

church

THE CHURCH IN SINGAPORE

times

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The Inheritance of the Saints in the **Light** God, Christ & the Holy Spirit

Besides saving us from sins, God also wants us to receive His inheritance. May we see what a great blessing we have obtained, and learn to apply the riches of the triune God in the church life and in our daily living!

Jehovah our God

"You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You" (Psa 16:2). This must be our practical experience. God is our Creator; He is more real than anything else, and He is the solution to all problems. If we feel that God is not practical, it is because we do not know Him, just like the fool who says "there is no God" (Psa 14:1). The following are some aspects of our God which we can experience practically:

• Our inheritance

God is our inheritance: "I am their inheritance ... their possession" (Eze 44:28); "the LORD said to Aaron: '... I am your portion and your inheritance'" (Num 18:20); "the LORD is his inheritance" (Deut 10:9).

• God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth

"The LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen 14:22).

• Almighty, all-sufficient God

"I am Almighty God" (Gen 17:1).

• Everlasting God

"The LORD, the Everlasting God" (Gen 21:33); "The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth" (Isa 40:28).

• The Great I AM

"And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM'. And He said, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you'''" (Exo 3:14).

• A consuming fire, a jealous God

"For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God" (Deut 4:24).

• A merciful God

"(For the LORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers" (Deut 4:31).

• Our refuge and dwelling place

"The eternal God is your refuge" (Deut 33:27); "LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations" (Psa 90:1).

... Continue on page 2

CONTENTS

- 3 • Nurturing Firsthand Faith in Our Children
 - Shepherds' & Parents' Meeting on 2 April 2000
- 4 • Choosing Recreation
 - Quiz
- 5 • How Should We Pray?
- 6 • Reflections from a Visit to the Church in Singapore
 - Truth Column - The Spirit that Gives Life
- Insert • Testimony - My Life Behind Bars



In the last issue, we saw how rich the inheritance of the saints is. In this issue, we continue to see the riches of our God and how we may experience Him practically. At the same time, may the life-changing experience of an ex-prisoner help us appreciate our inheritance more!

The church is concerned that our rich inheritance is also passed on to the next generation, and we thank the Lord for His blessings on the Shepherds' & Parents' Meeting on 2 April. May the parents care more for their children's growth in the church, and be good examples through enjoyment of the riches of Christ and much fellowship and prayers with the serving ones.

Teens Today features some principles of praying and choosing recreation, while the Truth Column shows another aspect of the Holy Spirit - the life-giving Spirit within us. Thank God for His wonderful inheritance for us, and for revealing it to us through His Spirit (1 Cor 2:10)!

The editors

• The God of the Lord Jesus, the Father of glory

"The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory" (Eph 1:17).

• Our Father and God

"I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God" (John 20:17).

• God who raises the dead and calls not being into being

"God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did" (Rom 4:17).

• Light and love

"God is light and in Him is no darkness at all"; "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God" (1 John 1:5; 4:16).

Christ - the good land

The good land that God promised to bring the Israelites into was most precious to them: "A land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper" (Deut 8:7-9). They were to live, labour and enjoy all the riches here. The good land is a type of Christ.

When Paul mentioned "partakers of the inheritance" in Colossians 1:12, he alluded to the good land where each tribe of Israel had a part. Hence, he continued that God delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. God wants Christ to be our good land, inheritance and life supply!

Paul then elaborated on the riches of Christ: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created ... All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence"; "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"; "for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily". He is also the real feast and real rest. Christ is our life. He is the new man, He is our all in all, so we must live and walk in Him!

The gospel of John also shows that Christ is the light, life, way, truth, bread of life, living water, good shepherd, true vine and true rest. God has given us such a rich Christ to be the hope of glory in us (Col 1:27)!

The Holy Spirit of promise

The Lord Jesus told His disciples: "At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (John 14:20). Through His Spirit, we know that He is in us. Our God is a triune God. If we know only Christ but not the Spirit, our knowledge of God would be inadequate, just as the Jews who believe God but reject Christ lack the practical experience of God.

"That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal 3:14). This blessing is the Holy Spirit. The following are some characteristics of the Holy Spirit whom we have received:

• The life-giving, indwelling Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a life-giving Spirit. The Lord said that "it is the Spirit who gives life", and that He came "that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 6:63; 10:10).

He is an indwelling Spirit. "If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you"; "... that He may abide with you forever" (John 16:7; 14:16). The Holy Spirit is the Helper who truly lives in us today!

• The Spirit of sonship, the Spirit that calls

The Holy Spirit redeems us from the law, transforms us and brings us into

fellowship with the Father: "You did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption [sonship] by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'" (Rom 8:15).

• The Spirit that leads, testifies and seals

The Holy Spirit leads us in the way of truth and life, and testifies of Christ within us: "The Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me" (John 15:26). He leads us to apply Christ and reminds us that we are children and heirs of God. He is also the seal, "the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph 1:14).

• The Helper (Comforter), the Spirit of truth

"The Helper, the Holy Spirit, ... will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you"; "He will guide you into all truth" (John 14:26; 16:13). He speaks within us, reminding us of God's righteousness, and exposing all sins and unrighteousness: "He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement" (John 16:8).

• The anointing, liberating, resurrecting and interceding Spirit

The Holy Spirit anoints us and teaches us all things to perfect us so that we may serve others (1 John 2:20, 27; 2 Cor 1:21). He also frees us from the law of sin and death (Rom 8:2; 2 Cor 3:17). Moreover, He is the Spirit who raised Christ from the dead (Rom 8:11-13).

He also intercedes for us according to God (Rom 8:26-28), so that we may receive grace and help in time of need.

How do we apply and enjoy this inheritance?

In the wilderness, God gave them manna and water out of the smitten rock, which was Christ (1 Cor 10:4). In the good land, all the produce was for the Israelites to enjoy. Likewise, to experience the Lord's riches and perfect humanity today, we must eat Him. Then we will live by Him!

It is good to pursue knowledge, but mere knowledge will not save us, and might even make us puffed up. 1 Peter 2:3 says: "if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious". Let us learn to pray, eat the Lord's word and receive life. Christ is the life, and this life makes us strong. "When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you" (Deut 8:10). Amen!

(Abstracted from messages of the conference in San Francisco in December 1999)

Nurturing Firsthand Faith in Our Children

- A Review of "First Hand Faith"
by B H Wilkinson

Have you wondered why had godly men like Samuel and David raised ungodly children, or do you have secret fears that your children might one day leave the Lord and the church? They might even have told you that being a Christian is boring, and asked why they should miss the fun in the world. On top of that, these vulnerable ones face a host of temptations from pop music, magazines, movies, undesirable web sites and the Internet relay chat where they may communicate with total strangers! As parents, how shall we fight against such insidious attacks couched in the name of recreation and the modern lifestyle? How may we offer up godly offspring that God seeks in our marriages (Mal 2:15)?

In "First Hand Faith", B H Wilkinson presents the generational drift from godliness to godlessness, as seen in the books of Joshua and Judges, through "The Parable of the Three Chairs".

The Three Chairs

Joshua is a primary example of someone on the First Chair. He loved God and was fully devoted; he even committed his family to serve God: "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh 24:15). Essentially, people on the First Chair have firsthand knowledge of God in their lives.

The generation after Joshua is an example of people on the Second Chair. They benefited from their parents' faith and experience - they knew "all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel" (Josh 24:31), but unfortunately, they had no firsthand dealing with Him. Hence, those on the Second Chair believe the facts about God but do not experience Him personally.

The generation after them sat on the Third Chair, who "did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel" (Judg 2:10). The Third Chair is a godless chair!

The drift from godliness to godlessness

People on the First Chair are saved and committed to God. They serve Him wholeheartedly, trust and obey His word.

Those on the Second Chair are also saved, but they compromise. Their love for pleasure and possessions outstrip their love for God. Ostensibly, the generation after Joshua did not drive out the Canaanites "because they had chariots of iron" (Judg 1:19), but Joshua had previously charged them to "drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and are strong" (Josh 17:18)! Instead, they put the Canaanites under tribute and took slaves and foreign women. Instead of conquering through faith, compromisers give excuses for incomplete obedience.

People on the Third Chair are not saved and do not even know the works of God. Judges 2:10-13 records that the people forsook God, did evil and followed other gods. In other words, they became one with their society. Wilkinson warns that a child growing up in a home that knows God but does not honour Him as the Lord faces internal conflict. He will question: "If God is really so important, why don't they obey Him at all times?"

On which chair are we?

As parents, Wilkinson advises that we should first assess our own spiritual condition. If we are preoccupied with worldly pursuits and pleasures, our children will see through our real values, and they might become skeptical about God's salvation! To move from the Second Chair to the First Chair,

Wilkinson exhorts that we should repent and allow the truth to free us from all lies. He also suggests the following steps:

- 1) Shift the focus of our commitment from ourselves, worldly possessions and pleasures to Jesus alone!
- 2) Trust in Jesus; He loves us and knows what is best for us.
- 3) Trust in God's power; He is mighty to save and His arm is not shortened (Num 11:23).
- 4) Believe in God's motive and purpose because He loves us (Rom 8:32-35, 38-39).
- 5) Embrace God's methods for His ways and thoughts are higher than ours.
- 6) Trust in God's provision for He more than meets all our needs.
- 7) Go on our knees and commit ourselves to the Lord now!

Indeed, a living example of firsthand faith is our best gift to our children. By God's grace and mercy, may we raise them up to not only know the Lord, but also love and serve Him wholeheartedly. By so doing, we will leave behind a spiritual legacy that can last into eternity!

Sis Chan Woon Cheng

("First Hand Faith" is available in the church library)

Shepherds' & Parents' Meeting on 2 April 2000

In this increasingly evil age, whether as parents or shepherds (those serving the children), we must give more time to care for the spiritual upbringing of the children. This was the goal of the first Shepherds' & Parents' Meeting.

The meeting started off with a short fellowship by two brothers on bringing up children as a shepherd and a parent. The key point was the importance of our living before the children. Thus, if we want our children to grow up right before God, we must be good examples right from the start.

Following that, we had a discussion on some practical matters; some parents raised the concern that shepherds and parents should work together more closely when organising outings for the children. The saints then gathered in their respective groups to know one another better and have further fellowship.

Thank the Lord for the encouraging time together. May we be faithful in nurturing the children God has entrusted to us!

Choosing Recreation

Recreation is something we enjoy, activities that help us unwind so that we can go on with our studies or work more efficiently. But we must be wise when choosing recreation because not all things are helpful or edify, even if they do not appear sinful at all. Here are a few pointers:

1. Not be brought under the power of anything

"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Cor 6:12).

The Bible clearly says that we should not be brought under the power of anything. If our recreation disrupts our Bible-reading, praying, meeting time, study or sleep, we must be careful lest we fall under its power!

2. Edifies

"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify" (1 Cor 10:23).

Recreation of the following nature does not edify and must be avoided:

- Related to sin - eg. movies about violence and sexual lusts easily defile us and hinder us from having a close relationship with the holy God.
- Related to gambling - eg. betting on football matches arouses the love for money, which is the root of all evil (1 Tim 6:10).
- Related to idolatry - eg. obsession with idols can subtly change our values away from God's truth to our idols' opinions.
- Worldly practices - "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2). Following the trend in the world, such as queuing up all night to buy a "Hello Kitty" or spending hours window-shopping, conforms us to this world, which God calls "the present evil age" He wants to deliver us from (Gal 1:4).
- Unrighteous - "And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present ... your members as instruments of righteousness to God" (Rom 6:13).

3. Glorifies God

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31).

We are God's people, and even in our recreation, we should honour Him and do all to His glory. Do not put our God to shame. One day, we will see Him. Hopefully, we will receive more praises than reproaches. So let's be wise and spend more time on the work of the Lord instead of wasting time on ungodly and useless things!

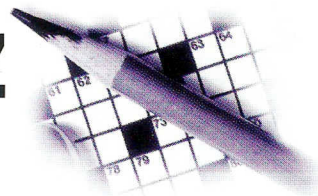
(Based on a series of messages given at the Students' Meeting)

ANSWERS TO TEENS TODAY QUIZ # 14

(What was the sign given to ...)

- The rainbow (Gen 9:14-15).
- God sent a smoking oven and a burning torch at dusk to consume the carcasses Abraham had laid on the ground (Gen 15:17).
- The burning bush which was not consumed (Exo 3:2).
- The waters of the Jordan river was cut off at the upper stream when the priests who bore the ark stepped into the river, allowing God's people to cross over on dry ground (Josh 3:15-17).
- The fleece was wet with dew while the ground was dry and on the next occasion, the fleece on the ground was dry while dew was found on all the ground (Judg 6:36-40).
- God turned the shadow (time) back by 10 degrees on the sundial of Ahaz (2 kings 20:8-11).
- God asked Ezekiel to speak to the dry bones and they lived and became an exceedingly great army (Eze 37:1-10).
- The plant which grew to be a shelter for Jonah and withered later (Jonah 4:6-7).
- He will be a mute until the child was born (Luke 1:13-20).
- A great sheet with all kinds of clean and unclean animals descended from heaven and God asked Peter to kill the animals and eat (Acts 10:11-13).

QUIZ



A FOOL VS A WISE MAN

Proverbs 1:7 says: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction". Can you differentiate between a fool and a wise man? Connect (or contrast) them as they are given in the Bible.

- A fool vents all his feelings ()
- Rebuke is more effective for a wise man ()
- In the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride ()
- The way of a fool is right in his own eyes ()
- He who trusts in his own heart is a fool ()
- A wise man fears and departs from evil ()
- A fool despises his father's instruction ()
- Wisdom is in the sight of him who has understanding ()
- To do evil is like sport to a fool ()
- The lips of the wise disperse knowledge ()

- but he who heeds counsel is wise.
- but whoever walks wisely will be delivered.
- than a hundred blows on a fool.
- but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.
- but a fool rages and is self-confident.
- but he who receives correction is prudent.
- but the lips of the wise will preserve them.
- but a man of understanding has wisdom.
- but a wise man holds them back.
- but the heart of the fool does not do so.

TEENS TODAY QUIZ #15

Name : _____

Tel No. : _____
Address : _____

All students are invited to send their answers under Teens Today Quiz #15 to 1 Derbyshire Road, Singapore 309457

teens

FOR THE YOUTHS AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

today



How Should We Pray?

Is this a question you often ask? Thank the Lord that He Himself shows us the pattern in Matthew 6:9-13:

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed¹ be Your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name

The address "Our Father" is so endearing! A little child has no fear in coming to his father. God is our loving heavenly Father who is ever waiting for His children to come to Him. We have been made near in the blood of Christ, and we can now come boldly to our Father in faith!

There is no better way to start prayer than by giving God the praise and honour He deserves. If we take time to marvel at His creation and the great things He has done, it is easy to praise and bless His holy name.

Holiness is God's nature, therefore He exhorts us: "Pursue ... holiness, without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14), and "be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet 1:16). To lead a holy life, our thoughts, words and actions must be sanctified daily.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Then, we should pray for His will and intervention on earth. God has a plan for us and He wants us to be part of that plan. As we know more about His will by reading His word, we should pray that His will be done, and allow Him to carry out His will in our lives.

A preacher once asked: Does "Thy will be done on earth" also include your lives? We desire to see His will done on earth - the gospel preached and His church built. But often, when it comes to our own lives and decisions, we cease to allow God's will to be done. Sometimes, we even go against His will deliberately. For God's kingdom to come, He must first rule as King in our lives!

Our Lord Jesus is our best example. He lived fully in accordance with the Father's will, and even before His crucifixion, He still prayed: "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matt 26:39).

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors

Next, we turn our focus from God to ourselves. We should definitely seek the Father to supply all our needs². "Daily bread" can be anything we need: food, clothing, love, etc. God shows here that it is not selfish of us to ask Him to meet our personal needs. But do note that it says "us" and "our", not "me" and "mine"! We should also pray for our families, the saints and our friends.

The word "daily" assures us that God meets our needs every day. That's why after showing us the pattern, He said: "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For

after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt 6:31-33).

Further, we should confess our sins and also forgive the offenses against us: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

In Matthew 18:21-22, Peter asked how often he should forgive his brother, and the Lord replied: "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven". Then He told the parable of a servant who put his fellow-servant in prison over a small debt right after his master had forgiven him a much larger debt. When his master heard of it, the servant was punished severely. If we want God's forgiveness, we must also forgive others.

Do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one

Finally, we should pray for God's protection and grace. It is so easy for us to fall into temptation and sin, so we need Him to help us avoid such situations. If they are unavoidable, we need His strength and grace to overcome. He is able to deliver us from all evil and sins.

A sister once testified how God kept her from evil: She had to help organise a dinner and dance party for her office, but she prayed that God would deliver her from temptations and unholiness. She then did her share of the work. But on that day, she fell ill and so excused herself from the dinner. A few days later, when she heard that the event was full of filthy jokes, she praised God for keeping her!

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever

Finally, we should declare that our God is our King and Sovereign. All glory and honour and praise be unto Him forever!

As the saying goes, "practice makes perfect". So let's start today and may God help us to become men of prayer!

(With help from "Becoming a Man of Prayer" by Bob Beltz)

1 'Hallow' means 'to make holy'.

2 Needs and wants are such different words! 'Need' has a 'must' connotation while 'want' is a desire for something that we like but can do without.

Reflections from a Visit to the Church in Singapore

It was my first time to Singapore, so I was quite nervous. In the plane, I prayed to the Lord to keep me and show me His work in other churches.

I landed at about midnight, but some saints were waiting for me. They took my luggage and introduced themselves. Instantly, all my uneasiness vanished; I felt that the church was God's house and my house too!

The saints were very hospitable and had a full programme planned for me. Besides the regular meetings and group fellowships, different saints took me around sightseeing. Many of them are either working or studying, and serving in various areas in the church, yet they took time for me. Their zeal for God is practical, and they live out the reality of brotherly love.

I was mostly in Hall 1, and two things impressed me. First is their hymn-singing - in English and Chinese concurrently! Initially, I was not used to it, but later, I found that there was actually an underlying harmony. Their earnest singing encouraged me to have this sweet simplicity too!

Next is the young people's zeal and consecration. The body of Christ is expressed in their hymn-leading, sharing and testifying as many of them give themselves to serve in oneness, and the Lord also gives them various gifts. Some even gave up the chance to study overseas so as to remain in their service. Their examples made me reflect upon my own behaviour.

One evening, I fellowshiped with a brother and felt that the young people here have a vision: They are preparing themselves for the Lord's coming. But we also felt that the saints in both Hong Kong and Singapore are faced with temptations and attacks from the world, and this has affected their testimony. So we prayed for the churches. After the meeting that night, we had more fellowship and again knelt before God in prayer and consecration.

This experience helped me see that the warfare between the church and Satan is at its climax, and more prayers and consecration are needed. May the Lord raise up more to co-work with Him and be a good testimony in this last age, and may glory be to Him!

Bro Choy Kin Ping, Hong Kong

Truth Column

The Spirit that Gives Life

1 Corinthians 15:45 mentions two Adam's, representing two distinct types of people. The first Adam is the first man God created. Every person on earth comes from him. The last Adam is Jesus. Although He is a man, He is not from Adam, so He is called the last Adam.

The first Adam is a living soul with a complete and independent character, capable of accomplishing God's will. But he sinned and fell. As a result, sin not only entered into man, but it also brought in death: "Through one man [Adam] sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom 5:12).

Since the first Adam had been destroyed and controlled by death, God could no longer use him to fulfil His will. So He specially sent His Son Jesus Christ to be incarnated and to take the place of the first Adam. The Lord Jesus became the last Adam to save us from sin and death, give us life and ultimately, lead us into glory.

This last Adam is unlike the first Adam. Though Satan tried all ways to tempt Him, he failed (Matt 4:1-11). He raised up the leaders of Judaism, the Pharisees and scribes against Him; they accused and attacked Him; His

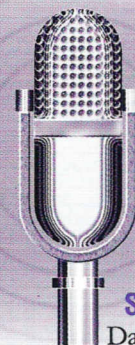
disciples also betrayed Him. But Satan's plot still failed. In the end, Satan made use of the Roman power to place upon Him false and ungrounded accusations, and stirred up the undiscerning crowds against Him. Under such circumstances, Jesus was crucified.

At His death, everything seemed to have ended, but on the third day, an earth-shaking thing happened - the Lord Jesus resurrected! The life of the last Adam cannot be imprisoned by death; it overcomes death and Hades. Christ's resurrection proves that the life He gives us has exceedingly great power!

1 Corinthians 15:45 also says that "the last Adam became a life-giving spirit". After resurrection, He is no longer restricted by time and space. "Now the Lord is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:17); although He cannot be seen, He can be experienced at all times and in all places!

We, the descendants of Adam, are sinners and dead men under the sway and torture of sin, with no power to overcome. But thank God for His saving grace in giving us the last Adam, who when joined to us, saves us from the power of sin! Moreover, as the life-giving Spirit, He gives us the resurrected life. When we believe in the Lord Jesus, the Spirit enters into us and gives us a new life, which dispels our pessimism, disappointment, bitterness, darkness, etc. We are filled with joy, peace, light, God's love and glorious hope, which we have never experienced before. This proves that we have been delivered from death and have obtained God's eternal life.

(Reference: "The Trumpet of Truth" lesson 174, by The Church in Hong Kong Bookroom)



Announcements



Prayer Items

Students' Camp

Date : 11-14
June 2000
Venue : Hall 1

Children's Camp

Date : 22-24 June 2000
Venue : Hall 1

Gospel Meetings

Date : 7, 8 & 9 July 2000
Venue : Hall 1
Time : 7 & 8 July, 7.30pm
9 July, 5.00pm