

**DATE: 1 JAN 2023 | SPEAKER: ELDER EE YANG | TOPIC: SEIZING THE DEFINING MOMENT | SCRIPTURE: DEUTERONOMY 1:19-36**

### SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

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

1. Find God's mandate for their lives in 2023, and endeavour to walk in it.
2. Focus on God's promises in His Word, and not on the problems they will face.
3. Commit to follow Jesus wholeheartedly, come what may in the new year.

### SERMON SUMMARY

In this first message for 2023, Elder Ee Yang shared from the story of Israel as they are about to enter the Promised Land after 40 years in the desert. He gave us three lessons on how we too, like Israel, must position ourselves to enter this new year with all its challenges ahead. In order for God's life, fruitfulness and blessings to flow out of our lives, marriage, family, work and community, we need to align ourselves with God's purposes.

To seize the defining moment as we enter this new season, Elder Ee Yang exhorts us to:

1. Walk in God's mandate
2. Focus on the promise, not the problem
3. Follow the Lord wholeheartedly

### SERMON RECAP

2021 was the year of languishing. 2022 was the year of being overwhelmed. 2023 will be the year of facing global challenges – rising costs of living, inflation, interest rates, and a looming recession.

To see God's life, fruitfulness and blessings flow out of our lives, family, work, community and nation, we need to align ourselves with God's purposes ([John 15:16](#)).

Deuteronomy means Second Law or God's laws given a second time to Israel as they prepare to enter the Promised Land. This is the defining moment for the new nation of Israel. God is preparing them for His next move.

The main message of Deuteronomy is: *Be faithful to God's plan for your life!*

Some of us have meandered in our journey with God during the pandemic. To get back to our Promised Land – our God-given mandate – we must find our bearings and return to God, individually and as a church. There are three lessons for us to remember as we enter this new season in 2023:

**1. Walk in God's Mandate ([Deuteronomy 1:19-21](#))**

Like Israel, God has called us to be His treasured possession. We are to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. We are to be witnesses to God's goodness, character and power to people around us. We are called to behold God's presence and reveal His glory. We are called to be salt and light so that people will taste, see, and believe in God.

How this mandate is expressed will look different for each of us. Some are called into business, or government, or arts and entertainment, while some are called to be homemakers. In every arena, we are called to bring God's presence, blessings and fruitfulness to our family, workplace, community and nation.

We need to know our mandate because our mandate becomes our compass. When we walk in our mandate, we live in God's purpose. Some of us may have deviated from God's mandate. If so, God wants you to return to Him.

**2. Focus on the Promise not the Problem ([Deuteronomy 1:26-32](#))**

Instead of focusing on the Promised Land, Israel rebelled, grumbled and questioned God's character in the challenges they face.

When we walk in His mandate, it doesn't mean we will have no problems or challenges. Sometimes problems get bigger because the enemy will do anything to stop us from fulfilling our mandate. We do not deny the problems; we acknowledge them but we do not allow them a place of influence in our life to disrupt God's plan.

We focus on God's promise. He will fight for us and carry us through the problem when we seek to fulfil His mandate for His glory.

**3. Follow the Lord Wholeheartedly ([Deuteronomy 1:32-36](#))**

What's so special about Caleb? Because he followed the Lord wholeheartedly. Our mandate flows from our relationship with God. Our endeavour has to be cradled by our encounter with God. We must follow the Lord with all our heart. To be faithful is a choice, not a feeling.

God has great plans for us in 2023. God is calling us to a land of milk and honey. He has wonderful promises for us, our family, our work and our ministry. ([Deuteronomy 8:1-9](#))

But following Jesus will mean making sacrifices; it will inconvenience us, but it will also bring us fulfilment and great joy. Practically speaking, we need to:

- Come physically to worship God on Sunday
- Be connected to a cell group
- Serve the Lord in a ministry

Some of you may feel you have been disqualified, failed, messed up, or even think God has given up on you. He hasn't. He is a God of second chances, and He will take you into the Promised Land. He has redeemed you and He will restore you. He will bring you into His divine presence, fruitfulness and blessings. Are you willing to seize this defining moment and say yes to God?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are you stepping into the new year with excitement and anticipation? Or do you feel worn out and overwhelmed from the weight of last year?
2. Take a few moments to think back over 2022. What, or who, can you give thanks to God for? How can you be grateful even in your trials and challenges?
3. As you look ahead into 2023, what steps will you take to find God's mandate for your life and walk in it? Which areas in your discipleship journey need a reboot in the new year and what are your plans to attain them?

## 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

- That God will help us in "forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, and pressing on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called us heavenward in Christ Jesus." ([Philippians 3:13-14](#))
- That we will remember "we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God had prepared in advance for us to do." ([Ephesians 2:10](#))

### 2. COVID-19 in Singapore

- Praise the Lord for the removal of the vaccinated-differentiated measures.
- Pray for God's protection in the midst of a high number of community cases.
- Pray for protection against reinfection and the ill effects that it may bring.

### 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 God's providence as we go through a challenging year.

### 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. **New Pulpit Series: Preparing for God to Move. 1-15 Jan.** Our first sermon series of 2023 will help us consider the posture we have to take and priorities we have to make for God to move in our lives, our church and our communities.
  - 1 Jan – Seizing the Defining Moment
  - 8 Jan – Following God into the Unknown
  - 15 Jan – Lord, Do It Again!

2. **Bible Reading Plan.** The church will be providing 3 undated Bible Reading plans that will serve as a resource for those who wish to follow a Bible Reading plan. Link: [rlc.sg/brp](http://rlc.sg/brp)
  - 2 Year Chronological Bible Reading Plan.
  - 3 Year Bible Reading Schedule (Alternating readings between Old and New Testament passages)
  - Redemptive Historical Bible Reading Plan (At your own pace, focusing on the redemption story)
3. **Water Baptism Class. 4 Feb, 9am – 3.30pm. Room 205.** For enquiries, contact [karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg).
4. **Alpha Course. 11 Feb – 29 Apr.** Sign Up Link: [rlc.sg/join-alpha](http://rlc.sg/join-alpha).
5. **RiverLife Prayer Meetings.**
  - **RLC Prayer Room.** Tue, 8-9.30pm, Victory Chapel. (Online: [rlc.sg/rpr-watch](http://rlc.sg/rpr-watch))
  - **Wed Night Prayer Meeting.** Wed, 8pm – 9.30pm, Victory Chapel.
6. **9M Ministry.** The 9M Ministry provides prayer support for expectant mothers on their 9-month journey of pregnancy. Sisters-in-Christ who are fellow RiverLifers are assigned as Prayer Buddies to walk alongside mums who sign up to receive prayer support.
  - Receive Prayer Support: [rlc.sg/9m](http://rlc.sg/9m)
  - Provide Prayer Support: [rlc.sg/serve](http://rlc.sg/serve)
7. **Global Hunger Fund.** This fund will go towards RLC's mission partners to help their local churches and communities gain access to food amid soaring costs. Refer to the [Digital Bulletin](#) for more details.
8. **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.)
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. **RiverLife Podcast.** The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is [rlc.sg/podcast](http://rlc.sg/podcast) or simply search '**The RiverLife Podcast**' on Spotify.
11. **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](http://rlc.sg/resource). This list will be continually populated throughout the year.
12. **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.*

13. **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>
14. **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.



## GIVING LINKS & QR CODES

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**Interbank Transfer**

RiverLife Church Bank Account: DBS Autosave 029-902431-0

Bank Code: 7171 / Branch Code: 029



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