



## CELL GUIDE

<b>TOPIC</b>	A New Heart for a New Season	<b>SPEAKER</b>	Ps Low Kok Guan
<b>THEME</b>	Vision Series: The New Normal	<b>DATE</b>	08 & 09 January 2022

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# MESSAGE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Starting off the sermon series on the New Season ushered in by the new calendar year, Ps Kok Guan used Ezekiel 36:22-32 to teach us the importance of living out our lives with the new heart God has given to us. It is a heart that is cleansed, committed and contrite.

## A NEW HEART FOR A NEW SEASON

The key theme of Ezekiel is the glory of God which will show people that He is God and Lord over everything as He works in their lives. It is important to know the posture of our heart. Not only is it key for our personal relationship with God, it is even more important that change comes from the heart, and not just the outside.

### 1) A Cleansed Heart

We often try to do things outside to solve what is inside but realise that they will not work. That is where God needs to step in. The words “I will” are constantly repeated in Ezekiel 36:24-26. Although God was the one who scattered Israel, God promised His people that He would cleanse and give them a new heart. As part of the Old Testament law, the Jews had to bathe or sprinkle themselves with clean water after they were defiled or had sinned in order to re-enter their community. Similarly, Jesus Christ cleanses us with His blood when we accept Him as our Lord and Saviour (Heb 10:22, 1 Jn 1:7). Our previously defiled hearts will be cleansed and renewed by God’s grace. We may sometimes feel as though we have failed the Lord due to our shortcomings or sins. However, in God’s eyes, we are already righteous and clean because of His Word (Jn 15:3). We are totally forgiven, totally accepted, and dearly loved by God. This freedom should not to be misused to sin further, but to live righteously for God. With our clean heart, we should be more loving, patient and gentle to those around us. He will continue to work through us for His namesake.

### 2) A Committed Heart

With this clean heart from God, we must then commit it to God. It is not just about what you can give, but about the posture of your heart; God wants a heart that is committed and obedient to Him. He will replace our heart of stone (rebellious and no longer growing) with a heart of flesh (tender, responsive, receptive and ready to obey God) (Ezek 36:26). He also gave us His Spirit to guide and enable us to live according to His Word. These help us to glorify God and in doing so, show others that Jesus is Lord so that they might turn to Him and be saved. The Parable of the Sower (Matt 13:1-9, 18-23) reminds us that we must be careful not to harden our heart as a clean heart can still harden. A hardened heart causes us to be no longer responsive to His Word. This can

happen when prayers are not answered, things do not go our way or disputes in the church discourage us. A hardened heart defiles us and can turn others away from God. Therefore, Hebrews 3:15 warns us to not harden our hearts. We must guard our hearts for everything we do flows through it (Prov 4:23). Keep our hearts fertile to God's Word and be committed to following Him wholeheartedly so that the fruit of the Spirit may overflow from our hearts into all areas of our lives, thereby allowing God to work in and through us for His glory.

### 3) A Contrite Heart

God wants an intimate relationship with us so He wants us to have a contrite heart. Sometimes, we only contact God when we need Him. We should however let God contact us first and then be responsive to Him. He knows that because of our sinful nature, our hearts are prone to wander. God initiated to restore His relationship with Israel in love despite how they turned away from Him. Being holy, God punished Israel. But He restored them because He is also gracious. Through this, He showed the nations that He is a good God. He wanted Israel to remember that they fell short of His glory and yet He gave Himself for them out of love. This also applies to us. We must know the importance of having a contrite heart. An external restoration must begin with an internal one. Until we know how poor we are inside, we will not be able to appreciate the kingdom of heaven. Go to God in repentance; surrender your tainted heart before God and ask Him to cleanse it. He will not despise a contrite heart and instead exchange it with a heart of flesh (Psa 51:17). Remember to be led to repentance daily, and ask the Lord to bind your wandering heart to Him.

## CONCLUSION

Often, we allow the circumstances of life, COVID, achievements and other worldly things to take priority over our relationship with God. We must remember that God must be the only one sitting on the throne in our hearts. He does not ask for more, all He asks for is our hearts. Dedicate your heart to God, for He will renew it for the new season. He will give you a cleansed, committed and contrite heart.

# QUESTIONS

1. Reflect on your walk with God in 2021 and the current condition of your heart towards Him. Share about what hindered or helped you in your walk with God.

2. In this New Year, how can we posture our heart so that we can draw closer to God?

3. We have a new season to have a new heart.

- A. What do you need to change so that you can focus on Him and His Word with an undivided heart so that you will be someone after God's own heart?
- B. What active steps can you take to do so?