Stay & Stay & SUCCEED as HE NEXT CENERATION

INTERNATIONAL VISION CAMP 2019

"Young Men Will See Visions"

Welcome to International Vision Camp 2019!

God said that in the last days young men will see visions (Acts 2:17). What is vision? Vision is what God will have fulfilled in the future. If a vision is given to you, it means God will use you to fulfill His specific plan. God gave Abraham a vision that he would be the father of many nations. Abraham held on to that vision even though he lived as a foreigner in the world. He passed his vision on to his son Isaac. Isaac held onto the vision and passed it on to Jacob. God's vision that he would save the whole world through his son Jesus has been continually passed on. Still today God gives his vision to us and uses us to save the world.

When we receive God's vision, we become visionary men and women of God. Those who have God's vision overcome all kinds of challenges and lead victorious and fruitful lives. God's vision makes our lives beautiful, fruitful, meaningful and glorious. How can we receive God's vision? We must first receive the Spirit of God. How can we receive the Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (Jn 14:17). When we receive the word of God's promise in our heart, we can come to have God's vision. When we have a clear conviction that the word of God's promise will be surely realized in my life, we will come to see God's vision vividly with our spiritual eyes. Vision will no longer be something vague. It will be real. It will become the meaning, purpose, and driving force of our lives. Vision is what makes us truly young.

May God bless Vision Camp 2019 and pour His Spirit through the Word of God to all the attendees. May God raise us into visionary men and women of God to save the whole world with the gospel of Jesus Christ!

May God be with you, Moses Yoon General Director



Congratulatory Remark

Acts 2:17, 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams."

Welcome to the 2nd International Vision Camp in Prague, Czech Republic.

We had 50 students at the first Vision Camp in Washington D.C. in 2018. God blessed the 2nd Vision Camp with 164 students from all over the world because so many wanted to learn the Word of God and have fellowship and receive God's vision. We have 23 mentors, 21 Bible speakers and many parents supporting Vision Camp. Our Vision Camp members are our VIP and our future hope.

The main theme of the camp is "Stay and Succeed as next Generation." The following items are the goals of the 2019 International Vision Camp:

- Raise up an Isaac Generation (stay in the land) to receive the blessings of Abraham
- · Networking and fellowship
- Identity as God's chosen people
- Raise up short term missionaries
- Build up Next Gen communities

I know God will bless the 2019 International Vision Camp with God's vision. We can count the stars and remain in God's land of promise and inherit the double portion of the Spirit. I pray that all of us may renew God's vision and serve the Great Commission of Jesus through this camp.

We are grateful to Czech UBF and M. Hannah Shin and coworkers who prepared this camp with their hearts and prayers. We are grateful to Pastor Moses Yoon, our general director, who supported the camp with prayers and generous financial support. I am thankful for all donors who funded scholarships generously and encouraged us all. Finally, I am thankful for all messengers, mentors and speakers who labored to prepare the conference. Let's gather together and worship God and see God's vision to change the world with the gospel message of Jesus.

In Christ, Jacob Lee Camp Coordinator





Dr. Ezra Cho



Gabriela Ramirez



Susan Yun

Note from the Editorial Team:

Though IVC 2019 has ended, we hope that you may be able to reflect on the messages delivered and cherish the new memories that you have made. This book was intended to remind you that you are God's chosen one (Eph 1:4), God's precious one (Ps 139:13-16), and God's loved one (Ro 5:8). As you go back to your daily lives, we pray that you will make the decision to follow Jesus - considering him in every decision you make and fully trusting in him.

We prepared and made this with a heart full of love for our fellow next gens - we are always praying and always rooting for you.

CONTENT:

PROGRAM

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SPEAKER'S PROFILE

22





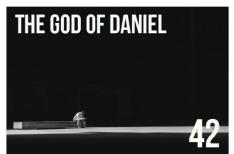










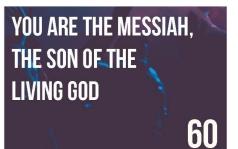


















7 DAYS



21 SPEAKERS

IAMA



23 MENTORS



34 COUNTRIES GATHERED



163
REGISTERED
STUDENTS



221 TOTAL ATTENDEES

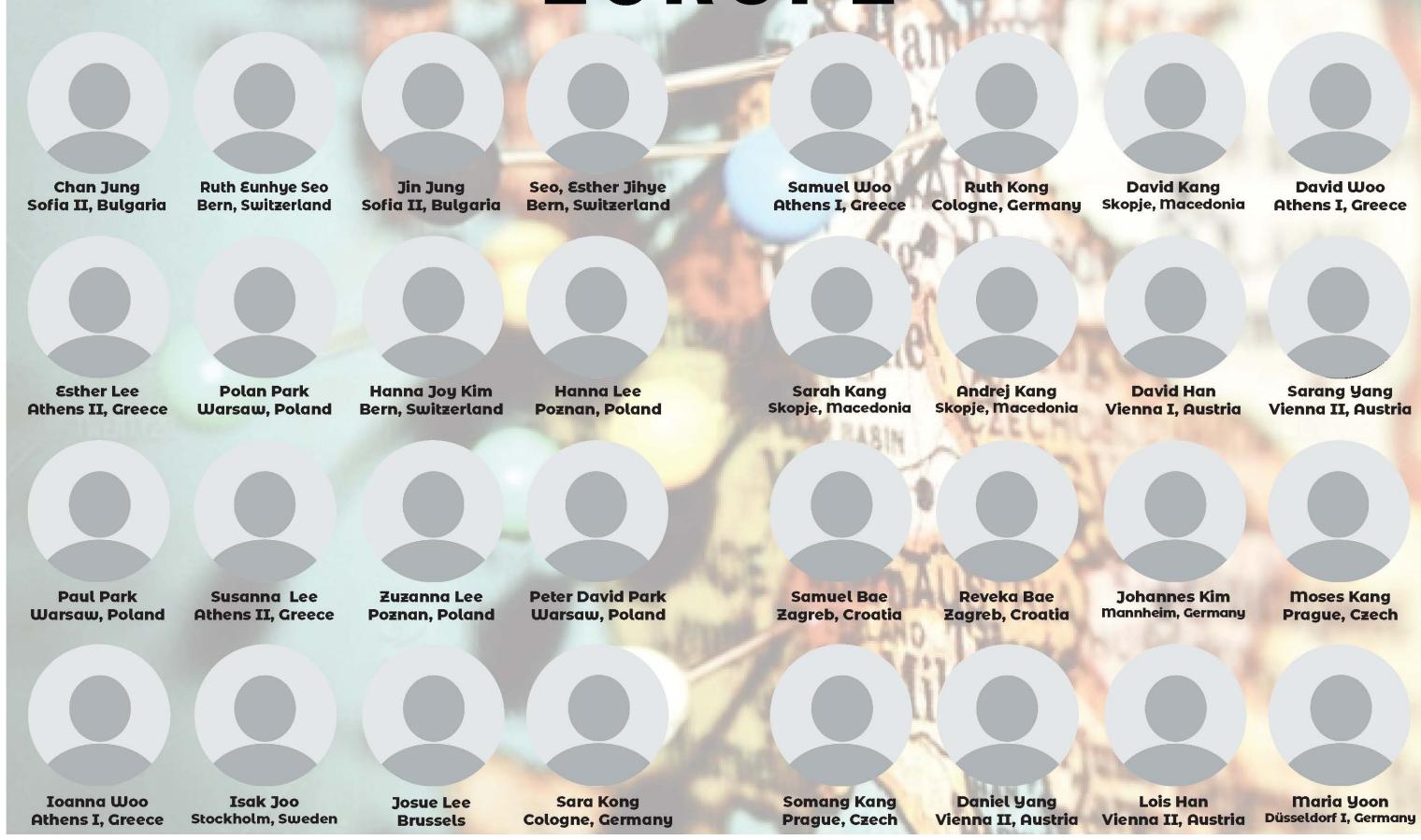


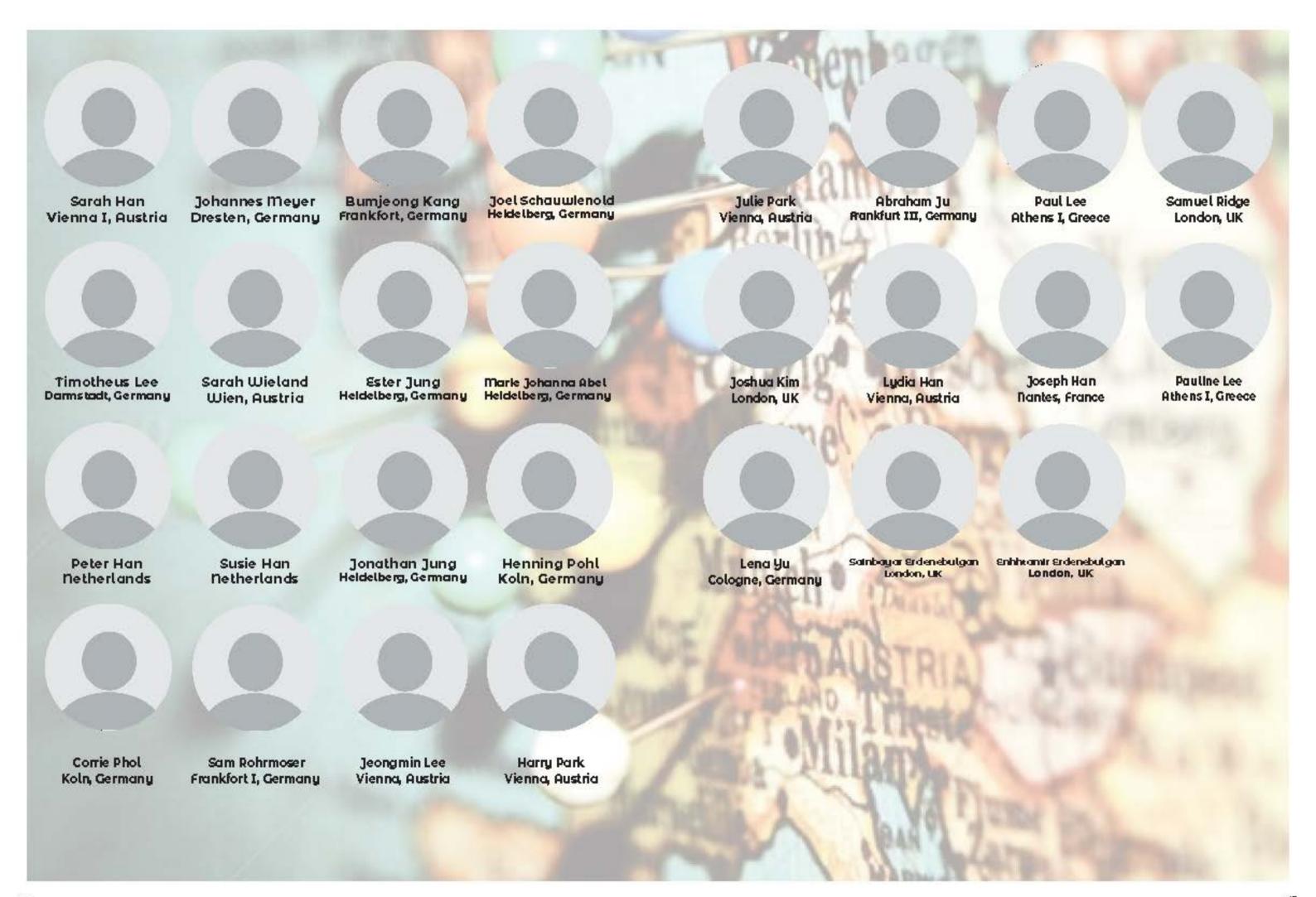
PROGRAM:

		STAY	AND SUCCEE			ON	
	T	F.44		mp 2019 at Pi			W. J. J.
	Thursday (Aug 1st)	Friday (Aug 2nd)	Saturday (Aug 3rd)	Sunday (Aug 4th)	Monday (Aug 5th)	Tuesday (Aug 6th)	Wednesday (Aug 7th)
7:00		Daily Bread Reading & Sharing by Group					
8:00				Bre	akfast		
9:00		Group Bible Study #1 (Gen 26:6)				Group Bible Study # 2 (2 King)	Group Bible Study #3 (Acts 16)
10:30		Main Message 1 Isaac Stayed in Gerar (Ge 26:1-33) M. Abraham Lee	Beautiful & Historic Prague City Tour	Sunday Worship The God of Daniel (Da 6:1-28) M. David Shin	Joyful Tour to Historic Cesky Krumlov Castle	Main Message 2 Let me Inherit a Double Portion of Your Spirit (2 Kings 2:1-15) Dr. Joseph Ahn	Main Message 3 Come Over to Macedonia and Help Us (Act 16:6-40) S. Paul Ridge
12:00		Lunch		Lunch		Lunch (12:00-1:30)	Lunch
1:00 3:00		Free time & Testimony writing (1:00-3:00)		(12:30-1:30) Team Building Sports (2:00-5:00)		Free time & Testimony writing (1:30-3:00)	Baptism & Commu- nion Ceremony (1:30-2:30) M. Samuel H. Lee
	Registration at Krystal Hotel in Prague	Testimony sharing (3:00-4:00)		Family Discipleship Lecture for Parents & Mentors		Special Lecture God redeems the faithful M. Sarah T. Ahn & M. Grace S. Lee	ESBC Preparation (3:00-4:00)
4:00		Special Lecture Passing the Spiritual Legacy to the Next Gen. Dr. Sam Lee		(1:30-3:00) M. Isaac Choi (Optional)			Special lecture UBF Next Gen: Identity & Diaspora Mission
							Dr. Ezra Cho
5:30		ı	T	Dinner	T	r	
7:00	Praise & Wor-	Praise & Worship	Praise & Worship	Praise & Worship	Praise & Worship	Praise & Worship	Praise & Worship
	ship Opening Message Look up at the	Evening Revival: Asia Mission Night	College Night How to Have a Successful College Mission Life	Special Lecture European Christian History and UBF pioneering	Evening Revival: North/South America World Mission Night	Evening Revival: CIS, Middle East, Africa World Mis- sion Night	<u>Evening Revival:</u> European World Mission Night
	sky and count the stars (Ge 15:1-6) M. James Kang	<u>Life Testimonies</u> <u>by Continent</u>	M. Daniel Lee Speaker	S. Reiner Schau- wienold	<u>Life Testimonies by</u> Continent	<u>Life Testimonies by</u> <u>Continent</u>	Life Testimonies by Continent
	Welcome Re- mark M. Hannah Shin	Speaker The Calling of Moses (Ex 3:1-22) Dr. John M. Lee	The importance of 1-to-1 ministry M. David Kim Speaker "The Me I Want to	Announcement ESBC Preparation Prayers for Prague UBF Europe	Speaker Seek First His Kingdom (Mt 6:25-34) Dr. John K. Lee	Speaker You are the Messi- ah, the Son of the Living God (Mt 16:13-28) Dr. Samuel Lee	Speaker I have Called You Friends (John 15:1-17) S. Toni Demir
	Video Presenta- tion 2018 Intro. of 2019 Vision Camp	Special Program by Continent Song or Dance	<u>Be"</u> Dr. Moses Noh <u>Speaker</u> College life Dr. Daniel Lee		Special Program by Continent Song or Dance Announcement	Special Program by Continent Song or Dance Announcement	Special Program by Continent Song or Dance Unity Night
	<u>Members</u>	Announcement Prayers for Asia	Announcement		Prayers for North/ South America	Prayers for CIS. Middle East, Africa Open Mic Night	Closing Message Dig the well of God's word (Psalm 1:1-6) Pastor Moses Yoon
9:30						 	Prayer for ESBC



EUROPE





NORTH AMERICA

Peter Lee Andrew Lee **Christine Lee** Wesley Fishman Luke Kim Gabriela Ramirez Rebekah Jeona Joy Park Washington D.C., USA Princeton, USA Princeton, USA Los Angeles, USA Los Angeles, USA Los Angeles, USA Washington D.C., USA Chicago, USA Sion Lee **David Baik** Anna Park John Kim Ezra Cho Joseph Fishman **Elizabeth Cheng Grace Baek** Washington D.C., USA Washington D.C., Usa Los Angeles, USA Tempe, USA Milwaukee, USA Humber, Canada Los Angeles, USA Chicago, USA Jeremy Park Anna-Marie Ahn Gideon Han **Gyungmin Kim David Noh David Inho Lee Abraham Ahn** Abraham Jeong Philadelphia, USA Portland, USA Cerritos, USA Los Angeles, USA Portland, USA Los Angeles, USA Calgary, Canada Boston, USA

14

Hanna Choi

Los Angeles, USA

Hannah Larsen

Los Angeles, USA

Caleb Kim

Cleveland, USA

Danny Kim

Cleveland, USA

Leah Larsen

Los Angeles, USA

Faith Miranda

Chicago, USA

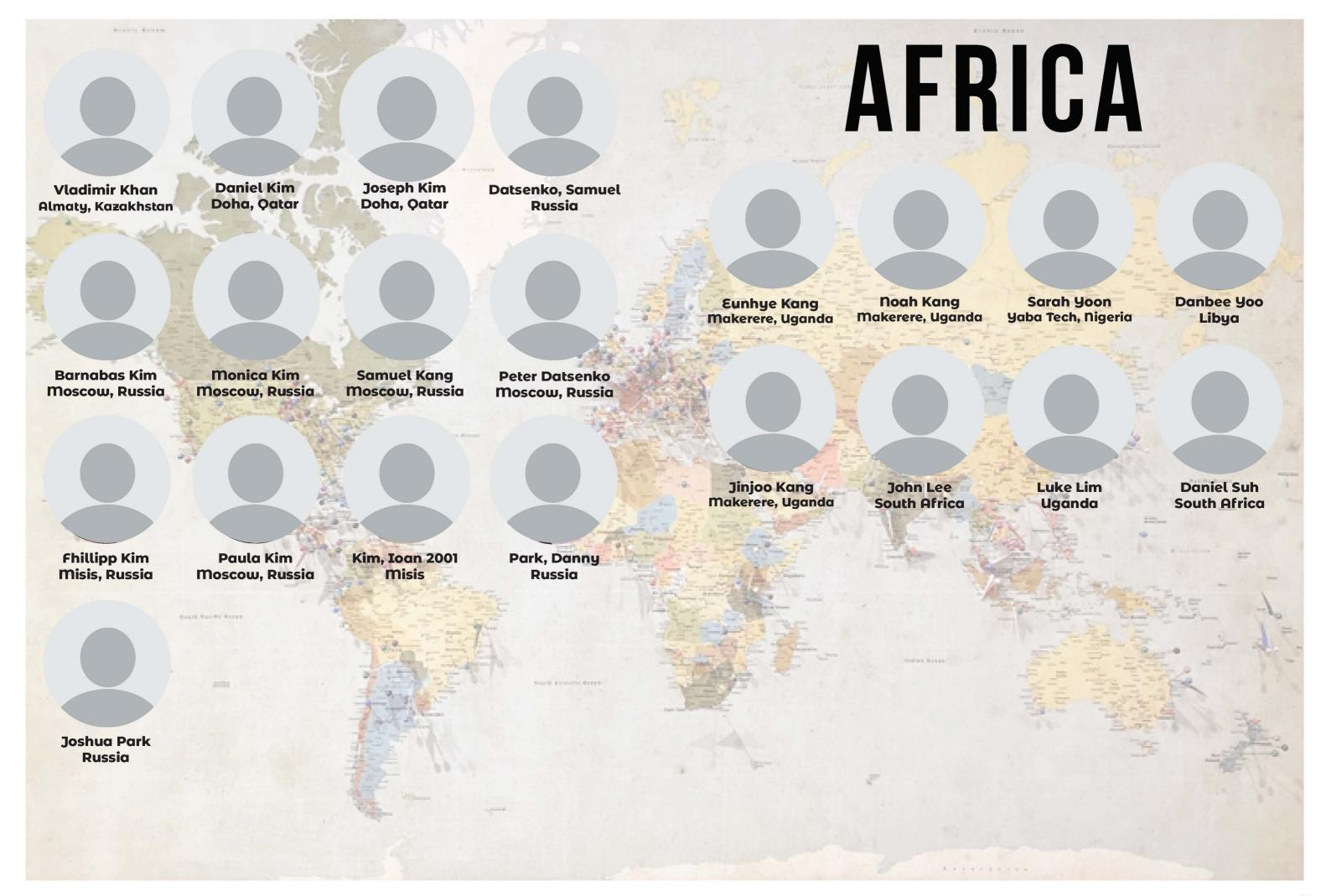
Gloria Mun Kansas City, USA

Esther Jun

Calgary, Canada



ASIA Sungkyoung Im **Woojin Cho** Park, Shinyoung Park, Dawit Dongwoo Ko **Yushin Kim** Chae Min Shin Joseph Kim Gong neung, S. Korea Anam I, S. Korea Sejong, S. Korea Jeju, S. Korea Inje, S. Korea Gwangju I, S. Korea Bugak Anam 1 Song, Yosep 2000 Eun Saem Bae Hanna Kim **Matthew Park** Deborah Cho Johan Back Haeun Kim Seong Hyeon Kim Busan, S. Korea Gwangju I, S. Korea Jeju, S. Korea Anam II, S. Korea Jong-ro II Jongro I, S. Korea Jongro VII, S. Korea Anam II, S. Korea Hanna Cho Joshua Park Inha Jeong Gloria Kim Jihyun Park Jingyu Ryu Joonmyoung Shin Daniel Jeong Gwangju VII, S. Korea Anam I, S. Korea Anam I, S. Korea Busan, S. Korea Anam I, S. Korea Anam I, S. Korea Anam I, S. Korea Japan **Mariya Yugay** Daniel Kim Jakie Haeun Lee **Deurim Lee Yejin Lee Yugyeong Lee** Jooheon Jang Gail Kang Jongro II, S. Korea Cambodia Almaty, Kazakhstan Anam I, S. Korea Gwanak III, S. Korea Anam I, S. Korea Anam I, S. Korea Jongro II, S. Korea







Pastor Jacob Lee

Pastor Jacob Lee served KyungHee-Mun chapter from 1970 to 1977 and came to Washington D.C. as a missionary in 1977, where he served as the director until 2017. He also earned his seminary degree in theology from Capital Bible Seminary in 2010. Currently, he serves as a chair of the World Mission Department.



Pastor Moses Yoon

Pastor Moses Yoon served as a staff shepherd for Kwanak UBF and currently is the General Director of UBF.



David Kim

David Kim has been actively serving UBF for many years. He is the Continuing Missionary Coordinator, Indianapolis UBF Director, DuPage UBF Director, NA Young Disciples Conference Coordinator, European Youth Conference Speaker, and KIMNET Coordinator (2012-2018).



Abraham Lee

Abraham Lee grew up in Washington D.C. and later went to YUST China for missions. He is currently a US diploamt and is a proud father of four children, Samantha, Josiah, Jakey, and Joshua.



Dr. Sam Lee

Dr. Sam Lee has been at the best university in the world (i.e. University Bible Fellowship) since he was born. Graduation date is TBD. He is a lifelong learner of Jesus and currently serves Princeton with his wife, Grace Lee. He has three sons: Samuel, Andrew and Peter by the grace of Jesus.



Dr. Daniel Lee

Dr. Daniel Lee is a missionary who is serving Shippensburg UBF (located in the beautiful Cumberland Valley of Pennsylvania). He is also a professor of economics at Shippensburg University. He has three children (Daniel James, Sarah, and Esther) who all serve the Lord in their respective mission fields with their families. He and his wife (Deborah) enjoy spending time with their six grandchildren.



Hannah Shin

Hannah Shin has been the director of Prague UBF since 2003 and has faithfully served the European CBF and JBF ministry for the past 10 years. She is also the CEO of a successful food business in the Czech Republic. She thanks God for choosing Prague for the 2019 vision camp and prays the conference may lead the young second gens to better understand and glorify God.



Dr. Ezra Cho

Dr. Ezra Cho served as a director at Shin-Soo UBF for 11 years (1990-2001). He came to USA to study Biblical Theology in 2005 at Calvin Theological Seminary and earned his Master's degree in New Testament. He continued to study at Asbury Theological Seminary and earned his PhD in New Testament. While in the USA, he served as a director for house churches in MI and KY (2005-2014). Now, he serves as a professor of Biblical Studies at Washington University of Virginia and serves Washington UBF. He is a father of Mary, Joanna, and Ezra Cho Jr.



Dr. Grace S. Lee

Dr. Grace S. Lee is a missionary serving Princeton with her husband, Dr. Sam Lee. She received her doctorate degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and is an ACBC certified biblical conselor.



Dr. John Lee

Dr. John Lee grew up in Washington UBF, where he has many leadership roles. He is the the Founder of the Washington UBF CBF and a co-founder of Young Disciples of Jesus (the college ministry). He serves as a board member of Washington UBF and works as a primary care physician. He is also a fellowship leader for Cross fellowship and has three children: Victoria, Maddy, and Stephen.



Toni Demir

Toni Demir serves Heidelberg UBF in Germany and is also a middle school teacher that teaches mathematics, chemistry and geography.



Reiner Schauwienold

Reiner Schauwienold is the Coordinator of Germany UBF from Heidelberg UBF. He is a sales manager, has three sons, and loves studying the Bible.



Dr. Joseph Ahn

Dr. Joseph Ahn serves the UBF in Portland, USA. He is a physician who serves a house church with his beautiful wife, M. Sarah T. Ahn, and his children, Abraham and Anna-Marie.



Sarah T. Ahn

Sarah Theresa Ahn lives in Portland,
Oregon with her family, Dr. Joseph,
Abraham, and Anna-Marie Ahn. She
completed her master's in theology in
2018 and is currently pursuing her doctoral
degree. Her prayer topic is for Portland to
be a city on a Hill and Bible-believing city,
and to create a loving community of faith
in Christ



Dr. John K. Lee

Dr. John K. Lee is a physician serving Springfield UBF in Illinois with his wife, Becky Lee, and 5 kids.



Dr. Moses Noh

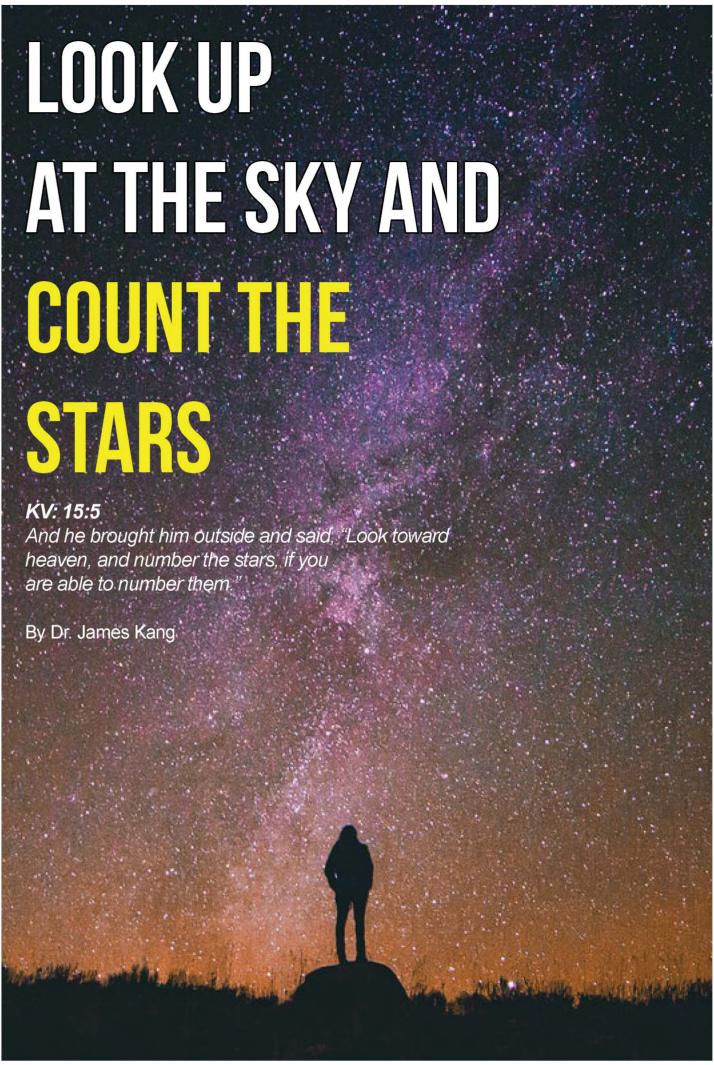
Dr. Moses Noh is a layman minister in Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love.

He is married to Rebekah and they have three beautiful children, David, Grace, and Abraham. He works at Drexel University as a professor in Mechanical Engineering. He loves to play tennis and study the Bible. He is seeking to find God's will for the second half of his life.



David Shin

David Shin's Alma mater is Charles
University, where he received his
bachelor's degree in Political sciences and
International relations. He currently works
at his family's Business, Shinfood. He has
two children: Paul Isaac Shin and Ester
Grace Shin. His hobbies include sports,
watching movies, and listening to music.
His favorite verses are Jn3:16, Jn19:30,
Jn15:5, and Ge12:2.



I. Who is Abram?

Abram was a wealthy old man. God called Abram at the age of 75. He had 318 soldiers, numerous servants, a big family and a lot of herds. He was a good man, a man of heart. He saved his nephew caught as a slave and risked his life for his friends and family to fight kings, and he took no reward for that. After being in war in the field with the kings, now he was on the mount all alone with God. And we become witnesses of a spectacular scene between God and Abram; Abram and God were having a conversation.

Abram had two sorrows: He had no stable home and he had no son. The lack of a son was his great personal sorrow, his only wish, his only want. Abram had anxiety issues: He had just been in war for his friends and family, and soon the four kings and their armies could attack him in vengeance.

Nobody could understand Abram. No one was in the same situation as his. No one could feel the same pain and fear and anxiety as him. If you've ever experienced fear, you would know that whatever you do, whomever you talk to, wherever you go, true fear can never be comforted or taken away through talking with close friends and family. When such fear evades you, you are so shaken by it, that you lose all appetite and thirst. You lay in your room for days in fear and no person on earth can bring you peace. But, one can: The Prince of Peace.

II. Caring God - Cast Your Anxieties to God

Have you ever experienced such fear? Have you been in a place where your life was literally at stake? Have you ever felt such anxiety no person on earth could comfort you and no peaceful music could give you a peace of mind? Go to God. Fall on your knees and turn to him, cry out to him and tell him all your fears and cares. Cast your fears to God. Because God is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield". God does not promise that your life will be all cozy and rosy, that all our enemies will be gone, that all your problems will be disappear and that you will live the life of your dreams. No, he says that God is your shield. He says "fear not." He says "I am your shield." In other words, God says "Believe in me." And with those words God put all storms to sleep. There was a calm at the lake of anxiety.

III. Alone Time With God, Honest Time With God

What now? Next, Abram wanted a son. He wanted to tell God about his sorrow, his dream, and his want. Abram wanted a son. Some may think that Abram was whining. Some may think that Abram's wish list was just never-ending. Some may even say that Abram should just be thankful and settle for what he already had. And yes, Abram was whining to God. He was complaining to God, "Lord, you have not given me an offspring. Lord, I want a son." Abram was very honest before God. He came to God and cast not only his anxieties, but also his wishes. "Lord, I want a son!" He went to God in prayer and told him all that laid heavy on his heart, all his desperate wishes - the wish of a son. Abram was honest before God. He stood all alone on the mountain with God. And he told him everything.

Are you casting your fear to God? Are you honest with God? Do you talk to God honestly about what you want, what your sorrows are? Do you kneel before God? Ask yourself now, when was the last time you went to God alone, in your quiet room, and told him all your sorrows, fears and wants? When was the last time you knelt before the Lord and cried out for his care? If you have not had any alone time with God in your quiet room all alone, like Moses did, then you should question your life as a Christian. Start having alone times with God, start kneeling before him, tell him all about your fears and wishes, and God will answer you through prayer and His words of life because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7).

IV. Who God Is

And do you see what God did? God did not rebuke him for his honesty and his small dreams and wishes. No, he took him outside and said: "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Do you realize that we are witnessing one of the most spectacular scenes between God and man? We have witnessed a caring God. Now, we are witnessing a glorious God, God the Creator of all things, the beginning and the end, the Holy God. Through the stars promise, God showed himself to Abram, the identity of the glorious and holy God.

This promise is not about the stars, it is not about the blessings, it is not about the joyful future that awaits Abram. In fact, it was not about Abram at all! This promise is about God himself. This promise is about the glory of God himself. This promise reveals God himself. This promise says, I am the Lord Almighty, I am the provider. This promise is about Christ Jesus, the Son of Man. This promise reveals the plan of God and his glory! This promise reveals God who planned to send Christ to die and be risen for the sins of man through Abram. This promise reveals God's saving vision. And Abram believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness.

V. Vision - Look and See

The title of this event is Vision Camp. Vision is the sense or ability of sight. That is why God says "Look!" He says, "Look toward heaven." Which means looks at Me, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Creator of the uncountable stars. Look at Me, your God the Almighty! He said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." This means, 'Look at my glory if you are able to contain it!'. God showed himself to Abram, with all His glory!

What is your vision? Do you even have a vision? Or you don't need a vision? Do you want to travel the world and see the kangaroos in Australia? Do you want to buy a Sony DSCHX80 and start a food channel on Youtube? Do you want to become a human rights lawyer and become the voice of those who don't have a voice? Do you want to become a medical doctor and save lives? Or maybe you want to be that funny and popular fashionista among your friends? Or do you feel sorry for your old missionary parents and decide to live with them, just because you feel sorry for them, and because this might be your destiny? How do you see your house church grow in the next 20 years? Do you see any future? Or are you just waiting to become an adult and gradually leave your house church?

It is great to have a vision! It is also great not to have a vision either! Because none of it matters - whether you have a good vision for your life, or you don't have any dreams at all. It doesn't matter at all because what matters is God's vision. God's vision is to restore the lost image of God in you.

"Through Christ, God's vision is that you become little and that Christ grows in you."

God's vision is also to reach to His Kingdom, for you to reach His Kingdom. For all to reach His Kingdom. God's vision is to find faith pure as gold in you.

So? Is your vision different than God's?

I had a vision. When I was a teenager, I had a dream to become the mayor of Nonsan, a small city in Korea. I wanted to become a mayor so that I could avenge the people who looked down on my poor parents. I studied hard to enter university. I majored

in Administration and Management, only to become a mayor. Then, the first day of freshman year, I met a Bible teacher. I started studying the Bible. I studied the Bible for several years, but I still had this dream to become a mayor. I was torn between my poor family and Jesus, because my family needed me. They wanted me to become an honorable man for them and help them financially. On the way to our church, there was a pojangmacha (street food stall). But one day, on my way to Bible study, I saw the pojangmacha in front of me, as if for the very first time. I was so torn between my family (and wanting to live up to their expectations) and the Bible that I wanted to have a glass of makoli (alcoholic beverage). That moment I had to decide - was it the makoli (world, and family) or Jesus. I sensed that if I choose the makoli, I would forever go the easy way, forget all the hardships and forever lose Jesus. It was a battle between the makoli or the Bible. I chose the Bible. This small decision turned the direction of my life. One small decision of faith leads to God's glorious vision - to save one soul and His vision and my vision finally become the same. Your choice between the world and God, however small it is (should I cheat on an exam, should I help my friend in need, should I read the Bible this morning) leads us to God. Those little choices are like small pearls that lead your life to God. But they will lead you also to the world, if you chose what is not God's. I realised that God's vision is that I become transformed in Him. I realized that I became the star that God had promised to give me.

I left as a missionary at the age of 25 to ex-communist Bulgaria. For the Gospel mission and to study the Bible with Bulgarian students, I studied Bulgarian very hard. I was recruited by the Korean Embassy and worked as an official interpreter. Then, as the ultimate dream of all simultaneous interpreters, I interpreted for the presidential summit between ROK-BG. Several years later, in my late 40s, I wanted to focus entirely on God's mission and by faith I left the Embassy. One Bible student told me that my action looked as if I jumped off a cruise ship to get on a wooden boat. But only if I could use my time to serve God, I was not afraid. God gave me a vision to live as a professor-shepherd and I became a professor in Bulgaria. As I look back at my life as a missionary of 30 years, I want to give you some advice:

- 1. You have to give all you can in whatever you do. You should have an absolute answer about the direction of your action. I wanted to become a mayor, but now I am a missionary. It was marvelous to realize that God's vision was my vision. God's vision is to save one person and one day my vision also became to save one person too. Also, God's vision was for me to restore His image in me. I saw that my vision was also growing in Jesus' image.
- 2. Your small decisions in your every day life lead to God's vision. Don't you also want to become a star in the sky? Live a life of small decision. Because visions start with small decisions and small actions.

VI. To Believe

But who is God so that we may believe in him? And what does "to believe" mean?

If I believe that Jesus is the Son of God the same way that I believe that Angela Merkel is the Chancellor of Germany, have I fulfilled the conditions of believing, and thus to be saved? Or is there more to belief than that? We know that it doesn't fulfill the conditions, because the devil believes it. And we know that the devil believes it because when Jesus came into the world and began to confront the demonic powers of the Devil, they said out loud, "We know who you are. You are the holy one of God. You are the Son of God." So the Devil is absolutely orthodox in his belief in the incarnation of the Son of God in Jesus Christ. To believe in orthodox Christology is not to be saved. The Devil is very orthodox when it comes to his understanding of Christ.

So what is missing is not believing in the fact that Jesus is the Son of God or that God is the Creator, but delighting in that fact, embracing that fact, and making Christ the treasure and the Lord of your life by surrendering to him. In other words, "belief" is seeing him for who he really is, seeing him as infinitely valuable as the Creator God. It's not just acknowledging the fact that he is God but also seeing him as infinitely precious and valuable. Satan, on the other hand, does not view God as precious and valuable. He hates Christ and Christ is a threat to his own value. But when the Holy Spirit begins to work in our lives we're not deceived like that anymore. We recognize that our value is nothing compared to Jesus' value. Instead, we just want to know him, be with him, enjoy him, follow him, and celebrate him. That transition—that change of heart, so that we are now looking away from ourselves to Christ and embracing all that God is for us in him-to receive him as our Treasure - that is what faith is. That is what belief is. That is what

VII. Believe and Be Saved

Now, I want make a plead to you. Cling to God. Cling to his promises. Cling to his 5467 promises in the Bible. And God will show himself to you. He will fill you with his grace and blessings. He will give you whatever you ask for if you believe in your heart that God will give to you. But the spiritual journey does not end there.

Are you praying to ace a math exam? God is Almighty to give you wisdom. Are you suffering from loneliness? "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want (Ps 23)." Do you feel left out and wrongly judged by the society or your friends? "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Rom 8:32)." Are you going through depression? "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds (Ps 147:3)." Do you feel misunderstood? "Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me (Ps 27:10)." Do you have a sin problem and you want to be purified? "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1John 1:8)." Are you in a desperate need of a life orientation? "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up of us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Rom 8:32)."

So cling. Cling to God. Have alone time with God and the Bible. Read it. Devour it. And look to God and the heavens, so that you may see God for who he really is and receive him as he is. Treasure him as the most valuable and precious. Believe in him and be saved.

So what can we learn from this majestic conversation between God and Abram? First, God is a caring god and He wants to hear all your fears and dreams. God is a god of conversation and wants to talk with you. And to do that you need to find alone time with God and his Word in your small quiet room everyday! Everyday! Second, God is the Almighty One. He wants you to LOOK to Him, to the heavens and not to you! He wants you to believe in Him and not in yourself. He wants you to see Him as who He really is. Third, to accept all this, you need to believe: "And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness. (Gen 15:6)" ■

 $_{6}$

By M. Hannah Shin

WELCOMING ADDRESS

Psalm 23: 1-4 Key Verse 23:1

"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing."



Hello! I'd like to welcome all participants who joined our Vision Camp in Prague! I pray God may bless Vision Camp 2019 and that all 19 messengers will be filled with the Holy Spirit. I also pray that God may give all Bible study leaders and mentors grace to serve their groups with a shepherd heart full of God's love. I pray for each 165 next gen participants - that God may work through His Word and give strength, comfort, and encouragement to everyone. And that we may meet Jesus personally and renew our mission faith through this conference. I thank God for this privilege for our 3 families in Czech to serve this conference.

I'd like to share Psalm 23 with you today. Psalm 23 is King David's confession of faith. This poem tells of King David's life experiences – from life of a shepherd to his life of a king. Each verse in Psalm 23 shows God's desire to heal our souls from loneliness, exhaustion, disappointment, oppression, wounds and fears. I pray that the God of King David will be our shepherd and lead our lives. Amen!

First, God is my shepherd.

King David starts off Psalm 23 like this: "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing." What problems do modern people have today? The problem is shallow and superficial relationships. People seek for acceptance, acknowledgement, and attention for others. But at the same time, they don't completely trust those people around them. It's because we like the connection, but we also know that your friend could fail you, because we are human. This desire for love and acceptance can only be fulfilled

by God. It cannot be satisfied by family, friends, or significant others. When we meet God personally, our heart and wants are whole. We need God, the shepherd, because we are weak sheep.

People are like sheep in front of God. Sheep have no means to protect themselves from other threats. Sheep don't have sharp teeth or claws like lions; they have soft wool. Sheep are animals that need protection from others; otherwise, they would not survive. They also have weak eyes so they need someone to guide them to food and water. The Bible describes people that don't know God as wandering sheep (Isaiah 53:6). No one knows what their life is going to look like in the future. We need a shepherd who will protect us and guide us.

"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing"

When David was a shepherd, he spent long hours and many days in the mountains with his sheep. He wasn't welcomed at his home because his brothers hated him because he got the most love from their father. It was a lonely life until he realised that God is his shepherd. When lions attacked his sheep, he valiantly fought them because he trusted God with his life and his sheep. With Jesus as our shepherd we have nothing to fear. Think about your lives. Is God the shepherd in your lives? Or do you wander aimlessly and without hope? Would you like Jesus to be the shepherd of your life? I pray that Vision Camp may be a time where we turn to God, who is our good shepherd. I pray that you all may meet Jesus personally as Jehovah - your own shepherd. Amen!

Second. God is a shepherd who gives us true peace and rest.

Look at verse 2: "He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters." In the 21st century, most people lives are busy and overwhelming. Many people have no time for rest; they aren't allowed to catch a break. Young teenagers constantly absorb information whether it be through media or school. Our world tells us that we shouldn't be still and that we should constantly "do". It's impossible for us to constantly "do." Sometimes we need to simply "be." When God created the world, the 7th day was meant for rest. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for Sabbath.

The fear of missing out is a true millennial problem. Even though people are in vacation, they are still stressed out because they need to make sure that their friends know that they are sitting on a beach sipping some juice. Some people take work to their vacations. Few just don't go to vacation. We can only achieve true peace with Jesus. He can still our uncertain and wandering souls with overwhelming and complete peace.

"He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,"

Sheep fell safe when their shepherd is around. If not, they are scared and frightened of the world. Our life is same. When we meet God intimately our fundamental problems can be solved and therefore our souls get peace and rest. However, when we as Christians feel uncertain and fearful, we need to turn to Jesus. God wants to deepen his relationship with us so that we can get peace and rest. We need time to escape from our busy everyday lives in order to meet God. It is important that we are intentional about our time with God. This way we can be connected and content with our shepherd. I pray that you all may experience quality time with God through this camp. Amen.

Third. God refreshes our souls and protects us during hardships

In Psalm 23 verse 3, King David says: "he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake." King David committed a serious sin before God when he committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband. God sent his prophet Nathan to confront him and David tearfully repented before God. Although he repented, he still went through a hard time because he was keenly aware of his wrongdoing. Psalm 51:12 says that David prayed for restoration of his joy of salvation because when we sin, our joy of salvation disappears. Our Lord, a good shepherd, restores us from our spiritual lows.

"He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake"

When we repent for our sins, that doesn't fix everything. We need to truly repent and work to be on the path of salvation. I believe that God will restore us all through this Vision Camp conference.

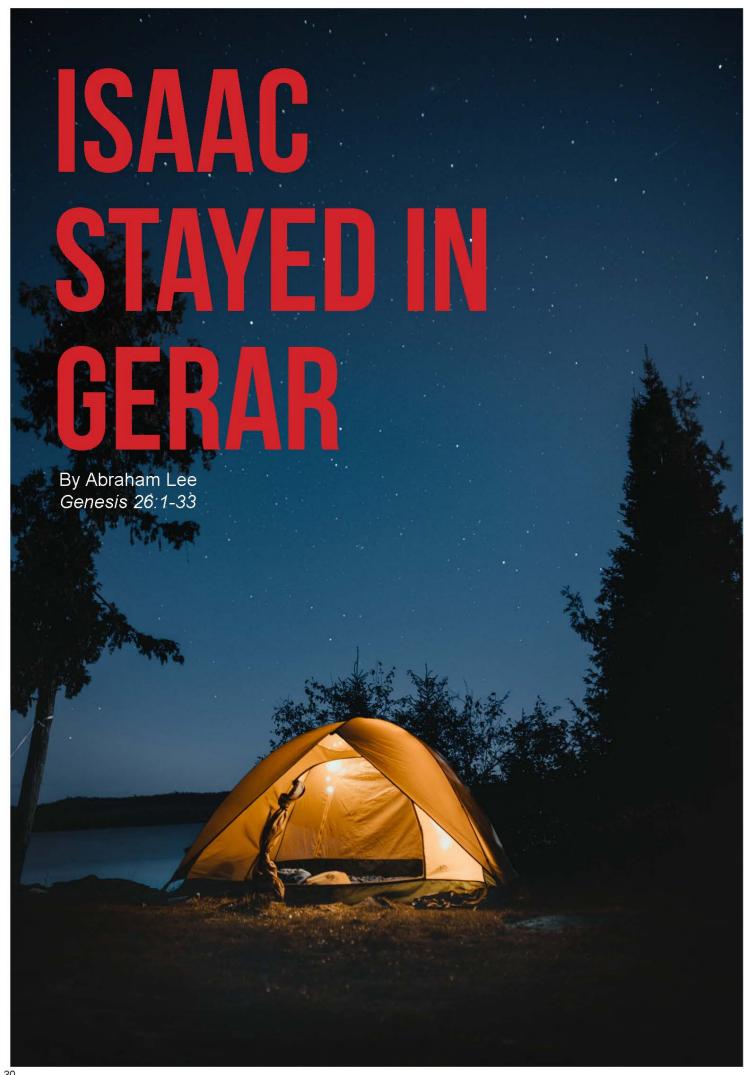
Look at verse 4: "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." King David faced many difficulties in his life. When he was young, he was anointed as a new king. However, King Saul tried to kill David many times, so David had to live in the wilderness. After he became a king, he faced relentless wars and threats. When king David faced life and death problems he could meet God more deeply.

According to the testimonies of many shepherds, sheep bond more with their shepherd when they pass through shady and dangerous valleys. If they stick close to the shepherd, they will be led to safe and green pastures. Our spiritual life is same. Who do you turn to when you go through hard times? I pray that it is Jesus because he is the only one who can safely and wholly get us through it.

In January 1993, I pioneered Prague, Czech Republic, with my husband, Missionary Isaac Shin. When we were in Germany as missionaries, my son David was raised until 5 by his grandparents. For 10 years my husband laid the foundations of Czech ministry. We learned the Czech language, went to outreach, worked as self-supporting missionaries, and co-worked with other missionaries. After 10 years of living in Czech, we received the missionary permit and built foundations to our self-supporting ministry. However on May 28th, 2003, my beloved co-worker and husband was diagnosed with liver cancer and eventually went to heaven. It was like walking through the valley of death. I was shocked when my healthy husband, who was never seriously sick during our marriage, was diagnosed with liver cancer and passed away. I wanted to know the reason why God called my husband to Him so early. I doubted God's goodness and I was overwhelmed with sadness and wanted to die. At that time, I read the book of Job to overcome my sorrows. I read Job many times without receiving much good news. One day when I was feeling extremely low, I opened the book of Job again. That time the Holy Spirit spoke to me. God gave me His words from Job 41:11 "Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me." Through this verse, I finally accepted that my husband's life belongs to God and that it was God's will for my husband to go. I realized that my life and everything I have belongs to God. When I met my God personally, I was able to find joy and see problems as a part of God's plan. Through these times of difficulties and trials I repented for my sins and my soul became refreshed. Through Job, I found the will of God for me and received a vision to restore Czech mission. I accepted God as my shepherd who will take care of my life. When God spoke to me, I felt true love from God and trusted in His goodwill for me. Moreover He gave me strong desire to loyally serve Czech ministry for the rest of my life.

Since then every week I have had to prepare Sunday messages in Czech which helped me spiritually. I was busy with my every-day business work and had to prepare Sunday messages. This made me worried - what if all my responsibilities make me sick one day? Every time I was caught up with fear of death, God gave me His word. He became my shepherd and led me to not fear but to have hope. He helped me to shoulder my cross and gave me victory. God sent to our Prague ministry precious co-workers: Msn. Joshua and Maria Kang, and Msn. Samuel and Anna Park. I thank God for their sacrifice, prayers and precious co-working.

Moreover, 2nd generation missionary David Shin was born again by God's unending Grace. I thank God for He has raised him to be a good co-worker but also allowed him to marry by faith to Msn. Anna Rebekah. Now I am a grandmother of 2 beautiful grandchildren. Thank God! I thank God who raised Shd. Aleš Máca as an Abraham of faith and servant of His Word. I thank God who made Sister Hanka Šámalová to grow in faith and become our co-worker. I thank God for His Grace that our Czech ministry, which is like a kernel of wheat, may serve the 9th new generation conference at ESBC 2019. I pray that all participants of this Vision Camp, all new generation missionaries, may meet the living God as their personal good shepherd like King David. Amen!



Genesis 26 is the only chapter in the Bible that focuses solely on Isaac as the main character. All other times in the Bible, Isaac is overshadowed by his father, Abraham, or lingering in the background while his son, Jacob, features prominently. One commentator said of Isaac, "He was the ordinary son of a great father, and the ordinary father of a great son." Another said, "The salient feature of Isaac's life is that it has no salient features." Despite the fact that there is only one chapter devoted to Isaac's life, Genesis 26 is a pivotal moment in God's history. It reveals who God is as well as who Isaac is and the significant role he plays in the fulfillment of God's covenant plan. Isaac cannot be overlooked because though he may look ordinary, he comes to exhibit extraordinary faith. Faith that comes not from being Abraham's son. But real, personal faith that comes from believing God's promises are not just for his father, but are meant for him too. That God is his God too. May God help us come to this same faith like Isaac, to know deeply and personally that God's promises are for us. That he is my God and your God.

Read verses 1-2: "Now there was a famine in the land—besides the previous famine in Abraham's time—and Isaac went to Abimelek king of the Philistines in Gerar. The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, 'Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live."

It is fitting that this passage begins with a situation that occurred to Isaac's father, Abraham. Just like his father, Isaac and his family were struck by a famine in the land. And just like his father, it seems Isaac was prepared to run away and go to Egypt to escape the famine. But God had other plans.

He tells Isaac, "I know what you're thinking. But I want you to stop and go where I tell you to go." Isaac had very practical reasons for wanting to go to Egypt. It was lush and had plenty to offer him. There was food and water and Isaac could have been very successful there. But God knew better than Isaac. God knew Isaac was the son of promise, the son of God's covenant promise to Abraham. God wasn't going to let Isaac make this big mistake and so he came to him. He said to Isaac, trust me. To help him, look at what God said to Isaac in verse."

Read verse 3: "Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham."

He goes on in verse 4 to repeat the exact promise he gave to Abraham. "I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed..." Isaac must have grown up with these words as his father shared many times what God had told him. When Isaac was a boy, Abraham talked about how God told him to look at the stars and count them. How God told Abraham that his offspring would be as numerous as the stars and the sand on the seashore. Isaac had heard this story many times. It would be natural to read these verses and overlook their meaning since we too have heard them before. If you've ever studied Genesis, this promise is familiar to you.

But we have to realize that this was the first time God himself was speaking these words to Isaac. And it was the first time that God was telling him the stories were not just stories. His promises to Abraham are his promises to Isaac as well. God had never made that clear to Isaac before. There may have been doubt in Isaac's heart growing up, maybe unsure of who God really was to him. But here God is promising to be with Isaac, to bless him, and confirming that the promise of Abraham is now the promise of Abraham AND Isaac.

Verse 6 says, "So Isaac stayed in Gerar." Does Isaac's upbringing sound familiar to you? Many of us have heard the Bible stories since we were young. Maybe you've heard the testimonies of others or even founders of our ministry. Since we are in Europe, you should all know by now that the first missionaries to Europe came to Germany as nurses. God has called your parents to places like Bolivia, Russia, and Cambodia. You probably know your parents' testimonies just as well as Isaac knew his father's. And maybe you too wondered like Isaac, what about me? I know who God is to my parents, but who is he to me? This passage should help answer that question. God's promise is true to Abraham. It is true to Isaac. It is true to your parents. And it is true to you. Stay, and I will be with you and I will bless you. God is promising to be your God. Not the God of others, or those around you. You, your God. For this to happen, we have to stay. Staying is an act of faith. Isaac stayed in Gerar which was a sign that he believed God's words.

Remember, this passage started with Isaac wanting to do his own thing and follow his own ideas and run to Egypt. Staying means giving up the lead in my life, and letting God lead my life. Isaac made a decision to trust God and stay. We might be tempted to take control of our own lives like Isaac tried to do by running to Egypt.

Especially if up until now our life feels like it's been led by our parents or by circumstances that seem out of our control. I never asked to be born in this country, in this family, in this ministry. When do I get to choose my own path, my own way? God wants you to know, nothing in your life is by chance. You are a child of his promise. He wants to be with you, and bless you. He wants you to know Him and his will for your life.

Stay, and don't run away from Him. I pray that each of you will hear God's voice telling you, "Hey, this is my promise for YOU." In hearing this, I pray we all might make a decision to stay in this promise, and let God lead us. What happened after Isaac made this decision? Read verses 7-8.

Staying in Gerar was not the end of Isaac's spiritual journey, it was just the beginning. As we see in verses 7-8, Isaac still messed up, really messed up. He lied to protect himself and save his own life. He was willing to risk his wife being given to others to save himself. When I look at Isaac's mistake here, I realize that the life of faith is just beginning for many of you. As such, it also means you will make mistakes. Even at my age, I still make mistakes all the time. I can't escape my own selfishness and my own sin. Isaac sinned. He made a big mistake. In light of this however we can learn one important lesson. When the king saw Isaac with Rebekah, he was mad. So mad that Isaac should have been afraid. What might the king do? Imprison him? Banish him? Beat him? Or even worse, kill him? No, the king simply rebuked Isaac. Because God was with him, God protected him, and God blessed him.

Read verses 12-14. Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him. The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him.

The lesson is God fulfilled his promise to Isaac because God is faithful. Even when we are unfaithful. He is consistent and constant, even as we are weak and inconsistent. God doesn't abandon us or throw us away when we screw up. Because we are children of his promise. We should not view this as a license to sin and do whatever we want. We should see how amazing the deep love of our heavenly Father really is. And respond to his love with thanksgiving and obedience. When we trust in His promise, God never lets us go. He will not let

us fall away. He is always working for us, always protecting us, always blessing us. Even when we don't even realize it. Sometimes His blessings are disguised as hardship and problems. Isaac escaped the king. Isaac was rich. But he still had problems to deal with in his life.

Read verses 19-22. Isaac's servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there. But the herders of Gerar guarreled with those of Isaac and said, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek because they disputed with him. Then they dug another well, but they quarreled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah. He moved on from there and dug another well, and no one quarreled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, "Now the Lord has given us room and we will flourish in the land." As Isaac became richer, the king and his people became jealous and Isaac was asked to move away. But though he moved away, the Philistines still did not like him and felt threatened by him. So they messed with his wells. One after another. They were picking a fight with Isaac. They tried to provoke him. Isaac chose not to fight, but kept the peace - voluntarily moving away every time a dispute arose. Until he finally found a place, Rehoboth, which was far enough away that no one would bother him. Note verse 22 again. Now we have room and we can flourish in this land. The strange but amazing thing is that Isaac did not stay in Rehoboth. Read verse 23. From there he went up to Beersheba. This is a turning point in Isaac's life and could also be the key verse of this passage. Isaac had faith. But his movements were motivated by very practical reasons. He had camels and animals to feed and they needed water. So he needed wells.

Every time he faced opposition he moved on because he needed wells. He thought it was easier to move on than to fight. He was moving along as circumstances were leading him. Hoping for a good outcome but not really moving in any real direction or with any real purpose. But something must have happened when he got to Rehoboth. He made a very deliberate decision to move to Beersheba. If you look at a map, we can try to guess why Isaac decided to leave Rehoboth and move to Beersheba. With each dispute, Isaac was moving closer and closer back to the promised land. When he finally found peace in Rehoboth, he must have realized that his life was not being led by circumstances. That his life was not just about finding wells for his camels. His life was being led by God himself who was using these circumstances to fulfill his promise to Isaac. God wanted him



to move to the promised land. When he understood God's purpose, he picked up everything and went to Beersheba. Why Beersheba? In Genesis 22, Abraham took Isaac up to the mountain top to sacrifice him there. When God spared Isaac's life and they came back down the mountain, where did Abraham take his family? To Beersheba. It was at a time when Abraham had passed the greatest of God's tests and walked in close fellowship with God. Isaac must have felt this fellowship with God too. Yes, his life was more than about finding wells. His life was meant to fulfill God's promise and God's plan. He could only do that by returning to the land of God's promise. Verse 24-25 confirms this:

"That night the Lord appeared to him and said, 'I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.' Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well."

The very night that Isaac arrives in Beersheba God shows up and reaffirms his covenant promise to Isaac. It's God's way of saying good job. You finally see and understand what it means that you are a son of promise. What it means that I am with you and will bless you. God had such great plans for Isaac, his family, and his descendants to come. Without Isaac, there is no fulfillment of God's promise. There is no us as believers and descendants of faith.

As next generation leaders, many if not all of you have grown up with a certain pressure since you were young. Like Isaac, to follow in the large footsteps of your father and/or mother. Like Isaac, maybe you are unsure of what that really means for you. Maybe it makes you feel uncomfortable or unsure. Maybe it feels forced. You have faith but you'll have time to get serious about it later. Like Isaac, you're just dealing with what's in front of you. You've got wells to dig too. You are all at an age where you have to make real decisions about the future of your life. What major to pursue, where to live, who to marry even.

Before long you will get busy with school, with work, with raising a family. You'll be like Isaac digging his wells. Moving from one place to the next without really knowing where you are going. Isaac's life changed when he saw God's true purpose for his life. That his life was meant for something more. He realized that everything that happened in his life from who his parents were, to almost being sacrificed by his father, to his well problem – was all part of God's leading in his life. Leading him to this moment where he could fulfill God's promise for him.

Through this Vision Camp, I believe God is wanting you to know the same. I don't know each of your individual histories. But as next gens, we have shared experiences including similar struggles and successes. Whether we used to see this background as a blessing or curse, it does not matter. Today I want us to know for sure that everything that has happened in our lives has been for a purpose. You too are a child of God's promise. You too are meant for something greater in God's great plan. Everything that has happened was to shape us for this moment. I pray that Prague 2019 may be like your Rehoboth. A place where you came to meet God and finally came to understand his unique, personally tailored promise for you

He is calling you to His promised land, to a place where you can begin to fulfill God's wonderful purpose for your life. Let's stop wandering around. But stay firmly rooted in God and His hope for us. ■

By Dr. John M. Lee

THE CALLING OF MOSES

Exodus 3:1-22



Have you ever seen the movie "Prince of Egypt?" Many of you are too young to have seen it in the movie theater. It is the animated story of Moses based on Exodus. There is another movie very similar to Prince of Egypt called Joseph, King of Dreams. I'm sure even less of you have seen this movie about Joseph's rise to power in Egypt which is based on the accounts in Genesis. In Genesis, we see the Israelites in a state of prosperity with Joseph in place at the right hand of Pharaoh. Which sets us up for transition to the time of Moses. After Joseph's death, a new Pharaoh came to power. This Pharaoh disliked the Israelites and treated them harshly. He made them into slaves and forced them into hard labor. This is the environment which Moses was born into. The focus of this message will be on the life of Moses and the three major turning points in his life. Moses lived exactly 120 years. His life was perfectly divided into three stages. The first 40 years were spent in Egypt, with his mother and in the royal palace. The 2nd 40 years were spent in the desert as a shepherd, husband and father. The last 40 years were spent in obedience to God's calling for him which was to lead his people out of Egypt to the Promised Land. As we move through this message, I pray you can find which phase you are in and how you can move to the next level.

I. Identity Crisis

During the time of Moses' birth, the new Pharaoh attempted to control the growing population of Israelite slaves by ordering the murder of all the newborn babies. In Exodus 1:22, we see the midwives of the time did not comply so he then ordered all the people to throw every Hebrew boy into the Nile, but let every girl live. This was the environment Moses was born into. Out of desperation, his mother placed him in a basket and guided him into the sight of Pharaoh's daughter while she was bathing in the Nile. Then his sister intervened and suggested that a Hebrew woman nurse the baby for Pharaoh's daughter. Therefore

Moses was returned to his mother so she could nurse him through his infancy. Exodus 2:10, "When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, 'I drew him out of the water." It is not clear how many years Moses was nursed by his mother but we can assume that she tried her best to instill spiritual values in her son. She undoubtedly continued to pray for him after returning him back to his Egyptian mother. Moses lived out his life in the palace with all the finest things in the world and received the highest level of education available.

Let's look at Exodus 2:11-14. "One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. one of his own people. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, 'Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?' The man said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?' Then Moses was afraid and thought, 'What I did must have become known." After a stress-free life living in Pharaoh's palace, Moses now had some conflict in his life. He had a crisis of identity. Though a Hebrew by birth, he was living as an Egyptian. Yet his own people couldn't relate with him or respect him either. They even mocked him, making him out to be a bully or thug, who might kill them too. His solution to this inner conflict was to run away.

Some of you may have grown up in a very privileged environment, like Moses, spiritually or physically. Even if you did not, as you have gotten older, there must have been a point in your life when you had a similar identity crisis. Moses knew he was a Hebrew his whole life. It took a moment of conflict, killing an Egyptian/Hebrews fighting, to find out where he truly stood and what he identified himself as. Have you had a similar moment of conflict which challenged you to find where you stand? For some of you it is a simple conflict of "Am I a Christian or not?" As an elementary school kid, I was a young Pharisee. I was a proud, self righteous 2nd Gen who looked down on others for being sinners. Then one day, God revealed to me that I too was a sinner. Until you have a sense of problem, your life will be on cruise control or auto-pilot. Everything will seem good like Moses' life in the palace. This is a false sense of security and is naïve. Our prayer for you is to take account of your life. Take responsibility to find who you are and what you believe. Do not blame your parents, your upbringing, or anyone else, but look inwardly to find who you are. When you start asking the questions, then turn to the wilderness to find the answer.

II. Wilderness Training

After leaving Egypt, Moses entered the Wilderness. He rescued a Midian Priest's daughters near a well and eventually married one of Jethro's daughters, Zipporah. While his people suffered in Egypt, Moses remained in the desert where he shepherded the flock of his father in law. He traded the palace life in Egypt for the shepherd/family life in the wilderness. It was in this broken and humble condition that God chose to reveal himself

to Moses. It was impossible for God to reveal himself to Moses in Egypt due to Moses' arrogance and lack of sense of problem. Moses did not feel a need for God in the palace. He might even have considered himself as an equal to God based on his noble status in the world. Therefore, God humbled Moses and sent him to the desert to encounter the Great I AM. This was the next 40 years of his life. Similarly, God will not reveal himself to you until you are in wildemess mode. If you don't have a sense of problem, then you will not feel a need for God. It is rare to hear a life testimony where God revealed himself to a proud, comfortable sinner. In the desert, Moses could focus on his own spiritual identity and focus on encountering God.

Let's look at Exodus 3:1-3: "Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, 'I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up." Our encounter with God in the desert must be personal and amazing. Surely a burning bush is not amazing. Moses noticed that the burning bush was on fire, but the fact that it did not burn up led him to investigate this phenomenon further. You are here at the 2nd Vision Camp. At the very least, you must be a little curious about God. Maybe you caught a glimpse of something cool and amazing about God. Whatever that burning bush is, I encourage you to go seek out why it is not burning up so you may personally encounter God. Whether you are here because someone forced you to come, or whether you came here by your own desire. I pray that you can have a personal encounter

Exodus 3:4-6: "When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, 'Moses! Moses!' And Moses said, 'Here I am.' 'Do not come any closer,"'God said. 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.' Then he said, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God." Moses gives us a good example how to meet God. When God called Moses, he replied, "Here I am." When God calls you, will you respond the same way? Moses then recognized the holiness of God and therefore did not advance any farther. He took off his sandals and hid his face because he was afraid to look directly at the Almighty God, who was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Your attitude towards God is vitally important. Having the right attitude is contingent upon knowing who it is that you are worshipping. On a human level, I've met a few celebrities. When meeting them. I certainly was humbled by their presence and social status. I could not look at them eye to eye in status and figuratively was looking up to them. How much more humble must we be when coming into the presence of God? Encountering God requires the right attitude and reverence for the Almighty God. If you don't come with the right attitude, you cannot meet God at the burning bush that does not burn up. Moses spent 40 years in the Wilderness but it was all worth it once he met the God of his forefathers. Also, we can all take comfort in the fact that God is concerned about you. In verse 7, God saw the misery of Israel, heard their cries, and was concerned about their suffering. Don't worry! God hears and sees you in your comer of the world.

III. God's calling for Vision Camp

There are 164 campers here at Vision Camp 2019. Do we really want all of you to be leaders? Does God really want that many?

Yes. God is calling all of you to be leaders. When you leave this place and return to your homes, we are praying that God can use you to lead other people to the Promised Land, the kingdom of God. We are entering the last 40 years of Moses' life when he obeved God's calling for him to lead his people to the Promised Land. God could not continue to allow his people to suffer at the hand of the Egyptians, so he charges Moses in Exodus 3:10: "So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." Everyone is praying for you to get to the point where God calls you. Like Moses, you might have some reservations or questions for God. Let's look at Moses' questions in response to God's calling for his life. Exodus 3:11: "But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" Moses wasn't sure he could do it, just like you might be thinking now. God reassures him that he will be with him. Yet Moses asks another question in response to God's reassurance, in verse 13: "Moses said to God, 'Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and they ask me, "What is his name?" Then what shall I tell them?" What is God's response. Let's read verse 14: "God said to Moses, 'I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: "I am has sent me to you."" If we examine God's calling for Moses, we can see that everything is done by the Power of God. Moses had nothing to offer God except humility and obedience. He was a shepherd and a father. He was not eloquent. He was not bold. He was actually kind of a coward as he ran away to the desert when faced with conflict. God is the one who saw the suffering of his people. It was God's heart that was broken at their situation in Egypt. It was I AM who would send a savior for them. It was I AM who would give Moses the words to speak. It is not about you, but all about God, the IAM, when leading people to the Promised Land. All God is asking you to do is be humble and accept his calling. You all are being called and sent out by I AM. There are a few names in the world we may recognize as the definite one when mentioned. The list of absolutely undeniable names might include Messi, Trump, Gandhi, Lebron James, and the Pope. Similarly, the world thinks there are many gods, but Christians know there is only one true God and he is I AM. Whatever your doubt or question for God is, the answer is I AM. We often think the work of God is based on me, but it is the opposite. It is not about you but all about God and his ability to use you to lead his people. So rather than focusing on yourself, simply obey God's calling and rely on the I AM to strengthen and guide you. I AM will certainly not let you down. See what he did for Moses. I AM covered all of Moses' weaknesses to help him lead the Israelites out of Egypt. God can use you to do the same. I AM is the God of UBF, the God of your parents, the God of your Bible teacher, the God of Abraham/Isaac/Jacob, and the God of YOU. I AM is sending you to be a blessing to your people. Don't feel burdened by God's calling for your life but let God take care of the details. You must simply obey like Moses. God's calling is not about you, it is about HIM, the I AM. We are so focused on what we are and what we can or can't do. Moses didn't think he could lead the Israelites out of Egypt. He went from shepherding sheep to leading his people into the Promised Land. Change your focus from yourself and your weaknesses and fix your eyes on God. I AM will do the work for you when you obey his calling. So we pray that all Vision camp attendees can obey God's calling by relying on the power of I AM, our God. Its not about you, it's about God. ■

COLLEGE LIFE: PURPOSE, FINANCE & MARRIAGE

Ephesians 2:10

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."



I. College Life with a Purpose

I have taught college students for the past 30 years as a professor of economics at a state university in Pennsylvania. I am also serving a UBF ministry there. I am happy to share what I learned about college life with you.

College days are an important period in your life. You gain knowledge and wisdom in college, and form your perspectives on many things. You meet many people with whom you could become friends for life. You make a decision on what you are going to do for a living. You may meet your future wife or husband during college. Most of all, you may think about what life is all about.

I often ask my students the question, "What will you do when you graduate? What is the goal in life?" A majority of them would answer, "I want to make a lot of money and be happy."

How about you? Do you have a goal or purpose in life?

When I was a college student, I did not have a clear purpose or direction in life. I only had a vague idea that I wanted to get a good job, marry a woman I loved, own a house with pretty garden, have a couple of kids, and live happily ever after. In other words, I did not think about life seriously. I studied hard because others did. I wanted to get a good job because other did. I was like a dead fish flowing down the

stream. I conformed to the pattern of this world.

There are very important questions in life that each of us should ask. They are: "Where did I come from?" (origin of life); "Who am I?" (identity); "Why am I here?" (meaning and purpose in life); and "What will happen when I die?" (future). I did not have answers to these questions. I did not realize it, but I was lost. I was trying to go somewhere with my life, but I was just groping in darkness. It was only after I became a Christian I realized that God has a purpose for my life. I learned that God created me in his own image for a purpose. How did this happen? God led me to UBF and helped me to study the word of God. He blessed me to come to know him through studying his words. He changed the direction in my life. I was a selfish man chasing after the Korean Dream, but God saved me by his grace and blessed me to live a life of faith and mission, serving college students with the word of God. He did a miracle in my life through his life-changing words. I am grateful for the UBF ministry.

I like the name of our ministry--University Bible Fellowship. Bible is our middle name. The Bible is at the core of our ministry. It is in our DNA. It's in our bones and marrows. We believe that the word of God leads us to Jesus. The word of God is the word of life. It leads us to eternal life in the kingdom of God. We cannot think of UBF ministry without Bible study

Our first name is University. Our focus is on campus

mission. In his book, "College Ministry in a Post-Christian Culture," Steve Lutz says, "College students are the most strategic ministry people group in the world today. Why? College students are future leaders of the world. The college years powerfully shape the lives of men and women, setting the trajectory of their entire lives." Unfortunately, colleges today are a breeding ground of liberal ideas. Many students are swept away by the pleasure-seeking and unbelieving culture of the campus. Without the firm foundation of God's word, they become like tumble weeds that move around by the wind. They are like sheep without a shepherd. They need someone who can help them to meet Jesus as their Lord. They need the biblical foundation on which they can build their value system. That is why our UBF ministry is so important, I believe.

Many young people today do not know God as their Creator. They don't know that they were created in God's image. Thoughtful students try to get answers to life questions from their teachers, parents, friends, social media, and from their own minds. The problem is that none of them can give the true answers, because they don't know the answers themselves.

"Only God who created our lives can give us the true answers. We can find all the answers from the Bible, the word of God."

The Bible teaches us that God created each of us in his own image with a purpose to be fruitful in him. It also teaches us that sin messed up our lives. The image of God in us was marred. Our consciences were seared as with a hot iron. Our thinking became futile. As a result, we cannot rely on our minds to think right, to do right things, and to be right with God. We had fallen and could not get up on our own. But God did not abandon us. In his great mercy, God sent his one and only Son Jesus to save us through his crucifixion and resurrection. He gave us a second chance in life, so that we may live our lives to fulfill his purpose.

What is the ultimate purpose of our life? The answer is that God created each of us for his glory. Question #1 of Westminster Shorter Catechism is: "What is the chief end of man?" The answer? "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." This is what God said, "everyone who is called by my name, whom I

created for my glory, whom I formed and made" (Isa 43:7). So how can we glorify God in our life? Rick Warren, the pastor of Saddleback Church in California, identifies five things we can do in order to fulfill the purpose of God in our life:

- (1) To worship and love the Lord with all our hearts through our intimate relationship with him.
- (2) To love others in our community with the love of Jesus. In Mark 12:30-31, Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."
- (3) Grow in the image of Christ. We must grow in spiritual maturity. How? Through the word of God, prayer, and building relationship with others.
- (4) Serve others with God-given gifts. We should use the gifts from God, not for our selfish purpose but to please God. (5) Share the gospel of Jesus with others.

So what is your purpose of life? This is a question I hope each of you ask sincerely before God. And he will certainly give you his answer as you study the Bible. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." This is a purpose of life for all Christians! So what are the good works? Helping the homeless? Cleaning up the environment? Helping to reverse the climate change? Yes, these are all good works. But from the Bible studies, we learn that God's heart is breaking everyday, because people are dying in their sins without knowing the Savior Jesus. The Lord wants us to devote ourselves to preaching the good news of salvation so that one more person may be saved and receive eternal life through our good works.

All four gospels end with Jesus' command to preach the gospel. In Matthew 20:19-20, Jesus gave us a command: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Do you know why we in UBF pray so much for world mission? I once visited a local church service and was impressed by their loving atmosphere. The pastor shared a detailed list of prayer topics for the congregation-for those who were ill, who had a car accident, who had babies, who graduated from high school, and so on. However, there was one prayer topic that was missing from the list. It was a world mission prayer topic. So why does UBF focus so much on world mission? Is it because our founding leaders were mission-minded people? Yes, it is true. But I heard that whenever the early leaders studied the gospels, each time they were challenged by the great commission of the Lord Jesus. They could not ignore it. The UBF ministry began in Korea in the 1960s. At that time, the country was not in a position to send out missionaries. It was devastated by the war. With a per-capita GDP of just \$100 a year, it was one of the poorest countries in the world, poorer than many countries in Africa. No one was even thinking about sending out missionaries. But our UBF leaders decided to obey the command of Jesus somehow and anyhow. They sent a missionary to Jeju Island, calling it an "overseas" mission. Then they sent out missionaries to Southeast Asia, then to Germany, then to the U.S.A., Canada, Africa, CIS, Latin America, Oceania, and so on. God blessed their obedience. And many of you are the fruits of their obedience.

Recently, I asked a young UBF leader this question: "What do you think the most serious problem facing college students today?" After a moment of reflection, he said, "Many of them don't know who they are. Some even don't know if he is a boy or a girl." Today we live in a very strange society. When our university put up colorful flags with the word, "pride," all over the campus, one missionary liked it, thinking it was about being proud of the university. But this pride was about LGBTIQA+ (which stands for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual and many other terms (such as non-binary and pansexual")). Teachers in some elementary schools are told not to call their students "boys and girls" or "ladies and gentlemen" in the classroom to promote gender inclusiveness. In this environment, young people are confused. They have no clear identity. If they don't know who they are, how can they know what to do with their life? This is serious. But who can help them? Their teachers? Their parents? Their friends? The social network? No, only God can help them to know who they are. Because God created each and every one of them. And we have the important responsibility to help them

to find answers by studying the word of God with them. We must help them to find the true meaning and purpose in life!

Most of you are missionary kids. And I think that many of you feel blessed by God to be MKs. Some of you may not like being an MK, because you did not choose to be one. If you live in poor countries, you might ask questions such as, "Why didn't my parents go to a country like Canada, U.S., or Germany? Why did they have to come to this poor country and suffer so much?" And if you are a missionary kid from Canada, U.S., or Germany, you might ask, "Why did I have to be born to a UBF missionary family? I want to choose my own faith!" How would God answer such questions? God knows who you are. He is the one who created you. He knows what is on your mind. He knows how many hairs you have. He cares about you. I believe he will say to you, "Trust me. I know what I am doing. I put you exactly where I wanted you to be." This is what David said to God,

"You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.... For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well" (Ps 139:1-3,13-14).

Isaac in Genesis could have asked the same questions like you. He could have said, "Why was I born to an old couple who immigrated to a country where foreigners are not welcomed? Why was I born to a weird father who tried to kill me and offer me as a burnt offering?" But he didn't do that. Instead, Isaac opened his eyes to see the faith of his father. He claimed the covenant promise of God as his own. He valued the spiritual legacy his father passed onto him. His father's God became his own God. He did not complain about his hard life. He lived by faith in the foreign land. He had a good spiritual influence on the people of the land by living a life of faith in God. He became an important figure in God's history.

I believe that all of you are blessed by God. He blessed you to be born to a Christian family. Like Isaac, you inherited spiritual legacy of your parents. Like Isaac, you can have a good influence on people around you where you are living a life of faith in God. You can help your friends to come to know Christ by studying the word of God with them. Without your help, they would live and die in a spiritual wilderness without knowing the love of God. They don't know where they are going. They don't know what to do with their lives. God wants you to help them!

2. Finance

Money is important. We cannot ignore money. Money is not evil. The love of money is the root of all evil

(1Ti 6:10). The Bible includes almost 2,000 references on money and finance. Jesus often taught his disciples on topics related to money. But this is a subject that requires more time to discuss than we have this time. So I will make only one point. Make tithing part of your life of faith. I have a personal testimony about the importance of tithing. I grew up in a poor family. For my birthday gift, all I wanted was a warm sweater. I never got one. When I got my first job as a high school teacher, it was hard for me to offer 10% of my income to the Lord because I thought to myself, "10% to God means 10% less for myself." But by God's grace, my Bible teacher helped me to offer my tithe to God by faith. This decision has become a blessing for me all my life. How? God helped me to overcome my desire for money through tithing.

Some people argue that we don't have to tithe because the New Testament does not mention it explicitly. However, to look for an excuse not to tithe is not wise. God is not a charity. He is not poor. He owns everything. What he wants from us is not money per se, but our heart. We bring a portion of our income to God in offering to give thanks to him for his blessings and to acknowledge that everything we have is from him. I believe that tithing helps us more than we help God.

3. Marriage

This is another topic that warrants a lot more time to explore than we have now. It is an important topic for you. In my view, there are three major events in your life—your birth, your marriage, and your funeral. In two of these events, you have no idea what's going on. Only on marriage, you have a say. Some young people who are otherwise obedient to God and their parents would say, "I am willing to obey everything, but not my marriage! I want to marry a person I love. Marriage by faith? What's that?"

The most important thing to remember about marriage is that it is for God's glory (1Co 10:31: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God"). It was God who established marriage between man and woman (Ge 2). God blessed them to become coworkers for God's mission to glorify him. For this, you should marry a man of faith or a woman of faith. You may think you can lead a non-believer to Christ by marrying him or her. Perhaps. But it might be like trying to help a person to get on a train while you are on the moving train. You may be pulled down from the train. St. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6:14: "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?"

Here is my personal testimony about my marriage. The pastor in our ministry introduced me to a woman of God, M. Deborah. It was not love at first sight. We married by faith. Then we began to date. Then we fell in love. We have been together for 42 years as partners in serving the campus mission. We have three children who also serve the Lord in their respective mission fields. God blessed us with six beautiful grandchildren. Our family is an international family with three different nationalities – from Korea, India and the U.S. I am so thankful to the Lord for blessing us to be part of his family and to serve him with a clear purpose.

CAMPUS EVANGELISM THROUGH ONE-TO-ONE BIBLE STUDY



Do you personally study the Bible deeply with a one-to-one Bible Teacher? I am sorry to see that there are some second gens in our ministry who do not have one-to-one Bible teachers. I am sorry that some people do not think that our second gen ministry is important and that only sheep we fish are important. Some coworkers think that when a second gen comes to college, they are automatic coworkers. But my observation is that our next gens need to be discipled and equipped spiritually to become gospel workers. As discipleship ministry becomes increasingly difficult in our current generation, it is encouraging and hopeful that 1:1 discipleship is still possible when the Bible teacher commits to deep Bible study, prayer and personally encountering Jesus. Some coworkers only talk about Bible study; some only talk about making a more fun program for young people to come. But we need both. May God help our second gens to know the importance of 1:1 bible study! Key verse: 2 Timothy 2:2 "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."

Max Lucado, a best-selling Christian writer and preacher said, "Jesus knew that each human being is a treasure. And because he did, people were not a source of stress, but a source of joy." Like Apostle Paul focused on valuing a single person, Timothy, UBF from the beginning has also focused on valuing one person with God's word through one-to-one Bible study, rather than holding public gatherings. Our one-to-one Bible studies were not for the purpose of doing something great. We simply sought to deeply value one person - to save them and raise them as Jesus' disciples - and God did all the rest by abundantly blessing this ministry.

I. Definition of One-to-One Bible Study

One-to-one Bible study can be defined as the process of new creation; one person is saved through God's word; then that person may lead another person to salvation through God's word. There are many ways to help someone find happiness and change their life. But why is one-to-one Bible study so important? It is because each person is different, and each person carries problems as big as the universe itself. One cannot solve these problems through a standardized procedure. One-to-one Bible study is one of the most effective ways to

serve people who tend to be opinionated and desire to be respected as individuals. On the surface, one-to-one Bible study is the meeting of two people, and two different personalities. But as they meet in the context of God's word, it is actually a meeting of three persons. In short, it is a meeting among a Bible teacher, a student, and God. The student meets a Bible teacher one-to-one, who shows the love of Christ. Through the Bible teacher, the student once again meets God one-to-one. Through this, the student who receives healing for their sinsickness is saved, and reborn as a child of God. In this sense, one-to-one Bible study is a process of a new creation through a person's meeting with God. It is a format of a spiritual revolution that works through a transformation of the heart (2 Co 5:17); a spiritual restoration progress through regaining God's image (Lk 19:10); a restoration movement through regaining God's Kingdom (Mk 12:28). Throughout the past 58 years, UBF has been the fruit of new creation and regeneration born through our one-to-one Bible study. The great contributors of this ministry are the one-to-one Bible teachers who labor in love for one student's salvation. Gospel Coalition Speaker, Jenny Salt, said, "One-to-one Bible study is a simple and manageable format that we may share God's word with one person."

II. One-to-One Bible Study within UBF

First: Emphasis of Our One-to-One Philosophy

From the beginning, we did not reach out to the wide public, but devoted to the caring of one person to raise them into Bible teachers through one-to-one Bible study. Christianity came about through one person at a time beginning with God choosing Abraham. Jesus came for one person: 'I.' Philosophically the number 1 is known as the unity of a whole. There cannot be a whole without even one person. When we truly care and pray for one person, we come to have a broken shepherd heart for one soul. Luke 15:6-7 talks about "the finding of a lost sheep until he finds it." Likewise, the idea of valuing one person, and the one-to-one philosophy of serving and praying for one person is the philosophy of Christianity, and Jesus' main philosophy. Therefore, based on our one-to-one philosophy, through suffering and sacrificing ourselves for one lost soul, we need to care for one sheep. Just as the gospel ministry was based on God's one-to-one philosophy, we need to cherish our one-to-one philosophy and put it into practice with God's Words.

Second: Beginning and Growth of UBF's 1:1 Bible Study Methods

UBF leaders adopted systematic 1:1 Bible study methods since 1968. First, Dr. Lee & Mother Barry started providing student leaders with Bible study materials in the form of question sheets and written messages from the book of Genesis and Mark's gospel. Based on question sheets of each lesson, student leaders studied the Bible one-to-one or in small groups. Then, these leaders invited their friends for Bible study and humbly shared what they learned. In this way, campus Bible studies spread not only through 1:1, but also in small groups on many campuses. This grassroots effort of equipping Bible teachers bore much fruit during the 1960s and '70s. By the 1980s, these one-to-one Bible study methods became widespread in many

UBF chapters. Through such personal evangelism efforts, the number of one-to-one Bible teachers increased remarkably.

The experiences of these 1:1 Bible studies were both personally rewarding and spiritually challenging to the participants, and many described their one-to-one Bible studies as an 'unforgettable one-to-one,' 'one-to-one festival,' or 'one-to-one battle,' and so on. Some dedicated leaders engaged in one-to-one Bible studies with 10, 12, and even 20 different individuals per week. Such 1:1 ministries required personal sacrifices. Some young mothers had to find time for their students while their children remained in the care of babysitters. This was not easy for many leaders. Yet, many Bible teachers sowed the seeds of 1:1 studies in tears to reap the harvest. As these children grew up, they also received one-to-one care with other Bible teachers or their parents' Bible students as well. In brief, UBF's growth is based on the commitment and sacrifice of many leaders for such vigorous 1:1s.

Third: Enormous Impacts of 1:1 Bible Studies on Participants

The primary reason for 1:1 is mobilization of Bible teachers for effective personal evangelism. The focus is to lead non-Christians to Christ and his kingdom and raising disciples of Jesus. Over the years, the impact of 1:1s has been huge in transforming both Bible teachers and participants. When Bible teachers had Bible study with students, their spiritual attitude toward Christ, and understanding of humanity also grew. Bible teachers cannot be careless, rash, and arrogant toward their Bible students if they want to help their Bible students grow in faith. They have approached the Bible as disciples of Jesus Christ. They have learned to pray, examine the Bible for personal applications, and help their students to accept God's word with their labor of love and deep care. Through these 1:1s, these Bible teachers experienced practical training to learn the mind of Jesus Christ towards his precious Bible students. A shepherd heart and labor of the Bible teachers for lost sheep in the form of patience, love, sacrifice and commitment has been the constant idea of these Bible teachers on a daily basis.

III. Humble Proposal for Fruitful 1:1 Ministries

In the 1960s, UBF leaders served young people regarding them as their own family members with dedication, commitment, and a spirit of love. The periods between the 1970s and 1990s were the golden era for 1:1 Bible ministries. In the 1990s and 2000s, the excitement for 1:1 ministry somewhat slowed down. These days, the 1:1 ministries have experienced practical challenges. The changing environment of college campuses requires a fresh strategic approach for 1:1 ministry. Although the 1:1 methods are still relevant and essential, it is worthy to note both strengths and limitations of 1:1 ministry. There are several proposals:

First: Bible teachers' hearts need to be touched and convinced by the power of the gospel.

The 1:1 ministry is often compared to passing a baton in a relay race, where the torch is passed from one runner to the next in sequential fashion. Likewise, the power of 1:1 ministry is based on the extent of love and spirit that works in the heart of a person. Thus, it is important for a Bible teacher to remain motivated and inspired by the gospel. In essence, the gospel is about God's love for the world. When the Holy Spirit works in a Bible teacher's heart, he goes out to the world in order to preach the word in-season and out-of-season. Since the Bible is God-breathed (2 Ti 3:16), those engaging in deep and prayerful Bible study experience loving others in their hearts by the love and spirit of God. Many Bible students throughout the world found reasons for hope and vision through the gospel of Jesus. The gospel of Jesus enabled them to rise up and go out to preach the gospel to all nations. Many leaders were willing to give themselves fully to the Lord in response to the grace of Jesus working in their lives. In view of the power of the gospel at work in these early UBF leaders, it must be our sincere prayer to renew such a passion and love for Jesus, as well.

Second: Commitment to serious personal Bible study.

A motivational speaker, Tony Robbins said, "The only limit to your impact is your imagination and commitment." For effective 1:1, Bible teachers may not merely repeat what they have learned from their Bible teachers. Superficial 1:1s may not appeal to the students who seek the truth. To be effective teachers, they need to commit to personal Bible studies seriously with much prayer and effort. Such personal effort and full commitment is essential, and can result when Bible teachers subject themselves first to the gospel truth and experience real joy by the truth in his life.

Third: Approach 1:1 Bible study with long-term vision and hope.

Two important factors for a fruitful 1:1 are personal encounter and meaningful relationship with the Bible student. A sheep may not come to the 1:1 Bible study merely for obtaining spiritual knowledge. Most sheep are in need of love and care. The key to reach these searching hearts is a meaningful encounter, based on a display of genuine kindness and care for others. A sheep appreciates expressions of love through practical details such as remembering their birthday, listening to what they have to say, asking about their health, and just hanging out for fun.

We tend to invest much on meeting with a sheep who is willing to study the Bible. Then, we tend to take the relationship aspect somewhat for granted. But more encounters or meetings do not necessarily build relationships. Spiritual relationships require great patience. If it takes a series of meetings that open a sheep's heart for regular Bible studies, it involves a deeper level of care for them to grow into a serious walk with Jesus. This process often takes months and even years. Thus, Bible teachers must engage in 1:1 ministries with long-term vision.

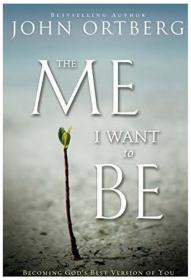
Bible teachers participate in the process of raising people on God's time. It is important to keep in mind that 1:1s are personal interactions. Good Bible teachers are capable in teaching. But Bible students want to speak what he/she thinks about. Thus, effective 1:1s are interactive based on a deep respect toward participants. For this reason, Bible teachers need to practice listening to what Bible students say and consider what they may not voice. When Bible teachers truly listen and provide sincere feedback, then they may have a heart-to-heart relationship such as the one between Jesus Christ and the Samaritan woman.

Fourth: Make every effort to build an environment for college students

It is not easy to bring one person to 1:1 Bible study. Generation X,Y and Z(!) come when they feel comfortable, welcomed, and engaged. Therefore, those who work in student ministries need to offer a friendly environment and interactive programs. Many UBF chapters offer a variety of programs that attract students through English studies and other social activities including team sports, praise and worship sessions, orchestra practices, cooking, and camping fellowship. As many Bible teachers are no longer college students, it is all the more important to provide events where both teachers and students can meaningfully interact.

Fifth: Be aware of other growth events beyond 1:1 relationships.

Long-term 1:1s enable deep personal relationships between a Bible teacher and student. Gradually, it is important for Bible teachers to allow their students to interact with other Bible teachers and Christian leaders for continuous growth and healthy engagements. Raising a Bible student is more than an individual's work; it involves a team effort. This may be one of the effective ways to raise one person to be a leader. Ultimately, it is God who raises him or her. Bible teachers are mere servants who lead people to Jesus, the Chief Shepherd (1 Pe 5:4).



Henri Nouwen, a priest, a teacher, and a famous writer who was in the exalted circles of Harvard. Yale, and Notre Dame. came to believe that those settings did not - for him - call forth the person God intended him to be. So he moved to a small community of physically and mentally challenged people and spent the last decade of his life caring for them. There he made a friend with a resident named

Trevor, who had many mental and emotional issues. One time when Trevor was sent to a hospital for evaluation, Henri called to arrange a visit. When the doctors of the hospital found that the famous Henri Nouwen was coming, they invited him to a luncheon with them. Henri went to the Golden Room for luncheon but Trevor was not there. "Where is Trevor?" he asked. They told him, "Patients are not allowed to have lunch with us." "But the whole purpose of my visit was to have lunch with Trevor," Henri Nouwen said. "If Trevor is not allowed to attend the lunch, then I will not attend either." So they brought Trevor to be with them at the lunch. The Golden Room was filled with people who II. The Be I Think I Should Be were quite excited that the great Henri Nouwen was in their midst. Some tried to be close to him. Others pretended to have read books they had not read and know ideas they did not know. They thought of how wonderful it would be to tell their friends that they spoke to Henri Nouwen. There were also those who were upset because the rule separating patients and staff had been broken. Then, Trevor had risen to his feet and said, "A toast, I will now offer a toast." The room grew quiet. People were thinking to themselves, "What in the world is this guy going to do?" Then Trevor began to sing:

"If you're happy and you know it, raise your glass. If you're happy and you know it, raise your glass. If you're happy and you know it, and you really want to show it, If you're happy and you know it, raise your glass."

At first people were not sure how to respond, but Trevor was beaming. His face told everyone how glad and proud he was to be there with his friend Henri. Somehow Trevor. in his joy, gave a gift no one else in the room could give. People began to sing – softly at first, but soon they began to shout with Trevor. No one worried about the rules. No one pretended. No one tried to separate PhDs from the Even you can't tell yourself how to change because you ADDs. For a moment, a room full of people moved toward the best version of themselves because a man named Trevor was living out the best version of himself. What is it that you really want? Think for a moment and

write it down. Some of you may want many things. Some of you may have a hard time expressing what you really want. In fact, if we make a list of what we really want, most of the things on the list will be just a means to an end. What we really want is to be fully alive insidethe inner freedom to live in love and joy. I want that life more than anything else. I just want to be fully alive. There is a me I want to be. However, many people fail to become the me they want to be. This is because of the counterfeits that elbow in to take the place of the me I want to be, the rivals who keep me from becoming the me I am meant to be.

I. The Me I Pretend To Be

Some people keep on doing name-dropping in their conversations with others. They want to impress others by pretending to know famous people. We have a similar tendency to try to look intelligent and accomplished. We also try to look devout and sincere. But in our minds we may have all kinds of dirty, sinful desires and enjoy them. This is hypocritical and also tiring. We can't pretend before God. He knows everything. He sees our heart. Genuine brokenness pleases God more than pretend spirituality. If I am going to become the me I want to be, I have to start by being honest about who I am. Deep inside we just want to be ourselves in our relationships. We don't want to pretend.

People compare themselves with others. We even measure our spirituality compared to others. A mother with little children hears her pastor talk about loving God so much that he is up very early every morning to spend hours in prayer. She would love such a quiet time in the morning but her children simply will not cooperate. But she thinks that she ought to be doing the same thing. Consequently, she feels guilty comparing herself with the pastor. It never occurs to her that her love and care for her children can count as her expression of loving God. Henri Nouwen wrote, "Spiritual greatness has nothing to do with being greater than others. It has everything to do with being as great as each of us can be."

III. The Me Other People Want Me To Be

Everyone has an agenda for you. If I try to be the me other people want me to be, I will never be free. Loving people means being willing to disappoint them sometimes. (Think about Jesus) No human being in your life gets the final word on who God made you to be. didn't create you. The one person in the whole universe who can do this perfectly for you is God. He created you. He knows what the best version of you looks like. In fact, he is already working on it. He has no other agenda for

you.

IV. The Me I'm Afraid God Wants

Many people equate spiritual maturity with trying hard to follow the rules in the Bible. No wonder they are unmotivated to pursue spiritual growth. If I think God's aim is to produce rule-followers, spiritual growth will always be an obligation rather than a desire of my heart Jesus did not say, "I have come that you might follow the rules." He said. "I have come that you might have life, and have it with abundance." People often use external behaviors and devotional practices to measure their spiritual health. But we must understand that spiritual growth is moving toward God's best version of ourselves.

V. The Me That fails To Be FTT ('failure to thrive')

This term is used for an infant who for some reason is unable to gain weight or grow. Psychologists have begun to speak of what is perhaps the largest mental health problem in our day. It is not depression or anxiety, at least at clinical levels. It is languishing—a failure to thrive. Languishing is the condition of someone who may be able to function but has lost a sense of hope and meaning. Languishing is not the presence of mental illness; it is the absence of mental and emotional vitality. When we ask a group of kindergarten kids, "Who is an artist?" every hand shoots up. The number decreases to half by third grade. By the time the students are twelve years old, only a few hands go up. When we give up on our growth and life's purpose, we languish. God's heart is broken when he sees his precious children languishing and repressed.

God made you to be flourishing, not languishing. Flourishing never happens by looking out to be number one or by trying to gain people's recognition. It is tied to a grander and nobler vision. "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10) You are not your handiwork. You are God's project. God thought you up. He knows your full potential, and he is guiding you toward that best version of yourself, though he is not in a hurry. He wants you to be flourishing and flourishing means moving toward God's best version of

As God helps you grow and flourish, you'll change, but you'll always be you. He pre-wired your temperament. He determined your natural gifts and talents. He made you to feel certain passions and desires. Your uniqueness is God-designed. When you flourish, you become more you. You become more of that person God had in mind when he thought you up. You don't just become holier. You become you-ier. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10) A flower in a vase is as good as dead. To be spiritually alive means to receive power from God to have a positive impact on your world. What are some ways God gives life and vitality to you? [Nature, Spiritual fellowship, Worship, Solitude, Serving, Study, Leading, Art, Rest, Celebration, Scripture, Recreation, Exercise, Family, Long talks, Laughter, Leading a cause, Retreat, Small group,....] Discover and develop those things empowered by God's Spirit. St.

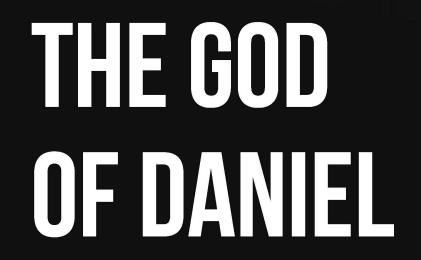
Irenaeus said, "The glory of God is a human being fully alive; and to be alive consists in beholding God."

We all want to be fully alive, but inside our soul there is a battle between a flourishing self and a languishing self. If your spirit is empowered by God's Spirit you become more flourishing. Your mind is filled with joy, peace, and love. You become more curious and want to learn and explore many things. However, if you are controlled by a languishing self your heart is uneasy and discontent. You will resort to bad habits and your thoughts will drift toward fear and anger. This battle between a flourishing self and a languishing self also affects your relationships. When you keep in step with God's Spirit, you listen, bless, and forgive others. You find other people to be a source of wonder. On the other hand, if you are controlled by your languishing self, you will be troubled relationally. You isolate and withdraw or dominate and attack. You will be easily annoyed and angered in your relationships.

VI. The Me God Made Me To Be Is Measured By My Capacity To Love

When someone asks us, "How is your spiritual life?" we tend to answer this question by looking at the state of my devotional activities (SWS, 1:1, DB, testimony writing, etc). The problem is that by this measure the Pharisees always win. People can be disciplined but remain proud and spiteful. A wise man said, "We can measure the wellbeing of our soul by asking two questions - Am I growing more easily discouraged these days? Am I growing more easily irritated these days?" At the core of a flourishing soul are the love of God and the peace of God. If peace is growing in me, I am less easily discouraged. If love is growing, I am less easily irritated.

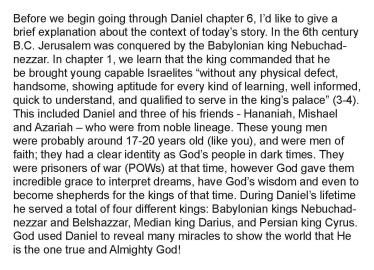
When I entered college, I thought I was flourishing. I was busy with many activities and surrounded by many friends. But when one of my closest friends broke his neck during a judo match and became quadriplegic I got lost and felt empty. I was languishing and suffering without knowing the meaning of life. It was then that God intervened in my life and drew me near to him through UBF Bible study. Listening to other people's life testimonies brought me amazement and hope. Finally, I too was saved by God's grace and began to live as a Christian. The first love was hot but with time it grew cold. There was a battle between a languishing self and a flourishing self in every aspect of my life but for long I did not know how to win the battle. Instead of living as the me I was meant to be I often became the me I pretend to be, the me I think I should be, the me other people want me to be, the me I'm afraid God wants, and the me that fails to be. Reading this book by John Ortberg, I realized that God wants me to be flourishing and flourishing means moving toward God's best version of me. I also learned that I can be fully alive and flourishing when my spirit is empowered by God's Spirit. I am learning to live by the Spirit. I also see that many people around me especially young people including my own children are languishing instead of flourishing. I pray that our lives may transform from languishing to flourishing. Amen.



Daniel 6:1-28 Key verse 6:10

"Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before."

By David Shin



Todays' 6th chapter is about God's grace that saved Daniel from being eaten alive by lions. In today's word we will learn how God was with Daniel – a man of faith, a man of prayer and a man of gratitude. Let's pray to accept the God of Daniel as our living God. Let's pray we may learn his towering spirit, his faithful prayer and his thankfulness in all circumstances to glorify God in our lives! Amen!

I. Daniel's life of faith (1-3)

Look at verses 1-2: "It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss."

During the rule of king Darius the Mede, Babylon was divided between the Median and Persian kingdoms (Dan. 5). The heart of the Median empire is today's Iran. Scientists consider Medians to be predecessors of today's Kurds. However, king Darius decided to change the political system of the Median empire. Probably it was too much work to handle himself, it was impossible to rule such a big empire singlehandedly. So, he appointed 120 satraps and 3 administrators to govern the kingdom. Among them Daniel, POW, had exceptional qualities and the king was going to make him prime minister of the whole kingdom.

Look at verse 3: "Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom."

In the Czech translation it says that Daniel had distinguished himself among the other administrators and satraps by his exceptional spirit! I like this version that clearly says that Daniel wasn't special because of his capabilities but rather by his towering spirit that comes from Almighty God! The king was at that time 62 years old and Daniel was about 80 years old. Sixty years had passed and Daniel had risen from being a POW to one of the three most powerful ministers. The king needed a wise and trustworthy manager who could rule the kingdom responsibly. Among all his administrators the king saw Daniel as the best option to become the first prime minister of the Median empire. Isn't it amazing? How is it possible? Verse 3 says that he was filled with towering Spirit! Outstanding Spirit! I believe this Spirit is the Holy Spirit that dwells among us.

In a previous chapter of the book of Daniel we learn that Daniel had made a clear decision of faith to keep his identity as God's child in difficult circumstances. He didn't defile himself with the king's food we know his spirit was an outstanding, towering Spirit! I heard that



between Daniel's life and Joseph's life. Both of them were slaves, however both of them kept their clear identity as God's children, and God protected them from all evil, and gave them hope, vision and courage to have victory in foreign lands! We also know what it feels like to be foreigners in a foreign country like Daniel.

"Daniel had made a clear decision of faith to keep his identity as God's child in difficult circumstances"

It is not easy to hold onto our identity as new generation missionaries. But Daniel and his life is greatly encouraging and inspiring to us. Right? From today's message we learn that decisions of faith and the life of faith is a life of victory. When we have faith in God and we're filled with God's Spirit we can be used greatly, the same as Daniel. Let's pray that we may all have a clear identity as God's children and be filled with God's outstanding Spirit to experience God's great power in our lives! Amen!

II. Daniel's life of prayer (4-15)

In verse 4b it says that king Darius sought to appoint Daniel as a prime minister of the whole Empire. For Daniel it was a great honour and blessing, however it also meant a great threat to him. How did others react to his promotion? Look at verse 4: "At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent." When the other satraps and administrators heard that the king was going to entrust the whole kingdom to Daniel they were jealous and angry. This meant that they would lose their power, their jobs, and their positions. They probably said: "How could the king entrust the whole kingdom to this foreigner?! Is he insane?! We need to get rid of him!" However they were unable to find any charges against him. Here we can learn that Daniel, although a great politician, was not corrupt, he was as pure as a dove, because of his decision to live by faith. When we talk about politics, we often see politicians embroiled in many scandals, accepting bribes, nepotism, and corruption. Also politicians are often viewed as liars because usually they don't keep their election promises. So politics is perceived as dirty work for personal influence and financial gain. Look at verse 5: "Finally these men said. "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."" They realised that the only way to bring Daniel down was to attack his faith. Verses 6-9 explain how the administrators and satraps went to the king to persuade him to sign a decree according the Median and Persian tradition. Their proposition looked flattering - to issue a decree ordering a season of public worship of the king for 30 days, with objectors to be thrown into a den of lions. It seemed like a great idea, honouring the king and unifying the country, but in reality it was simply a trap to expose Daniel as disloyal and get him removed. King Darius didn't see their evil intention to kill Daniel, so he signed the decree and there was no way to repeal it (8-9).

Daniel was now in a very precarious situation. If he was found praying to God he would be violating the terms of the decree and risked being sentenced to death. How did he react? Look at verse 10: "Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before." Wasn't he scared of being arrested? Of death? How could he disobey the king's decree? In today's context it means breaking the law. We try to follow the law of our countries we live in, right? What I want to say is that Daniel didn't follow the king's new decree because he gave priority to God's law. He was loyal in royal service to the king but he feared God the Creator, God Almighty, the God of the living, the God of his forefathers, his personal God, rather than king Darius. Proverbs 9:10 says: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.'

Through Daniel's life of prayer we may learn several things:

First, he prayed with open windows toward Jerusalem. Daniel didn't only pray for himself and his own problems. He prayed for his people in Jerusalem. Although he was far away from his home, in his prayers he was close to them. His vision was that God might free Jerusalem from the captivity of Babylon. In times of trial he didn't compromise his praying customs. He didn't close the windows and pray secretly to avoid death. His faith was uncompromising. During times of trial and problems we tend to compromise with this world but here we can learn from Daniel, that we should have courage and faith that pleases God.

Second, he prayed three times a day. Prayer is a method of communication. By prayer we can communicate with God. We all communicate via our mobile phones right? We cannot imagine life without smart phones. With mobile phones we communicate with family and friends and we somehow build a personal relation with them. During Daniel's time there were no mobile phones, no Internet and no social media. He had no family with him; he had three friends with whom he could share his problems and difficulties. We mustn't forget that Daniel had three friends: Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. They were probably like family, and must have been a great support for him in difficult days. Thanks to his friends Daniel could hold onto his identity as a child of God.

It's God's blessing to have so many friends all around the world. Look around you! So many brothers and sisters you didn't know you had! I hope you guys keep in contact even after the conference and pray and encourage each other, especially in time of troubles and difficulties.

Daniel prayed three times a day because he depended on God, not on himself. He entrusted his life and all he had into God's hands. When we don't pray we automatically depend on ourselves, on our capabilities, on our rationality. However by our strength we cannot overcome our sinful nature. We need to pray that our souls may breathe. When we don't pray we drift away from God and our soul is smothered by the cares of the world. Our soul needs to breathe and be nourished, the same as our bodies.

Let's thank God for this conference and this opportunity to pray, this is our opportunity to come to Jesus and renew our relationship with God. May God give us eager prayer to be filled with Holy Spirit and see God's vision for us! Amen!

Third, he got down on his knees. Here we can learn Daniel's attitude in front of God. That he went down on his knees emphasises his humility in front of God. By our attitude we also show God our respect and his sovereignty. Jesus himself was a good example, who prayed on the Mount of Olives kneeling to God. Luke 22:41-42 says: He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."

Whenever we pray, standing or sitting, on the way to school or work, we should pray with a sincere heart and humility. Moreover we should pray like Jesus to seek and accept God's will for us.

Fourth, he gave thanks to God. Daniel gave thanks in all circumstances. Daniel was a POW, far away from his home, his family, and his country which was oppressed by a foreign empire. However he never stopped giving thanks to the Lord. Daniel gave thanks to God in times of success and in times of distress. It is extremely difficult to thank God when we are sick, when we have troubles at school, at work or when we are betrayed by our best friends etc. However Daniel never gave up on giving thanks to God. Although he was facing injustice within a political process of envy and evil, he gave thanks to God. 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 says: "pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

We should thank God for it is God's will for us! So let us thank God now - for this moment, for this Word, for this conference, for each of us here. Whatever our spiritual condition, whatever bad situation we are in! Don't worry, but put your trust in our unchanging and

faithful loving God for Jesus has the answers to all of our problems. In Christ there is always a new hope and victory! Amen!

"Prayer is a method of communication. By prayer we can communicate with God"

Verses 11-15 describe the unjust political situation Daniel found himself in. King Darius loved his loyal servant Daniel, but he couldn't revoke his own decree (14-15). This scene reminds us of the injustice Jesus experienced before Pontius Pilate. Although he knew that Jesus was innocent, to save himself Pilate yielded to the crowd that cried out, "Crucify! Crucify!" (Jn 19:6) and instead he freed Barabbas, a murderer (Mark 15:7). King Darius was very distressed with the situation, but all he could say to Daniel was "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" (16).

Daniel's life can be characterized in 3 essential parts, which are: 1) Life of faith; 2) Life of prayer and 3) Life of gratitude.

These three aspects of his life became integral parts of his every-day life. These aspects of his life built his character as a faithful and influential man of God. Let us integrate Daniel's spiritual habits into our lives so we can grow towering, outstanding Spirits to serve our ministries wherever we are in the world! Amen!

III. God saves Daniel from the den of lions (16-28)

Look at verse 16: "So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" To be thrown into a den of lions absolutely means death. Nobody who was thrown into a den of lions survived. Therefore the king's only hope was that Daniel's God would do something. The situation was unchangeable; a stone was rolled over the mouth of the den and sealed with the king's own signet ring (17).

In verse 18, we see how king Darius loved Daniel. His anxiety and sorrow made him refuse all food and entertainment. He refused to eat delicious Filet Mignon or watch New Avengers. He couldn't sleep that night thinking of precious Daniel.

Early in the morning the king hurried to the lion's den and cried out in an anguished voice: "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" (19-20). Here we can see how king Darius respected the God of Daniel when he called Daniel, 'servant of the living God'. Wow! We all want to be acknowledged in this world as a servant of the living God! Do you? I do!

What was Daniel's testimony? Look at verses 21-22. "Daniel answered, "May the king live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty.""

Daniel experienced another great miracle in his life. He testified to the king that God had protected him from the lions because he was innocent in God's eyes. He was innocent of the charge of disloyalty to the king, he was innocent of idolatry before God, and he was righteous by faith.

In life we will continually face many kind of lions. In our job it could be a fearsome boss. At school it could be a strict teacher or professor. When we see these people that we fear we want to avoid them, because we worry that we will be crushed.

In our hearts we may have many kinds of lions that we fear and we want to avoid. It could be fear of the future, fear of death, fear of bad marks, fear of losing our job, fear of being expelled from school, fear of not being accepted, fear of failure, fear of marriage by faith etc. However from today's passage we learn that God saved Daniel from a den of lions! God saved Daniel from the pow-

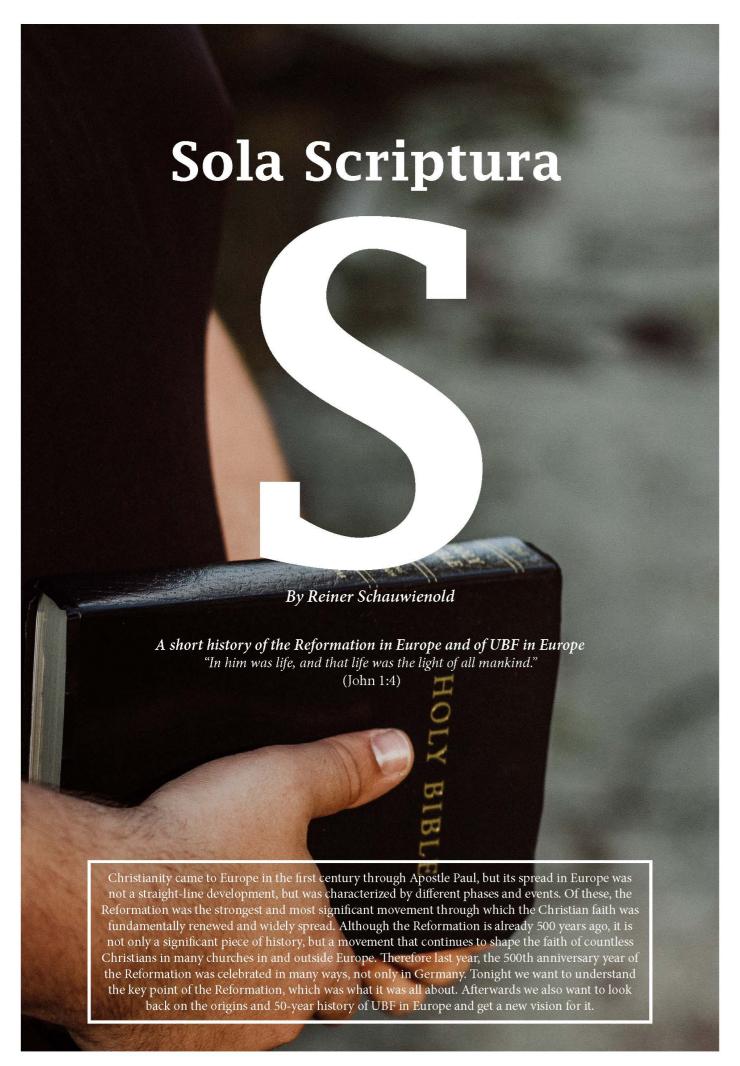
er of fear and death! Our God is the living God who has the power to save us from any threats and any fears! He has the power over life and death! Amen! Psalm 34:20 says: "The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all." So at this time let's shed all our fears and doubts and put our trust in Almighty God because he alone has the power to give us victory! Amen!

In verse 24 we see that the situation suddenly became reversed and Daniel's accusers and their families were thrown into the lions' den. In Czech we have a proverb saying, The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind." One day we will all be standing before God with our sins. So let us come to Jesus' Cross with clear repentance and faith that his holy blood washes all our sins and that our wounds may be healed by God's unconditional love. How did all this move king Darius? Look at verses 25-27: "Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth: "May you prosper greatly! "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

For he is the living God and he endures forever, his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." This is such a graceful song written by king Darius to honour the God of Daniel. It reveals how happy and moved he was. Through Daniel, the king himself got to know the God of Daniel personally. When he saw Daniel's victory he could experience the God of the living and give praise and thanks to him all over his kingdom!

Here we are gathered from all around the world to praise and thank God Almighty who gives us victory! Let us all praise the God of the living, the God of Daniel who is also our God who delivers us from the den of lions! Amen!

Verse 28 says: "So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian." Here we learn that God continued to bless Daniel. This shows us that through times of crisis God's will is to make us stronger and bless us, and make us fruitful. ■



I. Background of the Reformation

To understand the Reformation, we have to make a little journey back in time to the Middle Ages. At that time there were solid social structures: the princes, the clergy and the citizens and peasants. Education was reserved only for the clergy, the princes and some of the citizens. Most people could not read or write and had to work hard to survive. Because of hard work, poor nutrition and poorly developed medicine, people's lives were short (because of high infant mortality the average life expectancy was between 30-40 years). People were much more aware of how short their lives are, than today. Through the teachings of the Church, the majority of people were aware of their sinfulness and lostness before God, and many were worried about whether they would go to heaven or hell after death.

In the course of history, the doctrine of the Church had partially distanced itself from the teachings of the Bible. This was because the church did not clearly regard the Bible as the highest standard, but respected the church tradition in equal measure. In so-called councils, at which bishops and other ministers of the church came together at longer intervals, attempts were made to clarify controversial doctrines of theologians and church teachers. The doctrines, which were decided by the majority of councils as correct, became part of the doctrine of the church and were no longer questioned and practically as high as the scriptures themselves. In particularly contentious cases, the pope had the last word, whose judgment was infallible.

As a result, over the centuries, various doctrines became part of the doctrine of the church that did not or only partially agreed with the Bible. The deviations concerned not only secondary or formal things, but also the core of the doctrine of salvation. At that time, the Church emphasized the glory and holiness of God and the sinfulness and forlornness of people who can barely fulfill God's claims. She taught that in the face of their depravity, only through an exceptionally pious life and through the merits of the saints could human beings attain salvation. According to their doctrine, the saints, beginning with the holy apostles, through their good works and prayers and their exceedingly holy life, had acquired so great a degree of merits before God that a kind of excess was created, which could benefit other people.

This surplus of merits was administered by the church and she was able to assign it to other people. Therefore, the church had the sacraments such as the holy baptism, the holy supper, confession, the rites of the sick, etc. Therefore, people always had to go to the service, attend the holy supper, confess when they had sinned, pray much and do good works for others. They had to keep the commandments of God and lead an irreproachable religious life. Thus, according to the teaching of the Church, salvation is not given by God, but must be acquired, and man can only obtain it through the mediation of the church. Therefore, most people struggled to live a decent religious life in which they relied much on their own works and the works of the saints. Concerned that all this was not enough, some tried to gain additional favor with God for themselves or for their loved ones through donations to the Church or through the support of the Crusades. This concern also promoted many superstitious practices such as pilgrimages to sacred places, prayers to certain saints, or touching bits of bones from saints or other relics, trying to get more favor from God. But despite all efforts, people could not be sure of salvation, but lived constantly under the shadow of fear of God's wrath and eternal punishment. How dark was the life of the people! Without the light of the gospel, people wandered in fear and lost their hopes, and despite all their efforts they lacked the true life in Jesus.

Nevertheless, there were some people who realized that God justifies people by faith in Jesus Christ and gives them salvation. These included Petrus Valdes in France, John Wycliff in England, Jan Hus in the Czech Republic, Martin Luther in Germany and Johan Calvin in Switzerland. Today we only want to mention two of them, Jan Hus and Martin Luther.

II. Jan Hus

Jan Hus was probably born in Husinec in the then kingdom of Bohemia in 1370. Hus studied at the Charles University in Prague and obtained a master's degree at the age of 26. He became a university teacher and worked on Czech spelling. At the age of twenty-eight he became acquainted with the teachings of John Wyclif from England through Jerome of Prague, which he received enthusiastically. John Wyclif called for the Church's renunciation of possessions and worldly power because of the moral decay of the clergy in England and Bohemia. Jan Hus began studying theology in the same year, two years later he was ordained a priest, and two years later he was appointed professor. From 1402 Hus preached in the Czech language in the Old Town of Prague and held there annually about 200 sermons in Czech, which was most unusual at that time. He preached a strict, virtuous way of life and eagerly preached against zeitgeist and fashion. He fought passionately for a reform of the secularized church and saw in the Bible the only authority in matters of faith. He contradicted the doctrine of the church, according to which in matters of faith the Pope is the last resort.

In order to master the reform efforts, the Prague archbishop submitted to one of the then three popes, and obtained from him a bull, which demanded the surrender of the writings of Wycliffe and the revocation of his teachings. In addition, preaching outside the churches should be banned. Over 200 manuscripts Wyclifs were publicly burned and Jan Hus sued in Rome. Finally, Jan Hus was banned by the Pope in 1411, he was expelled from the church and expelled from the city of Prague. Because of his popularity Hus continued to teach under the protection of the king for a year, but in 1412 he had to flee. In November 1414 Jan Hus traveled to the Council in Constance in southern Germany. Although he was given freedom to travel and stay there. Hus was arrested and imprisoned three weeks after his arrival. The council demanded from him the public revocation and the renunciation of his doctrines. Hus refused and remained firm until the end of June. On July 6, 1415 Hus was sentenced in a plenary assembly of the Council as a false teacher to the death of fire and burned at the stake on the same day along with his writings. His name Hus means translated bird. Before his execution, he said: "You will kill me, but after a hundred years a greater bird will come, which will shake all Europe." This word was literally fulfilled by Martin Luther, who came a hundred years later and whose reformation would shake all Europe.

III. Martin Luther

Martin Luther was born in Eisleben in 1483, the son of a miner. Even as a young man, he had a strong awareness that he needed God's approval, but that his heart was not pure before God. He began studying at the University of Erfurt at the age of 18 and graduated four years later with "Magister Artium". After that, he began his law studies in the summer semester of 1505 at the request of his father. But in July of the same year he was struck by a severe thunderstorm on the way back from visiting his parents; in his dread, he called on Saint Anna, Mary's mother, for help and vowed to become a monk. Two weeks later, Luther entered a monastery in Erfurt. He wanted to live a holy life to stand before God. He followed the rules of the monastery so rigorously that he was ordained there in less than two years. But the consciousness of being

unclean before God tormented him further. He was the only one in the monastery who read the Bible. Thereby he learned even more about God's justice and his holiness. Despite daily penances, he was tormented by conscience. Often he would give confessions for hours without interruption, although his life as a monk was considered impeccable. When he was finally sentenced to absolution, he sometimes noticed sinful thoughts on his way back to his room and returned to confess again. However much he struggled to do justice to God, he continued to suffer from his sin and was uncertain about his salvation.

His confessor Johann von Staupitz recommended Luther in 1508 for a study of theology in Wittemberg. Luther graduated and received his doctorate there four years later and took over the chair of biblical interpretation. Soon after, he was to give the lectures on the psalms he was studying. But he was further plagued by sin, guilt and fear of punishment. His frustration turned into anger. He felt hatred when he even read the word "justice." When he read the passage in the psalms, refresh me with your righteousness (Psalm 119: 9), he was upset and wondered: How can a man rejoice over God's righteousness? As he studied Psalm 32, the second Penitential Psalm, he read how King David blessed the people forgiven for the transgressions to which the sin is covered, to which the Lord does not attribute the guilt. This psalm helped Luther slowly understand that God forgives sinners their sin. But this did not lead to a spiritual breakthrough.

The following semester, Luther gave the lecture on Romans. There he experienced a spiritual breakthrough in the study of Romans chapter 1, where it says in verses 16 and 17: For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." Luther later wrote the following about his change: "But I, who, in spite of my blameless life as a monk, felt as a sinner with a thoroughly troubled conscience and could not trust that I was reconciled to God by my satisfaction: I did not love, yes, I hated this righteous God, who punishes sinners; if not with outspoken blasphemy, surely with a tremendous murmur, I was outraged against God and said: "Should not it be enough that the wretched sinners, the eternally lost by sin, are oppressed with all sorts of evil by the Ten Commandments? Must God, through the gospel, still add pain to the pains and threaten us with his righteousness and his anger through the gospel?" At last, while contemplating God's mercy,

I paused day and night for the connection of the words, "a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." So I began to understand the righteousness of God so that the righteous live through them as through God's gift, that is, from faith; I realized that this is the meaning: the Gospel reveals the righteousness of God, namely, the passive by which God, the Merciful, justifies us by faith, as it is written, "The righteous will live by faith." He continued: "Now I felt completely newborn and entered the paradise through open doors. At that moment the whole scriptures were immediately revealed to me from another point of view. So I went through the scriptures as I remembered them, and read in other terms the same structure as: 'the work of God,' i. what God works in us, "the power of God," with which he strengthens us, "the wisdom of God," with which he makes us wise, "the strength of God," "the salvation of God," "the glory of God." Well, with how much hate I had formerly hated the word 'righteousness of God'. I praised that word with all the more love than that sweetest for me;

So much for me was this Pauline passage really the door to paradise." When Luther was born again through one word of

God, he was able to view and understand the Bible with new understanding. Solely through Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit, from a sinner full of doubt and torment, he had become a child of God, having peace and righteousness in the gospel. This change of one man had huge consequences. Understanding the Gospel through Scripture, Luther saw that the Church had not understood the gospel's core, and in how many teachings she deviated from the gospel. Luther took particular offense at the indulgence trade, which was practiced more and more during this time. But those who bought letters of indulgence from the Church for money could thereby obtain the remission of the penalty in purgatory for their sins for a certain number of days. This could not only be done for oneself, but also for relatives, even if they had already died. By larger donations or donations of houses or land to the church one could purchase correspondingly more indulgence. This indulgence was approved by the pope in Rome himself. It brought to the Church large sums of money, which served the Pope especially to finance St. Peter's. So many indulgence preachers went through the country. A famous indulgence preacher was Johann Tetzel, whose message was: "When the coin in the box sounds, the soul jumps out of the fire."

Luther was very upset about this, because he understood how much this doctrine contradicted the Bible. Luther first wrote 97 theses, with which he wanted to stimulate a discussion among the theologians. In October 1517 he wrote another 95 theses, which were directed directly against the indulgence. On October 31, 1517 he struck the 95 theses at the door of the castle church in Wittenberg. This day marks the birth of the Reformation and is celebrated every year until today. Luther's theses met with great public resonance, which triggered the Reformation. Luther objected less to the financial practices of the Roman Church than to the false sense of penance they evoked. He complained that the indulgence preachers gave the impression that repentance was unnecessary for a letter of indulgence. The indulgence was also an occasion for Luther to express his call for a fundamental reform of the whole Church "on the head and legs". He hoped that the church would understand their error and remember the truth of the gospel. But in fact Luther experienced a strong headwind. The archbishop of Mainz indicated Luther in Rome. In October 1518 Luther was interrogated at the Reichstag in Augsburg by Cardinal Cajetan. Luther refused to revoke his teaching if it were not refuted from the Bible.

This argument was already proof to Cajetan that Luther was a false teacher, and he was to be handed over. But Luther escaped the imminent arrest during the night by escaping from Augsburg. "Sola Scriptura", that only scripture has the highest authority, was the fundamental and most important principle of the Reformation. In June 1520, Luther was threatened with the ban if he did not submit in 60 days. But Luther did not submit. but published his book "From the Freedom of a Christian". He was excommunicated in January 1521. Nevertheless, his sovereign reached that Luther was allowed to explain and defend his position before the next Reichstag. On April 17, 1521 Luther stood before the Reichstag of Worms. He stood before the Emperor, the then most powerful man in the world, before cardinals and papal ambassadors and before the assembled princes of the whole German Empire. There he was interrogated and last asked to revoke. Luther was under tremendous pressure. After a day's reflection and knowing that this could mean his death, Luther refused the demanded revocation. He said, "[Since] my conscience is trapped in the words of God, I cannot and do not want to revoke anything because it is dangerous and impossible to do anything against the conscience. God help me. Amen." Luther could withstand the strong pressure because his conviction was based on Scripture. Because Luther did not revoke, the Reichstag imposed the Edict of Worms on him, which forbade throughout

the kingdom to support or accommodate Luther, to read or print his writings, and ordered him arrested and transferred to the Emperor. Luther became outlawed, meaning anyone could kill him without being punished.

On the way home Luther was secretly abducted by the soldiers of his sovereign prince Friedrich and arrested on the Wartburg near Eisenach in order to escape danger. There Luther translated the New Testament, in only eleven weeks from Greek into a German language that was understandable to all Germans. Luther's translation of the Bible sold ver well, so that more and more people were able to read the Scriptures and to find the way to salvation through them.

While Luther remained incognito on the Wartburg, the Reformation continued to spread like a fire. Everywhere people read or heard about Luther's writings and learned how to achieve peace with God. More and more could read the Bible itself. Countless people from simple peasants to princes recognized Luther's understanding of the gospel as correct and accepted his teaching. Numerous monks and nuns left the monasteries, where they had gone because of a wrong understanding. The Reformation continued to spread in Germany and beyond. This movement was partly slowed down or promoted by political means.

But ultimately, the principle of "Sola Scriptura" has given individuals the chance to listen to Scripture and recognize the gospel as truth in it. "Sola Scriptura" was not just a theoretical principle that replaced in humans a wrong view by a correct one. "Sola Scriptura" now helped countless people recognize the gospel in the Bible and experience its life-changing power, regardless of human teachings. Countless people who had lived on sin, guilt, and fear until then were freed from this and could start a new life in peace with God. Because they recognized the gospel in Scripture, they no longer served God out of fear, but could love God and their fellow human beings with all their hearts. They no longer came together out of fear or coercion, but wanted to praise God together. Thus, through the power of the gospel, new churches emerged that could more closely orient their doctrine and church life to the Bible. Even far beyond Germany, new communities emerged, in which people loved and served God and each other.

IV. Sola Scriptura and the history of Europe UBF

UBF is a community born on this spiritual ground. When UBF started in Korea in 1961, practically nothing was done but the Bible was studied together. Studying the Bible together in groups was something new, because in the church the Bible was taught by the pastors. More and more groups emerged on campus, where students came together after their lectures and studied the Bible. And the Bible has changed the people. When they respected the scripture, the word unfolded its power and changed many young people without hope into enthusiastic disciples and committed shepherds who were dedicated to the salvation of their fellow students. Their spiritual love and power that they got through the Word attracted many young people. As they continued to study the Bible and understand the love of God with which he wants to save the whole world, they began to pray for people in other countries as well. When they were seriously praying for people of other countries they had never seen, and kept praying for them. God began sending them as missionaries to these lands. It was in 1969, when God sent the first missionaries as nurses to Germany.

I'm too young to talk about this time, at that time I was only a primary school student. But I know that the first missionaries had something which they still had when I came to church 17 years later. They had only one thing: they had the Bible and the knowledge that the Bible is God's word and above all

else. Through the Bible, they had the strength to overcome the difficulties of living in a foreign land and loneliness, and to maintain their faith in every situation. The Bible also gave them the motivation and the strength to address other nurses and later intellectual students and invite them to study the Bible. Many wrote the words they wanted to say on a note and memorized it: "Hello! What is your name? My name is ... I want to invite you to Bible study. When do you have time? "But because of their joy and enthusiasm from Jesus, some could come to Bible study; and again it was God's words that appealed to the students and caused them to come again.

When I came to UBF in Heidelberg in 1986, I began to study the Gospel of Mark. I was 24 and longed for a proper orientation for my life. At that time, the ministry was basically a Korean couple with three small children, and I did not feel like I was going to a church. But the words of the Bible appealed to me and Bible study soon became the highlight of the week for me. Jesus' word from Mark 12:29-31 spoke to me personally: "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." That word taught me that God is the true goal of my life and that I shall use my whole heart, whole soul, whole mind and all my strength to love him.

I was very glad that I found the right orientation for my life, and chose that word as my key verse for years. The following year I studied the book of Genesis in Cologne during my vacations. God's call and promise for Abraham in chapter 12 appealed to me and I received that word as my call to be a blessing for the students and young people in Heidelberg and in Germany. Since then God has faithfully accompanied and guided me and taught me with great patience through His Word. God has blessed me with a loving wife and three gorgeous boys, and set me up as a Bible teacher, preacher and servant to the church. God also blessed me professionally. But I realize that the most important and decisive thing is still the personal relationship to God through his Word. I have to confess that I'm learning very slowly and in some ways still like a beginner. But I have hope in the Word of God because it is true in all things and has the power that will change me further.

In UBF we share the principle "Sola Scriptura" with the Reformation. The Bible has the highest authority and is to govern the teaching and practice of our church and each individual. This may sound like a dogma, but it is very important that it actually remains much more than a dogma. In the meantime, UBF ministries have started and grown in almost all European countries. In many churches, the second generation is already involved in God's work. It is very important that Bible study never becomes a routine. Let us, in the spirit of Martin Luther, always study scripture with great respect and open hearts until the gospel fills us with new power and life, and leads young people around us to Jesus. By applying the principle of Sola Scriptura in this way, the gospel will work mightily with its power and bring about a new reformation in Europe. Amen.

One word: Sola Scriptura – a new Reformation through Scripture ■

By Dr. John K. Lee

SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM

Matthew 6:25-34



Did you worry at all this past week? Are you anxious about anything going on in your life? I don't know if you know this or not. but anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S. right now. It affects about 40 million adults above the age of 18. It's one of the most common causes of visits to the ER at hospitals. Anxiety is also linked to all sorts of disease processes like high blood pressure, stomach ulcers, and heart disease. Therefore controlling our worries is such an important thing not just for our mental well-being, but also our physical and spiritual well-being. Therefore, in today's passage, we're wrapping up Matthew's gospel with one of Jesus' greatest teachings about how to face our anxieties. He reassures us with his loving words that we can conquer our worries and fears through him. When we put our hopes in heaven & the life to come, then all our other worries in this world dissolve. As we'll see in today's verses, Jesus gives us one of God's greatest promises given to us in Bible. Let's learn how to fix our eyes on our king Jesus and his kingdom. Let's nail all our worries and anxieties on the cross. Most of all may God help you to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

Let's look at verses 19-21 to see how Jesus gives them this reassurance: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Before Jesus tells us the secret of overcoming our anxieties, he tells us what the source of those anxieties are. He says in verse 19 it is when we lay up treasures in this world.

So what are the treasure of this world? Well it can be things like money, a new car, entertainment, or honor and success. It can be anything in this world that we love and work for. (I don't about you guys but when I was college it was getting a good job and finding a nice wife. Those were probably the two things I constant

thought about and desired most). And whether we know it or not, we all crave something in this life, don't we? Now these things aren't necessarily bad to have. But Jesus points out a problem if that's all we're living for. He says in verse 19 that these get broken. They get destroyed with time.

Or stolen by people. Like everything in this world, material things will fade away. They have an expiration date. So guys, that new car will eventually break down. Girls, that outfit you bought, will go out style next year. The good looking husband or wife you meet will eventually get old, wrinkly or full of white hair. Not to mention we cant bring any of these things into heaven when we die. So they can give you some joy and happiness for a while but it's only a matter of time before they pass away.

Another problem with these earthly treasure that Jesus points out is in verse 21 which says. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." In other words these material things have a way of consuming our hearts. They can ensnare your thoughts and emotions. They become like idols which prevent us from giving our hearts to God. And don't get me wrong. It's not necessarily sinful to have possessions. But when these things possess us instead of us possessing them, that's when it's wrong. That's when we have to be careful. Otherwise we'll end up loving those things more than the Lord. "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.." By the way the word money here in the Greek can also be translated as possessions. So it's not just money, but any material thing that we have to be careful of. Jesus says that if we don't guard our hearts from such things, then they will become our master They will rule over us. And they'll instill fear in us if we can't have them. They cause us to worry if we lose them. And it's interesting. The more we posses in this world, the more fearful we become of losing them. For example, my old phone I had for

about 3 years finally broke down. So I was super excited to get a new one. The person at the store who was selling it to me told me it was the best phone and that it would last. It had a great camera, fast processor, etc. 0 It's the best of the best. But as I was about to pay for it, she says: "Do you want insurance with that?" And I said what? You just told me for the past hour that this was the best phone and that it would last! And all she could say was: "Well, you never know. You never know what can happen. But for 99.99 you can get this 2 year warranty." Then suddenly all this fear crept into my heart. "What if the touch screen breaks or I get some strange virus?" What if it breaks down like my last phone? And that's what material things do to us. They cause us to put all our time, energy and love into those things.....and then what happens? It breaks and falls apart & cause us to worry even more. And everything in the world is like this. We can lose our jobs at any moment. Money will come and go. People can abandon us. And our possessions can get stolen, break & fade away. But God who is eternal never fades away. He always there for you. Only he can meet all your wants and needs in this life. And Only he will last forever. Therefore Jesus wants us to put our faith in him and him alone. He wants us to let go of whatever else we might be holding on to that's less tangible. Then when we do that, it drives away all our fears and anxiety in this world. We don't worry about the uncertainties of life. We don't fear what the future might hold. So what's the solution? (Should we live like homeless people? Not necessarily)

Look at verse 25. "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" Here Jesus tells his disciples and us to not be anxious. If you look at this verse these words are written in the imperative. So it's a command. It's not optional. In fact he also repeats this command 2 more times in this passage. So we may think worrying or being fearful isn't such a big deal. But to God, it's a sin and he considers it a serious problem. In fact he mentions 300 times in the Bible, do not fear, do not worry, do not be anxious.And why is that?..... Well it's because when we're fearful, it shows that we're not really trusting God. It's a sign that we don't believe that He exists or that He really cares. So fear puts shades around our eyes causing us to focus only on our problem and not look toward God. Therefore, we have to live in obedience to God's command here: do not be anxious. We have to repent of any fear and doubt that lurks in our heart. As His children you have to believe that your father in heaven is almighty and powerful. You have to have faith that He is able of meet your every need and that you can cast all your cares on Him. Most of all you have to trust that He loves you and that He cares for you more than anything else in this universe. Then when you do this, your worries slowly start to fade away. Your fear turns into faith and the anxieties of this life begin to subside.

At end of verse, 25 Jesus gives us another way to deal with our anxieties. He says. "Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" In other words he tries to give us the right perspective about what's really important. God has given us a body, which is way more complicated to take care of than our possessions. I don't know if anyone here has ever taken biology class but if you have, you know that our bodies are so complex and intricate to even down to the smallest cell. In fact we can't even fill a library with all the information about the human body. just cause we don't know everything about it. Yet somehow and in some way, God makes sure we stay alive each day. He makes sure we wake up each morning, that our minds are working and our bodies keep moving. God is able to do all this and that's way more important than all the material things we worry about. Our life is so much more precious and far more significant than the matters of this world. So when we remember that, then that also takes away our fear as well. When we know that God has already given us all we need, which is life itself, we're satisfied. We know the secret of godly contentment. We're happy with what we have and we're not longing for the things of this world.

at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."" Here Jesus continues to encourage us and build our faith by using a visual aid. Basically he says open your eyes and look around at creation. Even created things like mere birds and flowers trusts in their creator. They don't struggle to obtain food or clothing, yet God takes care of them. When's the last time you've seen a bird carry grocery bags? Or flowers trying on a new outfit. So even though these creatures are of far more primitive than us, they are provided for. Yet we as human beings are the apex of creation. We are God's greatest invention, so how much more will God care for us. What greater things does he have planned for you and your future? How much more does God love you and your life? Therefore Jesus says that if mere birds and plants don't worry, why should you? Finally let's look at one last verse for today in Matthew 6:33 to see the final thing we can do to overcome our anxieties. "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." In other words it's when we put the Lord first in our lives. It's when we choose to place him before other people and things in this world. And it's when we work for his kingdom ahead of our own. When we choose to do all these things. God promises to takes care of you and all your other needs. As it says the end of the verse, "ALL these things will be added to you." Not one of these things or some of these things. but ALL of it. For example, I remember when I almost lost my job several years ago. The hospital I worked for asked me to work more for them and do less here at here UBF. They didn't like how I was inviting my patients to church, having Bible studies during my lunch break and serving college students. So later my boss told me to stop all that and show my complete dedication to him or I'd be fired in 6 months. Due to a Non-compete contract I had signed with him, I would also have to move out of Springfield and find work elsewhere. At this time my wife was pregnant with our fourth child and we just bought a home as well. So I was really scared out of my mind and wondered what should I do. But I just held on to this verse in Matthew 6:33 to keep putting God first and serving him ahead of even my boss. So, I didn't stop serving the Lord and the students here on campus. Rather I just believed that if I chose to put God first in my life, He would take care of all my other needs. Several months later my boss had a change of heart. He realized how important I was to my workplace and didn't want to see me go. Also God blessed our ministry to grow even more. We became the largest Christian club on campus and even won an award a organization of the year. Also we had our four child Noah at that time. By the way, the word Noah in Hebrew means comfort and that was exactly how we felt God was doing for us through those storms of life. In the same way, when you choose to put God first and serve Him. He will meet all your needs in this life. You don't have to worry about surviving in this world. You don't have to be afraid about where your next meal comes from or what the future will bring. Because He's bigger than those storms of life you face. He is able to take care of your needs and He can solve those problems better than you can. So as we finish up, let me ask: What are you truly seeking in this world? Is there something else you put first ahead of God like your studies, your job, your relationships? Also are what are you anxious about?* And if so, do you believe that God's cares about you and your most basic needs? I pray that through this Vision camp, that your faith may grow all the more stronger so that you may not fall into the fears & worries of this world. Rather may you put your faith in Jesus and take to heart his words: Do not be anxious. Trust that he knows you and loves you having your best interest in mind. Most of all may you seek first God's kingdom and know that he'll meet all your needs when you do so. ■

Jesus reiterates this point again in verses 26-29 saying: "Look

By Dr. Joseph Ahn

LET ME INHERIT A DOUBLE PORTION OF YOUR SPIRIT

2 Kings 2:1-15 Key Verse 2:9

"When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?' 'Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,' Elisha" replied.

I. The God of Elijah

God Called Elijah

The Lord God called Elijah during the most difficult time in Israel's history. Israel was ruled by a succession of godless and wicked kings. Ahab and his wife Jezebel instituted compulsory idol worship and prohibited the worship of the Lord. Jezebel killed all of God's prophets until only Elijah was left. Even for ordinary people, life was difficult unless they accommodated themselves to bow their knees and kiss the feet of idols. But God called Elijah to challenge the idolatry in Israel by proclaiming, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word." (1 King 17:1)

God Trained Elijah

God didn't send Elijah out straightaway to confrontation, but first trained him. It was because Elijah needed to be trained and prepared to receive God's spirit. God hid him in a ravine and sustained him through ravens. So Elijah learned to patiently depend and humbly rely only on God. The Lord then sent him out saying, "I



have directed a widow ... to supply you with food." (1 Ki 17:9) Elijah learned to trust and obey God's words and experienced od's resurrection power when he cried out for the widow's dead son, "Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him!" (1 Ki 17:21) It was only after training Elijah that God sent him out to challenge the prophets of Baal, praying, "Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again. "(1 Ki 18:36,37)

God Met Elijah

However, after defeating the Baal priests, Elijah became exhausted and ran for his life when he heard Jezebel was hunting him. It was at this moment of vulnerability, that God met Elijah personally and strengthened him. Who is this God of Elijah? He is the God not of the powerful wind, earthquake, or fire but of the gentle whisper. (1 Ki 19:11-12) God is the God of encouragement who met Elijah in his weakness and strengthened him saying, "Go back...I reserve seven thousand in Israel- all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him." (1 Ki 19:18) showing him that he was not alone in his faith. God is the God of chosen remnants. The God of Elijah was his gentle shepherd who restored him.

God Empowered Elijah with His Spirit

On Mount Horeb, the Lord God empowered Elijah with His Spirit, the spirit of the gentle whisper. What is this spirit that God gave Elijah through his calling, training, and revelation? It is the spirit of patience to wait on God's time. It is the spirit of humility to submit to God's leading. It is the spirit of obedience to God's word. It is the spirit of courage to challenge the people living in dark times to repent, "To turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous- to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Lk 1:17) This is the spirit that God gave Elijah to anoint Elisha as his successor. God is the source of this spirit and of all that Elijah did. There are many great spiritual Elijahs of faith in UBF whom God used to go out to make disciples of all nations. They have done amazing things by God's help, going to foreign countries, fishing fearlessly on

campus, and dedicating their lives to world mission and discipleship. They have the spirit of passion and courage for God's kingdom. This spirit is their inheritance for us, the next generations. But for us next generations, it's easy to feel burdened by their zeal, and overwhelmed by their and our own expectations. However we must remember that it is God who called, trained, met, and empowered them with His Spirit. And it is God who gives each one of us a calling to inherit this same spirit, to be empowered to do even greater things for his glory. May we all who are gathered here at this vision camp, look to the God of Elijah who does not abandon us in our wilderness of weakness and doubt, so that we may be empowered with the inheritance of His Spirit to live as courageously by faith as Elijah did.

II. The God of Elisha

God Calls Elisha

Elisha was a hot-tempered farmer, who was sharp, irritable, and unrefined. But God called and anointed Elisha anyway to be his servant through Elijah. Elisha's calling was different from Elijah's calling, just like our calling is different from our parents' and Bible teachers' calling by God. However, God calls all of us.

God Trained Elisha

Elisha, like Elijah, received training before he was established as God's servant for his generation. God trained Elisha through Elijah. Elisha poured water for Elijah: he was Elijah's manservant and water boy. (2 Kings 3:11) He had to learn humility and a serving attitude through this training. Moreover, through this close apprenticeship, Elisha could learn from Elijah as his disciple, and then as his spiritual son.

The time had now come for Elijah to finish his mission and to be called to heaven. Let's read verse 1. "When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. The Lord God trained Elisha to have a sense of history through following Elijah from Gilgal to the Jordan. Perhaps standing before the stones of Gilgal reminded Elisha of the delivering power of God and his calling to be set apart as God's servant. But as they walked, Elijah said a surprising thing to Elisha, "Stay here; the Lord has sent me to Bethel." (2) Elijah did not force Elisha to come with him but gave him an opportunity to leave. But Elisha clung stubbornly to Elijah saying, "As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you." (2) Three times. Elijah told Elisha not to come with him, but each time Elisha refused to be left behind. This shows that Elisha valued Elijah's spiritual legacy and inheritance. Each refusal was a commitment to remain with Elijah, and the God of Elijah.

Elisha could have felt unwanted, unneeded, rejected and hurt. But he overcame and confirmed his commitment to remain as a part of God's history and went to Bethel, where he stood on holy ground in worship. By the walls of Jericho, he was reminded how the Lord gave a great victory to the Israelites who walked by faith in obedience.

At the Jordan he remembered the God of deliverance and power who rolled aside the waters for the Israelites to pass through on dry ground. When he remained, Elisha could witness the power of the spirit of God as "Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground." (8)

Now they came to the crucial climax of their journey. Let's read verses 9-10. "When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha. "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit." Elisha replied. "You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not," Here God gave Elisha an open-ended question asking, "What do you want? What do you value?" Elisha didn't say, "Give me power, wisdom, long life and wealth." Rather, Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Elisha wanted and valued this spirit of God more than anything else because he recognized that God had trained Elijah and empowered him with his Spirit, to glorify God. It was because Elisha came to know Elijah and God's spirit through his years of servantship training observing what God had done. By extending his hands to this inheritance, Elisha confessed that he was lacking and needy of God's mercy, power. and guidance. So Elisha asked for His spirit, the spirit of patience, humility, zeal, and power. Moreover, he desired not only the spirit of Elijah, but Elijah's relationship with God. He wanted the God of Elijah to be his personal God. He wanted to meet God personally. Elisha's plea, "let me", show that he did not take the Lord's question for granted. It was a supplication, not an entitled grasping or a forced acquiescence, the vocalization of his heart's cry to receive God's spirit as a privilege. Elisha said "inherit" because he was not earning this spirit or taking it, but humbly and willingly receiving it as a gift. He extended his hands out to God for this inheritance, which he valued more than anything else in the world. He asked for a "double portion" which meant that he was asking to be recognized as the legitimate heir and successor of his spiritual father, Elijah. He was asking to inherit God's spirit in a doubled form. May God help each of us to also have this spiritual value system to humbly ask for our spiritual inheritance, the double portion of His Spirit and the God of our fathers as our own God.

> "Elisha wanted and valued this spirit of God more than anything else"

God Met Elisha

What happened next? Elijah responded in verse 10, "'You have asked a difficult thing,' Elijah said, 'Yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yoursotherwise, it will not.'" We learn here that the spirit of Elijah was not something that Elijah could himself bestow, because it is only God himself who gives His Spirit as an inheritance. We can learn here from Elijah not to cling in fear and uncertainty to the next generations, expecting them or trying to force them to follow in our footsteps, but to entrust them to God and

help them rather to make a decision of faith to ask for their spiritual inheritance from God, who is the true giver Let's look at verses 11-13. "As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw this and cried out, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two. Elisha then picked up Elijah's cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan." By the great chariot and horses of fire. Elisha stood in the presence of God, the God of Elijah. God sent Elijah's cloak down to give Elisha the choice to take up the mantle of servantship. What did Elisha do? Let's read verse 14. "He took the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water with it. "Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over. Elisha picked up Elijah's mantle as his own and asked God, "Where are you?". In asking this, Elisha was askinghe God of Elijah to be his God, the God of Elisha. God empowered Elisha with his spirit

The God of Elisha then empowered him with a double portion of his spirit to divide asunder the Jordan. When he struck the water by faith, he found that the Lord, the God of Elijah, had not left him with the whirlwind, but was with him, as the God of Elisha. Look at verse 15. The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, "The spirit of

When Elisha extended his hands humbly to God, asking to receive the legacy of his father Elijah, God gave him a double portion of His Spirit and met him as His God. Elisha did even greater miracles than Elijah that point to Christ: he changed poisonous water to life-giving water, raised disciples, fed a large crowd with a few loaves, raised the dead, shepherded the needy, and planted hope even among the gentiles. We can learn here from Elisha, to humbly extend our hands to ask for the inheritance of our forefathers, not as a burdensome obligation but as a choice made by faith, and by a desire to know the God of Abraham, Elijah, and Elisha, as our God

III. Your God, My God

Although there are many Elijahs in our ministry, there are now many more Elishas: those who have had a parent or Bible teacher to shepherd them on their walk with God. They are those who are in the position of receiving a spiritual inheritance. They are you and me. You know all about this inheritance because you've probably spent your whole life going to Sunday Worship Service, prayer meetings, group Bible studies, 1:1 Bible study, writing testimonies, taking care of sheep, and so on. This inheritance of your Elijahs may feel burdensome, unwanted, and overwhelming. But God asks us, "What can I do for you?" and does not force us to respond with Elisha's request for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Instead he says, "Stay here." God doesn't force us to extend our hands to him while groaning grudgingly. He doesn't wrench open our closed fists in order to pour out a double portion of shame and disappointment. No.

He bears with our weaknesses, meets us through the Scriptures, and calls us with his gentle whisper. We have a choice, and each of us must make our own decision whether to say by faith to the Elijahs in our life, "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit. Where now is the Lord? Let your God, the God of Elijah become my God, the God of Elisha."

As for me, God called me through my parents Dr. Jose and Maria to be a second generation missionary and trained me through many Elijahs of Bible teachers, mentors, and role models such as Dr. Mark and Anna. Dr. Samuel Lee and Mother Barry. God used them as examples of how to live a God-focused, missioncentered life. But to be honest, I wished that God had not blessed me such a lavish inheritance. I hardly knew my father for the first 9 years of my life because he served God abroad as a diplomat missionary. My mother and I had a very close relationship but she was very busy as a staff shepherd in Korea. I took this spiritual legacy for granted. I complained that I didn't have a choice about being a second generation missionary. I was constantly meeting people who told me how great my parents and in-laws were, and I felt burdened feeling compared with them. I felt irritated whenever they called me "Junior" condescendingly and frustrated with a fatalistic victim mentality. But God trained me. I came to the US at the age of 8 and lived for 1 year apart from my parents, in Dr. Samuel Lee's house. I couldn't speak the language, and I had a hard time adjusting to the new culture, environment, and people. Subsequently I moved schools 11 times before starting high school, moving between the US, Mexico, and Korea. I couldn't go back to Korea, nor could I find my home in the US- I became homeless. Through this, God trained me to see that this world is not my true home. God trained me through my loneliness and fatherlessness to recognize and cling to my heavenly Father. During my youth, I was bullied but more often bullied others, until I was called the "Bad Boy of Chicago". Many years have passed, but I still run into people who harbor pains and resentments from the wounds I gave them. If you are one of them, I'm sorry, please forgive me. These wounds led to shame, and I put up an emotional wall to protect myself, and to hurt before getting hurt.

"He bears with our weaknesses, meets us through the Scriptures, and calls us with his gentle whisper."

But even through this, I see God's hand of grace for it led me to recognize and confess that I am a great sinner, who needs God's grace, forgiveness, and healing to be reconciled to him and to others.

Looking at my life through the frame of today's passage, I see that God never forced me but instead asked me, "What do you want me to do for you?" As I grew up, I had very common desires. Between the ages of 1-7, I wanted a lot to eat. When I came to America, I wanted to go back home to Korea. Between the ages of 9-13, I just wanted to get done with puberty, and have no pimples

and get a few inches taller. At the age of 14. I wanted to hold a pretty (perhaps any) girl's hand, but was too afraid to speak to them. When I was 15, I wanted to have a car but couldn't afford one. When I was 16. I wanted to do more than hold a girl's hand. When I was 17, I wanted to get into a good college to secure my future. When I was 18, I wanted to get as far away from my parents, my Elijahs and our ministry as I could but still loved them very much. I wanted to be free from their legacy and expectations yet wanted their recognition. I wanted to be my own man vet still liked to be supported. I wanted to have the freedom to do whatever I wanted, free of the constraints of Christian faith yet still have the assurance of heaven. I felt burdened by world mission but saw that a mission-centered life was meaningful and joyful. Fundamentally, I was torn between the world and God. I sought honor, love, success and money, only to find that they are meaningless and cannot last. I didn't know whether I wanted to inherit my legacy, and how to do so.

So the Lord God met me by the cross of Jesus when I was a lost 18 year old. He helped me to make a decision of faith to remain in God instead of running far away during college. God helped me to establish my family with M. Sarah and blessed us with two beautiful children-Abraham and Anna-Marie. God helped me to become a successful academic physician. But I experienced spiritual burnout and grew tired of my place as an Elisha surrounded by many Elijahs. My chin sprouted a goatee and I confessed to God that I had no more strength, and I was ready to lie down.

But the Lord God had mercy on me and brought me and my family to the Pacific Northwest in 2012. God restored me and met me through his word in Genesis, Mark, and Joshua as we held our house church worship service. His word healed me and showed me that I had a choice to be an Abel or Cain, Abraham or Lot, Isaac or Ishmael, Jacob or Esau. I came to see what a blessing it is to receive the spirit of my parents and my Elijahs as my spiritual inheritance. This message preparation helped me to see what a privilege it is to be called, trained, and met by the God of history. He calls me to receive my spiritual inheritance by faith and be restored as an Elisha in my generation, so that I can grow to be an Elijah who passes on this precious inheritance to my children and their generation. Now, God wants to empower me through his spirit. I cannot live as God's servant with my diligence, checklists, or professional training. And I hear the Lord God asking me again, "Joseph, what do you want me to do for you?" Here I confess my great need for his spirit of patience, obedience, humility, learning mind, challenging spirit- the spirit of power, the Holy Spirit in order to receive my inheritance as a child of my heavenly Father, and my home in the kingdom of God. It is my confession that I need the Lord's help and power to serve God as a second generation missionary. So I answer, "Lord, please let me inherit a double portion of your spirit".

What now about you? You know about "all this" already from your firsthand experience of watching Elijahs. It's easy to take this inheritance for granted, feel burdened to measure up, or to run away in rebellion. But we stand

on the holy ground of Vision Camp, our Bethel. The God of history is here and asks you, "What do you want me to do for you?" Our God wants to give you his Spirit, the inheritance of power to do even greater things than what the first generations have done. But it culminates now in a personal decision, whether to stretch out our hands humbly to receive the inheritance our Elijahs want to bequeath to us, to be empowered by His Spirit, and to meet God as my God. God wants each of us to be his children, in a personal and intimate relationship with him but does not force us. Instead he sent Jesus to die on that old rugged cross, so he could be with us as our Immanuel God, when we ask,

"Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah, the God of our fathers? My God?" Our Lord Jesus Christ gave up his place in heaven, so that we might inherit not just our parent's spirit, but the Holy Spirit, the kingdom of God, and everlasting life. This is the good news of the Gospel.

May God help us to humbly outspread our hands to receive our inheritance of faith by answering, "Father, let me inherit a double portion of your spirit! I want to meet you as my personal God." May God help us to value our legacy and humble ourselves to learn from the Elijahs God has placed in our lives. May God help us to claim our legitimate inheritance as his servants by holding on to God's word, walking by faith until we experience the tumbling down of the Jerichos and the crossing of the Jordans in our lives. Let us come with confidence to the throne of grace asking, "Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" as we strike with the spirit of God the waters of doubt and fear that keep us from fulfilling our spiritual legacy. For the God of Elijah is the God of Elisha, the Living Almighty God of our parents, your God and my God who gives us the inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade. Amen.



By Sarah T. Ahn & Dr. Grace S. Lee

GOD REDEEMS THE FAITHFUL

Ruth 4:14-15

"The women said to Naomi: 'Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.'"

First, Naomi's Identity

There are multiple facets to Naomi's situation. Naomi was a sufferer, experiencing compounded grief due to the loss of her husband and her children. She was also a saint given her obedience and how she identified herself as a member of God's people, rising with her daughter-in-law, and went on the way to return to the land of Judah (1:6). She acknowledged God's sovereignty even in the time of God's divine discipline, having his heavy hands against her. Naomi was a sinner, giving in to her bitterness and hopelessness in the face of her grief. Finally, she was a shepherdess. Naomi loved her daughters-in-law with God's love, even though there was a stigma against it at the time.

Second, Naomi's Act of Faith

As a sinner, Naomi returned to God in repentance of her sin. Naomi laments at the beginning of the book "I went away full, and I've been brought back empty," but concludes at the end that "the Lord brought me back." Even in the emptiness, there's hope because the Lord has brought her back home. As a sufferer, Naomi accepted God's comfort and God's kindness humbly. The book of Ruth is a love story, a love story between a young woman and her mother-in-law. Their relationship was marked with mutual kindness and vulnerability. Naomi was humble and authentic about her helplessness, which helped to foster a good relationship with Ruth.

The Hebrew word "hesed," meaning steadfast love or covenant loving-kindness, is repeated four times. The Lord had not ceased to show His kindness to Naomi in the face of unspeakable tragedy and was manifested in the kindness Ruth showed to Naomi. Ruth is an agent of kindness, just as Boaz is an agent of redemption. Each of them in their different ways makes concrete the kindness, the redemption, and the love of God.

There was a time when I hoped to be a great missionary bearing much fruit. However, after experiencing a midlife crisis, I felt like Naomi, and I complained to God, "Why did you allow a great missionary like me to suffer?" But through the book of Ruth, like Naomi, I found my identity in God. I am a saint who belongs to Him, I am a sufferer who needs God's comfort, and I am a sinner who needs the grace of forgiveness of sins, and I am a shepherd who can share God's grace with young generation.

Naomi's relationship with Ruth is heart-moving. I have three sons, and I find it hard to develop loving relationships with young women in my life. However, it is possible by faith

when I trust God and humble myself before God and the young. Naomi accepted the kindness of younger people. I thank God that I can share this message together with Missionary Sarah Theresa Ahn! During my present study, I have had a hard time with English writing and Research statistics, yet my son Peter has tutored me in statistics and my son Andrew has helped me with English writing. In preparation for the Vision Camp, Jin-Joo Kang and John Nah has helped us with research for helping missionary kids. I am so thankful for their kindness and brightness and pray earnestly for them, cook for them, and share God's grace and wisdom with them.

As a saint, Naomi, prayed for the wellbeing of Ruth. She must have knelt on her knee every day to pray for Ruth's wellbeing until God answered her prayer. The book of Ruth starts and ends with Naomi's story. Yes! God cares for His saint, one old widow. Ruth's life seems to be wasteful; but not in God. Hebrews 6:10 says, "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as



you have helped his people and continue to help them." When Ruth shared the love of God for one old widow, God has blessed her to live a full life and be included in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. God gave her a book after her name in the Bible.

May God help us to remember our identity in God so that we may love Him and love others. May God help us to share God's kindness with God's people. May God help us not only to overcome our multi-generational differences but also to shine forth the beauty, light, and hope of God's redemptive history through multi-generational collaboration.

I. The God of Naomi

First, God is the Sovereign God.

It is surprising to notice how little God is mentioned explicitly. However, throughout the book of Ruth, we can see the sovereign Lord who has faithful covenantal love and provides us with rest. God is involved in the day-to-day joys and hardships of our lives. God's unseen hands orchestrate the sequence of events to restore Naomi in big and small ways. For example, we can see that the Lord visited Judah and provided His people with food (1:6). He made the Levirate and Gleaning law. He offered a loving community to the Moabite widow Ruth where the marriage of Boaz and Ruth was built on a solid foundation of God's steadfast love and faithfulness. The book ends with a flurry of names with the genealogy from Obed to going down to King David, which shows us that God's faithful provision was completed with a loving community, a redeemer, a marriage and a son. Ruth and Boaz became to be the particular instrument of the wings of the Lord.

Second, God of fullness.

One of the most significant themes in the book of Ruth is that of emptiness and fullness. In Chapter 1, Naomi laments that "I've come back. The Lord has brought me back empty." Contrasted with Chapter 2, when Ruth goes back to Naomi and brings out of her apron a large number of her gleanings, the beginning of the end to the emptiness. Then in Chapter 3, Boaz says to Ruth in the morning, "You mustn't go back to your mother in law empty," as Boaz presents her with an enormous gift. Finally, in Chapter 4, Naomi's arms are filled as Ruth bears a son. All of these characters go from soul-crushing emptiness to life-giving fullness. We've seen God's fullness, full of grace and truth in John 1, and there's a fullness, altering the emptiness of sinners under the curse. God is the comforter, the provider, the redeemer who renews and sustains our lives with abundant blessings. May the God of comfort give comfort to all of us who have felt the pain of emptiness, misunderstanding, the grief of the loss, and the shame of poverty and suffering. May we be able to comfort others with the comfort of God so that they can experience the wonders of the fullness of our Heavenly Father, given to us in Christ.

In conclusion, Naomi lived in the time of Judges. People during the era of Judges had their cycles (Judges 2:11-19). But we can see the cycle of faith was manifested in the story of Naomi, Ruth, Boaz and Bethlehem town's people. When we accept God's covenant love, we know our identity as God's people. We can repent and believe in God's redemptive love through the gospel. God sanctifies us through His divine discipline and suffering. At the same time,

he grants us comfort, character, and hope, to produce the fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, joy, and hope. May God uses all our Vision Camp attendants to love God others and live as second generational missionaries and light and salt of the world

"May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."

Ruth 2:12

II. God's Redemptive Love in Ruth

Historically, the book of Ruth was written in the times of Judges. The book of Judges began from the death of Joshua and lasted until the death of Samuel. It is characterized as the cycle of sin in which the people of Israel continuously sinned against the Lord. In this corrupt time, where unfaithfulness was rampant in Israel, we can find Ruth's great faithfulness and commitment to the Lord and to her mother-in-law, Naomi.

The cultural and ethnic setting of Ruth is in Moab. The Jews and the Moabites were in a hostile relationship with each other. Do you know who the Moabites were? They were the descendants born from Lot, Abraham's nephew, and one of his daughters. They were the fruits of ungodliness. The Moabites were the enemies of God. God forbid any Moabite to enter the sanctuary. Ruth was a Moabite, widow, foreigner and Gentile who was not allowed to enter God's history. However, because of her great faith and love for God, she was greatly blessed by God, even becoming the greatgrandmother of King David. I would like to present the God of Ruth and God's redemptive love through Christ.

III. The God of Ruth

Let's find out who this God of Ruth is. God is the Sovereign Ruler, God orchestrated the whole scene. In Ruth, we do not see God's direct working hands but he orchestrated the whole situation according to his sovereign will. Ruth 1:22 states, "So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning." When Naomi got up from the seat of despair and went back to Jerusalem with repentance, God was ready to bless her decision of faith. Ruth 2:3 says, "As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek." God was providing for Ruth and he led her into Boaz's field. Throughout the book of Ruth, God's divine providence and his Sovereignty is shown. God is at the Center of Love. Ruth declared to Naomi, "Your people will be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried" (1:16-17). This is a very radical love and commitment. Ruth committed to Naomi's world, to her people and her God. Ruth embraced Naomi's whole life. Ruth's whole world would be upside down and her identity would be fundamentally changed forever. In the ancient world, it was almost impossible to change one's religion or people because it defined one's ethnic identity. However, when Ruth discovered and met the one true God through Naomi's life of faith, she decided to leave behind her people

and Moabites gods and follow the one true God.
Ruth made a commitment to God first as her Lord and then committed to Naomi next. We can see the correct order of love through Ruth's decision. Ruth put God, not love, at the center of her commitment to Naomi.

God honors faith expressed itself through love. Faith is the power for love. Gal. 5:6 "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." Ruth said that she was resting the weight of her life on God: "Your God will be my God" (1:16). Boaz told Ruth that she had taken shelter "under the wings of God" (2:12). She found strength to endure in love by putting her faith in God. Depending on God in faith gave her the power to love even in the most difficult situations. When we feel the weight of love or the cost of love, we acknowledge our inability to sustain love. It drives us to total dependence on God. We cannot love on our own strength or willpower but only by faith. We cannot help but cry out to God, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Luke 18:38) God uses those who live by faith, even poor widows and Gentiles. God does not show favoritism, nor is he prejudiced. God blesses anyone who comes to him by faith and uses them in his redemptive history. God is so gracious and merciful to those who come to him by faith, as we can see with Ruth.

IV. God's Redemptive Love through Christ

Through Boaz who redeemed Ruth as a guardian-redeemer, God demonstrated his redemptive love to Ruth. Boaz acted as God's instrument to extend God's kindness and redemption to those who found their shelter under God's wings. God is compassionate and kind to the needy. Ruth 2:20 says, "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead." God renews those who hope in him (Isa 40:31). God is the source and sustainer of life. Boaz is presented as a giver of God's grace and a figure of Christ, whereas Ruth is a receiver of God's redeeming love.

What is God's redemptive love for you and me? Like Ruth, we were foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12). But when we believed in Jesus, God made us alive and saved us from our sins (Eph.2:5). He changes our status so we can be his beloved children, members of God's household, and heirs of the Kingdom of God (Ro. 8:16-17; Eph.2:19). Spiritually speaking, we were like the Moabites. We were outsiders. We were all sinners. But Christ redeemed us, just as Boaz redeemed Ruth. Christ is our quardian-redeemer. In Christ, our status is changed forever! Ruth's ethnic status was a Moabite, an enemy of God. Her social status was a poor dead man's widow, foreigner, and daughter-in-law. In terms of social standing, she was at the very bottom of the society. Her acquired status was a guardian-redeemer Boaz's wife and a mother of Obed, the grandfather of King David. She became a great-grandmother of King David through whom Messiah would be born. Ruth became a great blessing to Naomi by bearing a son. She was praised by the women of town that she was better than seven sons to Naomi. Ruth's changed status was a grace-based identity acquired by faith in God. Likewise, our status is changed in Christ to become His beloved. Christ is our redeemer.

How could Ruth overcome her shame as a Moabite, a dead man's widow, and become a great blessing in God's redemptive history? Honestly speaking, Ruth did not have a choice to be a Moabite who was an enemy of God. She was

born as a Moabite. She did not choose to be the dead man's widow. It seems like she was labeled forever as the Moabite, and the dead man's widow. It seems like she was stuck in that situation forever. It might have been really difficult for her to overcome her sense of shame when she met the one true God of Israel, to realize that she was born as part of a race whom God hated and considered as his enemy.

As children of missionaries and shepherds, there are times that we feel stuck without any personal choice of our own. It seems like we are labeled as 2nd or 3rd generation "missionaries" without personal choice and have to suffer and make sacrifices like our parents did. And we are "expected" to be "great servants of God." This can be a great burden upon our shoulders like a Moabite title, rather than a blessing. However, Ruth did not sit in the seat of despair and shame. She made one significant choice when the opportunity came: to follow God. She made a personal choice to follow Him. Ruth's true home was not in Moab or Jerusalem, but in God. Culturally speaking, she was never fully accepted on either side. But she made a choice to accept God as her true home. That was her true identity as God's beloved.

God did not force Ruth. God does not force you. God is not the cowboy with whip. He really wants love relationship with you. Love is only love when we freely choose. So you can freely choose in His love. What is the one choice you can make before God? What would it look like to you to make one choice to follow God? When you make one choice to accept God's redemptive love in your life and follow Him, you will be included in God's redemptive salvation plan and His family line.

When I was young, my house was always crowded with sheep who needed love, shepherd care, and prayer. I had no privacy in my own house. I did not want to come home where somebody else was always there instead of mother, so I wandered off the streets after school. Seeing my parents' sacrificial shepherd life and their wholehearted devotions to God, I suffered under heavy expectations to grow as an "exemplary" 2nd generation shepherdess. My identity as a UBF 2nd gen was like a Moabite title to me. It gave me a sense of shame that I was not good enough to be God's beloved child. At the same time, it bound me like a chain and gave me victim mentality, thinking that I suffered because of God and my parents who served God's work so sacrificially.

However, Jesus had mercy on me and knocked on the door of my heart to be my Lord, Savior, Shepherd, and Friend. In my misery, I cried out to God and he redeemed me and saved me from my sins and made me as His own beloved. Like a Moabite, I was a useless sinner, but only by God's grace and his redemptive love, I became his beloved child and was called to be a missionary and God's servant who participates in God's redemptive history. When I made one choice to accept God's redemptive love and follow him, God made me a truly blessed woman with a happy family and a blessed house church ministry. In Christ, my shame became God's vessel for glory. In Christ, my status became God's beloved. My identity is that I am God's beloved through Christ alone. I'm loved, accepted, and cherished by God.

A beloved charter is the written words of blessing to speak over ourselves using Bible verses.

This is my beloved charter:

Sarah, my dear child~ You are fearfully and wonderfully made. I created you. I have redeemed you. I have summoned you by name; You are mine. *I created you for my glory.* You are my treasured possession, a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to me. You belong to me, my dear child. You are saved only by grace. You are alive in Christ because of my great love for you. I have loved you with my everlasting love. *I rejoice over you with gladness; I quiet you by my love;* I exult over you with loud singing. I rescue you because I delight in you. I choose you because I love you. You are not alone. I will never leave you, nor forsake you. I will give you true rest. You are my Beloved forever and ever.

What about God's redemptive love in your life?

How do you see yourself?

What is your identity in Christ?

May God bless each of you to receive God's love letter to you very personally and find your true identity as God's Beloved when you make one choice to follow God. Amen!

One Word: You are God's Beloved

By Dr. Samuel Lee

YOU ARE THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD

Matthew 16:13-28 Key Verse 16:16

"Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."



First, who is Jesus (13-20)? "13When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' 14They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'" (13-14) Jesus had reached a pivotal point in his ministry. So far he had preached to thousands of people and performed many miracles. He had called disciples along the way, and it was time to do somewhat of a midterm evaluation of his ministry because from now on the focus of his ministry would shift from the masses to his disciples and from all over Galilee and Judea to Jerusalem. That's why he was interested in what the people thought about him. The answers reveal that the people respected Jesus as some kind of prophet. Which doesn't sound so bad after all. How about today? What do Barack Obama, Jesus Christ and Bill Gates have in common? In a recent survey in Germany (2018 by Mafo.de) they were the three most frequent mentioned men among people who were asked: Who should be a role model for you son? I actually would not have thought that Jesus was in such high regard in German society. So both in Jesus' own times as well as in our times Jesus was a well-regarded, respected figure of authority, someone who taught us about the kingdom of God or at the very least showed us how to live a good life. So far so good.

"15'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?' 16Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'" (15-16) Now Jesus wanted to know what the disciples who were closest to him believed about him. Messiah is the Hebrew version of the Greek word Christ, and they both mean 'the anointed one.' What did Peter mean by that? In Peter's time this word, especially in conjunction with 'the Son of the living God,' had a very specific meaning. For centuries the Jews had waited for a descendant of David who would rise up to defeat all forces of evil, establish the kingdom of God and become the king to end all kings. This is what Peter believed about Jesus. And what an evaluation does he get from Jesus? "17Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'" (17-19) Wow, Peter was spot on! Sounds

I'm sure most of the people where your are from agree with the notion that Jesus was a good man who showed us how to live a good life. But Peter understood that we don't need

someone to tell us about the kingdom of God but someone who actually establishes the kingdom of God. We don't need someone to tell us what to do, but someone who actually does it himself. We don't need another prophet but a savior. We need someone powerful enough to overcome the forces of evil in this world. And he has come in the person of Jesus, the Messiah. After asking about the opinion of the people and the disciples, Jesus asks us in this room: Who do you say I am? What role does he play in your life? Is he someone who gives you good advice? Is he someone that you go to only when you have a problem? Or shouldn't he be much more than that. Think about it. Peter saw how Jesus fed more than 5000 people with 5 loaves and two fish, he saw how Jesus raised people from the dead. Recently, when I went into the ocean for the first time. I could get a hint of an idea about the vast power that lies in the winds, waves and currents. But Peter had seen how Jesus calmed a raging storm with the word of his power. One of my favorite preachers likes to put it this y: 'If the distance between the Earth and the sun, which is 150 million km, was the thickness of a piece of paper, the diameter of our galaxy would be a stack of papers 500 km high. And our galaxy is less than a speck of dust in the part of the universe that we can see. And that part of the universe might just be a speck of dust compared to all the universe. And if Jesus is the Son of God who holds all this together with the word of his power, is this the kind of person you ask into your life to be your personal assistant?' (Tim Keller) Jesus is the Messiah, the king to end all kings. He came to establish the kingdom of God and it starts with my life and with your life. It starts with us completely and utterly devoting our lives to following him, just like Peter did, after he realized Jesus' divine power. Let's take some time tonight and honestly think about who Jesus is in our lives and if we truly give him the place that he deserves.

Now notice what Jesus did next: "20Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah." (20) Despite being spot on and 100% correct, it seems like Peter only described half the picture of who Jesus is. So let's see what Jesus adds to that now.

Second, what did Jesus do (21-23)? The significance of what Jesus was about to say now becomes apparent when we look at Jesus' response to Peter's reaction: "22Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 'Never, Lord!' he said. 'This shall never happen to you!' 23Jesus turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.'" (22-23) Wow again! Sounds like an F to me now! How was it possible that Peter was so right just now and so wrong shortly after? How could Jesus give him one of the most exuberant praises in one moment and then rebuke him in the severest way the next? Not even the Pharisees were rebuked that harshly. So what aspect of Jesus as the Messiah was so crucial that it warranted such an extreme response from Jesus? "21From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." (21) What Jesus was saying here was completely counterintuitive for the people of his time. 'Many Jews of Jesus' day believed [...] that God would send an anointed king who would be the spearhead of the movement that would free Israel from oppression and

bring justice and peace to the world at last. [...] Many saw him as a warrior king who would defeat the pagan hordes and establish Israel's freedom.' (N.T. Wright) Peter was right, Jesus was going to establish God's kingdom but not by power and force, but in weakness and humility. He would be a king, but a king on a cross. So what does that mean for those who follow him?

Third, what are we supposed to do (24-28)? "24Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.' 25For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?" (24-26) Self-denial, taking up our cross, losing one's life - isn't coming to Jesus about finding peace, joy and fulfillment? Yes, but not in a way we would expect. We just learned how counterintuitive Jesus' kingship as our Messiah is. So how could following him not be just as counterintuitive? When we read these verses, especially the ones with a traditional Korean background, we might mistake what Jesus says, with the typical Asian notion of giving up our individual ambitions for the sake of the greater community, may that be the typical Korean family, the typical Korean company, or even the typical Korean church. It's all about fulfilling your duties and being absolutely loyal to your parents, superiors, or even pastor. Sounds a bit like what Jesus says here. Maybe that's why our parents were better at this than we are. But there is a crucial difference. If we leave Jesus out of the equation, than all these things become just a burden and we end up burnt out and disappointed. Maybe some of you have experienced that - I certainly have. The other extreme might be the typical Western approach that most of us have grown up with: Be yourself. The only obligation that you have is to stay true to yourself. Life is about fulfilling your potential, your dreams. Do what is best for you. This led us into our current 'me first' generation. I think the perfect illustration for that is social media. How many selfies or pictures with you in the frame are currently on your cell phone? How much time do we spend to make sure that everyone knows what an awesome life we have by showcasing that on Facebook or Instagram? But does that really make us happy? What is wrong with our world, that we have to put filters on so many things that we post to make it look better than it really is, including our own selfies? How much time do we spend comparing our lives with the seemingly perfect lives of others on social media? I know I'm exaggerating a little bit, but I guess you get the point. Making our whole life about 'me' is not the way to true happiness, because we were not created to circle around ourselves but around God.

Jesus challenges us therefore, to deny ourselves, to lose our lives for him. That is the way to find our real lives. For example, when your whole life is about you than when someone criticizes you, you will immediately get defensive because the core of your identity is attacked. The more important our lives here in this world are, the more important it is what other people think of us. But when we lose our lives for Jesus this means, that I don't define myself through my accomplishments but through Jesus'. Then we are able to look at ourselves and freely admit our weaknesses without feeling immediately threatened or attacked. We also become really free from what other people think of us. In this regard

there lies strength in weakness. C. S. Lewis wrote about this very topic: ,The more we get what we now call 'ourselves' out of the way and let Him take us over, the more truly ourselves we become. [...] our real selves are all waiting for us in Him. [...] The more I resist Him and try to live on my own, the more I become dominated by my own heredity and upbringing and surroundings and natural desires. In fact what I so proudly call 'Myself' becomes merely the meeting place for trains of events which I never started and which I cannot stop. What I call 'My wishes' become merely the desires thrown up by my physical organism or pumped into me by other men's thoughts or even suggested to me by devils. [...] It is when I turn to Christ, when I give myself up to His Personality, that I first begin to have a real personality of my own.' (C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity)

I think that this is especially relevant for many among us, including me. Many of us didn't choose to join this ministry but we were born into it. We are bearing the consequences of decisions that our parents made long ago. For some of you that means living in a different country under completely different circumstances than you would have had, had your parents staved in Korea. For all of us it means that we are stuck in a ministry that, let's face it, has a lot of issues and problems. Sometimes I just feel the urge to just break out of all that and go somewhere else. Somewhere where I feel more comfortable, that suits me better and where I have less problems and issues to bear. I can serve God anywhere. But here I learn, that per definition being a disciple is about following Jesus not my own wishes or instincts. Our lives of faith per definition should be characterized by self-denial and taking up our crosses, which includes suffering, pain and tears. This is very counterintuitive for our generation because everyone around us is 'me first' and tries hard to save his or her life. But we are called to do exactly the opposite. I don't know the specifics of your situation whether you are from a small chapter or a big one whether you are from America or Africa, whether you are rich or poor, whether you sometimes feel lonely or you are hurt by many other coworkers. What I know is that God put you in your situation for a reason. Jesus never promised us that he would suffer so that we don't have to, but that in our sufferings we become more like him. I don't want to convince you to stay in UBF at all costs, but I do want to encourage you to let your involvement in any kind of ministry be governed not by your feelings, your needs, and your plans, but by a spirit of self-denial, a willingness to take up your cross, and by the absolute commitment to following Jesus wherever he may guide you. This is the way to grow more and more into the likeness of Jesus, in his character - the mature version of you that can be a blessing to many around you.

,Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favorite whishes every day and death of your whole body in the end: submit with every fiber of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in. '(C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity)

Tonight, we thought about three questions: Who is Jesus? What did Jesus do? What are we supposed to do? The answers are: Jesus is our messiah, our king. But he is a king on a cross. Therefore, as his disciples we are called to denv ourselves, take up our cross and follow him. I guess we could end the sermon right here. But I think I left out a crucial last question: How can we do what we are supposed to do? As I said in the beginning, when I was meditating on this passage I wondered how you guys would feel about hearing such a message. I know that I certainly feel uncomfortable when Jesus tells me: 'Sam, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me.' It's not something that I naturally want to do. but that I begrudgingly accept because it seems to be part of the deal to be a disciple of Jesus. But let's look at that sentiment for a minute. Why do I feel that way? If you break it down to the most fundamental basics, we feel that way towards Jesus' command because in our sinful fallen nature we are still listening to and believing the lie of Satan that he first whispered into our ears in the garden of Eden. There the serpent questioned God's command and planted the seed of doubt in God's love into our hearts that is still bearing its fruit today. Actually. God had given Adam and Eve his command because he loved them and wanted to provide them with an opportunity to truly love and obey him in freedom by giving them a real choice. So the law was an expression of God's love. This is the crucial fact that Satan is lying to us about. The serpent is whispering other words into our ears: 'If God really loved you he wouldn't have given such a command to you.'

There are two ways to react to that lie. The first one is to assume that God doesn't unconditionally love us but that we have to earn his favor by keeping his commands. That means that we would deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Jesus to earn God's favor. I used to be like that. If you would have asked me, I would have told you all about God's unconditional love. But in my day to day life, I forced myself to do all sorts of things to comply to the expectations of my parents and my ministry to be the perfect 2nd gen, shepherd, bible teacher, student, and so on. But over time I became more and more ungraceful and hard towards me and others, demanding more and more discipline from me and others. Ultimately that was because deep down in my heart there was this belief that I had to work hard to please God. Theologians would call this a legalistic mindset. And I feel like that is what our ministry UBF was like for a while, somewhat like the older brother in the parable of the prodigal son.

Another way to react would be to listen to the serpent in a different way: Through his commands and laws God is withholding something from us, which means I would be much happier if I didn't have to obey his commands.' I am more like this today. When I hear Jesus' command to deny myself, take up my cross and follow him, deep down I believe that this is not really the life I want and the life I would enjoy. 'I know that I'm a sinner saved by grace, so why bother forcing myself to do things that don't give me instant gratification? Why stand up early in the morning to pray? Why wrestle with God's word, and do something as scandalous as to write up reflections on a bible passage? Why put up with the many difficult circumstances and coworkers in my ministry and commit fully when I can just pick and choose among other options for what suits me and my needs most? Why try to invite and disciple my friends when I'm busy enough with my

own life? My life would become miserable if I would truly deny myself, take up my cross and follow Jesus. I don't want to be forced to do anything. I don't want to become one of those legalists, but I want to live freely by God's grace.' Ultimately thoughts like that run through my head because deep down in my heart I believe that obeying God's command means to give up a better life, that God is withholding from me. Theologians would call this an antinomian mindset. And I feel like that is what our ministry UBF is more like these days. We just gather our stuff and leave for an easy going life, somewhat like the younger brother in the parable of the prodigal son.

We see that both the legalist and the antinomian mindset have the same origin: Not believing in the fact that God's commands are an expression of his love. So what is the solution? How can we obey Jesus' command to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him, not because we have to but because we want to? It's pretty simple, the key is love. This is my beautiful wife Curie. Ever since I got married my life underwent a drastic change. Anything I do also affects my family. I cannot just spontaneously go out and party and pull an all nighter, because my wife is waiting for me at home. This is even more pronounced since we had our two awesome sons. Life has become kind of a grind since they arrived. At work I purposefully forgo certain career opportunities because I'd rather spend more of my little time with my family. After a long day of work I come home not to get rest but to help Curie out who has been with the children much longer. In the past few years I have never once had a few nights of uninterrupted sleep in a row. And the nights are sometimes the only time of real peace for me and the only opportunity for me to some message writing. After spending a few days with us one of my sister-in-law said, that she doesn't want to have any kids. So in a way you could argue that after marriage I lost my freedom, I live in constant self denial and I'm bearing a heavy cross. And that is true. But you know what? Hove it! Why? Because Hove Curie and I love my sons. And they love me. If I had the choice between suffering ten times more than today or having to let go of them, I would always choose more suffering, and I would do so gladly, because I love them and they are precious to me. I used to be very focused on my career and my personal hobbies and ambitions. But all that changed when I met Curie and fell in love with her. Ever since then, all these other things became secondary to me - not because I had to but because I wanted to. That's what love does to you.

We have a great example for this in our very passage: Peter. Peter used to have an agenda for his life. When Jesus would defeat the religious leaders, he would be right at his side and rise up with him. He expected Jesus to wipe out all forces of evil and claim the throne of this world. When Jesus started talking about actually losing to his adversaries and dying shamefully, he wanted to talk him out of it. It turns out that Peter had an agenda and being with Jesus was only a means to an end. He was using Jesus. But look what a changed man Peter was by the end of his life. He was willing to deny himself completely and literally take up a cross when he died for his allegiance to Jesus. And even then he wanted to be crucified upside down because he didn't feel worthy of dying like his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What changed him? Love. After this, Peter would deny Jesus to save himself, only to see Jesus on the cross deny himself

to save Peter. It was in this moment that Peter realized that if Jesus had come as a king to wipe out all forces of evil, he would have had to destroy Peter, too. That's why Jesus didn't just become a king, but a king on a cross, because instead of wiping out all sinners, he was wiped out for all sinners, including for Peter. That's why Jesus had told him in our passage that he must go the cross, for Peter, because he loved him that much. When Peter realized the extend of Jesus' love for him he became a changed man.

It is my earnest prayer that each one of us can use this camp and the upcoming conference to fall in love with God all over again. Some of you are facing far more difficult challenges than I have ever faced. Some of you are all on your own with your family in your chapter, maybe even in your country. Some of you are struggling with persecution. Some of you are frustrated with your circumstances. Some of you might also be too comfortable. Whatever your situation is, don't listen to the voice of Satan. God is your loving father, everything that he asks you to do is for your ultimate growth, joy and happiness - even and especially to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Jesus. How do we know? Look at your Messiah, look at your king, the one who hold the universe together with the word of his power. He lived the life we should have lived, but died the death we should have died. He was in heaven and gave up everything, he denied himself and took up an actual cross, only to be utterly rejected and forsaken on the cross by his father. He did that so that we can come back into the arms of the father and can ioin him in heaven. I said that I would never trade my sons for anything else in this world. But you know what? God so loved us that he gave his one and only son to die a painful and shameful death on the cross so that we can have eternal life. How foolish are we to doubt that God doesn't love us and to doubt that everything he commands us is in our best interest? What could be more precious than Jesus? Whom would you rather serve than him? Jesus gave everything he had for you - don't you want to give everything you have for

DIASPORA MISSION:

THEOLOGY AND IDENTITY OF NEXT GENERATION



I. Introduction

In 1962, Thomas Kuhn, American scientist, published the book, titled "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions," making a great impact on many fields of studies. He coined the expression of "Paradigm Shift," which has been used commonly with many people. He defines "Paradigm" as followed: "Universally recognized scientific achievements that, for a time, provide model problems and solutions for a community of researchers." Similarly, human beings has the tendency of acting, thinking, and following with the shared concept or pattern of life, which is the paradigm of life. For example, before Copernicus all people looked the universe on the basis of the paradigm. that "the universe rotates around the earth." But when time passed, there appeared a phenomena of discord against the shared paradigm. Thus, in one moment the new paradigm abruptly appears and the already existing paradigm has been discarded among human societies and thought worlds. This is the "Paradigm Shift." Copemicus, Isaac Newton, and Albert Einstein also proposed and coined the new "Paradigm Shift" in the field of science. In theology, the "Paradigm Shift" plays the important roles. Apostle Paul changed the paradigm for the Christianity from the branch of Judaism to the worldly religion. St. Augustine, Calvin, and Thomas Aquinas also did the same things.

II. Paradigm Shift in the Christian Churches (Function and Position)

In 1986, the prominent theologians Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon published the book, titled "Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony," which created the great effects on the Christian churches. They analogized both the church as "Colony" and the believers as "Resident Aliens." They claimed the church had the responsibility to build the colony ('Alternative Community'), where the believers have the completely different life patterns from the world. Lee Beach wrote the book, titled "The Church in Exile: Living in Hope After Christendom," claiming the new paradigm for the church. He analogized the situation of the church as "the situation of the exile" in Scripture. He insisted the most powerful message in exile situation was the proclamation for the hope.

III. The Phenomenon of Diaspora as a Demographic Trend of the 21st Century

Historically the word Diaspora was used to refer to the population of Jews exiled from Israel in 607 BC under the Babylonians, and from Judea in 70 AD under the Roman Empire. Etymologically, the term "Diaspora" is a derivation from the Greek work which means "to scatter about" (disperse; dia—about, across + speirein—to scatter).

The Concept of Dispersion (NT)

The Greek Word "Diaspora" ("Scattered")
Δια (throughout) + σπορά (to scatter)

Jn 7:35 "... Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks..."

Jam 1:1 "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the Twelve tribes scattered among the nations..."

1 Pet 1:1 "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia..."

Migration is a phenomenon that has accompanied humanity since the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Modern day globalization has only accelerated and intensified the movement of peoples. Today about three percent of the world's population live in a country other than where they were born. According to a United Nations report: "Globally, the number of international migrants in 2010 is estimated at 214 million, up from 195 million in 2005. Females account for 49 per cent of the total. Six out of every ten international migrants (128 million) reside today in developed countries, and the majority of those (74 million) originated in developing countries" (2010:3). Human migration has been an ongoing feature of human history. The global migration is a potent power that permanently changes and shapes human societies and cultures. Let's think about what is happening in Europe, where many Syrian and African war refugees, economic migrants, and reverse-diasporaof Muslim are reshaping not only Europe's demographic scenery, but also its social structures and customs. How should we understand the relocation and migration of peoples? How do we connect migration of peoples both in the Bible and in the contemporary world? How do we understand diaspora missions? The book of Acts talks about how human migration and the relocation of people in the first century served as "a divine impetus" for mission." We will see that under God's sovereignty such movements of people in the first century created opportunities for the spread of the gospel to the nations. We can confidently affirm God's sovereign hand in the movement of people today, and we can seek to discover how God may use this for his missional purposes. (UBF Next Generation)

IV. God's Sovereignty and the Movement of People

Throughout history, reasons for relocation and diaspora have been both voluntary and involuntary, caused by war, famine, enslavement, or persecution on the one hand, or by the quest for freedom, economic opportunity, education, or adventure on the other. Behind these reasons God's sovereign hand is at work, and He uses such movement of peoples for is purposes. Scripture

affirms of God, "You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you" (2Chr 20:6b; cf. 2Chr 36:22; Jer 27:6; Isa 13:3-5: Eze 29:19), "In the Lord's hand the kind's heart is a stream of water that he channels toward all who please him" (Prov 21:1). God's sovereignty over the movement of people has been demonstrated throughout biblical history: for example, in the events surrounding the tower of Babel, Abraham, Joseph, the Babylonian captivity, Daniel, and various famines, plagues and wars that caused migrations among the people of Israel. The English term "diaspora" is used to describe the scattering of God's people. In the Old Testament this was a judgment of Israel for disobedience (Deut 28:25; 30:4; Neh 1:9; Jer 11:22; Joh 7:35). In the New Testament it describes more the fact of churches existing in various regions (Jas 1:1; 1Pet 1:1). This sovereign working of God in human history and the movement of peoples we find to be a means of God spreading His glory among all people, and preparing people to receive that message (Dan 3:28-29: 4:37: 6:26-27). At the time of the birth of Christianity, the movement of peoples as individuals and as larger groups was common. The Pax Romana and the Roman roads facilitated international travel and relocation. According to Eckhard Schnabel, "Caesar Augustus promoted deliberate resettlement policies: they relocated hundreds of thousands of proletarians from Rome, Italic people and veterans, settling them in the provinces." (cf. Puritan Diaspora from England to America)

V. Diasporas in the Bible

On the surface and from a human perspective, it is tragic for diaspora groups to leave the familiarity and security of their homeland in exchange for a soloumer's hardship abroad. Yet nothing that happens in life (both fortunate and unfortunate) escapes the sovereignty of God, as Joseph reflected on his diaspora experience in Egypt (Gen 45:1-6), and as found in the conviction of the apostle Paul (Acts 17:26-28; Rom 8:28; 11:17-26). Theologically, we can see the hand of God scattering many diaspora groups abroad for Kingdom purposes. There were times when scattering of people in the OT was the consequence of sin (Gen 3:22-24, the fall of man; Gen 4:13-15, the murderous act of Cain; Gen 11, the Tower of Babel; Ps 78:54-64, the idolatry practice of the Israelites). "Scattering" in the Old Testament, however, has not always been the consequence of sin. In fact, it was God's design that human kind should scatter (Gen 1:26-28, the blessing of scattering; Gen 9:1,7, Noah after the flood; Gen 11:1-9, the Tower of Babel). The Great Commission is God's design for Christians in the NT "to scatter" and to bear the good news to all nations Matt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-17; Lk 24:46-49; Jn 17:18; Acts 1:8), Failing to do so would incur punishment of being forced to scatter (Acts 9-11). Thus the "scattering" of Christians could be God's provision for outreach and church planting (Acts 18; 1 Peter and 2 Peter).

Selected Precedents of Diaspora in Scripture

- Abraham, the wanderer from Ur to Egypt and Canaan
- Joseph, the slave boy from homeland to Egypt
- Daniel, as a captive from his homeland to Babylon

- Ruth, leaving her homeland and follow Naomi's God
- Priscilla & Aquila, political refugees, church planters in Corinth. Ephesus, and Rome.

Diaspora Missions in Acts

Models of Diaspora Missions	<u>To</u> the Diaspora	<u>Through</u> the Dias- pora	<u>Beyond</u> the Diaspora
Acts	Ch. 1-7	Ch. 8-12	Ch. 13-28
Location & Language	Jerusalem/ Hebrew (Aramaic)	Judea & Samaria/ Hebrew (Aramaic) & Greek	The End of the Earth/ Multilingual
Serving & Culture	Fellow Jew/ Mono-Cul- tural	Fellow Jew & Gentile Greek/ Bi-Cultural	Peoples of many nations/ Intercultural
Biblical Contents	Disciples in prayer, Peter's Pentecos- tal works; Stephen's martyr and increase of numbers	Philip serving in Samaria; Saul's conversion; growth in number (Acts 9:31); Cornelius & the Antioch church (Acts 10,13)	Apostle Paul & co-workers; engage- ment in 3 missionary journey; the expansion of God's Kingdom to the end of the earth (Acts 28)
Stage	Infancy; Founding	Childhood & Youth: Organizing & Rapid Growth	Prime: Mobilizing
Nature	Internal Growth	Extension Growth	Bridge Growth

VI. Diaspora Distinctives of the Babylonian/ Persian Exile

were to the Jewish community, the exiled diaspora's response to Babylonian overlordship was never one of disengagement and detachment. To those exiles who may have been embittered by the experience of being routed from their homes and natal land, the prophet Jeremiah gave these instructions: "This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 'Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for yoursons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper..." (Jeremiah 29:5-7). The prophet's message to this diaspora could not have been clearer. Constructive long term engagement with the host culture was to be the pattern. The Jewish diaspora in Babylon were to seek ways to contribute positively to life among their hosts. The ancient covenantal dictum that they had been called to be

a blessing to the nations was to be as true for them as a diaspora No doubt the pace for this was set early on with the education and advancement of young Daniel and his associates in preparation for a lifetime of civil service in the Babylonian administration. These young Jewish men were tutored in every aspect of Babylonian language, literature, history and culture (Dan 1:4), and when tested by the king himself, were found to be "ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm" (Dan 1:20).

Who was the Apostle Paul, diasporically speaking? It is important to noting the biculturalism of Paul that grew out of his diaspora roots. Paul's biculturalism made him the ideal person to bring the gospel to both Jew and Gentile. Paul himself is an extraordinary example of a diaspora Jew who, after being exposed to both Jewish Greek cultures, was positioned to serve as a bridge for the gospel from the Jewish world to the Gentile world. Paul was born in Tarsus (Acts 22:3), who was actually a diasporic Jew. Paul was a second- or third-generation diasporic person (Acts 22:3; 22:28). Despite the pain and consequences of conquest and their eventual dispersion, the Jewish people learned valuable lessons throughout their national experiences. These experiences were also used providentially by God to impact more people worldwide in relation to Christianity and its missionary mandate.

Four lessons of lasting value to the Jewish nation can be learned from the scattering of the scattering of its people: (1) God's orchestration and control of the Jewish dispersion; (2) the hope and reality of the people's re-gathering after the scattering; (3) Israel's role as a witness to all nations in the midst of its dispersion; and (4) sovereign preparation for the advent of Christ and the spread of Christianity.

VII. Then, Who are We? How Shall We Live?

Persian Exile

Even to this day, the preservation of the "diaspora of his chosen people" is one of the marvels of God's providential government of the world. Then, who are we? How Shall were to the Jewish community the exiled diaspora's

Even to this day, the preservation of the "diaspora of his chosen people" is one of the marvels of God's providential government of the world. Then, who are we? How Shall we live? ■

By Toni Demir

I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS

John 15:1-17 Key Verse 15:5

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."



By now you have already heard many sermons, had many Bible studies, heard testimonies, written reflections, and so on. I hope you were encouraged to begin a new life with Jesus. Hopefully many of you have gained a desire to follow Jesus. The question now is: What's going to happen after the conference? What am I going to do with the encouragement and spiritual desires that I received here? In our text for today from John 15, there is a word that often appears. Which word is it? Right, it's the word "remain." Over and over again it says "remain." Here are a few examples: verse 4: "remain in me...," verse 5: "whoever remains in me...," verse 6: "If anyone does not remain in me...," verse 7: "If you remain in me and my words remain in you...," verse 9: "remain in my love...," verse 10: "you will remain in my love...." The right answer to the question, what should happen after the conference, is: Remain in Jesus!

Today we want to consider the concept of "Remaining in Jesus." Three questions should help us here:

- 1. Why is it so important to remain in Jesus?
- 2. How do we remain in Jesus?
- 3. How does Jesus encourage us to remain in him?

I. Bearing fruit (v.1-8)

At the beginning of the text Jesus gives us a lovely picture from nature. That picture helps us understand why it's so important to remain in him. Look at verses 1 and 5. It's the picture of a vine. Jesus explains: With God, me, and with you it's just like a grapevine: God is the farmer, I am the vine, and you are the branches. What do you think the farmer is most interested in?

What is he concerned about? He has a scissor in his hand. And then it goes snip, snap... a lot of shoots are cut off. He keeps right on going snip, snap. In the end only a tenth of the branches might be left. Just imagine that... it's like going to the barber with long hair and coming out afterwards almost bald. The farmer removes everything that wastes the vine's sap. He removes everything that hinders the vine from bearing many large grapes. The one and only thing he's concerned about is that the vine bears a lot of fruit.

And what about God? Is it the same with him? Yes, of course, otherwise Jesus wouldn't have compared God with the farmer. God is very much interested in whether our life bears fruit or not. Bearing fruit is not just a suggestion from Jesus. In verse 6, we learn that fruitless people will go hell. I guess, many of you have already heard a lot of UBF testimonies? Did you noticed, that many of them talk about how they didn't want to live anymore, because they didn't know the meaning of life. The similarity of their stories is surely no accident. It happens so often in Germany that young people throw themselves in front of a train. Many young people despair, because they don't know the meaning of life. But Jesus shows us what is really worth living for. Look at verse 8: God is glorified when we bear fruit. The chief purpose of every person's life is to glorify God. To bear fruit is to fulfill the very purpose for our existence. Recently we had very hot days in Germany. Once it was almost 40 degrees celsius hot. Imagine someone bringing you a tray on these days. On the tray there are big, fresh green grapes. Wouldn't that be nice? In the same way, God is delighted, when we bear fruit. Isn't that a nice sense of life? Jesus says: I chose you and

appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit.

I hope we understand now how important it is to bear fruit. But how do we bear fruit? Can we do it on our own? Let's think about the vine once more. Can a branch still bear fruit, once it has been cut off from the vine? As some of you know, I am a teacher. Sometimes I stay at school in the afternoons to prepare lessons. One time when I wanted to buy something to eat, I left my keys in the building. Except for a few euros in my pocket, I had left everything inside: my wallet, my smartphone, my laptop. No one else was in the building. Can you imagine how I felt? I felt like a cut-off branch. I thought: "I can't do anything!" A branch without the vine can't do anything. It can't even grow a single millimeter.

And how is it with us and Jesus? Jesus explains that it is exactly the same with you and me. He says, "apart from me you can do nothing." Without Jesus you can't bear a single good fruit. Without Jesus you can't do a single thing that really pleases God. Maybe you're thinking, I know a lot of people who don't believe in Jesus, but they're still really nice. They help others. You can have really good conversations with them, and so forth. That may be. But what is good fruit in Jesus' eyes? Look at verse 8. Fruit is something that glorifies God. Good fruit is, for example, something that others see in you that makes them think, "hmmm, there's something real about his faith!"; "I'd like to find out more about the God that he believes in," and so on. Ok, let's put this all together - On the one hand, God absolutely wants us to bear fruit, but on the other hand, we know that we can't apart from Jesus. How can we resolve this tension? The only solution is to remain in Jesus. Whether or not a branch bears fruit depends upon only one thing: "Is it remaining in the vine or not?" If it is in the vine, it will automatically bear fruit. It doesn't have to do anything of itself, except remain in the vine. If it isn't in the vine, it won't bear any good fruit at all. It's just like that with us: Whether or not we bear fruit depends upon this and that only, whether or not we remain in Jesus. If we remain in Jesus, we will bear fruit. Actually, the only thing we should worry about is remaining in Jesus.

Who is here from England? Do any of you know the play "Hamlet" by Shakespeare? In the first scene Hamlet makes his famous statement: "To be or not to be, that is the question." According to the metaphor of the vine we can rewrite this statement. "To remain or not to remain, that is the question." What if someone stood before you and said: "Remain in me.' How would you feel? I would think, why? Who do you think you are? Only Jesus can say that, because he knows who he is. Look at verse 1. Jesus says. "I am the true vine." Jesus is alluding here to another vine. In the Old Testament, Israel is compared to a vineyard. That "vineyard" completely failed to bear fruit. Jesus words "I am the true vine" means "I am the original": I am the vine that has the potential to bear much fruit. Jesus says: I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit. Do you hear the potential of Jesus? Through Jesus we can bear a whole lot of fruit. That's why it's so important that we... what? That we remain in him.

Ok, so far we have talked the whole time about how important it is to remain in Jesus. But maybe you have been asking yourself all this time, what does it actually mean to remain in Jesus? How do we remain in Jesus? Let's consider that questions in the second part of the sermon.

Part II: Love one another (v. 9-10)

In the second section of chapter fifteen Jesus continues to

speak often about "remaining." But did you notice that Jesus no longer says, "Remain in me"? Instead of "remain in me," all of a sudden he says "remain in my love." Remaining in Jesus means remaining in his love. But we could further ask, how do we remain in Jesus' love? Read verse 10, "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love." We remain in Jesus' love by keeping his commandments. We could, however, also ask, what does it mean to keep Jesus' commandments? Look at what verse 12 says, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." What Jesus meant first and foremost when he spoke of his commandments, was that his disciples should love each other. When we do that, we remain in his love. Remember the picture of the vine: The sap from the vine flows through the branches into the fruit. Even so the love of Jesus must flow through us to others. That will bear fruit. Love is according to the bible a fruit of the spirit.

In the next verse we see the extent to which love should go: Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. The greatest measure of love is to lay down one's life for one's friends. Love is much more than just thinking someone is nice. It's much more than just liking someone. It is much more than a student's kiss. Love is about laying down your life. Love is about dying. That doesn't mean that we're all supposed to die as martyrs. It means you consider your own wishes, needs and dreams as dead, in order to give others priority. Love is about daily self-denial. The motto of true love is: "First Jesus, then others, and last of all me." This kind of love is a good example for the fruit we ought to bear.

However, of ourselves we are not able to practice that kind of love. Look at verse 9: As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Before Jesus even begins to speak about remaining in his love, he shows us how much he loves his disciples. A disciple first needs to know that he is very much loved by Jesus. Let that really sink in: Jesus loves his disciples just like God loves Jesus! God loves his Son more than anything. Probably some of you have experienced a time when someone hugged you very tightly. You almost felt like you were being crushed. Of course, the person hugging you doesn't want to hurt you. He does that because he really likes you. With God and Jesus, however, it's even more amazing: They don't just hug each other; they aren't just close to each other. Jesus says, they are

Let's keep thinking about what Jesus means when he says: As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Have your parents ever have been really proud of you because of something? Sure there has. When parents are proud of their children, they talk constantly about them in front of other people. Whom does God talk about constantly in the Bible? God talks constantly in the Bible about his Son. Throughout the Old Testament God announces the coming of his Son again and again. He speaks about what he is like. He speaks about, what he will do. God speaks continually about his Son. That reveals a lot about how important Jesus is to God.

The Bible tells of people who lived very devout lives. But in each one of them God also saw sin. God couldn't say to any of them, "You're just fine. Stay the way you are." Jesus is the only one of whom God could say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." When God looks at Jesus, he is nothing but delighted. Just think about that. As God loves Jesus, so Jesus loves his disciples. Isn't that amazing?! Everyone who is a child of God can know, "I am incredibly, unbelievably, beyond measure loved by Jesus." These are no empty words when Jesus says, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you."

We see in verse 13 how serious Jesus is about his love. He actually laid down his life for us. Jesus didn't give his life in just any way. He gave it with the greatest suffering and pain. Can there be any greater proof of his love?

Jesus' words, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you" apply to every child of God. Of course, Jesus loves all people, but he loves the children of God in a special way. They are a part of him, like the branches and the vine. If you are not yet a child of God, then these words are a generous invitation to you. They are an invitation to receive Christ as your Savior. Jesus is waiting for you with open arms. And if you already are a child of God, then these words are also a wonderful invitation. They are an invitation to remain in Jesus' love. We've been given a good opportunity at this conference to remain in Jesus. We have heard many messages, often had Bible study, and hopefully written many reflections. Surely Jesus' love has often been mentioned. At home we can write out again for ourselves what we have learned about it. Then we can apply Jesus' love to ourselves as far as we understand it. For example: "Jesus laid down his life for his friends. Jesus laid down his life for me. Wow, Jesus loved me so much! Jesus is such a good friend to me." On the other hand, we have probably met a lot of new people at this conference. In other words, that's a good opportunity to share the love of Jesus. What is going to come of these relationships? Are we going to stay in contact with each other after the conference? Let's assume we stay in touch with the others. Then the question is, what are we going to make of these contacts? Are we just going to enjoy having good conversations? Loving one another means more than having a good conversation. Our fellowship could include, for example: exchanging prayer requests, helping each other, encouraging each other with Bible verses, sharing something from the Bible that spoke to you, sharing something you experienced with God (like an answered prayer). Even in plain, old everyday life we have plenty of opportunity to share Jesus' love. God places certain people in the path of every one of us. It really doesn't matter if we think they are nice or not. Jesus commands us to love them without exception. One of the most difficult things in my spiritual life is to love people who can hurt me. Instead of loving them, I would rather hurt them back. Or I would distance myself from them. But as soon as we feel antipathy toward someone, we are no longer remaining in the love of Jesus.

So far, we have been able to see two main things: First, the importance of remaining in Jesus, Second, the way to remain in Jesus. At the beginning I mentioned a third question: How does Jesus encourage us to remain in him? Let's consider that questions in the third part of the sermon.

Part III: Friendship with Jesus and with each other (v. 14-17)

Jesus doesn't just say to us, "remain in me". He gives us a huge encouragement to do it. Look at what verse 14 says, "You are my friends if you do what I command." If we remain in Jesus, we can live in a friend relationship with him. Which of you doesn't wish you had someone you could really count on? Which of you doesn't wish you had someone who is there for you; especially when things are at their worst? You know, around the turn of the year I was doing really bad. I think if you asked my roommate, he would say, "I've never seen Toni that low before." During that time I had only one hope. I knew Jesus could help me, no matter how hopeless the situation seemed to me. Over and over I clung to him in prayer. Back then I didn't think I would ever be happy again. But now looking back, it seems to me like a small miracle. Jesus really is a good friend. He is even more than a good

friend. Jesus says that he gives his life for his friends. He didn't do that just at the end of his life; he was doing it the whole time. He lived not for himself. He lived for his disciples. He was always there for them.

Many young people consciously or unconsciously ask themselves the question, "Who am I?" Some find their identity in friendships with popular people. Their logic works something like this: He is something special. So if I'm friends with him, then I must be something special, too. Others begin to identify themselves with something they do well. For example: "hmmm, I'm a very smart guy. The others just don't know it. I have to prove it to them." Others identify with things they have. For example: "I have a very attractive body. I should show it to everybody." The true identity we get is from Jesus. Listen to what Jesus says, "You are my friends." Jesus offers you friendship with the greatest of the great. Can there be any better identity than that?

Does anybody remember "studivz"? It's kind of like Facebook. That was really popular back when I was a student. When you signed up, you first got a message, "You have zero friends." That didn't sound very friendly. But soon after that you got one friend invitation after another. Suddenly you had hundreds of friends. But were those all really friends? Most of them are "acquaintances" rather than friends. Those are people you know. But a friend is something else. What Jesus means by friend, we see in verse 15. Jesus sees friendship as a close relationship. In that relationship you tell each other everything. There are many voung people who hang out with a lot of people. But they still feel lonely. Do you know why that is? They don't have anyone they can share their thoughts with. But to Jesus you can tell everything and he wants to tell you everything. Remember the picture of the vine: the branch doesn't just hang on the vine somehow. It isn't just attached to the vine. It is in the vine. It forms a unit with the vine. Jesus offers us a very closed friend relationship with him. Jesus says: everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. Do you know the meaning of this word? Jesus wants to involve us in the very closed relationship with his Father.

Nowadays, it is very important to have good connections. The friendship with Jesus gives you the best connection you can have. Look at verse 16. Jesus says, "whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you." If we live in friendship with Jesus, God will answer any of our prayer. Not because of us, but because we are friends of Jesus. There are many temptations in this world. They could easily keep us from remaining in Jesus. For example, parties promise us a lot of fun. Having a boyfriend or girlfriend gives us the feeling of being loved. Alcohol, nicotine, and drugs promise us pleasure and happiness. Computer games, smartphones, and the internet seem to be the best cure for boredom. How then can we remain in Jesus? We need a vision. A vision that encourages us to remain in Jesus. Just imagine if each one of you were a friend of Jesus. Then there would be about a hundred and sixty friends of Jesus here. What would that look like? Each of us would love the others. For a friend of Jesus does what he commands. For example, I told you about my experience with Jesus as a good friend. But Jesus didn't help me through a hand coming from heaven. He helped me through friends. They listened to me. They encouraged me through Bible verses and prayer. They went for a walk with me. One of them even brought me food. So, if each of us is a friend of Jesus, then there would be about 160 people who love each other. Wow! Out of us would arise a community where Jesus is central. We would grow together into a spiritual network that is on fire for Jesus. Isn't that a glorious vision?



Whenever we read Psalms in the Bible, we find it beautiful and refreshing. Psalms consist of 150 psalms. Today's passage, Psalm 1, talks about the blessedness of those who meditate on the Word of God. Why does this psalm come at the beginning of the book? It is because this psalm is the key to understanding all the following psalms. In today's passage, verses 1-3 talk about the blessedness of those who meditate on the word; and verses 4-6, about the misery and tragic end of those who do not. Through this passage, may God help us to learn the way to be truly blessed and prosperous like a tree planted by streams of water.

Look at verse 1: "Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers." The Greek OT, Septuagint, translates the beginning part of this verse as "Makarius Aner," which means, "How blessed the one is!" It is an exclamatory sentence. Who are blessed? The one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers is blessed.

First, the one who does not walk in step with the wicked is blessed.

The KJV translates this as "Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly." In the Bible, the expression, "the wicked" do not refer to just the bad people, or evil people like criminals. In the Bible, it refers to "the ungodly," which is the opposite meaning of "the righteous." Who are the righteous? They are those who have the right relationship with God. They accept God as their creator and Lord, and live for His glory. Yet the wicked do not believe in God. Even though they may have a good heart and may help others, or show mercy toward poor people, the motive of their heart is not for the glory of God. In short, the wicked are the godless and worldly people who live for their own glory. As we live in this world, whether we want to or not, we are influenced by the world. We hear news such as someone made a large amount of money through an investment on stocks or on properties. They enjoy fancy holidays at five star hotels. We read politics in the newspapers and are tempted to follow their ways. Yet, normally, even in the world, their end is not good. In the book of Esther, Haman, the Agagite and the principal minister of the king, Ahasuerus, made a plot to get rid of Mordechai who refused to bow down to him. Yet in the end he was hanged from the gallows that he had originally built himself, by the counsel of his wife, Zeresh, in order to hang Mordechai. This is a typical example of those who fall into their own traps because they walk in the counsel of the wicked. However, the blessed people do not walk in the counsel of the wicked. They love God and walk in the word of God. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." How blessed are those who do not walk in the counsel of the wicked but follow the word of God!

Second, the one who does not stand in the way that sinners take is blessed.

Here the expression "the sinners" refer to those who are worse than the wicked (or the ungodly). The wicked are those who do not believe in God, but "the sinners" are those who oppose God. They worship idols and seek worldly pleasures. We can see their lifestyle in 2Tim 3:1-5 which

talks about the people in the last days. "There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves. lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God -- having a form of godliness but denying its power." In the last days, sinners will love three things; they love themselves, money, and pleasures. They do not acknowledge God. These days people hate anything absolute or holy. Many states in the U.S. have legalized same sex marriage. One famous actor and LGBT activist ripped apart Leviticus chapter 18 from the Bible in public. Yet the blessed people do not follow the humanism and the relativism of the world. Those who do not stand in the way that sinners take are blessed. Those who are blessed accept the word of God as the absolute standard of their lives. They have a clear view on the world and life. They are not swayed by the way of sinners, but walk with God.

Third, the one who does not sit in the company of mockers is blessed.

The mockers or the scornful (KJV) are those who pour contempt on God and his people. They are proud and arrogant. They consider themselves wise, and despise believers as foolish. In history, King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed many neighboring countries and built the Babylonian empire. He was proud. One day, walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Dan 4:29. 30) What happened to him? While his word was still on his mouth, he was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. He lived like a cow for seven years. God opposes the proud. Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." The blessed do not sit in the company of mockers. The Bible gives us sound wisdom. With wisdom we can navigate this dangerous world keeping ourselves pure and holy. Holy people are blessed because all blessings come from the blessed God. May God help us not to walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers.

From the above, we have learned what we should not do in order to be blessed. What do we need to do? Look at verse 2. "But whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night." Those whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night are blessed. Delight means "extreme satisfaction" or "a high degree of joy." Those who find extreme satisfaction from the word of God are blessed. They enjoy great pleasure from the word. Normally, where do people find joy or pleasure? Today, people find pleasure in computer games. They spend hours and hours playing games. People love watching TV. People seek joy from sports. They find happiness in making money. People are satisfied with eating great food and enjoying holidays. Yet we know that any pleasure or joy from the world is not true pleasure. They are just physical and temporal. Where should we find our real joy? In the word of God! King David was brought up as the youngest of eight sons. Yet he was chosen by God. God's choosing him did not mean immediate happiness for him. David was chased after by Saul for more than 10 years. At times, he was often inches away from death. He had to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Yet, in all the days of his life, he loved the word of God. He depended

on the word and found joy and life directions in the word. He did not let the word depart from his mouth. Psalm 119 tells us how much he rejoiced in the word of God. "Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long" (119:97). "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (119:103). He found his delight in the word. God blessed him and raised him as the king of Israel.

"With wisdom we can navigate this dangerous world keeping ourselves pure and holy"

Question: How could King David do this? We try to rejoice in the word yet we feel sleepy within 2 minutes of reading the Bible. All kinds of trivial thoughts come to our minds. How can we find delight in the word of God like David? These days people's appetite are corrupted because of fast food. Fast food gives us instant pleasure but it ruins our sense of taste. Once your appetite is corrupted, it takes time for you to get used to healthy food. Likewise, our spiritual appetite is messed up because of spiritual fast food. We must strive to give up bad, toxic food and eat the word of God. If we continue to do so, God will surely help us enjoy the word more and more, and we will be able to find our delight in the word. Many years ago, I visited Rome. One day, we were in front of the Opera Theater in Rome. We went into a restaurant which was famous because the world famous tenor Luciano Pavarotti used to eat there. It was a very hot summer and I was not hungry. Anyway, I ordered king prawn spaghetti. I did not feel hungry, but you know what happened. At the first taste, I found the food so delicious. I ate the whole meal in the bowl. It is the same with the word of God. If we really discover the real taste of the sweet word of God we cannot help eating the word day and night.

Look at verse 2 again. "But whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night." To meditate means to think deeply on something. It means to dig the words of God. In Hebrew, the word "meditate" is "Haga" which has three meanings. First, to think and recite in a low voice (Ps 119:99, 148). If you happen to see any orthodox Jews in a bus or plane, you will find they recite the Scriptures in a low voice. That is meditation. Second, to growl like a beast (Ps 2:2, 2:9). Biblical meditation is not iust thinking and reciting the word. It means struggling like a beast growling over its prey so as not to lose it. Third, to apply (or plot) (Ps 2:1). Biblical meditation also does not just stay in the thought and mind. It has to be deeply rooted in our hearts so that the word will be applied in our lives. In short, to meditate means to recite the word again and again with an attitude holding fast to it until it is applied in our lives. Then, specifically, when and how can we meditate on the word? The best way is having spiritual daily bread early in the morning. David also said, "I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word" (Ps 119:147). The word is inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is the unchanging and everlasting word of the living God. The word of God is able to make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. The word of God is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2Tim3:15-17). So, if we love the word and meditate on it day and night we are the most precious people in the sight of God, and the

most blessed people in the whole world.

What is the one like who meditates on the word? Look at verse 3. "That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither, whatever they do prospers." The soil in Palestine is not fertile. Many parts of the land are barren. In such a land, the tree planted near a plenty supply of water is blessed. Even during draught, the tree planted by streams of water has no problems because the roots of the tree are in the streams of water. Even though there is no water on the surface of the earth, the tree takes enough water through the roots to grow strong, and produces fruit. The Psalmist says that those who meditate on the word are like the tree and they do not wither, and whatever they do prospers! What an amazing promise, that whatever they do prospers!

When we meditate on the word, the word gives us hope even in times of suffering. The word enables us to persevere and grow strong. In times of sorrow, the word gives us hope in the kingdom of God. In times of fear, the word helps us trust in God all the more to grow into men and women of faith. It helps us to never despair but produce fruit of the Holy Spirit. There can be no obstacles for those who love the word of God. Psalm 119:165 says, "Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble." Sometimes we feel despair because of the spiritual barrenness of this generation. There doesn't seem to be anyone who seeks God. Hardly anyone accepts our Bible study invitation. We appear to be becoming the absolute minority and the opposition seems to get tougher

and tougher. Yet for those who meditate on the word there is no obstacle. Nothing is impossible for them. All seemingly impossible situations are the best opportunities for them to grow strong and produce fruits of the Spirit. They remain thankful to God and live lives that glorify God.

By God's grace, I normally get up early in the morning with excitement to have daily bread. I am thankful to learn and receive God's word. Prayer and daily bread writing in the morning is one of my happiest hours of the day. As John Calvin once said, if we sincerely study the Bible we will surely know that it is the word of God. As I study the Bible, I really realize that the Bible is an amazing book. This is truly the living word of the living God. Since realizing that, I cannot neglect even the slightest stroke of the Scriptures. So, I began to memorize the Bible. I eat the Bible. It gives me tremendous joy and energy. We face many problems and challenges in life. I pray that we may not become problemcentered but word-centered people. I believe God will surely bless those who meditate on the word of God.

Now, what about those who do not meditate on the word? Look at verse 4. "Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away." Those who do not mediate on the word are like

chaff. They do not have roots and their life appears free and comfortable. They look wise and flexible. But when they do not take root in the word of God, they are so light that they are blown away by the wind. They end up being burnt up like chaff.

Look at verse 5. "Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous." They will not stand in the judgment which means they will not survive God's judgment. They will be condemned. They will not be in the assembly of the righteous - the kingdom of God.

Verse 6 says, "For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction." Those who meditate on and take root in the word can be temporarily isolated in the world. They may become lonely. But the Lord watches over their way. They are the apple of his eye (Ps 17:8) and he gives them the final victory.

In conclusion, those who dig the well of the word of God are blessed. May God help each of us, and our communities to mediate on the word day and night, through daily bread, sincere Bible study, Bible memorization, and grow into strong spiritual trees. May God bless us that we may prosper in whatever we do and produce much fruit for the glory of God. Amen!

