

Series - Be Wise (5 of 22)

Date/s - 23 June 2019

Topic - How Can We Be God's Faithful Servants

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/

www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like "This I Believe (The Creed)", "Forever", "Worthy Of It All" or "Highest Praise".

Spiritual Objectives

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

1. Know that we are called to be God's faithful servants; and
2. Commit to serve God faithfully wherever God has placed them.

Word [45 min]

In the first three chapters of 1 Corinthians, Paul addresses the problem of division in the Corinthian church. This division was largely caused by their propensity to exalt human leaders and human wisdom. In chapter 4, Paul turns the tables on this and exhorts the Corinthians instead to unity and submission to one another: he addresses the topic of servanthood, in particular, servant-leadership.

What is the difference between leaders in the world and Christ-centred leaders? We can take a hint from Luke 22:24-27. Leaders in the world lord it over others and to have a good name for themselves, brand themselves as "friends of the people". Instead, Christ-centred leaders know that in order to be great, they need to be humble. To be leaders, they need to stoop low and serve. In Mark 10:45, we are reminded of the model of Christ, who "came not to be served but to serve others and give his life as a ransom for many". *A good leader is a faithful and sacrificial servant.*

How then can we be God's faithful servants?

1. By accepting our calling as Christ's servants (1 Cor 4:1-7)

To be God's servant, *we must be found faithful* (4:1-2). The imagery here is of a Roman galley slave: a man who were forced to row the Roman ships of war. These slaves were chained to the galley of the ships to row them. They had all their rights stripped from them and could do nothing except what they were commanded to do: row the ship. Part of our calling as servants is to preach the good news. This calling is not only for Paul, but for everyone! (Matt 28:18-20). How obedient are we to this call?

Paul encourages us that in the area of our obedience to God, *we are accountable to God alone*. At times, we may hear conflicting voices of well-intentioned people who either encourage us toward serving God or discourage us from going all-out for Him. The only one who should be telling us what and how to serve is God alone. Of course, we take heed of wise counsel such as from our parents, mentors and/or leaders, but ultimately it is God who affirms our service to Him.

Next, *we must acknowledge that all our blessings come from God*. We did not earn our blessings; we did not buy our talents. They are all freely given by God alone. Therefore, do not be proud of your gifts, or praise one leaders' talents over another.

2. By our willingness to make sacrifices (1 Cor 4:8-13)

Servants of Christ must be willing to give of themselves to build others up. Paul exemplified that as he served the Corinthians. Paul's sacrifice was that he was poor, hungry, thirsty, cold, ridiculed, displayed as losers and as trash, thought of as fools, thought of as weak (vv. 9, 10, 13). At Paul's expense, the Corinthians were rich in everything, reigning in God's kingdom, wise, powerful, and honoured (vv. 8, 10). Jesus, who gave Himself as sinless God for sinful man, is the ultimate example of sacrifice (Mark 10:45). Paul exhorts us to imitate him, as he imitated Christ (1 Cor 11:1). When we are ridiculed for serving others, we can take comfort to know that Christ was also ridiculed and despised for our sake (Isa 53:3).

We can also take comfort in the fact that God will reward us for the sacrifices we make. Gal 6:9 encourages us to not get tired of doing what is good, for we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.

3. God had made us His servants on earth and for all eternity

Pastor Lionel goes on to remind us that we are saved to serve Him on earth (Eph 2:8-10, Heb 12:28-29). God created us for the purpose of doing good works. And that is our destiny as well: to serve and reign with God forever (Rev 22:3-5). Serving is part of our purpose and calling as followers of Christ.

But the question may arise: Why must we be servants? Can we not merely enjoy being God's sons? Pastor Lionel reminds us that we were saved to serve. Eph 2:8-10 says that we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus *to do good works*. We are also destined to serve and reign with God forever (Rev 22:3-5)!

Let us lay hold of God's call to be His servants in the world.

Discussion Questions

1. **Read Luke 22:24-27. Do you know of someone who exemplifies the qualities of a servant-leader? Share with the group how this person inspires you.** [15 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a relate question, meant to help members make the connection between what was preached, and a true model of these qualities of servanthood. Allow the members to share.*

2. **Read 1 Cor 4:8-13. Being a servant is not easy and involves sacrifices. Where has God placed you right now, that you struggle with *the most* in displaying the qualities of biblical servanthood?** [15 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a reflect question. Leaders may need to explain the question a little bit more. We all wear various hats and play multiple roles in life: student, employee, boss, parent, son, daughter, brother, sister, etc. In some of these roles, it may be especially difficult to exemplify the qualities of servanthood. Get the members to share and explain why a particular role is most challenging for them to display biblical servanthood. In doing so, they may hear from other members' sharing that they are not alone and what they face could be more common than they think. As group leader, try and pick out common threads in the sharing if there are, and encourage members that we all go through similar struggles.*

In the article "Leading with Joy" by Pastor Larry Osborne (<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/leading->

with-joy), we are reminded that leadership is also an incredible privilege, despite the hardships and burdens. The main points are:

- Leadership is a choice (Heb 13:17)
- Servant leadership means being treated like a servant (1 Cor 4:8-13)
- Our reward is coming (2 Cor 4:17)
- Suffering for Christ is a privilege (Phi 1:27-30).

Leaders can conclude by encouraging members to adopt a Godly perspective when going through the struggles. See 2 Tim 4:6-8.

3. **One practical way to serve is to get involved in church ministry. If you already serve in some area in church, what would you say to encourage your fellow church members to get involved? If you don't already serve in church, in what area do you think you would want to start?** [15 min]

Leader's Notes: A response question. The purpose of this question is to encourage members to be involved in serving in church. For those who are already serving, it may be helpful for them to reflect on the positive moments of ministry, especially if they are beginning to feel tired from ministry. For those who are not yet serving, it would be a good opportunity for them to start exploring.

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. Every RiverLifer will serve God wholeheartedly as His servants.

Announcements

1. **Joining The Family**

Sat, 27 Jul | 10am-1pm | Faith Chapel

This course is a pre-requisite for Associate Membership.

Sign up at online at bit.ly/rlcjoiningthefamily by Sun, 21 Jul. For more information, please contact Karen Koh at 65114139, or email her at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg.

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.