



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

Worship Theme: The Lord and the gods of Egypt (including the Pharaoh) - Who is the Lord?
Today's scripture texts: Ex 7:1-5; Rom 12:1-8; Ps 124

This week's theme answers the question – Who is the Lord? As we witness how the gods of Egypt (including the Pharaoh) encounter our Lord.

In this reading of Exodus God is giving his reluctant servant Moses instructions for the task ahead. God has already called Moses out of the wilderness and away from his sheep. He has listened to all of Moses' "yeah, buts" and has allowed Aaron – the better speaker of the two – to accompany him on his quest to free the people of Israel from their Egyptian bondage.

The answer to Moses' question, "Since I speak with faltering lips, why would Pharaoh listen to me?" is easily found in today's reading. Aside from being God's answer, it is a complete summary of what is about to happen: God gives Moses and Aaron the play-by-play of His great plan of redemption.

Let's get back to God's answer. First, God tells Moses that, in Pharaoh's eyes, Moses will seem like a god – that is, he will be able to do things Pharaoh has not seen before. (Imagine that kind of power!) Second, Moses and Aaron are to do exactly what God tells them to do. (Okay, so far, so good). Third, shockingly, God tells Moses that he will harden Pharaoh's heart. (Why? – we'll get to that). Fourth, the miracles will become greater and greater (but Pharaoh still will not to listen) until – fifth – judgment will fall on Egypt (which will get their attention), and in that judgment they will "know that I am the LORD." Sixth – the Israelites will be brought out. Finally, we are told that "Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded them" at the ripe old ages of 80 and 83!

The second reading on Romans seems a bit out of place compared with the Exodus reading, but it does reflect on God's work in and through people. Here, God's people are called to offer themselves completely (as sacrifices) to God. We are called to trust in God's transformation, God's people and God's gifting. All these actions show us who the Lord is.

No wonder the psalmist in Psalm 124 exhorts us to worship our God Almighty for His protective love. Let us praise God with a worshipful and celebrative spirit for no other god is like our God.

EVENTS

Online Bible Class & Worship

26 July

9.30 am Bible Class
The Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard by Lee Hock

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

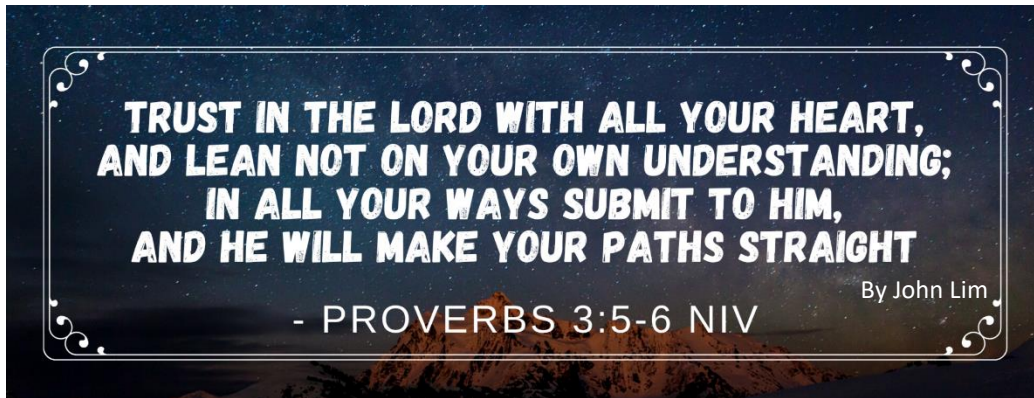


Use this QR code to access Online Worship



RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE 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. OR THEY MAY 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.**



By Ruth Smiling

Have you ever asked yourself: what is God's will for me? I know many of my friends struggled to find out what is God's will and plan for them. Recently I had a conversation with my spiritual mentor, which inspired me a lot on this topic, and I would like to share it with you.

My spiritual mentor's late husband was a doctor. He was overseas on vacation when the SARS outbreak escalated in his country in 2003. He did not have to go back to his country and serve, but he felt the responsibility to fight this battle for his country and people. Therefore, he returned to his country immediately to care for patients while leaving his wife and young daughters overseas. Unfortunately, he later infected with SARS and sacrificed at a young age. However, his sacrifice has been remembered by his country and people ever since, reminding them to strengthen the health system and not to be complacent.

My mentor's daughter has always admired her father, for his courage and putting others in front of himself. She has now grown up to be a smart and kind young lady and pursues her education in a leading institution overseas. This year (2020) when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, the country she lived in became a hard-hit area, and all schools closed. She asked my mentor whether she should continue staying at her school dormitory or return to her home country during this global pandemic.

My mentor asked if she had prayed, and what she thought. She continued by saying that if it were up to her, she would prefer her daughter come home as the mortality rate at home was significantly lower. However, she acknowledged that her will may also be different from God's will. "For example," she said, "Had I known beforehand that on return, my husband would have died, I wouldn't have let him go. However, God did not make a mistake either; his plan was to use your father to encourage his country and people to have courage, and to strengthen the health system, and it worked! Our country is doing so well in battling COVID-19."

My mentor's final thoughts to her daughter were that it is alright to not know what God's will is for you. However, when making decisions, two things are important to consider: First, can you fit God into your picture? Second, do you trust that despite the circumstances, He knows everything and will always take control? Is your heart filled with peace and joy? Ultimately, if God is always present in the picture and we can see how we can work for Him and glorify Him with our decisions, any decision we pursue will be alright. If our hearts are filled with peace and trust, we should go ahead, and if it is not God's will, He will close the door.

This conversation impacted me deeply, and it has improved my spiritual maturity substantially. I am sharing this conversation in the hopes that you will find it as encouraging as I did. When we make life decisions, it is alright to not know what God's will is for us at this point in time. If we can fit God into our picture, and have a heart filled with peace and trust, then any decision we make will be alright to pursue.

Let me leave you with this: an observation I've made of my spiritual mentor is that she has always been very positive and joyful, despite her adversities in life. After losing their husband and having to raise two young daughters alone, many would lose heart. I once asked her how she continues to be joyful. Her response was inspiring—because the bible tells us to be joyful, we should therefore, be actively joyful under any circumstance, instead of only being joyful when the environment allows. Ultimately, to be joyful is a choice that we all can make.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Philippians 4:4

Noah's ark by Lock Mee Hoe

In our family devotion many years ago a thought was shared on Noah's ark. As we dwelt further on this subject more insights poured in. In the spiritual realm, we are currently living in an era similar to Noah's.

Noah was building the ark according to God's instruction for preparation of a disaster that had never happened before. Like Noah, modern day Christians are also building our very own spiritual ark for the end of our life or for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, which has also yet to happen.

Gen 6: 9 & 6: 22 stated that Noah was righteous, blameless, walked with God and did everything just as God commanded him. In Gen 6:6, God talks of a society that was so perverse that caused God to grieve and be filled with pain— how Noah managed to accomplish such a task sent us into deep thought. Noah was able to achieve the spiritual act of worship through his continuing holiness. He was pleasing to God and did not conform to the pattern of the world (Rom 12:1-2).

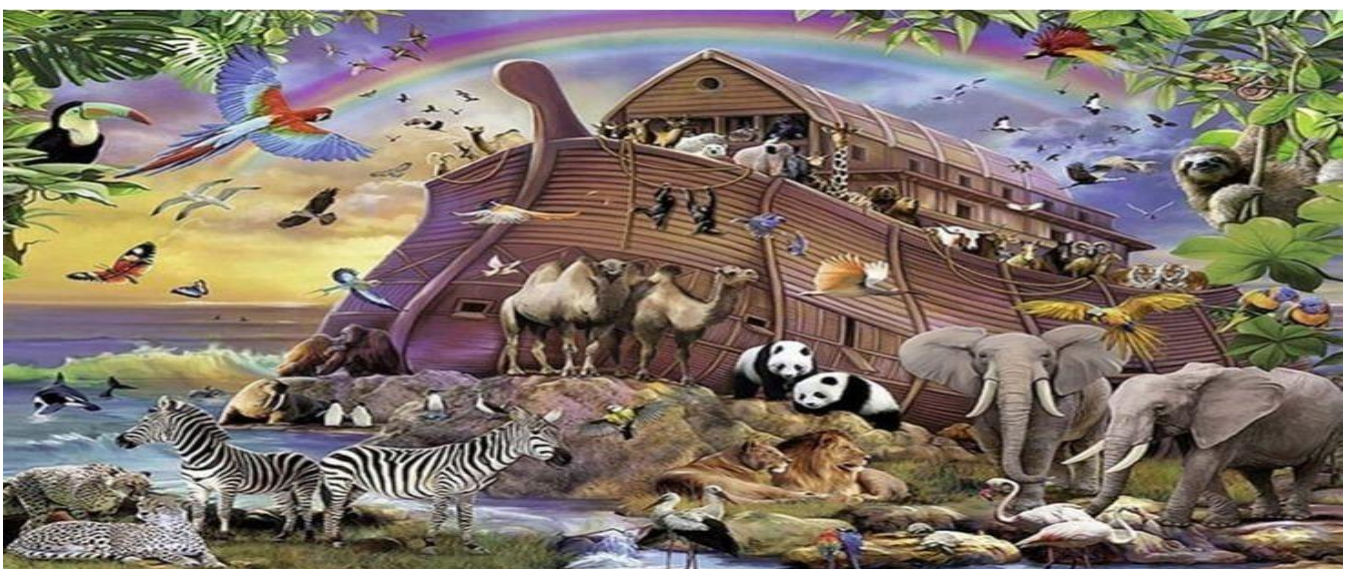
While we do not know how long Noah took to build the ark, Gen 5:32 states that Noah was 500 years old and Gen 7:6 states that he was 600 years old when the flood came. In that 100 years, Noah was in the midst of juggling between earning a living and building the ark, along with the myriad of trials and temptations that accompanied it. It must not have been easy. Similarly, our modern society provides us with a myriad of distractions; like striving to earn a living, catching up with children's education, coping with issues like ill health, grief, or the loss of someone or something very dear to us. The temptation to strike instant wealth has drawn many office workers to pool their bets and hard-earned money.

We have to overcome all these hurdles to continue building our spiritual ark. In the 66 books of the bible, God gives us the blueprints to build our spiritual ark, just as God had given Noah the dimensions and instruction to build the ark. In 2 Tim 3:16-17 it states that all scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Like our ECG graphs, our life lends itself to ups and downs. As in Eccl 3:1 there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven. The only time when there is peace and no struggling is when our ECG graph becomes a straight line.

As the hymn suggests, we don't know about tomorrow, but we know who holds tomorrow. We must not let the ups and downs of this life stop us from building our own spiritual ark. Many times we hear edifying lessons that boost us up to want to do better, but occasionally, like rock climbing, we slide back and have to struggle to climb up again. It is not easy, but we have to continue trying and never give up. As long as we do not cut off the safety rope, the branch to the vine (John 15:5) we know that we will slide and be able to climb up again but will not fall to death (Mat 10:29).

Prayers, coupled with abiding in the word of God, will see us through. Be confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Phil 1:6) .



Family News, Concerns & Prayers

Congrats to the grandparents, Farida & Jim Kawi and Doris & Seah Siow Hwee for the safe arrival of their grandson and Johnston & Josephine Seah, their firstborn son on 23 July. Both mother and baby are doing well.



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

Uphold prayer for SIBI students **Esther, Kim, Marc and Bles** on their return flight to their respective countries. May God grant each of them favours to return home to be with their love ones.

Our condolences to Sis. Rani Ponnusamy on the demise of her mother on 23 July. Funeral was held on 24 July. Please pray for God's peace and comfort to be upon Rani, Grace and Molly.

Nuggets for our Soul by Lee Hock

When the phrase "last shall be first & the first last" occurs in scripture, it refers to the fact that one's position in this life does not give a person an added advantage to gain eternal life or salvation. It not based on our status or success in this world.

This Sunday I will be sharing the Parable of the Laborers from Matt 20:1-16. It is about the upside down order of what success is, in God's Kingdom. Too often we miss the difference in meaning between a reward & a gift. True greatness is when we are called into His Kingdom with an offer from God to the commitment of becoming His servant. Those servants who are "first" in God's Kingdom has to do things His Way - be the last in order to be first. Join us today Online Bible Class at 9.30 am - <https://www.ppcoc.org/live-stream/>

SUNDAY GIVING

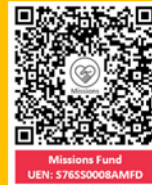
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Members who intend to worship at the church premises on Sunday are to register and submit the online form each week. <http://bit.ly/2Wk8Qg8>
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