

# church

THE CHURCH IN SINGAPORE

# times

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## Why the Lord Jesus Was in a Righteous Rage

“Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, ‘Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!’ Then His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.’” (John 2:13-17) Why was the Lord Jesus consumed by such zeal for God’s house? Something that could so provoke Him was certainly no small matter. To understand and hence appreciate Jesus’ reaction, let us see what the Old Testament says about God’s intentions for His temple.

At first the Israelites served the real God when they dwelt in Canaan. Then there was a famine and they moved to Egypt where there was ample food and where Jacob’s son Joseph was the governor. There God blessed them and they grew mightily. Later, a new Pharaoh oppressed them severely, so they could not serve God and they cried to Him. God remembered them and called Moses to lead them out of Egypt to the place He had prepared so that they might serve Him wholeheartedly there. Before they entered the Promised Land, God charged Moses on Mount Sinai with the details of the tabernacle and the service. From the Israelites’ journey through the wilderness to Canaan, we can see the functions of the tabernacle.

### The temple – the place to sacrifice to and serve God

God told Moses: “When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain. ... you shall say to him [Pharaoh], ‘The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.’” (Ex 3:12-18) The Israelites served God by offering sacrifices to Him, but where should they go to do so? “The place where God chooses to put His name for His dwelling place” appears 24 times in Deuteronomy, showing that God’s people must go to this place, and not wherever they liked, to offer their sacrifices to and serve Him, e.g. “But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks”; “You shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your gates, the



(continued on page 2)



*In the twinkling of an eye, 2011 has flown by. The past year saw increasing unrest and natural calamities worldwide. This is the Lord telling us in advance: be watchful, prepare and pray for the coming of His kingdom. In this age of comfort and materialism, the majority of believers might have been swept away unknowingly and neglected God’s call to serve Him and build up the church.*

*We thank the Lord for preserving us in peace and in the church. At the Lord’s Day Meeting, we are pursuing the Gospel of John. The fellowship on God’s word every time we meet through all the years always brings new revelations, new light, new enjoyment and new encouragement. Indeed, it is as what the Lord Jesus says: “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).*

*At the conference last December, from the record of creation in Genesis chapter 1, we looked anew at this mysterious triune God and the mysteries hidden in His creation. We were encouraged to build up a living of eating, drinking and enjoying God, which is the key to growth in life. In this new year, may all the saints heed His word, treasure Him, serve Him more faithfully, and testify for His kingdom.*

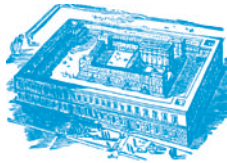
*The editors*

stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are among you, at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide"; "And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithes of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always" (12:5-6; 16:11; 14:23).

The place God had chosen was Mount Zion in Jerusalem, where "each one appears before God" (Ps 84:7). It was also the place where Solomon built the temple, which God had chosen for Himself as a house of sacrifice (2 Chr 7:12). So an important function of the temple was for God's chosen people to offer sacrifices to God and serve Him there.

### The temple – the place where God dwells

The temple was also God's dwelling place among men. God said to Moses: "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." (Ex 25:8) After Moses had set up the tabernacle, the cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord filled it (Ex 40:34). This tabernacle was God's dwelling with the Israelites in the wilderness. Later Solomon built the temple as a place for God to dwell in forever, and God affirmed it by sending fire from heaven to consume the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and filling the temple with His glory (1 Ki 8:13; 2 Chr 7:1). God declared to Solomon: "For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually"; "And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel" (2 Chr 7:16; 1 Ki 6:13). The psalmists testified: "For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place"; "How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts"; "LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house, And the place where Your glory dwells" (Ps 132:13; 84:1; 26:8).



### The temple – the place where God meets with, teaches and judges His people

God promised Moses: "And there [at the tabernacle] I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel." (Ex 25:22) Indeed, when Moses went into the tabernacle, he heard the voice of God speaking to him from above the mercy seat (Num 7:89).

Moses wrote the law, delivered it to the priests and elders and commanded them: "When all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God" (Deu 31:9-13).

"If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgement or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses. And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge there in those days, and inquire of them; they shall pronounce upon you the sentence

of judgement. You shall do according to the sentence which they pronounce upon you in that place which the LORD chooses. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you." (Deu 17:8-10)

So we see that the temple was also where God met and spoke with His people, where God's words were taught, and where judgements according to God's words were passed.

### The temple – the place to pray to God

At the dedication of the temple, Solomon asked: "But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You: that Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where You said You would put Your name, that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place." (2 Chr 6:18-20) God answered him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually." (2 Chr 7:12-16) The temple was thus established as the house of prayer, and God Himself declared in Isaiah 56:7 that "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."

### Conclusion

The temple was such a sacred place, yet the Jews had made it into a den of thieves. Hence it is no wonder that the Lord Jesus cleansed it in such a righteous rage (Matt 21:12-13).

In the New Testament age, God's temple no longer means just the physical temple: "So the Jews answered and said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' Then the Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body." (John 2:18-21) The temple God wants to build now is the spiritual temple. Hence the Lord Jesus says we worship the Father not in Jerusalem but in spirit and truth (John 4:21-23). Paul asks: "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Cor 6:19) Individually, our body is God's temple; corporately, the church is also God's temple: "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house"; "in whom [Jesus Christ] the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the spirit." (1 Pet 2:5; Eph 2:21-22)

Brothers and sisters, we really need revelation that the church is the dwelling place of the Almighty! This is not a small matter. May the Lord have mercy on us so that we do not err like the Israelites and fall short of His glory. May He also help us to treasure His church and to serve Him with fear and faithfulness in His temple, which is His church. Amen!



# Young People's Conference in Germany

– 30 July - 6 August 2011

We thank the Lord that three of us were able to attend the conference on “The Rewards for the Overcomers”. First the Lord impressed upon us the importance of having the desire to be overcomers. Then we looked at how we can be overcomers practically, e.g. by experiencing Christ as our High Priest, exercising our spirit, eating of the tree of life and drinking of the water of life daily. We also saw the central position the church has in God’s heart and in the fulfilment of His purpose. Finally, the Lord encouraged us to go on zealously by showing us the rewards He has prepared for the overcomers, such as being made pillars in the temple of God, having the name of God, the name of the city of God and the name of the Lord written on them, being preserved from the hour of trial, and being raptured to the throne of God as firstfruits.

In the meetings, many saints testified how they were touched by the Lord or heard His voice, especially in the hour-long personal time every day. We have experienced personally that His rewards are not just in the future but already a practical and real foretaste today. We are sure it is very possible to be overcomers as long as we are willing to co-operate with Him in our daily living. Praise the Lord!

(Recordings of the messages given in the conference are available from the audio service.)

## Sharing 1

Thank the Lord for this opportunity to go to Europe for the conference. At first, I didn’t think I would get much out of it; I just hoped I wouldn’t doze off at the meetings. However, as we were singing the first hymns, I began to feel differently. I was singing the best I could, and I sensed an indescribable feeling welling up and bursting out of everyone. When we sang the hymn “I want to be an Overcomer”, we all just stood up and clapped spontaneously. Everyone sang it full of spirit and energy, not caring if they could sing well or not. I realised it was God’s work in all of us that made us sing with such life and oneness.

On the second night, I experienced the Lord working in me again. It had been a tiring day, but when the meeting started, I was actually fully energized and listened attentively. The meeting was about calling upon the Lord, even calling Him “Honey Jesus” affectionately!

At a group fellowship, I decided to call a song that I really liked at that moment. Although not many knew how to sing it, it still encouraged a sister because the lyrics were the very verses she had read in her personal time that day. She was so encouraged that she even shared about it with the whole meeting that night.

At the Lord’s Day Meeting, many shared their conference experiences with the church boldly, which was really inspiring. I truly hope that I will be able to attend the “JuKo” again!

Bro Titus Lee

## Sharing 2

I realised anew how important it is to call upon the Lord’s name! In fact, it is a privilege that we can call upon Him and be called His people. A verse that we read in the conference that I have come to treasure is Deuteronomy 4:7: “For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for

whatever reason we may call upon Him?” May I learn to appreciate this privilege given to me to call upon Him for whatever reason, and may the people around me discover His goodness through my trust in Him!

Dear saints, let us all be encouraged to continue reading His Word daily, calling on His name and giving ourselves for the building of His church, for we have such a great God in our midst whom we can turn to for WHATEVER REASON!

Sis Dawn Neo

## Sharing 3

I was very motivated to see so many young ones with a burning desire to be overcomers. Their aspirations and resolve have spurred me to continue pressing on toward the goal together. Indeed, the remaining time is short and the Lord has already got so many wonderful rewards ready for us. How can we waste even an hour in anything that doesn’t relate to the preparation of His bride for His coming again?

The Lord has also engraved afresh into my heart the longing to be made a pillar in the temple of God. A pillar, unlike an obelisk that stands tall alone, is built up and built in with the other members solidly. Yet this pillar is yielding and sweet-smelling as a pillar of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense (Song 3:6). May our sons be as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters as pillars sculptured in palace style (Ps 144:12)!

Sis Lee S.G.

# Shepherds’ Conference

– 6-7 November 2011



*The shepherds enjoying team-building games*

Praise the Lord for the two-day conference in which about 50 saints participated! The theme was “Serving the Lord and ministering to one another”. On the first day, we played immensely enjoyable team-building games at the meeting hall and the MacRitchie Reservoir, which strengthened the spirit of oneness among us.

At the night meeting, brother Kee Hu shared about serving the Lord. He reminded us that we were priests of God and slaves of Christ through Jesus’ precious blood. The goal of serving the Lord was the building up of the body of Christ, which is His church. The message motivated us and reminded us about our attitudes when serving the Lord. The following morning, we learnt about gifts for service in the body of Christ and putting these gifts into practice by expressing care for one another. Responding positively, a pilot run of “Care network” (to commit to pray for and with a fellow shepherd) was proposed. Finally, the conference ended with a steamboat lunch.

We obtained positive feedback about the conference and many felt that they were much helped and recharged by it. May our hearts be good ground for the Lord’s timely words, and may we put all that we have learnt into practice. Glory be to Him!

# Year End Students' Camp

– 28-30 November 2011



*The students learning to serve through games, sharing & memorizing God's word*

*It was very inspiring and encouraging to learn about the authenticity of the Bible, and we appreciated the great love of God in preserving the continuity of His Word from the past generations to our present age.*

The theme was “Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.” (Ps 119:105). The objectives were to inculcate in the young ones the importance of reading God’s word, and to introduce to them different ways to enjoy God in His word. At the two night meetings, we looked at “How to read the Bible for all its worth” and “How the Bible came into existence”.

The speaking brother emphasized the importance of putting in effort to read the Bible and illustrated how God’s word was able to guide us throughout our lives. It was very inspiring and encouraging to learn about the authenticity of the Bible, and we appreciated the great love of God in preserving the continuity of His Word from the past generations to our present age. There were hands-on activities to help the youths practise what they had learnt about note-taking, choral speaking and listening to the audio Bible. We also played fun-filled icebreaker and team-building games to help the youths mingle with one another. We give thanks and praises to the Lord for all His blessings. May every young heart be inspired and long to be filled with His word!

# Church Conference

– 4-7 December 2011

Thank the Lord, about 280 brothers and sisters gathered together to enjoy God’s word. Through the conference, the Lord reminded us of the most basic truths and practices, which unfortunately have been neglected by God’s children in their living today. Based on the record of God’s creation in Genesis chapter one, we were helped to see anew the principles of spiritual growth.

*The first point* is the triune God being the God of life. This life is living, it can be seen, felt and handled; it is full of dynamism. It was, is and will be, and has neither beginning nor end. Originally, this God of life dwelt in a secret place unknown to men (for man has fallen). But for men to know Him again, He manifested Himself and His great plan to Abraham, Jacob, Moses etc. To accomplish His work, in the New Testament, God first sent His beloved Son Jesus Christ to this earth to express His life. Then He sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in us so that we can sense, experience and enjoy this rich life. The Holy Spirit is the only way for us to know the Saviour and the God of life.

*The second point* is the breath of life, the tree of life and the river of the water of life. The indwelling Holy Spirit wants to lead us to know and enjoy the Lord Jesus as such a One by eating Him as the tree of life, drinking Him as the living water and breathing Him in as the breath of life. Simply put, it is to believe in Him, receive Him, depend on Him, follow Him, call upon His name, read His word, pray to Him etc. Then we can be fed and satisfied spiritually.

*The third point* is the conditions for the existence of life. God separated light from darkness, dry land from the seas, and the waters above from the waters below, which show that He is holy. So we see that God has a desire for His people to learn to lead sanctified lives. In our service and living, we must distinguish the heavenly from the earthly, the spiritual from the fleshly. Then our spiritual life can survive. Otherwise, there is spiritual death.

*The fourth point* is the different stages of life. From the order and stages of God’s creation, we see the important principle that God wants the growth of life to be expressed. From the division of light and darkness on the first day right up to the creation of man on the sixth day, every stage is full of spiritual significance. May we take heed of the Lord’s speaking and receive grace together.

(Recordings of the messages given in the conference are available from the audio service.)



## Fanny Crosby (1820-1915)

Fanny Crosby was a famous blind hymnist. She became blind when she was only a few weeks old. Despite this, she was a spiritually rich servant of God. She wrote many excellent hymns which are great blessings to the church and are still treasured and sung by countless saints today.



Crosby was born to a poor family in Putnam County, New York, on 24 March 1820. Although her parents were of humble birth, they were devout Christians who loved the Lord fervently. Before Crosby turned one, her father passed away, so her grandmother came to look after her.

Crosby's grandmother also loved the Lord and knew Him well. She often put Crosby on her lap and described to her the beauty of God's creation. She also instilled into her God's great love, the Lord's redemption and the Bible's wonder. Crosby was deeply touched by the Saviour's sacrificial love and this fire kept growing in her. Maybe it was because she could not see her outward environment that her love for the Lord was all the more real, pure and fervent. Through the Holy Spirit, the Saviour revealed His own beauty in her heart and she experienced regeneration at a tender age. She loved having intimate fellowship with the Lord. Because she spent long hours in secret communion with Him, she obtained knowledge and revelation directly from Him and exceeded those who received teachings from men. Her grandmother also encouraged her to keep God's word in her heart richly as an incomparable and inexhaustible treasure that would be with her always. So from young, she memorized the Bible diligently and could recite most of it. Her efforts had a great impact on her service and yielded an endless supply of riches all her life.

Young Crosby was talented in poetry and longed to go to school, but the school for the blind was far away and too costly. However she trusted the Lord, made this desire known to Him and believed God could do what men deemed impossible. Although it was a long wait, she never doubted but just trusted and continued looking to God. Finally, the miracle came. A stranger from Boston came for an inspection and was so impressed by her poems that he sponsored her study. She majored in music and literature. After graduation, she stayed to teach for 11 years. She sowed the Saviour's great love into her students and many of them got saved. Like her,

they all loved the Saviour dearly and liked to have fellowship with Him. Her influence on the school was far-reaching. Later she went to testify in many churches and especially loved preaching the gospel among the poor.

Crosby's greatest contribution and service to the church were her hymns, many of which were actually the Holy Spirit's voice, her experiences in fellowship with the Lord and her knowledge of Him. Her hymns influenced the church way beyond her lifetime. This is the story behind one of them: One hot summer day, she was invited to preach in a chapel in New York city. Though blind, she was very sensitive. She sensed the Holy Spirit telling her a young man there had denied his Christian upbringing and turned apostate recently. So after preaching, she followed her inner feeling and asked, "If there is a young man here who has left his mother's teachings for the way of perdition, I would like to have fellowship with him after the meeting." She said that a few times and indeed, an 18-year-old youth came forward and said, "Do you mean me?" Then he wept as he admitted to defying his mother's dying charge, forsaking the Lord and sinning. Crosby hugged him, spoke kindly to him about the Saviour and knelt with him to pray until he was assured the Lord had forgiven his sins. He went back with a heart overflowing with God's great love. After Crosby got home, she was also greatly moved by the Holy Spirit and wrote this famous hymn "Rescue the Perishing":

*Rescue the perishing,  
Care for the dying,  
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;  
Weep o'er the erring one,  
Lift up the fallen,  
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save.*

*Rescue the perishing,  
Care for the dying;  
Jesus is merciful,  
Jesus will save.*

Crosby lived to 94 years old. She married a blind musician and her full name was Mrs Fanny J. Crosby Alstyn.

(Reference: Hymn 727 in *Selected Hymns & Songs*; abstract translated from "The Hymnists and Their Hymns (Volume 1)" by Newman Sze, Testimony Publications)

# Out Of Darkness Into Light

## An unhappy childhood

I was born in a village in Malaysia. When I was five, my family emigrated to Singapore. Shortly after, my father fell very ill and passed away. My mother and older brothers then all had to work to support the family, while my younger brothers and I were left at home to care and fend for ourselves without parental care.

When I had to begin school, my mother sent me to a school two kilometres away from home. As our relatives' children were studying there too, they could look after me as well. Every day, my fourth elder brother and I would walk with our cousin to school. I disliked school and do not have pleasant memories of my school-days.

I remember the time I was in Primary 4 and the first term break had just ended. We were walking to school one day when my cousin suggested that we skip school and go for a swim in the sea. We merrily did this for two weeks, until a school staff discovered our absence and summoned us back to school. On our first day back in school, we were taken to the principal who instructed us to get our parents to speak to him. I was afraid of what my mother would do to my brother and I, and also fearing my cousin would beat me up if I complied, I refused. This was considered an act of defiance for which the principal had no hesitation to give me two strokes of the cane. This incident earned me a black mark in my school record.

Shortly after this, I forgot to bring my homework that was due for submission. The English language teacher pinched my ear so hard that, in pain, I shoved her hand aside. Incensed, she took me to the principal's office where I was told to sign my name on a book. There I realized it was the first step of the procedure that would eventually lead to my expulsion from school.

## Struggles & turning point

Some time later, my fourth elder brother found me an apprenticeship with a retail shop at Geylang Lorong 36. There I made some friends who told me that they worshipped "a god who answers all requests". Uncertain about life, I just followed them to chant scripture and worship Buddha every day. I picked up many bad habits as well - I smoked, gambled (hoping to get rich), had a foul temper, mixed with bad company, and got into frequent fights. Such was the life I led for more than a decade!

Then one day, the shop owner's adopted son committed suicide – he hanged himself at the very spot I used for worship. My heart was filled with doubt – why did "a god who answers all requests" let a life end this way? I was at a loss, deeply troubled and wondered where I could find the real God.

It was in the midst of this situation that I found a gospel tract on a table in the shop. It was from the nearby Xingguang kindergarten, inviting me to a gospel meeting. I decided to go and take a look. The people I met there were so different from the company that I kept.

It was the first time too that I heard the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ. Strangely, I found enjoyment and happiness there. So I continued to attend the gospel meetings, and the Lord's words convicted me that Jesus is the true Saviour and God. I accepted the Lord Jesus as my Saviour, got baptized and led a proper church life. Within just two years, my life underwent a great change and all my bad habits were gone!

When I consider my sinful past and how the Lord had sought me and wrought a marvellous change in my life, I just bow my head in thanksgiving. The Lord has blessed me with my own family and His blessings are far beyond my expectations. Thank the Lord!

I am now more than 60 years old and have come to know the saving grace of Jesus for more than 40 years. I know that the Lord has not promised me that skies would be always blue nor the way would be smooth sailing. There have been big and small storms in my life, but in all my troubles and difficulties, I was experiencing that the Lord was teaching me to trust Him and to let Him be in charge. Hallelujah, glory be to God!

Bro Pang A.F.



## Announcements & Prayer Items

### Gospel Meeting

Date : 6 Apr 2012  
Time : 10:30am  
Venue : Hall 1

Date : 5 May, 2 Jun 2012  
Time : 7:30pm  
Venue : Hall 1

### Children's Camp

Date : 6-8 Jun 2012  
Venue : Hall 1

### Young People's Conference

Date : 10-13 Jun 2012  
Venue : YMCA