

DATE: 29 OCTOBER 2023 | SPEAKER: PS. LIONEL GOH | TOPIC: BREAKING SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS | SCRIPTURE: [1 KINGS 18:1-41 \(NLT\)](#)

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

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

1. Reflect and identify any idols or spiritual strongholds in their lives
2. Commit to living a life wholly devoted to Him

SERMON SUMMARY

King Ahad had married Jezebel, a Sidonian princess, who championed the worship of Baal and Asherah in Israel. The Israelites added these gods into their choices of worship to improve their chances of a better life. God was angry with this widespread worship of pagan gods and there was drought upon the land for 3 years. God intended to use this drought to draw Israel back to Himself.

1. God Detests Idolatry. Why?
 - a. Idolatry displaces God of His Pre-eminence ([Ex 20:2-5](#))
 - b. Idolatry brings defilement ([Ps 106:36-39](#))
 - c. Idolatry involves demonic worship ([1 Cor 10:19-20](#))
 - d. Result: Spiritual blindness ([2 Cor 4:3-4](#))
2. The Significance of Elijah's Challenge ([v 19](#))
 - a. Mt Carmel: The right venue for this spiritual contest
 - b. The spectacular spiritual contest ([v 22-40](#))
 - c. The divine reason for this showdown ([v 36-37](#))
 - d. The effects of God's victory
3. Application Today
 - a. Our modern day "idols"
 - b. Spiritual strongholds still exist today ([1 Cor 10:3-5](#))
 - c. How do we demolish spiritual strongholds? ([Luke 11:20-21](#))
 - d. 4 Steps to take:
 - i. Recognize your idols and strongholds.
 - ii. Repent from your idolatry and other sins.
 - iii. Resist the Devil's work in your life ([James 4:7](#))
 - iv. Rejoice in your freedom

SERMON RECAP

The people of Israel had been introduced to Baal and Asherah, the gods of Queen Jezebel. In 1 Kings 18 Elijah was sent to proclaim to King Ahab that there would be rain after a 3 year drought. Elijah challenged the people to make a stand and decision on which God to follow. He also challenged the prophets of Baal and Asherah.

Israel added Baal and Asherah into their worship list to improve their chances of a better life. Baal was deemed as the supreme God and could give good weather and boost their harvest. Asherah could increase fruitfulness to their flocks and families. Both deities enhanced their sensuality and sexual appetite through temple prostitution.

1. God Detests Idolatry. Why?

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- d. Result: Spiritual blindness ([2 Cor 4:3-4](#))

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- a. Mt Carmel: The right venue for this spiritual contest
- b. The spectacular spiritual contest ([v 22-40](#))

Baal's altar	Yahweh's altar
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Represented by 450 prophets• Sacrifice & wood left dry• Lots of loud shouting, prancing, self-mutilation, frenzy prayers.• Prayers went on for 6-7 hours• Nothing happened	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Represented by Elijah alone• Sacrifice & wood drenched• A repairing of broken altar with 12 stones• A simple prayer of 1 minute• Fire came down and consumed everything

- c. The divine reason for this showdown ([v 36-37](#))
- d. The effects of God's victory
 - The people saw God's power in real time.
 - Their spiritual eyes were opened
 - They confessed Yahweh as their only God
 - They killed all the false prophets of Baal
 - Rain came and their drought ended
 - A national revival broke out

3. Application Today

- a. Our modern day “idols” – An idol is something or someone that becomes more important to us than God.
 - Money / Materialism
 - Prestigious Degree
 - Good Job / Career
 - Physical Appearance
 - Children / Family
 - Comfort / Good Life
 - Entertainment / Fun
 - Sex

- b. Spiritual strongholds still exist today ([1 Cor 10:3-5](#)) – Examples of spiritual strongholds:
 - Pride
 - Ungodly Belief
 - Lofty Knowledge
 - Self-Righteousness
 - Carnal Desires
 - Depression
 - Unworthiness
 - Irrational Fear
 - Distrust
 - Insecurity

- c. How do we demolish spiritual strongholds? ([Luke 11:20-21](#)) - 4 Steps to take:
 - i. Recognize your idols and strongholds. Desire to demolish them with Jesus’ help.
 - ii. Repent from your idolatry and other sins. Seek God’s forgiveness.
 - iii. Resist the Devil’s work in your life ([James 4:7](#)). Take up your spiritual authority and break these strongholds in Jesus’ name.
 - iv. Rejoice in your freedom. Walk in steps with the Spirit in daily obedience

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. The Israelites had been introduced and influenced by the gods that had been introduced into their culture. Share with the cell if this is a similar experience you have in the settings you have been placed in. What are the overt and covert un-Biblical influences you have been exposed to? How can we be mindful not to be swayed by it but to remain devoted?**

Leader's Notes

The question aims to let members take a step back to reflect on the influences they may have been exposed to, and to consider how they can choose to reflect God wherever God has placed them. In the case of 1 Kings 18, members can also reflect about the influence of leadership on communities, and to also ponder how they can also influence each other to live a devoted life and to point others to Christ.

Transition

While we become aware of the influences around us and how it may impact us, let us also consider how good things can become idols when they take the place of God in our lives.

- 2. Idols are things or people that become more important to us than God. Are there areas that have become more important to us than God? What are some subtle ways these things or people take the position of God? What is God's intention of us recognizing these idols and how can we find biblical balance?**

Leader's Notes

This is a relate and reflect question. Some identified "idols" are not bad in itself, however it takes the form of idols when it becomes more important than God. This question aims to allow members to reflect on the subtle ways we may allow these to take the place of God. What are some markers that we can be mindful of e.g., the thin line of stewarding and nurturing our children or gifts vs allowing such things to become what we base our identity on. The later part of the question is for members to consider the heart of God for His people and how He desires for us to find everlasting satisfaction in Him instead of what is temporary.

Transition

God desires for us to be a people wholly devoted and surrendered to Him. He desires for us to trust Him and He will empower us to grant us what we need.

- 3. All of us will experience spiritual strongholds in our lives. Share with the cell an experience of a time where Jesus destroyed the spiritual stronghold, or a current area that you are trusting Jesus for breakthrough for. How can we also resist the work of the evil one in our lives?**

Leader's Notes

This is a relate and reflect question for members to share their testimony of breakthroughs in their lives and for members to share and commit areas that they are trusting God for breakthrough for. As a cell, members can also consider how we can be aware of the work of the evil one and to be mindful against it.

Closing

While there are many things competing for our attention and devotion, we can find assurance in God. May we fix our eyes on God and trust Him wholeheartedly.

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

- That we will be sensitive to God's leading and be aware of the things or people that have taken the place of an idol in our lives.
- That we can trust God wholeheartedly and find our identity in Him as we surrender these things to Him.
- For breakthrough in the areas of spiritual strongholds.

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.
- Pray for our upcoming mission trips, RiverLife Kindergarten Graduation Concert, as well as the Parents Gathering and Marriage Retreat that will be happening soon.

3. World

- Pray for Singapore as we experience a new wave of COVID-19 and haze.
- Pray for the conflict in the Gaza Strip between Israel and Hamas, that a peaceful resolution can be reached soon.
- Pray for Scotland and Scandinavia as the deadly storm Babet hits these countries.
- Pray for the bed bug infestations that are sweeping through France, Algeria and Africa.
- Continue to pray for the Russia-Ukraine war and the avoidance of using nuclear weapons.

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. Pray for Our Mission Teams.** From 1-6 Nov, 32 RiverLifers will be in Dagupan city in Pangasinan, Philippines to minister at province-wide conference and rallies. Let's cover them in prayer:
 - For God's presence to be manifested throughout the Conference & Night Rallies, and all who are there will encounter God personally.
 - For God to raise up a generation that is willing to be set apart and do His will in the Philippines.
 - That God will grant the team joy in serving, seeing a great harvest of souls, journey mercies, good health and good weather.
 - For the Lord's anointing upon the team as they serve in different areas.
 - For the Holy Spirit to empower team members as they minister in various local churches after the conference and rallies.
- 2. Newly Commissioned Ministry Heads.**
 - **Grace Wong, Head of Worship Ministry**
Grace's heart is for the generations coming together in oneness to worship the Lord and hasten the day of His return. Her desire is to see the church be wholehearted in our love for the Lord and His people. A musician by training and teacher by vocation, she is passionate about educating, equipping and activating the body of Christ to understand the Father's heart and serve Him with excellence. Having served in RiverLife Worship & Arts Ministry since 2012, she was part of the MegaLife Worship Ministry core team from 2016-2022 and joined the RiverLife staff team in February 2023. Grace is married to Jason and they have a son, Micah.
 - **Charmaine Chee, Head of Counselling Ministry**
Charmaine came to know the Lord when she was 14 and her faith deepened when she grew spiritually through serving in Overseas Christian Fellowship as a student in Perth. From 1992 to 2010, Charmaine served in various capacities as a full-time staff with Hope Church (Singapore). Presently, she is a primary school counsellor with the Ministry of Education after pursuing a joint degree in Master of Arts in Practical Theology and Master of Arts in Human Services Counseling at Regent University, USA. Her journey with RiverLife began in March 2019 when she started worshipping regularly here. She is part of PSH2B cell group and has been serving in Alpha @ RiverLife as well as our Counselling Ministry since 2020. Having completed the RTF Activation Seminar in July 2023, Charmaine is now training to be an RTF IFM Minister. She considers loving and following Christ as the best thing in her life and desires to continue empowering people to live fulfilling lives in the Lord.
- 3. Collect Your 'Make Us One' T-Shirts.** Starting this Sun – 22, 29 Oct & 5 Nov After service till 12.30pm | Atrium (Level 1) Upon collection, we may request for the email containing your order details received from 'Google Forms' at the email address you used to place your order for verification. Due to the overwhelming response, we seek your understanding that collection of orders will be done after service until 12.30pm on Sundays on a first-come-first-served basis. If you are unable to collect within the time slot this Sunday, you can do so next Sunday. Please be assured that confirmed orders (i.e. those placed and paid for within the ordering & payment period) will be fulfilled.
- 4. Bible Equipping Sessions by Pastor David Lim - Book of Leviticus Set Apart for The Gospel: Encountering God's Holiness.** "Rules and regulations" are unfortunately what go through many believers' minds whenever they encounter the book of Leviticus. In fact, its current name can be traced to a misconception that the book contained merely instructions to the priesthood, and thus was not relevant to the rest of God's people.

But why did God give this book to Israel right after the completion of the Tabernacle? How were the various rules related to the fact that God's holy presence was now dwelling among His people? The first half of Leviticus focuses on the significance of Israel's sacrificial system, culminating in the central theology of the atonement, while the second half explores the specific instructions concerning different aspects of daily lives and how they are meant to reflect the holiness of God.

This series comprises 4 sessions:

1. Fri, 17 Nov, 8-10 pm
2. Sun, 19 Nov, 11.30am-3.30pm (with lunch break)
3. Fri, 24 Nov, 8-10 pm
4. Sun, 26 Nov, 11.30am-3.30pm (with lunch break)

Pre-order your lunch for the Sunday sessions by Sun, 13 Nov: rlc.sg/lev-lunch

If you have not attended the Genesis book study series, please watch *Introduction to the Pentateuch*: rlc.sg/intro-penta (First 30 minutes)

5. **Seniors Survey for RiverLifers aged 55 & above.** We're inviting RiverLifers aged 55 & above to participate in our survey for seniors! This survey, initiated by our newly set up ministry for seniors – Caleb Ministry, seeks to understand seniors and the ways they would like to serve or be involved in church life during this season of their lives. Caleb Ministry is part of our ongoing churchwide discipleship efforts, and aims to encourage, equip, and empower our seniors to live an abundant life (John 10:10) in their autumn years.

Kindly submit your response by Thu, 30 Nov: rlc.sg/calebsurvey

6. **The RiverLife Welcome Lunch. Sun, 19 Nov | 11.30am-1pm Grace Chapel (Level 1)** Specially for those who started joining us at service or cell this year. Relationships matter to us because church is family. If you are new to RiverLife, come join us for this Welcome Lunch so that we can get to know one another better. You'll get to meet fellow RiverLifers as well as our Senior Leaders and Pastors too. This session is for those who have not attended a Welcome Lunch previously. Due to capacity constraints, each guest may be accompanied by up to two family members or friends (including their host).

RSVP online by Sun, 12 Nov: rlc.sg/welcomelunch

7. **RiverLife Community Services (RCS)**

- 2023 Faith Goal: \$920,000
- Amount raised to date: \$574,046

RiverLife Community Services is the community arm of RiverLife Church. It is our hope that through RCS, we will be able to bring Kingdom transformation to local communities by reaching, nurturing and empowering individuals and families. Your contribution to RCS will help sustain the programmes and support extended to low-income beneficiaries.

How you can give:

- Indicate your donation amount on this form: bit.ly/feeddreams
- Donate digitally or in-person at the Atrium on 15, 22, 29 Oct & 5 Nov (10.45-11.45am).
- As a token of appreciation, with every donation of \$50, you will receive one complimentary meal voucher from your choice of our partner restaurants.

8. Discipleship@Home - Our Bodies, God's Story (For Parents of Primary Children)

- Primary Session: Sun, 5 Nov | 9am-11am | Grace Chapel
- Content: What is God's design for our bodies that are made in the image of God? How can we love God through knowing how to take care of ourselves as male and female image-bearers?

The sessions will discuss biblical sexuality with children and parents, providing age-specific handles so that we can be effective ambassadors of Christ in His grand story. *More in-depth discussion on pressing issues such as purity and the influence of media will be covered at the Primary session.* If you have children in both preschool & primary levels, we encourage you to attend both sessions as content will differ.

Speaker: **Carol Loi** is the International Director of *Generations of Virtue*, a ministry committed to teaching sexual wholeness and integrity, building family relationships & transforming culture. As a mom to two young adults, Carol is also a certified digital wellness educator and a Fellow of the Center for Media Literacy. She has served in the Singapore public service for over two decades, including EDB, MOE and IMDA.

- Sign up to attend: rlc.sg/dah

9. Serve in SuperLife. Serve in SuperLife as a Teacher or Tech Support Crew!

- Teacher's role:
 - Support the running of weekly SuperLife services for preschool children
 - Care for and manage the children during service
- Tech support crew role:
 - Serve at our children's services for Kindy (aged 5-6) and Nursery (aged 3-4) levels
 - Operate the Pro-Presenter software on a laptop for videos and slides support
 - Operate the sound panel and microphones for audio support No prior experience needed as training will be provided.
- Sign up to serve: rlc.sg/serve

10. Current Pulpit Series – In the Wake of Awakening.

- Part 2 – Revivals (15 Oct – 26 Nov). We survey seasons of awakening in Israel's history throughout the Old Covenant. From restorations of relationships to spiritual warfare, we will glean from Israel's obedience and failures following seasons of renewal.

CHURCH CALENDAR

1. Church Calendar Highlights

- *Quarter 4*
 - Water Baptism Service – 12 Nov
 - Equipping Series - Leviticus: 17 & 19, 24 & 26 Nov
 - Marriage Retreat – 24 to 26 Nov
 - Leaders Huddle – 3 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.**

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