

DATE: 16 APR 2023 | SPEAKER: PS ERNIE SONG
TOPIC: NURTURING MENTAL WELLNESS | SCRIPTURE: PSALM 13

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

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

1. Reflect upon the checkpoints and signposts in their lives and Christian faith
2. Make a commitment to build a community that is authentic and walks victoriously in suffering

SERMON SUMMARY

Ps Ernie shared from his personal experience of living with anxiety, and how we as a Church can look out for our own mental wholeness and journey alongside each other in suffering well for God's glory.

SERMON RECAP

Mental illness and symptoms are common, with 1 in 7 people affected in Singapore. As a church, we need to be a place that welcomes and journeys alongside those in recovery ([James 1:27](#)). This sermon was shared from the context of anxiety.

1. Posture – How Do We Face Anxiety/Mental Illness? ([Psalm 13:1 – 4](#))

- When David wrote Psalm 13, he had endured 10 long years of persecution from King Saul. Yet God never delivered or explained to King David the reason for his unjust persecution.
- God allows us to come to Him with our questions as we see in the examples of King David's Psalms and the book of Job.
- Some of us however, will be called to walk the path of suffering, just like so many individuals in the Bible and in modern times.
- We must embrace the path of suffering – acknowledge the condition and live beyond the sickness. As we do so, our questions will change from the "whys" to the "hows" – asking God how we can walk this road for His glory?
- It is ok not to be ok – we can walk victoriously even in our suffering!

"Mental illness is not a failure of Christian faith; it is a challenge to Christian faithfulness." – CCH Cook, Mental Health in the Kingdom of God

- Embrace the posture of surrender to God's will, His wisdom and sovereignty.

2. Checkpoints – Are We Living Against God's Design? ([Genesis 1, 1 Corinthians 6:19 – 20](#))

- Our mental health gets affected when our lifestyles go out of sync with God's rhythm and design for our lives.
- 3 checkpoints to examine:
 - *Spiritual*: Is our spiritual lives in rhythm with God? - Sin, Generational Consequences, Undealt Hurts, Relationship with God
 - *Physical*: Is our physical lives according to God's rhythm and design? – sleep, rest, turning off, exercise & recreation, diet, observing the Sabbath
 - *Relationships*: Are we living in isolation? – spiritual community, close friends, family

- Dealing with these checkpoints returns us to God's rhythms and design for our lives and sets us up to thrive through the various situations in life.

3. Signposts – What Do We Hold on To on This Journey (Psalm 13:5 – 6)

- Ps Ernie shared about various verses in Psalms where the word "But" appeared (Psalm 3:3, 9:7, 13:5, 31:14, 38:15, 41:12, Lamentations 3:21 – 24). These were difficult times where Biblical characters would anchor themselves in God's character.
- Ps Ernie shared 4 truths to hold on to through this journey.
 - o *God is still good* – even through my suffering. Don't allow your sickness to cloud your vision of God's goodness in your life.
 - o *I am who God says I am* – we are not defined nor dictated by our illness, but are children of the Living God!
 - o *I am called to do His work on earth* – God has a call for our lives in spite of our sickness! We must learn to live beyond our sickness!
 - o *Jesus is going to come back for me* – Let us hold on to the glorious hope that the Bridegroom will come again for us, His Bride and His good and faithful servants.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What to you, is mental wellness and wholeness?

- a) On a scale of 0 – 10, 0 being extremely poor and 10 being extremely well, where would you rate your mental wellness and wholeness? Share your reasons for choosing this number.
- b) What is your view of good / poor mental wellness and mental health conditions? How does it affect the individual or others around them?

Leader's Notes

This is a recap and relate question. Members can take time to consider what they define as mental wellness and wholeness before going into rating themselves. The second question aims to let members share their views about mental health conditions. Leaders can ask them to elaborate further on how their experiences were shaped (i.e., through the media or personal experiences). Members may wish to be mindful and respectful, that it is not about us vs them mindset, but how we all have different challenges and struggles. Let us also be mindful that having poor mental wellness does not mean having a mental health condition, likewise, someone who is in recovery from a mental health condition can also have good mental wellness when there is good support and ongoing openness to seek help.

Articles provided by Ps Ernie

- 4 Encouraging Truths for Christians with Mental Illness
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/encouraging-truths-mental-illness/>
- Let's Talk About Mental Health in Church (<https://www.cru.org/sg/en/stories/helping-others-grow/lets-talk-about-mental-health-in-church.html>)
- 4 Ways the Christian Faith Protects Mental Health
<https://saltandlight.sg/news/with-god-we-can-cope-better-4-ways-the-christian-faith-protects-mental-health/>
- Turning to God in the Midst of Anxiety
<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/church/turning-to-god-in-the-midst-of-anxiety/>
- Struggling with Mental Health? You can Walk This Journey With Medical Help and Christ
<https://thirst.sg/struggling-with-mental-health-you-can-walk-this-journey-with-medical-he2lp-and-christ/>

Transition

As we continue to talk about mental wholeness, let us reflect and evaluate on the checkpoints and signposts Ps Ernie mentioned during his sermon.

2. **Ps Ernie shared about checkpoints and signposts. Which of these resonate with you? Share with the group. You may also wish to choose one checkpoint that you wish to make adjustments to or one signpost to hold on to during this time.**

Leader's Notes

This is a reflect and response question for members to choose which checkpoints and signposts resonated with them. Leaders may wish to run through the pointers again for members to reflect on. If members wish, they can also add on or share their own checkpoints and signposts to encourage others e.g., [7 Types of Rest by Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith](#).

It is important for us to find rhythm and to ask God for wisdom to have Biblical balance in our lives. Leaders can facilitate sharing to highlight how members may be experiencing the same struggles and / or to find ways where the cell can be accountable to each other.

Transition

As we have reflected on checkpoints and signposts, let us consider how we can grow in Christlikeness and community as we journey through this fallen world.

3. **Let us evaluate our heart postures. How willing are we to**
- a) **Be people who suffer well?**
 - i) **What is our understanding of suffering well?**
 - ii) **How does “suffering well” look like in our everyday lives?**
 - b) **Journey and help another brother/sister to suffer well?**
 - i) **How can we as a Church learn to be vulnerable and authentic with each other? How can we build a community that is life-giving?**
 - ii) **What are some fears / barriers we may have? What are some healthy expectations we can have as we journey together?**

Leader's Notes

Leaders can choose to use the pointers i) and ii) for members if they require further facilitation for sharing. The questions aims for members to reflect upon our heart attitudes in how we relate to God and ourselves in our own sufferings, and how we relate to others who are also suffering as well. What does it mean to suffer well for God’s glory? What is the view we have of God in our suffering?

Some resources to consider:

- [How to Suffer Well – Three Ways to Prepare Now - Desiring God](#)
- [Someone Needs to See You Suffer Well – Desiring God](#)
- [Through the Path of Suffering – A 28 Day Devotion for Those with Anxiety Disorder by Ps Ernie Song](#)

When appropriate, leaders can ask members to share deeper on fears / barriers they may have towards individuals who may be different from them. How would we hope for the church to journey alongside us if we are facing such a situation? How can we learn from each other’s experiences? How can we as a church journey alongside those in need? As the church discusses about supporting individuals in recovery, it is also needful to have healthy boundaries so as to sustain a healthy community.

Note: If you have someone who is suffering from mental illness within the cell, and the individual is open to receive help from the cell, discuss how the cell can come together and support this brother/sister. Do note that journeying with these individuals requires the whole cell’s commitment (eg. taking turns) and not just 1-2 individuals as it does require quite a bit of energy.

Resources to Journey with Individuals with Mental Illness in Your Cell

- [How God Can Help with Anxiety by Soul Shepherding](#)
- [8 Ways to Help Depressed Christians by Core Christianity](#)
- [Autism and Adult Ministries by Engaging Disability with the Gospel](#)

Closing

We can have hope that Jesus Himself understands our sufferings and is an example for us in our sufferings. He is near with us and always with us. As we journey with Him, we are also privileged to journey alongside each other, for His glory.

WORKS

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 the blessed assurance that we are dearly loved by our Bridegroom while we await His return.
- Pray that we will know that He will empower us to suffer well as we walk this earth for His glory.
- Pray that we will learn how to love each other as ourselves, and for the lost who have yet to know Him.

2. World

- Pray for a quick decrease in the number of COVID-19 cases in Singapore
- Pray for the tense situation along the straits of Taiwan
- Pray for peace in the Russia-Ukraine war and in the US-China conflict.

3. Opportunities for Outreach

- Ask the Lord to bless us as we step out to reach a pre-believer.
- 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

Digital Bulletin: rlc.sg/bulletin

1. RiverLife Community Services.

- **RCS Family Movie Day 2023 Sat, 17 Jun. 9am to 12pm. Shaw Theatres Lido Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse.** With every donation of \$100, you will receive 2 complimentary tickets to the movie screening. *You may opt to donate your complimentary tickets to our beneficiaries so that they and their families can join in the movie screening.* Register and donate online: tinyurl.com/rcsmovieday23.
- **Serve Together as a Family.** Find out more about RiverLife Community Services and how you can play a part in caring for the community! Link: [RCS Serving Opportunities](#)

2. New Sermon Series: Be Brave

This series will address 4 major life challenges that we face, and help us remain steadfast as we get ready for Jesus' return.

- 16 Apr – Nurturing Mental Wellness
 - 23 Apr – Dealing with Difficult Relationships
 - 30 Apr – Building Resilience in Life
 - 07 May – Navigating in an Age of Deception
3. **The RiverLife Welcome Lunch.** Sun, 23 Apr. 11am to 12.30pm Grace Chapel. If you are new to RiverLife, come and join us for this Welcome Lunch as we hope to get to know you! You'll get to meet fellow RiverLifers as well as our Senior Leaders and Pastors too. Due to capacity constraints, each guest may be accompanied by up to two family members or friends (including their host). RSVP online by Sun, 16 Apr: rlc.sg/welcomelunch
4. **Young Adults Camp | Commune. 7 – 9 July 2023. Opero Hotel Southkey, Johor Bahru.** If the end goal of discipleship is transformation unto Christlikeness, then beholding is foundational to the life of every believer. We are called to behold Jesus together—to commune with God within the context of community. So, let's embark on this journey together to gain a fuller understanding of God, a better glimpse of the radiant Church He desires, and the courage to walk faithfully with community until He returns. Come, be part of this journey!
- Early Bird Fees (Until 16 Apr): \$210 (Student/NSF), \$260 (Adult).
 - Regular Fees (17 Apr – 7 May): \$240 (Student/NSF), \$290 (Adult).
 - Register at rlc.sg/yacamp2023.
 - Enquiries: yacamp@riverlife.org.sg
5. **MegaLife Camp (Ages 13-18).** 15-18 Jun (Thu-Sun) RELC International Hotel (30 Orange Grove Rd) & RiverLife Church. Registration details will be released next weekend.
- Early Bird (1-16 Apr): \$200 per pax
 - Normal (17-23 Apr): \$230 per pax
6. **Israel Messianic Encounter. 20 Nov – 1 Dec. Cost: \$4,950 (30 pax trip), \$4,850 (40 pax trip).** Join this trip and receive a revelation of the significance of Israel in the end times. You will gain a deeper appreciation of the cultural and geographical background of Scripture, and rediscover your Hebraic spiritual roots. Registration closes on 30 April 2023. For More Information: <https://event.actxplorer.com> (Password: RLKCC2023IME)
7. **Church Calendar Highlights**
- *Quarter 2*
 - 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
8. **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.
9. **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.
 10. **RiverLife Cares Opportunities.** Signup: <http://rlc.sg/serve-rlcares>
 11. **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.)
 12. **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.
 13. **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)
 14. **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.
 15. **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.
 16. **Prayer Ministry.** If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. fear, worry, 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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