



A Publication of the San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church
"Growing together and reaching out in the love of Christ"

Firmly Rooted

"Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him." Col. 2:6a

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Let Freedom Ring

On our visit to New York City, Alice and I went to see the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. We could imagine how the immigrants must have felt when they saw the Statue of Liberty, symbol of hope and freedom. They had endured a long, arduous journey across the Atlantic. Ellis Island is where they were processed. They were not treated with sensitivity and care. Today, over 100 million Americans -- one third of the population -- can trace their roots to the immigrants who arrived in America at Ellis Island.

We also went to see the tenement museum. It is a tenement apartment building built in 1863. It was home to more than 7000 immigrants. We could see that life was difficult for them. It is estimated that 80% of all infants born to Irish immigrants in New York City died.

I wondered if these immigrants felt it was worth coming to America. Despite the hardships, I think they did. Leaving the old country, to come to the new world to have a new start in life meant a lot to them. A new start in life meant freedom. They believed what the Declaration of Independence says, ... *they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*

The 4th of July commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. It represents our freedom as a nation. This freedom did not come cheap. It was bought with the pain and blood of countless Americans who fought to acquire it, as well as those who have fought to protect it. For the immigrants, having a new start in life involved a lot of pain and adversity. In spite of the sufferings, there was a sense of satisfaction because of their freedom.

As much as we treasure our freedom in America, a greater freedom is our freedom in



Christ. It comes to us when we accept Christ, giving us a new start in life. That freedom did not come cheap either. It came through the pain and blood of Jesus Christ. Through the centuries, countless Christians have endured many trials. And yet, there is joy, because this new life in Christ gives freedom.

Jesus said, "... *you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*" (John 8:31-32).

The cross frees us from the bondage of sin. This great freedom gives us a life of purpose. It gives us victory over the sting of death. It gives us strength to overcome the burdens of life. It gives us power to love and forgive. It gives us power to accept ourselves as we are and not be tyrannized by the standards of the world. This 4th of July is a good time to consider our freedom — as Americans and as Christians. Our national freedom is of great worth, but our freedom in Christ is of immeasurable value.

-- Dr. Vernon Kam

God's GRACE is FOREVER

By: Ben Lee

When I was asked to share my testimony, I felt so grateful, blessed, and humbled for the privilege to share.

The wonderful treasure of our salvation in Ephesians 2:8 is that I was saved through faith in Jesus Christ and not by any works that I have done.

It is through God's glorious grace that He gave me the free gift of salvation. Many times we start with the recognition that it was God's grace that saved us, and then it becomes a perk for our lives.

It has taken me a journey to understand that His grace started even before my salvation and continues to this day. When I came from Hong Kong as a small child, my mother and I spent two years in Honolulu but never went to church. One summer, I stayed with my uncle who lived next door to a pastor of a church that met in a Quonset hut. I was invited to church and still remember the story of Joshua while my first Sunday School teacher, Mr. Robert Tom, taught with a bare light bulb swinging over our heads.

We then moved to Chicago and attended a church where after a boy's club meeting, I made the decision to accept Christ. I just followed the rest of the boys that wanted to become a Christian, not really understanding what it meant. Shortly after that, I attended a Moody Church Youth Camp. Through the teaching of the Bible, I realized I was a sinner and needed a Savior. I learned how Jesus loved me so much that He died on the cross and rose again to forgive me for all my sins past, present and future.

I grew up involved with the church and Christian activities and I always wanted "to do" things for Christ and serve Him. I took God's grace as something extra good that I had gained from being a Christian -- just one of the many perks like the Holy Spirit.

As I grew older, grace became more like the action of the judge who took the speeding ticket and tore it up or stamped the fine as, "Paid in full." That was a pretty simple understanding of grace and I was thankful for that.

As the years passed, I finally began to realize that God's grace covered everything that was happening in my life.



Grace Vilain, Kevin Masuda, Forrest and Kimi Yee and Jane and Ben Lee gather for their welcome reception when they became members of SLZJCC, April 25, 2010.

By His grace, He allowed me to go to college away from my home in Texas and He saw fit to hook me up with a friend and led me to a church to serve.

By His grace, He allowed me to meet and marry my partner, Jane. After college, by His grace, He allowed me to settle in Alameda to work and gave me the privilege to serve at three different Bible-believing churches, all where I learned and grew in the Word to love Him and developed a desire to serve Him.

By His grace, He gave Jane and me, three wonderful sons and subsequently three wonderful daughter-in-laws and now three grandsons.

By His grace, He has provided for and maintained us spiritually, physically, and emotionally throughout the trials and challenges all during these years. He was always there watching and "covering" for me.

Since worshipping at SanLo, I am so thankful to have grown to realize the immenseness of God's grace through the pastors and staff. He has shown me His grace and work in the many multi-generational families, their struggles and joys -- spiritually, physically, financially and emotionally -- as they still are able to praise and cling to the promises of the Lord. The whole church has been such a blessing to Jane and me.

As I continue to learn by studying His Word and spending time with the Lord, I realize that living by His grace is to show others love, respect, honor, friendliness, kindness, care, patience, joy, accepting others and building them up, as God's way of demonstrating His grace to me. At the same time, still confessing that I can do nothing apart from Him, a sinner saved by grace.

More Graduates



Last month our graduates were listed. Here are a few more! Please let us know if there are others we may have missed.

Congratulations...

to **Cory Ng** who graduated 8th grade from Fremont Christian PSP. *Our apologies that Cory was omitted in last month's F.R.*

Mary Agawa received a honorary diploma from San Jose State University, 60+ years later due to the internment. **Kimi Kitayama** received her honorary diploma from U.C. Berkeley in Dec. 2009 and we heard **Harold Takahashi** also received his honorary diploma from U.C. Davis last year! Praise God after many decades, these graduates were finally recognized. **Congratulations!**

Vacation Bible

School

July 19-23

9 a.m. to 12 noon



Be sure to register early for the High Seas Expedition! Your kids will explore the mighty love of God on an exciting journey that is filled with Bible learning, cool Bible songs, crafts, recreation, and tasty treats.

Pre-registration is highly recommended as walk-ins may not be offered. Registration forms are on the church website or at the church.

9th Annual Golf Outing – A time to enjoy great fellowship

The 9th annual SLZJCC golf outing took place on Saturday, June 12th, at the Mission Hills Golf Course in Hayward. It was a warm sunny day, but the winds picked up at the start, and it gave everyone a challenging nine holes of golf. We had a good mix of 11 gals and 23 guys. Nine of the people attended for the first time.

The day began with an opening prayer by Pastor Eric Yata. With the anticipation of fun, fellowship and good golf the day seemed to go by quickly. After golfing we enjoyed a lunch at the course. Jeff Kataoka, the guest speaker, shared how his "top ten" facts of golf related to his life as a Christian.

Jeff shared how there are different golf clubs to use such as a driver, woods, irons and putter. They help you with the obstacles on the course. As a Christian we have Christ, the church, our family and friends. Each one helps us with our life to deal with the obstacles that come our way. Also, the Lord reminds us to be humble, and golf is humbling!

A raffle was held with great prizes, many that were donated. The day ended with many smiling faces and positive comments.

The 10th Annual will be here before you know it!
Come join us next year.

-- Ross Yamamoto and Mike Ishii



God blessed this year's golf outing with 34 participants ... a great day with fun, fellowship, good weather and a meaningful devotional.