

The Vine

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The Vine Committee

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HOM'S Reflections

The \$13.9 million TOTO had just been won by only 2 persons leaving behind hundreds of thousands without a win. Yet these losers are better than most

Christians. Why, you may ask. Well, Christians pray to God, maybe once, twice and a couple of times more and when the answer is not forthcoming, they give up, they lose hope. But hope springs eternal for these TOTO punters. Despite losing time and time again, they never lose hope, they keep trying for years and years. They will faithfully be there every Sunday in the queue. Their goal of winning the big prize keeps driving them on.

Christians have a bigger prize waiting for us, yet we fall away, we backslide after a few setbacks, we leave the church and some of us join the crowds who line up for the TOTO tickets. Why? Is it because the chance of winning the TOTO is better than winning a place in Heaven? Is it because we can hear of the winners (even though we do not know who they are) and have faith in what we do not see? Do we trust the newspapers more than we trust the Bible? Some believe there is a great conspiracy by the church concerning the Bible and will not believe in Jesus whom they have not seen but are so convinced that there are actually 2 winners of the TOTO, despite not knowing their names or much else about them.

Many are willing to go through life, giving thousands to try to win at TOTO and never regret at the end of their lives even if they did not win. Yet some Christians are not willing to give a cent to God's work if they cannot see any returns for themselves. At the end of the day, you must admit that there is a god of money which people will give their all to, instead of to the one true God. That is why Jesus warns us, you cannot serve both God and money.

When you ask a TOTO punter why he buys the ticket (and most of the time without thinking of the number – system 7, etc) and he will say there is HOPE. Without buying there is no Hope. Do Christians have a Hope or do they need to depend on the punter's hope? Do we feel hopeless if there is no TOTO ticket in our pockets?

Before the results of every big TOTO draw, my colleagues will always remind me that when they win, they will all resign and leave me alone to do the all the work because they all buy as a group. This could be devastating to a company if it actually happens but after almost 35 years with the company, my colleagues are still with me. After the last \$13.9 million draw, they won \$10, so they ploughed this amount into the next draw and came up with nothing. One of the group asked later, "Where is the \$10?" I must admit, they have the "do or die" attitude, no giving up, something I find lacking in Christians.

Don't give up on God, He hasn't given up on you. He is still waiting for you to "come to your senses" like the Prodigal Son and return to Him.

In the light of recent events, it is good to reflect on Psalm 51 by David the king. Despite all that he did, God still forgave him and God will forgive us too.

1 Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.

4 Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.

5 Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived
me.

6 Yet you desired faithfulness even in the
womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

8 Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

9 Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.

10 Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Martin Cheah

Testimony of God's grace

Thanks to our gracious Lord, my badminton "kaki" has accepted the Lord today.

Three years of playing badminton with Jackson (friendship evangelism) and 20 years of prayer by his sister for his salvation – we have received the "harvest"!

Let us ensure our prayer War Room is active.

Rev Anthony Loh

From Jackson's sister, Josephine:

A testimony about my brother, Jackson to encourage those who interceded for him to live...

I met the surgeon who operated on his thigh bone a few days ago. He told me, "When I first saw your brother, I told myself...he is in such a mess; with so many severe injuries, I'm not sure if he could make it. And now, I'm surprised to see him recovering so well and so soon."

As for me, I know it's the power and results of the many prayers that were offered up to God for my brother's sake. He lives! He received salvation! He will walk again!

Thank you Kingdom People....let's continue to run to the Source of Life for the weak...and glorify GOD with our testimony of victory! God bless you and keep you!



Getting to know you.....

In this issue, we have the honour of interviewing two people serving in JCC iS.H.I.N.E Children Ministry. You may know them but I am sure you do not know everything about them! Read on to find out!

Jonathan Tan (HOM of Children Ministry)

Alicia: I'm sure most people know who you are but may not know you in depth so come on, give us some tidbits to gnaw on...

Jonathan: Hmmmmm...what do you want to know about me? Let's see...10 fun facts about Jonathan.

- 1) I grew up in JCC since I saw the first light.
- 2) JCCK was where I learnt my A..B..C.. & 1..2..3..
- 3) I grew up in the century before Internet came into the world.
- 4) That time I still used my pager and listened to Walkman.
- 5) I was once a stamp collector but grew out of it. (Think if I sell my stamps, it will worth a fortune)
- 6) I used to love outdoor sports but nowadays lesser, currently more indoor sports as I am afraid of the heat. (It was a miracle that I survived National Service).
- 7) I went for an air steward job interview just for the fun of it as I enjoy travelling overseas.
- 8) My childhood favourite superhero is the blue guy with the red underwear.
- 9) Working as a social worker can be life fulfilling but yet challenging – a real eye opener to life.
- 10) I am a Zumba Instructor!!



Alicia: Why is Children Ministry now named as iS.H.I.N.E?

Jonathan: Correction...Children ministry is NOT renamed as iSHINE. Children ministry is made up of Little Lambs (2-6 yrs old) and iSHINE (7-12 yrs old). Little Lambs is a platform for little children to (1) know God, (2) know that they are special, and (3) know that Jesus is special. For iSHINE, our claiming verse is from **Matthew 5:16**, "In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.".

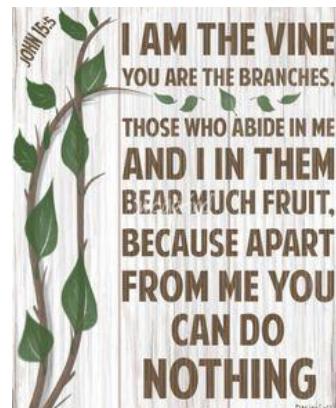
SHINE was renamed as iSHINE, because 'i' (small letter i) denotes a sense of self-humility and ownership. SHINE is an acronym that denotes a set of values we hope to see in every child, namely:

Serve, Honor, Intercede, Nurture and Excel.

Putting iSHINE together, shares about a 6-year journey of i-SERVE, i-HONOR, i-INTERCEDE, i-NURTURE, i-EXCEL. Our goal is to instill these core values into the children's lives so that they take ownership of their own Christian maturity to another level each passing year.

Alicia: What drew you into serving in this ministry? What role/s have you played throughout your serving?

Jonathan: I recall 25 years ago, when Auntie Seline, Uncle Kin Siong and significant others were my Sunday school teachers. They put in a lot of effort to make the lessons fun and enjoyable. We had quizzes almost every week to help us recall what we had learnt. We had to memorise scriptures every week, and each week anyone who got the scripture correct would be awarded a star. At the end of the month, each of us would receive a small incentive based on the number of stars we were awarded. I grew up realising the importance



and significance of knowing God, having a close relationship with Him and why we do what we do as we grow in our Christian faith. 25 years later, it is still a spiritual journey of encountering God and growing in Him. When we stop our encounter with Him, we stop growing. When we stop growing, we will find other ‘things’ to fill that emptiness. And the burden I have for our kids in church is to ensure that they will not stop growing in their walk with Jesus. Moreover, I worked with children/youth-at-risk before, hence the passion and calling to serve in this ministry is stronger. Throughout my service here, I have served as a facilitator, a teacher, an observer, a MLT member and a worship leader. Through the different roles I play, I was able to pick out some areas of which we can improve on.

Alicia: What are the difficulties you had faced or are currently facing in this ministry?

Jonathan: I hope and pray that the children ministry will not become a substitute for the role parents have to play in developing their own children spiritually. As a social worker, I have seen how people have relied on schools/ kindergartens etc. to teach the children values and parents become complacent in their rightful duties/responsibilities. I may be wrong, but it has become a common sight, be it in the areas of caregiving, educating, parenting, etc. Without giving the children quality time and teaching them right values, these children would seek love, belonging, identity outside of home and lose the attachment they once had with their significant others, and lose sight of their Heavenly Father, who is the giver of everything. In fact, the children ministry should be regarded as a ‘bonus’ partnership with parents in building these little young lives, not a separate entity by itself.

Change or transformation can only happen when everyone is in one-mindedness, in one strength and in one Spirit. Our children ministry



has come this far, for about 40 over years since Sis Ting Ching first started the ministry. I asked myself this question, “How much have we changed or improved for the better ever since, or have we ever done an evaluation for our ministry before?” We can no longer depend on old teaching strategies to engage our children. We are talking



about a new generation of IT-Savvy children who are being influenced daily by the social media and the stimulus around them. For example, we can no longer make them sit straight for 20 mins listening to bible stories because studies have shown that different age groups have different attention spans, learning styles, learning pace, etc. Thus, as we re-looked our teaching methods. IT can become another approach to actively engage the kids, yet it is also a challenge as to how we can tap on such resource to make our learning fun and enjoyable.

Alicia: What motivate you to keep going?

Jonathan: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 shares about the ‘Unity and Diversity in the Body’. It reminds me that a church is a body of Christ. And as a body, we need to be united, not only in works, but also in one Spirit. We cannot and should not be focusing just on strengthening our individual ministries and hope for the best that every ministry is running healthy, no!!

**All of you together are
Christ's body,
and each of you is
a part of it.**

1 Corinthians 12:27 NLT

Verse 24-26 states, “*while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it,²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*”

It is my prayer that every ministry is of equal concern to the other ministries, whether weak or strong, and wants to put a hand in it. What motivates me is the hope to see every church member, old, young, new putting their hands to support every other ministry so that every part can be strengthened. And when every part is strengthened, the church will be strengthened and united as a whole. Only then, we can

sit back, reflect, rejoice and proclaim God's goodness. It delights God's heart when we support His ministries!!

Alicia: What would you like to see 10 years from now?

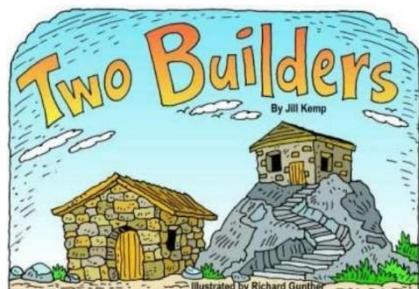
Jonathan: Our Loving Father will give us what we need when we ask according to his will. But to know his heartbeat for children ministry, we need to be fervently praying, seeking and knocking. We can be having awesome lessons and programs for kids, big attendance, great manpower, etc. but unless the Lord builds this ministry, we will all labour in vain. We need to trust, surrender, and discern what the Lord has for the ministry.

Matthew 7:7-11, says,

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."

"Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

In 10 years' time, I envision that our ministry leaders/teachers will not be afraid to ask from the Lord to reveal more things to them about the ministry and they will ask in faith and believe. They will be wise, so that in times of challenges and storms, the ministry will not crumble. Its foundation will remain steadfast, rooted in His Word, showered with prayer. I want to see them growing in confidence, in faith as we Envision, Equip and Empower those serving in the ministry.



Teach Learn

Teaching about God should be an outflowing response out of an individual's intimate relationship with God. Children do not need to be taught about Jesus literally. All they need to do is to look and observe. To be a positive Christian role model to our kids, everyone needs to be consistent in our own walk with the Lord, not just the role of teachers. It is only through individual walk/encounter with the Lord that outpours the passion to teach, in love, in joy, in conviction, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

My prayer for teachers is that their main goal is not to teach the children about God, but to be able to stay passionate and steadfast in their service to children. Getting burnt-out is a common factor, but it is certainly not because of lack of manpower. Why so?

(1) It goes back to my first point about every ministry need of showing equal concern to other ministries. As long as we stay concerned of our own ministry, there will always be a lack of manpower somewhere.

(2) The need for evaluation. Evaluation for self, teaching and ministry. Without evaluation, we do not know where goes wrong or what we need to improve on. One of the philosophies in Solution-Focused Brief therapy (SFBT) states, 'Continue doing what works; what is not working, do something different'. How often do we do things differently when we see something not working? No wonder we get tired easily.



(3) Renewal of leadership. At times, we will get so excited, so enthusiastic, that we get sucked into the planning and execution of our ministry's activities and programmes that we fall short of the importance of leadership renewal. Everyone will grow old one day, or grow out of ideas/creativity, hence the need for 'fresh blood', passing on the baton to new leaders. While we are running the ministry, it is

crucial to always look out for potential leaders, preparing, developing and mentoring them.



Looking forward, apart from teachers, another group of people I hope we can partner with would be the parents of our children. We only see our kids once a week in church. We are also concerned about how they would be growing spiritually for the rest of the week. It would be helpful if parents of these young lives can also play an active role in following up on what they learnt for that Sunday, and follow through the week on how they can make relevance to what they learn, living out the abundant life of Christ. If there are parents out there, who may feel inadequate or unequipped on how to lead your child spiritually, please do drop us an email (at kidschurch.jcc@gmail.com). We will work with the parent ministry to see how we can better support our parents in spiritually growing our children. Remember, these young lives will become our Church Leaders one day... these are our Leaders of Tomorrow!!

Alicia: Thank you Jon for your sharing. Next, we turn to Valerian to the next part of our interview.

Valerian Loke (MLT of Children Ministry)

Alicia: Hey brother! I've served alongside with you in the past but never really have the chance to know you better so here goes! If you are shipwrecked on a deserted island with just one wish...



Valerian: Wow, that's a tough one. I wish to be in the Garden of Eden and experience God's presence and love there. Hopefully find a soulmate there just like Adam & Eve.

Alicia: Ahem...that seems to be 2 wishes instead of 1! Anyway, silly question of mine aside. Let's head into topic proper. How did you know God and become a Christian?

Valerian: Alright, how I came to know God is pretty straight forward as I came from a Christian family, both my parents & grandparents are Christians. My faith journey with God began when I joined JCC back in 1997 knowing that the JCC families love and support the brothers and sisters in Christ. Since then, there's no turning back.

Alicia: What drew you into serving in this ministry? What role/s have you played throughout your serving?

Valerian: Actually I started serving in church ministry somewhat later in my life. I began to receive God's calling to serve in the Kids Ministry back in 2013 as I sensed God telling me I would work well with children being a Sunday school teacher. When I first came in to observe and assist in the role of an assistant teacher, I gradually felt great joy serving and interacting with the kids. Moving forward, as I became a full-fledged Sunday school teacher, I began teaching the children bible lessons. Thankfully I had a co-teacher to assist alongside with the kids. God began to reveal to me the purpose of serving in the kids ministry, to sow the seeds for children of God to grow in faith and knowledge and building up their lives trusting God. In 2014, I had a greater calling to be in Kids Ministry MLT. Without doubting, I took up the offer and my portfolio became upsized. I had to plan, manage and execute the kids ministry programs and activities all of which were relatively new to me but I was thankful for the encouragement, support and guidance from our ministry leaders especially Auntie Ewe Ewe.

Alicia: What are the difficulties you had faced or are currently facing in this ministry? What motivate you to keep going?

Valerian: Being in the Kids Ministry, there are a lot of challenges we face. As teachers we have our challenges of conducting the bible lessons/ Sunday programs fruitfully with the kids while keeping track of the time. Besides that, at times we face a drop in kids attending

Sunday school. Therefore we truly hope that parents can encourage and support their children to attend Sunday school so that the kids will build, grow their faith and knowledge with God. On the other hand, being in the kids ministry MLT we sometimes face challenges on working out the direction of our ministry like planning for kids church materials, kids camp, Sunday school activities and managing the various responsibilities on our shoulders. Thus, we truly appreciate the prayer and support from our church brothers and sisters. What keeps me going is seeing the seeds of faith in God sown into the lives of these children with the prospect that they will grow in faith, love and knowledge, trusting God as they build up their lives.

Alicia: What would you like to see 10 years from now?

Valerian: Good question! I'll see myself older and having more white hair. Ok, joke aside, I would like to see the i-SHINE Kids Ministry and children having a heart to **Serve** sincerely, **Hope** in God's love, **Intercede** through prayer, **Nourish** through wisdom of God's word and **Excel** in their life to give glory to God.

Alicia: Now we've come to the end of the interview. Once again, thank you both for spending time sharing with us regarding iSHINE Children ministry. May we continue serving our Lord with glory! [Vine](#)

JCC has only one GB company left, the girls from Shuqun Primary School. They were encouraged by Chaplain Wong Mui to seek Jesus' Face and read His Book.



POWER OF HOPE

Beyond the Clouds where the Mountains rise and Rivers flow

As the flight descended through the layers of cotton-like clouds, we could see Fukuoka more clearly and the excitement grew into anticipation of another adventure. Imagine the wonders of how God had created nature at its best!



Teck Chai and I had the opportunity to visit the Kyushu Prefecture during the Chinese New Year period, taking advantage of the stretched weekend. The travel took our senses off ourselves as we watched the mountains, rivers and forests passed us by when the coach moved from one place to another. Have you wondered at some point, how did God make all these images possible? Amazing beyond our comprehension and it is like nothing we have seen or heard. Sounds familiar?

This was also a time that I have been looking forward to rest. Or was I looking for “Hope”? “Hope” in what I need to do next?



Throughout the travels by coach in winter, Kyushu was a place filled with many volcanoes; naturally a place with hot springs and frequent earthquakes. Did I share with you that one of the volcanoes erupted

during our travels as we followed the news on the television? We were at the place near where it happened!

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters he restores my soul. He guides me in path of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Ps 23:1-6

Beauty at its best does come with a price, isn't it? I wonder where the people find hope in living in such a place. Our travel guide shared that nature has also brought good soil and good produce in the areas. Still, I wonder why the people in Kyushu made such a choice to stay.

Let me show you Mount Aso where Teck Chai and I had a chance to be at a close range to an active volcano. How majestic it was, but deep inside, we could feel the instability of the volcano as we knew that it could erupt anytime. Yes, anytime.

We were standing on the ash alongside the roads and buildings; watching the streams of ash mud congregated from the lava flows in some areas around the volcano; sighting the effects on the remains of an earlier eruption. It was still spouting smoke from where we were at the perimeter of a shrine that has been closed since it was covered with ash and volcanic mud.



Is this the land of "milk and honey" for the local people? I am not sure as my heart was filled with emotions at how the people manage the day-to-day emotions of nature; wondering when its anger will strike

amid the tranquillity now. How fortunate we are regarding the easy access to our drinking water and the daily grinds of the hustle and bustle of work life as compared to the locals.

Is there “Hope”? Where can we find “Hope” in such circumstances? The buying of insurance is not practical or almost impossible because no insurance companies will cover any acts of God. This does not look like a land of milk and honey for the people in Kyushu. This is just an opinion.

“...But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, putting us to hard labour. Then, we cried out to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression. So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and now I bring the first-fruits of the soil that you, O Lord, have given me. Place the basket before the Lord your God and bow down before him. And you and the Levites and the aliens among you shall rejoice in all the good things the Lord your God has given to you and your household.” Deut 26:6-11

It was always written that there is always hope in the love of God. Throughout the history and how God has showed us through His message from His Word, we have “Hope” because of His Love for us. The Love story with God is “Hope” in itself. Did you realise it?



And, did I also add that we were out at sea in freezing cold and windy weather in life jackets, close to jumping in the water to swim with the schools of dolphins.

What a sight as the Nature came to life beyond watching documentary from

the television in the comfort of my living room. How beautiful and real in the freezing cold!

This is not an advertisement of travels or just a story as a part of my travel journals. It is a reflection which I like to share with all of you in my journey with God. On the arduous and blessed road of life where I usually learn a lot from my travels i.e. business or leisure; nature always brings back the reality of who we are and what we are here for.

Where there is Love, there is Hope and there is Peace?

Another heart-wrenching moment was when we were at the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb museum. I could see how the tourists were snapping photographs as we walked through the museum. My photographs stopped beyond the entrance of the museum with the dawning of the truth that this really happened at the sights of the history unfolded in the pictures and illustrations of the war that came to an end with the use of atomic bombs. I noticed many of the tourists gradually kept their cameras and hand-phones along the way.

Today, Nagasaki is one of the state that advocates peace and against the use of atomic/nuclear bombs. The statue and the fountain of Peace at the park near the museum were erected as a reminder to the people and the World that Peace is to be valued.

Yes, all these moments it brought back the sense of life, as we give thanks and pray, remembering that our hope is in the Lord Jesus because of His Love for us that Jesus died for us. This picture is

beyond worlds and words, “Is there Hope anywhere beyond the clouds where the mountains rise and rivers flow?”

DON'T GIVE UP
on the things
GOD HAS PLACED
in your heart.
KEEP
PUSHING & PRAYING
he will direct you

“... Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”
Rom 12: 11-12

Joyce Tan

Jesus Christ, Our Passover Lamb



You may like the delicious *asam laksa*. Recommending it to a Chinese friend, you call the dish 亚参叻沙, which is just a transliteration based on the Malay/Peranakan pronunciation; it is not an actual translation because there is no indigenous term for it in the Chinese vocabulary. When your Chinese friend tries to translate it into a third language (English), what would the dish be called without getting lost in translation?

Getting lost in translation is a very common encounter, and I shall here share something of this about Easter and Passover in translations across three languages (Hebrew, Greek, English).

“Easter” is mentioned once in the KJV translation of the Bible:

*“And when he had apprehended him [Peter], he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after **Easter** to bring him forth to the people.” – Acts 12:4 (KJV)*

The KJV follows the much older Tyndale Bible’s adoption of the word “Easter” in the translation. However, in the NKJV and other modern English translations, the word “Easter” in the Acts passage is replaced by “Passover”. Here is the same passage in NIV and NKJV:

*“After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the **Passover.**” (NIV)*

*“So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after the **Passover.**” (NKJV)*

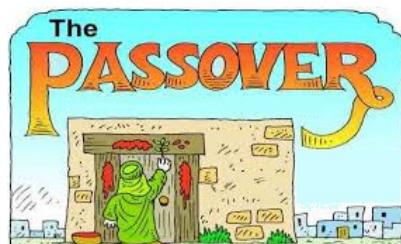
Before there was any English Bible, there was the Greek New Testament. When referring to the festival of Passover celebrated by the Jews (as originally mentioned in Hebrew texts), the authors of the Greek New Testament did not have an indigenous Greek word for it; so they adopted a rendering by transliteration. (It is like the rendering of *asam laksa* as 亞參叻沙 which cannot be found in any native Chinese dictionary; the Greek transliteration could not be found in any native Greek dictionary.)

Matt. 26:2 records what Jesus said – “As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

It is clear that the blood sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross was linked to the Passover. Easter (Christ’s resurrection) was only shortly thereafter. When the translators of the KJV Bible tried to decipher the meaning of the transliterated Greek form (without absolute clarity from any Greek dictionary) in Acts 12:4 for the Jewish festival of Passover, the proximity of Easter could have played a significant influence in the choice of the word “Easter” instead of “Passover” as the English translation. It is plausible that the KJV translators inferred that the Greek transliteration was referring to the Easter event. After all, saying that Peter would be brought out for trial (Acts 12:4) “after Easter” or “after Passover” might have no practical difference on the ground. Alternatively speaking, by referring to Easter (instead of Passover), the KJV translator was not making any significant error in pointing out the time after which King Herod would bring Peter out for trial.

The replacement of the word “Easter” (KJV) by the word “Passover” (in NKJV and modern English Bibles) suggests Bible scholars’ recognition of the fact that the Greek word actually referred to Passover, not Easter.

The Passover was a festival that traced its history back to the Old Testament.

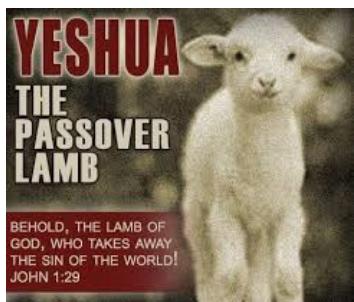


The Passover lamb was what God instructed the Israelites to offer as a sacrifice so that God would pass over them on the day that He would strike down every firstborn on the land:

"The blood on the houses where you are staying will be a distinguishing mark for you; when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No plague will be among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt." – Ex. 12:13

The passing over of God's people from death became a day that the Israelites were to commemorate (Ex. 12:14):

- *"This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance." – NIV*
- *"And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." – KJV*



When Jesus was sacrificed on the Cross, He became our Passover Lamb and His blood shed on the Cross became the distinguishing mark for believers:

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." – Heb. 9:12 (KJV)

Apostle Paul tells us, "Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch – as you really are. For **Christ, our Passover lamb**, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. 5:7-8)

The Orthodox Jewish Bible¹ carries the message of 1 Cor. 5:7-8 this way:

“⁷Purge out the old chametz (leavened bread), that you may be issa chadasha (new dough, batzek, deaf dough, having no indication of fermentation), as you are indeed like matzot (unleavened bread). More than that, our Korban Pesach has been sacrificed, Moshiach. [SHEMOT 12:3-6,21]

“⁸So let us celebrate Pesach, not with old chametz, nor with the chametz of kavvanah ra'ah (malice) and wickedness, but with matzot of kenut (sincerity) and emes. [SHEMOT 12:14,15; DEVARIM 16:3]”

Those who believe in Jesus Christ and is baptised will be saved, while those who do not believe will perish on account of their sins. (Mk 16:16)

In the Bible, we do see the stunning impact of Christ's resurrection in overturning the darkest hours for the early disciples of Christ when they witnessed His Passion, crucifixion and burial in the tomb. Peter, who denied Jesus three times at the latter's arrest by the Roman soldiers, became transformed as a disciple of great courage. (Acts 4:13, 20)

The proximity of the Passover to Christ's Resurrection is thought-provoking. Both elicit the message of deliverance from death by the blood sacrifice of a lamb (or goat) without blemish. To Christians, our Passover Lamb (without blemish) has been sacrificed to obtain eternal redemption for us.



Whether the word “Easter” is or is not mentioned in the Bible, it is indisputable that the resurrection of Christ is mentioned in

¹ <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Kehillah+in+Corinth+I+5:6-8&version=OBJ>

the Bible, and it is an enormously important event to Christians.

Jewish Christians also recognise Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb sacrificed on the Cross for the deliverance of sinners from eternal death. They celebrate the Passover, and proclaim Jesus the Messiah to the world.²

According to *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*:

"The special celebration of the resurrection at Easter is the oldest Christian festival ... Although the exact date was in dispute and the specific observances of the festival developed over the centuries, it is clear that Easter had special significance to the early generations of Christians. Since Christ's passion and resurrection occurred at the time of the Jewish Passover, the first Jewish Christians probably transformed their Passover observance into a celebration of the central events of their new faith. In the early centuries the annual observance was called the pascha, the Greek word for Passover, and focused on Christ as the paschal Lamb."

Apostle Paul preached:

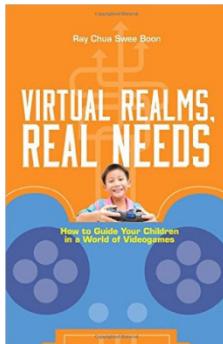
"If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." – 1 Cor. 15:13-14

It is laudable for Christians (Jews or Gentiles) to commemorate the event of Christ's resurrection every year, in whatever manner of observance that will make us not forget the focal message of the Resurrection of Christ.

John Lee

² <http://www.jewishvoice.org/media/publications/articles/messiah-our-passover-lamb.html>

The Parents' Prayer Group (PPG) of JCC organised a talk on “Guiding our Children in this digital age” on 5th March.



Thank God that brother Kin Cheong managed to invite Mr Ray Chua, a clinical psychologist, to be our esteemed speaker.

Apart from being a clinical psychologist specialising in gaming addiction, Mr Chua is also the author of the book “Virtual Realms, Real Needs: How to guide your children in a world of videogames.”

With the ubiquitous mobile devices and easy access to the alluring contents on the Internet, it is no wonder that the topic of the talk was close to the hearts of the parents attending, who felt challenged to guide their young children away from potential or extant games addiction.

Altogether about two dozen parents (more than half being non-JCC members) sat attentively through the whole talk with a short refreshment break, after which they formed themselves into separate groups for a relaxed sharing of discussion questions and personal experience with their children’s access to the electronic devices and digital media. Meanwhile, JCC members helped with the childcare in the adjoining room for the young children who came with their parents.

Mr Ray Chua delivered his message with a personal familiarity with the subject matter, being an avid gamer himself, a father of children who play games and a counsellor with the experience of dealing with games addicts. As he scanned the online landscape, his audience was apprised of the varied genres of video games (individual or multi-player types with gameplay challenges, roleplay games, etc.) and social media (such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube). The audience was also given an insight into the addictive nature of online content in the current situation and in future trends.

The audience learnt that people who play videogames are affected differently. Personal risk factors such as mental health disorders, unmet needs for acceptance, low self-esteem and systemic risks (involving family, peers or school) all may have a part

in a person's vulnerability to an unhealthy obsession. Even gender is a significant factor, with males generally ten times more susceptible to videogames addiction than females. Managing the usage of technology by children requires parents to know the children's world while choosing appropriate content and establishing rules (such as limiting screen time, setting clear boundaries and consequences, etc.). Dealing with underlying problems of the child is also important.

Mr Ray Chua introduced a few parenting adages which I find to be very pertinent:

- Rules without relationship lead to rebellion.
- Know the 5 love languages, referring to ways to show the children that they are loved.
- Keep calm and choose your battles – with calm strategy instead of butting heads.

The talk was enriching to parents seeking to gain wisdom on dealing with the phenomenon of children's inevitable exposure to the online world in the age of the Internet and social media, hoping to be more proficient in guiding them to tap the usefulness of it while avoiding the pitfalls.

The talk was interesting and informative; therefore, not boring. It was encouraging to note the active participation at the group discussion session and at the final question time with the speaker. In the end, there was the impression that some great substance of the subject matter seemed to have skipped by sketchily because the 3 hours set for the talk was insufficient to cover more things in detail.

Finally, the Fei Yue Family Services at SSO @ Taman Jurong was introduced to the audience by our brother Jonathan Tan who is a social worker there. Those who have relevant needs for assistance are welcome to approach the service centre.

Feedback from the participants is being studied by the PPG, and the experience gained from organising this talk will be useful inputs for future events that are organised for parents.



John Lee