



# Carmel Times

A Teens Fellowship Initiative

CARMEL MAR THOMA CHURCH  
BOSTON



Photograph by Chacko Mathew

## Goodness Project

Short story series on the fruits of the Spirit

----- by **Aiden Mathew**

Once upon a time, a farmer named Peter lived in a small village. Peter was married to Ashley, and they had a daughter, Lucy and a baby boy named Jake.

Lucy was a very caring person and always put others before herself. Lucy often found herself bored as her father was tending the crops and Ashley was always busy with Jake. During her free time, she would often go for long walks, watch her father garden small plants, and pick wild fruits.

One day as Lucy was strolling along, she found a withered apple tree. After seeing how badly this tree was impaired, she decided to take care of it. So, every morning Lucy would go and care for it until it was flawless.

One morning on her way to water the tree she notices a small green thing poking out of the tree. She takes a closer look at it and realize that the tree is budding. Her hard work was finally paying off!

A few weeks pass by and there is an abounding number of apples on the tree. She took a bite out of one to see how it was and it was succulent. Instead of keeping all these delicious apples for herself, she decides to give them away to all the villagers.

The villagers were delighted with the delicious and nutritious fruits, and they thanked Lucy for her hard work.

She gave most apples to people but

there was so much left she decided to keep for herself. She decided to sell these apples to make some money.

On her way to sell the apples she saw a homeless lady who looked very weary and exhausted.

Lucy went up to her and asked, "Are you okay?" She also had rough, dry and wrinkly skin.

"No, I haven't eaten in days", she replied.

Lucy then said to her "Would you like this bucket of apples?" The lady's face then lights up and says "Yes, please thank you for being so kind to me!"

While walking home Lucy feels good about herself for helping someone in need.

From that day on, the village was known for its goodness and generosity, and it became a shining example that goodness can bring joy and bliss to all who partake of it.

Matthew 5:16 says, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Goodness is not about doing elaborate things to gain recognition. Oftentimes, it is the small acts of *goodness* we do throughout our day that mean the most to those around us.

## Foreword by Atchen

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We are entering another season of Great Lent which is a favorable time for personal and community reflection and renewal. The contemplations around the life and death of Jesus Christ, our Lord become the crux of this season. It can lead us to be a better individual in all aspects of our personality. The love for God who gave his life for us should inspire us to be like him. Not counting the cost, we ought to offer our lives to be broken and shared for God's work in this world. Jesus himself uses the image of the seed that dies in the ground to bear fruit as a symbol of the mystery of his death and resurrection. In this selfless offering of our own potentials and persona alone lies the hope and confidence of the world.

My dear teen friend, if you desire to make a difference in this world this is the best revealed path before us. It has withstood the test of time. Jesus on the Cross is not the final picture of the Lent, but it is the resurrected Christ and it enlivens earthly hopes. The word of God assures that those who are intimately united to him in love "by dying a death like his" (Rom 6:5) will also be united to his resurrection for eternal life. All our seeming failures can be transformed into victory through Jesus Christ. Bitter disappointment at shattered dreams, deep concern for the challenges ahead and discouragement at the poverty of our resources, can make us tempted to give up on our good works for the world and seek refuge in the comfort of self-centeredness and indifference to the suffering of others. Therefore, let us stay refreshed in this conviction that the God of all hope who aroused Jesus from the dead will finish all the good works that has been initiated in you. Wishing you all a meaningful Lenten Season.

*Sujith Atchen.*





Art By Elijah Thomas

# Oh Mother Earth

A plea for Mother's Day

----- by Ziva Thomas

It seems like the end is near,  
 My heart is full of fear.  
 The trees you saw on those walks,  
 Are now paper that collects our thoughts.  
 The rich land that animals called their homes,  
 Have become landfills and construction zones.  
 There are people killing others for their beliefs,

Innocent people imprisoned for being thieves.  
 The moon is rusting and turning red  
 But you choose to stay in bed.  
 My Mother Earth will give to the end,  
 But we, her children, must make an amend.  
 Arise. Awake. For Our Mother's sake.



Art by Isaiah Thomas

## Sunday School News & Events

### Next Carmel Times Issue – March

If you would like to be part of this team or contribute to this publication, whether it be a story, article, poem, drawing/illustration/ graphics, please send your contributions to [cmtcprintcrew@gmail.com](mailto:cmtcprintcrew@gmail.com)

### Adventure League – Feb 24<sup>th</sup>

Let's go Bowling  
 Bowlero Shrewsbury  
 6:00-8:00 pm  
 Contact Chacko Mathew

**Bible Bee** – Children interested in Bible Quiz and Quiz Team, reach out to Mrs. Siji Anish George

Stay tuned for some exciting news from **World of Word**

### Save the Date - RISE 2023

March 25<sup>th</sup> @ CMTC

Look out for Sunday School Announcements for more details.

## Editorial Board

Sheba Oommen  
 Betsy Jacob  
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 Andrew Varughese  
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# Voice from the Past

----- BY ANDREW VARUGHESE



Sadhu Sundar Singh  
Sept 03, 1889 – c 1929

Sadhu Sundar Singh was a Christian missionary from India, who lived from 1889 to 1929. Born to a wealthy Punjabi family, Sundar was raised in the Sikh religion but had a profound spiritual experience at the age of 19 that led him to convert to Christianity.

“Sadhu” is a title given to spiritual people who devote their lives to holiness and religion and care very little about material things. Sundar’s journey into spirituality was largely influenced by his mother. She did not want him to be materialistic like his brothers, but instead, she wanted him to seek righteousness and truth. As a child, his mother took Sundar to learn about God from Hindu priests even though they were of the Sikh religion. As a result of his mother’s influence, Sundar was exposed to many different religions. Sundar was exposed to Christianity and the Bible in the Christian mission school he attended. He memorized the Bhagavad Gita,

the 700 verse Hindu scripture and the Vedas of Hinduism. Additionally, Sundar read the Quran, which is the Islamic sacred book. He also spent time with sadhus who taught him about yoga and meditation.

When Sundar was 14 years of age, his mother died suddenly. His mother’s death affected him in a profound way as he was very close to her. In his anger at God for taking his mother away, he tore his Bible apart and burnt it page by page while his friends watched. He threw stones at preachers too. Yet, despite his anger at God, Sundar was still drawn towards religion and spirituality. Restless, and longing to find the real God, he realized that his search for God in the many different religions had brought him no lasting peace. He finally came to a breaking point and in desperation, he planned to go to some train tracks, where an early morning train would soon come. He decided that he would either find God or end his life.

He prayed, “Whoever is the real God, show yourself to me, or I will kill myself.” He looked around but was suddenly blinded by a bright light. Sundar saw Jesus in a vision and heard His voice. “How much longer are you going to search for me? I have come to save you. You prayed for the right path. Why have you not followed it?” Sundar fell to his knees, and finally experienced the peace of mind he had been looking for his entire life.

Sundar’s life was transformed by this incident, and he decided to become a follower of Christ. His conversion to Christianity was met by the vehement opposition of his father and his family who were devoted to the Sikh religion. His brothers even attempted to poison him. Sundar then became a wandering ascetic devoting his life to God and preaching about Christ,

relying on the kindness of strangers for his survival and wearing only a saffron-colored robe and turban.

Sundar was a dynamic and powerful preacher, traveling extensively throughout India, China, and Tibet, sharing the message of the gospel and winning many converts to Christianity. His unique and captivating style of speaking, which combined scriptural knowledge with personal thoughts and spiritual insight, attracted many people to his teachings. His devotion to God and to a simple, humble lifestyle inspired others to follow in his footsteps and become missionaries themselves.

He wrote many books on religion and God, as well as a book on his visions of the spiritual world. As a person, Sundar was described as an affable man, humble and kind, a joyful person with a love for nature. Sundar’s life and teachings had a profound impact on the Christian world and especially on the Christian church in India. He helped to bridge the gap between Western and Eastern Christianity, demonstrating that the gospel could be effectively communicated in different cultural contexts. Sundar’s work inspired many young people to become involved in Christian missions and led to a revival of the Christian faith in India.

However, Sundar’s life was cut short when he disappeared while on a preaching mission in the Himalayas in 1929. Despite extensive searches, his body was never found, and the circumstances of his death remain a mystery to this day. Nevertheless, his legacy lives on, inspiring generations of Christians to follow his example of devotion, sacrifice, and boldness in sharing the gospel.

## What is Lent?

Lent is a prime time to introduce spiritual disciplines—prayer, fasting, remembering, simplicity, celebrating—into your family’s lifestyle and rhythms. Beginning of Great Lent is observed on February 19, 2023, leading up to Easter. It’s a time to focus on God and prepare to remember and celebrate Jesus dying on the cross and rising from the grave to save each of us. During this Lenten season watch this short video [The Test](#) and reflect on the discussion questions.

### Lenten Activity

Make a prayer chain. Write a person or situation on each of 40 strips of paper. Assemble them into a paper chain. Remove one link per day and pray for that thing or person.

# ChitChat Room

Conversation with our Sabha Mandalam Member Dr. George M Abraham

----- By Ziva Thomas & Josh Philip

Josh: What or who inspired you to become a physician?

**Georgie Uncle:** *I was never good at math and so gravitated to taking more biology courses in high school. That piqued my interest in medicine. Further, Psalm 139 was an inspiration to me.*

Josh: How has Christianity impacted your professional life?

**Georgie Uncle:** *It has kept me grounded in my profession in more ways than one. The amazing mystery that is the human body and that it could never have been created by a human being, that God has made us in His image is humbling. Additionally, the fact that he has blessed me and given me opportunities that I might never have accomplished with my own abilities are all facets of how my faith has and continues to inspire my professional life.*

Josh: Is there a particular incident that you would like to share that you feel God worked through you?

**Georgie Uncle:** *As an infectious disease physician, I treat a condition called hepatitis C. I was referred to as a 50-year-old woman who unfortunately had acquired infection through a blood transfusion 20 years prior as a result of treatment of acute leukemia (normally it is acquired through injection drug use). She was extremely anxious about going on treatment fearful of what the side effects might be and the length of treatment. It took her 60 weeks (15 months) of treatment to ultimately cure her. Supporting her through her care and overseeing her care to minimize side effects, etc. was a tedious task. She has remained as a patient with me since, but 2 years ago she was diagnosed with liver cancer as a result of her liver disease. By God's grace, I was able to diagnose it early enough where she could be treated and has been in remission for 2 years.*

*She attributes her cure to my professional skills, and I remind her that God uses people to cure her, that it is none of my skills but His grace. It is easy, in this profession, to assume that the cure of illnesses is because one's skills or abilities, it is critical to be grounded and remember that only God can cure or heal, we are but instruments in His hands.*

Ziva: Which Bible verse strengthens you in challenging situations?

**Georgie Uncle:** *Jeremiah 29:11*  
*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future*

Josh: Growing up, what was your favorite hobby and why?

**Georgie Uncle:** *Philately (stamp collection), I loved the diversity of different countries, used to imagine how life might be in different countries and cultures, which may have been part of the reason why I wanted to leave home and travel to different countries during my work life.*

Ziva: What advice would you give to your teenage self?

**Georgie Uncle:** *Focus on a professional future, work hard towards it while you have your mental and physical health and abilities, and always stay grounded in the word of God that is "A lamp unto my feet and a light unto my*



*path" (Psalm 119:105).*

Ziva: Which was the last song you sang out loud in your car? (Any genre)

**Georgie Uncle:** *We are so blessed (words by Annie Johnson Flint and sung by Taranda Greene)*

Josh: Which achievement are you most proud of in your life? (Personal or professional)

**Georgie Uncle:** *I was the first Indian (and having studied in India) to become the President of the American College of Physicians in its over 115-year history, which is the foremost professional organization (and the largest) in internal medicine, in the world.*

Ziva: Let's fast forward a year from today. What needs to happen in this year for you to look back and say "I made a difference" and "life is good"?

**Georgie Uncle:** *Continue to be a mentor to my trainees, be the best physician I can be (not only in skills but someone who is compassionate and empathetic) and personally feel that I continue to be the best Christian that God wants me to be.*

Ziva: You've been interviewed so many times- what's the one question you wished someone would have asked you, but never did?

**Georgie Uncle:** *What motivates me to continue to do what I do every day, the answer to which is my faith in God and the fact that God expects me to be the best disciple I can be (as Paul said, 'to whom much is given, much is expected'). Also, the blessing of having an amazing wife who is my role model, biggest fan and my biggest constructive critic, as well as the blessing of two amazing daughters who inspire me every day and whom I continue to learn from.*