
Engage

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from Your presence nor take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.





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.

King David: Experiencing Blessings and Brokenness

#8: Rebuke & Restoration

Pastor Gilbert Tan
(2 Samuel 19-21)

Reading 2 Samuel 19:1-8

Joab was told, “The king is weeping and mourning for Absalom.” And for the whole army the victory that day was turned into mourning, because on that day the troops heard it said, “The king is grieving for his son.”

The men stole into the city that day; as men steal in who are ashamed when they flee from battle. The king covered his face and cried aloud, “O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!”

Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, “Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that the commanders and their men mean nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead. Now go out and encourage your men. I swear by the Lord that if you don’t go out, not a man will be left with you by nightfall. This will be worse for you than all the calamities that have come on you from your youth till now.”

So the king got up and took his seat in the gateway. When the men were told, “The king is sitting in the gateway,” they all came before him. Meanwhile, the Israelites had fled to their homes.

Introduction 1 Timothy 6:12-14a

We enter the eighth sermon of the 2 Samuel series with the focus on Rebuke & Restoration. The Scripture account is set after the civil war in Israel that had ended with Absalom's (David's son) death. Word had reached Joab and the men that David was mourning bitterly for the death of his son.

We revisit one of DUMC's core habits - Keep it Real, as we trace the life account of David's experiences in the Bible. Christians are called to be personal, authentic and life-giving and there is no greater place to cultivate such relationships than in the church.

How we can cultivate personal, authentic and life-giving relationships:

1. Being Steadfast in relationships 2 Samuel 19: 1-3 ,5; 2 Timothy 4:2

Joy of victory turned to deep sadness. David's men crept back into the town feeling ashamed of themselves upon hearing their king was mourning the loss of his son. Joab rebuked the king sharply to act appropriately and to recognize the men for their loyalty and bravery in defending the king and his family. As the commander of David's army and as his nephew, Joab was intensely loyal to David and had been through the ups and downs together. Joab was steadfast to keep David from making a bad decision that would alienate him from all his men and thereby jeopardise the stability of the kingdom.

The apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:2 instructs his young protege that correcting, rebuking and encouraging are to be given with '*great patience and careful instruction*'. Rebuke is a stronger and harder form of correction. It can be thought of as a progression from correction and can be stinging to the receiver. Therefore, it should be given sparingly and done out of love for the other person. Our pure intent has to be wanting to point someone dear to us back to God as we cannot bear to see them spiral towards a path of self-destruction. Hence, it is predicated on having established a deep relationship with the other person where trust must have been established. And this is possible only when Christians put effort to cultivate deeper and warmer friendships within the church and the people around us. One example is stepping out to connect deeper and on a more personal level with our fellow Cell Group (CG) members.

2. Having a Soft heart 2 Samuel 19:8a; Psalm 51:1-2, 10-12; Psalm 141:5; Proverbs 9:8

David's humble response to Joab's rebuke demonstrated that he was open to improve his walk with God. Time and time again he demonstrated that he had a repentant heart that was not resistant to correction and rebuke from God. In Psalm 141:5, David likens rebuke as pouring oil on his head. Oil was seen at that time as

having medicinal properties and he saw rebuke as a healing that drew him back closer to God. In Proverbs 9:8, he tells us to draw close to the righteous and wise for they love us and are genuinely concerned for our wellbeing.

Being at the receiving end of a much needed rebuke can be painful. One way is to model the three Ps - Pour out your heart to God, Process with God and Praise God. **Pouring** out our heart means we honestly share with God our innermost feeling about the situation while avoiding cultivating a complaining spirit. **Processing** with God means waiting upon Him and asking “*Lord, what can I learn from this?*”. We will begin to see from God’s perspective and reflect on His presence and goodness in our lives. Finally, **Praising** God comes naturally in spite of the seemingly unchanged difficulty or challenge. We develop a deeper relationship with God, knowing Him, His nature and His faithfulness. Our hearts are drawn to the Blessed Giver instead of the blessings itself. This is not a quick fix hack and is a gradual process as we wrestle and wait on the Lord. All of us desire to be wise, so let us receive rebuke the right way in obedience to God.

3. Cultivating Spiritual Conversations *2 Samuel 19:14; Revelation 12:11; Proverbs 18:21; John 9:25b*

Israel was in tatters and directionless in the aftermath of the civil war. David began to reach out to the people and showed care. He reached out to his men and this bolstered their morale and cemented their loyalty. They stood by him as a united force against external threats. He sought to mend relationships: forgiving Shimei, restoring half of the land to Mephibosheth and showing favour to Barzillai.

In this day and age, there are still principles we can draw from David’s example. We can share with one another what God is doing in our lives - victories, failures, brokenness and all. Revelation 12:11 reveals that Satan is afraid of the blood of Christ and of the sharing of our life testimonies. Our words have power because we are created in the likeness of God with the Holy Spirit in dwelling. This is also because when we share, our words point to God’s work. We encourage and remind each other of God’s faithfulness in our lives. It can be shameful but we share anyway to encourage and uplift others because we have been transformed by our encounter with Jesus.

Conclusion

We are called to be personal, authentic and life-giving and there is no greater place to cultivate such relationships than in the church. Although pre-believers can also be personal, authentic and even encouraging; Christians ought to be more. God gave us life. We are now charged to be life-givers to all around us.

As we do life together in church and CG, let us support one another with prayer and encouragement, correction and rebuke where needed; all done in loving gentleness.

Contributed by Darren Lim



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 was the funniest or most annoying feedback/criticism you have ever received?
- What do you look for in a friend? Share about a friend who exhibits some or all of these qualities.



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Suggested Word Introductory Questions

- Discuss: Where does criticism fit within the spectrum and context of this week's Scripture references to 'correcting' and 'rebuking' e.g. criticism is correcting? Etc.
- Words can be powerful. In your personal conversations with an acquaintance, colleague, friends or relatives this week, share how the other person impacted you with their words - be it words of encouragement, a piece of advice, a compliment, a joke, a complaint, a lament, a correction, or perhaps, a rebuke.

Suggested Questions linked to the Sermon:

- Define, in your own words, the difference between 'correcting', 'rebuking' and 'encouraging'.
 - In what circumstance and condition makes it appropriate to rebuke a fellow brother/sister?
 - How would you go about it in a manner that applies love, great patience and careful instruction?
- The sermon tells us that being Christlike is to be authentic, genuine and life-giving. Sometimes this also means sharing our struggles and challenges. How does this spur you to be bolder in sharing authentically as you faithfully wait upon the Lord?
- Share an instance where you had someone rebuke you. How did you respond? How would the 3 Ps (Pour, Process and Praise God) help you to discern God's will and lead to humble repentance?
- Share the person(s) you consider your inner circle whom you trust to keep you

accountable? If none, would you be open to establishing such a relationship?

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

- What does this expression mean: “A friend in need is a friend indeed”? How do the different interpretations shape your friendships?

[Note: There are various interpretations, e.g. “A friend, (when you are) in need, is indeed a true friend.” Or “A friend, (who is) in need, is (“indeed”) inclined to stress their friendship in order to obtain your help.” For more information, visit: <https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/a-friend-in-need-is-a-friend-indeed.html> .]

- Share an instance where you had to rebuke someone. How did it go? Knowing what you know now, would you have changed your approach?



SERMON REFLECTION



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The Engage team is taking a break from sermon reflections based on the

2 Samuel: *Experiencing Blessings & Brokenness* series.

We are open to having new writers / huddlers join us. You may consider starting out as an observer.

If you are interested, please email one of us:

Pr Benny Liew (benny.liew@dumc.my) or

Wendy ML Tan (minlitt76@gmail.com) or

Darren Lim Jit Aun (darrenjalim@gmail.com)



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.

CrossFields

MISSIONS CANDIDATES' PREPARATION PROGRAMME 1

26 – 27 October 2024

(2 days 1 night stay-in training)



Register: bit.ly/mcpp1_oct2024



A practical introduction
to missions

Come, learn about God's heart for the nations, and discover how you can participate in His global plan.



Sign up here: bit.ly/mcpp1_oct2024



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 Penans & Punans of Sarawak

The indigenous Penan peoples are traditionally nomadic and many Penan children drop out of school because they cannot adapt to formal school society.

Pray for:

- The parents of the Penan and Punan families, to understand the importance of education and continue to send their children to school.
- Dedicated teachers to be sent to the preschools in Long Malim and Long Lidem
- The Holy Spirit, to grant wisdom and insight to BEM Church in Miri (our missions partner) as they address the pre-school situation in Mentalun.

Sarawak Penan Mission Team

Liew Siew Eng (Team Leader), Ho Leh Jan (Asst. Team Leader), Leem Weng Keng, Mimi Leong, and Nance Tan will be on a mission trip to Sarawak from 24 September to 1 October 2024.

Pray for:

- Good relationships and bonding with the locals, and team unity to be preserved at all times for God's purpose.
- All preparations to be aligned with God's plan for the receiving communities.
- God's protection for the team and their loved ones.