

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

**Date** : 25 Feb 2024

**Sermon Title** : Discipleship: The Urgency

**Speaker** : Rev John Foo

**Text** : 2 Corinthians 6:2

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This is the first sermon in the 'Discipleship' sermon series entitled "The Urgency". The text is taken from 2 Corinthians 6:2 - *For he says, "In a favourable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is a favourable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

We normally think that the urgency refers to preaching the Gospel to the lost or unbelievers before Christ returns. This is true because we are given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5) to persuade others to reconcile to God and all these had been covered in the previous sermon on 'Harvest'.

More than that, there is another sense of urgency related to our theme for this year on "Make Disciples Intentionally". If we read the whole chapter of 2 Corinthians 6, we will see in verse 1 that the apostle Paul was in fact writing to believers in Corinth, appealing to them not to receive the grace of God in vain. The New Living Translation (NLT) makes the meaning of 'receive the grace of God in vain' clear: "As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvellous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it." This means we are not to accept God's kind gift of salvation and then do nothing about it.

As ambassadors of Christ, let us ask ourselves what we have been doing, to show for the salvation we have received. While the urgency is for us to bring the message of reconciliation to the lost, how can we do so if we ourselves are not transformed by the gospel of Christ? Why would unbelievers accept this message of reconciliation to God from us if they are not attracted to the way we live as Christians?

## **"The Urgency"**

- To live out as God's disciples
- To be living testimonies of God's grace at work in us

## **Two thoughts about "The Urgency"**

### **1. Don't put off the call to be a disciple of Christ.**

It is easy for us to rest on our salvation and put off the call to be Christ's disciple because we may think that once we have accepted Christ, eternity in Christ is sealed

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*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

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by the Holy Spirit and there is nothing more to do. We may tell ourselves we have a long life ahead, and that we will consider becoming a true disciple when we retire, or when our schedule permits. We may also enjoy living our comfortable lives so much that we feel we do not need to add this thing called 'discipleship' to it.

## New life in Christ

2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, the new has come.

- We need to ask ourselves if we are living the new life God has promised us, or we are hanging on to our old life and trying to make the best of it. If we hang on to our old lives, we deprive ourselves of what God has in store for us. If we do not sense God's presence or direction in our lives, it may be because we are living the old life.
- God's blessings upon blessings and promises, including His living presence, direction and purpose, favour and help, come with the new life of living in Christ because this new life is the life of Christ in us.

When we receive Christ, we have the new life because we are a new creation. We must let our old life pass, no matter how full, attractive and enjoyable it seems. If we do not take up our new life, we have not started our journey of discipleship because that new life is the life of a disciple. When we receive His salvation, we must also take up His call to be a disciple. Salvation comes with discipleship, and now is the best time to take up the life of a disciple.

## **2. The path of discipleship is seldom the path of least resistance**

When we try to live out the new life of a disciple, it is seldom the path of least resistance. In 2 Corinthians 6:8-10, Paul describes "being treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything."

## Life as a disciple of Christ

Paul got this perspective from being a disciple of Christ. He was able to go through all these trials because he had God's help and favour upon him. It would have been impossible for anyone without the help, favour and grace of God. Paul knew what it meant to suffer for Christ because he also knew the context of God's plan and direction for his life and chose to live his life in this way.

- If the path of discipleship was not the path of least resistance for Paul, neither should it be for us if we choose to take up our cross to follow Christ.

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Christians were persecuted in Paul's time and in several countries today, Christians continue to be persecuted. Even if we do not face such persecutions in Singapore, we should also be prepared that the path of discipleship is seldom the path of least resistance, and we must never discount that there will be sufferings and difficulties when we live as disciples.

This does not mean God will make us suffer as disciples because He is not a sadistic God. Rather, we must recognise and accept that God's greater plan and purpose for our lives does not exclude suffering. God will not make us suffer unnecessarily but if suffering brings us to where He wants us to be, He will allow it. Even non-believers suffer but when we suffer on the path of discipleship, the path is strewn with His mercy, grace, comfort, blessing and power; everything He has to offer us. This is not found on any other path because God's living presence is found in this path for us if we will only choose this path of discipleship.

## **CONCLUSION**

God calls us to walk in the path of discipleship; to become disciples ourselves intentionally so we may then make disciples intentionally. Let us live out the call now and not put it off. Let us take up our cross to follow Him. While it is not going to be easy, the favour and help of God will be there for us because the presence of God will be with us when we follow the path He has planned for us.

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## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

3. Read 2 Corinthians 6:1-10 aloud.
  - a. How has knowing that the path of discipleship is seldom the path of least resistance impacted you?
  - b. Would you still want to take up the path of discipleship?
  
- 4a. Do you think you are still living or hanging on to your “old life”?
  - (i) What is holding you back from living your new life in Christ?
  - (ii) How can you overcome these obstacles?
  - (iii) How can your group leader or members support you to stop living or hanging on to your “old life” and take up the life of a disciple?
- 4b. If you are already living a new life in Christ, what are some
  - (i) suffering or difficulties in your discipleship journey?
  - (ii) ways you have experienced God’s help and grace through them?
  - (iii) ways your group leader or members can help or encourage you in your discipleship journey?

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## **C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action**

***Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.***

5. Share your testimony on God's grace at work in your life recently.

OR

Give thanks to God for giving us blessings after blessings through His presence with us in our journey of new life in Christ.

6. As a group, pray for the church, including pastors, pastoral team members, missionaries and all believers, to continue to walk in God's presence and experience His love, encouragement and blessings, especially in the face of suffering and challenges. With a prayer partner in your group, pray also for those hanging on to their old life to be willing to give it up completely with urgency, and for God's strength and help to overcome any challenges faced in living as a disciple so everyone will be a disciple who makes disciples intentionally.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Praise – Elevation Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=raFnjGVkHe8>
2. Heart of a Servant – City Harvest <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMSh1MIOeA0>
3. On That Day – CityAlight <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McX9SdQS4ml>

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