



2020 Church Magazine

Cover Design: Sunday School Students

A word from the Editor:

Happy 2020 Everyone, this year is a great year to start new habits or break old cycles. I personally have a new found source of motivation to do just that. I know the beginning of the year is a good time to take stock on what matters the most to you and how you would like to see the new year roll out and anticipate your end of year results. No matter the course your life takes this year, it's good to remind yourself that every day is better than the next, you are wiser and stronger and can accomplish that much more. So, as we are winding down to the end of the month, remind yourself to seek grace while you tackle all the new year to-dos. I hope God blesses you all abundantly and you seek his guidance in all things this new year.

Richu Aby



Autumn Leaves Ministry

The Bible speaks on the importance of how we clothe ourselves throughout the bible, below are references to how we clothe our spiritual bodies.

7 Garments mentioned in the Bible

Author: Pastor Sunny Mathew

- 1. Garment of salvation (Isaiah.61:10)**
- 2. Garment of Praise. (Isaiah. 61:3)**
- 3. Garment of Glory. (EX.28.2)**
- 4. Garment of righteousness. (Isaiah.61:10)**
- 5. Garment of needle work. (Psalms. 45:14)**
- 6. Garment of white raiment. (Rev.3:4)**
- 7. Garment of Holiness. (Ex.28:2)**



In the Bible, Jesus gives us descriptions of who he is in our spiritual lives. Below are references to Jesus's I am statements.

I am statements Jesus in the Bible.

Author: Pastor Sunny Mathew

Jesus said,

- 1. I am the way, truth and life. (John 14:6)**
- 2. I am the resurrection and life. (John. 11:25)**
- 3. I am the true vine. (John. 15:1)**
- 4. I am the good Shepherd. (John. 10:11)**
- 5. I am the door. (John. 10:9)**
- 6. I am the bread of life. (John. 6:35, 48)**
- 7. I am the light of the world. (John.8:12)**



നീൻ ദാർശിക് എൻ പ്രാണൻ ഭക്തനമനസേ
വർത്തിയാൻ ആയില്ലാവില്ലെന്നൊക്കെ
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നീൻ കൃന്ദൻ വാദനനനിക്കാമയോടൊന്നു } 2

മരണമുൾട്ടിൻ വിഴിപ്പുമുട്ടുമിട
ഭക്തനമനസേ നീ ഹൃദയം വിഴിപ്പാൻ
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ജീവിക്കുന്നതിനാൽ ദാമം അങ്ങുവില

ഹൃദയമുൾട്ടിൻ നാമനൊക്കെ മരണമുൾട്ടിൻ
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മരണമുൾട്ടിൻ നാമൻ നാഥൻ ചക്കരയ്ക്ക്.

Linla m Byu

Mini Abraham

Flowing Water vs. Still Water Living Water Flowing from the Heart



2019 was an exciting year for me. I've been wanting to visit Israel ever since I started reading the Bible and I was fortunate to do so over the summer. Being in the same land where Jesus was born, grew up, walked, ministered, sacrificed his life, and was resurrected brought tears of joy and gratitude that words cannot express. My companions and I went from moments of joy when we visited Bethlehem to overwhelming pain when we visited the Garden of Gethsemane and Golgotha to sharing the joy of victory when we

walked through the empty tomb. I learned a lot when we visited some of Israel's landmarks, especially three particular bodies of water: the Jordan River, where Jesus was baptized, the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus spent most of His time, and the Dead Sea. We sailed through the Sea of Galilee and floated on the Dead Sea, and some people were baptized in the Jordan River. The Sea of Galilee teems with life. The fresh water has provided clean water to humans for millennia and promotes vegetation all around the area. The local fishing industry has always thrived because of the abundance of marine life. The Dead Sea has its name for a reason – it's dead! Salt has built up so much over the years that nothing can live in the sea. With the saline content being eight times saltier than the ocean, the Dead Sea is so dense that floating on it feels like lying on a floatie! The land remains barren around the sea's perimeter. No fish or aquatic life can survive in the salty environment – it is completely dead! Yet the two bodies of water are only 65 miles apart and the same Jordan River flows into both!



The Sea of Galilee Dead Sea only difference is that water flows into and out of the Sea of Galilee, but in the Dead Sea, water flows in, but no water flows out. We can learn a great lesson from these two seas. We attend church on a regular basis and receive the Word of God, but if we don't let the Word flow out of us into others, we become like the Dead Sea. When Jesus spoke to the people who attended the Feast of the Tabernacle, He declared this great truth. "On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture

has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water'" (John 7:37-38 ESV). Jesus Christ, the Giver of living water for our souls, commands us to not only receive from Him, but also to let His Word and Spirit flow out of us. We are called to do this by telling others about God's goodness and ministering to them with our gifts. For example, if your friends, coworkers, or people outside of church share a problem or concern with you, you can pray for them. And when you pray, you are letting what God has entrusted to you flow out of you. If you come across a person in need, you can offer your help, like the Good Samaritan.

When you see a need in your church or community, you can step into action. When you have an opportunity to share God's goodness, take a chance and exalt Jesus through your testimony. The Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea challenge us to learn a great lesson. Will you receive and give or will you just be a receiver? When we are part of the Kingdom of God, God wants us to give, help, and serve others! He wants us to be a grateful and worshipful people. The Holy Spirit fills us constantly, just like the Jordan River constantly flows, but it's up to us to let Him flow out of us and bless others. This is my prayer for us in 2020: that we use our talents for God's glory, that we are willing to serve and give generously, and that we have a heart of gratitude as we receive from the Spirit. As Jesus said, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8 NIV).



The Return of the Prodigal Son Henry Nouwen: Image Books, 1994 Pages. 151

A Self Reflection

Rev. Anish John



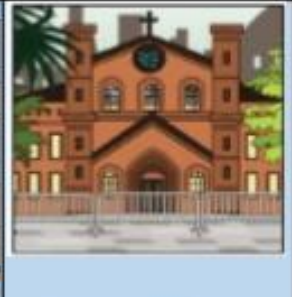





As I read the book, "The Return of the Prodigal Son" by Henry Nouwen recently, it touched me in my heart and soul. A chance encounter with a reproduction of the Dutch painter Rembrandt Painting "The Return of the Prodigal Son" catapulted Henri Nouwen on a long spiritual adventure in which he shares the deeply personal and resonant meditation that led him to discover his own waywardness and the loving embrace of the Heavenly Father in his innermost soul. Along with Nouwen, I also see a prodigal son in myself. Like the younger brother in the story, I have sought meaning in life, by going away from home as a sojourner. I went on a long journey to find meaning and joy in my life. As I have continued this journey, I have passed through different countries, different careers and different life styles. That time I didn't know that it was just the beginning of a long journey wandering through different countries doing the jobs of teacher, journalist, secretary, accountant, cashier, store keeper, manager, administrator and of Child care specialist. In this journey I searched in vain for peace, self-actualization, wasting away my talents and potentials. At the end of it I felt deeply tired and frustrated. I was going away not listening to the soft and gentle voice speaking to me in the most hidden places of my inner being. It was the soft and fragile voice of an old father who has cried many tears and died many deaths. I was not allowing myself to be touched by that fragile whisper. I wanted to continue my useless journey in search of fulfilling my selfish motives and following my plans. I wanted to be a son-come home, to be vulnerable, to be embraced by the father and to feel the safety of home. No more confronting, beseeching and waiting, but just experiencing the belongingness with the father.

The younger brother was lost in a faraway place like the lost sheep, and the older brother was also lost inside the home like the coin which was lost inside the home. He was leading a dutiful life, but he was a man of anger, jealousy, self-justification and selfishness. Thinking about my life, it becomes clear to me that I was a good boy in everybody's book. I was a very dutiful son, obeying my parents in everything even sacrificing my own interests. I was very punctual in the family prayer and attended Sunday school for eighteen years. I was a leader of the prayer group in the college and I started serving as an altar boy when I was eighteen. I never hung out with my classmates who caused trouble. I never talked with girls or never mingled with them which was typical of a good boy in my town those days. I always helped my parents with their work, and whenever my dad wanted me to, I worked as the store keeper of his store, without asking anything in return. I always respected older people and was obedient to my parents, teachers, and others. I never got into bad habits of smoking or drinking.

I never spent money in “debauchery and drunkenness”. But looking harder and deeper into the eyes of the older brother I understand that, with all these good qualities I have been lost just as the younger brother. I see my jealousy, anger, doggedness, impatience, self-righteousness, selfishness, desire for revenge, lust, greed, antagonism, lack of forgiveness, resentment, defensiveness, lack of trust, and loneliness. I worked in my father’s farm and the store and stayed at home, but I was very lonely. I never fully enjoyed the joy of being at home. In my deep heart I wished to get away from home. How much anger I had not only against those who spoiled my wishes in life, but also against myself? I was unable to forgive others and forgive myself. My heart was full of bitterness for not being awarded a good place for being a good boy in everybody’s book. Because of my hatred and resentment, I was lost. I stayed at home being a nice and obedient son but I have never lived a free life in my father’s home. In my bitterness, I even wanted to become like the younger brother to take my revenge.

The prodigal son experienced the joy of the son-come-home. To have that immense joy one should have died many deaths and cried many tears. The mysterious embrace of the father and son has become an intimate part of my spiritual journey. The embrace shows complete forgiveness. It is the place where I will receive all my desires, all that I ever hoped for and all that I will ever need. It is the place of fullness of love, forgiveness and healing. Forgiveness of all my mistakes, and healing of my defensiveness, loneliness and aggressiveness. It is an inner place where I am held safe in the embrace of the all-loving Father who calls me by name and says, ‘You are my beloved son, you are blessed, and on you my favor rests’. At the same time it is a place I have to let go all that I most want to hold to, my defensiveness, loneliness, aloofness, lack of vulnerability, aggressiveness and all other selfish motives. In the embrace of the father even my brokenness looks beautiful, the beauty coming from the compassion that surrounds that brokenness.

Story of a Typical Malayalee Pentecostal Christian Woman

 <p>Born in Kerala, a southern state of India</p>	 <p>Grew up in a prayerful family</p>	 <p>Attended a traditional church on most Sundays</p>
 <p>Kerala: Beautiful land with limited job opportunities</p>	 <p>Welcome to USA Hi USA</p> <p>Immigrated to USA, went to college & got a job</p>	<p>Freedom to question old beliefs</p>
 <p>Accepted Adult Baptism & filled with the Holy Spirit</p>	 <p>Glossolalia: Speaking in Tongues</p>	 <p>Worship God with Thankful Heart</p>