

Series - On your Mark!

Date/s - 4 February 2018

Topic - Living a life of obedience & fruitfulness

Speaker/s - Senior 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 like "How Great Thou Art", "Our Father", "Here As In Heaven", or "God I Look To You".

Spiritual Objectives

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

1. Understand that while on earth, Jesus gave up His divine privileges, and lived as a man fully yielded and obedient to the Father;
2. Commit to take practical steps to live a life of obedience and fruitfulness.

Word [45 min]

Pastor Lionel's sermon centered on the first chapter of Mark, demonstrating how Jesus, as the servant of God, led a life of obedience and fruitfulness.

Pastor Lionel started his sermon with a brief recap on the overview of the book of Mark. Written by John Mark for Roman Christians around 60 AD, the book of Mark seeks to present the person, work and teachings of Jesus- the overarching theme is that Jesus is God's suffering servant.

Sharing from Mark 1:9-28, Pastor Lionel taught that Jesus' first act of obedience was receiving His baptism from John. John's baptism was for repentance and forgiveness of sins (1:4). Even though Jesus was sinless, He humbly obeyed God's call to be baptized as a way of identifying himself with sinful humanity (Matthew 3:14-15). As a result, He was blessed in the following ways through His baptism:

- i. The Holy Spirit rested on Jesus and authenticated His calling as God's Servant (Isaiah 42:1, 11:1-3, John 1:32-34)
- ii. The Father affirmed Jesus' Sonship and expressed His delight in Jesus. (1:11).

Pastor Lionel next shared from Mark 1:12-13 on how Jesus' second act of obedience in the book of Mark was to subject Himself to the Devil's Temptations (see also, Luke 4:1-2). In these passages, the Devil exploited Jesus' identity as God's Son by tempting Jesus to act independently from His Father. Jesus was challenged to turn stones into bread (Matthew 4:2-4), throw Himself down from great heights (Matthew 4:5-7), and worship Satan in return for the promise of all the kingdoms of the world (Matthew 4:8-10). Triumphantly, Jesus overcame Satan's temptations by holding unto God's Word and trusting in God's ways (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).

Pastor Lionel then explained the ways Jesus' ministry bore out the fruitfulness of an obedient and yielded life. He was fully empowered by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14-15). He taught with great authority (1:21-22, John 12:49-50). He freed a demonized man with a simple command (1:23-28, John 5:19).

Pastor Lionel concluded with the exhortation to consider the example set by our Lord Jesus, who came into our world as God's Suffering Servant. While on earth, Jesus gave up His divine privileges, and lived as a man fully yielded and obedient to the Father. As a result, Jesus was able to live victoriously and minister with great fruitfulness.

As we grow to know our Lord Jesus more and more, may we be inspired to likewise live obedient and fruitful lives!

Discussion Questions

1. **Pastor Lionel shared how the underlying theme of the book of Mark proclaims Jesus as God's suffering servant. Mark 10:45 (NIV) reads, "for even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many".**

How do you think this calling of Jesus fits in with the many other dominant "callings" held out by society, both during Jesus and our times (e.g. that of fame, self-actualization, career success, wealth)? Discuss the stark contrast in values.

[5 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a recap and ice-breaking question for cell members to share how Jesus' calling to be God's suffering servant must have come across as a radical teaching in even in Jesus' times, and may not have been well-received; and how it is still countercultural in today's context. Pastor Lionel also referenced a parallel passage in Philippians 2:5-11, which portrays Jesus as the obedient suffering servant. Consider having the cell think through these verses, and discuss how the values therein (e.g. humility, meekness) directly subvert our arrogance, pride, and selfish ambition. These verses are a sobering reminder that Jesus' road to exaltation came by way of the self-emptying of his life for others, and "narrow is the gate that leads to life" (Mark 7:14).*

2. **Pastor Lionel explained from Mark 1:12-13 how Jesus was Himself not spared from the Devil's Temptations. Yet, Jesus' response to the temptations teaches us exactly how we are to respond when we are likewise tempted—with Scripture (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).**

What are some areas your life this current season where in you are being tempted to compromise, and do they resemble any of Jesus' temptations? Can you identify the false promises held out, and what are some specific promises from the Word of God you can fight back with, to help you trust in God's deliverance?

[15 min]

Leader's Notes: *A relate question. This question allows members to identify and share deeper about some common areas where they might be tempted in. It bears remembering that Jesus' temptations follow three patterns that are common to all men- the first temptation concerns the lust of the flesh (Matthew 4:3-4), the second temptation concerns the pride of life (Matthew 4:5-7), and the third temptation concerns the lust of the eyes (Matthew 4:8-10).*

We can however be encouraged because though there are many temptations that we may fall into, we have a God who will not let us be tempted beyond what we can bear; He will provide a way out (1 Corinthians 10:13). We also have a High Priest who is able to sympathize with us in all our weaknesses and infirmities (Hebrews 4:15), because He was subjected to weakness too.

If time permit, have members share past breakthroughs whereby they successfully resisted/overcame temptation by trusting in God's word. Remembering and honouring the journey of members can edify or build up one another, as we give thanks for God's deliverance.

3. **From Mark 1:21-28, we see how Jesus both taught with great authority and ministered in great power. Pastor Lionel expounded further that the key behind Jesus' ministry and teachings was a deep and constant abiding in**

God, and He only spoke and did what He heard and saw of the Father.

Meditate on John 15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” Take some time to reflect on our personal walk with God. Are we daily abiding in God? Share on areas in our lives where we are still operating independently from God.

[15 min]

Leader's Notes: A reflect question. This question allows members to understand the direct correlation between their daily abiding in God, and their capacity to bear fruit that will last. Have members explore their daily posture of their hearts, and assess their relationship with Jesus in light of this verse. Members are encouraged to do personal reflections and share on areas of their lives where they are currently working on surrendering to and trusting God in faith.

Are we drawing all of our strength from God, or are we striving to be the captain of our lives in accordance with our own works and wisdom? We must understand that without Christ, we are incapable of Christ-like goodness. As Paul says in Romans 7:18, “Nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.” As branches, we will produce fruit as God has intended only if we seek sustenance only from the True Vine.

4. **Pastor Lionel concluded that Jesus’ selfless life on earth example inspires us to live likewise, so that we can also be obedient and fruitful people. What are some personal steps we can take to live in obedience and fruitfulness today?**

[10 min]

Leader's Notes: This is a response question.

Have members brainstorm concrete and practical ways they can adopt to walk in greater obedience and fruitfulness, and to which they can personally commit to. The sermon outline provides some suggestions as follows:

- a. *Submit to Jesus’ Lordship daily. Stay connected with Him consciously (John 15:5).*
- b. *Whenever you face a problem or situation, pray and ask God for guidance and help (Phil 4:6-7).*
- c. *Learn to hear from Him. Evaluate that prompting in the light of God’s Word.*
- d. *When you sense the prompting is from God, simply obey it and leave the result to God.*

Leaders may get members to break into small groups to share more and if time permits and to pray for one another for specific action steps that they can commit to.

Works [10 min]

Let’s pray:

1. We will imitate the godly example of Lord Jesus to live a life of obedience and servanthood.

Announcements

1. Unlocking the Gospel of Mark Part 2

Sun, 11 Feb | 2.30pm – 4.30pm | Victory Chapel

You can register online at <https://goo.gl/4gVbPU>

2. Alpha Course

Suns, 4 Mar – 20 May | 2pm – 4pm | Faith Chapel

Register online at <http://bit.ly/ricalpha>. Lunch served at 1.15pm, Atrium.

For enquiries, please contact Moses Sho at 65114146 or email him at mosessho@riverlife.org.sg

3. Precept Bible Study

40-MIN STUDY | JESUS: EXPERIENCING HIS TOUCH (MARK 1-6)

Course Dates: 13, 20, 27 Mar & 3, 10, 17 Apr (Weekly)

Please register by 25 Feb

40-MIN STUDY | JESUS: LISTENING FOR HIS VOICE (MARK 7-13)

Course Dates: 24 Apr, 3, 15, 22, 31 May & 5 Jun (Weekly)

Please register by 15 Apr

PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT | GALATIANS: WHO HAS BEWITCHED YOU? WHY AND HOW?

Course Dates: 27 Feb, 13, 27 Mar, 10, 24 Apr, 8, 22 May & 5 Jun (Fortnightly)

Please register by 18 Feb

For more details, visit riverlife.org.sg/precept. You may register online or at the Information Counter. For enquiries, please contact Karen Koh at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg or 65114139.

Church Vision Statement:

"A vibrant family where sons and daughters mature and reveal the Father's glory from generation to generation."