
Ignite

"Dear Lord, we are grateful for Your love to each of us with Your covering and protection upon DUMC as a church. We cry out to You now, Lord, asking that You would revive Your church and rewire the culture, using the words of the prophet Habakkuk 3:2 'I have heard of Your fame; I stand in awe of Your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.' Amen"



SERMON SUMMARY

IMPACT Nation Now 1:

The One That GOD Uses

Rev Dr T. Jeyakumar

Nehemiah 1:1-11

"The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Then I said: "Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

"Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, "If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name. They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name.

Give your servant success today by granting him favour in the presence of this man." I was the cupbearer to the king.

Introduction

God always finds an individual

The great heroes through biblical times to today's era, are known by their names. Names such as Noah, Moses, Gideon, Paul, Peter, or St Augustine, Martin Luther King Jr, John Sung and John Wesley. These were ordinary individuals who devoted their lives to follow Jesus, to be disciples who were willing to pay the cost in doing what He wanted them to do. Such as it was with Nehemiah. Little is known about him, except that he was in exile and had served as a king's cupbearer.

1 God chooses the one with extraordinary burden [Neh. 1:2-3, 4](#)

140 years have gone by since the Israelites went into exile. Jerusalem stood gateless, without walls, making the people there susceptible to the attack of bandits. It was a sorrowful sight to watch God's holy city wallowing in ruins. With such a distressing situation, Nehemiah felt a tremendous burden in his heart and had a deep concern for the city and its people. He was a man who cared a lot about the honour of God. On hearing the disheartening news, he wept, mourned, fasted and prayed for a period of time for Jerusalem.

Similarly, in the 18th century, John Wesley, at 5, was rescued from a burning house. He grew up, knowing that God has saved him for a greater purpose. He once said to his brother, Charles, "*You and I are called to do this: to save souls from death, to watch over them as those that must give account.*" Burdened to rebuild England from its state of spiritual lowness, John Wesley devoted more than 50 years of his life in ministry, traveled over 250,000 miles on horseback around England, and gave 40,000 sermons, reaching out to and helping as many people as possible.

2 God uses the one with exceptional integrity [Neh. 5:14-15, 17-18, Neh. chapters 8 & 9](#)

As we look around us, we may know of people who began well, but do not necessarily end well. According to Transparency International, "*Corruption can happen anywhere... Corruption can involve anyone.*" No one is an exception to corruption. It is "*the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.*"

Yet, Nehemiah avoided corruption. Through his position, he was entitled to enrich himself with extra gains, but he refused to accept them, as he knew that the people were poor and in need of much. Nehemiah feared God more than man.

It is important then to note that a person of exceptional integrity was one who had the fear of God in him or her and so, would be free from greed and self interest. In all his years of service to the king, Nehemiah's honesty and values did not change.

Nehemiah had a giving heart. He went beyond building a wall. He brought the people within those walls closer to the Word of God, building them into people of integrity. This sparked a revival in the city. From there, we know that Nehemiah took training in discipleship seriously.

The man who ignited the Methodist revival, John Wesley said, "*The church changes the world not by making converts but by making disciples.*" This revival lasted a solid 100 years, the longest revival in the last 2000 years. Long after Wesley had died, the revival continued as the Methodist followers were solid in the Word of God. If any one were to mention that he or she was a Methodist, they would be hired straightaway. They were well-known for their integrity.

According to D Michael Henderson, *"The Wesleyan revolution is an illustration that long-lasting spiritual transformation... comes only through serious disciple building."*

Also, a person who is said to have integrity is one who has a sincere and true heart. Their word and deed would match up and there would be nothing about them, to hide. Are you a person of integrity?

3 God uses the one with excellent leadership *Neh. Chapters 3,7 & 5:1-16*

Nehemiah started out as a cupbearer to the king. Along the way as he heeded God's call to rebuild the city's wall, Nehemiah would have over time, learned leadership. He was a man who knew Scripture well, often citing them in his prayers. He also employed successful strategies like choosing people of good integrity to work with him towards rebuilding the city's wall. Even with all the opposition around him, the city's wall was ready in 52 days! Nehemiah had a good balance between praying and planning. Last but not least, leaders must have a moral responsibility to correct situations. If we fail to do the right, then the wrong is bound to increase.

In the early years, the Methodist would work on various social concerns in the nation. For example, under relief work, monetary aid and loans were given out to the needy, and visitations were made to the sickly, In the public health sector, tracts on hygiene were written and distributed, homes were cleaned and aired. Through education, those who were illiterate were helped, and classes were conducted.

Conclusion

There is a time of breaking, and a time of rebuilding. With so much brokenness around us, the call that God has placed on us is to rebuild. We must imitate Nehemiah who availed himself to God.

On 21 May 1938, the Times Literary Supplement remarked that. *"No historian can miss the immense raising of the nation's spiritual temper by Wesley in his own movement and through its effects in the Church of England. ... The recovery of the national mind and character started with Wesley."*

To do His work one must avail one's self to God.

SERMON REFLECTION



Being the only daughter in my family, I grew up, somewhat entitled. New clothes, new toys, my own bedroom, though probably the same amount of pocket money as my brothers. Fast forward to 2016, a close friend brought me out for a Christmas dinner hosted under the *Picha Project*. Over the simplicity of the food spread and chit-chatting, I felt a strong tug in my heart. I have been carelessly selfish for most of my life when it came to the needs of others. I recall what the refugee expressed - all

he wanted was to see his children receive free education. I thought of my nieces and nephew. I would want them to have a good future too. It is so easy, isn't it, to take for granted the access we have, that others so crave?

You don't have to go very far to notice the plight of the poor and needy in our community. Have you ever stepped foot into a PPR flat? Looked at the statistics of families who requested for help during MCO? Go on an outreach to where the Orang Asli settlements are? What goes through your mind when I even mention these things? That they are someone else's problem?

There is brokenness all around us. Do you see it?

As Malaysia celebrates her 63rd independence day, I started thinking about how sad that there are unresolved cases of disappearances, an increase in divorce and suicide news, the existence of child marriages, of people getting away with the law and that corruption is rife. I shook my head at the 'tidak apa' attitude when I had to walk amongst a swarm of people in an overcrowded mall, glancing at sardine-packed restaurants and less than 1-metre apart queues outside boutiques. Is there no concern of the minute virus that has infected at least 25 million people worldwide?

I closed my eyes. I am reminded on the other hand to be grateful to God. We have the privilege to enjoy freedom because the forefathers of our country fought hard to attain the country's independence. Let's wake up, and take ownership of this freedom. Let's be clean, caring and Christlike citizens. We each have a responsibility to make a change. For the betterment of your family, the church, community and our beloved country, won't you start by confessing to God of your shortcomings, ground yourself in His Word and avail yourself to do His work?

Contributed by Wendy ML Tan, PJS1



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)

- Pop quiz:

- How many years has it been since Malaysia achieved independence? (*Answer: 63*)
- What is the slogan and title of the theme song for this year's independence day celebration? (*Answer: Malaysia Prihatin*)
- What is our country's national anthem? What do you do when you hear our national anthem played? (*Answer: Negaraku. Stand up straight.*)
- What is our national flag called? (*Answer: Jalur Gemilang*)
- What is our national flower? (*Answer: Bunga raya / Hibiscus*)

[Note to Word facilitator: The above are sample questions that you may ask your CG. Feel free to add in more questions. The idea is to lead your CG during the Word time to reflect on the burdens that they may have for our country.]

Suggested Word Introductory Question:

- Have you heard of the 3Cs - 'couldn't care less', 'complaint' and 'concerned'. In regards to what is happening in our country today, which "C" are you?

Suggested questions linked to each main point:

God chooses the one with extraordinary burden

- As we celebrate Malaysia's 63rd year of independence and 57th Malaysia Day, what are you *most* concerned about the country? What is your hope and desire in regards to that concern? Write or type out a short prayer, just a line or two, on what you have just shared.
[Note to Word facilitator: You can have a session during or after CG where each member reads out their prayer for a better Malaysia.]
- Are there pain points or desperate needs in your life right now? How can the CG help you?

God uses the one with exceptional integrity

- Are you the same person at church and in the workplace? Are you the same person at home and in your cell group? Are you a person of integrity?
- Share an occasion when you could have fallen into corruption. What went through your mind, and what did you end up doing? What were the negative consequences resulting from the act of corruption?

God uses the one with excellent leadership

- Name some of the leaders or organizations in our country that model leadership values of Christlikeness.
[Sample answers: Pr Raymond Koh, Hannah Yeoh, Malaysian Care, Salvation Army]
- Fill in the blanks: To me, “rebuilding the nation” means _____.
[Note to Word facilitator: What can you do as individuals? Sample answers:
“educating my children on the importance of living a life with integrity.”
“using stainless steel straws and recyclable plastics to save the environment.”
“paying taxes and summons before the due dates”
“writing stories / drawing comics that inspire others”
“giving to the poor or making visits to the old folk homes and orphanages” etc]



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

- What do you think is God's heart for the people of this nation? Why do you think He has placed you in Malaysia? How can we better reflect this in our family, community, church and nation?
- Do you find it difficult to follow through your words with your deeds? Recount a situation where you were challenged to do away with what you have said.

- You are applying for a new job. How would your previous employer or close acquaintances describe you? What would be your best quality ?
 - Which area in your life do you see a need to rebuild? Your character? Soft and hard skills? Your knowledge and understanding of the Word of God?
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WHAT'S YOUR STORY?



Story of the week...

"Last Thursday, as my wife and I were rushing home from dinner to pick our daughter up from my mum's place, we saw an Alza car parked near my condo. A person ran out and another guy came out with what seemed like a baton-looking car lock. The guy with the car lock in his hands was so angry and was standing on the side of the road..."

- Joshua San, ZL in PJN6

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

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

- Maya Angelou

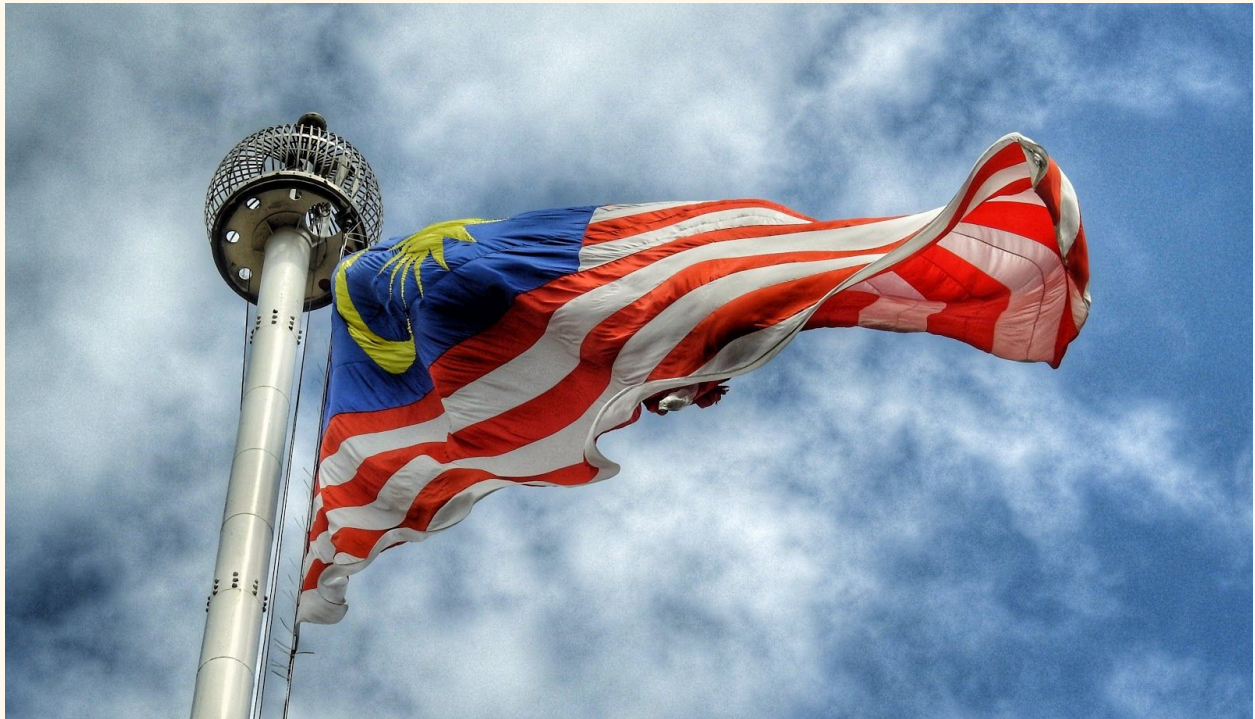
If you or your CG member(s) has a story to share related to today's Word,

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.



Independence Day Prayer

Amos 5:24 ESV

“But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

Lord God, You reign sovereign over the nations.

You are the Ruler of rulers - of kings and governments that rule nations. We give thanks for Your sovereign hand of grace and mercy over Malaysia for the 63 years of nationhood.

We exalt You as God of the nations, that it is You, who alone determines the times and seasons, for You alone who removes kings and raises kings.

On this Merdeka week of celebrations, we ask for Your truth, righteousness and justice to reign over this nation. We pray for Your Word to reign in every corridor of power and law making – from the Rulers to the Parliament, to the Judiciary, and to the Government.

Lord God, we want to see You glorified in this nation because righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne.

We pray that You will bless Malaysia with a judiciary and a legal system that courageously upholds Your benchmarks of truth, righteousness and justice.

We pray that as we see more high profile political arrests and more court cases being tried, including the big 1MDB cases involving powerful personalities, we ask for an undeterred judiciary that is anointed with wisdom, strength and courage; men and women who are god-fearing and desire to uphold righteousness.

Thank You, Lord for the recent outcome of great significance to bring stolen wealth back to the nation and charge the perpetrators of a grave crime through their abuse of their political power.

We ask that justice will continue to prevail, and those who have truly abused power, laundered money and stolen the people's money, be swiftly dealt with. But should any be falsely accused, may justice be done for them.

We pray for a nation whose people are discerning, honest and righteous, who know how to weigh right from wrong, not easily duped by political deceptions. We pray for spiritual breakthroughs in the present political strife and impasses, and economic uncertainty that the reality of "Thy Kingdom come" - will be fully felt in this beloved nation of ours.

Help us not to be embittered or only look to political solutions, but to look to You, O God, to deliver us from evil men; for You have said, "Vengeance is mine".

We thank You for our Prime Minister and his cabinet as they demonstrate having a heart for the people, especially during this time when many are suffering under the strain of the pandemic and economic turmoil. We continue to lift up the health of our Prime Minister, Muhyiddin Yassin, into Your keeping hands.

We ask that a powerful continuing work of the Holy Spirit be upon this Cabinet - to bring about cleansed hearts, sincere motives, good conscience and empowerment to genuinely serve the Rakyat with integrity of heart and effective competencies.

We pray for the fear of God as these ministers discharge their duties and responsibilities.

Please transform Malaysia to be a beacon of truth, justice and righteousness.

May You receive all the glory and praise for Your righteous laws from all tribes and tongues in this nation, as we ask that the people will be given full rights to religious, political and economic freedoms.

We know that You are continuing to work Your purposes. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven; and let Your Kingdom come.

We ask for the demolishing of strongholds of demonic activities, secret plotting and witchcraft.

We ask that the intensifying efforts of the evil principalities and powers in stirring and stoking disunity, corruption and deception, and plotting unholy alliances, will tremble and desist in fear at Your Name.

Please remove from us the evils of apathy, racism, prejudice and hate that must not find a home in our hearts.

Stir in our hearts a deep compassion for those who have lost homes and who are just seeking for hope, fairness and essential provisions.

Cleanse us, O Lord, and remove from us blockages to Your work of grace that hide in the corners of our souls and minds.

Fill us with Your Holy Spirit, that we may walk in newness of purpose and mission for Your glory. May we be Your mouth, Your hands and Your feet in bringing truth, justice and righteousness to those who are oppressed, displaced and in material need. Help us to get out of our comfort zone and offer compassionate and practical help together with our prayers, as we seek not to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit. Use us, O Lord to prosper the nation.

We ask that You will remove all hindrances that prevent us from speaking to those who need to hear the gospel so that they may be saved.

You have promised that those who hinder the work of the gospel are piling up their sins and awaiting the judgement of Your wrath. We humbly ask You to intervene through Your divine authority over the affairs of men.

We also ask of You, O God of Justice, to quicken justice due to families who have suffered disappearances of their loved ones. We continue to ask for justice and truthful closure for them, so that all attempts at cover-up will be thwarted.

Lord Jesus, shine Your light into the darkness in Malaysia, expose that which is hidden, and cause human darkness and the demonic agents to fail and flee at Your powerful name. AMEN.



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!

 <p>Strengthening the SOUL OF YOUR LEADERSHIP</p> <p>📄 Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership ...</p> <p>30 minutes on average</p> <p>transformingcenter.org</p> <p>Ruth Haley Barton</p> <p>Prayer & Spirituality</p> <p>Podcast</p>	 <p>Spiritual Formation on the Run</p> <p>Meditations to Grow the Busy Life</p> <p>📄 Spiritual Formation on the Run</p> <p>188 pages</p> <p>kairos2.com</p> <p>Alex Tang</p> <p>Prayer & Spirituality</p> <p>E-Book (Free)</p>
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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!

