

Series - Jesus is The Answer

Date/s - 26 Nov 2017

Topic - Purpose - What is the Meaning of Life?

Speaker/s - Pastor Ernie Song

Welcome [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

www.thesource4ym.com/games/

www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html < [go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS](#) >

Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like “You You Are God”, “When I Survey”, “I Offer My Life” or “Worthy Of It All”.

Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

- Learn that the pursuits of pleasure, wisdom and hard work are meaningless;
- Understand that the meaning of life is found in a personal relationship with Christ; and
- Commit to align our priorities to God’s will and fulfil our life purpose.

Word [45 min]

Pastor Ernie started his sermon by sharing how scores of people- men, especially - experience what psychologist term as a “mid-life crisis” between the ages of forty to sixty. This is a phase where people are triggered to re-evaluate their lives thus far; for many, it may lead to feelings of anxiety and depression and drastic life changes. Pastor Ernie also shared that no matter our status in life, illness and the winds of unexpected sorrow will strike all at some point or another. Amidst the troubles of this life, we will need to find purpose and meaning.

Pastor Ernie then taught from the book of Ecclesiastes, concerning one man’s search for the “meaning” of life. We see the Teacher (Qohelet) of Ecclesiastes (whom scholars widely regard as Solomon), submitting himself to a thought experiment in his quest to find the answer to this question.

First, the Teacher tested himself with pleasure (Ecc 2:1-11). Pastor Ernie highlighted how he did not deny himself “what is eyes desired”, but acquired all kinds of pleasures ranging from amusement, to women, to possessions. He even became the richest person in history! Yet, at the end, the Teacher considered all pleasure was vanity, and “a striving after the wind”.

Second, the Teacher turned to wisdom. This could broadly encompass morality, and good works. Pastor Ernie shared that the Teacher’s conclusions about wisdom is that even the search for such is pointless. Ecc 1:18- “For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.” And, Ecc 2:16 – “For of the wise as of the fool, there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise dies just like the fool!”

Third, the Teacher explored if work is the answer to life’s meaning. Once again, he arrives at the same conclusion that hard work too is an exercise in futility – “Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun” (Ecc 2:11). Pastor Ernie also brought up Ecc 2:21- “when one dies, the work is left to someone else, who did not toil for it.” This too, is a tragedy.

Pastor Ernie then concluded that the meaning of Life is a Person. He expounded from a short word study on John 1:1, sharing that the root word of the “Word” used in that context referred to a Person. That Person is Jesus Christ. Because

our meaning is found in Jesus, we can live purposeful lives even amidst tragedies and vicissitudes of life, because our meaning is not anchored in our circumstances, but in a constant and unchanging Person.

Discussion Questions

1. **The first thought experiment in Ecclesiastes presents what life is like “under the sun” where life is reduced to nothing more than what our five senses apprehend, i.e., pleasures. Think about how this reduction is, to a large extent, the reality of modern culture. We are encouraged to relentlessly pursue the pleasures of our sensory, bodily existence. Share some ways that you see this pleasure-seeking, God-denying lifestyle being played out in the media and in major trends of society. What are some lies that are implicit in these messages?** [10 min]
2. **Pastor Ernie shared from the book of Ecclesiastes how the pursuits of morality and hard work, for their own sake, will not satisfy us. How are you tempted to find meaning in being a good person, or in being a hard worker?** [10 min]
3. **Pastor Ernie shared how the meaning of life is ultimately found in a Person. Similarly, read and meditate on John 17:3 “This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent”. Take some time to reflect on what it means to find meaning in our relationship with Jesus.** [10 min]
4. **Pastor Ernie concluded with his sharing on the life of the Apostle Peter, and how he was a transformed man after his life purpose was changed after he was restored by Christ. Living for Christ became his, and the other disciples’ life purpose and driving force. What are some practical ways you can commit to re-order your life’s priorities to align with this truth?** [10 min]

Works [10 min]

Let’s pray:

1. Deep down in our hearts, we would acknowledge that the meaning of life is found in Lord Jesus alone. And out of this abiding in Him, we will produce lasting fruits.

Announcements

1. **Love Out Loud (Christmas gift market)**

Sundays, 10 Dec & 17 Dec | 10.30am - 2pm | Fellowship Atrium

This Christmas, love someone in your home, workplace, neighbourhood or on the streets with a gift!

The Gift Market features a thoughtfully curated mix of vendors offering Christ-centered gift items. Let God’s love be revealed as you give cheerfully this Christmas!