issues like inclusion of the marginalised, and loving our enemies. It may mean choosing to give our vote to a difficult and unpopular cause. We may need to learn more about a foreign culture and seek to understand people we would normally consider "enemies". It may mean giving up on certain clothes, foodstuffs or sweets in order to ensure we don't participate in the oppression or slavery of others.

This **Revelation** is certain, though: God's call will lead us to take our global citizenship seriously and to contribute sacrificially in whatever way we can to the **Re-creation** of our world and its inhabitants. And as we as individuals and groups respond to God's call, we become part of a movement of grace, healing, love and sacrifice that has the power to really change things for the better.

EVENTS

Online Bible Class & Worship

19 July
9.30 am Bible Class
The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant by Kelvin Koo

11.00 am Worship
The Call and Commissioning of Moses – Revelation and Re-creation by John Lim

Wed Online Bible Class
22 July
7.30 pm
The Book of Psalms
Teacher: Lim Cher Yam

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



Use this QR code to access Online Worship



RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE ON 19 JULY 2020. RELIGIOUS SERVICES OF ONLY UP TO 50 PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO RESUME WITH STRINGENT SAFE MEASURES IN PLACE (READ PAGES 2 AND 3).

AS SUCH, THE ONLINE WORSHIP AND BIBLE CLASSES WILL CONTINUE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

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.



By John Lim

Oasis: a fertile or green area in an arid region (such as a desert); something that provides, relief, refuge or pleasant contrast

Merriam-Webster

The Importance of July

Why is the topic relevant right now? The beginning of July represents the half-way point of the year. Now is a time to ask: Where have we been? What have we accomplished? What have we learned? Where are we going? As we answer these questions together as members of PPCOC family, these questions can infuse us with clarity about what is most important and keep us on track toward our mission as an individual follower of Christ.

The truth is, there will always be obstacles, ideas, and opportunities that pop up and challenge the vision you set for the year. As we stay prayerfully focussed,, we can achieve the goals we set forth as a church or family member despite the distractions and setbacks. In light of this, I am publishing John Lim's article on Oasis or "Cultivating Oasis" to motivate you to take stock and finish well in our Lord's vineyard - from Beng Chuan.

I close my eyes and inhale. My fingers intertwine lightly as though in prayer, finding a sweet spot between connectedness and relaxation. My feet cross each other at the ankles, perfectly balanced upon one heel. Leaning back into the plushy cushion, I barely notice the exquisite fabric of my sweater and jogger pants. When I do, it feels like the gentle embrace of a fluffy cloud. Or cotton candy.

It's 5:15 am on a Wednesday morning. I realize that this isn't the typical setting you'd find a college student in. We have this stereotype about us that we stay up as late as we can, whether because we're hanging out or to cram for a test that "snuck up on us." Our alarms shock us awake in the morning. Or we oversleep our alarms and get shocked anyway when we gape at the time.

We live our days scurrying from one class to the next, making frequent pit stops for caffeine or sugary snacks. Between studying, socializing and student jobs, we fill every spare second with our devices. It's like we're desperately trying to keep our brains overstimulated, our lives over-saturated and our energies overspent. But hey, that's college. Right?

With all the things we do, there is something I think we do quite terribly. And that is, well, doing nothing. Inactivity is disgusting to a culture that's always on the move. Doing nothing wastes the potential of the moment. *You could have sent one more email or You could have watched one more episode.*

The Word of the Year

That's why I've chosen *Oasis* as my word of 2020. The "word of the year" is basically a minimalist New Year's Resolution. The way I see it, it's not exactly a "goal" that I'm trying to achieve. It's more like a "guide" I try to live by, and I find that this concept offers a lot of grace. You can fail to achieve a "goal", but a "guide" helps you find your way back when you've strayed. And boy, do I stray a lot.

Last semester, I ordered my life to see how far I could push myself. I essentially lived without margins, filling all my time with classes, study, research and/or work. Rest was out of the question – I actually told people that I "rested" from one thing by doing something else. While I didn't officially burn out, I learned that trying to hit that limit isn't worth it.

Continues on Page 3

Continues from Oasis by John Lim

Ironically, the less I rested, the more I thought about it. The idea of Sabbath haunted me, subtly yet painfully accusing me of my self-neglect. The more I tried to drown out the cries of my exhausted body and spirit with work, the louder the voice of Sabbath sounded. Only that it wasn't like an angry mob growing more berserk by the second. It was like a whisper that grew clearer, though not louder, stilling the chaos of my mind. When I didn't take time to rest, this voice created its own oasis within me.

So this year, I'm trying something different. I've ignored the voice of Sabbath long enough. It's time to cultivate an oasis within myself.

Cultivating Oasis

For starters, I'm bringing back my practice of Saturday Sabbath. I need time to read for leisure, write posts like this, enjoy good coffee and spend quality time with friends. Not everyone might consider this "rest" (I read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* over Christmas break for fun) but hey, I do.

Another thing I'm trying to do is cultivate a morning routine that allows me to be still. I wake up at 5 am and spend time in still, silent solitude. Then I go for a run, swing some weights around, take a shower and enter into the day with a smile.

At least for the present, these practices are helping me cultivate an inner oasis. An inner state of stillness, peace and rest that makes me feel grounded through the day. When I come before God before I see the sun, I am reminded of who I am because of where I come from. I can smile not because I'm putting on a front, but because joy radiates from within.

Cultivating this oasis isn't as easy as I thought. When we think of being still or silent meditation, we might picture a brown-robed monk, head bowed in blissful prayer. We think of solitude as a grace that only a select few possess, and those who do are untouched by any cares or concerns that we normal people do.

Having tried it myself, I realized that it's not as serene as we think it is. Ironically, I think of my oasis as a battlefield, albeit a different kind. Every time I close my eyes and pray for God's presence to come to me, it's a fight to keep everything else out. Stilling one's mind to only think about God when one is so used to *doing* something and thinking *everything* is freaking difficult. I think of undone assignments, tasks to accomplish for the day, a funny comment that someone made to me yesterday, and before I know it my mind has drifted far from the One who ought to command my full attention.

Even so, I consider this a battle worth fighting. It's not a fight to "do all the things" or to have everything done according to my way or my plans. Rather, I now fight to die to myself. To the impulses that distract me from my Creator. To the urge to abandon rest so that I can be "productive". Maybe that's what Paul meant when he said that we don't fight battles with flesh and blood.



Online Wednesday Night Bible Class July 2020

The Book of Psalms

Beginning from this Wednesday night, 22 July 2020, we will begin a new series studying the first twenty-five Psalms (Psalms 1-25).

The book of Psalms has been the favourite of many throughout the ages and is treasured and well read. It is a book where all of us will naturally turn to in every changing season of our lives – during the good times and the down times. It speaks directly to our hearts because in it, we are able to identify with the diverse thoughts and emotions expressed by the Psalmist.

We share the exuberance and joy of the Psalmist when he celebrates the good times with thanksgivings and praises overflowing from his heart to God.

We share the pain, anguish and anxiety of the Psalmist when he was dealt with cruel blows that life often conjures.

We share the laments, distresses and the disappointments of the Psalmist when he felt abandon and forsaken by God.

What is depicted in Psalms is often mirrored in our very own lives and for this reason, the Psalms is a book for all seasons.

In it we find solace, encouragement and comfort knowing that we can always depend on God who is always there for us.

Our approach to the study is chapter based. In each Psalm we will explain the context and the events that surrounds the writing of the Psalm. We will dissect the contents, give an overview of the Psalm and suggest how we should interpret and draw the valuable lessons intended.

Each lesson comes with well researched materials which are deliberately documented in great details which will help and guide you in your future self-study.

I hope you are encouraged by this introduction and will join us in this study!

God Bless,

Cher Yam



Family News, Concerns & Prayers

Tim Loy Hwee Sieu is now in a Bukit Batok Care Home, a nursing home. Uphold him in your prayer.

Uphold prayer for **Janet Gant**. Praying for God's favour for kidney stones removal surgery and wellness on 29 July.

Pray for our Newly Elected Government:

1. Pray for humility of the leaders.
2. The leaders should not be proud, not just economy driven.
3. There must be fairness and compassion - care for the underprivileged.
4. Pray for the spirituality of the leaders. We need courageous Christian leaders.



Sis Hong Ngee shared a timely lesson on "How to find Peace in a Pandemic?" last Monday at Gladiolus Place.

Please pray for God to continue to protect the girls from Covid-19, to help them study well for their coming examinations and to know God's will for their lives.

How to find Peace in a Pandemic

- Back away from the bad news
Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (Phil 4:8)
 - Open our hearts again to faith in time of uncertainty
 - Be vigilant
 - Be responsible
- Lean in to Spiritual Discipline
Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isa 41:10)
 - Frequent prayers
 - Silence
 - Reading the Bible

How to find Peace in a Pandemic

- Relocus on what we can control
The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent. (Ex 14:14)
 - Release your burdens and walk in obedience to Him
 - Be still in the places where we are powerless
 - Be faithful where He has given us responsibility
- Fresh grace for the next day
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lam 3:22-23)
 - Available to all who believe in Jesus
 - Good work of the spirit in my heart

SUNDAY GIVING

FACTS FIGURES

12 July - \$14,630.80

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.

General Fund
UEN: S76SS0008AGFD

Missions Fund
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Members who intend to worship at the church premises on Sunday are to register and submit the online form each week. <http://bit.ly/2Wk8Qg8>

Scan the QR code to submit the registration successfully.

FEEDBACK on Church Matters



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

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