**Core Habits - Be Real (2 Corinthians 12: 7-10)**

***Senior Pastor Chris Kam***

or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12: 7-10)

# Introduction

As human beings we sin. We cover ourselves when we come to church or meet other people. We are not real with the people we meet in our lives. We wear a face mask wherever we are. Like in a Chinese dance, our faces can change in a split second as we meet different people. As we are the church, we need to be real with each other. Being real comes before honour. If we are real, honour will be a habit. It is a risk we need to make. Ultimately, we must be able to say “I know who you are and I love you”. 

We don’t have to pretend that we are not on top of everything or that everything is okay. What kind of house do you want to build?

****

**The Big Idea: It is OK not to be okay.**

Nothing is too small and no job is too low for a humble person. A humble person is not interested in power and recognition. He is selfless, big-hearted and generous. Most of all, he trusts in God.

# It is okay not to be okay: It is okay to be in pain (Paul’s pain)

or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. (2 Corinthians 12:7)

It is believed that a good Christian is blessed by God and is always healthy without any pain. There is no such thing as a quick fix. This is only a myth.

Life is a series of problems: Either you are in one now, you're just coming out of one, or you're getting ready to go into another one. The reason for this is that God is more interested in your character than your comfort. God is more interested in making your life holy than He is in making your life happy. ~ Rick Warren.

God allowed Paul to go through pain to keep him from being proud. Different characters in the bible also go through pain. Elijah had to go through silent depression and went into hiding. David walked through the valley of the shadow of death.

In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

People like to use magic phrases when someone is going through pain. This will not solve the problem of sin or mask our pain. Do not be surprised when trouble comes.

Joni Erikson broke her neck in a swimming accident and became a quadriplegic. That didn’t stop her from doing God’s work.

# It’s okay not to have an answer. (Paul’s prayer)

Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. (2 Corinthians 12:8, 9)

We are praying instant prayers and expect them to be answered instantly. We want a quick fix for everything. But some things do not have an answer,

He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. (Luke 22:41–44)

I may live 60 to 100 years on earth, but I am going to spend trillions of years in eternity. This is the warm-up act - the dress rehearsal. God wants us to practice on earth what we will do forever in eternity. We were made by God and for God, and until you figure that out, life isn't going to make sense. Life is a series of problems: Either you are in one now, you're just coming out of one, or you're getting ready to go into another one. The reason for this is that God is more interested in your character than your comfort. God is more interested in making your life holy than He is in making your life happy. We can be reasonably happy here on earth, but that's not the goal of life. The goal is to grow in character, in Christ likeness. - Rick Warren

God ignored Paul’s pain but assured him that God’s grace is sufficient for you. In a spiritual desperation, Jesus is in anguish pleading with God earnestly but also surrendered to God’s will in the end. Jesus admitted that he was not okay and asked his disciples to pray for him.

# It’s okay not to be okay but it is not okay to stay that way. (Paul’s provision)

That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:10)

“Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” ~ C.S. Lewis in “The Problem of Pain.”



Pastor Chris’s son had cancer and went through a successful operation. One year later during a father son time with Pastor Chris, he mentioned that the cancer was the best thing that happened to him. It was the moment that God became the most real to him. We have a choice on how we respond.

“Pain is inevitable but misery is optional.” ~ Pastor Edmund Chan

You might be in pain but it is your choice whether to stay miserable or not. You can remain miserable for a very long time. We all need pain to grow and draw us closer to god.

Despite Joni’s quadriplegic condition, she wrote 50 books, was in movies and television. Below are some of her achievements.

* “Joni and Friends,” a daily five minute radio program that reaches over one million listeners a week.
* Family retreats for hundreds of special need families across the United States.
* Wheels for the World has provided 34,000 refurbished wheelchairs to needy disabled individuals in developing nations.
* Joni and Friends’ Field Services provide training and resources to promote church ministry to those affected by disability and those who can help.

Joni’s best-selling and award-winning works cover a wide range of topics and include: A Christmas Longing (1990), The Life and Death Dilemma (1995), Heaven: Your Real Home (1995), The God I Love (2003), and two books co-authored by Steve Estes When God Weeps: Why Our Sufferings Matter to the Almighty (1977) and A Step Further (1978).

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. (2 Colossians 1:3–4)

Conclusion: The response of the community: With Honour & Humility

* Don’t be prescriptive when people pour out their feelings. Just Listen.
* Don’t pre-Judge situations people go through. Empathize with them
* Don’t pound the person with Bible verses. Don’t Bible-bash. Most of us know what the Bible says but we need time for the truth to sink in. Give it at the right time. There is no simple answer.
* Be present when someone goes through hardships, Practise the presence ministry. Sometimes people don’t want an answer. They just want someone to stand with them.
* Pray

Pr. Chris was trying to be strong during the son's cancer. His wife asked "how are you feeling?" He stared in the sky for a long time, looked at her and started crying. He was real.



Sermon summary contributed by Abbey Thangiah

Prayer points contributed by May Ng



SERMON: Core Habits – Be Real

**Pray:**

* We will be authentic to one another instead of putting up appearances.
* We are Christians will fully trust in God despite negative circumstances.
* Wisdom and discernment to know what to do under all circumstances.
* Prayer to be every Christian’s first line of action.
* We will be joyful and thankful to the Lord that we are His children with blessed assurance.

***Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. (1 Chronicles 16:11)***

**MINISTRIES & EVENTS: Alpha Course @ DUMC**

*The Alpha Course to be held at DUMC is scheduled to be launched on 2 March 2017.*

**Pray:**

* The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the servers and guests at the launch party and subsequent sessions.
* Conviction in the hearts of those who are half-hearted to sign up for the course and to attend it faithfully and completely.
* Peace and joy to prevail throughout the course.
* Anointing for all to encourage family and friends to attend the course.
* A fresh revelation of Jesus to all during the course.

***For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.  (Acts 13:47)***

MALAYSIA MY NATION: Security & Safety

*A pastor has been reported to be missing since earlier this week.*

**Pray:**

* God to give His angels charge over each and every one of us as we go about our daily activities.
* Wisdom for those concerned to locate the whereabouts of the missing pastor.
* Safe return of the missing pastor to his family.
* God’s peace to be upon his family while awaiting his safe return.
* Justice and righteousness to prevail in the search for the missing pastor.
* The authority will carry out their duties without fear and favour.
* God to reveal Himself to any and all concerned.

***But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. (2 Thessalonians 3:3)***

**A TRANSFORMED WORLD: Corruption in South Korea**

*Lee Jae-yong, the de facto leader of Samsung, South Korea's biggest conglomerate, has been under investigation on corruption allegations.*

**Pray:**

* Justice and righteousness to prevail in the investigations.
* Conviction in the hearts of those concerned that Jesus Christ is Lord.
* God to raise up just and righteous leaders.
* Transparency in the governance of not only private sectors but also the government.
* Jesus to reveal Himself in the course of the investigations.

***When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan. (Proverbs 29:2)***