



## 17 JUL 2022 | ELDER LEE EE YANG | ALTAR OF IDENTITY | 1 KINGS 18:30-39

### SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

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

1. Desire to encounter God's manifest presence in their lives
2. Understand and rediscover their identity in Christ as God's children
3. Commit to rebuild their altar unto the Lord

### SERMON SUMMARY

The manifest presence of God falls on a rebuilt altar – We have to rebuild our altar unto God and rediscover our identity as children of God. Our identity is about who we are in Christ and what He has done for us, and not what we do. Let us take our rightful place as sons and daughters of the Most High, so that we can encounter God's presence and know Him.

### SERMON RECAP

#### Introduction: Encountering the Manifest Presence of God

- God is omnipresent, His presence is always with us. Sometimes, God's presence become so tangible that He becomes so real to us.
- In [1 Kings 18:30-39](#), we see God's manifest presence represented by fire. The fire, **the manifest presence of God falls on the altar of God.**
  - What is an altar? It is a meeting place between man and God. An altar is a place of consecration. It is a place where a person's identity, beliefs and behaviour are shaped.
  - Two people can go to church every week but have very different experiences. For one, the message touches him deeply. For another, it's almost that he had the news read to him. Why is this so? Because one is consecrated to God, the other is consecrated to the world. They have different altars in their lives.
- The context of Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal is that Israel was in spiritual decline. The whole nation was led by Ahab, the most evil king in Israel's history ([1 Kings 16:30](#)). Ahab not only devoted and the whole nation to the worship of the false gods Baal and Asherah in Israel ([1 Kings 16:31-33](#)).
- Elijah challenged Ahab and his 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah to a duel – one of the most exciting spiritual battles in the Bible. The purpose was for all of Israel to see. Because ultimately, his assignment from God is to woo God's people back to God's presence.
- The real battle is for the hearts and soul of God's people, who had been led astray. The people were double minded. Elijah said they were wavering between 2 opinions. **Their worship of God has been severely compromised by the idols in their lives.**

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- In our present time, many people lead lives apart from the realness of God. They do not encounter the manifested presence of God nor have spiritual encounters. We live compromised, diluted spiritual lives. God wants a breakthrough in your life. He wants us to experience the realness of God, because arguments and debates won't convict people but the realness of God convicts people.
  - When you encounter the realness of God, you realise the Christian walk is so exciting. You walk in His presence, walk in His revelation, His blessing, His wisdom, and a life of signs and wonders and miracles.

In the encounter in [1 Kings 18:30-39](#), we learn 3 things that will help us receive the fire of God, His tangible presence.

### 1. Israel was worshipping at the wrong altar.

- The prophets of Baal called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying "Baal, answer us". But there was no voice and no one answered. They started to dance about the altar, cry and cut themselves. But no one answered, no one paid attention.
- If you don't experience the manifest presence of God in your life, you need to check: Am I worshipping at the correct Altar?
- Baal means "Lord", "Owner". Worshippers of Baal ultimately believe that they are the Lord of their own life.
- What is idolatry?
  - At the fundamental level, an idol is someone whom you worship to get your desires fulfilled.
  - We treat God as an idol when we only want God's power to help fulfil our desires, and we don't want His presence.
- God is against idolatry because God wants to be known, not to be used. God wants a covenantal relationship. He doesn't want a transactional relationship.
  - [John 17:3](#) - "Now this is eternal life: that they **know** you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent"
  - Is our relationship with God borne out of reverence and submission? Are we genuinely sincere in wanting to know the heart and mind of God? Or are we using God to fulfil our own goals and targets or our own definition of success?

### 2. Elijah repaired the altar of God with the stones of identity.

- Elijah "repaired the altar of the Lord which had been torn down" ([1 Kings 18:30](#)). There was an altar but it has been desolated. Israel used to worship God with all of their hearts but that has changed. The altar of God was in disrepair.
- What's the significance for us as 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians?
  - Your life was once consecrated to God. You were on fire. Every day God was so real to you. That was your "first love" moment. But today your heart has grown cold. You had been distracted. Maybe you have been disappointed. Maybe hurt by someone. Maybe you stepped onto the devil's snare and sinned, and fell into addiction. And from then on it's a downward spiral.
  - Your altar is in disrepair. There is no longer room for God in your heart any more. Your altar needs to be rebuilt.

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- How did Elijah rebuild the altar?
    - He took 12 stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, “Israel shall be your name” ([1 Kings 18:31](#)). Elijah rebuilt the altar of God with the stones of identity. 12 stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel, the name of Israel representing their identity.
  - **To encounter the manifest presence of God you have to once again rediscover and rebuild your identity in God.** You have to understand that you belong to God and no one else. You become one with God whom you identify with.
  - **Your identity is about who you are, not what you do.**
    - [Joshua 8:30-32](#): “...an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used”
    - When we introduce ourselves, what would you say? “I am a doctor” or “I am a teacher.” Every time we tell people who we are, we end up saying what we do. Our sense of self-worth becomes tied to our achievements, accolades, qualifications, social status.
    - God is reminding Israel that your identity is not built on your works
    - When we come before His Presence, it is who we are that is important. We are born again, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. It’s not about our performance, but our position – our standing before God. God sees Christ in us.
  - Do not be unaware of the enemy’s scheme to trip us up.
    - In Matthew 4:1-3, the devil came to tempt Jesus personally. What was the temptation about? Jesus was tempted to **prove His identity**.
    - Jesus countered the enemy by saying “Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” – Jesus identity had been settled by the words of the Father (“this is my Son, whom I love, with whom I am well pleased” ([Matt 3:16-17](#)))
    - God wants you to return to knowing who you belong to.
  - The devil challenges our identity in God. We are bombarded every day by the world saying “prove your identity” – by having that car, by having that house, coveting that promotion, getting busy, obtaining that achievement. How many likes on that Facebook post, and followers on Instagram. We chase after these things which don’t matter for eternity. We get busy trying to prove our identity and worth. Then we develop a prayer list – and our prayer is basically to fulfill all these.
  - Your worth is not in the things you do, but in who you are and whose you are, a child of God.
  - When you identify with the one true God – when you build the altar in the name of the Lord, you receive your worth, you know your value. Then your inner disposition changes. You no longer feel pressured to need to prove yourself. You can work from a position of rest, position of worship and thanksgiving to God because He has already given you everything to live a godly and fruitful life. And your life will start to change.
  - What does being a child of God mean? Ultimately, being a child of God means you stand for love, grace and righteousness. You start to be a godly representative of God the Father.



### 3. Elijah called on the name of the Lord of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

- 1 Kings 18:36-39 - “Elijah said to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Answer me, answer me, that this **people may know that you, O Lord, are God and that You are turning their hearts back again.** Then the fire fell. The people proclaimed that “The Lord, He is God, the Lord, He is God”.
- Why did the fire of God fall on the altar? It is to turn the hearts of the people back to the Lord. The Lord wants us to encounter Him and know Him afresh. The manifest presence of God ended all debate as to who is the real God. God wants to make himself real to you so you will stop doubting and start trusting. Stop running away and come back to His Presence. The fire was so strong that it consumed everything.
- What’s the significance of the name, the Lord of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? This name of God shows that He is a covenant keeping God. The covenant that God made with Israel and the Israelites’ special place as God’s Chosen People.
- God repeated the Abrahamic Covenant to three different generations: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all given the promise of land, many descendants, and blessing. This covenant is a covenant of oneness. God wants to become one with you. That’s why God chose to identify His name with the name of His people. God wrote your name into His name. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise ([Galatians 3:29](#)).
- God has not forgotten His covenant with you and with RiverLife church.

In conclusion, Elder Ee Yang invited us to take our rightful place as sons and daughters of God, and to build our altar with a renewed understanding of our identity in God.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Israel was worshipping at the wrong altar and their worship of God had been compromised by the idols in their lives ([1 Kings 18:26-29](#)). Which altar are you presently worshipping at? Are you worshipping God or yourself?**

### Leader's Notes

This is a recap and reflect question for members to share. Elder Ee Yang shared that at the fundamental level, an idol is someone whom you worship to get your desires fulfilled. We treat God as an idol when we only want God’s power to help fulfil our desires, and we don’t want His presence. God wants us to know Him, and not use Him for our benefit. Leaders can get members to reflect on their relationship with God - whether they are genuinely sincere in wanting to know God, or using God to fulfil our own goals or own definition of success.

### Transition

God wants a covenantal relationship with us, not a transactional relationship. He wants us to encounter His manifest presence and to know Him.

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2. **“Your identity is about who you are, not what you do”. What do you base your identity on? To what extent is your sense of identity and self-worth tied to your identity as a child of God?**

Leader's Notes

This is a question for the cell to reflect on their lives and share. Elder Ee Yang reminded us to not be unaware of the devil’s attempts to trip us and challenge our identity in God.

- Leaders may invite members to reflect and share whether their sense of self-worth has become tied to their achievements, accolades, social status etc., or whether they have been busy trying to prove their identity and worth by chasing after the things in life that do not matter for eternity.

Transition

Our identity is not built on our works. God wants us to return to knowing who we are and who we belong to. Being a child of God means you stand for love, grace and righteousness. You start to be a godly representative of God the Father.

3. **Elder Ee Yang shared that God’s manifest presence falls on a rebuilt altar. He invited us to rebuild our altars unto God, and rediscover our identity as a child of God. How can we encounter God’s presence in our daily lives? Are there areas in your life where you need to rededicate/consecrate to God or take your rightful place as a child of God?**

Leader's Notes

This is a reflect and response question. Different members may be at different seasons/stages in their encounter with God’s manifest presence.

- Leaders can ask members to reflect on whether there are areas or situations in their lives where they need to rededicate/consecrate to God or need a breakthrough, and invite the cell to pray for each other.
- For those who have lost their passion for God and need a breakthrough, leaders can invite members to pray for them to receive fresh fire as they rebuild their altars.

Closing

God wants us to take our rightful place and sons and daughters of God. God has already given us everything to live a godly and fruitful life. Let us rebuild our altars unto Him.

## 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**

- For us to desire God’s manifest presence in our lives, and to know Him intimately
- For God to give us fresh revelation of our identity as children of God

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- For God to help us rebuild our altars unto God and turn our hearts towards Him
- 2. COVID-19 in Singapore**
    - Praise God for the decrease in community cases.
    - Pray for God's protection especially from the Omicron variant.
  - 3. World**
    - A swift end to the COVID-19 crisis globally, if not a reduction in cases in third world nations, and a stable environment where humans and virus coexist.
    - Comfort and change to come to USA in the midst of a spike in mass shootings all over the country.
  - 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](http://rlc.sg/bulletin)

- 1. Alpha @ RiverLife. 20 Aug – 29 Oct.** Alpha is a series of interactive sessions to explore the basics of the Christian faith. Each session includes a short video and a discussion at the end where you can ask anything or share your thoughts. Sign up online: [rlc.sg/join-alpha](http://rlc.sg/join-alpha).
- 2. Marriage Preparation Course. Sundays, 4 Sep – 2 October, 1.45pm-5pm. \$280 per couple.** This course is specially tailored for couples exploring marriage or planning to get married in the next 2 years. This course covers Biblical foundations and practical principles needed to build a God-centered Marriage. Register: [rlc.sg/mpc](http://rlc.sg/mpc).
- 3. RiverLife Missions – Medical Mission Trip to Sarangani, South Philippines. 20-24 October. Cost: \$800.** We are looking for doctors, nurses, pharmacists and healthcare professionals to join us for this trip. Team members will help to dispense medication, take basic vital statistics, interact with families, pray for the sick and share the Gospel. Signup: [rlc.sg/signupformissions](http://rlc.sg/signupformissions).
- 4. Current Pulpit Series – Rebuilding the Altar. 2-31 July.** This series seeks to lead people to rebuild the altar of God in their lives.
  - 3 July – The Altar of Awakening
  - 17 July – The Altar of Identity
  - 24 July – The Altar of Repentance
  - 31 July – The Altar of Worship
- 5. 40.Day Prayer 2022.** 40.Day is an annual national prayer initiative by LoveSingapore. The theme for this year's prayer guide is "to live is Christ", a journey through the book of Philippians. The prayer guide is can be accessed one day at a time at this link: <http://www.lovesingapore.org.sg/40day/2022>. Prayer



entries will be posted one day at a time starting from Friday, 1 July. Let us join the body of Christ in Singapore in seeking the Lord.

6. **Call for Musicians and Vocalists.** The Worship & Music ministry is on the lookout for musicians and vocalists – keyboardist, electric guitarist, bassist, drummer and singers. If you are interested, you can sign up at [rlc.sg/serve](http://rlc.sg/serve). Do note that an audition will be required before joining the ministry.
7. **Call for SuperLife Volunteers.** If you have a heart for children and a desire to disciple them in their spiritual journey, come be a part of the SuperLife team. Sign up at [rlc.sg/serve](http://rlc.sg/serve). Immediate needs:
  - *SuperLife Primary Teacher* (Serve twice a month. Facilitate small group discussions after each Bible lesson, connect and pray with the children, be involved in SuperLife Ministry events, etc.)
  - *Special Needs Chaperone.* (Serve twice a month. Provided 1-1 support to children with special needs and help facilitate an inclusive environment between children with and without special needs.)
8. **F&B Related Ministries Recruitment.** We're looking for RiverLifers who love connecting with new people and enjoy cooking and serving. Team members will serve once a month. For more details Karen Koh (Welcome Lounge) at [karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg) and Jonathan Cho (The Café and Volunteers Corner) at [jonathancho@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:jonathancho@riverlife.org.sg).
9. **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](http://rlc.sg/serve) or refer to our [digital bulletin](#) for more details.
10. **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](http://rlc.sg/mfh))
11. **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](http://rlc.sg/rcs2022).
  - 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](mailto:office@rcs.org.sg).

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- 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](mailto:volunteer@rcs.org.sg).
  - RCS is looking for 20 Food Collection Helper/Driver that is able to help with the loading/unloading of fresh food items at blocks where we are reaching out to. Commitment: Minimally once a month for 6 months, Saturdays, 12-4pm. Contact: [rlcares@rcs.org.sg](mailto:rlcares@rcs.org.sg).

12. **RiverLife Podcast.** The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is [rlc.sg/podcast](https://rlc.sg/podcast) or simply search '**The RiverLife Podcast**' on Spotify.
13. **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](https://rlc.sg/resource). This list will be continually populated throughout the year.
14. **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.*
15. **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>
16. **Bible Reading Plan.** You can access our 2-Year Bible Reading Plan 2021-2022 by visiting: <https://rlc.sg/brp2021>.
17. **Testimony.** If you have a testimony to share, you can write to us at [stories@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:stories@riverlife.org.sg) to share with us your testimony as an encouragement to others.

## 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 GIVING TO MISSIONS

Give 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 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.

