

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



"We Welcome You"

"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me." (Mark 9:37, NIV)

Dear Friends, do you find the title "**We Welcome You**" familiar? I am sure you do because it is the message of our banner outside SAMS. The condition given to us for putting up a banner is that the content should not be deemed 'religious'. I am so used to Christian slogans that I do not know what to put on the banner except for the service timings and the church's name. So I prayed to God, and he gave me three words, "**We Welcome You**". I remember thinking in my heart, "That's it?".

In the NIV version of the Bible, Jesus in Mark 9 told his disciples to **"welcome one of these little children in my name"**. Surely, we know from other parts of the Bible that Jesus wants us to receive everyone, not only children. Jesus is making the point that our attitude towards welcoming anyone into our midst should be the same as welcoming little children. When we see the little children, we welcome them with open arms and hearts filled with joy. Moreover, the child comes to us trusting that they will be accepted into the congregation.

In the ESV version of the Bible, 'welcome' is substituted by **'receive'**. The Greek word for 'receive' means not only welcome but also accept, tolerate, approve, and believe. It goes beyond just welcoming the people. The spirit of it synchronized with Jesus' command in Mark 10:45, **"...The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve..."**.

Just before Jesus said these words, the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest. Jesus knew that the disciples had missed the whole point. They were still looking after their own desires, and we are no different from them. For this reason, Jesus shifted their self-centred focus to Him and gave them the command in Mark 9:37.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, welcoming is more than hospitality. It is bringing to action our obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ. We do it not out of our own goodness but in Jesus' name ("**...welcomes one of these little children in my name...**"). When we do that, Jesus says we also welcome the one who sent Him, who is our Heavenly Father. Therefore, everyone -- not just the ushers and hospitality team, is responsible for welcoming people into the house of God. Please do not wait for one another, but grab every opportunity to welcome our visitors and each another. You do not need to be a Christian to be hospitable, but it does take a faithful follower of Christ to obey his teachings.

Would you welcome God's children into WAC/JACM because you want to please God? Let "We Welcome You" remain not just a slogan, but be reflected in our actions towards new visitors and also among ourselves.

Pastor Kelvin