

VOICE OF PENTECOST

VOL . 37 NO.4

February 2009

Heaven's Record of a Young Girl's Decision

The story of Ruth is best known as a story of love, redemption and sacrifice. While these themes may seem to take the spotlight of the story, the underlying essence of this story stems from Ruth's determination to journey to the Promised Land. Although she may not have realized the significance of her decision at that time, God heard her words, honoured her sincerity, and gave her the privilege of being a part of the ancestry of Christ.

At a time of famine in the land of Israel, Elimelech, with his wife Naomi, decided that this trial was too hard to bear. Without asking God for guidance, they sojourned to the land of Moab. Shortly thereafter, Elimelech died, leaving his two sons to take matters into their own hands. They took the compromise of their parents to the next level, for they married themselves to that strange land. They too, died in the land of Moab, leaving Naomi without a husband or sons, and stuck with two heathen daughters-in-law. This tragedy caused Naomi to become bitter against God, and she decided to return to her homeland, realizing all too late that it would have been better to have suffered the famine than to see the funerals of her loved ones.

To make this journey, Naomi had to ``get rid" of her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, lest her backsliding be exposed. She had so fallen from grace, that she encouraged the young women to return to false gods, sending them to Christ-less eternity. Initially both girls refused to leave Naomi, yet the moment Naomi pointed out her deficiency in both material and spiritual goods, Orpah decided to make a quick exit. Naomi gave Orpah a farewell kiss, indicating that she get away from her; and Orpah returned the kiss and took the fastest road home. Ruth, however, was not interested in showing her affection and loyalty by means of a kiss. Naomi kissed, Orpah cried, but Ruth clave.

Now one may wonder why this heathen girl, having no obligations to an old woman, would remain with her. After all, Naomi had nothing to offer, no life of luxury, no name to be proud of. So why would Ruth decide to follow her? The answer is simple. During the ten years that Naomi was in the land of Moab, she could not help but talk about the God of Israel—the God that divided the Red Sea and brought down the walls of Jericho, the God that carried His people through their trials while loving them unconditionally. And each time Naomi would tell a story of this great and awesome God of Israel, Ruth found herself falling in love with Him. She found her heart longing to meet this God. She found that the depths of her soul cried out for this God. She wanted Him. She needed Him. She was determined to get Him.

This determination, this desire, this longing caused Ruth to ignore Naomi's artificiality in "blessing" her and sending her back. Ruth's yearning for God enabled her to forsake her own people, land, and life, in order to accept the land of the unknown. To Ruth, it didn't matter that she did not know where she was going; she didn't need a revelation,

a shining light, or a burning bush. Ruth's only goal was to find that God of Israel. Ruth had already made up her mind. She had already decided to follow Naomi, because she knew that if she left her, she would never get another opportunity to find her God. So when Naomi told Ruth to go back to her land, Ruth adamantly refused, saying "Where you go, I will go, where you lodge, I will lodge, your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God." Naomi's attempts at persuasion fell on deaf ears, because Ruth had already made up her mind. She wanted to find this God.

She countered Naomi's misguidance with a face like flint: she wouldn't return after her sister-in-law, but would go where Naomi went; she wouldn't go to the house of her mother, but would lodge where Naomi lodged; she wouldn't return to her people and to her gods, but to Naomi's people, and her God would be her own. Then Ruth sealed the deal by saying, "Where you die, that's where I'll die and that's where I'll be buried." Ruth was determined to follow until the day of her death. She made a decision that up until the last day of her life, up until her last breath, up until her last ounce of strength, and her last drop of blood she was going to follow the Lord. She hadn't yet left Moab, but she said, "I've already made my decision about the end of my journey, I'm going to die in Israel and I will be buried there. Even my bones should stay in that land. I've made a permanent choice; I've made an eternal choice."

Ruth's decision not only revived the heart of Naomi; it continues to do so for our hearts thousands of years later. Her decision to follow God no matter what the trial sets an example for us to follow. Ruth wasn't expecting to be a part of the lineage of Jesus; she didn't know that she would be the only heathen woman to have a book of the Bible named after her. All she knew was that this God was a God worth following in life, and worth following in death. She knew that this God was enough, and once she found Him, she did not need anything else. God heard her decision and God preserved her until the very end. It is known that Moabites were not supposed to mingle with the Jews, but God saw Ruth's genuine love for Him, and He broke all the rules to bring her in.

The Ruth of the Old Testament was privileged to go down in history as a family member of Jesus. But, you dear reader, are offered a greater privilege. He is calling you to be His wife, His undefiled Bride. Will you take Him up on His offer? Or will you be an Orpah and follow out of convenience? Which- ever you choose, know this—it was Ruth who married Boaz, not Orpah. Don't refuse the opportunity; purpose in your heart to forget your people and follow your God. Live your life, having Jesus as your goal. It doesn't matter what other rules there are; when you have the law of love in your heart, God will "break" every rule just to bring you in. This is because Jesus showed His love, not by a kiss, but by a cross. He didn't give you an emotional high, but He gave you His life. Fall in love with your Jesus. For once you are in love with Him, you won't feel the need to look elsewhere. Listen to that still small Voice that says, *"I want you to be Mine, both now and forever."* Make up your mind today; tell your Boaz, "Where you go, I will go." That simple decision can make you His Bride.

VOICE OF PENTECOST FEBRUARY 2009 . 2

By Faith

(Sl.No.6)

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb 11:6).

"This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased," declared the heavenly Father about Jesus Christ, twice. In this manner Jesus received the testimony from the Father concerning the matter of pleasing God. We must also receive such a testimony from God by pleasing Him. But without faith it is impossible

to please God. Galatians 1:10 says that we have to please only God and not men. We must always be in the Spirit in order to please God as they that are in the flesh cannot please God, the Bible says. Jude 5 says that though the Lord saved the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt, He afterward destroyed them that believed not. In Psalm 106:26 it says that God lifted up His hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness. They despised the pleasant land and believed not His word. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. So if we have faith we can please God and if we have not faith, great destruction will be the result. So we must be diligent to please God always by faith.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good" (Psa 14:1). But the desire of God is that everyone must come to Him. God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Tim 2:4) for, the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. To go to God the Father, Jesus Christ is the only way. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." That Christ is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them (Heb 7:25). While Jesus was ministering in the world, He spoke about the heavenly Father many times so that everyone in this world may know God and come unto that God through Him. All must believe the existence of God and approach Him. "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27). Believing the existence of God is the first step of faith.

Abraham believed the Lord and He counted it to him for righteousness. And it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on Him. When the people of Nineveh heard the preaching of Jonah about the judgment for their sin, they believed God, proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them to the least of them. God saw their works that they turned from their evil way and God repented of the evil that He had said He would do unto them and He did it not. So here it is clear that believing God causes us to turn away from evil works and by that we can escape the judgment of God. So we must pray and work hard so that the whole world might believe the existence of the true God and turn unto Him from idols (I Thess 1:9). For that the word of faith must be preached. But how shall they hear without a preacher? So in these last days, all the young people of God must come out to serve the living God and go to the uttermost part of the world to pro

VOICE OF PENTECOST FEBRUARY 2009 . 3

claim the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Millions and millions of people all over the world and heaven are waiting for you. God is also calling you. Step into His glorious ministry by faith.

We must seek our God diligently. "Thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deut 4:29; II Chron 15:2; Jer 29:13). God is looking down from heaven at those who seek Him (Psa 14:2). Since God says, "seek ye My face" (Psa 27:8), we have to seek God early every morning to find Him (Psa 63:1; Prov 8:17; Isa 26:9). Then we can rejoice and be glad in the Lord. We seek God by prayer (Dan 9:3). Amos 5:4 says, "Seek ye Me, and ye shall live." So we get the life of God by seeking Him, and that life is needed for eternity also. While Jesus was in this world, all men sought Him (Mk 1:37). In

those days, people were seeking Him for worldly and physical needs. But we should seek Jesus for perfection and eternal life. Also, since God is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, we must seek God for small and big matters.

On the first day of the week came early to the sepulchre, Mary Magdalene, when it was yet dark, to seek Christ. As she was unable to find Jesus, she was weeping. Jesus asked, "Whom seekest thou?" Once she had received many blessings from the Lord. With a grateful heart and love she is now seeking Jesus. So after resurrection, Jesus appeared to her first. Dear reader, whom are you seeking these days? These are the days of seeking our Jesus. Seek Jesus with a broken heart and contrite spirit, with weeping and tears. Surely He will appear to you in this world and also at mid-air. Do not be satisfied with the things of this world. Don't waste your precious God-given time in any other way in this perishing world. Seek Jesus with your whole heart. He is coming soon with a full reward for you. He wants to give you the crown, throne, dominion and many other things in eternity as a reward if you seek Him. "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him" (Isa 40:10).

A STUDY ON JOSEPH'S LIFE

(Serial No.55)

(Contd. from Nov'08 issue)

"And the famine was sore in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food" (Gen 43:1,2).

LIVING WITH JESUS

Why did God permit the famine to continue in the land of Canaan? When there was famine, these brethren went to Joseph and got enough food for their families. But they did not stay there. They went back. They went away from Joseph. Going to Joseph for food shows, going to Jesus for our needs—spiritual or material. But the purpose of the Lord in giving us blessings is that we may stay with Him or live with Him. God had to allow the famine to continue, to make the brothers go to Joseph again. Sometimes, we also

VOICE OF PENTECOST FEBRUARY 2009 . 4

turn to the Lord for blessings—for healing, for some spiritual needs, or even financial needs. But after God answers our prayers, we turn back to our old lives. We do not want to live with Jesus. So, sometimes, God permits a spiritual famine, some dryness or difficulty in our lives to draw us back to our ``Joseph''. Till we go back to Him, our trials, problems and difficulties will continue.

Why could not Joseph's brothers live with Joseph? Because they pretended to be true men though they were guilty inside! If we are unable to live with Jesus in our day-to-day living, there could be hypocrisy in our lives. There could be some sins still hidden in our lives. How sad it is that some people do not have personal prayer even for a few minutes! When we have guilt and sin in our lives, we cannot enjoy praying. The brethren could not live with Joseph. They were like fish out of water. They could not be comfortable. If we learn to live with Jesus, so many of our trials may be avoided.

"And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you" (Gen 43:3-5).

SEEING THE FACE OF JESUS

"Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you." When we come to the presence of our Jesus, our heart should be right, even with the least esteemed brother in Christ. If we are bitter against anyone, we cannot see His face. Perhaps, that person is dead, but you may still have hatred in your heart! You may not tell anybody about it but when you come to the presence of Jesus, His face will be hidden from you. If the brothers had gone to Joseph without bringing Benjamin, at the entrance itself the messenger would have told them, "Joseph has already commanded that unless your youngest brother comes, you cannot see his face." So saying, he would have turned them away empty. Keeping hatred and bitterness against someone, we can come to the presence of God, we may even rejoice in the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues, but we cannot see the face of Jesus.

Our hope is that we shall see the Lord face to face at His appearing. However, we cannot see Him unless we are all made one, as the children of the same Father. Can we disregard our brother for whom Jesus died, and expect to stand before Him with confidence?

Without bringing Benjamin, they could not see Joseph's face. But for Jacob, Benjamin was very precious. He meant more to him than even his food and sleep. He could not live without him. In our life too, there may be something very precious to us, something we value much, something we do not want to part with. Whatever it may be, unless we are willing to bring it to our Jesus, we cannot really see His face. Unless we are willing to offer our best to our ``Joseph'', we cannot live with Him. It may be our children or our physical health, but unless we give to God the thing we cherish more than Him, we cannot see His face.

The Word of God says, "His servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face" (Rev 22:3,4). Seeing the face of God is not a small thing. It is a very great privilege.

VOICE OF PENTECOST FEBRUARY 2009 . 5

Here, Jacob was stubbornly holding on to Benjamin, and this hindered the brothers from seeing the face of Joseph. Perhaps you are called to serve God. But you do not want to surrender. You do not want to give up something that you may love. Therefore you do not want to serve God. Perhaps you are called to be a eunuch for Christ. But you do not want that life. There may be a ``Benjamin" you are holding on to. Child of God, you are missing out on the great privilege of seeing the face of the Father.

GIVE YOUR BEST FOR GOD'S BEST

Consider Jacob's grandfather, Abraham. When asked to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, he was willing to do it immediately. But Jacob could not part with Benjamin even for a while. This is because he was not a man of faith but of feelings. What made Abraham offer Isaac? Abraham realized, "Even if I sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering, my God is able to raise

him up." But Jacob could not believe that God could bring Benjamin back safely.

What was God's purpose in demanding Abraham's only son—his very best? He wanted to make him a father of many nations. Why does God ask us to give our best to Him? God has a very great plan for us. He wants to give us His very best. But unless we give our best to Him, He cannot give His best to us. If we are praying, we should pray in the best way. When we go to pray, if we squat, nod, yawn and slumber, that is not the best thing to give Him. If we are reading the Bible, God wants us to read it in the best way. Whatever we do for Jesus, we should do it in the best way.

Above all, give your mind to God because the mind is the best part of a human being. It controls the whole life. You may be keeping your mind away from Jesus. It may be filled with all the filth and rubbish of the world. God wants it to be filled with the glory of God all twenty-four hours of the day. Seeing the face of God is a very, very great privilege. But, for that, you have to give what you cherish as your best.

You may have given a part of your mind or a part of your heart to Jesus, and given the rest to worldly things. But that cannot be. Our ``Joseph" is very jealous—He wants that which we love most, that which we cherish most to be brought to Him.

Pastor Don Spiers—A Shining Life

(Serial No.38)
a true shepherd

Pastor Don was a shepherd "according to God's heart," one who fed the flock with "knowledge and understanding." "He tried his best to revitalize our hearts, to revive our souls, to invigorate our spirits, to intensify our faith, to inspire our hopes," reports a child of God, ``He was a gift of God for all of us—a gift of love, a gift of light." He cared for the flock as a shepherd cares for his lambs; he was full of tenderness and compassion for his sheep.

His love and care for the brethren in his charge was genuine and sincere. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God" (Acts 20:28). This Pastor Don diligently observed. As exhorted by St.Peter, he

VOICE OF PENTECOST FEBRUARY 2009 . 6

+ _ _ _ _

took great care to feed the flock willingly and with a ready mind, being an example to the flock. His caring love for others made him suffer much for them.

Pastor Don can truly be called "a father of many nations." His impartial and unselfish love for the saints all over the world is a unique feature of his life. Transcending social status and nationality, he acknowledged every believer as the Bride of Christ and showed them guileless love. He didn't give preference to believers who had been in the church longer than others; he treated everyone alike. He was a true brother and father in Christ to all.

He was a man of great kindness and he showed a special concern for each of

his spiritual children even as he trained them in their walk with the Lord. "Like a good shepherd, Brother Don always tried to control our ways, to comfort our souls, and to reduce our stress. He helped us in our troubles and temptations, and carried our heavy loads and burdens," says one believer.

He would often visit the churches in his care. "It was always a joy to have him come," testifies one child of God, "When he came, he always brought blessings." The work really grew because of his love and generosity and his burden for the people. He would pray for the people with such a delight, such enthusiasm, such a burden.

Though he always taught the servants of God the preciousness of faith and the faith life, as a father, he would be always calling to see if their needs were met. "If he saw how something could be changed or provided to make things easier or more comfortable for us, he would immediately seek to do that. He used his valuable time for our benefit. It gave him great comfort to know that

everyone was "happy in Jesus". He used to often go to the II floor kitchen in Newark, and say "Praise the Lord" with a smile to those working there. He would take time off his busy schedule to drive miles and visit people—to comfort, help, give counsel, encourage, or solve their problems. He would personally go over even when he could have sent someone else. "It is because of Pastor Don that I am still in this assembly," testifies one child of God, "He would drive alone from Washington and come and stay in Chicago with us to teach us, encourage us in the Word of God, counsel us, or rebuke us."

It was not gifts, talents or abilities that Pastor Don saw and appreciated in others, but their Christlike character. He would often mention a particular believer who kept watch at the gates of a faith home in Sri Lanka and say, "He's the best preacher I've ever known!"

He did not see anyone as special or ordinary, as educated or illiterate; but as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters. Everyone was equally important to him. Once someone introduced a sister to him, saying that she was a relative of Pastor So-and-so, a senior pastor in the church. "Oh well, she's my sister!" he replied with a big smile.

He was a pillar of strength, and a source of great consolation to those in need. He was especially tenderhearted toward the least and the unfortunate, toward the fainthearted and weak. He never looked upon anyone as a nuisance, or as being burdensome or difficult. "The biggest problem I have is myself," he used to say.

"Weep with them that weep," says the Word of God. That was Pastor Don. He wept at the bedside of the sick with agony. "When I was very ill he came to visit me. And kneeling down at my bedside, he held my hand and just started to weep," recalls one servant of God. "And in his prayer he said, 'Lord, we've fasted, we've prayed, and now our eyes are on You. Jesus, Your child needs healing.'

VOICE OF PENTECOST FEBRUARY 2009 . 7

I could see the agony on his face. How much he wanted me to live and glorify the name of Jesus! 'What a precious gift God has given to us!' I thought."

One believer says, "In all my difficulties I would call him—even in the middle of the night, and he would pray with tears and comfort me." Another brother says, "I was facing many problems in my home—my wife who was of another

faith stubbornly refused to attend our church. After one meeting I came forward at the altar call and was crying before the Lord. And I was kneeling there even after everybody had left. Suddenly I opened my eyes and saw Pastor Don kneeling beside me. He was weeping too."

"When I came to this country, in the beginning, I was very upset," testifies a brother. "Brother Don visited me and said, 'God knows your sufferings and sorrows, your tears and the deep wounds of your heart. And God knows your needs and wants. You don't have to walk in darkness or wander aimlessly. Our God is the true living and loving God. So come close to God and God will come close to you. Get in touch with God and everything will be organized.' Those words comforted my soul, softened my feelings and supported me in all my ways. Being with Brother Don was, in so many ways, like being with our heavenly Father."

Pastor Don knew the state of his flock very well—whether anyone was unhappy, or had lost his peace or anointing and he always spoke out the truth—in love. "At one time, I didn't realize I had some bitterness in me," says one, "But Pastor Don saw it, and looking at me straight in the eye he said, 'Sister, you have bitterness in your heart.' I broke out crying and he prayed for me. I thank God he was always willing to tell us straight."

He was very keen on maintaining unity and love among the brethren. "When we think of Pastor Don, we think of John Ch 17—the prayer that Jesus made for His disciples. Many portions just speak about Pastor Don—about how he prayed and wanted to see all of us as one," testifies a believer, "His great desire was that we be united in love. And he poured out his love to us." Once when there was a split in one church, the believers were troubled. He went to have a meeting there and wept with them. His love for them removed all their bitterness. The word he gave them, John 17:24, helped restore unity and love among them. "Now I can love anybody and everybody," says one of those believers. A message that Pastor Don gave to another church when it was going through a tough period was, "Can you drink of the cup (sins of others) that I drink?" That message changed everyone's outlook on the situation.

Even in his weakest moments Pastor Don was caring for the church. When the husband of a believer passed away, he called the wife, and though his voice was weak and faint he spoke with her for a long time, comforted her and prayed for the family. "God then filled my heart with such peace, comfort and hope," she says. In the last few months of his life, when he wasn't doing well, a sister arrived in Newark sick. For the most part he was not able to come out and fellowship much. But because that sister's illness confined her to bed, he made it a point to regularly visit her and pray with her and encourage her. Just a week before he passed away he went upstairs to see her. And two or three days before he died, when he could hardly speak, he said to the sister-in-charge, "How is..." That was all he could say. When asked, "Brother Don, are you asking for Sister—?" He nodded yes. In the following message, Pastor Don makes "serving God in holiness" the most wonderful thing in the world. "That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without

VOICE OF PENTECOST FEBRUARY 2009 . 8

fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Lk 1:74,75).

There used to be some churches in America called holiness churches. But now

holiness is being mocked everywhere. The devil comes telling us all kinds of lies—"Holiness is too hard." But I tell you, holiness is beautiful. "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." The holiness of God is beautiful. Our God is altogether lovely. His holiness is His glory, His beauty. His throne, His city and His holy mountain are beautiful beyond imagination. And if you learn to love the Lord and long for His holiness, His holiness will appear more and more beautiful, and you'll hunger and thirst after the fulness of His holiness.

But there is one problem in seeing the holiness of God. "In Thy light we see light." When the light of God comes, it manifests everything. Isaiah was a great prophet of God. But in Isaiah Ch 6 we read that when he had a vision of the Lord and saw the angels crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord!" he cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips."

God put the tabernacle amidst the Israelites and He dwelt there. The Israelites could see the glory there, but they dwelt in their own tents. The reason why they could not approach Him was they were not holy. But God loved them and wanted them to come to Him. So He made provision for them to come with a sacrifice. As they came they would see the curtain of the outer court, and they would say, "There's the tabernacle." And with great reverence they would come in with their sacrifice. And when they found themselves in the outer court they looked at the holy place and said, "Oh! Oh! *There's* the tabernacle." And when the priest went into the holy place to minister there, he said, "*There's* the tabernacle" looking at the most holy place." When we come to God, we come as sinners. We come through the sacrifice of Calvary. But at the outset we don't realize how holy God is, and we don't realize what great sinners we are. We call Him Abba and we enjoy Him, but as we go on with God, all of a sudden, there seems to be a distance growing, because His light is revealing things in our life.

When apostle Paul got saved, his testimony was, "I am blameless." But after some years of walking with Jesus he said, "I am the chiefest of sinners—there is no good thing in me!" *I can say that too today. God has searched me from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet. When I first got saved and the Lord called me to serve Him, I had no consciousness that I was a sinner. I was happy to have a good God to serve and I thought He was happy to have a good boy like me serving Him. But a time came when His light shone into my heart and into my mind. I found that there was no good thing in me at all. Even the best of my works were contaminated with pride and selfishness, and my desire to go to Zion was a proud and selfish desire. Sometimes I say, "Oh God, I don't even like to come to the pulpit and preach any more. Woe is me, woe is me!"*

But then the Lord says, "I love you. You trust in Me. I will change you from glory to glory into My own image and likeness." There is no good thing in me, but there's no blemish in God. Therefore I surrender myself totally to Him. And oh, what a great joy and peace comes! What a delight it is to walk with Jesus, and how beautiful as He changes us from glory to glory! Faithful is God Who has called us to serve Him in holiness. He will do it.

Some people are afraid of holiness. You know, we're going to serve God forever in a holy place, in the Most Holy Place. There's no sin there at all. And that's exclusive joy.

VOICE OF PENTECOST FEBRUARY 2009 . 9

—

When you say, "I'm afraid of holiness" there will be no joy. That's the spirit of fear. Holiness is the fulness of joy. I've seen people that are drunk trying desperately to be happy. The devil's a liar. We're going to serve in the Lord's presence, beholding a beauty which this world can never even imagine—that's Eternity. Immeasurable joy. The Bible says, "Joy unspeakable"—You can't even talk about it. o

A Branch Forgotten

If our Master, the Big Branch, was forgotten by His dearest and nearest, we the little branches are going to be forgotten too. Don't lose heart; you are the branch of God's planting.

The Lord Jesus is compared to a "Branch" that shall grow out of the roots of Jesse (Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5,6; Zech 6:12). Though at the First Advent He was as a forgotten Branch, during the Millennium He will be seen as a green flourishing Branch whose beauty will fill the whole earth (Isa Ch.11; Dan 2:34,35). "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isa 25:9). "In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious" (Isa 4:2).

The people of God also are compared to branches. Referring to His followers who abide in Him, the Lord said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (Jn 15:5). If, our Master, the Big Branch, was forgotten by His dearest and nearest, we the little branches too are going to be forgotten and forsaken by all. Jesus came as a "Green Branch" bringing physical as well as spiritual healing to all; but He was forsaken and forgotten by all (Exo 15:25,26; Lk 23:31). How did the people react to the kindness of this Branch? "Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled" (Matt 26:56; Mk 14:50). Do we long to be like the Lord Jesus? Then, "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord" (Matt 10:25), meaning, we too are going to be forsaken and forgotten.

Why is the Lord permitting us to be as a branch forgotten? It is to make us a fruitful branch. Joseph was forsaken and forgotten as a branch, but the Lord made him a "fruitful bough." "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall" (Gen 49:22). But before this took place, "The archers (have) sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him" (Gen 49:23). They shot at him with their bitter weapons of hatred, grudge, and animosity. Joseph was indeed a branch forgotten by others; but not in the sight of God. God made him a branch which "ran over the wall"—a blessing to the people inside and outside.

How could Joseph remain as a fruitful branch, though forgotten? He was planted "by a well" and this well is the Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament (Gen 49:22; Isa 12:1-3; Jn 4:14). Joseph kept on drinking from the springs of this Living Water, and therefore, even in captivity and adversity he was seen as a fruitful bough. Where is the place of your planting? Is it in the counsel of the ungodly or in the way of sinners or in the seat of the

VOICE OF PENTECOST FEBRUARY 2009 . 10

scornful? If so, your place of planting is a parched field and you are liable to wither away. Remove yourself from there and be planted by the rivers of waters (Psa 1:1-3; Jer 17:5-8).

The branch of Joseph was blessed with the precious things of heaven, by the dew, by the sun, and by the moon (Deut 33:13,14). Joseph, the forgotten branch ran over the wall, for the whole world to see and be blessed with it (Gen 41:57). "Dew" refers to the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We are the planting of the Lord and for the ripening of our spiritual fruits, we need this dew constantly, without which our spiritual life will not flourish. The "sun" signifies the righteousness of God and it is given to us as a breastplate. Let us be clothed with this righteousness which is of faith in Christ (Phil 3:7-9). "Moon" signifies the grace and the peace of God in which we stand, live and reign (Rom 5:1,2). Though the dragon (Satan) is standing before the woman (the Spirit-baptized Church) to devour her manchild (the overcomers), by the

anointing, grace, peace and righteousness, she is reigning in the heavenly places and in due time she will bring forth the manchild who will be caught up to God and to His throne (Rev 12:1-5).

Job was another "branch" forsaken and forgotten by all; but he did not wither away. Why? Job too experienced the scent of God's water and the power of God's "dew," though he was cut down like a tree: ``For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease...through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant"; "My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch" (Job 14:7-9;29:19) and therefore his glory was fresh in him, and his bow was renewed in his hand (Job 29:20).

When others forsook and forgot Him as the life-giving Branch, Jesus remained as a Green Branch. He did not wither away. How?—By praying for those who persecuted Him and extending forgiveness to those who tormented Him: "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? And there were also two other, malefactors, led with Him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided Him, saying, He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked Him" (Lk 23:31-36). See the power in this Branch _ It took one of the malefactors to Paradise!

How are we to stand, when we are forgotten by all?

(i) By trusting in the Lord: "I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel. For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. But I trusted in Thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God," and His face will shine upon us (Psa 31:11-16).

(ii) By hoping in the Lord: "I will say unto God my rock, Why hast Thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a sword in my

VOICE OF PENTECOST FEBRUARY 2009 . 11

bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God," and God will become the health of our countenance (Psa 42:9-11).

(iii) By remaining steadfast: "All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten Thee, neither have we dealt falsely in Thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from Thy way" (Psa 44:17,18).

(iv) By cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit we will be able to remain as a glorious branch: "In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning" (II Cor 7:1; Isa 4:2,4).

(v) By being willing to be sown, "like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it," we become a flourishing branch (Mk 4:31,32; Jn 12:24-26). We need to be

sown in His Garden, where we are always under His watchful eye. His Garden is an enclosed one, meaning, a well-protected garden from all wrong influences (Lk 13:19; Isa 27:2,3; S.S 4:12; Jn 15:1-5). In this Garden (of the Spirit-baptized Church of the New Testament) we are pruned by the Father, Who is the Husbandman. To flourish as a branch, we must be willing to be pruned. We need to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of the Lord, lest we become unfruitful and be cast away as a withered branch. Before the growth, it must be sown; it loses all identity and becomes invisible for a time under the earth: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (Jn 12:24,25), and this is that "sowing." Let us be willing to die to all that is carnal and mundane in our lives.

(vi) When our backsliding is healed by the Lord Who is like Dew, we shall be seen as a glorious branch: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for Mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon" (Hos 14:4-6).

Now you are a forsaken, forgotten branch. But that small despised branch of yours will become a thousand. God has promised to make you an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Don't lose heart; you are the branch of God's planting, the work of His hands, that He may be glorified. And the Lord will hasten this work in His time (Isa 60:15-22). And from such a branch, the precious fruit will be gathered (Jms 5:7,8). Perhaps you have been left as a forgotten branch; but God has not forgotten you. Come, let us enter into a perpetual covenant and return to Zion (Jer 50:5,6).

VOICE OF PENTECOST FEBRUARY 2009 . 12

-
- What do  ?

The last journey of Jesus to Jerusalem before His crucifixion was about 7 miles (more than 10 km). After a long day and a tiresome journey, Jesus took three of His disciples to the garden to pray. It was past midnight when the prayer began. Was it not natural for them to sleep? Still, the gracious, loving Jesus woke them up and prompted them to pray. Why? The situation was urgent, and demanded such a sacrifice.

How long do you pray? What are your sleeping hours? The situation is urgent,

more urgent than you think.

Wanted—for the Lord's Use

A Man after God's Heart

"The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people" (1 Sam 13:14). "I will raise Me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in Mine heart and in My mind" (1 Sam 2:35). The Lord has some plans in His mind and certain desires in His heart, and He's looking for people to carry them out—people who'll sacrifice their own plans and desires in order to fulfil His.

When someone asked George Mueller the secret of his achievements, his reply was, "One day George Mueller died." King David was one such man—he died to his will and to his wishes and became a "Man after God's Heart." Would you be one too?

One Who Loves the Lord above All Else

"Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord...He saith unto him, Feed My lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord...He saith unto him, Feed My sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep" (Jn 21:15-17). Jesus planned to use Peter to fulfil some of His great purposes; so He wanted Peter to be unwavering in his love for Him.

John Wesley was so consumed by love for Jesus that he travelled not less than 4500 miles a year and preached not less than 5000 sermons a year. When once asked how he gathered such great crowds, he said, "I just set John Wesley on fire and people come to see him burn." Do you love the Lord so?

Someone to Stand in the Gap

"I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before Me for the land...but I found none" (Ezek 22:30).

VOICE OF PENTECOST FEBRUARY 2009 . 13

Of Moses we read, "Moses His chosen stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath" (Psa 106:23). Abraham was a great intercessor too. John Knox interceded for the land praying, "Give me Scotland or I die!" The dreaded Mary, Queen of Scots once said, "I fear John Knox's prayers more than an army of 10,000 men." Can the Lord find such an intercessor in you today?

Consecrated People

"Moses stood...and said, Who is on the Lord's side?...Put every man his sword by his

side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour" (Exo 32:26,27). From Deuteronomy 33:8-10 we can see that the Levites, who thus consecrated their family for the sake of the Lord, were assigned special duties and responsible positions. When William Carey received God's call to pioneer a missionary work in India, he immediately got ready to set out, planning to leave for good his beloved wife with their three little sons and a new-born baby. Will you come forward to serve the Lord with such a dedication?

The "Little"

"When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?" (I Sam 15:17). When Saul ceased to be "little" in his own eyes he ceased to be of any use to the Lord.

It's the humble, the humblest, that the Lord can use. Someone asked Francis of Assisi how he was able to accomplish so much. He said, "The Lord looked down from heaven and said, 'Where can I find the weakest, littlest man on earth?' Then He saw me and said, 'I've found him. I will work through him and he won't be proud. He'll see that I'm only using him because of his insignificance.'" Child of God, how does the Lord see you?

The "Willing to Serve"

"The damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that Thou hast appointed" (Gen 24:14). Rebekah was chosen because she was "willing to serve."

Isaac Watts, the Father of English Hymnody says, "I was ambitious to be a servant of the churches and a helper to the joy of the meanest Christian." President Franklin Roosevelt always had with him a frail-looking man named Harry Hopkins. When once asked why he tolerated him, his answer was, "Through my door flows daily an incessant stream of men and women who invariably want something from me, Harry wants only to serve me." How eager are you, to serve the Lord?

Available Ones

"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isa 6:8). When Prophet Isaiah heard of the Lord's need, he was eager to offer himself.

William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, said of his victory in his ministry, "There have been men with greater brains and opportunities than I, but I made up my mind that God would have all of William Booth there was. Sportstar Madeline Mims, who

VOICE OF PENTECOST FEBRUARY 2009 . 14

in her 16-year career in track events won many gold and silver medals in the Olympic Games and was a shining witness for the Lord in the sports world,

prayed at the age of six, "Jesus, if all Your angels get tied up and busy and all Your servants are out and You ain't got nobody to go for You, send me. I'll go." Dear youth, you may have a great many qualifications in many fields, but are you available when the Lord is in need of someone?

Special Healing Service

Beloved ones in Christ,

Greetings in Jesus' Name.

Our International Convention at Chennai this year begins from

the 11th of March. As in the previous years, we have prayerfully planned to have a Healing Service on Sunday, the 15th of March (the last day of the Convention). We must prove to the world that Jesus is still alive, and as powerful as He ever was, and that the healings of the Bible are not a tale. The people of those days who were eyewitnesses to the healing power of Jesus said, "He hath done all things well..." (Mk 7:37). Today's world must say it too. In view of this, special fasting prayers have been arranged in all our churches all over the world on Saturday, the 7th of March. The purpose of this prayer is not to glorify the healing powers of the Mission, but the omnipotence of God. So let us cry out to God to reveal His power that we might be channels of His glory. We request all our believers to put aside all other appointments and set apart this day to seek the Lord for a mighty

healing revival. We have limited the Holy One of Israel long enough. It is time we allowed Him to work. *"Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses"* (Matt 8:17).

God bless you.
Pastor Wilson Joseph