**Studies in the book of John - I AM the Christ**

***Pastor Mike Ngui***

(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ”) Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.” They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.” Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’ ” Now the Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.” This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing. (John 1:15-28)

The word ‘Christ’ is the Greek word used by the Jews for ‘Messiah’. ‘Christ’ is the title that Jesus is the Messiah. John also alludes to Jesus as the One that they have been waiting for.

# The Mess and the Messiah

The people of Israel were waiting for a Messiah, and they were promised a Messiah. They had the law, they had the prophets and the temple system. They had a system where they could practise their faith; after all they were God’s covenant people, a special privilege. What more were they waiting for? But they had no political autonomy.

The ‘mess’ for Israel at the time of Jesus was that they were under foreign rule, of the Romans. They had neither kingdom nor king of their own. There were expectations that this Messiah would come and be their king. Someone Who will deliver them from their mess. Someone who would embody the hopes of these people who have been enslaved. They expected Him to wield the power of God to overthrow the Roman rulers that were governing Israel at that time. The Messiah that would institute the kingdom of God as they understood it, and begin to rule Israel. Jesus was fully aware of these expectations. He definitely knew the promises that were made in the scriptures by the prophets, about the Messiah. When He spoke wisdom and worked miracles, the people were ready to make Him King.

**MESS = foreign rule; no king of their own**

**MESSIAH = a king!**

Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. (John 6:15)

Jesus did not offer himself to be that kind of king, a king to overthrow the foreign oppressors.

**The ‘mess’ we see ourselves in**

**shapes**

**the ‘Messiah’ we look for.**

Because the mess that Israel was in was political oppression, they looked for a Messiah that would deliver them from political oppression.

If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail. *~Abraham Maslow*

If you see every problem as a nail, then you’d look for a hammer. *~Mike Ngui*

What is the mess that we want Jesus to save us from? What are your messes, what are your pains? All of our messes are real.

The Jews were given a system to live by, by God. Why then, do they still need a Messiah? The Jews had very high morals. They had system that would protect the marginalised, the poor, and keep the poor from being constantly exploited. But what mess was Israel in, that the prophets saw the coming of the Messiah? Why did they need a Messiah? The system that God gave to them was good. But the problem lies not in the system.

**The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.**

# The Christ and the Crisis

What is the crisis that Jesus came to address?

**The Real Crisis**

## We are unable to stand guilt-free before God without condemnation

Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.” (Matthew 9:2 (Mark 2:5, Luke 5:20))

The guy was paralysed, lying down and unable to move, so why did Jesus tell him that his sins are forgiven? Because Jesus knew that at the heart of the problem, he had sins that needed to be forgiven.

Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” (Luke 7:48)

For Jesus, the mess was always ‘sin’, not just poor self-esteem, disease or hunger, even though these things are real.

Jesus came to save us from our sin.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)

John recognised that Jesus came to deal with these problems.



**Christ Jesus came to save sinners from sin, to live to God.**

## We are unable to live rightly before God

Even if we have been forgiven of our past sins, we are still unable to live rightly before God. Sin is not just the act of the sin; it has also got to do with the nature of sin. That is why in the Old Testament, God said that He will write His laws in our heart.

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. (Ezekiel 36: 26-27)

It’s not just about being ‘forgiven’; it’s about being given a new ability to live right before God.



Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ (John 1: 32-33)

I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” (Mark 1:8)

We cannot live right before God, but Jesus came to meet this crisis. The real crisis lies that we stand guilty before God. If we live to God we need the Holy Spirit’s help. It is not just a matter of being forgiven; it is also a matter of our being changed and be given a new nature. When the Holy Spirit lives in us, our desires and inclinations will be different.

Coming to Jesus is not about behaviour modification or leading a better life. Coming to Jesus Christ is to admit that “I cannot do it”. Ever since that day it’s been a journey to yield to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has been given to us to live our lives free to God.

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:31)

JESUS did not come to heal us in our bodies. Jesus came to save us from our sins, so that we might live free to God.

# The Herald and the Hero

## John knew who he was NOT

Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.” (John 1: 19, 20)

John set out to announce the arrival of the Saviour. He was the herald, the messenger for the Messiah.

## John knew who he WAS

Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’” (John 1: 22, 23)

John pointed people to Jesus. That’s what the messenger, the herald is supposed to do. The herald announces the hero. The messenger points to the Messiah. The more he succeeded in what he did, the more people would go to the Messiah. The church is not the answer to the world; Christ is the answer for the world. The church is the answer only as much as it declares Christ. We must be a Christ-centred, gospel-driven church in everything we do.

When we understand that the crisis we are in, is that we cannot stand guilt-free before God, and that we are actually unable to live right before God, that is the time we recognise we have a need for a Saviour. For Christ not only forgives our sin, but also gives us the Holy Spirit, who lives within us, that we might live right before God.

## John knew who he was not to be Hero

He must become greater; I must become less.” (John 3:30)

As the church, we cannot change the world, but we can become the instrument for God to change the world. We are not the Saviour; but we proclaim the Saviour. We uphold Christ as the One Who can change people. The real problem with mankind is that we have got a sinful nature in us, and only Christ can save us from that, in order that we might live free to God. We as the church of Jesus Christ in living out our commitment need to keep pointing people to Jesus and face the problems in this world. But the answer ultimately lies in Christ Jesus. This is the Gospel that we must declare every single day.



Sermon summary contributed by May Ng

Prayer points contributed by Michelle Wong



SERMON: I AM the Christ

**Pray:**

* All the people of God will acknowledge their own problems, repent and look to Jesus to save them.
* God’s people will cry out to Jesus to set our country free from the dysfunctional legal, moral and social systems which are causing injustice and misery to the *rakyat*.
* Pray that Jesus will touch the hearts of those in power, that they will fear God and do what is right before God.
* We will be clear that we can only be set free from our sin when we allow Jesus into our lives to redeem us from our sinful nature.
* People of God will be reminded and convicted that they are the mouthpiece to the nation, proclaiming Jesus Christ as the Saviour of all people.

***“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” (Ezekiel 36:26)***

**MINISTRIES and EVENTS: Holy Week and Easter - 3 Day Fast and Prayer/Holy Week Morning Prayer**

23 – 27 MARCH 2016

 **Pray:**

* The people of God will make a commitment to fast and pray throughout this week to seek God’s direction and will.
* God will convict the hearts of the chosen ones to reach out to those ready for His kingdom and bring them for the Easter Celebration.
* God will enable the prayer intercessors to come for the Morning Prayer throughout the week to pray for new and young believers.
* God will instil the spirit of unity and raise up committed leaders to avail themselves for the Holy Week morning prayer.

 ***“I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.” (Ezekiel 11:19)***

MALAYSIA MY NATION: Our National Constitution

*Rights of every citizen to freedom of religion*

**Pray:**

* Article 11 of the Federal Constitution will take precedence over all other laws with regards to the rights of each citizen for freedom of religion.
* People of God will pray for His hand of righteousness over the Judicial System in our country in the conversion case of Rooney Anak Rebit.
* Holy Spirit will convict the hearts of young and new believers about their rights as a citizen to freedom of religion in this country.
* People of God will fast and pray for God’s Hand to protect the rights of each citizen for freedom of religion in our country.

***Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6)***

* **A TRANSFORMED WORLD: CAMBODIA**

*DUMC Adopted Unreached People Group -Khmers*

**Pray:**

* For the Khmer people to be open to the Gospel.
* For the Cambodian Missions and Services team to be able to organise and mobilise all teams sent to conduct workshops effectively.
* God’s protection on all leaders, team members and their families who are carrying out the work of God in the various capacities with the Khmer Christians.
* Breakthrough in their efforts and a great harvest of souls for the Lord.
* Good weather and journey mercies for all the travelling to and fro to various parts of Cambodia; and back home.

***Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Mathew 19:26)***