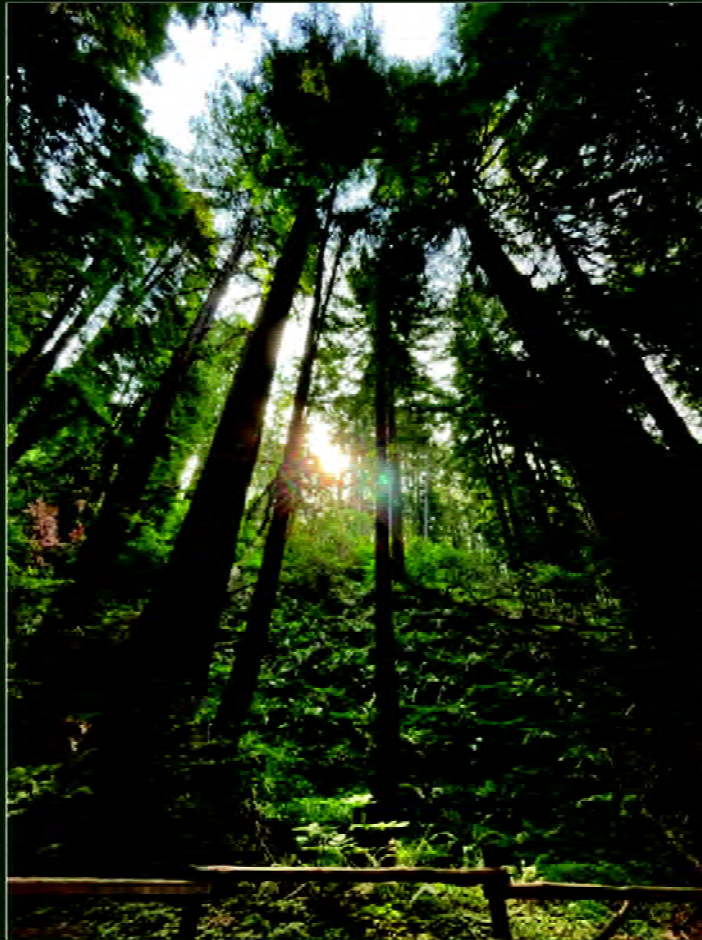


Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself
against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into
captivity to the obedience of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5



Kirkspire

The Monthly Magazine of St. Andrew's Church (The Kirk), Chennai
November 2024

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Editorial Board :

**Usha George
Chitra Bennett**

Word from the Pastor



Baffling

God's Baffling Plans

And the Lord shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked and save them because they trust in Him (Psalm 37:40)

Would anyone choose the meanest to fight a battle or the one timid enough to run in the opposite direction to preach and reach an entire nation? There are many such examples of how the Bible is filled with men and women who were not necessarily born with greatness or see greatness in themselves but God made them do amazing feats. This is month's study is on having a 'Responsible Mind'.

This devotion is focussed on how if God sees you fit to live for a particular task with a great purpose, who are you to say that you cannot make it or think that you made it on your own. You and I have been chosen by God and there is no reason to feel that we can handle things are on own.

Here are three lessons that the verse above teaches us

1. God is the helper and provider for all those who seek Him - This entire Psalm teaches about the power of drawing our help from God. King David always knew that he was able to accomplish things in life because of His God. Even when he faltered, he repented by acknowledging the power of the Almighty God. David did not know that God had rejected Saul but God knew. David did not know that he was chosen to be the next king but God knew. David did not know how he will escape from the attacks of Saul but God knew. God's plans are baffling.

2. God is the deliverer for those who trust in Him - Trusting in God is not a statement to be said but a lifestyle to be lived. A simple test of this trust is how much our prayer life is filled with words of assurance or anxiety. David trusted in God for he knew that what his father, brothers, neighbors did not see in him, God did. God's plans are baffling.

3. God will abandon those who reject Him or rebel against Him - The pain of over confidence is that one would fall and fail when they least expect. Samson fell when he least expected, the Pharaoh's army was destroyed when least expected, Haman's pride and life was crushed in the least imaginable manner. God's ways are baffling.

So here are a few life lessons. Live with a responsible mind, reverential attitude and responsive obedience. Have a blessed month as you walk in the light of God's grace and enjoy His favour now and always.

Have a blessed month

Rev. Isaac Emmanuel Johnson

What more could He give? God gave His all. He gave Himself.
Who can measure this love?

Charles H. Spurgeon

John's Corner



EVANGELISM

(Nov 10th is Evangelism Sunday)
Read Rom 10:14, Mat 5:16, Mat 28:20

Preaching Christ is prohibited,
In many countries well we know;
How then can we proclaim the Lord,
That He's The Way to others show?

Writing Jesus Christ is Saviour,
In many nations is a crime;
But Christ has said to judge He'll come,
We must warn all while yet there's time.

How can they with no preacher hear,
About Christ learn if we can't write?
But how to live none can dictate,
It's our prerogative and right.

Let Jesus Christ be seen in you,
You be the Bible all can read;
Your silent peaching none can stall,
Your life's message no one impede.

John H. Bala Singh

The most holy service that we can render to God is to be
employed in praising His Name.

John Calvin



Fear

Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him. Mark 10:32

Fear (fictitious or real) is soul destroying. Ranging from a vague feeling of uneasiness to a full-blown panic attack it contracts the heart and withers hope.

A heart thus contracted cannot be generous and diminished hope offers a rudimentary view of possibilities.

This not only reduces a person to a spineless shadow but it also fixates one's attention on the problem instead of seeking solutions.

Father but how does one not fear in a world that induces this emotion at every turn?

"My dearest child,
the feeling of fear may persist at times
but what you do with it
is far more important than
its mere presence or absence.
Like My early disciples trouble & frustration
will always be a part of earthly life.

Though My outline of your suffering may not be as detailed as theirs
(because I don't want that to be your focus)
I want you to know the outcome-
Resurrection, joy, peace.

Meanwhile,
let not fear keep you from profitable work or enjoyment.
Give no place to lingering guilt
or engage in negativity...
Especially the spoken form.

As you follow Me
numbing fear and awe may coexist.
For often eradication of the former
takes time, prayer & the Spirit
(Not necessarily in that order).

So stop prioritizing your
feelings as truth and start
trusting in My written Word.
Enjoy this road to your Jerusalem.
Take in the views.
Cherish the company & conversation.

These words are not meant to induce dread
but to let you know that with Me
victory is not an abstract concept
but an endless reality.

For whatever happens grace will be given.
At that moment.
No sooner. No later.

And My child
after every crucifying experience
resurrection follows
because of the cross.
Because of My love for you."

Dr. Susan Rajkumari

"God asked for love – in two directions. For love for Him,
and for love toward our fellow men. One grows on the
other, or should."

“So The Last Will Be Made First, And The First Last.”

Lord Jesus Christ makes a most eloquent and piercingly powerful declaration in Matthews 20:16a, “So the last will be made first, and the first last”. No ordinary man can imagine this and therefore one has to sit up and take note of this extra-ordinary proclamation coming straight from the mouth of the Son of God, who Himself is “the Alpha and the Omega”, the very First and the very Last of the entire universe and beyond.

In our day to day lives we witness and also at times suffer the consequences of the highly competitive and rank-oriented atmosphere, be it in the schools, colleges, universities or institutions of higher learning or research. No sane person there would ever say that the ones with an F or D grade will be placed ahead of or above A or A+ grade students; or in the reverse, those with Outstanding or O+ ratings would be placed below those with C, D or F.

The competitive culture gets much more reinforced in the intensely ambitious milieu of the commercial organizations, businesses, factories and corporate board rooms. The race for profits maximization and career advancements are the principal driving force therein, and no one in his senses will daresay that one lagging behind in monetary values, performance rankings will ever be placed higher than the so-called smart, shrewd and successful financial players. Almost a similar culture prevails even in majority of voluntary organizations, charitable bodies and also in the fashionably called ‘not for profits’.

The reality in many churches, religious bodies and in their auxiliaries the situation is not much different, though the hierarchies and listings may generally be more nuanced and appear subtle in the first impression. But manmade yardsticks of righteousness and accomplishments, worldly assessment of seniority and significance are deeply ingrained.

Narrating the famous parable of ‘Workers in the Vineyard’, in Matthew 20:1-16, Lord Jesus Christ does not mince His words in explaining that the landowner of the vineyard (that is, the Lord God Himself) has a sovereign right to engage workers for His vineyard at any time of the day. It is an open house; and it is not limited or restricted to those who have already been engaged or have entered the vineyard.

The Lord does not leave anyone 'standing idle' but engages everyone who presents himself or herself for service, at any hour of the day, or at any stage of one's life. Lord's evaluation of the role played by a worker is not similar to how the world assesses their contributions. In the estimate of God, sheer length of the service or period of time spent on the work do not determine the value of a worker.

Further, the Lord may start paying wages to the workers at the end of the day's work even in the reverse order of their engagement. The landowner in the parable directs the steward (manager) to "give them wages, beginning with the last to the first".

What is more significant is that our Lord does not entertain mutual comparisons. He severely frowns upon jealousy among the workers. Workers shall not get pro-rata payments of wages; some may get equal and while some others disproportionately higher wages even for shorter periods of work. It is the discretion of the landowner to decide. To the complaining workers the landowner points out critically, "Or is your eye evil because I am good!"

It is the sovereign jurisdiction of the Lord our God to bless anyone according to His will, exactly as the landowner in the parable asserts his right, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things?" And as a loud warning to some and a strong encouragement to most others, Lord Jesus unequivocally declares, "So the last will be first, and the first last." (Matt 20:16a)

+ + +

Whetting the human appetite to be first in the society, Lord Jesus offers a candid clarification elsewhere. When his disciples disputed among themselves about who would be greatest among them, Jesus left them in no doubt, and asserted, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." (Mark 9:35). Jesus lived his sermon by His personal examples 'to serve and not to be served'. Anyone seeking to establish, excel or exalt oneself must bear this in one's mind all the time, with humility and reverential trepidation.

Lord Jesus graphically reveals his true identity in the Book of Revelation: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last!" (Rev 1:11, 22:13).

B V Selvaraj

Kirk Women's Fellowship Retreat 2024 – October 19, 2024

The long-awaited Kirk Women's Retreat began with women of all ages excitedly gathered at 7 am dressed mostly in blue. After prayer, we started towards Coromandel Gardens which is near Sriperumbudur. We were greeted with great hospitality by Mrs Suhasini, one of our church members (who was our host for the day) and her team. They gave us delicious, homely breakfast to kick start the day's proceedings.

The first session began with prayer and worship, followed by an inspiring message by Meera Ninan. After the tea break, we went on an adventurous bullock cart ride through the farm, admiring the emus, tortoise, horses, ducks, chickens, and Dusky, the adorable dog. We came back to do a challenging quiz competition conducted by our champion quiz master Roselin Johnson, who had meticulously prepared the questions.

By then, it was time for lunch. We were treated to a mouth-watering menu comprising of sambar, veggies, fish fry and chicken gravy.

The highlight of the afternoon session was the anointed message by Roselin Johnson, who spoke about the Rapture. This was followed by wonderful fun games organized by Roselin, Sushma and Serena. All the women had pure unadulterated fun and frolic, hearty laughter and we wholeheartedly enjoyed bonding together as Sisters in Christ.

Another activity which stole the show was when our childhood photos were projected and we had a whale of a time trying to guess the who the child had become now. The final activity was when we wrote down our pet names, and as the names were called out, others had to guess who it was. We also received thoughtfully bought gifts given to all participants and special prizes were given to those who excelled in the Quiz.

After snacking on hot cauliflower bajjis and tea, and a group photo, we returned nourished in body and soul. We are extremely thankful to our wonderful God and sincerely thank Roselin who orchestrated and executed this wonderful outing for all those who participated in this special event of Kirk Women's Fellowship.

Asha Isaac

Bible Quiz No. 153–November2024



An Anthropologist's Quiz

Please give a Bible reference (KJV)

1. What happened when God *'repented He had made man on the earth'*?
2. What name is given to the place where God **'confounded'** the language of man?
3. What did David say about *'the steps of a good man'*?
4. Which of the minor prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah in these words:
'Behold the Man, whose name is the Branch'?
5. Finish this text : *'What is man that thou art . . .'*?
6. Who said, *'man is like to vanity; his days are as a shadow that passeth'*?
7. *'For since by man came death, by man came also . . .'* What?
8. What does James say about a *'double minded man'*?
9. Who propounded this question :
'What hath man of all his labour?'?
10. *'Your -_-_- men shall dream dreams, and your _-_-_-_- men see visions'.*

Taken from *A Bible Quiz Book* by May C. Smith

Kindly send your answers to the church office or email kirkspire@gmail.com (please note the new email address for Kirkspire) by 17th November 2024.

Usha George

Answers to Bible Quiz No. 152 – October 2024

An Aeronaut's Quiz

1. Elijah, when he was taken up into heaven in a whirlwind. 2 Kings 2:11
2. 'The glory of God'. Psalm 19:1
3. Isaiah. Isaiah 40:22
4. The Gemini twins in the constellation. Acts 28:11
5. Job. Job 9:9
6. The building of The Tower of Babel. Genesis 11:4
7. 'They that wait upon the Lord'. Isaiah 40:31
8. Jacob. Genesis 28:12
9. The Son of Man. Matthew 24:30
10. "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the Earth upon nothing." Job 26:7

The winners are:

1. Mrs. Indira Rajanayakam
2. Mrs. Suguna Joseph
3. Mrs. Victoria Basker
4. Dr. Sujata Elizabeth Prasad
5. Mrs. Minnie Devadoss
6. Mrs. Patricia Patrick
7. Mrs. Gladys Vedavimali
8. Mrs. Sabrina Siga
9. Mrs. Peace Rani Sudhakar

Hearty Congratulations!

THE KIRK SUNDAY SCHOOL (KSS) REPORT FOR 2024-2025

Mark 10:14: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

It is a joy and privilege to serve the Kirk Sunday School, where we strive to instill a love for God's Word and nurture young hearts. This year, our theme is "The Mind of Christ." We believe in safeguarding young minds from harmful influences and guiding them toward a Christ-centred view.

We have about 135 children, ages 3-17, attend our weekly Sunday School. Classes are held every Sunday from 9 A.M, except the first Sunday of the month. A collective worship service, filled with joyful singing and hymns, precedes the class sessions. A vibrant youth team lead us in singing, music and worship using their talent for the glory of God. The "verse of the month" as given by our church is also taught and reiterated via skits, stories and object lessons.

We have 20 dedicated teachers who have committed themselves to prayer and the spiritual growth of the children. They meet every Saturday to pray for the classes, the children and fellow teachers and seek God's guidance. Monthly meetings with Pastor Isaac Johnson provide spiritual nourishment and equip teachers to share God's word effectively. They also have a 15-minute devotion before class every Sunday, where teachers and guest speakers take turns sharing the word of God and praying.

Psalms 119:11 says, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I may not sin against you". So, we emphasize on memorizing the Scripture, including Bible verses, the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, select Psalms, and the Apostles' Creed. The scripture portions taught are based on the books given to each class and include engaging craft work, colouring activities, puzzles and thought-provoking questions.

Children are also part of various Sunday School initiatives and Church activities. This year, we had our annual retreat on the 28th of July at the Pleasant Days Resort. It is a yearly retreat that provides opportunities for spiritual growth, fun, and fellowship for the children. Children also actively participated in the Annual Church Carnival, contributing to the church ministries by showcasing their

creativity and helping in sales. We also have a Witnessing Sunday where the children and teachers share their testimonies and experiences of God's grace. During Christmas, children express their love for others through gift-giving initiatives.

We are grateful to God Almighty for the opportunity He has given us to serve our church and to build His kingdom. Please do not forget to uphold this ministry in your prayers. May the Lord's name alone be glorified!

Preethy Deepak
Superintendent,
Kirk Sunday School



DOCTORS SUNDAY 13th October, 2024

It is the custom at St. Andrew's Church (The Kirk) to celebrate a Sunday in mid-October as Doctors Sunday or Healing Ministry Sunday. The reason is that in the church calendar, October 18th is marked as St. Luke's day. Luke the Evangelist, the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles was by profession a physician. The Bible records him ministering to Paul while accompanying him on his missionary journeys. This was sufficient reason for Medical professionals to adopt him as one of themselves and to honor him. Luke never actually met Jesus during his life and ministry on earth. However, the meticulous record of Jesus' ministry on Earth as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, is typical of the detailed medical records that Doctors maintain today.

The Healing Ministry of The Kirk has been functioning for more than half a century to date. It has evolved in the last fifty years to meet the needs of the people it serves in the villages and in keeping with the goals of the church in bringing the Gospel to the rural areas. Of late, the ministry is partnering increasingly with the Evangelism ministry in conducting camps in different peripheral areas. The government is also introducing new rules and regulations for the functioning of clinics in the state. The prayers of the congregation are requested for God's continued leading and direction that the Healing Ministry is to take in keeping with the objectives of the church for the glory of God.

Dr. Benjamin Ninan



The Kirk Sunday School Family.



Little voices, big praise.



The Great commission - Missionaries Talk show

Children's Corner

*Psalm 23:2 He lets me rest in green meadows;
he leads me beside peaceful streams.*

A picture by Ruana, Standard 4, Kirk Sunday School



Bible Quiz for Kids – November 2024

GENESIS 16–20

1. What was called Beer Lahai Roi and was located between Kadesh and Bered?
2. What does the name "Sarah" mean?
3. At the end of Abraham's discussion with the Lord, how many righteous men would it have taken to save the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah?
4. What four items were destroyed by the Lord?
5. After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah where are we told Abraham stayed (between Kabesh and Shur)?

Source: www.theseeker.org

Answers to Bible Quiz for Kids – October 2024

Genesis 11–15

1. Confusion – Gen 11:9
2. An altar to the Lord – Gen 12:6 & 7
3. It was well watered – Gen 13:10
4. Melchizedek – Gen 14:18 & 19
5. In a vision – Gen 15:1

Dolly Shanthakumar

Achan's Sin

A poem by Noah John, Class 5, Kirk Sunday School

Once in the land of Israel
A story to be told
A man named Achan stole holy things
And had taken all their gold

God told them not to,
But Achan disobeyed
He took it all and hid it
And went about his day.

Now Joshua told them to attack
The city of Ai
They got a few soldiers ready
And set off to war saying bye-bye

They thought it would be easy
As there were very few people there
So they ran up without fear
Not even a single care

But Oh! They did not know
Of Achan's tragic sin
So in the city of Ai
God's wrath flew in

Israel got defeated
With 36 men dead
Joshua was upset
And was filled with dread

God told Joshua what happened
Joshua was filled with rage
"Tomorrow I will show you,
The man that went astray"

So the next day
Achan was found out
The people all stoned him
And that was the end of Achan

Sometimes we do not think
That sin would cause us hurt
But when you are tempted
Think of Achan's fate!



The Rough Road of Life

"Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be." Deuteronomy 33:25

Our old house stands on a road crammed with shops of various trades, a palace of a Nawab, temples, mosques, a Police Station, the old Zam Bazar – the list goes on. The road bustles with vehicles, a crush of pedestrians cleverly maneuvering their way, not forgetting the placid cows meandering at their own pace and preferred direction. This chaotic road finally reaches the beautiful Marina Beach.

Yes, life's journey can be rough and tedious. Various trials and temptations come our way. Life's highways and byways are well-beaten tracks, walked on by miserable sinners and by saints, apostles, prophets and martyrs.

We have luminous examples of men and women who have lived inspirational lives, undeterred by being handicapped. A few to be named – Milton gave us his epic Paradise Lost – all the while a prisoner of blindness. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was completed under the frightful handicap of deafness. The hymns of Fanny Crosby were gifted to us with joy through her blindness. Our God has touched so many afflicted lives to build and inspire us.

The Book of Genesis records the ruin of Man's relationship with His Maker. We were created with love to enjoy all of His creation. Tragically this was not to be. The rot stemmed from the human heart. Pain, betrayal, heartache and death ravaged Man. Our Creator could see the awful depths of hell and makes a life-restoring plan to save His children from doom. It was His utmost plan. The Divine Sacrifice 'hinged' on Jesus Christ our Redeemer. He alone could wash our sins away with in His precious blood. He alone can make the journey of our life meaningful – "...He made us into a kingdom, priests to His God and Father" (Revelation 1:5-6).

Our Road of Life clearly points to Christ's Great Commission for us. Do we walk the walk of life with the ardour of the Early Church?

We live in a world that is educated, scientific, trained and armed with temporal knowledge. But without the blessed assurance that we are firmly rooted and grounded and fed by His love and word our lives can be devilish and dangerous. "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

As we travel the rough road of life, may we with our Saviour's grace, weed out all the false lights that beckon us. Let us firmly and steadily proceed and drink from the Well of Life, Christ Jesus Himself.

May we sojourn, delight in His ways, His Word and His Holiness, in prayer, love and joy, knowing that the hand of our Master leads us on to our 'Home, beautiful Home'.

"Forward through the desert,
Through the toil and fight;
Canaan lies before us;
Zion beams with light."

Usha George

The Church is not a gallery for the exhibition of eminent Christians, but a school for the education of imperfect ones.

Henry Ward Beecher

Living by the Book: part 5

Learning how to study the Bible from Dr Howard Hendricks

“Do you understand what you are reading?” (Acts 8:30, NIV)

In order to act on what God has said, you have to understand what He has said. In this second major step of Bible study, you ask and answer the question, ‘*What does it mean?*’

Some people may believe that everyone is free to have his or her own response to the text, and that meaning is purely subjective. Dr Hendricks argues that “the task of Bible study is to ‘think God’s thoughts after Him’.”

There are substantial barriers to interpreting the Bible accurately: *language* barriers from the need for translation, *cultural* barriers require appreciation of the context of those times, there are different *literary* genres, and the limitations from breakdowns in the *communication* process. However, Hendricks urges us not to get stuck in the problems and unanswered questions that come up in our Bible study, because the amazing thing is that we are able to understand the essentials for our salvation and daily living.

The problem of *faulty interpretation*, on the other hand, poses some dangers. We need to read the text properly (not *misreading* it), without making it say what we want (*distorting* it), or *contradicting* it by using it to authorise beliefs or practices that go against the character of God, or dropping intellectual engagement for total *subjectivism*. We do not assume that the Bible changes meaning over time or that its meaning is *relative*, nor do we set ourselves up in *overconfidence* as the ultimate authority on the text. Differences and *disagreements* in interpretation can occur, bearing in mind our limited understanding of the text. “God is not confused about what He has said, even if we are”. We have a responsibility to handle the Word correctly (see 2 Tim 2:15).



Literary genre is crucial to interpretation - what did the Author mean it to be? Awareness of literary form - whether it be exposition, narrative and biography, parables, poetry, wisdom literature, or prophecy - sharpens and strengthens our observation, interpretation and application. The table from Dr Hendricks’ book (pages 224-226) examines literary forms in more detail.

- Anisha Lazarus

LITERARY GENRES OF THE BIBLE

GENRE	CHARACTERISTICS	BIBLICAL BOOKS AND EXAMPLES
Apocalyptic	Dramatic, highly symbolic material; vivid imagery; stark contrasts; events take place on a global scale; frequently narrated in the first person as an eyewitness account; portrays a cosmic struggle between good and evil.	Revelation
Biography	Close-up view of an individual's life; subject is often portrayed in contrast to someone else; selected events reveal character development; often positively (comedy) or negatively (tragedy).	Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Saul, David, Elijah, Jesus
Encomium	Sings high praise of someone or something; references in glowing terms the subject's origins, acts, attributes, or superiority; exhorts the reader to incorporate the same features into his own life.	1 Sam. 2:1-10 Psalm 118 Psalm 119 Prov. 8:22-36 Prov. 31:10-31 Song of Solomon John 1:1-18 1 Corinthians 13 Col. 1:15-20 Hebrews 1-3
Exposition	Carefully reasoned argument or explanation; well-organized; logical flow; terms are crucial; builds to a logical, compelling climax; the aim is agreement and action.	Paul's letters Hebrews James 1 and 2 Peter 1, 2, and 3 John Judith
Narrative	A broad category in which story is prominent; includes historical accounts; structure is conveyed through plot; characters undergo psychological and spiritual development; selected events used to convey meaning; events juxtaposed for contrast and comparison.	Genesis-Era The gospel Acts
Oratory	Stylized oral presentation of an argument; uses formal conventions of rhetoric and oratory; frequently quotes from authorities well known to listeners; usually intended to exhort and persuade.	John 13-17 Acts 7 Acts 17:22-31 Acts 22:1-21 Acts 24:10-21 Acts 26:1-23
Parable	Brief oral story illustrating moral truth; frequently relies on stock characters and stereotypes; presents crimes and activities common to everyday life; encourages reflection and self-evaluation.	2 Sam. 12:1-6 Ezra 9:14-16 Matt. 13:1-53 Mark 4:1-34 Luke 15:1-16:31
Pastoral	Literature dealing with rural, rustic themes, especially shepherds; heavy on description; lean on actions; often meditative and quiet emphasis on the bond between a shepherd and his sheep; idealized presentation of life away from urban evils.	Psalm 23 Isa. 40:1 1 John 1:6-18
Poetry	Verse intended to be spoken or sung rather than read; emphasis on cadence and the sounds of words; vivid images and symbols; appeals to the emotions; may employ features of encomium, pastoral, and other literary styles; in O.T., heavy use of parallelism.	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon
Prophecy	Strident, authoritative presentation of God's will and words; frequently intended as a corrective; intended to motivate change through warnings; foretells God's plans in response to human choices.	Isaiah-Malachi
Proverb	Short, pithy statement of a moral truth; reduces life to black-and-white categories often addressed to youth; frequently employs parallelism; points readers toward the right and away from evil; heavy use of metaphor and simile.	Proverbs
Satire	Exposes and ridicules human vice and foibles; is employed by various literary styles, especially narrative, biography, and poetry; warns readers through a negative example.	Prov. 26:3-34 Ezekiel 34 Luke 18:1-8 2 Cor. 11:1-23
Tragedy	Relates the downfall of a person; uses selected events to show the path toward ruin; problems usually revolve around a critical flaw in the person's character and moral choices; warns readers through a negative example.	Lot Samson Saul Acts 5:1-11
Wisdom Literature	A broad category in which an older, seasoned person relates wisdom to a younger; may use parable; gives observations on fundamental areas of life—birth, death, work, money, power, time, the earth, and so on; appeals on the basis of human experience.	Job Proverbs Psalm 37 Psalm 90 Ecclesiastes

For additional help with the literary types of the Bible, see Roland Blyden's excellent book *The Literature of the Bible* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974).

KNOW YOUR HYMN

Amazing Grace

"O taste and see that the Lord is good." — Psalm 34:8

It was the experience of God's amazing grace in his life that prompted John Newton (1725–1807), an English clergyman and poet, to write this beloved hymn in 1772.

Newton was born in 1725 in Wapping, a London suburb known for shipping and sea trade. His father, a merchant ship captain, was often away on voyages that typically lasted two to three years. During one of these absences, Newton's mother succumbed to tuberculosis, leaving him in the temporary care of friends, the Catlett family, in Kent. His father remarried, and Newton was placed in boarding school. Despite this, he maintained close ties with the Catletts, especially their daughter, Mary, whom he eventually married. Mary was the cornerstone of Newton's life; no matter what befell him, his goal was always to return to her.



Newton's early religious beliefs were marked by confusion. He admitted to living an immoral life, lacking self-control and discipline. He faced "many a danger, toil, and strife," realizing that his life had often been miraculously spared. On one occasion, he was thrown from a horse, narrowly avoiding impalement on sharp stakes. Another time, he arrived too late to board a vessel carrying his companions to a warship; he watched helplessly as it overturned, drowning all

aboard. Years later, during a hunting expedition in Africa on a moonless night, he and his companions got lost in a swamp. Just when they had resigned themselves to death, the moon appeared, guiding them back to safety. Such near-death experiences were common in Newton's life.

Newton often mocked the ship's captain by composing obscene poems and songs about him, which became so popular that the crew joined in. His disagreements with several colleagues led to him being starved, imprisoned at sea, and even chained like the slaves they carried. He was enslaved by the native Sherbo people and forced to work on a plantation in Sierra Leone until rescued by his father's intervention.

Despite these rescues, Newton relapsed into his old habits, continuing to defy his religious calling and attempting to dissuade others from their beliefs. Among all the sins he later confessed, undermining the faith of others weighed most heavily on his heart.

John Newton's biography recounts the origin of this beautiful hymn, marking a pivotal moment of conversion to Christianity that set him on a path toward redemption. During a particularly violent storm aboard a slave ship off the coast of Ireland in 1748, Newton prayed desperately to God to save him and his ship from sinking. Moments after he left the deck, the crewman who replaced him was swept overboard. Although he manned the vessel for the remainder of the storm, he later reflected that, throughout the tumult, he realized his helplessness and concluded that only the grace of God could save him. Inspired by what he read in *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, Newton took the first step toward embracing religion. In the words of his hymn, this incident marked "the hour I first believed." The ship was spared, and they reached safety.

Newton married Mary Catlett in 1750, and as a changed man, he accepted the helm of a ship bound for Africa. This time, he encouraged his crew to pray rather than mock them for their beliefs. He also ensured that every member of his crew treated their human cargo with gentleness and care.

Three years after his marriage, Newton suffered a stroke that prevented him from returning to sea. Exploring his faith, he realized his calling and accepted a ministerial position at the Olney Church. He became deeply involved in his parishioners' lives and was well-

loved. He struck up a friendship with William Cowper, a gifted writer and fellow convert. "Amazing Grace" was written to illustrate a sermon on New Year's Day in 1773. In 1835, American composer William Walker set it to the tune known as "New Britain."

Forty years later, Newton, now an abolitionist, openly challenged the trafficking of slaves. In 1789, a "Bill for the Abolition of Slavery" was introduced in Parliament. After repeated opposition, King George III declared it law in 1807. "Amazing Grace" was written by a man moved to speak out against a practice from which he had once profited. In an essay, Newton reflected: "I hope it will always be a subject of humiliating reflection to me that I was once an active instrument in a business at which my heart now shudders." Thus, it is fitting that his hymn has become an anthem against all forms of social injustice.

Newton confesses, "I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see." He celebrates the amazing grace of God: "Grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved; how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed." Rejoicing in God's promise, protection, and the hope of eternal life with the Lord, Newton concludes with this verse:

"The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, the sun forbear to shine; but God, who called me here below, will be forever mine."

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." — Ephesians 2:8

Let us never think we are too weak or unworthy to approach Him, for "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." In our weakness, we are strong, for Christ says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Let us with grateful hearts thank God for His amazing grace, For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ' Titus 2:11-13.



NUTRITION – I

“Doctors treat, but Jesus heals”

AN APPLE A DAY

Apples are a rich source of iron, calcium and vitamins A and it is also an important source of pectin and cellulose and therefore a good source of roughage for the body. Although most of the varieties can be eaten raw, there are certain varieties which can be classified as cooking apples as they are best eaten when they are slightly cooked. As far as possible, eat apples with the skin to avoid loss of essential vitamins under the skin. To avoid oxidation of the flesh after peeling, sprinkle some lemon juice on the apple. While cooking, do not use excess water as this would require prolonged cooking and would result in loss of all the heat sensitive vitamins. Wash thoroughly before peeling and not after peeling.

GOODNESS OF YOGHURT

Yoghurt is integral to Indian cuisine. Most south Indians end a meal by eating rice mixed with curds. In the west, yoghurt is a desert usually eaten frozen or with fruit, and yoghurt made from low-fat milk is a healthy food. Yoghurt's tartness makes it a perfect matrix for sweet banana slices, fresh or frozen berries, grapes and pineapple slices. Yoghurt, like milk, is a good source of calcium, vitamins and other minerals. Yoghurt is easier to digest than regular milk by those who cannot digest lactose, the sugar in milk. Hundred grams of yoghurt made from plain whole milk contain 60 calories.

A cup of plain low-fat curds can have as much as 400mg of calcium – 40% of the daily requirement of the minerals. What's more, it also has protein, B-12, riboflavin, potassium, magnesium and zinc. Eating curds helps control the diarrhoea associated with antibiotic use – probably by replenishing the levels of “good” gut bacteria (lacto bacillus), indiscriminately killed off by antibiotics.

Dr. (Mrs.) Rajini Kantha Narendranath

Kirk News



*Bright eyes gladden the heart;
Good news puts fat on the bones.
Proverbs 15:30*

Faithful Footsteps

"Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." – William Carey

"We must give these people the Word of God in their language, for how else will they know the true Saviour unless they can read of Him themselves?" - Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg

These quotes are familiar in Christian circles, often recited without much pause for reflection. Yet, as we look deeper, it becomes clear that India has been profoundly blessed by the work of missionaries whose varied lives radiated the glory of our Lord. God planted a vision and desire in their hearts, and in faith, they took each step forward. Through their obedience, God not only impacted individual souls but also shaped the nation at large.

A common thread runs through all their stories: a deep reverence for the Word of God. Each missionary recognised that only the Word of God could bring about lasting transformation. Their contributions to spreading the Bible among the people of India remain the bedrock of the nation's spiritual journey. Despite the challenges they faced, they knew that the task before them could only be accomplished by relying on the unchanging God.

May we be so conscious of God's calling that we, too, take those steps of faith, allowing God to work wonders through us. His Word continues to speak, guiding and sustaining us today. Therefore, let us strive to live out the Scripture: *"Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all."* (1 Timothy 4:15).

The Sunday of October 20, 2024, was a special one—Sunday School Day. The children’s songs of praise captured the hearts of all who listened. Parents and the congregation alike glowed with pride, marvelling at the talents that God had bestowed upon the children. But what left everyone completely awestruck was a talk show performed by the children, titled *Fishers of Men*. In it, they “interviewed” great missionaries like Ida Scudder, Pandita Ramabai, Robert Caldwell, Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, Amy Carmichael, William Carey, and Sarah Tucker.

This powerful portrayal reminded us of the abundant blessings we enjoy today because of these faithful servants of God. More than that, it ignited within us a fresh desire to live out the calling that God has placed on our own lives. Their stories stirred our hearts, awakening a flame that challenges us to walk faithfully in obedience, just as they did. May their example inspire us to leave a legacy of faith that will transform future generations.

Guest Speakers

Dr. Santosh Varughese – Healing in Jesus’ Name – 13.10.2024 –7:00 AM &9:00 AM Services

Kirk Youth Fellowship

The Kirk Youth Fellowship continues to inspire spiritual growth through its ongoing Bible study series, “Rebuild.” On October 20, 2024, the group gathered after the 9 AM service at the Guest House of St. Andrew’s Kirk. Following a fruitful time of study, attendees enjoyed a communal lunch, deepening their fellowship and connections with one another. The KYF remains committed to nurturing young hearts in their faith and helping them grow in their relationship with Christ.

Kirk Men’s Fellowship

The Men’s Fellowship Retreat was a blessed time of refreshment and renewal, held on October 12th and 17th, 2024, at Grand Serenaa Hotel & Resorts, Pondicherry. With our pastors, Rev. Isaac Johnson and Rev. Paul Anbarasu leading the sessions, the men were encouraged in their walk with the Lord through engaging discussions, prayer, and fellowship. The retreat provided a wonderful opportunity to step away from the daily routine and focus on strengthening both faith and fellowship.

Kirk Women's Fellowship

The Kirk Women's Fellowship held its Annual Retreat on October 19, 2024, at Coromandel Garden, near Sriperumbudur. This day of spiritual retreat was marked by inspiring messages, worship, and the nurturing of bonds among the women of the congregation. It was a time to refresh their spirits and renew their commitment to God, surrounded by the love of fellow believers.

Friendship Club

On October 10, 2024, the Friendship Club met at 3:00 PM in the SACCE Hall. This gathering was a time to build Christ-centred relationships, offering an opportunity for fellowship and the formation of lasting friendships. The Friendship Club continues to provide a welcoming space for members to come together in faith, friendship, and mutual support.

Obituary

V. Dharmaraj (September 10, 1929 - October 7, 2024), the funeral service was held on October 9, 2024, at 3:30 PM at St. Andrew's Church (The Kirk). Following the service, he was laid to rest at Kasimedu Cemetery. We remember his life and legacy and pray for comfort and peace for his family during this difficult time.

Mrs. Omana Joseph, 93 years, the funeral service was held on October 6, 2024, at 12 noon at The Kirk. Her burial followed at Kilpauk Cemetery. Her presence will be missed by all who knew her. May God's peace surround her family and loved ones as they mourn her loss.

Forever with the Lord!

Angela Susan Bryner

Dear Readers,

If you have articles to contribute, request you to email them to tokirkspire@gmail.com

Kirkspire Editorial Board



Bible session time



Bullock cart ride



KWF Retreat @ Coromandel Gardens, Sripurumbadur

