

"ZION IS OUR HOME" - A MULTIFACETED PERSPECTIVE

TONY WONG

Revisit of "Zion is Our Home"

The theme for Zion Alliance Church in 2025 is "Zion is Our Home." Our church is calling us to build a home full of love, care and acceptance, a spiritual home where God and man meet. In implementing this, we may want to understand better the two terms, "Zion" and "Home." Maybe then, you will better understand "Zion is My Home," and perhaps gain a different understanding from "Zion Alliance Church is My Family."

A Different Interpretation

"Home," whether it be Hebrew or Greek, based on the word itself points to a house, a residence, a palace; a place humans dwell in. In analogy, it points to a fellowship of believers, the house of God, or a country.

"Zion" in Hebrew, apart from being another name for Jerusalem, it's also the name of a mountain in Jerusalem. At the same time, a word with the same root word, and same sound means a road sign in Jeremiah, or a pinpoint in Ezekiel. Similarly, they point to a direction. As the word Zion and direction are related, we can say that Zion is a sign, a direction God gave to his people to lead the Israelites back then, and also us today to return to Him to enjoy his abundance.

What does the Bible Say in Other Areas

In Isaiah 62, God gave Zion (Jerusalem) a new name, Hephzibah (Delight by God). In the New Testament, when Jesus was baptized, a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Later in Matthew 17, during Jesus' transfiguration, the exact phrase is repeated from heaven. This clearly indicates that Zion is the delighted son of God, who is Christ.

Comprehension through Interacting with God

To fulfill this year's theme of building a church full of love, care, and acceptance — a home where brothers and sisters can interact with God — we must continue to interact with God ourselves. This is because if a branch is separated from the tree, without the nutrients from God, the branch will not be able to continue living. God's word, the bible, is the best cohesion for God and man to be connected. Not only does it help us understand the will of God, but it is also our best defensive weapon and the source of our blessing. We can't allow it to slip past us. We should not be satisfied with only the weekly sermon and the seasonal Sunday school. We must continue to purify ourselves, follow the teachings of the bible and live out the truth of God in our lives.

The Key to Following God and Loving Each Other

This is the command Jesus gave when He washed the feet of the disciples. Through this love (humble and action), Jesus showed His disciples how to build unity through serving one another. Loving each other is not one-way, but a two-way street. The disciples need to learn how to love others through following Jesus' love for them. This life must be anchored in the love of God, and is beyond the command (love your neighbour). This is how they were able to display their identity as followers of Jesus—a glorifying marker of discipleship.

Brothers and sisters, do not let "Love one another" remain as a slogan or a wish. The best place to implement this is through fellowship gatherings. Fellowship is not just a gathering, but a reflection of connected lives, through sharing of ups and downs, as well as experiencing God. We need to understand that excuses like being too busy or having too much to do can subconsciously pull us away from the teachings of the Bible (Philippians), "Not looking to your own interest but the interest of others." If not, we will slowly become desensitized to the needs of others. If we consider others' issues as small, irrelevant matters, how can we practice loving one another?

Another Experience of Zion

When you arrive at the Zion Alliance Church, at the Northwest corner of Highway 7 and Frontenac, my hope is that you see not only a heritage building but also a structure overflowing with warmth. At the same time, we should not be satisfied with the current state, but we need to focus our sight on our redeemer, Jesus, who chose to walk this Earth with us. While "Zion is Our Home" means finding the home of God in Earth, but also that Jesus is our final resting place. Our destination if Jesus Christ, and therefore, going to church is not simply to worship and listen to sermons, but part of the pilgrimage to see our everlasting Lord.

Why do we Need to Look Up Towards Jesus

The continuous tense of looking up, in its original form, means being fully attentive and staring. But what are we focusing on? Our focus is to follow the examples of Christ. As daily bible reading and experiencing God is something that cannot be missed, I urge you to read the bible more often. Just as Romans stated, the gospel of God is the story of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Therefore, the basis of our faith, "fully believing", the core, "Word of God," and the bridge is "Lord Jesus Christ." He is the life, the truth and the way.

More importantly, there are no other names that we can gain salvation through. There is only one route for salvation. Just as the old proverb states, "Once you miss the village, there's no more shops."

Brothers and sisters, I do not mean to accuse anyone, but to remind and encourage ourselves. We should just examine ourselves, and if anyone of us is described, then we should change our behaviour, and if not, then see it as a congratulation to our work so far. May we all be victorious through Christ, and be a blessing to others as we better ourselves.