



GREENLANE CHINESE METHODIST CHURCH
紐西蘭基督教華人衛理公會美恩堂

2026
20th
Anniversary
二十週年



Growing Communities Moving for Christ

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*Twenty Years of
the Lord's Grace*

The Way God Works: Starting From What Is Unremarkable

♦ Rev Bishop Lai Liong Chan



GCMC is now 20 years old. Over these two decades, God has guided us step by step, leading us to worship in our own purchased church building today and to hold this 20th-anniversary thanksgiving service. This is truly God's marvelous work and grace. We cannot but give glory to our Heavenly Father, our redeemer the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit who empowers us.

Looking back over these 20 years, God's work began from what seemed unremarkable and insignificant. Yet today, we cannot despise the small and humble beginnings of GCMC. When something aligns with God's will and people are willing to obey, God will surely work in it to accomplish His good purposes.

In fact, if we trace back to the very beginning, we can say it started with the Chinese-English bilingual worship service that began on October 1, 2000. At that time, Auckland Chinese Methodist Church (ACMC) was still renting St. Paul's Methodist Church at 12 St. Vincent Ave, Remuera, holding worship services at 1:00 PM. Due to the increase in attendance, the service could no longer accommodate more people. Additionally, we had some brothers and sisters who primarily communicated in English. Based on these needs and considerations, it was decided to hold a Chinese-English bilingual worship service every Sunday at 3:30 PM.

At that time, the service was not large, with only about 10 to 20 people attending each Sunday. This continued for many years, until ACMC purchased its current location (12 Young Road, Mt Wellington) in 2003 and, after renovations, moved to the new building on February 12, 2006, for a joint worship service and commissioning ceremony. This commissioning ceremony was to send out the workers, brothers, and sisters from the 3:30 PM Chinese-English bilingual worship service, as well as those encouraged to stay and continue worshipping at the rented St. Paul's Methodist Church. Thus, about 40 to 50 people

remained and began the Remuera Mission Centre on February 19, 2006, with worship services held at 1:00 PM. Three years later, on March 15, 2009, it was promoted to a full church during the 6th CMCNZ Annual Mission Conference and named Remuera Chinese Methodist Church (Mei En Tang).

Looking back on this journey, starting from what was unremarkable and unnoticed, we deeply appreciate Jesus's Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew 13:31-33. The Scripture says: "He put another parable before them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.' He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.'"

Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed, which was the smallest seed known to the Jews at that time, yet it would grow into a large tree. Jesus also compared the kingdom of God to yeast, so small that it goes unnoticed, yet it causes the entire dough to rise through fermentation.

By using the mustard seed and yeast to illustrate the kingdom of heaven, Jesus indicated that it often starts unnoticed because it seems too small. However, over time, God causes it to grow, and people begin to notice its presence.

In fact, this is the way God works. He often chooses to use what seems ordinary or insignificant to express His love and power, ultimately accomplishing His will.

From the Bible, we see that at critical moments for His people, God often sends a baby as His answer. These beginnings may seem insignificant, but God uses them to fulfill His plans and purposes. For example, Moses, Samuel, and

John the Baptist were all God's answers to the needs of their times.

When God delivered the Israelites from the oppression of the Midianites, He deliberately used only 300 seemingly insignificant men to defeat a much larger enemy force. In fact, He could have used more soldiers, but He wanted to accomplish His goal through His own mighty power.

When Jesus chose His first disciples, He could have recruited a large crowd to follow Him or called the wisest, most outstanding, and most talented people of the time. However, He chose only twelve, and these twelve disciples were even looked down upon by the world, described as "uneducated, common men" (Acts 4:13). Yet, it was these disciples who spread the gospel, and to this day, churches are found all over the world.

Yet, Christians are often tempted by the world to embrace the belief that "bigger is better." We are tempted to measure success by the number of people involved in ministry or the size of the church building. Just as the Charismatic Movement showcases God's power through miracles, and the Prosperity Gospel movement showcases success through megachurches, we need not deny miracles or large churches. Instead, we must understand God's ways and how He works.

God often starts with the small and the few to display His power and wonder. Therefore, we must learn to view success through God's eyes. God values the human heart and delights in those who obey Him. What matters is not the size or number but the quality of life of those who walk with Him, as this determines how they impact the world.

Every church starts from what seems insignificant. As long as the people within it obey God's Word, allow their lives to be transformed, walk with the Lord in love and holiness, God will surely cause it to grow and add to their number those who are being saved.

May GCMC continue to be used by God to shine as light and salt for the truth of the gospel, to lift high the name of Christ, to become a church that glorifies God and benefits others, and to fulfill the mission entrusted by the Lord.

Builders And Watchmen Pleasing to God

◆ Rev Aaron Sim



GCMC has reached its 20th anniversary. We give thanks to God, for it is entirely because of His gracious plan, mercy, and faithfulness that GCMC has been able to grow steadily, mature, and be used by Him in His kingdom, working together with God.

At the same time, we must recognize that in this world, almost every individual or group can celebrate a 20th anniversary. Even unbelieving groups, pagan religions, and even evil organizations can mark their 20th or 100th year. They too can grow from something small into something influential. Therefore, simply reaching 20 years is not, in itself, something to boast about. In fact, it should prompt us to be alert and reflective, to gain a wise heart and to number our days.

*1 Unless the LORD builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.*

*Unless the LORD watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.*

*2 It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,*

*eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives to his beloved sleep.*

*3 Behold, children are a heritage from
the LORD,*

the fruit of the womb a reward.

*4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the children of one's youth.*

*5 Blessed is the man who fills his
quiver with them!*

He shall not be put to shame

when he speaks with his enemies in

the gate.

(Psalm 127, ESV)

From Psalm 127, let us reflect together on three reminders about building and guarding in ways that are pleasing to God.

1. Build according to God's word

This psalm does not deny or diminish human responsibility and effort. Rather, it teaches us that our efforts only have lasting meaning when they are aligned with God's word. This applies not only to church ministry, but to every area of life—we are called to build according to God's instructions.

Whether 20 years or an entire lifetime, human life passes quickly. Even thousands of years are but a moment in God's sight. If our lives or our church appear successful but are not built according to God's word, they amount to nothing more than empty labor.

For this reason, the primary goal of church growth must be faithfulness to Scripture. When we confess with the church throughout history in the Nicene Creed, "I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church," the term apostolic affirms that the church believes and obeys the whole counsel of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments. Only on this foundation can the church faithfully proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, live in love and unity, and pursue holy and godly lives shaped after Christ.

Church history warns us that when the church departs from obedience to Scripture, its labor becomes futile and its vigilance ineffective, leading the church into deep spiritual darkness. When the watchman "stays awake in vain," the enemy is free to destroy and cause chaos. The same is true of individual lives that drift away from obedience to God's word.

Abraham provides a sobering example. When he

failed to trust God fully and instead acted according to human reasoning by having a child through Hagar (Genesis 16:1-2), he brought lasting difficulties to his family and to God's people. Only when Abraham trusted and obeyed God did he truly witness the establishment of God's household.

2. Rely on God's power

This psalm also carries a promise: when we labor faithfully according to God's word, we can be certain that God Himself is at work. This is because it is He who is building and guarding the church; we are simply His servants.

Prayer, then, is an expression of reliance on God—but biblical prayer is inseparable from obedience. If we act according to our own plans and then ask God to bless them, we are not truly relying on Him; rather, we are attempting to use and manipulate Him. Such labor cannot bring peace, because it is not pleasing to God.

By contrast, verse 2 reminds us that when we labor faithfully while depending on God, we are granted rest. This rest does not mean an absence of hardship, tears, or struggle. In fact, obedience to God's word may bring greater challenges, as Jesus taught when He spoke of taking up the cross and walking the narrow path.

Yet those who rely on God can experience deep inner peace even amid suffering, because they know their labor and tears are not in vain. God will use them to build both His people and His church.

John Calvin captures this truth well: "The faithful, on the other hand, although they lead a laborious life, yet follow their vocations with composed and tranquil minds. Thus their hands are not idle, but their minds repose in the stillness of faith."

3. Give thanks for God's blessing

When the church builds and guards according to God's will, God surely blesses. One clear blessing is the spiritual growth and maturity of those who serve (Ephesians 4:11-16). However, the response of those we evangelize and shepherd—their faith, repentance, and growth—is never something we can control. Scripture never offers a guaranteed formula for visible success.

Therefore, when we see growth, conversions, and repentance, we should respond with gratitude, recognizing these as God's gracious gifts.

Psalm 127:3-5 uses the raising of children as a

powerful illustration. God commands us to be fruitful and to raise children according to His ways, yet even faithful obedience does not guarantee children, nor does it ensure that children will follow our instruction. When we do receive children, or when our children walk in faith and obedience, so that we can be like a warrior with a full quiver of arrows, we must recognize this as God's blessing—not as proof of our own skill or methods.

Jacob's story illustrates this clearly. Through questionable schemes (Genesis 30:37-43), he gained Laban's wealth—not because his methods were right, but because God mercifully blessed and protected him. Jacob rightly owed God thanksgiving for His blessing, but he also needed to learn God's ways. This was part of his spiritual formation.

Likewise, when the church grows, we must resist boasting in our methods, traditions, or experience. Instead, we give thanks and continue learning how to build God's church faithfully according to His word.

As Scripture reminds us:

*"So neither he who plants nor he who
waters is anything, but only God who
gives the growth."*

(1 Corinthians 3:7, ESV)

And:

*"Moreover, it is required of stewards
that they be found faithful."*

(1 Corinthians 4:2, ESV)

Finally, we give thanks to the brothers and sisters who have shared testimonies in this annual publication, helping us remember God's past blessings and faithfulness. All glory belongs to the God who gives grace. However, there are countless acts of faithfulness and love for the Lord that are not recorded here, and many we ourselves may have forgotten. But God remembers them all, and every act of obedience has eternal value.

May we therefore continue to treasure each day and each small act of faithfulness—obedient to God's word, dependent on His power, and grateful for His blessing—so that we may be builders and watchmen who are pleasing to Him.

Happy 20th Anniversary, GCMC

◆ Rev James Chin



Remembering significant events on an annual basis is something as old as humankind. Even before calendars were invented, people used the annual cycle of seasons and the rhythms of the work year—planting, cultivating and harvest—to recall significant marker events.

Israel celebrates Passover (the annual remembrance of deliverance from Egypt; Deuteronomy 16:6), and the Methodist church celebrates the festivals of Easter, Christmas and Aldersgate. Nations celebrate their day of independence, the king's birthday or the day the All Blacks won the World Cup.

In the same way each individual life is annually marked with significant events, the most obvious being one's birthday. Christians sometimes celebrate the day of their baptism, or confirmation ceremony. Married people celebrate their wedding anniversaries. Some churches celebrate their anniversary publishing newsletters (like the one you are reading). All these are happy occasions that invite gratuitous reflection.

In the past 20 or more years, this church has changed names multiple times; from ACMC, to RCMC, to now GCMC. The first letter of each acronym refers to the geographical shifts that took place, from Auckland to Remuera to Greenlane (note it's Greenlane, not Greenland that a certain man with orange hair covets). If nothing else, this shows that God is on the move, and is moving with GCMC.

There are also anniversaries that are difficult to celebrate: a spouse's, parent's or child's death, the day one was assaulted, or made redundant at a job, or the date that the paper came through on the divorce, or a medical test result, or for me as a pastor, members who left our church under less than favourable

circumstances. Even if these dates are not written on my Google calendar, they are inscribed on the calendar of the heart. Many people have an annual emotional cycle that forms the seasons of the soul, both summer and winter. These too are worthy of theological and spiritual reflection.

Some misguided Christians think that denying painful anniversaries is a mark of advanced spirituality. They never talk about the loss and pretend that it is 'all over.' But like a cork pushed down in water, such painful wounds surface in compensatory behaviour: inappropriate emotions, depression, withdrawal from situations that bring back memories, conspicuous lack of reference to deceased people, unwillingness to risk being loved again or rebound relationships. In the church context, not wanting to serve again after being 'burned at the altar of sacrifice' as colourfully described to me by a hurt brethren.

Yes, we have our up's and down's, and guess what? God is in it too. There are some wounds and events that in this life will never be forgotten, but they can be forgiven and substantially healed. And the process of getting there is part of God's agenda for our spiritual growth and maturing.

Celebrating anniversaries as individuals or as a community of faith is based on good theology. God is sovereign and has a wonderful purpose (not a plan) for our lives. Nothing has happened to us that cannot be incorporated into his good purpose for us. He is a saving and healing God. We are not a bundle of accidents or victims of fate. God's grand purpose - not the stars or horoscope - defines our life path. Each person is a unique creation (Psalm 139), and celebrating the marker events of our unique life path is a way of celebrating creation and Creator at the same time.

Fun fact #1: Did you know GCMC (then RCMC) started their English service in 2013 with Rev Aaron Sim having to 'shuttle preach' at both the Chinese and English services?

Fun fact #2: Did you know the English service at GCMC is also known as "Cornerstone @GCMC"? Don't believe me, check out the big billboard sign on Campbell Road.

Fun fact #3: I believe our English Fellowship will reveal them at our 20th Anniversary dinner.



Not only is celebrating anniversaries good theology; it is good spirituality. It helps us find God at the centre of our lives. True spirituality is gained, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said, "... by living unreservedly in life's duties, problems, successes and failures, experiences and perplexities. In so doing we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God" (D. Bonhoeffer, Letter from Tegel Prison in 1944, p15).

GCMC 20th Anniversary Thanksgiving

◆ Kie Sing Tang



Thanksgiving reflection — Walking a Seven-Year Journey of Faith Together

In 2016, my wife and I moved from Dunedin to Auckland. We thank God for giving us the opportunity to join Remuera Chinese Methodist Church (now Greenlane Chinese Methodist Church, GCMC), where we worshiped and served together with the brothers and sisters for seven years before moving back to Dunedin again.

During this time, we were deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside Rev. Aaron Sim, Rev. James Chin, and the Local Church Executive Committee (LCEC). Through these years of service, we came to appreciate that GCMC is a church full of life, passion, and God-given vision.

As the church celebrates its 20th Anniversary, I would like to take this opportunity to count God's blessings and share three areas in which I witnessed beautiful spiritual testimonies—things we can be thankful for, encouraged by, and continue to uphold in the years to come.

1. Young and Dedicated Leaders — Seeing Hope Through Their Commitment

GCMC is blessed with a group of young, gifted, and energetic leaders and co-workers. They serve efficiently, passionately, and faithfully, and their

commitment can be seen across all areas of ministry.

Although many of them are young parents with children to care for, they still willingly devote their time, energy, and gifts to serve the Lord and support the work of the church. Their spirit of dedication is truly moving and gives us great hope for the future of the church.

Not only are they diligent in service, but they also hunger for God's Word, seeking truth and spiritual growth. As Paul said in 1 Timothy 4:12: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

The rise of this younger generation is a clear sign that God is at work in His church. May their lives continue to be an example to others—impacting lives through their own life testimony.

2. Unity in Building the Church — Experiencing Blessing Through Co-labouring In Christ

GCMC is the first church under the Chinese Methodist Church of New Zealand to have both Chinese and English Sunday services under one unified LCEC. Despite differences in language, the two congregations share the same leadership, vision, and mission.

This unity is the gracious work of God and the Holy Spirit. Brothers and sisters serve together, respecting and supporting one another, working side by side in harmony. Through this, the beauty and unity of the body of Christ are clearly displayed.

One of the moments that touched me deeply was seeing the congregation working together in practical ways. During the fund raising campaign for the new church building, many families willingly volunteered—preparing breakfast on Sundays, serving the church joyfully, and strengthening one another through fellowship and mutual support.

Such unity has helped the church grow strong and has become a channel through which God continues to bless the congregation.

3. A Beautiful Example of Cheerful Giving — Love Expressed Through Generosity

The brothers and sisters of GCMC also shine as a wonderful example of joyful giving.

Whether through tithes, offerings, or contributions to the building fund, their generosity reflects a sincere love for God and His

house.

Their willingness to give freely is an expression of gratitude toward God and a testimony of their living faith. Because of their faithfulness and unity, the church has experienced God's abundant provision—both materially and spiritually.

Looking Ahead — Moving Forward for the Glory of God

These twenty years testify to God's abundant grace and faithful guidance. He has raised up generations of co-workers, enabling the church to be rooted in truth, grow in love, and bear fruit in unity.

GCMC has now relocated from Remuera to Greenlane. We pray that the new church will become a beacon of the gospel, shining brightly in the community so that many more will come to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

May God continue to bless GCMC and all its members, so that they may continue to walk together in unity on the path ahead, filled with faith, love, and the spirit of oneness.

May all glory, honor, and praise be unto our faithful God.

Wishing GCMC a Blessed Birthday

◆ Selina Yee

Thank God and praise Him! GCMC has been established for 20 years now. Over these two decades, God's grace has been with GCMC every moment. I still remember when I graduated and left the first spiritual home that had nourished me with spiritual milk, and came to Auckland as a single woman. I visited different churches and fellowships. Thank God, I eventually settled down at GCMC, where I continued to grow and experience God. I am grateful for the teachings of Rev Chan and Rev Sim in the past, as well as the

wonderful youth fellowship, and even more thankful for the sisters who grew together with me in God's love. Although I am now married and continue to serve and grow at my husband's church, GCMC remains the second spiritual home that nurtured me. I pray to God, asking that GCMC continue to spread the gospel under God's guidance and lead brothers and sisters to resolve to follow the Lord.

Wishing GCMC a Blessed birthday!

◆ Rita

I have been attending the church in Remuera since 2016. I truly miss the days when we studied the Bible together, had fellowship, went hiking, and participated in camps.

Over these nine years, I am so grateful to have met some good friends in this church with whom I can still share my spiritual life to this day.

I also want to especially thank the pastor and his wife. Whenever I encountered difficulties, you always comforted, encouraged, and guided me

with God's Word, helping me stay on God's path.

I am truly thankful to God for bringing us, people from different backgrounds, together in the same church, allowing us to learn to love one another, build each other up, and become more and more like Him.

I pray that the Lord will personally lead this big family. May we all emulate the humble life of Jesus Christ, have the same mindset as Him, and build the Lord's house with the same conviction.

20th Anniversary Reflections

♦ Betty Hii

This year, Greenlane Chinese Methodist Church celebrates 20 years of God’s unending faithfulness. All glory to God.

The story of GCMC is not about what we have achieved, but about what God has done in and through His people. As we look back on two decades of ministry and mission, we are reminded that every step of this journey has been guided and sustained by the grace of God. Many have prepared the way, but every victory, every breakthrough, and every life touched belongs to Him alone. Proverbs 21:31 reminds us: “The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord.” We do our part, but God brings the fruit.

We are especially grateful for the tremendous blessing of purchasing our own church building, renovating it, and moving into Campbell Road in December 2024. In the following year, 2025, we also restructured and renamed RCMC to GCMC Trust. This milestone is far more than a physical relocation; it is a testimony of God’s provision and the generosity of many who have been channels of blessing to GCMC. Their sacrifices and obedience have helped build a spiritual home for generations to come.

Honouring The Beginning

We remember the small beginnings where families gather, prayers whispered in faith, seeds planted with hope. These early steps, taken with courage and obedience, formed the foundation we stand on today. What began with a handful of families has grown into a vibrant, bilingual church family, worshipping side by side, not competing but complementing one another. We honour and remember the pioneers who planted, prayed and persevered so that future generations can flourish.

As Paul reflects in 1 Corinthians 3:6: “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God gave the growth.”

And indeed, God has made GCMC grow.

One Church, Two Languages, One Heart

For 20 years, God has shaped GCMC into a unique and beautiful testimony, having two services running concurrently, one in English and one in Chinese, yet united in one Spirit. While

different languages are spoken, the same gospel is preached. Even though the worship styles may vary, the same Lord is exalted. As Paul writes in Ephesians 4:4-6: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call - one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all.”

“This is not division, it is multiplication. It is not separation, it is expansion.”

GCMC is more than a building; it is a bridge. God has entrusted GCMC with a beautiful calling: a home for first-generation believers, a bridge for the next generation, where intergenerational families worship together united in Christ.

In a world often divided by culture, language, and age, God has positioned our church to embody unity not uniformity, but harmony. Our bilingual identity is not a challenge to overcome; it is a gift to steward. It reflects the heart of a God who gathers all nations and generations into one church family.

Moving Forward United Together In Christ

As we celebrate 20 years, we look back with gratitude and forward with hope. GCMC is one church with two expressions, Chinese and English, united in one heart and one mission for Christ. Our bilingual and intergenerational identity is a gift that reflects the beauty of God’s diverse family. May God shape GCMC into a church that reflects His heart, where generations walk together, differences are embraced with grace, and Christ remains at the centre of all we do.

The years ahead are not about comfort but about calling, a calling to share the gospel and the good news of Jesus Christ. It is not about maintaining but moving for Christ, not about preserving what we have but pursuing what Christ has prepared for us.

With grateful hearts, we look to the future trusting that the God who has strengthened us in the beginning and carried us for 20 years will continue to lead us as we grow communities and move for Christ”.

To God be the glory for the past 20 years, and to God be the glory for the years to come. Amen.

If John Wesley visits GCMC with our Lord Jesus Christ at our Church’s 20th Anniversary?

♦ King Yee Yong

While preparing for the 20th Anniversary Thanksgiving Banquet of **Greenlane Chinese Methodist Church**, a small and amusing incident occurred. One brother cheekily wrote a rather unexpected name on the registration form—“John Wesley.” When the co-workers noticed it, they were first surprised and then amused. Could it be that the founder of the Methodist movement, **John Wesley**, had signed up to attend the church’s twentieth anniversary celebration?

Historically speaking, this great revival leader and servant pastor of the eighteenth century passed away more than 235 years ago. Yet this small joke invites a thoughtful reflection: **What if, one day, the resurrected John Wesley were to accompany our returning Lord Jesus Christ and quietly visit the 20th anniversary celebration of our church? What might he see? What encouragement or challenge might he give to us before this world comes to pass?**

Looking back over these twenty years, we can only say with grateful hearts: **Time has flown by, and the grace of the Lord has been abundant.**

Twenty years ago, the beginning of our church was very humble. At that time, the congregation gathered in a rented space at St Paul’s Church. There were only about thirty people in attendance. Though the number was small, there was a group of brothers and sisters who were willing to faithfully offer themselves to the Lord. They devoted their lives, time, and finances for one shared purpose—to see the gospel proclaimed and the church established in this land.

Those early days required much faith. Many ministries were explored and developed step by step through prayer. Resources were limited, yet brothers and sisters supported one another. The congregation was small, yet everyone served with one heart. In the midst of human weakness and limitations, God patiently built His church.

Twenty years later, the congregation of Greenlane Chinese Methodist Church has grown to more than two hundred people. Even more encouraging, during **Christmas 2024**, the church

moved into the property that God graciously provided—our very own purchased place of worship. Looking back on every step of this journey, we can only bow our heads in gratitude, recognizing that all of this has been accomplished not by human strength but by the faithful guidance and gracious providence of God.

Throughout these twenty years, we also remember with deep gratitude the pastors and ministry co-workers who served the church in different seasons. They faithfully shepherded the flock, cared for brothers and sisters with love, and taught God’s Word with wisdom. Through prayer, labour, and quiet dedication, they faithfully cultivated the spiritual life of the congregation. Some of them have since moved on to serve in other mission fields, yet their faithfulness and sacrifice remain an important part of the history of our church. We thank God for their service and pray that the Lord will continue to bless and remember their labour in Him.

Yet if John Wesley were truly to visit us today, he might not only rejoice in the growth of the church. He might also gently ask us some deeper questions:

**Are we truly living in Christ?
Are our lives continuing to grow in His grace?
Is our church still faithfully living out the mission of the gospel?**

These questions echo the message of **First Epistle of John 2:1-6**, where the apostle John writes with pastoral tenderness: “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin.” Yet knowing human weakness, he immediately offers the comfort of the gospel: **“We have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”**

Jesus Christ has offered Himself as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. He not only forgives our sins but continues to intercede for us at the right hand of the Father, helping us grow in grace. His redemption does not merely change our standing before God—it continually transforms our lives.

Therefore the apostle John reminds believers: **“Whoever claims to know Him must live as Jesus did....but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him.”**

True faith is not merely a verbal confession but a life that expresses love for God and love for others. God’s love becomes complete in those who walk in obedience to His Word.

This is also the spiritual path that John Wesley emphasized throughout his life. He taught that the Christian life is a journey of grace—from salvation to sanctification—where believers grow steadily in God’s love until that love becomes more fully reflected in their lives.

Yet Wesley also left the church with a famous declaration:

“The world is my parish.”

This statement reminds us that the vision of the church should never stop at the walls of its own building or the comfort of its own community. If Wesley were among us today, he might ask: **s our vision limited to Greenlane Chinese Methodist Church? Is it limited to Auckland alone? Or are we also concerned about God’s work throughout New Zealand and around the world?**

When we think about the gospel needs in other cities of New Zealand—for example, the ministry of the our **New Plymouth Mission Centre**—and when we remember that many people around the world have still not heard the gospel, we realize that Wesley’s words are not merely a historical motto. They remain a living call to the church today.

Therefore, the twentieth anniversary of our church is not only a moment to look back with gratitude—it is also a new beginning.

We thank God for the grace He has given during these past twenty years, and we thank the many faithful co-workers and brothers and sisters whose prayers, service, and generosity have helped build this church step by step.

More importantly, this history reminds us of one truth:

God’s grace deserves the response of a lifetime.

May we treasure the opportunities God has given us and encourage one another to live faithfully for Him. May we continue to grow in

Christ and live lives marked by holiness and compassion. May our church become not merely a place of gathering, but a community that reflects the love of Christ.

Perhaps one day, when our earthly journey is complete, we will gather with the saints of every generation in our heavenly home. There we may truly meet the apostle John, John Wesley, and many faithful servants who devoted their lives to the gospel. Together we

will rejoice and worship the Lord Jesus Christ—the One who died for us, intercedes for us, and leads us in our growth.

May the Lord continue to guide the future of **Greenlane Chinese Methodist Church**, so that we may keep growing in His grace—**to know Christ, to obey Him, and to live out His love; carrying the mission of the gospel beyond the barriers of geography, culture, and language; proclaiming the truth of Christ’s redemption and His great love to a wider world. So that the pastors, co-workers, brothers and sisters of Greenlane Chinese Methodist Church may continue to serve and love God faithfully, to love people and bear witness to the gracious goodness of our Heavenly Father.**

Amen.

TWENTY YEARS AGO...

The Greenlane (previously Remuera) Chinese Methodist Church was established in February 2006 in the Remuera suburb of Auckland, at the former site of the Auckland Chinese Methodist Church (ACMC). Following the relocation of the ACMC to a new premises, most of the congregation moved with it, while some brothers and sisters chose to remain at the original Remuera site, where they established a new mission centre. In its early years, the congregation was jointly shepherded by Rev Lai Liong Chan and Pastor Ting Chek Dark.

In March 2009, GCMC was promoted from a mission centre to a full-fledged local church. In July of the same year, Rev Aaron Sim arrived at the church and has served faithfully here ever since.

In 2012, we added an English worship service. For the following two-plus years, Rev Sim simultaneously led both the Chinese and English congregations.

In 2015, Rev James Chin joined us, taking over the ministry of the English congregation, and the Chinese and English services began to run concurrently.

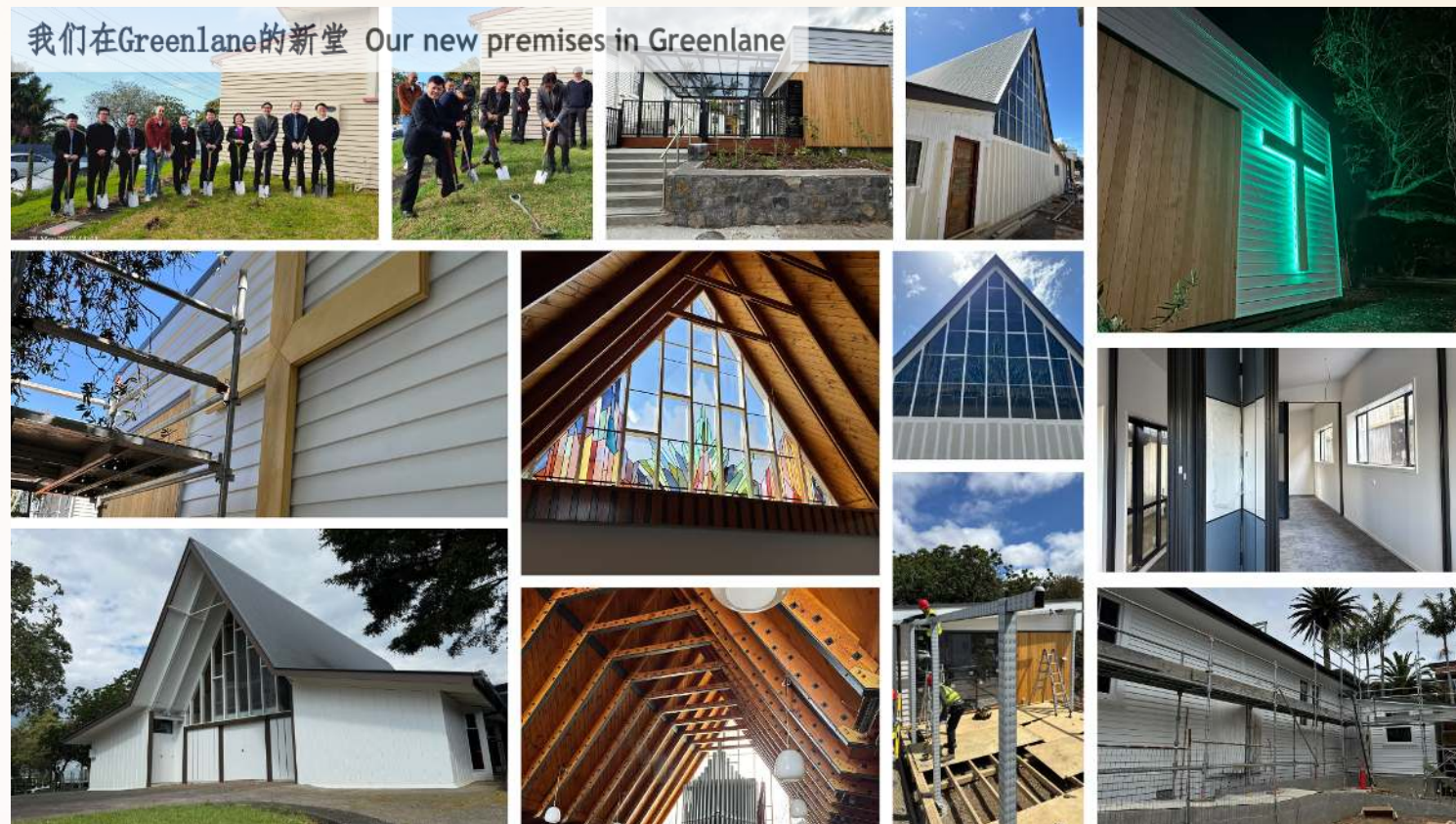
In 2022, we purchased a new premises in Greenlane. After nearly two years of renovation and expansion, we officially moved into the new site in December 2024.

Hand Together Through the Storm





Building Our Spiritual Home Together



*All things are from Him,
and through Him,
and to Him.
To Him be glory forever,
Amen!*

Ever-flowing Grace Through the Years



GCMC Today



Life Testimonies

Testimony of Grace and Salvation

♦ Sandy

Before coming to New Zealand, I knew very little about God or Christianity. My husband's grandmother was a devout Christian. One Christmas when she celebrated with us, this woman in her eighties sang hymns in English – a memory that stayed with me deeply, leaving me with a sense of the pure sincerity and genuineness unique to Christians.

In 2018, we arrived in Auckland, strangers in a new land. Fortunately, my husband discovered a free weekly English class held at a local church. We stumbled our way into that church family, and in the classroom of a kind and patient Christian teacher, we picked up the English we hadn't used in years. One day in December 2018, the church teacher invited us to watch a film about Jesus Christ. Though I couldn't follow the English, the scene of Jesus being nailed to the cross still moved me profoundly – I was struck with awe at the greatness and selflessness of His sacrifice. Afterward, as I began attending language school and then an MBA program, facing challenge after challenge in studies and in life, pushing through one hurdle after another, I gradually drifted away from church. During my studies, several of my closest classmates were devout Christians. Their steadfast faith in the Lord and their consistently kind and caring behavior once again deepened my admiration and appreciation for Christians – and yet I always felt that God was their God, not mine.

Then came 2023. The combined pressure of approaching graduation and a demanding part-time job left me utterly exhausted. I, who had always prided myself on being strong, was nearly crushed. I turned to a Christian friend for help, and visited her home repeatedly to listen as she explained the Bible. Each time she finished, my heart felt as though it had been nourished by sweet dew – the anguish and anxiety within me soothed and calmed. My friend told me that God was standing at my door, arms full of gifts and blessings, knocking. At that time, because of the beliefs and worldview I had been raised with, I still hesitated to open that door – until the most significant day of my life arrived: June 13, 2023.

That day, I was sitting outside a church near a clinic, waiting for my doctor's appointment. I looked up and saw the notice board at the church entrance: A place to belong. Beneath it, in smaller letters: Together in the heart of the city expressing

God's heart for the nations! Something stirred in my heart. After seeing the doctor, I stepped out of the clinic and looked up again – this time at the back of the church board: Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." I stood there, completely still. All the noise around me faded away; time and space seemed to freeze. A voice led me to read the words again, and every single word entered my body and soul. I found myself in wholehearted agreement with every one of those words. The barriers that had long stood between God and me suddenly seemed insignificant – they dissolved and vanished entirely. A deep and complete faith in God rose up within my heart. I felt as though little angels were surrounding me, singing and rejoicing, and I felt myself embraced by God. For the first time, I felt His presence with me. Love and joy flooded my heart. I don't know how much time passed before I returned to the world around me, but when I touched my cheek, the tearstains were real. Three desires arose in my heart: 1. I want to draw near to God. 2. I want to go to church. 3. I want to study the Bible.

And so, with the help of my dear sister Jing, I came to RCMC (now GCMC). From the very first service, everything felt familiar and close to my heart – the hymns, Rev Sim's exposition of Scripture – every word resonated with me deeply and filled me with wonder. When Rev Sim read this passage from Matthew: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30), tears poured down my face. Thank You, Lord! Praise You, Lord! I had walked such a long road, and at last I stood before You – at last, I had come home.

The Alpha Course and baptism classes that followed gave me a much deeper understanding of God, the church, and the Christian community, and further strengthened my faith and resolve to follow the Lord. My faith and spiritual life have grown day by day, spiraling upward.

Because I trust in the Lord, my understanding of life has grown broader and deeper. I know that all things are in His hands, and that my part is simply to do my best wholeheartedly – I need not worry about outcomes, for all outcomes rest in His

keeping. This has brought great peace and calm to my heart. In moments of difficulty and helplessness, it is prayer that has deepened my connection with the Lord, allowing me to witness His grace again and again, and to receive His gifts. This past February, my mother-in-law fell gravely ill. I prayed for days on end, pouring out my heart to the Lord and pleading for her. On the morning of the sixth day of her hospitalization, at five o'clock, the good news came that she had passed through the danger. In that moment, my gratitude to the Lord was boundless. There are so many such examples.

In the course of studying the Bible, I once listened to a talk by Sister Liao Zhi, which gave me much deeper insight into the truth that in God's eyes, all people are equal. God is just. Before we even came into this world, He already made provision for each of us according to our unique character and nature. Trials, suffering, and challenges have no "greater or lesser," no "harder or easier" — because each person is one of a kind, with their own distinctive nature. Therefore, the degree of every trial and hardship God allows is calibrated to what each individual is able to bear. God ordains these things to reveal His presence. Liao Zhi is a striking example of this. For those of us who are ordinary people, facing the various trials and hardships of our everyday lives — even if our difficulties are not dramatic or world-shaking, even if they seem small and unremarkable — they still display the glory of God. This shows us that God's love for each of us is equal, just, deep, steadfast, powerful, and eternal. It also helps me appreciate more fully that everyone carries their own burdens and sorrows, everyone has their own lessons to learn in life, and no one's life is truly easy. Liao Zhi played her role in life beautifully, embodying through her own experience what it means to be used by God, in the fullest and most vivid way. We, too, because we trust and follow the Lord, and because we grow continually in His teaching, find our lives blessed. Walking with our God — what a profoundly grateful life experience this is.

At the Easter service, Rev Sim posed a searching question for the soul: Do we truly long for God Himself — or for something else?

This question kept me in deep reflection for a long time. I realized that part of my longing for God had been bound up with the desire for Him to fulfill my wishes — and this troubled me. My longing for God should be a longing to learn His wisdom and love under His guidance, to grow as a person, to apply these things in my own life, so that my thoughts, words, and actions reflect the

image He approves of, and so that I may glorify Him through my life's journey. Even when God does not answer my prayers in the way I ask, I choose to understand that as His deeper purpose — calling me to reflect more carefully, to learn from what I am experiencing, to correct my own thinking and behavior, and to grow. I hope I can always hold onto this posture.

This journey of trusting in the Lord has only just begun. I am grateful for the love and support of the brothers and sisters at GCMC, who have accompanied and cared for me every step of the way. I am grateful to Rev Sim for his professional and patient teaching, through which I have grown. I offer up my heart through the prayer I love most — the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer
(from Stream of Praise)

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors.
Hallelujah.

And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory,
Forever.

I will seek You all my days,
Gaze on Your beauty in the holy place,
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory,
Forever.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory,
Forever.

Grateful, thankful for all of this.

All glory be to God, Amen.

(April 7, 2024)

Testimony of Grace and Salvation

◆ Soi Goek Tan

In 2001, my children and I arrived in Dunedin. Soon after, friends took us to church, and sometimes we attended gatherings for meals. It was around that time that I first got to know the Lord, though I had not yet believed in Him. Of course, I was very happy because we had just arrived from Malaysia to a place where everything and everyone was unfamiliar. I was also glad to meet brothers and sisters in the church. Their enthusiasm and kindness made me realize that those who believe in the Lord are different, and that faith can change a person's character and mindset.

We lived in Dunedin for ten years. After my children completed their studies and smoothly found a job in Auckland, I returned to Malaysia. After coming back, friends took me to different churches. The believers there treated everyone with kindness and also witnessed the authority of the Lord.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to go to church. Similarly, hospitals were not easily accessible. During this time, whenever something happened at home or someone fell ill, we would pray. After praying, the situations and illnesses would improve, and I truly couldn't believe it. I once mentioned this to a friend, but he didn't believe me. Instead, he asked, "Have you been baptized?" I said, "Not yet." He replied, "Then you're not even a Christian yet. How can you have such thoughts?" After hearing this, I felt very hurt. However, I ignored his words because the Lord was already in my heart.

One time, I fell down the stairs, tumbling from the third step. I landed on the floor and was utterly terrified. Both of my legs were in extreme pain—had I fractured them? I lay on the ground, unable to sit up. My husband tried to rub some medicated oil on me, but I still couldn't sit up. He wanted to call an ambulance, but I asked him to wait and see how things went. After a long while, I managed to sit up and slowly stand, though moving around was difficult. I thought to myself, why was I so fortunate not to have fractured anything? At that time, I also prayed, and my injuries healed.

This year, after returning to Auckland, I decided to believe in the Lord. The pastor arranged for me to attend the baptism preparation classes. With the pastor's careful guidance, I bravely completed the course. Thank the Lord. Jesus bore our sins and was nailed to the cross. He is our Savior. I also want to have faith and accept the promises God has given us.

Since believing in the Lord, I feel that I have changed. My temper is no longer as irritable, I am more patient, and I don't like to criticize others carelessly. I also consult with my family when making decisions. I have started reading the Bible and praying. After returning, I have also been attending church and have gotten to know new brothers and sisters. My life is filled with joy. Praise the Lord.

God Truly Is Real: A Testimony of a Soul's Salvation

◆ Grace

Once we believe in the Lord and experience His wondrous love, we long for our friends and family to know Him and accept Jesus too. This often becomes the most urgent prayer in our hearts.

I used to pray constantly for a college classmate of mine. She was a girl with a sharp pen, a clear logical mind, and a formidable talent for debate. She was my closest friend; we started by working on research reports together, grew closer, and eventually shared our deepest secrets. We could talk about anything—except faith. Whenever the topic arose, she would intentionally ask difficult, pointed questions, such as: "Chinese culture is so vast and profound; why on earth would you let yourself be shackled by Western Christian thought at such a young age?"

Or she would say, "You Christians are so good at self-justification. You speak as if you hold the absolute truth, but is any of it actually true?"

In those moments, I wished I possessed great spiritual strength, like Paul mentions in 2 Corinthians 10: "...mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

After several debates, I slowly came to a realization: sharing the Gospel isn't just about winning an argument. In reality, it is about understanding the state of another person's soul—examining the "soil" of their heart to see if it is soft or still hardened. In that process, we silently lay their situation before the Lord in continued prayer, for only God can change a human heart. In the brokenness of their rebellious life, we plead for the Lord's mercy and grace.

Eventually, she would say, "Alright, alright! If I ever decide to follow a religion, I'll definitely choose Christianity—after all, my best friend is a Christian!"

After graduation, we both got busy with our lives, and I eventually immigrated to New Zealand. Years later, she suddenly told me she had been diagnosed with near-terminal cancer. It was very serious, and her time was likely short. Panicked and desperate for a cure, she mentioned someone had recommended a mysterious religious group on a certain mountain that claimed to have a divine

healer. She decided to go; at that point, she felt she had no other choice.

Not long after, I returned to Taiwan to visit her. She was completely transformed. It felt as though the physical pain had begun to soften the hard soil of her soul. I believe the cancer had cracked open her stubborn heart, creating a fissure for light to enter.

I reminded her of her promise to look into Christianity and asked if she was willing to know more about Jesus. She nodded weakly. Since I was only staying in Taiwan for two weeks, I worried about how I would guide her. But it's amazing—when God's timing is right, the path opens up.

That day at the hospital, I happened to run into a pastor's wife and a group of sisters from a local church who were there visiting patients. Once they learned of her situation, they immediately took over, visiting her consistently to pray and study the Bible together. After some time, she told me she had believed in the Lord.

The first thing she did after converting was change her pen name to "Guo Zhen" (果真 - literally means: truly is real). Her reasoning was: "God truly is real. It truly is the case that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life."

The second thing she did was tease me, saying, "How can an 'old' Christian like you be so unenthusiastic about sharing the Gospel? Sharing the Gospel is so joyful and so important!"

Later, when I returned to Taipei, she invited me to join her on the streets to sing hymns, hand out tracts, and visit friends who hadn't yet believed.

Although doctors had predicted she had only months to live, she miraculously lived for over ten more years before returning to her heavenly home.

This journey of interceding for her lasted over twenty years. At first, it felt as though my prayers were going unanswered and I felt discouraged, but God used that time to refine me and increase my faith. In fact, the entire experience deeply shaped my own spiritual life; I learned how to quietly wait on God and the lesson of total submission.

I miss her dearly. I look forward to—and know for certain—that we will be reunited in our heavenly home.

From Pride to Humility, A Life Transformed in Christ

◆ Kuan Shin Tan

A few days ago, I attended my son's school end-of-year prize-giving assembly, which was also the last day of school. As I watched one outstanding student after another receive awards, my attention was drawn especially to the Form 7 Dux—the top student of the school. He was a Korean international student, scoring a perfect 100 in mathematics and around 96 in three other subjects (likely chemistry, physics, and biology). His ambition is to study medicine at the University of Sydney or the University of Auckland. Seeing this "creme de la creme" or "top of the top" student brought back memories of my own academic glory days, when I too brushed shoulders with the scholars honour's board and the title of Dux. Yet it also exposed the pride and vanity in my heart, and reminded me how often I have placed my hopes on my son, desiring him to bring me honour. But such vanity is not pleasing to God.

Academic Glory and Disappointment

Back in Form 6, I sat the University Entrance Bursary exam. English was compulsory, and it was my weakest subject—I scored only 60. In contrast, my other four subjects (three sciences and calculus) averaged above 90. My total score was just four points short of making the school's Scholars Honours' Board. I received scholarships in four subjects, but not in English. In the national NZEST Scholarship Exam, I achieved Distinction in chemistry, ranking sixth nationwide. That summer, I was invited to join the New Zealand Chemistry Olympiad training team, with the possibility of representing the country at the International Chemistry Olympiad. One of my seniors had won a silver medal the year before.

Had I stayed on for Form 7, English would not have been compulsory. I could have taken statistics, three sciences, and calculus, and almost certainly would have become Dux or at least made the Honours' Board. But I chose to skip ahead to university, eager to start uni earlier.

I failed to gain entry into Auckland Medical School, and instead enrolled in Health Science First Year, aiming to gain entry into Otago Medical School. That year, the Dux was my classmate Student R, who continued to Form 7A, but the top scholar overall on the Scholar Honours' Board was

Form 6A's Student G, who later won the Girdler's Scholarship to study physics at Cambridge, and is now a professor at the University of Auckland. Many of my classmates went on to Auckland Medical School and are now distinguished specialists—dermatologists, plastic surgeons, urologists, breast surgeons. But I, having gone to Otago, achieved nothing of note.

Pride and God's Discipline

At that time, I was not yet a believer. I pursued fame and wealth, choosing medicine for its financial prospects. I was proud, convinced of my superiority and inevitable success. Yet after I came to faith in my second and third years, God began to deal with my pride. I barely scraped through medical school, graduating only by passing at the minimum level. As a doctor, I was ordinary, eventually practicing in general practice or family medicine. Later, due to long-term illness, I had to stop practicing altogether. My years of pride were broken by God's hand, teaching me humility and showing me that I am nothing. Scripture says: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18, ESV)

The Lord also declares: "Thus says the LORD: 'Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight,' declares the LORD." (Jeremiah 9:23-24, ESV)

Encountering the Gospel in Weakness

When I studied in Dunedin, my pride led to carelessness, and my grades declined. In my struggles, I came across a gospel tract handed out after an evangelistic meeting. My heart began to turn toward the true God. As Solomon said:

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight." (Proverbs 9:10, ESV)

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Proverbs 1:7, ESV)

I began attending church, hearing the gospel, and eventually received Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord. Though my academic performance declined, I realized I was a sinner, forgiven in Christ. His righteousness was counted as mine, His blood washed away my sins, and I became a child of God.

Learning from Paul's Example

The Apostle Paul, before encountering Christ, pursued worldly and fleshly achievements. He was a Pharisee, highly respected, much like holding a doctorate today. He once boasted in his worldly achievements:

"...though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless." (Philippians 3:4-6, ESV)

Yet after meeting Christ, he said:

"But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." (Philippians 3:7-8, ESV)

Paul was given a "thorn in the flesh" to keep him from becoming conceited. He pleaded with the Lord three times to remove it, but the Lord answered:

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9a, ESV)

Paul then declared:

"For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:10, ESV)

I cannot claim to love the Lord as Paul did, but I agree with his exhortation:

"For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned." (Romans 12:3, ESV)

My Son and the Call to Humility

This year's Dux at my son's school is also a Christian. He testified that the Lord gave him wisdom and talents, and he uses them to glorify

God. As Paul said:

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

I pray my son will follow such an example—pursuing excellence not for vanity, but for God's glory. I hope he will discover the gifts God has given him, walk faithfully in his calling, and humbly serve both God and people, becoming a good steward of God's manifold grace.

Paul exhorts us:

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love." (Ephesians 4:1-2, ESV)

May my son and I both "forget what lies behind and strain forward to what lies ahead, pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14, ESV)

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

I thank You for Your marvelous work in my life. You have led me from pride to humility, teaching me that human wisdom, strength, and achievement are nothing compared to knowing You. Thank You for forgiving my sins through Jesus Christ, whose blood has cleansed me and made me Your child.

Lord, I commit myself and my son into Your hands. Grant us humble hearts, that we may not live for vanity but for Your glory alone. Open my son's eyes to see the gifts You have given him, and guide him to walk faithfully in the calling You have prepared.

May we be good stewards of Your manifold grace, living with humility, gentleness, patience, and love. May we forget what lies behind and press forward toward the goal, until the day we see You face to face.

In Jesus' name I pray,

Amen.

My Journey of Faith: A Testimony of Grace and Service

♦ Grant Shew

My journey with Christ began in my early university years, making me a first-generation Christian in my family. Honestly, I never really thought I'd become a Christian. 'God' or 'Christianity' popped up now and then, but I never really got what it was all about. I was always a philosophical kid, always wondering about the purpose of life, especially as a teenager. It wasn't a big dramatic event or anything miraculous that brought me to faith. It was more of a slow, quiet stirring inside.

A big moment for me was finally getting to talk to a preacher, at a time when my mind was still buzzing with deep questions. I asked him, "Why did God make us if we're just going to die anyway?" His answer was simple, but at the time, not what I wanted to hear: "Because He loves you." I thought it was too simple - that there had to be more to it. But 20 years later, through everything in life and God always being there, I totally get it now. It really was the perfect answer: "Because of love." If it wasn't for God's grace, I can easily see myself going down a completely different path. I would have missed out on so many amazing blessings, like meeting my awesome wife and raising our three kind, talented kids in a Christian home.

Our family is really rooted at Greenlane Chinese Methodist Church (GCMC) now. We came to GCMC because, as our kids got older, they needed an English service that our old Chinese church didn't have. Coming here meant our whole family could stay together in one church, worshipping and growing in faith, instead of going to separate places.

When it comes to my spiritual routines, my prayer life could definitely be better. I tend to do short, conversational prayers throughout the day, which is good, but I'm trying to be more consistent and set aside a dedicated time daily. My Bible reading is similar - I was much more consistent for a while, but it's dropped off a bit lately. I sometimes listen to the Bible app in the car or read it here and there. I know I could be more disciplined here, but my desire to get closer to



God is still really strong.

I believe my spiritual gifts are being empathetic, inspiring, and motivating people. I naturally like bringing people together and creating an environment where we can all work towards a common goal. How these gifts fit best in church, I'm still figuring out through prayer. But I really believe that if I commit myself to serving with an open and willing heart, God will show me my calling and how to use these gifts for His glory and for our church community.



The Taste of the Lord's Grace, It Makes Our Lives Forever Different

◆ Mei Lan Chen

It has been nearly a year since Qing Run was called home to be with the Lord, and the longing in my heart rises up again and again without ceasing. Every time I step out the front door, so many places along the way are little stations where we once rested together — corners where we shared our hearts, listened to each other, prayed together, and ate snacks; spots where we watched people play football, took in the view of the sea, or admired the neighbour's garden. Now, he is like that grain of wheat that fell into the ground and brought forth much fruit. He was gentle and refined in character, and his life was filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit — a life that Jesus had tailored especially for him. When we were preparing to return to Taiwan, our next-door neighbour, finding the driveway inconvenient, took the opportunity to tear down the fence, move the boundary, and take a small strip of land. But he, valuing harmony above all, chose not to contend over it — for the sake of the neighbour's convenience, and for the Lord's sake, he simply let it go.

He was never loud or boisterous, always gentle and courteous, accepting in submission whatever circumstances arranged for him, and living out a beautiful new life — a life that Jesus had truly shaped and moulded just for him. Now he has gone, leaving me here alone, leaving behind in me a deep and abiding sense of all that was good and beautiful about him. When I gaze at his memorial photograph, the expression on his face speaks to me like that of an infant. It was taken naturally by a neighbour when he needed to renew his passport — and in it, he was still looking forward to going back to Taiwan to eat Peking duck...

Looking back, the Heavenly Father warned me on the eve of his hospitalisation that the days of our companionship as husband and wife were

drawing to a close. And so it was — within just one week of his admission, he was taken home by the Lord. It happened so quickly that I hardly know how I made it through. I am deeply grateful for the love of the church. The brothers and sisters were like the hosts of Jehovah, moving in orderly groups, taking turns to accompany and care for us, strengthening us. God was greatly present with us, and the mighty arm of the Heavenly Father surrounded and sheltered us. In that ICU ward, hymns of praise to God were often sung, the melodious songs drifting through the air like the harmony of angels and heavenly hosts, bringing boundless comfort and support to me in my grief. I am thankful that our pastor, amid his many responsibilities, came to visit and to pray. The brothers and sisters came and went like family, warming and soothing the heart of one who was in mourning. Such service to us is truly rare and precious — something that gold and silver cannot buy.

When I quieted my heart and began to learn the practice of discarding, releasing, and letting go, many things were revealed to me in the light of God — the ways I had fallen short of and neglected Qing Run, the foolish things I, like a foolish woman, had done that did not please God. But he, my dear husband, gently wiped away all these transgressions for me. "Love covers a multitude of sins" — he lived this out completely. Thank the Lord. The grace and blessing that God has given me are also specially tailored for me. I give thanks for everything God has bestowed!

O God — I give you thanks, I worship you, I bow down and kneel before you. Thank you for bringing salvation to our family, for letting us taste the sweetness of the Lord's grace, for making both our lives forever different — because we have Jesus.

Prayer

◆ Jewel

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13 ESV

Today is July 20th, and the weather is absolutely beautiful—the sun feels so warm on my skin. Not long after returning from church, I thought about going out for a walk, so I invited my neighbor, Sister B, to join me for some sunshine and fresh air. As we walked and chatted, she said to me, "I also went to the nearby G Church today. The pastor talked about 'simple prayer' and shared three points..."

As she spoke, she began explaining each point one by one. As I listened, I was completely stunned and felt a warmth in my heart—because our pastor, Rev Aaron, had also spoken about prayer today after returning from his break, and he also shared three points! Rev Aaron's message was:

- 1. Scheduled prayer and spontaneous prayer are equally important;*
- 2. The deepest meaning of prayer is to turn our hearts back to God and submit to His guidance;*
- 3. We must trust in the authority of prayer that God has given us in Christ.*

As I listened to her share each point, I was truly moved.

It suddenly struck me that three months ago, when I first started discipleship training, the speaker encouraged us to pray for the people around us. At that time, I added Sister B to my prayer list.

Back then, she often looked troubled, as if she were weighed down by her emotions and couldn't

break free. In my heart, I simply asked God to have mercy on her and heal her—even if it was just to get her to go out for a walk, to come sing, or to attend Alpha.

But to be honest, later on, she explicitly declined both invitations—she didn't want to sing, nor did she come to Alpha. I felt a little disappointed at the time, and then... a little ashamed, because after she refused, I didn't persist in praying for her. During that period, I was also distracted by many things. Sometimes, I'd get sucked into watching short videos, and the day would slip away before I knew it. I couldn't even keep a consistent prayer schedule.

So today, hearing her say that she took the initiative to go to church, listened attentively to the sermon, and could even share the pastor's key points with me—I was both surprised and deeply moved. God truly listens and truly works. Even though I had become a bit lax, He still gently led her, drew her close, and renewed her heart in His own way.

Thank You, Abba Father. He is truly loving. Through Jesus—the most perfect and gentle High Priest—He allows someone like me, who is easily distracted and weak, to come before Him boldly and without fear. He listens to prayers, not necessarily answering them in the way I expect, but His plans are always better and more profound than I can imagine.

Lord, please help me learn to pray with greater perseverance—not just with fleeting enthusiasm, but to continue trusting and relying on You, even when I cannot yet see the results.

- Shared at the Thanksgiving Night on 13 December

Pastor, brothers and sisters, greetings.

Tonight, I would like to summarize my thanksgiving message in two words: good examples.

In 1 Corinthians 15:58, we hear these words:

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

So, what does it truly mean to “give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord”? This year, I have witnessed some very real and practical examples of this in our church.

First, I want to thank our pastor and chairperson. In arranging the online prayer meetings, you’ve kept trying new ways and making adjustments. For example, you changed follow-up items that used to be handled right during the prayer meeting to following up individually the day before. As a result, the content of the prayer meeting became clearer, and the time was managed much better. This showed me that serving isn’t just about doing more things—serving is being willing to keep

thinking: Can we do this even better?

Next, I want to talk about giving. This year, New Zealand’s economy has been tough. To be honest, I have struggled myself. In such circumstances, how can we continue to uphold tithes, contribute to the building fund, and not give up on mission offerings? I have truly questioned God many times in my heart.

But in the midst of this struggle, I saw the good examples of some brothers and sisters. Some began making long-term plans, consistently preparing meals for those in need, and steadily using the funds raised for the building project. This showed me that love is not just a momentary feeling, and giving is not just a one-time act—it is a long-term, steady, and willing commitment.

So tonight, I truly want to thank God. I thank Him for allowing me to meet so many devoted brothers and sisters in this church. Through their actions, they have shown me what it means to “give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord.”; through their lives, they’ve lived out what a true good example looks like.

Dear brothers and sisters, tonight at our church’s year-end thanksgiving gathering, my friend shared a verse from Job:

“.... The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

— Job 1:21b (ESV)

This verse deeply touched my heart and led me to reflect on my journey over the past year and a half.

In April last year, my mother left us and was received into the Lord’s eternal home. Her journey through illness was a painful and unforgettable trial. I thank the Lord for sending angels to care for her in her final days, including my wife, my sisters, and others. My father lost his companion of more than half a century, and this grief is something we can all see and feel, though it has not yet healed.

During this time, I often remembered the words from Ecclesiastes:

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.”

— Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, 4, 11 (ESV)

Though my mother has departed, I believe she truly trusted in the Lord. She now rests in His embrace, having gone to that better homeland. One day, we will be reunited there.

This is the first time I have truly experienced what the Apostle Paul said:

“...as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;”

— 2 Corinthians 6:10a (ESV)

In the midst of loss, I feel deep sorrow, yet at the same time I rejoice because of the Lord’s promises. Sorrow and joy coexist—this is the mystery of faith.

My Reflections and Encouragement

Bless the Lord’s name even in loss: Job’s faith reminds us that both giving and taking are in the Lord’s hands.

Rest in God’s timing: Ecclesiastes teaches us that there is a time for everything, and God’s work is beyond our comprehension.

Rejoice in sorrow: Paul’s testimony shows that the Christian life is not free from pain, but in pain we can still rejoice because of hope in Christ.

May my sharing encourage you: in times of loss or suffering, remember that God’s work is beautiful, and His name is always to be blessed. Our tears on earth will one day be turned into joy in heaven.

Church Life

Our Own Church, So Full of Flavor: Turnip Cake, Dumplings, Hot Pot...

♦ Jewel



Today is Sunday, June 29th, and there's breakfast. I chose the Singapore-style fried turnip cake. It's not a store-bought instant product; the turnip cake was made by Sister J herself, rich and fragrant in taste.

Sunday breakfast at the new church has been going on for half a year now, ever since we moved here at the end of last year—yes, half a year, a length of time that can turn strangers into acquaintances. Some say the breakfast service isn't just to encourage everyone to come to church early, but also to prepare for the Alpha course—first getting familiar with the kitchen equipment and safety, so that by the time the Thursday evening Alpha Gospel course starts in July, everyone will be more comfortable in the kitchen and preparing dinner will be a breeze.

I still remember the week before last, during the Matariki Māori New Year holiday. On Friday evening (June 20th), the Adult Fellowship held a fundraiser sale and hot pot gathering in the back hall. I happily picked up three treasures: a can of

milk powder, a bottle of perfume, and a backpack. Although there weren't many people, the fundraiser raised as much as 1300 New Zealand dollars.

When dinner started, over a dozen hot pots were bubbling away, with four or five people gathered around each one. Lamb slices were cooked one by one, and there were prawns—large prawns, small prawns, sweet prawns, lobster... Everyone instantly felt closer.

Then on Saturday morning, June 21st, it was the Evergreen Fellowship's birthday party. No cake, no candle-blowing; instead, everyone took turns sharing how they came to believe in the Lord. At noon, we cooked dumplings and fried New Year cakes in the kitchen, feeling as close as family celebrating a festival, eating together while counting our blessings...

In our own church, tasting these flavors, interwoven with people's stories, allows us to experience God's grace even more. Every little bit is to be cherished.

Evergreen Fellowship Outing - A Day of Gratitude and Joy

◆ David Luk

This morning, the church's Evergreen Fellowship held a long-awaited outing. Brothers and sisters, united in the Lord and supporting one another, embarked on this journey filled with laughter and beautiful sceneries.

We first drove to Mission Bay. The sea breeze brushed against our faces, and the air carried a faint salty taste. The view where the sea and sky merged into one was refreshing and uplifting. Despite the strong wind, brothers and sisters strolled along, enjoying the seascape, while happily chatting and sharing recent news with each other. The gentle waves lapping against the shore seemed to be playing music for our fellowship gathering; everyone's laughter echoed by the seaside, full of vitality.

Around 11 a.m., we happened to encounter strong winds and heavy rain. Everyone joked that this was also part of the little challenge. So we quickly headed for lunch. The dining table was filled with warm sharing and mutual care, along

with nine dishes and a serving of rice—absolutely delicious. Thank you, Heavenly Father, for providing such abundant food! The love of being one family in the Lord felt especially genuine at this moment.

After lunch, the sky cleared up, and we then headed to The Big Wheel pier scenic area. The view here was vast, and the scenery by the pier was incredibly beautiful. The daytime sky, white clouds, sea surface, and moored boats formed moving pictures one after another. Brothers and sisters eagerly took photos to commemorate the occasion, preserving this moment of peace and joy in their cameras and etching it in their hearts.

Today was not just an outing, but also a journey of spiritual renewal. In the natural scenery, we felt the wonder of the Creator; in walking together in fellowship, we experienced the reality of the Lord's love.

May glory be given to God the Father, and may our hearts always rejoice in gratitude! Amen!



Celebrating Mid-Autumn Festival

◆ Jewel

This year's Mid-Autumn Festival celebration was especially significant for GCMC—it was our first celebration in the new building.

As early as the Saturday afternoon a week before, the church kitchen was already bustling with activity. Sister J took the lead in organizing everything, and together we divided the dough, wrapped the fillings, and baked mooncakes. As the oven opened, waves of wheat and sugar fragrance filled the air, giving anyone entering the kitchen a sense of "home."

On the night of the celebration, every family brought their signature dishes. The Wesley Hall was decorated with red lanterns, and the tables were filled with all kinds of aromatic dishes. I tried Sister A's pea shoots—fresh pea sprouts she had grown in her own yard, tender and delicious. As people served their dishes, conversations flowed in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Fuzhou dialect, and Shanghai dialect. I also made many new friends—some from Wuhan, Shanghai, Henan, Fujian, and Lanzhou; some were neighbors of church members, others were colleagues. This is the beauty of potluck dinners—with every bite and every conversation, the feeling of unfamiliarity quickly melted away.

The evening's performances were rich with Chinese cultural flavors: graceful fan dances, melodious guzheng music, and familiar Teresa Teng songs... singing of longing for loved ones far away.

Everyone listened in silence as Rev Aaron started his message. He shared about visiting a patient who tightly gripped the pastor's hand and asked, "I'm living in such pain—what meaning does life have?" The pastor replied that it's not only those who suffer who think this way; even those living comfortably ask the same question.

Only by knowing Jesus can we find true belonging and meaning. That evening, a first-time visitor to the church responded to the pastor's invitation, expressing a desire to learn more about the Lord.

Finally, we all tasted the small mooncakes we had baked together a week earlier. That sweet, moist bite seemed to fulfill an entire week's anticipation.

We are grateful to our God for granting our big family this reunion: we prepared together, laughed together, and shared the warmth of this home with every newcomer who walked through our doors.



Life Ever Green - Evergreen Fellowship

Life Ever Green, Spirit Ever New, Joy Ever Full, Strength Ever Present

Life Ever Green - Psalm 92:12-15 - The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

Spirit Ever New - 2 Corinthians 4:16 - So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

Joy Ever Full - John 15:11 - "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

Strength Ever Present - Isaiah 40:31 - but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.



From Passivity to Commitment - My Reflections on Serving

◆ Kiw

- Shared on Laity Sunday, 28 September

Dear brothers and sisters, peace be with you!

Today, I am truly honored to share with you, under the theme of "Honoring Pastors and Laity," why I am willing to commit to serving.

This year, I was elected to the LCEC to serve in the Property Committee representing the Chinese congregation. Some of you might not be entirely sure what our Property Committee does. Simply put, we handle everything related to the maintenance of the church building. If a chair is broken, a door is stuck, or someone wants to rent the church premises, you can come to us.

I was baptized about fifteen years ago by Rev Aaron. But to be honest, for the first ten-plus years, I was just a passive Christian. I came to church every week and left, and my relationship with other brothers and sisters was merely nodding acquaintance—there wasn't much interaction. Back then, with three young children at home and no family help, I had my hands full. How could I possibly find time to serve in the church? Besides, I felt like the church already had everything well in hand; they didn't need my help.

It was only in the last couple of years that things slowly began to change. Two years ago, I noticed there weren't many male voices in the choir and asked Lily about it. I had never considered joining the choir before because I know absolutely nothing about music; I can't read a score. But Lily encouraged me to give it a try, and I ended up staying. Even though many of us in the choir can't read music or know much about it, through repeated practice, we manage to have a monthly presentation. Later, I also joined the multimedia team, and then was invited to be a backing vocalist in the worship team. This year, even though I was "still figuring things out," I was nominated to serve in the LCEC. When Kenny called me, my initial reaction was: Do I really have the time? But then I thought about it - having time or not really depends on whether we are

willing to prioritize God's work. So, I agreed.

The Challenges of Serving

To be honest, serving isn't easy. Sometimes, I confront my own inadequacies; sometimes, I face challenges in interpersonal relationships; and sometimes, I just feel tired. But through these processes, I've increasingly come to understand 2 Corinthians 12:9: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." In my weakness, I've learned to admit, "I cannot, but God can." When I hand the steering wheel over to God, I'm not serving in my own strength or temper, but relying on the Holy Spirit.

The Rewards of Serving

In serving, my greatest gains are in three areas:

First, God first refines my character. I often have my own ideas and plans, but serving has taught me humility, to let go of myself, and to let God lead.

Second, I have experienced God's presence time and time again. The promise, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age," is not just a verse in the Bible but a real experience in service.

Third, serving has brought me closer to my brothers and sisters. We pray together, we shed tears together, we rejoice together, gradually becoming a spiritual family. This kind of mutually supportive relationship is something you can't find in the world.

Encouragement and Calling

Brothers and sisters, I want to encourage you: Serving isn't just the responsibility of leaders; it's the calling for every child of God who has received salvation by grace. Romans 12:1 says: "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

Maybe you feel you're not good enough, or like I used to think, "I don't have time, I can't do it." But I want to testify: God isn't looking for perfect people; He's looking for willing people. When you are willing to offer yourself to God, He will lead you step by step, allowing you to experience His grace.

Finally, I often remind myself that I am truly unworthy. But God, in His grace, gives me the opportunity to serve in His house. This is not a transaction, nor a merit, but pure grace. I also hope that more of our brothers and sisters, whether with their abilities, time, or financial resources, will be willing to offer them together, becoming vessels pleasing to the Lord.

Thank you, everyone. May all the glory be to God!

In the life of a Christian, serving is indispensable. God has given us different gifts, and serving is the way we exercise and respond to those gifts. In the year that is about to pass, I have been involved in more serving than before. Although I have expended more physical energy, time, and effort than in the past, my heart has been filled with greater joy and satisfaction than ever before.

1. Faith Strengthened in Serving

This year, because worship services moved to the morning, I had the opportunity to join the choir. At first, I simply wanted to participate in serving and because I enjoyed it. But through repeated practices, I gradually discovered that singing hymns is not just about performing for others—it is about deeply singing God’s words into my own heart during worship. As I repeatedly sang songs about God’s grace, mercy, and promises, my heart often found healing and comfort in those beautiful and moving melodies. This helped me understand that the serving I can do is not reliant on myself alone, but on God and His grace. Whenever I felt tired or inadequate, God reminded me:

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”
(2 Corinthians 12:9)

So I learned to rely on Him more, and in that reliance, I experienced my faith being built up little by little.

2. Tasting “Love” in Serving

Most serving is not accomplished by one person alone; it requires division of labor, cooperation, and mutual help and support among many, which also draws brothers and sisters into closer relationships. In the choir, I gradually came to experience this: practicing songs together, worshiping together, serving together—a unity and warmth from God filled my heart.

In other areas of serving—whether cleaning, preparing food, or ushering on Sundays—the mutual collaboration and encouragement among the team members likewise allowed me to deeply feel the warmth and power that come from the Holy Spirit. I know this does not originate from us,

but from God’s love flowing within us. When I willingly and joyfully serve others, God pours more of His love into me. As the Scripture says: “We love because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

As a result, I have even greater motivation to participate in serving with love.

3. Spiritual Life Shaped in Serving

A choir is not about solo performances, but about team members listening to one another and coordinating together in service. Only through building up and yielding to one another can a hymn be presented well. In this process, we learn respect, coordination, and mutual edification. In various serving roles—whether in the choir or elsewhere—misunderstandings, being overlooked, or facing challenges beyond our abilities are inevitable. Yet these are precisely the moments when God “prunes” us and the Holy Spirit refines us; they are opportunities to learn humility, patience, and obedience.

The path of spiritual growth is often not smooth or comfortable. The trials we experience in serving are the very means God uses to shape us, so that we may become more like Him.

Conclusion

This year’s experiences in serving have deeply shown me that in the process of serving, my life has quietly transformed. I have also gradually come to understand that serving is not merely a duty, nor a way to seek recognition—otherwise it would lose its meaning. Serving is our response to God’s love: because God loves us, we pass on God’s love and gifts to others through serving.

May I, in the days ahead, continue to serve God with a heart of love and obedience, and may God use me as a channel of His love.

Looking back on my faith journey—from my youth until now, when I am approaching old age—I am amazed to discover that beautiful hymns and choir service have accompanied the growth of my spiritual life throughout my entire journey. I am truly grateful to have enjoyed such a blessing.

I recall that it was a hymn, “Lead, Kindly Light”, that first drew me in, leading me to join a traditional Baptist church and participate in the weekly choir rehearsals. That was how my faith journey began.

The choir used hymnals such as Youth Hymns, New Songs of Praise, and Campus Hymns for practice. These traditional hymns carry a unique power—not only are the melodies beautiful and the harmonies exquisite, deeply touching the heart, but the lyrics are also rich in Scripture. The biblical truths were unconsciously sung into my heart, helping me come to know this loving God and find the true anchor for my life.

Our conductor was highly skilled in music and deeply burdened for the choir. He was humorous, witty, faithful, and responsible. His teachings also strengthened our resolve to serve. He often said: “Once you join the choir, you are a choir member for life. Even if in the future God leads you to the ends of the earth, remember to keep singing praises wherever you are in the world—this is a great spiritual blessing.” After experiencing the joy of singing, whenever I considered my place of service in the church, the choir always remained one of my most important options.

At that time, most choir members were young people ranging from their teens to early thirties, and the majority had no formal musical training or instrumental background. When we picked up the hymnal, we had to laboriously read the five-line staff; our pitch was often shaky, and our tone quite raw and unrefined. It was remarkable how hard our conductor worked to help us experience the beauty of harmony. I especially remember one period when, right from the beginning of rehearsals, he trained us to learn vocal production by imitating crying—each person shaking our hands, recalling and mimicking how a child cries, to find our resonance cavities and at the same time train group harmony. Everyone ended up crying in the strangest ways—it was hilarious and great fun.

We had to present every week. On Saturday evenings, in just one hour, we rehearsed three pieces to prepare for the following day and the

next two Sundays. We were also required to memorize lyrics as much as possible. The workload was heavy, so we had to practice on our own during the week. Otherwise, if we made mistakes during rehearsal and caught his sharp gaze, we would feel very guilty and under pressure. Starting in September, we added Sunday afternoon rehearsals to prepare selected choruses from Handel’s Messiah for Christmas Eve worship.

Looking back now, the choir schedule throughout the year was intense and demanding, yet my spirit was richly rewarded. Biblical truths were continually stored in my heart, and beautiful melodies constantly echoed in my mind.

Later, whenever I faced anxiety or sorrow in life, I would hold my hymnal and sing softly. It felt as though I spread my wings and flew under the shadow of God’s wings to hide, receiving the Lord’s comfort and renewed strength. Even now, whenever I sing certain hymns, I recall those moments when I met the Lord through them—they feel so intimate and precious.

From Taipei to Auckland, more than twenty years have passed in a flash. I have been blessed to meet several gifted, talented, and faithful choir conductors. Each one brought unique creativity and specialized training, leading us to worship God more deeply through songs. As my own years in the choir have lengthened, I have gained a richer spiritual understanding of this ministry: choir service is an extremely serious matter. It not only rigorously trains one’s personal resolve but also exercises how to correctly put on the full armor of God.

The moment the piano prelude begins is actually the arrival of a major test. The soprano melody is the most prone to going off pitch, yet also the most enchanting. When the tenors and basses join in, as an alto, I often find myself struggling to survive in the midst of it. A moment of carelessness and I can become lost in this musical jungle.

At such times, I must firm up my resolve, stand steadfast in the Lord, sing the correct pitch, and hold my ground no matter how many “troops” surround me. I bravely sound my note, sing precisely on the beat, and firmly adhere to the “three no’s principle”: I will not retreat, I will not be pulled off course, and I will absolutely not go out of tune. I strive with all my strength to blend into this mighty musical stream and produce that beautiful harmony for the piece.



Isn't this exactly how God's children stand firm in the truth and fight the good fight of faith?

In the church, many ministries are visible, but many are hidden. God greatly values the heart that is offered in secret, and the choir especially illustrates this truth. In the full harmony, no individual voice should stand out—heroic soloistic expression would only ruin the beauty. As choir members, the first thing we train is to have sensitive ears: to listen to others and to the other parts, to imitate one another's tone quality, adjust volume, remind each other of rhythm, support one another during learning, care for each other, and together experience the emotional surges in the music—whether joyful praise or sorrowful lament. Individually we seem immersed in the melody, yet the harmony rises above us all. When we are of one heart and mind, singing before the Lord and sincerely offering a spiritual sacrifice pleasing to Him—what a beautiful thing it is!

Moreover, in choral singing, the soprano melody seems to receive all the glory, while the other parts appear to be mere support—yet it is precisely those supporting parts that give the piece its grandeur and lingering resonance. Through this I have also come to feel that in our conduct and dealings with others, it is not about outward show or brilliance. On the contrary, being reserved, low-key, quietly yet faithfully fulfilling our duty—when God examines the heart, He knows. What great joy that brings!

We are often reminded: when singing, never bury your head and just plow through the notes—you must lift your head and watch the conductor, obeying her instructions on dynamics and phrasing. This is indeed true, and it is how team

unity and beautiful ensemble singing are cultivated.

This is also another reminder of truth: “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things” (Colossians 3:2)—meaning we should continually look upward with heavenly perspective, adjust our earthly values, live in ways that please God, make decisions that delight Him, and learn to imitate Jesus Christ so that we may fulfill the purpose for which God called us.

Modern medical research strongly affirms the physical benefits of singing, particularly for the overall health — body, mind, and spirit — of the elderly. Singing requires one to take in the full surroundings: reading the score and following the conductor, listening attentively in all directions, counting the beat precisely, breathing in and out at the right moments, and producing the correct tones. All of these demands call for a high degree of concentration, which in turn stimulates the brain to operate on all fronts, and can help prevent the deterioration of the nervous system. Add to this the engagement and vitality of the whole body working in harmony, and the benefits are truly numerous.

I often feel that whenever I sing hymns, my whole body warms up—even in the cold of winter there is a gentle warmth. Surely my circulation is flowing freely! Overall, it truly is a form of whole-body exercise that achieves movement through stillness.

In summary, the choir is a ministry well worth dedicating oneself to. Let us together become seasoned soldiers of the choir, savoring this spiritual feast, and bringing a unique brilliance to its ranks — it is both a grace and a source of endless joy.

Reflections

Book Sharing: The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place

♦ Judy

Before sharing my reflections on this book, I would like to pose a few questions for everyone to consider: 1) In today's world of rapid technological advancement, while enjoying the comprehensive conveniences it brings, do you sometimes feel a sense of powerlessness—an inability to break free from a lifestyle driven by technological forces? 2) In our stressful and busy days, we hope technological devices can make our lives easier. Have you noticed any reduction in your spiritual anxiety and restlessness? 3) Compared to the environment in which we, or even our parents' generation, grew up, technology has advanced at breakneck speed for the next generation. Do you believe they are living healthier and happier lives? 4) What constitutes the ideal life that humanity should live, according to the way God originally intended us to be? I believe that, like me, many brothers and sisters are filled with numerous questions and hope to find answers within the pages of this book.

Of course, the positive role technology plays in our lives is undeniable, and there is little need for me to elaborate on it here. Precisely because it is omnipresent, it brings both opportunities and significant challenges to our lives.

The book resonates with our daily experiences in many ways: often, when children grow restless, handing them a phone instantly quiets the world. When a family dines out and waits for their meal, everyone busies themselves scrolling through their phones to pass the time. Scrolling before bed can easily lead to staying up late, leaving us exhausted the next day, and so on. Over time, dependency forms, and being without electronic devices starts to feel unnatural. Think back to our own childhoods, growing up without electronic devices—weren't our days simple and joyful?

Technology accompanies life, and this is unstoppable. The book also mentions that technology is inherently designed with a persuasive force—it quickly captures attention and is easy to master. Yet problems inevitably arise:

for the younger generation, they are exposed prematurely to the most violent and explicit aspects of life, some of which are virtual and exaggerated, far beyond their cognitive scope. For the parental generation, seeing their children equally captivated by various technologies leaves them feeling bewildered. So, how can we prevent technology from controlling our lives and instead coexist harmoniously with it? The book suggests that we need discipline and discernment. Discipline and discernment stem from the right values, requiring strong willpower and sustained action to implement them. They help us restrain ourselves when tempted and steer ourselves back on track in time.

Just as with Christian spiritual disciplines—solitude, silence, and fasting—I believe everyone has some experience with these. When discussing fasting, the book mentions that we are naturally wired to need food, even to enjoy delicious meals, but it is only through fasting that we can truly enter a realm of freedom, breaking free from relying on food to soothe our depression and numb our anxiety. Similarly, observing the Sabbath not only allows us to experience deep, restorative rest one day a week but also helps us make various decisions throughout the following week, steering clear of anxiety and pride. Later, the book suggests adopting a "Sabbath rhythm" in our persistence: not just one day a week, but a moment each day, and perhaps a week or more each year for practice. Through such spiritual disciplines, our way of life can be subtly transformed. Likewise, through discipline (which I also interpret as self-discipline and accountability, exercised with caution and perseverance), we can liberate ourselves from technology and make the right decisions.

So, how do we build a scientifically wise family that guides us toward a better life? Family values are crucial—they form the foundation for everything. Based on a survey of over 1,000 American households with children aged 4-17, the

book found that family plays a role of over 80% importance in an individual's self-identity. Parents bear the responsibility of shaping their children's character, such as by frequently discussing topics like self-control, patience, joy, fairness, forgiveness, work ethic, trust, conflict resolution, and serving others at home. These conversations touch on every aspect of the children's daily lives and can also include content they encounter online. As long as the communication is open and pleasant, it greatly benefits the children's growth—something that cold technology and fleeting entertainment can never achieve.

The book suggests that building a scientifically wise family requires us to make three key decisions: First, prioritize character—we must make cultivating wisdom and courage the mission of every family member. Second, create space—arrange the main living spaces to emphasize character development and creativity. Third, schedule time—establish daily, weekly, and yearly rhythms in life that allow us to know one another, God, and our world more deeply.

The book elaborates on each decision. First, how do we define wisdom and courage within the priority of character? Wisdom is not just knowledge but also discernment—knowing what is right in a complex world and how to act in ways that best honor our Creator and His creation. (Proverbs 18:2): "A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion."—This verse could also describe social media. Fools represent those who do not know God, do not understand others, and have not even truly known themselves. Courage, on the other hand, requires us to understand our role in the world and the right course of action, as well as the faith and character to put it into practice (life is a journey through hardships).

How can we become people of wisdom and courage? The only way—connect with others. Not just within our immediate families, but in communities like the church, which are places to cultivate wisdom and courage. We need people who deeply understand us—our lives, our struggles, and our dilemmas—so deeply that we cannot hide these things from them. We need people who love us unconditionally, regardless of what we've done, who give of themselves freely so we can grow; and who know us best, seeing not only who we are but even more clearly who we

can become. This is God's grace and love. In a sense, the church is a true community and family.

On the other hand, although our lives today are much easier than those of our grandparents thanks to technological advancements, they were not inferior to us in wisdom and courage. This has nothing to do with the ease of life but with how one handles difficulties. Therefore, as parents, we must teach our children early on—not to make their lives easier, but to make them better. Through words and actions, we should show them how to create a family environment where everyone is understood, loved, and called to grow. These challenging decisions differ from how most people use technology and require wisdom and courage.

Regarding the second decision—creating space—the book mentions allowing children to find joy in creating with raw materials and reconnecting with nature. We simply need to guide them in that direction, pushing technology and shallow entertainment aside, and bringing deeper, more enduring things to the core. Activities like playing musical instruments, crafting, cooking by hand, and washing dishes are highly recommended, as the engagement, focus, and action involved bring us more joy and confidence.

The third decision pertains to scheduling time. While technology brings various conveniences, it can also easily add to our burdens. The satisfaction gained from meaningless leisure or materialistic consumption cannot truly restore our souls or strengthen our relationships with others and God.

We were created to live in a rhythm of work and rest. (Exodus 20:9-10): "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God." Enjoying restoration and worship through rest is commanded by God and blessed by Him. Thus, the book suggests a simple Sabbath rhythm, as mentioned earlier, so I won't repeat it here.

Regarding the three basic decisions mentioned above, the book offers ten commitments, which I interpret as ten specific plans to implement these decisions. There are also other aspects, such as not immediately opening electronic devices after waking up or before going to bed, striving to keep children away from screens before age 10 both at school and at home, using time in the car for

conversation, and parents regularly checking all electronic devices used by their minor children.

As mentioned earlier, the true goal of the family is to shape wisdom and courage. We cannot achieve this in isolation. Every family that values wisdom and courage needs to belong to a genuine larger family—the church. Worship is the path to true wisdom, leading us to know the truth—that is, its original purpose and ultimate meaning, as well as our responsibility in the world. (Psalm 14:1): "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" Because humans need some ultimate sense of reality and cannot truly live without God, fools replace God with other things (often themselves), leading to a shallow and dangerous worldview. Therefore, we must love our God with all our heart, soul, and strength. The best worship brings transformation, and God responds to our worship, working within us to give us abilities we cannot achieve on our own: sacrifice, love, repentance, forgiveness, and hope.

In the final two chapters, the author encourages brothers and sisters to worship wholeheartedly by singing loudly, to personally participate in significant life events such as weddings and funerals, to learn to be present with others in their most vulnerable moments, and to accompany one another at life's end. Compared to living in shallow, virtual connections, these genuine, heartfelt relationships allow us to know through prayer and song that we are deeply loved. Finally, let us encourage one another, starting now, to strive together to live a life of love, doing what pleases God, glorifying Him and blessing others!

Reflections After the Discipleship Course

♦ David Lok

Thank the Lord — this year I had the opportunity to complete the second volume of discipleship training, Deeply Rooted in God's Household, together with several brothers and sisters. Throughout the course, we revisited how to read God's Word, how to practice spiritual devotion, and how to pray. The course continually reminded us to build our lives on obedience to Christ, to be rooted in His Word, and to center our lives on prayer. We also learned to support one another within the fellowship and to bear witness to the Lord together.

In the process of preparing the lessons, I found that God was speaking to me first. Many times I thought I was "the one teaching," but in truth, God was using the preparation and sharing to lead me to reflect afresh on my own attitude, motivation, and direction in ministry.

After the course concluded, I began trying to apply what I had learned to my own service — particularly in practicing ministry that is Christ-centered and prayer-centered. I pray that God will lead me to lean on Him more fully, and that His grace and protection will rest upon my service.

Below are brief reflections on these two themes: being Christ-centered, and the practice of prayer.

Christ-Centered — The Ministry of Compassion

I think I will never fully comprehend in this lifetime the deep mystery of why Jesus was willing to humble Himself as a servant, nor will I ever exhaust my understanding of the life He poured out in total surrender to the Father and wholehearted service to all. And yet, as I trace His footsteps through the Gospels, I can sense His unreserved obedience to the Father, and I see how He responded with merciful action to every person who cried out to Him in distress. All I can do is spend a lifetime seeking to understand and to follow — and through continual practice and growing insight, gradually learn the gentleness and humility that belong to Christ.

In our new social care ministry, we encounter the frailty of fellow members, the struggles of life, and those who have been overlooked and forgotten by society. In this context, we ask: how

are we to respond in practical action to the Lord's call, and how are we to reflect His heart and character in this ministry? Lord, lead us.

Matthew 15:22 records the faith of the Canaanite woman, who cried out to the Lord to heal her daughter who was suffering terribly from demon possession. The verse that moved me deeply was Matthew 15:25 — ***She came and knelt before Him. "Lord, help me!" she said.*** These words give voice to the longing in so many hearts — the desperate desire for help, with no idea where to turn. When we encounter people in our own society who are likewise struggling in suffering, how are we to respond?

When broken, overlooked, and crushed lives reach out to us in wordless plea, are we willing to respond as the Lord Jesus did — with compassion, with action, with love?

We are often weak and timid, and many times we lack the courage to face the needs right before us. I pray that the Lord will move more brothers and sisters to see the needs of this ministry and to take an active part. May He grant us hearts of faithful commitment, so that we are willing to follow closely in His footsteps along this road of compassion. For it is only by depending on God that we — who are in ourselves weak — can be strengthened by Him, and can possess a boldness like that of Peter and John, so that our service bears witness that we are ***"people who had been with Jesus."***

Acts 4:13 — When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Prayer-Centered — The Practice of Solitude

In this second volume, we studied the Lord Jesus' teaching and example on prayer — coming before God first with praise and worship, then bringing our personal needs and requests. The course also reminded us to record matters of particular importance or significance, noting the dates on which prayers were answered, so that we might look back often and count the blessings the

Lord has given.

In the practice of prayer, when I come before God with thanksgiving and praise and count His blessings, I readily experience the sweetness of prayer – and I understand the spirit of David's words in Psalm 141:2: *"May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice."* When my heart is fixed on God's greatness and grace, His Word naturally becomes the praise and thanksgiving I offer to Him.

When interceding for brothers and sisters, beginning in worship and praise fills my heart with assurance that God's mercy and grace are our hope. As I then bring the needs and sicknesses of fellow members before Him, faith flows naturally, for I know deeply: *"I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him."* (2 Timothy 1:12)

The busier the ministry becomes, the more time I need to spend in prayer. When I worship and praise in prayer, it becomes easier to surrender everything into God's sovereign hand and leading – and I am reminded that all I do is God's own work. Even in the midst of His busy ministry, the Lord Jesus withdrew to solitary places to pray and draw near to the Father.

The discipleship training also calls us to cultivate times of solitude as part of our prayer practice. I thank God for giving me the habit of rising early. In the stillness of early morning, worship and prayer before God allow me to be far more focused and attentive.

I hope to grow in this practice of quiet and solitude in the days ahead. In the limited solitude I have experienced, I have genuinely encountered the peace, joy, and reverence that come from God's presence.

I thank God for using this course to help me grow, and I trust that He will continue to lead me into deeper learning in ministry. The membership ministry team will partner with the Christian education group to encourage brothers and sisters to participate in discipleship training and to be more diligent in the ministry of prayer. May all glory be given to the Lord!

Reflections on Maundy Thursday

♦ Jewel

On Thursday night, despite the Cyclone Tam, I attended the Maundy Thursday service at the church instead of staying home to watch it online. To be honest, my intention was simple—I just wanted to receive communion, since that's something you can't experience online.

I've heard the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet countless times. I thought this time would be no different—just going through the motions. But who would have known that night, my heart would ripple like water stirred by wind? Not because of the wind outside—though it was indeed frighteningly loud—but because of a question the pastor asked during his sermon.

Rev James stood at the pulpit and said, "Have you ever wondered why Jesus didn't wash the disciples' feet as soon as they entered the room? That would have been the most logical time, wouldn't it?"

This question made me sit up straight—both physically and mentally.

It turns out, Jesus was waiting.

Waiting until all the disciples were seated, until the meal was underway, until the atmosphere in the room had relaxed, and even—until they started arguing again about "who was the greatest." It was at this moment of peak ego that Jesus didn't frown or roll His eyes. He simply rose quietly, took off His

outer robe, poured water, picked up a towel, and knelt down to wash their feet, one by one.

In Jewish culture, foot washing was something only servants did—the lowliest of tasks. Yet the Lord Jesus did precisely this. And He said, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me."

At that moment, my heart skipped a beat. It turned out that He wasn't washing feet according to standard procedure; He was waiting for the moment that could "most deeply enter people's hearts."

What Jesus washed was not just feet, but the dirtiest, most shameful, most hidden parts of people's hearts—the parts they least want others to see.

Lord, I am willing to be cleansed by You. Originally, I only came to receive communion, hoping to draw a little closer to the Lord through this act. I am ashamed, I repent...

With a heart deeply touched by Jesus' love, I walked to the communion table, profoundly moved.

That night's sermon, the bread and cup I received, the a cappella singing of the choir, the lighting arranged in the church, and the howling wind outside the window—all seemed to repeatedly remind me: Jesus' humble and intimate love has never left and has never ceased.



Prayer Night - Renewed Within, Reconnected Without

♦ Yilia

Prayer Night — a special evening where we arrived with parched hearts, yet left with hearts renewed and filled.

It was a small story about "pressing the call bell" that opened our night of intimate fellowship with God.

[Restore My Heart] We came before God and honestly uncovered the hidden corners of our innermost selves, asking the Lord to search us. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." In that moment I knew: if I am a lost sheep, then in prayer I must listen for the Shepherd's call.

[Rebuild My Spirit] As our hearts were strengthened, a sense of peace and joy rose within me — like a cup of clear tea poured into a parched throat, bringing deep and quiet refreshment. In that moment, I was reminded: life does not belong to us alone, but calls us to respond to our calling in our families, our workplaces, and our church.

[Send Me Forth] What left the deepest impression on me was the third movement — Send

Me Forth — for in that moment, we were called not only to listen keenly for the voice from heaven, but to ask ourselves in the Lord's presence: if He is calling me, sending me into this world to bear witness for Him, can my heart humbly respond before Him — "Here I am, Lord. Send me"?

When we wrote out our commitment cards during Prayer Night, I knew this was not a vow made before people. It was a covenant made with God — after I had allowed Him to renew me in His presence.

Prayer Night —

If I am a lost lamb, may I hear in prayer the Shepherd's voice calling me home;

If I am a parched and thirsty field, prayer is the rain that nourishes my life;

If I am a broken and wounded soul, prayer is the medicine that heals my hurt;

If I am a traveller in the night, prayer is the lamp that lights my way ahead.

Return to the Love We Had at First: Reflections on the 2026 Adult Fellowship Retreat

♦ Harold Sun

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4, ESV)

From February 6th to 8th, 2026, the Adult Fellowship embarked on a journey of spiritual rediscovery under the theme "Return to the Love We Had at First." In the torrent of our fast-paced lives, we are often pulled by trivial matters and besieged by pressure, to the point where that simple, fervent longing for God gradually becomes obscured by the dust of daily living. Yet, God has never been far away. He gently calls to us in the wilderness, inviting us to return to His embrace and rediscover the heartbeat touched by His love.

The Boat, the Night, and the Shore: The Symphony of Peter's Life

Through the Apostle Peter's spiritual restoration, Pastor King unfolded for us a profound picture of life: the love we had at first is not a momentary spark of emotion, but a continuous process—encountered in the ordinary, reshaped through brokenness, and ignited within a mission.

The Call in the Ordinary: Faith often begins in that old, fish-scented boat. The Lord Jesus did not enter Peter's life in the grandeur of the temple, but on an ordinary morning as Peter was washing his nets. In that moment Peter let down the nets at Jesus' word, he saw not only the nets full of fish, but his own sinfulness and the Lord's holiness. **Absolute submission to the Lord's authority is the bedrock of the love we had at first.**

The Brokenness in the Night: Spiritual crisis often lurks within "overconfidence." Peter, at his peak moment, vowed he would never fall away, yet in the darkest night, he denied the Lord three times. The Lord permitted Peter to experience failure to refine his faith through pain and to dismantle his old pride. The look at the moment of the rooster's crow was not a glance of condemnation, but one full of merciful intercession—**true repentance is feeling the Lord's presence in the very scene of our failure.**

The Commission on the Shore: In the morning light by the Sea of Tiberias, the risen Lord prepared breakfast for His weary disciples. Beside the charcoal fire, there was no rebuke, only that soul-penetrating question: "Do you love me?" The

Lord replaced harsh interrogation with gentle forgiveness and entrusted the mission—"Feed my sheep"—to this man who had once fled. Now, Peter no longer relied on his natural zeal, but responded to grace with a love that was deep, humble, and willing to lay down his life.

Spiritual Reset: Letting Go, Accepting, and Moving Forward

Returning to the love we had at first is not just a rekindling of emotion, but a reorientation of life:

Letting Go of Self: Acknowledge our weaknesses and limitations, and no longer serve based on impulse.

Embracing Acceptance: Believe that the Lord not only loves the "you" who serves fervently but also accepts the "you" who weeps in remorse.

Pressing Towards the Mission: Transform love into faithfulness to the Lord's commission, bravely walking the path of discipleship in the mundane routine of daily life.

Conclusion: Setting Out Anew with the Light

In these brief three days, we witnessed tears of repentance, tears of gratitude, and joyful tears of fellowship. We laid down our weariness and rested our hearts in God's embrace. In worship, sharing, and prayer, that rekindled love renewed our vision once more.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Pastor Gong for his wise teaching, to the preparation team for their quiet dedication, and to every fellowship member for their sincere participation. May this retreat be not just a charging station in our lives, but a brand new starting point. Let us return to our respective lives with this rekindled love, becoming the light of the world, bringing glory to God and benefit to people.

Whether you are by the lake of a great catch or in the darkness of a stumble, listen closely—the risen Lord is still gently asking you, "**Do you love me?**"

What I Gained from the "Return to Love We Had at First" Retreat

◆ Jewel

"And Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.'" (Luke 5:10)

Over the long weekend at the start of February, we didn't go anywhere far. We simply gathered in the same place — our own church.

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We simply gathered in the same place — our own church.

Together we worshipped, prayed, listened to the Word, and read Scripture.

Together we shared meals, played games, rehearsed, and opened our hearts.

Pastor Gong spoke about Peter.

About how he followed the Lord, then wandered away;

how he loved with urgency and retreated just as quickly —

yet turned back, again and again.

And the Lord was there all along.

It was the Lord himself who went down to the lakeside to find him.

Peter's story always happens by the water —

in the most real and ordinary places of life.

This retreat was the same.

In the games, in the rehearsals for the "talent show,"

over tea, over meals, in the unhurried in-between conversations —

we brothers and sisters came to know one another a little more.

Names were no longer just words on a list,

but voices, expressions, and the particular ways each person carries themselves.

I didn't really want to do the talent show.

But that day, we stepped up together anyway.

Nervous together. Embarrassed together. Laughing together — really laughing.

Some of the distance between us quietly disappeared in moments like that.

I also led worship for the very first time.

From not daring to, to stepping forward.

It wasn't that I suddenly became brave.

It was the accompanist keeping pace with me, a sister's quiet reminders and steady presence beside me,

and the encouragement and grace of those seated before me —

that let me know: I am not alone.

Peter was probably something like this too.

Through the long hours of fishing,

through time spent with Jesus and with his companions,

he came to know the Lord more slowly, more deeply —

and slowly came to be known by others as well.

When the retreat ended, I found that what I was carrying home

was not only what I had received and been moved by,

but something real —

a connection with my brothers and sisters.

The Moment I Let Go

◆ Little Mandarin

I attended the first-ever Retreat Camp for the Adult Fellowship from February 6th to 7th this year.

I set off with a happy and long-awaited heart. It had been such a long time since I last attended a camp. I deeply hoped that this time, I could set aside my busyness, bring a quiet heart, and simply be poured into by God.

When the programme stChinese version ready for review. Please have a look to see there's nothing obviously if you have a sec. Thanks.orted on the first day, we were invited to write down on a piece of paper the burdens, regrets, worries, and difficulties we were currently facing in our lives. After writing, the notes were collected and kept—no one would read them.

At that moment, I just felt heaviness, without fully realizing how much real pressure those words carried. They were things I usually refused to acknowledge or face yet had been carrying with me all along.

During the two days of the camp, I participated in every activity as usual. In the group games, I laughed heartily. It had been so long since I'd relaxed like that; it felt like returning to my school days, being as innocent and carefree as a child again. One word describes it—utter joy.

There was also the long-missed talent show. It was also the most dreaded part, because I'm not good at acting. But what moved me even more was the spirit of unity we shared. Everyone brainstorming, revising, and trying to organize the content logically and smoothly—it wasn't easy. I'm especially grateful to a brother in our group, who planned with talent and dedication, even staying up until midnight to type out the script word by word before sending it to every member. I'm also thankful for the members in charge of props and costumes, who went home exhausted yet still prepared everything wholeheartedly. Seeing that picture of mutual cooperation filled me with gratitude.

It wasn't until the final session that we each got our own note back.

When I opened it again and reread what I had

written with my own hand, my heart was suddenly touched. Those problems still existed, those worries hadn't disappeared; I had just habitually suppressed them deep inside.

Next, we were invited to feed our notes into a paper shredder ourselves.

As I held the paper filled with my heartfelt concerns and slowly pushed it forward, I could clearly feel the vibration of the machine starting up. The rapid spinning, the continuous, low hum—the sensation traveled from the paper to my palm.

That vibration wasn't just mechanical force; it felt like it was shaking something deep within my soul.

The moment I let go,

the paper was pulled into the machine and instantly shredded.

In that very instant, tears streamed down my face.

A very real question suddenly surfaced in my heart:

God, can You forgive me this easily?

Over the years, I had been clinging to my regrets, self-blame, and weaknesses, year after year.

But the moment I was willing to let go,

You did not rebuke me,

You did not bring up the past,

You did not nag.

You simply caught me.

In that moment, I realized—

It's not about how long I've struggled to earn forgiveness,

but that You have been waiting all along for me to admit it, for me to turn back.

In just two short days, I was able to entrust these things. Yet, for so long in my life, I had been holding on tightly, refusing to let go.

It turns out, what God has been waiting for all along,

is not my strength,

but the moment I am willing to let go.

At the same time that paper was destroyed, some of the stubborn attachments in my heart began to loosen.

Entrusting doesn't mean things change immediately;

it means I no longer carry the burden alone.

The moment I let go,

I truly understood—

Release

comes not because the problems disappear,

but because I have returned to His hands.

