

DATE: 5 MAR 2023 | SPEAKER: PAK BARATHA | TOPIC: GOD'S MISSION HEART | SCRIPTURE: [2 SAMUEL 9:4-6](#), [PHILEMON 1:16](#)

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

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

1. Understand that God's heart is a missional heart
2. Love and serve the poor, the underprivileged and the marginalised, and
3. Commit to invite them to the King's table.

SERMON SUMMARY

The extraordinary stories of Mephibosheth (in 2 Samuel) and Onesimus (in Philemon) reveal God's heart for lost people. God wants everyone on earth to be in His family and be part of His Kingdom. As Christians, we have already accepted the King's invitation to sit at the table with Him. Though His dining table is very wide, many chairs are still yet to be filled. All of us are called to share His invitation with others so that they too can enjoy His fellowship at the table.

SERMON RECAP

Pak Baratha shared how God led him from a comfortable but predictable life in Indonesia to move his family to Myanmar to serve the poor and the needy in the midst of the nation's political strife. Despite unfamiliar terrains and challenging circumstances, Pak and his team persevered and even made progress in reaching many for Christ. Pak gave all the glory to God. He also thanked RiverLife for our partnership that goes beyond mere funding to active engagement in the field.

Pak's ministry focuses on three areas: 1. Children – to disciple the next generation; 2. Media – to create content and testimonies to share the Gospel; 3. Human Relief – to meet the physical needs of the poor in Myanmar through food distribution. In spite of the uncertainty and unrest in the country, Pak continues to love and serve the Burmese people, as well as to encourage the remnant churches in Myanmar to remain faithful. Pak testifies to God's pure, intense and sacrificial love for him as his motivation for his mission work. God's heart is a missional heart.

The deep love God has for every human is the same love God has for Onesimus (Philemon's lazy and runaway slave), and Mephibosheth (Jonathan's crippled and outcast son). In the epistle of Philemon, Paul writes to Philemon to forgive Onesimus and take him back – not as a slave but as a new-found brother in Christ. In the story of Mephibosheth, when King David found out his best friend Jonathan's son was abandoned in a desolate and barren place, he took him back, and even had him seated at the King's table as part of his family.

In the same way, we were once like Onesimus – slaves in need of forgiveness until Jesus came and forgave us and restored back us to God. And we were once like Mephibosheth – outcasts in need of redemption until Christ stepped in and redeemed us to His family and sat us at the King’s table. All glory to God! And now it’s our turn to share this great, eternal and abiding love with all the *Onesimuses* and *Mephibosheths* everywhere!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Do you feel an intense and sacrificial kind of love for people like Mephibosheth and Philemon, i.e., the poor, the underprivileged and the marginalised? What might loving like this cost you?**

Leader’s Notes

This is a recap question for the cell to consider how to love people who are very different from us. In *The Violence of Love*, Oscar Romero writes, “All of us, if we really want to know the meaning of conversion and of faith and confidence in another, must become poor, or at least make the cause of the poor our own inner motivation. That is when one begins to experience faith and conversion: when one has the heart of the poor, when one knows that financial capital, political influence, and power are worthless, and that without God we are nothing.” Those who are wealthy can easily become self-sufficient and lose sight of our dependence on God and neglect those who are considered the least, the last and the lost among us. Yet these are also God’s beloved children and they too deserve to sit at the King’s table.

Transition

The King’s dining table is still waiting to be filled. Invitations are still open. People still need the Lord. The field is ripe for harvest. But where are the workers?

- 2. You have sat at the King’s dining table for a while, and you noticed the empty chairs around, and even the one next to you! Who do you think needs to sit at the table with you? Will you get up from your chair and invite someone to the table? If not, what is stopping you?**

Leader’s Notes

This is a relate question for the cell to discuss why some of us are not excited about the Great Commission ([Matthew 28:16-20](#)) and how we can become more zealous about sharing the Gospel with others. A clue on our reluctance may be found in [Matthew 6:21](#): “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Similarly, Thomas Aquinas said, “The things we love tell us what we are.” Think about the things that are foremost in our hearts. What do they say about us? Do we really love the people God loves? Do we really want *those* people at the table with us? Or are we just hoarding the King’s table for ourselves? If we are, do we really deserve to be sitting at the King’s table?

Transition

The Great Commission is our calling to make disciples everywhere. Let’s start at home and then move out to the nations around us, particularly our close neighbour, Myanmar.

- 3. Pak Baratha shared his heart about the great needs in Myanmar. If you’re convicted to help in his mission, share your intentions with the cell. Share your concerns too if you have. What is one area you can actively participate in to serve?**

Leader’s Notes

This is a response question for the cell to take concrete steps to answer the call of God to His mission in Myanmar (or in other nations). As the worship song “I Say Yes” which we sang on Sunday reminds us, “When I look into Your heart I see the broken and the lost, I remember what

You've done, and I say yes. It is my joy to share in your glory. It is my joy to share in your suffering. No longer I who live, but Christ in me. I say yes." Will we say Yes to God's calling to share in His glory and in His suffering for the lost sheep out there? Speak to your cell leader or reach out to Pastor Joachim and his mission team for a discussion and prayer.

Closing

It is time to return to our roots and ask ourselves some vital questions. What did God save me for? What is my ultimate purpose in life? Am I truly following Jesus when I'm not even following His clear instructions? If the Gospel is good news, why am I not sharing it with others?

PRAYER

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

1. Sermon Application

- Pray that we will find our divine mission in life.
- Pray that we will dare to accept God's calling and live it out faithfully.
- Pray that we will be strengthened in our efforts to reach the lost for Christ.

2. World

- Pray for those affected by the aftermath of the Turkey-Syria earthquake.
- Pray for those affected by the aftermath of the Cyclone Gabrielle in New Zealand.
- Pray for 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.
- Pray for peace in the Russia-Ukraine war and in the US-China conflict.

3. Opportunities for Outreach

- Pray for the Lord to grant us opportunities this week to invite a non-believing loved one, friend, or colleague to join us at the King's table.
- Pray for the Lord to show us an area where we can join Pak Baratha in serving the people in Myanmar.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Digital Bulletin: rlc.sg/bulletin

1. **A River Flowing Outwards: Our Community & The Nations.** As a continuation of our Vision Series, we will spend the next five weekends exploring how God can bring about Kingdom transformation in our city and the world through each of us living out our call as change agents. Join us on this journey to expand our hearts for people who matter to God and be available to serve as He leads.

- 5 & 12 Mar: Missions Emphasis
- 19 & 26 Mar, 2 Apr: Community Emphasis

2. **SuperLife: A Discipleship@Home Session on Relationship. Sunday, 12 Mar. 9am – 10.40am. Grace Chapel.** In this upcoming Discipleship@Home session, Ps Ben & Ps Dinah will share practical handles for parents to better relate with their children to nurture their emotional and spiritual growth; and how our relationship with our spiritual family matters in our parenthood journey. Registration: rlc.sg/dah12mar.

3. **Workshop: Hearing God's Voice by Rev Pat Owyang.** This workshop seeks to activate the prophetic experience of hearing God's voice in your life, training you to discern His voice and to speak forth what you hear for the benefit of others (1 Corinthians 14:3). Over four sessions, you will be introduced to multi-sensory experiences of interacting with God's voice. As you engage with the activation exercises, you will discover the joy of receiving His words with increasing confidence, clarity and accuracy.

Fri, 17 Mar | 8-10pm Session 1: Introduction to the Prophetic

Sun, 19 Mar | 11am-1pm Session 2: Look to See (Visual Experience)

Fri, 24 Mar | 8-10pm Session 3: Listen to Hear (Acoustic Experience)

Sun, 26 Mar | 11am-1pm Session 4: Sense to Feel (Perceptive Experience)

All sessions will be held in Worship Centre.

4. Church Calendar Highlights

- **Quarter 1**
 - Equipping – “Engaging the Holy Spirit” Workshop: 17 & 19 Mar, 24 & 26 Mar
 - Cells Prayer Night #1: 31 Mar
- **Quarter 2**
 - Easter Evangelistic Services: 8-9 Apr
 - Bible Equipping – Acts: 26 & 28 May, 2 & 4 Jun
 - Children’s Camp: 8-10 Jun
 - Youth Camp: 15-18 Jun
 - Cell Revival Nights (Fridays): 2 – 30 Jun
- **Quarter 3**
 - Young Adult Camp: 7-9 Jul
 - 32nd Anniversary Weekend: 26-27 Aug
 - Bible Equipping – Leviticus: 15 & 17, 22 & 24 Sep
 - Cells Prayer Night #2: 29 Sep
- **Quarter 4**
 - Equipping Series: 17 & 19, 24 & 26 Nov
 - Christmas Outreach: Dec
 - Cells Prayer Night #3: 29 Dec

5. RiverLife Prayer Meetings.

- **RLC Prayer Room.** Tue, 8-9.30pm, Victory Chapel. (Online: rlc.sg/rpr-watch)
 - **Wed Night Prayer Meeting.** Wed, 8pm – 9.30pm, Victory Chapel.
6. **RiverLife Kindergarten Recruitment.** RLK is recruiting for the following roles. Link: oileng@riverlifekindergarten.org.sg. Refer to the e-Bulletin for more details.
 - Chinese Teacher
 - Teacher Assistant
 7. **9M Ministry.** The 9M Ministry provides prayer support for expectant mothers on their 9-month journey of pregnancy. Sisters-in-Christ who are fellow RiverLifers are assigned as Prayer Buddies to walk alongside mums who sign up to receive prayer support.
 - Receive Prayer Support: rlc.sg/9m
 - Provide Prayer Support: rlc.sg/serve
 8. **Global Hunger Fund.** This fund will go towards RLC's mission partners to help their local churches and communities gain access to food amid soaring costs. Refer to the Digital Bulletin for more details.
 9. **RiverLife Cares Opportunities.** Signup: <http://rlc.sg/serve-rlcares>
 10. **Call for SuperLife Volunteers.** If you have a heart for children and a desire to disciple them in their spiritual journey, come be a part of the SuperLife team. Sign up at rlc.sg/serve. Immediate needs:
 - *SuperLife Primary Teacher* (Serve twice a month. Facilitate small group discussions after each Bible lesson, connect and pray with the children, be involved in SuperLife Ministry events, etc.)
 - *Special Needs Chaperone.* (Serve twice a month. Provided 1-1 support to children with special needs and help facilitate an inclusive environment between children with and without special needs.)
 11. **Technical & Production (TAP) Ministry Recruitment.** The TAP ministry comprises five teams – audio, graphics, lighting, sound and video – and they all work as one in partnership with the Holy Spirit to support an atmosphere that allows the congregation to encounter God. We are now opening up recruitment for this ministry. If you desire to take the next step in your walk with God through starting to serve, we invite you to sign up to explore serving in one of the five TAP teams. You may sign up online at rlc.sg/serve or refer to our digital bulletin for more details.
 12. **Bible Reading Plan.** The church has provided 3 undated Bible Reading plans that will serve as a resource for those who wish to follow a Bible Reading plan. Link: rlc.sg/brp
 - 2 Year Chronological Bible Reading Plan.
 - 3 Year Bible Reading Schedule (Alternating readings between Old and New Testament passages)
 - Redemptive Historical Bible Reading Plan (At your own pace, focusing on the redemption story)
 13. **RiverLife Podcast.** The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is rlc.sg/podcast or simply search '*The RiverLife Podcast*' on Spotify.
 14. **Spiritual Growth Resources.** We have put together a curated list of recommended resources for the RiverLife family. These resources (books, articles, podcasts and videos) are recommendations for the various spiritual growth stages as you seek to grow deeper in the River of God this year. You can access them at rlc.sg/resource. This list will be continually populated throughout the year.
 15. **Cradle Roll.** Our Cradle Roll is open from 9am to 10.30am every Sunday for children 24 months and below. *NO booking of tickets is required.*

16. **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>
17. **Testimony.** If you have a testimony to share, you can write to us at stories@riverlife.org.sg to share with us your testimony as an encouragement to others.
18. **Stay Connected with RLC.** Follow us to stay updated on latest church news and happenings.
 - **WhatsApp Broadcast:** Text 'Subscribe' to 8923 1939
 - **Telegram Channel:** t.me/RiverLifeChurch
 - **Facebook & Instagram:** [@riverlifechurchsg](https://www.facebook.com/riverlifechurchsg)

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