



17 APR 2022 | PASTOR VINCENT LUN | UNEXPECTED: EASTER SUNDAY | LUKE 24:13-27, 29-31, 46-47

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

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

1. Know and trust that God is always with us, and to focus on Jesus when faced with the unexpected.
2. Learn to face unexpected events in our lives courageously, knowing that these are part of God's plan for a greater good.

SERMON SUMMARY

In this Easter Sunday message, Pastor Vincent exhorted RiverLifers to face unexpected events in our lives courageously by knowing that God has never left us and that we need to refocus our eyes on Jesus who is always near us. Ps Vincent also encouraged us to know that although unexpected things can happen to us, they are no accidents because God knows them all along and perhaps had even planned for them. Lastly, he also urged us to know that God can bring greater good out of unexpected events in our lives.

SERMON RECAP

The disciples thought that Jesus was coming to redeem Israel from oppression. The unexpected happened when Jesus was crucified and died. Just when the disciples thought that it was the end, Jesus rose from the dead on the third day after His death.

Life is unpredictable, especially in the past two years, with the COVID-19 pandemic. We have to live our lives expecting the unexpected. Life does not always turn out the way we expected or the way we hoped for. Ps Vincent exhorted us to face the unexpected courageously so that our feet are anchored and that we are not easily shaken. We can do this by knowing that:

1. God Never Left You

- The disciples were so preoccupied with what had happened in the natural world that they did not recognise Jesus. They only recognised Jesus when He broke bread (v 30), which reminded them of the Passover meal that Jesus had with them a few days earlier.
- Key: Do not be so preoccupied with unexpected things or things you cannot control that you miss out God's presence. We need to constantly refocus our eyes on Jesus to realise that God is always near us.
- Application: We experience God's presence through our daily devotions and by being connected to our spiritual community (cell).



2. God Planned It All Along

- The disciples were sad because they were seeing things in the natural and had hoped that Jesus would redeem Israel.
- Jesus recounted for the disciples all that God had done, from Moses through all the prophets in order to make them realise that Jesus' death and resurrection was planned by God all along.
- Key: God is all knowing and powerful; and the unexpected things that happen in our lives are all within God's sovereign plan.

3. God Meant It For A Greater Good

- Jesus' death and resurrection was planned by God and is meant for a greater good: to bring about the repentance and forgiveness for all mankind (v 46-47).
- Key: God can bring about a greater good out of the unexpected events in our lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **The disciples were sad because their hopes that Jesus would redeem Israel from the Romans were lost (Luke 24:19-21). Share a time in your life when you did not understand what was happening around you and you felt hopeless. How are you able to see God's plan in this circumstance?**

Leader's Notes

This is a recap and reflect question for members to share about how their experiences relate to the sermon. Members can share about their own personal experiences or things that are happening in the world, for example, COVID-19, Russian-Ukrainian war, etc. Leaders can encourage members to recognise the sovereignty of God who is in control and knows everything that happens to us, even things that we don't seem to understand.

The article "How to Trust God, Even in Difficult Times" by Brittany Yesudasan (<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/trust-god.html>) tells of how God is trustworthy even when we do not see our prayers answered or problems solved right away. We must put our faith in God, remembering that God is always there and that He is good all the time!

If there are pre-believers joining the cell discussion, leaders can share how they see Jesus through these circumstances and weave the salvation story into the discussion. God has a plan for everything that happens to us. It is not by accident that the pre-believing friends are in church or cell, and them being there is part of God's plan. The hope that God brings is also available to them if they believe and put their faith and trust in Jesus today.

Transition

As we desire to refocus our eyes on Jesus, we can be assured that God's presence is with us wherever we go. We can trust in our God who is all knowing and all powerful. This is the hope we have in Jesus.

- 
2. **How can we learn to trust in our all-knowing, all-loving and all-powerful God that whatever happens to us, including the unexpected, is part of God's sovereign plan for a greater good in our lives?**

Leader's Notes

This is a reflect question for members on how they can recommit their lives to God in faith and to trust that God is a good Father and His eyes are always on us, even in the unexpected. Leaders can also remind members on the importance of being rooted in a Christian community. The cell can break into smaller groups to pray for each other. You can use the following resource as a guide on how to pray through the unexpected.

Resource: *Trusting God in the Unexpected* by Dena Johnson Martin (Crosswalk)

Transition

Let us remember that God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to die for our sins (John 15:13). Jesus has risen from the dead, and so we have hope in Him that He is always with us and that His plans for us are always for a greater purpose. The next question explores how we can respond to this Easter message by focusing our eyes on Jesus.

3. **What does it mean to focus our eyes on Jesus? Share one practical way you can commit to in the next week to put Jesus at the centre of your lives.**

Leader's Notes

This is a response question for members to think about what it means to fix our eyes on Jesus. Members can share with one another on how to focus our attention on Jesus in practical ways in our day-to-day lives. Leaders can encourage members to learn from one another and to daily remember that Jesus is always with us, never leaving nor forsaking us (Deuteronomy 31:6). From this passage, some ways to focus on Jesus would be:

- a. Take our eyes off what is in the natural world (Colossians 3:1-5)
- b. Make time to be with Jesus
- c. Remember what Jesus has done for us
- d. Ask Jesus to open our eyes to see what He is doing in our lives

Consider prayerfully to take practical steps in our lives to include Jesus in our daily routines by putting the focus on God each and every day, removing distractions, which can be things or people that take your focus away from Christ, and surround ourselves with reminders of Jesus!

Closing

As we desire to refocus our eyes on Jesus, we can be assured that God's presence is with us wherever we go. We can trust in our God who is all knowing and all powerful. This is the hope we have in Jesus. Jesus is risen! He rose from the dead and through this work of atonement, redemption, reconciliation, and salvation, He is with God in heaven. As promised in John 3:16, for all of us who believe in Him, we will have eternal life!



WORKS

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

1. Sermon Application

- Know and trust that God is always with us and through the storms of our lives. Pray for Godly courage to face the unexpected difficulties in our lives.
- Even when faced with these difficulties, we can trust that God is all knowing, powerful and loving, and trust God to mean these unexpected things to be for a greater good.

2. COVID-19 in Singapore

- Praise God for the decrease in community cases.
- Pray for God's protection especially from the Omicron variant.

3. War In Ukraine

- Pray for Russia and Ukraine as they continue with their peace negotiations.
- Pray for the safety of all Ukrainians especially the churches there.
- Pray for a swift end to the invasion.

4. Opportunities for Outreach

- Ask the Lord to grant you opportunities to reach out to a non-believing loved one, friend, or colleague this week as we seek to mature in Christlikeness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Digital Bulletin: rlc.sg/bulletin

1. **Alpha.** We know that some may have many questions about life, God, Jesus and Christianity. Or, maybe they are a new Christian who has just accepted Jesus into their life and desire to embark on this journey with Jesus. We would like to extend a special invitation for these individuals to participate in Alpha at RiverLife. It is a series of 12 sessions (8 online & 3 in-person) where participants can ask anything about life, faith and God in a friendly environment. The first session starts 5 May. Full schedule and registration details can be found here: rlc.sg/alpha.
2. **Technical & Production (TAP) Ministry Recruitment.** The TAP ministry comprises five teams – audio, graphics, lighting, sound and video – and they all work as one in partnership with the Holy Spirit to support an atmosphere that allows the congregation to encounter God. We are now opening up recruitment for this ministry. If you desire to take the next step in your walk with God through starting to serve, we invite you to sign up to explore serving in one of the five TAP teams. You may sign up online at rlc.sg/serve or refer to our [digital bulletin](#) for more details.
3. **SuperLife Camp 2022: #GodFirst.** SuperLife Camp is happening on 9-11 Jun for children in Primary 1-6. Online registration will be open from 24 Apr to 8 May.

- 
4. **Missions from Home.** In order to find out more information concerning our mission initiatives in the nations and how you can participate, visit our new mission website. (rlc.sg/mfh)
 5. **RiverLife Community Services (RCS).** In 2021, RCS focused on providing relief to families who were badly affected by the pandemic. We believe that in this season, God is calling RCS to build loving families and strong communities. Listed below are opportunities where you can serve or give to RCS:
 - You can serve as a volunteer in one of our programmes to befriend and build relationships with children, youth, mothers and lower-income families. Find out more here: rlc.sg/rcs2022.
 - You can support the work of RCS by participating in our annual Family Movie Day. For instructions on how you can watch a movie this June holidays and stand for families visit this link rlc.sg/rcsmovie.
 - You can sow by contributing financially too. Your giving will go into initiatives such as grocery distributions and various programmes that will help our beneficiaries build resilience and break free from the poverty cycle. Find out more by writing to RCS at office@rcs.org.sg.
 - RCS is also looking to partner with organizations (donations of essential items – toiletries, wearables, etc). To find out more, write to us at volunteer@rcs.org.sg.
 6. **RiverLife Podcast.** The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is rlc.sg/podcast or simply search '**The RiverLife Podcast**' on Spotify.
 7. **Spiritual Growth Resources.** We have put together a curated list of recommended resources for the RiverLife family. These resources (books, articles, podcasts and videos) are recommendations for the various spiritual growth stages as you seek to grow deeper in the River of God this year. You can access them at rlc.sg/resource. This list will be continually populated throughout the year.
 8. **Cradle Roll.** Our Cradle Roll is open from 9am to 10.30am every Sunday for children 24 months and below. **NO booking of tickets is required.**
 9. **Prayer Ministry.** If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. unforgiveness, demonic oppression, etc), you can sign up for RLC's RTF ministry: <https://bit.ly/rlcrtf>
 10. **Bible Reading Plan.** You can access our 2-Year Bible Reading Plan 2021-2022 by visiting: <https://rlc.sg/brp2021>.
 11. **Testimony.** If you have a testimony to share, you can write to us at stories@riverlife.org.sg to share with us your testimony as an encouragement to others.

ONLINE GIVING TO MISSIONS

Donate digitally:

PayNow

Log in to your bank's existing mobile banking app. Scan this QR code on the right OR enter UEN No. 200100806DTNO.

Interbank Transfer

UOB Account 450-309634-4
Kindly indicate "Missions" in your transaction reference.



ONLINE GIVING TO RIVERLIFE CHURCH

Contribute your tithes and offering digitally:

PayNow

Log in to your bank's existing mobile banking app. Scan this QR code on the right OR enter UEN No. 200100806DSCB.

Interbank Transfer

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



ONLINE DONATION TO RIVERLIFE COMMUNITY SERVICES

Donate digitally:

PayNow

Log in to your bank's existing mobile banking app. Scan this QR code on the right OR enter UEN No. 200711586WDON

Kindly indicate your NRIC No. under the Bill Reference to qualify for tax deduction.

