



in FOCUS

Equipping God's Workers With God's Word For God's Work



Allen Lim

BREAKFAST WITH JESUS

One does not know exactly why John appended an epilogue after his gospel. To most people, the expressed purpose in 20:31 serves as an appropriate conclusion. Nonetheless, this appendix provides unlimited illumination to both ancient and present day readers. It speaks of the Lord's unchanging relationship with His followers. In this passage, the Lord asserted once again His Lordship and demanded no less than an uncompromising commitment from Peter and the rest of the disciples. The same message applies to a disintegrated world such as ours, full of uncertainties and void of trust.

John's literary genius displayed in this final chapter could be viewed as an one act three-scene drama against the backdrop of the serene shores of lake Galilee. The principal characters are Jesus and Peter. As John told us, this is the third time when Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection. (v. 14)

Scene 1 *It is the Lord!! (21: 1-14)*

There are many speculations as to why and whether Peter should or should not go fishing. During this waiting period, it is probably the most practical thing to do. The disciples simply needed something to fill their time or stomach. When the Lord appeared to them on the shore, without any chiding he asked them the simple question, "You don't have any fish, do you?" (v. 5) It is interesting that the Chi-

nese Union version translated this as "Have you anything to eat?" Anyhow, they went fishing, labored through the night and caught nothing.

They did not recognize the Lord until they had the big catch following His instruction. "It is the Lord!" (v. 7) The beloved disciple was the first to recognize Him but Peter as always was the first one to approach him. The most touching scene was Jesus serving them full breakfast on the shore with grilled fish over coal fire and some bread which He had prepared. (v. 9) The Lord Himself handed the bread and fish to the disciples and the latter enjoyed the breakfast fellowship without a single word. (vv. 13-14) What could be in the minds of the disciples during these tender moments?

Peter must have recalled a similar experience during his early encounter with the Lord. (Luke 5:1-11) At that time the Lord gave him the new job of fishing men after the miraculous catch. Now with the same awe and fear, having denied the Lord three times days ago, what would the Lord say? The other disciples may simply remember how the Lord had fed the multitude with five loaves and two fish. When Jesus handed them the food, they were reminded of His servile spirit in washing their feet and His prediction during the last supper, regarding the coming kingdom, but not without His suffering first.

The disciples now realized it is the Lord. The same Lord who walked with
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We look at things around us rather than focus on our Lord. It's no surprise if we should retract from our calling or retreat from our ministry when we turn our eyes on people rather than our Lord.

Wilvic Elmer Huang

Three years of studies at BSOP have finally passed! Yet there still seems to be so many things I need to learn from His wonderful Word. I thank God for all the blessings that He has given me and to those who showed concern for God's people who are serving and working together in BSOP.

Many events took place during my stay in the Seminary. I had my ups and downs but God gave me strength when I needed it and I learned to consider all trials to be pure joy.

It is unlikely for me to like preaching since I don't talk much, but somehow I do. After going through the studies on how to handle God's Word, I have learned to be more careful in what I say. To speak God's Word is indeed a privilege. How could a mere man speak for God? His Word is holy, true and awesome. His Word is great indeed but many neglect it. We need to remember that through His words, all things were created and are maintained (Colossians 1:16-17). It is therefore our duty and responsibility to handle it faithfully and bring it to those who have not heard the good news, in accordance with His will. Thank God for His mercy and love that we have come to life in His living Word. *Sola Scriptura!*

GRADUATES' TESTIMONIES

Batch 2003

Jamiely Sia

As a senior student, I experienced the most troubling year of my life in BSOP. The pressure of finding God's will for my place of ministry, of being torn between being a missionary and a Bible woman, all came to a climax this year. It all started before I entered BSOP. I had a special kind of love for tribal people and it was always my dream to become a missionary someday. This was the reason why BSOP was the last on my list of seminaries to choose from. But as Proverbs 19:21 so rightly puts it, "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." I had planned to be a missionary, but after taking our Global and Urban Missions class, I realized that I lacked some qualities for being an effective missionary. For three years, the Lord had also been polishing me as a church worker rather than as a frontier worker. With humility of heart, I submit to His guidance and accept the new challenges I will be facing as a Bible woman. So, for the next two years, please pray as I serve God at the United Evangelical Church of Balintawak.

Joshua A. Ong

I still remember someone telling me that BSOP is not a place where I would find "elect angels" because everyone has his or her own weaknesses. I find this to be so true. Discouragement is bound to arise whenever we put pastors and seminarians on the high pedestal only to find out that they also have flaws. I have been discouraged several times, but by God's help and because of the precious advice of my beloved professors, life goes on for me.

Living in BSOP for three years enabled me to establish friendship with the local students as well as with students from foreign countries. Although I was hesitant to learn Mandarin during my first year, I never thought that making friends with them would eventually sharpen my conversation and listening skills. Thanks to all the Mandarin-speaking students! I am also very grateful to God for enabling me to establish deep friendship with my batch mates. Because of His grace and through their help and prayers, I was able to breeze through hardships in life. I will never forget them.

Now that three years of training have passed, I wouldn't dare say that I know all the deep theologies and doctrines. All I can say is that, like Paul, "God's grace is sufficient for me, for His power is made perfect in my weakness." (II Corinthians 12:10) May all the glory and honor be lifted back to our great God!

FACULTY ON THE MOVE

❖ Dr. Joseph Shao will be the Guest Speaker at the Missions Conference of Holy Light Theological Seminary in Taiwan, held on April 23-25, 2003.

❖ Mr. Philip Remmers has decided to return to the States after two years of ministry at BSOP. The Seminary would like to thank him for all his contributions.

❖ Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Pan has accepted our invitation to teach starting in June, 2003.

Scenic Retreat

The whole school went on a scenic retreat to Antipolo City last February 24-25, 2003. The venue, Loreland Farm Resort, was perched on a hilltop overlooking the whole Laguna de Bay.

Rev. Moses Keng spoke on "Moses: Servant of God." Everyone enjoyed their fellowship with God and with each other, as well as swimming and games.

Summer Activities

The first **Alumni Family Retreat** will be held at Caliraya Conference Center on May 11-14, 2003. Rev. Jeremiah Cheung will be the guest speaker. We urge the alumni to bring the whole family to this rare occasion.

The **Fulltimers' Conference** will be held at BSOP on May 18 to 21, 2003. The theme this year is "Full time? Part time?" with guest speakers Rev. Vicente Sia and Ptr. Richard Guion.

ALUMNUS ORDAINED

Congratulations and praise God for another ordained alumnus. Bernardo Que (Class of '95) was ordained on January 26, 2003 at the United Evangelical Church of General Santos.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ Pray for adequate electricity and water specially during the summer when conferences, TESOL and MACE classes will be held here.
- ▶ Pray for the new graduates as they launch out into their respective ministries. May the Lord give them strong bodies and zealous hearts as they serve in His vineyard.

Wedding Bells



Master of Divinity student William Jonathan Ong and Laurice Manalese were joined in holy matrimony at the United Evangelical Church of the Philippines last February 23, 2003. God bless the newlyweds!



2003 Graduates
 Front row (l-r): Jamiely Sia, Suzanne Li
 Back: Elmer Huang, Joshua Ong, Anthony Techico

Anthony Techico I thank God for the opportunity to be trained and equipped at BSOP for His ministry. I came to the Seminary thinking that I would just be getting a diploma, because I already knew about the Bible and had all that I needed to know. Coming here taught me that I knew very little. I am thankful that the Lord taught me what I needed, and indeed much more, He made me realize that I needed a humble heart, that I am not able to do anything apart from Him.

Through this experience He nurtured a dream within me, a dream similar to what D. L. Moody said, "The world has yet to see what God can do to a man who is fully dedicated for God's use!" I pray that God will use me as much as He used D.L. Moody for the glory of His name!

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them for the last three years, the same Lord who performed the miraculous signs, the same Lord who suffered on the cross, the same Lord who is now resurrected was eating with them right before their eyes. This same Jesus “shone” (in John’s language) His unchanged character by providing the great catch from the lake and the meal on the shore. Where these things come from was not a question at all. It is the Lord’s!

John’s purpose stands unfeigned. He proved to his readers that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

When the challenge is tough and the road rough, do we not sometimes feel that our Lord is far from us? Does He really care, anyway? Though shrouded by the mist of our uncertainties, He stays put not only as the agent of the cosmic creation but the Word that became flesh, full of grace and truth. He has not changed, not even a bit.

Scene 2

You know that I love you. (vv. 15-19)

After breakfast, Jesus finally broke the silence. As Peter might have expected, he was now being “grilled,” not the fish. Three times, Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him. Three times Peter affirmed his love for the Lord, though a little grieved on the last time. Again, we are not clear as to Jesus’ reference when He asked Peter if he love Him more than “these things.” It would be much simpler if Jesus was referring to the catch. He had long forsaken his fishing profession until this current trip to the sea. If Jesus’ reference was to the other disciples, ouch, this must have hurt much. Peter could easily recall that he claimed that even if the rest would forsake their master, he would stand

staunchly behind Him even if this would cost him his life. But Alas! He failed the Lord three times when those boastful words were still in the air.

But the intent of the Lord was not to hurt but to heal; not to pain Peter but that Peter would pine after Him. This time, Peter’s answer was more reserved. “Yes Lord, You know that I love You.” (vv. 15, 16) He submitted his love to the Lord’s scrutiny. He also expressed his knowledge of the Lord’s penetrating insight, He knows all things. (v. 17, also 2:24) In reciprocation, Jesus entrusted to Peter the task of feeding His flocks, but not without a price. Jesus also pre-announced Peter’s martyrdom in his old age.

Although this dialogue is more a test of Peter’s love for the Lord, yet the Lord’s patient testings indicated His unflinching love for Peter. He could have replaced Peter with the beloved disciple; but He reinstated his role as the shepherd of His flocks.

We cannot love the sheep without first loving their Master. We would just be hirelings, who flee for their life when danger strikes. (v. 10:12) Could this be the crisis of the church today? We do not only lack pastors but more so, pastors who would care for their sheep because they are dearly in love with the Lord who entrusts these sheep to them. When we realize the Lord’s “dying” love, then and only then can we even begin to consider paying the same price for our sheep.

Scene 3

Follow me!! (vv. 20-23)

Peter was always Peter. He was quick to accept the challenge but

when he saw the beloved disciple trailing behind, he asked the Lord, “How about him?” After all, the Lord would be fair, wouldn’t He?

We cannot love the sheep without first loving their Master. We would just be hirelings, who flee for their life when danger strikes.

Peter was willing to pay the price as long as the rest would meet the same requirement. But Jesus only reiterated His demand, “You follow me!” This time with an emphasis. (vv. 19, 22) Jesus did not give in to Peter’s desire. Whatever lot should fall on the next person was no business of Peter’s, it is the Lord’s prerogative. Peter’s only option was to follow His Lord unconditionally.

How often have we acquired Peter’s syndrome? We tend to compare ourselves with others. We look at things around us rather than focus on our Lord. It’s no surprise if we should retract from our calling or retreat from our ministry when we turn our eyes on people rather than our Lord. The Lord’s demand is not an option to be considered but a command to be obeyed as Hudson Taylor would put it. His call stays, “Take up YOUR cross daily and follow me.”

Response

As we retrace the footprints left on the shores of the Galilean Sea, enjoy the heat of the coal fire, and taste the fish and bread, may we recognize the Lord lives even if the mist still enshrouds. He is the faithful provider, tender lover and rightful master. Only when we know Him intimately will we love Him deeply and follow Him totally, even as He has given Himself to us unconditionally.