

Name: Jak Li

Position: Male Devotional Leader

Years at CCF: 2

Years as Christian: 1-3

Current Church: New City Church

Home Church: New City Church

Vision Statement

I began my walk with God two years ago, here at CCF. At that time, my purpose for coming was to somehow understand this Christian God. I thought I could do it myself as I do most things myself, but after many failures from struggling to read the Bible, to trying to overcome sins through pure discipline, to refusing the love that God shows through community, I find myself having a little better understanding of what the Christian God is about. My vision statement is Journey with God, which means simply to open my life up to my brothers and sisters as we pursue God together.

Repentance

"From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"
Matthew 4:17 (RSV)

Repentance is a big word. The dictionary definition is: "to feel sorry, self-reproachful, or contrite for past conduct; regret or be conscience-stricken about a past action, attitude, etc". This means that we need to be sorry for something. Okay, so we can feel sorry about a lot of things that we do from day to day life, but let's take it one step further and look at why we should repent. "For the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Hmm...this sounds vague pretty impersonal. What does the kingdom of heaven mean for you and me? It means a lot actually and it is through the continual pursuit of understanding what this kingdom really means that we can truly understand why we should feel sorry for something we do.

Community

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 (ESV)

How do we repent? Feeling truly sorry and wanting to say sorry to God is difficult to do and sometimes, it takes alone time to introspect and figure out the heart's deepest desires and sorrows. As my walk continues, I'm beginning to appreciate the true values of community and I believe this is one aspect of the kingdom of heaven as we are a "royal priesthood" 1 Peter 2:9. In a safe community, a person can have the freedom of being open and sincere, knowing that the community is there to love. One of the most difficult things to do is to allow the community to be a part of your life. It means vulnerability, and letting someone "speak with Christ-like authority" over you. This means letting go of control and trusting people around you, even if you haven't known them for a very long time...sounds impossible.

Gospel

"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:21 (RSV)

Nothing is impossible! Not with God around anyway. This is a verse of special significance to me...first and only one I remember! (Hopefully that will change). The impossibility of letting people close and making ourselves vulnerable is shattered by Jesus' death on the cross. The Gospel allows us to receive criticism without being crushed because we know that our identity and self-worth has been assured by he who knew no sin, so even if it hurts, we won't be devastated. On the other hand, the Gospel also allows us to give criticism without crushing because we all needed God to become sin for our sake. In this, the Gospel slowly becomes real and we can let it permeate through our desire for repentance and community; I hope to walk in this journey with you all.

So that's it...that's my vision for CCF next year. To be a part of community where we can discover the true conditions of our hearts, realize the pain that these conditions puts on the people we love and repent it to God as well as our loved ones, allow the Gospel to work in our everyday lives and understand the realness of the Christian God.

Personal Evaluation

1. Name 2 weaknesses that you possess, and please indicate if and how you are addressing each weakness.

The first weakness that I have is my tendency to make things more serious than they might be. Often times, I might read more into something than there is and play things out in my head in ways that only exist in my head. I'm working on this weakness by first being more aware of my reactions to certain situations. Furthermore, I'm learning how to approach those involved in a non-threatening way to clear up certain situations.

The second weakness I have is my constant self-criticism. Although on the surface it might come out as humble, in the depth of my heart, I know I have a lot of self-worth issues, which is in itself a very selfish thing. I am working on this weakness by reminding myself of my identity in Christ and that he is perfect and God loved him so, but because he suffered my death, when God looks at me, he is happy with me. Furthermore, I am learning to accept the love God is showing me through community.

2. Name 2 strengths that you possess, and please indicate how you believe it will benefit the CCF family.

One strength I have is empathizing with people. I tend to put myself in other people's shoes often and perhaps show love through encouragement or being there. I think this can benefit the CCF family because everyone needs some comfort once in a while. Perhaps my words may be comforting

to some.

Another strength I have is being honest. Although it is hard to be honest sometimes, I think being honest is the easiest way to resolve any issue. Perhaps the CCF family can find my honesty encouraging in knowing that even though we struggle with many things in life, because God loves us all, we can be honest with each other even if it's difficult.

3. Critically evaluate your ability to work alongside others and provide an example.

I've always enjoyed working with others and being in Engineering, I've had a lot of opportunity to work in teams. The process of bouncing ideas off one another and integrating the different ideas is very fun. I made it through AER201 without hating my teammates so I think that was a great blessing on its own.

It will be the first time I'll be working with a slightly larger group very closely, so I expect there to be many challenges ahead to work alongside many different personalities. However, I believe that by having a servant heart, we can work out our differences. One of the most beautiful things of the Christian Faith is the reconciliation between people who would never in any other case invest in each other and I think when these things happen, it definitely a reflection of God's perfect relationship within the Trinity and with us personally.

4. Critically evaluate your openness towards receiving criticism and provide an example.

I am pretty open towards receiving criticism. Part of my vision for next year is allowing my brothers and sisters to have Christ-like authority over me and that means to hear out the criticisms and really think about them. I believe the best way to grow is accepting criticism, but at the same time, I'm pretty hard on myself as is, so a nice balance between criticism and affirmation would be most gracious :).