



Marketplace Moments

Bibliophoria

Living Wisely, Finishing Well:

Rt. Rev John Tan Teng Wai

This is the first of a series of collection of sermons, reflections and writings from members of the Graduates' Christian Fellowship and their spiritual journey. There is no better person than Bishop John Tan to start the series off.

John Tan is among few that have both vast experience in the workplace/ marketplace as well as a pastor and teacher. He is the founding principal of St Andrew's Junior College in 1978 and has many years of experience as an educator before that. He was ordained in 1980 while holding the post as principal. He retired from the teaching profession in 1990 and served the Anglican Church in Singapore on a full time basis. He was consecrated Bishop in 1995. John Tan also served as the President of the Graduates' Christian Fellowship from 1973 to 1976 as well as Scripture Union and Trinity Theological College Singapore.

In this collection of sermons which was preached at a number of churches, many of them comes from scriptural reflections on contemporary living in Singapore. Topics ranged from busyness, grandchildren, commitment, Christian service in the world as well as in the church, community, grace, backsliding.

Stories and illustrations comes

Living Wisely, Finishing Well

- A Collection of Sermons

The Rt Rev John Tan Teng Wai



from a variety of life circumstances familiar to Singaporeans and beyond; MRT rides, generation differences, travels etc.

Perhaps you can catch a glimpse of the quality and pedigree of this work from John's own foreword. 'Good preaching stems from God's anointing and proper sermon crafting. The preaching of Rev John Stott at All Souls Church and D. Martin Lloyd-Jones at Westminster Chapel became my spiritual meals every Sunday when I studied in London. I was so hungry for the Word of God and good preaching that I attended two services each Sunday. (Available at GCF office. Call Simon @ 6338 6283)

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Of the Heart and Mind

Developing Muscles

I first began learning this at the recent East Asia Graduates' Conference held in Seoul when I heard Marva Dawn. A frail older woman who is blind in one eye, deaf in one ear, handicapped and suffers from low blood pressure. There were times where her blood pressure dips while speaking that she almost falls over.

Yet she is no weakling by any measure. I was impressed not only of her gentle peace and steadfast love and faith of her God, but her clarity of Biblical principles and theology that could withstand tides of false doctrines, deceptive philosophies and lies.

The critical beauty and strength lies in developing spiritual and theological muscles than can hold together apparent contradiction and biblical paradoxes while living in a fallen world. Many with weak muscles has split churches and wrecked faith. Not because they are unbiblical, but because there has yet to develop strong theological muscles to hold them together or using another metaphor of Paul, not strong to digest solid food.

Let me first present two scriptures before moving on.

2 Tim 3:16 'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.'

Heb 5:12¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teach-

ers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.'

Consider the following apparent paradoxes and questions in daily life.

- 1) Why does a loving God allows so much sufferings?
- 2) Almighty God and the problem of evil.
- 3) Finding gracious and just solutions.
- 4) Where does God's responsibility ends and ours begins?
- 5) Why does the evil man gain while the righteous loses.
- 6) Love and discipline
- 7) Some prayed and was healed, while others not.
- 8) Godly parents and wayward children

In a world of fast food, instant noodles and quick fixes, we want quick and easy answers. Many times, we over simplify complex situations. We also forget that



many of us have not dwelled deep into scriptures to develop an appetite for solid food as Paul writes As with physical training, it takes both time and perseverance.

We also need to learn to live in Biblical tension. God is God and we are not. What makes us think that we can resolve the matters of God, when he has revealed to us in scriptures both sides of the truth? Salvation does not call us to escape from a sinful world but be part of His plan in the transformation and redemption of the sinful world. Living in tension doesn't seem like a great proposition. But we also need to understand that we are now living as Christians between 'what is' and 'what ought to be'. Only through building strong biblical and theological muscles, can we begin to reconcile the liberals with conservatives, Charismatic and Fundamentalists and prevents us from hitting the error of extremes.

The marketplace movement is melting pot where denominations plays less of a significance than scriptures. Let us approach both scriptures and each other with humility and reverence.

By Timothy Liu

Eyes in a Darkened Room

Evan ALMIGHTY

Evan Almighty

Directed by Tom Shadyac. Starring Steve Carell, Morgan Freeman, Lauren Graham, and John Goodman.

The sequel to *Bruce Almighty* picks up the story of Bruce's rival newscaster Evan Baxter (Steve Carell), who has just won a seat to the US Congress on the strength of his campaign promise to "Change the World." On the eve of his first day in Congress, after everybody has gone to sleep, he offers an uncomfortable, bumbling, but earnest prayer to God, and goes to bed. It immediately becomes apparent to us that God (Morgan Freeman) has indeed answered that prayer—to Baxter's hilarious discomfort. It seems God has been looking for someone who wants to change the world, and he has picked Evan to be his new Noah and build an ark before the new flood comes. Evan becomes the new Noah, complete with a prophet's beard and robes,

despite Evan's best efforts to remain a clean-shaven, sharp-dressed congressman. Evan responds more like Jonah to God's call, running away from God, with every kind of animal in creation following right behind him (even some little fishes, but no great fish).

Finally, Evan stops resisting, and with copy of *Ark Building for Dummies* in hand, builds the ark. All the while, he becomes the laughingstock of congress and the international press. Even his family, especially his wife, doubts his sanity. Will the flood really come on 22nd September as promised, or will God leave him high and dry before the mockery of a skeptical world?

Carell is funny as Evan Baxter, but he is no clown. We sympathize with him because his world is turned upside down and we know he is not crazy—but nobody else does. Eventually, he responds with faith and obedience. *Evan Almighty* does not mock faith, but respects it. Evan does what God wants him to, but at great cost to his reputation—would we be willing to be radically obedient to God if it meant everyone thought we were a fool?



Those who had some reservations about *Bruce Almighty* because of some its adult humor and sexual innuendo need not fear. *Evan Almighty* is thoroughly clean fun. However, its theological themes are weaker. Of course, generic theology is typical of Hollywood. One thought-provoking theme is that God does not usually answer our prayers by doing everything for us. Rather, he puts us in situations where we can act to bring about the answer—if we have the faith and the courage to do so.

By Brian Thomas



Discussion:

- 1) How do we know God is calling us to do something radical? How can we discern through community?
- 2) Put yourself in the shoes of Evan and also his wife. How would you share this experience with fellow Christians about your calling?

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**Kingdom Building
at the Workplace**

Coming Events

10-12 Oct – New Gods, New Identity

Vinoth Ramanchandra

20 Oct (4-6pm) – Faith that Heals

Differentiating Medical, miraculous and magical healing of our time by CMDF.

24 Oct (7:30pm) – God and Technology

Speaker: Mr. LT Jeyachandran

Venue: GCF-FES Center, 420 North Bridge Rd, #05-04. (Opp National Library)

For more information check our web-site.

