

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS EVE OUTREACH SERVICES

Our Christmas Eve Outreach Service is happening next Sunday! Invite your friends and loved ones so they can hear about God's greatest gift through a musical performance and a special message.

A special second offering will be collected during the service, which will be donated to New Hope Community Services.

Date: 24 Dec (next Sun)

Time: 9am and 11am

Speaker: Dr Andrew Goh

WATCHNIGHT PRAYER

Come join us to start the new year in God's presence at our Watchnight Prayer. Together as a church, we will look back on 2017 with thanksgiving, look within ourselves to renew our commitment to God, and look ahead into 2018 with faith.

Date: 31 Dec (Sun)

Time: 9 p.m. to 12.18am

Venue: WDL Worship Centre

*Please note that there will be **no** children's programme.*

HOKKIEN CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

Celebrate and share God's greatest gift with your Hokkien-speaking friends and loved ones by inviting them to our Hokkien Christmas Outreach.

Date: 23 Dec (this Sat)

Venues and Time:

BPJ Centre Main Sanctuary (Level 2), 7pm – 9pm
WDL Centre Chapel 1 (Level 4), 3pm – 5pm

Speaker: Rev Timothy Hoon (洪茂祥牧师)

CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED

If you are curious about Christianity or have been visiting the church but have not accepted the faith, join us at Christianity Explored! This is an informal platform to explore Christianity and discuss spiritual questions.

Date and Time: Six Sundays from 14 Jan to 25 Feb (except 18 Feb) at 1pm

Venues: WDL Centre, Love Room
BPJ Centre, Hope 4

Covenanters who would like to invite and accompany their friends and loved ones on these sessions, are encouraged to attend a training session on Sat, 6 Jan, 2pm to 4pm at ACKCentre, Training Room 5.

Sign up for the sessions or for the training at <http://cefc.ch/christianity-explored>

COVENANT EFC

ACKCentre: 2 Kallang Avenue, CT Hub #10-26, Singapore 339407

ONE CHURCH MULTIPLE CENTRES:

BPJ Centre: 8.30am, 10.30am & 12.30pm ■ WDL Centre: 8.30am & 10.30am ■ East Centre: 10.00am (Pre-service prayer: 9.30am)

Tel: (65) 6892 6811 ■ Email: mail@cefc.org.sg ■ Website: www.cefc.org.sg

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CovenantEvangelicalFreeChurch

VISION

AUTHENTIC
DISCIPLESHIP
& INTENTIONAL
DISCIPLEMAKING
OF A CERTAIN KIND

VISIBLE VALUES

- Grace
- Growth
- Godliness



UNDERLYING VALUES

- Truth
- Community
- Stewardship
- Balance
- Brokenness

COVENANT EFC

EAST CENTRE, 17 DEC 2017

SERVICE LEADER: PS BARNEY LAU ■ WORSHIP LEADER: SIMON AND LILLIAN SEOW

Rebuilding the Foundations

PS IVAN HO, DISTRICT MENTOR AND INTEGRATED EQUIPPING

This year, as we preached through the book of Ezra, it speaks about rebuilding the foundations. How apt and timely is God's Word for us! God is so good and faithful to His people! He knows what we need and guides us clearly, so that we can be restored in His presence and by His Word to fulfil the destiny He has for us as a discipling church.

These two months as I prepared and preached three sermons in Ezra 9 to 10, I sensed God convicting me that I have become desensitised to my sins and that God's people have trivialised sins. A clear indicator is that I do not have tears nor feel grief for personal and communal sins when they become known to me. What about you? What has been your response to the Whole Life Survey results? Let us ask God for tears to cry over our own sins and the sins of God's people. For a broken spirit and a contrite heart to grieve over the brokenness of our own lives,

marriages, families and church. So that God can rebuild us from the inside out to be holy and distinct in our calling and conduct. For our repentance to be genuine, it cannot be forced or rushed. It is a process and will take time. The key is for us to seek God in prayer and then do as He leads us.

Our church theme for next year, our 40th anniversary, is "We Are Church: Pray and Repent!" The movement forward for us is an emphasis on personal and corporate prayer. Let us start now to seek a deeper journey of prayer with God. Begin a daily discipline of self-examination and repentance of sins. Come before God at the end of each day and ask: "In what areas have I sinned against You today, Lord? In my thoughts, my words and my deeds?" Then in 2018, let us receive every prayer initiative that our church leaders lead us to, as an opportunity to seek God's presence and obey His Word.

SERMON OUTLINE

Ezra Revisited

SCRIPTURE: BOOK OF EZRA ■ SERMON: PS ANDY LEW

Introduction

A. A Deep Longing for God's Presence (chp. 1-6)

B. A Decisive Alignment to God's Word (chp. 7-10)

Conclusion

NEXT WEEK'S SERMON SPEAKERS:

24 DEC – PAUL SHI (BPJ), REV CHRIS CHIA (WDL) AND DR ANDREW GOH (EAST)

LAST WEEK'S SERMON SUMMARY

It's Not the End

SCRIPTURE: EZRA 10:16-44 ■ SERMON: PS IVAN HO

Introduction

Often we fail to recognise or heed warnings in life. It's a mistake to call sins "mistakes". Then we're trivialising our sins and not dealing with them seriously. After we confess our sins, what lessons can we learn as individuals and as a church family? How we can learn from our sins? To learn individually and corporately from our sins:

A. We Must Be Willing (vv.16-17)

1. Note the intentionality of Ezra, the priests, leaders and people of Israel: (a) Decisive action: "Then the returned exiles did so" (b) Leadership responsibility: "Heads of fathers' houses" (c) Thorough investigation: "Sat down to examine the matter" (d) Duration: Three months to complete the investigation. There were 111 men whose foreign wives continued worshipping pagan gods with pagan practices; those wives had to be put away (cf. New Testament teachings in 1 Cor 7:12-16; 1 Pet 3:1-7).
2. The mixed marriages were a great threat to the distinctive identity of God's people. If left unstopped, the effect will be multiplied over the years to come! The serious danger of God's people turning away from Him to worship idols warranted a drastic measure to arrest the spread of the corruption like a cancer treatment.
3. Ezra 9 to 10 call us to repentance. God greatly desires to bless us, but our sins have withheld the blessing. Oswald J Smith: "... for unless our lives are right in the sight of God, unless sin has been put away, we may pray until doomsday, and the revival will never come."
4. Applications: (1) Be willing to ask God for tears to grieve over personal and corporate sins. In this regard, Leaders, be willing to seek God in fasting and prayer, confessing your own sins and the sins of those under your care, and asking God for forgiveness. (2) Be willing to be asked by your spiritual leader about your personal holiness. (3) Be willing to examine yourself daily before God. In what areas have I sinned against God today? Examen of Conscience. Framework: Thoughts | Words | Deeds

B. We Must Issue a Warning (vv.18-44)

1. List of guilty ones: sons of high priest (4), sons of priests (13), Levites (6), singers (1), gatekeepers (3), people (84). A total of 111 men. Note the seriousness of the problem: (a) Rot at the top. Even the son of the high priest, Jeshua, and the sons of priests and the Levites were guilty of unfaithfulness and disobedience to God! (b) Potential effect over just a few generations would be disastrous! (c) A discipleship problem. The guilty men were the offspring of the remnant who returned with Zerubbabel in the first wave with conviction of God's call and at much personal cost. Yet their parents did not pass on their godly devotion, truth convictions and deep commitment to obey the Lord at all costs.
2. The list of names was a warning to God's people living then and those who come after: Don't be unfaithful or disobedient to God! But the list of names in Ezra 10 wasn't the end of God's salvation story; it pointed to the need for the Saviour, Jesus Christ. In a real sense, our names are also found in that list, because we're all guilty of unfaithfulness and disobedience to God. We're all sinners in need of Jesus to save us!

Conclusion

Repent and believe! Repent and return!