

PREFACE

*“Dear pastor, it will be winter here in a month's time but already, I am feeling the chilly intensity and effects of apostasy of these last and evil days, not only outside but within my very own soul. I experience the strength of my depravity and wretchedness. Like the horse and the mule (Psalm 32), I have no understanding. As Abijah Zhong put it, it is very painful for the stubborn horse when the bridle is applied. Likewise, the humbling of the law to bridle my spirit is unbearable too. **God shows me my man-ward religion and the subtle trust in my works, even my spiritual works.** In spirit, I have not understood what Justification by Faith is. My spirit is filled with discontentment and there is little exercising of faith daily. Not that I have the thought of almost throwing in the towel (Olive Pee's candid confession), neither am I moving forward with the cheer of faith (Sarah Harper's grief). The brethren mentioned of pastor's message from Genesis that this book begins with life and ends with death. Though I am hitting my jubilee only next year, but I feel like I am dragging the body of a 60-year-old. With my chronic health condition fluctuating, at times, I do have a greater sense of the reality of death. I was struck by what Eliezar Pandey quoted, that pastor ‘... fears his inconsistency and his own heart most ... he still fears that he may fall into apostasy and he prays for preservation till death that nothing will come in between God and him.’ We see so much consistency in pastor's life and what he does, yet he fears his inconsistency. How much more I need to fear, lest I fall away in apostasy. Jacob ‘wrestled’ - that brings some senses to me. I need to wrestle and wrestle, peradventure God may show mercy upon me. Rhoda Soh spoke about the vertical spiritual journey and how the salmons would swim upstream back to their birth place against all the odds. I eat salmon every week but little do I know that I can learn from this creation of God. It was inspiring just to view a short video clip on the salmons attempting the upstream swim despite the bears waiting to prey upon them. It was said that the longer the return journey, the weaker the salmons are, yet they will persevere till arrival at their destination.*

I called to remembrance that God picked me from my dunghills. Without pastor's ministry, I would not have received the true Gospel. I am grateful for the Psalter in our hands and it is pastor who introduced and brought it into our lives. For the majority of the churches, the singing of Psalms is alien but for us, it is sweet and healing. I was struck that though we have the accounts of the life and ministry of David in I and II Samuel and Yeshua Christ in the Gospel books, it is the Psalms that recorded for us the innermost feelings and sufferings of David and Christ (gleaned from Rhoda Soh's response). Thank God for this survival kit and its immense benefits if employed by faith. The Psalms are ever so needful in times of ‘cynicism of unbelief ... the forlornness when salvation appears so remote, the disquietness when God seems withdrawn and silent ...’ (pastor's preface to the Psalter). The antidote to all my spiritual malaise is the means of grace. Thank God too for all the New Jerusalem Times and the sanctuaries in various dwellings all across 127 provinces where the Spirit of God is still striving within us especially at worship, prayer meetings and spiritual gatherings.

I have been thinking of my niche and role under pastor's ministry. Not being a help in his ministry, I ought to at least be faithful in remaining as a doorkeeper in the house of God and in brook Besor praying, in being a sisters' keeper, in admonishing the children in the fear of God and in witnessing with the Gospel we have. Only that I may have the spirit of the little maid of Israel who humbly submitted to God and did her part. Recently, pastor had to kick (via WhatsApp) many of us to move our butts for souls out there are perishing. Russia is calling, Central and South America are beckoning, the Himalayas; India; Nepal and China are thriving. Even Malaysia, a Muslim country, seems to have more hope than this ungodly liberal Australia. Disheartened by the outreaches here, it is not without a tinge of skepticism or unbelief that I consider how souls would ever respond positively to the strait-gate Gospel that we present to them. I am like the faithless disciples who returned to fishing and the routines of this earthly life instead of being a fisher of souls. In my heart, I say there is hardly any responses to our church BRCs and pastor's tracts in this part of the hemisphere. Are we casting pearls to swine? Except the Lord grant the increase, we labour in vain. I struggle with where to go and who to preach to. Yet, did not God send the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, to apostate Israel? At best, I do patch-up work to reach out because pastor pushes us to do so; but in reality, I lack the compassion for souls. Pastor's WhatsApp to Myra Patacsil (the entry on the Philippines) was like a gun pointing at me too as we cannot use our roles as a woman, mother and working person as an excuse. Have I discharged my sacred responsibility? Despite the hardness of the ground, my responsibility is to keep sowing. Speaking about responses, it is very encouraging to read of Wisdom Basseyy writing from Georgia to pastor in New Jersey and it was a moving reply from pastor to the long lost Wis; therein is the compassion of a father for a prodigal son and a shepherd to the African nations.

I appreciated the honest confession of Haziell Qi, who assessed himself as Saul in relation to Samuel. It is better to receive the rebukes of pastor than suffer the silence of the man of God. Our relationship with the anointed servant of God and the liberty of our spirit to relate and stand in the presence of pastor are indicative of our relationship with God. Doth not the countenance of pastor towards us individually affect us for we know that often than not, it is an indication of God's feelings towards us? Do I not subtly seek for the approval of the man

of God so as to gain some assurance of my spiritual disposition? Ultimately, I need to experimentally taste of the joy of salvation and the attestation of the Holy Spirit. 'Help me, O Jehovah my God: O save me according to Thy mercy.' (Psalm 109:26)" Martha Tan, Adelaide, Australia; 2 May 2018 AD