

Series - The Antioch Mandate

Date/s - 05 August 2018

Topic - The Antioch Mandate (Part 2)

Speaker/s - Pastor John Koe

**Welcome** [15 min]

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

[www.thesource4ym.com/games/](http://www.thesource4ym.com/games/)

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

**Worship** [15 min]

You may select songs like "God Be Praised", "God Is Able" or "Be Thou My Vision".

**Spiritual Objectives**

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

1. Know God's missional strategy of going out, instead of waiting for people to come.
2. Purpose in our hearts to sincerely seek God's will for our own lives regarding this missional call.

**Word** [45 min]

There has been increasing talk amongst the Singapore Christian community regarding the nation's call as the Antioch of Asia – especially so as this is the 40<sup>th</sup> year since the late Billy Graham uttered that prophetic proclamation over Singapore. These 2 weeks, Ps John Koe spoke on the Antioch Mandate.

To sum up last week's sermon, the Antioch mandate is spelt out in Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

**The four spheres of reach**

Ps John described the four concentric spheres of reach mentioned in Acts 1:8, and its relevance to us:

1. Jerusalem – The people in our immediate sphere of influence, that you have daily contact with.
2. Judea – Your countrymen or those of our ethnic group. In our case, that would be fellow Singaporeans or foreigners who have made Singapore their home.
3. Samaria – People who are similar but yet different people. We may also have bloodlines to the people living in these regions. For example, a Singaporean Chinese person may have bloodlines to a particular people group in Malaysia/ China.
4. The ends of the earth – People of other races and ethnicities.

**Correcting a misconception**

Oftentimes we are taught that the inner sphere (our 'Jerusalem') must be fully taken care of before we progress on to the next sphere. Ps John corrected this frame of thinking and reminds us that we are to reach out to all four spheres simultaneously, as God provides the opportunity.

After summing up last week's sermon, Ps John proceeded on with his message for this week.

The key to understanding Jesus' command in Acts 1:8 to go and be witnesses is to understand the question that

Jesus' followers posed in Acts 1:6 "...Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

The Jews had for centuries expected that the Gentiles would stream to Jerusalem and worship Yahweh according to the laws and customs passed down through Jewish scripture and tradition. In verse 8 however, Jesus reverses their perspective: they were meant to *go out* and witness to the Gentiles, not wait for them to come to Jerusalem. *The view of our role as servants who 'go out' and witness is intrinsic to our obeying the Antioch Mandate.*

Ps John shared 2 important lessons we can learn from the early church:

1. Don't just enjoy the blessing of God in the House; go out and share it with the world.
2. Don't just sit here and expect sinners to come; go out as servants bearing the good news for the lost.

### Barriers to the Antioch Mandate

However, when Jesus commanded His followers to witness to the regions beyond Jerusalem, they were unwilling to do so. When they eventually did, it was only because they were forced to: Acts 8:1-4 describes Saul persecuting the Jewish believers and as a result they flee to Judea and Samaria, Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and begin to share the good news there – *but they did so only to the Jews in those regions*. It is inconceivable that they should ignore all but a tiny minority of Jews whom they supposed were chosen by God to be saved! God raised another man, Paul, to be the apostle to the Gentiles, raising up another church, Antioch, to take the Gospel to the 'ends of the earth.'

Ps John exhorted us to examine ourselves: Just as the Jewish believers shared the good news only to their fellow Jews (because of their wrong beliefs as shown in Acts 1:6), could there be wrong beliefs that hinder us from witnessing for Christ?

Ps John also posed a similar question to the church as a whole: *are there (traditional) barriers that hinder the church's missional endeavours?*

### The process of obeying the Antioch Mandate

How exactly do we obey the Antioch Mandate? Matthew 9:35-38 illustrates the process of obeying this Mandate.

1. Just go! Start out by faith, go! If you have a burden for a particular people group/region, go and pay them a visit.
2. When you are there, you will begin to see through God's eyes and identify the specific needs of the region.
3. You will begin to feel God's heart (have compassion) for the needs that you saw.
4. Pray. Ask God to send workers into the harvest field. Avail yourself to God in prayer to be the worker sent forth to meet the need. That worker is you!

And when you obey and go, God will give you the authority to do it (Matthew 10:1). You don't have to be powerful to obey the Antioch Mandate. Obey the Antioch Mandate, and you will be powerful. See 1 Thessalonians 1:5.

Ps John exhorted us, "when you put yourself between a people with needs and the God who wants to meet those needs, you will become a minister." **Let's heed the call of God and GO!**

**Discussion Questions**

1. **What are some wrong beliefs that hinder us from witnessing for Jesus Christ?** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:** Just as the Jews had a wrong belief that the Gentiles would come to Jerusalem instead of them going out of Jerusalem to preach the Gospel, are there some wrong mindsets that cause us to not take that step outside of our comfort zone to witness to our community? Encourage members to share openly.

Wrong beliefs covered by Ps John are the misconception that the 4 spheres (Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth) are progressive, delay going by waiting for the anointing by the Holy Spirit before stepping out in faith, wrong traditional or cultural ideas on who God has chosen to save and how He will do so, etc. Ask further if there are barriers in the church that hinder missions and missional endeavours. Are there traditions that hold us back as Riverlife Church and more widely, the Singapore churches, from obeying the Antioch Mandate?

2. **How does your answer to Question 1 change the way you think about our role as witnesses of the Gospel?** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:** Many times, we wait for people to come to church (through outreach events e.g., Christmas, Easter). Could we instead bring the Gospel out to our community? This question may lead to members brainstorming about practical actions to take as a cell group, to reach out to a local target group. Great! Be open to how the Holy Spirit guides the discussions.

3. **Matthew 9:35-38 illustrates the process of obeying the Antioch Mandate. Have you ever visited a certain people group/region, and felt God's calling on you to meet a need there? Share if you have such an experience. What did you do about that call you felt?** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:** The chief message is to exhort members to start out by faith and GO! Then, we will see the needs of the people and feel God's compassion, if we seek His heart and are surrendered to His purpose.

This is a chance for anyone in your cell group who has ever felt God's call to missions, to share his/her experience. It is a great opportunity for other cell members to hear first-hand, how God placed a missional burden on a fellow cell member, and how that member obeyed the call. Do note that not everyone may have obeyed God's call fully – we are all imperfect. The leader can encourage members to share without making anyone feel embarrassed for not fully obeying God's call. It is a time to encourage every cell member to truly search and ask God if He has called any to His harvest field. Members can pray to avail ourselves to God to be the workers sent forth to meet the needs.

**Works** [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. Every RiverLifer will sincerely obey as God calls us into His harvest field. GO!

### Announcements

#### 1. **Joining The Family**

**Sat, 18 Aug | 1.30pm – 4.30pm | Faith Chapel**

Sign up at the Information Counter or online at [bit.ly/rlcjoiningthefamily](http://bit.ly/rlcjoiningthefamily) by Sun, 12 Aug. For more information. Please contact Karen Koh at 65114139 or email her at [karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg)

#### 2. **Alpha Course**

**Sundays, 2 Sep – 25 Nov | 2pm – 4pm | Faith Chapel**

Register online at <http://bit.ly/rlcalpha>

For enquiries, please contact Moses Sho at 65114146, email him at [mosessho@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:mosessho@riverlife.org.sg) or visit our Guest Welcome Lounge on Sundays.

#### 3. **Marriage Preparation Course**

**Sundays, 30 Sep, 7, 14, 21 & 28 Oct | 1.45pm-5pm and Sat, 10 Nov | 9am-5pm**

**\$260 Per Couple | Classrooms 214/215 | RiverLife Church**

There will be a celebratory dinner from 6-9pm on Sun, 28 Oct.

Register at the Information Counter by Sun, 16 Sep. For enquiries, please contact Christine Tan at [christinetan@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:christinetan@riverlife.org.sg) or 65114141.

**Church Vision Statement:**

“A vibrant family where sons and daughters mature and reveal the Father’s glory from generation to generation.”