



a Bible-Centred Community for 21st Century Singapore

The pursuit of holiness in a pandemic

(by Pastor Christopher Chia)

Dear ARPC brothers & sisters, how are you? How are you relating to God?

A sister in Christ, who works in healthcare, manages to muster enough strength and scrap precious time to join a Zoom session for Bible study. She is teary as she shares about the pressure and her tiredness from working in a hospital.

Likewise, another of our selfless medical fraternity, shares her great temptation to join the chorus of grumbling on social media. Her husband encourages her to look to God and look for things to be thankful for, instead of things to grouse about. His gentle encouragement rescues her from the echo chamber of complaints.

This is the tip of the iceberg of the impact of this lumbering pandemic on all walks and all ages, now experienced in the rolling on of our Stabilisation Phase for another month.

All of which leads us to ask a more poignant question as Christians. It is not simply "How are you?" but "how Godly are we in this pandemic?" A more searching question is: "What difference does faith in Jesus make in both the routine and crises of life?" What does it mean for us to be God's holy people and kingdom of priests, pointing others out of a pandemic of fear and negativity?

Exodus records Israel's "deep end" introduction to Yahweh as Holy God. All the detailed laws (Exodus 19-23) and instructions for The Tabernacle (Exodus 25-30) are to shape his people to live in awe of God's exacting holiness.

They fail miserably but God's holiness is masterfully and finally fulfilled in Jesus our Lord. We learnt from 1 Peter 1:13-20 that Jesus is our foundation and motivation for distinctive holiness in small and big ways.

1. Holiness, identity, family and sexuality

We praise God for our topical sermon series on "**Changing World, Unchanging God**". This pandemic must not distract us from our unchanging spiritual battles as singles, marrieds and families. May we spur

one another on to holiness in our hearts and homes. This series culminated with our Children's Church Teachers Retreat last weekend. We pray our parents, teachers and children can partner more deeply and grow step by step in identity holiness.

2. Holiness & Exams

We praise God for helping our 80+ Primary 6 students of ARPC to complete their PSLE safely under very trying circumstances. Sitting for major national exams are trying enough in normal times let alone in a pandemic.

Let us pray for our "O levels" and "A levels" students as they look to Jesus' Lordship in their studies. May God's Spirit and Word keep our students and parents spiritually, mentally and emotionally healthy as we abide in Jesus' love.

3. Holiness & stewardship of our "free" time

For others, exams are over and they may be struggling with too much free time as school holidays beckon! Here, we have to be alerted that idleness is the Devil's destructive workshop. May parents and children pray and agree on what are helpful or unhelpful virtual inputs and friendships.

In that light, SMIX.asia is one of a small handful of home-grown and Christian-based streaming services. It has a library of God-honoring entertainment programmes, including one we can watch now as we study Exodus (Patterns of Evidence - The Exodus).

It's offering ARPC a 1-month free trial for their streaming service. You can get the instructions on how to sign up for the free trial at arpc.sg/signupsmix.

Let us help one another watch what we watch with our eyes because we are one another's keeper. Let us spur one another to holiness for God's glory. May Jesus' holiness flow into us and overflow through us for God's glory.

"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen."
1 Peter 5:10-11

For Christ our Good Lord,
Pastor Christopher Chia