



WEEKLY CELL GUIDE

21 NOV 2021 | WE REVEAL GOD'S WISDOM | EPHESIANS 3:1-11

Series : Rediscovering Church | Speaker : Lam Zhengxin



WELCOME

[15 MINS]

You may want to look up the following websites for icebreakers suitable for your cell.

[Ice Breakers 1](#)

[Ice Breakers 2](#)



WORSHIP

[15 MINS]

You may select songs like

1. Come Holy Spirit
 2. Spirit Touch Your Church
-



WORD

[45 MINS]

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

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

1. Understand that the fullness of their Christian identity comes from knowing both the Old and New Testament.
2. Walk in God's wisdom and continually reaching out to the lost.

SERMON SUMMARY

The Church is a divine design, and we must model ourselves after how God has intended it to be. When we do that, the wisdom of God will be manifested to the world.

SERMON RECAP

In [Ephesians 3:1-11](#), Paul was writing to the Ephesians about the mystery and the wisdom of God's plan in creating a new people for Himself: the Church, made up of Jews and Gentiles. There are two parts in his message.

Part 1: The Mystery of Christ Revealed (v2-6)

'Mystery' here means something that has been hidden by God and we can only know it if God reveals it to us. God remains mysterious until He reveals himself and He has revealed Himself through the Bible. That is how we must come to know Him. Anything apart from that, there is a danger of constructing God after our own image. Similarly, it is only through Him that we understand what His design for the Church is.

1. The church is a divine design, and she must be centred around the person of Christ

- It is natural for us to see the church as a human institution, full of shortcomings and made up of imperfect leaders. Young people in the world are also increasingly sceptical or cynical of the church.
- We must know that the church is not a human institution. It is a God-ordained community carrying a divine design. It is not man's idea of organisational religion, but God's idea and it carries a mandate from God Himself.
- The life and vitality of the church must find its source in the person of Jesus. We must focus on Jesus, talk to Him, wait on Him, posture ourselves to listen to Him. The mystery of who Christ is has been revealed to us. Cherish it and continue to seek Him.
- Being a Christ follower and being the church means that we get to come into a relationship with the living God. This relationship alone is enough to sustain us, rejuvenate us, fill us with wonder, fill us with passion, give us meaning and purpose for our lives.
- This is the church's divine design: To be a God-ordained community that is centred on the person of Christ. Everything else is peripheral. We must be a people who hunger to know Him and desire to walk in obedience to Him.

2. The church is the continuation of what God has started in Israel through the family of Abraham

- To fully grasp what the church is, we need to understand and internalise the story of Israel. Israel's story is our story. Israel's history is our history.
- The church is the culmination of what God started in Abraham, and now includes both Jew and Gentile. We, who are Gentiles, now share in the inheritance and all of the promises made to Israel ([2 Corinthians 1:20](#)).
- We need to study and know the Old Testament well. If our understanding of who we are is divorced from our roots in Israel, we are deficient Christians having an incomplete identity as God's people.
- God made a covenant with Abraham, that Abraham and his people will be blessed, and that they will be a blessing to all nations. Through Moses, God revealed His character and His ideals through the writing of the Law. Through David, God promised to establish an everlasting kingdom. We join in all these covenants and promises. As Jews and Gentiles together, we are a part of what God has been doing throughout history, and we must know where we come from.

Part 2: The Wisdom of God Revealed (v7-11)

1. The church is the display of God's wisdom

- When we think of the church, we don't typically associate it with God's wisdom. We see more of God's wisdom in creation ([Psalm 104:24](#)). God's creation is full of amazing things, yet Paul says that the pinnacle of God's wisdom is in the gathering of the church - Jew and Gentile coming together.
- The church is the display of God's wisdom. It is seen in how He has brought two things which cannot co-exist – His hatred for sin and His love for sinners – into union in Christ. Without Christ, God looks at us with wrath and anger, because He is a Holy God. But because we are in Christ, we are made right and holy in His sight. The result, and the expression of this wisdom, is the church.
- Since the fall of man, when sin entered the world, the angels and the demonic beings have always wondered how God would bring about redemption. God's redemption plan was hidden until the appointed time. On resurrection Sunday, the mystery of God's wisdom was finally revealed. The Messiah would not

only atone for all of mankind's sin on the cross, but the Messiah would also conquer death so that all who placed their trust in Him would live through Him.

Conclusion

- It is God's wisdom to send His Holy Spirit to us, so that we might live out His purposes through the power of His Spirit, and not in our own strength. In His wisdom, God knows that we cannot live out the Christian life in our own strength, and with our own determination.
- Christians cannot live independently of the Spirit. All Christians have the Spirit of God. There is no Christian who does not have the Spirit of God. The question is: Do we talk to Him, walk with Him, and yield to Him? If we ignore the Holy Spirit or resist His promptings, then we have not walked in the wisdom of God, but in our own foolishness.
- Allow the Holy Spirit to touch us afresh and to awaken our passion and hunger for God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What is the connection between the church and the family of Abraham in the Old Testament? Why is it important to know the Old Testament? [10 Mins]**

Leader's Notes

This is a recap question on how the church today is connected to Abraham and his family in the Old Testament. When we join the church family, we are entering into the unconditional covenant that God made with Abraham. This is the Abrahamic covenant:

"And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." – Genesis 12:2-3

When we are part of the church, we are part of the family of Abraham – later known as Israel. We, who are Gentiles, now share in the inheritance and all the promises made to Israel! It is not only the promises found in the New Testament but in the Old Testament as well (Romans 11:11-31). This is why it is important to know the Old Testament.

If we only know of the New Testament, then we have an incomplete identity as God's people. We need to know the Old Testament to know our heritage and roots. We need to know how God established the church from Israel and included the Gentiles into the covenant. When we know how God views us and His plans and promises for us, we can then move forward into the future without fear and with a firm grounding of our identity as His people.

Read this resource to learn more: [Abraham's Covenant Family](#)

Transition

Our full identity, as the people of God, is found not only in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament as well. We think that the Old Testament is only about the Law, but it is not the Law that we are after, but God's promises. For we are heirs to the promise, not the Law.

- 2. The church displays God's wisdom in reconciling His hatred of sin and His love for sinners. How can we live out this wisdom by loving sinners? [10 Mins]**

Leader's Notes

It all begins with a change of mindset.

We are all sinners and by that definition, God hates us – because God is holy and He hates sins. And yet, we are fiercely loved by Him – so much so that He sacrificed His son to make us clean and holy so that we can be reunited with Him. One way we can love sinners is to remember that we are sinners ourselves. We are equally bad. We are not above or better than anyone else. Everyone deserves the opportunity to recognise their sins and repent.

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” – Colossians 3:13 (NIV)

It is also important to remember that we have been forgiven by God – forgiven for a lot of the things we have done. Others may have sinned against us, but in carrying God’s forgiveness in our hearts, we will be able to show love and compassion to them.

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” – Matthew 7:1-2 (NIV)

It is equally important to remember that we are not qualified to judge others. Only God can judge – and He is the only one who judges fairly. We leave the judging to God and we focus on helping and loving them.

It is easier said than done of course, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, it is possible. Remember how we ourselves have come to believe in God? It was through someone who viewed us through God’s eyes, who didn’t judge us, who loved us, and believed that we could be saved. Everyone deserves that kind of love.

Transition

God’s love is fierce and intense and it surpasses His hatred for sin. In the Bible, God always give multiple chances for people to repent and turn back to Him. He repeatedly warns them and patiently waits. Punishment is always His last resort. God always chooses to show love and compassion to the sinner first.

3. Why do you think that there is growing scepticism and cynicism towards the church among believers these days? How can we address that issue? [15 Mins]

Leader's Notes

Remember that church is a divine design. It is a God-ordained community.

While the church has a divine conception, the church consists of imperfect human beings and leaders. Due to man’s human and sinful nature, church leaders can make wrong decisions and at times fall into sin, and church members can live lives that do not reflect Christ. As a result, this has caused scepticism and cynicism, especially among young believers.

Therefore, it is critical for us to remember that the church must not be centred around people, but in the Person of Jesus. The life and vitality of the church must find its source in Jesus. Believers must find their satisfaction and joy in Jesus – to engage with Him, talk to Him, to wait on Him, to posture ourselves to listen to Him, etc. When we do that, we will see the church differently – not a man-made organisation, but a God-ordained and divine community completely centred on Jesus.

We must allow Christ to be the centre of the church again and to make Him our focus.

Closing

It is easy to lose our focus on Jesus and to look at human aspects (e.g. imperfect church leaders and members) of the church. When we do that, we will eventually become disillusioned with the church because man always disappoints. Man is imperfect. This is why our eyes must always be on Jesus, and the church must keep pointing and directing our attention towards Him – the only one who is perfect and will never disappoint.



Consider dividing the group into micro-groups for a deeper time of sharing as well as praying for the following items:

1. Sermon Application

- We will keep our focus on Jesus and whenever we grow sceptical or cynical towards the Church, we will turn our attention back to Him.
- We know our identity as God's people and to hold on to His promises unwaveringly.

2. COVID-19 in Singapore

- Thank God for the further relaxation of the COVID-19 measures.
- Pray for God's continual protection as we learn to live with COVID and begin to open up our borders.
- God's hand to alleviate the sufferings, and for practical help to arise and be rendered to these suffering communities, especially the old and the vulnerable.

3. COVID-19 in the World

- A swift end to the COVID-19 crisis globally, if not a reduction in cases in third world nations, and a stable environment where humans and virus coexist.
- Healing and comfort for those who are sick and suffering.
- Protection and guidance for healthcare professionals at the frontline, giving them wisdom, courage, and strength to confront this crisis.

4. Opportunities for Outreach

- Ask the Lord to grant you opportunities to reach out to a non-believing loved one, friend, or colleague this week as we seek to mature in Christlikeness.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

[5 MINS]

1. **With You This Christmas.** This Christmas, we are reminded of Jesus, whose name is Emmanuel (God with us) and He is God's gift of presence to us. We want to rally every RiverLifer to give the gift of presence and be with someone or a family this festive season so that they may experience Christ in their lives too! We will be distributing a Christmas postcard every Sunday for the next three weeks for you to give to a pre-believing individual. If you're keen on obtaining one, do join us in-person at church for service (rlc.sg/tickets-eng). Apart from giving this postcard to someone, there are a few things you can do:

- Invite pre-believing family or friends to our English Adults Evangelistic Services on 5, 12 & 19 Dec. We will have two Christmas services on 19 Dec at 9am & 11am, and there will be prayer for healing. The e-invite can be downloaded here: rlc.sg/withyou-eng.
- Reach out through food and fellowship. Think of an individual, a family or a community that you can bless and reach out to. Host them in your home, have a meal with them, pray with them and have Spirit-led conversations.
- We have a special resource to get you started on reaching out. This resource contains conversation starters and recipes that you can use to bless someone this season. Link: rlc.sg/withyou-kit

2. **November Midweek Equipping – The Will of God vs. The Will of Man (The Calvinist-Arminian debate).** This Wednesday (24 Nov) is our final session in this series. The guest speaker is David Lim, Academic Dean of ACTS College. You can join via this link: rlc.sg/midweek.
3. **Prayer Ministry.** If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. unforgiveness, demonic oppression, etc), you can sign up for RLC's RTF ministry: <https://bit.ly/rlcrtf>
4. **Bible Reading Plan.** You can access our 2-Year Bible Reading Plan 2021-2022 by visiting <https://rlc.sg/brp2021>.

ONLINE GIVING TO RIVERLIFE CHURCH

Contribute your tithes and offering digitally:

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Log in to your bank's existing mobile banking app. Scan this QR code on the right OR enter UEN No. 200100806D.

2. Interbank Transfer

RiverLife Church Bank Account: DBS Autosave 029-902431-0
Bank Code: 7171 / Branch Code: 029



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