

Date/s - 22 July 2018

Topic - Longing for the return of Jesus

Speaker/s - Pastor Allen Hood

Welcome [15 min]

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

www.thesource4ym.com/games/

www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like "Be Thou My Vision", "Living Hope", "How He Loves", or "Worth It All".

Spiritual Objectives

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

1. Love the kingdom now and
2. Long for the kingdom to come when Jesus returns.

Word [45 min]

Please note that two different messages were preached on Sunday. This synopsis summarises the sermon preached in the first service.

Pastor Allen Hood spoke about the apostolic longing for the return of Jesus.

He shared that the Holy Spirit is equipping the church with gifts to prepare us for the Lord's coming (Ephesians 4:11-13). There is the restoration of this first love into our hearts (Revelation 2:4-5). We need to be awoken to this love, and to love and long for Jesus' return.

In Matthew 9:14, John the Baptist's disciples questioned Jesus' methodology with regards to fasting. In response, Jesus introduced Himself as the Bridegroom. This has Biblical references in Hosea 2:16, Isaiah 54:5 and Isaiah 62:5. Jesus has a deep affection for His people, just like the affections of the Bridegroom for his Bride. Jesus desires that we not only submit to Him (out of religious duty or habit), but to love Him wholeheartedly. God's people miss Jesus and are undone by the love of Jesus!

Pastor Allen shared about the example of Paul, who longed for Jesus. Paul's apostolic preaching came from experiencing God in a fresh and intimate way! Paul preached that the kingdom has come. Jesus is our blessed hope (Titus 2) and He is the hope of eternal life (Titus 1). His return will be glorious (Colossians 1) and is the hope of righteousness (Galatians 5)! Pastor Allen shared about how fasting is also an expression of the longing for God's presence (2 Chronicles 7:14). Do we, as a church and as individuals, long for Jesus like how a bride longs for her bridegroom?

God desires for Israel and the World to know the Messiah. There are two conditions for Jesus' return. The first is that the Gospel shall be preached in the whole world – see Matthew 24:14. The second is the rejoicing that comes with the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit yearns for Jesus to come! See 2 Timothy 4:8. God has the crown of righteousness to those who love Jesus' appearing.

Pastor Allen exhorted us to love the Kingdom now while longing for His kingdom to come. It is not one or the

other, but both. Revelations 22:17 speaks of this longing for Jesus' return, which is a measure of our spiritual condition. Pastor Allen spoke of the unity of God's church in longing for Jesus Christ's return, and the expression of this longing through mourning and fasting. This is not the longing of a servant but of a bride who loves from the heart. It is when the church will be in its identity as the bride of Christ!

Discussion Questions

1. **Read Hosea 2:16, Isaiah 54:5, Isaiah 62:5 and Matthew 9:15. Draw the parallels in these Bible verses and share your thoughts.** [10 min]
2. **Pastor Allen shared that we should be "loving the Kingdom now while longing for Kingdom to come." In practice, some Christians emphasize one on top of the other. Examine how we live our daily lives and reflect on what changes we should be making.** [15 min]
3. **2 Timothy 4:8 says that God has a crown of righteousness to us who love Jesus' appearing. Share with the cell about action steps you would like to take as a cell and as an individual as an expression of our longing for Jesus Christ's return.** [10 min]

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. "Loving the Kingdom now while longing for Kingdom to come". May this be the heart desire of every RiverLifer, daily taking steps to advance the kingdom of Papa God & spending time alone in His presence.

Announcements

1. SOLEMN ASSEMBLIES

1 JUL-9 AUG | NIGHTLY | 8-10PM | IN CHURCHES NATIONWIDE

RiverLife will be co-anchoring the prayer meetings for the week of 29 Jul to 4 Aug with Pentecost Methodist Church and Bethesda Pasir Ris Mission Church.

For full schedule of Solemn Assemblies, please visit www.riverlife.org.sg/sites/files/riverlife/40day2018.pdf

2. Joining The Family

SAT, 18 AUG | 1.30PM – 4.30PM | FAITH CHAPEL

Sign up at the Information Counter or online at bit.ly/rlcjoiningthefamily by Sun, 12 Aug. For more information. Please contact Karen Koh at 65114139 or email her at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg

3 Alpha Course

SUN, 2 SEP – 25 NOV | 2PM – 4PM | FAITH CHAPEL

Register online at <http://bit.ly/rlcalpha>

For enquiries, please contact Moses Sho at 65114146, email him at mosessho@riverlife.org.sg or visit our Guest Welcome Lounge on Sundays.

Church Vision Statement:

"A vibrant family where sons and daughters mature and reveal the Father's glory from generation to generation."