

Date: 3 Mar 2024 | **Speaker:** Ps Ernie Song | **Topic:** Let the River Flow | **Scripture:** John 13

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

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

1. Understand that we need to first experience God's love, to love others fully with an others-centered love
2. Desire to experience more of God's love in their lives, and to love the people/community around them

SERMON SUMMARY

*"A season of breakthroughs in word, deed and power, that ushers in a new normal of kingdom experience and fruitfulness." – James Choung & Ryan Pfeiffer, **Longing for Revival***

All of us desire to see our church being revived – greater manifestation of God's presence in worship, deeper teachings of the work, expansion of our community and missions work, every RiverLifer stepping up to live a thriving Christian life, etc. But, where do we start? It is no coincidence that we are doing John 13-16 during the season of prayer and fasting because in it, Jesus shows us the first step towards a revived life – love. The way many of us do relationships is no different from the world - there is too much of the world's values, expectations, and priorities in us.

Jesus teaches and models for us what love for each other and relational wholeness looks like in **John 13**, which depicts the scene of Jesus having the last supper with His disciples before going to the cross. Amidst a very tensed and competitive setting, Jesus washed his disciples' feet and gave His final teaching to his disciples – to love one another.

As disciples of Christ, others-centeredness/love has to be the motivation and core of who we are and what we do. This cannot take place if we do not experience God's love for us first. Out of this love that we have received, then we can give.

SERMON RECAP

*"Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, **he loved them to the end.**" – **John 13:1***

Ps Ernie shared that **John 13:1** is the key that unlocks how we interpret **John 13-16**. The key lens we need to have as we approach **John 13-16** is that of love – our love for God (Great Commandment) and our love for each other (2nd Greatest Commandment).

1. Atmosphere of Strife at the Last Supper

To better understand the context and background of the Last Supper, Ps Ernie highlighted the significance of the seating arrangement at the Last Supper. Contrary to popular belief, Jesus and the disciples were actually seated on a Triclinium Table that was more like a U-shape (not a straight table) and they were all reclined at the table. As the seating arrangement was in order of importance, this triggered an argument amongst the disciples that night and they argued with each other as to where each should be seated. The Bible records that there was a dispute among the disciples as to which of them was to be regarded the greatest (**Luke 22:24**). The dysfunctional relationships between the disciples is an inherited consequence from the original sin.

2. Broken Shalom in Eden (**Genesis 3**)

The original sin in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 3:6-13**) broke not just man's relationship with God but also man's relationship with each other. There was a "shame and blame" that happened in the Garden of Eden (e.g. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the snake). Man became "Me-centred" and selfish, and no longer others-centred. When Adam and Eve sinned, a part of God's image in them is distorted because God is love (**1 John 4:16**).

3. **When God Washed our Feet (John 13:1-12)**

While all the disciples were arguing over who was the greatest that night, Jesus knelt down with a towel and basin and washed His disciples' feet. Feet-washing in ancient Israel is significant – feet were often smelly and dirty due to the dusty ground, littered with animal droppings and warm and dry conditions in Israel. Jesus washed His disciples feet even though he knew that Judas was going to betray Him, Peter was going to deny him and all his disciples would forsake Him – He did this because Jesus, who is God, is love – and Love is demonstrated through servanthood. Jesus cannot stop being who He is, regardless of how His disciples respond to Him.

To understand the significance of Jesus' feet-washing, we must first understand how insignificant humans are – “we are dust” (Psalms 103:14). Showing a photo of earth taken by Voyager 1, in 1990, where planet earth appeared as a pale blue dot, Ps Ernie reiterated how insignificant we are – just a small dot in all of His creation. Yet, Christ humbled Himself, gave up everything and served us by dying on the cross for us. That is the love of God. The Creator of the whole universe washed our feet in spite of our imperfectness and shallow love for Him. God continues to wash our feet today.

God is love. He is Other's centered (agape love). That is why, as children of God, the call of us must be to love one another (John 13:34).

When Jesus washed his disciples feet, it wasn't just Christ that washed their feet. It was Father, Son and Holy Spirit that washed their feet. The Trinity washed the feet of the disciples despite their constant striving, fractures, pride and subsequent betrayal and denial.

4. **Implications of God Washing Our Feet (John 13:12-17)**

The foundation that revival should be anchored on is love. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love (1 John 4:8). The number one characteristic of a Christian is if you have the Father's love in you, and expressed through you.

“You are an image-bearer with work to do, not a work-doer with an image to maintain” – Ian Simkins. We are meant to bear the image of God, the glory of God wherever we are – to show God's love. We are our brother's keeper. Christianity is birthed in community and must be done in community, not in isolation. That is why we have cells – to spur each other on this race.

Ps Ernie shared a picture of the river. Every river begins with rain from above; Rain creates pools of water on the mountain; These pools of water overflow, creating various waterfalls down the mountain which results in streams. These streams join together to create a river. Similarly, the starting point for us on how to love one another is if we first experience the rain – the love of God. The starting point to love one another is to first experience God's love.

The love of God is not something to be taught or understood but to be experienced. We must experience God's love first to know what true love is. We need to experience the love of God first before we can love others and be others-centered. When we have experienced God's love, it would naturally flow out of us into the lives of those around us.

Ps Ernie concluded the message by encouraging the church to participate in the 21 days of prayer and fasting to seek God and experience God's love anew so that the love we experience can overflow to the communities around us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. We must experience God's love first before we can love others. How can you experience God's love (not just read about or understand it) on a regular basis?**

Leader's Notes

Ps Ernie shared that the love of God is not something to be understood, but to be experienced. We must first experience Him as Father. Leaders can ask members to reflect and share about various times in their lives where they experienced God's tangible love, and how that had changed them or their lives. Leaders can also invite members to share what challenges or difficulties they face in experiencing God's love regularly (eg. being caught up with the distractions of the world, busy achieving our own agenda in life, etc). The cell can share some spiritual disciplines (eg. prioritizing daily devotions, quiet time and prayer, worship etc.) that we can incorporate in our daily lives to help us experience God's love on a regular basis.

Transition

We cannot love others the way Christ did until we first experience God's love ourselves.

- 2. What is the difference between the love that Christ wants us to have for each other versus how the world teaches us to love one another? What can I do to be "my brother's keeper"?**

Leader's Notes

In the world we live in today, everyone is "Me-centred" – looking out for themselves and our love for each other is often conditional, even amongst family members and friends. Our relationships are often shallow and do not cost us much or inconvenience. Ps Ernie shared that God is love, and the number one characteristic of a Christian is having the Father's love in you – and expressed through you.

Leaders can ask members to reflect on the relationships in their lives and the way they love their family members (parents, spouses, siblings, children etc.) and friends, and what they can do to be more others-centred in their relationships or to spur someone on their faith journey. Leaders can also invite the members to share how the cell can better support or spur each other on in their Christian faith.

Transition

Because God is love and Others-centred, His call for us as His children is to love one another. We are our brother's keeper.

- 3. Discuss as a cell how you want to participate together in the 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting.**

Leader's Notes

Leaders can invite members to share how they would like to participate in the 21 days of prayer fasting both individually, and as a cell, and discuss how the cell can support each other or keep each other accountable during this 21 days. If needed, do a short exhortation to encourage your cell members to participate in what God wants to do in our lives during these 21 Days.

Closing

As the church embarks on 21 days of prayer and fasting, God wants to do a work of refining and restoration in our midst. Let us make time for it so that we can experience more of God's love. When we have experienced God's love, it would naturally flow out of us into the lives of those around us.

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 desire to experience more of God's love in our lives.
- Pray that God will cause us to experience more of His love daily so that we express His love by loving others around us more fully.

2. RiverLife

- Pray for our church, that as we enter into a season of prayer and fasting, that God will align all of our hearts and do what He needs to do so that we can live in a new normal that glorifies Him.

3. World

- Continue to pray for the various nations that are at war:
 - a. Russia and Ukraine
 - b. Myanmar (Civil War) – Pray for the situation where military service was made compulsory for man and woman between the ages of 18 and 35.
 - c. Israel & Hamas
- Continue to pray for countries that have an escalated conflict situation:
 - a. China and the Philippines in the South China Sea
 - b. North & South Korea
- Continue to pray for countries recovering from recent natural disasters:
 - a. Japan (Earthquake)
 - b. Iceland (Volcanic Eruption)
- Pray for Singapore
 - a. Pray against the rise of young drug abusers
 - b. Pray for a stability in the cost of living in Singapore
 - c. Pray for the Zika cluster in Boon Lay Place
- Pray for Indonesia as a new president has just been appointed.
- Pray for the situation in Korea where there is a strike by the medical professionals which is affecting the sick.

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.

1. **21 Days of Prayer & Fasting - Revive Us, Lord, Align our hearts to Yours. 11-31 Mar.** The days we live in hold many distractions, alluring pathways, and enticing agendas which can cause our hearts to wander. Once again, we need to remember that we are God's beloved children, called to share His love in our broken world, and we must never slip into spiritual apathy and forget our calling. This is why we're setting apart 21 days leading up to Easter to deepen our fellowship with Christ – meditating on His word, enjoying His presence and hearing Him speak to us. We will fix our gaze on the Lord and give Him our full attention – putting away everything else that would distract or distance us from the simple act of sitting at His feet. As we pursue Him together and collectively desire to be in communion with Him, we know that God's heart will not only be filled with delight, but also be moved to fulfil His purposes through us.
 - For 21 days from 11-31 Mar, we are committing ourselves to:
 - Daily Devotion
 - Daily Fasting
 - Nightly Worship & Prayer
 - Sermon Series based on John 13-16
 - Join us on this shared journey: rlc.sg/21days

2. **MegaLife Camp 2024. Thu-Sun, 13-16 Jun. Thistle Hotel, Johor Bahru. For Youths Aged 13-18.** If you are a parent of a teen or know someone who's a teen, invite them for our annual Youth camp! Registration opens first week of April and more details will be shared.
 - Camp Fees:
 - a. Early Bird (6-15 Apr): \$280
 - b. Regular (16-22 Apr): \$320

3. **The Parents Gathering. 27 Apr, 2pm-6pm. Grace Chapel.** This platform is designed to help parents of various life-stages to grow in their roles as parents, as well as support one another in their parenting journey. Each quarterly gathering will include short teachings, group connection time, refreshments, as well as parents processing time.
 - No fees required.
 - Closing Date: 21 Apr 2024.
 - Registration: rlc.sg/pg

4. **Family Life Portal.**
 - Our Family Life ministry strengthens relationships within the family so that they are reflective of who God is – married couples loving and serving each other, parents discipling their children in the ways of God, grandparents inspiring the generations by their faith and actions, and the singles living secure and fruitful lives for God's kingdom! RiverLife's Family Life portal is an online platform that contains this year's calendar of Family Life initiatives as well as a wide range of resources for various life stages.
 - Access the portal: rlc.sg/familylife or www.riverlife.org.sg (Under the "Resources" tab)

5. **Complimentary Shuttle Bus Service**
 - In view of our Filipino Service returning to RiverLife premises on Sundays, there is a shuttle bus service for Filipino congregants at 10.20am and 10.50am. This is to help them ease in as they transit from the previous service venue at Bible House.
 - As such, we have a shuttle bus slot at 11am from RiverLife to Pasir Ris MRT.
 - From RiverLife to Pasir Ris MRT: 11am at our Level 1 Drop Off Point
 - Do note this is a provisional arrangement and subject to change following the transition period.

- 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 interested in joining the gatherings and would like to find out more, connect with us on our Telegram Channel: [rlc.sg/ya](https://t.me/rlc.sg/ya).

Gathering Dates: 6 Apr, 4 May, 1 Jun, 3 Aug, 7 Sep, 5 Oct, 2 Nov

YA Camp: 5-7 Jul

Christmas Outreach: 14 Dec

- RiverLife Prayer Meetings.**

- *RLC Prayer Room.* Tue, 8-9.30pm, Victory Chapel. (Livestream: rlc.sg/rpr-watch)
- *Revive Nights.* Wed, 8pm – 9.30pm, Victory Chapel. (Livestream: rlc.sg/revivenights)

We encourage you to set aside every Wednesday for a time of fasting.

- Quarterly Calendar for Key English Adult Congregation Events**

**Some dates are tentative and subjected to change. Stay updated via our digital bulletin and our social media channels for the latest information.*

Quarter 1	Quarter 2
<p><u>March</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3, 17, 24 Mar – Marriage Preparation Course #1 • 8 to 10 Mar – FOPx Conference (Youth) • 17 Mar – Water Baptism Service #1 • 29 to 31 Mar – Good Friday / Easter Weekend 	<p><u>April</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 06 Apr to 22 Jun – YA Gathering, Alpha #1 • 07 Apr – Dating Couples Briefing #1 • 13 Apr – Caleb Ministry Gathering • 27 Apr – The Parent’s Gathering <p><u>May</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 04 May – YA Gathering • 10 to 11 May – Leaders Advance • 24 to 31 May – Equipping #1: Numbers • 30 May to 01 Jun – SuperLife Camp <p><u>June</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2, 23, 30 Jun – Marriage Preparation Course #2 • 08 Jun – Caleb Ministry Gathering, Water Baptism Class #2 • 09 Jun – RiverLife AGM • 13 to 16 Jun – Youth Camp • 27 Jun – Fun Day (Youth) • 29 Jun – Parents Gathering #2

Calendar

Quarter 3	Quarter 4
<p><u>July</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 to 7 Jul – YA Camp • 13 Jul – Caleb Ministry • 14 Jul – Dating Couples Briefing #2 • 20 to 21 Jul – RTF 1B • 21 Jul – EA Welcome Lunch • 28 Jul – Baptism Service #2 <p><u>August</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 03 Aug – YA Gathering • 03 Aug to 3 Oct – Alpha Run #2 • 04 Aug – Q3 Leaders Huddle • 17 Aug – Parents Gathering #3 • 24 to 25 Aug – RLC 33rd Anniversary Weekend, RTF (Round Robin) <p><u>September</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 07 Sep – YA Gathering • 01 to 15 Sep – Marriage Preparation Course #3 • 01 to 29 Sep – SPYCs • 06 to 15 Sep – Equipping #2: Deuteronomy • 14 Sep – Caleb Ministry Gathering • 22 Sep – EA Mid-Autumn Lunch Outreach 	<p><u>October</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 05 Oct – YA Gathering, Water Baptism Class #3 • 06 to 20 – Marriage Preparation Course #3 • 12 Oct – Caleb Ministry Gathering • 13 Oct – Discipleship @ Home for Pre-School Parents (Parents Equipping) • 16 to 23 Oct – Feast of the Tabernacles • 19 Oct – Fun Day (Youth) • 26 Oct – Local Outreach (Youth) <p><u>November</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 02 Nov – YA Gathering • 7 to 9 Nov – Ministry Orientation Camp for Sec 1s (Youth) • 10 Nov – Discipleship @ Home for Primary School Parents (Parents Equipping) • 10 Nov – Water Baptism Service #3 • 15-24 Nov – Equipping #4 • 23-25 Nov – Marriage Retreat <p><u>December</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 Dec – YA Christmas Outreach, Caleb Ministry Gathering • 19 to 21 Dec – Youth Conference • 21-22 Dec – Christmas Outreach Weekend • 28 Dec – Parents Gathering #4

Ministry & Opportunities



1. The 9M Ministry.

This 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.

Enquiries/Registration: rlc.sg/serve-rlcares

4. RiverLife Community Services

Sign up: rlc.sg/servercs

5. Prayer Ministry.

If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. fear, worry, etc), you can sign up for RiverLife's RTF ministry: bit.ly/rlcrtf

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: rlc.sg/wachannelinvite

Telegram Channel: t.me/RiverLifeChurch

Facebook & Instagram: [@riverlifechurchsg](https://www.instagram.com/riverlifechurchsg)

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