

Faith Journey 信心之旅

A quarterly newsletter of Faith Methodist Church

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New Normal: Sunday School Children

Celebrate Mother's Day



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The views expressed by the authors are not necessarily the views of the church.

For non-Muslims only

The Pastor's Message



在恢复式行动管制期间，越来越多人日夜工作，也越来越少机会跟家人一起吃饭了。由于一些限制，一些家庭成员，从老到少都生活在高压中。

我想起我们过去的灵修“不曾走过的路”，和保罗弟兄说“不要效法这个世界，只要心意更新而变化，叫你们察验何为神的善良、纯全、可喜悦的旨意。”（罗12:2）。

让我们反省，过去几个月，我怎么让自己的属灵生命得着复苏？我对主耶稣基督的信心和依靠如何被建立起来？当我们重新回到工作岗位，我可以阻挡打扰我抓住核心（保持灵命日日更新）的事情吗？我能够做一些调整，让自己继续有珍贵的家庭时光吗？我愿意鼓起勇气，邀请家人一起祷告，求神教导并指引我一家走这条新的旅程，让家里常有属天的平安、喜乐和爱吗？

愿我们大家彼此鼓励，彼此提醒，继续与主同行。

During this RMCO, there are more and more people working day and night, but fewer chances to have a family meal together. Because of some restrictions, family members are in a state of *hypertension* every day, from the eldest to the youngest.

I recalled a devotion material I read in the past: "A way that I never walked through before". I also recall a verse by brother Paul, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:2).

Let us reflect: what have I done in the past few months to keep my spiritual life afresh? How I build up my faith and trust in Jesus Christ? When I go back to my workplace, can I stop those interrupting me from holding fast to the core, that will keep my spiritual life afresh? Can I adjust a bit, so that I still may have precious family time? Can I be courageous enough to ask my whole family to pray, asking God to teach and guide us through this new journey, so that we will have heavenly peace and joy and love at home?

May we continue to support and remind one another, continue to walk with the LORD.

Rev Kelly Lee §

要命的新冠疫情

庚子年刚过农历新年,正要享受着春暖花开的季节,就要享乐其中.但流年不利卻引发要命的新冠疫情病毒的傳播,來勢汹汹,勢如破竹,排山倒海而來,让国人措手不及,人人自危,无法抵挡.政府为了保护人民性命的安全而頒佈行管令的条例,致使国内的各行各业受到极大冲击,走进冬眠時期,无法營業,国家经济陷入萧条困境与严重創伤.

在MCO期间(18/3/20-9/6/20)84天的行管令所有贸易商行,制造业,工厂,各企业都受到管制而停頓运作.国民百姓隔离在家,限制了人流,市面冷清,猶如空城計,出門必須戴口罩配上手套,全副武装,一家一人出外購物,保持1米的社交距离.政府用心良苦,关心人民的健康,要国民遵行SOP以保障生命安全.

教会关闭停止聚会及一切活动项目.年议会为了要继续牧养众信徒们而開啟线上网络直播主日崇拜信息.因为MCO隔离在家的会众,可以在家与家人同敬拜,增进了亲子关系,享有天倫之乐,是何等的有福气.难得的家庭祭壇在圣餐主日时自備了餅与葡萄汁与家人同領受耶稣的身体和宝血,同得益处,特别有义意.

各自的堂会都开始利用线上交流,或用 ZOOM来开执事会,仿佛与現場的会议没有两样,效果非常理想.

zoom

Join a Meeting

Sign In

晚禱会同样以 ZOOM进行禱告会得到会友们的认同,心心相印更珍惜禱告会的时光.

乐龄团契的职员们经过牧师细心的调教後学会应用ZOOM来进行会议, 领受到资讯带来的方便. 要预备今年的年会乐龄大会(16-17/10/2020) 同样用ZOOM的方式开会与交流. 乐龄也在筹备中用线上进行查经, 又是一项新的举措. 于端午节吃粽子的习俗, 用录影方式示范包粽子的活动. 让有兴趣者学会亲自包粽子, 更加美味.

如今资讯特别发达的时代一机在手, 便可接收无限量的讯息. 所以说: 秀才不出门能知天下事. 只要撻动手指头诸多的传讯涌入眼底. 教会的每日活水, 灵修信息, 还有转戴的每日圣经篇都是振奋人心的天国福音, 便是我们的每日灵粮, 更是精神食粮.

更多的视频浏览到世界动态. 全球新冠疫情死亡病例的大数据, 瞩目心惊, 各国的洪涝灾害, 蝗虫祸害, 台风, 火山暴发等. 国家内乱零星的战争. 人民活在水深火热之中, 末世的徵兆. 最近有关非洲裔美国人在众目睽睽之下锁喉不能呼吸致死, 震惊全球的大新闻. 惨无人道的执法, 凸显对人格的淪陷及人权的危机.

撕裂整个社会, 引发了持续性的示威暴动. 原本是基督教盛行的国家而变为暴力大国.

耶和华是我们随时的帮助, 我们的盾牌抵御新冠病毒的侵袭. 我们的山寨防护生命的安全, 直等到疫情完全消灭为止.

犹大书1/20经文说: 亲爱的弟兄啊, 你们卻要在至圣的真道上造就自己, 在圣灵里祷告, 保守自己常在神的爱中, 仰望我们主耶稣基督的怜悯直到永生, 啊们!

乐龄团契
范長莊稿
13/6/2020

Immobilised during MCO

By Ting Su Hie

I was immobilized during MCO, well, kind of, for a week. My movement was restricted for two weeks because I injured the area at the ball socket of my femur bone due to some home exercise. At one time, I could not even raise my right hand without pain. Then, it was alright but I could not squat down or sit on the floor, which I like to do when watching the daily media conference given by the Health DG.

When these problems went away, I thought it was okay for me to climb the tree to pluck the star fruit because my "cloth-bag-star-fruit-picker" is not that good. It either takes down the small green fruits next to my targeted fruit, or it causes the star fruit to drop into my neighbour's garden. I also climbed the jambu tree to reposition certain branches so that when they grow big and strong, they are in the right place for me step on them. I also lifted my heavy bed with my son in order to reposition it.

Oops, the injury got worse, and I could only sit for up to 20 minutes to write papers. Then I had to lie down to realign my bones. I could not even bend my head forward to brush my teeth and wash my face for a week. I came downstairs in the morning and went up only when it was time to sleep.

On the three worst days, I could not walk over to see my neighbour's dog. This is the dog whose left hind leg was run over by its owner, and then abandoned. Later the Auntie next door allowed the dog to live in their house, but they are ban-jin-ngiek (Foochow expression for "very particular about cleanliness"). Since June 2014, I have bathed Barryo every weekend. I usually go over to see Barryo early in the morning, standing or sitting down outside the gate. During that time, I also make it a point to pray for my father and family in Sibü or my kind neighbours who took in the abandoned dog. Thank God, my bone-pain went away slowly with painkiller and all, and I was able to see Barryo and squat down to bathe it again.

That time gave me a view of what it will be like when I am old. During that time too, I realised that it is God's blessing to be able to move about freely. It's God's blessing that I can sit for hours without pain. It's God's blessing that I can do housework and gardening.

10 June 2020 §

Blessings during MCO: Sharing by members from Nehemiah small group

Su Sueh Ing:

This period of Movement Control Order (MCO) is a period of blessings to me and my family. During normal days, my better half and I had always been so busy with work that we normally reach home late almost every evening. We seldom have proper family meals together, what more to say family altar as we were all exhausted. My children were busy with homework and tuition classes at night. We had limited time to bond with each other and with our Almighty God. Those helpless feelings led to a lot of frustrations within me for quite a long time.

During MCO, I still needed to work from home but I saved a lot of hectic travel times on the road. I was able to meet deadlines and complete four doctorate assignments within a week without having to worry about waking up early the next day to go to work.

I was reminded of the signs of the end times and wondered if I am ever ready. I feel like our Almighty God has been slowing me down and awakening me to the things that really matter in His eyes.

To me, this is a period of blessings because I have more time now to be with my family, having more regular family altar and time to build closer relationship with God together. I am able to join in online Christianity workshops, prayer meetings and small groups gathering via

zoom more regularly. My children also have a great time enjoying proper meals at home, with my better half helping in the cooking. We know that everything is in His plan and God is still in control. We just need be still and know that He is God. Amen.

Lo Tzu Hsiung:

MCO has given me opportunities to spend a lot more time with my family which helps with family bonding. In addition, I had more time to read Bible and reflect. Besides, I watched Christian family movies with my better half on many nights, which we had not done for a long time.

This MCO also makes me realise that God has somewhat already prepared the world digitally for this pandemic — all essential things seems achievable online.

My life seems to become abnormally normal after a while. I then started to feel the blessings this MCO has brought. I believe that our God has a purpose for mankind in this pandemic, and it will definitely make us all stronger after we come through it.

Lau Yeo Koo:

What a complete change of life! From uncontrollable and unstoppable daily routine to almost a stand-

still in everything. Just like a glimpse of end time, a revelation of God or warning. The life threatening COVID-19 virus outside, yet God provides a sure safe heaven at home with the comfort of everything. I thank my gracious God.

Crucially we need to recognise His coming, seeing how fast the world can be changed. All worldly values are meaningless with the threat of death, including being eternally lost. The only eternal life available is at the home He prepares for us. Praise God, it is wonderful because in Him I have assurance of future hope, a worry-free rest, and restoration to restart soon.

Marcus Yu:

Praise the Lord. I have never spent so much extended time at home. This is really an unforgettable time for me in my life. I am a businessman, so at the beginning of MCO, it was really very difficult to me.

I felt worried and panicked. I was wondering whether this is a test from God. Slowly, God calmed me down. The Bible says, "Don't be afraid." He will be with us. I noticed that God is taking care of everything, and everything is under control. Of course, he never promised us Christians would be free from suffering.

He gave me strength and patience. I have peace and joy. From now onwards, our lifestyles change. I pray to God to take care of my career, my health and my family in peace and joy. I have learnt to let God to take control of my life and put me in proper position to serve him.

Christina Lim:

MCO has been a hard time for me for the first two weeks. Before MCO, I used to have a cup of coffee at Double Happiness, Green Heights. I buy beehoon for my mum everyday. Then, I would go out and buy food for lunch. I gave tuition in the afternoon and night. My typical day was well spent and I was very contented.

However, with the abrupt implementation of MCO in March, I was very unsettled and frustrated as my life was disrupted. I couldn't visit my mum and tuitions were put to stop. I could hardly take it.

As days went by for two weeks, I started to video call my son and we prayed together. I also started to exercise in the afternoon and read the Bible at night. I began to adapt to the MCO.

During the MCO, I was grateful to have a caring and loving husband who goes out and buy groceries and cooks everyday. He is a quiet person. Action speaks louder than words. This proverb really describes my husband. I begin to understand my husband more during MCO.

During the period of MCO, Sis Adeline and Bro Yeo Koo initiated our Small Group Meeting through zoom. It is an awesome time to grow in our faith and get connected with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Good job Adeline and Yeo

Koo. I am also very encouraged to have meeting with our new pastor, Rev Lenita. Her presence further enhanced our faith in Christ.

Lastly, praise God in every situation we are in. Psalms 91:1-2 says, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust'." Amen

Adeline Tang:

My life during first few weeks of MCO was in a big mess. I was under tremendous stress of coping with work from home, parenting my two boys, doing house chores (especially cooking 3 meals/day).

After a few weeks, I learnt to cope and experience God's abundant providence in the midst of the pandemic. We do not lack anything. God takes good care of us, providing us with plenty of food, good health and from fear of the virus.

I was also grateful to God for "A Little God Time for Mothers" session that I attended. The sharing from three speakers refreshed my walk with God. I have started to reflect on my relationship with God and spend more time with Him. I have also started my first family altar which previously faced strong resistance from my teenage boy. It is amazing to see God's power at work when I surrender to Him. God is amazing. Lots of impossible things were made possible through this MCO. Praise the Lord!

Joshua Tiong:

It's all about God! Sovereignty ... Reflecting on all that had happened, what is happening and what is go-

ing to happen. It's all about God! We may diminish the Sovereignty of God through our thought process but God is still sovereign no matter what.

During this MCO, I had time to think about God and wrote some thoughts down. There maybe a bigger storm coming. We do not want to be ill prepared. Maybe we do not have the resources to prepare like USA now. But, we need to be prepared spiritually. Being close to God, know God, abide in God.

Phang Chui Lian:

From the very beginning, I welcome MCO, knowing that it is a necessary measure to control the spread of COVID-19. However, uncertainties about how various things would go brought worries. As more and more people get infected and even die locally and globally, I felt very sad. For a moment, I felt panic and lost.

However, not long after that, the Lord reminded me that I should focus on Him, not on the virus! He is the great God and is able to keep us in His plan and will despite this pandemic. He is still in control of everything. Hence, I found peace in Him.

I also experienced the Lord's faithfulness in many ways, and blessed to have solitude with Him. Besides, I rejoice to see the gospel reaching further and wider through online services, prayer meetings, etc. Praise the Lord!

25 April 2020 §

When Someone You Know Has Cancer ...

By Sew Boon Lui

Almost everyone knows someone who has cancer. How should we as believers show our care and concern towards cancer patients?

Receiving cancer diagnosis can be a frightening and overwhelming encounter. However, given sufficient support by family and friends, cancer patients can get ready for what lies ahead in terms of understanding, deciding and preparing for the necessary treatment to get well or to put the cancer under control. This is where the family and friends can play a crucial role to give support to the cancer patient.

More often than not, we will get to know someone affected by cancer in the circle of friends, relatives, colleagues, neighbours, and former classmates. How should we show our caring concern and support to them? What are the right words to say, and the right thing to do? Here are some useful guides gathered from the experience as a cancer survivor and a volunteer helping other cancer patients.

First of all, let us recognise the fact that it is difficult to face a cancer diagnosis. Therefore words that acknowledge this toughness will make the cancer patients feel that they are being understood. Asking how they feel to let them know that we care for them and their feelings.

Here are some examples:

"I'm sorry you're going through something like this."

"This must be a tough time for you."

"I know staying positive can be hard. How are you really?"

When we truthfully share our own emotional state upon knowing their medical condition, they can sense your sincerity and feel heart-warming. Examples:

"I can't imagine how you feel."

"I don't know what to say."

Another helpful aspect is, ask if the cancer patient would like to speak to someone who had been through a similar cancer journey and is coping well, or to get in touch with a cancer support group. When a cancer patient gets to hear from other patients/survivors their personal stories, it often gives them the feelings of comradeship knowing that someone has been through the journey, and that they are not alone in facing this cancer battle.

If you can help with practical actions - even just your physical presence or a listening ear, let them know:

"I'm here for you if you want to talk."

"Feel free to text me or call me if you wish to."

Usually some acts of service would be very much welcomed. For example:

"Do you want a lift to your appointment tomorrow? I'm available."

"I can cook dinner for you tonight."

"Can I bring you some fruits tomorrow?"

"I saw a really good film the other day - you might like to watch it?"

Sometimes, we want to be helpful by offering information, thinking that it would help. However, it would best to avoid the following pitfalls when talking to someone with cancer:

Avoid offering unsolicited advice

Do know that cancer is a complicated disease with many probable causes. Unless you're an oncologist or a surgeon, let the medical professionals do the job to provide advice on the cancer treatment they need; unless you're a dietitian, leave it to the professionals to advise on any particular diet needs. Please DO NOT give these types of advice:

"Have you tried taking xyz product to cure your cancer?"

"You must have eaten too much meat. Don't take any more meat."

"Cancer feeds on abc. Stop taking abc, and your cancer will die."

Avoid trying to relate sad stories

Cancer is in fact not one disease, but a group of diseases. Hence, every cancer and every case is different in terms of its severity and complexity. Other cancer cases that we know of may be entirely different from what this person has. While we do not give

false hope, we also do not add worries, fear and anxiety by quoting a saddening real case.

Examples of stories to avoid:

"I know a girl who had this type of cancer. She did not make it ..."

"My uncle had this cancer ... he died not long after."

Do not minimise or downplay their experience

While we make an effort to encourage and lift up the spirit of the cancer patient, we do not assume that we know their experience, and downplay their emotional burden upon diagnosis, during and even after cancer treatment.

"Just stay positive."

"You will be fine."

"You are lucky to discover at an early stage. Others are worse off than you."

Very naturally, as believers, we would always want to encourage the cancer patient by saying, "I will pray for you." This is usually fine if the patient is of the same faith as us, but do not assume, if you do not know about the person's belief. It would be appropriate to share that we as Christians always pray for those who are sick and do seek their permission to pray for them.

If the cancer patient is a Christian or open to prayers even if he/she is not a believer, we can then ask the patient if he/she has any specific needs of prayer, such as, praying for strength from God, praying for peace and wisdom in making treatment decisions, praying for a smooth surgery, praying for the side effects of treatment to be bearable or manageable etc, depending on what phase the patient is in (newly diagnosed, in the midst of deciding which treatment to undergo, undergoing treatment currently, etc).

It would also be helpful to send text messages with encouraging words and to give assurance of our support in prayer or in action (provided we can commit to that). Sending an uplifting Bible verse or a soothing music or worship songs can always brighten up the day for someone in critical illness. Here are some bible verses that are comforting and encouraging:

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7).

"A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." (Proverbs 17:22)

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33b)

Let us always ask for wisdom from God as we care for the patients. May we be a faithful follower of Christ and always care for others with a heart of compassion.

The Sept 2020 issue of Faith Journey will commemo- rate 25 years of FMC's existence.

**Please
submit
articles to
suhieting@
gmail.com**

21-June-2020 §

My Life Journey in the Like of the Wesleyan Theology of Grace

By David Lau Chien Loung

Prevenient Grace at Work in My Life

I was born in an ambivalent family in matters of faith with a father who is a cynic of religions and a mother who tends towards the Christian faith, following the path of her grandmother. I have not recalled her own parents and siblings to have an inclination towards the Christian faith. Neither have I heard them mention of the name of Jesus Christ. There was no signs, symbols and pictures to indicate the Christian faith in our humble village family house.

As far as I can remember before the teens years, my mother would sing and teach us Christian songs notably the Christmas hymns. The sound of music is a great gift. The lyrics sowed the seed of the gospel for my faith in God in the later stage of life.

From the kindergarten age, I was curious about life and living on earth. On one occasion I saw a funeral procession passing by and I wondered what was going on. What is the meaning of death? I wondered where one goes after death. Perhaps it is this search that propelled me to seek God. It was another among the stirrings within the soul to search for a reality beyond the life in the flesh, to be able to respond to the invitation to relate to the Sunday school and church.

I was invited to Sunday school class by a friend during my early secondary school days. I was able to connect and belong to the class to relate to God. I felt my

search for meaning of life is met somehow by the presence of an Almighty being who knows all things, who is all powerful and all presence. It is comforting to know, if there is God who is present everywhere, then I no longer feel lost, lame and lonely.

At some point during my secondary school days, I attended the Sunday worship service of the local Methodist church. It is through the hymns, preaching of the word of God that I believe God was preparing me to receive His justifying grace.

Justifying Grace of God

I remembered an evangelistic preaching by an invited speaker. I was moved, shed tears and was touched in my heart by the awareness of the immense love of God.

Before this event, I had just read a book on the tales of two cities, in which a prisoner who was to be beheaded by the guillotine during the era of the French Revolution was saved by someone who is willing to switch with him in the dark of the night. In the sight of the executioner, the work is done, the task is accomplished to meet the order by the authority. For the prisoner, it was the release of the bondage, set free from prison and escape from the tyranny of death.

The story of someone who was willing to die on my behalf, I as a sinner condemned to death was clear to me on that night. I knew I was helpless as a man in an open sea, tossed by the wind and swept

by the storm. A strong hand came out to me. If I did not stretch out my hand, I would have missed Him. I extended my hand and called to him to save me from the curse of sin and penalty of death and eternal separation from the Almighty.

Assuring Grace

Over the many years, I moved in Christian circles whether in the university Christian fellowship or Sunday church services. There are verses from the Bible where I picked up and memorised from the Navigators that assure me of my salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9. For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not of works, so that no one can boast.

John 1:12 Yet to all who received Him to those who believe in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

Revelation 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me.

1 John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

John 5:24 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes in Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from

death to life.

My faith is based on what Christ has done for me and how great He is. It is not of what I have done.

Sanctifying Grace

I believe in the continuing work of God in my life as His child. I belong to His community of faith in the Trinity Methodist, Faith Methodist, Trinity Methodist (BM), small groups, Theological Education by Extension (TEE), Malaysia Theological Seminary which I joined in 2019 when I took the local preacher course of the Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference.

God's Means of Grace

God's means of grace for me is through five means.

(a) Scripture Reading and Study

I benefited over the years through the hearing of the word preached over the pulpit by so many preachers, seminars like "Walk through the Bible". And the path to go deep into the word of God is through the TEE course with modules like: the introduction of the new and old testament, systematic theology, Christian theology, interpretation of a few books in the OT and NT, study of selected books in the OT and NT and the study of Biblical Hebrews to know the original meaning of the scriptures.

(b) Prayer

The practice of personal prayer, to apportion time in a day to focus and pray to God is complemented with the weekly prayer with my brothers and sisters in the church community. It is an inmost, inner and intimate relationship of the spirit with God: prayers said in the church, songs and hymns sung, and the counsel

of others in my life.

(c) Fast

I occasionally fast from Thursday evening till Friday late morning, noon or afternoon from solid meals and I appreciate the exhortation and example by Rev. Dr. Tie, the SCAC President to fast regularly. During the fast, I focus my thoughts on God, reading Scriptures and books, and writing assignments. There is the clarity of thoughts, the flow of ideas and understanding of order during the fast.

I have joined in a group once for a silent retreat and found it beneficial to redirect my spiritual bearings and it is my desire that I can do so now and then, once every few years. It is a "travel or vacation" for some, but for me I sure stand to reap its benefit.

(d) Holy Communion

The Holy Communion reminds me of the steadfast love and great compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ who made Himself a sacrifice, hung on the cross, spilled His blood and atoned for my sins and guilt. Sometimes I am moved to tears with my heart cut when I meditate on His love and forgiveness for me as an underserving creature stand condemned.

I praise God for the way I can relate in our Methodist churches during Holy Communion where I walk to the altar, kneel down with outstretched arms and open hands to receive the elements from the pastors and stewards with a humble and contrite heart in remembrance of the sacrifice of the our Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God. I believe in the continuous healing by God in my life. I appreciate that the conduct of the Holy Communion in our Methodist churches is treated with utmost somberness against the practice of others where the elements are passed around by the ushers or from the one sitting next.

(e) Fellowshiping

Philip Meadows in his book on equipping of churches to become communities of discipleship on mission on God condensed fellowshiping into the following levels:

- Learning community with 10-20 people as a fellowship meeting monthly with teaching on the way of life and missional discipleship.
- House fellowship with 6-20 people of all ages, as an extended family weekly in a home for good food and sharing of good news for the development of spiritual practices.
- Fellowship Bands with 3-4 people gather around Jesus and seeking His Spirit meeting at least once a month for spiritual conversation on the Way of Life, gather face to face or online.

All the above intends towards a Jesus-shaped Way of Life; seeking growth in the love of God, using disciplines as means of grace; sharing fellowship with spiritual friends and engaging mission through love of neighbor and surrendering to the leadership in daily life.

I am working on fellowship bands as I intentionally communicate and meet up with pastors, friends and brothers whom I can seek counsel in the Spirit. I believe that a person whom one can relate and respect can touch and influence another person beyond measure.

Means of Grace (Work of Mercy)

I have willed myself to relate to the "poor" in the sense that they are young, that is the primary school students in the Boys Brigade movement held once a month in a school. I as an older person have much to receive from the carefree spirit of the young boys. Their minds are open and with gladness I

taught them songs which I learned in the days of the youth and I find myself connecting to them.

I have visited the poor and sick over the years and will aim to do more as a means of grace, to feel compassionate for them in the physical or mental poverty that the love of God may shed abroad for them. I think the caring for the sick including my immediate family will humble me to realise the frailties of life and depend on God for His love and compassion.

Conclusion

I find John Wesley's way of explaining and categorising graces as a practical reality in my life from prevenient to justifying grace and sanctifying grace which is at work till the day I passed away from this earth to attain the glorifying grace eventually.

In all, I may join the Jews of the Old Testament in the proclamation of the Shema, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One.

And the command to love the Lord our God with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my strength.

Our Lord Jesus add on "Love our neighbours as ourselves". And of the two commands above; John Wesley termed that we may attain "Christian Perfection". §

Interesting Questions

Why does God allow us to suffer from abuse and diseases like cancer?

God does not create abuse and disease, but He sometimes permits them. Evil is a mystery; we can never understand it completely. But this does not mean we cannot understand anything about it.

To begin to think about evil, we need to first think about God and what he has revealed. God has one ultimate will, but this will is expressed in two ways: His positive will and His permissive will. His positive will is what brings about all the good we see.

God's permissive will allows evil to happen but only because He intends to bring about a greater good from it. Often, evil is result of man's free choices (Proverbs 1: 29-30). God simply allows the natural consequences that inevitably flow from these choices. Even, so God can always bring greater good from this (Rom 8: 28).

Much good can come from suffering if we embrace it when it comes our way (Romans 8: 18). Let's say a man has lived a very selfish life that includes heavy drinking and abuse of his wife. God may allow this man to lose his health because He knows that if the man stays healthy, he will continue to sin. If the man is incapacitated, however, he may come to see the true beauty of his wife and then reconcile himself to God and his wife.

One final point: God understands our suffering through the suffering of Christ on the cross (Hebrews 2: 18). We can link our sufferings with the sufferings of Jesus on the cross and thus, offer them up as gifts to the Father (2 Corinthians 1: 5; Colossians 1: 24).

Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord, since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes (1 Proverbs 29: 31).

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8: 28)

For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. (2 Corinthians 1: 5)

Adapted from Pinto, M. J. (2003). *Did Adam & Eve have belly buttons?* West Chester, Pennsylvania: Ascension Press (pp. 24-25). §

Zoom LCEC Meeting, 20 May 2020

