

18

GUIDE &
DEVOTIONS

REVIVAL — IS — NOW

WAKE UP

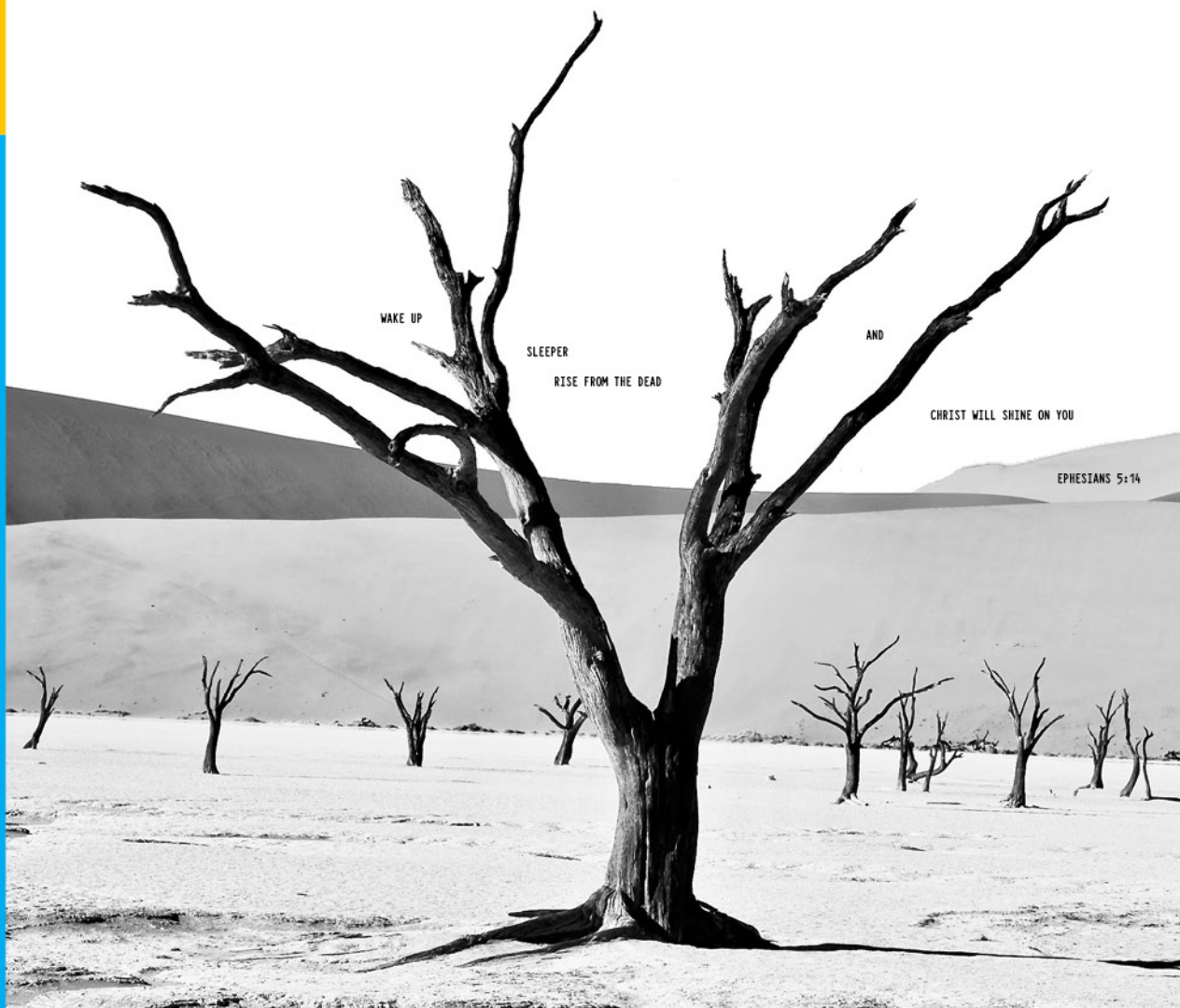
SLEEPER

RISE FROM THE DEAD

AND

CHRIST WILL SHINE ON YOU

EPHESIANS 5:14



HOPE CHURCH SINGAPORE

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More than 3000 volunteers are serving this conference.

Thank you for building this church together!

CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP

We received more than **\$94,000** to sponsor the conference costs. Your gifts made it possible for many people to attend this conference to be blessed and recharged. Thank you for making a difference!

DEVOTIONS

Writers

Rachel Lim

Tan Yan Shao

Fiona Teh

Yeo Yeu Ann

Editor

Chen Jingting

Subeditor

Joseph Fam

Consulting Editor

Raphael Cheung

Designer

Faith Lim

Illustrator

Koh Qing



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Most of us yearn for a revival of some sorts. A revival signifies new beginnings, restored vitality and fresh works of the Spirit.

Just as parched lands cry out for rain, the struggles we witness in our lives and those of others cause us to thirst for revival. Who wouldn't want to see a revival in a rocky career, a troubled relationship, or a ministry that seems to be bearing little fruit? Who would say no to a revival where countless lives come to know the extravagant love of God?

Yet revivals do not just take place around us. There is a revival that needs to happen within each and every one of us before we can be credible witnesses for Christ, bearing His light in this world. As we meditate on Revelation 1-3 and supporting passages from other parts of the Bible, we discover essential qualities Christ expects of His followers. From there, we obtain seven aspects of revival we want to see happen within us.

As amazing as revivals can be, the novelty and excitement will eventually ebb and wear off. So we don't chase after revivals, but Christ. We keep our souls fresh and vibrant in Christ by staying close to Him in every season, knowing Him with a deeper love and serving Him with a greater fervour.

THE BIBLE COMES FIRST

Get your Bibles ready. Read the indicated Bible passage before starting on the devotion of the day. The Bible, not the devotion, is the Word of God. The devotion simply facilitates your reflection on the Bible passage and your application of what you have learnt.

“
**EVERY BRICK COUNTS
TOWARDS BUILDING A FIRM
AND UNSHAKABLE FOUNDATION**
”

Learning from the Bible is like laying the foundation of the building of your faith, brick by brick. It takes effort and will not 'feel' novel or inspirational all the time. But every brick counts towards building a firm and unshakeable foundation. When your faith is hit by the storms of life, you'll be thankful that you have laid the foundation well.

PONDER AND PRAY

Reflecting on God's Word is more than intellectual work. It is a spiritual exercise where we humbly ask the Holy Spirit to enable us to understand, accept and act on God's Word.

Slow down and chew on what God's Word means to you. Humbly examine your faith. Record your thoughts. Share your findings with your Life Group or mentor.

Pray through the prayer points and other concerns that the Holy Spirit places in your heart. Don't just speak; listen to what God wants to tell you.

Fast to train yourself to control your appetite (whether for food, social media, or other activities) so that you can focus on God. Fasting develops our ability to master our desires instead of letting them take over us.

FAST

I'm Fasting From

We will fast and pray together as a church from **18-29 June**.
Let's break fast together at conference!

WHY FAST?

The word 'fast' is derived from the Hebrew word *tsom*, which refers to the practice of self-denial. In Greek, the word is *nesteia*, which has the same meaning.

Fasting is abstaining from food, sleep, favourite hobbies, or any desire in order to focus on God. One of the most powerful spiritual disciplines in the Christian faith, fasting strengthens us spiritually and helps us to connect with God on a deeper level. As we seek God through prayer and fasting, we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit to transform our lives.

COMMON WAYS TO FAST

1. Abstaining from food:

- Fast from one meal a day, OR
- No solid food for an extended part of the day, e.g. 6am to 6pm; OR
- No solid food for a definite period, e.g. for 1 week, etc., OR
- No meat or other favourite delicacies

If you have a health condition and plan to fast, please seek medical advice from your doctor.

2. Abstaining from things that distract you e.g. television/internet shows or movies, computer games and holiday trips, etc.

When God's people turn to Him wholeheartedly, He hears their pleas and acts for their good. He knows their deepest desires and cherished concerns, and He will respond with grace, mercy and love. As you fast, listen attentively to what God is saying and respond to Him with trust and obedience.

Ephesians 3:16-19

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

REVIVAL IN US

Hear What the Spirit Says to the Churches

READ REVELATION 1

Imagine you're on a mission to save lives. You've done your part, and now's the time for your protégés to continue the mission. Some are tempted to give up and compromise. Others are hanging on but losing strength. What would you say to revive their faith and boost their morale?

You would probably cut out the nonessentials and niceties, and zero in on the main and salient points. You would choose your words very carefully to ensure that your protégés get it right for the sake of themselves and those they are trying to help.

It is with such urgency and gravity that Christ addresses the seven churches in the book of Revelation. Around AD 95-96, when the Apostle John was inspired by God to pen the book, Christians were battered by false teaching from within and persecution from without. Some left the faith, while others' love for God went cold. Those who stayed faithful were struggling.

John's letter to the seven churches (Revelation 2-3) aims to strengthen believers. It aims to revive their reverence of God and restore their confidence in Him. The world may be going south, but God is still in control. If they keep their faith, they will be overcomers with Christ.

The letter contains heartening encouragement, fierce rebukes and frightening warnings from Christ. The Lord pulls no punches because He desires the disloyal and the proud to repent before it's too late. He passionately calls the faithful to press on fearlessly with hope.

Christ's words to the seven churches are for us today too. He walks among us, just as He has walked among them. He knows us as thoroughly as He has known them. Like the high priest in the Old Testament who tended the lampstand in the temple to ensure that it kept burning, Christ tirelessly prunes and refreshes us so that we can continue to bear His light.

Christ wants to see a revival not just beyond the church, but inside as well. From Revelation 2-3,

“
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PASSIONATELY
CALLS THE
FAITHFUL TO
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FEARLESSLY
WITH HOPE
”

we obtain seven qualities or areas of revival that Christ expects from the church. He desires us to blaze with 1) love, 2) fearlessness, 3) holiness and 4) zeal for God. He yearns for His people to 5) persevere in the faith, 6) hold on to the truth and 7) rely on God. When we obey Christ, we'll radiate His grace and truth to others around us.

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.



PONDER

What does it mean to be overcomers? Christ promises the seven churches that they would be victorious if they stay true to Him no matter how bad their situations are. What then, is victory in Christ all about?

PRAY

There may be a revival within the church, so that we can live up to our calling to be light bearers for Christ.

WORSHIP

Revival (Here On Earth)
Hope Church
hopechurch.sg/day1

REVIVAL IN LOVE

Regain Your First Love

READ REVELATION 2:1-7

HOW DO WE KNOW
WHETHER A DISCIPLE
OF CHRIST IS THRIVING
IN THEIR FAITH?

How do we know whether a disciple of Christ is thriving in their faith?

Do we look at their enthusiasm in prayers, their knowledge of the Bible, their skill in running programmes, or their charisma in rallying people?

The church in Ephesus was founded by the Apostle Paul. It seemed to tick all the boxes of what a strong, established church should look like – believers were serving and hardworking, and they were relentless in opposing false prophets. Staying loyal to Christ was no mean feat in a place like Ephesus, a city dedicated to the imperial cult.

Yet the believers in Ephesus have ignored Christ's command to love one another (John 13:34-35). Perhaps they have been so focused on perfecting their ministry that they have forgotten to love imperfect people. So severe is their offence that Christ issues a grave warning to repent. If they don't, they would forfeit their inheritance in Him.

It shouldn't surprise us that Christ places such emphasis on love for one another. When we look back on our Saviour's time on earth, what stands out to us?

He walked in love, breaking social norms to spend time with the adulterous, the sick, and the despised. He performed miracles out of mercy and rebuked out of concern. He even loved those who wanted to kill Him and taught His disciples to bless their enemies (Matthew 5:43-48).

Are we guilty of neglecting love?
 We cannot allow the pursuit of excellence
 in ministry to overtake our commitment
 to love one another. The hallmark of God's
 church is first and foremost a love for
 God and His people. If we cease to love,
 everything else becomes just for show.

PONDER

What are some signs that your love for people may be going stale? Love is a two-way street – not only does it need to be expressed, it needs to be received and felt. What can you change about the way you serve or interact with others, so that they find it easier to receive your love?

PRAY

Repent if we have forsaken our love for people in any way. Ask God to empower us to lead a life of love for one another within and beyond the church.

WORSHIP

Only One For Me
 Elevation Youth
hopechurch.sg/day2

REVIVAL IN LOVE

Civil War No More

READ 1 JOHN 4:7-21

Family feuds are intriguing. Whether we are reading the news about a bitter legal spat between siblings for their parents' inheritance, or watching a drama series on the politics of a family-run business, we often come away with some kind of emotion.

Perhaps it's the heartache of seeing people pitted against their own flesh and blood when they should be on the same side. Maybe it's the dismay of watching a family torn apart by bitterness and revenge.

Family feuds can happen within the household of God too. Bloody civil wars had taken place among the Israelites during the days of judges and between King David and his son Absalom. Are we going through a 'civil war' with a fellow believer in Christ? We may be waging a cold war, filled not with words but anger, towards someone. We may also be licking our wounds, hurt by frequent clashes with another over differences in opinion, personality or preference.

Whether we started the war or not, it's time to end it. John is clear – "Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar... Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister." We are God's family. We're supposed to have one another's back.

Before we think about the brother or sister whom we struggle to love, it may help to take a few moments to look at our own frailty, how we're redeemed and forgiven by God Himself. Fuelled by God's grace, may we task ourselves to forgive our fellow brother or sister if they have hurt us in any way (Ephesians 4:32).

“

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ONE ANOTHER'S BACK

”

Forgiving someone does not mean sweeping their sin under the carpet. If a fellow believer sins, we should be honest with them about their wrong, or seek help from church leaders to address the issue (Matthew 18:15-20).

Church discipline is necessary in cases where the one who sins is unrepentant.

In any case, if we want a revival in love, we need to be willing to love even when we don't feel like it, even when it seems hard at first. Causing hurt may be inevitable when we sin, but it is possible to repair relationships when we choose to love.

Tell God today :

Help me to love and forgive _____
the way You have loved and forgiven me.

PONDER

Is there a fellow believer you despise, or are bearing a grudge against? Are you willing to let God's love motivate you to love your spiritual family? How can you grow in your love for the church today?

PRAY

God may help us to forgive those who hurt us and give us courage to seek forgiveness from those we hurt.

WORSHIP

Fullness
Elevation Worship
hopechurch.sg/day3

REVIVAL IN FEARLESSNESS

Bold are the Faithful

READ REVELATIONS 2:8-11

During World War II, a Dutch Christian family risked their lives by making their home a hiding place for Jews who were being hunted by the Nazis. Corrie ten Boom, a member of the family, told her father when she was a little girl, "Daddy, I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ."

"Tell me," her father replied, "when you take a train trip... when do I give you the money for the ticket? Three weeks before?"

"No, Daddy, you give me the money for the ticket just before we get on the train."



In the same way, God would give Corrie the strength to suffer for her faith at the right time when she needed it, her father added.

Her father's wise words gave her comfort, Corrie said while ministering in Africa after the war. "Later I had to suffer for Jesus in a [Nazi] concentration camp. He indeed gave me all the courage and power I needed." Corrie boldly ministered in Christ's love to the prisoners, giving them hope in the midst of their suffering.



Cornelia Arnolda Johanna "Corrie" ten Boom, along with her family, helped many Jews escape the Nazi Holocaust during World War II by hiding them in her closet.

We imagine that the words spoken to the church in Smyrna would have comforted her greatly. For the believers in Smyrna also knew how it felt like to be persecuted by the authorities, both political and religious.

Acknowledging Christ as their only Lord would not sit well with the Roman authorities in Smyrna, a prominent centre of emperor worship. Worshipping Christ as the Messiah invited hostility from synagogue leaders, who rejected even the Jewish Christians. Yet the believers in Smyrna stayed true to Christ.

As Corrie ten Boom and the church in Smyrna have shown, we can be fearless in faith even when the odds are against us.

We all have fears of our own to conquer – fears that come in the way of our faithful obedience to Christ. We could be fearful of losing our security blanket or stepping out of our comfort zone. We could be afraid to

risk a relationship in order to do what's right. We could be frightened at the thought of forsaking our achievements and possessions if God calls us to.

The extent of our fear is an indicator of how attached we are to the things of this world. One key message of Revelation is that Christ is returning soon. Whatever earthly treasures or titles we possess now will no longer matter when He's back. It is wiser then, to start investing in things that will last, such as our relationship with God and our service for Him.

It is natural to fear that our faith may fail. But the Gospel assures us that we can trust in Christ even when terror strikes – as long as we stay true to Him, nothing can take away our salvation (Romans 8:35-39). The Gospel also gives us the power to overcome evil by doing good to those who harm us (Romans 12:14; 19-21).

PONDER

Are you afraid to suffer for Christ? Christ promises victory for those who, undeterred by fear, are willing to bear hardship for His sake if necessary. How does knowing this encourage you to face your fears?

PRAY

Believers in Singapore will be fearless in being witnesses for Christ.

WORSHIP

We Are Free
Planetshakers

hopechurch.sg/day4

REVIVAL IN FEARLESSNESS

Confident in Christ

READ PSALM 23

For many of us, our impression of sheep consists of adorable fluffy creatures surrounded by lush green fields, pretty wildflowers and a glistening lake. That may be common in picturesque New Zealand, but not so in the dry and rocky Palestinian land, where the Israelites of the Old Testament lived. Vegetation was sparse and water sources were few.

To survive, the sheep needed to follow their shepherd on long journeys from one source to another. A sheep would die without a shepherd who knew the way to food and water. So it is with spiritual life. Christ calls Himself our Shepherd (John 10:1-18). He protects His sheep from harm, guides them to abundant life and even lays down His life for them.

The imagery of Christ as our Good Shepherd is a comforting one. In the course of our lives, we are bound to encounter rocky paths and low valleys. Fear may cloud our vision and attack our heart. But we can choose to see with eyes of faith and trust in the wisdom of God.

When we are troubled by financial problems, personal difficulties, or the unrest in this world, we can rest in the knowledge that our Shepherd knows how to lead us forward, and that He will.

With Christ as our Shepherd, life becomes meaningful. When our Shepherd leads us to the entrance of a valley, the ones who trust in Him know that what lies on the other side is worth the journey. Purpose now lines our path and we are assured that we are not stumbling along.

“
PURPOSE NOW
LINES OUR PATH
AND WE ARE ASSURED
THAT WE ARE NOT
STUMBLING
ALONG
”

Our Shepherd knows when to bring us to the waters for refreshing, and when to walk us through the valley to our next destination. He readies us for our mission as disciples and sweetens our enjoyment of Him as the Shepherd of our soul. There is a purpose for every path that Christ sends us on.

And when we have completed the journey on earth, we will have known our Shepherd intimately, having grazed the pastures and braved the valleys together with Him.



PONDER

What are you fearful about? What hinders you from trusting in God? God can use your fears to deepen your relationship with Him.

PRAY

God may help us to overcome our fears and that in turn, we can minister to those struggling with fear.

WORSHIP

Nobody Like You
Red Rocks Worship
hopechurch.sg/day5

REVIVAL IN TRUTH

The Antidote to Falsehood

READ REVELATION 2:12-17

Satan is known as the prince of deception, the king of liars. One effective way Satan deceives people is through false teachings that appeal to sinful desires and contradict the Gospel.

Some of the Christians in Pergamum fell for such falsehoods that pulled them away from God.

Pergamum was a melting pot of pagan religions and a centre of emperor worship in Asia Minor. Needless to say, the church faced serious persecution and some Christians were martyred for their loyalty to Christ.

While Christ affirms the Pergamum believers for standing firm in a challenging environment, He rebukes them for tolerating and succumbing to false teachings that have infiltrated the church.

As a result, they have begun to assimilate into the surrounding culture by participating in religious festivals. Jesus urges them to repent before He judges them.

Untruths and lies continue to abound today, threatening to cloud our judgment and draw us away from God.

The only antidote to falsehood is God's truth.

The only way to beat deception is to know and obey God's word.

Some of us are easily swayed by false teachings because we do not have a sound understanding of God's word to discern what is true and right. In addition, we may not be living out our faith because of our lack of knowledge of God. We need to take steps to learn what God has revealed about Himself in the Bible.

As we grow in our knowledge, we should resist the temptation to selectively obey what is easy and convenient.

We ought to fight against the instinct to ignore or twist the word of God to suit our preferences. We must be humble to know that, no matter how much we think we know about God, there's often more about Him that we don't know.

“
THE ONLY WAY TO BEAT
DECEPTION IS TO KNOW AND
OBEY GOD'S TRUTH
”



PONDER

What do you think will happen if Christians are stagnant in their knowledge of God's truth? How can you grow in your understanding of God's word?

PRAY

We will actively learn and teach God's word and be watchful against false teachings.

WORSHIP

Prophesy
Planetshakers
hopechurch.sg/day6

REVIVAL IN TRUTH

Are You Planted in Truth?

READ PSALM 1



Imagine yourself as the tree described in Psalm 1.

You are constantly nourished in your faith. You grow strong with beautiful lush leaves and are deeply rooted, healthy and sturdy. You bring blessing to those around you by providing shade and bearing sweet fruit in season.

How blessed it is to have such deep and vibrant faith! And we can – if we love God's truth and constantly keep His word in our heart.

When we meditate on God's truth, it does not just feed our mind. It permeates every part of our daily living, influencing the way we talk, think and act.

God's truth is not just meant to be heard, but obeyed. It challenges us to go beyond our personalities and preferences. It calls us to take a stand. There is no sitting on the fence when it comes to God's truth – either we're for it or we're against it.

We are constantly challenged to follow God's way or the world's. We may decide to show mercy or withhold forgiveness. We may decide to encourage or to put people down. We may

decide to spend our time and talent on our personal glory and pleasure, or channel them to fulfil God's purpose.

When we choose God's way, fruits of everlasting significance will come, either immediately or sometime down the road. We don't have to be discouraged if we don't see them yet. Perhaps God the gardener is still growing our roots or pruning our leaves. We just have to respond to His work with faith.

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FAITHFULNESS
IS OUR ROLE
FRUITFULNESS
IS GOD'S
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Faithfulness is our role, fruitfulness is God's. On the other hand, if we acquire knowledge of God's truth without allowing it to change us, it remains as mere information. In refusing to obey God's truth by faith, we sabotage God's work in us.

What kind of tree are we today? Are we firmly planted in the word of God? Are our fruits ripe for harvesting? Are we so battered by the storms of life that we are in danger of being uprooted? Are our leaves consumed by the pestilence of sin?

No matter what kind of tree you are, plant yourself in God's truth. Let it heal you, humble you and hone you to be a Christ-follower who glorifies God and blesses others.

PONDER

Do you subscribe to the concept of 'spiritual dryness'? Psalm 1 implies that the believer who plants themselves in God's truth is a tree that is ever flourishing. How does this change the way you understand 'spiritual dryness'? How can you go beyond 'feeling' dry to obeying God's truth with faith?

PRAY

The church will hunger for God's truth, and that instead of being complacent we will constantly respond to His challenge to obey His word.

WORSHIP

New Wine
Hillsong Worship
hopechurch.sg/day7

REVIVAL IN HOLINESS

Set Apart or Led Astray?

READ REVELATION 2:18-29

Do you subscribe to the five-second rule? It is the idea that food dropped on the table or floor is safe to eat if it's consumed within five seconds. Unfortunately for careless (and greedy) eaters out there, this is a myth. Researchers have found that food attracts bacteria, sometimes harmful ones, the moment it hits a contaminated surface.

So it is with our spiritual health.

IF WE ARE CARELESS
ABOUT HOW WE LIVE,
WE CAN BE EASILY
CONTAMINATED BY SIN.

If we are careless with how we live, we can be easily contaminated by sin. Sin is definitely harmful, even deadly, if we don't deal with it quickly and thoroughly.

Repenting of our sins is the first step towards holiness. Holiness means to be set apart for God. In the Bible, the holiness of God is so glorious and overpowering that men are ashamed of their sinfulness in His presence and fall before Him in reverence. Because God is full of love and goodness, being set apart for Him includes following His high moral standards.



Holiness is all or nothing – we cannot claim to be living for God if we are doing right in most areas yet allowing sin to fester in others. The Christians in Thyatira are serving and persevering in the faith, but Christ points out that they have failed in their response to the sinful teachings of false prophets. They tolerate the dangerous teachings, allowing sin to lead one another to compromise on God's holy standards.

Christ is not being difficult or hard to please. Rather, He is deeply concerned that His people are being led astray.

In Thyatira, a prosperous trading centre, business was closely tied to religion. Trade guilds in the city organised monthly feasts to honour their patron gods. Often, the feasts would involve orgies. Christians who refused to join these feasts risked isolating themselves socially and economically. Some stood firm, while others caved in and compromised.

Christ will not tolerate His people being led astray. He will strike the false prophets and their followers for their evil deeds in time to come (Revelation 2:21-23). He warns those who have compromised to repent before it's too late.

“
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”

PONDER

Christ does not condone sin, and He graciously corrects and warns His people to repent. Do you need to correct or warn someone today about their sin? How can you do so with grace and firmness?

PRAY

The church will not tolerate sin but will make a commitment to be holy.

WORSHIP

Spirit Move
Bethel Music
hopechurch.sg/day8

REVIVAL IN HOLINESS

Holiness is a 'We' Thing

READ 1 PETER 1:14-16

In the complex and fallen world we live in, being holy is a tall order.

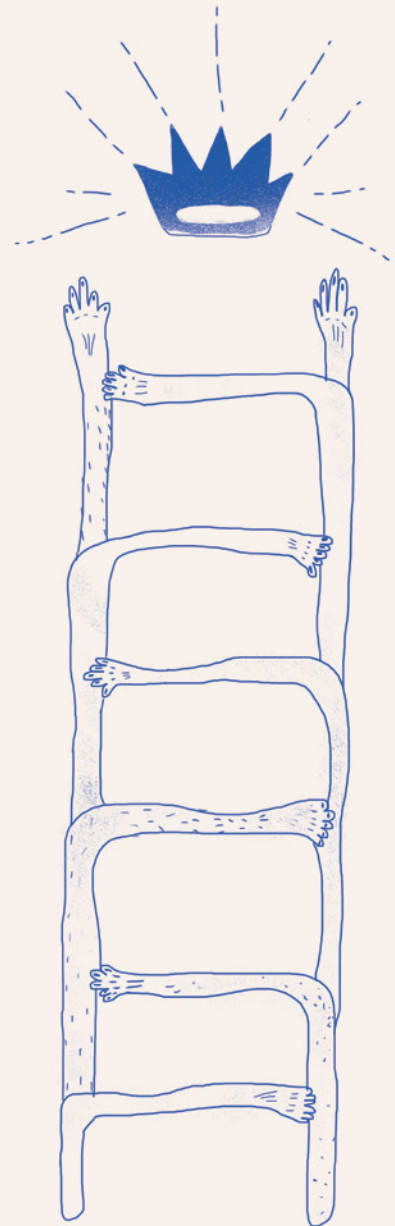
Sometimes we know what's the right thing to do, but we still struggle to do it. Being honest may not pay in the business world. Keeping sexually pure may not be easy in a culture that prioritises sexual gratification. Honouring the boss may not come naturally in a workplace where gossiping and backstabbing behaviours are common.

Other times we're caught in a dilemma, where we find it hard to discern the right action to take. To make things harder, the individual often struggles alone, as if he or she is the only one in the battle against temptation. But this is not how God intended it to be.

Holiness is for the community. Most of the time when the Bible uses the word "you", it is in the plural tense, as in 1 Peter 1:14-16. We are supposed to help one another quench the evil desires we once had and obey God to be holy in all that we do.

Does a brother struggle with lust? Sisters around him can help by noting how they dress. There's no need to make it harder for him to overcome the problem.

Does a believer struggle with lack of self-control, such as when it comes to alcohol? The Life Group can steer clear of places that sell alcoholic beverages. There's no need to expose him or her to temptation.



Does a sister struggle with envy? Her spiritual family can avoid talking about their possessions, achievements or children that may stir up a sense of covetousness or make her feel inferior.

There are many other areas where we can strive to be holy together – how we talk (Psalm 19:14, Colossians 4:6), how we teach our children (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Proverbs 22:6), how we manage our finances (Hebrews 13:5), how we spend our time (Psalm 90:12), how we conduct our sexual life (1 Corinthians 6:12-20) and so on. Holiness is reflected in our everyday choices and everyday living.

“
 HOLINESS IS REFLECTED
 IN OUR EVERYDAY CHOICES
 AND EVERYDAY LIVING
 ”

Helping one another to be holy is not moral policing. Instead, it is being aware of one another's weak spots and doing whatever we can to overcome sin and temptation – together. This is love in action, expressed through our consideration to one another's needs and determination to help one another become more like Christ.

PONDER

Is there a brother or sister you know who needs help to be holy? What can you do for them today? Do you yourself need help? Will you tell someone you trust and seek their support?

PRAY

As we help one another in holy living, we will be like a lighthouse that draws people to God.

WORSHIP

Revival
 Soulfire Revolution
hopechurch.sg/day9

REVIVAL IN ZEAL

Total Devotion

READ REVELATION 3:1-6



Standing on a mountain, the city of Sardis appeared to be mighty and impregnable. Yet it was conquered five times, of which twice was due to negligence. This is a striking metaphor of the spirituality of the church in Sardis – seemingly strong and alive on the outside, but weak and dying on the inside.

It is easy to create the façade of a ‘committed’ Christian. We attend church activities and events, serve in various ministries, post Christian messages on our social media.

These things are not wrong in themselves, but true Christianity goes deeper than what we do on the outside. Christ criticises the church in Sardis for being a church that, despite looking good on the outside, is not living wholeheartedly for God.

Maybe the church has compromised on its beliefs and adjusted its standards to that of society. Or perhaps the believers are half-hearted in their deeds of faith and love. In any case, the Sardis Christians are living

comfortably with the world where pagans rule.

Perhaps it is when the Christian life is free from trouble that our spiritual life is most in danger of losing its vitality. When life is smooth-sailing, we may not see the need to depend on God. As a result, we become indifferent towards Him. Externally, we seem to be doing well. But internally, our hearts and minds are far from Christ. Our love for Him has gone cold.

We end up performing Christian duties and rituals with little passion. We go through the routines of service and Life Group with minimal zeal. We are content to be nominal believers who show up for church events and nothing more.

We need to regain a heart that is totally devoted to God, a heart that loves Christ fervently. Let's examine our motivations – are we doing what we do because we love Christ, or is it simply to keep up a façade?

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DEVOTION IS MORE
THAN AN EMOTION
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Devotion is more than an emotion. It is a determination to honour Christ no matter how we feel. Let's be humble to ask the Holy Spirit to point out any half-heartedness in us. Let's repent and determine to follow Christ with total devotion.

PONDER

What are some signs that you may appear fine on the outside but are actually dying spiritually on the inside? How can we encourage one another to love Christ with fervour?

PRAY

The church may love and follow Christ wholeheartedly without reservation.

WORSHIP

More Than Enough
JPCC Worship
hopechurch.sg/day10

REVIVAL IN ZEAL

Wholehearted Worship

READ ROMANS 12:1-2

Faith and reason. Many tend to see them as conflicting and mutually exclusive. Some declare, "I don't need to know and think so much, just have faith." Others argue, "I can only trust in God after I completely understand what He is doing."

Yet according to Romans 12:1-2, faith and reason go together like two sides of the same coin.

The book of Romans contains an elaborate explanation of what the gospel is about and its implications on our lives. In the first 11 chapters, Paul establishes the extravagance of God's grace and the power of the gospel in transforming once rebellious sinners into a holy people of God. In chapter 12, he explains how a Christian should respond to the Gospel. The reasonable response to God's incredible mercy, Paul writes, is to offer our whole lives to God in worship.

Worshipping God includes a transformed mind. Transformation starts with forsaking the ways of the world and reasoning according to God's ways. In other words, we can't live a life of worship without changing the way we perceive things.

Just because we should reason doesn't mean

that we don't need faith. Because of the gospel, we have hope that Christ will return for us. Since we don't know how and when Christ's return will occur, we need to have faith that it will happen. While waiting, we will worship God wholeheartedly by offering Him our everything.

The question is not how much we can give to God, since we can never really give enough to repay Him for all that He has done for us. Rather, the question is what are we withholding from God? Would we, for instance, be willing to sacrifice our career advancement or our leisure time and activities, or even put our lives on the line for the sake of the Gospel?

“
WHOLEHEARTED WORSHIP
REQUIRES BOTH
FAITH AND REASON
”

Wholehearted worship requires both faith and reason. Faith to believe that Christ will return for us, reason to think and perceive things as Christ would.



PONDER

What is a step of faith that God wants you to take? In what way is He challenging the way you reason and make decisions?

PRAY

As we embrace a lifestyle of worship, we may be transformed to become more like Christ. Friends and family will be drawn to us because they are curious about the God we serve.

WORSHIP

One Thing
Hillsong Worship
hopechurch.sg/day11

REVIVAL IN PERSEVERANCE

Persevere, the Fight Isn't Over

READ REVELATION 3:7-13

How high is your pain threshold? Do you flinch at the slightest discomfort? Or do you hardly bat an eyelid unless the pain is excruciating?

Everyone senses pain differently. But one thing we share in common – because we live in a fallen world tainted by sin, we will all experience suffering.

Sometimes suffering crashes upon us like a flood. Wave after wave, it shakes our boats and knocks us overboard. We fight hard to keep afloat but our limbs are losing strength. A tsunami of suffering had hit the Christians in Philadelphia. They were rejected by the Jews. They faced much pressure from a society where many worshipped pagan gods. Philadelphia was also prone to frequent earthquakes, one of which was particularly devastating in AD 17.

Even though the church in Philadelphia has little strength left, they stand firm. They have not compromised on their beliefs and are found to be faithful by Christ. However, their fight is not over. Christ encourages them to press on, to hold fast to their faith. He promises the victor's crown to overcomers who persevere to the end.

Our fight is not over. In the storms of life, we need to keep hanging onto Christ. When we find ourselves drowning in the torrents of suffering, God's promise of eternal glory is our lifebuoy. Our temporal troubles will pale in comparison to the future glory that we will receive after we have persevered (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

What about those of us who have a relatively easier life? We're comfortable, Singapore is peaceful, everything seems okay.

However, the peace may not last. If peace turns into persecution, would we still profess our faith, knowing that trouble would come? Or would we bow to pressure and compromise?

Before our world turns upside down, let's build our faith strong. We can do so by growing in our understanding of Jesus, by rooting ourselves in God's family, by finding answers to difficult questions about our faith.

Determine to persevere before trouble strikes. Anchor ourselves in the Word of God today.

Look forward to the glorious crown of victory. Christ is coming back soon. Hold on to your faith, so that no one will take your crown.



In the storms of life, we need to keep hanging onto Christ.

PONDER

God's promises are clear and many in the Bible. Why then do some believers still fail to persevere? What can you do today to build your faith strong?

PRAY

Christ's promise of the victor's crown may encourage the church to press on in difficult times.

WORSHIP

**Surrounded
(Fight My Battles)**

Michael W. Smith

hopechurch.sg/day12

REVIVAL IN PERSEVERANCE

Press On With Joy

READ JAMES 1:2-4

When you hear 'bad' news, what's your first reaction? "Oh no", "That sounds terrible", "#@%& (expletives out of anger or disbelief)" are common responses.

We may struggle to appreciate James' response to suffering even if we have read James 1:2-4 many times. In the opening of his letter to Jewish Christians, James encourages them to "consider it pure joy" when undergoing trials. To some, James' words may sound like a pathetic consolation to ease the pain. To others, James may come across as insensitive and apathetic, even crazy.

But James is not speaking from an ivory tower. As a leader of the Jerusalem church blasted by the flames of poverty and persecution by the Jews, James was right in the heat of trials. He died a martyr, probably around AD 60 during the Jewish uprising.

Still, we may find it difficult to understand what James is saying. Living in an affluent city, it is easy for us to associate happiness with success, strength and status. As such, we see failure, weakness and oppression as 'bad' news to be avoided at all costs.

YET JAMES IS
SAYING THAT SUCH
'BAD' NEWS CAN
ACTUALLY BE PART
OF GOD'S GOOD PLAN
TO REFINE OUR FAITH
AND TRAIN US IN
RIGHTEOUSNESS.

When our faith is tested, we'll have to decide – do we press on or give up? Do we continue to follow God, or do we walk out on Him? Every time we press on, we grow in Christ-like character. By the time we have persevered to the end, we will be blameless before God and steadfast in our loyalty to Him. This outcome, to James, is worth rejoicing.

God has a plan for our lives that is bigger than what many of us are striving for. While we are happy when we have plenty in life, what God truly desires for us is that we become more like His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 8:28-30).

If He has to use trials to mould us into the likeness of Christ, He will. Since trials will result in much good in our lives, we are encouraged to embrace them with joy.

Having reason to rejoice may not make it easier to go through hardship. But it provides assurance and hope. Pastor and author Timothy Keller once said, "While other worldviews lead us to sit in the midst of life's joys, foreseeing the coming sorrows, Christianity empowers its people to sit in the midst of this world's sorrows, tasting the coming joy."

After persevering through our trials in this life, we can look forward to the infinite joy of meeting Christ.

“
AS WE
PERSEVERE
THROUGH OUR
TRIALS, WE
LOOK FORWARD
TO THE INFINITE
JOY OF
MEETING CHRIST
”

PONDER

To the Christian, every difficulty is an opportunity to grow in perseverance and character. Are you facing a trial now? How can you press on with joy?

PRAY

We may persevere when trials and suffering come our way. It is a battle we cannot lose if we don't give up.

WORSHIP

Lion and the Lamb

Leeland

hopechurch.sg/day13

REVIVAL IN RELIANCE

Beware of the Pride that Binds

READ REVELATION 3:14-22

Singapore has come a long way, from a struggling nation forced into independence to one of the richest countries in the world to date.

Like Singapore, Laodicea was a prosperous financial centre. It had a booming wool-manufacturing industry and a bustling medical hub that exported its notable eye-salve. Laodicea was so rich, it refused imperial disaster relief after an earthquake in AD 60, relying on its own resources to rebuild itself.

Prosperity isn't wrong in itself. It's okay to have resources and enjoy them. But if we take pride in our success and riches, we will fall into arrogant self-sufficiency.

Sadly, the believers in Laodicea have been blinded by their pride in their wealth. They have mistaken their material prosperity to be a sign that all is well for them. They think that they have made it all on their own and don't need God anymore. Because they have rejected God, they are "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked."

Pride is a sneaky thing.

It starts innocently enough as a desire for affirmation. But if left unchecked, the desire grows and becomes an infection that blinds us to God's light.

Instead of fixing our eyes on God, we turn our gaze on ourselves. Soon, God becomes a blur – out of sight, out of mind. Instead of relying on God we take things into our own hands, sometimes with disastrous results.

If pride has sneaked into your heart, repent and come back to God. Christ will not tolerate your arrogance. Turn back before it's too late.

Christ hammers the Christians in Laodicea with hard truths because He loves them.

And just as He exhorts them to be earnest in repenting, He too is earnest for them. He can't wait to restore the closeness He once had with

His people. He continues to hold out the promise that those who return to Him will sit with Him on His throne.

If God is disciplining you today, know that it's because He loves you. He would rather bruise your ego and blunt your confidence than lose you to pride. He wants you to learn reliance so that you can walk in intimacy with Him from now till eternity.

“
HE WOULD RATHER BRUISE YOUR
EGO AND BLUNT YOUR CONFIDENCE
THAN LOSE YOU TO PRIDE
”

PONDER

Is there an achievement, a relationship or a talent you may have taken pride in? One way to know is to ask yourself, “If God wants to take it away from me, would I let Him?” Our reluctance to let go may be a sign of pride – we think we have earned it, instead of acknowledging that it is a gift from God. How can we help one another to guard against pride in our lives?

PRAY

The Lord may reveal any pride in us and help us to overcome it.

WORSHIP

I Came For You
Planetshakers

hopechurch.sg/day14

REVIVAL IN RELIANCE

Rely on the Giver of life

READ JAMES 4:13-15

THE REFUGEE CRISIS
IN THE WORLD TODAY IS
A HUMBLING EYE-OPENER
THAT LIFE COULD
TURN UPSIDE-DOWN
ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.

In 2016, the record of displaced persons worldwide hit a chilling high. War, persecution and other acts of violence rendered more than 65 million people homeless.

Many of the refugees were ordinary people like us – parents, business people, students, children and the elderly – who went through extraordinary experiences that changed their lives forever. A stray bomb, a sudden disaster, or a mistaken arrest snatched them out of their otherwise peaceful lives, thrusting them into chaos and uncertainty, even death.

How unexpected life – and death – can be. No matter how well we've done in life, no matter how detailed our plans are – all it takes is an unexpected tragedy, an unwelcome illness or an unforeseen twist to throw us

into confusion and anxiety. Certainly, we “do not even know what will happen tomorrow.” James was addressing the rich businessmen of his time, but the affluent church today ought to take his rebuke seriously too.

Life's uncertainty should humble us to realise that we have little control over our tomorrow. We learn not to rely on our smarts, wealth and experiences, but to rest in God who is transcendent (great beyond our limits) and personal at the same time.

God is the Creator of the universe. Yet He's not a distant deity who sits impassively from afar, controlling the cosmos while keeping His distance from us. God is intimately involved in our lives, steering everything for our good and for His glory. His coming to earth in the flesh of man 2,000 years ago is the ultimate expression of His intense desire to be with His creation.

Therefore, will we humbly seek first the will of the Lord when making important plans? Will we say, “If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that”? Are we willing to let God disrupt our plans so that He can show us something better? Or will we presumptuously go ahead and run our lives as if God does not exist?



God is watching over us, but He leads us according to His will, not ours.
Life is short – make the most of it by relying on the Giver of life itself for wisdom and guidance.

PONDER

How does knowing that God is transcendent and personal motivate you to rely on Him? How would relying on God change the way you make decisions? What new questions should you ask yourself whenever you make important choices?

PRAY

The Lord may show us how we can depend on Him more in our everyday life.

WORSHIP

So Will I
Hillsong Worship
hopechurch.sg/day15

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