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## WORSHIP

The Joy  
One God  
What an Awesome God

## WELCOME

Suppose you discovered a deal so good that it could save your friends a lot of money. Would you spread the word, or keep the opportunity to yourself?

## WORD

### Matthew 9:35-38

<sup>35</sup> Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. <sup>36</sup> Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup> Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

There is a growing trend of churches being deconsecrated. As congregations have declined, church buildings have been sold and turned into residences, business and holiday rentals. In Singapore, what used to be Ebenezer Chapel in Dempsey Hill is now Claudine Restaurant. It is a saddening spiritual lesson for what is happening to the church of believers today.

Our theme verse for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CCF Singapore, which we are celebrating today, speaks of the continuity of God's work through generations (**Psalm 145:4**). God employs us in the process of that continuity and there must be genuine, consistent intentionality behind it. To declare the praise of God and his work to the next generation, we must first and foremost model it in our lives. This means walking as Jesus walked and living as Jesus lived (**1 John 2:5-6**).

This message focuses on three aspects which we are to imitate and model for the next generation of Christians: circulation, compassion and commission.

## 1. Circulation

In the passage, Jesus was moving through cities and villages (v35). He was teaching from the Old Testament, proclaiming the gospel and the fulfilment of its prophecies, and healing people as proof that he was the Messiah. To circulate well, he had to be intentional.

Other instances of Jesus' intentionality include travelling through Samaria at a time when, because of the animosity between the two groups, most Jews avoided the region. He knew he had a divine appointment with a Samaritan woman at a well (**John 4:1-26**). Similarly, when a blind beggar asked him to "have mercy on me" as Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, Jesus did not ignore him (**Mark 10:46-52**). He again recognised the divine appointment, knowing that the salvation

Hof even one soul causes great rejoicing in heaven.

Only occasionally after beginning his ministry was Jesus not circulating. In those instances, he was often in prayer (for example, in **Mark 1:35-37**). His dependence on his father and desire to fulfil his father's will during his brief life on earth also attest to his intentionality. Among his prayers was for protection for his disciples (**John 17:15**), including us, for the job we have to do.

Although circulating like Jesus requires speaking about him, we are rarely excited to do so. Consider this: given the ongoing energy crisis, if you had inside information from a reliable source that there would be a fuel price rollback starting June 1, would you keep it a secret? Hopefully not. Yet we are rarely as excited to tell people about Jesus. Why should we be more excited about a fuel price rollback than about our lord and saviour?

We are called to be heralds of good news. To do this, we need to maximise our exposure to other people instead of sitting at home unnecessarily. Being in the workplace, at school, in the park – each of these is an opportunity. We need to have happy feet, eager to tell people about the saviour we love (**Romans 10:14-15**). The gospel that we bring is a gospel of peace (**Ephesians 6:15**) and we should not hesitate to tell people about Jesus.

## 2. Compassion

"Compassion" in the original language of the passage refers to an intense emotion in one's gut that moves one to action. No action means no genuine compassion. Jesus felt compassion for the people he saw (v36), including the two people he met during the instances described earlier.

After speaking to Jesus, the Samaritan woman at the well was so intrigued and desperate that she asked for the living water he had described. But Jesus, wanting to cut to the real issue of her life, responded by asking for her husband and consequently prompted the woman to admit to the sin of her relationships. She realised that Jesus could see right through her. He had brought up her situation not to shame or condemn her, but to show her how desperately she needed him, and she believed (**John 4:1-42**).

Similarly, Jesus responded to the desperate cry of the blind beggar Bartimaeus, who then threw his cloak aside as he was summoned. The significance of this detail is that based on Old Testament law, a poor person's cloak symbolised warmth and protection. If it was taken as collateral for a loan, the law demanded that it be returned to the borrower before sunset. Bartimaeus was blind and could not be certain he would find his cloak again if he lost it, yet it was worthless to him compared to the opportunity of being with Jesus. Jesus asked Bartimaeus what he wanted, even though it was arguably obvious, because Jesus wanted the request to come from Bartimaeus himself. Bartimaeus subsequently also believed (**Mark 10:46-52**).

When we tell people about Jesus, we give them an opportunity to admit how much they need him. It is an unparalleled privilege to be used by God to introduce Jesus to a person's life and to then witness that person begin to follow Jesus. There are people who are desperate for Jesus and don't even know how much they need him.

### **3. Commission**

Pastor Ricky shared that one occasion that truly humbles and warms his heart is when the church commissions new small group leaders. They pray over the leaders and formally, in the sight of God and his people, commission them

to be disciple-makers. The harvest is plentiful and faithful workers are needed (v37-38).

In his prayer for protection for his disciples, Jesus also prayed that said disciples would be one, just as Jesus and the father are one (**John 17:20-22**). This likewise applies to believers. The Genius of One, a book by Greg Holder, explores this prayer in John 17 and purports that common ground among Christians is shrinking in today's world. Slight disagreements can carve deep divides and simple conversations can instantly polarize. Tragically, while Christians are busy debating and arguing about these minor things, the devil is laughing at our ineffectiveness as disciples of Jesus.

Recently, Pastor Ricky was involved in a pastoral gathering which focused on training small group leaders and other church members to share their testimonies and the gospel. They then sent over 400 volunteers into the area around the CCF Center in Ortigas to practice their new skills, where the volunteers shared the gospel with skateboarders, truck drivers and people from all walks of life. It was humbling to see that while the volunteers were initially hesitant, the reluctance that they had to go out and share the gospel was far exceeded by the excitement they had when they came back.

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament point to Jesus. He has given each believer a new heart and a new spirit to obey (**Ezekiel 36:26**). Like the Samaritan lady at the well and blind Bartimaeus, may we all have a personal encounter with Jesus, our living saviour. And after we do, may we also circulate in our communities, have compassion on others and honour our commission to tell the world about him.

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## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Do I see my family, friends, officemates with the same compassion that Jesus had for the crowds, or do I tend to overlook their needs?**
- 2. Consider one specific action you can take to demonstrate Christ's love, or ways to respond to the spiritual and practical needs of those who are "distressed or helpless" in my community, workplace, or family?**
- 3. Jesus told His disciples to pray for workers for the harvest. Who is God telling you to pray for?**

**\_-for personal reflection and only to be shared when comfortable-**

# WORKS

## PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for healing and restoration for those who have been hurt and whose lives have been devastated by those who lied to them. Share the truth (the gospel of Jesus) that will set them free from lies, and from speaking falsehood.

## WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

### I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

### II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Singapore & Philippines.
- For legislators to promote and support bills and laws aligned with God's Word.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented.
- Pray for persecuted Christians in Sudan and Nigeria) --- many have been beheaded and murdered; earnestly seek God's intervention to stop the bloodshed. Pray for freedom from oppression, that God's word and His people bring them comfort and hope.
- PRAISE God that all Israeli hostages have been restored to their families! Continue to pray for Israel's war with terrorists to end according to God's purpose and for His glory. For Jewish people worldwide who are experiencing a surge of antisemitism. May this lead them to the Messiah, Jesus as they turn to God for help and comfort.
- For nations in turmoil (e.g., Ukraine, Middle Eastern countries, etc.) to experience true freedom in Christ and become centers for massive spiritual revivals in their regions. For new Iranian leadership to rise up that will be for the

people of Iran, will promote freedom of worship that the Iranian believers will be able to reach out to the rest of their countrymen and the people of the Middle East.

- For the people of Mali who are experiencing a violent takeover of their government by Islamist terrorists.

### III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God, and make disciples
- For elders, pastors, deacons, and families to become holy, humble, harmonious, happy, and heart-working)
- **Pray for a bigger Sunday Worship venue or a second worship venue.**

### IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain (MMRC)

### V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper and intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends