



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC	Purity in Religion	SPEAKER	Elder Lok Vi Ming
THEME	BCS Awareness Week - James 1:27	DATE	13 & 14 Aug 2022

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Bethesda Care Service (BCS) has been reaching out to and meeting the needs of children, youths, families and the elderly within the Bedok-Tampines community since 1996.

We are asked in James 1:27 to reach out to the homeless and loveless in their plight and guard against corruption from the godless world. Elder Lok shared examples of BCS' impact in the community. In addition, he outlined ways that we may continue to co-labour with the Lord in the work of BCS and live out a religion by presenting a way of life of obedience, submission and surrender to God to serve those in need.

KEY POINTS - CARE

1. Care

The first story was about a client of BCS' Medical Escort and Transport who has to go for multiple medical appointments weekly. Over the last five years, she has received assistance and care from a BCS home help staff who accompanies her for her appointments. She considers BCS as family, standing in as a family member to accompany her for the medical reviews.

A hand to hold, a heart to touch and a life to care for is a privilege that the Lord gives to all who are prepared to be used by Him. We are encouraged to invest our lives in the lives of those in need as well as to care and lift them up in real and significant ways so that they may see God working in their lives through our actions.

2. Authenticity

Authenticity is showing genuine care for someone and creating a safe place to allow someone to reach out and grow. Matthew 5:8 reminds us to be pure and seek Him first while Hebrews 12:14 encourages us to pursue holiness. Without purity and holiness, it is impossible to see God. When we give, we need not worry about the amount or the size of the gift as God sees our heart.

3. Restoration

In the past two years, there are more people seeking emotional and mental health support due to relationship issues, workplace challenges or unresolved past traumatic experiences. Through a counselling journey at BCS, a lady transitioned from a season of hopelessness due to a betrayal of a loved one to a restored new self with new hope and purpose for life.

We are restored in the fellowship with God and what we have today is because of what the Lord Jesus did for us. We are encouraged to live out James 1:27 by helping the weak, homeless and loveless transition through situations and by restoring lives. We can be assured that God will use our experiences to refresh us.

4. Empowerment

The last story was about an excITE staff from BCS' ministry outreach, excITE@College East, who befriended and journeyed alongside a youth from ITE College East. The staff did this through engaging him in activities and empowering him to navigate through his family situations, studies and challenges.

Through Jesus Christ, the process of sanctification and the Holy Spirit working in our life, nothing is impossible. We will be strengthened by God for the work ahead and empowered to make a difference in lives of others.

CONCLUSION

Elder Lok cited two examples to illustrate that extending grace involves risks:

- 1) Philip Yancey's 'the unexpected guest' which was an experience of charity with generosity and compassion in the Church; and
- 2) Mother Teresa who yielded her life in total surrender to God and lived a life of risks in places and situations to help the poor, rejected and helpless.

We are encouraged to see the Father in the things we do, to pursue purity and holiness in faith and in our hearts as well as to give with a submission of heart instead of a cynical mind. Trust the Lord to use our giving to make a difference in the lives of others. There are many needs in the community and we can play a part in the work of BCS, either to donate, volunteer or be a corporate partner.

James 1:27 is a challenge and privilege for us. If we keep the promise of Matthew 5:8 to be pure in heart, we will see God; if we keep the promise in James 1:27 and practise the religion that is pure and faultless, others will see God through us. Human endeavours will come to an end, but the light that we shine unto others will continue to glow longer and beyond what we can imagine.

QUESTIONS

1. Share an experience when someone came alongside and helped you during a time of need. How did that change your life or perspectives?

2. How can we press on to pursue purity and reach out to those in need in a world which is increasingly godless and self-centred?

3. Take a moment to reflect on the provisions, interests, skills or gifts that God has provided you with. Explore the volunteering opportunities at BCS website.

A. Share how you can practically do so which will transform their lives.

B. Discuss the possible activities that the cell group can volunteer and serve the community together.