



Lively Stones | PETER 2:5

Holding forth the word of life

Issue 1, 2009

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Increased in Wisdom and Stature

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (Lk. 2:52)

The Church Session had decided to continue with "Towards a Growing and Fruit-Bearing Christian Life" as our church theme for 2009. This should be a perpetual theme for our church and we must continue to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). Besides preaching a series of "growing" sermons, we want to move on to develop individual growth in line with the church body growth. The gospel writer Dr Luke tells us that "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Lk. 2:52). This verse has since been established as what many would call the "balanced life philosophy"! Every one of us must learn to grow mentally, physically, spiritually and socially. Let us examine how we can do this in 2009 together in our Sunday school.

Grow Mentally

When the New Testament Church was started, the apostles initiated four key church programmes in Acts 2:42 – "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." The teaching and preaching of the Word of God was central to the church programme. The other programmes being Christian fellowship, worship and practice of holy sacraments, and prayers. Here we are told that the believers continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. There was a strong team of preachers and teachers delivering the whole counsel of God to this newly found church community. You may challenge this statement by saying, "But they do not yet have the full canon of scriptures at that point in time!" Yes, they may not have the full canon of both the Old and New Testament, but they have the very Word of God through the apostles' doctrine. They have the Old Testament scriptures which were fundamental to their preaching and practices. The apostles had received direct teaching and revelations from our Lord Jesus Christ, and hence, it was important for them to be teaching the believers what they had received from the Lord. There was also a

sense of urgency and diligence on the part of the church members. The Bible tells us that "they continued steadfastly" – yes, every member must be diligent in the study of God's Word and humbly learning from their leaders. Come to our Night Classes in 2009! Don't be contented with the 45 minutes Sunday school lesson every week. Come and chew spiritual meat at the feet of God's faithful servants. Make it a point to read your daily Bible readings using Our Daily Homily by F. B. Meyer. This is basic meal everyday, and we must absorb more than we did in 2008. This will be a clear sign of personal growth in Christ. The writer of Hebrews says, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe." (Heb. 5:12-13) Learn to chew spiritual meat and don't be contented drinking spiritual milk all the time.

Grow Physically

"And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." (Acts 16:4-5) The consequence of a maturing church well fed with the Word of God is physical and spiritual growth. The New Testament is full of such testimonies. When the church became complacent, God allowed persecution to come, and they split up and grew. "Therefore they were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." (Acts 8:4) The New Testament Church must obey the Great Commission and go forth to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ everywhere. Life Bible Presbyterian Church has been favoured of the Lord to receive the gift of the 'New' Beulah House. With increased capacity, it is expected of Lifers to bring in the sheaths. Every department must double up our effort in evangelism and spread the good news to those who are still outside the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us make Beulah House (conserved building) and Beulah Centre (5-storey building) a beehive of evangelistic activities all year round for the glory of the Lord. There is much room for growth, let's grow physically in numbers.

Grow Spiritually

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. 6:7-8) When members invest time in Bible study and share God's Word with others, they will bear spiritual fruits. Blessings beget more blessings. Our God is a covenant keeping God and He will lead us into life everlasting. In our Sunday school, we want to continue to teach Shorter and Larger Catechism, and the Westminster Confession of Faith so that our young people can be properly instructed and skilled in doctrine and practice; and our adults may be spiritual role models for the young men and women in our church. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."* (Gal. 5:22-23) We must grow in grace daily and bear the fruit of the Spirit increasingly. Make our life count for the Lord each day, and pray that He will use our lives to touch other lives as we wait for His imminent return.

Grow Socially

In His high priestly prayers for the saints, our Lord prayed that the Heavenly Father will protect and sustain His people who are still in the world. While Jesus has ascended to the heavens, he continues to pray for the disciples at the right hand of the Father. Jesus prayed: *"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world."* (Jn. 17:14) Therefore, we must arm with the Word of God and learn to reach out to others. Christians should not shy away from the secular world. We are in the world but not of the world. Christ will empower us and grant us victory over self, sin and Satan. *"The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man of gluttons, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."* (Matt. 11:19) Our Lord set the perfect example for us to grow socially and learn to reach out to sinners. Jesus' mission statement is this: *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."* (Lk. 19:10) Let us follow the footsteps of the Lord and grow socially to reach out to every soul which the Lord has called into His kingdom.

"Occupy Till I Come" (Lk. 19:13)

As we march into 2009, let us take heed of the Lord's teaching in this parable of the pounds in Luke 19 –

"Occupy till I come!" As we learn to grow mentally, physically, spiritually and socially, leading a balanced Christian life, the Lord expects us to make our life count for Him. To occupy till He comes is to do the business He wants us to do. God's business is a spiritual business. He wants us to have a heavenly vision of souls living through eternity and not to build earthly treasures that will rot, rust and be robbed! As the lyrics of this short hymn goes:

***With eternity's values in view,
With eternity's values in view Lord;
May I live each day for Jesus
With eternity's values in view.***

Because Jesus lives,

***Elder (Dr) Sherman Ong
General Superintendent
Life Bible-Presbyterian Church Sunday School***

A N N O U N C E M E N T S

Today is Staff Dedication Sunday. All teaching and non-teaching staff are strongly encouraged to be present for the dedication during the 10:45 am Worship Service.

SUNDAY SCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2009

***General Superintendent:
Elder (Dr) Sherman Ong***

***Assist. General Superintendent:
Dn Lim Ching Wah***

***Honorary Secretary: Mrs. Jennifer Goh
Registrar: Mr. Vincent Goh
Treasurer: Mr. Andrew Lim***

***Adult DS: Dn Lim Ching Wah
Senior DS: Mr. Mark Liu
YT DS: Dn Heng Shao Sheng
Junior DS: Mr. Timothy Soh
Primary/Nursery DS: Mrs. Iris Loe***

Lively Stones Editor: Mrs. Julia Koh