

3 July 2022

Why We Need Each Other?

John 17:1-26

1. Why What are the insights or ideas that have struck a chord in your heart as you hear the sermon?
2. According to the speaker, what does the Cross of Jesus represent?
3. Name the 3 reasons that the speaker gave as to why we need each other in community. Explain whether you agree with the speaker or not.
4. What practical actions will you take after hearing the sermon?

10 July 2022

HVMC Vision Series #4 Building Up

Ephesians 4:11-16

1. Share how you had nurtured someone or something, e.g. Parents can share how they nurtured their children, pet owners can share how they groom their animals, or business owners can share how they grew their organisations, etc.

2. What are some ways in which Christians today are like “children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes?” (v.14)

3. What are the leadership offices that God gives to the church? Explain the function of each office and how they equip Christians. (v.11)

4. How can every Christian participate in the work of ministry to (a) build up the body of Christ and (b) build unity among the believers? (v.12-13, 15-16)

5. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] Why are some people (or you) reluctant or hesitant to be equipped for the work of ministry?

17 July 2022**HVMC Vision Series #5 Reaching Out****1 Peter 2:9-10**

1. If you meet someone at a social function, and they ask you, “Who are you and what are you doing here?” How would you respond?
2. In the first part of verse 9, Peter gives some descriptors of the church. What are they and explain what each description represents? (e.g. a chosen race, a royal priesthood, etc.)
3. According to the second part of verse 9, why do God’s people exist?
4. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] In your own words and from your own experience, share how has God called you out of darkness into his marvellous light? How can you “proclaim” this to others around you who do not know Jesus?
5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, “The Church is the Church only when it exists for others...” How can we live this out in our own church?
6. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] Do you agree with the following statement, “We are a people for a purpose and that purpose is inextricably linked to ACS (International)?” Why or why not?

24 July 2022
Sickness Unto Death
John 11:1-27

Context

Jesus' ministry was known to have spanned 3 Passovers (John 2:13, 6:4, 11:55). In chapter 11, we see an end to the narrative that began at John 5 with the healing of the crippled man at the pool during the Passover celebration. The end of John 11 presents us with the Passover which means that a year had just passed.

1. Share an occasion when you had to wait for someone or for something to happen without knowing how long for, and the waiting caused great frustration or anxiety.
2. Why did Jesus meet Mary and Martha only 4 days after Lazarus' death? (v.39-40)
3. Soren Kierkegaard in *The Sickness Unto Death* writes, "Thus to be sick unto death is to be unable to die, yet not as if there were hope of life; no, the hopelessness is that there is not even the ultimate hope, death. When death is the greatest danger, we hope for life; but when we learn to know the even greater danger, we hope for death. When the danger is so great that death becomes the hope, then despair is the hopelessness of not even being able to die." Do you agree with Kierkegaard's statement?
4. What did it mean for the Jews to hear that Jesus is the resurrection and the life (v.25)? What does it mean to you?
5. What was Martha's response to Jesus in John 11:27? Did her response correspond to Jesus' question? (v.25)
6. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] How do we react when things don't go according to our own plans? How can we respond better in faith?

31 July 2022
First Fruit Giving
Proverbs 3:9-10

1. How have you experienced giving as an expression of love in your life (as either the giver or receiver of gifts)? How might this work in your relationship with God?

2. The principle of “firstfruits” is making sure that God is given the first priority in every area of our life. What fears or concerns (if any) do you wrestle with most when thinking about this principle?

3. What has God entrusted you with to steward for His Kingdom purposes? List your talents, the opportunities you’ve had, and your financial capacity.
 - a. How have you been using these to serve your own desires rather than stewarding them for God?

 - b. What changes might you consider making to shift from fulfilling own desires to one of stewardship?

4. God is the true owner of everything that we have. He expects us to be good stewards of all that we are entrusted with. Why do you think God would want us to be “stewards” rather than “owners?”

5. What are some practical steps you can take to prioritize giving to God (whether in terms of time, treasure or talent)? What might it take for you to make and keep this commitment?

7 August 2022

Giving In Grace

2 Corinthians 8:3-5

1. Share an experience when you were quite reluctant to give away something to someone. (e.g. Giving a toy to a sibling when you were young, giving an obligatory gift to a guest, etc.)

Acts 11:27-30

2. How did the Christians in Antioch show an almost “prescient” concern for the hungry?

2 Corinthians 8:3-5

3. Can you identify Paul’s use of the word *Charis* (or grace) in 2 Corinthians 8:1-9? How does he use the word?
4. In verse 4, Paul writes the Macedonians pleaded for the privilege of “sharing” in the service to the Lord’s people. How do we understand “sharing” within the family of believers?
5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes that “I have community with others and I shall continue to have it only through Jesus Christ.” What does this mean?
6. How is pledging or giving money to the church an act of service?
7. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] Have you been practising the spiritual discipline of pledging? Share with the group why you have or may not have made the decision to pledge.

Laity Sunday
Living A Fruitful Christian Life
Matthew 5:14 - 16

1. If someone were to write a story about you, what would the story feature?

2. Read Matthew 5:4.
 - a) How have you mourned and responded to injustice around you?
(e.g., at your workplace, in school, in your neighbourhood)

 - b) How are you helping the marginalised or those who are mistreated?

3. Read Matthew 5:5.
 - a) In what areas do you need the Holy Spirit's help to be meek, to keep your pride under control?

 - b) How can you spend more time listening to the young and not-so-young?

4. Read Matthew 5:7.
 - a) Is there someone you need to be more merciful to or more patient with?

 - b) How will you take the time to understand their situations better?

5. Share with one another a blessing that you have received in recent weeks.
 - a) How will you journal your blessings?

 - b) How will you thank the persons who have been a blessing to you?

6. Read Matthew 5:14-16.
 - a) Do you know someone who does not yet know of the Lord's goodness?
Or has wandered far from the Lord and needs to be reassured of His love?

 - b) How will you reach out to them in the coming week?

Conference Sunday
Fig, Faith, Forgive & Fruit
Mark 11:12-14 and 20-25

1. What is the evidence that we are feeding on the WORD daily and allowing the WORD to take root in our lives?
2. How do we know that we have allowed the WORD to blossom in our lives through an attitude of brokenness and repentance?
3. How and why must we adopt a posture of being willing to forgive others and even ourselves?
4. How can we constantly bear fruit for the Lord?
5. What does Matthew 7:17-19 say about the fruit we bear?

Facing Your Fears Isaiah 41:10

1. Share some things which you may be fearful of (e.g. lizards, durians, heights, etc.).

Read Isaiah 41:8-10

2. Why does Isaiah's words from 2 ½ millennia ago still apply to us today? (Hint: v.8, See Gen 12:1-3, Ex 19:5-6 & 1 Pet 2:9)
3. How does God's promise of his presence give you confidence to face your fears?
4. How has demonstrated his power in your life? or, How would you like God to demonstrate his power in your life?
5. What are some promises from scripture that God has shown you that you hold on to closely?
6. What are some ways in which God has revealed his purposes for you, your family and our church?
7. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] What are some things in your life that you need to surrender (or let go of) in order to trust God fully?

Philippians Sermon Series #1
Finding Joy In Suffering
Philippians 1:1-11

1. Pause and reflect on this question: Do I regularly 'rejoice in the Lord?' What are some of the things that I can rejoice in the Lord whatever my circumstances?
2. Paul begins the letter by thanking God, with joy, for the Philippians, because they are his partners in the Gospel (v. 3-5). Do you believe that being in a community of faith is necessary for living the Christian life? Why or why not? Share some about the impact and importance of Christian community in your own life.
3. In the midst of Paul's circumstances, how can you explain his repeated use of the word "joy" in his letter?
4. Reflect on areas in your life where God has begun a good work in you. Share this with your Life Group and pray together, thanking God for His continuing work in each other's life.
5. Identify a verse from the passage that speaks to you. How has it spoken to you or challenged you? You may want to commit the verse that you have identified to memory.

Philippians Sermon Series #2
In Unity & In Holiness
Philippians 1:12-26

1. Ps Jeremy said that the Gospel is the proclamation of (a) God's long awaited victory over evil and the salvation of his people and (b) God's inbreaking kingdom and Christ becoming its king. How does that change the way you see the Gospel?
2. In the church, "unity and holiness go together." Do you agree? What are the implications of that?
3. How does Paul's suggestion that we are brothers [and sisters] in Christ (Phil 1:1, 12, 14, 26) mean for our relationship with one another?
4. Ps Jeremy said that because of the Gospel, we have a "different way to behave." Explain what that means for the way you will live.
5. Paul says, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil 1:21) How could Paul regard death as better than life in this world? Do you think you can say what Paul says confidently?

Philippians Sermon Series #3
With In Christ
Philippians 1:27 - 2:11

1. Paul writes, “Only let your ‘manner of life’ (politeueste) be worthy of the gospel of Christ.” How does the gospel of Christ change the way you behave in your public life?
2. Do you agree that unity is an important expression of the Church’s public life? How does Paul describe it? What would it look like for us today? (Phil 1:27 & Phil 2:2)
3. Why is it essential for followers of Jesus to join together with Christ’s suffering? (Phil 1:29-30, Gal 2:20, Col 2:12 & Matt 10:32-33)
4. Read Phil 2:6-11. Reflect upon some of the major themes in this poem. (e.g. what does the poem say about God, Jesus, humans, humility, servanthood, Roman culture, etc.)
5. Ps Jeremy said that our church must be one in which we serve one another in the partnership (koinonia) of the gospel. What are some ways in which you can serve?

Philippians Sermon Series #4
Stop Grumbling! Start Shining!
Philippians 2:12-18

1. What does it mean for you to “work out your salvation?” Is there something you need to ask God’s grace for in working out your salvation?

2. “Complainers will always find something to complain about. Worshipers will always find something to praise God for.” (Mark Batterson). Reflect on this question: Am I a complainer or a worshiper?

3. Make a list of things you are prone to grumble or complain about (e.g. our jobs, our spouse, our children, our circumstances).
 - (i) Reflect on how your complaining manifests a spirit of entitlement or a failure to trust God.

 - (ii) Why do you think “complaining and grumbling” is seen as a dissatisfaction and a distrust in God?

 - (iii) How would being thankful mitigate our tendency to complain?

 - (iv) How would the Philippians (and us) “shine as lights in the world” by not grumbling and complaining?

4. Paul tells us in **2 Corinthians 5:17** that “**if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!**” Are there still parts of the “old self” that you are struggling with? What are they? Pause for a time of prayer committing these to God. Ask Him to help you to overcome them.

5. What is your biggest takeaway from the sermon? How is it relevant to your life today?

Philippians Sermon Series #5
For Christ's Sake!
Philippians 3:1-14

1. What are some things that you have benefited from your family ancestry? (e.g. inheritance, reputation, family name, etc.)
2. Who were those who Paul accuses as “the dogs... the evildoers... those who mutilate the flesh?” (Phil 3:2) What was wrong with them?
3. How does Paul counter the false teaching propagated by those in verse 2? (Phil 3:4-6)
4. What is the contrast between what Paul claims he has lost and what he discovers he has gained? (Phil 3:7-11)
5. What's the connection between Paul's exhortation to “rejoice in the Lord” (Phil 3:1) and the rest of the passage from Philippians 3:2-11?
6. What does Paul aim to forget and what does he determine to press on to? (Phil 3:12-14)
7. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] If the Lord calls you to be a missionary, a ministry staff or a pastor, what might you find difficult to leave behind from your current life or lifestyle?

Before next Sunday

Consider what is God's call and goal for your life. If you sense the Lord leading you towards full time vocational ministry, sign up for the Vocational Conversations.

Philippians Sermon Series #6
Future Ready
Philippians 3:15-21

1. What steps can you begin to take to be more future ready?
2. What kind of examples are you looking out for & trusting god to bring into your life to help you overcome your past, press on in the present & be more future ready for Jesus' return?
3. How can someone imitate my life that will help them not become enemies of the cross unwittingly?

Philippians Sermon Series #7
Walk The Talk
Philippians 4:1-9

1. What is your natural response when challenges or trials enter your life?

2. Paul calls us to *“rejoice in the Lord always”* in verse 4.
 - (i) When you hear the word “rejoice” what do you typically think of?

 - (ii) Why do you think rejoicing in the Lord in the midst of difficult circumstances is one of the ways we “live a life worthy of the gospel?”

3. In verse 8, Paul reminds us how important our thought life is:

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

 - (i) Why do you think Paul places such emphasis on our mind not only in our passage but also in Romans 12?

 - (ii) How is your thought life like? What are some of the things that frequently occupy your mind which you need to give up?

4. On a scale of 1 (negative) to 10 (positive), how would you rate the degree that pre-believing friends and relatives can tell from your life that you are a Christian?

5. Is there any area of your thought or behaviour that you have been convicted of in today’s sermon? If so, write it down, as well as take some steps that you could begin to take this week (talk to God; ask your Life Group members or your Prayer partner to pray for you) to put your desire for obedience into action.

Philippians Sermon Series #8
Blessed To Bless
Philippians 4:10-23

1. Share an occasion when you were greatly encouraged by someone's gift to you.
2. Review the whole of Philippians 4 and pick out what Paul says about the "partnership in the gospel" which the Philippians shared with him (See also, Phil 1:5 & 7)
3. In your own words, how would you describe what it means to be content? How does Paul come to be so content? (Phil 4:11-13)
4. In verse 18, how does Paul make use of 3 phrases to recast in sacrificial language, the meaning of the gifts from the Philippians? (See Gen 8:21, Lev 1, Ps 51:17, Ezek 20:41, Rom 12:1)
5. In this passage, how does Paul draw a tension between expressing his appreciation for the gifts sent from the Philippians and emphasising the spiritual principal of dependence on the Lord rather than on human help? (Phil 4:10-20)
6. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] How does this passage help you to be more grateful to God?

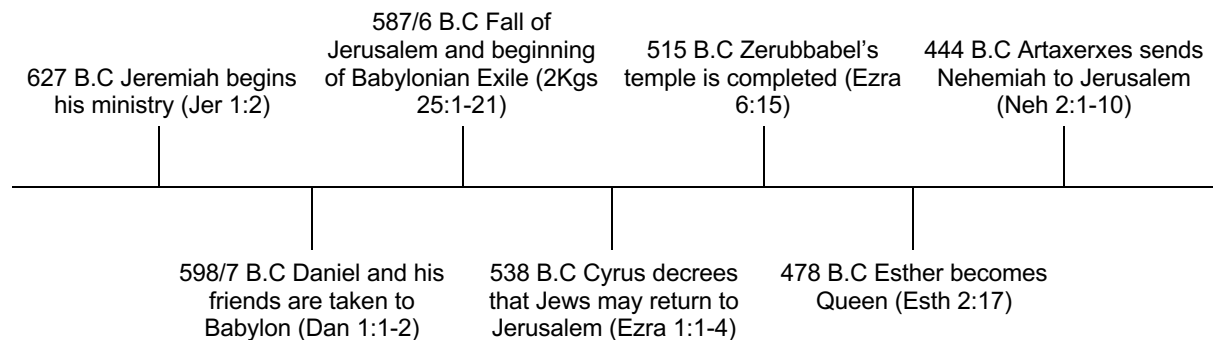
Before next Sunday

Memorise Phil 4:13 & 19 and observe how God is allowing you to claim these promises in your life this week.

Nehemiah Sermon Series #1

Rebuilding The Wall

Nehemiah 1



All dates are approximate.

5. Why would the returnees (remnant) in Judah be “in great trouble and shame” because “the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire” (Neh 1:4)?
6. Nehemiah fasted and prayed after hearing the reports from the group of Jews (Neh 1:4). What is the purpose and effect of fasting? Is God more attentive to the prayers of people who fast? Why or why not? (Matt 6:16-18)
7. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] Share a personal experience of fasting and prayer. If you have never fasted before, share why.
8. Read Nehemiah's prayer in Neh 1:4-11 and take turns to paraphrase the prayer in your own words. How does Nehemiah pray? (see Deut 4:25-31; 7:6-11; Dan 9:1-19) List down what you can learn about how to pray from Nehemiah.
9. In Neh 1:10, Nehemiah prays that God redeemed His people by great power and strong hands. In Exodus, God redeems His people by delivering them from slavery in Egypt and in Ezra-Nehemiah, God redeems His people by delivering them from exile in Babylon. How is Jesus the continuation of God's work of redemption for His people today? (Gal 3:10-14, Eph 1:3-14)
10. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] From the reports of some Jews, Nehemiah received a burden to return to Jerusalem to rebuild its walls, leaving a promising and rewarding career as cup-bearer to the king (Neh 1:11b). What burden has God placed upon your heart today? What are you going to do about it?

For further reading - Introducing Nehemiah¹

Nehemiah was in leadership during an extraordinary time in Israel's history. He faced opposition from all sides—both from his own people and from outside forces.

From antiquity, Ezra and Nehemiah have been considered almost as one book. The two books cover a period of about one hundred years. In 587 BC, Judah was removed from the land of Israel and deported to Babylon with only a few left in the land. In 538 B.C. Cyrus sent some of the people back to rebuild the temple. Nehemiah's second return would be around 430 B.C. Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah are all wrapped up in this history. Zerubbabel built the temple, Ezra brought the Law back into Israel's life and Nehemiah rebuilt the wall that made Jerusalem secure.

The amazing thing is that Israel had more autonomy and distinctiveness than at any time of their existence as a sovereign state. The Persian Empire allowed the people to practice their religious convictions with seriousness, and this probably accounts for why Israel had such a pristine religious life at this time.

While Zerubbabel and Ezra worked more in the religious realm, Nehemiah was really sent to Judah to be governor of the land, and that gave him considerably more ability to make some lasting changes in the life of the people. The people needed Nehemiah's strong leadership to handle the opposition to their work.

Derek Kidner describes the importance of this period of Israel's history:

The two centuries of the Persian empire were among the most formative periods of Jewish history. Out of the ruins of the little kingdom of Judah there had emerged the small community whose concern to be the people of God by pedigree and practice shaped it into the nation which meets us in the New Testament. Already the future prominence of the Temple and its priests of the law and its scribes, as well as the enmity between Jew and Samaritans, could be seen developing. Throughout this time the Persian regime was given a substantial part to play, both in sending and subsidizing the three expeditions of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, and in backing their authority with its own. It was not the first empire, nor the last, to be allotted some such role.²

The Israelites living in the land were fairly passive at this point in history. They had to adapt to the culture around them because they were such a small remnant. Their intermarrying and political ties made this considerably worse.

Nehemiah's gifts in administration and perseverance enabled him to mold this people back into the "people of God" so they could obey God's commands and have a distinction from the people around them. This is where Nehemiah shines through. It was not enough to build just the wall—he had to build a people that would once again stand on their own as God led them. Putting some "backbone" back into the people was a large part of what Nehemiah had to accomplish— even if it required him to be harsh with them at times.

God has called each of us to important tasks, both as leaders and as followers. Reading Nehemiah will help us to have the courage we need to follow through even in the face of difficulty and persecution.

¹ Excerpted from Don A. Fields, *Lifeguide Bible Studies: Nehemiah* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 5-6.

² Derek Kidner, *Ezra & Nehemiah* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 17.

Nehemiah Sermon Series #2

Rebuilding The Wall

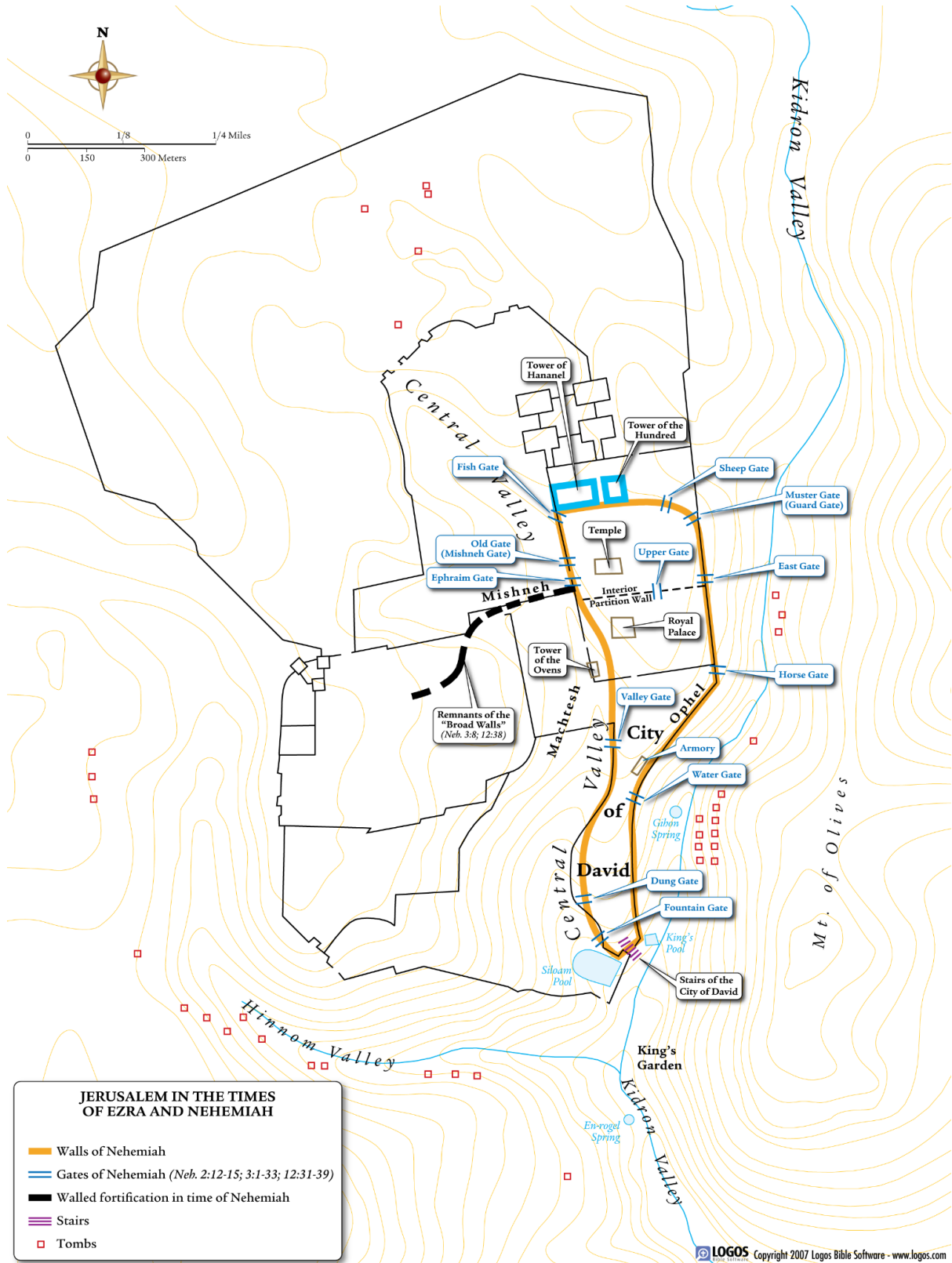
Nehemiah 2

1. After four months of prayer, Nehemiah went before the king with his request. How was Nehemiah's plan well-thought through? Write down what he requested from the king. (Neh 2:1-9)
2. Contrast the two verses below. If the good hand of God was upon Nehemiah, why did he still have to take the personal risk to go before the king? What does this mean for human partnership with God in the work of His kingdom? How does this encourage you?

"I said to the king, 'If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favour in your sight...'" (Neh 2:5a)	"The king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me" (Neh 2:8b)
--	--
3. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] Share a personal experience of taking a big personal risk in obedience to God.
4. Why was there opposition from Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem to Nehemiah's plan to rebuild the wall? (Neh 2:10, 19) How did Nehemiah respond to the challenges? (Neh 2:11-18)
5. Nehemiah faced opposition from other people. As God's people today, while we face opposition of all kinds, we do not battle against other people. What is the nature of our battle and how are we to resist the opposition? (1 Cor 10:3-6, Eph 6:10-20)
6. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] God calls his people to "rise up and build" that which "were broken down and ... destroyed by fire" (Neh 2:13, 17-18). What have you observed in your family, society & church that is broken down and destroyed? What keeps you from rising up to rebuild or if you've started rebuilding, how are you doing so?

Nehemiah Sermon Series #3
Rebuilding The Wall
Nehemiah 3

1. Print out the map (page 3) and locate the different gates where the people were working. Go around the city wall and write verse numbers or the names of the people or leaders as they are listed. The list starts in the upper right hand corner and goes counter clockwise around the city. What observations can you make? What do you think was the point of recording all this information in this chapter?
2. How did Nehemiah organise the groups? Why? What lessons can we learn?
3. What do you see as the significance of the words, “opposite his own house” or “beside his own house?” How do you think this helped with the overall strategy especially when opposition arose? (Neh 3:10, 21-23; 28-30).
4. What kind of attitude was there among some of the rich from Tekoa (southern Judah) (Neh 3:5)? Do we see such an attitude in ourselves and in the church today? How can we address it?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. God’s people of all status, vocations and wealth came together in unity to rebuild the wall. How does this challenge us to think about (or rethink) the unity of God’s people in the church today?
6. The completion of any project requires a willingness to work and a spirit of unity. Share with one another some projects to build God’s kingdom you might want to be a part of. What might be required of you? What might be required of those around you (your Life Group, Ministry Group, friends, etc.)?



Nehemiah Sermon Series #4
Rebuilding The Wall: Overcoming Opposition
Nehemiah 4

1. What was the response to building the wall of Jerusalem (Neh 4:1-3)? What should we expect whenever we want to do the work of God (Lk 4:14-30; Mk 5:1-17)?
2. Identify the enemies within and without in Neh 4:10-12. What strategy did Nehemiah employ to deal with these 2 enemies (Neh 4:13-14)?
3. What are some “enemies” (within and without the church) to discourage God’s people today? What can we learn from Nehemiah 4 in dealing with these enemies?
4. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] What are the enemies of faith that you encounter in your journey as a Christian? What can you learn from Nehemiah 4 in dealing with these enemies?
5. How does Satan seek to weaken us (Heb 2:15; Rom 8:15)? How can we overcome fear and the schemes of the evil one (Eph 6:10-17)?
6. What can you learn about prayer and ministry in Neh 4:16-23? How would these principles apply to us today?

Nehemiah Sermon Series #5
Rebuilding The Wall
Nehemiah 5

1. What was the issue described in Nehemiah 5:1-5?
2. Remembering that slavery was a common practice in Nehemiah's day, why was Nehemiah so angry (See Deut 15:12-15 & 24:10-15)? How do you think this is linked to God's redemption of the Jewish people by returning them to the land from exile?
3. Who were the people responsible for this inequity? Why would they act so unjustly in the midst of the unity of rebuilding the wall?
4. What are the various ways in which Nehemiah responded to the issue? (Neh 5:6-19) What do they tell us about Nehemiah's character and leadership?
5. Nehemiah did not lay heavy burdens on the people like his predecessors "because of the fear of God" (Neh 5:15c). How does the fear of God relate to our treatment of those around us? (See Lev 25:39-43)
6. How is Nehemiah's actions of setting the slaves free and breaking the yoke of oppression over the people a foreshadow³ of how Jesus redeemed us? (Phil 2:6-8 & 1 John 3:16-18)

³ In Christian theology, a foreshadow is a person (or a thing) in the Old Testament that is a *type* of a person (or a thing) in the New Testament. When Nehemiah is described as a foreshadow of Jesus, we are saying that he behaves in a way that corresponds to Jesus' character or actions in the New Testament.

For Further Reading⁴

SERVANTHOOD THAT CLAIMS NOTHING AND GIVES GENEROUSLY.

We see in Nehemiah one who as governor could have “lorded it over the people” (Neh. 5:15) but who instead served them generously—gathering people from the nations at his table (vv. 17–18). Nehemiah did not claim the benefits of the allowance technically due him (vv. 14–18). We might think of the apostle Paul, who made no use of his God-given rights to payment for his gospel work (1 Cor. 9:14–15). For the sake of the Lord Jesus, he made himself “a servant to all” (1 Cor. 9:19). This kind of servanthood ultimately reflects a gospel-shaped pattern, shown most fully in Christ Jesus, who, “though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant” (Phil. 2:6–7). Through this heavenly servant, we receive by grace a salvation we do not deserve.

FEAR OF GOD.

Nehemiah talks often about fear—of enemies (Neh. 4:14; 6:9, 14, 16, 19) and of God (1:11; 5:9, 15). He knows the “great and awesome” Lord (1:5), the only one worthy of fear—and the one who fights for his people and delivers them from fear of their enemies. Nehemiah understands David’s words: “The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” (Ps. 27:1). But he also understands Proverbs’ words describing the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10). Nehemiah is a great example of Proverbs’ wisdom, applying the fear of God to all of life and showing the kind of prudence and understanding celebrated in the Wisdom Literature. This includes the realm of social responsibility: addressing their injustice toward the needy, Nehemiah calls the people to “walk in the fear of our God” (Neh. 5:9). Jesus comes calling people to fear only the God in heaven, the one “who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). He offers in himself the authoritative word on fear: “Do not fear, only believe” (Mark 5:36).

⁴ Kathleen Nielson, *Ezra and Nehemiah (Knowing the Bible)* (Crossway, 63).

Nehemiah Sermon Series #6
Rebuilding The Wall
Nehemiah 6:1 - 7:73

Nehemiah 6:1-14

1. Ono is neutral territory between Judah and Samaria. How did Nehemiah know that Sanballat and Geshem were scheming to do him harm and not to make peace when he was invited to meet them in the plain of Ono? (Neh 6:2b)
2. What were the other threats that Nehemiah received? (Neh 6:6-7) How did Nehemiah respond?
3. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] Fake news, rumours, slander and gossip distract God's people from doing God's work. Share about a time where you had to deal with similar threats in your family, workplace or church (share one). How did you respond?
4. Through his quick prayers (Neh 5:19 & 6:14), Nehemiah longed for God's justice i.e to punish evil and reward good. How do you long for God to "make things right" in our world today? How does Jesus' first coming usher in God's justice (and how do we explain the remaining injustice that we continue to witness in our world today? (Rev 19:11-16 & 21:3-8)

Nehemiah 6:15-7:4

5. Why did the enemies of the returnees perceive that the completion of the wall was accomplished with the help of God? (Neh 6:16)
6. What were Nehemiah's challenges and priorities in reestablishing the city of Jerusalem? (Neh 7:1-4)

Nehemiah 7:5-73

7. The rest of chapter 7 contains a long list of names and the number of people who had returned from the exile (cf. Ezra 2). Why do you think God would put in Nehemiah's heart for the people to be enrolled by genealogy? (Neh 7:5) Are genealogies important? Why or why not?

Nehemiah Sermon Series #7
Rebuilding The Wall
Nehemiah 8:1 - 9:38

Nehemiah 8

1. Imagine how amazing it would have been for the returnees to gather to hear the reading of the Book of the Law of Moses. What do you think were their attitudes towards the Word of God? Do you feel that Christians today carry similar attitudes? Why or why not?
2. Why did Nehemiah, Ezra and the Levites instruct the people not to mourn or weep on the holy day but celebrate with joy instead? (Neh 8:9-12) Does this teach us anything about the way we worship a holy God?
3. As the people completed rebuilding the wall, they gathered around the Word of God which revealed to them their identity as a people who were rescued by God. As Christians, how does the gospel now shape our identity as a people who are rescued by God?

Nehemiah 9

4. How did the people gather in prayer and worship? What preparations did they make before they came together? (Neh 9:1-5) Why are such preparations important? In our prayer and worship today, do we make such preparations? Why or why not?
5. List down some of the attributes of God that are mentioned in the prayer in Nehemiah 9:6-31.
6. Nehemiah 9:6-39 is the longest recorded prayer in the Bible and contains the history of salvation for the Jewish people. As Christians, how can you incorporate your own personal (or communal) salvation history in your prayer life?
7. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] Take some time to write down a prayer which includes your own personal journey of salvation. If you're comfortable, take turns to pray this prayer out loud in the group.

Nehemiah Sermon Series #8
Renewing The Covenant
Nehemiah 10

1. Share a time you made a promise to someone but didn't keep it.
2. The people had just had a spiritual revival in Nehemiah 9. They repented and confessed their sins to God. How did they seal their promise and what is its significance? (Neh 9:38 - 10:27) (See Numbers 30 for law governing vows and oaths. Jesus warned against using empty oaths; Matt. 5:33-37; 23:16-22)
3. What groups of people were involved in ratifying the promise (10:28-29)? Why do you think it was important for all these groups to ratify it?
4. Why was "separation" (Neh 10:28) so important to God? What practices of the pagan nations and pagan religions would have made this necessary? Would "separation" be applicable today for Christians?
5. What do you think of the vow against marrying foreigners? (See Exodus 34:10-17 - danger of mixed marriages) Do you think such rules apply to Christians today? If so, in what way?
6. In what ways do these vows and commitments help the Israelites to worship God more faithfully and more holistically? How can we apply them meaningfully in our lives today that would deepen our worship of God?

Nehemiah Sermon Series #9
If Not You, Then Who?
Nehemiah 11

1. How did you decide to live in your current home? How much did the location factor into your decision?
2. After the Israelites recommitted themselves to God in Nehemiah 9, Nehemiah addressed another concern: who would live inside the Jerusalem walls? Where did the leaders of the people live? Where did the other people live? Why did it have to be rectified?
3. Consider the following quote: For a city to prosper and be great, it must be populated. And for more than seventy years, Jerusalem had been nothing but a ghost town. Now, over the last eighty or so years, it has been repopulated, with a new temple built (under Ezra) and the walls rebuilt (under Nehemiah). But the city still needed more people. Why do you think the people might have been reluctant to move back to Jerusalem?
4. What do you think of Nehemiah's choice to cast lots to make a decision? (Neh 11:1)
5. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] Are there things that the Lord might be asking you to do which requires you to move outside your comfort zone? Share your struggles and experiences.
6. How has the Lord challenged you from the passage today? What actions will you take?

Nehemiah Sermon Series #10
Dedicating The Wall
Nehemiah 12

1. How do you prepare yourself to go to church each week? (e.g. Dress the children, wash the car, pray, etc.)
2. This chapter begins with another list of names. From your study of Nehemiah, what do you think is the significance of this list? Hint: Jeshua was the high priest with Zerubbabel, Joiakim is the son of Jeshua who became high priest before Ezra's return and Eliashib is the son of Joiakim who was the high priest when Nehemiah returned (Neh 3).
3. Read Exodus 19:10-15. Describe what are the requirements for ritual purification (Neh 12:30)? How are we to understand these requirements for ourselves?
4. In this chapter, there are many references to King David (Neh 12:24, 36, 37, 45, 46). How does the concept of kingship jibe with the reality that the people were now subjects of a foreign power despite returning from exile? Contextualising to our time today, how do we as Christians understand Jesus as our King? (Mark 1:15)
5. Read Nehemiah 12:43-47. How was the joy of dedicating the wall to continue (after the dedication) to be expressed by the people?
6. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] Share with one another how you have been experiencing joy in worship or whether there are obstacles that prevent you from experiencing true joy in your worship life?

**Nehemiah Sermon Series #11
Beware Of Spiritual Decline
Nehemiah 13**

8. Share an occasion when you've either been a victim of a crime or encountered someone who broke the law.

9. What reforms did Nehemiah introduce in this chapter?

10. Think of a time when you made a commitment / promise to God, but failed to keep it. Why?

11. How is your daily time with God like? If this is an evaluation of your spiritual temperature, what does it tell you?

12. Read Nehemiah's short prayers in this chapter (Neh 13:14, 22, 29 & 31). What do you think were his concerns at this point of the story? Why?

13. How has the book of Nehemiah brought new clarity to your understanding of the Gospel?

Go one round in your group and share with one another what you have learnt from the book of Nehemiah.

God and Family Series #1
Marriage
Matthew 19:4-6

14. Share something you're proud of in your family (suggestions could involve your extended family, parents, siblings, children, etc.)

Read Matthew 19:1-15

15. What main points about marriage, divorce, celibacy and family does Jesus make?

16. From Matthew 19:4-6, as a group, try to put what the verses express into a one-sentence definition of marriage.

17. What was Jesus trying to show his listeners about Moses' teaching on divorce? (Matt 19:7-9)

18. Examine the responses of the pharisees (v.7) and the disciples (v.10). From their questions, how do both groups misunderstand the heart of God?

19. Read Ephesians 5:25-32. How does Jesus' teaching on marriage in Matthew picture another marriage, that of Jesus and the church? (also see Rev 21:2-3)

20. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] What are some ways that you can build up your own marriage or be an encouragement to another couple's marriage (could be your friends, Life Group members, parents, etc.)?

God and Family Series #2**Singleness****1 Corinthians 7:6-9**

1. How can embracing singleness and marriage bring glory to God?
2. Do you tend to idealize a lifestyle (marriage / singleness) different from the one in which God has placed you? Talk to someone in your Life Group involved in the lifestyle you long to be living in. Ask him / her about the realities of living it. Write down and discuss those realities, making comparisons with your lifestyle today.
3. Make a list or discuss with your Life Group the reasons you would like to be married, or if you are already married, the reasons you would like to be single again. As you do, write down or talk about the inherent realities – positive and negative – of each.
4. Is your desire for marriage or singleness subordinate to your desire to serve God? In other words, can you honestly and openly pray through Paul's advice in 1 Corinthians 7, asking God to shape your life in its entirety so as to best glorify and enjoy Him?
5. Around what do you orient your life? Is it companionship, marital status or God?
6. What is the one thing you brought away from the sermon today?

God and Family Series #3
Sexuality
Philippians 3:15-21

1. How ready are we to accept overcomers, strugglers and even moderates who want to say in our midst?
2. How should we respond to those we know (Christians or not) in our family or amongst our friends, who want to stay in the gay lifestyle?
3. How should we deal with social pressure personally and on the church, to "modernise" with the times and celebrate LGBT lifestyle?
4. How should we disciple our church further, in the face of pressure for society including the church, to align with LGBT ideology?

God and Family Series #4
Children
Colossians 3:20-21

1. Share some pleasant things your family members have done for you in the past month. (If you're comfortable, you may also share some which are "unpleasant.")

Read Colossians 3:17-4:1

2. How does verse 17 interact with Colossians 3:18-4:1? Suggest some underlying attitudes which Paul expects family members to have in the way they relate to one another.
3. Paul instructs children to obey their parents "in everything." What reasons does he give for this instruction and why? (See Ex 20:12 & Eph 6:1-3)
4. What responsibilities do parents have towards their children? (v. 21, see Eph 6:4)
5. What would it look like if children and parents followed Paul's instructions?
6. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] If you have children, how do your children help *you* to grow as a disciple of Jesus? If you do not have children, how can you support parents in our church family to disciple their children?

Note: A "Disciple" is one who conforms one's words and ways to the teachings of Jesus and learns from Jesus to live like him.

**Advent Series #1
The Return of The King
Isaiah 9:1-7**

21. How have you experienced God as your wonderful counsellor who brought good out of something bad?

22. How have you experienced God as your mighty warrior who delivered you from an enemy?

23. How have you experienced God as your everlasting father who met your need?

24. How have you experienced God as your prince of peace when you were troubled?

25. What darkness are you facing now in which you need to hope in the Light?

Advent Sermon Series #2
Thanksgiving
Psalm 136

1. Why is thankfulness or gratitude to God an important part of our Christian life? In what ways do you give thanks to Him on a regular basis in your life?
2. Read and reread the first line of verse 1 (Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good), and the chorus that recurs throughout the 26 verses of the psalm (His love endures forever). Make a list of desperate situations or seasons when you witnessed His care and goodness. Take time to thank the Lord for His steadfast love.
3. God pours out His blessing on us every day. List as many reasons as possible to why you often fail to give Him thanks. In what ways can you cultivate more gratitude in your life?
4. Why do gratitude and trust in God go hand in hand? Can we truly be defined by one without practicing the other?
5. Write a prayer asking God to cultivate in you a grateful heart. Ask Him to help you by the power of His Spirit to enable you to always see His goodness in the midst of whatever trials you may face.

Advent Series #3
Promised Joy
Psalm 146:5-10

1. Share an occasion when you were waiting for something or someone (e.g. for a loved one to return, for a delivery of an item, etc.)

Read Psalm 27:13-14

2. Why does the psalmist exhort the people to “Wait for the Lord?”

Read Psalm 146

3. What reason does the psalmist give for God’s people to not depend on others?
4. Ps Jeremy gave 12 attributes of the deliverer we are to wait for. Which one resonates the most with you? (i.e. Helper, creator, promise keeper, deliverer of the oppressed, feeds the hungry, frees the captives, healer, upholds the humble, loves the upright, looks out for foreigners, cares for marginalised & frustrates the wicked).
5. Which of the four “ways” of waiting is something you think we (the church) are lacking in? (i.e. Waiting with Patience, Prayer Anticipation, Purpose & Praise).
6. [Personal question, share as you are comfortable] As you reflect upon the way you “celebrate” Advent and Christmas, do you think you are longing for Christ to return? (See Rev 22:20)

Advent Sermon Series #4
Final Expectancy
Luke 2:1-7; 25-32

1. How does Caesar's decree, Mary's travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem with Joseph during her pregnancy and her birth in Bethlehem help you view your less than ideal circumstances differently?
2. Whether we understand it or not, our God is constantly working behind the scene for our good. His providential hand is always at work. What implication does this fact have for the way you view your circumstances?
3. **"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)** How can this verse help you in the midst of a difficult situation? Take time to memorise the verse.
4. Waiting for God to act is hard. Silence is even harder. How do we live in the tension between Jesus' promise in **John 14:14, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it"** and our experience with what we perceive as "unanswered prayer"? Think of a time when you experience this. Share with your group.
5. When you allow yourself to look in anticipation to the day of Christ's coming again, what thoughts stir in you? How would your life be different if you live continually with an awareness that He may be coming back any moment?
6. What is the one big takeaway for you from the sermon today? How can you apply it to your life?

Christmas Sunday
God Speaks
Hebrews 1:1-4

1. Go round the group and demonstrate how one would “speak” to a baby.

Read Psalm 19:1-4a

2. How does God speak through His creation? (see also, Rom 1:19-20, 10:18)
Share an occasion when you were awed by God’s creation.

Read Hebrews 1:1-4

3. Share some ways in which God spoke through the prophets? (e.g. Moses at Mt Sinai in Ex 19:16-19, Daniel through a dream in Daniel 2:19).

4. What do you think was the central message that the prophets proclaimed?

5. From Hebrews 1, how does Jesus “speak” for God? (Heb 1:2-3)

6. How is Jesus a superior “voice of God” compared to other means by which God speaks (i.e. through creation, angels and the prophets)? (Heb 1:3b-14)

[Personal question, share as you are comfortable] How would you like God to speak to you as we come to the end of the year? As we look ahead to 2023, share how you can become more open to God’s Word, Jesus speaking into the silence of your soul.

Pledging

To pledge or to present your tithes and offerings, go to – <https://www.hvmc.sg/giving>



Life Group

To join a Life Group at HVMC, go to – www.bit.ly/HVMCLifeGroups



Serving

To serve at HVMC, go to – www.bit.ly/HVMCServe

