

The Ecumenical Family

[A Bulletin of the English Congregation, Aizawl, Mizoram, for private circulation only]

Vol. XV

DECEMBER 2016

No. 52



CHECK IT OUT...	PAGE NO.
Editorial	03
WHEN IS LOVE, LOVE?	04-07
LOVE CAME DOWN AT CHRISTMAS	08
GOD'S LOVE	09
WHAT JESUS MEANS TO ME	09
PHOTOS.....	10-13
E.C. HAPPENINGS	14
ANNUAL CONVENTION 2016 :	
Summary of Sermon No. 1 : BLOOD SACRIFICE	15
Summary of Sermon No. 2 : REDEMPTION	16
Summary of Sermon No. 3 : CLEANSING IN JESUS' BLOOD	17
Summary of Sermon No. 4 : RECONCILIATION IN THE BLOOD OF JESUS	18
Summary of Sermon No. 5 : ADDRESSING THE YOUTH.....	19
Crossword from the Net.....	20

Editorial..... 



Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad

LOVE CAME DOWN AT CHRISTMAS!

We live in a loveless world

We live in a loveless world. A lyric, entitled “A World without Love,” expresses utter disappointment with such a world:

*Please lock me away, And don't allow the day,
Here inside where I hide, With my loneliness
I don't care what they say, I won't stay
In a world without love*

Love given to a loveless world

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1894), author of three collections of mostly religious poetry and four devotional books, suffered poor health from age 16. Rossetti's best-known hymns are the Christmas carols “In the Bleak Midwinter” (1872) and “Love Came Down at Christmas,” (1885).

The first stanza of “In the Bleak Midwinter” paints a vivid picture of an unwelcoming and desolate landscape: *In the bleak mid-winter, Frosty wind made moan, Earth stood hard as iron, Water like a stone; Snow had fallen, snow on snow, Snow on snow, In the bleak mid-winter, Long ago.*

“Love Came Down at Christmas” presents an inviting image of incarnate “Love” descending to such a loveless bleak world: *Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, Love divine; love was born at Christmas, star and angels gave the sign.*

Indeed, if one includes the word “lovely,” “Love” is mentioned 12 times in three short stanzas of the carol, Love came down at Christmas. The carol, in a sense, echoes 1 John 4: 7-11, a passage that mentions “love” in some form 13 times: “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.”

Love gives itself up

The love of God in Jesus Christ is no romantic expression of love. It is not like the Christmas gifts we exchange with friends during the season. It is a love which calls for the giving of one's life. A Thanksgiving Festival was being held in a rural place. A hen and a goat were watching people bringing gifts to be offered. The hen got excited and suggested to the goat that they too could participate in the festival. The hen said to the goat, “I can offer my eggs for omelettes! You can offer your meat for biryani!” The goat replied, “For you, to offer your eggs is a superfluous contribution. For me, to offer my meat is a sacrificial commitment!”

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, *but emptied himself*, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross” (Phil.2:5-8).

Love came down at Christmas!

[Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad is presently the General Secretary of National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) and is stationed at Nagpur along with his family. He was also the first Pastor of the English Congregation.]

WHEN IS LOVE, LOVE?

*“If all you do is love the loveable, do you expect a bonus?
Anybody can do that.” – Matthew 5:46 (The Message)*



Hepuni Kayina

It is easier not to love than to love. Why? The reason is simple. We can be offended by and displeased with others in so many more ways than they can please us. And when we don't like someone, loving that person seems unwarranted. *“How do you expect people to love you when you are so contemptible”*, sounds familiar? It does sound reasonable for people to hate you if you behave abominably or do not behave the way they like.

Yet there is clearly no such thing as reasonable-not-to-love someone when one reads a parable such as *The Prodigal Son* in the gospel according to Luke chapter 15, verses 11 to 32. In fact, to not love is unreasonable! The parable completely turns the reason to love as we understand it on its head! The call to love as heralded here, at first hearing, appears at once to be unnatural, counter intuitive and insane. Nevertheless when you do give it a thought it is the only thing that makes sense at all! The love of the father in the parable is not only radical, but comes as a shock wave blasting away the bricks of long held ideas of what is love. This way of love is so shocking we would be driven to ask if it is practical at all! In fact I have actually been told after a sermon that it sounds nice but it would not work. But what does God say about this kind of love? It *never* fails (1 Corinthians 13:8).

As we read the story of the prodigal son in Luke, we are struck by two situations when it is very difficult to love; yet it is in those situations, we realize, when it is the most crucial to love; the moment to love, actually. I believe Jesus is intentionally making a statement when describing the option of the father in those situations that *when it is the most difficult to love is the crucial moment to love*. It is the moment when love shines the brightest and is most needed. Seen this way it is then little wonder Jesus says there is no reward in loving those who love us. For when we love someone who is unlovable or unlovely it is agape love coming into play that enables the loved to realize and regain his or her real worth and allows the lover to lose the losing which is the only way to obtain the reward of finding self. Thus both can celebrate the wonder and regenerating power of love.

The first difficult situation is found in vv. 12, 13, where the younger son is seen demanding for his share of inheritance from his father, while the father is alive! I cannot think of a greater way to show contempt for one's father or of one human to another. A son is expected to honor his parents; parents are expected to love their children. But how is the father expected to love if his authority is disdained? How can you love someone who hates you? Here we have a situation where the intent and desire to love is met by open and active contempt of none other than one's own child! In worldly terms, how is love supposed to be possible and even relevant in a situation of rebellion? Can parents be faulted for being stern against such behavior? And yet, the message of this episode to parents is very clear. We are called to love though we be held in contempt and faced with rebellion. And especially when a child behaves irresponsibly, for these are the moments we either drive them further away or help them to return 'home'. So situation #1 conveys the first brief of the command to love.

Brief #1: Love the contemptuous.

The father's response to the situation at first reading is questionable and disconcerting but on pondering the matter, it is the only good way to deal with it. And it is the way to be a father, for what is a father if not to redeem? Though confronted with unmitigated scorn the father does not react. He did not explode in righteous fury. He does not rant. He does not shift into lecture mode. He does not say anything to condemn nor do his eyes condemn I am sure. Despite the huge provocation he does not say a word! What?! Is the father a wimp?! Wait. Give the father's behavior a thought. His *deliberate* silence, and silence in such times is way harder than exploding, is loudly saying, "Love does not react." In excitable moments it is difficult to remember that silence is not being incommunicado, that it actually is a communication. Aldous Huxley profoundly said, "**After silence that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music**". In this situation, silence is the love language. The father is taking the responsible approach. He chooses to behave with maturity instead of with authority. He will still love (reason) although he cannot delight (emotion) in love at that moment. For only commitment can sustain love.

Love does not react, instead it responds. Without even a murmur the father lets the son have his way and lets him go as he wished. But isn't this ridiculous?! Capitulating to an irresponsible demand and childish decision? However, at a closer look it is not an irresponsible act on the part of the father but a very responsible and measured one at that to let the son go. The father's behavior is clearly driven by love. If he loves he must let go despite the risk. *Not holding on but letting go is a response of love.* This is a law of life. You can only keep what you give away. The bird in the cage will not be kept long as the bird freed. Is it foolishness of the father to let the son have his way and see the last of him? To be more candid, with the son's attitude being what it was, the father in fact never had the son even while he was home. By insisting on keeping him he might end up not having him at all! By letting him go he could still have what little he had of him or could even hope in having more of him in future. Because the father did not say anything that he would regret later he did not cast up any barrier to prevent the son from returning. The son could still take the decision to return just as it was his decision to go, not his father's. This, by the way, is a lesson in making someone responsible for the decisions he/she makes. Staying silent in that strategic hour precluded the father from saying something that might have sounded like it was his decision to send the son away. So in the hope of having his son back he let him go. "**Nothing that you have not given away will ever really be yours**" (C.S. Lewis). Later on in the story we also learn that letting go is the way to mature and develop someone.

The second situation that makes it difficult to love someone is enumerated in vv. 18-24. The passage tells about the return of the prodigal son. He went away in contempt for his father and all that he stood for, but now we see him returning in grime and slime to what he had earlier spurned. Only this time it is he himself who is revolting in his own eyes. Defeated, ragged, dirty, stinking, tattered and spirit completely broken, what an unlovely sight he must have been. How our senses are repulsed by the ugly, the outcast, the loser, the rebel, the unlovely. And how much more difficult it is to love a child who has been nothing but a pain and grief to you? How difficult to love someone who you cannot respect. This is the portrait of the son in the second situation, reeking of everything that is loathsomely unlovely. The first situation emphasizes the parental privilege to love despite the insolence, the second despite the humiliation. And thus the second situation throws up the second brief.

Brief #2: Love the contemptible.

If the father's response in the first situation is questionable, his response in the second is astonishing and even bizarre. What's 'wrong' with this father? Instead of trying to regain his hurt pride there he is watching out every day in the hope of seeing his son return. And when he sees him in the distance staggering home, he thinks nothing of dignity as he rushes out in gasping delight! There is no hesitation as he throws his arms around his scrawny son and smothers his dirt-caked cheeks with kisses. Does he not get the stomach turning smell and see a loser?! No he does not. He is too drunk with joy at having his son back, to notice!

My heart melts when it hits me that this is the picture of the Father welcoming me whenever I return in filth from going away. Am I glad He cares more for charity than for dignity! So what if he lost half his wealth, didn't he get much more back? His son!? Is that why He says somewhere, **"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and is himself destroyed or lost?"**

Whereas in the first situation the father chooses to remain silent so that his love may not be compromised, in the second situation remaining silent would have done just that. Here we see him expressing his jubilation over the return of his son. In the first instance the father does not say anything to contradict the son's protestation about not wanting to stay home, but in the second he speaks against his son's protestation about being unworthy to be regarded as a son. What father could know better than this father that there is a time to keep quiet and a time not to stay quiet in order to demonstrate love! For only love can provide the hope and the means of restoring queered relationships. Without love can there even be life in them? This is literally what Jesus means too. In 1 John 4:8 John declares that God is love. If God is love, the gospel of John chapter 10 verse 10 where Jesus states, **"I have come that they may have life"** may be rendered, *"Love has come that they may have life."* This is the deeper reason which convinced the son to return because where he was loved was where he would find life. Apparently there is an inseparability of the two.

Therefore, the lesson derived from the father's response to both situations, first when the son left and next when he returns, underscores the point that loving a person when it is difficult to love has a momentous effect on that person. We are to love all and at all times without switch-on and switch-off frequencies. Coming on when we are pleased and off when displeased. Loving those who love us or are lovely is easy because that is just giving back what we receive from them, while loving the difficult and unlovely requires us to do the giving, and giving is the active face of love. For without giving there is neither redeeming nor restoring.

In fact come to think of it, loving the loveable is self-serving because you love what gives delight to you. Or maybe you simply love the delightful. Either way the cause of your love is dependent on the other person. In contrast, the love that the parable advocates that restores someone to life is regardless of the qualification of the other person, because true love is not earned. It is not conditional but it ought to be the condition of the heart. And in all clarity this is the love that is Christ-like, for when is a better time to put our love on the line than when someone is useless to us? **"But God put His love on the line for us by offering His Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use to Him"** – Romans 5:8, TM.

To err is human whether young or old, religious or not, intentional or not. Of itself an error is a tragedy but how unbearable the tragedy in the absence of love! Imagine the errant son hurtling out into the unknown unclothed with the love of his father! Without it he would have had nothing meaningful to return to as he went through slide after slide that would only have increased the callousness of his heart till darkness engulfed his mind! But the show of indiscriminate love by his father when he behaved so condemnably began the healing of his heart even as he walked out the portal of his father's house. His contemptuousness was doomed! And having tasted that love the son was fated not to be satisfied with anything else less delightful! He was besotted without being aware he was. Beware though, only this giving-away love heals. It is the same love that gave away His ONLY begotten Son.

Finally here is a note to fathers from the Father in the parable. A mother births children which makes it natural for her to love them with an instinctive and fierce love. A father is not given such a congenital reason, so he needs an equal sense of responsibility to love and it is this. A father helps 'birth' his young children to become well-balanced adults through the love and leadership he provides in the family. The writ for the father's role therefore is this. Love the kids for who they are (in other words, acceptance of who they are), and intentionally through all their obnoxious and difficult times with a love that emanates from you, not which is conjured up by their behavior. And all it takes to do this is a commitment, the commitment to be loving and responsible in co-raising them to adulthood. *'Studies by Kyle D. Pruett, Michael E. Lamb and others looked beyond the parent-child relationship to study paternal involvement in family life, as well. Studies of families with fathers actively involved in both childcare and household responsibilities reported preschoolers who showed increased cognitive competence, increased capacity for empathy, increased self-control, and a decrease in gender-stereotyped beliefs'* (Father's Role In Early Child Development: Louis Weiss, PhD).

The import of this sacred responsibility describes the father as being vested with the holy office of modeling and providing a love that warms, protects, nurtures, cheers and bonds, insulates, satiates, grows and redeems his family. The stakes involved here are whether you want to see your kids go to self-destruct or to self-construct in the absence or presence of your love!

In extending the meaning out of the family context, a father could well mean a mature Christian, and the parable could be extended to mean the ministry of mature Christians showing love to others, especially the immature, for the purpose of redeeming their lives for Christ.

So, when is love, love? Love is love when it is given no reason to love, yet loves anyway.■

(Developed and written from a sermon delivered at MCFD on 19 June, 2016 at the behest of AsakhoChachei, editor of MakhreihriiShiipei).

(Mr. Hepuni held the post of Joint Secretary in the E.C. Committee and has contributed greatly to the spiritual growth of E.C. He along with his wife and daughter are now with ELIC in China and are supported by the E.C. with prayer and finance.)

**“Christmas is most truly Christmas
when we celebrate it by giving the light
of love to those who need it most.”**



Leishimi Konghay

LOVE CAME DOWN AT CHRISTMAS

Love came down at Christmas
 Love all lovely, love divine
 Love was born at Christmas
 Star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead
 Love incarnate, love divine
 Worship we our Jesus
 But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token
 Love shall be yours and love be mine
 Love to God and to all men
 Love for plea and gift and sign.



One of the favorite Christmas hymns is *Love Came Down at Christmas*, based on a poem by Christina Rossetti. It was first published in 1885 without a title in “Time Flies: A reading diary”. Later, in 1893, it was included in the collection *Verses* under the title, “Christmastide”. The poem has been set to music as a Christmas Carol by many composers including Harold Darke, Leo Sowerby, John Keslsall and John Rutter, and is most often sung to the traditional Irish melody, “Garton”. More recently, the poem was given a modern treatment by the contemporary Christian band, Jars of Clay on their 2007 album, *Christmas songs*.

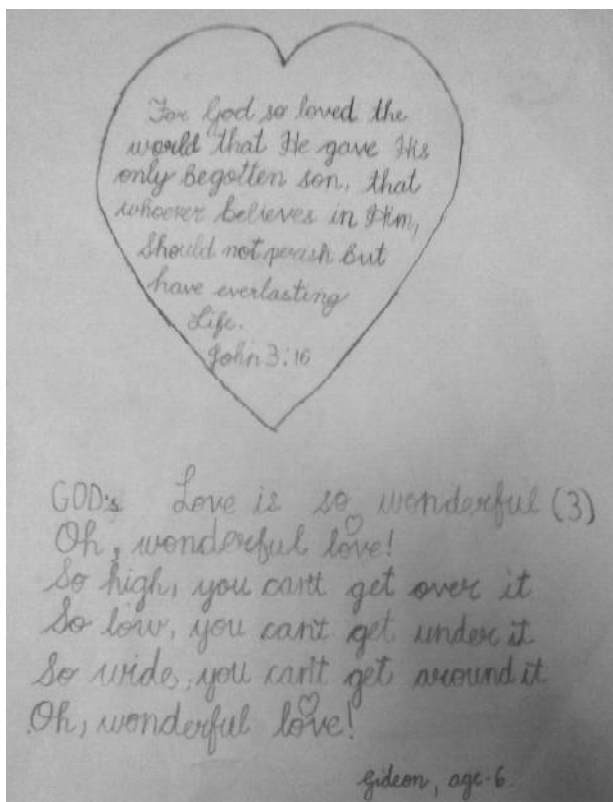
What I love about this hymn is its simplicity - a sincere and direct expression of the true meaning of Christmas. This hymn eloquently speaks to the central message of Christmas - Love Came Down at Christmas - **only Love**.

This Advent season, let’s prepare once again to experience the transforming Love of Jesus Christ in our lives. As we celebrate the unconditional love of God in all of our lives, let us also invite friends *to experience this Love with us*. ■



(Mrs. Leishimi, former E.C. member, was wholeheartedly involved in E.C. life and ministries. She is presently in Lucknow and is being greatly used by God to extend His Kingdom.)

GOD'S LOVE



Gideon Lalmuanawma

(Master Gideon is a KG-2 student of English Congregation School and is the son of former E.C. Pastor, Rev. Dr. K. Lalrinkima.)

WHAT JESUS MEANS TO ME

Joy-Giver

Enough for me

Shepherd who protects and leads me

Ultimate hope

Saviour who always loves me



Neha R.S.
Primary Class, E.C. S.S.

Annual Convention

21st - 23rd Oct., 2016

Theme:

“Blessings of Blood in the Holy Bible”

-Leviticus 17:11

Preacher:
Prof. Ravikant Kant



Special number by E.C. Sunday School



Salvation Army Choir



Synod Mission Choir



He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree.

Convention contd....



Youth Session led by Prof. Ravikant



Men's Session led by Pastor



Women's Session led by Mrs. Lalnunzawmi (Manuni)



Christmas is not as much about opening our presents as opening our hearts to Christ.

Convention contd...



Praise and Worship Team



ATC Male Voice Choir



Masihi Sangati Choir



Some E.C. Events



Admission of new members,
Mr. & Mrs. P. Thangsuanhau
(30.10.16)



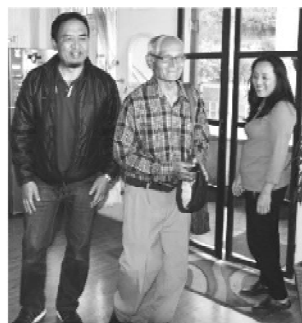
World Sunday School Day
(6.11.16)



Youth Fellowship
(13.11.16)



Pushpak gathering
(13.11.16)



Cottage Meeting at Pastor's residence
(19.11.16)



*God is love. He didn't need us. But he wanted us.
And that is the most amazing thing.*

E.C. HAPPENINGS

I. E.C. Annual Convention (21st - 23rd October 2016) :

The Congregation was privileged to have as its Speaker, Prof. Ravikant Kant, Minister-at-large, Interserve, Pune. The Theme for the Convention, as chosen by the Speaker was: "Blessings of Blood in the Holy Bible." (Leviticus 17:11). The Congregation was spiritually nourished. The Congregation also enjoyed listening to special numbers from different individuals and groups from within and outside E.C.

Fellowship tea was provided by Mr. Harish Bajaj and team on 21st and 22nd after the evening Convention meetings and fellowship lunch and dinner were provided on 23rd after the Sunday Morning Worship Service and before the Final Convention meeting. Different sessions were held on 23rd from 1:30-3pm: Youth Session was led by Convention Speaker, Prof. Ravikant Kant, Women's Session by Mrs. Lalnunzawmi (w/o former EC Pastor Rev. Dr. K. Lalrinkima), Men's Session by EC Pastor, Rev. Dr. H. Vanlalruata.

II. Admission of new members :

Mr. Thangsuanhau and his wife **Mrs. Margaret** were welcomed into the E.C. family on 30.10.16. Pastor spoke a few words of welcome and prayed for them.

III. The Annual Sunday School Final Exam was held on 20.11.16.

IV. Blessing :

The Congregation rejoices with Mr. & Mrs. Rajiv and Kusum Limboo and thanks God for blessing them with a little bundle of joy, a baby girl, their first child, born on 2.12.16, in Shillong.

V. Prayer Requests :

1. Board Exams – Let us uphold the following children in prayer as they appear for Board exams in March 2017- a) **Miss Bathsheba Badding** - Class X, b) **Miss Anisha Ann Daniel** - Class XII, c) **Master Daniel Bajaj** - Class XII.

2. Health – Let us pray for the following people as they face challenges in their health: a) Mrs. Lalhmingmawii (Nuteii), b) Mr. Teju Bahirvani.

SPECIAL PRAYER POINTS :

1. *Our Pastor, his family and ministry.*
 2. *Rev. Kim Sang Soo, his family and ministry.*
 3. *Missionaries/Organizations supported by E.C. :*
 - a) **Mr. Felix John** and family (IEM), and their ministry in Nagpur.
 - b) **Mr. Jacob Rasaily** and family (ICCC), and their ministry in Gangtok.
 - c) **Mr. Ajitkumar Singh** and family (ICCC), and their ministry in Imphal.
 - d) **Rev. S. Nengzakhup** (Executive Director, NECTAR), and his family and ministry in Shillong.
 - e) **Mr. L.H. Kayina** and family (ELIC), and their ministry in China.
 - f) **Mr. Dheeraj Rai** (ICCC), and his ministry in Gangtok.
-

**ANNUAL CONVENTION 2016
SUMMARY OF SERMON NO. 1
BLOOD SACRIFICE**



*Professor Ravikant Kant
Minister-at-large, Interserve, Pune*

The theme verse of the annual convention was Leviticus 17:11. “For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.”

Why is the blood needed?

In Genesis 3 we read that sinless Adam and Eve broke the command given to them in Genesis 2:16,17, and thus committed sin. Sin is lawlessness or the transgression of the law. They ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. As a result they lost their sinless character and innocence.

They realized they were naked. So they made coverings of tree leaves. This speaks of man-made religion to cover their sins. But this does not work.

Sin and death entered their lives. Sin brought separation from the holy God (Isa.59:2; Prov.15:29). Yet the holy God out of His sovereign grace and love made a way. That is atonement, ‘at-one-ment.’

The Holy God Himself sacrificed innocent animals; their blood was shed for atonement for guilty Adam and Eve. Out of their skin the coverings were prepared for them. The blood of sacrificial animals brought the holy God and Adam and Eve “at-one” again. The book of Leviticus describes in detail the animal sacrificial system that is acceptable to our holy God.

However Heb.10:4 states that it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats, as described in the book of Leviticus, to take away sins. The Holy God accepted the blood of a substitute (sacrificial animal) in anticipation of His Son Jesus Christ’s sacrifice on the cross (shedding His blood and death).

We learn from the Holy Bible that God has intense hatred towards sin. The Scripture reveals that God is vigorously opposed to evil in every shape and form, even though it is noted that He is “slow to anger” (Numb. 14:18). “God is angry with the wicked everyday (Ps. 7:11). In the book of Jeremiah God says “... lest My fury come forth like fire and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings” (4:4). Because of His infinite holiness our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29) towards sin and sinners.

Here comes the need for appeasement which is termed ‘propitiation’ in the King James version. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross satisfied the demands of God’s holiness for the punishment of sin. Romans 3:25 speaks of Jesus Christ “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.”

Jesus stands before God as our mediator. His blood sacrifice on the cross satisfied the wrath of God against sin by paying the death penalty for our sin. In His blood we are forgiven and cleansed, and thus reconciled with our holy God.

Reference : 1. Holy Bible (KJV); 2. Holy Bible (NIV); 3. Holy Bible (NLT)

SUMMARY OF SERMON NO. 2**REDEMPTION***Professor Ravikant Kant*

Sin is a subject nobody likes. We do not like to remember our own sins. We do not like it if someone reminds us of our sin. Yet we find that the Holy Bible is not silent about the sins of mankind. It speaks about sins of extremely evil people; sins of God's own people, sins of God's chosen servants and sins of the members of the first century church.

The Bible reveals the universality of sin. After Adam and Eve committed sin by eating the forbidden fruit, the history of mankind openly confesses that wherever human beings are, there is the presence of sin. "The lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time" (Gen 6:5). "Every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood" (Gen 8:21). King David confesses "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Ps. 51:5). "All have sinned" (Rom 3:23).

The holy Bible teaches us that God is holy and His holiness is infinitely great. The prophet Habakkuk talking to the holy God said "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil, you cannot tolerate wrong" (1:13). "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men" (Rom 1:18). Thus the Bible reveals that God's holiness has intense hatred and wrath burning like fire, on sin.

The Bible also shows man's total helplessness against sin. Cain tried to hide his sin of murdering his brother. But he could not hide it. King David tried to hide his sin of adultery and got the husband of the woman killed, yet he did not succeed. The newspapers always bring news of scams and crimes being exposed even though the criminals try their best to hide their evil deeds. The Bible says "you may be sure that your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23).

Human beings are also helpless in getting themselves free from the slavery of sin. Jesus said, 'I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin' (John 8:34). The history of mankind shows the tremendous efforts people have made to be free from sin's power, but in vain. All man-made religions prove the helplessness of man before sin's power.

Seeing this helpless condition of man, the loving God acted in His mercy and provided a remedy. Here is the theme verse of the convention "FOR THE LIFE OF A CREATURE IS IN THE BLOOD, AND I HAVE GIVEN IT TO YOU TO MAKE ATONEMENT FOR YOURSELVES ON THE ALTAR; IT IS THE BLOOD THAT MAKES ATONEMENT FOR ONE'S LIFE" (LEVITICUS 17:11). The most merciful God gave the whole system of animal sacrifice, applying its blood on the altar for forgiveness of sin, in anticipation of Jesus' blood sacrifice with its infinite merit on Calvary's cross. After His resurrection Jesus took His own blood into the Holy of holies in heaven. Now we can always claim the merit of Jesus' blood and by faith receive the forgiveness of sin. Our gracious God always welcomes a repentant sinner. Very graciously our Heavenly Father has made this provision for our redemption.

SUMMARY OF SERMON NO. 3

CLEANSING IN JESUS' BLOOD

Professor Ravikant Kant

A day comes in the life of everyone of us when John 1:12 becomes a reality. "To all who received Him (Jesus), to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12), children born of God. According to 1John 1:9 we received forgiveness of sins and cleansing from all unrighteousness. A day of great rejoicing for us and for heaven.

But this does not mean that sin cannot approach us. What God told Cain in Genesis 4:7 is true for everyone of us: sin is waiting to attack and destroy you. That is why in the garden of Gethsemane Jesus told the disciples, "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26:41). In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus included the petition: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." The reason is this : we have not reached sinless perfection, and Satan never declares ceasefire. "Then the dragon (satan) went off to make war against those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (Revelation 12:17).

We live in a sin-sick world. "For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world." (1Jn 2:16).

So knowingly or unknowingly one can easily slip into sin

When Jesus was washing the feet of His disciples, Peter objected. Jesus said to him, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." Then Peter told Jesus to wash his hands and head also. Jesus responded: "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet, his whole body is clean." (John 13:8-10). Jesus' answer confirms how important it is to be cleansed by His blood quite frequently. Spiritually our feet may get dirty in this sin-sick world.

I John 1:7 is an important verse: "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin." The choice is with us: Live in the light or live in the darkness.

Light is Truth and Fear of God. Darkness is Falsehood and Sin. When we live in divine light (Heb 4:12; Ps. 119:105) it exposes sin or failure if any. Then we go to I John 1:9, confess sin/failure, and receive forgiveness and cleansing in the blood of Jesus. Then our fellowship with Jesus is restored and so our fellowship with fellow-brethren. Our relationship with God is unbreakable. But fellowship with God can be interrupted. Hence we need constant cleansing by the blood of Jesus.

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. 1:5,6).

SUMMARY OF SERMON NO. 4

RECONCILIATION IN THE BLOOD OF JESUS

Reconciliation is restoration of a right relationship between God and man through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the process by which God made sinful people acceptable to Himself. The other term used is PEACE WITH GOD. "The punishment that brought us peace was upon Him (Jesus)" – Isaiah 53:5. Rom. 5:1 says, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us see 4 aspects of reconciliation:

1. Plan of Reconciliation
2. Means of Reconciliation
3. Aim of Reconciliation
4. Evidence of Reconciliation

PLAN OF RECONCILIATION:

God's ultimate plan for the universe is to reconcile all things to Himself through Jesus' blood shed on the cross. At creation: "it was very good" (Gen.1:31). It was marred by sin. This affected the entire creation - subjected to frustration and bondage to decay (Rom. 8:20,21) - has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth (Rom. 8:22).

For Human beings: On our own we could never reconcile ourselves with our holy God. In Rom. 5:6-10 the apostle Paul gives 4 reasons:

- i) Lack of Strength : "We were still powerless" (v. 6)
- ii) Lack of Merit: We were "ungodly" (v.6)
- iii) Lack of righteousness: "We were still sinners" (v.8).
- iv) Lack of Peace with God: "We were God's enemies" (v.10).

It is only through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, that reconciliation is made possible.

THE MEANS OF RECONCILIATION:

"Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself" (Col 1:20).

In the Old Testament sacrificial system, the sacrificial animal suffered a violent death. Similarly Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb, suffered a violent blood-shedding death by being nailed to the cross. Difference is: In the Old Testament, the sacrificial animal bled to death. Jesus willingly laid down His life. "Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit My spirit.' When He had said this, He breathed His last." (Luke 23:46).

THE AIM OF RECONCILIATION:

"Now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation" (Col.1:22).

Holy means, separated from sin and set apart to God. "Chose us in Him to be holy and blameless in His sight" (Eph. 1:4).

Reconciliation gives us a blameless character - like the spotless Lamb of God. No one can bring a charge against us (Rom 8:33).

THE EVIDENCE OF RECONCILIATION:

Christians give evidence of being truly reconciled when they "continue in the faith, established and firm" (Col. 1:23). Because of reconciliation "we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus" (Heb 10:19).

Jesus Christ is our peace. Peace with God is purchased at the price of Jesus' blood. Peace with God brings peace between man and man. This is the only way to bring peace in our torn world.

**ANNUAL CONVENTION 2016
SUMMARY OF SERMON NO. 5**

ADDRESSING THE YOUTH

Professor Ravikant Kant

I) Many young people present in the meeting did not have assurance of salvation. So John 1:11, 12 was presented to them.

v.11 He (Lord Jesus) came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.

v.12 Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

In the Christian community several people are in verse 11. They have never invited Jesus into their lives.

People in verse 12 have invited Jesus into their lives and so have assurance. They have the right to be children of God. They are forgiven of their sins. They are washed in the blood of Jesus.

II) **READING THE HOLY BIBLE:**

Many Christian young people are not in the habit of reading The Bible.

Suggestion:

Start with devoting 15 minutes every day to read the Bible and Pray.

Let 15 minutes be 1 unit of time.

1 hour = 4 units

24 hours = 96 units in one day.

Since you call yourself Christian, you take Christ's Name on you. Out of 96 units in a day give 1 unit to sit in Christ's presence (by faith) and read the Bible and pray. Discipline Yourself.

III) Time management is life management. Length of life is measured in years, months, days. These are measure of time. Time is highly perishable. One cannot store time to use it later.

Use it or loose it. Time lost in doing nothing or doing unproductive activity means that much life is lost. So use your time/life profitably. Plan your day well.

IV) Commit your life to Jesus. Allow Him to make your career. Think of Peter, the fisherman fishing in the sea of Galilee. He became very prosperous in the fishing business. But one day Jesus came along the shore and invited Peter to follow Him to become His disciple. Peter agreed and leaving the fishing business, committed His life to the Lord Jesus. Jesus made his life great though he had little education and Peter was awarded as an apostle. The day came when in the capital city, Jerusalem, he stood before a crowd of thousands of people. He addressed them and the Holy Spirit applied his speech to 3000 people who committed their lives to Christ. Peter became a strong pillar of the first church.

If you commit your life to Jesus, He can take you to greater heights than what you can do by yourself, with your life.

From the Net

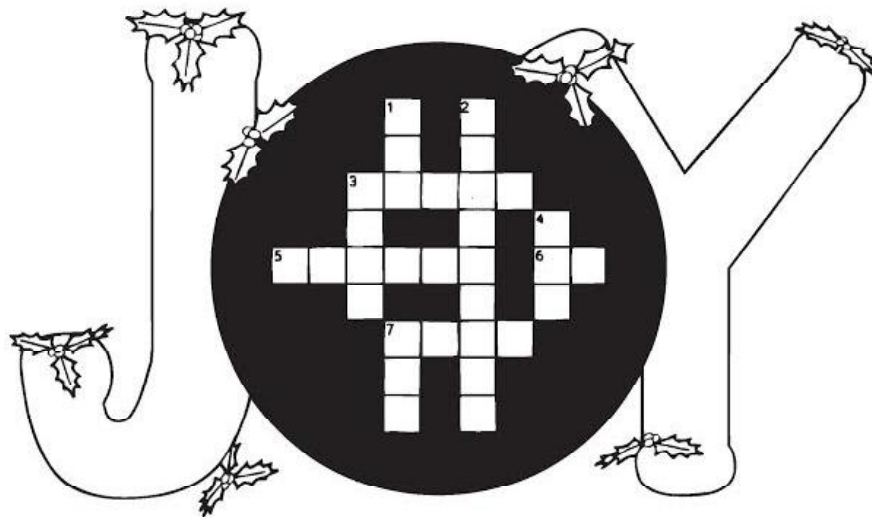


Contributed by Jaison Joshy

Luke 2:1 – 12



The Birth of Jesus



Across

3. In verse 9 the shepherds saw an "____ of the Lord."
5. "____ also went up from ... Nazareth" is in verse 4.
6. The word after "because" in verse 4 is _____.
7. "And there ____ shepherds" is from verse 8.

Down

1. "Room for them in the ____" is in verse 7.
2. "____" were watching their flocks in verse 8.
3. The third word in verse 4 is _____.
4. "He is Christ ____ Lord" is in verse 11.
7. The fourth to the last word in verse 2 is ____.



(Jaison has been part of E.C. for a long time and is now doing his M.Tech in Computer Science in National Institute of Technology, Arunachal Pradesh.)

ATTENTION!

The English Congregation meets every Sunday for Worship at 10 a.m. in the English Congregation Church building, within the Synod Office compound, at Mission Veng.
ALL ARE WELCOME!

Editorial Team : Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad, Mrs. Nimmi Joseph, Ms. Lavi Joseph, Mr. Jaison Joshy
Website : www.eccaizawl.in