



# BGST This Week

BIBLICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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## A Reflection from Luke 15

One of the greatest portrayals of the Father heart of God is found in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32. So powerful is the depiction of God as a loving Father that this parable can be sometimes referred to as the parable of a merciful or an extravagant Father. I believe this parable is timely for us as we think about our lives before God this week.

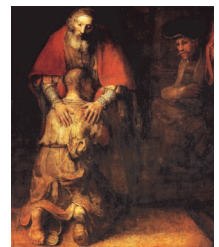
It is amazing that the father in the parable did what most patriarchal fathers in those days might not have done: when he saw his son, he ran towards him. This father laid aside his pride and dignity and ran for his son, embraced, and kissed him despite the fact that his son had previously mingled with the pigs and might probably smell like one of them. We see here a picture of a gracious father!

Have you considered what God might do if you turn your back on Him and mess up your life? As far as the young son was concerned, he learned the hard lesson. Verse 16 summarises his plight, "No one was giving anything to him..." In other words, no second chance. Yet the parable invites its readers (or hearers) to think about a God who waits for his child's return. It portrays God as a God of second chance, who meets where his child is.

This depiction of God can indeed be a great comfort to us. The church is no strangers to many of their members with prodigal experiences. Prodigal experiences may not necessarily be bad experiences. Rather, they can be a process of searching for truth and of unlearning and relearning. In fact, many church leaders, if they were to be honest about it, had at some point of their lives wandered away from their faith and ministry but then returned, become better and stronger.

John Mark, the gospel writer, was a case in point.

Concern parents may have done all that they can and still see their children walk away from their faith. It is no doubt a painful experience. But I believe God works in the lives of the children, as well as the parents' as they go through the pain. The experience of pain and sorrow has been beautifully expressed by Oswald Chambers as "the soul's path to God." I believe God puts parents through a time of soul-searching and isolation to help them realise the sovereignty of God and that He has His timing and ways. Because He is God, He causes all things to work for the good of those who are called to His purpose. That includes the parents and their wayward children. Parents need to know that God loves their prodigal children, too, and more than they possibly can.



The parable concludes with a sad reality in verses 25-32: while God gives second chance, God's people may not.

When the elder son learned that his brother has repented, he was very unhappy. He even accused his father for showing favouritism. Rather than saying "my brother," he said, "This son of yours..." and refusing to celebrate with his father. Jesus was in effect telling his hearers, in particular, the scribes and the Pharisees, "Look at these so called sinners. You who are elder brothers, be gracious to them and be joyful that God is reaching out to them."

Isn't this paradoxical? The younger brother who was "outside" was now "inside" whilst the older brother who was supposed to be "inside," busy working in his father's field, actually remained "outside"?

God rejoices over His child's return but sometimes we fail to understand His graciousness, hence, fail to receive erring brothers and sisters. Self-righteous attitude of God's people hurts absolutely.

Whichever level you are at, God meets you where you are. And remember, God is still gracious to his erring children even when we are not so toward them.

The Editor,  
*Dr Andrew Lee*

## BGST's Moving Appeal

We would like to thank the 60 or so donors who responded to BGST's Moving Appeal. We received a total of almost \$200,000 in donations, and we are most grateful for the generosity of God's people.

Some donors requested to remain anonymous, and we will of course respect that request. A few donors made gifts but did not give any address; nor do we have their address in our records. If you donated to the Appeal, but have not yet received a thank you letter and receipt from us, it may be that you are one of these donors for whom we have no address. If you think you may be in this category, and would like a receipt for your gift, please contact us (Tel: 6227 6815; Email: [peh-adam@bgst.edu.sg](mailto:peh-adam@bgst.edu.sg)). We will supply you with a receipt promptly.

And once again: to all our Moving Appeal donors, thank you!

## Staff Devotion Time for Month of October

BGST Staff Devotion time is scheduled on Wednesday, 02, 09 and 16 October, 12 noon.

Friends & visitors are welcome to join us for fellowship and devotion together at our centre.

## Course Schedule

For Semester 1 of Academic Year 2013-2014, please visit our webpage at <http://bgst.edu.sg/media/files/courses/2013-2014-sem1.pdf>.

For course inquiries, please email us at [inquiry@bgst.edu.sg](mailto:inquiry@bgst.edu.sg)

## Intensive Course - November 2013

### Liturgy and Worship

CM220 (1.5 Credits)

Guest Lecturer: Dr Vincent Ooi

Venue: BGST Centre

Dates: Nov 16 (9:30am - 4:30pm),

Nov 18, 19, 21 (7:15pm - 10:15pm)



#### Course Overview

This course explores the place of liturgy in Christian worship and living. The approach is interdisciplinary, i.e. scriptural, theological, historical and contemporary resources will be used to consider the subjects of liturgy worship, liturgical time, sacramental theology and the ordinances/sacraments of baptism and communion. Students will be encouraged to make informed and critical reflections of liturgical practices in their own traditions in the light of liturgical practices in other traditions.

To view course description, please visit <http://www.bgst.edu.sg/media/files/courses/cm220-2013.pdf>

## Intensive Course—November 2013 *continued....*

### Asian Religions in the Contemporary Age

IC211 (3 Credits)

Guest Lecturers: Dr Tan Kang San & Lee Loun Ling

Venue: BGST Centre

Dates: Nov 23, 30 (9:30am - 4:30pm),

Nov 25, 26, 28, 29, Dec 2, 3 (7:15pm - 10:15pm)



#### Course Overview

Christian engagements with people of other faiths flow from our theological convictions. “No task in missiology is more controversial and crucial than encountering world religions” (Gerhad Anderson). Despite living in a multi-religious society, many Asian Christians have superficial knowledge of the beliefs of their neighbours. This course offers an introduction to Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Hinduism religions as well as theological analysis of interfaith issues in Asian contexts. The course begins with the method of academic study of religion, followed by the study of selected religious texts, case study, videos and group discussions from a Christian perspective. Throughout the course, practical implications on gospel and culture, evangelism and inter-religious conversations and the mission of the local church in a contemporary plural society will be explored.

To view course description, please visit <http://www.bgst.edu.sg/courses-and-events/386-asian-religions-in-the-contemporary-age>

## Online Registration for Courses through Moodle

### 1. RETURNING STUDENTS

You can register online for most courses through Moodle. Log in to your Moodle Account via <http://bgst-m.com/login/index.php> with your Username (Student ID) and Password

If you've taken a course with us some years ago and are just returning, you can call us at 62276815 or email [inquiry@bgst.edu.sg](mailto:inquiry@bgst.edu.sg) to request for your Username and Password.

### 2. NEW TO BGST?

If you are a new student of BGST, click on the “New Student? Please click here to register”. The Username and Password will be emailed to you once we confirmed your student registration and thereafter, you should be able to register for courses via Moodle.

### CHOOSE YOUR COURSES BEFORE YOU REGISTER

For example, you would like to register for NT101 for credit.

In the main page under

1. “Courses Categories”, please look for NEW TESTAMENT
2. Choose New Testament Foundations I (NT101-AY2013, Credit)



3. Click
4. Add to Cart
5. Select “Mode of Payment”
6. We will be notified of your registration.

### MODES OF PAYMENT

For those registering for courses under normal course rates, you may select “VISA” or “I-Banking” as your payment mode.

For those registering for courses under BGST course discount schemes, you will need to select “Others” as your payment mode. A confirmation email will be sent through the Registration Office for payment via Cheque / I-Banking after the registration details have been verified. For further enquiries or clarifications, please call Admin Office at 62276815.