

DATE: 03 SEP 2023 | SPEAKER: PASTOR ERNIE SONG
TOPIC: SET APART | SCRIPTURE: [GENESIS 17:1-14, 23-27](#)

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

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

1. Recognise the importance of Oneness in God and with each other
2. Commit to building the unity of the Church by loving God and each other as Christ does

SERMON SUMMARY

Circumcision in the Old Covenant was practiced as a sign that an individual is in covenant with God. It symbolises the Jewish identity as well as a commitment to walk in the ways of Yahweh, and to cut off anything that is unclean/sinful to God all the days of their lives. In the New Covenant, we are taught to circumcise our hearts. While this is not physical in nature, God desires His church to cut off anything that is displeasing to Him. He desires a church whose heart is solely on Him, and a church that walks in His ways, unpolluted by the world and its culture. When we live a lifestyle of heart circumcision, we will begin to walk in God's destiny for our lives.

SERMON RECAP

Introduction

One of the most important questions that a believer needs to ask is – “who am I?”. In order for this question to be answered, another bigger question needs to be asked – “who is God?”. One we know who God is, we know who we are. When we know who we are, we then will know how to live.

For the Jewish people, since the time of Abraham, their key identity is found in circumcision. We will examine the very first circumcision recorded in the Bible, in the story of Abraham.

Circumcision in the Old Covenant

#1 Circumcision is the sign of the covenant (v 10)

- Circumcision indicates that one is in covenant with God.
- It indicates one's willingness to be “all in” in the covenant with God – to not worship other gods, and to walk in the ways of God all the days of his life.

#2 Circumcision transforms one's identity (v 5)

- In ancient times, when a greater king makes a covenant with a lesser king, the lesser king will often times circumcise himself as a symbol of willingness to participate in the covenant.
- The moment the lesser king is circumcised, his status immediately gets elevated to an equal of the greater king's household. ([Psalm 23:5](#))
- It symbolises that the lesser king has access to the greater king's power and protection.

- Often times, this is accompanied by the changing of the lesser king's name (Abram to Abraham)

#3 Circumcision serves as a covenantal reminder (v 15)

- While circumcision is a sign required by God, circumcision is a sign for man.
- It serves as a reminder for the individual to walk blamelessly before God all the days of his life.

Circumcision in the New Covenant

#1 Circumcision is no longer required for Gentile believers. ([Acts 15](#), [Romans 2:25-29](#), [Galatians 3:28-29](#))

- This was the conclusion of the apostles in the early church.

#2 Our identity as believers is found in the circumcised heart ([2 Corinthians 6:17-18](#))

- Since the circumcision of Abraham, God has always desired that His children are circumcised in their hearts. ([Jeremiah 4:4](#))
- This means the “cutting off” of anything that displeases Him from our lives, and to embrace His ways of living.
- The Holy Spirit prompts and empowers believers to cut off those things that separate us from God (the ways of the world).
 - Sexual immorality
 - Constantly being in a position of temptation
 - Worldly work practices that are not God's ways
 - Expectations of children

#3 When we choose to walk in the circumcision of our hearts, God's call for our lives will come to pass ([Genesis 17:18-21](#), [21:1-4](#))

- Abraham's destiny came to pass at 100 years old when Isaac was born; this was 1 year after he was circumcised.
- When we are in the posture of a circumcised heart, God's destiny for our lives will come to pass.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think circumcision of the heart is such an important identity for a Christian?

Leader's Notes

This is a recap question. The circumcised heart symbolises that we are in covenant with the Lord. It also the posture by which we live – cutting away anything that is displeasing to the Lord in our lives. A heart that is not circumcised is equivalent to an unbeliever's heart. Therefore, we must constantly be in the posture of removing things within our lives that displeases the Lord – worldly practices and values, intentional sin, sin of omission, etc.

Resources: [What is the Circumcision of the Heart](#) by Mike Leake

Transition

A circumcised heart sets a believer apart from the world. It is our spiritual identity as sons and daughters of God. We must therefore be intentional to live “set apart” lives on a daily basis.

2. What does a lifestyle of the circumcised heart look like for your life? What will you be doing more and what will you be doing less?

This is a practical question – translating the concept of a circumcised heart into practical living. Encourage your members to share with the rest of the cell what their life would look like if they walk in the circumcision of the heart.

Transition

This is the lifestyle that we should aspire towards. This is God’s destiny for our lives – to live a life that is pleasing before Him.

3. Physical circumcision is painful. Likewise, spiritual circumcision is painful as well. It at times will cost us. What are some of the “worldly areas” in your life that you struggle to cut off?

Leader's Notes

This is a question that turns the concept of heart circumcision into practical steps we would like to take. Encourage your members to examine the various aspects of their lives: lifestyle, spending habits, parenting styles, relating with the opposite sex, the type of entertainment they choose to watch, business practices, etc. Which of these areas have more of the world in it than God? What is their struggle in cutting the worldly practices off from their lives and embrace God’s ways? Facilitate for the cell to share deeply in this area and to support one another in prayer.

Closing

A heart that is circumcised is a heart that is set apart for the Lord. It is our identity as believers in Christ. Let us not grow weary of cutting off those areas of our lives that are worldly and not of the Lord so that we need not be ashamed when we stand before Him at His coming.

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

- Ask the Lord for areas in your life that needs His circumcision
- Ask the Lord to grant you the strength to cooperate with His Spirit as He cuts those things in our lives that are displeasing before Him

2. RiverLife

- Pray for our church that as we have concluded the 21 days of prayer and fasting, we will determine to live in a new normal – one that follows after the example of Christ.

3. World

- Continue to pray for the Russia-Ukraine war and the avoidance of using nuclear weapons.
- Pray for Hawaii as catastrophic wild fires are sweeping through the various islands.
- Continue to pray for Thailand as they elect a new Prime Minister.

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.
- 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. **RCS: Urgent Help Needed for Maths Tutor (Now till end Oct)**

- We're in need of 6 tutors who can teach Primary 1 to 6 mathematics to serve from now until end Oct to help our children prepare for their year-end exams.
- One hour per week, online. Day & time to be arranged with parent, usually a weekday night or weekend morning/afternoon.
- If you're available and would like to serve, please sign up here: bit.ly/rcs-volunteer-signup

2. **The Parents Gathering.** The Parents Gathering is held once a quarter for parents to come together to connect with and support one another through the journey of parenting. As we discover more about ourselves and our children, may we grow to become the parents that God intended us to be. Our time together will comprise:

- A short 30-min video teaching segment
- Group connection time
- Personal / couple processing time
- Light refreshments

Our first gathering: Sat, 28 Oct. 2-6pm. Venue: TBC

Register by Sun, 22 Oct to join us at our first meetup: rlc.sg/pg

Workbooks can be purchased at \$16 each. Details to be released at a later date.

About the Curriculum Used

'The Art of Parenting' is designed to help parents make faith the core of their parenting with intentional, Biblical teaching and Christ-centered plans. Parents will gain renewed confidence, fresh insights on raising children at different ages, and a parenting plan unique to each child's personality and gifting. Inspired by Psalm 127:4, this eight-session study is video based and covers the following topics:

The Goal of Parenting • Forming Character • Applying Discipline • Building Relationships • Understanding Identity • Nurturing Identity • Preparing for Mission • The Power of Family

Preview the Curriculum here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7ZJ31DbGag>

3. **RiverLife's "Make Us One" T-Shirt**

- Cost: \$5 each (subsidised)
- Visit our booth in the Atrium to view sample sizes.
- Order and pay online: rlc.sg/32tee
- Order period: 26 Aug to 17 Sep 2023
- Collection period: 14 to 29 Oct 2023

4. **SuperLife's Annual Missions Carnival. 10 September 2023.** SuperLife's annual Missions Carnival 2023 is back! This year, our children will be raising funds for 3 day-care centres in churches planted by RiverLife in Sarangani, Philippines. The funds raised from the carnival will cover construction and start-up costs, as well as one year of operational expenses including meals for children at the centre and salaries for teachers.

SuperLifers will be serving you at our Cafe in the Atrium on Sun, 10 Sep:

- Breakfast with usual cafe menu and some extra surprises (8am-9am)

- Brunch with a variety of finger food, mains & desserts (10.45am-12pm)

You can look forward to a special menu that includes Grandma's Chicken Curry, Country Chicken Stew and Ice Cream! Do come and have your meals in church as a way of supporting and encouraging our young ones.

- 5. Equipping – Making Sense of Spiritual Gifts (4 Sessions).** The twentieth century has been called the "Century of the Holy Spirit" as the world witnessed successive revitalisations of the Church through the enablement of the Spirit. This empowerment by the Spirit continues to open up new possibilities for the Church; but also presents old temptations. Join us for this equipping series as we pursue an in-depth study on 1 Corinthians 12-14 so we can heed Apostle Paul's advice not *"to be uninformed about the gifts of the Spirit"* (1 Corinthians 12:1). Details:
 - a. Fri, 15 & 22 Sep, 8-10 pm, Sun, 17 & 24 Sep, 11am-3pm
Venue: Worship Centre
 - b. If you require lunch (\$7 each) for the Sunday sessions, please pre-order online by Mon, 11 Sep: rlc.sg/sg-lunch
 - 6. Restoring the Foundations: Hope, Healing & Freedom (6 Hours). Sat, 30 Sep. 9am to 4pm Grace Chapel. \$40 for RiverLifers only (inclusive of lunch and materials).** This seminar will teach about the biblical basis of RTF. You will learn to identify Hinderances and Beliefs that are holding you back. Begin to receive the Freedom to fulfil God's plans, purposes and calling for you. This Integrated Approach to Healing will enable you to receive Personal Restoration. Register by Mon, 25 Sep: rlc.sg/riverlifertf. Enquiries: mosessho@riverlife.org.sg.
 - 7. Joining The Family. Sat, 30 Sep. 10am - 1pm. Faith Chapel.** Joining The Family is a two-hour session that will help you understand what it means to be a son and daughter of this house. Learn about God's heart for the Church and His call for us to identify with a local body of believers. If you have been baptised, and you are a regular worshipper of RiverLife and belong to a cell group, we invite you to take the next step towards becoming a RiverLife family member.

Registration at rlc.sg/jointhefam (Closing Date: 24 Sep). Enquiries: karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg.
 - 8. Water Baptism Class. Sat, 7 Oct. 9am – 3.30pm. Room 205 (Level 2).** Water baptism is a public declaration of a believer's union and new identity in Christ and an outward expression of our commitment in receiving Christ as our personal Lord and Saviour. If you desire to take the step of faith to be water-baptised, do join our baptism class to understand the significance and importance of baptism.

Registration: rlc.sg/baptism-class (Closing Date: 1 Oct). Enquiries: karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg.
- Note:**
- Participants will have a one-hour lunch break at own expense.
 - Our upcoming Water Baptism Service will be held on Sun, 12 Nov at 2pm.
- 9. Call for a Suitable Liver Donor.** Father of RiverLifer Beverly Lim is calling for suitable donors for his son, Ryan, who is in need of a liver transplant. Ryan was diagnosed with Autoimmune Hepatitis (AIH) that affected his liver and bile duct. On 22 May 2023, Ryan was brought in to see the doctor due to his bloated stomach and the doctor concluded that a liver transplant was needed for Ryan as his liver was failing. The donor needs to be of blood type A+ or O+, with no prior illness and someone with a healthy diet. Read more about their story in this salt and light article [here](#). Should anyone wish to enquire or volunteer, do contact Ryan's dad, Lim Cheng Kwan, directly at +65 9768 4748.

10. **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

CHURCH CALENDAR

1. Church Calendar Highlights

- *Quarter 3*
 - Bible Equipping – Making Sense of Spiritual Gifts: 15 & 17, 22 & 24 Sep
 - Joining the Family – 30 Sep
 - RTF HHF Seminar – 30 Sep
- *Quarter 4*
 - Baptism Class – 7 Oct
 - Parents Gatherings – 28 Oct
 - Leaders Huddle – 5 Nov
 - Baptism Service – 12 Nov
 - Equipping Series - Leviticus: 17 & 19, 24 & 26 Nov
 - Marriage Retreat – 24 to 26 Nov

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.

- *RiverLife Prayer Room.* Tue, 8-9.30pm, Victory Chapel.
- *RiverLife Revive Nights.* Wed, 8pm – 9.30pm, Victory Chapel (livestream: rlc.sg/revivenights)

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

ONLINE GIVING TO MISSIONS

Donate digitally:

PayNow

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

Interbank Transfer

UOB Account 450-309634-4

Kindly indicate "Missions" in your transaction reference.



ONLINE GIVING TO RIVERLIFE CHURCH

Contribute your tithes and offering digitally:

PayNow

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

Interbank Transfer

RiverLife Church Bank Account: DBS Autosave 029-902431-0

Bank Code: 7171 / Branch Code: 029



ONLINE DONATION TO RIVERLIFE COMMUNITY SERVICES

Donate digitally:

PayNow

Log in to your bank's existing mobile banking app. Scan this QR code on the right OR enter UEN No. 200711586WDON

Kindly indicate your NRIC No. under the Bill Reference to qualify for tax deduction.

