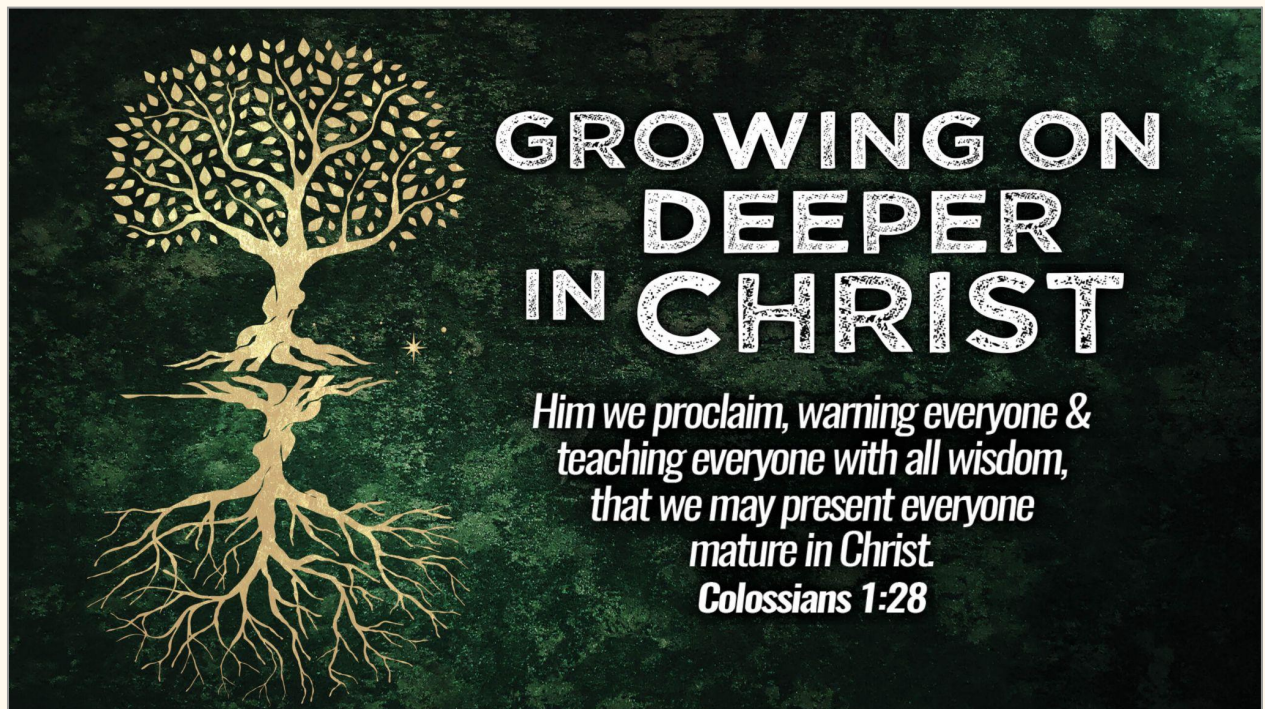

Engage

Dear Lord, may we be always vigilant and alert with the signs of time by seeking You and discerning through the Holy Spirit. Help us to be ready. In Jesus' Name, 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.

The Door of Revival: Don't Miss the Call

Pastor Chris Manivannan

Matthew 25: 1-13

“At that time the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet Him!’

“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps.

The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

“No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you.

Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

“Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

“But He replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Introduction

Spiritual Revival is the visitation of God and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that results in spiritual reawakening, a heart returning to God in repentance. Oftentimes, it comes suddenly and unexpectedly. The Bario Revival was one of such notable outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon a community. This happened in 1973 in Sarawak where the Bario tribe were overcome with fear of God. There was an awakening from spiritual slumber and many repented of their sinful lifestyle. [The Bario Revival: The Four Waves and Its Impact – Malaysia's Christian News Website](#)

This spiritual vigilance reminds us of the five wise virgins in Jesus' parable of the Jewish wedding in Matthew 25. We cannot work revival out ourselves but are we keeping our faith alive and prepared spiritually for Jesus' return?

BIG IDEA: Revival is from God and can happen when God's people are spiritually prepared.

There are three areas on Spiritual Preparedness:

1. The Call to Revival - The promise of revival is from God.

a. The Midnight Cry [Matthew 25:6](#)

It was Jewish custom to conduct a wedding ceremony at night and the bridegroom would arrive unexpectedly. Likewise, revival is God's sovereign promise and an unexpected call to which we do not know when it will occur.

b. God's Call to Awaken [Ezekiel 37:5-6](#)

God's promise of revival is as much alive today as it was when He gave Ezekiel the vision of the valley of the dry bones. God made the promise to revive our spirits. Flesh and bones were restored in the vision, signifying the spiritual awakening and the prompting to seek His presence more deeply.

2. Preparedness - By keeping the oil of faith alive. [Matthew 25:2-4](#)

God's sovereign promise is given for revival but we will miss out if we are unprepared. Jesus lays out an abject lesson of two contrasting groups of virgins waiting for the bridegroom prior to entering the wedding banquet.

a. The Wise Virgins: Prepared and Ready

The wise virgins are characterised by wisdom. They had foresight and readiness. They were wise to prepare more oil in case they should have to wait longer. They understood the importance of oil as fuel to carry on. Oil signifies the spiritual fuel we need to sustain an intimate relationship with God. It symbolises spiritual preparedness. We are vigilant and alert to engage with God regularly, always ready to respond to God's prompting.

b. The Foolish Virgins: Unprepared and Unaware

The foolish virgins are in stark contrast to the wise ones. They lacked foresight, preparedness and wisdom. They were stopped from entering the wedding banquet because they neglected the importance of oil as fuel for their lamps. Their running out represents those of us who are spiritually complacent. We have allowed our spiritual life to run dry. We are not prepared for God's coming revival or worse, we do not have any fuel left and are running on empty.

c. A Critical Moment of Separation *Matthew 25:5-6*

The critical distinction between the wise and the foolish occurs when our Lord Jesus, the bridegroom, arrives.

3. The Cost of Being Unprepared. *Matthew 25:10-12*

a. The Closed Door

This signifies missed opportunity for those who are spiritually unprepared.

b. There is a Window of Time

There is a uniquely appointed time but there is also a sense of urgency. Apostle Paul often equates the Christian life to a marathon race. We do need to pace and sustain towards the finish line but there is also a qualifying time. Are we taking our own sweet time to run the race or are we keeping our eyes fixed towards finishing within the set window of time?

c. Guard Against Spiritual Slumber

Jesus exhorts us to guard against complacency and to stay spiritually vigilant at all times.

Conclusion *Ezekiel 37:5*

Revival is God's promise and we can't work it out ourselves. God's declaration of "I will" underscores His divine initiative. Will our response be "I need to be revived in..." or will we be found unprepared when He comes?

Some practical steps to embrace revival are as follows:

- Examine Our Hearts: Reflect on areas of our lives where we may have grown cold or indifferent.
- Seek God's Presence Daily: Spiritual discipline to emphasise reliance on God's Word and the Holy Spirit.
- Respond to God's Promptings: Step out in faith and not hold back.

We need to humble ourselves and seek God to respond in preparation to experience revival. Let us not miss out on His promise.



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

- How would you see yourself in the caricature of the Christian marathon race? Are you the quitter, the sight seeker, the slow & steady or the vigilant runner?
- Each CG member prepares two truths (facts about yourself) and one dream/goal (desire) that you may have. As each person shares, the rest attempt to distinguish between the two categories.



Photo by Vladimir Fedotov on Unsplash

Suggested Word Introductory Questions

- “*We must first feel before we act*”. Agree or disagree? Briefly discuss why.
- Spend 2 to 3 minutes to write down on a post-it what Spiritual Revival **IS** and **IS NOT**. Take turns to share your answer.

Suggested Questions linked to the Sermon:

Facilitators may decide to divide into smaller groups as you discern what is most appropriate. Some questions may be sensitive and best discussed in a more intimate setting.

- What areas in your life will you respond with greater urgency after knowing the certainty of God’s promise of revival and also that it will come unexpectedly?
- A closed door signifies eternal separation from God. Knowing the urgency of being spiritually vigilant, who are some “foolish virgins” or “prodigal sons” that

come to mind? What can you do to encourage and wake them from their slumber?

- Which out of the three practical steps in embracing revival most resonates with your current season in life? Share your challenges and how you may go about overcoming it.

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

- Share one or two areas where you have grown cold and indifferent OR areas where you may be running on empty. Pray for one another.
 - What does spiritual preparedness and keeping our faith alive look like in your life? In what way is that different from your current reality? What steps can you take to closer align reality with your desire?
 - If DUMC were to be taken away someday, would the community around miss it? Will you miss it?
-



SERMON REFLECTION



Photo by Tamara Elhova on Pexels

Confession here - Revival has always been a distant concept to me. Oftentimes, I find myself indifferent to the prayer call for God to bring revival in our nation and our church. I am not against it but I admittedly see it as good to have rather than a necessity. It escaped me why our Pastors and church leaders pray ever so fervently for one.

But this week's sermon provides a different perspective. Revival is strikingly similar (and in many ways overlapping) to God's promise of eternal life. Both are His promises. Both are by His grace and divine initiative. And as we strive to live out the realities of our transformed lives in light of God's certain promises, we embark on a journey towards personal spiritual growth. The journey of spiritual preparedness increases our dependence on God and develops a certain spiritual closeness that is so wonderfully sweet to experience.

This personal growth is not self-help or self-improvement as the world understands it. No, not at all. But it is more like: Taking one step forward, a day at a time in daily dependence on God. One day lived is another day closer to the fulfilment of God's

promise. The blessings He has bestowed something to savour while the challenges, a call to lean ever more heavily into Him.

A broken relationship has caused bitterness and resentment to seep deep into my heart. The never endless peaks and troughs of a toxic relationship has created such a chasm that is humanly impossible to leap across. I lift this burden up to God, He knows best. Though I may not experience a turnaround improvement of this tragedy, I pray forgiveness permeates through my heart like sun rays rushing to illuminate the deepest and darkest crevices of my heart. If nothing else, that I may know the true “Shalom” and grow in dependence on His grace. O Lord Jesus, more of You, less of me.

Contributed by Darren Lim



MISSIONAL

Note to CGL: Inspire and encourage the Cell Group members to participate in the activity suggested below (from our CrossFields, Missions department) together to cultivate a culture of being a missional church.

DUMC  **CrossFields**

Unreached People Group (UPG)

A people group where there is no indigenous community of believers with adequate numbers and resources to evangelise (or reach) the rest of its members without outside assistance



Pray for the UPGs adopted by DUMC



Japanese in Japan

- Pray that Japanese believers will fully embrace and walk in their new identity in Christ, and for them to have the opportunities to share the love of Jesus with their families and friends.
- Ask for compassion and hope for those facing mental health challenges, including deliverance from depression and shame.
- Pray that emerging generations will turn to Jesus as the Holy Spirit softens their hearts to the messengers and message of the Gospel.



PRAYER

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.

The Newari & Tamang People in Nepal

Pray that

- God will break the strongholds of traditional practices, rituals and witchcraft in the lives of these people
- Jesus will reveal Himself to the Newari and Tamang people through dreams and visions.
- God will continue to raise up bold Christian leaders and believers to share the Good News with their own people.

Nepal Mission Team

Katherine Mah (Team Leader), Dr Lakana Kumar (Asst. Team Leader), Aryana Kumar, Jonathan Joseph, Joseph A/L K.V.Kutty, Mary Bernard, Sylvia Pook and Marc Wong will be on a mission trip to Nepal from 28 November to 8 December 2024.

Pray for:

- Wisdom, discernment, and unity in spirit among the team members and their partners in Nepal as they work together to advance God's kingdom and fulfil the Great Commission.
- God's protection over the team members and their loved ones, and journey mercies as they travel to and from places of ministry.

DUMC Christmas (DUMC.my/christmas)

Prayer Points for Creative Arts Ministry members involved in Advent/Christmas 2024.

Pray for:

1) Physical and spiritual protection

- Members and their loved ones have been constantly falling sick, having hospital emergencies, accidents, dissension popping up at home and at work, etc. Everyone is burdened with the constant challenges.

2) Resources

- The right people will step up to serve urgently as we are currently having challenges in looking for people to fill certain roles.
- In other forms of resources that are lacking, that the Lord will continue supply and multiply
- Increasing the team's ingenuity and creativity in sourcing and using what is available.

3) Advent Corners

- The Lord would move powerfully and miraculously through this initiative as it aims to reconnect people to the family of God, those who have been disconnected, lost, forgotten, hurt and those who do not know Christ, who are looking for hope, love, community.
- There will be divine appointments as we come together to bond over Christmas activities over the 5 nights, that we will hear countless testimonies from everyone of how God met them where they are at and their needs, and for people to come to know Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour.
- Our members understand the heart behind this project, to sign up quickly and to bring a friend/s.

4) Carolling

- The aim is to bring the church to those who cannot come (for whatever reason i.e. sick, immobile, unpermitted, etc.) The carollers representing the family of God, be the connecting point to these people in need.
- Our members who can sing, to answer the call to be part of the carol swiftly.
- The requests for carols to come forth, those who need to be visited.

5) Christmas Day Performance and weekly programme

- All that is being prepared from the performance to the worship to the sermon would all line up with God's desire and that our hearts are ready to receive what the Lord wants to reveal to us.
- The Lord will do powerful and miraculous things in the midst of our congregation this season.

- Pre-believers to encounter Christ in a special personal way through the conviction of the Holy Spirit.
- Blessings on all the technical preparation.