



CELL GUIDE 2015

Theme	Building Relationships Beyond Self
Topic	Not A Rolled Away Stone But A Carried Away Church
Speaker	Elder Lok Vi Ming
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Message Summary

Are we carried away?

While the church can boast about the victory of Jesus over the grave, what the community cares about isn't a rolled away stone. It cares about the actions of the church and the values it embodies. To have credibility as a church that professes our hope in Christ, we have to **show** that we have allowed the Holy Spirit to carry us away i.e. that we have allowed Him **free reign** in the church and in our lives. This week, Elder Lok explores the characteristics of the early church in Acts, how it embodied the very essence of what God intended His church to be and what it means to be "carried away".

The Essence of a Church

The early church in Acts 2 was a mighty, vibrant and victorious church. The passage in Acts 2:42-47 gives a brief description of this church and how they manifested the good works of a fruitful church.

v42 *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."* BBTC places a great emphasis on what is preached at the pulpit and on cell groups – do we personally recognise the importance of sharing and studying the word together?

v43 *"Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles."* Truly, the signs and wonders of the time were astounding – a mere shadow brought about healing [Acts 5:15]. In fact, the miracles Paul performed were described to be "unusual" [Acts 19:11-12]. However, while miracles today may not look like they did in the past, are they not still worthy of awe and thanksgiving? Sicknesses that seem unthreatening today were, many years ago, the same ailments that took many lives. Elder Lok urges us to consider whether we have lost our amazement for the miracles happening in our midst today.

v44 *"All believers were together and had everything in common."* The people shared commonality in spirit and in space. It wasn't just connectedness over social media or Whatsapp. They were **together**.

v45 *"They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need."* This is not merely an example of communalism but a preparedness to sacrifice time, talents and resources to the church. However, this readiness can only come with the maturation of the church and with the sensitivity of the church to the Lord's leading.

v46 *"...they broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts."* Daily, the people **reveled in** each other's company as they conducted their spiritual and everyday activities.

v47 *"praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."* Because they embodied the true essence of God's church, they were



CELL GUIDE 2015

attractive to the people outside of the church. Their vibrancy overflowed into the lives of the community and the Lord ushered in the numbers. The church prospered from within and without.

The Carried Away Church

When the Jews heard the men of Galilee speaking their native language, they were amazed and perplexed [Acts 2:12]. And so, though the message from the Lord was, in itself, awesome but the manner in which it was delivered was truly bewildering. Similarly, for the church, it is important for us to be a **living testimony**. The true test of Christianity is the life it produces; it is evidence of Christ's life-changing power.

But while the church can make preparations for many things – it can be well-managed and function like a well-oiled machine, we may never realise the sum total of the church until we allow the Lord free reign. We may each be an arm or a leg, but the full body of the church is far greater in its totality. If we would only yield ourselves to the Lord, then can He work through the Holy Spirit and bring about wondrous and awesome works intended for us. And how profound this could be!

And so, an example of a carried away church is one whose members does good. For even if we should suffer for what is right, we are blessed [1 Pet 3:13-16]. Elder Lok encourages us to do good and not overthink it.

When we are a carried away church, the community will respond. People see, they hear and they know that the Lord we serve is nothing ordinary. And just like Rahab, who staked her bets on the two spies, our actions as a carried away church can melt away the confidences that people have of the world and still give us permission to intercede for them [Josh 2:8-21].

The Never-ending Story

At the end of Acts, nothing is said about Paul's acquittal, his ministry amongst the Gentiles and eventually his martyrdom. The book simply concludes with how he preached and taught without facing much resistance. And thus, the story of the Spirit-filled church lives on! There is no end, no conclusion to Paul's ministry. Likewise, the Lord isn't finished with us. Let us strive to be a Chapter 29 church, one that never ceases in our serving and in our mission as a church.



CELL GUIDE 2015

Questions

Why is 'community' amongst Christians so important?

To your group, what does it mean to allow God to have free reign within your group? What would it look like if your cell group were to be 'carried away'?

What are some barriers that prevent you and your group from being carried away and how can you overcome those together to make a difference for Him?
