



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Praise in the Prisons

SPEAKER DSP Edric Sng

THEME Knowing and Experiencing God (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

DATE 6 & 7 July 2019

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

DSP Edric opened with the importance of Hope in reaching out to our oikos even though the Celebration of Hope event has concluded. The “Macedonian call” first came to the Apostle Paul in a profound vision which led him to change his plans in Acts 16:9-10:

“During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.”

We are reminded that it is time for the harvest in John 4:35-36 and we should be ready and put our hands to the plough.

HOW WILL YOU RESPOND TO THE MACEDONIAN CALL?

In Acts 16: 22-34, Paul and Silas were filled with joy, and sang praises to God even though they were arrested, beaten, and imprisoned for doing good. The prisoners were listening to them. A supernatural earthquake occurred such that all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed. The jailer wanted to kill himself. Guards who allowed their prisoners to escape received the penalty of their escaped prisoners. Knowing this, Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.” He assured the jailer that no one had escaped. This hardened keeper of the prison fell down trembling. This man knew that the Lord was with Paul and Silas – by the love they showed to him, and from their ability to take joy even in misery – that he wanted the kind of life that Paul and Silas had. Paul told him to: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and he and his household would be saved. The jailer and his family saw no reason to delay baptism; they were baptised that very night.

1) THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY FOR PUBLIC MINISTRY – WILL YOU PAY THE PRICE FOR PROCLAMATION?

In the example above, the crowd joined in the attack where Paul and Silas were stripped and beaten with rods. They were thrown into prison, put in the inner cell with their feet fastened in the stocks. 2 Timothy 3:12 records that all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Godly suffering is different from suffering as a result of our sins, foolishness and wrong desires. In 2 Samuel 24, we note that David is instructed to erect an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah. King David said to Araunah, "I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver." This shows that if it costs nothing, then we have given nothing to God.

DSP Edric drew a parallel to those who responded to the call to help out in the Celebration of Hope. They had to get up early, find childcare arrangement for their children, change their schedules, make their way to the National Stadium at 5-6am. DSP Edric cited a cell group who had volunteered to take care of the young children while their parents volunteered at the Celebration of Hope. These sacrifices are part and parcel of public ministry.

2) THERE IS POWER IN PRAISE – WILL YOU PRAISE THROUGH YOUR PAIN?

In Acts 16:25-26, as Paul and Silas were singing praises to God, a supernatural earthquake occurred such that all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. When we worship, God and the spiritual realm are our audience. The angels of God rejoice and we usher in God's presence.

Rain clouds were closing in during the Celebration of Hope on Sunday morning and as the people of God worshipped at the National Stadium, the rain clouds were blown away and in its place was a cool breeze. As we praise God, we are offering our thanksgiving, prayer and petitions to God and the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard our hearts and mind. We will enjoy the faithfulness of God forever. In 2 Chronicles 20:21-24, King Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise Him for the splendour of His holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the Lord, for His love endures forever."

3) THERE IS A PRICE FOR PERSEVERANCE – WILL YOU PERSEVERE FOR THE PRIZE?

In Acts 16:34, we see the prize where the jailer and his family believed in the Lord and were baptised that very night. DSP Edric shared about the 4 groups of counselors from BBTC and 3 groups were initially told to go back during the Celebration of Hope. By faith, they remained there in a posture of unity and joyful sacrifice. God rewarded them for their perseverance as that session on Sunday morning had the highest response where 1,500 persons responded to the call and stepped forward to the front of the Stadium. The 3 groups were then called on to pray for those who had come forward!

CONCLUSION

DSP Edric encouraged us to come to a place of prayer to hear God's heart before we do God's work. The commonality between Acts 16:13 and Acts 16:16 is the place of prayer. Prayer precedes proclamation. As we pray for our loved ones to be saved, God will work in ways that is beyond what we can do: open their spiritual eyes and soften their hearts. We are encouraged to lead a lifetime of sharing the Gospel even beyond the Celebration of Hope. Evangelism should be a perpetuity as we press on to pray for our loved ones to come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS

1. We are called to discipleship and to serve God but there is a price to pay when we follow/serve God. List down what you think are the costs of following/serving God, the costs of not following/serving God and the ultimate reward.

2. Describe in your own words what the Macedonian call is. What do you sense God is calling you towards? Considering question (1) above, how will you respond?

3. What is an area/time in your life that you are experiencing worry/anxiousness/pain? How can you still worship and praise God in such circumstances? Share with another member and pray with one another.