

Rx

*Recipes
for
Living a Happy
Life*

Timothy Tow



*Recipes
for
Living a Happy
Life*

Recipes for Living a Happy Life

© 1999 by Timothy Tow

Published by
Far Eastern Bible College Press
9A Gilstead Road, Singapore 309063
Republic of Singapore

ISBN: 981-04-1853-1

Cover Design by Charles Seet.

Contents

FOREWORD	4
REFLECTIONS OF THE GENTING FAMILY BIBLE CAMP	6
CHAPTER I	
I MUST MAKE 100 PER CENT SURE THAT I WILL GO TO HEAVEN WHEN I DIE	9
CHAPTER II	
THE SECRET OF A BLISSFUL MARRIED LIFE	21
CHAPTER III	
TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT JOB AND USE IT FOR THE GLORY OF GOD	32
JOHN SUNG SERMON ON “THE UNFATHOMABLE GRACE OF GOD” (II King Ch. 7)	43

FOREWORD

This booklet contains three messages that were delivered under the theme “*Recipes for Living a Happy Life*” by our beloved Pastor at Life Church Bible Camp, Genting View, September 6-10, 1993. As I was Camp Master I can vouch that the 170 campers participating were immensely blessed. I thank God for the privilege of writing this Foreword.

This booklet is designed not only to bring to remembrance the lessons we had learned in Camp, but also with the purpose of sharing them with a wider Christian readership. Herein you will discover what are the secrets of “*Recipes for Living a Happy Life*” from one who finds increasing happiness and youthfulness through 43 years in the Lord’s Service. “*Happiness is the Lord.*”

In view of the fact that Dr John Sung who brought Revival Blessings to Singapore in the thirties was frequently mentioned, and his Revival Choruses were sung, we append a John Sung Sermon after the three *Recipe* messages.

Maranatha.

Eric Mahadevan

Happiness Is The Lord

*Happiness is to know the Saviour,
Living a life within His favour,
Having a change in my behaviour,
Happiness is the Lord.*

*Happiness is a new creation,
Jesus and me in close relation,
Having a part in His salvation,
Happiness is the Lord.*

*Real joy is mine, no matter if teardrops start,
I've found the secret — It's Jesus in my heart.*

*Happiness is to be forgiven,
Living a life that's worth the living,
Taking a trip that leads to heaven,
Happiness is the Lord.*

REFLECTIONS OF THE GENTING FAMILY BIBLE CAMP

September 6-10, '93 proved to be a time of spiritual refreshment and revival at the Genting View Resort for 170 campers from Life Church English and Chinese services, and Far Eastern Bible College. All had come from diverse backgrounds and countries but all were gathered in one accord to seek the Lord just like David, a man after God's own heart.

To be a man after God's heart, one must first cultivate an intimate relationship with God (Matthew 6:33). And so the days began with personal quiet time followed by a daily, hour-long morning devotion led by Deacon Jack Sin, Deacon Yiew Pong Sen and Mr Das Koshy respectively. Dn Sin expounded on having a mind to work (Nehemiah 4:6,15), a heart to pray (Nehemiah 4:4) and an eye to watch (Nehemiah 4:9). Dn Yiew impressed upon us the urgency of preaching the gospel and the significance of missions in church growth (Romans 1:13-17). Mr Koshy shared from his personal counselling experiences with church members on how Christians ought to respond to life's problems.

The daily, hour-and-a-half theme messages on *David -- A Man After God's Own Heart* were expounded by Mr Quek Suan Yew, our camp speaker, from I and II Samuel. These messages were based on the life of David, which spanned from his running years as a fugitive from Saul to his promotion to king of Israel and the reigning years that followed. David was God's darling as he always inquired of the Lord decisions he had to make in his life (II Samuel 2:1, I Samuel 13:14). David kept closest to God during his fugitive days as seen by

the numerous psalms penned by him. Today, the Psalms is the most read book of the Bible. It is a balm to the weary, caught in life's treacherous and laborious journey.

Running concurrently was the Chinese service whereby sermons also based on David were preached to the congregation consisting mainly of elderly men and women. If energy is a fair measure of one's age, they certainly do not look their years with their enthusiasm in the studying of God's Word. Most of the sermons were targeted at reassuring their faith in Christ.

Afternoons were left free for the campers' leisure and recreation. Together with late suppers, the camp also provided an excellent opportunity for fellowship.

Evening messages were delivered by Rev Tow in English and admirably translated into Mandarin or Hokkien by Preacher Ng Sang Chiew of Kelapa Sawit (also an FEBC graduate). The theme of the evening messages was *Recipes For Living A Happy Life*. The three essential ingredients of a happy life are assurance of salvation, the secrets of a successful marriage and career. These truths, though simple yet essential, are often forgotten in our own lives. Over the three nights, the congregation was captivated by pastor's sermons through many amusing anecdotes. One of the highlights of the Camp was also pastor's publication, *Born Again in the Singapore Pentecost*. It was rushed off the press for the campers' benefit.

Being at the evening meetings was partly like having stepped into the time machine - singing John Sung Revival Choruses and listening to the preaching of Dr John Sung and Miss Leona Wu at the 1935 Revival Meetings in the Telok Ayer Methodist Church. Perhaps, Rev Tow's preaching differed from Dr Sung's allegorical and dramatic style, but one thing they do share is the meeting of minds and souls wrought in "one consuming passion to save souls" (page 20, *Born Again*). As Pastor challenged us to check if we were 100 per cent born again, we felt the power of the Holy Ghost convicting many souls of their sins and moving many to repentant

tears. With the resounding of John Sung Revival Choruses and the release of the Pentecostal power, immense assurance immediately welled in the hearts of both the old and young (Titus 3:5).

The testimony hour was dramatic and unforgettable. Many shared unreservedly how they were ministered by the messages and many more FEBC students publicly reconsecrated their lives for the Lord. How many more will heed the Master's call to serve Him in the Lord's army? May the Pentecostal power be with these missionaries wherever they will be sent.

Reminiscing the moments up the mountain and penning these thoughts now, I thank God for the knowledge of our rich heritage which has helped me to appreciate Life B-P Church for what she is today. "Indeed, the spirit and vitality of the B-P Church has stemmed in great measure from the Singapore Pentecost of 1935" (page 22, *Born Again*). If the walls of Life B-P Church echo to great men of God such as John Sung and John Calvin, shouldn't Lifers also strive to be men and women after God's own heart in order that we may be "lively stones (that) are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5)? Amen.

- *Lim Meng Kean*

CHAPTER I

I MUST MAKE 100 PER CENT SURE THAT I WILL GO TO HEAVEN WHEN I DIE

The general topic of my messages is *Recipes for Living a Happy Life*. In view of the fact that there are three evenings available for me, I can deliver only three messages that are most basic.

The first one is *I Must Make 100 Per Cent Sure That I Will Go To Heaven When I Die*.

The second important topic is *The Secret of a Blissful Married Life*.

The third one is *To Choose the Right Career so That I May Glorify God by It*.

Recipes for Living a Happy Life — the introductory recipe is to come to this Genting Resort. If you don't come here you don't get the Recipes! The second introductory recipe is the person who speaks to you must be a happy person. If the person speaking to you is a sad person, then I'd use a John Sung illustration. Somebody was selling, "Hair restorer! Hair restorer! Mine is the sure cure!" But then he was wearing a hat, like me, until some naughty boy pulled away the hat and he was *botak* (bald headed)!

I have been your pastor the last 43 years. As the years go by I'm getting happier and happier. And when you are getting happier and happier, you get younger and younger! Well, this is to testify to some of you who are feeling the call of God and you say, "I don't think I can get into this sort of a job." I can testify to you, if you serve Him

He will serve you because He says, “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:30).

Now, to make 100 per cent sure I’ll go to heaven when I die. Go to the street and ask anyone, “What will happen to you when you die?”

“Why worry? Die, die, finish!”

I spoke to my two contractor friends. Both of them give me the same answer: After men die, that’s the end, so why worry?

It’s interesting to hear this reply not only from the man in the street, but also from the mouths of scientists and great men. I heard it on the BBC. There were two scientists discussing life. Both of them concluded that life is an accident. That’s the philosophy of the evolutionists, those who believe that men come from monkeys or apes. After all, we are like the animals; the monkey dies, the dog dies, we die. That is the answer of those who are called “materialists.” And the communists are materialists.

Recently, there was a brother from a university from China, who stayed with us in Beulah House. After reading the Bible for 40 days and nights, he wanted to become a Christian. Thank God for this communist officer in the university, he was soundly converted, he was born again, he found the Lord Jesus. And I asked him, “When you were a communist, did you ever think about life and death? Do you people discuss this?”

“Well, we just take it for granted. Life is like that, so we don’t look to the future. We are all the time struggling for the present.”

Tonight, what do you say about it, when you leave this world, when you die. What will happen to you? Have you ever considered this? I can remember as a boy, whenever I read about death or saw a coffin pass by, I’d be greatly exercised in my heart. I felt so sad, why must a man die? Now, that’s a very wise question. That’s what the Bible says: It’s better to go to the house where there’s a funeral and not go to a house where there’s a wedding (Ecclesiastes 7:2). So this

is a very important question to discuss, coming to this camp. If we come here and indulge in a lot of beautiful thoughts, but never touch on the ugly ones, we have missed the point. The Bible tells us that after you die, there are only two ways: You either go down or go up. There is only one heaven and also one hell. We must find the way to go to heaven.

Jesus tells a story of two men who died. One was a very rich man, the other was a beggar. The beggar always got food at the doorstep of the rich man, who threw it down to the dogs to eat. Both of them died. The rich man when he died, found himself in hell where there was fire burning him and he was crying. But when the beggar died, he went to heaven, to paradise.

Well, why did the rich man go to hell? The communists will say because he was rich, that's why he got the punishment. No, the Bible says that he did not believe the gospel. In the Old Testament the gospel was given by Moses. This man was a Jew, he did not listen to the word of Moses. The beggar went to heaven not because he was poor, but because he believed the gospel.

Tonight is a very crucial time in your life. Some of you are relatives of members of this camp. Perhaps you have not heard the gospel before. Or you might have heard quite a lot but somehow you just put it aside, "Wait till tomorrow." But the Bible says, "Now is the accepted time" (II Corinthians 6:2). If I were you, I'd make very sure I am on the coach to heaven, and not being left out. So I pray that after the service is over, when we conclude in prayer, you will say in your heart, "Oh, Lord, I want to be saved."

The Bible tells us that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrew 9:27). The judgment is to put you into the proper place. In our country the judgment is usually to put you into prison or put you to the gallows (according to your crime).

Well, the next point is some will agree, yes, after you die there is heaven and hell. But I must do my best to go to heaven. That is actually answering to the natural law. Because when God created us,

He created us “in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24). And God said we are to obey Him. When we disobey Him, then we die. So to do good to go to heaven is the reflection of the natural law in our heart. Especially with the Jews who receive the law of God, so they think that by keeping the law, and giving charity, they can go to heaven.

That’s my idea too. I somehow concluded that if I could get 51 per cent, I would go to heaven. I discussed this with my sister. If the balance is a bit in my favour, then I have done good enough, I can go. That’s the idea of the Buddhists. When I was in Bangkok I met a lot of Buddhist people: “We’re doing some charity to accumulate merits to go to heaven.” Not only the monks are trying to do good, but the people also. Every time they give food to the poor, to the monks, they earn some merit to go to heaven. But then the Bible tells us not 51 per cent can qualify for heaven. The Bible says, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). Everyone of us gets a duck’s egg! (zero).

So please do not think, after all I’m a good woman, I’m a good man. I’m a gentleman, for I’ve not killed anyone nor set fire to a house. I pay my bills and I do my best for my children and grandchildren. Surely God will take me in. I discovered that I failed totally. I could not go to heaven by my trying to be good. So let us make very sure.

Some people say, so long as you have faith. I’ve met quite a few ladies who said to me the same thing. This lady said “I come from the Anglican Church and you from the BP Church, never mind, so long as we have faith.” But you ask her, “What do you mean by so long as you have faith, or you have some sort of belief?” They are not able to tell you. They usually say, “Well, I believe there is a God.” But James says that the devils believe that there is a God and they tremble (James 2:19). If you believe that there is a God in this universe, you believe no more than what the devils believe.

John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son Jesus, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” So you say, “I believe that Jesus is the Son of God and Saviour of the world.” Again, the devils believe that Jesus is the Son of God. In Mark 5, there was a man who was filled with devils in his heart who lived in the tombs. When Jesus came along, he cried, “Jesus, thou Son of God, why do you come and torment us?” They also recognise that Jesus is the Son of God. To believe that there is a God and Jesus is the Son of God is not enough, because you have not been fully embedded in the true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Are you like that?

Then there are those who say, “But I’m baptised.” It’s good if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you must be baptised. But there are those who come in and join the catechism class and are baptised, who still have no saving experience or knowledge. It is baptism by convenience. There was one who asked me, “Pastor, will you marry me?” I said, “You don’t belong to this church.”:

“All right, I want to join your church, I want to be baptised.”

He wants you to marry him so they will live forever happily after, and goodbye! We’ve testimonies of those who later on got converted, born again, who confessed that at the time they were baptised they really were not saved.

Some people come to be baptised but they say our church uses too little water. So to get a fuller protection, “I’ll go to the Baptist church and get immersed.” I’m all for immersion if they are Baptists. But Presbyterians, we keep to ours, there’s no difference.

This is a true story. An American friend of mine, so many years ago returned from the war. He said to me, “Before I went to Europe to fight in the Second World War, I went specially to the Baptist Church to be immersed, because I felt that when I was totally immersed in the water then my whole body was protected. I went to war with a good feeling that I was cleansed by the holy water, and I thought I was fully protected.” But when he was in a foxhole in Italy

and the bombs were crashing down, the shrapnels, the bullets, he looked up to the Lord and prayed, “Oh, Lord, save me.” “Only that time I got saved. Before I had some sort of a superstition.”

I’ve got people who asked me, “Please baptise my son that he may recover from the sickness.” There are people who want to go and study abroad. They feel that by getting baptised, they would be better protected than buying insurance at the airport. Well, I think it’s a bit better, but not very much better. The important thing is that you are baptised inside and not outside.

Let us examine ourselves. I said to an old lady, “You are advancing in age, can you tell me when the Lord comes, whether you will go to heaven or not?” Oh, she thought for about three minutes that seemed to be an hour. She said, “To tell you the truth. I hope for the best. Only when my eyes close will I know whether I’ll go up or down.”

I believe that’s the mentality of some of us here. We are not very sure, and we are hoping for the best. But our faith is not a hope-so salvation, it’s a know-so salvation. We should know it. That is why it says here, “To Make 100% Sure I’ll Go to Heaven When I Die.” Then there are some who say that they have made some decision in order that they may be saved to go to heaven. These are given in the Bible in John 2:23. There were many people who saw Jesus’ miracles, and having seen these miracles they believed. But the Bible says that while they believed Jesus, Jesus didn’t believe them. Jesus did not commit Himself to them. That is to say He had no confidence in their belief. Jesus is God and He sees right through our heart. And He says He need not anyone come and say, “Ah, Sir, wonderful! I believe in you.” You tell Him that you believe, but Jesus says, “To tell you the truth, you don’t really believe Me.”

Today, there are many who follow those who are preaching an erroneous gospel. They stress on miracles. In Singapore there is an evangelist who made a most sensational invitation to his meeting: “Come to my *Miracle Rally!??*” But he could do it only once in

Singapore, because many people criticised him. So he went to Medan. In Medan where our boys are - Haposan and so forth - they keep track on him. Then they told me that guy was coming again. Well, I think Singaporeans are a little more intelligent than Indonesians. No, no, no, not that. In Singapore we know him, the Indonesians in Medan do not know him.

So they go everywhere saying, “Heal! Heal! There is one having cancer now walking into the stadium.” Of course, there are some people with cancer walking into the stadium. And some of them would even say “I am healed.” This happened in America. They discovered the fraud. But the fact is that most of these who went had some headache or backache. When there was excitement and they began to sweat a little, by the time they sweated it out, the headache had gone! So they say they are healed. Make-belief. Then they say, oh, I believe in Jesus. But Jesus says this sort of faith is emotional. It cannot save you.

Thus Jesus comes in John 3. He says if you say that you believe Him, you must have proof. The test is that you must be born again. Let me ask you tonight: Are you born again? Not as the Buddhists say that when you do good you will be reborn better; if you do bad, you will be reborn worse. If you are a man, you do bad, next time you will be born into a woman. Well, that’s what they say. And if you are a woman, you do bad, next time you will be born into a pig. That’s all in the Buddhist philosophy. If you don’t believe me go to the Tiger Balm Garden, they have all these: 18 hells to go through and finally there is a wheel of fate where you are born again into animal or man or woman.

No. Jesus said, “When I say you must be born again, it is not to be a baby again, born of the flesh. No. You must be born of the Spirit. Your heart must be totally converted, changed. Because if you are not born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.” So that’s a good test for members of our church. Can you imagine that in 1935 when Dr John Sung came to Singapore to conduct a revival campaign, none of us had a Bible? I was 15 years old, I lived in the

church. I could give the excuse that since there were so many Bibles in the church, I need not own one! But we never read the Bible because we were not born again. A man who is not born again cannot see, he is blind. He is not only blind, but deaf as well.

Many years ago, I had a pianist who played for me. She told my brother, “Your brother’s sermon, I can’t understand anything.” She could not appreciate my sermons. She could not see, nor could she hear! If you are born again, you will not only see and hear but also speak. When the Lord blesses you, do you know what you will say? You will say, “Praise the Lord!” Have you ever said, “Praise the Lord!”? “Thank you Lord!”? You should speak vertically, not horizontally. You praise the Lord.

There was an assistant pastor to Life Church many years ago. He was very proud of himself because he was a good writer. He criticised every preacher. He even criticised St Paul. He said St Paul made a mistake because he shaved his head. Oh, I got very angry within me when he criticised the Bible and the apostle. One day I brought him to task. I said, “You are my assistant pastor, you stay in this hostel, I never hear you say anything vertically but all of the time horizontally. You criticise everybody. Now I challenge you one thing. Did I ever hear you say once “Praise the Lord and thank the Lord?” Now, that’s a good test. A heart filled with the Spirit praises the Lord.

We must be born again to be able to see, to hear, to praise the Lord. And except you be born of water and the Spirit! The water is the water of the Holy Spirit. In Greek, the conjunction “be born of water *and* the spirit” can be translated “be born of water, *even* the Spirit”, that is the water of the Spirit.

But John Sung said something that was very true, too. “Born of water” means also that one is baptised in tears of repentance. We so often forget the other side of the coin. To believe is also to repent. The apostles told the 3,000 whose hearts were pricked: “**Repent** and be baptised.” In Acts 20, the apostle is recorded as saying, “We are to

repent to God and have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” This is a very good test, whether we have turned away from our old ways. We used to scold bad words, foul words in the market. Now we repent. Do we use the same bad words? Before you were a chain-smoker, now you believe. Do you still keep on smoking?

I thank God that my father was an elder of a Presbyterian church. But he always asked me to buy cigarettes for him. I know all the brands — Craven A, 555, Rough Rider. Now my father got born again that night. When he came home — we were living in a church, my grandfather was pastor there — my father who was a very strict man, looked very sheepish. He looked like a boy going to see the principal. He said, “Come, all my children, come and see me do something.” He got out a parcel wrapped in old Chinese newspapers. He opened it and made a bonfire of his cigarettes and Chinese tobacco in that parcel. He said, “I am born again, hearing Dr John Sung.” He had tried to stop smoking for many months by taking peppermint sweets. But it did not work. When you are born again, you repent, and you turn away from your sins.

There was an old elder of Glory Church in Bukit Timah. This old man and all his sons, daughters-in-law, the whole family, were saved. The eldest son told me, “When my father got born again that night, he went home and brought all his Hennessey and brandies and smashed them in the drain. All the cigarettes he also threw into the drain. He never drank nor smoke again.” This is the best testimony. Have you read *Born Again in the Singapore Pentecost*? I need not tell you extra. You want to read *John Sung, My Teacher*; the whole book, now.

One rich man came to the revival meetings with his three wives and all the children. He and the three wives and all the children got saved, the whole house. His name was Gan Beng Teck. He divided all the property. He paid off his second wife, third wife. He gave the business to his eldest son. His business was in Telok Ayer Street. And he went preaching the gospel. He was soundly converted. We really went through a Holy Spirit revival.

Now, I tell you my experience of being born again. I was so excited about coming to this Resort, what could I do for this camp? It's no joke coming here and not contributing anything. So I got this booklet *Born Again in the Singapore Pentecost* published to tell you the story of how I got born again. If you are born again through reading this book, you will be happy to say, well, now I have the confidence.

We went to the John Sung Revival Meetings and the first sermon I heard, it pricked my heart. At the second service, the message was "Ye must be born again." Now I never heard of the words "born again", never in my life. There may be some here who have never heard of "born again." If you are not born again, you will not go to heaven. Now, I was bowing my head there, very nervous. I saw the evangelist was calling for sinners, and Pastor Chew Hock Hin of the Methodist Church was there also. They were crying out, "Who wants to be saved, come to the front." So I reluctantly walked up the front. Then Dr John Sung asked us, "Do you commit these sins?" He named them one by one: Do you worship idols? Have you disobeyed your parents? Have you stolen anything from your friends? Have you cheated in class? Do you go to the cinema? Have you done bad things in secret? Have you told lies? Do you play mahjong? Do you smoke? Do you gamble? Have you borrowed books without intention of returning them and they are now on your shelves?" I felt so miserable. Then Satan said, "You are a good boy, never mind. Your grandfather is a pastor. You live in the church. You were baptised when you were a baby. Now you are taking the Lord's Supper and you attend every service. You have been trying your best to do good, right?" I did not want to confess that I was a lost sinner because I'd this too beautiful a face, I did not want to lose it. I thank God when I was bowing my head there, with all the struggle inside — Satan was on this side trying to keep me away. But on the other side, the voice of the Holy Spirit said, "But you are not born again; but you are not born again; but you are not born again." Then my brother Siang Yew (he is now in glory) surrendered to the Lord and put up his hand. But my hand was very heavy. So he looked at me and he nudged me. One

blow from his side, and my hand went up! That was the happiest moment of my life. That was the moment I was born again. Oh, I was so happy to know that all my sins were now forgiven, through this wonderful hymn, “In the Cross”! I had often prayed to the Lord, “Lord, forgive me.” But I never had the experience that my sins were forgiven. Do you know that your sins are really forgiven? This time I knew that my sins were forgiven because the Holy Spirit brought me to the Lord, there dying on the cross for my sins. As we sang the chorus, “All my sins are washed away,” ah! I felt all my sins were washed away indeed. The first time I experienced this, the joy of salvation!

How can you be sure of going to heaven? You must be born again. “Except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” This is a most vital question. There are many other things that I would like to speak to you. And many of these doctrines maybe you also know. But somehow it’s head knowledge. You may be a Calvinist and say, “I know all these doctrines.” And you may say also, “I’m elect.” I tell you, many who said they were elect, were lost. The Jews were riding on the fact that “we are the chosen race.” But Jesus said, “Except you bring forth fruits of repentance. Now is the axe laid at the root of the tree. You will be cut off. God can raise up from the stones children of Abraham.”

Well, I have the assurance that many of us here are born again. But there is a proportion, no matter what, who are not born again. If you have not gone through the water of the Holy Spirit that washes you and brings you to the foot of the cross where you see Jesus bleeding His precious blood for you, you are still not born again.

I pray that you be born again tonight. It is so easy because Jesus said, “The wind blows where it likes.” In my case, I received the Holy Spirit like, the power of the monsoon wind. But now the breeze is coming in very gently. If the word I’ve spoken has touched your heart, then there is only one more step. You must say yes to our Lord. Confess your sins to the Lord and say, “Lord, I want you to cleanse

me and save me to the uttermost.” Then you are born again. You won’t quarrel with your husband, you won’t quarrel with your wife. You won’t be like my father who was always smoking. You are born again, you have a new life. Then you are a very happy person. Oh, how wonderful to live on earth, as it is in heaven, according to the song we sang. Now we are carried along by the power of the Holy Spirit. We also have His seal in our hearts. Romans 8:16 tells us that the Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirit, that we are the children of God. As I pray, you say yes to the Lord with a repenting heart. You will be born again, you will be sure of your salvation, 100 per cent.

CHAPTER II

THE SECRET OF A BLISSFUL MARRIED LIFE

The second message is to find out the secret of a blissful married life. For our text let me read Proverbs 18:22: “Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing and obtaineth favour of the Lord.” Proverbs 19:14 says: “House and riches are the inheritance of the fathers, and a prudent wife is from the Lord.”

My message is to find out the secret. That is to say I’m not here to give you the final answer. There must be something mysterious about it, that’s why we say it is a secret. Marriage is a very deep mystery. Marriage can be very easy, and it can be very difficult.

When marriage is very easy, it is likened to a whirlwind. It comes over you and blows you off your feet. You are overthrown! Let me speak from my own experience. It was “love at first sight.” Well, I’ll leave you at that ... ! I was very young. Then the Lord took away Nancy in the year 1965. And it was on an Easter Monday afternoon.

I was married again in July 1966, 15 months after that. For that reason many of you want to read my biography. Well, it must be a closely-guarded secret! That’s for effect, and my biography hasn’t come out yet. But I can tell you something about my first three students. They were Sang Chiew, Ivy and Eddy Chan. Of the three students, Ivy was one who asked me a question at the outset. She said, “Pastor, for us girls to study Bible college, what are our prospects?” Because many of her friends began to ridicule her,

“You’ll be an old maid, etc, etc.” Well, I said, “If you are humble, and do all the duty assignments, mopping the floor and polishing the church furniture, God will surely use you one day.” How did I know I was going to marry her? Marriage is a multi-mysterious mystery!

Every nation has her sayings about marriage. The English say marriages are made in heaven. The Chinese have a saying that marriages are arranged by the man under the moon. Both believe in some sort of predestination.

Let us look at Ecclesiastes 3. Ecclesiastes 3:2 says, “There is a season for everything under heaven, a time to be born, a time to die.” When you were born, right to the last minute, it was predestined. And when you are to die is also predestined. You can’t escape one second. Look at Ecclesiastes 8:8, “There is no man that has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, neither has he power in the day of death.” NIV translates it thus, “No man has power over the wind to contain it; so no one has power over the day of his death.” No one can prolong his life. When death comes, no one avoid it.

How about marriage? It’s also given in Ecclesiastes, at 3:5b, “... a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing.” So marriage is also predestined. If it comes, and it is the will of the Lord, it comes like a whirlwind. You are knocked off your feet. Suddenly you realise you are a different person altogether.

On the other hand, it is also very difficult, as I have observed in my pastoral duties. Like the whirlwind that comes without your knowing, marriage may be lying inert like the doldrums. Doldrums means very still, where the sea is calm, and there is no wind. In olden days all ships depended on the sail. So they say the boat set sail. They had to put up the sail when the wind blew. Now, sometimes the wind might not come for a week. No ship, big or small, could move. Marriage is also like that.

Is there any Scripture on such a situation? Let us turn to Matthew 19. This refers to men and not women. But by application, it involves also ladies. Here in Matthew 19:10-12: “His disciples say unto him,

If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

Of men there are some who are born not to be married. Well, this is for a physical reason. But it may be for a spiritual reason. Now here's a confirmed bachelor. This young man is getting older, and we are rather worried for him. Though some would like to play honorary matchmaker, somehow it doesn't work. Maybe God had predestined him that he would not marry. But there are some who are very shameful, who lose their manhood just to get a high job in the palace. This you see in the movie, "The Last Emperor."

Jesus hinted there is a third class of people who are not married for the gospel's sake. We thank God for the Apostle Paul. He did not get married. Some scholars think perhaps Paul had married but when the wife died he remained a widower, till the end of his life. We can think of other examples of men, who, because they were so sold-out to the gospel, they remained unmarried. One such person is none other than William Chalmers Burns, "grandfather" of Bible-Presbyterians. We thank God that the Gospel came to China, to Swatow (Santou) and to Amoy (Xiamen) through him. These two places are from where our ancestors came to Singapore. They got the gospel from William Burns, who first went to Hong Kong in the year 1847. If he did not preach in Swatow and Amoy we won't be Christians today.

We have an example of an unmarried servant of God in the Old Testament, in Jeremiah 16. Let us read Jeremiah 16:1, "The word of the Lord came also unto me, saying, "Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place."

Jeremiah had a girlfriend. That was very obvious. He was thinking of getting married. There is nothing wrong. If a prophet can get married, why can't the Roman Catholic priests get married? If Peter had a wife, why do the Roman Catholics, who say that Peter was the first Pope, deny marriage to their priests? Does it mean that if you are a prophet you cannot get married? Now God said to Jeremiah, "You don't get married," He said this for a very special reason. War was coming and the children that were born during this period would all be killed. God knew it was a better future for Jeremiah that he should not be encumbered with a family. Even so, the Lord Jesus Christ said to the women of Jerusalem when He was going to the cross. All the women were weeping for Jesus. But Jesus said, "Don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves because war is coming to Jerusalem. Blessed are they who are not married and who will not have children and have to take care of them (Luke 23:28,29). So there are special periods when it is required of us that we should not be married.

Jeremiah is a case for men. Does it apply to girls, to women? If God has predestinated that men are not to marry, don't you think that it also concerns women? Maybe the Lord did not intend for you to get married. Does that mean you will be lonely and miserable?

Why did Jesus pay frequent visits to Bethany? It is a very special house. There is no married couple there. Only big sister Martha and younger sister Mary, and brother Lazarus. The Bible tells us that they all love the Lord Jesus, and the Lord Jesus loves them. That's why when Lazarus died, Jesus came, although four days late, to work out His glory. Once Jesus did say, "Martha, Martha, you are very busy, you are encumbered with many things. But Mary has the better part, she is receiving all the Word that I preach to her." Does it mean that the two sisters were not on good terms? Though not married, they teamed up together to help one another. Being unmarried their hearts were more devoted to the Lord, which is described in I Corinthians 7. That long chapter of 40 verses is a classic exposition of the married

life and the single life. If God determined for us to be single, we are none the worse. Like Martha and Mary.

Now, we come to those who were married, but are now become singles again. I'm sorry to tell you that Singapore is going the way of the West. In America, when I was there 40-odd years ago, the rate of divorce was one in three. Now the ratio is one in two. The same with England, the same with Australia. In Israel, it is one in three. In Singapore it may be one in ten or nine. In another two years, it may be one in eight. Another one or two more years, it could be one in seven. This I should know because I am a deputy registrar of marriage.

Now, one elder wanted to test my theological knowledge: "Doesn't the Bible say that except for adultery, there can be no divorce?" I said yes, the Bible does say, but Jesus also said that because of the hardness of the heart divorce was granted. Moses in Deuteronomy 24 allows them to have divorce other than adultery in order to accommodate and to make the best out of a bad situation. But now the law goes lower and lower. The fastest place you can get a divorce in the world is Tokyo — five minutes. The Mohameddians have even a higher speed of divorce. They can marry four wives. But when the husband says, "I divorce you, I divorce you, I divorce you," the wife is divorced.

Divorces are getting from bad to worse! We have troubles in Life Church also. One young lady told me her husband was now going with his secretary in the office. So I replied, "Will you forgive your husband if he comes back?" "Oh, I need to have him back very much." She was a gentle lady and she said she seldom argued with her husband. "This is a very good sign," I said, "you've got some hope." (I advise you, young ladies, don't argue with your husband.) The more you argue, the more you lose out. I said, "Let's pray that your husband will quarrel with the girlfriend." It happened that this girlfriend was very quarrelsome. The two quarrelled, so the husband came back. This is the only counselling case in which I succeeded to get the husband back. Rare success!

Many ladies like that will weep before me. I reply, “If you did not meet with your husband leaving you, you would never have come to church.” God sometimes uses very mysterious ways to bring us back to Himself. And after they have been saved and baptised, then say to them, “Isn’t Jesus a much better husband than your husband?” Their hearts are now turned to the Lord. They are no more lonely and derelict.

So there are those who are predestined to be single. By this way or that way, you have to accept your lot. But Christ is your constant companion, Saviour and Provider.

There are some who advance one step further. “Now that I’m so free, and I’m all alone, single, I’d better serve the Lord and study at FEBC. I’m resolved to serve the Lord as a missionary.” Well, I’ve seen it happen in the West. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, then there will come the solution to your life. I make this offer not only to those who are affected by marital problems, but to anyone who has any problem: Come and serve the Lord.

Now I’ve also seen how God has blessed ladies who finally get married. They may not marry like the others who are young, they marry late. We’ve got a young lady, she’s over 40. Suddenly she has found her beau! The young man is a little older than she is. It is a very good match.

In the Bible we see two such examples. One is in Numbers 12, and it is a case that affects none other than the great Moses. In chapter 12, it says that Moses married an Ethiopian woman, a black woman. This must be something that rocked the whole desert like an earthquake. You know that Moses was married maybe at 41, because at the age of 40 he escaped from Pharaoh into the desert. He married the daughter of Jethro, whose name was Zipporah. Zipporah means sparrow, very small size. They had two sons. After that, we didn’t hear anymore about the wife, until she went with him down to Egypt but she got stuck halfway at an inn. And now Moses is back in the desert. Moses — at what age will he be now? — well, you know he

was 40 years in the desert for training, so he must now be over 80. And yet the Lord gave him a wife in the person of the Ethiopian woman, apparently after Zipporah's death.

I met with an Indian pastor and we got to discussing about marriage and re-marriage. Oh, I said, in America it's all right. Even if you are 80 and you want to get married, that's very common. "But not in India," replied my friend, "If you are over 50, all the people will talk bad about you." I think this is very relative. An old car but well-kept may be better than a new car. The new car suddenly has an accident and it's finished. So I said, "Well, I've been to America, I know their culture. To them it's nothing. But the Bible tells us when Moses died at 120, he was like a young man. His eyes were not dimmed and his vigour and strength was as if he were a young man." That should give some encouragement to our ladies!

Another one is Ruth. Ruth lost her husband but she received new life through her mother-in-law, Naomi. And when Naomi was going back to her home country in Bethlehem, Naomi said, "Why you want to come along? You are still young. Why don't you get married here in Moab. I'm a poor woman, when I go back, there won't be much of a prospect." But here again is where God honours a person's faith. "I'll not care what will happen to me, all I want is your God. I'll never leave you and your people will be my people, your God will be my God. And where you die, I'll also be buried with you." This is a daughter-in-law's rare word to a mother-in-law. It's the most beautiful and most wonderful protestation of love ever recorded.

When she puts God first, then God will come and bless her. Now, Ruth went to the relative's field, and the Bible tells us that she met an elderly man. He was a *towkay* with plenty of fields and property. Or better, Boaz found Ruth. But God was smiling from above.

Now I'll come to difficulties in marriage. But you say, they are compatible, that's why they marry. Nevertheless Wang Ming Tao has a most beautiful, frank testimony. He said, "I'm a tidy man but my wife is a very untidy woman." He told everything about his family

life. I really marvelled at him. I must try to be like him. Well, with regard to Nancy, we married very young. I was 21 and she was 19. But at least I was older than Dan Ebert III. They got married younger. Dan Ebert III maybe was 19 or 20, his wife 16 or 17. When you are young, you don't understand the deeper things of life. One of the things is that we would get into a quarrel. You sometimes ask yourself, why do you quarrel? Plain stubbornness. Actually there was nothing to quarrel about. One wants it this way and the other wants it the other way. Now I see that you people get married older. I think this is better because you are more mature.

Now I come to Ivy. This is quite a different matter, because both of us are given to serve the Lord full-time. That resolves a great problem. When you are more advanced in years, you are more considerate. You see things differently. One thing I can guarantee you, we don't have fist-fights in our house. Anyway we live in a glass house. All my students are there, they know what we are doing upstairs. That's why I said I'm getting happier and happier because we have no arguments. Sometimes there may be an argument, but there is a good proverb I got from my father: Those who know one another's nature, they can live with one another. When you see your wife getting angry, you had better keep quiet. And when I get angry, she also understands and she keeps quiet. No trouble. It is a sad thing to have unnecessary quarrels.

What is the purpose of marriage? Nowadays the liturgy, they turn it around. We are borrowing the old Anglican liturgy and that's a very good thing. The first reason we marry is that we may procreate children. But now they put to have children to the last. They turn it the other way round. I know of one couple. They decided when they got married they would not bear children. As a result, when the quarrels came, they separated. They are divorced now. But do you know that when you have a child, it brings not only joy to the father and mother but also to the grandfather and grandmother? So I declared in my family, "I'm May Ann's best friend." The whole family is full of joy. Day and night they go and look at the little baby.

All the more when the husband and wife quarrel, and they look at the baby, they will be bound together again.

Now, in our present economy, perhaps it is necessary for us to hold on until such a time we can have a baby. You know best between yourselves and the Lord. But it is most important for us to put family life first, with the baby in the centre. Now, if I say this, some wives here may not vote for me to be pastor next time!

In my days, I was not drawing a big salary but when we got married, my wife had to take care of the baby. When the children grew older she worked as a midwife and she continued for some years, until the Lord took her. Now, I read somewhere that a wife, by contributing to the family chores and all the jobs at home, she is actually earning \$1,700 a month, especially when baby is young. I would think — I'm not going to make it a mandate — I would think it a very good idea for the wife to cease working outside and put all her energy to bringing up her child. The amount of Bible, gospel, hymns and songs and words of God that you speak to the little child is something that a maid can never give.

As I grew up, I heard many songs that seemed very familiar to me. It's from the "tape-recording" in the baby's mind. When I was young, my mother sang all those hymns to me, so hearing them when I grew up was like seeing old friends! That's why I say for someone to be born in a Christian family where the Lord is paramount, is to be born into heaven on earth. See the teaching, for example, of Timothy under Eunice and Lois, that from a small child he had known the Holy Scriptures which were able to make him wise unto salvation!

Let me counsel young couples intending to marry: Please don't be a dink, d-i-n-k — double-income-no-kids. This is now an accepted word in the American language. He is a dink, that means he has a wife who also earns an income but they don't want to have any children.

Another good advice. Now husband and wife are one. So whatever money you have, you pool together. That is the best. But in

view of the fact that sometimes quarrel will come unnecessarily over money, I think it's a good idea to let the wife keep her money, and the husband keep his. Then there will be no more quarrels over money. I think it is good if the husband promises to give the wife so much money a month. If he earns something extra, it will be a good idea to surprise her with an *ang-pow*. She will be very happy.

We can go on and there are many things we can discuss to make a happy family. But I must end sooner or later by saying that the Bible tells us we must marry only in the Lord. II Corinthians 6:14-18, "You cannot be unequally yoked — a Christian with a non-Christian; a Christian with a Buddhist; a Christian with a Taoist; a Protestant with a Roman Catholic; and a B-P with a Seventh-Day Adventist. We had one couple in our church before. The husband came to church on Sunday, the wife went to hers on Saturday. The children had to follow father one day and follow mother another day. Finally, the children decided, "We go too often, we have already attended our quota of services, enough." So they left off attending church.

One Roman Catholic girl was marrying an American B-P boy. The father told the son, "If you marry this Roman Catholic girl, you will divorce in one year because before you are married, you both are arguing day and night about Mary and Jesus." The young man said, "I can't help it, I'm very much in love with this young lady, I must marry her." Well, what was the result? They were separated in six months.

But some of them in old China — it's not the case of the young man marrying, but the father also marrying — he is marrying a daughter-in law. So the father is also deeply involved. Usually the marriages were arranged by parents. And even when the baby was in the womb, she was being betrothed. When the young lady grew up and the young man was going to marry her, she was not a Christian. As the father-in-law liked this young lady for the son, he was very excited. "Oh, never mind, we can marry her, then we'll convert her." This is called "marital evangelism." But marital evangelism loses out

to the other side, more often than not. So it is important for parents to pray for their children who are now growing up, to pray that your son will marry a Christian girl, and your daughter will marry a Christian boy. We simply have no way out by our own strength. But we can do one thing. Bring them both to the Lord when they are young, that they themselves will know the importance of marrying Christian spouses. It is dignity if you marry the right one and doom if you marry the wrong one.

Finally, don't say, as the invitation cards now say, "We, so-and-so, invite you," and put the parents as Number Two. It should be your parents inviting them to your wedding. The parents' names should be on top. Because your parents will either bless your wedding or not bless. It is given in the fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and mother." So you young people had better listen. Don't say, "We know better than you. You are already ancient, you are already out of date." Parents have a lot of wisdom and they mean well to you when they give you advice. Before I got married, I brought Ivy to see my father. I was praying that my father would say yes. After she left, I went to see my father: "How about that?" He said, "Good." If he said good, that was good for me. You must respect your parents, honour them, that your parents will give their blessings on your wedding. Then you will have a happy life. And we who have growing children, we must all pray that the Lord will give them good spouses.

There is the divine sovereignty. You say marriages are made in heaven. They are already made, so what can I do? No, on your part you must diligently pray and work out your salvation because God has given you the human responsibility.

Have I revealed to you enough secrets of a blissful married life?

CHAPTER III

TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT JOB AND USE IT FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

There is a Chinese saying that eating is as great as heaven. We came here, the first two or three meals were not very good. I hear murmuring all round. But in the Garden where there was no sin — wasn't it wonderful — the fruits, all the wonderful fruits were our food. And even of the tree of life we could have eaten if we had the faith. The sad thing was that Adam and Eve both rebelled against the Lord. Eve was the first one to yield to temptation. So both of them were chased out of paradise.

And now the sentence comes to the woman. With regard to your livelihood: the job of the woman primarily is the home. If there were no sin it would be a pleasant experience to give birth. There would be no pain. And not only that, in the matter of conception, it would be very regular. But because of sin, God said, "I will increase your conception." The sorrow of conception is that you start having twins. Then triplets, quadruplets, quintuplets. Some who took the fertility pills, got nonaplets, nine. In Chinese we say they got a thousand sons and ten thousand grandsons, how good it is! Is it?

Now the modern generation is too clever. They will not want to follow the new government policy to have four. Since you said two is enough, two is enough. There are those who even do not want to have children. But this is the job that is given to woman. You are to be in the home. I'm not against wives going to work. But the important thing is God has given to Eve to be the mother of all

living. The woman has much to do in the home. Do not degrade her. Let not he husband say, “I’m the head of the family and I’ll rule over you.” Actually, if husband and wife are loving and agree with each other, there is no need to say who is head for you work together. There is no need for someone to control.

But I would like to suggest to the husband that in the home the woman is head of four departments, and you are under her. First, she is head of the culinary department. I confess my own inadequacy. When I go to the kitchen, with all the gadgets, all the knobs, I don’t know which one to turn to start the fire. So you see the wife is number one in the kitchen. The next department is the laundry. Now you cannot wash your clothing nor iron them. Many men do not know what to do. Thirdly, she is head of the marketing department. Many husbands do not know how to go to the market. I’m saying to myself. Fourthly, she is head of the nursing department. When we get sick we make a lot of noise. Then our wife will come and take care of us. But when they get sick, they keep quiet. And we do not know they are sick. We leave them alone. So you can see the marvellous value of the wife in the home.

You know why there are no great men today? Because many women are not playing their part in bringing up the children. How was there such a great Christian philosopher and church father known as Saint Augustine? Because he had a mother by the name of Monica. When Augustine was young he was a playboy. He did not obey the law of the Lord. But his mother, Monica, kept on praying until he got saved. So there is a saying that the son of a praying mother cannot be lost. I have observed other praying mothers how their prayers have blessed their children. Not only Augustine, we have John Wesley. His mother had something like 15 or 16 children. But she took good care of the whole family and because of many prayers for John, he became a great revivalist. Not only these who are great in the church but also great in the world. I am very sure you have heard of the name of General MacArthur. He was the conqueror of Japan. He was the real hero of America. The wonderful thing is

that he was brought up by a very loving and godly mother who instilled the Christian faith in MacArthur.

Tonight we want to stress the importance of the woman as the mother, the wife in the house. Now, I'm not against the pill. That has been invented to limit conception. But when it is misused for selfish purposes, that brings greater ruin. We must warn you not to use it. But there is a wonderful verse in I Timothy 2:15. Here is a recipe that the Apostle Paul gives to women, especially expectant mothers. They rely very much today on the gynaecologist and the specialist. But the Word of the Lord says, "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." If they live a holy life, a devoted life, God will protect them in childbearing. The Word of God is superior to the word of men.

Now, in the case of man what is his livelihood? Because of sin God will raise up thorns and thistles. There will be many, many obstacles to making a living. By the sweat of the brow, by very hard work, can you get food to eat. So today, whether it be in Singapore where circumstances are good and we say we are in prosperity, or in places less fortunate, it's the same thing. You've got to strive very hard to make a living.

Your span of life is 70 years. In the earlier days they lived several hundred years, but after the flood it was reduced to 70, and if you are strong, 80. That was what Moses wrote. Although he lived up to 120, the normal span of life was and is 70 to 80 years. All that you have throughout your life is labour and sorrow. Just like the Chinese saying, it's birth and old age, sickness and death. Finally, when you die, you will be put back to earth. You are made from earth, to earth you go back. Insofar as the Bible is concerned there is no such teaching as cremation. The Jews when they die they bury them. But in the Holy Land they have a lot of caves so they put them into the caves. The Muslims when they bury they really make your body touch the raw earth. Our livelihood throughout the years is one of sorrow.

So now we start off from kindergarten. I hear that even kindergarten children today have tuition classes. Right through primary, secondary, O Level, A Level, you have to struggle. When I started to go to school, the first thing my mother said to me was, “You must study hard. If you don’t study hard, you will be a coolie.” The word “coolie” is not very much used today, but what is the meaning of “coolie”? It is “bitter strength” in Chinese characters, you’ve got to exert it. (The dictionary definition of “coolie” is “a European’s name for a hired native labourer in India and China.”) I did study somewhat. By the grace of God I managed to pass without much difficulty in those days. When I look at our young people today, I sometimes feel sorry for them. I hear that mothers are studying for their children, and almost take their exams for them. Life is getting harder and harder, so that it fulfills what the Bible has already said, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (Genesis 3:19).

Well, what is our Singapore government doing? They are trying their level best to give a good livelihood to Singaporeans. But it seems that they are pressurising us harder and harder. More training, more productivity, and more going abroad. The whole nation is caught up with this rat race. But what does the Bible say? It is true you may make more money by going to China. It is true that if you have more risks in business you make more profit. But God, the most important factor, is left out.

So in the choosing of a career, insofar as we are concerned, we have a secret that the world does not know. Now that we are become children of God, as we come out from among them, He will be a father to us. We have a God to help us. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). Jesus says, “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). We are trying to get a good job and earn a living to take care of our family. But we must do it according to the teaching of God’s Word. In other words, we must conform to His law, we

must be diligent. “If any would not work, neither should he eat” (II Thessalonians 3:10). We must not only work hard, we must be honest. So here comes the test. After Jesus was in the desert for 40 days and 40 nights without eating, then Satan came along to tempt Him, “If you are the Son of God, you can turn the stone into bread. You can eat and be filled.”

Many are caught by Satan’s snare. They think, “If I cut some corners, I will make the money.” Very soon, their names appear in the newspapers for insider trading, for example. Very shameful.

Let me tell you a very interesting story. It happened about 30 years ago. I read it in The Straits Times. There was a Chinese lady wearing a necklace. An Indian thief suddenly came and snatched away the chain. The police gave chase. The Indian man did not know what to do. “Oh, there is a toilet there!” (in the old days all the toilets were in the backlanes). He got in and Satan must have said to him, “You just swallow it.” I think Indians are very good at swallowing. I see them guzzling water straight down the throat like that. He swallowed it very happily. The detective asked: “Where is the chain?” He examined the toilet — nothing. But I believe the Holy Spirit also worked. The detective said, “Never mind, come with me to *rumah sakit* (hospital).” He said, “I’m not *sakit* (sick), I’m all right.” “Never mind, just come along.” They X-rayed him and there was a worm inside. All right, they found it. The stone was made into bread, but when you swallow it into your stomach, it becomes stone.

In I Timothy 6 there is a wonderful teaching for us, from verse 6 to verse 10. Many people who quote the Bible will mumble, “Money is the root of all evil.” They quote the Bible but they misquote. They say “Money is the root of all evil,” but the Bible says, “The *love of money* is the root of all evil”. You are rich enough and you want to be richer, that is the love of money. I know of a young lady who sold her house for \$400,000, and went to buy shares which she thought could make her rich overnight. Suddenly the price dropped. She lost about \$30,000. “I hope that it will go up.” But the more she wished

that it would go up, the more it went down. Finally she got just about 25 per cent of what she had speculated.

The Bible tells us clearly, “For the love of money is the root of evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” As far as Christians are concerned, I would urge, though you can get your CPF to go into certain investments, you must pray hard and study hard. Do not speculate and lose everything. The Bible says, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.” You have the spiritual blessing first. All these things that are of our normal daily livelihood will be added even more. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Now, let us start off by taking the case of one who has graduated from university or polytechnic. Or even if you had not had the chance of going to the higher schools of learning and you just have an O Level. Now you have gone out to work. You must not take any work because it pays better, but requires you to do things that are not right. We had a student in FEBC from Korea. He is now a famous professor in Korea. He is also a well-known pastor in the university. He had a degree in accountancy. But in his job he had to keep two sets of accounts. He felt very miserable. “I cannot take on this job because I’m cheating the government every day.” Finally, the Lord called him. “I’d rather work for the Lord.” So he came to FEBC, graduated, went to America and got higher degrees. Because he seeks the kingdom of God and righteousness, he is promoted to chief chaplain of the university.

There is another young man, he said to me, “I was given this job; it pays so much better. But I got another job, lesser pay, but I can take off on Sunday.” He’d rather take on this job that gave him the freedom of worship on the Lord’s Day. The Lord promoted him to a better pay than the first one. I would therefore advise when we are looking for a job, make this your guiding principle. Is it putting God first? In this job, are we going to glorify God? The title of my

message is to choose the right career and use it to the glory of God. This is a wonderful principle. What is the chief end of man? What is the chief purpose of life? The answer is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Whatever I do, it's God first. If you hold to this principle you will never go wrong.

One day I asked a young man: "When you grow up, what job will you take?" "I like racing cars." That is his job! I asked another one: "What job do you want to take?" He said, "I'd like to be a detective." The work of the detective, let, the non-Christian take. I questioned another: "What job do you like to take?" "I like to be an undertaker." That's not bad. I think it is an honourable job if you can dig. You've got the Singapore Casket. Without Singapore Casket, you will be stuck, right? The Bible says it's better to go to the house of mourning than go to the house of feasting. Every now and then, I am called to Choa Chu Kang. Those Malay diggers, they all know me — Oh, Pastor Tow is here. Of course, I didn't say that very soon I'd be inside there. I've been observing all the undertakers and many of them are not Chinese. Most of them are Indians and Malays. I have a secret belief in my heart. Some of them must have received the Lord Jesus Christ in their heart because every time they go there, they hear the Christian message. An Indian fellow, a retired bank clerk and a Roman Catholic upon my query, confessed he believed Christ died for him and rose from the dead. Is he saved?

We usually hear them say, Christians would choose to be doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers and so forth. There are many good Christian lawyers, but there are crooked lawyers also. "Well, I like to be a sailor." Any job that you choose, must be appropriate. Calvin has a right formula. How many talents did God give you? If God has given you one talent, you do the one-talent job; two talents, then do the two-talent job. Don't try to jump to the five talent job and break your leg. Be very contented. As long as in this job I can earn an honest living and the pay is not too bad, and I can also have time to serve God, that will be the job for me. Because when you put God first, God will put you first. And when you put him first, He will give

you many things that money cannot buy. They are long life, health, strength, happiness, a good family, obedient children. Conversely, there's a Chinese saying, "You may have a rich man's money, but live a leper's life." What is the use? So it is important to be contented in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." (I Timothy 6:6).

As the Lord helps us we begin to be more relaxed. Before we were very poor, now we are well-off. Proverbs 3 gives us the principle that we can never break. In verses 7 and 8, it says: "Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones." When we trust the Lord and keep away from evil, God gives us good health and strength. Then verses 9 and 10: "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." When God has helped us to get a job, remember also that verse in Deuteronomy, it is God who gives us the strength to get wealth. Then remember the source, that we must return to worship him. In the Bible it is very clear, one-tenth of our income belongs to Him. Do we keep other laws but in the matter of giving the one-tenth, we slacken? It has been said that when we were earning small pay, we gave tithe, but when we make big money we grip it tight.

Here's the story of Colgate. Colgate got \$10 from his mother and went out to sell small things like a hawker. When he came back he made \$2. He gave 20 cents to the Lord, one-tenth. Then he got a little bit more money, he went trading again. Oh, he made \$50, so he gave \$5 to the Lord. Now the Lord blessed him because he knew how to honour the Lord from the beginning. Not only God will bless you, men will also bless you because they see that you love God. He became so rich, he gave 30 per cent, 40 per cent. He got so much money he couldn't use it all. The Lord says "God loveth a cheerful giver and God is able to make all grace to abound toward you, that

ye always having all sufficiency, may abound to every good work” (II Corinthians 9:7,8).

Learn a lesson from the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is a freshwater lake, and you’ve got the upper River Jordan that brings the water from the snow mountains into the “sea”. Now this River Jordan is not big and you cross it with a small bridge. But before you cross the bridge and after you cross the bridge, you see there are many streams from other places also flowing into the “sea”, so that Galilee is always full, because God says, I’ll make all blessings to come to you through other channels. Galilee is always full of fresh water and rich with fish, because it gives what she freely receives.

But the Dead Sea is the opposite. It is 1,300 feet below sea level. It can only receive, it doesn’t give out. It is the picture of a miser — all in but nothing goes out. So when God begins to bless us in our job, we must remember Him to return the one-tenth, which is our worship. That’s not income tax because God doesn’t have an officer to check up on you. If you don’t give one-tenth, the church doesn’t bother either. It’s between you and your God. But when you give anonymously and you give not because you have to but because you love Him... He will reward you openly. I know there are those who give not only one-tenth, they give two-tenths and even more. In times of emergency they even borrow money to give to the church. When we built Life Church at Gilstead Road, there were many times of need. I knew one elder who sold his car, \$1,200 — that was 30-odd years ago. He had no money but he said, I will sell my car and give to the church \$600; the other \$600 is a loan. After two months, he said to me, “Pastor, I’ve got a double promotion.” The other half, \$600, he now converted to a gift. Another young man was so exercised about the church’s need, he borrowed \$10,000 from the bank and gave it to the church. The Lord gave it back to him and more.

Our contractor was very surprised. We built the church at Gilstead Road in 15 months, at high speed. We paid him always on time. One day he said to me, “Pastor, I see that the God of your

church is greater than the God of other churches.” I said, “That’s right, that’s right. Our God is a fundamentalist God.” The others he mentioned are modernist. You know what they do? Garage sales, concerts, fun fairs, food fairs. They sell T-shirts, and they make *achar-achar* (Malayan pickles) to sell for a paltry sum. When we were building Woodlands, one sympathetic BP pastor proposed to hold a concert in order to make \$25,000 to help us. Our project was \$3 million but he could give us only \$25,000. What’s the help? I replied: “Please don’t hold any concert for us. The Bible says only the tithe. And the Bible says love offering, freewill offering, all in worship.” If you hold a concert and people give \$15 for a ticket, after giving they will say, “All right, we have already given.” That will cause our building fund to stop. Praise the Lord, we did not hold the concert.

Now Beulah House is another testimony. The Session three times said, “We will get a loan from the bank.” But the Bible says “Owe no man anything” and my grandfather taught me never to pay interest. So in all my life I’ve never borrowed any money and I never pay interest. I urged the Session to trust the Lord. And the Lord moved all your hearts. Some sister would come and smilingly say to me, “You know what is here?” Well, I know it’s something good. I opened it — \$25,000. One night, I was very sad because the building fund was not going up. We lacked something like half a million. We were not catching up with time. What we needed were many free loans. I said, “If you give now, your \$1 will be \$1.21 because I have calculated the interest. A brother was touched. He brought me a small cheque. I dared not open it. When I went to my house, I opened it — \$300,000. Free loan, but it mightily helped us. We needed \$7.2 million. That Easter we received \$79,000. I remember all these figures. There was one offering: it was a small envelope and the notes were folded into the pattern of a flower. We opened it — five \$10,000 notes. We did not know who gave it. All of you who have given, are you poorer today? I’m no poorer, I’m richer today. The Lord gives me good health. All the years, I never paid any medical bill. They cut my eye. I didn’t pay any bill. Somebody paid it for me.

So you see how wonderful it is. We honour the Lord with our substance, and the Lord gives us good profit in our business.

When we choose a job, remember it should glorify God. Smaller pay? Never mind, but I have good opportunity to serve the Lord. But now the Lord wants us perhaps to even leave our job for a higher one. He said to the disciples: “Follow me, I will make you fishers of men.” I thank God, had I served myself, if I went into law and politics, I would have been retired long, long ago. But at the present moment, I’m revising my scale about life. I used to say that life began at 60. Now I say life begins at 70. You see, the Lord gives you the joy when you serve Him. You may be old in age but young in years.

Perhaps the Lord is speaking to some young person tonight, like He spoke to the rich young ruler. Well, there may be some young man with a good job here, or young lady. It is not too much for the Lord to tell you: “Give it up and come and serve me. And until you give up you will never have peace.”

Finally, there are those who have reached middle-age or retiring age. At such a time, you might like to change jobs. The best job for a change is to serve the Lord. I can give a good testimony for Elder Khoo Peng Kiat. When the Lord called him after he retired, he went to fill a very important gap. Now it’s nearly seven years, and he is still filling that very important gap. But he testified to me: “How happy I am that I gave my life to serve the Lord in whatever way I could.” Today we see him labouring for the Lord in that most important place. Some of us here go on mission trips. That may be the way that leads you to serve the Lord full-time, even in your middle age. Old or young, livelihood is man’s first physical need. But we must consider what it is that will glorify God. The Lord will bless you and increase you as you go along. “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36).

JOHN SUNG SERMON ON “THE UNFATHOMABLE GRACE OF GOD” (II King Ch. 7)

Samaria, Capital City of Israel was surrounded by the armies of the Syrians. The people were in grave anxiety, for many had nothing to eat. So much so they were obliged “to eat pigeon dung.”

V. 1. But Elisha said, “By this time tomorrow two gallons of flour or four gallons of barley grain will be sold in the markets of Samaria for a dollar. . . .” Beloved brothers and sisters, the grace of God is beyond our imagination. Many of God’s people are waiting for His saving grace to come quickly, not knowing that it has already come. Now is the accepted time!

V. 2. Here we have a high officer, assistant to the King, who said to Elisha, “Impossible! A dollar to buy two gallons of flour? Unless the door of heaven would open up!” Elisha said, “Whether you believe or not, this thing shall come to pass.” O the unfathomable grace of God! The grace of God is beyond our wish and imagination. The grace of God is still with us. Before I came here, I never could have dreamed of such a crowd tonight.

When I went to Huchow, I hoped to see only 200 born again. So, I asked for this number in prayer. On the first day, however, out of 400 who came to the meeting, 300 were saved! On the second day, over 1,000 came and we had to meet outside on the grounds. Almost 1,000 were saved, including a pastor’s son. This pastor’s son said to me, “Mr. Sung, I never knew God’s grace until now.” Beloved

brothers and sisters, whether you believe or not, the grace of God must come to you. How great and wonderful is His grace!

V. 3. Praise the Lord! Here are four lepers who refuse to die, sitting up. They want to get out of death. Pitiful, there are so many who would prefer death, never desiring a way out. There are many more struggling in their daily sorrows. These also have never thought of getting out!

V. 4. Wonder of wonders, these four lepers thought of a way out. They said, "If we sit here we are sure to starve to death. If we go into the city, we will also die. Why not get out of here and surrender to the Syrian Army?" Now, I'm not in favour of their surrendering. I am in favour of their determination to find a way out.

A sister in Shanghai wrote me of her mother's plight. Only over 30, she has succoured ten children. But every one of her children has died, except herself. She says, "My mother is a devout Buddhist. Buddha said to her that her ancestors in hell had need of money. So they had taken her children to hell to sell them for money. Now her only way out was to worship the devils with money. When my mother asked how much money she needed to pay up, the answer was \$200. She really spent that \$200, but when she went to inquire of Buddha again, Buddha replied "Your ancestors are still penniless. So on the 8th day of the ninth moon, they will also take your only surviving daughter to hell and sell her. My mother was scared to death. She went to the Church and asked the pastor to pray for her. This brought us peace and nothing happened to me, her daughter. After this, she got hold of a hammer and had her Buddha idol smashed to pieces."

Beloved brothers and sisters, Satan had utterly oppressed this woman. Could she do anything else but struggle her way out? How jubilant! Today how many are under the throes of the Devil's grip? There's the tobacco devil, the gambling devil, the alcohol devil. Why won't you seek a way out?

Vv. 5, 6. The four lepers found their way to the Syrian camp. But when they got there they saw not even a shadow of the Syrian troops. “Ha, Ha!” they chuckled, “Such a lot to eat! How lucky we are, and there is none to fight against us . . .” Beloved brothers and sisters, wonderful is the work of the Holy Spirit. If a person is willing to be led by the Holy Spirit to seek a way out, he will find the way ahead marvellous, and more marvellous yet. Once, after a sermon, a new convert said to me, “Mr. Sung, I was in great trouble when I decided one day to come to your meetings. At first I found your preaching entirely tasteless, but I decided to sit through the sermons. As I concentrated on the sermon, my heart began to beat and throb. When you said, ‘Anyone who is a sinner, let him raise his hand.’ At first I had no courage, but afterwards I raised my hand, I went forward, and as I went, all the sins I had previously committed flooded before my eyes. I felt miserable. But the moment I put my trust in Jesus, a ton-load of sin fell from me. I received such a joy as I had never known.” Beloved brothers and sisters, if a man wants to be saved, he will find salvation wonderful, yet more wonderful.

Vv. 7, 8. The four lepers were thrilled by the wealth they now possessed. For, the Syrians being overwhelmed by a sound of horses and chariots they had heard the night before had fled to the last man. God’s grace is given to us freely without any charge. Without arms, without lifting a finger to fight, the lepers had plenty to eat, more to spare, and a whole lot they couldn’t carry away. O, the inexhaustible grace of God.

One night I had a dream. I saw a man who had lost a lot of money. I began to pick the money up, and I picked and picked every one of the coins. When I awoke, I couldn’t find a cent. Such is the nature of dreaming. But God’s grace is not such vanity, not such a dream. God’s grace is real. It defies our counting. God’s grace did not merely satisfy the leper’s hungry stomachs. This would not be enough.

V. 9. Most precious is this verse. The four men, having eaten, thought of the hungry plight of their countrymen. They agreed, “Let

us tell the good news at once! If we do not make the report when dawn comes, the King would surely punish us.” Beloved brothers and sisters, how many of you are having your talent buried. You have never told forth the good news i.e., the Gospel! Paul says, “Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.” Now the people of Amoy have nothing to eat, while you are being fully fed. Mongolia, Kweichow, Yunnan are teeming with countless starving souls. They have never tasted the grace of God. Beloved brothers and sisters, “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.”

Let us see what these four have reported. They have preached the Gospel. They have given a vigorous testimony, for woe would come on them if they preached not the good news. Beloved brothers and sisters, let us remember: it is a greatest sin not to preach the Gospel.

Vv. 10, 11. They are now on their way. They tell it to the gate-keeper. The gate-keeper believed because he saw them all well-fed. People believed them because they were well-fed.

Once there was a man selling hair-restorer. He bragged about his hair-restorer as he hawked: “If you buy my hair-restorer and rub it on your bald head, it will make your hair grow.” A little child came and pulled off the hat he was wearing, “You just said, ‘If you rub the hair-restorer on your head, hair would grow’. But, look, you are a bald yourself. Why don’t you do what you say?” What a big joke! A bald-head selling hair-restorer! This is like a man never born again preaching a sermon on “salvation through the new birth”. Laughable! Why is the Church so slow moving today? Because in it are many bald heads trying to sell hair-restorer. Who would buy it? These four lepers are fed and round-bellied. They are convincing to the gatekeeper. May you also say, “We have been to the revival meetings. We have eaten a lot.” Before you were gambling fiends. Now you can praise the Lord and convince others.

V. 12. The gate-keeper said, “Let me go and tell the king.” Now the king, when he got up in the middle of the night, was prejudiced. He said, “Perhaps the Syrians have gone away in disguise. If we go

after them, may we not fall into their ambush?" In such a case, can God open the door of grace?

Vv. 13, 14. Someone told the king, "Don't be prejudiced. Let us send five men to find out." When those five returned, they said with one voice, "The enemy has retreated! The ground is strewn all over with goods." When I was preaching in Shanghai, the Church in Hangchow sent four delegates to hear me, because they were not sure of inviting me. When these four were favourably impressed, they invited me. When I got to Hangchow, a super-pastor there was fiercely opposed to me. He had a son, a habitual gambler, who never read his Bible. Wonder of wonders! While others remained unsaved, he got saved, he repented. He was changed. He organised many Gospel teams. He told his father, "You are against revival meetings, but I have been converted. I won't gamble now. I love to read the Bible." Beloved brothers and sisters, when men resist you, don't be discouraged. If God be for us, all problems will be solved.

Once when I went to Swatow, I got no invitation to preach the first day. I was invited by only one place. After the first meeting, over 200 were born again. The second meeting saw over 1,000 in attendance. After this, every church invited me to preach. Brothers and sisters, if you preach the truth, you needn't worry even when you are being resisted.

Vv. 16, 17. O, the open door of God's grace! All went! There was no need to invite, or to coerce. They rushed for all their worth. All were dying of hunger, and all fought for the food. If what you preach is the Gospel, people will come and hear. If what we preach is truth, we needn't worry if men oppose us. When I was preaching in Canton, detectives and policemen were sent to arrest me. When they were on the point of doing so, a band of students protested. This truly was God's help.

On another occasion when I went to another Church, there was a notice put up, "Meetings Prohibited." But this could not stop a multitude coming. Who can resist when the Holy Spirit is working?

God said, “A dollar will buy two gallons of flour.” True? Yes? Unfathomable is God’s grace.

V. 18. Was God’s Word fulfilled? Most certainly. Whoever disbelieving is a stumbling block. But such is trampled to death! If we preach it good, Satan is surely defeated. Now you’re born again. You’re blessed. If you preach not the Gospel, woe will come!

God called me on Feb. 10, 1926. The Lord wanted me to preach. Many a time I didn’t want to, for preaching is a difficult job. If I became a teacher, no one would bother me. When I started to preach, I found many adversaries. If you preach you must carry the cross. Your whole life must be hung on it. Thousands upon thousands are still in Satan’s grip. “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.”

Beloved, we are well-fed. Woe is unto us, if we preach not the Gospel.



FROM THE FOREWORD

This booklet contains three messages that were delivered under the theme “*Recipes for Living a Happy Life*” by our beloved Pastor at Life Church Bible Camp, Genting View, September 6-10, 1993. The 170 campers participating were immensely blessed.

This booklet is designed not only to bring to remembrance the lessons we had learned in Camp, but also with the purpose of sharing them with a wider Christian readership. Herein you will discover what are the secrets of “*Recipes for Living a Happy Life*” from one who finds increasing happiness and youthfulness through 43 years in the Lord’s Service. “*Happiness is the Lord.*”

In view of the fact that Dr John Sung who brought Revival Blessings to Singapore in the thirties was frequently mentioned, and his Revival Choruses were sung, we append a John Sung Sermon after the three Recipe messages. — *Elder Eric Mahadevan*



Far Eastern Bible College Press

9A Gilstead Road, Singapore 309063

Tel: (65)2569256 Fax: (65)2506955

Email: febcb@pacific.net.sg

Internet: <http://www.lifefebc.com>

ISBN 981-04-1853-1