



4 SEP 2022 | ELDER LEE EE YANG PUTTING GOD FIRST | 2 CHRONICLES 31:1-10

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

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

- Recognise the “high places” in our lives and ask God to come into our lives so that we can remove these ungodly influences in our lives
- Commit to honour God by contributing to the spiritual community.

SERMON SUMMARY

This message is the last in the series on “Church on Fire.” It is about putting God first in every area of our lives. If God is first in your life, everything comes into alignment. Otherwise, nothing can come into alignment. We put God first by:

- (1) Removing the “high places” ([2 Chronicles 31:1-2](#)). High places are anything that is in the way of our relationship with God.
- (2) Honouring God with our “first fruits” ([2 Chronicles 31:4-6](#)). This refers to the principle of tithing. The tithe is our first fruits.

Elder Lee Ee Yang exhorts RiverLifers to step up and contribute to God’s house so that we can all fulfil the mandate God has given us. Let’s honour and serve God together!

SERMON RECAP

This message is the last in the series on “Church on Fire.” It is about putting God first in every area of our lives: family, work, finances, health, church, etc. If God is first in your life, everything comes into alignment. Otherwise, nothing can come into alignment. Elder Ee Yang compared this to the buttoning of a shirt. If we put the first button into the first hole, the rest of the buttons will be placed into the right holes. Otherwise, the whole row will be buttoned wrongly and the only way is to do it all over again.

Preaching from 2 Chronicles 31:1-10, Elder Ee Yang taught that we need to similarly put God first in our lives. How do we put God first?

- (1) **Removing the “high places” ([2 Chronicles 31:1-2](#)). High places are anything that is in the way of our relationship with God.**

We need to be careful about the sources of influence in our lives. These act like ungodly altars of false gods which will start to distract us from worship and to be led into conforming to the patterns of the world. Romans 12:2 teaches us to be transformed by the renewing of the mind.



We should be devoted to the spiritual disciplines of worship, prayer and the reading of the Word of God – that is, spending time with God every day. Community is important as we cannot do this on our own. In community, we support, pray for and hold each other accountable.

One of the most important “high places” we need to remove is our trust and the love of money. Matthew 6:21 says that where our treasure is, there our hearts will be also.

(2) Honouring God with our “first fruits” (2 Chronicles 31:4-6). This refers to the principle of tithing. The tithe is our first fruits.

From Exodus 13:12-13, we understand the significance of the tithe. According to the Old Testament law, the firstborn animal was to be either sacrificed (if ceremonially clean) or redeemed (if ceremonially unclean). There is no third option. Jesus is God’s Son and is clean, perfect and unblemished. God sacrificed Jesus so that He can redeem us, sinners, back to Himself. Hence, God demonstrates the principle of FIRST Himself!

It always requires faith to give our first fruits to the Lord. We are saying to God that we recognise Him as first in our lives and that we trust Him to take care of us.

The message is however not one of “Give to Get.” The motivation of giving is not getting as this would put us in the wrong heart posture. Blessing is the outcome of putting God first. God’s favour is upon those who honour Him. God is so good that even before we can give Him anything, He first loves and blesses us!

In conclusion, Elder Lee Ee Yang exhorts RiverLifers to step up and contribute to God’s house so that we can all fulfil the mandate God has given us. Let’s honour and serve God together!

1) We can enter into God’s presence because Jesus died for us (2 Chronicles 29:20-24)

When we look at the Old Testament, we are reminded of our own sin and sinful nature and how the basis of worship is about purity and cleanliness. It shows us how Jesus’ sacrifice has redeemed us and there is a danger when we treat the Cross with casualness. Elder Ee Yang led us in the Holy Communion to remember the sacredness of His death for us (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

2) We enter into God’s presence as a community, not just as individuals.

Worship to God has two dimensions – as individuals and together as the people of God. Biblical worship is both personal and communal. We cannot isolate worship to simply a personal act (2 Chronicles 29:28-29, Hebrews 10:24-25). Elder Ee Yang also shared about the horizontal component to corporate worship where we also encourage one another through our songs and devotion. (Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:18-20)

3) Worship is presence centred

Hezekiah also took reference from David's tabernacle when he reformed the temple (1 Chronicles 16:4, 1 Chronicles 25:6-7, 1 Chronicles 23:5). Everyone came ready to bring a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. The entire assembly orientated themselves around the presence of God. Worship is meant to be centred around God, not our needs or preferences. We need to change our perspective of worship from one that is human-centric to God-centric.

Christian growth and maturity are not measured by how much we receive, but by how much we give and offer to His kingdom.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **1 John 5:21** tells us to "keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts" (New Living Translation). In present times, these are the equivalent of "High Places" in our lives. What are these ungodly altars that we face in our lives and we presently struggle with? Share with the cell on an area that you struggle to surrender to God.

Leader's Notes

This a reflect and relate question. Elder Ee Yang shared that an ungodly altar is a source of influence in our lives that take us out of alignment with God's will and ways. Romans 12:2 tells us not to be conformed to the ways of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind. Popular culture bombards us daily that we must strive hard to reach for material goals and that our lives will be incomplete otherwise. Having displaced God from the top position in our lives, we can be pressured to set our sights on unrealistic expectations and targets; and imposing such standards on those around. Most importantly and commonly, we struggle to remove our trust in money – see Matthew 6:21. Leaders can invite members to share about their own experience of this struggle to surrender to God and overcome idolatry.

Resource: "What Are the 'High Places' in the Old Testament, and How Does That Apply to Us Today?" by Randy Alcorn

Transition

Recognising any ungodly influence in our lives is an important step to break free. We have to commit to put God first so that we can place God in His rightful place in our lives. This then leads us to honour Him with every area of our lives.

2. **Imagine a pre-believing friend asking you about the reasons for the need for both personal and communal worship. What answer would you give?**

Leader's Notes

This question aims for members to ponder on the importance of both personal and communal worship, and what better way than to reflect on our own experiences and to imagine sharing it with someone who has yet to know God! Leaders can also ask members to consider how they would describe worship – personal and communal – and to share how these two have contributed to their



growth in God. Members can also share how they may be encouraged by communal worship.

Transition

We have recognised the importance of both personal and corporate worship. Let us consider how we can support one another as a community.

- 3. Read Exodus 23:19. We are called to bring to the Lord our God the first fruits, which is the tithe. This is about honouring God with our possessions and to acknowledge Him as the source of the increases that come our way. This principle applies to our finances and all areas of our lives such as marriage, family life, work, ministry, etc. Share with the cell an area that God is calling you to respond to the call to honour Him.**

Leader's Notes

This is a response question. While the subject covered in the sermon is on tithing, this applies to all areas that we have to surrender to God and contribute to His Kingdom. Leaders can encourage members to think of how they can contribute to the building of the community and the church through their sacrifice of time, skills and resources so that the church mandate in the wider community can be fulfilled. While this question primarily focuses on individual responses to this call to honour God with what God has blessed us with, leaders can also ask the cell to consider how the spiritual community can come together to be a blessing to the people who come to our church and also, those who do not. The cell can then pray for every member who commits to serve God.

Resource: *“What Does the Bible Say about Christian Tithing?”* by RC Sproul; *“5 Common Questions We Want to Have Answered about Tithing”* by Doleres Smyth

Closing

As a church body, we need to encourage one another (corporately and individually) to put God first in everything that we do! Let's honour God and serve Him as a spiritual community!

PRAYER

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 recognise the “high places” in our lives.
- For God to come into our lives so that we can remove these ungodly influences from us.
- For us to honour and seek ways to honour God by contributing to the spiritual community!

2. COVID-19 in Singapore

- Pray for God's protection especially from the Omicron variant.
- Pray that the community cases will be low.

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.
- Pray for peace especially in areas of conflict (Ukraine) and potential conflict – China & Taiwan.

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. **New Pulpit Series: The Blessings of Generosity. 11-18 September.** In this series of 2 sermons, we will explore God's perspective of ownership and stewardship, and God's promises of blessings when we are generous.
 - 11 Sep: Let's Be Faithful Stewards
 - 18 Sep: Let's Be Generous Givers
2. **Water Baptism Class.** 1 Oct. 9-3.30pm. Faith Chapel. Signup: rlc.sg/baptism-class.
3. **RiverLife Missions Upcoming Trips.** Signup: rlc.sg/signupformissions.
 - **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.
 - **Encounter Camp & Revival Rallies, Asansol, India. 30 Sep – 6 Oct. \$1200.** Serve local churches through studying God's Word and corporate worship.
4. **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. Do note that an audition will be required before joining the ministry.
5. **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. 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.)
6. **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 and Jonathan Cho (The Café and Volunteers Corner) at jonathancho@riverlife.org.sg.

7. **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.
8. **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 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.
 - 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.
9. **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.
10. **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.
11. **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.*
12. **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>

13. **Bible Reading Plan.** You can access our 2-Year Bible Reading Plan 2021-2022 by visiting: <https://rlc.sg/brp2021>.
14. **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.

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