

**Topic** : **New Covenant: Always Focus on the Lord Jesus!**

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**Hebrews 12:24** ...to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

There is a paradigm shift from the old to the new covenant, one that is fundamentally different.

**Hebrews 8:6** But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

The foundation of focus is on Jesus who is the truth; we are to focus on His righteousness and not on our righteousness.

**1 Corinthians 1:30** But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

**Righteousness comprises 2 parts:**

- I. Justification - our position of right standing before God in Christ.
- II. Sanctification - our journey of right living before God in Christ.

We can always come to God anytime. We might have been ruffled by someone before going for church service and the devil might accuse us and call us a hypocrite. However, we need to know that our basis of coming to God is not on performance or behaviour. God looks at our standing in Christ.

**Romans 5:1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Before God the Father, we are justified and we have peace with God.

**1. This righteousness is the righteousness of God.**

**2 Corinthians 5:21** For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The sinners deserve death. Jesus made the divine exchange on the cross. Our past, present and future sins are borne on His body and He has brought us righteousness. Our righteousness is not our own. They are like dirty rags. **Isaiah 64:6**.

## **2. We receive this righteousness as a gift.**

**Romans 4:3** For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” **4** Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. **5** But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness ...

When we work, we receive our salary and this is due to our efforts. However, righteousness is entirely due to the grace of God. It is unmerited, unearned and undeserved, given as a gift.

## **3. We receive this righteousness by faith when we confess Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.**

**Romans 10:9** that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

**Romans 1:17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

As in **Romans 1:17**, we need to move from faith to faith. Unfortunately, we move from faith to works. We trust Him as Saviour but not inviting Him in our lives and journey.

## **4. It is entirely due to the mercy and grace of God to give us this righteousness in Christ.**

**Ephesians 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Paul was emphatic about this. This truth must be caught but we misbehave and stumble in our Christian life.

## **5. We cannot work to earn this righteousness.**

**Romans 10:3** For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

The Jews sought to establish their own righteousness. There are believers who say, “You better pray harder, pray longer,” or “We better fast,” as if we could bend God’s arm. This is pagan thinking. It is not scriptural. The only reason prayers are heard is because of Christ. **Hebrews 4:14.** He is our great High Priest. We think that by our travail alone, God will hear us.

Question: Why do we pray or read the Word? Why do we serve? Do we think God would favour us more because we serve? Wrong thinking. We serve because of the gratefulness

to God. We want to be a blessing to others. We serve our destiny - to do good works. We need to rethink our motivation for serving.

**Philippians 3:9** and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith ...

## **II. Sanctification – Right living before God in Christ**

### **1. In our daily walk, focus to be led and ruled by the Holy Spirit, not by our self-life, external laws or anything else.**

To be led is to be ruled, guided, tutored and coached by the Holy Spirit. Who is the Holy Spirit? He is our companion and consultant. He is the Spirit of truth. We pray, “Spirit of truth, show me if I err and am in error.” We posture to hear the Spirit. For power, He is the Spirit of holiness who raised Jesus from the dead. He is the one to enable me to overcome bad habits, to forgive, to turn the other cheek and to walk the next mile.

Legalism is when we are ruled by rules. Lawlessness is when we are ruled by ‘whatever’ seems right in our own eyes without regard to the laws of God. If we do not have regard for God and Scriptures and no consideration for the Holy Spirit, then anything we do is lawlessness. In **Matthew 7**, the people who cast out demons disregarded the relationship with Jesus and did what was right in their own eyes.

**Judges 21:25** In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

For those who are with the church for the last 5 years, you are encouraged to be plugged into discipleship. We need to see life change in marriages. If there is no life change Sunday in and Sunday out, something is wrong.

In talking to someone who is trying to pick up some lessons in a class, Pastor Daniel Foo asked the person if any of his lecturers have been in the market place, been involved in business, etc. It dawned on him that none of his lecturers were practitioners in the market place. We don’t want to have knowledge which is not applied because knowledge puffs up. Knowledge is of no use when it is not applied. There must be life change. We cannot be part of the crowd and do our things right in our own eyes. Following Christ must make a difference in our family and in the way we work.

Lawfulness is when we are ruled by God to fulfil the Spirit of the Law in our relationship with Him.

Kingdom of God is about the reign and rule of God. When things do not turn out the way we hope for, we can be disappointed. We need to go with the FLOW of the Holy Spirit. We don’t know everything and we don’t have everything figured out. The posture is always to be ruled, directed, coached, mentored, tutored and guided by the Holy Spirit.

**2 Corinthians 3:17** says the Lord is the Spirit. We need to submit to Him, to His kingdom and righteousness.

In making decisions, it is the process of having knowledge, understanding and wisdom. Knowledge is gathering facts. Understanding is having revelation and clarity of opinions with the Spirit unpacking and wisdom is applying knowledge and understanding.

In living the Christian life, we must know the difference between:

- a. relying on our own efforts and strength.
- b. relying completely on the Holy Spirit to enable and empower us.

**Hebrews 8:10** For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

As in **Hebrews 8**, He writes His law in our heart and mind. However there are two obstacles. First is when we grieve the Spirit such as being unkind to a brother or we grieve Him in a relationship that is not right. Next obstacle is when we quench the Spirit. To quench is when the Spirit convicts, tugs and puts thoughts in our mind but we ignore Him and insist on our own ways. Eventually, we reap what we sow.

To rely completely on the Holy Spirit to enable and empower us is:

- e.g. 1 - When we deal with anger and bitterness in our hearts, we will not physically murder.
- e.g. 2 - When we deal with lust in our hearts, we will not commit adultery.
- e.g. 3 - When we deal with covetousness in our hearts, we will not steal.

We may not be able to prevent the birds from flying over our heads but we can prevent them from building a nest and shitting on our heads.

We cannot mix our self-righteousness with God's righteousness. There is only one righteousness, i.e. God's. Sanctification does not depend on us. It depends entirely on Jesus who is our Sanctifier.

**Romans 10:4** For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Christ is our Sanctifier, we move from:

- a) Being tutored or ruled by our self-life, external laws or anything else.

to

- b) Being tutored - ruled - led and empowered only by the Holy Spirit.

## 2. Focus on the super abundant grace in Christ, not on our level of faith.

a) From God's perspective, He has already given us all the faith for all the needs in our lives.

Don't focus on our faith but on the glorious riches of the grace of God. **Romans 8:32**

b) From the believer's perspective, our faith 'grows' as we journey in revelation and experience with God.

We must have our minds renewed, and we do so when we surrender to Him. We move from knowledge to revelation. We pray, "God, what have you got to say about buying a house; about having a second child, about the problem with the arm, etc." The last phrase of the Lord's Prayer is 'Yours is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever.'" Acts says that Jesus goes about doing. It is about demonstration. God is supernatural. The church is a supernatural place. We must sense His presence in the church. We are given authority to release peace. If we are the only pre-believers who understand this truth, we release peace. Behind misbehavior are unclean spirits that draw out the iniquity in the person. To live by faith is to walk in the supernatural. In the church, people will be saved or will be healed. In **Acts 1**, Jesus spent 40 days talking about the kingdom as He lay down the character of the Kingdom. Then in Chapter 2, the power fell and in Chapter 3, 3000 were saved.

We are a disciple-making church. The end product is to be an effective king and priest. We have to demonstrate the love of God in situations that require prayer for healing or for casting our demons. We must demonstrate the kingdom of God. We must not be in the mode like what happened in the classroom.

c) See the super abundant grace available to the believer in the divine exchange in Christ.

**Romans 5:1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

**John 16:33** These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

d) Appropriate the divine exchange by the Spirit of faith

**2 Corinthians 1:20** (NIV) For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

**2 Corinthians 4:13** And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak ...

We have what we believe and what we say. We say, "I am deeply loved by God."; "I am completely forgiven."; "I am a son/daughter of God and I have divine favour."; "All the mountains will be removed."

### **3. Focus on God's love for me and not my love for Him.**

**John 3:16** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

**1 John 3:1** Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

**1 John 4:19** We love Him because He first loved us.

When we personally experience the love of God, nothing touches us. Perfect love casts out fear. It is not about how long we pray or whether we go for mission trips. In **Ephesians 3**, Paul prayed that we will be rooted and be able to grasp the love of God.

Pastor Daniel Foo shared about someone who needed to be stroked and affirmed. Without right words from the staff, person would sulk and misbehave. Some people come from homes that are dysfunctional and without good models. It's the love of God that will save and heal. All of us carry the wound of lacking the father's love. We are not loved by our fathers and we carry father-wounds. We are also not properly affirmed by principals and teachers. We need to come to the Father God and find His healing balm that will fill up the gaps which are the root causes of misbehavior. In human relationships, we may have low EQ and are not gracious and kind. Knowing this, we have to focus on His love and not on our love for Him.

### **4. Focus on the one thing that is needful first and then we will know the priority of the many things to do.**

**Luke 18:22** So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him [Rich Young Ruler], "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

**Psalms 27:3** Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war may rise against me, in this I will be confident. **4** One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

**Verse 4** is written in the midst of war. In the midst of stress we go through, the pressures, the deadlines, the uncertainty of job, constant worries, anxieties and fear, what do we do? David worshipped God amidst trying times and he beheld the beauty of God. Depending on our make-up, we may want to think of nature, painting, scenery or flowery poems. We may want to think of people like Mother Theresa. We are always attracted to beauty and David

saw the beauty of the Lord. Moving fast forward to Revelations, the 4 living creatures worship the Lord and they say, "Holy, holy, holy." The key is that they have eyes all over and they were mesmerized with the beauty of the Lord. They close their eyes and when they open, they see another beauty of the Lord. David later saw the Lord as the Lord of Hosts; the battle belongs to the Lord. We need to focus on the priority before us.

**Luke 10:42** But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.

## **CONCLUSION**

Martha's world is falling apart. She is busy, stressed and anxious. Is our world falling apart? It is so because we have taken our eyes away from Jesus.

**Colossians 1:17** (NIV) in Him all things hold together.

Colossians says that Jesus has all supremacy and He holds all things together. The Word of God is the container and vessel of the power of God. This is the new covenant, the gospel. We have right standing, right believing and right living. We always follow Christ in triumphant procession. When we turn our eyes from the miry clay to the Saviour, He is mighty to save.

End





4) How will focusing on the super abundant grace help us grow in our faith?  
How can we make the Divine Exchange our experience?

5) Personal meditation: Is your world falling apart? Pause and turn your eyes to Jesus. Invite Him into your life. Surrender what you need to place in His hands to take over. Open your ears to hear what you need to hear, your eyes to see what you need to see, your mind to be accordingly renewed and your heart, it's time to let Him have His rightful place. The storms may capture your attention but you need to see the One who is able to still the storms. Spend the moments with Him and like the 4 living creatures, may you capture another glimpse of His beauty and holiness.