

2018 END-OF-YEAR CAMP MEETING

WELCOME ADDRESS

BY

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TITLE: THE CUP OF HIS SALVATION IS OVERFLOWING

Our Destiny is in the Hands of God

The secular year is coming to a close once again after a journey of 12 months, 52 weeks and 364 days. We are here in one whole piece in the presence of God Almighty, grateful and joyful in Him. Our lives are a testimony to His steadfast love and favour.

A year is not too long a time and yet long enough to bring profound changes to our lives. Some become fresh husbands and wives and build new homes together in the course of the year; some get sick and get into all sorts of misfortunes. Some even die.

But some also land new jobs and promotions and attain great successes.

For millions of others, however, it's business as usual; it's the same old pedestrian life lived all over again – no significant improvement or worsening circumstances. They just seem to be stuck where they are. But they live nevertheless, and they too ought to be thankful to God. "For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion" (Eccl. 9:4). Their breakthrough might just be on the way!

For us believers, chance is not our destiny fixer but God, "In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:10). He assures us in His word, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jer. 29:11).

The promised "future of hope" is rooted in the faithfulness of God. Whatever our circumstances, our cup already "runneth over" with His blessings, and we can't complain but be thankful. That's all we can do tonight.

The Cup of Bitterness exchanged for the Cup of Salvation

For all the blessings the heavenly Father has bestowed on us this year, it's beyond our capacity to adequately compensate Him. We can neither quantify the blessings nor give the commensurate compensation. We can only count our blessings – by taking the cup of salvation overflowing with His benefits towards us. In unison with the Psalmist, therefore, let's sing from the depth of our souls:

*“What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me?
“I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.
“I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people.
“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.
“O LORD, truly I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid:
Thou hast loosed my bonds.
“I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the
LORD.
“I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people,
“In the courts of the LORD'S house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the
LORD” (Ps. 116: 12-19).*

The “cup of salvation” is a cup of divine blessings for which we express thanks and pay our vows. It’s a cup which never quite dries up! Healing, salvation, deliverance and all kinds of innumerable blessings flow from the cup – which is Christ. (See John 4:13-14).

At His *victorious death* at Calvary, He took away our cup of suffering when He tasted to the dregs that bitter cup of the human condition. It was literally a sponge of vinegar put to His mouth:

*“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.
“Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth.
“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost” (John 19:28-30).*

There and then, He exchanged our cup of sorrows and bitterness for His cup of salvation so our souls might drink of it and be satisfied.

But it wasn’t an easy sacrifice to make. Thrice He prayed against the cup of human suffering and misfortunes as His death approached menacingly:

“O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39, 42, 44).

The Father gritted His teeth and looked away; He shut His mercy from His only begotten Son, fashioned in human form for your sake and my sake – so that we might have this salvation we now enjoy. The Father only sent an angel from heaven to strengthen Him (Luke 22:43).

Only for Him to let out a cry of anguish while He hung on the tree:

“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? (Matt. 27:46).

It was a cup of suffering, of sorrows, of betrayal, of hurtful words, of shame and of a cruel and bitter death, but that was the divine recipe for our salvation – at great cost to God: at the price of His Son.

So you see, it's beyond our means and ability to offer God adequate thanks (which is equal to the benefit). We can only show token appreciation – like how a poor farmer shows his appreciation to a rich benefactor by presenting him with a basket of fruits. It's not a gesture equal in value to the rich man's gifts, but it will surely gladden the heart of the rich man.

Praise Time

Now then is the time to pay our vows of praise and thanks and offering to God for His manifold blessings given in grace. There's no price tag on God's grace. We thank and glorify His holy Name simply to show our gratitude.

His cup of salvation is not an empty cup or even half full, but a cup overflowing with His blessings even now, as we stand before Him. Let's lift it up and celebrate His goodness. He has dealt generously with us.

It's to Him that we owe our very breath and wellbeing and salvation.

He has loosed our bonds of sickness, death, shame and poverty. He has turned our mourning into dancing. He ought to be celebrated, not in our hearts or within the confines of our rooms only but “in the presence of all His people, In the courts of the LORD's house.”

Same time next year, His goodness will overflow in torrents, our cup never ceasing to run over and over! Amen!