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2017 雲彩集

「我們既有這許多的見證人,如同雲彩圍着我們,就當放下各樣的重擔,脱去容易纏累 我們的罪,存心忍耐,奔那擺在我們前頭的路程,仰望爲我們信心創始成終的耶穌。」 (希伯來書12:1-2)

無需地圖、直奔命定

羅長河牧師,編者譯

很久以前,一個人乘船從美國前往中國,橫跨太平洋。暴風雨驟臨,那條老船在風浪中飄搖 掙札。那人懷疑船能否安全跨越太平洋,順利到達目的地,非常擔心自己的生命安全。他將 自己的擔心告訴船長。船長幽默地說,『讓我給你講講這條船。她的木頭和甲板已經老舊, 隨時會破裂,我們可能葬身海底。驅動船的蒸汽發電機已經生銹、汽缸泄露,隨時會爆炸, 我們可能被送上天。然而,不管我們沉下去還是被送上天,我們都會前行。』

當我們步入2018,新的歷險的一年,我們不知道這一年將發生何事,但我們知誰掌管這一年。我們或許跌入低谷,或許經歷高峰,耶穌也許回來接屬他的人和他的新婦,就是教會,回天家。不管我們是上或是下,神希望我們繼續前行。他爲我們每個人設有一個命定和一個方向。你相信嗎?

聖經裏有個奇妙的故事講述了這個眞理,記載在約書亞記第三章二到四節:過了三天,官長走遍營中,吩咐百姓說,『你們看見耶和華你們神的約櫃,又見祭司利未人擡著,就要離開所住的地方,跟著約櫃去。只是你們和約櫃相離,要量兩千肘,不可與約櫃相近,使你們知道所當走的路,因爲這條路你們向來沒有走過。』

約櫃是個長四尺、寬兩尺、高兩尺的小盒子,裏面放了一罐嗎哪、亞倫發芽的杖和刻有十誠的兩塊石板。作爲至聖所的唯一陳設物,約櫃代表神的同在。四十年之久,摩西帶著以色列人在曠野流蕩,百姓總是圍著陳設約櫃的會幕安營。如今,摩西逝世,約書亞蒙召接替摩西的領導職位。神準備帶領他的百姓進入充滿機遇的應許之地。這時,神改變了他引導以色列人的方式。以往四十年,約櫃一直在以色列人中間;現在,約櫃走到百姓前頭。這種改變不是擁有上的,而是位置上的。以色列人仍然擁有約櫃,但約櫃如今引導他們。約櫃無論往哪裏,他們都要跟到哪裏。

爲什麼要有這個改變?因爲應許之地不僅是充滿機遇的一塊地,也是充滿未知的一塊地,正 如神對約書亞說的『這條路你們向來沒有走過』,更是充滿困難和試煉的一塊地。以色列人 面前就有一條大河,收割季節河水滿溢的約旦河。他們必須跨過約旦河,才能進入應許之 地。他們沒有地圖,只有神的同在。神不再滿足於僅僅居住在他的百姓中間,更想帶領他的 子民進入應許之地。

通過這個故事,我想跟各位分享沒有地圖、如何到達目的地的三個原則。

第一個原則是讓耶穌用他在你生命中的同在引導你。聖經中,帶領以色列百姓前行的約櫃預表耶穌。當我們進入2018,我們不知道等待我們的是什麼,或許享受許多的歷險,或許領受很多祝福,或許面對重重困難與險阻。神說,『我來帶領,你願跟隨嗎?』我們每個信徒心裏都有基督。可是,到了年終,很多基督徒可能發現自己並沒有活出得勝的生命,沒有到達神要我們到達的目的地。沒有地圖,要想達到命定,我們不僅需要耶穌做我們的救主,更需要耶穌做我們的領導,願意跟隨他。耶穌不僅僅要住在我們裏面,更要做我們的總統和元帥;他不僅要做我們的救主,更要做我們生命的主。面對新的一年,神沒有給我們一張地圖或指南。基督徒的生活不靠地圖的帶領,乃靠與神的關系。正如神吩咐以色列人跟著約櫃走,神也吩咐基督徒定睛主耶穌。耶穌說,『我的羊聽我的聲音,跟隨我』;又吩咐他的門徒,『跟從我,我要引導你』。

定睛耶穌意味著我們不需要知道何時。他動,我們跟著動;他前行,我們跟隨。有時,我們可能失去耐心,對神說,『你什麼時候動啊?我等不急了。』讓我告訴你跟隨耶穌的秘訣:不在於時間,而在乎時機。我們都知道聖經裏亞伯拉罕的故事。神應許他他會有一個兒子。他卻等得不耐煩,走到神前面,娶了太太的使女夏甲爲妾,生子。但那不是神的計劃。就連摩西,他年輕時在埃及地,也走到神前面,沒有成爲宣教士,反殺了一個埃及人,成了逃亡的殺人犯。主耶穌從不匆忙,也不遲延。他做了三十年的木匠,瑪利亞也許會問,『你什麼時候開始天父的事工?』耶穌回答說,『我的時候還沒到。』他與門徒在耶利哥,馬大和瑪利亞差人送信說拉撒路病了。耶穌逗留幾日,直到拉撒路死了。等他進了拉撒路所住的村莊,瑪利亞埋怨說,『你若早來,我的兄弟必不至於死。』當耶穌叫拉撒路從死裏覆活,他們的哀哭就變成歡呼。當生命行至終點,耶穌對神說,『父啊,你托付我的,我都已完成』。耶穌從來不誤事。

定睛耶穌也意味著我們不需要知道何地。去年聖誕節,土桑有個基督徒家裏布置了成千上萬的聖誕燈,我的鄰居說那些聖誕燈如何漂亮。我想帶孫子孫女去看看,就問鄰居怎麼去。鄰居說了路怎麼走,可我聽得很糊塗。他就說,『牧師,這樣簡單點。我開車在前面,你就跟著我。』我說那好。天很黑,我要做的就是註意他汽車的尾燈,緊緊跟著,很簡單。神告訴約書亞,『這條路你們從未走過』他也跟我們說,『2018年你們也從未度過。』前途有許多未知和不定,我們無需知道往哪裏去,神會告訴我們往哪走。

我們也不需要知道爲什麼。神應許約書亞將見到神蹟奇事。神蹟奇事是我們無法完全明白的。無論是約旦河分開,還是耶利哥倒塌,都是以色列人無法全然明白的。新的一年,如果我們讓神的同在引導我們,緊緊跟隨耶穌,我們就會經歷神蹟奇事。無需知道何時,無需知道何地,也無需知道爲什麼,我們唯一要做的是定睛耶穌。我祈求神,讓耶穌的同在成爲你生命中的眞實。

第二個原則是讓耶穌借著他的應許讓我們靈裏喜樂。約櫃之所以被稱爲約櫃,因爲神與他的百姓立了一個約,給他的百姓一個應許。約書亞時代,神與以色列立了舊約;今日,神借著耶穌與我們立了更美的新約。約書亞時代,神帶領他的百姓進入應許之地;今日,神要帶領我們進入更美的應許之地。神對約書亞說,『我怎樣與摩西同在,也必照樣與你同在。』新年伊始,我牢記神的應許,『我必常與你同在,必不離開你,也不丟棄你。』新約是給我們每個人的,神的應許有很多,在基督裏都是真實的,給我們每個信徒的。

可惜,很多基督徒活在如此光景。他們打開聖經,自言自語地說,『神的這個應許很美,那個應許也不錯。我要抄下來。』他們卻沒有活出神的應許,沒有將神的應許拿到天國的銀行去兑現。他們讀聖經如同女士們櫥窗購物。一位先生問太太,『你什麽都不買,爲什麼要去購物?』太太回敬道,『你一條魚也釣不到,爲什麼還去釣魚?』去購物卻不買東西,那是櫥窗購物。有些人認爲舊約時代的人活在另一個世界,呼吸著不同的空氣。沒有比這種說法更荒唐的了。神的應許是給所有時代、處在不同生命境況中的所有聖徒!舊約時代,神的子民能夠活出神的應許;今日,神的兒女同樣可以活出神的應許!

最後一個原則是讓耶穌的能力保護你!記住,新的一年充滿機遇,也充滿挑戰。許多人和事 將給我們帶來壓力、挑戰和艱難。但是,我們裏面有耶穌的能力。那在我們裏面的比這世界 的要大。

約書亞對以色列人說,『你們近前來,聽耶和華你們神的話。』約書亞說,『看哪!普天下主的約櫃必在你們前頭過去,到約旦河裏,因此你們就知道在你們中間有永生神。並且他必在你們前頭趕出迦南人、赫人、希未人、比利洗人、革迦撒人、亞摩利人、耶布斯人。你們現在要從以色列支派中揀選十二個人,每支派一人,等到擡普天下主耶和華約櫃的祭司把腳站在約旦河水裏,約旦河的水,就是從上往下流的水,必然斷絕,立起成壘。』他是主耶和華,他是永生神,他是拯救的神。聖經記著,『當擡約櫃的祭司到了約旦河邊,腳一入水,那從上往下流的水,便在極遠之地、撒拉但旁的亞當城那裏停住,立起成壘;那往亞拉巴的海,就是死海,下流的水全然斷絕。』

讀這段經文之前,我甚至不知道有座叫亞當的城。也非出於偶然,約旦河的水往下,一直流入死海。你知道嗎?希伯來文中的約旦代表下降、審判和死亡。當代表神同在的約櫃進入約旦河,下流至死海的河水全然斷絕,並在上游亞當城處停住。聖經說罪因亞當一人入了世界,死又因罪臨到眾人。我們都死在亞當裏。兩千年前,約櫃所預表的耶穌基督踏入冰冷的死亡之河,其源可追溯至亞當,他就打破了死亡的權勢。我們跟隨今日的約櫃 耶穌基督,他的能力可以保護我。新的一年中,縱然我可能行過死蔭的幽谷,我也不怕遭害,因爲耶穌已經勝過死亡。

如果你留心新約,你會發現耶穌常常發出兩個邀請。第一個邀請是『到我這裏來』。他說, 『人若渴了,到我這裏來,我是生命的活水。人若餓了,到我這裏來,我是生命的糧。人若 心裏勞苦,到我這裏來,我是賜安息的主。』今年餘下的350天,你若渴了,就近耶穌,他 必賜你生命的活水。你若餓了,就近耶穌,他必給你生命的糧。你若心裏勞苦,就近耶穌, 他必讓你重新得力。如果你心裏已經有了耶穌,他對你發出第二個邀請『來跟隨我』。基督 徒是耶穌的跟隨者。如同約書亞跟著約櫃,我們要跟隨耶穌,讓他的同在引導我們,讓他的 應許使我們喜樂,讓他的能力保護我們,我們就能在2018年不用地圖、直奔命定,過得勝的 生活。

Reach Your Destination without a Map

Rev. Ron Hart

A long time ago, a man was on a ship traveling from American to China. Suddenly a strong storm came, and the old ship was struggling to get through the terrible waves. The man worried about his life, and wondered if the ship may come across the Pacific Ocean and get to the destination. He brought his concerns to the captain of the ship. The captain said, "Let me tell you something about the ship. The wood and timbers are old and could break apart any moment, and we may go down to the bottom of the ocean. The boilers that produce steams that run the ship are rusted and leaking and could explode anytime, and we may go up to heaven. However, whether we go down or go up, we will go on."

As we enter into Year 2018, a year of adventure, we may not know what the year holds, but we know who holds the year. We may go down, or we may go up, and Jesus may come back to take his people and his bride to heaven. Whether we go down or go up, God wants us to go on. He has a destination and a direction for each of us. Do you believe that?

There is a wonderful story in the Bible, talking about the truth. It is recorded in the book of Joshua, Chapter 3, verses 2 to 4. After three days the officers went throughout the camp, giving orders to the people: "When you see the ark of covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about a thousand yards between you and the ark, do not go near it."

The ark, which is a small box of 4 feet long, 2 feet wide and 2 feet high, contains a pot of manna, Aron's rod that has been miraculously budded, and the two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments. As the only furniture in the most holy place in the Tabernacle, the ark represents God's presence among his people. For forty years, Moses has led the children of Israel wandering in the wildness, and Israelites have always camped around the Tabernacle. Now, Moses has died, and Joshua has been called to take up the leadership position. God is ready to bring his people into the promised land, a land full of opportunity. At this point, God has changed his leadership with his people. For forty years, the ark of the covenant has been in the mist of Israelites. Now, the ark of promise is in the front of the children of Israel. The change is not in possession, but in position. They always have the ark, but now the ark leads them. Wherever the ark goes, they are to follow.

Why comes the change? Because the promised land is not only a land full of opportunity, but a land full of mystery, as God said to Joshua, "You have never been this way before." It is also a land of difficulty and trial. There is a great river before Israelites, and they have to come across the Jordan, which is at flood stage all during the harvest, to get to the other

side. As they are entering the promised land, there is no roadmap but God's presence. God no longer wants to dwell among his people only, but desires to lead his people into the promised land.

From this story, I want to share three principles with you about how to get to your destination without a map.

The first principle is to let Jesus lead you by his presence in your life. The ark that guided the children of Israel pictures Jesus in the Bible. When we walk into Year 2018, we don't know what waits for us. There might be many wonders for us to enjoy, there might be many blessings for us to receive, and there might be rivers of struggles and opposition for us to face. But God says, "I would lead you, would you follow me?" As believers, all of us have Jesus in our hearts. At the end of year, many Christians may not live a victorious life and may not reach their destinations. If we want to reach our destination in a new year, we not only need Jesus as our savior, but also need Jesus as our leader. We have to be willing to follow Him. Jesus doesn't want to be just residential, but presidential; he doesn't want to be just savior, but leader in our life. God doesn't give us a roadmap for Year 2018. The Christian life is not led by a roadmap, but by relationship with God. Just as Israelites were told to follow the ark, Christians are told to look upon Jesus. Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice and follow me", and commands his disciples, "Follow me, and I will lead you."

Keeping our eyes on Jesus means we don't need to know when. When he moves, we move. When he leaves, we follow. Sometimes we might get impatient, and say, "God, when are you going to move? I am waiting for you." Let me tell you something about following Jesus. It is not about time. It is about timing. We know Abraham's story from the Bible. He got a promise from God that he would have a son. But he got ahead of God, took his wife's maidservant, Haggar, and got a son. That is not God's plan. Even Moses, when he was a young man in Egypt, got ahead of God. Instead of becoming a missionary, he killed an Egypt and became a murderer. The wonderful thing about following Jesus is that he is never in a hurry, and he is never late. For thirty years, he has worked as a carpenter. Mary may say, "When are you going to work on your father's business?" Jesus replied, "My time has not come yet." When Jesus was at Jericho with his disciples, Mattha and Mary send a messenger to Jesus, telling him Lazarus was sick. He waited till Lazarus died. When he arrived in the village where Lazarus lived, Mary said, "If you had come earlier, my brother wouldn't have died." When Jesus resurrected Lazarus from death, their pounding turned into shouting. At the end of his life, Jesus said to the Father, "I have finished everything you send me to do."

Keeping our eyes on Jesus also means we don't need to know where. In the past year around Christmas time, I heard a Christian decorated his house with thousands and thousands of Christmas lights. I wanted to bring my grandchildren to see this man's house. My neighbor was telling me how beautiful the house was. I asked him how to get there. He was telling me the direction, and I got confused. Then he said, "Pastor, I make it easy for

me. I am going to get my car, and you just follow me." I said, "That is easy." It was dark, and all I needed to do was to look at his tail lights and follow him. As God said to Joshua "You have never been this way before," God says to us "You have never been in Year 2018 before." There are many mysteries, we don't need to know where. God will tell us where.

And we don't need know why. God promised Joshua that he would see wonders. Wonders are something that you don't fully understand. This year, if we let God's presence guide us, and if we follow Jesus, we will see many wonders. We don't need to know when, where, and why, we only need to keep our eyes on Jesus. My prayer for you is that Jesus' presence is a reality in your life.

The second principle is to let Jesus gladden you by His promise. The ark is called the ark of the covenant. The covenant is a contract, an agreement, and a promise that God made with His people. In Joshua's time, God made a covenant with Israel. Today, God makes a new covenant with us through Jesus. In Joshua's time, God led his people into a land of a promise. Today, God leads us into a land of promises. God said to Joshua, "As I was with Moses, I will be with you." When I walk into 2018, I remember God's promise, "I will be with you always. I will never leave you or forsake you." God has made many promises to us. The new covenant is for each of us, and the promises in the Bible are for each of us as believers.

However, this may describe how many Christians live. They take out the Bible, and say to themselves, "This promise is wonderful, that promise is so great. I am going to write it down." But they never live by the promise, and never take it to the heaven's bank to cash it. They read the Bible like ladies go to window shopping. A husband once asks his wife, "Why do you call it shopping, since you don't buy anything?" She replies, "Why do you call it fishing, since you never catch anything?" You go to shopping, but don't really buy anything. That is window shopping. Some believes people in the old testament time lived in a different world, and breathed different oxygen. This cannot be further away from the truth! God's promises are for all saints, for all seasons, at any situation in life. In the old testament time, his people could live by his promises. Today, his children also can live by his promises.

The last principle is to let Jesus protect you with his power. Remember this new year is full of opportunities, but also full of struggles. There will be multiple things that will bring pressure, struggles, and difficulties on our life. But we have Jesus' power living in us. The one who is in us is greater than the one that is in the world.

Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God. This is how you will know the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. See the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. Now

then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. And as soon as his priests who carry the ark of the Lord the Lord of all the earth set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap."

He is the Lord God, he is the living God, he is the liberating God. The Bible says, "As soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah was completely cut off."

Before I read this passage, I even don't know there is a city called Adam. By no accident, the water flows all the way down to the Dead Sea. Do you know that Jordan in Hebrew means descending, judgement, and death? When the ark that represents God's presence steps into the river of Jordan, the water flowing down to the Dead Sea was cut off, and was all the way pushed back to the city of Adam. The Bible says, sin entered the world through one man that is Adam, and death through sin. In Adam we all died. When two thousand years ago Jesus, who was pictured by the ark, stepped into the chilly water of death, which was all way back to Adam, he shattered death. When we follow Jesus, who is our ark today, he will protect us by his power. Even though I may have to walk through the shadow of death, I shall not be afraid, because Jesus has crushed death.

If you read the new testaments closely, you may find Jesus often extends two invitations. His first invitation is "Come to me". Jesus says, "If someone is thirsty, come to me. I am the living water. If someone is hungry, come to me. I am the bread of life. If someone is tired, come to me. I am the Lord of sabbath." In the next 350 days, if you are thirsty, come to Jesus, and he will give you the living water; if you are hungry, come to Jesus, and he will provide you the bread of life; if you are tired, come to Jesus, and he will give you rest. If you have Jesus in your heart, he extends his second invitation to you, "Come after me. Follow me." Christians are called followers of Jesus. As Joshua followed the ark, we should follow Jesus, let his presence guide us, let his promise gladden us, and let his power protect us, so that we may live a victorious life and reach our destination without a map in Year 2018.

做个有追求的信徒

Frank 弟兄

去年夏天我在美国的时候,和一个华人教会的同工沟通。他讲到教会的弟兄姐妹服事都挺热心。我为他们感谢主,问他说: 『你们教会弟兄姐妹有追求吗?』他不太明白我的意思。后来我和自己教会的一个弟兄聊天,谈到信徒属灵的追求,说: 『在我们教会里愿意服事的信徒不少,但是有追求的信徒不多。』弟兄就问我: 『什么是属灵的追求?』

弟兄姐妹,我们今天就来思想这个问题。在日常生活中,我们会说,这个人有追求;或者相反,那个人不求上进。一个有追求的人对于现状不满,有近期和长远的目标,为达到目标而努力。在属灵的生活上也是一样。有追求的信徒对于现状有一种『神圣的不满』,因着神的本性或者圣经的应许,有强烈的渴慕,愿意花代价,去得着他们想要得着的。今天的信息就是要鼓励弟兄姐妹『做个有追求的信徒』,作为一个新年的勉励。

我们的主题经文是腓立比书**3:12-14**:『这不是说,我已经得着了,已经完全了。我乃是竭力追求,或者可以得着基督耶稣所以得着我的。弟兄们,我不是以为自己已经得着了。我只有一件事,就是忘记背后努力面前的,向着标竿直跑,要得神在基督耶稣里从上面召我来得的奖赏。』

腓立比书是保罗四本『监狱书信』之一。写腓立比书的时候,保罗已经完成了三次传道旅程,被囚禁在罗马,等候皇帝的审判。那个囚禁可能更像是监视居住。保罗被允许写信,接受探访和金钱馈赠。腓立比教会就是经常送钱给保罗的。腓利比书被称为『喜乐的书信』。 『喜乐』一词在这本书信中出现十二次之多!

按照圣经专家推断,腓立比书大约是主后60年写的。而保罗可能是在主后65年被罗马的尼禄皇帝处死。写这本书的时候,保罗已经快达到他人生的终点,也接近灵性的顶峰。但是在这段话语中,保罗二次提到,自己还没有得着!

第一次他说:『这不是说,我已经得着了,已经完全了。』

第二次他又说:『弟兄们,我不是以为自己已经得着了。』

在说这些『没有得着』的话语前,保罗说了什么呢?腓立比书3:12:『不但如此,我也将万事当作有损的,因我以认识我主基督耶稣为至宝。我为他已经丢弃万事,看作粪土,为要得着基督。』这里说的『万事』就是主耶稣基督以外的所有事情,包括之前保罗认为对自己有益处的,比如他的身份、学历等等。在保罗的眼中,唯有耶稣基督是至宝。为了要得着耶稣基督,他把万事丢弃了,都看成是粪土了。弟兄姐妹,我们有没有把认识耶稣基督看成至宝?相比之下,有没有把万事看成粪土?对于大部分信徒来说,有很多事情比耶稣基督来得重要:工作、房产、儿女、甚至自己的心情都可以轻易地凌驾于耶稣基督之上。说实话,我没有看到一个信徒、包括传道人符合这个描述。我自己完全不符合。你符合吗?

这样的一个属灵伟人,在他灵命的高峰期,却说:『我还是没有得着。』,这种态度就是一种被我称为『神圣的不满』的特质。

在现实生活中,不满足的人很多。比如,我们中间觉得自己钱够多的举手看看?估计没有一个人会举手。曾经有人问标准石油公司的创始人洛克菲勒,人赚多少钱才够,他给出一个很哲理的回答:『Just a little bit more. (只要多赚一点点!)』

其实在物质生活上,神要我们满足的。保罗写信给提摩太的时候,对他说:『只要有衣有食,就当知足。』(提前**6:8**)。因为什么呢?物质的领域是暂时的。我们在物质的世界里面只有很短暂的时间。来的时候没有带什么,去的时候也带不走什么。还活着的时候,我们所需要的其实就是有衣有食。有衣有食之后,穿的好点,吃得好一点差别没有那么大。这点也被心理学证实了。人赤贫的时候,钱多起来,幸福感和物质的丰富程度成正比;到一个地步,钱再多,对于幸福感的增加,作用减少了;然后钱更多的时候,可能产生反作用,更可能使有钱人感觉焦虑,而不是幸福。

这并不是说,神不看重我们物质上的需要。有些"过分属灵"的人容易推导出这样不符合圣经的结论来。事实上,神重视我们所有的需要,包括物质的需要。比如诗篇103:5说:『他用美物,使你所愿的得以知足,以致你如鹰返老还童。』神乐意满足我们物质上的需要,让我们享受世界上的生活。但是对于物质生活,神要我们有衣有食就当知足。那是神圣的满足;在属灵上,我们却应该有一种神圣的不满足。老底嘉教会是一个在属灵上有虚假满足的教会。他们说:『我们是富足的,发了财了,一样都不缺了。』(启3:17)。他们说自己发财,估计是在描述物质上的丰盛。但是耶稣基督对他们的评价是『你是那困苦,可怜,贫穷,瞎眼,赤身的。』(启3:17)。

一个满足的人不会追求;一个追求的人是不满足的。在物质和属灵领域里面都是一样。所以弟兄姐妹,今天我的第一个要点是要你对于自己的属灵现状不满!如果保罗对于自己的属灵现状不满,我们就没有任何理由可以满足。很多信徒会觉得,我信主了,也受洗了,聚会也经常来,服事也算热心,现在就等着上天堂了。还有什么可以不满的?还有什么可以追求的呢?

保罗之所以不满足,是因为他还有很多想要得着而没有得着的。这个是一个有追求的人的第 二个表现,除了对于现状不满以外,还有追求的目标!这点保罗也说了二遍。

第一次他说:『或者可以得着基督耶稣所以得着我的。』

这话有点拗口。意思是耶稣拯救保罗的时候,对于保罗的一生有一个奇妙的旨意。而保罗自认,还没有达成神对他的期待。那么,弟兄姐妹,我们有没有达成神对我的期待?想一想,耶稣基督拯救我,是要我过现在这样的生活吗?就这么说吧,如果有任何人看到我们的生活,会不会羡慕?他们会不会因此想成为基督徒?这不正是耶稣基督的期待吗?他拯救我们,祝福我们,好让我们成为其他人的祝福,把人带领进入神的家。

下面我们来看一小部分圣经讲到『耶稣基督所以得着我的』经文,大家来对比下。如果有达成,感谢赞美主;如果没有,那些就是你应该要得的。准确地说,是耶稣基督要你得的。这些就应该是你追求的目标,人生的标杆!

约翰福音10:10大家都非常熟悉,耶稣说:『我来了,是要叫羊(或作人)得生命,并且得的更丰盛。』在这里耶稣告诉我们,他拯救我们的目的,是什么?要我们得生命!所以弟兄姐妹,信主以后,我们应该有一个强烈的感受,就是有生命了,有活力了!这种生命的活力是以前没有信的时候所没有的!而且这种生命的活力是一天比一天更明显,更丰盛的!弟兄姐妹,你得着了吗?还是觉得信主以后和以前差不多,或者根本不知道『得生命』是什么意思?如果是这样,你就有追求的目标了。在新的一年里面,追求这种丰盛的生命吧!

在约翰三书1:2,神借着使徒约翰的口对该犹,也对着我们众信徒说:『亲爱的兄弟阿,我愿你凡事兴盛,身体健壮,正如你的灵魂兴盛一样。』所以,耶稣基督拯救我们,是要我们灵魂(就是生命的意思)兴盛,凡事兴盛,身体健壮!弟兄姐妹,这是耶稣基督之所以得着你的目的,是他要你得着的!所以,如果你现在没有凡事兴盛,没有身体健壮,没有灵魂兴盛的,那么你就有了追求的目标了。在新的一年里面,让这些耶稣基督想要给你的祝福成为你的现实吧!

约翰福音16:24是关于信徒祷告必蒙应允的经文:『向来你们没有奉我的名求甚么,如今你们求就必得着,叫你们的喜乐可以满足。』 这也是耶稣基督想要每个信徒都能享受到的特权。 环顾左右,现实生活中很少有这样『求就得着,喜乐满足』的信徒。这不等于说,耶稣基督的应许是无效的。神的话语是信实的,是真理,我们要凭着信心去支取。弟兄姐妹,如果你的祷告蒙应允的比率还没有到100%,那么你就有了追求的目标!

如果这些经文看起来有点抽象的话,我们可以想一下初代教会的情形。现代教会可以不可以像初代教会这么兴旺?可以!因为初代教会的神也是我们的神。耶稣基督昨日、今日,直到永远都是一样的。我们可以不可以像初代教会的弟兄姐妹那么有能力?可以!在初代教会的时候,神『用神迹奇事,和百般的异能,并圣灵的恩赐,同他们作见证。』(来2:4)。今天神还可以这样做吗?当然可以!为什么没有?因为我们还没有得着!

上面是我随便想到的一些标杆。弟兄姐妹,按照你所到达的灵程,神会在你生命中设立一些近期和远期的标杆。重要的不是我们现在已经达到了什么水平,而是有没有正确的方向,而且我们在向那个方向努力地奔跑!

第二次保罗说,他『要得神在基督耶稣里从上面召我来得的奖赏。』

我理解,保罗说的『奖赏』应该是在天上耶稣基督要给他的。相比在这个世界上能够得着的,我相信,信徒在天上的奖赏是更大的。大到一个地步,现在我们可能还没有办法完全理解。圣经说: 『神为爱他的人所预备的,是眼睛未曾看见,耳朵未曾听见,人心也未曾想到的。』(林前2:9)。 因此,很少会有信徒真的追求天上的奖赏。这也是我们信心弱小的一个表现。

最近我们一个团契在查考启示录。耶稣基督写给亚细亚七个教会的信中,都有『得胜的应许』。信徒得胜以后,会怎么样?『我必将神乐园中生命树的果子赐给他吃。(启2:7)必不受第二次死的害。(启2:11)我必将那隐藏的吗哪赐给他;并赐他一块白石,石上写着新名。(启2:17)我要赐给他权柄制伏列国。(启2:26)必这样穿白衣。(启3:5)我要叫他在我神殿中作柱子。(启3:12)我要赐他在我宝座上与我同坐。(启3:21)』

查考启示录的时候,我们注意到一点,就是没有不得胜的信徒;如果是信徒,就一定要得胜。『得胜』和『相信』是描述同一个状态,但是显然重点不一样。『相信』好像比较被动地接受;『得胜』描述一个战士在经历艰苦的争战之后取得的结果,要付代价的。求主赐给我们信心,让我们看到天上奖赏的宝贵,把那个作为我们人生追求的目标,并且花代价来得着!

保罗说,他所追求的是耶稣基督要他得着的,是耶稣基督要他去追求的。弟兄姐妹,耶稣基督也要你有追求!我们需要知道一件事情,就是神想要给我们,并且已经应许要给我们的东西,不是自动会发生在我们身上的!这点在旧约摩西带领以色列人出埃及,进入迦南地的事情上就显明了。神应许把迦南地赐给以色列人,但是以色列人还是要凭着信心,通过争战去得着。和摩西一起出来的以色列男丁,只有二个人得以进入了应许之地。而且一直到最后,以色列人也没有完全地得着应许之地!同样,今天有了耶稣基督救恩的应许,信徒还是需要凭着信心,有些要通过激烈的争战去得着的!不是那么容易,不是坐在教会中,消极等候中就可以得着的。一个有追求的人,除了不满足,有目标以外,他一定在努力!保罗说,他在竭力追求、奔跑。这话他也说了二遍。我们来看。

第一次,他说:『我乃是竭力追求...』

第二次,他说:『我只有一件事,就是忘记背后,努力面前的,向着标竿直跑...』

前面的『竭力追求』和后面的『直跑』是同一个希腊字,意思是急忙跑步、奋勇向前、追逐。不知道为什么中文要用不同的词汇来翻译。这个词的时态都是一般现在时态。也就是说,保罗描述他自己在罗马的监狱中,还在追求,还在奔跑,还在努力。忘记背后,努力面前的,意思是已经得着的和还没有得着的比起来不重要。而且已经得着的往往可能阻拦神要多给我们的。所以保罗要忘记背后!在属灵的事情上,保罗一直觉得不够,想要更多。这个努力就是『伸手去抓』的意思。这二句话给出一个图画,就是保罗向往耶稣基督在这个世界和来世要给他的,不断地追求,不断地奔跑,不断地伸手在抓!--这就是一个有追求的信徒的样子!

弟兄姐妹,对于我们来说,『追求』意味着什么?

我想,首先意味着一个愿意努力,花代价的心态。弟兄姐妹,最近你有在什么方面努力吗? 大家首先会想到工作吧!工作是神的托付和祝福,确实要好好努力的。我鼓励大家,不仅把现在的做好,还要期待神会提拔你,提升你在公司的地位,增加你的收入等等。在属灵生活的领域呢,我们有没有努力,付一点代价?比如早起来灵修,禁食祷告,抽时间读经,看属灵书籍;又比如为主的缘故去爱别人,去赦免包容弟兄姐妹;又比如冲破自己的心里障碍去传福音,奉献宝贵的时间在教会服事弟兄姐妹。没有一样是容易的,没有一样是自动的,但是若我们有追求的心,就会愿意付上代价,为要得着基督!

努力包括一个愿意跨出自己舒适、安全区的心态。比如大部分弟兄姐妹生命中很少有圣灵的引导。这些弟兄姐妹需要努力追求认识圣灵,学习聆听他的声音。如果你操练过,就知道这是一个信心的跨越,不容易的。特别对于圣灵引导很陌生的弟兄姐妹是一个极大的挑战。但是耶稣想要我们有一个『恩膏在凡事上教训你们』(约壹2:27)的生命。为此,我们就应该竭力的追求。又比如大部分信徒没有哥林多前书12章提到的属灵的恩赐。圣经命令我们,

『要追求爱,也要切慕属灵的恩赐。』(林前14:1)。无论是得着爱,还是恩赐都不容易,不是我们想要就可以有,也不是一、二次的祷告就可以搞定的。但是既然圣经这样命令和应许,我们就要花代价去得着!

其次,这应该意味着我们在不断地实际操练。追求不仅要有心,而且要有行动!弟兄姐妹,如果我问你,最近在操练什么属灵的功课,我希望你能够给出一、二个来。最近我操练很多的还是信心。读经的时候操练,祷告的时候操练。信心是一个属灵界和物质界管道。我们用信心的眼睛看到属灵的真理(神的话语),凭着信心支取,就能让属灵的真理显明在物质的世界。比如,上次我们一个团契查考耶稣基督的话语。耶稣说『信我的人,就如经上所说,从他腹中要流出活水的江河来。』(约7:38)。我们讨论的结果是,大部分的弟兄姐妹没有体会到这个真理。因此,我们就有了追求的目标。耶稣基督想要我们经历活水江河的生活。应许已经给我们了。我们要凭着信心来支取。所以每每想到这点,我就操练。如果要喜乐,我就宣告自己有喜乐的江河;如果要平安,我就宣告自己有平安的江河;如果我们要其它需要,我就宣告在我的里面已经有了这些资源!

操练就会有二种结果:一个是成功和进步;一个是失败和挫折。失败和挫折是成功的大敌!新年决心一般过不了元宵,为什么?操练了几次,失败了,就灰心放弃了。所以成功确实属于少数人的。大卫之所以成为大卫,是因为他杀了歌利亚。用比较现在的语言来说,信仰生活好像是游戏冲关。有属灵追求的人好像进入一个战场。魔鬼在每一个关口都会阻挡我们。一个关口失败,就不可能进入下面一个领域。感谢主,我看到越来越多的弟兄姐妹起来追求。我也看到,追求的弟兄姐妹面临挑战。有很多灰心放弃的。这几个月我经历了人生最大的挫折,而且是一个接着一个。我自己觉得,都是因为我有了属灵的追求。弟兄姐妹,我们追求的时候,不一定一下子就追求到。往往可能环境看起来更糟糕了。因为魔鬼害怕我们追求,所以起来阻挡我们。

感谢主,保罗给我们一个很好的榜样。他被魔鬼投在监狱里面。但是他还是那么喜乐。他还 是不放弃,继续追求。弟兄姐妹,起来吧,怀着一个愿意花代价、努力的心,不断地操练, 尝试,面对挑战和失败的时候不灰心!在新年里面做一个有追求的信徒!

聖經中的信心女子 — 喇合

陈海光姊妹

喇合在新約中出現三次,這很特別,而且當中有兩個地方提到她的時候非常稱許,說她是信心的女子。一位居住在城牆上的妓女,卻在聖經新約中成爲一個被表揚的榜樣。舊約的事跡,成爲新約的榜樣。希伯來書十一章可說是信心英雄榜,把所有能成爲榜樣的人都列出來,喇合也名列其中。「妓女喇合因著信,曾和和平平地接待探子,就不與那些不順從的人一同滅亡。」(來11:31)雅各書在提到信心跟行爲有什麼關係的時候,舉的例子又提到喇合:「妓女喇合接待使者,又放他們從別的路上出去,不也是一樣因行爲稱義嗎?」(雅2:25)在舊約是事跡的描述,在新約成爲生命的榜樣。每個人的生命當中都有故事與事件不斷在發生,但不都能成爲榜樣。我們自己每天都發生很多故事,但都能成爲榜樣嗎?喇合這位邊緣人物,因著信,成了榜樣。让我们具体看看她在哪些方面可以成为信心的榜样。

一個信仰告白

約書亞記有一段是喇合的信心告白:「對他們說:『我知道耶和華已經把這地賜給你們,並且因你們的緣故我們都驚慌了。這地的一切居民在你們面前心都消化了;因爲我們聽見你們出埃及的時候,耶和華怎樣在你們前面使紅海的水乾了,並且你們怎樣待約旦河東的兩個亞摩利王西宏和噩,將他們盡行毀滅。我們一聽見這些事,心就消化了。因你們的緣故,並無一人有膽氣。耶和華一你們的神本是上天下地的神。」(書2:9-11)她知道耶和華的旨意,她聽說過出埃及的事及約但河東之事。換句話說,喇合不斷聽到關於以色列人四十年來的事跡。聖經跟我們說:「可見信道是從聽道來的,聽道是從基督的話來的。」(羅10:17)喇合不是聽道理,而是聽見證。喇合並未親眼看見,這更難得可貴。當我們聽到不同人的見證時,這些見證有沒有激勵你?這些見證有沒有讓你感覺到信心?

不一樣的選擇

喇合相信上帝的全能,相信他讓紅海變乾地,讓威嚴的王倒塌。不管是大自然,還是地上的 王,這位上帝都有能力掌控。此外,喇合在信仰告白中也承認上帝的獨一性,提到「耶和華— 你們的神本是上天下地的神」。耶利哥城的人拜的是日月星辰、土木花草等各式各樣的神, 可是她卻認爲以色列人的神是獨一的神。同時她也相信上帝的同在,不是一個高高在上,不 只是全能、獨一無二的神。她知道以色列人出埃及的時候,耶和華怎樣帶領他們,又說「我 知道耶和華已經把這地賜給你們」。她聽見、她相信這位神是全能、獨一且與人同在的上 帝。

因著這個信,喇合就做了一個不一樣的選擇。第一個决定是把握住機會。整個耶利哥城的人都知道以色列人要來攻打,可是只有喇合接待探子,並且與對方交換條件:「現在我既是恩待你們,求你們指著耶和華向我起誓,也要恩待我父家,並給我一個實在的證據,要救活我的父母、弟兄、姊妹,和一切屬他們的,拯救我們性命不死。」(書2:12-13)喇合冒險保護

探子,如果這事被耶利哥王察覺,性命就不保,但她覺得這是值得做的事,可以保全她和全家人的生命。第二個決定是立即爭取全家蒙拯救的擔保。第三個決定是接受探子的交換條件:「二人對她說:『你要這樣行。不然,你叫我們所起的誓就與我們無干了。我們來到這地的時候,你要把這條朱紅線繩繫在絕我們下去的窗户上,並要使你的父母、弟兄,和你父的全家都聚集在你家中。凡出了你家門往街上去的,他的罪(原文是血)必歸到自己的頭上,與我們無干了。凡在你家裏的,若有人下手害他,流他血的罪就歸到我們的頭上。你若洩漏我們這件事,你叫我們所起的誓就與我們無干了。」(書2:17-20)喇合並沒有與探子立下任何書面契約,但她的回應是:「『照你們的話行吧!』於是打發他們去了,又把朱紅線繩繫在窗户上。」探子前腳一走,她立刻綁上紅線,讓攻入的以色列人就憑靠這條紅線辨識,放過這一家人。雖然沒有說何時攻城,但喇合的信心在這裡顯現,立刻綁上紅線。

成爲他人祝福

同時她經歷到的是,她的生命成爲別人的祝福。第一個,她保全了兩個探子的生命,沒有讓耶利哥城的人把探子抓走,讓探子回到約書亞那裡。「二人到山上,在那裏住了三天,等著追趕的人回去了。追趕的人一路找他們,卻找不著。二人就下山回來,過了河,到嫩的兒子約書亞那裏,向他述說所遭遇的一切事;又對約書亞說:『耶和華果然將那全地交在我們手中;那地的一切居民在我們面前心都消化了。』」(書2:22-24)第二個,她讓以色列百姓大得信心。原本以色列百姓非常害怕,因爲耶利哥城很大、人的體型與城牆又高。當摩西派探子前往迦南地的時候,探子回來說迦南人很高大,應該放棄攻打。但這次因爲喇合說的話,讓以色列人充滿信心。探子將喇合的話重複說了一遍:「耶和華果然將那全地交在我們手中;那地的一切居民在我們面前心都消化了。」喇合的一番話讓以色列人爲之一振,成爲以色列百姓的祝福。所以在第六章我們就看見以色列人圍繞耶利哥城,直到城淪陷爲止。最後。她也使父家大大小小蒙拯救。「約書亞卻把妓女喇合與她父家,並她所有的,都救活了;因爲她隱藏了約書亞所打發窺探耶利哥的使者,她就住在以色列中,直到今日。」(書6:25)

成就上帝救恩

此外,她也參與了上帝的救恩。喇合遇到這兩個探子的時候,選擇隱藏他們、幫助他們逃離。喇合沒有想到她這樣做會發生什麼事,只是想跟著這位上帝,就是「我要選擇這個上帝,我要保全我的生命」這種想法。她萬萬沒想到,在她勇敢做決定的當下,她接待了探子,就等於接待了天使。她的名不是只有在希伯來書與雅各書裡出現,更出現在耶穌基督的家譜裡面。「亞伯拉罕的後裔,大衛的子孫,耶穌基督的家譜:亞伯拉罕生以撒;以撒生雅各;雅各生猶大和他的弟兄;猶大從她瑪氏生法勒斯和謝拉;法勒斯生希斯崙;希斯崙生亞蘭;亞蘭生亞米拿達;亞米拿達生拿順;拿順生撒門;撒門從喇合氏生波阿斯;波阿斯從路得氏生俄備得;俄備得生耶西」(太1:1-5)耶穌基督是神應許的救恩。當她因著信心,做了一個不一樣的選擇,接待了探子並保全他們,同時也接待了天使,讓自己參與上帝拯救的大使命裡面。或許當我們有一點點的信心,做了不一樣的選擇時,在某日或許會成爲別人的祝福,並且成爲蒙恩典的人,參與神救恩的計畫。

从喇合的故事中我們学到了那些屬靈的功課呢?,让我们一起來看一看。

1.認識神是信心的開始

常有人問,信心從哪裡來?喇合的救恩,是因著她的信心。「妓女喇合因著信,曾和和平平地接待探子,就不與那些不順從的人一同滅亡。」(來11:31)「對他們說:『我知道耶和華已經把這地賜給你們,並且因你們的緣故我們都驚慌了。這地的一切居民在你們面前心都消化了;因爲我們聽見你們出埃及的時候,耶和華怎樣在你們前面使紅海的水乾了,並且你們怎樣待約旦河東的兩個亞摩利王西宏和噩,將他們盡行毀滅。我們一聽見這些事,心就消化了。因你們的緣故,並無一人有膽氣。耶和華—你們的神本是上天下地的神。」(書2:9-11)

她的信心是從知道、認識上帝,知道上帝的作為、恩典與話語。認識上帝,是信心的開始。 她聽到那些事件,並跟隨這一位上帝,而非人。信心不是建立在人的身上或行為,而是與人 同在的上帝。盼望我們在新的年度,從經文、禮拜中,能多認識上帝,讓信心一點一點累 積。

2.不完美人生主仍使用

喇合不是完美的人,聖經一提到她就說「妓女喇合」,爲什麼要一直戳她的瘡疤呢?聖經不 是爲了揭露她的缺點,而是用喇合當作見證。這樣的一個人,當她的信心改變了她的生命, 上帝使用她成爲人的祝福,並使她參與上帝拯救的計畫。喇合的生命並不完美,甚至有人說 她不誠實、叛國,欺騙了耶利哥王派來的人。

然而在這不完美的當中,因著信,她的生命被調整、被改變。保羅曾經說:「我從前是褻瀆神的,逼迫人的,侮慢人的;然而我還蒙了憐憫,因我是不信不明白的時候而做的。並且我主的恩是格外豐盛,使我在基督耶穌裏有信心和愛心。『基督耶穌降世,爲要拯救罪人。』這話是可信的,是十分可佩服的。在罪人中我是個罪魁。然而,我蒙了憐憫,是因耶穌基督要在我這罪魁身上顯明他一切的忍耐,給後來信他得永生的人作榜樣。」(提前1:13-16)保羅的生命也不完美,可是當他在耶穌基督裡,他的生命就能成爲榜樣,成爲第一個宣道家。

提摩太後書這麼說:「在大户人家,不但有金器銀器,也有木器瓦器;有作爲貴重的,有作爲卑賤的。人若自潔,脫離卑賤的事,就必作貴重的器皿,成爲聖潔,合乎主用,預備行各樣的善事。」(提後2:20-21)無論過往、現今處境如何,當人脫離卑賤的事,生命就會改變,成爲上帝所使用的人。不管是喇合還是保羅,他們的生命並不完美,我們的生命也是,但上帝不是看這個,而是要我們有信心,便能爲神所使用。

3.信心需有相稱的行爲

喇合只是聽見,沒有看見,但她試著相信。所以她把兩個探子隱藏起來。「女人將二人隱藏,就回答說:那人果然到我這裏來;他們是哪裏來的我卻不知道。」(書2:4)並且也不需要探子給予任何證明,「於是女人用繩子將二人從窗户裏縋下去;因她的房子是在城牆邊上,她也住在城牆上。」(書2:15)接著,「女人說:「照你們的話行吧!」於是打發他們

去了,又把朱紅線繩繫在窗户上。」(書2:21)這種信心其實不容易。當探子離開以後,她要去跟家人說,去說服家人相信這件事。而且探子沒有告訴她何時以色列人會攻打來,她還是得將家人集合到自己家裡等待。以色列人攻耶利哥城時,前七天都繞城靜悄悄。所以喇合集合家人之後,等了七天,此時喇合必須要憑著信心,並不是件容易的事。

還有一個人各位一定記得:諾亞方舟的諾亞。上帝告訴他會有大水來,要他蓋方舟,但大水沒有馬上來,他便因著信,最後終被上帝所使用。巴勒是位神學家,他說:「你的口裡有一根舌頭,而你的一雙鞋子裡有兩根舌頭,無論你口裡的舌頭說什麼,只有你鞋子裡的舌頭說出你在做什麼,和你要往哪裡去。而事實上,只有你鞋裡的舌頭才有最後的決定權。」在腦海裡的信心是死的,只有做出來的時候才會變成見證,而且有意思的是,透過行爲,你可以將信心活出來,而行出来的時候,你的信心就更增加了。行爲跟信心就這樣相輔相成,生命也就這樣被改變。

4. 勇於做不一樣的選擇

整個耶利哥城的人其實都知道,耶和華上帝是全能的,在四十年當中帶領以色列人經過紅海、曠野,打敗亞摩利王西宏和噩。他們也知道以色列人要打來了,耶利哥城會滅亡,但只有喇合做了一個不一樣的決定,就是恩待探子。「現在我既是恩待你們,求你們指著耶和華向我起誓,也要恩待我父家,並給我一個實在的證據,要救活我的父母、弟兄、姊妹,和一切屬他們的,拯救我們性命不死。」(書2:12-13)。戴德生說:「如果沒有一絲毫的冒險,也就不需要一絲毫的信心。」信心是需要冒險的,唯有跨出信心的那一步,試著去做的時候,才會知道這個信心是真的,這一位上帝是信實的神。

弟兄姐妹们,愿我们从喇合的身上,学习到她信心的榜样,并在我们每日的生活中活出这种信心。因为,人非有信,就不能见神的国!愿圣灵一直带领我们走在有信心的道路中!

我在懷爾德伍德與上帝之旅

Timothy Chan

地點:新澤西州懷爾德伍德 (Wildwood, NJ)

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你曾經聽說過『黎明前的夜晚最黑暗』嗎?你相信嗎?你有沒有這樣的經歷呢?我在前往懷爾德伍德的旅程就是這樣一次經驗。事實上,整個2017年夏天的旅程都是一系列的這樣的試煉。然而,那個試煉和磨難卻把我推離了本來安逸的生活,進入了上帝的懷抱。想象一下,你一直在自己美好的理想中漫步,非常愜意,直到有一天它突然破滅了,你只好停下了腳步,最後也不得不倒下來。但是,突然你意識到自己躺在柔軟的東西上,如此安慰,如此和平。那就是神的手,他溫暖的手托住了你。爲什麼上帝如此仁慈憐憫呢?因爲上帝不會讓我們受到試探超出我們所能處理的範圍,所以儘管我們可能面臨許多的鬥爭和困難,可是我們卻知道他會一直背負着我們的重擔,我們也總能看到神向我們顯示的愛。

你們所遇見的試探,無非是人所能受的。神是信實的,必不叫你們受試探過於所能受的。在 受試探的時候,總要給你們開一條出路,叫你們能忍受得住。-哥林多前書10:13

參加新澤西州的懷爾德伍德的旅行對我來說是一場艱難的爭戰。我從來沒有單獨出過遠門,以前總是有老師或我的家人陪伴出行。但是這次,我和許雙立 (Joshua Xu) 卻只有上帝可以依靠。經過長達23小時的舟車勞頓,我們終於到達了懷爾德伍德。簡直無法想像,我們在費城美鐵(Amtrak)車站坐等了10個多小時,而且整晚都沒有睡覺,另外還有許多事情需要考慮。無論如何,最終我們還是安全地抵達了懷爾德伍德,在巴士上就遇到了Epic Wildwood Summer Mission (EWSM) 其它的團隊。他們和我們相處的很好,當時我們談了很多話,但現在,我腦海里能想起的依然是,緊張和疲勞的神情。我們計劃整個夏天剩下的時間裡都要和這些人一起生活和工作,但是我感到非常緊張,感覺無法完成這個任務。然而上帝的聖靈卻讓我平靜下來,最終我們能夠和許多EWSM團隊的人一起歡笑,一起悲傷,一起憤怒,一起內疚,一起怨恨,又一起和解。這些事情看起來平常普通,可是上帝就是用我們聚在一起來敬拜他,並讓我們彼此相愛來榮耀他。感謝上帝一直都有他的計劃。

來EWSM的前幾周日子過得非常快,我們主要是彼此熟悉。從第一周,我就被派去尋找工作,用我們的津貼購買雜貨,與新的室友一起生活。謝天謝地,我已經和我的行動小組的人交過朋友了,我們一起尋找工作,同時相互了解。接下來,我們舉辦了關於如何傳福音的培訓課程,然後在培訓課程之後,我們會走出去並開始傳福音。還有什麼比通過實際操作更好的方式來培訓呢?然後,每個星期都有新的主題,每個新的主題也都帶來了新的挑戰。對我來說,最大的挑戰就是走向陌生人,與他們談話。我一直都知道自己有點膽怯,加上我一向於過分謹慎,在接近陌生人的時候會很痛苦。我腦海中常有一個聲音說:『哦,坐在那裡的人看起來像是在等人,最好不要接近他們;哦,那個人看起來像是在享受他們的披薩,我不應該和他們說話。』但是另外又有個聲音對我說,爲什麼只有我們能聽到好消息呢?如果我

現在不告訴他們,他們還會有機會嗎?每個人都應該知道耶穌降世的好消息,他爲我們的罪而死,所以只有我們相信他,才會有永生。在懷爾德伍德的這整個旅程幫助我把思想定位爲不是我的思想,而是主的思想。耶穌需要掌管我們生命的寶座。如果用我們自己的思想和行動,我們就不能夠執行主的工作,因此我們需要依靠聖靈指引我們所做的一切。耶穌對他所遇到的人的愛是堅定不移的。他真的會幫助他們,教他們許多關於天父的教訓。當然,這是一個過程,也是一個痛苦而艱難的過程,但是對上帝來說,任何事情都是可能的,而且他將永遠和我們在一起。

他看見許多的人,就憐憫他們。因爲他們困苦流離,如同羊沒有牧人一般。於是對門徒說,要收的莊稼多,作工的人少。所以你們當求莊稼的主,打發工人出去,收他的莊稼。因此,求收穫的主,派遣工人到他的莊稼地去。-馬太福音9:36-38

這個夏天我遇到了許多的人,也學會了很多的事情,但是隨着EWSM即將結束,這一切都必須結束。許多夜晚我們在一起了增加彼此之間的感情,想到要分別,有些人甚至流了下的眼淚。我也交到了很多真心的朋友,他們都和我一樣,願意以耶穌的心爲心。我們都努力創造一個氛圍,在那裡我們都可以與耶穌在一起,彼此有意爲之。在彼此情緒的溝通和互相的勉勵以後,我們不希望分別。當然,其實我們不會分離,因爲知道有一天我們會再見面。不僅是在全國性的會議上還是在日後的訪問中,而且我們將一定在天堂再見面,一起敬拜上帝。我希望所有讀這個見證的人都願意來愛上帝,跟隨他,願你所有的事情都爲榮耀他。因爲神會永遠愛你,永遠和你在一起,就像他一直和我在一起一樣。謝謝大家,也感謝所有支持我的人,願上帝保佑你們!

耶穌進前來,對他們說,天上,地下所有的權柄,都賜給我了。所以你們要去,使萬民作我的門徒,奉父子聖靈的名,給他們施洗。(或作給他們施洗歸於父子聖靈的名)凡我所吩咐你們的,都教訓他們遵守,我就常與你們同在,直到世界的末了。-馬太福音28:18-20

My Journey with God in Wildwood

Timothy Chan

Setting: Wildwood, NJ.

June 13 - August 6, 2017

Have you ever heard the saying, "the night is darkest before the dawn"? Would you agree with that? Have you ever experienced such an event? The mere journey of traveling to Wildwood was a test upon itself. In fact, the whole journey through the summer of 2017 was quite a series of tests. Trials and tribulations that pushed me out of my comfort zone and into the embrace of God. Imagine walking within your own bubble, just walking inside this bubble throughout life until POP! It bursts, and you fall and fall and finally you stop. You realize that you've landed onto something soft, something comforting, something peaceful. The hands of God. Why is God so gracious and merciful? God doesn't let us be tempted beyond what we can handle, so even though we may face many struggles and obstacles, we can always count on the love that God has shown us and know that he always has our back.

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. - 1 Corinthians 10:13 NIV

Traveling to Wildwood, New Jersey was a big struggle upon itself. I had never traveled without any older adult supervision and usually would have teachers or my family to rely on, but instead, I only had God to rely on and Josh Xu of course. Together, we were able to find the right way to Wildwood after a long sleepless 23-hour transit. I'm telling you, if you've ever sat in the Philadelphia Amtrak station for 10 hours through the night without sleep, it makes a person think. So many things to think about. Anyways, we arrived in Wildwood safely and along the way, had met some people on the bus also with the Epic Wildwood Summer Mission (EWSM) team. They seemed nice and we all talked a bit but in the back of my mind, I was still nervous talking to them. I was supposed to live and eat and work with these people for the rest of the summer? I was so nervous but God, thankfully, calmed me down and eventually I was able to meet the many people who would become the EWSM team. Laughter, sadness, anger, guilt, resentment, reconciliation. These are all things I would come to face with some people on the EWSM team but that's the thing, God uses all these things for his glory. Whether it be bringing us all together in worship or even making us cry into the shoulders of one another, God has a plan.

The first few weeks of EWSM was mainly a fast-paced introduction. From the start, we were sent to look for jobs and buy groceries with our stipends to live day to day with our new roommates. Thankfully, I already had made friends with the people in my action group and together, we set out to look for jobs while learning about one another. We had training sessions on how to evangelize and then right after the training sessions, we would go out to the boardwalk and start evangelizing. What better way to train than by actually doing it? Each week had its own theme and with each new theme came new challenges. For me, the biggest obstacle was going up to new people and initiating the conversation. I've always been known to be somewhat timid and that coupled with my tendency to overanalyze, made for a very hard time when it came to approaching strangers. An example of the dialogue in my head: "Oh, that person sitting over there looks like they're waiting for someone hmm, best not to approach them, oh, that other person looks like they're enjoying their pizza, I shouldn't talk to them, pizza is delicious." But when you think about it, why should we be the only ones to have heard the Good News? If I don't tell them now, will they ever meet someone who will? Everyone deserves to know the Good News that Jesus came down to Earth and died for our sins so that if we believe in Him, then we shall have everlasting life. This whole journey in Wildwood helped me to orient my thinking to NOT be my thinking but the Lord's thinking. Jesus needs to be on the throne of our lives with us at his feet. With our own thoughts and actions, we would not be able to carry out the work of the Lord, instead we need to rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us in all that we do. The love that Jesus had for those he met was unwavering and driven. He really sought to help them and teach them many lessons about his father. Granted, it is a process and a painful and tough one, but with God, anything is possible and he will always be with us.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." - Matthew 9:36-38 NIV

There were many events and people that I met during the summer but it all had to come to an end as the EWSM was coming to its final day. There were many tears shed and many nights spent staying up to increase the time we had with one another. I had met so many genuine people who all valued the one thing we all needed: Jesus. We all strived to create a community where we could all be intentional with one another with Jesus in the center. Many emotions were had and many words exchanged, but we didn't want it to end. And of course, it wasn't going to end, I knew we would see each other again one day. Whether it be at a national conference or a random visit, I know we will see each other in Heaven, worshipping God. That is my wish for all who read this little story, that you would come to love God and follow him so that you can do all things for His glory. He will always love you and will always have your back, just like how he had mine. Thank you to all who read this and to all who have supported me and God bless.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age - Matthew 28:18-20 NIV

蒙召去中國

陳萍

去年暑假,我去中國宣教一個月,拜訪西南的一座小的地級市,跟許多人分享福音。現在跟 大家做個簡單的匯報。

我選擇那個地級市作爲宣教地點有幾個原因。據我的朋友說,從來沒有外面的宣教士去那裡 宣過教。那裡的人想認識神,相信神,卻不太了解神,也不會讀聖經。我的朋友希望有人去 那裡,跟人講神的事。前年,我去中國宣教時也得到激勵,要去福音還沒有傳開的小地方宣 教。那次,我去了中國的一座省城宣教。省城很大,很多宣教士常去關顧。在那裡的第一 周,我就遇到三個從美國去的宣教團體。但是,宣教士很少願意去小地方,更不用說鄉下。 去年,我決定去小地方和鄉下宣教。

我去了那個地級市的兩個縣城。在一個縣里,我用約翰福音第一章1到18節跟幾個人分享神的 創造、三位一體、耶穌在十字架上受死和三天后復活。聽了我的信息後,三個人接受耶穌作 爲他們個人的救主。我爲他們施洗,教導他們聖餐和禱告,帶他們領聖餐。我的朋友是其中 的一位。她是我在那裡的聯絡人,繼續跟人傳講耶穌。

另一個縣有五千左右基督徒。我有機會跟四位領袖接觸,了解當地基督徒的現狀。每位領袖帶領一百到兩百基督徒,帶領查經和禱告。他們常常出去探訪生病的或生意上出問題的人,爲人禱告。他們要回答許多問題,幫人明白神的心意。最常見的問題包括:神爲什麼允許他們生病?是不是他們做錯什麼,神懲罰他們?如果他們真的最近做錯什麼事,領袖就會帶領他們立即悔改。那裡的基督徒都是地下基督徒,不敢公開他們的信仰。他們通常星期一聚會。聚會的時候,他們害怕公安局的人來找麻煩,必須保持安靜。通常一個帶領的選擇一句經文,大家討論,然後分享各自的見證。結束的時候,他們頭蒙白布,跪著禱告。那是他們唯一的禱告方式。看上去,他們好像誤解了哥林多前書11章的教導。聚會的前一個晚上,他們需要禁食。我遇到的人都問我相同的問題:你吃血嗎?你禱告時頭蒙白布、跪著嗎?你先禁食再禱告嗎?

許多基督徒跟我分享他們的見證。比如,神醫治他們的疾病,神幫助他們生意發達,神非常 愛他們。他們大多沒有什麼文化,不會讀聖經,對聖經的理解非常有限。有些人相信只要他 們信靠神,神會幫他們生意發達,他們能賺更多的錢。我用聖經的話幫他們明白神對禱告、 悔改、苦難和死亡的教導,還有什麼能吃不能吃。我和他們討論如何跟不信的人傳福音。我 一遍又一遍地用約翰福音三章十六節跟他們講福音是什麼,神何等愛我們,只要我們悔改, 神不會跟我們過不去。

我與人分享神的話語也遇到不少攔阻。許多人笑笑,然後走開;我最好的朋友聽見我給他們講耶穌,保持沉默。有人害怕政府有一天找他們麻煩,不敢信福音。有人抵制西洋文化和宗教,認爲基督教是外國宗教,因而反對。

我準備這個暑假回去一趟,帶幾個領袖去我前一次拜訪過的大城市學習如何敬拜神,如何用 書捲帶領小組查經。我打算跟中國的一些教會說一說,看看怎麼幫助那些不識字的基督徒。 另外,我將訓練一些可以帶查經的人。

去年暑假那次宣教給我一些啓發,如何在中國小城市裡做一個富有果效的宣教士,如何在那裡教導聖經。我準備爲那些沒什麼文化的人寫些講道,幫助帶領者專注耶穌和他的福音。我想跟各位分享一節經文:『神愛世人,甚至將他的獨生子賜給他們,叫他們不至滅亡,反得永生。』(約翰福音3:16)。

如果你對我上次得宣教有任何問題,請跟我聯繫。神看爲合適,怎麼用我,我都很興奮。各位不管對我宣教的時候該講什麼,如何講有什麼建議,我也非常樂意接受。

My Call to China

Chen Ping

Over the past summer, I made a one-month mission trip to China. During the trip, I visited a small town in Southwest China and shared Gospel with many people. Here is a brief report of my last mission trip.

I chose the small town because of several reasons. According to my friend, the town has never been visited by a missionary from outside. People there want to know and believe God, but they do not know much about God, nor can they read the bible. My friend hoped for years that someone may go there and tell people about God. My experience of a previous mission trip has also motivated me to visit small towns, where the gospel has not been widely spread. One year earlier, I had visited a capital city in China, which is big and has been frequented by many missionaries. In my first week over there, I met three missionary groups from the United States. However, few missionaries are willing to go to small towns, not mentioning countryside. Last summer, I decided to visit countryside and villages as a missionary.

I visited two counties in the small town. In one county, I shared the book of John, chapter one, verses 1-18, with several people. I talked about God's creation, trinity that is one God in three persons, and Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection on the third day. After hearing my message, three people accepted Jesus as their personal savior. I baptized them, taught them communion and prayer, and had communion with them. My friend is one of them who were baptized. She is my contact there and continues to tell people about Jesus.

In another county, where there are about 5000 Christians, I had the opportunity to interact with four the group leaders to better understand Chinese Christians there. Each leader is in charge of 100 to 200 Christians, leading bible studies and prayers. Often, they go out and pray for people, who are sick or whose business is in trouble. Their major task is to help people understand God's will and answer their many questions. The questions that people care the most include why God allows them to be caught by disease and if God punishes them because they have done something wrong. If they indeed have done something wrong recently, the leaders would lead them to repentance immediately. Christians there are mostly underground, and keep the religion to themselves. They have regular meetings on Monday. When meet, they have to keep quiet, fearing the visit of and the abuse of power by police. Usually, one person chooses a bible verse for discussion, and the group members share their testimonies with each other. In the end, they kneel down with heads covered by white cloth to pray. That is the only way they pray. It seems that they have misunderstood the

passage from 1 Corinthians 11. On the night prior to the meeting they also have to fast. Every new people I met asked me the same questions: Do you eat blood? Do you kneel down to pray with head covered by white cloth? Do you fast before pray?

Many Christians I met shared their testimonies. For example, God cures their diseases, God helps grow their business, and God loves them so much. Most of them have received a little education, cannot read the bible, and their understanding of the bible is very limited. Some of them believe if they trust God, God will help grow their business and they can make more money. I used what bible says to help them understand what God says about prayer, repentance, suffering, death, what we can eat, etc. I discussed with them about what we should tell nonbelievers. I used book John 3:16 over and over to talk about what the gospel is, how God so loves us, and God will never go against us because we repent.

I have also faced a lot of resistance, when I spread the words of God. Many people just smiled and walked away. My best friends kept silence, after I told them about Jesus. Some people are afraid of government that someday may come after them. Some people think Christianity is a foreign religion, and are against western culture and religion.

I am planning go back this year. I will take some leaders to a big city, which I visited earlier, to learn how to worship God and how to manage group bible studies from book to book. I will talk with some churches in China about how to help these Christians who cannot read. I will train some people to teach bible.

The trip over the past summer gives me some ideas on how to be a fruitful missionary in small Chinese towns and how to teach the bible there. I will write some sermons for those who had no education or little education, and help some leaders to focus on Jesus and the gospel. I like to share with everyone a bible verse: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Please feel free to ask me questions about my mission trip to China. I am very excited to be used by the Lord in any way he sees fit. I am open to suggestion about what and how to teach.

主賜平安

趙庚

一年前,眼睛的檢查報告出來後,才知道我的視網膜已經發生病變,當時內心既震驚又不安,一片茫然不知所措中,主耶穌的呼喚使我不再沮喪,主說: 『凡勞苦擔重擔的人,可以到我這裡來,我就使你們得安息。』 (馬太福音11:28) 經過不住的禱告,漸漸把這個重擔交託給主,主耶穌不離不棄,永遠的愛,賜下的真平安挪去我心中的膽怯與懼怕,讓我能以平靜的心如期返回美國。我雖軟弱主剛強,有主同在爲我開道路,引領我 『得救在乎歸回安息,得力在乎平靜安穩。』 (以賽亞書30:15)

我持續在主面前禱告,尋求。有一天去拜訪經常與我交流醫療保健訊息的軼文姊妹,一進到她家,聽到大爲弟兄(軼文的先生)的聲音說:"『趙阿姨,眼睛的病要快快早治療!』,那次雖是很短時間的談話,卻感受到他們夫婦無盡的溫暖湧入心中;基督的愛堅固弟兄姊妹的相互顧念與分擔憂愁,真是何等的美,何等的善。

當我全然降服主,將主權交在祂的手中。單單仰望主的帶領,祂是全知全能掌管宇宙萬物的主,沒有留下一樣好處不給祂的兒女,況且我們曉得萬事都互相效力。感謝主,垂聽了弟兄姊妹們為我的代禱;主顧念我的需要,預備醫生。因著主的憐憫與慈愛,在我這段治療期間軼文姊妹仍全程陪伴,使得毫無一絲力量的我找到了這份主添加進來的支柱。雖然擺在我面前有許多不易承受的,卻也都能忍受住了,堅心倚靠主,主賜力量,加增信心與勇氣,主耶穌說: 『在世上你們有苦難,但你們可以放心,我已經勝了世界。』(約翰福音 16:33b) 因此,我不再看難處了,只要信靠主,祂不會加給我的重擔是超過我所能承受的。每日親近神,等候神,心思不離開主的話語,經常思想到主耶穌『祂誠然擔當我的們的憂患,背負我們的痛苦。因祂受的刑罰我們得平安,因祂受的鞭傷我們得醫治。』(以賽亞書 53:4,5) 屬神的兒女永遠都有全能神的同在,藉著耶穌基督住在我們心裡面,這是何等奇妙的確信。主的恩典夠我們用的!祂的恩典乃是一生之久。在一次靈修的時刻,讀到雅各書5:14 『你們中間有病了的呢,他就該請教會的長老來,他們可以奉主的名用油抹他,為他禱告。』我深信出於神的話,沒有一句不帶能力的,聖靈繼續感動我,祈求,就給你;尋找,就尋見;叩門,就給你開門;這是神美善的旨意,只要信,就必得著啊!感謝太岩長老在禱告會時,奉主名爲我抹油禱告;感謝在場的弟兄姊妹們同聲爲我禱告。

這次我回到台北,轉眼已三個月,感謝大家一直持續爲我禱告,讓我感受到主愛永不止息。 感謝主增長我信心,引導我的腳步走在正確的道路上,教導我,指示我當行的路,凡事都有 基督的平安在我心裡做主。『但願使人有盼望的神,因信,將諸般的喜樂平安,充滿你們的 心,使你們藉著聖靈的能力,大有盼望。』(羅馬書15:13)。感謝讚美主,一切頌讚,榮耀全 都歸給主耶穌基督。

選擇委身

張孟悦

寫此見證的時候,我正置富勒神學院第一季學習的最後一周。一年前,我剛剛海外宣教歸來,根本沒想到一年之內我會搬到加州學習婚姻與家庭醫治。可的確,我已在此。

說實在的,申請之前我對現在這個婚姻與家庭醫治的專業所知甚少。但很長時間我確知我需要更多裝備以帶給人平安與醫治 (例如在宣教禾場我們服侍的許多痛苦中的婦女),也幫助家庭--甚至一些基督徒家庭-生活在憤怒、苦毒和痛苦之中。春季,上帝輕輕推我一下,讓我申請富勒,也爲我來到這裡鋪路。上帝顯出祂的信實:從大的事情如使申請期限延遲讓我仍有足夠的時間完成申請,到一些小的事情如預備舒適的校園住房,在不太可能的情況下讓我拿到一個免費的停車位。

我原期盼我在神學院的時間會是像山頂上繁榮令人滿足的經歷,因爲在基督徒圈中我們趨向於認爲神學院經歷會比其它的經歷更加神聖、更加屬靈。在宣教時,我有類似的期盼,只是那個期盼很快就轉變了。是的,生活在阿國使我的成長超出我的想像:就在我的眼前我見證上帝給人的醫治,我心中對這個被宣告爲沒有盼望的國家懷有眞實的盼望,我也在這些從未聽過耶穌拯救大能的人前勇敢宣告福音。但於此同時,我個人與上帝的關係卻是我每日掙扎的事情。我所學到的是,雖然我每日在服侍祂做祂的工,但這並不等同於我跟上帝的關係。

來到神學院之後我再次學到這一功課。許多方面,神學院與宣教禾場正好相反:充滿了尋求更多學習有關他們信仰的基督徒,試圖奉獻他們一生給上帝成爲牧師或服侍在其它的領域。但在其它方面,神學院跟宣教工場非常類似:因爲你擺上你自己在感覺上像是在做上帝的工作,卻很容易忘記你整日所做的並不等同於你跟上帝的關係。的確,我這裡的教授開始上課都會禱告,每一天課堂上我都坐在基督裡的弟兄姐妹當中,但這不能代替我個人的禱告生活。當然,這樣的主題是我在教會聽過也在小組裡分享許多許多遍的。教會大家庭在一起全體的敬拜不能代替我們個人的敬拜;反之,我們大家一起的敬拜應該是我們個人與我們的天父、我們主耶穌、我們實貴聖靈親密關係的滿溢。這要求委身,每一天的委身,選擇使祂爲第一位,不管這一天內發生什麼,不管你是否9點到5點整天工作或在神學院學習。

這一季我選的一門課,讓我從婚姻的層面學到一些關於委身的事情,幫助我更好地了解對上帝的委身。課本上說"委身是圍繞夫妻強壯疆界的代名詞。如同疆界-委身-會在困難的時候維護關係免於破裂。沒有足夠的委身,就會少有彼此面對面解決問題的傾向力,困難再次襲擊的時候也少有關係破裂的保護。"委身是叫攪擾遠離的疆界,而且清楚說明你的伴侶是你最重要的優先。對結婚的夫妻來說,委身作爲一個環繞的疆界也許意味着爸爸媽媽在很嚴肅的交談時孩子不可打擾,或者非常繁忙的工作表中丈夫和太太仍要優先安排在一起的時間以保持他們之間的關係。在如此思想委身的時候,我可以說我對上帝是委身的嗎?對我和上帝一起來說是否有堅固的疆界我不允許有任何東西破壞我們在一起的時間因爲我將祂放在首位,還

是事實上當我忙碌的時候,我跟上帝的單獨時間是我首先願意犧牲的?我跟上帝關係的疆界 是否如此的散落以致如不復存在一般?這樣的話我對上帝,這位我曾說過將我的生命獻給祂 的上帝的委身究竟意味著什麼?

我忠心希望你是一位,你可以說,你看重並保護圍繞你和上帝個人關係那寶貴疆界的人。我在這方面還在努力。我一次又一次的挑戰就是『這是那不可少的那一件』(路10:41-42)。如果你跟上帝的關係建立在你父母的屬靈光景上,或是你的牧師,或是你的小組長的屬靈光景上,當事物艱難的時候,當你跌倒的時候,或者他們令你失望的時候,你就會失去對你信仰重擊的保護。但當我們的信仰來自對上帝祂自己深刻牢靠穩固的委身,『(我們)必像樹栽於水旁,在河邊扎根,炎熱來到,並不懼怕,葉子仍必青翠,在乾旱之年毫無掛慮,而且結果不止。』(耶利米17:8)我的禱告是,我們成爲一個眾聖徒牢牢持守救恩-基督重價买贖我們成爲上帝兒女的教會。正基於此,我們才能真正盡心、盡性、盡意愛主我們的上帝,而且愛鄰舍如同愛我們自己。

Choosing Commitment

Melody Zhang

As I write this, I am in the final week of my first quarter studying at Fuller Theological Seminary. A year ago, I had just returned from a year abroad on missions and would never have guessed that I would move to California within the year to pursue training in marriage and family therapy, and yet here I am.

To be honest, I knew very little about marriage and family therapy before applying to the program I am now in, but I had been convicted for quite some time that I wanted more training in bringing peace and healing to individuals (like the many hurting women we ministered to on the mission's field) and also to families--even Christian families--that are living in systems of anger, bitterness, and hurt. In the spring, God gave me a little push to apply for Fuller and paved the way for me to come here. He was faithful from the big things like having the application deadline postponed to give me enough time to apply to the small things like providing affordable housing on campus and even giving me a free parking spot when there shouldn't have been one available.

I think I'd come into my time in seminary expecting to be in a flourishing and fulfilling mountaintop experience because in the Christian community we tend to view these types of experiences as more holy or spiritual than others. When going on missions, I had a similar expectation that was very quickly overturned. Yes, I grew more than I could ever have imagined while I lived in A-land: I saw God heal people before my eyes, I carried real hope in my heart for a nation that others had declared hopeless, I proclaimed the gospel boldly before people who had never heard about the saving power of Jesus Christ before. But at the same time, my personal relationship with God was something I had to fight for every single day. I learned that even though I was serving and doing His work every single day, this was NOT identical to my relationship with God.

I've had to learn this lesson again since coming to seminary. In many ways, seminary is the exact opposite of the mission's field: it is full of Christians who are seeking to learn more about their faith, presumably to devote their lives to God either as a pastor or in another area of ministry. But in other ways, seminary is very similar to being on the mission's field: because you are devoting yourself to what feels like God's work, it can be easy to forget that what you do day-in and day-out is not identical to your relationship to God. Sure, my professors here open lectures with prayer every day. I sit in class with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, but this does not substitute for my own prayer life. This theme, of course, is something I've heard in church and talked about in small groups many times. Corporate worship where we gather as a church family to worship together cannot substitute for

individual worship; instead, our expression of corporate worship ought to be an overflow of a personal relationship with our heavenly Father, our Lord Jesus, our precious Holy Spirit. This requires commitment, commitment every single day to choose to make Him number one, regardless of what happens during the day, regardless of if you are working a 9-to-5 job or studying in seminary.

In one of the classes I took this quarter, I learned something about commitment in the context of a marriage that helped me better understand our commitment to God. The text said, "Commitment is another name for a strong boundary around a couple. The same boundary--commitment--protects the relationship from dissolution during hard times. With insufficient commitment, there is little pressure to face each other, and little protection against dissolving the relationship when hard times come again." Commitment is the boundary that keeps out disruptions and makes clear that your partner is your foremost priority. Commitment as a boundary around a married couple might mean that children aren't allowed to interrupt a serious conversation that mom and dad are having, or that even with busy work schedules the husband and wife still prioritize time together to maintain their relationship. In thinking about commitment this way, can I say that I am committed to God? Is there a strong boundary between me and God where I don't allow disruptions to our time together because I put Him first, or is it more true that when I get busy, my personal time with God is the first thing I am willing to sacrifice? Is the boundary of my relationship to God so diffuse to the point where it is almost nonexistent, and what does this mean about my commitment to this God that I say I've given my life to?

I really hope that you are someone who can say that you honor and protect that precious boundary around your personal relationship with God. I am someone who is still working on it. I am challenged again and again that this is the one thing that is necessary (Luke 10:41-42). If your relationship with God relies on your parents' spirituality, or your pastor or small group leader's spirituality, then when things get hard, when you stumble or when they fail you, there will be little protection against your faith being heavily shaken. But when our faith comes from the deep assurance of a steadfast commitment to God Himself, "[we] will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit" (Jeremiah 17:8). My prayer is that we would be a church of believers who firmly steward the salvation and adoption as sons and daughters that we've been afforded in Christ. From this place, we can truly love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind and then love our neighbor as ourselves.

個人見證

Tricia 姐妹

大家好!我的名字叫Tricia,在亞利桑那大學讀研究生。

回想一年半前,自己剛來圖森的日子真的是感慨萬千。那時候我沒什麼朋友,又沒有車,再加上英語聽力不是很好,聽課便有些困難,所以常常心灰意冷,很鬱悶。我本來就出自於一個相對缺愛的原生家庭,在這樣的情況下就更是讓我抑鬱。有時候,單獨一個人,我會莫名其妙的哭起來,特別感到無助和絕望。

一次十分偶然的機會,我認識了xiyi,她是個基督徒,會經常和我談起基督和教會,但我常常會問她很多尖銳的問題。雖然,那時我對教會並不大感興趣,可是我非常享受跟她一起的相處時間。因爲每周五晚教會都會有人接送我,所以只要一有空,就會和他們一起去。現在想來,其實每周五的晚上都是我一周里最放鬆的時間。

剛一開始去教會,我既聽不懂他們說的,也看不懂聖經寫的是什麼,所以在大家查經時我常會打瞌睡或者玩手機。然而,我卻非常喜歡聽他們唱詩歌,那美妙的旋律,動聽的歌聲,感人的歌詞,常常讓我熱淚盈眶。

最讓我記憶猶新的有下面幾次經歷。

有一次,聽了詩歌以後,我發現其實我一直是表面假裝堅強,內心卻活得很累,更可悲的是,沒有人可以去傾訴。但突然我發現神是那麼愛我,他一直是按照我們的本相來接納我們的,我可以在他的面前傾訴,可以在神面前做最真實的我,我感覺很感動,很幸福。

另外一次,是因爲看到台上虔誠地唱歌的基督徒,比如郭淼,我就會想究竟是什麼樣的力量,可以讓這麼年輕,即有智慧又有理想的青年如此不斷地歌頌,不住地讚美神呢?

還有,或許是因爲我對音樂比較敏感吧,很多次,在唱詩歌時我的腦海里浮現出充滿慈愛的神,他張開手臂迎接我,雖然我還不認識他,但內心會忍不住祈禱神,祈求他讓我能走出各樣困境和遭遇的不順。總之,我在唱詩歌時總是備受感動而流淚,現在我明白了,這一切都是聖靈在對我做工,感謝神!。

經過了一段時間,我逐漸對聖經感興趣了,慢慢能讀懂大概聖經的內容了,也覺得去教會查經越來越有意思了。特別對一件事我很想找到答案,就是爲什麼教會裡有那麼多的人樂於助人且不求回報?比如幫助我們新生買菜或接送新生來教會,還有經常有基督徒會打開家門,請我門吃飯聚會。隨着不斷有聖靈的感動,聖經里所傳揚的善與愛,像是一種力量,慢慢進駐到我的內心。現在我已經知道答案了。因爲我相信上帝是如此愛我,他讓自己的兒子釘死在十字架上爲我們頂罪,他教導我們要如何愛他人,就像他愛我們一樣。現在的我感覺自己內心更強大了,我學會了主動去愛別人,我學會了去給以而不求回報,我學會了分享而不斤斤計較,最重要的是,我學會了愛,以及內心的滿足和平靜。

尤其是在認識了基督徒男友後,我決心和他一起努力靠近神,認識神。我開始學習怎樣開口 禱告,學習跟神交談,嘗試讓神帶領我去做最正確的決定,學習相信神,其實我遭遇的一切 都是有原因有價值的。我開始爲自己的困難禱告,爲我家人的健康平安禱告,也爲教會的兄 弟姐妹禱告,並且感恩我現在所有的。如今,我內心有着從未有過的幸福感,即快樂也安 心。

我非常驚訝現在的我,因爲曾經的我不僅自私還不懂得分享,記得以前,在國内上大學時, 姐姐給我買的好吃的零食我都藏起來不給舍友吃,現在的我卻主動把自己最愛吃的零食給別 人吃;曾經的我對陌生人都是笑很尷尬的,現在我願意跟所有陌生人微笑;曾經的我一有不 公或不公平時,就去討公道,還總是以我自己爲中心,患得患失,斤斤計較,現在我更多爲 他人考慮,覺得自己能幫就幫還覺得沒幫什麼,付出也覺得沒什麼。

我相信這就是神的力量,他在我身上的做工如此奇妙。我更希望神可以在我身上,也在所有 屬神的兄弟姐妹身上繼續做美妙奇妙的工!阿門!

沙漠蒙主恩 遊子齊盼望

黄大肯

從來沒有人見過神,我們若彼此相愛,神就住在我們裡面,愛祂的心在我們裡面得以完全了。 約翰一書 **4:12**

我是2016年六月來到亞利桑那州的土桑,那時我和太太雅鴻剛從正道神學院畢業。在將要來亞利桑那大學環境學院念博士班之前,台灣的同學告訴我公司在找人,是台灣最賺錢的半導體公司,薪水相當於台灣的正教授等級。雖然有這樣的機會,能夠在高等教育界成爲福音的出口,是我十多年來的感動,儘管唸博士班代表著未來的一切充滿了不確定性,我們沒有太多猶豫就來到土桑,繼續跟隨上帝的大大小小冒險。

選擇在土桑華人基督教會聚會,我亦沒有太多的猶豫,因爲在台灣的指導教授告訴我,聽上帝的聲音,同時也要聽太太的聲音,太太的選擇就是我的選擇。並且,看見太岩長老和繼香姊對學生團契的付出和關心,也讓我們十分感動。我們就像是新約聖經五餅二魚神經記載中的小男孩,希望能夠將自己有限的放在上帝的手中,盼望神能使用我們成爲祝福的管道。

來土桑已經一年半,唸博士班好像在大海上航行,有時晴空萬里,一望無際,有時卻又一片 漆黑,看不見前方的道路。又彷彿是在沙漠裡望著海市蜃樓前行的駱駝客,幸好,學生團契 是沙漠裡的綠洲,總是能夠讓我們這些唸博士班的遊子,得到補給,彼此扶持,一同經歷每 一個考驗,也看見上帝每日帶領我們成長的恩典。

感謝神,2017年太太雅鴻繼續在洛杉磯正道神學院攻讀神學碩士,上帝也一個學期一個學期 地供給我們學費的需要。讓我們持續經歷祂透過弟兄姊妹給我們的許多祝福,支持和恩典, 雖然兩地奔波十分辛苦,但神的恩典仍舊夠我們用。

學生團契每個月一次的家庭聚會,是我最期待的時刻,除了有好吃的東西,弟兄姊妹也可以 互相關心和交流。希望團契也漸漸地能夠有更多學生參與服事,在信仰中成長,能更為神所 用,成為許多人的祝福。

神爲我爭戰

Diana Liang

2017年3月底與現在所在教會(休士頓西南國語教會)的橄欖樹福音事工回台短宣,我在出發前 完成了申請北美中華福音神學院(簡稱北美華神)的面試,4月中休假回來工作,5月中拿到了北 美華神的入學通知,之後就經歷了很長一段時間的屬靈爭戰。

事情起源於工作上的組員對我的投訴,這位組員直接向公司總部的人事部主任寫了一長串對我的投訴,公司隨即開始展開一連串的調查。沒有人告訴我公司在調查我,直到我發現我的組員一個一個地被公司約談調查,我才知道原來是在調查我。調查的過程讓我很難受,心中也很多的委屈,覺得自己在這份工作上盡忠職守,對人也從來沒有害人之心,不懂自己爲什麼要經歷這些事情。另一方面根據以往的經驗,許多被調查的人,後來都是被解雇,更是讓我感到憂慮。我來到神的面前禱告,把自己心中的委屈向神傾吐,我甚至跟神說:「我可以把我的心整個展開在祢面前,讓祢查驗,我是如何在祢所賜的工作上,忠心做祢所交付的。」神一直給我平安的意念,叫我不要憂愁。神也用詩篇42與43篇中 3次對我說:「我的心哪,你爲何憂悶?爲何在我裡面煩躁?應當仰望神,因祂笑臉幫助我;我還要稱讚祂。」

調查完畢之後,很感謝主,公司認爲我雖有可進步空間,卻沒有犯什麼大錯,於是我繼續留在我的位置上。這位投訴我的組員對公司的這個決定彷彿不滿意,接著又採取更積極且激烈的手段。我想他的目的就是想要我離職,我不懂到底他對我到底有多麼地不滿,會如此無所不用其極地要讓我離職。在這段過程當中,我有好幾次甚至很想就辭職算了,但是神一直跟我說:「你就坐在那裏,且看我如何爲你爭戰。」這句話成爲支持我繼續下去的有力後盾。也很感謝主,讓我看到我主管在這件事情上對我的支持。當時我很擔心我會不會因此被解雇,但我的主管一直都表現出他不擔心我有做什麼不好的事情,對我很有信心,相信我會平安度過這次的調查。他跟人事部主任兩個人在調查結束後,都鼓勵我繼續用「kindness (良善)」對待這位投訴我的組員,當然也要好好保護自己。

接下來的日子還是不好受,這位組員對我的不滿展現在每天的工作上,我每天的壓力都很大。在某一個主日,我跟教會一位老姊妹一起禱告,提到了這件事情,這位神重用的老姊妹跟我說:「Diana,當人攻擊你的時候,你不要認爲對方在攻擊你,你要看到的是在他背後的黑暗勢力,藉著他在攻擊你,所以你要爲對方禱告,讓他不要被黑暗勢力挾制。」同一天,教會另一對牧師跟師母邀請我去他家吃晚飯並交通分享。飯後,牧師問我對屬靈爭戰了解多少,因爲他認爲這些發生在我身上的事情,其實很明顯的是屬靈爭戰。牧師說當我們要爲神做事,撒旦就無所不用其極地想破壞,但是如果我們自己不清楚,一直無法好好用正確的禱告方式與內容來應戰,就只是空揮拳卻無法擊到要害,那我的神學院可能也念不下去了,因爲每天光應付撒旦的攻擊,就被搞得精疲力竭。從那天開始,我才真正體會到,原來我正在經歷一場很大的屬靈爭戰。我開始改變我的禱告方式,每天讓神當我的大元帥,也每天穿上全副的屬靈軍裝,並爲這位組員來禱告。

經過半年多的禱告與爭戰,我這位組員在2017年底主動提出了辭呈。在他提出後,他跑來我位于跟我說:「Diana,謝謝你這段時間對我們的照顧,你真的對我們很好。」這事之後,更讓我覺得約伯記中神允許撒旦的作爲,其實也是會真實發生在我們身上的。但是即使遭遇這些不好的事情,也要記得「萬事都互相效力,叫愛神的人得益處。(羅馬書8:28)」要知道我們在天上的那位神,是掌王權居首位,必爲我們爭戰到底的神。