



Cell Guide



DATE: 30 JUL 2023 | SPEAKER: LAM ZHENG XIN

TOPIC: THE LUKEWARM CHURCH | SCRIPTURE: [REVELATION 2:1-7](#); [3:14-22](#)

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

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

1. Recognise their own spiritual condition.
2. Put our relationship with God first, before anything else in life.

SERMON SUMMARY

We need to be honest with our current spiritual condition. We need to recognise how we have departed from our love for God and others. We need to recognise how we have built our lives around ourselves instead of around God, repent and return to God.

SERMON RECAP

The sermon is on the letters to the churches of Ephesus and Laodicea. God is rebuking both churches, and He laid down the reasons why. Understand that the letters were meant to confront us by showing us where we fall short.

1) Consider your Spiritual Condition

- Will we be honest with God and ourselves today? If God were to write a letter to RiverLife, what would He write?
- It is so easy to be pulled away from God in the hustle and bustle of our daily living. We tend to forget Him in our pursuit of a good life.
- If we want things to change, we must first be honest with ourselves and let God speak into our hearts and lives today.

2) The Church of Ephesus: The Loss of First Love

- The church of Ephesus has neglected their love for God and one another.
- While we study Scripture to learn more about God, it does not necessarily translate to loving God and one another.
- The true yardstick of Christian maturity is shown through our love for one another. Are there hurts and disappointments caused by someone in church? Seek reconciliation.
- A Biblical sign that God is reviving us is when we love one another like family ([John 13:35](#)).
- What does it mean to love God?
 - Loving God happens in the context of our communion and our relationship with Him.
 - We all need to learn how to have a relationship with God as a person.
 - Coming back to our first love means coming back to a place where our relationship with God is central to all that we are doing.

- When we read the Bible, we can either relate to God as a person, or as a text. When we pray, we can either relate to God as a person, or as a power to grant our desires.
- Scripture has also framed our love for Him as obedience to Him ([John 14:15](#), [John 14:23](#), [1 John 5:3](#)). The evidence of our love for God is seen in our obedience to Him, where the source of our obedience is our love for Him. It is different from a legalistic obedience.

3) The Church of Laodicea: The Lukewarm Church

- Historical Context (Adapted from BibleGateway.com): To the north of Laodicea, Hierapolis had healthy hot springs (with medicinal benefits), and to the south, Colossae had cold springs that were clean and refreshing to drink from. But Laodicea had perpetual problems with its water supply, which was brought by aqueduct six miles from the south. By the time the water reached Laodicea, it had become lukewarm. It was tepid, unclean, and undrinkable, the kind of water that makes you sick, that you might spit or vomit out of your mouth.
- Jesus likened the spiritual condition of the Laodicean church to their lukewarm water – it was disgusting to God.
- Although the church of Laodicea is doing well in their own eyes, in God’s eyes they are wretched and pitiful – poor, blind, and naked ([Revelation 3:17](#)).
- God’s challenge for the Laodiceans:
 - In their nakedness, obtain from Him white garments of purity. No longer live in sin.
 - In their blindness, get salves from Him to heal their spiritual blindness, so that they can see themselves for who they really are.
- We become lukewarm when we make ourselves the centre of our lives; we flirt with sin, and we are spiritually blind to see and recognise this.
- We have invented a kind of middle-class Christianity, that is neither biblical nor heretical, but moderate enough to justify our lukewarmness. We put ourselves in the centre of our lives, God at the periphery. Has our focus shifted away from God to storing up treasures on earth ([Matthew 6:19-21](#))?

That is why we need to examine ourselves and our lives. Are we living for God or for ourselves? Do we love our lives on earth more than we love God?

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.” – [Matthew 13:45-46](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. John Piper once asked, **“The critical question for our generation – and for every generation – is this: If you could have heaven, with no sickness, and with all the friends you ever had on earth, and all the food you ever liked, and all the leisure activities you ever enjoyed, and all the natural beauties you ever saw, all the physical pleasures you ever tasted, and no human conflict or any natural disasters, could you be satisfied with heaven, if Christ were not there?”**

Reflect on this question and share your honest answer and thoughts with your cell.

Leader's Notes

This question prompts us to reflect honestly on our current spiritual condition. If we answer that we are happy with a heaven without Christ, we need to ask ourselves - why? Do we value our friends and our pleasures more than we value Christ? This is a sign of a lukewarm Christian.

In the sermon, Zheng Xin shared that we become lukewarm because we make ourselves the centre of our lives, we flirt with sin, and we are spiritually blind to see and recognise this.

How can we return to the place where we will be like David in [Psalm 63:1](#), “O God, You are my God; earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh faints for You, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”?

Transition

A heaven without Christ isn't heaven at all! May God open our eyes to see that Christ far outweighs everything else in our lives.

- 2. RiverLife is currently going through a period of fasting and praying for personal revival. Reflect on your journey thus far and share candidly. What does personal revival look like to you?**

Leader's Notes

*“Revival is not an added dimension to strengthen our spiritual walk but a new passion and friendship with Jesus based on acknowledging our brokenness (wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, naked) and turning away from our self-sufficiency.” – extracted from **21 Days of Prayer for Revival Devotional Day 7.***

*“Revival is always accompanied by deep repentance from sin... God convicts and we repent... We repent alone and we repent together.” – extracted from **21 Days of Prayer for Revival Devotional Day 11.***

Here are some other questions you can ask your cell:

- Did you hear from God and convict you of things you need to repent?
- Did you have a tough time fasting? If yes, are you discouraged?
- Are you committed to this? If you are not, why?

Transition

Our revival journeys will be different from each other. What matters is that we persevere and continue to encourage each other.

- 3. “And many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.” – Matthew 24:11-13.**

Like the church of Ephesus, has our love for God and for others grown cold? How do we love God more?

Leader's Notes

The church of Ephesus has neglected both their love for God and for one another (Revelation 2:4). They have forsaken their love for God.

How do we love God? In the Bible it says:

“If you love Me, keep My commands.” – John 14:15

“In fact, this is love for God: to keep His commands. And His commands are not burdensome.” – 1 John 5:3

When we keep His commands, it means that we love God. How do we keep His commands, especially in daily life where it is very easy to forget Him and carry on living as we usually do? You can choose something that you want to change that aligns with God's command and get an accountability partner from your cell.

Resource: *Eight Signs You're a Lukewarm Christian* by JD Greear Ministries

Closing

Jesus already foretold that our love would grow cold. Let us be the ones that stand firm to the end!

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 for us to realise our spiritual condition and to build our lives around God.
- Pray for strength and desire to align ourselves with His commands.

2. RiverLife

- Pray for our church that God will revive us individually as we go through the 21-Days of Prayer and Fasting.

3. World

- Pray for good weather in Singapore during this hot season. Pray also that there will not be any haze.
- Continue to pray for the Russia-Ukraine war and the avoidance of using nuclear weapons.
- Pray for the political scene in Singapore amidst all the scandals that have surfaced these 2 weeks.
- Pray for Japan as they release the Fukushima radioactive water into the ocean, as well as the nations that will be affected.

4. 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. Revive Us, Lord – 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting, 17 July – 6 August 2023.**
 - After three years of praying together, our Elders and Senior Leaders sense it is now time to call the church into a season of prayer and fasting. We invite you on this journey as we commit ourselves to pursue the Lord together and align our hearts to His.
 - Listen to Ps Ben's sharing on the heart behind the call: rlc.sg/21days-2jul
 - For 21 days from 17 Jul to 6 Aug, we are committing ourselves to:
 - Daily Devotion
 - Daily Fasting
 - Nightly Worship & Prayer
 - Weekly Sermon Series
 - Visit the microsite for more details: rlc.sg/21days
 - We have also prepared a 21 Day Devotion for parents to do with their children during the 21 Days. You can download the e-Devotion here: rlc.sg/21d-kidsdevo
- 2. Revive Us, Lord. Sermon Series.** In the book of Revelation, Jesus wrote letters to 7 churches. He commends them for what they have done well, addresses their current state, gives them each a warning and an encouragement for those who would heed His words. As we embark on 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting, this sermon series will move us to examine the state of our hearts and the spiritual condition of our church. As we hear what God is saying to us, may we return to the ways and will of God for us individually, and as a church. Lord, awaken us to the urgency of the times and the reality of your return!
 - 16 Jul: Facing Revival
 - 23 Jul: The Revelation of Christ
 - 30 Jul: The Lukewarm Church
 - 6 Aug: The Compromising Church
 - 13 Aug: The Church in Persecution
- 3. RiverLife Mission Trips.** Come serve with us on a Mission Trip this year-end!
 - **Trip 1: 28 Sep-2 Oct (Thu-Mon) Medical Mission to Sarangani, Philippines** We're in need of medical doctors and nurses to serve with us on this trip. Registration closes on Tue, 8 Aug.
 - **Trip 2: 1-6 Nov (Wed-Mon) Province Wide Revival Conference in Pangasinan, North Philippines** Registration closes on Tue, 15 Aug.
 - **Trip 3: 7-11 Dec (Thu-Mon) Christmas Celebrations with B'laan Tribe in Sarangani, Philippines** Registration closes on Fri, 1 Sep.
 - Sign up for a trip at rlc.sg/missions-go or visit our Missions Booth in the Atrium on Sun, 6 Aug.
- 4. Marriage Retreat.** We had a powerful time with 27 married couples in March as we piloted our first Marriage Retreat. It was a powerful time of learning, rejuvenation, healing and restoration for our couples. No couple left unimpacted. We would like to encourage married couples to join us at this retreat and experience God's hand on your marriage.
 - For more information, download the eBrochure here: rlc.sg/mrBrochure
 - Highlights from previous retreat: <https://youtu.be/csHrCtBsuWg>
 - Link to signup: rlc.sg/mr

5. Cultivating Emotional & Mental Wellness Seminar. Sun, 13 Aug | 11am-1pm Grace Chapel (Level 1)

- This seminar will:
 - Help individuals who are struggling with emotional or mental wellness
 - Educate and equip caregivers of those who are struggling with emotional or mental wellness
- **Speaker: Dr Danny Ng**, a clinical psychologist in private practice and the President of the Singapore chapter of Renovaré (USA) offering resources for Christian Spiritual Formation for spiritual growth. He is the founder of Family Connexion, a Christian ministry whose focus lies in promoting a greater bonding and deepening of relationships between people, especially within the family.
- Register at rlc.sg/counems

CHURCH CALENDAR

1. Church Calendar Highlights

- *Quarter 3*
 - 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

2. YA Gatherings (For Young Adults in their 20s). First Saturday Every Month, 5pm-8.30pm Victory Chapel (Level 1).

The YA Gathering is a space where young adults can get together to connect and build community. This gathering is made up of two components – Community Conversations & Communal Dinner – both with a focus on relationship building and life conversations. If you are currently in a cell, register your attendance with your cell leader. If you are currently not in a cell, do register online: rlc.sg/YAgathering-apr-reg.

3. 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.

CHURCH MINISTRIES & OPPORTUNITIES

1. **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
2. **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.
3. **Missions Microsite.** Discover how you can go, give and pray for the nations. Let's make a difference in the nations together! For more information, visit rlc.sg/missions.

4. **RiverLife Cares Opportunities.** Signup: <http://rlc.sg/serve-rlcar>
5. **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>

RESOURCES & CONNECTING WITH US

1. **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)
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **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)

GIVING LINKS & QR CODES

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