

3 June 2005

ESR

Good Morning teachers and students,

I begin my speech with an ancient story :

Long time ago, a man called Abraham lived with his wife Sarah in Canaan, a region between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. Abraham's family was wealthy. Yet, Abraham and Sarah were not happy enough because they did not have any children.

As they were eager to have a son, Sarah advised Abraham to marry a young lady. It was Sarah's good will that the young lady might give birth to a son for Abraham. Abraham did what Sarah had told him to do. He did get a son before long. He named his son Ishmael.

While Abraham was 99 years old and Sarah was 89, one day, God said to Abraham, "I will give you a son by your wife Sarah." Abraham was surprised by the news. He replied, " **Can I** have a child when I am going to be **100** years old ? **Can my wife** Sarah have a child when she is going to be 90 ? " He then asked God, " **Why not** let Ishmael be my heir (successor; the person with the legal right to receive property, etc when the owner dies) ? " But God answered, "No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son and you will name him Isaac." The next year, God did keep His promise. Isaac was born. To the old couple, the birth of Isaac was not only a breakthrough, but also a great event.

Do you still remember Abraham's responses after he had heard God 's news ?

Abraham said, " **Can I** have a child when I am going to be 100 years old ? **Can my wife** Sarah have a child when she is going to be 90 ? " His responses meant that he did not have faith in God 's words.

He thought that he was too old to have a son. He lost **strength** to strive for self-breakthrough.

Abraham also asked God, " **Why not** let Ishmael be my heir ? " By this response, he explicitly expressed that he was satisfied with his present situation. He lacked the **eagerness** to change or improve the situation.

Abraham's responses are not uncommon among the aged (very old people) of this century.

When an old man finds himself losing his energy to move forward or face a challenging situation, he will probably say, " Can **I** do this task when I am very old ? "

When an old man is satisfied with his present situation and is reluctant to change or improve it, he will probably say, " **why not** let the present situation remain unchanged ? "

In the same manner, if we always bear old Abraham's responses in our mind, such as " **Can I ... ?** " or " **why not ... ?** ", we will have no **strength** to strive for self-breakthrough and we will lack **eagerness** to make improvements. As a result, we, irrespective of our actual ages, have become aging persons (persons entering the later part of life, especially those lacking **strength** and **eagerness**). At last, we will never be able to do new and great tasks.

Our school is a large school because there are about 1200 school members. Among them, there are educators (teachers) and students. As the school year is coming to its end, it is the appropriate time to **reflect** (think deeply) about our performances in this school year.

For **students**,

- (a) are you satisfied with your present academic and behavioral performances ?
- (b) what are the desirable and undesirable performances ?
- (c) knowing that there is room for improvement, how do you improve your ways of learning and attitudes towards people ?

For **educators (teachers)**,

- (a) are you satisfied with your present educational or teaching performances ?
- (b) what are the desirable and undesirable performances ?
- (c) knowing that there is room for improvement, how do you improve your teaching strategies and attitudes towards students ?

The school is looking for **energetic** educators (teachers) and students who are willing to **reflect** on their past performances. The school wants people who are willing to identify areas to be improved, work out plans for improvements and put the plans into actions. The school will be **ever-improving** (improving continually) when all educators (teachers) and students are **energetic**.

To conclude, I would like to point out that our school is 22 years old. Our school is still like a **youth** and is **ever-improving** if all of us are **energetic** (if we work together with strength and eagerness). In the days ahead, let's work for the target " **Our school will be an ever-improving school** ". Last but not least, let me introduce to you 3 magic letters in order to help you remember the main points of my speech. They are **E**, **S** and **R**. The magic meanings of these letters are :

(a)Educators & Students Reflect

We, teachers and students, must think deeply about our past performances and identify areas to be improved. Then, we make plans for improvements and put the plans into actions.

(b)Energetic Students Required; Energetic Staff Required.

All school members, including teachers, students and non-teaching staff must work with strength and eagerness.

(c)Ever-improving School Realized

It is our desire to make our school an ever-improving school. Only energetic school members can turn our hope into reality.

May God bless our school today. Thank you.

Let us pray :

Our Heavenly Father,

We thank you with all our hearts for your love and guidance. Give us the strength and eagerness to demonstrate improvement each day. Help us to focus on what is really important in life. Teach us to work harmoniously in school and to work for the target " Our School will be an Ever-improving School ".

Dear Lord, bless our school today. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.