

TOPIC: LIFE-LONG LIFE-CHANGE

SPEAKER: Senior Pastor Daniel Foo

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Today's message is a pastoral message, one that I share from my heart.

In the month of June, the focus of the messages has been on changing attitudes, minds and being clear about our purpose. Today, we want to consider how to have life-long life-change that is real and sustainable until Jesus takes us home and to be with Him.

We know that there are problems in life because we are fallen people. Romans 3:23. In the Christian scene, there are problems with marriages; there are integrity issues with people who cheat and steal. There are carnal responses from believers where they walk off in a huff and a puff. There are Christians who are immature and moody. For ladies embarking on the Breakthrough Weekend for Women, one thing coming out of it is how to be emotionally and spiritually healthy. We need to be on this journey of life change into the image of Christ. We cannot have people tip-toeing around us, wondering if we are moody or not.

We make mistakes and we have moods but to be moody and touchy most of the time is not good. Conflict resolution is something we need to do right. We are easily offended, we make wrong presumptions and assumptions, words come out wrongly. We are not gracious and we don't extend courtesy.

Senior Pastor was with the Youth Church and the Hokkien Service on Saturday. He was proud of the pastors and leaders. They understood what it meant to extend courtesy. They prayed for him. Being courteous and being gracious is something we need to work on in our lives.

In Psalm 130, it says, "If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" The psalmist thanked God that with Him, there is mercy, salvation and forgiveness.

This is a discipleship-making church. We are in this journey to grow in Christlikeness; to develop relationship with God and our lives must change. It is all about relating with God.

What contributes to life-long life-change relationships? The purpose of the pulpit is not to tickle our minds but to preach and teach the Word for life-change. How?

1. We need to have ongoing encounters with God.
 - a. This may begin with an initial significant encounter with God. It may be via the following platforms:
 - conversion experience
 - Alpha Day away
 - significant breakthrough of issues in life
 - seminars
 - conferences
 - baptism of the Holy Spirit
 - church camp

We cannot impose it on anyone. God knows our heart and what's important. He knows the posture of our heart. Our prayers are for anointed worship, that we may connect with God and we may respond with tears. It is perfectly alright to be emotional in our worship of God, loving Him with our heart, soul and mind. We love Him cerebrally with our mind but also with all our heart and soul.

Senior Pastor related how he had special favor when he travelled to Europe. We need that daily sense of the presence of God, the sense that He is dealing with us and seeing Him coming through for us day by day, week by week. This is so that we may know that He is God. It is heaven intervening in our daily lives. We cannot come to a worship service and yet be far from the God we worship. Likewise in the cell groups we go into and yet miss out on God.

b. We must then move on to have continual encounters with God.

2 Cor 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The first thing that we need to do is to unveil our face. To behold, we need to remove the veil. What's the veil? It is the blockage. To behold is to gaze, stare and look intentionally on the glory of God. The mirror is symbolically the Word, the Lord. We stare at Jesus. The glory of the Lord is mentioned in Exodus 33:3,4. That is the goodness of God. We cannot love someone till we experience the love of God. He is the One who deposits His love, not human love which is selfish. Romans 5:5- It is the Holy Spirit who pours love into our heart. As we do so, we are being transformed. Otherwise it will only be in the natural realm and not through the lens of the love of God.

2. We need to belong to a close community of believers:

In today's world, there are dangers of virtual community. Parents need to be alert. The children who are physically in the home may be in another world via facebook, etc. They are IT savvy but poor in relationships. We need to form relationships.

Our journey in life is beset with obstacles. In the world, there will be troubles as we interact with selfish people. Hurt people hurt others. We need encouragement and we need a group to whom we could be transparent.

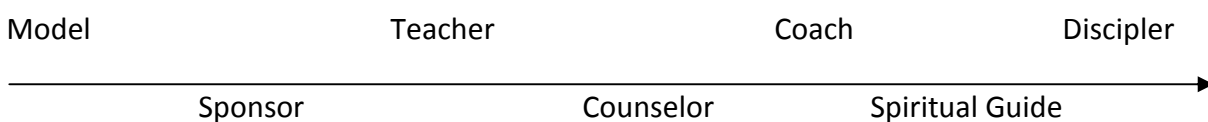
A & C: accountability and covering.

P & C: pray and communicate

We do the above with anything that is not routine, e.g. a medical checkup, presentation, sale of house, career change.

3. We also need to have mentor coaches who can speak into our lives.

There is a range of mentoring relationships:



The range covers from being passive to intensive or from less to more deliberate.

We try to model for you how to be a strong family. We are not perfect, we make mistakes but we try to be models.

James 5:16

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Confidentiality means we do not publicize in the newsletter. There is no such thing as a lone ranger. Always find someone to whom you can confess your faults. What is a fault? It is a mask, weakness, foibles committed. We confess so that we can be healed and be restored. We need people to speak into our lives.

4. We need to adopt a humble posture of life-long learning.

We need to be willing to make changes. Otherwise we will not grow and be transformed into the image of Christ.

Proverbs 9:9-10

9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. 10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

The key to wisdom is the fear of the Lord. It behooves us to change when something is pointed out. No one likes his faults to be pointed out but a wise man will learn. Why? It is so that we may be transformed. It is dealing with baggage as we are made aware of them.

Hebrews 12:1 (AMP)

Therefore then, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses ... let us strip off and throw aside every encumbrance (unnecessary weight) and that sin which so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us, and let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us ...

There are two things that stand in the way of becoming like Christ.

1) Sin - the root of the tree

2) sins - the fruits of the tree

All have sinned, it is the sinful nature. We need to be consciously aware of this nature in us (1 John 1:8).

Next, sins are like the fruits of a tree. Examples are anger, unresolved issues, low self esteem, rejection, legalistic, victim mentality, bitterness and judgmental attitudes which will cause us to be partially blind. Judgment will be meted back to us the way we judge others. Thank God there is mercy and mercy triumphs over judgment. We must be people who show mercy.

Don't have a victim mentality, thinking that the pastor is talking about you all the time. There are also unhealed hurts which we need to deal with. We need to repent, change our thinking and realign that our lives may be changed.

This is about our journey in brokenness.

Luke 9:23

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

What are the instruments that will lead us to the cross? They are people and circumstances. We need to recognize the milestones and developments of our lives. We need to develop life skills to deal with them. We need to learn to honor our leaders. Relating to people require skills.

5. This is the renewal of our minds as we know the good acceptable and perfect will of God for our lives.

Prov 23:7a

For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

Our behavior is a reflection of our values. Our minds are to be renewed as we present our lives to God.

Romans 12:1,2

1I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

6. We must develop and pursue our purpose in life.

a. This is related to our roles and responsibilities in life.

If you are a man, be the godly man, husband, employee and godly brother.

b. It is always about influencing and impacting lives, beginning in our families.

We are either encouraging others or are a stumbling block.

c. We do so according to our gifting.

We encourage everyone to serve God, doing so formally or informally.

Don't say that I am not a leader, so I can do anything I want. It is our responsibility to help our cell leader to succeed. When you are in the sanctuary and see newsletters, tissues under the seats, what do you do? Together, we will succeed. This is family talk. Senior Pastor is speaking as a pastor, from his heart.

7. We need regular spiritual disciplines.

a. We need to have regular intake of the Word.

We have the BBTC Devotional Journal. This copy is available for anyone – with one condition, i.e. that one reads the Bible once through in a year. As you read, certain phrases will pop out. We record, we reflect, we respond. E.g. a judgmental attitude will cause us to be critical and we will not receive anything. We need to make a response and repent.

We have the 5 assurance, the spiritual parenting, the New Believers' Track (NBT), Growing Believers' Track (GBT) and the Serving Believers' Track (SBT).

b. We need to have ongoing prayer communion.

Together with other churches, we are participating in the 24.365 prayer movement. Various tribes will be anchoring this week in 24 hour prayers. In the kingdom, there is now a new emphasis on the 4-14 window. The devil is specifically targeting this age group. 10-15 years ago, pre-marital sex was a problem with the undergraduates. Now, the age where teens engaged in sex has gone down. The 12-13 year-olds are not only having sex, they have multiple partners. We need to pay attention to our young. We need to pray.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray without ceasing

Luke 18:1

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.

c. We need to build an altar of thanksgiving.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Ephesians 5:20

giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

What is the bottomline of thanksgiving? It is gratefulness.

d. We need to build an altar of praise.

Hebrews 13:15

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to [confessing-NIV] His name.

What is the bottomline of praise? It is knowing God – His nature and attribute.

e. We need to build an altar of worship.

Leviticus 10:3

And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.'"

The heart of worship is to commit everything to God. The bottomline of worship is surrender.

We need to know His plan – His plan of peace (Jeremiah 29:11). Otherwise, we don't understand God and misrepresent Him. We dare not surrender because we misunderstand Him.

Summary:

1. We need to have ongoing encounters with God
2. We need to belong to a close community of believers.
3. We need to have mentor-coaches who can speak into our lives.
4. We need to adopt a humble posture of life-long learning.
5. We must develop and pursue our purpose in life.
6. We need regular spiritual disciplines.

Conclusion: Will you commit to life-long life-change into the image of Christ?

End.

Questions for discussion

1) Reflect on some of the God-encounters that you might have. How have these changed your life?

2) Do you have someone to whom you could turn to and be accountable to? Who are the people whom you would allow to speak into your life?

3) What would you consider to be postures needful for life-long learning and life-long change

4. What would you consider to be your purpose in life?

5. How are you faring with the following:

a) Word-intake

b) Worship

c) Prayer

No condemnation, no comparison, no competition but only encouragement...