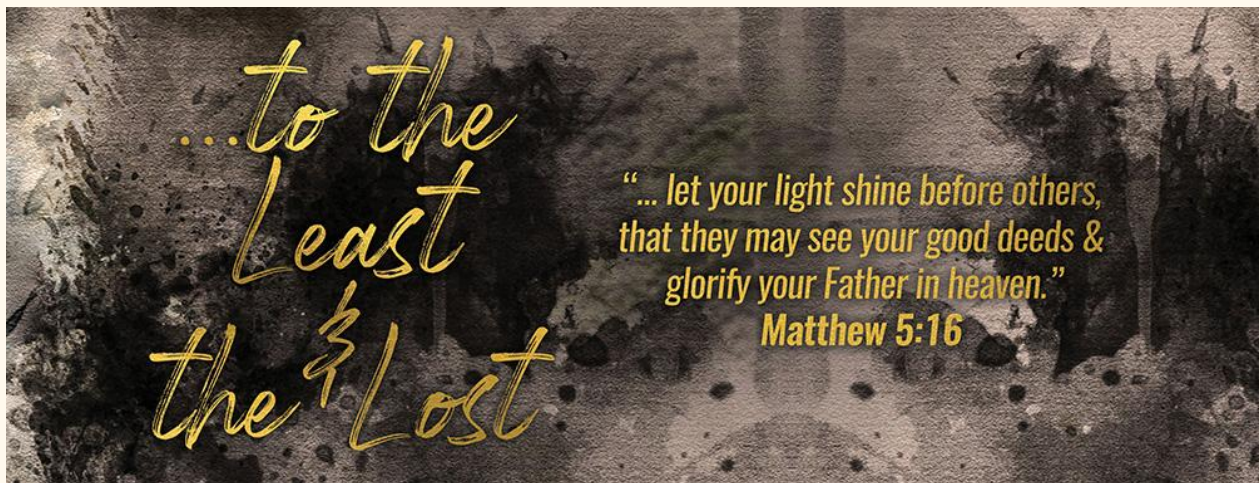

Ignite

Dear Lord, we come to You through the blood of Your beloved Son, which cleanses us from all sins. We thank You for Your grace and forgiveness. We will no longer live in shame because we know that we can come to You and receive Your love, grace, and forgiveness. Thank You, God, for the life You gave us. Amen.



SERMON SUMMARY

Note to Word Facilitator: The sermon notes below is a summary of the sermon. You may choose to further summarize it according to the needs and context of your CG members. The goal is not just to go through it “verbatim” but to prepare well, allowing members to recall and engage the message in the best possible way.

What kind of Christian are you?

Senior Pastor Chris Kam

Matthew 4:18-22

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Luke 6:40

The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Introduction

The Lord wants us to know what kind of a good Christian we are. What kind of life do we meet? If we want to carry a good image you need to be In Christ's Image. There is a starting point in the life of a Christian.

Pastor Chris was involved with the youth service at 15 but did not accept Christ. When a leader challenged him, he then quietly asked his parents through a note on the table. His father challenged and warned him not to be baptised. Pastor went ahead

to get baptised and accepted Christ at 17. This was his starting point in determining what kind of Christian he was.

Pastor Chris has walked with Christ for 45 years. Pastor reflected on his 45 year journey and has never looked back since.

Types of Christians

Eugene Peterson wrote in his book, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*:

"One aspect of world that I have been able to identify as harmful to Christians is the assumption that anything worthwhile can be acquired at once. We assume that if something can be done at all, it can be done quickly and efficiently. Our attention spans have been conditioned by thirty-second commercials. Our sense of reality has been flattened by thirty-page abridgments. It is not difficult in such a world to get a person interested in the message of the gospel; it is terrifically difficult to sustain the interest. Millions of people in our culture make decisions for Christ, but there is a dreadful attrition rate. Many claim to have been born again, but the evidence for mature Christian discipleship is slim. In our kind of culture anything, even news about God, can be sold if it is packaged freshly; but when it loses its novelty, it goes on the garbage heap. There is a great market for religious experience in our world; there is little enthusiasm for the patient acquisition of virtue, little inclination to sign up for a long apprenticeship in what earlier generations of Christians called holiness."

There are two biblical designations for people of faith:

Disciples & Pilgrims **John 14:6**

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

You are making disciples in Christ. Pilgrims are going somewhere. The way of the pilgrim is eternal life. It doesn't get easier but harder and harder until I meet God.

"I no longer live" Christianity.

Big Idea: There's only one kind of Christian – the Crucified kind.

What kind of Christian are you? What kind of follower are you? Jesus did not look for people to "hangout" with him but FOLLOW him. This is not an easy example to

follow. We need to reflect the kind of Christian that we are. You are either a Christian or Not a Christian. Then there is the category called born again Christian. Every Christian must be born again. There is no in between. What kind of Christian are you? What kind of a Follower are you?

Two broad kinds: The Cultural Christian and the Biblical Christian.

Cultural Christianity

- Nominal believer (a label) - eg. inherited faith
- More Social than spiritual - Christians and non-Christians are wearing crosses as a fashion symbol.
 - An added activity / hobby
 - Feel good charity (means vs end)
 - Identity (data field)
- Undisciplined disciples (Os Guinness) - Half hearted disciples, selective obedience
- Spare tyre Christianity (Patrick Morley) - Only use Christianity when required. They use Jesus as a spare tyre

Cultural Christianity

"There is a God we want and there is a God who is. They are not the same God. The turning point of our lives is when we stop seeking the God we want and start seeking the God who is." ~Patrick Morley (Man in the Mirror)

Which God are we seeking?

Signs of Cultural Christianity (a checklist)

1. Reading the Bible with an agenda, if they read at all.
2. Read their Bibles looking for evidence to support their decisions they have already made. People use the bible to "tikam" a particular scripture as a symbol of God's message.
3. Follow the God they are underlining in their Bible.
4. Read the Bible for comfort, but Wall Street for direction.
5. Disappointed with God regularly. – God didn't answer the prayer.
6. A constant guilt in their lives to perform (a little more).
7. Mistake the means for the end.
8. Replacing "Knowing God" with "Serving God." -- What is God asking you to steward?

9. Denying the inspiration of Scriptures or parts of Scripture – selectively deny parts of Scripture
10. Ignoring or downplaying true repentance as the first step toward knowing God.
11. Focusing on Jesus' love and acceptance to the exclusion of His teaching on hell, obedience, and self-sacrifice.
12. Living in and even celebrating sin while claiming to know God.
13. Claiming God's promises while ignoring the requirements included with them. (***Psalm 37:4***)
14. Seeing protection and blessings as goals to be achieved, rather than by-products of a love relationship with God. – Everything is about you and you alone. You need to learn to die to self.
15. Choosing a church based upon any or all of the above. We need to be faithful to Scripture to preach the whole Scripture.

Cultural Christianity versus Biblical Christianity

1. Anyone can be a cultural Christian.
2. Cultural Christianity is comfortable.
3. Cultural Christianity is more about outward appearance than personal relationship with Christ.
4. Cultural Christianity picks and chooses.
5. Cultural Christianity requires little sacrifice.

Biblical Christianity

It's either you are Christian or you are not. You are being perfected along the way.

What is required is not sinless perfection, but sincere progression.

There must be a sincere desire to progress towards what God is calling us to, a fruitful life.

Parable of the Sower *Matthew 13:22, 23*

Cultural Christianity - Christians who live an unfruitful life.

Biblical Christianity - Christians who live a fruitful life.

Christ-centric *John 15:5*

Jesus made it very clear that you cannot do anything apart from Christ.

The Normal Christian Birth (David Pawson)

RuBBeR: 4-step process of the normal Christian birth:

R – Repent towards the Father

B – Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ – You must know what you are believing in

B – Baptism in Water

R – Receive the Holy Spirit – not positionally but personally. Activate it

Think of your birthright

Key Principles:

- Seek the God who is rather than the God we want.
- If Jesus is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all.

In essence Paul affirmed,

“If He loved me enough to give Himself for me, then He loves me enough to live out His life in me.”

Conclusion *Matthew 4:22*

There are people of certain faith who are finding

- Are you willing to die for your faith?
- Are you willing to go to jail for your faith?
- Are you willing to lose your job for your faith?
- Are you willing to be kicked out by your family for your faith?
- Are you willing to go to a rehabilitation camp for your faith?



APPLICATION

Note to Word facilitator:

As you prepare for this session, this is a great time to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you to use the questions efficiently. You can select, modify or entirely create your own questions, according to the needs of your CG, especially if you feel that there are too many questions than required for the allocated time. The questions below are crafted with a certain flow in mind. You could use these towards the end or insert them in between your own sermon reflection and summary.

Suggested Icebreaker Activity/Questions

- What is your favourite shape? What is the shape of God to you? Do you shape God to what you want him to be? (eg. fitting Him to your convenience and commitment)?
- Run through the checklist on Cultural Christianity. Of the 15 descriptions that were mentioned, how many do you identify with? Which of these do you hope to eliminate the soonest from your personal list?

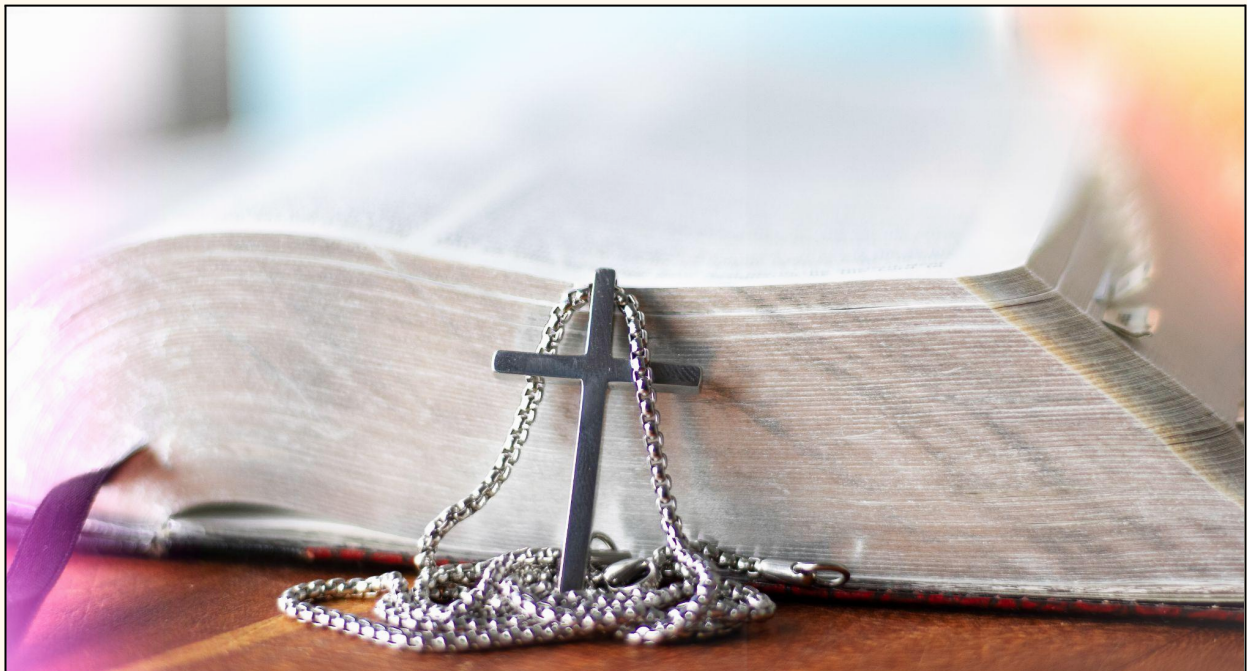


Photo by Cam Ferland on Unsplash

Suggested Word Introductory Questions

- Relating to being born again, good birthing has these in the process “RuBBeR”. Did you manage to go through some or all these experiences well in your journey as a Christian?
- Share about your Christian Journey. What was your starting point (in becoming a Christian)? What was the turning point when you shift from

seeking the God you want to the God who is? Did you have to face any challenges to defend or stand up for your faith in Christ?

Suggested Questions linked to the Sermon:

- Read the extract of Eugene Peterson's book. Would you agree or disagree with him? Why?
- How would you describe the differences between cultural and biblical Christianity? Which of these two do you think you are more inclined to? Why? *(Use this principle as a point of discussion: "Seek the God who is rather than the God we want.")*
- What do you think Jesus would say to you as His follower? What would He commend you on? What would He correct you on?
- Galatians 2:20 says, *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."* What do you understand from this verse? In what ways have you been able to live out this verse? In what ways do you struggle?

Question Bank *(Extra questions that you can use to bring your discussion further as you see fit):*

- Rather than putting your focus on "sinless perfection", what can you do to have "sincere progression" in your spiritual life? Name one or two things that you can devote in doing in the coming week / month to grow spiritually, whether individually or as a CG.
 - We may have the tendency to agree and say that, "Yeah, we need to die to self, everyday" but the reality is that it is not an easy thing to do. What's your greatest hindrance/obstacle in dying to self?
 - Do you see yourself as being Christian by birth or consciously accepting the Holy Spirit in your life?
 - God gave us Jesus Christ to overcome the sins of the world. Are you using this superpower?
 - What does "born-again Christian" mean to you? Should there be such a term?
-

SERMON REFLECTION



Photo by Hichem Meghachou on Unsplash

I was blessed to be raised in a Christian family. Initially, I was irritated and annoyed. As a pastor's son, being in my family felt like I was in an aquarium. People would come in and out of my house as they pleased. My mum also would be obliged to cook for them. Many would be quick to judge if we made minor offences, sometimes even as mundane as watching cartoons. In the late 80's and early 90's (pre internet era), many pastors would receive this circular stating that watching Spiderman, Care Bears, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and other cartoons were not allowed in the Christian faith. Despite attending confirmation classes, I still felt that my duty as a Christian is not to be a naughty kid (*I was*) and not give my parents a bad name.

In secondary school, I had the privilege to join ACS Sitiawan. We had a school CF (Christian Fellowship) and the Wesley MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship). My scope of Christianity expanded from the corners of my church alone. In university, all cultural and denominational barriers broke in the Inter Varsity University Fellowships but that is a story for another day. Back in secondary school, people accepted me for me. I wasn't perfect but I had friends who looked beyond my identity as a pastor's son and accepted me as a unique human being. I always looked forward to the time my CF would meet. I also was exposed to the Scripture Union and their amazing roles in promoting inter-school camps and activities.

I remember when I was 14, I attended one of the Methodist Youth Fellowship camps during the school holidays. During one of the MYF camps, one of the pastors spoke about being a born again Christian and rededicating my life back to God. I have heard of this many times before but this time I didn't feel good inside me. I felt it was weird why a pastor's son would want to rededicate his life when I haven't done

anything wrong (I mean, I wasn't blameless) but I still felt that I wanted to do it anyway. During the altar call on the final day of the camp, I went forward and made the decision to be a Christian myself without any external pressure.

I have not looked back since. God has saved my life from a few car and motorbike accidents. He has also been with me through the toughest points in my life, especially through the pandemic. I look forward to a great time serving Him here on earth till I meet Him in heaven one day.

Contributed by Abbey Thangiah



PRAYER

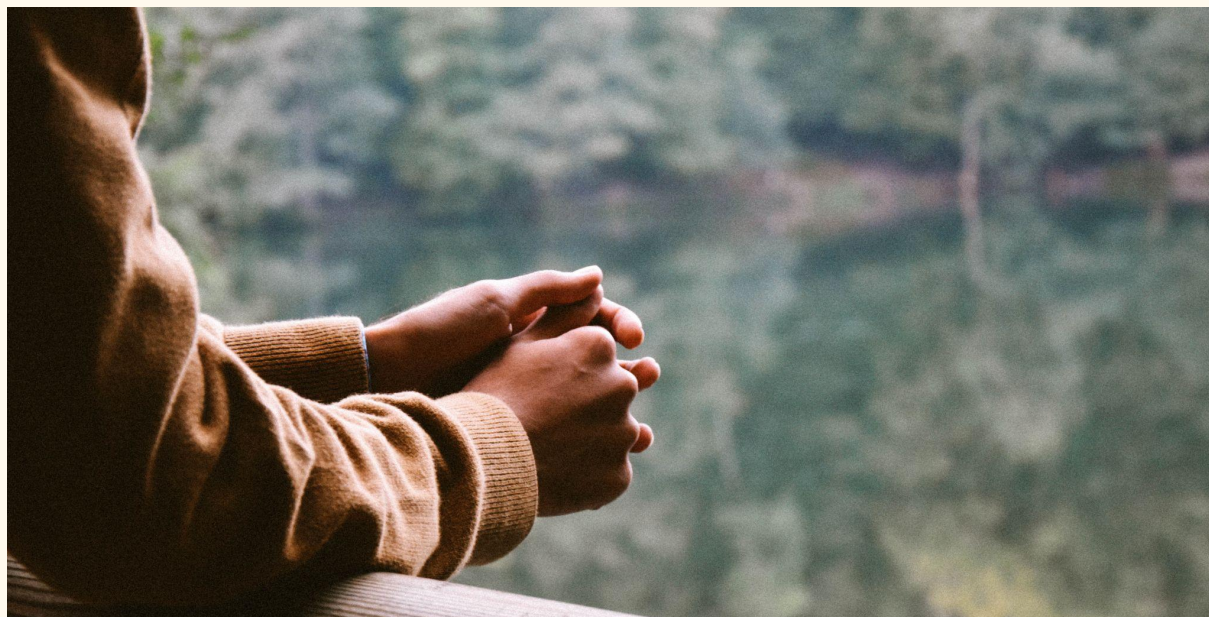


Photo by Ümit Bulut at Unsplash

Note to CGL: You (or someone you assign this portion to), may lead by praying OR reading these prayers together as a CG during worship.

Business & Job Recovery

- We give thanks for signs of improved business sentiment. Pray:
- For significant improvement in the economy.
- Those suffering from bankruptcies and business losses will be given fresh starts.
- Job recovery and for fair remuneration for workers.

NextGen Campus Camp - Is It Enough?

NextGen Campus camp will be taking place on 19 to 21 August at PDMC.

Pray for:

- God to prepare the hearts of the campers to receive His Word in season.
 - Camp & workshop speakers to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and that God will use them in a powerful way.
 - The Holy Spirit to lead and guide all committee members and leaders.
 - Everyone to be in good health and protected throughout the camp.
-