Connect Study—Flourish

How good was last Sunday where we had the extended time of worship. It’s so important for us to come together to worship our God because it cultivates our heart and allows us to be captivated by His love. I want to encourage everyone who’s watching this to come early on Sunday, get your hearts ready to worship God.

The previous weekend during our retreat, Ps Ken Dew spoke here in ICC on the three prerequisites for flourishing. Before we go into the three points let’s take out our Bible or Bible apps and read Psalms 1:1-3 together.

Sometimes we see the ungodly in this world being so successful and we question why. But as Christians we don’t measure success with the standards of this world, it’s not about the material things, it’s about knowing Jesus Christ and allowing His will to work in and through us. God is more interested on who we become.

Ps. Ken gave us 3 prerequisites:

1. Meditate on God’s Word day and night
   * More and more people in this world do not know the Word of God.
   * Ps. Jono mentioned about a quiz show where a contestant couldn’t give an answer when asked “Who was the father of Jesus Christ”.
   * How to meditate on God’s Word? Journal everyday. Carry your Bible with you and start reading.
2. Seek godly accountability
   * Psa 92 says that those who are planted in the house of God will flourish.
   * You see we can be in a church but still carry an independent spirit. Just wanting to do our own thing.
   * Ps. Jono talked about Pot Plants where we move from church to church to church but you know what. God puts us in a family to grow.
   * We need to be planted in a church and have godly accountable.
   * Have you been planted here in ICC?
3. Take responsibility for your own choices
   * God gives us the freedom to choose but unfortunately, we are not free from the consequences of those choices.
   * You can choose to reject God, choose to sin, but you have to bear the consequences.

In the camp, one of the most impactful messages shared by Ps. Josh was on turbulence. God often presents a strife that strains our comfort. The three young men Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down to the statue of King Nebuchadnezzar, as a consequence, they were thrown in the fiery furnace. Today, similarly many have been persecuted for their faith but yet strangely the church thrives in those circumstances. Sometimes the greatest growth comes in stormy seasons. Take for instance Iran, tens of thousands of people are being persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ but tens of thousands of people are receiving Jesus Christ as their Lord and saviour on a weekly basis. In China, where they tried to persecute Christians, well now they are one of the biggest missionary sending nations.

The Bible says count it all joy when you face trials of this kind. We don’t rejoice because of those trials but we can rejoice in the midst of those trials. Like those 3 boys that were thrown in the fiery furnace, God did not rescue them out of the furnace but He was in the midst of them. It’s in the midst of fire, in the midst of trials that God is with us.

One of the greatest fear of flying is caused by turbulence. Turbulence happens when there’s a change in the atmosphere, air pressures, etc. When you’re flying and there’s turbulence it is a scary thing. You begin surrendering things, repenting your sins.

When the plane begins to drop from 35,000 feet to 10,000, most people’s reactions would go from calm to panic to prayer and repentance. OH God Oh God, if you get me out of this I will serve you. But when the pilot gains control and pulls the plane back up to cruising mode, you forget all the promises you made. There are lessons that can only be learned at 10,000 feet. When we are going through things remember this, maybe there are things that we need to learn and surrender before God.

But you don’t have to always wait for turbulence to come. Learn to live a lifestyle of prayer, live a righteous life. Don’t put your faith in anything else, not in your spouse, not in your children, not even in your doctors. Let Jesus Christ be your anchor point. Just like flying, you need to be strapped in during a turbulence.

Also the wings of the plane are also flexible to be withstand the turbulence. If not they could snap off.

God also allows trials to strengthen us. The Biosphere2 is a lab that is owned by University of Arizona. It is built with the intention to stimulate the perfect condition for plants to grow. There are several zones in that biospheres. Everything grew perfectly as they thought they would but what baffled the scientists were that the trees would grow to certain height then they would topple. The reason was the lack of wind. Without the resistance, the trees were not strong. Wind is necessary for roots to grow, the movements create space between the roots and the soil. Scientists have found that the little bit of space created by the movement is essential for the growth of the tree because it causes the roots to grow even deeper, trying to get more from the soil.

Similarly, when we apply it to our lives there are storms and challenges that come, we don’t thank God for it but we can praise God in the midst of it. As a result we begin to grow deeper in God.

Let’s read Ephesians 3:16-19 together.

No matter what you are going through now know that God sees everything. Let Christ make His home in you and continue to grow in the midst of trials. Don’t give up and in time you will begin to flourish.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you see yourself as planted in ICC? Why?

2. What is your anchor point in life – is it family, self, friends or God?

3. Our roots grow deeper when we go through turbulence.

* Share your experience to encourage others or
* If you are going through one right now do you want to share with the group and we can pray together.

\*End by praying for people who are going through turbulence.