
Ignite

"Heavenly Father, we lift up missionaries during this COVID-19 outbreak. For so many communities have been massively impacted by sickness, fear, or devastation. Father, help them to do all things through Your wisdom and guidance during this time. Protect them and help them to have full health, helping their immune systems to remain strong during this time. Father, as many are quarantined, we pray that outreach via the internet or other forms of communication may be all the more powerful. Help them to connect even when not in person and to truly represent You well during a tense time. This can be a time in which remarkable change can happen, so help them to follow the Spirit's lead and guidance. May this be a time of miracles in Your Name. Help and lead us to partner the work as a cell group and the church. In Jesus' name, 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.

Missions in The Midst of A Pandemic

Dr Fidel Monzon

Ephesians 5:15-17 (ESV)

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Introduction

What comes to mind when we think of the COVID pandemic? We think of the huge number of people infected and deaths due to the virus. We think of travel restrictions and lockdown. We see businesses closing due to lack of customers. These challenges have not only impacted many physically, mentally, emotionally and financially but also spiritually. We feel that fulfilling the great commission of making disciples of all nations is an intimidating task. However, we are called to understand His will and discover creative ways to effectively witness for the kingdom despite the global pandemic. Here are some practical ways how:

I Start where we are *Matthew 5:14-16, Galatians 5:22-23, 1 Peter 3:15*

We may not be able to travel far due to travel restrictions, but we can be a witness in our own home, office, or workplace. We can reach out to those around us who are in

need. Firstly, *Matt 5:14* reminds us that we are the light of the world and we must shine through our **good works**. When we handle our responsibilities and accountabilities with excellence, it gives glory to God. Secondly, we shine through having a **good attitude**, embodying the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. We are able to be joyful, loving and at peace despite the difficult and challenging situations we find ourselves in.

These two ways of shining for Jesus presents us opportunities to share the Good News when people wonder 'What is our secret? How can we be so calm in spite of our seemingly hopeless situation?'. This also means we must be prepared to boldly **share Jesus** as our source of hope and strength.

II Pray, Pray, Pray *Luke 10:2, Romans 10:13-14, Colossians 4:3, 2Th 3:1, Romans 15:30-31, 1Ti 2:1-2*

We may not be able to travel far due to travel restrictions, but

- We can pray for more workers *Luke 10:2, Romans 10:13-14*
There has to be someone willing to go and preach the Good News. Willing to go and make disciples, willing to go and plant a local church. We can pray for more workers, labourers, missionaries to go to the Lord's harvest. In Rom 10:13, Paul reveals that *"Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved"* BUT Paul goes on to say in verse 14: *"How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? **And how are they to hear without someone preaching?"***.
- We can pray for open doors *Colossians 4:3*
Pray that God may open doors for us to declare the Word and the mystery of Christ.
- We can pray for the Gospel to spread quickly *2 Thessalonians 3:1*
Pray that the word of God will spread quickly throughout the nations even the unreached people groups of the world. Pray that the word of God will spread quickly in the hearts of those who hear it. The need in our world today is huge. There are still about 41% of the world's population (3.23 billion) that have not heard the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Majority of these people are Tribal people (people who are controlled by their fear of spirits), Hindus, Muslims,

Buddhists and the unreligious.

- We can pray for our workers serving on the field **Romans 15:30-31**
Pray that they be delivered from harm and for protection, anointing, refuelling and healing.
- We can pray for those in authority **1 Timothy 2:1-2**
People in leadership positions have great influence. Dr. John Maxwell said, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” If the leader is touched by the Lord, this can lead to wonderful opportunities for the proclamation of the gospel in his area.

Conclusion

We are all called to be missionaries where we are in one form or another. As believers, we would not want to be foolish and let the pandemic hinder us or intimidate us from reaching the lost. As we study God’s Word, we will clearly understand His will and discover creative ways to effectively witness for the kingdom even in the midst of a pandemic.

Note: if you would like to know more about DUMC missions, email at missions@dumc.my. Also, come join the monthly **Missions Prayer Meeting** - Sign up here: bit.ly/MPMregistration #Crossfields #PrayerMoves #IMPACTNOW.



SERMON REFLECTION

MISSIONS. A word that evokes mixed feelings among us Christians - some love it while others dread it. For some, it is a true test of Discipleship where we, as Christians, obediently step out into the unknown and trust God will lead and work through us to sow kingdom seeds. Yet for some, the prospect of sleeping in rooms ridden with bed

bugs, putting up with unhygienic toilets and cold showers puts us off. We tell ourselves that we are not cut out for this and are not called to do missions. Inadvertently we place missionaries on a pedestal and tell ourselves that it is about God's calling as it takes a certain "kind of Christian".

This week's sermon challenges us to think broadly and creatively during this global pandemic. Each of us are challenged to stop thinking of missions in one dimensional terms i.e. uprooting and sharing the Gospel in some distant nation but to also consider that **mission happens right here and right now in our daily living.**

Personally, this week's sermon stripped away every excuse I had not to participate in God's great commission to make disciples of every nation. I realize that while it is true that I dread the waves of nausea caused by long travels away from home, the real issue was my fear of not being up to the task. How can I bear a good witness to Jesus if I myself am found wanting? How can I lead others if I have not always been a faithful disciple of Jesus?

One specific struggle is in the area of prayer. I get anxious and self conscious when asked to pray for more than 2 persons at time. While prayer seems to flow ever so effortlessly for others, the words of petition seem to get stuck in my mouth. I often find myself at a loss and turning in circles as I frantically struggle to find the right words. In many ways, my relationship with my Heavenly Father is largely shaped by my earthly father who is a typical strong silent Asian type who rarely openly expresses affection. How am I to teach others to pray? What happens if I am asked to pray for healing or the loss of a loved one? Even in a 1-1 setting, my prayers for others have gone largely unanswered. I know I should not feel this way but I can't help but wonder if it is because my prayers lack passion or is in some way "inferior".

However, I am humbly reminded in 1 Cor 1:27-29 that it is not by my power and abilities but it is **in Christ and Christ alone** that things rise and fall and that if I faithfully step out and sow, He will take care of the harvest:

But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly and despised things of the world, and the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast in His presence.

And in 2 Cor 12:9: 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."

A fellow sister made an impactful statement: “How can you pray if you have not yourself experienced it?”. This sister discerned a very important truth that Paul revealed to us: *“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”* (1 Cor 13:13).

It starts with Love. I will make every effort to know my neighbours on a deeper level. To seek to love them by celebrating personal victories and coming alongside in their struggles that I may know how to more effectively pray for them. I am encouraged to step out as I am and to trust Jesus to guide, lead and equip. Perhaps, some day, I pray, as I embark on my very own daily Missions Candidate Preparation Program (MCPPE)-like journey, I will have the privilege of participating in a short-term mission trip at least once in my lifetime.

Lord Jesus, help me to see that it is not about me. Teach me to pray like how you taught your disciples when they asked. Like your disciples, help me to see that our Heavenly Father desires an intimate relationship and not the right formulation of words that come out from my mouth for He already knows what I need. Holy Spirit, personal presence of God, open my eyes and heart to see the needs of my neighbours and reach out in love. Amen.

Contributed by Darren Lim and the Ignite Team



APPLICATION

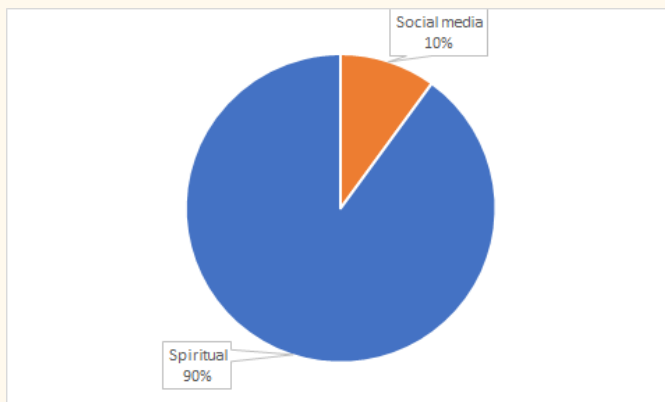
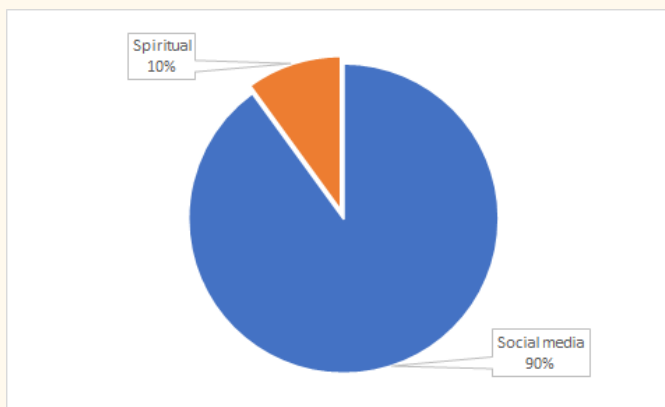
Note to Word facilitator:

As you prepare for this session, this is a great time to pray that the Holy Spirit will

guide you to use the questions efficiently. 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 Questions

- Name the destinations for a DUMC short-term mission trip (Answer: Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Nepal, Sri Lanka, West Malaysia, East Malaysia).
- Which chart best describes what you do with your remaining time?



Suggested Word Introductory Questions

- “Mission is not for everyone” - Agree or Disagree. Discuss this.
- Where is the first country you would like to visit after the pandemic? What are the current conditions there like? (economic, social, political, etc.)

Suggested Questions linked to the Sermon:

Start where we are

- Of the two ways you need to do to reach people where you are, which one do you need to improve on?
- What are some of the issues you face that challenge you to shine for Jesus or share Jesus? How will you overcome these issues?

Pray, Pray, Pray

- Name five of your neighbours living in your residential area. If you can, how can you pray for their needs? If not, how can you get to know them better this week?
- How much time in a day can you commit to praying for laborers, for open doors, for the Gospel to spread quickly, for our missionaries serving on the field, for those in authority?

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

- Shout out the first words that come to mind when you hear these words: 1) Sunset 2) Buffet 3) Missions.
- Why do you think prayer is important in fulfilling missions?
- As Christians, we have access to the Father through Christ. How can we learn to pray more effectively and powerfully for others?
- Do we know our DUMC missionaries? How can we pray for their needs?



PRAYER



Photo by Timothy Eberly on Unsplash

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 DUMC missionaries & ourselves

Father God,

We lift up our missionaries overseas. Lord, you have called them away from their homeland to follow You for Your purpose in their lives and to the lives of those they come into contact with--just as Hebrews 11:8 reminds us of Abraham going by obedience, not knowing what he would find in the journey ahead. Overseas missionaries, much like Abraham, have awoken to the call in their own hearts to venture beyond what they have known to follow in obedience to share with others about You, Lord. Father, we pray for protection over them. We pray for safety and favor as they take every step-in obedience into these lands. We pray that the hearts they come into contact with would be open and willing to hear and receive the beautiful and life-altering truth of Your Son, Jesus Christ. We pray for open doors and victory in Your Name so that more of Your children would come to the table of the Lord. May doors that have been long since closed to visitors swing wide open by Divine influence in order that Your call to all of Your followers may be carried out by Your Holy plan.

We pray over ourselves in sharing the hope and love of Christ on our very own soil. So many in our country have been shown a false view of what it means to follow Christ, but we pray through Your Holy Spirit we would be given the words, guidance, and access to share Your true heart and love with those we come into contact with. May the people we meet come with their honest and vulnerable hurt, experience, and perspective and be open to coming into personally knowing You, Lord God. Help us to be tender to Your Spirit, knowing when to speak and when to listen. Help us to walk in boldness rooted in You, standing boldly and without fear, for they are sent from You. Just as Moses stood before Pharaoh boldly proclaiming Your assignment to him, we stand before others. Help us not to fear the wrath or harshness of men, but to know what matters is Your opinion in the end. Father, help Your children as we proclaim Your Name in this land.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

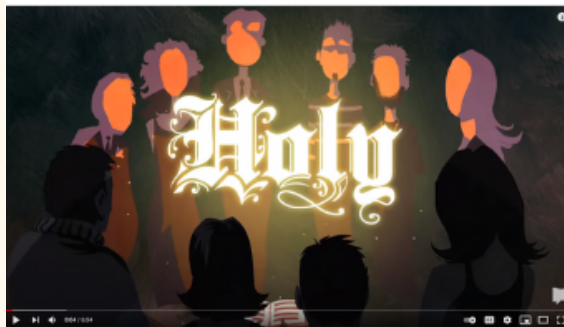


OTHER RESOURCES

*Below are some links to resources for 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!



Holiness

6 minutes 34 seconds

[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

In this video, we explore the paradox that God's holiness ...

[Bible](#) [Doctrine](#) [Prayer & Spirituality](#) [Christian Living](#)

[Video Clip](#)



Sacrifice and Atonement

7 minutes

[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

In this video on sacrifice and atonement, we trace the the...

[Bible](#) [Doctrine](#)

[Video Clip](#)



Overview: Leviticus

8 minutes 16 seconds

[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

Israel's holy God invites them to live in His presence desp...

[Bible](#) [Christian Living](#)

[Video Clip](#)



Holiness as the Church Bearing Fruit

seedbed.com

Holiness, as we have seen, is not merely about eradicatin...

[Timothy Tennent](#)

[Bible](#) [Doctrine](#) [Teaching](#) [Christian Living](#)

[Article](#)

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!

