

Series - On your Mark!

Date/s - 8 April 2018

Topic - Fan, Follower or Disciple (Mark 3:7-35)

Speaker/s - Pastor Ernie Song

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 “The Lion And The Lamb”, “Be Enthroned” or “Above All”.

Spiritual Objectives

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

1. Understand that a disciple of Christ is one who does the will of God by bearing fruit;
2. Take practical steps to love God, and love people .

Word [45 min]

Pastor Ernie’s sermon centered on the third chapter of the book of Mark, a passage which grapples with challenging questions and hard truths.

Sharing from various scripture references (John 6:38, Luke 4:18-19, Mark 3:10-11), Pastor Ernie taught that Jesus’ ministry during His three years on earth was to do the will of the Father, and be a model for us. Mark 3:14-15 speaks of how Jesus appointed His twelve disciples, for two purposes: a) **to be with Him**, and then; 2) **to be sent out**.

As the passage goes along, we see how Jesus encountered opposition when doing God’s will, such opposition stemmed primarily from two groups-

1. The religious leaders of the day (vs 22): comprising mainly the Pharisees, they represented the group who assumed that they were doing God’s will, but in actuality was hindering His purposes.
2. Jesus’ family (vs 21, 31): they represented a people who thought they were close with God, yet did not truly know Him.

The similarity between both groups is that they did not bear fruits. On the other hand, Jesus’ parables consistently defined a disciple/child of God as one who does the will of God by bearing fruit (see Mark 3:35 and Mark 4:20).

Pastor Ernie then explained the differences between a fan, a follower or a disciple of Christ. If we are to call ourselves true disciples of Christ, we must encounter a change in our fundamental worldview and/or belief systems, in denying ourselves (e.g. discarding the “Me first” mentality), taking up our cross (e.g. choosing “Others first”), and following Him (e.g. walking out this life as Jesus did).

Pastor Ernie went on to share the implications Mark Chapter 3 has for us today-

1. God's will should likewise matter to us, because it concerns the issue of Lordship:
 - a. While the world advocates a "Me First" mindset, the gospel calls us to a "You First (Agape)" worldview.
 - b. It is therefore important to understand what the Lord's will is (See Ephesians 5:15-17).
2. God's will is for us to:
 - a. Love God (the Great Commandment)
 - b. Love People (the Great Commission).
3. We fall short of God's will for us, mainly due to the following reasons:
 - a. Action, not placement- we may feel "called", but we may not actually be doing anything about or acting out our calling;
 - b. Exclusivity- we may be unwilling to move out beyond our social circle;
 - c. Inconvenience- we may be unwilling to sacrifice our personal comforts;
 - d. Time- we may have other priorities.

Pastor Ernie shared some global and domestic statistics on the wealth distribution in Singapore today:

- Globally, Singapore has the highest concentrations of millionaires in the world. The wealth per adult is the 7th highest in the world.
- That said, there is still a substantial percentage of Singaporean households living in 1-2 bedroom HDB apartments, and/or earn less than \$1,250 per month. 10-14% of Singaporeans also live in severe financial difficulty, with less than S\$5 per day to spend.
- Closer to home in Pasir Ris, out of its 140,000 population, 8,400 live in poverty.

Pastor Ernie concluded with an exhortation for Riverlife as a church to look outwards, to make a difference to the community and the nations. As we grow in true discipleship, may we be "sent out" to transform society as Christ did!

Discussion Questions

1. **In his sharing of Jesus' calling of His twelve disciples, Pastor Ernie highlighted Jesus' practice of spending time with his disciples, before sending them out.**

Why do you think spending time with Jesus was crucial to disciple-making?

[10 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a recap and ice-breaking question for cell members to grasp the correlation between their daily walk with God, and their capacity to represent Jesus to the world (i.e., "be sent out"). To emulate the ways of Jesus, we must first have an active and growing relationship with Him. Jesus likewise displayed his reliance on and unbroken intimacy with God, in John 5:19 where He said "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."*

2. **Drawing from the two groups who opposed Jesus during His ministry, Pastor Ernie touched briefly on**

the differences between a fan, follower or disciple of Christ. Which group do you identify best with, in this season of your life?

[10 min]

Leader's Notes: A relate question. This question allows members to contextualize the passage through personal application, and share deeper about areas of discipleship they may be struggling with. To facilitate the discussion, it may be useful to refer to the guide below:

- A fan (e.g. the crowd) follows God from afar, to the extent that His teachings are acceptable to them. Christianity might make sense to them, but they do not live accordingly. In the end, their hearts remain unchanged, as they are content merely to observe from afar.
- A follower (e.g. the 500 followers) may be near to God, and may have even received from God personally. They are keen to seek after blessings, but turn away/ against God once the going gets tough or hard truths are preached requiring a sacrifice on their part. They have a "God exists to bless me" mindset.
- A disciple embraces God's teachings unreservedly by whole-heartedly doing His will. They are willing to undergo an overhaul of their values, belief system and lifestyle. The things that matter to God, matter to them. They are committed to following God through the good times and bad. Their hearts are ultimately transformed.

Regardless, we should bear in mind that **discipleship is a journey**- one does not arrive at it overnight. Most of us progress from being a fan, to a follower, and then a disciple, as we gradually grow in the knowledge of His goodness and our understanding of the Word while the Good Shepherd leads us on – 1 John 2:6.

What matters is that we are committed to be convicted. We must continuously be challenged to exist not for ourselves and our needs, but totally for God and His purposes.

3. **Pastor Ernie discussed the main reasons we fall short of God's will for us:**

- a. **Action, not placement;**
- b. **Exclusivity;**
- c. **Inconvenience; and**
- d. **Time,**

Take time to reflect on your personal walk with God. Do you struggle in any of the above-mentioned ways? Share specific incidents in your life, where these mindsets held you back from doing what you knew would please God.

[10 min]

Leader's Notes: A reflect question. This question allows members to think deeper about the practical reasons hindering them from fulfilling the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. While most of us will give intellectual assent to the will of God, our daily lives may not reflect likewise. This question may provide an opportunity for members to identify specific ungodly lies they may be subscribing to, that run counter to the teachings in the gospel. (For e.g, if they put others first, no one will look after their interests, or if they were to associate with a certain disadvantaged group at work or school, their reputation may be on the line.)

4. **Consider the sobering statistics concerning the rich-poor divide in Singapore, and closer to home, in**

our neighbourhood Pasir Ris.

What are steps we can take to become more effective disciples of Christ, beyond our immediate social circles? Going a step further- as a church, how can we impact the wider community and the nations?

[10 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a response question.*

Have members brainstorm concrete ways they can adopt to grow in their personal discipleship journey. We must remember that love looks like something. Some practical steps can be to:

- a. Practice accountability in cell group*
- b. Practice stewardship, through time management, and the giving of tithes*
- c. Daily evaluate our heart conditions to assess if we are walking in love, or if there are areas of unforgiveness/bitterness that we should address*
- d. Practice servanthood by choosing to serve instead of receive. This may mean prayerfully considering signing up to volunteer with Riverlife Community Services ("RCS") in any capacity, and being intentional to look out for the needs of others.*

Leaders may get members to break into small groups to share more and if time permits and to pray for one another for specific action steps that they can commit to.

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. We will always follow the footsteps of our Lord Jesus, taking practical steps to love God and people.

Announcements

1. Precept Bible Study

40-Min Study | Jesus: Listening for His Voice (Mark 7-13)
Course Dates: 24 Apr, 3, 15, 22, 31 May & 5 Jun (Weekly)
Course Material: \$11 (RiverLifer) | \$16 (Non-RiverLifer)
Registration closes Sun, 15 Apr.

For more details, visit riverlife.org.sg/precept. You may register online or at the Information Counter. For enquiries, please contact Karen Koh at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg or 65114139.

2. Confronting Your Anxiety:

A Biblical Response To Overcoming Fear & Worry

A Seminar Organised By RiverLife's Hospital Visitation Ministry
Sun, 28 Apr | 9am-12pm | Faith Chapel
Speaker: Dr Leslie Lim

Sign up at the Information Counter by Sun, 22 Apr. For more information, please contact Christine Tan at 65114141, or email her at christinetan@riverlife.org.sg.

Church Vision Statement:

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