

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

Worship Theme: Choosing Our Ending...Finishing Well!
Today's scripture texts: Isaiah 66:1-6

The key message of the sermon would be an encouragement for us to choose our ending wisely, like the humble who exalt God in all they do. There are two groups of worshippers in the house of God.

The God-exalting worship of God by the humble, vv1-2.
The self-exalting worship of God by the arrogant, vv3-6.

When Christ comes, things will be so totally changed that His people will recognize the sheer size of God. The context is that we are not going to think of the physical temple as the dwelling place of God, like the Israelites. Think about the majesty of God! Heaven is God's throne. Earth is where God rests His feet. God cannot be localized or contained. Isaiah predicted the end of the temple and its worship. This is what Isaiah is saying. This is the new heavens and new earth when Christ comes. This is part of the new creation. The temple is not your hope. The new covenant will make all things new and the former things and ways and worship will be forgotten.

If temple worship would be set aside when Christ comes and establishes his covenant, what is the new worship going to look like? God explains this in verse 2. "But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word." It is not people who come to the temple. It is people who come to the throne of God who lives in heaven, with humility. God will look with favour on those who come with a contrite spirit. God will accept people who tremble at His Word. God wants people who sense their inability in spiritual matters.

God examines the sinful hearts of the people and their problem. "These have chosen their own ways" (v3). The people delight in sin rather than in delighting in God. The self-exalting worshippers choose to do what God does not delight in (v4). When God calls through His word, they do not listen. Hence, God will judge them for their sins.

Pay attention to the encouragement God gives His God-exalting worshippers. God tells those who long to obey God to listen to what He has to say. Your brothers will hate you for trembling at His word. You will endure sarcasm, mockery, and shame because you love the scriptures. We may think that our suffering will be caused by outsiders and unbelievers. But this shame will be caused by those who claim to be followers of God. Verse 5 says that they are going to mock your love for God. In Isaiah 28, it is mentioned that such people will mock you because you are deeply concerned about God's Word. But the Lord will bring recompense on them for God knows they are his enemies (66:6).

May you celebrate being God's son and daughter. Choose your Ending as that will determine how you will finish well.

By Irvin Wan & Beng Chuan

PPCOC Health Advisory:

For brothers and sisters who have travelled abroad in the last 14 days, please stay at home for 14 days (after your return to Singapore), so as to help curb potential transmission of COVID-19.

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

EVENTS

Sunday Worship

22 Mar
8.00 am & 11.00 am
Irvin Wan
Isaiah 66:1-6

6.00 pm
Lim Cher Kiat
John 15:1-8

23 Mar (Mon)
7.30 pm
Gladiolus Place Devotion
Catherine Leow

Wed Bible Class

25 Mar
7.30 pm
Ecclesiastes
Vincent Lim

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Every Sat 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm
Terilee / Dennis Law

Prayer Warriors

Every 2nd & 4th Tue
Lim Lian Chye

31 Mar (Sun)
SIBI Graduation
12.30 pm Lunch
1.30 pm Ceremony

25-29 Jul (Sat-Wed)
59th Asian Mission Forum
Chennai India
<http://amf2020.webflow.io/>

Use this QR code to
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<http://bit.ly/3c5ifhP>

Hope from a Wounded Healer

By John Lim

There is literally nothing else on my Twitter feed right now. Every single post has something to do with the situation that now plagues our world. It does not matter if it is politics, sports or pop culture – COVID-19 has penetrated into every sphere of existence. Even typing that name of that pandemic makes me cringe, as though naming it makes it more real.



This is the crisis of our generation. Hundreds of thousands lie down in self-isolation or hospital beds, wondering if every moment will be their last. And the rest of us remain gripped with the fear that we are next. Politicians and health officials scramble desperately to safeguard those whom they can, knowing that the tiniest slip up can have catastrophic consequences. Medical professionals risk their lives and their families by exposing themselves to the virus as they care for those infected, frantically praying to whatever gods they believe in to guard them.

What am I supposed to make of this situation? I am a Christian. I believe in an all-good, all-powerful God who moves mountains and speaks worlds into existence. I believe that He entered into human history as flesh and blood, restored the sick to health and raised the dead to life. And I believe that He will do it again and wipe away every last germ and virus. I believe He will inaugurate a world where sickness is a distant memory and where death has no place. And I still do.

Then why on earth is this happening?

How am I supposed to hold on to faith in a benevolent Healer who allows sickness to run rampant? How do I keep believing in a God of peace when fear, panic-buying and disruption of world economies and school schedules reign? Somehow the old slogans seem empty – just trust in God! Have more faith! God is good all the time, and all the time God is good!

Sure, say that to a world fighting for its life.

I am not seeing care packages delivered from Heaven by winged angels. I have not seen the heavens open and heard a voice saying “Enough!” What happened to the prayers of all the faithful, who petitioned the Great Physician to bring healing? If the prayers of righteous people are powerful and effective, where are the effects?

God, why are you silent?

Surely He Has Borne our Sorrows

You seemed silent too when your own Son died on the cross. When he wailed from the excruciating pain of his nails and the effort of every gulp of air, you said nothing. Eloi eloi lama sabachthani issued from his parched lips to meet with nothingness. No angelic host or miraculous sign to prove your presence and rescue your Only Begotten. No pillar of fire or cloud, no mighty rushing wind, no trembling of the earth – at least not until after it was too late.

And yet.

Somehow you were there. Clothed in our mortality, you felt it all. The sting of every wound, the breaking of every bone. The piercing of all flesh and the strain of every muscle. But you did not stop there. You bore the hurt of every heartbreak, the crushing weight of every separation and loss. You would not drive pain and sickness and death away, but took it all on yourself.

You did not suffer so that we would not have to suffer, because we still do. You suffered so that we would not be alone when we do suffer.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed.

A Coronavirus Prayer

Petitions for the World

I pray for miracles to happen. For so long we have counted on science and medicine and money to solve our problems. Yet now they have reached their limits and failed us. We turn again to you and call upon the God for whom nothing is impossible. We ask you – no, we beg you to intervene, not for our sake, but so that your name may be lifted high even now.

Yahweh Raphe, God-who-heals, have mercy on those who are already have coronavirus in their bodies. Great Physician, relieve them of their bodily suffering as only you are able. You opened blind eyes and strengthened lame feet with the gentle touch of your hand. You brought the dead back to life at a single, life-giving word. Spirit of Life, breathe over us once again.

Lord, have mercy on all our medical practitioners – doctors, nurses, pharmacists, support staff. For they risk their own health so that those who now lie sick in bed may know health once again. Whether they know it or not, these physicians are the hands and feet of the Wounded Healer. So let healing flow through their fingers and grant success to their restorative work. Bless their families and give them peace.

King of Kings, may your Spirit of wisdom descend upon our local, national and international leaders. For so long we have fostered a spirit of scepticism and mistrust for authority, and we supplant their every effort. Yet in this season, we need strong and decisive leaders who can guide us all through this trying time. You are Lord over all, and you have anointed every single one of these leaders. So stir in their hearts, O Holy Spirit, to do that which is good and true. And stir us who follow them to humility and a submissive spirit.

Petitions for the Church

Lord, summon your church to battle! We are your body, commissioned to be ambassadors of Christ to a world that needs to know of your healing grace. As Christ would have done if He walked this earth today, empower us to do the same.

Convict us of the need to pray, pray, and then pray some more. For by prayer we invite your Presence to fill the earth, and in your Presence is fullness of life. Drive us to the end of our ability to pray, where no more words suffice to express the brokenness we feel for the world. For it is there that your Holy Spirit takes over and utters inexpressible groans on our behalf. When we cannot pray on our own, the Spirit transforms those into the most effective prayers.



Direct our hearts and minds to the ways we can serve right where we are. If our church structures and habits and practices inhibit your work in us, then break them. Break us. For we exist not to keep those traditions alive, but to help others know Life itself. So let us sacrifice ourselves for the sake of others, just as Christ held nothing back to redeem the world.

Yes, you see a world that deserves annihilation for its sin, but it is also a world on the road to resurrection and renewal. We suffer justly from this pandemic for going astray from you, but you will not let go of us. You will bring an end to the suffering and the fear. You will restore this world to the perfection you envisioned at first. Here we are. Lord, send us.



Family News & Concerns

Our condolences to Bro. KC Chew on the demise of his father, the late Mr. Thomas Chew Eng Khoon, on 15 March. Please pray for God's peace and comfort to be upon KC Chew and his bereaved family at this time of loss. The funeral was held on 18 March.

Prayer for God's favour for the sick

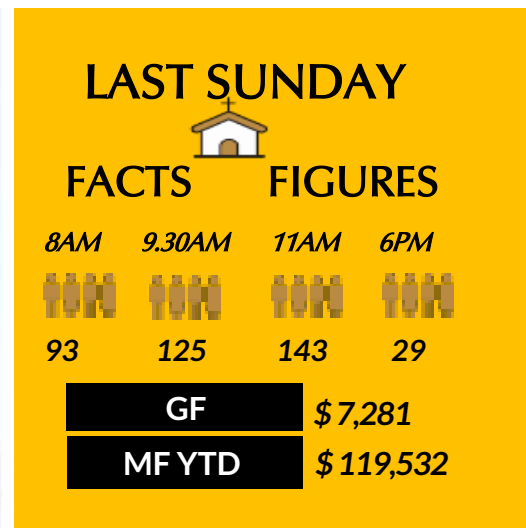
1. Bro. Loy Hwee Sieu at home.
2. Sis. Elaine Koh at St. Andrew's Nursing Home (Queenstown) Ward 7A04.
3. Bro. Sam Ponnusamy at Renci Nursing Home (Bukit Batok) Level 3 Bed 21.
4. Sis. Annie Huan (Lian Chye's mother) in Ward 77 Bed 27 Sengkang Community Hospital.

This week, we call upon those who fend off the Covid-19, to join us in prayer for:

1. People most likely to be harmed by the coronavirus - individuals with disabilities, young and old, as well as the medically fragile and the elderly.
 2. Friends who contract this virus and their families.
 3. Friends who are being served with SHN (Stay Home Notice) - 14 days
 4. Friends who are locked in nationwide in affected countries because the government is trying to enforce social distancing to curb the rate of transmission.
 5. Families living with disabilities as they cope with isolation and loneliness.
- This temporary need for social distancing is permanent for families living with disabilities.



We rejoice with Louis & Liesl Low on the safe arrival of their second child, Mandy Low, on 15 March.



FEEDBACK on Church Matters



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Go to Internet browser link <http://welcome.ppcoc.org> via the Church WIFI to record your attendance