

Series - Be Wise (2 of 22)

Date/s - 19 May 2019

Topic - How Can We Be Truly Wise?

Speaker/s - Pastor Lionel Goh

## 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 "How Great Thou Art", "God Of Ages", "Shout To The Lord" or "What A Beautiful Name".

## Spiritual Objectives

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

1. Be passionate to seek divine wisdom in their lives.

## Word [45 min]

This sermon continues the series "Be Wise". Pastor Lionel began by looking at what it meant to be a successful person in the world. In the past, a man of great physical strength and military prowess would be chosen to be king. Nowadays, knowledge and intellect are valued over physical strength, and people who display such talent are rewarded by becoming "kings" – CEOs, leaders of large companies and institutions. In this day and age, young children are signed up by their parents for countless extracurricular activities to prepare them for school, reinforcing the mindset that society values a person who can think, speak and write well. This is the wisdom of this age. Pastor Lionel made a distinction between *knowledge* and *wisdom*. **Knowledge** was defined as the possession of information and skill acquired through formal study or casual experiences. **Wisdom**, on the other hand, was the ability to use our knowledge and experience to make good decisions and judgments.

Pastor Lionel went on to describe the 2 types of wisdom, human and divine wisdom (James 3:13-18), and the attributes of both:

Human Wisdom:

- Envious, selfish, ambitious, earthly, unspiritual, demonic
- Produces disorder, evil fruits, favouritism and hypocrisy

Divine Wisdom:

- Pure, peace-loving, gentle, compliant, merciful
- Produces good fruits of gentleness, righteousness and peace

As Christians, we should pursue divine wisdom. But, how do we do so? Pastor Lionel gave us 3 points:

### 1. By fully embracing the cross. (1 Cor 1:18 – 25)

Pastor Lionel noted that one of the main challenges to Christians fully embracing the cross was that the cross was foolish to the human mind (vv. 18, 22). The cross was a Roman instrument of execution; it spoke of weakness and defeat. The Jews were looking for a powerful Messiah (Mark 8:11-12), someone who would

overthrow the Roman occupation of Israel. They were seeking a figure like Moses who parted the Red Sea, or like Joshua who conquered Jericho. The Greeks were a highly sophisticated people and would also find the cross foolish – how could a failed Messiah grant eternal life? How could a crucified convict be worshipped as a god?

And yet, the Bible reminds us that human wisdom cannot lead us to God. 1 Cor 1:20-21 says that “the world would never know him [God] through human wisdom”. How then can people know God? Only by the cross. When we as believers of Christ embrace the cross, we not only receive salvation but God’s wisdom as well!

## 2. By revering Christ and his works (1 Cor 1:24 – 31)

Pastor Lionel’s second point was that we as believers ought to revere Christ and His works. In verse 27, Paul tells us that God intentionally chooses things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise (v 26). Many of us come from humble backgrounds, and through God’s mercy and gentle leading have come to know of Him and His saving grace. God uses the humble so that no one can boast of themselves in God’s presence. From being nothing to the world, Christ has made us everything before God (v 30). Through Christ we now have divine wisdom, righteousness, holiness and purity, freedom from the penalty of sin. It was only through Christ that we have all these blessings. Therefore, we revere Christ for what He has done for us. When we revere Christ, we become wise (v 31). When we fear Christ, we will have true divine wisdom (Prov 9:10 and Job 28:28).

## 3. By depending on the Holy Spirit’s power (1 Cor 2:1 – 5)

Pastor Lionel’s third point was that we need to depend on the Holy Spirit. Paul tells us in 1 Cor 2:1-4, that he did not try to convince the Corinthians with lofty words and impressive wisdom, but in weakness and with a plain message. Pastor Lionel reminded us that we need to lay aside our human abilities. The Bible reminds us that when we are weak, then we are strong in the Spirit. There will be times that we experience success in life. But even in those moments, we should depend on God for our success rather than relying on our own abilities.

Let us be truly wise by fully embracing the cross, revering Christ and His works, and depending on the Holy Spirit’s power.

### Discussion Questions

1. **Human wisdom seeks to be seen as strong and victorious. On the contrary, divine wisdom recognises our human limitations and seeks to rely on God. Yet, human wisdom seems much more natural to pursue. Why?** [15 min]

**Leader’s Notes:** *This is a reflect question. From Pastor Lionel’s sermon introduction, we can see that human wisdom is more attractive as it feeds our human nature that seeks after personal glory and success. Human pride and God’s wisdom are incompatible. The world may be more impressed by power (Jews) and intellectualism (Greek) than what is demonstrated by the crucified Christ on the cross. Divine wisdom is foolishness to the secular mind; divine power is weakness to the unbeliever. This question is meant to highlight the difference between human and divine wisdom, and also appreciate the fact that God’s ways are contrary to man’s ways. God uses what is seemingly weak and simple to proclaim the gospel and only through the “foolishness” of the cross, God’s wisdom and power are made manifest.*

2. **Of the three points that Pastor Lionel spoke of in his sermon (fully embracing the cross, revering Christ and His works, and depending on the Holy Spirit’s power), which of these do you think is most challenging to do? Explain why any of the points is more difficult for you personally.** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:** This is a relate question. Members are encouraged to bring up why each of the points are difficult. For example, a member may have an intellectualist upbringing and the gospel message runs contrary to this upbringing. Another may have expectations that power, and strength are the solution to life's difficulties, so they cannot fully embrace the cross and the message of the gospel.

In a way, this is a trick question. All 3 points can be equally challenging to do because they all require one thing that is most difficult to do: to put down human pride and receive only what God can give us, in humility. However, leaders may not want to reveal this at the start but encourage members to think through and discuss. Try and steer the conversation towards helping members realise that all 3 points are equally challenging, and why. If the conversation does not go in that direction, leaders may want to eventually bring it up.

3. **What is one thing you can do this week to work on one of the 3 points?** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:** A response question. Encourage members to commit to take one practical step this week to seek divine wisdom and act it out in their lives. 1 Cor 1:24 – Christ is the 'wisdom of God' & 1 Cor 1:30 – Christ is the 'wisdom from God'. When you have more of Christ, you have more divine wisdom of God and from God. Eg of practical actions - What could I do to know more about the nature and character of Jesus? What could I do in response to the heart of the Father when Jesus died on the Cross? How could I partner the Holy Spirit in my daily decision?

**Works** [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. Every RiverLifer will seek to inculcate divine wisdom in their lives.

**Announcements**

1. **Water Baptism Class**

Sat, 1 Jun | 9am-3pm | Faith Chapel (Our next baptism service will be on Sun, 7 Jul)

Register for this class at the Information Counter by Sun, 26 May. For enquiries, please contact Karen Koh at 6511 4139 or email her at [karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg).

2. **SPYces on Sundays (Five Sundays afternoon from 30 Jun)**

1.45pm-5pm | Faith Chapel

Register at the Information Counter by Sun, 16 Jun. For more details, please contact Christine Tan at christinetan@riverlife.org.sg or 65114141

3. **Filipino Combined Service**

Reflecting His Glory. Sun, 9 Jun | 2pm | Victory Chapel

Speaker: Pastor Tony Lee

**Church Vision:**

"A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations."

**Mission:**

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.