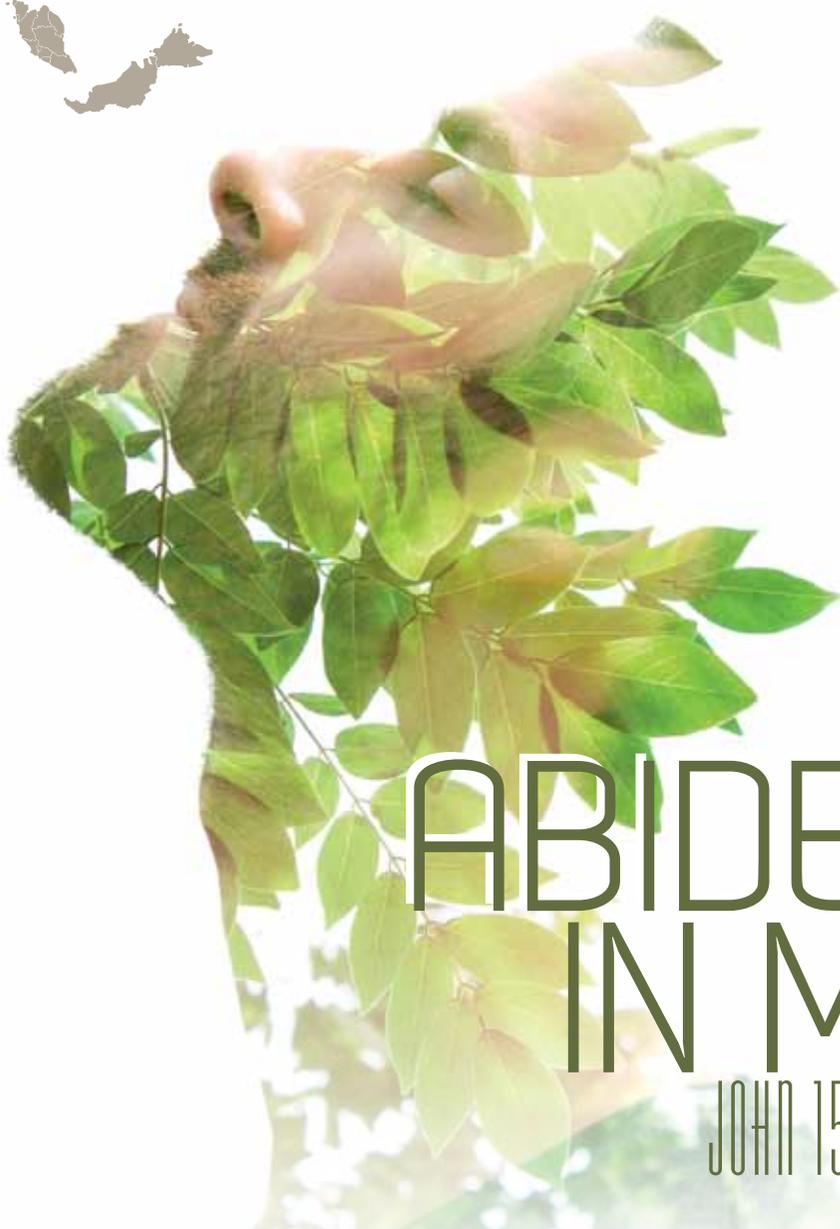


NECF
MALAYSIA



ADULT EDITION



ABIDE IN ME

JOHN 15:4

40-DAY FAST & PRAYER · 07.08 - 15.09.2015

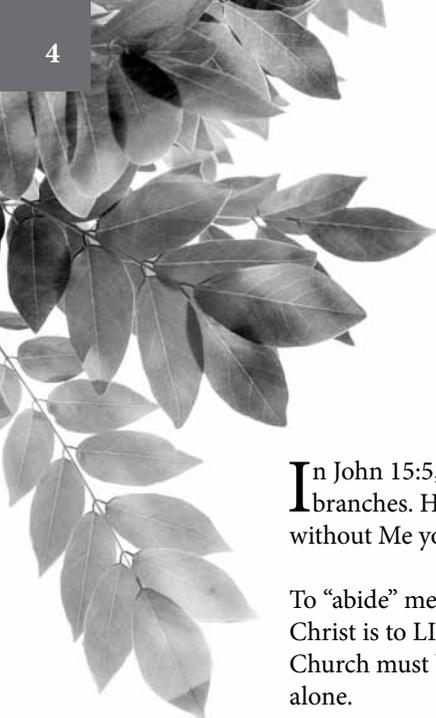


Abide in Me

(John 15 NIV)

- ¹ “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.
- ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.
- ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.
- ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.
- ⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.
- ⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.
- ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.
- ⁸ This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.
- ⁹”As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.
- ¹⁰ If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love.
- ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete





Abide in Me

Foreword by Rev Dr Eu Hong Seng, NECF Chairman

In John 15:5, Jesus taught His disciples, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

To “abide” means to “live”, “continue” or “remain” - so to abide in Christ is to LIVE in Him, or to REMAIN in Him. Every believer and Church must be “Presence-driven” - and all must be done for His glory alone.

Even so, many of us seem to do quite well without actually abiding in Christ. Some appear oblivious to their “unplugged” state, while others do not seem too bothered about not being able to tell the difference between living a life in and with Christ, and one without Him.

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”
John 15:5

For far too long, the Church has allowed herself to be distracted by “success” by her own measure, instead of actually bearing fruit. We have let ourselves believe that success lies in the size of our congregations (and buildings), rather than on the number of disciples we produce and send out. We have become too pre-occupied with the “church experience” instead of the Christian experience.

We have let ourselves get away with speaking to the nation without being prophetic. We have sung “praise” songs, without offering incense to God. We are passionate about many things, but we have no zeal for His house. Machinery and methodology have taken over the role of godly men.

As God’s people get better educated, ministries are in danger of becoming more talent-focused, while church programmes are management driven. There is little appreciation for the touch of the Holy Spirit that comes from true abiding in the Vine.

To “abide in” also implies dependence. Branches depend on the vine to keep them alive - through the nourishing sap that flows from vine to branch, supplying minerals and



nutrients, without which the branches cannot survive, let alone bear fruit.

Friends, we are not meant for a superficial acquaintance with our God. What we were created for, is an intimate relationship with Him - which we can only find by cultivating a habit of seeking God, no matter how busy our lives are.

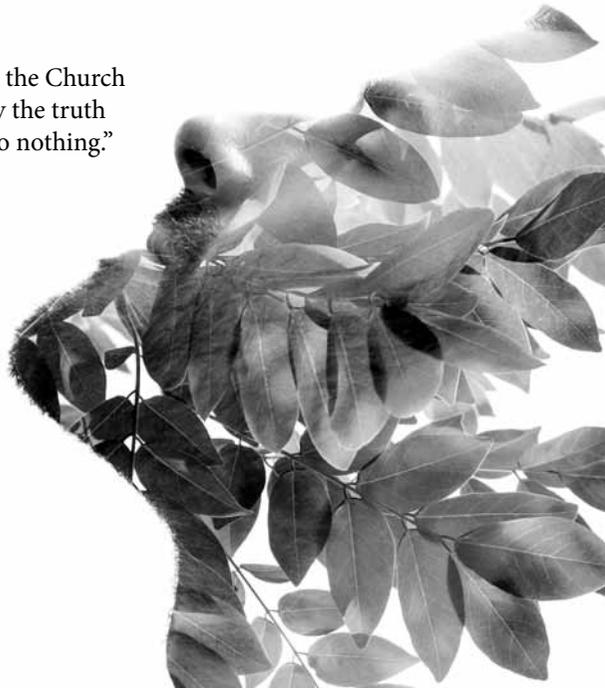
The last days of God's calendar are fast approaching, and the Church desperately needs to be more vibrant, fresher, and more prophetic than ever before! As we take up arms against the rising spirit of the anti-Christ, we need the constant in-filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives to maintain our stand, and remain inspired and energised.

*Without ME,
you can do nothing.*

Abiding in Jesus is not a short sprint. It is a life-long commitment of trusting, depending and believing in Him. Many do not see fruit in their lives because they cannot stay the course.

The problems and challenges confronting the Church and our nation these days indeed magnify the truth of Jesus' words - "Without Me, you can do nothing."

Nevertheless, let's hold on to God's promise that we can be in the place of victory and fruitfulness - because he who abides in Christ, and Christ in him, bears much fruit!



Introduction

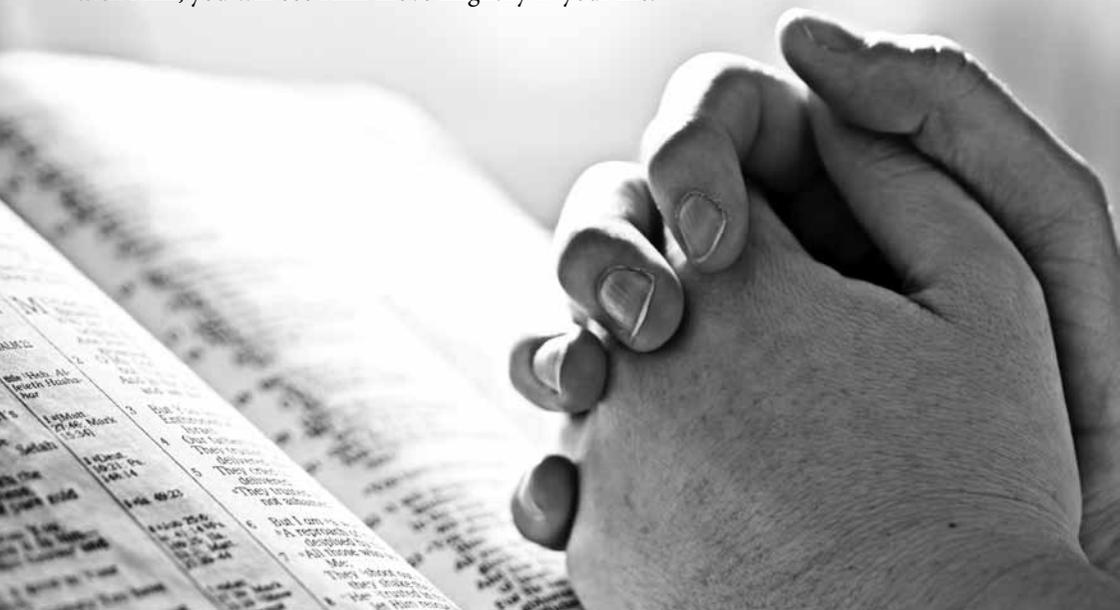
by Prayer Commission (Publisher)

Prayer is a very important element in our lives, as it holds the keys to unlock all that God has and wills for us. Prayer has the ability to change our lives, our nation and our destinies. However not everyone has been able to fully benefit from its potential.

In the Parable of the Vine, our Lord tells us how a fruitful prayer life can be attained and what benefits it brings. In John 15:7-8 He says, *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”* (NKJV)

It can't get any clearer than that - the key to a fruitful prayer life is to abide in Him. It is crucial that we grasp this and live it out, because when our prayers are answered the work of our hands flourish, showing the world that we are His disciples. Most importantly, this brings God glory. As Jesus' disciples, we ought to always, like our Master, pray fruitful prayers.

As we embark on a fast and prayer for our nation throughout the next 40 days, we will practise abiding in Him. In this prayer booklet, you will find daily reflections on what it means to abide in Christ, and how we can do it. They were written by local church leaders, who themselves live out the discipline of abiding. We believe that as you journey with us, you will be inspired; and that as you endeavor to dig in, deeper and closer, in your walk with Him, you will see Him move mightily in your life.



NECF 40-Day Fast and Pray

NECF 40-Day Fast and Pray started back in 2001 and has continued ever since. This edition of prayer booklets marks our 15th year of calling and mobilising the Church of Malaysia to pray and fast for our nation. Today, it is widely accepted as a key annual Christian event with participation from our National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) member churches and believers from other Christian groups.

This initiative has its roots in the Argentinean Revival which took place back in the late '90s. Desiring a wave of revival in Malaysia, the NECF invited Carlos Annacondia - a notable figure during the Argentinian Revival - to speak at the Breakthrough Conference and Rally in year 2000. The conference sparked an urgency to fast and pray for Malaysia – and from there, the idea of conducting a nationwide 40-day Fast and Pray movement was formed and put into action.

National Evangelical Christian Fellowship

Since its founding in 1982, the NECF has undergone many changes but its function and purpose remains the same. It continues to represent the Evangelical churches, as a united voice to the government on critical issues that affect the Church of Malaysia. It offers local churches a ready platform for fellowship and assistance, through its various commissions and services offered. As a representing body, the NECF also updates the local Church on current national affairs, and suggests strategic responses, including prayer. In recent years, the NECF has adopted a greater emphasis on nation building and public sphere engagement.

Pray for NECF

- Pray with the NECF that its vision to see the Malaysian Church actively and unitedly engaged in nation building, will come to pass.
- Pray that the bond of fellowship between local churches will remain strong. That local churches will remain united, vibrant and relevant as witnesses and nation builders.
- Pray that God will endow the NECF Executive Committee and Council with wisdom, as they lead and strategically address the various challenges confronting the Malaysian Church.
- Pray that the NECF Secretariat will be strengthened and empowered as they continue to pursue the vision and serve the Malaysian Church.

Call to Fast

In this season of fasting and prayer, let us soften our hearts and turn to God, seeking Him wholeheartedly. Let us, the Church of Malaysia, His body, be united, as we cry out to Him for our nation - to prepare the way for God's sovereign move to align His purposes and His will for Malaysia, in the days to come.

The objective of our fast is to increase our hunger for God, and thus allowing Him to sharpen our spiritual senses - so that we are able to hear clearly what He is saying to us about our personal lives, our families, our churches, our communities, and our nation, Malaysia.

How to begin the fast

- Set your objective - that is, the reason for your fast.
- Commit, for 40 days, to a specific type of fast, as the Lord leads you.
- Prepare yourself spiritually, by examining your heart for any unconfessed sins.
- Prepare yourself physically.
- Break fast properly by first taking small portions of food.

Be creative and include others as you fast and pray.

Suggestions:

With your family: Build a family prayer altar, and fast and pray together as a family. Decide on one type of fast everyone in the family will commit to, and come together daily to pray along with the theme suggested in the 40-day Fast and Pray booklets.

With your cell group: Agree on one type of fast. You may also want to form a daily prayer schedule, and allocate time slots of each cell member to pray that day.

With your office mates: Encourage Christians in your office to fast together. You may use tea breaks or lunch breaks to pray through the Prayer Focus of the day.

Via video-conferencing/voice calls/chat platforms: Commit to praying with a friend daily using communication platforms such as Whatsapp, Skype, etc.

Give

Set aside money saved from your meals. Fasting accompanied with giving is pleasing to God (Is. 58:6-9). Use the envelope provided and send it by cheque written out to 'NECF Malaysia'. All money collected will be designated to *NECF Charity Fund* for the development of the East Coast work. Do not send any cash by mail.

Types of fasts

Total Fast: Partaking only water and liquids and abstaining from solid food.

One Meal Fast: Sacrificing one meal a day.

Daniel Fast: Abstaining from meat. Eating only fruits and vegetables.

Denial Fast: Abstaining from something you enjoy daily such as coffee, tea, chocolates, sweets, hobbies, or even intentionally abstaining from careless speech.

Media Fast: Abstaining from any form of media such as television, computer games, movies, or the Internet.

40-Day Round-the-clock 24/7 Prayer

Round the clock – 24-7 prayer finds its roots in Scripture. In Isaiah 62:6-8 the prophet declares: “I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” Examples of such prayer can be found in Scripture and throughout Church history.

The book of Acts records the birth of the Church which took place in a room where round-the-clock prayer was being held in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost. According to Luke, who wrote the book of Acts, “they all joined together constantly in prayer.” (Acts 1:14) During the early days of the Church, Christianity was incubated by the monastic prayer centres of the Desert Fathers, the Celtic communities of Northern Europe, and eventually the Benedictine and other orders.

In the 18th century a Moravian community - under the leadership of Count Zinzendorf - prayed night and day, for more than a hundred years, and out of this faithful prayer came the great missionary thrust of the Reformation. One of their converts was John Wesley, founder of Methodism.

The 20th century saw a multi-racial 24/7 prayer gathering in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, grow into one of the greatest revivals the world has seen, the effects of which continues to reverberate in churches across the globe today.

The concept of 24/7 prayer has since become widely recognised and is practiced worldwide, and has emerged as the latest development in the global prayer movement. Non-stop, round-the-clock, prayers are being offered throughout the earth, calling for His power to be unleashed, as we prepare for the greatest harvest in all of history, before Jesus comes again.

Believers in the Church of Malaysia are now called to join hands and raise round-the-clock prayer, in light of recent disasters and tough challenges threatening the nation and the Church.

With this in mind, apart from following the 40-day Fast and Pray programme, we urge churches to organise round-the-clock prayer for Malaysia. Churches can consider taking a full day of prayer (24 hours), or combine prayer efforts with other churches for a week of non-stop prayer. Throughout this season of prayer and fasting, let there be no hour left unsaturated with prayers offered by God’s children in Malaysia.



Abide in the Vine: Jesus is the 'True' Vine

The Old Testament is replete with grapevine imageries as a symbol for Israel (Isaiah 5:7). Unfortunately, due to the spiritual adultery the Israelites committed against their covenant God in the OT, the grapevine imagery for Israel is tinged with negative connotations.

By declaring Himself as the “**True Vine**” (John 15:1), Jesus was not only re-branding a familiar concrete imagery for himself - He was also deliberately distancing himself from the renegade OT Israelites. As the True Vine, Jesus is a model par excellence for faithful obedience. Philippians 2:8 expresses it well: **“And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death -- even death on a cross!”**

No wonder then, we see in Luke 3:22, at the commencement of Jesus’ public ministry, Father God highly commended Jesus by uttering these words: **“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”** Why such affirming words from the Father? Because Jesus had always demonstrated steadfast obedience to the Father’s will without any reservation or question.

Likewise, we only bring pleasure to our Heavenly Father’s heart when we seek to emulate Jesus in the area of faithful obedience. Philippians 2:5 calls us to adopt the same mindset as that of Jesus. **As we abide in the True Vine, do we seek to become a more obedient people?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Selangor

- State government:
 - a) That the Menteri Besar and all authorities in state governance will uphold transparency, integrity and impartiality;
 - b) Effectiveness and competence in all policy implementations;
 - c) Wise financial management and good stewardship;
 - d) Prioritise public interests and public well-being;
 - e) Committed to poverty eradication;
 - f) Appropriate development plans without affecting the poor and the environment;
 - g) Corrupt officials to be removed.
- Orang Asli to be accorded just treatment and dignity.
- The Church:
 - a) Unity – that the Malaysian Church will be Christ-centric instead of egocentric; Kingdom-centric instead of church-centric.
 - b) Awareness of challenges facing the Church and wisdom to address them.
 - c) Effective role in issues affecting the community, excellence for God in the marketplace, passion in rural outreaches.



Abide in the Vine: 'Abide' in the True Vine

In John 15:1, Jesus employs a horticultural metaphor which denotes an organic and dynamic relationship between the vine and the branches. Thus, He is actually inviting us to enter into a *living relationship* - a real union and communion with Him. This in turn will lead us to know Jesus personally and intimately.

Jesus is also calling us into a *dependent relationship* with Him when He commands us to abide or remain in Him (John 15:4-6 and 7). According to renowned theologian and author J. Sidlow Baxter, the Christian life is not like a battery system which requires frequent recharging once the power runs out. Rather, we should operate it like the electric current principle – where the electrical plug remains in the socket all the time so that there is *continuous power* through *continuous contact*.

Jesus seeks to impress upon us that believers who are truly born again, are spiritual branches that remain organically attached to the Vine. When we abide in Jesus each day, we are drawing spiritual power from God to nourish and sustain our spiritual life and growth. **How serious are we in obeying the command of Jesus to remain in continuous contact with him?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Negeri Sembilan

- The state government: wisdom, integrity and corrupt-free, prioritise public interests, good stewardship of state funds, respect and uphold religious freedom. All government policies and development programmes to be administered justly, without favouritism or any discrimination.
- Economic sufficiency and economic development, especially for those involve in agriculture e.g. farming and fishing.
- The Church:
 - a) *Unity, vision, fire for Jesus and passion for the lost;*
 - b) *More dedicated leaders and committed full-time workers, as well as adequate support for them;*
 - c) *Fruitful campus outreaches, to foreign students in particular;*
 - d) *Young Christian graduates will return and contribute to the wellbeing of both their local churches and home state.*



Abide in the Vine: My Father is the 'Vinedresser'

Jesus does not only declare Himself as the True Vine, but he also points out that the heavenly Father is the vinedresser in John 15:1. The role of a farmer is to maintain the health, growth, and fruitfulness of the grapevine. For example, to ensure that the vine becomes increasingly fruitful, the farmer will prune the unproductive branches (John 15:2).

The “pruning” of our lives often looks like a painful process, but it is nevertheless a very important sanctifying work which our loving Heavenly Father, who is the spiritual Vinedresser, does for us. Just like a hospital surgeon who has to remove a gangrenous limb or cancerous tumour, in order to save a patient’s life, similarly our Father will only “prune” the deadwood in our character which hinders our spiritual growth and fruitfulness. As Hebrews 12:9-10 puts it: *“Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they (earthly fathers) disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.”*

What then is the whole purpose of this “pruning” exercise by our heavenly Father? The end goal is clearly articulated in John 15:8: *“This is to My Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”* **Are you and I aware that God is most glorified when we reach a high level of fruit-bearing?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Melaka

- For the state government and local councils:
men and women of integrity and good reputation – who place public interests above theirs – to be in positions; their hearts and ears be attentive to godly counsel, doing what is right in God’s sight.
- For the Chief Minister and the state executive council to work well together for the rakyat’s interest.
- The Church:
a) Ask the Lord to revive His Church and bless His people with renewed vision and unity; b) Renewed concern among His people for the salvation of many; for confidence, boldness and sensitivity in sharing and proclaiming the Good News and demonstrating its power; c) For Mission Schools to have godly Christian principals, good teachers, and freedom to run student Christian fellowships.



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The Branch: We are the Branches, He is the Vine.

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:4-5

These verses remind us that we are the branches and Christ is the Vine. For branches to grow well and to be healthy and fruitful, they must fully abide in the vine and feed from the nutrients that come from the vine. If the soil is unhealthy and the vine fails to receive proper nutrients and water to grow, it will severely affect the growth of the branches.

As God’s children, we have a Vine that is fully sufficient and will not dry up. That Vine is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is all sufficient, all able, all knowing, all powerful and is our total Provider. He is not affected by adverse situations in the world or in the heavens because He is in control of all situations in the physical or in the spiritual realm.

Let us therefore not neglect to receive daily, all that God the Father wants to give to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, the power of the Holy Spirit, the word of God, spiritual gifts, and His guidance and leading in our lives.

“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16

Do we truly believe that our God will supply ALL our needs according to His riches and glory through Jesus Christ?

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Attorney-General

- Love for truth and righteousness.
- Fear of God that they may work for the justice of all people.
- The Attorney-General and the staff team will have the courage to resist manipulation, pressure and the fear of man.



The Branch: A Sanctified Life

Then Joshua said to the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.” Joshua 3:5

Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

2 Timothy 2:21

God can choose not to use people if their hearts are not turned towards Him. When He wants to do something significant in a person’s life and wants to use him for His purpose, He will begin to draw that person’s heart towards holiness, righteousness and purity. He will move the person to sanctify themselves wholly unto Him.

The reason for this is that sin is a formidable barrier that prevents God from having His way with His people (Psalm 66:18). For God to work through and on behalf of any individual, He calls for cleansing through deep and sincere repentance. He asks for a heart purged of impurities and for hands that are cleansed of unrighteous deeds. When this is done with sincerity and truth, He so often moves and does wonders without measure. At this point, the life of the Vine will flow freely through the branches (God’s people), and His power will surge through them.

Let us therefore allow Him to have His way with us. We must sanctify ourselves, present our bodies and lives as living sacrifices to God, seek His righteousness, and consecrate our whole lives unto Him. **Have you come clean before God so that no sin may hinder His work in you and through you?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Judges

- For the judiciary to uphold the Federal Constitution.
- That judges will administer justice without partiality. For judges to deliver judgment in accordance with the law and evidences presented to them, independent from politics and money corruption.
- For independent and courageous judgments – that judges will be brave enough to make decisions based on facts, the law and the constitution, without considering whether the decision is popular or not, or whether it will be praised or mocked by the public. For rulings based on legal and constitutional principles.



The Branch: The Victorious Life

For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules as righteous as all this law that I set before you today? Deuteronomy 4:7-8

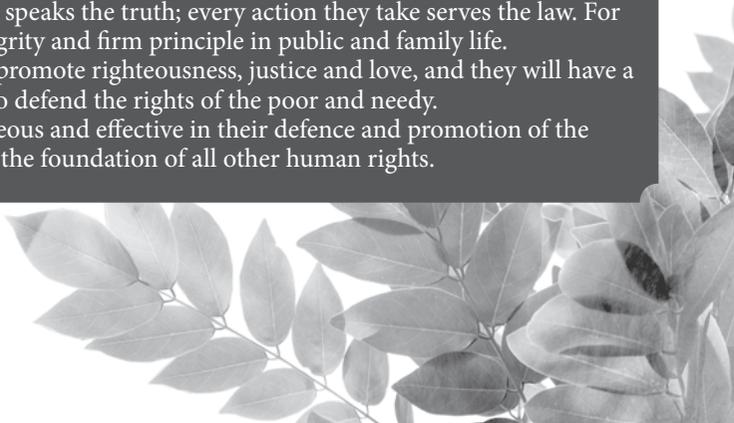
We are indeed a privileged people to know God personally through Jesus Christ, and to be given the right to be His children. We can call God “Abba Father” and we have access to Him at any time.

As God’s people who freely receive life from the Vine, we are not destined for defeat but to meant to live in victory. *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).*

Oppressive forces, problems and demonic powers are out there in this world, and their purpose is to prevent our spiritual growth, hinder the gospel of Christ, cause crises in the Church of God, and oppose the advancement of God’s kingdom. The Lord Jesus, however, has given us total authority over all adverse situations and evil powers (Mark 16:17; Luke 9:1-2). In confronting all these, we are: 1) to walk close with our Lord and receive the life-giving Word and power from Him, 2) confront all situations with faith and trust in the Lord, 3) confront evil powers in faith and boldness, and cast them out in the name of the Lord Jesus, 4) walk in obedience to the Word of God. **Do you and I exercise the victorious authority given to us in Christ Jesus to confront our enemies and enforce the Kingdom of God?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Lawyers

- That they may be trustworthy with confidences, keen in study, accurate in analysis, correct in conclusion, able in argument, loyal to clients, honest with all, courteous to adversaries, ever attentive to conscience.
- That every word they say speaks the truth; every action they take serves the law. For their zeal for justice, integrity and firm principle in public and family life.
- That their advocacy will promote righteousness, justice and love, and they will have a burden and willingness to defend the rights of the poor and needy.
- That they may be courageous and effective in their defence and promotion of the sanctity of human life — the foundation of all other human rights.





The Branch: Ambassadors for Christ

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 2 Cor. 5:20

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:16

As God's people we are ambassadors of God's kingdom in our nation. We represent God - our heavenly Father and Jesus Christ our Savior - and we are to do this with honour, integrity, and dignity. We are to live a life of purity and holiness before God and before our fellow men. We are ambassadors of God's love, His peace and His mercy. We are to proclaim, without compromise, God's message of salvation and eternal life to our neighbours and the unsaved.

As ambassadors of the most High God, we are to at all times, conduct ourselves in a manner that will be pleasing to Him. We are to represent the Christian faith with truth, integrity and excellence. With all the opposition and injustice that we see around us, we are to forgive and *"not be overcome with evil but overcome evil with good"* (Romans 12:21). **Is your life one that shines for Christ or are you no different from the rest of the world?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Ministry of Home Affairs

- That the fear of God always be in them. To be men and women of integrity, humility and honesty.
- For all-inclusive policies that benefits the people and embraces our nation's diverse communities, regardless of creed, class and race. Pray against policies that alienate the different races.





The Branch: Being Steadfast and Immovable

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:58

Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. 1 Corinthians 16:13

The Church in Malaysia is going through some challenging times. We are experiencing adverse situations that we have not encountered before. We see clear strategies by other groups to convert and draw people away from Christ, especially in the rural areas and in the interiors. With all the backing and resources made available to these groups, they seem to have a clear advantage.

Yet we do not lose hope. In the face of all these, the Church must stand firm and strong, to fulfill her calling and purpose in God. The Lord Jesus said, “*..and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” (Matthew 16:18b) Our hope is in WHO God is, and what He has said that He would do. That is, He will build His Church. Let us then move forward in faith and avail ourselves as co-labourers with Christ. **Have you allowed your faith to be shaken by the surrounding circumstances or is your faith rooted in Christ alone?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Police

- For police personnel that value integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality. Pray for reforms within the police force to become a reality.
- Ask the Lord to guide them as they keep us safe day and night, and that He will hold them firmly in His care should danger come their way. Thank the Lord for exposing extremist elements and militant groups in our nation. Ask the Lord to watch over our police force and protect them, their families and friends.
- For synergy between the police and other state regulatory apparatus (the judiciary, legislature and public prosecutor), all of which need to be attuned to the service of the common interest.





The Branch: Impacting our Community

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news?” Romans 10:14-15

First of all then, I urge that supplication, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people,... This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:1,3,4

Believers are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, to bring transformation and God’s blessing to the nation. We have the Word and the eternal life in us through Christ our Savior. We have the truth and the life-giving message that can save and transform the life of each individual on earth. God does not want us to keep this truth to ourselves for our own benefits. Instead, He wants all of us to go out into the world and make disciples who follow hard after Christ.

It is imperative therefore, that all of God’s people must arise as disciples and not just stop short after conversion. It is also the primary task of the Church and church leaders, to teach and equip believers to be disciples and leaders that will influence all the spheres of society. It is only when the whole body of Christ rises up with a passion to do God’s will, with uncompromising dedication and boldness that we will see a clear and visible impact of the local church on our communities. **Have we lost touch with the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to bring change to the communities around us?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Immigration

- That they would be courageous enough to stand up for what is right; for successful delivery of their services to the public.
- That they be timely, reliable and dependable in discharging their responsibilities.
- That they be honest in financial and ethical matters.



The Branch: Preparing the Next Generation

And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110 years. And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance in Timnath-heres in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. And all that generation were also gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel. Judges 2:8-10

The future of the Church of Malaysia depends on how well we prepare the younger generation to take the position of leadership as her current leaders fade out of the scene. The situation becomes critical due to greater threats and challenges confronting the Church. We are at crossroads - many of our leaders are in the final phase of their ministry life, and we want to see the next line of leaders ready to take their place.

Israel's problem after the time of Joshua was that there was no clear and able leader who could take his place. Even the parents in that day were not able to teach and guide their own children, to know and walk in the ways of the Lord. When the generation who lived in the days of Joshua died, the next generation did not know the Lord and what mighty works He had done for Israel.

As there was no one capable enough to lead them, "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25), causing Israel to go through a chaotic and lawless era. **Have you been investing in the next generation of Christ followers? What part do you believe you need to play in fostering inter-generational ties?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Security Forces

- That they may rise to the highest standards of their profession. That they desire honesty, integrity and loyalty.
- For good management, diligence, and for the right decisions to be made.
- That they respect authority and practise accountability.



The Fruit: First and Foremost

Read Genesis 1:28

Our Lord views fruitfulness with utmost importance. Right at the beginning, the very first command God gave to the first man and woman, after blessing them, was simply to “*be fruitful and multiply*”. (Gen 1:28). Why was this first and foremost? Because it was through this, that man would fill and subdue the earth – henceforth extending and exercising the King’s dominion over all.

Much has transpired since that first command to Adam and Eve – the Fall of man, the formation of the nation Israel, redemption through Jesus Christ, and the birth of the Church. As we can see through the words of Jesus in John 15:1-5, God’s literal command to be fruitful, has now taken a spiritual dimension. In the book of John, “fruit” can be seen as good results stemming from the life of a believer – which not only benefits the doer, but also impacts others and advances the eternal purposes of God.

Therefore, it is now our time to answer and fulfil God’s call on man right from the beginning. We have been born again into God’s family. But the question is: **Will we be fruitful, multiply and extend the Kingdom of God wherever He has placed us?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Kelantan

- Pray for the Kelantan state government, that they may have a deeper revelation and understanding of the one true God. Pray for dreams and visions, and a powerful, transformative encounter with the God of love.
- Pray for communities and neighbourhoods affected by the recent flood. Pray that they will be able to rebuild their livelihood and receive proper food, medical, education, and other basic needs. Pray against every form of entitlement, hardship or impoverished mentality.
- Pray that the Church, we will, through our everyday vocation, stand strong and make a difference in our respective communities. Pray for Christian leaders to rise up, people who will strive to heal and disciple a lost generation.



The Fruit: After It's Own Kind

Read Genesis 1:11-13

Right from Creation, God had already set into motion the principle of multiplication – whereby, every plant and vegetation would reproduce after it's own kind. Genesis 11:12 describes it: *“The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.”*

Modern science would further unlock the mysteries of genetics, discovering that every seed contains the necessary biological code (DNA) to reproduce according to its own kind, ensuring that the integrity of each multiplied cell is preserved.

This principle applies to the concept of fruitfulness in the area of discipleship. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, the Apostle Paul tells the church, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” Notice Paul did not just instruct them to “Imitate Christ”, but used his own life as a reference point. By doing so, he gave them a visual and tangible representation of what following Christ looks like. Ultimately, Paul was reproducing not himself, but Christ-likeness in the lives of others. In was in this manner that the Gospel “DNA” was passed on from person to person, and from generation to generation. **Have you and I been faithful as stewards of the Gospel DNA, faithfully reproducing what has been taught and entrusted to us, through our lives?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Pahang

- Pray for the employers of foreign workers in Cameron Highlands. Pray that they will treat and pay their employees fairly. Pray for the Christians working amongst them, that they will make a difference in their well-being.
- Pray for Christians working in Genting Highlands. Pray for an understanding of their purpose and calling to Genting - that they will use their gifts and resources to heal, restore, align and build up individuals, families, and professionals.
- Pray for the protection of our natural resources. Rainforests cover 2/3 of the state and is among the oldest in the world. Pray that those in authority will manage our resources with wisdom, understanding and fairness.



The Fruit: The Nine

Read Galatians 5:16-25

A good tree bears good fruits, not bad ones. How do you tell between a good tree and a bad tree? Jesus said that it is by their fruits! (Matthew 7:18). Galatians 5:22-23 gives us a list of the nine “fruits” that should be produced by and evident in the life of a believer. The problem arises when we strive to create this fruit through our own human determination, which often ends in failure or frustrating results.

In John 15, Jesus gives us the answer to that problem. He tells us that it is through abiding in Him that we bear fruit. One way of looking at this, is that before we try to do the tasks He assigns us to, or serve in the ministries He has placed us in, we have to first find our identity and rest in Him. In Him, and only through Him do we find the necessary “nutrients” to grow and bear good fruit. Abiding in Christ and building our lives upon His Word feeds and restores our souls, and aligns our characters, attitudes and perspectives with His. In one sense, God is more interested in who we are becoming, than in what we can do for Him.

Maybe it is time that we shift our priorities towards abiding in Christ, rather than relying on our own limited strength and resources for holy living and life transformation. It’s time we let Him change us, from the inside-out. **Are we trying to manufacture the fruit or is it a by-product of our abiding?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Terengganu

- Pray for the Sultan, and Menteri Besar, that they will put the people and community ahead of their own interests. That they will be able to relate the problems and struggles of rakyat, and respond with wisdom, compassion and generosity.
- Pray for the 0.2% Christians (2010 Census), that they will have a right understanding of their role and influence in the community, and that their relationships with their neighbours, and with the living God will grow stronger every day.



The Fruit: Our Words

Read Matthew 12:33-37

In the passage we just read, Jesus again uses the metaphor of fruitfulness. However, the issue at hand is not the absence or presence of fruit. Rather, Jesus is talking about the type of fruit - good or bad. Everyone will eventually bear some sort of fruit. The question is - what type of fruit will you bear? And more so, how will we know what sort of fruit it is? The simple answer is by our words.

We live in a time and day where words seem to be taken less and less seriously. We are all too familiar with sayings like, “Talk is cheap,” and “Put your money where your mouth is.” Yet, in this passage we can see that Jesus places enormous value on words. He lays it out simply: what we say (the fruit) stems from who we are (the tree) *“for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”* Dealing with the deeper motives of the heart, Jesus chastises bad trees for trying to bear good fruit. This implies that we must have integrity between our inner motives and outward talk. When these two are in harmony - the proper and right actions will follow.

Let us never belittle the power of the spoken word. After all, it is through the “foolishness” of preaching that many are saved (1 Cor. 1:21). Sadly, the opposite could be equally true - have our careless words hurt, offended and turned others away from the Lord and His church? **Heeding the Lord’s warning, do our words justify or condemn us?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Sarawak

- Sarawak is the only state in Malaysia where Christians outnumber Muslims (44% vs 30%, 2010 Census). Pray that Church of Sarawak will be united and fervent in prayer; to be the watchmen over the land. Pray for the hearts of church leaders, that they may discern His heartbeat and pray strategic, authoritative and constant prayers, to pull down strongholds and lay the foundation for His coming Kingdom.
- Pray for the Chief Minister, Tan Sri Datuk Patinggi Adenan Satem. Pray that he will act justly and fairly towards all ethnicities that occupy the state, and perform his duties with wisdom, honesty and integrity. Pray that he will receive wise counsel from honest, trustworthy and God-fearing people
- Pray for the many ethnic groups and orang asal in the land to be opened to the prompting of His gentle spirit, that they may know the grace and mercy of our living God.



The Fruit: The Peaceful Fruit of Righteousness

Read Hebrews 12:7-11

Scripture talks about a certain type of fruit called the “*peaceful fruit of righteousness.*” In the passage we read, the writer of Hebrews talks about how a God disciplines those who are His, just like how a father disciplines his children. Ultimately, discipline is for our good, that we may share in God’s holiness (vs.10) and yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

There is a pattern we can observe here: First comes the pain, then comes the peace; First comes the discipline, than comes the fruitfulness.

Are you going through some sort of hardship or chastening, as consequence of a besetting sin in your life? Is stubborn disobedience leading you down a dangerous path away from God? Know first that God is not against you - He is for you. But He is against sin, because sin hurts you as well as those around you. And as any loving Father, He will do anything in His power to protect His children from that which hurts them.

When we walk in paths of righteousness, we will have peace within our own conscience and with God. The prophet Isaiah summed it up well: “*And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever (Isa. 32:17).*”

Peace is the fruit of righteousness. Peace is what Jesus promised us. Peace should be a hallmark of the Christian faith, in a stressed-filled world falling into chaos. **Do you and I have this peace that is an outflow of righteousness and holy living?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Religious Freedom

- Pray that the government will uphold the principle of equal citizenship rights for all Malaysians, regardless of race, religion and culture. Ask the Lord to neutralise all efforts by selected parties to assert ethnic and religious supremacy over one race.
- That the Federal Constitution to be upheld and honoured by the ruling government above any other law, that the voice of the moderates will be heard. Pray that the government will take its stance against extreme fundamentalist groups.
- Pray for the salvation of our majority race, that regardless of the human laws that stands in the way, God’s sovereignty would overrule and that He will reveal Himself to them.



The Fruit: Bitter Roots

Read Hebrews 12:12-17

After touching on the peaceful fruit of righteousness, the writer of the book of Hebrews further encouraged the people of God to strengthen themselves and strive to be at peace with everyone (vs. 12-14). He urged the Church to “*make straight paths for our feet*”, so that “*what is lame may be healed*” (vs.13). Are there areas in your life that are “lame”, weak and causing you to stumble in your walk with God? Do not give up. Instead, walk on in faith. “*Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot from evil (Prov. 4:27)*,” knowing well that healing and restoration is at hand.

Nevertheless, in the midst of pressing on, we also need to take heed of the warning found in verse 15 - where the author warns against the “root of bitterness,” that springs up and causes trouble not only to one’s self, but to others as well, defiling many. Whether it be a broken relationship, a child who intentionally rebels against his or her parents, or even division in the Body of Christ - most problems can be traced back to a root of bitterness, which has found its way into the heart through offence, resentment and unforgiveness.

Could it be that in spite of your good intentions, you are still reaping bad fruits because you have not uprooted a bitter root in your life? **Obtain the grace of God and do what it takes to uproot that bitter root from your heart.**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Family Ministry

- Pray for strong biblical foundations in families, to build strong homes, in order to impact and influence the next generation. Pray for embattled families that every scheme and assignment of the evil one against these families will be broken.
- For parents to live for the glory of God in every area of their lives. For committed parents who will deliberately prioritise discipling and pastoring their families.
- For children and youth of this generation to be passionate followers of Christ. That they will be grounded in the Word and equipped with a Biblical worldview, so that they may have discretion and discernment to make right choices according to Godly standards, and not according to worldly values.



The Fruit: The Parable of the Fig Tree

Read Luke 13:6-8

There are two things that are required of us by God. The first is faithfulness and the second, fruitfulness. In other words, it is not enough to say that we are faithful in our service to God without considering whether we are actually bearing fruit in accordance with His will. It is important that we think about this because we could be steadfastly doing something that is completely out of God's agenda. While we may be sincere in our service, we can also be sincerely wrong – if we are not guided by the Holy Spirit. This is because our hearts are, after all, deceitful above all things.

Jesus illustrated this truth when He told the Parable of the Fig Tree, using it to symbolise Israel's last chance to repent before it faces God's judgement. The "extra year" given to the fig tree to bear fruit signified a period of grace and extended opportunity to repent. Should its fruitlessness persist, the tree would be torn down.

We too need to understand the urgency of the times. God's graciousness and patience with us should not be presumed upon and trifled with. In one sense, the fig tree was very well "alive" but had not born fruit as the Master required of it. Likewise, does our Christian walk have an appearance of being "alive", but is in reality barren and unfruitful? **Do we hold on to an appearance of godliness but deny the true workings of the Holy Spirit in our lives?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Society

- Pray for reconciliation between the older and younger generations. Pray that the walls of pride, enmity, and entitlement will be replaced with a bridge of love, humility and encouragement.
- Ask the Lord to remove the flood of evil in our land. Waves of greed, corruption, lust, drug abuse, rape, murder, love of self, that are threatening to drown our nation. Pray for His light to shine and dispel the darkness. Claim every gateway, and pray for tight security and vigilance by the relevant authorities against the inflow of vices, radical militancy, human trafficking, into Malaysia.
- Pray for the various NGOs and organisations seeking to improve our society: cleaning our waterways, looking after orphans, feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, infirmed and elderly, caring for animals and more. Pray for wisdom, and for God's favour on them to receive better funding and resources.



The Pruning: The Master Pruner

Read John 15:1-2.

Pruning is a horticultural practice that involves an intentional, selective and purposeful removal of certain parts of a plant, to ensure its health and fruitfulness. Naturally the pruner is one who knows and cares for the plants under his care. In this passage, Jesus explicitly calls His Father the gardener of the vineyard – the Master pruner, the one who is responsible for the task of pruning the plants in His care.

God's relationship with His children is undoubtedly one which is based on the foundation of His love. He knows each of us personally and intimately, and takes great delight in us – just as a gardener his plants. God is well aware of our respective strengths and weaknesses (Ps 139).

Knowing God for who and how He is, we can rest assured that as He watches over us, we are in good care. He prunes us for our good, just as He disciplines us because we are His children (Heb 12:4-6). With this in mind, we will do well to yield ourselves to His pruning process.

Are you and I willing to submit ourselves to God's pruning of our lives, so that we may accomplish the purposes of God in our lives?

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Ministry of Communications and Media

- This ministry is presently being led by Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek. Pray that every decision he makes is backed by wise counsel, and done for the good of all people. Pray for integrity, sincerity, fairness and compassion in his thoughts, words and deeds.
- Pray for a sound mind, godly view and understanding of the nation's needs. Pray that the lies of the enemy will be exposed and shamed.
- Pray for the minister to have a right relationship with his superiors, associates, partners, the press and his ministerial staff. Pray that he will have the strength of integrity to be able to scorn corruption.
- Pray that in this high-speed, borderless world, the Lord will use this ministry to filter out lustful, violent, dangerous and negative elements that are made so easily accessible by the Internet. Pray that those tasked with censorship will be men of righteousness, integrity and sincerity.



The Pruning: The Intended End

When any gardener prunes a fruit-bearing plant, it is so that the plant will be able to bear good fruit. The process of pruning is done in several stages. First, the gardener cuts off the branches that he knows do not bear fruit.

There are various reasons why a branch is not bearing any fruit. One may be that the branch is unhealthy, and is so because its supply of nutrients from the main vine or stem has been interrupted.

Another reason could be because the branch is diseased. A branch that is lacking in nutrients will be left vulnerable to diseases, which will then render the branch unfruitful and eventually cause the branch to wither and die. If left attached to the rest of the plant, the dead branch can become an incubator for diseases to spread, which may affect other branches and even cause ruin to the entire batch of plants or vineyard.

Just like a good gardener who protect the plants in his care, God will not allow the disease of sin to fester and go unchecked in our lives. **Are you and I mindful of the diseases that plague us spiritually and as a corporate body of Christ?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Press

- Pray for the owners of all newspapers. That they will know how to balance profits with responsibility. Pray for a righteous conviction, and for a sincere desire to use their time, talents and resources for the good of the nation.
- Pray for the editors and reporters of the nation's top papers, online and print. Pray that they will report the truth without fear or favour. Pray for courage to uphold their moral conviction. Pray for sound minds and a healthy and truthful perspective of the nation.
- Pray for Christians working in the press. Pray for sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, for wisdom, integrity and righteousness, and that they will initiate projects that make a difference in their community and nation. Pray that they will surrender their ability as members of the press to influence opinions to the Lord, and operate out of the might and power of the Holy Spirit, instead of by their own human wisdom.



The Pruning: The Method and Process

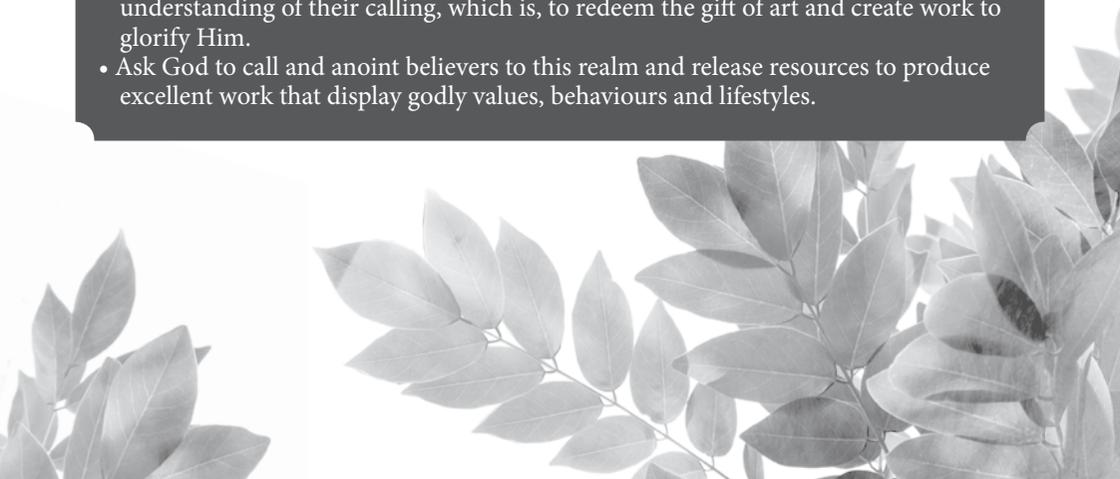
When Jesus described the pruning methods undertaken by the gardener, He used the words “cut” and “prune”. When a branch is cut off, it is permanent – and is therefore, not something done arbitrarily. It is only done when and where necessary. Such acts of severance are targeted at the branches that are dead or diseased beyond redemption. These cut branches are then gathered and burned (John 15:6).

Pruning also involves some form of cutting. However, the process of pruning is often more driven by productivity as an end result. When a gardener prunes, his intentions are often to enhance the well being of the whole plant, so that it will be more fruitful.

Pruning is usually a regular, consistent and systematic activity, to ensure a plants potential is optimised. A gardener keeps close watch over the plants in his care to keep them well pruned and therefore, healthy. So it is with our God. He is our Good Shepherd who keeps constant watch over us, the sheep in His pasture (John 10). **Can you and I still trust the Good Shepherd even when we don’t understand the road He is leading us on?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Arts and Entertainment

- The earth is the Lord and the fullness thereof! Call forth the creativity to express and to celebrate who God is through the arts and entertainment media to glorify Him! Ask God to expose all ungodly intentions and corruption in this sphere, and that He will send a great wave of righteous conviction to cause a distaste for ungodly values, in especially among younger generation.
- Pray for believers in the arts and entertainment industry to be enlightened in their understanding of their calling, which is, to redeem the gift of art and create work to glorify Him.
- Ask God to call and anoint believers to this realm and release resources to produce excellent work that display godly values, behaviours and lifestyles.





The Pruning: The Cutting that Heals

In the pruning process, not all cutting is done with the intention of permanent severance. Remember, the end goal of the process is fruitfulness. Hence, the main aim of a gardener who prunes is to protect and restore health to his plants.

When a branch is infected with disease, the gardener's first course of action would be to trim off the infected areas. This prevents the disease from spreading. He will be conscientious and careful not to over-trim, so as to not bring more harm to the plant. He will also ensure that the plant will be able to heal and will do everything in his power to nurture it back to health.

God's pruning work in our lives is to rid us of the diseases that impair our spiritual health. When He prunes us, He will also be sure to restore and heal us, so that we can fully reach the potential He has for us. In other words, God's "cutting" work heals us. **Do you and I have the perseverance and endurance to endure the cutting so that healing may come?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Perlis

- Declare God's glory to shine upon the people of Perlis, for opened heavens over them. The few Christians in Perlis are mainly confined in the Kangar district. Pray that they may arise to be at the forefront in addressing social concerns.
- The state government has eased polygamy regulations. This move has been opposed by some women's groups in the country. Pray for God's intervention with regards to the implementation of this policy.
- The border crossings to Thailand at Padang Besar and Wang Kelian have become popular transit points for smuggling and entry of illegal immigrants. Pray that the armed forces will be empowered by God to curb illegal activities at the border.



The Pruning: To be More Fruitful

Pruning does not only involve branches that are unhealthy or diseased. Jesus said, “*while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.*” Here He implies that the branch being pruned is reasonably healthy as it bears fruit. Why then is there a need for pruning?

In a horticultural sense, even branches that are healthy enough need to be pruned of anything that might inhibit their ability to grow and be fruitful.

Likewise, while many Christians have an on-going, healthy relationship with God, we are still susceptible to external factors that may hinder our walk with the Lord. We are all prone to episodes of spiritual lethargy, negligence, apathy or even sins that so easily beset us.

We are all work in progress, and God is not done with us yet. We need to remember, in the midst of being pruned, that His divine and perfect plan for us is for our good, and not to harm us – even if part of the plan involves our getting rid of something which is good, so that we can have the best. **Are there any “extra” things in your life that sap your time and energy causing you to be less fruitful?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Kedah

- Speak forth God’s divine peace upon the Kedah’s precious people, that His peace may become a reality in their daily lives. Pray for Kedah’s small Christian community, that God will give them oneness of heart and boldness to be His witnesses. Pray for more teachers of the Word to be rise up and for lasting fruits from the youth outreach.
- Poverty is a harsh reality for many rural households in places such as Baling and Kubang Pasu. Intercede for concrete solutions to improve their lives.
- The summit of Gunung Jerai (Kedah’s highest peak) is believed to be the abode of spirits, and is sometimes frequented by individuals seeking supernatural powers through meditation. Pray that those who venture to this mountain to seek supernatural powers will instead encounter the Ever-living God.



The Pruning: The Gardener's Expectation

The gardener is tirelessly committed towards making sure that his plants are healthy and fruitful. For all the effort he puts in, it will not be enough for him to see his plants healthy, but bearing little or no fruit.

When the plants bear good fruit and in abundance, they become the gardener's pride and joy, as they lend credit to his capabilities as a good gardener who nurtures his plants well.

We have already established that God's relationship with His people can be illustrated through a good gardener's relationship with the plants under his care – he nurtures them, watches over them, protects them, and prunes them when and where necessary to ensure that they are healthy and fruitful.

Similarly, God is always working with and in us through the Holy Spirit, so that we can have a lasting and meaningful relationship with Him. He desires to see all His children bear fruits of righteousness, and live abundant lives through Christ Jesus. **Are you aware of God's expectation and vision for your life?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Penang

- Penang Island's numerous religious sites reflect her people's attraction towards what is perceived as the divine. The island holds the nation's biggest statue of Guan Yin the goddess of mercy, while the annual Feast of St Anne in mainland Bukit Mertajam draws massive crowds each year. Pray that the "Pearl of the Orient" may find keys to the kingdom of heaven in her spiritual search.
- Georgetown has been a major trading centre since the 19th century. Materialistic values are very much a part of life. Pray against every sense of self-sufficiency that causes hearts to be hardened spiritually.
- Uproot the scourge of gangsterism, which dates back to the rise of Chinese triad activities during the British colonial rule. Pray also against lawlessness and immorality in the form of prostitution, sexual perversion and drug trafficking.





The Pruning: Minimising

Although God's pruning of our lives is inevitable, we can, on our part, reduce the amount of times and areas that need to be pruned. We can do this by first, staying spiritually healthy.

For branches to remain in a state of healthiness, they must be securely attached to the vine. With Jesus as our True Vine, we must be, as branches, constantly latched on to Him – because He is our source of life and everything we need to survive, grow and be fruitful. It is also by attaching ourselves to the True Vine, that we receive the strength and immunity to fend off spiritual diseases that may harm us.

Another way to minimise the pruning of our lives, is by doing away with the things in our lives that take up a lot of our resources, but hold no real, eternal value. By remaining in the True Vine, He gives us the wisdom to know what to keep and what to discard.

One more way is to simply BE fruitful. However, this only comes by remaining spiritually healthy and letting God direct where we should channel our resources. By cooperating with God, and doing our part to minimise the areas of our lives that need to be pruned, we also ensure that we are primed for bearing lasting fruit. **What are some of the things you could do to with regards to your spiritual state that would minimise the need for pruning?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Perak

- Pray for the people of Perak, that they may see the reality of God's mercy in their lives. Perak has the highest number of Chinese new villages in Malaysia – 134 in total – and of these, very few Christians. Pray for the Gospel to be preached in a relevant manner that transcends all cultures.
- Malaysia's largest Tibetan Buddhist temple is located in Tambun. Pray for those who frequent this temple to know the Most High God who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.
- The country's main naval base is located in Lumut. Pray for God's presence to shine upon the naval forces stationed in this base, that He will grant them the strategies to preserve the security of our nation's territorial waters.



God's Word Abiding in Us: God's Word as Scripture and Special Revelation

John 15 says that to abide in Christ also means to have His Word abiding, or living, in us. But, what really is “God’s Word”?

In singular form, “Word” or “Bible” – comprising of all 66 books of the Bible (or in Greek, “biblion”) – stresses on the ONE utterance of God. This also applies to the word “Law” – whether it is written by Moses or the other prophets. Effectively, all instruction, commandments, precepts, statutes, promises, warnings, judgements, etc, come from God.

In Jesus’ time, the term “Scripture” mostly referred to the Old Testament text, which were contained in various scrolls and books. They were recognised as oracles or words from God – which were holy and binding, cannot be broken, and will be fulfilled. The Scripture ultimately testified about the Messiah, that is, Jesus Christ.

Among the Apostles and within the early Church, these Scriptures still played a predominant role. Paul says that the Scriptures “are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus” and were “useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” To this day, the evangelical Church continues to accept the Scriptures – that is, the Bible – as God’s special revelation about Himself, and that through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, mankind can be saved. The universal authority and power of the Scriptures have been validated time and again, throughout the course of history.

In Jesus’ farewell discourse before His death (recorded in John 15-17), the Lord told His disciples that in order to overcome their weaknesses, the hostility of the world, and Satan’s influences, they had to abide in His Word, and let His Word abide in them. This is also the key, He said, to being fruitful and to prove that they were His true disciples. **Do we hold the the Word of God with such high regard or have we taken it for granted?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Rulers

- Declare forth God’s hand of blessing upon the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong and the traditional Malay rulers in the states, as well as on their consorts and their entire households. May God’s favour and mercy be revealed upon them.
- Pray that they will lead exemplary lives that others can admire and follow. Pray that they will speak for all without fear or favour.
- Praise God for men and women within the royal households who have used their position to take up charitable and social causes that have benefited the people. Pray that their efforts may be multiplied and bring positive change.



God's Word Abiding in Us: The Word as Natural Revelation

In our modern globalised, multicultural, multi-religious world, we must remember that God also speaks through nature, human history, the arts and sciences, as these too, reflect His “hand and footprints” – they are His natural revelation. While they are not Scripture proper – which is God’s special revelation, these are external evidences of Him, and they validate our testimony of Him.

To abide in His Word, is also to worship Him with all our mind (Matt. 22:37, Mk.12:30, Lk. 10:27). God’s Word says that nature declares His glory (Ps. 8, 9:1), His praises (Ps. 89:5) and His righteousness (Ps. 97:6).

God’s Word is able to stand up against any open-minded, rational and critical investigation, because all truth comes from our Creator who made the whole earth and all of mankind, in His own image. Nature and history does not replace the Bible. Rather, they point us to our Creator.

The Christian must not allow himself to be blinded by “intellectualism” or narrow-mindedness, like many religious and racial extremists are. Neither is he swayed by common beliefs and values. The Christian believes that the Bible alone is God’s authoritative Word – and in doing so, we are not to merely appreciate His natural revelation. Instead, we are to bring God honour and worship, as the Creator and Redeemer of all things. We are to love God and love our neighbours in accordance with His commandments. We are to be good stewards of the resources He has given us. But at the same time, we must be mindful not to be “too heavenly minded to be of any earthly use”!

Instead, let us equip ourselves and be prepared to show His love, share His Word, tell of His salvation, imitate Christ and bring Him fame, in this lost world. **Are you secure enough in your understanding of the faith to engage effectively with the world?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Prime Minister

- Uphold the Prime Minister in discharging his duties, that he may perform his duties as the nation’s leader well, despite mounting pressures and challenges.
- That the Lord will surround the Prime Minister with men and women who will give him wise, sound and godly counsel.
- Pray that he and his household may encounter the reality of God’s mercy and grace.



God's Word Abiding in Us: The Word and Spirit

We can sometimes become confused with words and ideas. This happens a lot when it comes to Christian or church “jargon” – for example, what does it mean to say that God can “speak through the Inner Spirit”, or what is “Light” in a man? Do they involve a person’s intuition or conscience? Is it a hunch or one’s imagination – after all, God sometimes speaks through “subjective” means such as dreams and visions.

The 17th century Quakers held that the “Inner Light of the Christ within” gives the Christian inner guidance and certainty of salvation. However, their extreme reliance on “subjective” faith had also led them to reject more traditional forms of worship, liturgy and formalism.

For this reason, the Reformers – responding to this – insisted that the authority of the Scripture and Biblical doctrines were preached regularly, faithfully and accurately, without denying that the more subjective, personal promptings and voice of the Holy Spirit, also has its place of importance.

The Bible frequently associates the Word with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:5, Heb. 4:12). Throughout Scripture, it is clear that God’s Spirit and Word always operate together. As someone once wisely put, “If we have the Word alone, we dry up. With the Spirit alone, we ‘blow up’. We need both Word and Spirit to GROW UP”.

Let us not divide ourselves or seek division. Instead, let us always seek after the marriage and unity of the Word and Spirit. It is a false dichotomy to have to choose one over the other. We are to be guided by Biblical principles, led by the Spirit, in our lives and ministry. **How can you and I put this balance into practice?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Cabinet Ministers

- That they would fear the Lord, though they may not know Him personally.
- Pray that they may uphold prudent management of the nation’s wealth and formulate wise economic policies that will benefit all Malaysians.
- That they will take a clear and just stand against all forms of extremism that threaten national unity, and that all forms of legislation that erode the fundamental rights of ethnic and religious minorities will be repealed.
- That Christian politicians would be bold and take every opportunity to “speak before kings” as the Holy Spirit directs.



God's Word Abiding in Us: Word and Power

God spoke and the universe came into being! He spoke forth and His Word cannot be recalled. God's Word is effective (Isa. 55:10-12) and self-fulfilling, like the miracle birth of Christ (Lk. 1:37). In seeing His promises fulfilled, God “performs His Word” (Deut. 9:5).

There are important implications to note here: the Word carries the power of God, we can follow Jesus' example and use the Word not just for preaching – but also for healing and delivering people from bondage by Satan. The four Gospels testifies to Jesus' “PHD” ministry – Preaching, Healing and Deliverance. As Christians imitating Christ, we need to include this ministry into our individual capacities, as doctors, educators, crisis relief providers, and in our church ministries.

Today we see Christians from various backgrounds and denominations applying more fully, the power of God's Word in their prayer-intercession and spiritual warfare ministries – which includes speaking the Word into (to quote Pope Francis) “the Least, the Little, and the Lost”, and even to the “Principalities and Powers” (political and spiritual).

In the midst of all these, it is also crucial that we nurture a biblical theological doctrinal mind-set. The Word is indeed powerful – and just like any powerful weapon or instrument, is rightly used to build – but if misappropriated can divide and destroy (Satan has many times misused God's word, including perverting it to deceive Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden). **Do we believe the Word of God is inherently powerful and will not return to Him void?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Federal Government

- Pray that the Federal Government will function effectively in being the hub of this nation's administration.
- Pray for the fair and just distribution of the nation's wealth by the Federal Government to the states within the Federation.
- Pray for transparent and proper execution of development projects by the Federal Government to the states.



God's Word Abiding in Us: Word As Gospel (1) -The Contents and Message

The Gospel is not just part of God's Word – it is the heart and central focus of God's Word. The term “gospel” comes from the old English “godspel” which means “god-story” or “good tidings” - which in turn, is retranslated from the original New Testament Greek word, “evangelion” meaning “good news”.

The essence of the Gospel is missional. That is, the Church is seen as the instrument to fulfil God's salvation mission in the world. Jesus was sent by the Father, and we are being sent out into the world to bring news of His salvation to others.

Even so, as “evangelicals”, we can become so word-centred, that we overlook this focus on missions. We forget that God's Word reflects His character and His heart – which is always intent on redeeming a lost world through the promise of His love and salvation, for those who repent through faith in Jesus Christ.

God is Holy, Just and Merciful, and therefore, His judgement and salvation are two sides of the same coin when it comes to the Gospel message. The Word speaks of pardon, grace and mercy for the penitent, but the wilfully unrepentant will be dealt with in wrath and judgement.

But praise be to God, that in Jesus Christ we are saved, born again, cleansed, sanctified, glorified, redeemed, and have been made new – reconciled and justified before the Father. Let us give thanks, and rest assured in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel (Romans 15:29). **Do we rejoice in this great inheritance available to all who receive Christ or have we lost the wonder of it all?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: State and Local Government

- Pray for the Chief Ministers of each state that they will administer their respective states effectively
- Pray that righteousness, integrity, efficiency and justice will be the pillars of the state governments, local governments and special local governments.
- Pray that elected state-level assemblymen in the state governments will carry out their duties well.



God's Word Abiding in Us: Word As Gospel (2) - Mission and Evangelism

From the very start, God has been preparing His people, Israel, to be missional. He commanded them to bless the nations with the good news of His love and salvation. His primary call for the Church is to bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Mt. 28:18, Mk. 16:15, Lk. 24:46, Jn. 20:21, Acts 1:8). The early Church saw the good news of salvation spreading through the witness of the first Christians and the apostles. There are evidences that the Gospel went far beyond the Roman Empire within the first century after Jesus' death. By the third century, the whole Roman Empire which had previously persecuted the Church, had become officially Christian.

However, the advancement of the Gospel saw a decline as the first millennium approached, and the world entered the Middle Ages. This was a time when the Roman Catholic Church began to neglect the power of the Gospel, placing their focus instead, on religious and political power. However, the Roman Catholic Church would later go through a renewal that sprang forth a notable missionary outreach via education, social and medical services, which are evident up till today.

Thus, we can see that whenever the Church begins to lose sight of the Great Commission, God would bring about renewal through other means – such as in the case of the decline of the Roman Catholic Church, the Reformation and Protestant revivals began to rise – to ensure the Gospel message is advanced.

John 15 also reminds us that spiritual fruitfulness does not come easy. A pruning process is often necessary, to ensure that the “branches” of Christ are healthy and continually bearing fruit. Thankfully, despite the hardships and trials we have to endure, even in the midst of the painful process of pruning, we are always covered by and under the watchful eye of our ever-loving Father. **Do you and I have that readiness of heart for missions and evangelism?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Parliamentarians

- Pray for all elected representatives (both Government and Opposition parties), that God will inspire their hearts with godly fear, so that they will selflessly serve their electorates.
- Pray for the Elections Commission that oversees the nation's General Election every five years; pray that the integrity, independence and objectivity of this commission will be upheld.
- Pray for more Christian MPs to be salt and light, and would stand up against ungodly practices and principles.



God's Word Abiding in Us: God's Word In Us - Psalms 119

Let us close our week's meditation with a classic exposition of the marvellously crafted Ps. 119.

1) A Holy Repetition

In God's Word, there is a careful and purposeful repetition of the central themes about who God is and what He does, such as, salvation and sanctification, His laws and statutes, etc. Each repetition carries further the truth that God's Word is our ultimate guide to our God-given destinies.

2) A God who relates and involves Himself in His creation.

This is indicated right from the first verse of the Psalm – in the capitalised “LORD” or Hebrew “YAHWEH” – which is, the personal, relational and covenant-making name of God. He does not just give us the Word and His commands, but personally comes alongside us, empowering us to carry them out.

3) His Word brings true joy.

As a loving Father, God wants to bless His children and see them truly happy. However, without God's Word, true joy cannot be achieved. Even “good” Christians are unhappy, if they do not abide in His word. Thus, the first eight verses of Psalm 119 – headed accordingly by the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet – make it clear that true happiness and holiness go hand-in-hand.

Read Psalm 119 and allow God to speak to you.

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Wilayah Persekutuan (Federal Territories, FT) – Kuala Lumpur, Labuan, Putrajaya

- As righteousness exalts the nation, pray for a shift in high places - that righteous men and women will be positioned to sit at the “gates of the city”, so that the nation would be blessed.
- Pray that God would intervene and impact the culture of the FTs in a powerful way, and that His presence will bring revolutionary change to the everyday lives of its people, and that His Church in the FTs will be profoundly effective .
- Pray that the redemptive gift of the land would be revealed and FTs will be a blessing to all people groups.



The Power in Abiding: The Son's Dependence

John 15:7 - "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."

John 14:10, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works."

Jesus is fully God and fully Man. This is usually taught in "Christianity 101", yet a lifetime would not be enough to completely uncover the mystery of the deity and humanity of Christ. There are so many questions encompassing this beautiful mystery, of which one of it is: if Jesus is fully God, equal with the Father, why does He still need His Father for His ministry on earth?

We know that before Jesus came to earth, He has always been in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18). During His earthly ministry, Jesus was physically separated from the Father but chose to remain in that place of abiding by laying down the right to be independent. As a Son, He had to constantly ask His Father, "Abba, what are You thinking? What are You saying? What are You doing?" This constant conversation with the Father kept Jesus in intimacy with Him.

Likewise, spiritual authority and power cannot be separated from a loving relationship with God. The Son of Man Himself is powerless without His Father (John 5:19). As His disciples, we also should abide in Him in full dependence for every ministry that He has called us into. **Do you and I have the intimacy and humility to depend on the Father for everything?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Sabah

- Pray for unity among the anak negeri Christians and a sense of urgency of the hour. For young potential leaders among the anak negeri will be raised up. That the indigenous church will know their rights encapsulated at the formation of Malaysia.
- Pray for border security and protection against terrorist attacks. Pray the Border Patrol Agents (police, RELA, army, etc.) will be effective in enforcing their duties. Pray the government will have wisdom in dealing with the illegal immigrant issue.
- Pray for rural infrastructure development (roads, electricity, water, etc.) to be implemented appropriately.



The Power in Abiding: Are You Awake?

Matthew 26:41, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

It was all quiet in Gethsemane that night, except for the sound of the Lord groaning in prayer. "If it is possible," He cried, "Take this cup from me. Yet not my will, but let Yours be done!" His sweat trickled down and fell to the ground like great drops of blood. In his agony, the angels came only to strengthen Him to endure the great sorrow ahead but not to remove the cup of suffering from Him.

His disciples, weary from the day, fell asleep while their master prayed. Three times, it said in the book of Matthew, the Lord stirred them up from their sleep to pray. At the third and final time the temple guards had come to arrest Jesus. They took Him away. He did not resist for He knew it was the Father's will.

In the next few hours that followed, one of His disciples denied Him, one committed suicide, and the others remained hidden, afraid of receiving the same end as their master. So, the words of Jesus were proven true: only those who pray can withstand the hour of temptation. Jesus had a legion of angels ready to save Him but He did not fall into that temptation. Because He wrestled in prayer, He was able to allow His body to perish on the cross for the salvation of all mankind. **Are you caught in a spiritual slumber, or are you watchful and sober minded in your prayers?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Education Ministry

- Pray for God's spirit of wisdom, counsel, knowledge and understanding to be upon the Ministry of Education. Pray for: the Minister of Education, policy-makers, curriculum writers, education officers (district, state and federal level), school principals, teachers, teacher-trainers, counsellors, disciplinary boards, and school board and the PIBG.
- Pray that the Ministry of Education will intentionally spearhead programmes that instil godly values and raise a generation of productive and healthy youth who cultivate healthy lifestyle, habits and attitudes.
- Pray that the Ministry of Education will set aside more funds and resources to help educate children in the interiors.


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34

The Power in Abiding: Hidden Places; Small Beginnings

Acts 13:22, "... He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will do all My will.'"

As a youth, David seemed like the most unlikely candidate for a king. He probably stood two or three feet shorter than his tall, well-built older brothers. As a shepherd boy (who cared for the frailest of his father's flock), he spent time practicing his slingshot skills and singing songs to God on the back hills of Bethlehem. His brothers may have actually received better opportunities to hone their masculine qualities by doing more "significant" chores for their father or by joining the army. From the way things looked on the outside, there was no indication that one day this shepherd boy would lead the entire nation.

"Do not look at his appearance or his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart," God said to Samuel when he was choosing a king from among sons of Jesse.

Man can be so concerned about the externals, that they totally neglect the training of the heart. David, in the days of his small beginnings, gave himself to pursue God in worship and trained his heart to be strong in the One he loves. It wasn't because David had the physique and smarts of a warrior that he was able to bring down Goliath. It was because of his heart that was made great in the hiddenness. **What goes on in the hidden parts of your own life?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Pre Schools

- Pray for wisdom for Preschool Operators and teachers to place the child's safety, welfare and balanced growth as their core focus. Wisdom for Education Ministry to regulate and coordinate operational needs to ensure quality care and education is provided. Pray that Christian based centres will find favour with the government.
- Pray for parents to vigilantly monitor child's holistic growth and not place unnecessary academic pressure. That any learning difficulties/disabilities will be identified and crucial early intervention to be provided. Pray that the young ones will grow in confidence and discover their talents and abilities in an enjoyable secure environment.
- Pray that Christian preschools will find creative and effective ways to bring the reality of Christ to lay strong spiritual foundations in the children's lives.



The Power in Abiding: A Courageous Warrior

Joshua 1:9, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of a good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua is celebrated as one of the great warriors of the Old Testament. He was raised up as a leader for such a time in Israel's history, where in order to reach the Promised Land, God had to lead them into warfare against the nations before them. We sometimes think of Joshua as a fearless leader with a mean, battle-ready demeanour, but the more that we read about him, the more relatable he becomes - in the sense that he too struggled with fear and intimidation.

You see, when Joshua heard the words "fear not" in verse 1:9, it wasn't the first time. Deuteronomy 31:6-8 tells us that Moses had already said those words to him in front of all Israel. A man who is already courageous does not need repeated reminders to be brave.

Yet, although he was afraid, he willed his heart to finish his task, according to the promise of His presence. From beginning to end, the Lord of Hosts was with him as his very source of strength. As we move forward in faith we need not fear because our God is with us and for us. **What then are the fears that hold you back?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Ministry of Religious Affairs

- Pray for religious rights to be upheld as spelt in the Federal Constitution.
- Pray God's divine protection, strength and wisdom for leaders who speak up against religious bigotry.
- As we face increasing challenges in regards to our religious rights and liberties, pray not only for the Lord's vindication and deliverance but pray also the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes over the situation. Pray:
 - a) That the Lord's name be hallowed and glorified, that His Kingdom come, and that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 - b) That, just as how Jesus declared in the Beatitudes, we can rejoice and be exceedingly glad in the midst of the religious persecution, discrimination and intense challenges.



The Power in Abiding: Fasting and Feasting

Matthew 11:11, “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

Who is this John, this wild man from the wilderness of Judea? Those words were probably whispered among the masses who came to see the rugged man clothed in camel skin. He wasn't one of the Pharisees or Scribes who would regularly preach and teach in the temple, but the words he said pierced many hearts into repentance. He regarded himself as the voice spoken of in Isaiah 40:3. This voice was not to be found in the upper echelons of a king's house but in the lonely harsh desert. It was there that he fasted and prayed, rejoiced in the Law and the Prophets, and prepared to receive the coming of the Messiah.

The Gospel of Matthew goes on to record the end of John the Baptist. He was killed because he spoke boldly against the sin of King Herod and his wife. John did not fear man who could only put his physical body to death because he was saturated with the reality of eternity. This, he received in the wilderness, away from all the comforts that the world. What did he do to receive such a high affirmation from Christ Himself? He simply abided in the joy of eternity while laying down his rights to the world and all of its pleasures. “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.” **Are we living in a way that reflects a readiness to receive the second coming of the Messiah?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Economy

- For God's purging of unethical business practices that feed on corruption in the political and governmental environment.
- For God's interference in the fast-paced culture of consumerism, materialism and “cyberism” – that has left people from all walks of life leading towards an impersonal and covetous lifestyle.
- That the Church will not succumb to the infiltration of the spirit of the world but instead stand firm in the ways of the Lord. To counter this pray for: spiritual reforms to overcome complacency; and for Christians to have a spirit of excellence in their work and business ethics as their act of worship to the King of kings.



The Power in Abiding: Inheritance

Psalm 2:7-8, “I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.’”

You have probably heard the second of these two verses quoted many times. It has also served as a battle cry for those whose hearts are for missions. Still, is there something more to this verse? Could it be that this verse is prophetically speaking about God the Father addressing His Son, Jesus, the messianic heir of David? “You are My Son,” said the Father. He continued, “Ask...the nations for Your inheritance.”

Only sons and daughters receive inheritances, while servants and soldiers receive wages. By living out in our identity as children of God, serving Him becomes a joy and a privilege, because we know that everything which belongs to Him also belongs to us (Luke 15:31).

Knowing this, I now no longer try to earn my way into a reward when I pray. One day, when Jesus returns, I know that I will be sharing in His inheritance. Now I intercede and labour alongside Jesus, asking the Father for the salvation of the peoples of the earth. Christ is King and ultimately rules over all nations. **Can we look beyond ourselves and ask God for the nations?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Ministry of Finance

- God’s purging of unscrupulous manoeuvres (and the spirit of lawlessness) by any individuals, parties internally or externally that will adversely affect and deplete the country’s funds and/or taxpayers’ contributions. Pray for tighter financial governance to eradicate leakages, abuses and corruption.
- Pray that our nation will not fall into the same entrapment as that of other nations who face national debt crises, which will inevitably put future generations in debt.
- Pray for prudence in spending and investment for the development and enrichment of the country as a whole.



The Power in Abiding: Holy Spirit Empowerment

Acts 1:4-5 “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Jesus’ great task to bring atonement was finished on the Cross - but that wasn’t the end of the story. Jerusalem was still under the Roman rule. Moments before He ascended to heaven, His disciples asked, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” His answer highlighted three things:

1. It was not for them to know the Father’s timing;
2. But the kingdom will increase through them through the Holy Spirit;
3. Not just in Jerusalem, but all Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

We could imagine their prayer meeting in the upper room to be dreary without the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Yet, they faithfully waited for the Promise until it fell upon all of them like tongues of fire. It was only afterwards, that revival broke forth in Jerusalem and when 3,000 people heard Peter (the same Peter who denied Jesus thrice) preach they gave their lives to Jesus under the conviction of the Holy Spirit. That event was just a foretaste of kingdom invasion through the praying, abiding Church. There is a whole lot of earth for the Spirit-filled Church to conquer before the time set for Christ’ return! **Do we fully lean upon the Holy Spirit to empower us to carry out the Great Commission?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Universities

- Pray for wisdom for lecturers and tutors to uphold a posture that is free from discrimination and accepting of the differences in race and spiritual beliefs. That they will be fair, ethical, and committed to their call to educate.
- Pray for first year students to have the mental strength to handle the stress of transition, adjustment and loneliness.
- Pray for Christians to see their calling as students as a dual pursuit of academic excellence and understanding the Word Of God. Pray that Christian students will be examples to others and overcome negative peer pressure as they walk in God’s ways.



Abiding in My Love: The Cross

John 15:9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love."

Jesus wants us to remain in His love, and He warns us against drifting away from His love. The clearest demonstration of God's love is the Cross which defines what love is.

The voluntary giving up of His life by the Son of God, in a cruel and painful death of crucifixion, so that sinful and condemned people like us are spared the wrath of a holy God - this is love, in the highest and purest form. Knowing such love melts away all our rebellion, selfishness, stubbornness and resistance to God's love. This wonderful love becomes part of our lives as we open up our hearts to Him.

To remain in this love, we need to keep holding on to the truth of the Gospel. We must not leave this means of grace by seeking to be righteous by any other means. We cannot earn God's righteousness and love through our works. We need to keep relying totally on the work of Christ on the Cross. Our good works are the consequences of our salvation, not a means to it. We must keep believing in this in order to remain in God's love. We are saved by grace, through faith, for good works (Eph.2:8-10). **Have we lost the wonder of this Gospel truth?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Schools

- Pray for dedicated teachers that will have a heart for the teaching and raise the level of education in our country.
- Pray for Christian Fellowships in schools to flourish. Pray that they will have a significant impact on the lives of the students.
- Pray for more secondary schools to be established in rural areas so that secondary school education will be made accessible to all students.



Abiding in My Love: Obedience

John 15:10 "If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in His love."

Yesterday we learned that remaining in Christ's love requires us to faithfully hold on to the truth of the Gospel of Christ. Today, in the verse above, we learn another means to remain in Christ's love - obeying His commands.

John 14:21 says, "Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them." We will obey God if we love Him. When we love someone, it becomes natural for us to do the things which makes them happy. On the other hand, disobedience will eventually break a relationship. The fact is, we cannot be intimate in our relationship with God if we do not obey Him.

The reality and depth of love of the Father and the power of salvation through the Cross borne by Jesus Christ, can be experienced by obedient Christians. Every time we obey His voice and carry out His will, we grow deeper in knowing Him. Jesus has repeatedly commanded Christians to love one another. He wants His love to be the defining characteristic of His Body, the Church. **Have you been responding in obedience to God's love?**

PRAY FOR THE NATION: Johor

- Pray for the Iskandar Johor project that it will create jobs and raise the standard of living by developing the state to be one of the nation's economic drivers. Pray against greed and corruption that can threaten the success of the Iskandar project for nation building.
- Pray for the Sultan of Johor who has great influence over how the state is run. Pray that God will touch his heart, and that he will administer over the state in a God-fearing way, upholding integrity and putting the people's interest first.
- Pray for the Menteri Besar and the state government, to come up with and enforce good policies that will complement development of the state, which has very close ties with Singapore.



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