

Sat. July 10<sup>th</sup>

Matt. 10:24-33

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'The disciple is not superior to his teacher, nor the slave to his master. It is enough for the disciple that he should grow to be like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, what will they not say of his household?'

**Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing... So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven. But the one who disowns me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in heaven.'**

Even Jesus our Master and Teacher could not persuade or convince those who refused to be convinced and closed their minds to the truth. As his disciples, we are not superior to our Master and cannot expect everyone to welcome the Good News. If these unbelievers could call Jesus Beelzebul, what will they not call or accuse his followers of?

The early Church faced much persecution and even today there are countries where Christians are being persecuted. Even in countries where there is freedom of religion, Christians may be ridiculed and discriminated against.

Jesus however assures us that they can only harm the body, not the soul; which does not mean that God is not concerned if we are being persecuted and killed. Indeed, even when a little sparrow falls, God knows and is sad.

As Christians we should be more concerned if, by denying Jesus, we cannot enter our heavenly home. However if are not afraid to **stand up for Jesus** in front of others, 'I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven.' This is Jesus' promise and assurance to all who remain faithful to him.

*Lord Jesus, I know you are always with me. May I have the faith and courage to stand up for You and witness to your Truth and Love.*

July 11<sup>th</sup>

Bible Sunday

Col.1:15-20

**Christ Jesus is the image of the unseen God and the first-born of all creation, for in him were created, all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignities, Powers – Before anything was created, he existed, and he holds all things in unity. Now the Church is his body, He is its head. As he is the Beginning,**

**he was first to be born from the dead, so that he should be first in every way; because God wanted all perfection to be found in him. and all things to be reconciled through him and for him everything in heaven and everything on earth, when he made peace by his death on the cross.**

At the First Creation, all things were created in and through Jesus Christ who was with God from the very Beginning. We, the Church, are the New Creation, formed in Jesus Christ who reconciled us to God through his death on the cross. From the very beginning Jesus holds all things in unity. As head of the Church, Jesus continues to hold all things in unity. No one can see God. Just as Jesus is the image of the unseen God, we too, the members of the Body of Christ, are called to be the image of the unseen God. How? - not in physical appearance but in the divine attributes of God ie by reflecting his love, goodness, holiness, mercy, justice, etc. Only in Jesus, in accepting Jesus as head and in obeying him and submitting to his will and his way, can we be one, holy and perfect people of God. As we celebrate Bible Sunday, let us renew our commitment to be a people who are formed and guided by God's Word – to be **the New Creation in Jesus Christ.**

*Father, you created us to your image and likeness. In Jesus, may we be one and reflect your love and goodness to a world where many still do not know you.*

Mon. July 12<sup>th</sup>

mj Matt. 10:34 - 11:1

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth: it is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies will be those of his own household.

'Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who prefers son or daughter to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.'

Jesus' teaching here seems contradictory. Jesus is the Prince of Peace – why does he say that he has come not to



bring peace but a sword? Jesus came to change mindsets, attitudes, prejudices and behaviour of people who have been influenced by the ways and values of the world. The peace Jesus is referring to here is the superficial peace the world seems to be content with - not to rock the boat, to flow with the trend rather than stand up for Jesus and his way of life, as it may cause conflict and division. The sword Jesus refers to here is not the sword of violence, but his Word which is the Truth that divides believers from unbelievers, even members of a family. This is not the intention, but is sometimes the **consequence of following Jesus.**

The hardship and suffering we have to bear of leaving the comforts of home, separation from family and friends, rejection and even persecution - this is part of the cross Jesus tells us we have to take up and follow him.

Jesus also tells his disciples: 'Anyone who finds his life, will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.' This seems an even greater paradox! What Jesus is teaching us is that those who seek to enjoy the pleasures of life in this world which are at best temporary, will end up losing the Eternal Life that Jesus has won for us through his death and resurrection. If only we could imagine what Heaven is like and the joy of Eternal Life with Jesus and the Father, we would not hesitate to lose this life here on earth in order to gain Eternal Life. Nothing can compare to the wonder and joy and glory that await us in our heavenly home!

*Lord Jesus, though none go with me, I still will follow - for You are my hope, my joy, my Life. All glory be to the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit!*

Tues. July 13<sup>th</sup>

Matt: 11: 20-24

**Jesus began to reproach the towns in which most of his miracles had been worked, because they refused to repent. 'Alas for you, Chorazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. And still, I tell you that it will not go as hard on Judgement day with Tyre and Sidon as with you. As for you, Capernaum, did you want to be exalted as high as heaven? You shall be thrown down to hell. For if the miracles done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have been standing yet. And still, I tell you it will not go as hard with the land of Sodom on Judgement day as with you.'**

Capernaum was the centre of Jesus' Galilean ministry. The miracles which accompanied Jesus' preaching should have convinced the people that Jesus is the Son of God but they still rejected him. Even Sodom, known as a wicked immoral city that brought divine wrath upon it and was destroyed by fire and brimstone, would have repented, Jesus declared,

had the miracles been done there; thus even they would be judged less harshly on Judgement day.

Today, we have the privilege to know God as our loving Father and Jesus as our loving Saviour. We have had even more opportunities to hear the teachings of Jesus and to see the miracles God has worked in our midst. Let us not however be complacent and take God's love and mercy for granted. In many subtle ways the voices of the world can seduce us and lead us astray. **Let us take Jesus' message of repentance and conversion to heart.**

*Search me, O God, and know my heart today...  
Cleanse me from every sin and set me free.*

**Wed. July 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Matt.11: 25 - 27**

**Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal to him.'**



We do not need to be learned and clever to understand God's Truth and Word. On the contrary, our intellect and human wisdom can block us from understanding such mysteries. Our human minds can only absorb and accept what is logical and proven. Our minds are also prejudiced and tainted with

our worldly experience and selfish ambitions; more often than not, we choose to accept and interpret things the way we want to, blocking out what we do not wish to see or hear. We need to see and listen with the eyes and ears of faith and **understand with hearts that are open and trusting.** That is why God chooses to reveal his truths to 'mere children' whose minds and hearts are innocent and trusting and yearn to hear their Father's voice.

Do you yearn to hear the Father's voice? Everything that the Father wants to reveal to us has been entrusted to Jesus his Son. Following Jesus and listening to his Word will lead us to the Father for 'no one knows the Father except the Son'.

*Jesus, we believe that You and the Father are one - that You are the Way that leads to the Father.*

**Thurs. July 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Matt.38:1-6,21-22,7-8**

**Jesus exclaimed: 'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'**

In the story of Creation, we are told that God rested on the seventh day after all his work of creating; he blessed it and made it holy. In our fast-paced society today, many have to work overtime and on Sundays. Even when we do not have to go to the office, we bring work home or we have to catch up with housework and other commitments. Mentally and emotionally we are also drained, having to cope with problems and conflicts with bosses, colleagues, clients and even family members. The pressures and stress of modern living which often comes with progress and development has taken its toll on many of us. Unabated, it can lead to a nervous breakdown, depression and heart problems. Jesus' invitation and promise to give us 'rest' is like a balm for our body, mind and spirit. It is not just resting from physical and mental activity, but to **rest in the Lord** and experience his peace, love and healing, renewing and refreshing us, giving us new life.

Jesus knows all that we have to cope with and desires to lessen our burden. Thus he invites us to 'shoulder his yoke'. A yoke is a wooden cross-piece fastened over the necks of two oxen and attached to a plough. When we put on his yoke and move in tandem with Jesus, our burden will be much, much lighter.

*Thank you, thank you Jesus - You came to save us and set us free. May we not be enslaved by our worldly ambitions, material things and anxieties that burden us and block us from following You in the freedom and power of the Spirit!*

**VERBUM DEI MISSIONARIES**

2A Bury Road Singapore 119820

Tel/Fax: 62740251

Email: [verbumdeispore@yahoo.com.sg](mailto:verbumdeispore@yahoo.com.sg)

<http://www.verbumdeisingapore.org>



**Fri. July 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Matt. 10:16-23**

**Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Remember, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves; so be cunning as serpents and yet as harmless as doves. 'Beware of men: they will hand you over to sanhedrins and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the pagans. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how to speak or what to say; what you are to say will be given to you when the time comes; because it is not you who will be speaking; the Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you. 'Brother will betray brother to death, and the father his child; children will rise against their parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by all men on account of my name; but the man who stands firm to the end will be saved...'**



Jesus had commissioned the Twelve to share in his mission and sent them to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom. Just as he himself encountered opposition, rejection, betrayal and persecution, Jesus warned them that they would be 'like sheep among wolves' and be hated and persecuted.

Do we have the faith and courage to evangelize? We do not have to be foolhardy and preach in the streets or die for our Faith, but 'to be as cunning as serpents and yet as harmless as doves' - to be creative in finding ways of **witnessing and sharing the Good News** with love. Let us persevere in our efforts to build God's Kingdom, to spread his peace, love and truth. We have Jesus' assurance that the Holy Spirit will speak through us, and those who stand firm will be saved.

*Holy Spirit guide us, empower us to share in the mission of Jesus!*