
Ignite

“Creator God, who formed us from dust, breathe in us again. Give us a new imagination to perceive greater possibilities today. Open our eyes, stir our hearts and teach us how, ‘To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with...’ You today. Amen”



SERMON SUMMARY

Note to Word Facilitator: The sermon notes below is a summary of the sermon. You may choose to further summarize it according to the needs and context of your CG members. The goal is not just to go through it “verbatim” but to prepare well, allowing members to recall and engage the message in the best possible way.

The Local Church 4: An Equipping Station

Senior Pastor Chris Kam

Ephesians 4:11-16

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Hebrews 13:17-21

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you. Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon. Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Introduction *Ephesians 4:11-16*

The local church is a covenant community that visibly manifests God's invisible kingdom. In the last three weeks, we learned that the church is the spiritual authority we submit to under God. It is a spiritual safe home away from home. It directs kingdom people towards the global mission of loving and serving people, taking the focus away from self. We also discovered our newfound identity as Ambassadors for Christ in the ministry of reconciliation that brings salvation to non-kingdom people by pointing them to the saving grace of the Gospel.

In this fourth and final part of the series, we explore how God intends the church to be an equipping station to help us better serve others. As ambassadors for Christ, we are serving non-kingdom people, and we may not know how to do that effectively. The church plays a critical role to train and guide us to do ministry.

BIG IDEA: The church is an equipping station for kingdom people to serve others.

Priests for God *1 Peter 2:5*

In the Old Testament, the priests offered prayers and sacrifices on behalf of the people before God. They were mediators between man and God at a time when only the High Priest could come into the presence of God without being struck dead. But we can now freely enter the presence of God through prayer since Christ, the Lamb of God, sacrificed Himself for our sins once and for all. Therefore, as priests of God, we are called to play an active role in serving and not leave ministry only for the leaders or "professionals". The corporate church is here to prayerfully set direction, challenge and help us grow but it is through the small congregation where we commune and impact lives through personal accountabilities and discipleship.

Sadly, the church has grown into a very formal affair since the freedom of worship was declared in the *Edict of Milan* (AD313). Huge buildings were constructed when the church grew too large for home congregations and many Christians became passive participants where going to church simply meant going to a building rather than congregating with fellow brothers and sisters. The church is on a road to recovery thanks to pivotal historical milestones such as *The Reformation* (1517) and the *Methodist* "priesthood of all" movement (1784).

Three Views of Church

Most churches fall within three views:

1 Traditional view

This is a passive view where ministry is done by "professionals". Members are passive and view themselves as not gifted. They are happy to tithe and expect church full time priests and leaders or committees to do various ministries such as discipleship, prayer, visitation and so on.

2 Evangelical View

This movement emerged in the latter part of the 20th century. It encouraged spiritual gifting and members were empowered to do ministry. The pastors, elders and deacons shared and delegated ministry responsibilities as they began to raise up others. The only setback was that many members were left on their own to figure out what to do. Very little support was given in terms of equipping them which meant certain ministries were still left to professionals e.g. counselling, visitation and so on.

3 Biblical View *Ephesians 4:11-12*

The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers not only encourage members to serve but to train and guide. Their role is primarily to equip and train people to do ministry, global missions and also to prepare a safe home where people can try and fail safely.

Which view do you think DUMC holds as a church? (*Note to Facilitator: This is a suggested pause to get viewpoints from cell members.*)

How should ministry be done in DUMC? *Hebrews 13:21, Mark 10:45, 1 Cor 15:58*

Not suggesting that a church should be run like a business but we can use a business analogy to understand the principles. Businesses exist to serve customers.

In the context of the local church, **God** is the *Owner* and He is the good shepherd. The business of the local church is to glorify God and to draw non-kingdom people towards God. The *Management team* are the **Leaders** who serve the *Owner* who is God. They are to prayerfully establish the long-term vision of the church and align us to what God wants to do through the local church. The *Employees* are members of the church who worship the *Owner (God)* and work with the *Management team (Leaders)* to serve the *Customers*. Our *Customers* are **non-kingdom people** who are in our communities, seekers, occasional visitors or even ppl who have strayed from the faith.

In this analogy, it would be unthinkable if an *Employee* sees themselves as a *Customer*. The church would become dysfunctional and start to break down if members started thinking like this. If we say we want to be more like Jesus, then we must be more like Him in that we are not coming here to be served but to serve. We are not saved BY serving, but we are saved FOR serving.

Success and Significance [Ephesians 2:10](#)

Life is not only about success, but also about significance. Tim Tebow was a successful sports professional but he found the truth in what it means to serve God. In the short video "[Success to Significance](#)" he shares a powerful message that we can be successful in life and yet not achieve significance. Significance can only be found in Christ and what God has planned ahead of time for us to do.

Conclusion

Now that we have found Jesus in this local church that we are placed as an authority over our lives, we are called Ambassadors for Christ and Priests for God. We are called to serve God by serving others - whether formally or informally - because life is not about achieving successes and comfort for ourselves. For we are God's handiwork and we were created in Christ to do good works which God has prepared in advance for us to do.

SERMON REFLECTION

It was always mind boggling when we finally arrived at the decision of serving in a formal ministry at church. I recall those days when my spouse and I were sorting through all the possible options at DUMC and putting them into a continuum of low to high time commitment e.g. Foodbank and First Touch are on the lower end and Resonate and DEW on the other extreme. We started forming a mental list of criteria that each ministry had to meet before we would even consider being a part of. It was almost like finding a life partner! *Does it allow both of us to serve? Can it be done just once a week? Is there one that minimizes us stepping out of our comfort zone?* The list went on and on.

We decided in the end to join the First Touch Ushering ministry because it was one that we had some experience from our previous church and it was in our view, a very low commitment of just 2 hours every two weeks. Perfect!

The sermon this week has made me realise that we need to recalibrate our mindset about serving. My spouse and I were having the wrong posture where we felt we were doing the church a favour by volunteering our time in service of the church. This manifested in many ways that we are not proud of and are today repentant. Firstly, it meant we turned a blind eye to areas that could be improved. Coming from a consulting background, it was always easy for me to see how things can be done more efficiently but **I held back because it would involve more time commitment** and I consoled myself with thoughts such as *"Relax, it is just volunteer work..."*, *"The Leaders will figure it out..."*, "I don't want to work on weekends.." and so on.

I held back when there were healthy discussions on tricky topics such as *"Do we open doors for members?"* and *"Should we have performance metrics?"*. I told myself that *"I am here to just be a volunteer for 2 hours. Let's not rock the boat and make enemies in the process. We will faithfully submit to church authority.."*

I now realise that we have a bigger role to play in Christ's local church. God has given us the opportunities and giftings to better support the Leaders of DUMC in achieving the vision that He has imparted to them. I also realise that we are not saved BY serving but we are saved FOR serving. Through serving, we offer gratitude to our Father in heaven for saving us and that each moment now we strive to be more like Christ.

Lord Jesus, forgive me for all the times I have chosen to play the Pharisee instead of the good Samaritan. I turned a blind eye to the needs of my brothers and sisters that you have presented before me. I confess my sins and ask that you give me more faith to step out in full dependence on you. Amen.

Contributed by Darren Lim



APPLICATION

Note to Word facilitator:

As you prepare for this session, this is a great time to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you to use the questions efficaciously. You can select, modify or entirely create your own questions, according to the needs of your CG, especially if you feel that there are too many questions than required for the allocated time. The questions below are crafted with a certain flow in mind. You could use these towards the end or insert them in between your own sermon reflection and summary.

Suggested Icebreaker Question (for Welcome that would link to the Word time)

- Who is more popular/successful/"cooler"? (choose two celebrities that your CG may know e.g. Taylor Swift and Beyonce, Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, etc.)
- Complete the sentence: "A successful person is one who..."

Suggested Word Introductory Question:

- Who do you see as a successful person you look up to as a role model? Explain why you think or feel that way.
- Share a time when you were thanked by your loved one/close friend/neighbour for a kind gesture you did. (*Note to facilitator: We tend to think that impactful things have to be big to be significant but oftentimes, it is the small acts of kindness that are most appreciated.*)

Suggested questions linked to each main point:

Priest for God

- What is your role in ministry? Has your view of ministry changed after listening to the sermon?
- What do you think is the role of the Priests in the 21st century church?

Three views of the Church

- How do you think the leadership can help equip you better to minister?
- Out of the 3 views of church, which do you think best describes your view? What are some practical steps you think/feel can help lead us closer to the Biblical view?

Success and Significance

- During this pandemic, how has God challenged you to intentionally reach out to non-kingdom people? *(Facilitator note: If this was touched on in previous weeks, this can be a good time to continue encouraging members to faithfully step out.)*
- What can you do this week that will be of significance to a family member/friend/neighbour? *(Facilitator note: CG members can agree to take home an action and share in the next session - reflect prayerfully on who they can be a blessing to this week.)*

Question Bank *(Extra questions you can use to bring discussion further as you see fit):*

- How can we be a faithful Priest for God? How is this similar/different to being an ambassador for Christ?
- As Kingdom people, how are we living out our Christian lifestyle as Priest for God?
- What are your thoughts about the 3 types of views of ministry? Share how you feel about each of the different views of ministry.
- What can you do more to effectively minister to kingdom people (inside the church) and to non-kingdom people (outside the church)?
- What could you do to become more equipped than you currently are at?
- What is one thing you would do this week to be a blessing to others?
- Share a story of how someone has positively impacted your life and helped you in your walk with Jesus. What did they do and why was it

impactful?



WHAT'S YOUR STORY?



Photo by Judit Peter from Pexels

Story of the week...

"I was playing badminton when I did a hard smash and completely dislocated my right shoulder. It was around 10 pm. I was immediately sent to the hospital, but was made to wait till 8am the following day before they could put me under general anesthesia..."

- Sarah Tan, PJN6

* Read the rest of Sarah's story on dumc.my/blog

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you."

- Maya Angelou

If you or your CG member(s) has a story to share related to today's Word or any other story that speaks of His goodness, **share their/your story** [\[HERE\]](#)



PRAYER

Note to CGL: You (or someone you assign this portion to), may lead by praying OR reading these prayers together as a CG during worship.

Pray for COVID-19 hotspots in Malaysia

Prisons and detention centres:

- *For the authorities to know how to contain the outbreaks*
- *For detainees to cooperate with the containment efforts*

Areas under lockdown in Sabah, Kedah & Selangor::

- *For everyone in these areas to be calm and cooperative*
- *For the most affected - the poor - to get the aid they need*

Hospital system:

- *Frontline workers to be adequately rested and geared-up*
 - *Medical supplies to be sufficient and distributed where needed*
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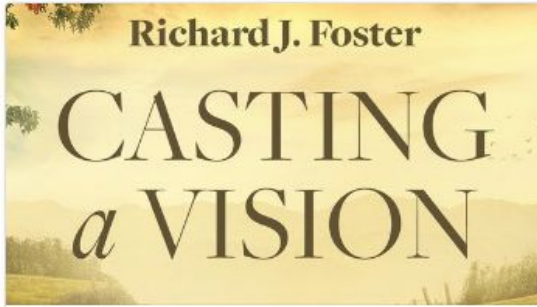


OTHER RESOURCES


Below are some links to resource you. Do **CLICK** on the images below!

FEATURED

In view of our current changing landscape that affects us individually and corporately, here are some featured resources for you this month!



Richard J. Foster
**CASTING
a VISION**

 **Casting a Vision**
20 pages
renovare.org
The twenty-first century though has brought with it new c...
Richard Foster
Prayer & Spirituality **Discipleship**
E-Book (Free)



Where is God in the Pandemic?
1 hour
youtube.com
Tim Keller **Francis Collins**
Suffering **Social Concerns** **Teaching**
Video Clip



OTHER RESOURCES

Discover a host of other resources curated for you here!



DUMC STORIES

Be blessed by a compilation of inspiring DUMC Stories that you can share with others!

