

Series - Awed by His Love

Date/s - 24 January 2016

Topic - How To Prosper In Famine

Speaker/s - Ps John Koe

Welcome [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

www.thesource4ym.com/games/

www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like "Jehovah Jireh, my Provider" or "Draw me close to You"

Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand the essentials of having a spiritual inheritance.
2. Know that we can thrive with God's help in times of famine.

Word [45 min]

Pastor John Koe shared that in Jan 2016, the world was confronted by the plunging of the stock markets and trillions of dollars were lost. Hence, he felt prompted to share in today's message on some financial principles found in the story of Abraham and Isaac.

In Genesis 26:12, we saw that a famine was affecting Isaac and his family and his immediate reaction was to, just like his father Abraham, travel to Egypt where they have a better chance of surviving. However in Gerar, God intervened. Isaac hearkened to God and decided to stay in Gerar. Because he listened to God, he prospered through the famine and was envied by the Philistines there. What was his secret?

ISAAC DREW UPON HIS SPIRITUAL INHERITANCE

In Genesis 26:18- 22, we see that Isaac remembered how Abraham dug wells and used the water to irrigate. This was a technology that Abraham learnt from his time in Egypt. Isaac merely followed Abraham and re-opened all the wells that the Philistines covered up. As a Church, we have the resources. We are able to tap on one another's knowledge and experiences. We can learn from one another through the church network to help us in times of "famine" or economic difficulties. Through the involvement in cell and connecting with one another, we are able to assist one another. Pastor John encouraged us to be willing to be fathered and mentored. We are to invest in relationships and learn from spiritual mentors. This is a good example of Godly counsel in God's house. We are to walk together as a community and do church as a family.

ISAAC HAD A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

When Abraham left Ur, he brought along his nephew. Lot became rich because of Abraham. He was so rich that conflicts arose between his and Abraham's people. When they parted ways, Lot ended up in Sodom where he lost his way. This is a clear illustration of two people who are so different: Abraham had a deep relationship with God. He communed with God and He showed him what to do. Isaac heard God speak and obey. Lot, on the other hand, relied on Abraham. Isaac too had a deep relationship with God. We must learn not to leech on our fellow brothers and sisters, riding on their relationship with God while we put in little or no effort in ours. In the end, we stand to lose everything. We are mocking God and His blessings will depart from us if we

continue in our sedentary Christian lifestyle. The key is having a personal relationship with God.

ISAAC SOWED ACCORDING TO GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS

Trusting in God, Isaac sowed into the land despite the famine and reaped plentiful harvest. Do not stop sowing or tithing when in difficult times. Malachi 3:10 challenges us to "bring the whole tithe into the storehouse" and see that God will pour down His blessing on you "until it overflows". When we continue tithing in faith, God will pour down rain on our land to bring forth supernatural harvest on us. Malachi 3:11 goes on to say that God will rebuke the devourer (the devil) so that he will not destroy your fruits on the ground nor your vine in the field.

ISAAC MAXIMISED HIS ASSET

Isaac dug many wells, thereby enhancing his land for greater production. Are you maximizing your assets? Are you setting aside your resources to compete in the market place? Do you need to upgrade your computer system, your operation processes or the skills required to stay competitive? Are there any government grants to enhance your position or competitiveness? Take advantage of tools or grants to help you stay competitive.

ISAAC CREATED MULTIPLE INCOME STREAMS

Isaac not only farmed the land but raises cattle, sheep and goats that can feed off his farm produce. Is there possibility of operating an online business from home? Have you consider renting out a room to generate income? Or put your uncommitted resources to generate more income?

ISAAC CREATED VALUE IN HIS INDUSTRY

Isaac introduced new technology to the land of the Philistines by irrigating crops with the well water on a large scale. Ask the Lord for wisdom. Most of the so-called new businesses are actually devised from old things: 1) The largest taxi firm Uber owns no cars. 2) The most popular media company Facebook creates no contents. 3) The most valuable retailer Alibaba carries no stock. 4) The world's largest accommodation provider Airbnb owns no property. Deuteronomy 8:18 told us that God is the one who will give us the ability to produce wealth. We need to ask God to open our eyes and give us the discernment and wisdom to discover new things to help us tide over tough situations or consolidate without being wasteful while things are going smooth.

We are the sons and daughters of God the Father and He wants to prosper us and glorify Himself through our lives if we allow Him to. All we need to do is to acknowledge His Lordship over us and allow ourselves to be used by Him. However, we need to consistently walk with Him, look to Him and trust in Him. Our faith is a two way relationship. Without faith in our part, it is not possible to please Him.

Discussion Questions

- 1 **Pastor John Koe mentioned that Isaac drew upon His spiritual heritage. Read Genesis 26:1-6.** [15 min]
 - a. **In verse 3, what can we learn about God and spiritual inheritance?**
 - b. **What can we learn from Isaac for him to receive the blessings?**

Leader's notes: a. A recap question. In Genesis 26:2-4, God appeared to Isaac and affirmed His covenantal promise to him although it was 'cut' with his father, Abraham (verse 3). It is important to note that the Abrahamic covenant was initiated by God and not man (Genesis 15). Man or Abraham was in a deep sleep when the covenant was cut. Therefore, man did nothing to deserve the blessings through this everlasting covenant. In verse 5, God gave the reason why He shall do what He promised and instructed Isaac to stay in Gerar. It is recorded that this covenant shall be fulfilled through Isaac because Abraham 'obeyed God, and kept His requirements, His commands, His decrees and His law'. A spiritual legacy that father Abraham left behind.

b. A relate question. Consider what might happen if Isaac had not obeyed God and still went down to Egypt. Will it or will it not affect the fulfilment of the covenant? Remember the 40 years that the Israelites had to go through when they did not believe in His covenant and sinned against God (e.g. worshipping the calf and not walking His ways). Eventually, they were set free during the time of Moses. God's covenant and inheritance is everlasting. However, faith is important in realizing the covenant in our lives. Just like Isaac who had a personal relationship with God and he obeyed God to stay in Gerar. Our relationship with God and obedience in walking life according to His ways are important.

- 2 **The pastor mentioned 'Isaac sowed according to God's instruction'. [15 min]**
- According to Malachi 3:6-12, what is God's promise here in challenging times?**
 - What might be one area of resource that we can sow to bless others?**

Leader's notes : *a. Isaac chose to obey God. In Malachi 3, we read that God wanted His people to return to Him (verse 7) i.e. to follow his decrees and keep them. However, His people were not even aware that they have actually robbed God (verse 8). God is a promise keeper and have not held back any blessings from His people. It is important to note that God looks at a person's heart and He treasures the relationship with His people and is not stingy in blessing them at all times. The purpose of tithing and offerings is so that nations will call them blessed and that their land is a delightful one (verse 12).*

b. Ask your cell members if people around them have been blessed through the blessings they have received from our good Lord. Isaac started to re-open and dug wells (Genesis 26:12, 18-19, 21, 25, 32) to create multiple income streams and value for the industry. Like Isaac, we should steward our blessings and sow into assignments in obedience to God so that others can know God through us. When we help others, our Christian practices should be filled with compassion and also to discern. The Bible tells us to be shrewd as serpents but innocent as doves in Matthew 10:16. In the end, we are blessed to be a blessing; to give and to do it with wisdom.

- 3 **Ps John Koe shared financial principles from the story of Abraham and Isaac on how to prosper in famine. Share on one specific area where you can apply one or more of these principles in 2016 to tide over difficult times. [10 min]**

Leader's Notes:

*This question helps members focus on the biblical ways and principles outlined by Ps John Koe. Leaders are to encourage members to **apply** these principles in practical ways and be inspired to trust God, hear Him speak to us and obey Him. The Biblical principles are as follows:*

- Draw upon our spiritual inheritance. See Gen 26:18-22.*
- Have a personal relationship with God.*
- Sowing according to God's instruction. See Malachi 3:10-11.*
- Maximizing our assets.*
- Creating multiple income streams*
- Creating value in our industries. See Proverbs 8:12 KJV 1900*

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

- 1 Every RiverLifer will invest in relationships, assist one another and learn from spiritual mentors. Depending on God's help and thrive in times of famine.

Announcements**1. 21 DAYS OF FASTING & PRAYER**

16 Jan to 5 Feb (21 consecutive days) | Grace Chapel

- Mondays to Fridays: 8–10pm
- Saturdays: 6–8pm • Sundays: 2–4pm

For more information, please email riverlifepayer@gmail.com**2. THE ALPHA COURSE** (*session 1 starts on 5 Mar*)Register online at <http://bit.ly/rlcalpha> or at the Alpha Course Counter (beside Cell Connection Counter) from 24 Jan to 28 Feb at the Fellowship Atrium after services.For enquiries, please contact Moses Sho at 65114141 or email him at mosessho@riverlife.org.sg.**3 PRECEPT**

Weekly night classes will start on 1 Mar and run every Tuesday from 8pm to 10pm. It is open to all RiverLifers in the English Adult congregation (FAPG, OneLife & HighLife). All leaders who are serving in cells are specially encouraged to attend. You can choose from two tracks: Topic (6 weeks) or Book Study (13 weeks). Register online at <http://www.riverlife.org.sg> or at Cell connection Counter.