

Series - Awed by His Love

Date/s - 10 January 2016

Topic - He First Loved Us

Speaker/s - Pastor John Koe

**Welcome** [15 min]

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

[www.thesource4ym.com/games/](http://www.thesource4ym.com/games/)

[www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html) < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

**Worship** [15 min]

You may select hymns like “Amazing Grace”, “In Christ Alone” or “How Great is our God”, “Trust His heart”.

**Spiritual Objectives**

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

1. Live in God's love as sons of God
2. Understand the importance of resting in God

**Word** [45 min]

Pastor John Koe encouraged the congregation to grow in grasping the truth of the Gospel. Knowing that we are sons and daughters of God allows us to find rest in Him.

Pastor John shared that it is important for us to identify whether we operate from a “works mentality”. That is, doing or performing in order to gain God's approval and love. He added that the definition of true love is found in John 4:10 “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (NIV84)”.

God sent his son for our salvation, with the aim of reconciling us back to the family of God. He made us sons of God first, before sending us out as ambassadors for Christ. Sonship therefore precedes vocation or servanthood. Sonship without servanthood is passivity, and servanthood without sonship is legalism. Sons make the best servants.

He shared that sons labour out of rest, but servants labour in stress (Matthew 11:28 and Hebrews 4: 1-3, 8-11). This means drawing on God's power instead on relying on our own power or abilities, which is to do a “power switch”. This is not easy and takes intentional effort. God is waiting for us at this place of rest.

Pastor John also shared about the different stages of entering into the promised rest (Galatians 2:20)

1. My work for my benefit
2. My work for His benefit
3. His work for my benefit
4. His work for His benefit

Unbelief prevents us from entering into this promised rest. Pastor John exhorted the congregation to relentlessly pursue knowing God and of His great love for us in 2016. This is because to the degree we understand the Gospel (which is the good news of God's love and His redemptive plan), we enter to God's rest.

### Discussion Questions

1. **What to you is God's idea and purpose of rest?** [10 min]

**Leader's Notes:** This question aims to hear from members about their perspective of godly rest. Ask members to share about the struggles they face about resting in God. Leaders may also wish to prepare more materials about the biblical understanding of resting in God.

See Matthew 11:28-30. The rest Jesus promises is certainly for the world to come, but it is also for this world. It is the sense of security and peace that flows from a right relationship with God, the Father, through obedience to his Son, the Messiah, and membership in His kingdom [adapted from Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology.] This is also the purpose and benefit of godly rest.

2. **God made us sons of God first before He sends us out as ambassadors for Christ. Share your experience of growing in the knowledge of sonship and having the heart of a servant.** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:** A relate question. Sonship is a relation while the latter is a vocation. It is when we relate rightly to God as His sons that we can represent Him well as His ambassadors. However, we tend to mix things up – viewing God first as a master rather than a father. It is to the degree that we experience our sonship, that we are empowered for servanthood. Sonship precedes servanthood. Both are important and kept in that order. If you are truly growing up as a son, you would want to participate in the Father's business. Have members share experiences of their faith journey.

3. **Pastor John shared about entering into God's rest. Share with the cell what is an area of your life you would like to move from depending on yourself to trusting in God. What is one step you can take to enter into His rest?** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:** This is a reflect and response question. Ask members think further about the struggles they may have trusting God for a particular area of their life. Leaders may wish to note and shift members away from "what I should do or should not do" (anxiety or worry) to focusing on God. Often, we are used to our own strengths and ingenuity to live lives by, the mere thought of "letting go and letting God" can be intimidating!

Paul leaned heavily on the presence of God in him when describing his own ministry: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). He understood his ministry as the fruit of Christ's promise to His disciples. It is the Lord who (in Hebrews 13:21) "who "equip[s] you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight". Our good works are not our own—they are the product of God's work through Christ and His Spirit in us.

As a cell, share practical tips on how to handle stress or recognize stress-triggers so as to walk in God's promised rest.

### **Works** [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. Every Riverlifers will eagerly seek to enter the rest that is promised by Jesus in Matt 11: 28 – 30 & daily live out their identity as sons of God.

**Announcements****1. 21 DAYS OF FASTING & PRAYER**

16 Jan to 5 Feb (21 consecutive days) | Faith Chapel

- Mondays to Fridays: 8–10pm
- Saturdays: 6–8pm • Sundays: 2–4pm

For more information, please email [riverlifepayer@gmail.com](mailto:riverlifepayer@gmail.com)

**2. WATER BAPTISM CLASS**

Sat, 23 Jan | 9.30am-3.30pm | Faith Chapel

Register at the Information Counter by Sun, 17 Jan

**3. PRECEPT INTRODUCTORY TEA SESSION**

Sun, 24 Jan | 2.30-5pm | Victory Chapel

Register online at [www.riverlife.org.sg](http://www.riverlife.org.sg), Cell Connection counter or Information counter.