

Series - For God So Loved The World

Date/s - 6 Nov 2016

Topic - Understanding God's Heart For The Lost

Speaker/s - Elder Andrew Goh

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 worship songs such as "I'm Forever Grateful", "You Rescued Me" and "Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)".

Spiritual Objectives

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

1. Have a burden for the lost
2. Pray for boldness for the lost
3. Have a compassion for the lost like the way God does

Word [45 min]

Elder Andrew Goh started by conducting an electronic poll which he referred to as the "Living Parable". The responses from this poll are summarized and tabulated (at the end of the guide). Some similarities are found in the responses of both the 1st and 2nd services which go to show that there are common struggles we face when it comes to reaching out.

Elder Andrew encouraged us to share the Gospel in spite of those struggles. The more we share, the easier it gets and the more often we feel like sharing it. From 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6, we are called to have "boldness in our God" to share the Gospel. This "boldness" is not as in *arrogance* but it is in the *confidence* that God will see us through in the sharing of His Gospel. It is not just a 'skill' or a 'technique' but it is through the help of the Holy Spirit, we dare to share the Gospel despite opposition or difficulties.

As Christians, we are also "entrusted with the Gospel" – God has given us divine approval to share the Gospel. Are we to bury and hide the Gospel or do we prove ourselves worthy of the trust placed upon us by God? Trust is not just in "Honesty" but in "Capability." A Christian client asked an alcoholic lawyer, Cyrus Scofield, why he was not a Christian and then shared the Gospel with him. Scofield later became a famous theologian, and wrote and published the influential Scofield Reference Bible in 1909.

Elder Andrew then examined what is meant by "Lost" when used in the Bible. In Luke 15:4-7 (The Parable of the Lost Sheep), Jesus told of a shepherd with 100 sheep who "loses one of them". The shepherd then "go after the one which is *lost* until he finds it." When he finds it alive, he puts it on his shoulders rejoicing and brings it back to the fold saying "rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was *lost*." There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, who forsakes his old ways and embraces God's ways. God is a Seeker after us! The first question asked by God recorded in the Bible is "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). This shows that (a) God thinks of you; (b) God speaks to you; (c) God knows when you are not at the right place;

and (d) God wishes you to tell Him why you are not in the right place (as He did with Adam)¹.

The evangelical understanding that the “Lost” are the unregenerate (i.e., they lack everlasting life) – Jesus did not come to make bad people good; but dead people live!² See John 3:16. We see in 2 Peter 3:9 that God has His own timing and we are not forgotten by God. Our God is indeed awesome!

Is our heart for the “Lost” like Prophet Jonah’s heart or God’s heart? Jonah did not like the Assyrians so he was a very reluctant prophet for Nineveh. He did not preach well yet by God’s grace many believed including the king. Yet, Jonah was not happy (see Jonah 4).

- (a) Jonah had compassion on that for which he had not labored – God had compassion on those for whom He had labored.
- (b) Jonah had compassion toward a single plant – God had compassion for a vast multitude of people.
- (c) Jonah’s compassion was focused on his own benefit – God’s compassion was for the benefit of others.
- (d) Jonah had compassion on that which would cease to exist – God had compassion on sinners who will face eternal damnation.

In conclusion, Elder Andrew encouraged us to pray for a **Burden** for the lost and pray for **Boldness** for the lost. See Romans 1:16. We have boldness when we have a heart after God’s heart and share the same compassion for the lost!

Discussion Questions

1. **Look at the responses of the electronic poll conducted during service time. Briefly discuss what possible thrusts in evangelism that the church, cell or individuals can consider based on these findings.**
[15 min]

Leader’s Notes: *This is an ice-breaker, as well as a relate question. The figures stated here are the average of the two services. Or you can refer to the summary of the polling results of the ‘Living Parable’ at end of the guide and briefly touch on possible thrusts in evangelism for the following:*

- a. *How long have you been a Christian?*
Over 90% have been a Christian for more than 10 years – there are not as many new and ‘young’ Christians. Are we welcoming enough for new Christians?
- b. *How did you become a Christian?*
79% became a Christian through personal friendships –we should perhaps focus more of our outreach energies by building up personal friendships with pre-believers?
- c. *When was the last time you led someone to the Lord?*
About 38% have never led anyone else to Christ while another 36% has done so more than 3 years ago – Perhaps, we should focus greater attention and make more efforts at a personal level on evangelism?
- d. *In your opinion, what is the main reason for Christians not reaching out?*
Around 48% indicated the fear of offending others as the chief reason why Christians do not reach out & 32% has no sense of urgency – As a church or cell, should we look into ways in which we can share our testimonies and beliefs more effectively and overcome this fear? Do we need more practice? How should we carry the sense of urgency and develop a heart for the lost?
- e. *How would you prefer to share Christ?*

¹ Source: McAuslane.

² Source: Ravi Zacharias.

80% indicated personally sharing their testimonies or beliefs as our way of sharing the Gospel – what can we do to strengthen this for church members?

- f. Currently how many persons are you praying for (to receive Christ)?
80% are praying for at least one pre-believer.
- g. How often do you interact/socialise with pre-believers?
92% indicated that they socialise with pre-believers in one way or another.
- h. How prepared are you to share the gospel immediately?
Close to 76% are either slightly or not prepared to share the gospel compared with 24% who are very prepared.
- i. How many people (pre-believers) would regard you as a friend?
Close to 68% have more than 10 pre-believing people who would regard them as friends – This represents huge opportunities for better equipping and a ready field for Christians to engage pre-believing friends on the Gospel!

Encourage members to share from their personal experiences on evangelism. Through this sharing, using 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6, Leaders can encourage members to prayerfully renew their personal burden for the salvation of pre-believers.

2. **Share how you became a Christian. Reflecting on your personal experience, share what you, your cell or our church can be more effective in reaching the lost.** [15 min]

Leader's Notes: Leaders could get each member to relate on how he or she became a Christian. The focus would be what the most effective mode for evangelism was for each member and then ask the members to reflect on what they are doing or potentially do to be more effective in reaching out to the pre-believers. Romans 1:16 encourages Christians to have a boldness to share the Gospel.

3. **Is our heart for the Lost like Jonah's heart or God's heart? Share with the group the specific person(s), if any, who you are praying for to receive Christ.** [15 min]

Leader's Notes: This is a response question for members to share about the specific person(s) who they are praying for to receive Christ – close to 90% indicated in the electronic poll that they are praying for at least 1 person. Encourage each member to write down the name of the person(s) he or she is praying for, and commit to pray regularly as a cell for the list of persons listed down. In particular, members can pray for them to have a heart after God's heart and to develop the compassion for these pre-believers listed down. Also, spend some time to plan for the Cell Christmas Outreach.

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. God would grant us a greater boldness & burden to reach one more for Jesus.

Announcements

1. CELL OUTREACH KIT FOR CHRISTMAS

Cell Leaders, please be informed that if your cell group is hosting the Christmas outreach you may approach the Cell Connection Counter starting this Sunday (while stocks last) to collect one Cell Outreach kit per cell

group. More details in the email which you will receive by Friday.

2. MEN'S FELLOWSHIP EVENT WITH JASON WONG

Sat, 19 Nov | 3.30-6.30pm | Worship Centre

Free admission. Dinner will be provided.

Register at the Information Counter by Sun, 13 Nov.

For enquiries, please contact Christine Tan at 65114141, or email her at christinetan@riverlife.org.sg

3. WATER BAPTISM

Sun, 13 Nov | 2.30-5pm | Victory Chapel

31 RiverLifers will be getting baptised. Come and show them your support!

6 November 2016

The “Living Parable” Polling Responses

| Qn | Item | 1st % | 2nd % |
|----|--|-------|-------|
| 1 | How long have you been a Christian? | | |
| | A. Less than 1 year | 0 | 4 |
| | B. More than 1 year but less than 5 years | 8 | 0 |
| | C. Less than 5 but more than 10 years | 8 | 0 |
| | D. More than 10 years | 84 | 96 |
| 2 | How did you become a Christian? | | |
| | A. Church meeting/Outreach programmes | 12 | 15 |
| | B. Personal friendship | 84 | 73 |
| | C. Reading book/Tract/Magazines | 4 | 4 |
| | D. Small group/Cell | 0 | 8 |
| 3 | When was the last time you led someone to the Lord? | | |
| | A. Never | 44 | 31 |
| | B. Less than 1 year | 12 | 23 |
| | C. More than 1 but less than 3 years | 4 | 15 |
| | D. More than 3 years | 40 | 31 |
| 4 | In your opinion, what is the main reason for Christians not reaching out? | | |
| | A. Don't know how | 4 | 4 |
| | B. No sense of urgency | 28 | 36 |
| | C. Too lazy/inconvenient | 12 | 20 |
| | D. Afraid of offending others | 56 | 40 |
| 5 | How would you prefer to share Christ? | | |
| | A. Personally share testimony/beliefs about Christ | 84 | 76 |
| | B. Share evangelistic materials (tract/book) | 4 | 4 |
| | C. Invite someone to an evangelistic event | 8 | 12 |
| | D. Pray that someone else will witness to prebeliever | 4 | 8 |
| 6 | Currently, how many persons are you praying for (to receive Christ)? | | |
| | A. None | 12 | 28 |
| | B. 1 | 20 | 8 |
| | C. 2 - 4 | 36 | 24 |
| | D. 5 or more | 32 | 40 |
| 7 | How often do you interact/socialise with prebelievers? | | |
| | A. Never | 16 | 0 |
| | B. Not very often | 16 | 11 |
| | C. Somewhat often (weekly) | 24 | 19 |
| | D. Extremely often (daily) | 44 | 70 |
| 8 | How prepared are you to share the gospel immediately? | | |
| | A. Don't know (not prepared) | 16 | 20 |
| | B. Not sure & no confidence | 24 | 24 |
| | C. Slightly prepared | 36 | 32 |
| | D. Very prepared | 24 | 24 |
| 9 | How many people (prebelievers) would regard you as a friend? | | |
| | A. None | 8 | 4 |
| | B. 1 to 5 | 12 | 4 |
| | C. 6 to 9 | 16 | 20 |
| | D. 10 or more | 64 | 72 |