



WEEKLY CELL GUIDE

**18 APRIL 2021 | IN LIGHT OF ETERNITY | JOSHUA 6:15-21, REVELATION
20:11-15**

Series : I AM | Speaker : Pastor Ernie Song



WELCOME

[15 MINS]

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

[Ice Breakers 1](#)

[Ice Breakers 2](#)



WORSHIP

[15 MINS]

You may select songs like

1. Worth It All
 2. Purify
-



WORD

[45 MINS]

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

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

1. Commit to live in light of eternity and the coming judgment.
2. Choose a life devoted to the rule, the ways and the character of God.

SERMON SUMMARY

How we live today matters for eternity. The problem today is that there has been too much emphasis on God's love and grace that we forget God is Judge as well, and that sin must be punished. The book of Joshua gives us a picture

of God's judgment on those who are unrepentant in their ways, but in His mercy God allows a window of grace before judgment happens. Similarly, in [Revelation 20:11-15](#), we see the closing of the window of grace for our present age and the final judgment taking place. In light of these warnings, we as Christians ought to live in light of the coming reality.

SERMON RECAP

Introduction

Our sense of right and wrong comes from God because we are made in His image; what is right is whatever that is in accordance with God's character and ways, and what is wrong is whatever that goes against His character and ways. God is just, and because He is just, He has to punish sin. If not, He is not just. But in certain segments of Christianity today, there is too much emphasis on the grace and love of God, and an underemphasis on God's wrath and justice. We must have a balanced view of God. God is not only Saviour, He is also Judge. If there is no judgment, there is no point to salvation.

1. God's Judgment in the Book of Joshua ([Joshua 6:15-21](#))

- We tend to see the book of Joshua in terms of the fulfilment of God's promises and Israel's victorious battles. What we don't realise is that it is also a book of God's execution of judgment on the Canaanite nations. The sins of the Canaanites had degenerated to such abominations as transvestism, incest, pederasty, bestiality and child sacrifice.
- But God in His mercy allowed a window of opportunity for them to repent. A grace period of four generations were given to the Canaanite nations to repent but they failed. As Scripture is not explicit in this area, we need to look at God's character – He is also a God of grace and mercy. Therefore, He has to give opportunities to the Canaanites to repent. "Because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete..." ([Genesis 15:12-21](#)). We see the Canaanites being warned of the coming judgment through Rahab's words ([Joshua 2:8-10](#)). Also, we see this consistent trait of God in Jonah's warning to the Ninevites. **Before judgment, there is a period of grace and warnings, but once grace ends, judgment begins.** God's judgment then allowed Joshua to take the land, which fulfilled the Covenant God had made with Abraham.
- The principle for judgment in the book of Joshua is called *herem* – Hebrew for 'devoted to utter destruction' or 'devoted to being dedicated to God's judgment'. The Canaanites and all their properties became *herem* because of their sinful state. They were then dedicated to destruction as a result of God's judgment. And if any Israelite were to take anything that was *herem*, they themselves would become *herem* and would receive the same punishment as the *herem*. An example is found in the story of Achan in [Joshua 7](#).

2. Judgment at the End of Days

- What we see happening in Joshua is a picture of what is to come in the last days when Jesus returns. When He returns, the window of grace will close. Those who are unrighteous will be separated from God eternally. Those who are righteous will enter into the new heaven and new earth for all eternity ([Revelation 20:11-15](#)). But those who still yoke themselves with the world and its ways (i.e., living in sin and apart from God's rule) will also be deemed *herem* and will face the same judgment.
- If there is no life after death, there will not be any justice. If God does not punish sin, there will not be any justice for victims who were cheated, murdered, raped, beaten or abused. Justice will be served one day. If God does not judge, we cannot call Him righteous, holy and just. Judgment is necessary to demonstrate integrity in God's character.
- Those who are in Christ have passed the first judgment, because Jesus became our substitute. All the sins we have committed – anger, lust, discrimination, pornography, adultery, etc. – were laid upon Christ. He suffered an excruciating death for our sins in order to satisfy the wrath of God towards our sins. He took all our guilt and punishment and in exchange, we become sinless when we turn to Him in repentance ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). This shows how much God hates sin, and also how much God loves us. God's grace cannot be properly understood unless you first understand the judgment of God.

- The second judgment is for Christians – to give an account of our life on earth ([2 Corinthians 5:10](#)). We are now living in the window of grace. How we have lived our life, how we have managed the blessings and gifts God has given us, the words we have spoken, the deeds we have or have not done, will be judged. This is not a judgment of salvation but a judgment of accountability for Christians.
- The Old Testament gives us a model of God’s judgment, while the New Testament in Revelation shows us that the same judgment will happen when Christ returns. This is not a coming reality, *but a present reality*, because we are living in that grace period. When the window of grace is over, Jesus will return and judgment will begin. **We can never understand Jesus as Saviour until we understand Him as Judge.**

3. Implications for Us Today

- How we live today affects our eternity. But you may say, “I raised my hand, I said the sinner’s prayer, I filled up the form and I attended the new believer’s class. My salvation is confirmed, stamped and guaranteed already, right?”
- But here is the problem: We become complacent. If we continue today to live in our sinful ways, can we still be considered saved? A good portion of the New Testament devotes its teachings towards repentance – forsaking one’s old ways and embracing the ways of Christ. You read statements like “persevere on”, “I press on”, “work out your salvation with fear and trembling”, and many such warnings to Christians. (See [Philippians 2:12-14](#), [Hebrews 12:1-2](#), [1 Corinthians 9:24-27](#), [2 Timothy 4:7-8](#))
- And here is the question: If nothing can affect my salvation, why then is there so much emphasis on right living in the New Testament and in Revelation? The fact is this – how we live today as Christians will determine our tomorrows. In the future, there will be a new heaven and new earth. The old will be destroyed because of sin. If we are unrepentant and continue to desire our sinful ways (*herem*) instead of God’s ways, how are you going to live in the New Jerusalem? **Only people who fully embrace everything God is will enjoy His holy presence** ([1 Thessalonians 4:1-8](#)).

Conclusion

Why do the Gospel writers emphasise this point again and again? Why does this matter? It matters because our eternity depends on it. It matters because salvation is not an event but a journey that requires us to work it out ([Philippians 2:12](#)), where we are to train ourselves in the works of repentance ([2 Peter 1:10](#)). **We are not saved by works, but salvation always produces the fruits of repentance.** ([Ephesians 2:8-10](#)).

Final thought on the Season of Consecration for RiverLife:

Consecration is not just an event that happens for a season. It is a starting point that leads to and becomes a daily lifestyle for every RiverLifer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. ***“It doesn’t matter how I live today because I am already saved. I have said the sinner’s prayer and I go to church.” Do you agree with this statement?*** [15 Mins]

Leader’s Notes

A *relate* question. The above statement has a ring of truth to it, but it is not biblically accurate. There are scriptures to support the assurance of faith, e.g., in [John 5:24](#), Jesus assures us, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life.** He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” But mouthing the sinner’s prayer without turning from sin (repentance) and attending church without obedience to Christ (discipleship) do not lead to true *salvation* (‘sozo’ in Greek – ‘to preserve one who is in danger of destruction’). A few chapters earlier in [John 15:5-6](#), Jesus instructs us, “I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. **If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers;** and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.” We must hold both truths in tandem, and not sway from one extreme to the other. Another biblical example is [2 Timothy 1:12](#) where Paul encourages Timothy, “And it is for this reason that I suffer these things. But I am still full of confidence, because I know Whom I have trusted, and I am sure that **He is able to keep safe until that Day** what He has entrusted to me.” But later in chapter [4:7](#), Paul concludes, “I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, and **I have kept the faith.**”

Transition

Last week, we learned that God is holy (set apart, wholly other and perfectly just). His desire is for a family in the new heaven and new earth who are holy and set apart for His pleasure and glory. And He has already made that possible through the Cross. Now it is our part to take up our cross, follow Him, and finish the race.

2. **Will God really send people to hell for not believing in Jesus? How could a loving God allow anyone to perish eternally? Discuss.** [10 Mins]

Leader's Notes

A *reflect* question. The Bible says that God created hell for Satan and the wicked angels who rebelled against Him, but there are people in hell as well ([Matthew 25:41](#)). Both angelic beings and human beings are in hell for the same reason – the wages of sin ([Romans 6:23](#)). Because God is holy and morally perfect ([Psalm 18:30](#)), He always does what is right. If God is perfectly righteous, then anything that falls short of His perfection is sinful, and every human being who has ever lived, since Adam's fall from grace, has committed sin ([Romans 3:23](#)). Since God is eternal, immutable, and infinite, and all sins are fundamentally against God, God has decreed the just punishment for sin must also be eternal ([Matthew 25:46](#)). If God did not send people to hell for breaking His laws, it could be said that God is not just ([Psalm 7:11](#)). A good analogy is a court of law with a judge and a lawbreaker. A just judge will always convict the person who has been found guilty. If that judge did not pursue justice for the crime, he would not be a just judge ([Deuteronomy 32:4](#)).

Transition

However, the good news is that God is also merciful. In His rich mercy, He made a way for sinners to avoid the punishment of hell by trusting in the atoning work of His Son, Jesus Christ ([Romans 5:9](#)). For Christians, the penalty of sin has been removed and placed upon Christ on the cross ([1 Peter 2:24](#)). Because of the sacrifice of Christ, God is still just – the sin is punished – yet He is also merciful to all who trust Him and follow Him in His rule, His ways, and His character.

3. **If Judgement Day, as mentioned in the book of Revelation, happens a year from now, do you think you are ready for it? What would you change in your life in light of that coming reality?** [10 Mins]

Leader's Notes

A *respond* question. Judgment Day will one day take place as the Bible has promised. But many of us do not pay enough attention to this reality because we either believe it is too far away to think about, or we believe we will not be judged on that day. We could be wrong both ways. We know that the return of Jesus is imminent: "So you also must be ready, because **the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.**" ([Matthew 24:44](#)) And this time Jesus is coming back as Judge: "And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is **He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.**" ([Acts 10:42](#)) And if we think just because we are 'saved' we will not be judged, [1 Peter 4:17](#) warns that Christians will face God's judgment too: "**For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God;** and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?" The imminent return of Jesus as Judge propels us to live holy lives (conformed into the image of Christ), and to share the good news of the Gospel to those who do not know Christ. This is how we are to live in light of eternity.

Transition & Closing

Jesus is coming back, and this time as Judge. It is a reality that demands a response from us – how we live today will determine our eternity when He returns. Therefore, let us "throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." ([Hebrews 12:1](#))



Consider dividing the group into micro-groups for a deeper time of sharing as well as praying for the following items:

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1. Sermon Application

- Pray that we will live in light of eternity – and not for temporary worldly pleasures.

2. Season of Consecration

- Pray that every RiverLifer will go through this season of consecration intentionally, and that a new normal in our lives would emerge.

3. COVID-19

- Continue to pray for the spread of the virus to come to a halt.
- Pray for the recovery of our nation's economy.

4. Myanmar

- Pray for peace and stability to return to this nation.
- Pray that God will protect and provide for our brothers and sisters in that nation.



1. **Bible Reading Plan.** You can access our 2-Year Bible Reading Plan 2021-2022 by visiting <https://rlc.sg/brp2021>.

2. **RiverLife Community Services (RCS) Family Run.** 31 May to 13 Jun. Sign up online: rlc.sg/rcsrn.

3. **Season of Consecration.** As part of the call to consecrate, we are rallying every RiverLifer to read the book *Crazy Love* by Francis Chan in June. This is to prepare our hearts for the Special e-Gathering and sermon series based on the book in July. The call to consecrate calendar:

- 2 - 31 May - 30 Days of Prayer & Fasting
- 5, 12, 19 & 26 May – Consecrate Nights on Wednesdays (8.30pm to 9.30pm)
- 1 - 30 Jun – Read and reflect on *Crazy Love* by Francis Chan
- 3 July (SAT) – Special e-Gathering with Francis Chan
- A four-part Consecrate sermon series will run on Sundays from April to August.



"HONOUR GOD WITH EVERYTHING YOU OWN;
GIVE HIM THE FIRST AND THE BEST."
PROVERBS 3:9 (MSG)

Give Digitally

Here are two cashless ways to give your tithes and offering.

1. PayNow

Log in to your bank's existing mobile banking app.
Scan this QR code on the right.

SCAN ME



2. Interbank Transfer

RiverLife Church Bank Account:
DBS Autosave 029-902431-0
Bank Code: 7171
Branch Code: 029

