

CONSECRATE 21

...an introduction

We live in a country well-known for its variety of cuisines. Throngs of people from all over the world have found their way into Malaysia for this reason, and it seems as if all that has been presented on television and on the Internet worldwide is how delicious our food is.

As Penangites, we take pride in this. I have heard on different occasions the playful bickering between Penangites, KL-ites and Singaporeans about which place has the better food. Penang, as we know it, is the food capital of Malaysia. I have even heard of this joke once that Penangites only take one meal a day, and that one meal lasts for 24 hours. Oh, yes, we take our food seriously.

This reminded me, though, of a Malaysian preacher, who, in his most comical Malaysian accent, once said, "What? As if Malaysia got nothing better to see than food!"

He was irate, and it was understandable why. Was this nation not birthed to host the presence of God, drawing the spiritually hungry and thirsty from nations surrounding it to its fountains? Why so much emphasis on physical food while many are so deprived from spiritual fulfillment?

China, a nation behind the iron curtain of Communism is experiencing one of the mightiest waves of revival the world has ever known. It's the land where signs and wonders thrive, and where the growth of Christianity skyrocketed within the last ten years. The leaders of the underground Church dream this dream, that one day, 100% of the population in China will become Christians. Foreign missionaries who berate this idea as nothing but wishful thinking would be rebuked by the Chinese leaders for their lack of faith.

Yet, daily, they pay the price of revival. Perhaps, more genuine, heartfelt, anointed songs of worship have been sung in prisons and labour camps than in other places. It would be inaccurate to say that their comforts were *snatched* away from them. Rather, the Chinese Church herself *released* her rights for comfort so that loving Jesus and others won't be too difficult for them in the season of persecution.

To heed a prophetic word is wise, but to prepare for the day of its fulfillment is wiser. The Malaysian church had received word after word concerning the coming revival, but it is not without a warning: that the wave of revival will usher in our cousins back to Christ, but the Church must prepare herself for their homecoming. We do not wish for persecution, but blessed are those who endure it!

This year, Consecrate21 will focus on that: voluntary release of *wants*. More than just depriving ourselves of good food and other comforts, we take time to learn, as a House, what it really looks like to live as the persecuted ones - with mere daily necessities. As we do so, I believe that we will learn that wants are not an evil thing after all, but a godly one when we find that Christ Jesus is the fulfillment of all that our hearts desire. When a plate of *char koay teow*, three hours of Facebook every night, and a nice, hot cup of coffee in the morning are removed from us, we will begin to realize that He is all that we want, with or without external comfort.

In light of all that, we will also be meditating on the words of Jesus to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor in the book of Revelation. The closer we are to the coming of the Lord, the more relevant it is to us. This passage alone is hefty in its content, but to sum up the meaning, it is to *prepare*. As we go deep in studying this passage, I believe that hearts will be stirred and convicted, and that the end result of that would be a people who will not just hear the word in vain, but also faithfully obey it.

Daily meetings are an integral - if not - a non-negotiable part of the Consecrate21 DNA. In line with the spirit of Acts 2:46-47, we want our devotion to go beyond the secret place and overflow into the Body of Christ. This year, blanketed by the theme of *preparing for persecution*, we take the meaning of *fellowship* a notch higher: giving ourselves in love to one another as how Christ gave his life to many, even His enemies. What would it look like for us to sacrifice our time and energy to meet daily for three weeks to intentionally love others who are praying and fasting with us? It's going to be a journey of love that goes beyond emotional fancies. It will be willful and deliberate.

Oh, how it moves the heart of God to see a band of lovers in Malaysia willingly choose Him over all the comforts that the world could give! Like Daniel and his friends who chose not to savor the kingly delicacies of Babylon, may our countenance shine beautifully among the people around us. May the nations know that Christ lives in us, and be drawn to the light that we carry! May these twenty-one days of voluntary wilderness prepare us to walk as mighty revivalists for His sake!

And finally, may God honor your act of voluntary weakness by supplying His abundant strength as you commit these three weeks to seek His face.

With much love in Christ,

Carolyn R. Boin

On behalf of the Consecrate21 Team - Joyce Lam, Stephanie James, and Jane Lee.

On fasting

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

- 2 Chronicles 7:14.

WHY DO WE FAST?

- Jesus fasted 40 days and reminded His followers to fast - "... when you fast ..." (Matthew 6:16), not if you fast. **Fasting and praying are biblical disciplines that are not optional.**
- Fasting is a Biblical way to truly **humble yourself in the sight of God** (Psalm 35:13; Ezra 8:21)

HOW DO WE FAST?

Fasting means **purposely putting away that which you are fasting, and filling up the new time slot with prayer and communion with God** (they always go together - otherwise it's just dieting). Whatever you have chosen to fast, remember to intentionally stop and take time to dialogue with the Lord through personal prayer (or intercession based in our daily prayer focuses), and allow Him to speak to you.

WHAT DO WE FAST?

This year, we are going to be intentional on **fasting in preparation of persecution that is sure to come**. In simple terms, we are fasting that which we want but do not need. This is in light of the **lifestyle of those persecuted who are surviving on the basic necessities** only. Examples of wants include electronic games, movies, social media, fast food, dessert, etc.

THE CHALLENGE

- Take time to consider your daily/weekly routine. How many items in there that are just wants and not needs? **Consider fasting at least 2 items and filling those slots with prayer.** This will help strengthen and prepare us for the difficult season ahead.
- At the same time, fasting food will also prepare the body and allow for spiritual intimacy to increase. **Do consider a food fast (see chart on Types of Fast) to go along with #1**

SEVEN TYPES OF FASTING

1. Experience the Power of God in ministry

- There is a dimension of power that is only released through regular prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:21)
- Connection between fasting and preaching with authority

2. Fulfilment of God's promise to a Geographic Region

- Nehemiah fasted and prayed to release Israel from captivity (Nehemiah 1:4); Cornelius fasted and prayed for his household (Acts 10:30)
- He who sows and he who reaps will rejoice together (John 4:36) The labour of Anna, Simeon, John the Baptist and Jesus paved the way for the revival at Pentecost

3. Fasting to Stop a Crisis

- Hannah asking God for Samuel through prayer and fasting (1 Samuel 1:7)
- God reversed Israel's desperate situation after they turned to Him in corporate prayer and fasting (Joel 2:12)
- Nineveh repented with fasting (Jonah 3:3-9)

4. Prophetic Revelation of the End Times

- Daniel fasted and prayed, and Gabriel came to him to reveal end time plans (Daniel 9:3, 21-23; 10:3, 12)
- Angels told Daniel that because he had set his heart to understand and to humble himself before God, his words were heard, and the angel was sent because of his prayers.

5. For Protection

- Ezra proclaimed a fast for protection on the journey from Babylon to Israel
- Esther called Jews in Persia to fast with her as she approaches the king (Esther 4:16)

6. For Direction

- The New Testament church fasted and prayed for direction in their ministry before selecting elders (Acts 14:21)
- Paul, after being blinded, fasted for direction (Acts 9:9)

7. Grow in Intimacy with Jesus (Bridegroom Fast)

- Motivated by our desire for Jesus, rather than desire for power in ministry
- Mourning over sin that hinders our relationship with Him - out of our desire to be one with God
- Mourning over His absence and longing for His return

On prayer

"Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at his disposition, and listening to his voice in the depth of our hearts."

- Mother Teresa.

WHY SHOULD WE HAVE PERSONAL PRAYER TIMES?

- **Prayer is personal communication with God.** Even though our Father already knows of what we need of before we ask of Him, He still invites us to "Ask, and it shall be given," (Matthew 7:7). However, in James, it says that our prayers do not get answered because we do not ask according to His will (James 4:3). Therefore, we should make sure that we pray prayers that are in accordance to His will, and that only then can we see the answers to what we are praying for.
- Jesus had set the example for us. He made it a priority to talk to His Father before attending to the needs of the people. **His victorious life on earth was the fruit of His life of prayer.** The sort of life He lived would have been impossible without communion with His Father.
- In John 15:7, Jesus said, "Abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you". **When we abide in Him, we receive the revelation of His word.** Therefore, it becomes our privilege to ask of Him in prayer based on what He reveals to us.

WHY SHOULD WE PRAY CORPORATELY?

- Matthew 18:19-20 says, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them." **Jesus promises that He is present when a group of people seek His face in prayer together.**
- **Corporate prayer is the model of the early church** as it says in Acts 2:42.
- **God promises national healing for corporate prayer** (2 Chronicles 7:14), just like in the days of Jonah where the wrath of God was turned away because the people of Nineveh gathered to pray and repent (Jonah 3:1-10).

WHY SHOULD WE PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH?

- Hebrews 13:3 says, "Remember the prisoners as if chained with them - those who are mistreated - since you yourselves are in the body also." **We are exhorted to unite our hearts with the persecuted church in prayer.**
- This is model of the early church when Peter was thrown into prison, the believers gathered and prayed fervently for him in Acts 12 and he was miraculously released from prison! **Miracles can happen as such, but it matters a lot that the we ask for it.**
- **God can use even the persecuted ones in prison to reach out their enemies with the Gospel.** We can see an example of this in Acts 16:25-34 where the Philippians jailer was saved after an encounter with the power of God in prison.

THE CHALLENGE

- The business of life can easily steal our precious times of prayer. **Why not set aside specific times within the day to pray and have another person keep you accountable on it?**
- Consider **saying no to hanging out with people during these three weeks** so that you have **more time to pray.**
- **When someone comes into your mind, why not say a prayer for them?** Who knows, God may reveal a word or a picture to encourage him or her, and you can then bless that person with a prophetic word!

On feasting on the Word

"Fasting is a landing strip for revelation."

- Lou Engle.

WHY STUDYING THE WORD IS NECESSARY

- **When we behold the word, we are actually beholding Jesus**, as it says in John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The knowledge of Christ does not contradict the revealed, written word.
- **Our key to finishing well in life is by daily meditation of truth and willful obedience to the Word of God** as it says in Joshua 1:8, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from Your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to what is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."
- **The sincere, genuine and humble act of studying of the word of God leads to reverence in God.** Psalm 119:38 says, "Establish Your word to Your servant, Who is devoted to fearing You."

PRAYER AND FASTING FOR REVELATION

The act of fasting and prayer - laying aside all earthly pleasures and distractions for the things of God - tenderizes our hearts, and our capacity to receive from the Holy Spirit increases. As our hearts get tenderized, the seed of the Word of God finds good ground to take root in, and thus, our Bible study times not only becomes an intellectual study time, but a time of beholding God as He reveals Himself to us as we meditate on His word. We become what we behold. Our hearts get transformed in our Bible study times.

WHY STUDY THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES?

The general message of Revelation 2-3 is urgency and the call to stand faithful in the end times. **Although these words were given specifically to the Churches in Asia Minor, it is relevant to us, especially at this hour when we know that Jesus Christ is coming back soon.** As His people, we need to be prepared for His coming and one of the ways to do so is by diligently heeding the word of Jesus to His churches - the warnings, encouragements and word of hope found in this passage. Psalm 119:11 says, "I have stored up Your word in my heart that I may not sin against You." Standing as faithful ones and daily choosing to live holy has a lot to do with our knowing, understanding and obeying the Word of God.

THE CHALLENGE

- Sometimes, as we fast, we permit ourselves to read other books like novels and newspapers in order to cope with doing a prolonged media fast. **Why not take the challenge of reading nothing else but the Bible for these 21 days?**
- **Before coming in for our Lectio Divina times, why not take time to do your own study of Revelation 2-3?** There are a lot of methods you can use, for instance, Pray-Reading the Scripture, Inductive Bible Study, etc. If time doesn't allow you to do so, play an audio version of Revelation 2-3 and listen to it while you are driving or in your homes, doing housework, while constantly praying, "God reveal Truth to me. Wash me with Your Word. Your Word is Truth."

"HOW DO I STUDY THE WORD?"

Prayer Reading

PRAYER READING THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES

1. The purpose of this tool is to help us communicate with God while reading the Bible.
2. Two ways:-
 - Asking God to help us **believe** in the truth
 - Asking God to help us **obey** the truth
3. Let's draw from this example of prayer-reading through Psalm 27:4, "One thing have I desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord And to inquire in His temple." After thanking God for His word, we, then, can pray like this:-
 - Praying for **belief**: "God, You are my heart's true desire. Help me to understand that You are the only One that will satisfy my deepest longing, and that You will encounter me when I seek You with all of my heart."
 - Praying for **obedience**: "God, I pray that You will keep my heart focused on You as the reason behind why I am called to serve You in Your house, therefore let me be diligent in seeking Your face. Keep me jealous and zealous for my personal time with You even through the business of the day."
 - Then, allow the Lord to speak to you, and **journal** your thoughts and the revelation that You receive as He opens up your heart to hear from Him. As you revisit your journal entries, ask Him to take you deeper in the revelation of that certain passage or verse in Scripture as you continue prayer-reading through it.

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina, a Latin term, means "divine reading" and describes a way of reading the Scriptures whereby we gradually let go of our own agenda and open ourselves to what God wants to say to us.



- 1 Find a place of stillness before God, clearing your mind of distractions.
- 2 Read the passage, slowly. Listen for pieces that catch your attention. Then, meditate upon what you have heard. **What stands out?** Write it down.
- 3 Read the passage again. **What is the theme for the passage? What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?** Write it down.
- 4 Read the passage a final time. Meditate on it. Is there something He wants you to do with this passage? Is there **something He is calling you to?** Journal as you dialogue with the Holy Spirit.
- 5 Pray and thank God for what He has shared with you. **Come back to the passage** a few more times over the coming days and weeks.



CONSECRATE 21

Daily Calendar (21 February - 12 March 2016)

CONSECRATE21 2016 DAILY CALENDAR (21 FEBRUARY - 12 MARCH)

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
21 Teaching: Overview of the Seven Churches of Revelation (2pm - 3pm)	22 Lectio Divina 1: The Church in Ephesus (8pm - 9pm)	23 Prayer Room (3pm - 10pm)	24 Lectio Divina 2: The Church in Smyrna (8pm - 9pm)	25 Prayer Room (7pm - 10pm)	26 Prayer Room (8pm - 12am)	27 Prayer Room (3pm - 4:30pm)
28 Lectio Divina 3: The Church in Pergamum (2pm - 3pm)	29 Lectio Divina 4: The Church in Thyatira (8pm - 9pm)	1 Prayer Room (3pm - 10pm)	2 Lectio Divina 5: The Church in Sardis (8pm - 9pm)	3 Prayer Room (7pm - 10pm)	4 Prayer Room (8pm - 12am)	5 Prayer Room (3pm - 4:30pm)
6 Lectio Divina 6: The Church in Philadelphia (2pm - 3pm)	7 Lectio Divina 7: The Church in Laodicea (8pm - 9pm)	8 Prayer Room (3pm - 10pm)	9 Family Room (8pm - 9pm)	10 Prayer Room (7pm - 10pm)	11 Prayer Room (8pm - 12am)	12 Break Fast and Thanksgiving (7:00pm onwards)

Notes

1. Participants are encouraged to spend at least one hour in the Prayer Room of PenHOP during the Prayer Room days.
2. *Family Room* is a night when we will come together as a community to spur one another in the second part of the Great Commandment: love your neighbour as yourself. More details to follow.
3. The venue for *Break Fast and Thanksgiving* will be informed at a later time.