



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC You Have Brought Me This Far

SPEAKER Ps Lawrence Chua

THEME Maturing in Christ

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

Introduction

2019 was a year that saw many troubling news over the world, from riots in Hong Kong to increasing economic tensions between China and United States. And with the year coming to a close, Pastor Lawrence Chua encourages us to reflect about the year not just from the macro view but also at the micro level. More specifically, to ask ourselves where we have come from, and how God has brought us this far.

Using the stories of King David and Apostle Paul, Pastor Lawrence Chua calls us to reflect on how far God has brought us no matter the season we are in.

David in the Palace

King David received great blessings from God in terms of material possessions (1 Chronicles 17:1), and this was seen in how his dwelling place was built in a house of cedar, considered to be an expensive house only for the noblest in the past. His wealth was known to be constantly increasing with the blessings of God. In the present day, Singaporeans would surely desire such blessings in our houses, jobs, and earnings. We have a tendency to desire increase in all these areas like the parable of the rich man desiring to build greater barns (Luke 12:15-18, 21).

But the key question is: When is big enough ever big enough? King David understood this and had his heart in the right place, for God. As he saw that his material possessions were increasing, he spoke about the ark of covenant of the Lord being in the tabernacle as compared to his dwelling place. He did what was written in John 3:30 (He must increase but I must decrease) to focus not on the increase of his own material wealth but on the increase for the sake of God.

King David reflected on how God had brought him this far by asking God to sharpen his perspective of the present by giving him a clear context of his past (1 Chronicles 17:16). And God revealed the past for King David, how he came from a sheepfold to a palace, from a shepherd to a king, had presence, protection and provisions from God. And the realisation of God's great blessing to him and his family, caused David to overflow with gratefulness.

Paul locked in Prison

While King David enjoyed tangible blessings in his time of reflection, Apostle Paul had an experience of an opposite nature. Apostle Paul had his moment of reflection while being locked up in prison.

Paul had a fantastic spirit and a passion for God's people and to preach the gospel. His testimony reminds us that whatever difficult situation, we can still testify of the great things God has done (Philippians 1:12-21).

Apostle Paul also showed gratefulness for how far the Lord had brought him. He acknowledged that it is by the grace of God that he got to where he was (1 Corinthians 15:10). He also experienced decrease by choice, arising from a change of priority in his life (Philippians 3:7-8).

Conclusion: You and I at Present

Where are you now? And where have you come from? These are important questions to ask ourselves at present. If we are absorbed only in the present we will become dissatisfied with what we have. But if we look at where we came from and how far we have come, we start to have gratitude and thanksgiving for where God has brought us thus far.

QUESTIONS

1. On a piece of A4 paper, draw a horizontal line across to halve the page in landscape orientation. With the line representing the timeline of 2019, write above the line your significant milestones of successes or God's blessings. How many of these are non-material blessings?

2. On the same page, note below the horizontal line the "dark periods" or difficult times in your life. How did you decrease and God increase during these periods?

3. Take a look again at your timeline – life, as Ps Lawrence highlighted, is a mixed bag of good and bad. Give thanks for how God has brought you this far.