

# Weekly Cell Guide

Leader's Copy

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**Series** -  
**Topic** - Missions Emphasis: From Shittim to Gilgal

**Date** - 15-Mar-2020  
**Speaker** - Elder Ee Yang

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## WELCOME [15 min]

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

[Ice Breakers 1](#)

[Ice Breakers 2](#)

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## WORSHIP [15 min]

You may select songs like

1. Making a Difference
  2. The Stand
  3. Worthy Of It All
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## WORD [45 min]

### **Spiritual Objectives**

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

1. understand what it means to be in a covenant relationship with God; and
2. learn how to “crossover” and to walk in our covenantal relationship with God in this season by being missional.

### **Sermon Summary**

The following are the key points of the sermon:

1. The journey of the Israelites from Shittim to Gilgal is a journey for the children of God to discover and enter into their spiritual inheritance.
2. Being missional means to carry God’s grace and effect God’s will in heaven on earth, and be a light and blessing to the nations.

## **Sermon Recap (Full Summary)**

**Historical Background:** Shittim was the final place where Israel stayed on the long journey through the wilderness after they left Egypt (Num 33:49). Gilgal is the first place Israel stayed after they crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land (Josh 4:19).

### **1. Introduction**

From Micah 6:5-8, we learn that:

- We need to understand the righteous acts of the Lord before we can be empowered to do what the Lord requires of us, i.e. to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God. And that means being missional.
- The journey from Shittim to Gilgal is a journey for the children of Israel to discover their spiritual inheritance. There is a dramatic shift in the destiny of the Israelites as they cross over from Shittim to Gilgal. Elder Ee Yang shared that there are many lessons we can draw from this historic journey, many of which will provide insight, direction, wisdom and counsel and are applicable to the world which we live in today.

### **2. The Concept of Covenant (Hebrews 9:15-16)**

- We, as 21st century believers, are still under the Abrahamic covenant. Galatians 3:29 says, "If we belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
- Like in a marriage, a covenant speaks of God's commitment to us. Unlike a contractual relationship which can be repudiated if one party fails to hold up to his side of the bargain, God's covenant for us is for life – He is faithful to His promises. Even when there are times when we find it difficult to hold on to God, God is faithful and He will hold on to us.
- A covenant is also like that of a last will and testament – Hebrews 9:16 tells us that there is a will written in heaven, with our names on it. We are sons and daughters of God, and only sons and daughters of God partake in the covenant promises of God. We have an inheritance prepared for us by the living God, made operative by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Gal 3:29). Jesus came to fulfil the Abrahamic covenant.

### **3. Israel at Shittim: Broken Covenant.**

At Shittim, the Israelites broke their covenant with God.

- They committed harlotry with the daughters of Moab (see Rev 2:14, Numbers 25).
- Israel was deceived by Balak and wholly rebelled against God and was held accountable for their idolatry.
  - This shows how sin is fundamentally deceptive, and spiritually blind people are blind to their own blindness.
- The harlotry was so bad that a person brought a Midianite into the camp to fornicate. Phineas took a spear and thrust it into the couple (see Numbers 25:6).
  - Sin has to be totally dealt with. God's grace cannot be divorced from his righteousness.
- The sin of rebellion does not just apply to the Israelites. Using the analogy of the Coronavirus:

- Sin looks like a crown because at the root of sin is the desire to wear that crown that has been reserved only for God.
- Since the fall, we have tried to wrestle for the crown that belongs to God alone. We carry the roots of rebellion in us. We are all sinners, dealing with pride, self, anger, envy, jealousy, etc.
- Sin needs to be crucified. And it was, at the Cross.

#### 4. Israel at Gilgal: Restoration of Covenant.

The journey from Shittim to Gilgal demonstrates that God keeps His covenantal promises. It reminds Israel of that covenant. This journey is the one which allows Israel to enter into the land which was promised to Abraham hundreds of years before. Gilgal represents life in the promised land and true kingdom living. At Gilgal, God restored His covenant with the Israelites when they responded to God's grace. 3 things happened at Gilgal:

- a. The reproach of Egypt was rolled away, through the act of circumcision (Joshua 5:4-8).
  - Circumcision is an act to put off the flesh. It is an act to dethrone self. It's an act to declare that God is in charge.
  - Egypt represents slavery to sin and bondage. The sons of Israel took 40 years to learn their identity as sons and daughters, and not as slaves. They left Egypt in a flash – it should have taken 11 days to reach Kadesh Barnea, but it took 40 years in the wilderness for Egypt to leave them.
- b. The firstfruits of spiritual inheritance were received.
  - The day after the Passover, the Israelites ate for the first time the produce of the land, unleavened bread and roasted grain. The manna that God had supernaturally provided before the Passover ceased the day after. (Joshua 5:10-12). They had tasted the goodness of God and His promises.
  - Implications for today:
    - Likewise, God's will is to advance us, give us increase, influence culture, and break down ungodly altars of the world.
    - We need to know that supernatural provisions are connected to God's purpose.
- c. Spiritual legacy is relayed.
  - From the Israelites, we learn how to relay our spiritual legacy to the next generation.
  - The 12 tribes took 12 stones from the River Jordan and erected an altar in Gilgal with them. This is a spiritual milestone for the next generation. (Joshua 4:1-7; 4:20-24)
  - Implications for today:
    - Just like the Israelites sent into the Promise Land to possess it, we are sent to be a light and blessing to the nations.
    - We are to "do justice, love mercy and walk humbly." (Micah 6:8)

#### 5. Closing: Walking in the Covenant

Let us remember that our destiny (Promised Land) involves impacting nations. God wants to set us free from the past and propel us into our missional destiny. May we take the first step of faith into the Jordan River today to cross over!

## Discussion Questions

1. **What does “covenant” mean to you as a 21<sup>st</sup> century Christian? Why is it so important to understand that our relationship with God is covenantal?** [15 min]

### Leader’s Notes:

*This is a relate question. The purpose of this question is to highlight the importance of grasping that we, as 21<sup>st</sup> century believers, are still under the Abrahamic covenant. Some believers today may think covenant is an antiquated concept in today’s transactional society built on convenience and reciprocity, but Galatians 3:29 says, “If we belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*

*God’s covenant is always in the context of relationships – those that are between God and man, and God and Israel. To better grasp the richness of a covenant relationship, leaders can refer to some biblical references to covenant set out below:*

- *“So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.” – Exodus 2:24*
- *“For the Lord your God is a merciful God, He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.” – Deuteronomy 4:31*
- *“He remembers His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations...” – Psalm 105:8*

*Members can take some time exploring the difference between a covenantal relationship, and that of a normal relationship or contract. The main takeaway here is that when we fail to understand God’s covenantal love for us, we fail to discover our identity and purpose, or fail to appropriate the blessings of God. Like the Israelites, we are called to be special, set apart, blessed to be a blessing to nations, and having influence as a people belonging to Jesus our King.*

### Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving To The Next Question)

Covenant is important in our relationship with God, because the Bible tells us that He is a God of covenants. God always keeps His Word, and His Word never changes, regardless of circumstances. As we base our life on His unchanging nature and His words, we will see how He will faithfully act on our behalf time and time again, as we call out to Him. When we walk in submission and understand the power of the covenant, His call for us becomes great – bigger than anything we could ever imagine.

2. **Read Micah 6:5-8. We learnt how the memorial stones at the Jordan River were meant to help Israel remember the righteous acts of the Lord (God’s covenantal faithfulness). Looking back on your own life, what are some great acts which God has done on our behalf, which we can recount and give thanks for?** [15 min]

### Leader’s Notes:

*This is a reflect question. The book of Joshua chapters 4 and 5 reveal how as soon as the feet of the priests carrying the ark of the covenant touched the water, it divided. And the people crossed over on dry ground. God then asked Joshua to pick up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan and set them as a memorial to commemorate His great acts, including this miraculous crossing of the Jordan River which was then at its flood stage.*

*Likewise in our own lives, there will be many times where God intervened to act on our behalf, just as He did with the Israelites. Leaders can get members to share their experiences and testify about His goodness. By recalling His past faithfulness time and time again through difficult seasons of our lives, and testifying about it, we strengthen ours and each other's faith, and are encouraged that we can rest in Him for future victories.*

#### Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving To The Next Question)

By tracing the Israelites' journey from Shittim to Gilgal, we see how God fulfilled His promises, and how the Israelites were called to act in obedience to recover and realise their spiritual inheritance. We are reminded how the Lord has already provided all that we need for carrying out His vision in our lives. The question which remains is whether we will respond in grace, renew our covenant with Him and embrace His call on our lives.

- 3. At the close of the sermon, Elder Ee Yang led the congregation through a prophetic act of "crossing over" their personal Jordan River – whereby each member received a memorial stone to mark their decision to renew their covenant with God and embrace their missional call. What does it mean for you to be "covenantally faithful" this season? If being faithful to the covenant involves living missionally, how can you start being missional in this season? [15 min]**

#### Leader's Notes:

*This is a response question. Supernatural provisions must be connected to a spiritual purpose. What is yours?*

*The question offers an opportunity for members to explore and seek what God might be calling them to do in this season of their lives so that they are faithful to their covenant with God. To be missional means to carry God's grace and effect God's will in heaven on earth, and must necessarily result in bringing blessings to the nations (esp. the good news). Matthew 28:19-20 exhorts us, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." A missional call cannot merely be a personal destiny – it must have a corporate dimension, to bless and build up the body of Christ.*

*If time permits, the cell can break off into smaller groups to pray for one another – for those who do not yet know the specific missional call of God on their lives, we can pray for wisdom and direction, and for those who need supernatural provision, we can pray for faith.*

*Romans 12:2 teaches us that discerning the will of God requires a renewed mind. Leaders can also guide members to consider how to consecrate ourselves daily through prayer and saturating our minds with the Word of God constantly.*

#### Transition (Wrapping Up, Vision Casting To Cell & Closing The Discussion)

*In the midst of all the chaos, and instability in society today, we as covenantal believers must continue to remain faithful to our covenant with the Lord – to walk in His ways and to be a light in the world. The outworking of it is different for every single person.*

*God may be laying different burdens in our hearts during this season on how we can live missionally in such times. May we be found covenantally faithful even in the downtimes.*

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## **WORKS** [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. That as Christians we are not mere "believers" but sons and daughters of a covenantal God who has given us an eternal spiritual inheritance, and has set us apart for a great purpose.
  2. That as a church we will never fail to be a blessing to the nations, and we will be visibly active in society to "do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God."
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### **Church Vision**

"A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations."

### **Mission**

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.