

Series - Awed by His Love

Date/s - 17 January 2016

Topic - How Can We Rest and Still Accomplish Much?

Speaker/s - Pastor Lionel Goh

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 that focus on God's abounding grace.

Spiritual Objectives

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

1. Know that abiding in Christ is the secret to Rest and Fruitfulness.
2. Renew their commitment to enter into this Rest by abiding in Christ.

Word [45 min]

Pastor Lionel Goh followed on from the message in the previous week, saying that God invites us into His rest. This is the "Sabbath rest", which is both emotional and spiritual rest, given by God for His people. From Hebrews 4:9-11, we are called to make every effort to enter that rest. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus addressed the people who were burdened by the many Jewish laws and traditions with over 600 do's and don't's. A bullock cart has a yoke and a heavy frame. Jesus invites us to come and strap ourselves to Him and He will do most of the pulling. His yoke is easy, the burden is light and we will find rest for our souls.

The secret to rest and fruitfulness is therefore abiding in Christ (John 15:4-5). Biblical rest can be described as spiritual (salvation) rest and practical rest. The former means there is no need to strive in our own self effort to please God and earn our salvation - we are in Christ and we are the beloved of God! The latter is having the peace and faith in God that He will meet all our needs and life challenges! We can totally abandon ourselves to God and have full confidence in Him. This is not passivity but focused and fruitful activity as directed by God. He also cited the example of Hudson Taylor, the founder of China Inland Mission (OMF). During the Boxer Rebellion, 58 missionaries and 25 children were murdered but Hudson was able to find the needed rest in God. Pastor Lionel shared that he had a tough boss in New Zealand, but he prayed and asked God to give him the grace to work with the difficult boss and God granted him favour with the boss. Heidi Baker in 1995 was a missionary in Mozambique looking after 200 orphans and 2 churches. She was stressed, had tuberculosis and pneumonia. She went to Toronto and was prayed over by Randy Clark. There, she was touched by the Holy Spirit and was immobilised for 7 days and had a vision of Jesus using His body and blood to feed thousands of children. Her ministry 'exploded' once she realised that her responsibility is just to obey and abide, and that God will provide. Now, she has 15,000 churches and thousands of children but she is no longer stressed as she spends 3 hours daily spending time with God. She also realised that 5 minutes of intimacy with God and receiving downloads from Him are far more effective than years of fruitless striving. Fruitfulness and intimacy with God requires us to create time and space to be with God!

Pastor Lionel then shared on the account of Jesus feeding the 5,000 to illustrate this point (Mark 6:30-44). Jesus showed his concern for His disciples in v31 - Jesus is always concerned for us! In v34, Jesus had compassion for the multitude - though they would not starve by missing one meal, yet Jesus wanted them to

eat. This is contrasted with the hardness of the disciples' heart in v35-36 in viewing the multitude as a problem to be pushed or wished away. However, Jesus already knew what to do when He demanded that the disciples feed the multitude. The learning point is that when God calls us to an assignment or put us in a situation, God already knows what needs to be done.

Jesus then showed in v38-42 how His disciples could partner Him to feed the multitude. We learn that no matter how meagre our talent, resources or abilities, whatever we give to the Lord in love and devotion, Jesus takes it all. He gives thanks to God and He will multiply it! Pastor Lionel also observed that the disciples organised the people into small groups and said that organisation was simple but important to prevent a stampede. The disciples simply became channels of Jesus' grace to the multitude and it was not difficult to feed the people. A miracle happened!

How can we find rest and still accomplish much? First, we must be still and discern God's heart in any given situation. For example, know that God loves your wayward kids and will take care of them, and also know that only God can change their hearts. All we, as parents, can do is to give them a safe and caring home environment. Secondly, we must prayerfully distinguish which tasks are God's responsibilities and which are ours to bear. Thirdly, we must surrender ourselves and our meagre resources to God. Fourthly, we are to hear the Lord's prompting and simply obey Him. We will then find that things will begin to change. Finally, we are to abide in Christ and be His channel of blessings to others.

Discussion Questions

1. **Discuss the practical difficulties for Christians to enter into God's rest.** [10 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is an ice-breaking question for members to examine the obstacles for entering into God's rest and emphasised that God's rest is not passivity but focused and fruitful activity as directed by God. The obstacles may include constraints of tight / hectic schedules and personal responsibilities. Read Matthew 11:28-30 and encourage members to create time and space to be with God regularly. Leaders can also encourage members to share practical tips on this.*

2. **Read through Mark 6:30-44. Focusing on Jesus, which part of the account about Jesus do you find most impressed you personally and why?** [10 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a recap and relate question. Members can take time to reflect and share their personal perspectives on God's nature that are illustrated by the account. Pastor Lionel brought up 3 specific points that relate to relying on God to accomplish His work:*

- a. *Jesus is concerned for his disciples (v31)*
- b. *Jesus has compassion for the multitude (v34)*
- c. *Jesus showed how the disciples can partner Him to feed the multitude (v38-42).*

Leaders can point out to members that we have a loving God who wanted to partner with us to accomplish His will.

3. **Read John 15:4-5 on God's promise for us to bear much fruit. How we can rest and still accomplish much? Share from your own personal life a specific area where you would like to commit to God.** [20 min]

Leader's Notes: *Members are encouraged to see themselves as branches and Jesus is the vine. The fruits come **naturally** when the branches abide in the vine. How did Jesus show his disciples to partner with Him*

in feeding the multitude? The disciples gave him whatever resources they had and Jesus gave thanks and multiplied that creatively. Leaders can ask members to discuss on the following points mentioned by Pastor Lionel:

- a. The first thing to do is to be still and discern God's heart in a given situation.*
- b. We should prayerfully distinguish which tasks are God's responsibilities and which are ours to bear. Then, we can rest knowing that our Father, who loves us and knows our needs, will do His part.*
- c. We should surrender ourselves and our meagre resources to God. Then, we can see God work.*
- d. Our part is to hear the Lord's prompting and simply obey.*
- e. We shall then abide in Christ and be His channel of blessings to others.*

When we learn to commit our needs to God, we will find that things will begin to change. As a response, ask members to share on specific areas of their lives which they wish to commit to God. Then, divide into groups of 2 or 3 to pray over these, asking them to renew their commitment to enter to God's rest by abiding in Christ.

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. Every Riverlifers to fully comprehend that the secret to rest and fruitfulness is abiding in Christ (John 15:4-5)

Announcements

1. 21 DAYS OF FASTING & PRAYER

16 Jan to 5 Feb (21 consecutive days) | Faith Chapel

- Mondays to Fridays: 8–10pm
- Saturdays: 6–8pm • Sundays: 2–4pm

For more information, please email riverlifepayer@gmail.com

2. THE ALPHA COURSE (*session 1 starts on 5 Mar*)

Register online at <http://bit.ly/rlcalpha> or at the Alpha Course Counter (beside Cell Connection Counter) from 24 Jan to 28 Feb at the Fellowship Atrium after services.

For enquiries, please contact Moses Sho at 65114141 or email him at mosessho@riverlife.org.sg.