

Series - Open Topic

Topic - Adopted By God (Ephesians 1:3-6)

Date - 1 Dec 2019

Speaker - Ps. John Koe

WELCOME [15 min]

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

[Ice Breakers 1](#)

[Ice Breakers 2](#)

WORSHIP [15 min]

You may select songs like “Sing To The King”, “Highest Praise”, “Pilgrimage” or “When Jesus Comes Again”.

WORD [45 min]

Spiritual Objectives

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

1. Recognise our true identity and know our true worth as God's adopted children.
2. Live our lives as fully accepted by God and not striving for approval elsewhere.

Sermon Summary

1. We live in a culture that celebrates achievement. This causes us to strive for perfection and engenders a spirit of rejection.
2. God has adopted us into His family by His will, not because we deserve it. We can rest in this promise!

Sermon Recap

Introduction: The culture of ancient Ephesus (and modern day Singapore)

Pastor John Koe began the sermon with a personal testimony of how God turned around a spirit of rejection in his life into a firm belief in his adoption into God's family. His sharing was to make a point: all of us are orphaned due to sin. But God intervened to adopt us and make us His children. God's plan to adopt us as His own precedes even the creation of the world (Eph 1:4). In order to more fully appreciate the truth of this passage, Pastor John brought us back to the time of the first century, to the city of Ephesus in the Roman empire.

Ephesus was major city in Asia Minor. Much like modern day Singapore, it was a strategic hub for trade and culture. The Ephesians highly valued perfection of the human person, whether physically, artistically, or intellectually. From young, children were raised and trained in sporting prowess, artistic ability, and intellectual excellence, in order to be part of the elite of society and take part in the highest levels of sports, arts, and intellectual

competitions. In this culture of celebrating human perfection, young children and even babies were selected based on their physical characteristics. Infants born with deformities or disabilities were literally thrown away and left to die by exposure to the elements.

In the midst of such an exacting and demanding culture, the apostle Paul appears bearing a countercultural message: You have a heavenly Father who created you just the way you are and He accepts you for that. God is your heavenly Father who loves you. God accepts you as you are and not as who you should be. He accepts you as His creation – you were created in His image. God does not make garbage. When Roman culture did not accept you, God brought you in. Your worth is not determined by the one who threw you out, but by the One who brought you in.

Pastor John reminded us that the culture we have in Singapore today is not much different from ancient Ephesus. Singapore prides herself on and demands excellence. People who have achieved much, or have attractive looks, are accepted and celebrated. This causes a fear of rejection in those who have not, and we see it prevalent in our society. To avoid being rejected, people work hard and are in danger of becoming workaholics. Pastor John highlighted that the “kiasu” (afraid of losing), “kiasi” (afraid of dying) and “kiabo” (afraid of lack) mindsets are all based on *kia* (fear). This deep-seated root of fear in our society is the result of a spirit of rejection. Pastor John exhorted us that the cause of all fears is not knowing our sonship in Christ. The love of God casts out all fears (1 John 4:18).

After painting this backdrop of the very unforgiving culture of Ephesus (and modern day Singapore), Pastor John then pointed us back to the sermon passage Eph 1:3- 6, and brought us to the sermon’s key point: *our adoption is from God, through Christ, and for His glory.*

Our adoption is from God...

Eph 1:4 tells us that, before the creation of the world, God already predestined us to be adopted. Therefore our adoption is not God’s “contingency plan” because we sinned and needed to be saved. God already planned for our adoption before the world was even created! We can be secure, assured and comforted that our adoption is not based on what we can or cannot do.

...through Christ...

Eph 1:5 emphasises that our adoption is through Christ. Christ’s death on the cross was essential to God’s plan to adopt us into His family.

...for His glory.

Eph 1:6 reminds us that it is all for God’s glory. Our adoption through Christ will result in the praise of His glorious grace.

Let us rest in the promise of our heavenly Father’s promise of adoption, and praise Him for it!

Discussion Questions

- 1. We are all very aware of the culture that celebrates achievement and excellence in Singapore. Have you experienced this before? Share an example where you experienced this first-hand for yourself. How did it make you feel?** [15 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is an ice-breaking and relate question. This question is meant to get members to share first-hand experiences of the negative effects of living in a culture that celebrates achievement and human perfection. Such a sharing would help members recognise this in a more tangible way. Leaders should try to highlight the negative effects of such a culture, which will contrast with what the apostle Paul preached.*

Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving To The Next Question)

We can see that such a culture has negative consequences, when we start to value a person more for what he/she can do, rather than for who he/she is.

- 2. Read Ephesians 1:3-6. This passage tells us that God chose us to be holy and blameless in his sight. Contrast this with the experiences shared in Question 1. How do you feel now, knowing that God now declares you holy and blameless in Christ, regardless of what the world tells you?** [15 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a reflect question. The point of this question is to get members to contrast God's promise and declaration of our inherent value in Christ, with what the world says (as discussed in Question 1). Leaders can allow members to freely share.*

For more reflections on the topic of God's adoption from John Piper:
<https://bit.ly/2ReUiwo> and <https://bit.ly/2qWnVbj>

Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving To The Next Question)

We can and should thank God for His unconditional acceptance of us. We are his children and called to model His love to the world.

- 3. We now know that God has adopted us into His family and declared us holy and blameless. This is such a contrast to what the world teaches us! How can we practically model God's acceptance to the world?**[15 min]

Leader's Notes: *A response question. The point of this question is to convert our thoughts into actions. Leaders can encourage members to share how we can live our countercultural values in the world, beginning with our relationship with our family and relatives, at our workplace, with our friends, and in the neighbourhood. Exhort them that it may not be easy, but God will enable us to do what He wants us to do.*

Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving To The Next Question)

Let us all learn to accept others by how God sees them, and not how the world sees them. Let us learn to accept ourselves in the same way, too.

WORKS [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. Every RiverLifer will bring God's love and acceptance to their spheres of influence.
 2. For the upcoming Cell Christmas Outreach.
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Synchronised Prayer Alarm

8am on Wednesdays

Follow on Facebook & Instagram (@riverlifechurchsg) for weekly prayer pointers.

Church Vision

“A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations.”

Mission

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.