

## **4Ws for Week 31, 2 Aug 2021 - 8 Aug 2021**

*(With COVID-19, this 4Ws is to be adapted for use at online meetings.)*

### **WELCOME (15 minutes)**

Choose one of the following icebreakers:

*(If you have first-time guests, begin with a round of introduction and warmly welcome the new visitors.)*

#### **1. Humble Beginnings**

If you are using Zoom, allow participants to change their background picture. If you are using any other software, do ask participants to find a way to share the picture.

- Recall when was the time you made the decision to follow Jesus. Either as a first-time believer or as a rededication.
- Find a picture of the place that best represents this scene.
- Change your virtual background and share with the rest of the group about this scene.

#### **2. The Road Ahead – God did it before, and He will do it again!**

Singapore's 56<sup>th</sup> National Day is coming! Although actual parade celebrations are delayed, discuss and share with the group

- What were some signs of God's faithfulness on Singapore in the last 56 years?
- What do you think is the road ahead for Singapore?

Even as you share, let a spirit of faith arise! Declare in faith, that in line with the NDP song this year, God has done it before — and He will do it again!

#### **Transition to Worship:**

*The God we serve is a good God! His Love is eternal and endures forever. As we enter into Singapore's 56<sup>th</sup> year and wrapping up the second year of fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, let us spend some time to remember God's faithfulness to our Nation. He has done it before, and He will do it again! Let us speak the language of faith to trust and believe that God is sovereign and in control. Let us raise our voices to praise and worship Him!*

### **WORSHIP (20 minutes)**

You may use the following worship songs:

- 1) Faithful – Chris Tomlin (D)
- 2) You Are Faithful (G)

Let us pause to wait upon the Lord for the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We would like to encourage everyone to exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit – if you have a word, a vision, tongues and interpretation of tongues – release it to minister to each other.

#### **Transition to Word:**

*Heavenly Father, Your name is great and worthy to be praised! Your faithfulness knows no end, and we are in awe of You. We sense Your presence as we seek Your face. May our hearts be softened and open as we receive Your word. Amen.*

### **WORD (45 minutes)**

### Memory verse of the week: Philemon 1:6 (NIV)

“I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ.”

**Sermon Title: A Hard Problem**

**By Senior Pastor Daniel Khong**

**on 31 Jul-1 Aug 2021**

### Scripture Passage: Hebrews 3:7-19 (NLT)

<sup>7</sup> That is why the Holy Spirit says, “Today when you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> don’t harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled, when they tested me in the wilderness. <sup>9</sup> There your ancestors tested and tried my patience, even though they saw my miracles for forty years. <sup>10</sup> So I was angry with them, and I said, ‘Their hearts always turn away from me. They refuse to do what I tell them.’ <sup>11</sup> So in my anger I took an oath: ‘They will never enter my place of rest.’”

<sup>12</sup> Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. <sup>13</sup> You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. <sup>14</sup> For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. <sup>15</sup> Remember what it says: “Today when you hear his voice, don’t harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled.”

<sup>16</sup> And who was it who rebelled against God, even though they heard his voice? Wasn’t it the people Moses led out of Egypt? <sup>17</sup> And who made God angry for forty years? Wasn’t it the people who sinned, whose corpses lay in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup> And to whom was God speaking when he took an oath that they would never enter his rest? Wasn’t it the people who disobeyed him? <sup>19</sup> So we see that because of their unbelief they were not able to enter his rest.

### Introduction

One of the biggest problems that we face is the hardening of our hearts. A hardened heart results in us being unable to be sensitive to what God is speaking to us as well as sense what He wants to do through us.

If we want to be transformed by God, we need to deal with the issue of the hardness of our hearts. In order for us to learn how to deal with the hardness of our hearts, we need to be aware as to how or why our hearts become hardened.

Our hearts become hardened due to:

1. Stagnation – What are you doing in life that challenges your faith?
2. Self-Absorption – We need to surrender and lay down our desires.
3. Suffering – We need to be willing to trust again.

### Discovery and Understanding Questions:

**Q1. I constantly serve in church and attend church and cell. I also do my quiet time most of the time as well as occasionally read the Bible and Pray. Why do I still feel lost and stagnant?**

**A1.** Spiritual stagnation is described as a state where our spirits are inactive, and we do not feel like we are growing in our faith. We might believe in God, but in reality our hearts might be in a state of unbelief to the things of God and our faith is weak.

### Hebrews 3:12 (NLT)

<sup>12</sup> Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God.

### Hebrews 3:19 (NLT)

<sup>19</sup> So we see that because of their unbelief they were not able to enter his rest.

### Hebrews 11:6 (NIVUK)

<sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please God...

A state of unbelief pushes us away from taking the step of courage or faith to do the things that God has called us to do. It prevents us from daring to go beyond and do things that we have never done before. We need to exercise the faith that we have in order to prevent our hearts from stagnating.

Are we simply contented to exist as Christians in name? Or will we go out there to live out our faith? If we want to break out of our spiritual stagnation, we need to grow and mature in God by living out His word.

### **Q2. How can people who have experienced the reality of God in their lives still harden their hearts and rebel against God?**

**A2.** The Israelites were God's chosen people and His treasured possession. God saved and delivered them; He provided for them. And YET they still grumbled against God despite all that He has done. This goes to show that regardless of how much one experiences God, there is still the possibility that one's heart can still be hardened and turn away from Him.

### Hebrews 3:7-9 (NLT)

<sup>7</sup> That is why the Holy Spirit says, "Today when you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled, when they tested me in the wilderness. <sup>9</sup> There your ancestors tested and tried my patience, even though they saw my miracles for forty years.

### Exodus 16:2-3 (NIVUK)

<sup>2</sup> In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. <sup>3</sup> The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat round pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.'

### Numbers 14:11 (NLT)

<sup>11</sup> And the Lord said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? Will they never believe me even after all the miraculous signs I have done among them?"

As you can see, the Israelites were grumbling despite all that God has done for them. The reason for that was because they became so preoccupied with what they wanted and desired and started focusing on their own selves rather than on God and his provisions. This resulted in them hardening their hearts and not being able to submit to His ways.

Do you find yourself having difficulty obeying the voice of God? Or do you feel that you have reached a stage where encountering God is but a memory and not a regular pursuit? It is easy to

point fingers at the Israelites and think about how ungrateful they were. Let us examine our own lives to consider the condition of our own hearts.

### **Application Questions**

Break into smaller groups, share, pray and minister to one another.

**Q1. How is your walk with God? How have you been growing spiritually and in your faith?**

**Q2. When the storms of life hit, do you find yourself getting so caught up with what's happening to you rather than asking God what is He showing you through that journey? What is your greatest struggle with living a life of surrender?**

**Q3. When was the last time you had a personal encounter with God? Is your Christian walk based upon borrowed experiences or fresh and new encounters?**

### **Transition to Works:**

*Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for leading us through the seasons. Despite the hardness of our hearts and our pride, thank You for always reaching out to us. Just as You have given all of Yourself to us, we too will lay down our lives to step out in faith to do Your will. Keep us humble and submissive to Your will.*

### **WORKS (15 minutes)**

#### **1. Focus on CG Outreach**

The focus of CG meetings is *edification, equipping* and *evangelism*. In each CG meeting, spend some time to encourage your members to do personal outreach right where they are. Give some time each week during the WORKS portion for them to share their outreach efforts.

Plan regular (monthly or quarterly CG outreach, either as a whole CG or in separate groups) into your CG roster, using the existing COVID-19 guidelines to plan your activities/programmes.

The next XFXZ will be in September. Use the CG time to prepare your members and get their buy-in to conducting a XFXZ cell the next round.

#### **2. Prayer over the COVID-19 situation**

Consecrate some time each CG meeting to be praying for the situation; and to remain connected with one another.

#### **3. Consolidation of Visitors/New Converts from your outreach**

Assimilate them! Let them experience a sense of belonging in our faith community! Connect with them via phone calls; introduce them to cell members via WhatsApp and invite them to join in our livestream services and your online cell group meetings.

#### **4. Continue to Connect**

##### **a) With cell group members**

1. Hold your cell members accountable to watch the Livestream Service.
2. Stay connected with members via:
  - a. Synchronize prayer times

- b. Share devotional thoughts through WhatsApp. Encourage your members to share their Quiet Time Reflections in your cell group chat.
  - c. Create a cell group hashtag - Post uplifting messages, sermon videos and notes, or even bookmark pretty verse images by leaving these in your cell group hashtag as a comment.
  - d. Video call each other
3. Continue with your cell group meetings online. Ensure that none of your members fall through the cracks. Continue to monitor the attendance of your online meetings.

**b) With Potential BESTs / Pre-Believers**

1. Evangelism need not take a back seat with livestreaming. Invite pre-believing friends/Bests/3x3 contacts (depending on their comfort level) to join you in watching our livestream service. Connect online with them and spur other members to do so.
2. When the salvation altar call is made during livestreaming, a Response Form link will be screened over the livestream for those who have responded or want to respond, to fill in. The livestream links are:
  - For English -- [www.fcbc.org.sg/connectwithus](http://www.fcbc.org.sg/connectwithus)
  - For Chinese -- [www.fcbc.org.sg/zh/connectwithus](http://www.fcbc.org.sg/zh/connectwithus)

**Get your pre-believing contacts to fill up the Response Form or you can help them fill it up.**

When filling up the Form, try to provide as much of the information needed as possible, and do so immediately after the livestream service.

**5. 3x3 Prayer**

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the strongholds that bind the people in captivity. Ask Him to set up divine appointments for you to minister His power over them (words of knowledge, healing, helps, etc.). Pray for one another to have boldness, courage and obedience to follow through.

**6. Announcements**

- All English, Chinese and Hokkien Services will be held online. For more information, please visit [fcbc.org.sg/covid-19](http://fcbc.org.sg/covid-19)
- English, Chinese, and Hokkien Services will continue to be streamed at their regular service timings on our [YouTube channel](#)
- In-person cell meetings and gatherings will be suspended.
- Our advisories on [weddings](#) and [funerals](#) have been updated in our website.

For more announcements, please visit [www.fcbc.org.sg/announcements](http://www.fcbc.org.sg/announcements) or our social media platforms – Facebook and Instagram@fbcscg.