



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Encountering God – Lessons from Philippi **SPEAKER** Elder Lok Vi Ming
THEME Experiencing Revival **DATE** 09 & 10 July 2022

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Elder Lok reminds us of the Love Singapore 40-Day Season of Prayer (<https://lovesingapore.org.sg/40day/2022/>), but also reminds us not to overly focus on the discipline of prayer and end up missing out on the Person whom we are praying to.

The reason for the season of prayer is so that we might encounter God through prayer. Let us not miss out on this focus to encounter the God of this universe.

Elder Lok points us to the book of Philippians. Throughout this letter to the church in Philippi, the Apostle Paul inspires us to build a platform of joy as we think about God, what He has done for us, and His goodness towards us.

Encountering God – Lessons from Philippi

1) Build the Platform of Joy

At its heart, Paul's letter to the church in Philippi seeks to inspire and encourage the believers. Its focus is on God and Paul responds with heartfelt thanksgiving for who God is, what He has done and His goodness towards His people.

In his letter, Paul gives strong reasons for the church to give thanks and be joyful:

- We have confidence that God will complete the good work He has begun in us. (Phil 1:6)
- As we live for Christ, we no longer need to fear death, as death itself will be a blessing for bringing us home to God. (Phil 1:21)
- We are encouraged and inspired by the worthiness of the Gospel we live for. (Phil 1:27)
- We are reminded that the humility of Christ that we are also called to, led to Christ's exaltation by God the Father. (Phil 2:3-15)
- We are encouraged to look ahead and reach forward for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil 3:13-14)
- We are even commanded to rejoice in the Lord, always! (Phil 4:4)
- We are promised peace through the challenges of life, if we would just bring them before God. (Phil 4:6-7)
- We are reminded to meditate on the things that give us joy. Things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, of virtue, are praiseworthy. (Phil 4:8)

- We are encouraged to remember that God himself will supply all our needs (Phil 4:19), and that we can therefore learn how to be content in all situations, independent of the circumstances we find ourselves in, through Christ who strengthens us. (Phil 4: 12-13)

So let us be encouraged by Paul to build this platform of Joy, to guard us and guide us in our Christian life and living.

2) Nothing happens by chance

Elder Lok brings us back to how the church in Philippi was first formed in Acts 16:1-34.

A long journey by Paul, with twists and turns, whereby the Holy Spirit led him away from Asia, away from Bithynia, before finally sending Paul a vision to go to Macedonia, leading him to the foremost city in that part of Macedonia, the city of Philippi.

Nothing happens by chance. Not the silent refusals by the Holy Spirit that led them away from Paul's original plans. Nor the dreams and visions leading them to Philippi.

While in Philippi, they stayed there for some days before meeting and speaking with a certain woman called Lydia, whose heart was opened by God to heed the words of Paul and resulted in her and her whole family being baptised. Thus, we see that the staying in Philippi for a few days, the leading of Paul to speak with the women instead of men, were all also not by chance.

As Lydia persuaded them to stay at her house, Paul also encountered a slave girl possessed by a spirit. In the encounter with the demon possessed slave girl, her deliverance by Paul lands him and his companions in jail and subject to flogging, without trial.

In prison, Paul's platform of Joy kept him singing and praising God while the prisoners listened. And God responded, causing an earthquake and the prison doors to be flung open. This eventually led to the prison warden kneeling humbly to receive Christ, resulting in him and his entire household being baptised.

Nothing happens by chance. Paul was led by the Spirit, to go where he did not plan to go, stay where he had not planned to stay, speak to those he had no reason to speak to, sent to prison. Yet, the end result was that many lives were saved, leading to a new and growing church in Philippi.

Let us remember that nothing happens by chance and let us seek to see more of how God is working in our world and in our lives.

CONCLUSION

Think about how big God is. He is big enough rule the mighty universe, yet small enough to live within our hearts. Take stock of your life, and see what God has done. Know that God is good. Then build your platform of joy. This joy is rooted in gratitude. It is not joy that makes us grateful. It is gratitude that makes us joyful.

Psalm 34:8 urges us to taste and see that the Lord is good. Isaiah 43:1-2 reminds us that God has redeemed us, He calls us by name. When we walk through the waters, they will not overwhelm us. God is with us.

QUESTIONS

1. How big is God in your life? Share a story with your cell group to encourage them.

2. Joy is rooted in gratitude. Share some ways that we can cultivate gratitude.

3. JOY is when there is nothing between Jesus and You. What is something in your life that may be blocking you from God? As you share, pray for His help to overcome it and take active steps to keep nothing between you and God.