

Series - On Your Mark!

Date/s - 23 Sep 2018

Topic - By What Authority Do You Do These Things?

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/](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 songs like "This Is Amazing Grace", "In Christ Alone", "When Jesus Comes Again" or "Beautiful Saviour".

**Spiritual Objectives**

At the end of cell discussion, we pray that cell members will:

1. Know who Jesus is at the deepest personal level
2. Personally commit to true discipleship at a most practical level.

**Word** [45 min]

Where Pastor Lionel left off last week at Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-21), Pastor Ernie picked up on that event and the event that followed with more observation and further application (Mark 11:27-12:12).

**Observations from Scripture**

As anticipation built up around the person of Jesus, the Jews were keenly expecting the long-awaited Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. Amidst the fanfare and excitement, all hopes were pinned on Jesus being the King to rescue them from Roman oppression. If only they knew Jesus' true mission, they would not have made such a fuss over Him. If only they knew Jesus came not to set them free from Roman rule but from God's wrath over sin. If only they knew Jesus was not interested in being popular, but being obedient to God's will.

The Jews eventually found out the hard truth about Jesus when He upset the status quo by clearing the Temple. With their expectations crushed, their authority challenged, and their profiteering ruined, the Jewish religious leaders began to plot Jesus' downfall. Just as in Mark 14:61-65, their pride and prejudice prevented them from accepting Jesus as their Messiah.

The truth is, not only was Jesus the promised Messiah, He was also the Bridegroom who had come for His bride, Israel. Yet the nation rejected Him. While the religious leaders were concerned about position and power, Jesus was concerned about truth and righteousness.

Jesus responded to the leaders with the parable of the vineyard that described them not as God's anointed but as outsiders. Jesus equated the tenants in the parable who killed the vineyard owner's son to the religious leaders. In telling the parable, Jesus was revealing where His authority came from and the purpose of His coming – to replace the religious temple system. In doing so, He wanted to provoke them to repentance. But their eyes were blinded and their hearts were cold. They had completely failed to see Jesus for who He was.

But Jesus' primary concern was not for outsiders but for insiders – disciples – to know who He truly was, and is.

## Significance of Passage for Today

The question asked then by Jesus of His disciples (Matthew 16:13-15) is the same question asked of us today.

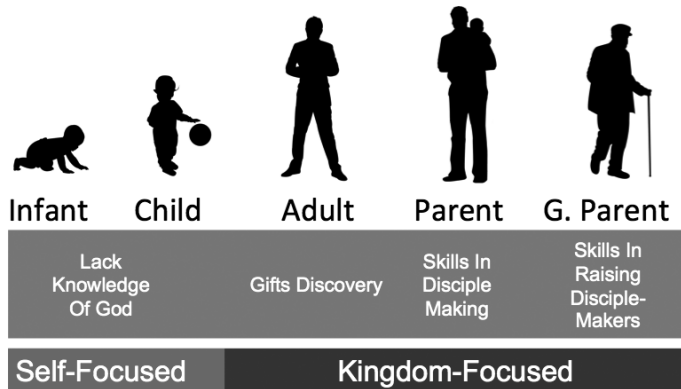
“WHO DO YOU SAY JESUS IS?”

Is Jesus a saviour, a friend, a helper, or the LORD? Is He only a saviour to whom you said the sinner's prayer years ago as a ticket to heaven? Is He just a friend to whom you sing songs in church every Sunday? Is He a helper to whom you call on when you need a promotion? Or is He the LORD over everything you do and everything you have – every single day? *If Jesus is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all!*

Is the way we live a result of calling Jesus LORD? If not, Pastor Ernie challenged us, we ought to examine our lives through 1 John 2:3-4, “We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person.” Obedience is what Jesus is looking for, not church attendance.

Pastor Ernie also warned us through Matthew 7:13-14, “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” The consequences of not taking discipleship seriously are critical. Those who are just “church attendees” must grapple with the question of who Jesus is to them.

Pastor Ernie then defined what a true disciple is: One who is constantly growing into the likeness of Christ (1 John 2:12-24). The chart below illustrates our growth as disciples. Jesus' key concern is not our comfort but our fruit. Check yourself: Is your faith still in kindergarten?



If our discipleship and allegiance are to Jesus who has all authority, where on earth can we find His authority?

1. **Scripture.** Do we let the Bible drive our values and convictions? Or do we read men's words more than God's Word? “Disobedience to God's Word leaves us unchanged and feeds our self-deception so we wander around in blindness.” (Bobby Harrington/Josh Patrick)

2. **Leaders.** Life change never happens on a Sunday morning through preaching itself. Transformation does not happen in big groups but in cells with leaders who are devoted to Jesus. We should never be afraid to let leaders speak into our lives, or allow the Asian culture of “saving face” stop us from accountability and intimacy. “Nothing can be more cruel than that leniency which abandons others to their sin.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

3. **Situations.** Life does not always work out according to our plans. Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong.

Can we let God be God because we are not? Pastor Ernie shared the story of Swedish missionaries David and Svea Flood to demonstrate the cost of discipleship and proclaim the sovereignty of God over every situation.

### Discussion Questions

1. **Read Mark 11:27-12:12. As you read this passage, imagine yourself in the story as it unfolds. See yourself as one of the disciples with Jesus, listening to the conversation between Him and the religious leaders. What do you see? What do you hear? What are you thinking? How are you feeling? And why?**  
[10 min]

**Leader's Notes:** {Qn 1 is optional. If you would like to discuss further on the practical steps on discipleship (from the recommended articles) in Qn 4, you may start with Qn 2.} A recap question for diving into the fabric of the story. Imagination is God's gift, so encourage everyone to use it to put ourselves in God's story. Try to imagine what we might see, smell, feel, and hear, and what the other persons in the scene might be doing. Always, at each point in this exercise, we try to draw some practical fruit from the reflection for our own life today. We need to ask ourselves what difference it makes in our everyday lives that we have encountered Jesus through this biblical text. One way to do this is to focus on the words of Jesus and consider the ways our lives would be changed if we heard Jesus say those same words to us.

2. **The question asked of Jesus by the Jewish religious elite was "By what authority do You do these things?" It is the same question Jesus asked His disciples then and now: "Who do you say I am?" (Matthew 16:13-15). Who is Jesus to you? Is He Lord of all of you or Lord of parts of you? Does He have complete authority over you in all that you do and how you live?** [10 min]

**Leader's Notes:** A reflect question for thinking deeply about the battle for the rulership of our hearts and minds. We all want to be the authority in our own lives instead of letting Jesus have full authority. With sin still living inside of us, we are still torn between our love for the little kingdom of self and the grand and glorious purpose of the kingdom of God. We are still tempted to want our own way and to write our own rules. We still tend to value comfort and pleasure more than we love redemption. We are tempted to have more excitement in the things of this world than we do with the reality that we have become the children of God. We still complain when sanctifying trials come our way and we still tend to credit God with faithfulness only when things in our lives seem to be working. Crucial follow-up questions to ask then will be: "In what areas of your life are you still holding on to your own little kingdom authority? What makes it scary to give up authority or control of your own life? Is Jesus worth it all to relinquish every authority to Him?"

3. **Pastor Ernie defined a true disciple as one who is constantly growing into the likeness of Christ (1 John 2:12-24). Examine the chart in the sermon synopsis above. Where do you place yourself in the diagram? How long have you been in that position? What may be the things holding you back from growing?** [10 min]

**Leader's Notes:** A relate question for taking stock of our spiritual inventory. As disciples of Jesus, we should be always growing towards the likeness of Christ. We cannot stay where we are once He has called us. His goal for us is character formation. We can no longer live just for and to ourselves. We cannot exchange an eternity of rewards for a limited time of comfort on earth. Being a true disciple means having a willingness to trust Him completely in all aspects of our lives from the highest highs to the lowest lows. It means we are not only willing to trust Him to provide for our salvation, but we trust Him for the future. We are to trust Him even when we do not know, like, or understand when and where He may be

leading us. Being a true disciple allows us to put our hand to the plow and not look back. As we grow in Christ, we become increasingly dissatisfied with anything less than His call and character. The follow-up question to ask then is: "Am I willing to pay the cost?" (Luke 9:23; Luke 14:25-35) Jesus invites us to discipleship. But He lets us know up front that it is a commitment that will cost us something. It is not going to be easy. We cannot just go to church and say we love the Lord. We must show it and it must transcend to our hands and feet. Discipleship is costly because Jesus must have priority over our wills, ideas, plans, and presumptions.

4. **The story of missionaries David and Svea Flood is a story of the cost of discipleship and the sovereignty of God. The couple responded to Jesus and gave up all to follow Him, at great costs to themselves, but their rewards were eternal. Will you respond like the Floods and follow Christ at any price? What practical steps will you take to move to the next measure of the fullness of Christ?** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:** A response question for considering the cost of following Jesus (Luke 14:25-33). To be a disciple demands that He become the most important thing in our life. We must put our Master above those nearest and dearest to us. Discipleship also means asking the question, "What does Jesus want me to do?" Jesus wants us to see that the cost of discipleship involves understanding that there is a higher calling on our lives than doing what we want to do here on earth. We cannot say to God that we are only available two hours on Sunday. We must respond with the attitude of Isaiah, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8) How much does discipleship cost? It costs everything! However, the rewards are limitless as we are entrusted to a Saviour who loves us deeply and more than we could ever comprehend! He desires the best for us. He has a plan and purpose for us in the kingdom of God. And He wants us to spend eternity with Him. There is no better way! The rewards of discipleship far outweigh the costs. "Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy." (Psalm 126:5)

If there is time, read the story of David and Svea Flood together. "A Story of Eternal Perspective" is found here: <https://goo.gl/dP4bnp>

For practical steps on discipleship, encourage cell to read two excellent online articles on their own:

1. Two Questions for Successful Discipleship: <https://goo.gl/TF2ug3>
2. Discipleship: Its Requirements and Its Rewards: <https://goo.gl/oX6MUY>

## Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. Everyone in RiverLife will devote sacrificially to a life of personal discipleship and disciple making.

## Announcements

1. **Water Baptism Class**  
Sat, 6 Oct | 9am - 3pm | Faith Chapel

Our next baptism service will be held on Sun, 11 Nov. Register for this class at the Information Counter by Sun, 30 Sep. For enquires, please contact Clara Tan at 65114160 or email her at [claratan@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:claratan@riverlife.org.sg).

### Church Vision Statement:

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