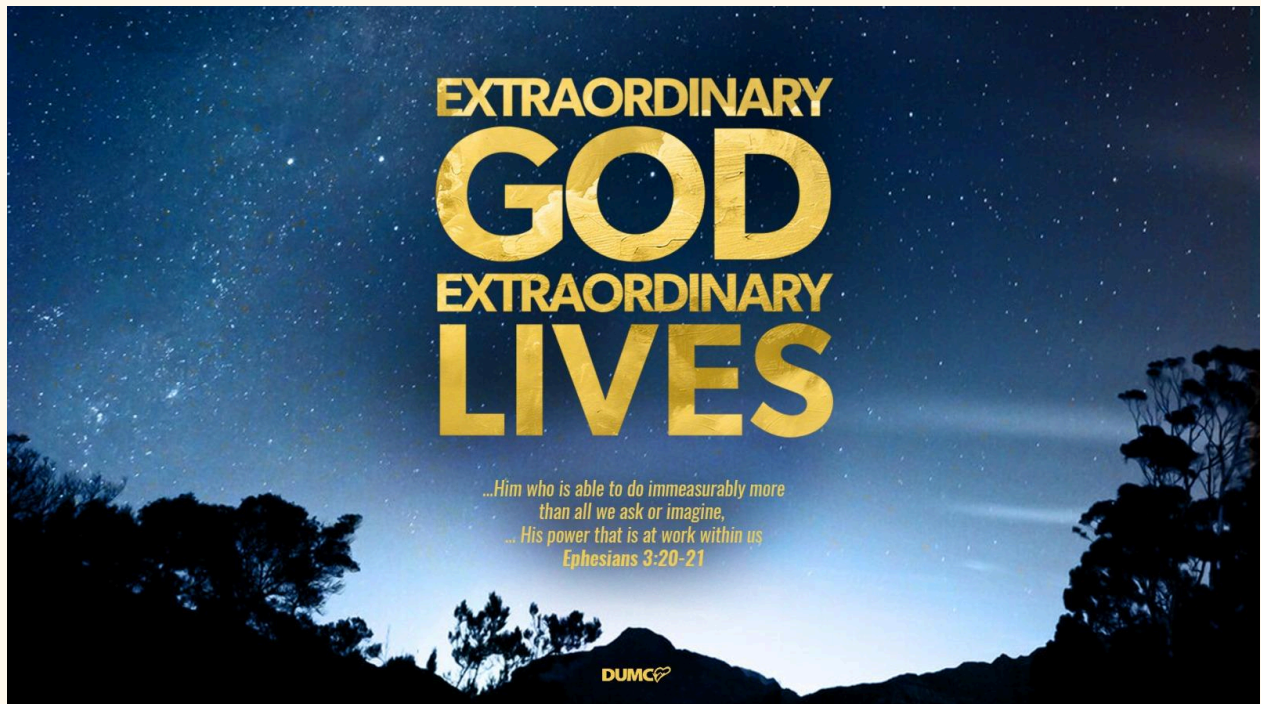

Engage

Dear Lord, thank You for the privilege of knowing You. Fill us with Your love, wisdom, and courage, that we may reflect Christ in all we do. Use us as Your vessels to lead others to Your truth, and may our every words and actions point people to Your grace. In Jesus' Name, Amen.





WELCOME

Welcome is the first “W” in a Cell Group (CG) session. Each person may be going through many daily situations leading up to a CG session. Hence, it is good to bring the CG with a practice of releasing the daily situations we each may be going through. CGs are encouraged to get creative about Icebreakers and/or activities that help its members to be present with one another. Here are some suggestions to shake things up a little and inject some fun and freshness into how we do this.

Suggested Icebreaker Activity/Questions

For CGs with new visitors

- What was your favourite kind of story while growing up (e.g. Cinderella, boy meets girl, the heroic adventure, etc.)? What was most captivating about that story?

For CGs with existing members

- Share one item on your bucket list that you were either challenged or dared by others to accomplish. Did you manage to? Why or why not?



Photo by David Traña on Unsplash



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.

A Different Story to Be Written

David Yeghnazar, Elam Ministries

Acts 1:1-3

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. After His suffering, He presented Himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the Kingdom of God.

Acts 4:23-31

On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “You made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: ““Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against His anointed one.”

Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your Word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly.

Introduction

God is doing amazing things in Iran despite the dark and bleak headlines we see in the news. Iran is in the season of harvest. In spite of sharp opposition and persecution of Christians, more and more people are coming to know Jesus daily. God is writing a different story, a beautiful story - one not defined by fear and oppression, but one filled with hope and love. This was possible through the faithful partnership between the Spirit and the previous generations of Christians - men and women who, empowered by the Spirit, tirelessly sowed the Good News, even when their labour seemed fruitless for years.

The Iranian revolution in 1979 resulted in the toppling of the monarchy and the rise of anti-Christian sentiments. Christians face persecution and imprisonment. Churches were closed and missionaries expelled from the country. In a small church tucked away in Iran, Seth Yeghnazar (the grandfather of David from Elam Ministries) and a few other Christians gathered to pray earnestly and boldly for the Good News to move powerfully in their nation. Their prayers were filled with tears and hope, asking God to bring Salvation and to draw hearts to Jesus. Can God really answer such a ridiculously impossible prayer? It may have seemed impossible or even foolish to believe such a thing could happen under such heavy opposition. People like Seth and the early Christians believed it was! They believed that God was writing a different story because Jesus is alive! They boldly continued to share Jesus with others in spite of the threat of being imprisoned and persecuted for their faith. They expected God to work and to bring His Kingdom to life, even in an unlikely place such as Iran.

We heard many such encouraging stories from Iran. Inspiring stories of courage, redemption, healing and breakthrough. Stories of

- A couple whose life took a different turn when they had to move from a more affluent neighbourhood to a rougher part of town. How they lean into God's story in this situation and led many in their apartment to Jesus.
- Scared Sarah who could not open her mouth to share her faith. God used her in a mighty way to lead her family and friends to Jesus.
- The couple who planned to take their own lives the next day but chose instead to give their lives to Jesus after having the exact dream of Jesus the night before.
- Many many more such stories can be found on the 'Jesus Speaks Farsi' podcast (elam.com/podcast).

Perhaps the most inspiring story was the live testimony of Farshid Fathi, an Iranian church planter who spent five years in Iranian jail because of his Christian faith. He and 60 other leaders were arrested on Boxing Day in 2010. He spent 361 days in solitary confinement, facing regular interrogation and yet, he was happy and had peace in his heart. God had stood with him in those difficult times. It was not his own faithfulness but God's faithfulness that allowed him to stand here today and give praise to God (see [here](#) for full story).

Conclusion

The Acts miracles are still happening today, through the work of the Holy Spirit, even in unlikely places such as Iran. And because Jesus lives, we pray different prayers - we pray bold prayers. Because He is alive:

1. We know He has the final word in the story.
2. We seek to boldly play our part in the story.
3. We expect God to work.





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.



Photo by Maegan Martin on Unsplash

Suggested Word Introductory Questions

- Which story from the sermon resonated most with you? Describe how it made you feel and what parts connected with you in the most meaningful way.

- We heard the story of the couple who leaned into God's story when they had to move from a more affluent neighbourhood to a rougher part of town. What is one specific transition or change you are currently undergoing?

Suggested Questions linked to the Sermon:

- Share a difficult experience in the past and how God walked through it with you. How does experiencing the fact that God has a better story help posture your heart in facing present difficulties?
- How do these inspiring stories and testimonies embolden you to courageously step out to be vessels, ambassadors, salt and light for God's great desire to save many? How would you envision the story for Malaysia to unfold?
- What are some miraculous stories you have heard happening today? How does that help you persevere through prayer as you continue to trust God for breakthrough and deliverance?

EPL Emphasis:

A question to help anchor our focus back on [E]vangelism/[P]rayer/[L]ead

- Pray for opportunities — whether for yourself or to help disciple others — to share about Jesus to someone around you. Practise how you would tell people about your faith in Christ by finishing this sentence: "I met Jesus and He changed my life. I / He ..."

E	P	L
Evangelism	Prayer	Leadership (Discipleship)
• Being and doing Christ-like • Missional & Outreach	• Conversation and relationship with God • Tuning in to the heart of God	• Discipleship – journeying as a CG, Church • Growing deeper and more Christ-like



SERMON REFLECTION



Photo by Yan Krukau on Pexels

The stories of how God is moving mightily in Iran were incredibly encouraging. Miracles are not a thing of the past - they are happening today, even in places as unlikely as Iran. It's almost unimaginable that the God of Israel is drawing people to Himself from a nation that has been in hostile conflict with Israel for over 46 years. And yet, He is.

That led me to a deeper question: *What is Malaysia's story?*

It doesn't take a stretch of the imagination to draw parallels between our country and what happened to Iran in 1989. The freedom we currently enjoy to practice our Christian faith is God's grace. But it is also fragile - momentary, conditional and with no guarantee that it will last. It takes just a spark for it all to be taken away. So I am led to ask: *What is God's story for Malaysia?*

As the preacher continued to share stories after stories - some of which moved me to tears - a question whispered in my heart: *'What is my part in His story?'*

When I look back to low points in the past, I am amazed at how God was working behind the scenes in ways unimaginable. He was always there. He never left me. He

never abandoned me. I recall a particularly painful season when I was treated unfairly by a manager at work. At the time, it felt unjust and even crushing. But now I see how God used even that difficult experience to refine me, removing the dross that was holding me back. I find myself slowly beginning to understand some of the reasons why the manager did what she did. And now, as I walk through a new struggle involving a potential health challenge, I see His hand at work again.

I am a piece of clay in the hands of the master potter. A work in progress. God is still shaping me - day by day, moment to moment. The challenges I have faced, the ones I am currently in and the ones yet to unfold are turning points. Moments God uses to mold me into a sculpture that reflects His beauty and purpose.

I get a glimpse of God's bigger plans for me. I may not fully comprehend but I will trust and obey. I have resolved to follow wherever He leads. The road ahead may be uncomfortable and even scary but I know it will be meaningful because He is with me! If God can move so powerfully in Iran, He can certainly write a beautiful story in my life and in our beloved nation, Malaysia. Jesus is alive! And because He lives, I can pray bold prayers. I can lean into His story with courage, hope and expectation.

As I bring this reflection to a close, the familiar words of a beloved hymn '*Blessed Assurance*' echoes softly yet deeply through the chambers of my heart:

*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;
Oh, what a foretaste of glory, divine!
Heir of Salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.*

*This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Saviour all the day long.*

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.

Missions Prayer Meeting



CrossFields

MISSIONS PRAYER MEETING

5 July 2025
9.15am – 11.00am
Room 103, Dream Centre

As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. (John 20:21)

We pray for revival in the nations, asking God to move powerfully in the hearts of people across the world. As we lift up the nations in prayer, we ask for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to bring transformation and salvation.

Join us as we seek the will of God, praying for a fresh move of His Spirit in the hearts of people worldwide. We will follow in the footsteps of Jesus, whose mission was to bring hope, and walk in step with the Spirit, trusting that He will guide our prayers and actions.

 5 July 2025

 9.15am

 Room 103, Dream Centre

 *Breakfast will be served at the Garden at 8.30am*

Stay connected: [@crossfields.dumc](https://www.crossfields.dumc.org)



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.

Pray for the people in nations affected by the conflict and war

PRAY FOR:

- All civilians caught in conflict, especially children and the senior population
- Leaders to prioritise human life over political objectives
- Spirit of restraint and wisdom to override revenge impulses
- Lasting peace arrangements rather than temporary ceasefires
- Wisdom for safe gatherings as house churches face scrutiny
- Safety for church leaders at higher risk during crisis
- Peace that surpasses understanding amid trauma and uncertainty
- Unity within the church as they support one another
- Wisdom for believers with family in military/government
- Strength to be peacemakers and witnesses of Christ's love
- Protection from fear and despair that could overwhelm faith
- Access to food, medicine, shelter as infrastructure is damaged
- Communication abilities despite internet restrictions
- Financial provision amid economic hardship
- International church support from believers worldwide
- Open doors for ministry - opportunities to share Christ's love