

Series - On Your Mark (Mark 7:1-23)

Date/s - 27 May 2018

Topic - The Tradition of the Pharisees

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 "All Because Of Jesus", "Awesome Is The Lord Most High", "God Be Praised", "Here I Bow", "I Surrender All" or "Show Me Your Face".

Spiritual Objectives

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

1. Recall what is truly important in God's eyes as we live in Christlikeness
2. Take steps to love and reach out to the Lost.

Word [45 min]

Pastor Ernie preached from Mark 7:1-23.

Every family and society has a tradition of its own. To start with, the Pharisees created traditions out of a good intention.

They wanted to

1. Impose their vision of morality and obedience to the law so that Israel would be holy and set apart
2. Make holiness (Lev 19:2) something that was attainable in everyday life

Pastor Ernie also spoke about two types of sin

1. The sin of Commission – we take action to commit, whether in thought, word or deed. It can be intentional or unintentional
2. The sin of Omission – not doing something that God's word teaches us to do (James 4:17).

The consequences of sin are that it:

1. Affects our relationship with God
2. Affects us, the sinner
3. Affects our relationship with others.

Pastor Ernie spoke about where the Pharisees fell short (Matthew 15:8-9). The Pharisees began to live their lives based on man-made standards of what they understood from the Bible, and it became their measure of how holy and pure they were -> the end goal was "to feel good about themselves". In their hope to ensure that others lived up to the standards of holiness, they had lost sight about caring for and interacting with the widows, the poor, the sick, the Romans, Samaritans and Gentiles.

God is more interested in the condition of our hearts than our external acts (Mark 7:15, 1 Sam 16:7 and Jer 17:9).

Pastor Ernie exhorted us to examine our motivations – are we serving or tithing to feel good about ourselves or out of a desire to please God? Pastor Ernie also exhorted us to step out of our comfort zones to relate to others of different faiths / value systems – the key principle is that we must be in the world but not of the world. He also challenged us as a church to consider our priorities and how we deal with people in the church who have messed up. We should examine ourselves in order to move out of a “Pharisee” mindset.

Discussion Questions

1. **In the midst of implementing good intentions for the Jews, the Pharisees lost sight of what was truly important in God’s eyes. Share a time when you had lost sight and later reminded of what truly matters.** [10 min]

Leader’s Notes: A question for members to share about their own experiences – was there a time when they had wanted to implement things out of good intentions, but it resulted in them being legalistic, critical and angry with themselves or others? Were there times where members allowed others to continue in sin and did not speak in truth? See also Galatians 6:1 on restoring that someone caught in sin in gentleness and at the same time watching ourselves lest we be also tempted.

Leaders can get members to talk about balancing truth and grace (what we view as extremes) as we live the Christian life and are being moulded by Him into Christlikeness. Leaders can refer to these two resources: <https://www.cloudtownsend.com/growth-takes-grace-and-truth/> and <https://www.cloudtownsend.com/growth-takes-time/>

2. **What is God’s intention for us to examine our hearts in what we do? Reflect on how by examining your motives, it would affect the way you interact with and serve others.** [15 min]

Leader’s Notes: Jer 17:9 says that “the heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?” God is more interested in the condition of our hearts than our external acts – see 1 Sam 16:7. Leaders can ask members to reflect sincerely on the reasons for examining our hearts based on what we understand about God’s character – it is not about living in fear that we are not serving out of the right motives or serving out of obligation, but God desires that we can serve Him in joy and a love that has freely chosen to do so. Leaders can ask members to share with each other on what are some practical guidelines or words of wisdom from others that have guided them in making their decisions e.g. to serve, to take up new roles or challenges etc.

3. **Share with the cell on your struggle / how you overcame relating to someone with different values or faiths.** [10 min]

Leader’s Notes: A relate question for members to share about their struggles in interacting with people of different values or faiths – do they struggle with relating to them, or answering their questions about faith or lifestyle? Members can also share about what are some practical steps that have helped them to interact with others of different faiths / values, how they weave speaking about Christ in their conversations. Leaders can perhaps focus the discussion that every person is created by God and has the potential to be a child of God. We are to stand firm, and choose to love, choose to serve, believe in the potential of the gospel and to become a disciple of Christ. Only God can bring about the turning of the heart of each person and restore him to a relationship with Him.

4. **Share with the cell about one action step you would like to take in “being in the world but not of the world”** [10 min]

Leader’s Notes: Leaders can prompt members to reflect on changes that we may like to consider on our life priorities, how we spend our resources and how we deal with people in our community who have messed up. Are the areas in our interpersonal interactions whereby we should move away from a legalistic mindset and exercise more love and grace? How can we speak the truth in love? We are challenged to reach out to build bridges of love and at the same time, to be the salt of the earth as Jesus commanded us – see Matt 5:11-14.

This is a time for members to share and pray for each other.

Works [10 min]

Let’s pray:

1. Our hearts and minds are always aligned with our Papa God, knowing what matters to Him.

Announcements

1. **One Thing Gathering**

Would you make Jesus your one thing?

19 – 21 July | RiverLife Church

Register now at onething.sg

2. **SPYces (Spiritual Parenting of Young Couples)**

1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 Jul | 1.45pm – 5pm | Lunch served, 1.45pm

For enquiries, 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.”