

Series - On your Mark!

Date/s - 8 July 2018

Topic - Encountering Jesus - The Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-31)

Speaker/s - Pastor Vincent Lun

Welcome [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

www.thesource4ym.com/games/

www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like “One Thing Remains”, “Here I Bow”, “Behold”, “How Great Thou Art”, or “My God Reigns”.

Spiritual Objectives

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

1. Understand that an encounter with Jesus always demand a radical change in our lives; and
2. Identify and remove the idols in our hearts preventing us from embracing wholeheartedly the call of true discipleship.

Word [45 min]

Pastor Vincent’s sermon centred on the tenth chapter of the book of Mark, a passage which demonstrates how an authentic encounter with Jesus always bring about radical change.

From verses 17 to 31 of Mark 10, we see how Jesus encountered a rich young ruler of His day. Young, wealthy, and a spiritual leader of his community, the rich young ruler embodies a genuine seeker of truth, who on the surface seem to possess immense potential. Yet, as the story unfolds, we see how the mistaken religious assumptions the young man clung to, coupled with his preoccupation with his great wealth, ultimately prevented him from entering the kingdom of heaven.

Pastor Vincent went on to share that encounters with Jesus will always bring about radical change. When we encounter the Lord Jesus, we will find that:

1. His ways are far higher than our ways (Mark 10:17-20)

Jesus challenges the two assumptions that the rich young ruler had. One was that eternal life can be earned – see Mark 10:17. The other is that eternal life is an addition – see Matthew 19:20. Eternal life – a relationship with God – is not something that we can earned by our own strength or we can add on to our lives. It is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. It is something that we receive through God’s promise. Many of us just want a little upgrade or an add-on, without making a radical change, when we encounter Jesus. However, God’s ways are far higher than ours.

2. His demands are far more (Mark 10:17-27)
 - “When you are confronted by the real message of the Gospel, you always find that it offers more and demands more than you thought.”- Timothy Keller

God knows that the love and dependence on his great wealth was an idol in the rich young ruler's heart. No one is good except God alone. Jesus was not being unreasonable, but He wants to remove this idol and for the ruler to let go of it. God wants us to grow from glory to glory so that the relationship with God will no longer be head knowledge. God wants us to enter more into the things of God and become more intimate with Him. God is going for our hearts. What is holding us back from a deeper relationship with God? What do we need to let go?

3. His rewards are far greater (Mark 10:28-31)

Pastor Vincent concluded with an exhortation for us to see the gains of following Christ as outweighing the cost- as He slowly strips away the idols in our hearts, may we view Christ as our treasure, our meaning, our significance and our everything!

Discussion Questions

1. **Over the past few sermons in this sermon series, we have been following Jesus through the book of Mark. Through His various interactions with different people, we learn what it means to be His disciple and have a relationship with Him.**

In this particular sermon, we are introduced to a new nameless character known as "The Rich Young Ruler".

What are some characteristics we can glean about this young man, from this title given to him and from his interactions with Jesus recorded in verses 17 to 31? What would a modern-day "Rich Young Ruler" look like- where will we find him in society today e.g. strata of society, vocation?

[10 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a recap and ice-breaking question for cell members to better contextualize the encounter between the rich young ruler and Jesus, so as to arrive at a deeper personal application.*

The book of Matthew mentions that he was "young", while Luke described him as a "ruler". All three gospel writers identify him as rich. We can conclude that he was a man of power, influence and wealth. And yet, more notably, he was a deeply religious man well-respected in his community- the title "ruler" often described a lay leader in a synagogue during Jesus's time. So he had probably achieved some degree of spiritual status by a young age, which also meant that he had not accumulated his wealth through illegitimate means. From his interaction with Jesus, we see that he is respectful and humble, genuinely interested in goodness and righteousness. He is also not fault-finding or outwardly arrogant like a typical Pharisees. In short, this rich young ruler was in all likelihood a really good person, both from a spiritual and worldly perspective! In today's context, he will probably be held in high esteem by both religious and secular groups. However, we are to take heed that even with his pure motives, he was in great spiritual danger. What a cautionary tale it holds for the rest of us!

2. **Pastor Vincent shared that from the questions posed to Jesus, we can infer that the rich young ruler held two mistaken assumptions about his eternal life: 1) eternal life can be earned, and 2) eternal life is an addition.**

What are some ways in which we may be guilty of operating out of these similar mistaken

assumptions?

[10 min]

Leader's Notes: A relate question. This question allows members to explore the various ways we may be operating by a man-made system of divine salvation, to try to "earn" salvation on our own terms or treat Christianity as a lifestyle adjustment instead of a complete overhaul.

For example, we may be active in ministry, thinking that God will then bless us because we were "good" Christians, or we may compare our "righteousness" to other believers to feel better about ourselves. If bad things happen in our lives and things go awry, we may assume it is because we have not been spending enough time on spiritual activities and accordingly increase our involvement in that regard.

3. Meditate on Mark 10:25 and Matthew 6:24. Why is it so hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of God?

This encounter is not primarily about material wealth, but the power any kind of idol wields over the human heart. Like how it was with the rich young ruler, God sees into each of our hearts and knows "the one thing still lacking." What personal idols do we serve knowingly or unknowingly? In which areas of our lives do we spend most of our resources (time, money and thoughts) on?

[10 min]

Leader's Notes: A reflect question. This question allows members to identify the idols in their hearts which may be holding them back from surrendering their lives to God.

In his book "Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope that Matters", Timothy Keller defines an idol as "anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give... An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, "If I have that, then I'll feel my life has meaning, then I'll know I have value, then I'll feel significant and secure." For some, it might be material wealth; for others, it might be success, approval and validation of others, body image, sports, status, fear, etc.

To help in our self-assessment of our heart idols, Timothy Keller has also included a list of twenty diagnostic questions in his above-mentioned book, which may be found at this link: <http://qara.org/20-questions-tim-keller-uses-to-diagnose-the-idols-of-the-heart/>. If time permits, leaders can share these questions with cell members.

"LIFE ONLY HAS MEANING/I ONLY HAVE WORTH IF..."

1. I have power and influence over others." (Power Idolatry)
2. I am loved and respected by ____." (Approval Idolatry)
3. I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life." (Comfort idolatry)
4. I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of ____." (Control idolatry)
5. people are dependent on me and need me." (Helping Idolatry)
6. someone is there to protect me and keep me safe." (Dependence idolatry)
7. I am completely free from obligations or responsibilities to take care of someone." (Independence idolatry)
8. I am highly productive and getting a lot done." (Work idolatry)
9. I am being recognized for my accomplishments, and I am excelling in my work." (Achievement idolatry)
10. I have a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and very nice possessions." (Materialism)

- idolatry)
11. I am adhering to my religion's moral codes and accomplished in its activities." (Religion idolatry)
 12. This one person is in my life and happy to be there, and/or happy with me." (Individual person idolatry)
 13. I feel I am totally independent of organized religion and am living by a self-made morality." (Irreligion idolatry)
 14. My race and culture is ascendant and recognized as superior." (Racial/cultural idolatry)
 15. A particular social grouping or professional grouping or other group lets me in." (Inner ring idolatry)
 16. My children and/or my parents are happy and happy with me." (Family idolatry)
 17. Mr. or Ms. "Right" is in love with me." (Relationship Idolatry)
 18. I am hurting, in a problem; only then do I feel worthy of love or able to deal with guilt." (Suffering idolatry)
 19. my political or social cause is making progress and ascending in influence or power." (Ideology idolatry)
 20. I have a particular kind of look or body image." (Image idolatry)

Ultimately, God knows our hearts and sees better than us. Otherwise good things (i.e., wealth) in our lives that nevertheless prevent us from embracing what's still better or the best. Jesus is not saying that possessing wealth is a sin. Instead, it is about what and who we put our trust and security in. We must recognize that as long as we cling on to these idols, we will, like the rich young ruler, be unable to accept Jesus's invitation to true discipleship.

4. **Mark 10:30 concludes that the rewards of following Jesus are far greater ("shall receive 100 fold in this life and... eternal life in the age to come").**

As true disciples, we can hold fast to the promise that there is a great exchange to look forward to - we are trading treasures on earth for even greater treasure in heaven. With this promise firmly fixed before us, how can we better resolve to surrender what is dear to us for the sake of the gospel and kingdom? What are some practical steps we can take?

[10 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a response question.*

Have members brainstorm concrete ways they can adopt to grow in their personal discipleship journey. Some practical steps can be to:

- a. *Practice accountability in cell group.*
- b. *Practice stewardship, through time management, and the giving of tithes*
- c. *Daily evaluate our heart conditions to continually assess if there is anything or person which is taking over first priority in our hearts, and repent before the Lord.*
- d. *Commit to fast from certain unhealthy past-times or inordinate affections, which the Lord may reveal to us.*
- e. *Practice spiritual disciplines.*

Leaders may get members to break into small groups to share more and if time permits, to pray for one another for specific action steps that they can commit to.

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. We will grow from glory to glory, moving beyond just having head knowledge of Jesus, truly loving and following Him.

Announcements**1. SOLEMN ASSEMBLIES****1 JUL-9 AUG | NIGHTLY | 8-10PM | IN CHURCHES NATIONWIDE**

RiverLife will be co-anchoring the prayer meetings for the week of 29 Jul to 4 Aug with Pentecost Methodist Church and Bethesda Pasir Ris Mission Church.

For full schedule of Solemn Assemblies, please visit www.riverlife.org.sg/sites/files/riverlife/40day2018.pdf**2. ONE THING GATHERING 2018****THU-SAT, 19-21 JUL | WORSHIP CENTRE**

CONFERENCE FEES: \$70 (ADULTS) | \$30 (FULL-TIME STUDENTS)

ADMISSION IS FREE FOR NIGHT SESSIONS

To register or find out more, visit www.onething.sg**3. Joining The Family****SAT, 18 AUG | 1.30PM – 4.30PM | FAITH CHAPEL**Sign up at the Information Counter or online at bit.ly/rlcjoiningthefamily by Sun, 12 Aug. For more information. Please contact Karen Koh at 65114139 or email her at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg**Church Vision Statement:**

“A vibrant family where sons and daughters mature and reveal the Father’s glory from generation to generation.”