

JOURNAL





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MESSAGE FROM REV ANTHONY LEE

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

As you may well be aware by now, our church theme for 2021 is “Home with a Heart.” These few simple words capture the essence of where our church is poised to head towards in 2021 and beyond.

However, while God has anointed and appointed me to lead this church and this family, this home is also to be shaped by you. What does “home with a heart” mean for you? How can you make AMKMC a “home with a heart”?

We have created the “Home With A Heart” series in hopes that it will help you to further your understanding in what God is calling us to do, and how we are able to respond to Him in a pragmatic manner.

I pray that as we embark on this journey of discovery, that the Lord will reveal His Presence and Will to us. May we be filled with the Holy Spirit and be ready to act in response to His Call.

If you have been blessed by this series or prompted by the Holy Spirit in any way, I encourage you to send your testimony to hwah@amkmc.org.sg. No testimony is too small or insignificant; in fact, sharing your testimony helps us to recall God’s faithfulness in our lives and brings us all closer to Him.

May God be with us as we build Him a Home with a Heart.

Blessings in Christ,
Rev. Anthony Lee



INTRODUCTION

When the Church set her vision “To be a Methodist Family after God’s Heart” more than a decade ago, God was leading us to be a family that pursues what is in His heart. Part of our rich Methodist family heritage is the pursuit of “Scriptural Holiness”, expressed through personal and social holiness.

Our Church theme for 2020 and 2021 “Home With A Heart” focuses on this vision by expressing the two great commandments in Matthew 22: 37-38, “Jesus said ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind’. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’”.

This 6-week campaign seeks to explore and offer an in-depth explanation of the “Home with a Heart” theme. It also aims to offer practical applications to guide you in your walk with God as you go about your daily lives.

A PERSONAL INVITATION TO CHRIST

“Home” is an enjoyable, happy place where a person can live, laugh, and learn. It is somewhere where one feels loved, respected, and cared for. “Home” also provides security, control, belonging, identity, and privacy - among other things. Most of all, it is a place that provides us with a centring.

Receiving others, or ‘hospitality’, is a Christian value (Matthew 25:35–40). The act of being hospitable is welcoming people into our lives, meeting their needs, and reaching out even to strangers, enemies, and even to people who are hostile (Hebrews 13:2). Biblical hospitality adds that we are to honour and obey God by serving those around us with joy, and where we provide love, affection, and shelter to others (Hebrews 13:16).

Jesus taught and exemplified hospitality. He ate with sinners (Matthew 9:10); He received children gladly (Matthew 19:14); He taught us to invite the lowly to parties and to welcome strangers (Luke 14:13). He even prepared breakfast for His wayward disciples, including Peter who had betrayed Him (John 21:12). As a show of hospitality, Jesus even came out to bring us into His home so that we may enjoy the indescribable privileges of eternal life at His great sacrifice and cost (Mark 10:45).

Being a real Christian starts not only from the church, but should extend to our real, everyday lives at home. If we want a friend to visit our home, we extend an invitation to them. Likewise, if we want Jesus to be our Lord and Saviour, we must personally invite Him into our lives and into our homes by creating a welcoming and hospitable environment for Him to reside in.

1. PRAY OFTEN

When we invite a friend to our home, we extend hospitality to them rather than ignore them. Similarly, when we invite Christ into our home,

we must take time to pray and talk to Him. Even if we are unable to sit down for a marathon prayer session, we can still say short prayers throughout the day while going about our daily chores and responsibilities. Instead of merely talking to ourselves, we can share about our day with God.

2. WORSHIP GOD THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Worship is not just about what we receive, but what we give in response to what we have received. Romans 12:1 reminds us that true worship bears a very high cost – “a living and holy sacrifice” – and that cost is the sacrifice of our self. By worshipping God all day and every day we are letting God take authority over us. Here are some ways we can weave worship into the various aspects of our lives:

- Playing worship music in the background as we go about our day
- Placing scripture cards around the home, and meditating on them all day long
- Giving thanks before meals and at bedtime
- Sharing with family members about how wonderful God is, and how He has helped each of you

3. ENCOURAGE CHRIST-LIKE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS FROM THE HOME

By allowing sin to reign in our hearts and in our homes, we crowd out Christ and leave no room for Him to flourish. To have a home that truly honours God, we have to encourage Christ-like behaviours and attitudes, and eliminate sinful attitudes and behaviours. Christ-like attitudes are encapsulated in the Fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22–23 & the qualities of love found in 1 Cor 13:4–8a.

Deciding to follow God has to be a daily conscious decision and must encompass every sphere of our lives (i.e. we are not just Christians when we come to church). By inviting God into our homes and heart, we are committing our entire life to Him – such that every single aspect of our being is subject to Him as our Lord and Master.



REVELATION 3:20

HERE I AM! I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK. IF ANYONE HEARS MY VOICE AND OPENS THE DOOR, I WILL COME IN AND EAT WITH THAT PERSON, AND THEY WITH ME.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Have you invited Jesus into your heart?
2. What are some things you have done to make your home welcoming to Jesus?
3. What else can you do to make space for God to enter your personal life?

NOTES

THE MEASURE OF A PERSON

In medical terms, the heart is a muscular organ that transports blood to all parts of the human body through its circulatory system of various blood vessels. This provides the oxygen and nutrients needed to sustain life. A healthy heart is one that pumps the right amount of blood at the right rate so that the human body can function as God intended. Suffice to say, the human heart is probably one of the most important organs that God has placed in our bodies.

The Hebrew word for “heart” or “**לב**” (pronounced as “lev”) in the Old Testament, however, is specified as the inner part of a person, ie. one’s inclination and personal will. It also refers to a person’s moral character and emotions. The heart was thought to be the “control centre” or “ruling centre” from which all our decisions are made. It is the centre of our thinking and reason, as well as our emotions. In short, the heart is the core of who we are as a person (Matthew 15:18–20).

As it is the centre of the body and represents physical vitality, it is most essential for a human heart to be healthy. On the other hand, as the centre of one’s inner being – our soul – it is imperative for our spiritual heart to be ‘healthy’ since it serves as the “fountain” of moral attitudes and actions. Our spiritual heart controls our actions, which determine our habits, and which in turn determines our character (Philippians 4:8).

How does the Lord measure the “worth” of a person then? He does it not by putting a measuring tape around our head, but around our heart (1 Samuel 16:7; Proverbs 21:2). Thus, Acts 13:22 calls for us to be a people after God’s own heart.

Invaluable as it is and as the wellspring of life, Proverbs 4:23 also reminds us that we need to continually “post a guard” at the doorway of our heart, so that every avenue of our being blocks the entry of sin. Remember that we are fighting against an enemy who is bent on our destruction. He not only opposes God, but also everything that is

aligned with God – us included. If our heart is unhealthy or defeated, it destroys everything in our life.

The secret to guarding our hearts is actually to be filled with God's Word. Just as one has no more appetite after a buffet dinner, when our hearts are so full from God's Word, there is no more room for sin. As Psalm 119:9 says, "How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word." Let us make effort to memorize as many Bible verses as possible.

NOTES



1 SAMUEL 16:7

BUT THE LORD SAID TO SAMUEL, “DO NOT LOOK ON HIS APPEARANCE OR ON THE HEIGHT OF HIS STATURE, BECAUSE I HAVE REJECTED HIM. FOR THE LORD SEES NOT AS MAN SEES: MAN LOOKS ON THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE, BUT THE LORD LOOKS ON THE HEART.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What standards have you used to measure your self-worth?
2. In what ways have you guarded your heart from sin?
3. What new Bible passages will you commit to memory for this season?

GOD'S THREE CALLS

In our walk with Christ, we should focus our attention on several aspects – the Upward Call, the Inward Call as well as the Outward Call. Firstly, we must focus on God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit – and the need to continually give praise and honour that is due to them (upward call).

Secondly, we need to take an inward look at ourselves by constantly growing and re-examining ourselves to see what needs to be fixed (inward call). Thirdly, we must look outward toward our brethren by addressing the need to serve and love one another, and share the Good News of God's love and salvation (outward call).

UPWARD CALL: TO LOVE GOD

Although God calls all men to reflect His image and glory (1 Corinthians 11:7), men have turned away from this upward call by sinning. Despite this, God, in His great love, has provided a way for sinners to return to Him – through the death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross (John 3:16).

While God's grace makes it free for us to be reconciled to God (Romans 5:8), when Jesus beckons us to follow Him (Luke 9:23-24), He makes it clear that there is a high price to pay for discipleship (Luke 14:27). Why is that? Simply said – for us to follow Jesus, we will not only have to face trials and tribulations but are also required to die to ourselves (Colossians 3:3).

One of God's greatest commandments is to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). In that case, since a whole or "pure heart" is considered the perfect quality (Matthew 5:8), then "with all one's heart" is the perfect quantity (Jeremiah 29:13).

INWARD CALL: TO LOVE YOURSELF (AND YOUR COMMUNITY)

Jesus said that we should love others as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:37). To love everyone equally is a true sign of our love for God and our desire to live in a Christ-like way (Philippians 2:5). As 1 Peter 2:5 says, all of us are like living stones being built into a spiritual house of God, therefore – empowered by the Holy Spirit – we have the duty and ability as believers to build up this house together (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Some Christians put themselves down as miserable sinners who are unworthy of love. They are hard on themselves when they sin or make mistakes, and the idea of loving themselves seems repugnant. On the other extreme, there are Christians who are driven by selfishness, pride, and arrogance; simply put - they are too full of themselves.

There is a direct relationship between our relationship with God (“vertical” relationship) and our relationship with others (“horizontal” relationship). How we love our brothers and sisters (horizontally) reflects our belief and understanding about how God loves us (vertically) (John 13:35). It is through the building of such relationships that the ministry of believers can be lived out, and in which mission and evangelism flow – so that others may experience God’s love. We have all been given a unique set of time, talent, and treasure from God – and we can use them to love and serve our community by meeting their unique needs in practical ways (James 2:15–16).

OUTWARD CALL: TO LOVE OTHERS

Jesus sees our relationship with God as completely connected to and inseparable from our relationship with others. He himself came to tear away all unnecessary barriers – and so we should, too. God’s love has the immense power to bring life and freedom to mould us so that we will never be the same again.

Additionally, Scripture makes it clear that all believers have the love of God in their hearts (Romans 5:5). As 1 John 4:8 reminds us:

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love”. We love because He first loved us - and because God’s love resides in us, we can truly love others.

It is not possible to say that we love God if we do not love others, because we would be actively disobeying the commandment that Jesus gave us. When Jesus told His disciples they would be recognised by their love for one another (John 13:35), they were – as are we – expected to follow the example He laid out. With the freedom and blessings that His sacrifice was given to us, so is the expectation for us to love and care for others.

When Jesus says, “Come follow me,” He is not calling us to offer a class or start a programme, but rather, to follow His way of life. That includes opening our homes and lives to others. Before we can do this, however, we must first open our hearts daily to God.

NOTES

WALKING WITH GOD IN OBEDIENCE

As Christians, we ought to be entirely subjected to God from the beginning. In every thought, word, or deed, we should seek to practise unreserved commitment and grow from strength to strength in complete obedience to God.

1. KNOWING GOD'S WILL

We are by nature sinful and because of sin, our hearts drive us to wilfully sin again and again. Unless we decide to give up our own will and ways by abandoning ourselves fully to God, to allow God's Word and Spirit to renew our minds, we can never know His perfect will in and for our lives (Romans 12:2). By surrendering ourselves, we are placing our all in God's care and allowing Him to cleanse and purify our hearts (Psalm 51:10).

2. LEARNING GOD'S WILL

Before we can hope to know His will in the personal and specific areas of our lives (John 7:17), we must first obey God's common will found in the Scriptures. However, it is not enough to know the will of God and we must earnestly do what God has commissioned us to – in His way, in His time, and according to His anointing.

It is not wrong of us to desire and expect that God will teach us His will. However, we need to realise that God's will is beyond the human intellect, therefore being teachable is also vital to obedience (Psalm 25:9) - since the Holy Spirit works effectually through those who humble themselves before God with a willing heart.

3. FAITHFULLY ABIDING IN GOD'S WILL

As Luke 16:10 points out: "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much."

One great biblical example is David, whom despite having committed several egregious sins, was named by God as “a man after my own heart” (Acts 13:22). David was considerably flawed, but what made him worthy of such an honourable description? Well, regardless of imperfections or sins, a man after God’s own heart is one who actively seeks to live in obedience to God and responds properly when confronted with his sin.

In David’s case, it was not so much the nature of his sins that is significant; rather it was that he acknowledged his sins with humility, and truly repented of them (2 Samuel 12:5–13). David was unafraid of admitting his transgressions and his soul could be touched by truth. He also sought to live his life in obedience of - and fully dependent on - God, and faithfully waited many years on God’s promise to make him king (1 Samuel 24:4–7).

When it comes to obedience to our beloved Master, there can be no half measures. We must give up our entire self to Him (Romans 12:1), or else we will soon falter and fall. Ultimately, to truly be able to cling to God, we must first seek to die to ourselves (Galatians 2:20) and submit to God’s will. As Jesus prayed while in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Yet not my will, but yours be done.” (Luke 22:42)

NOTES

GROWING IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Jesus commanded us to “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). As Scripture points out – we were created in God’s image to reflect our Maker, by caring for others. To truly love God and our neighbour, we should focus on fostering healthy relationships in all these arenas of life:

1. BE A GOOD STEWARD

The word “steward” is rooted from the Ancient Greek word “oikonomos”, which translates into “household manager”. A Biblical steward is trusted to care for things that are important or dear to their master. In the same way - although our lives belong to God (Ephesians 1:11) – we need to recognise that He has given us authority over our lives and that He is the source of all blessings (James 1:17).

God has equipped us with the skills, talents, and time required to be a good steward (1 Peter 4:10). We have not merely been placed on this earth to live a good, comfortable life. According to God’s will, we have been placed here to live purposefully (Romans 8:28) – i.e. To spread the love of Jesus and the Gospel (Mark 16:15). A good steward acknowledges and gratefully receives God’s abundant gifts and generously shares them with others (1 Peter 4:10). By serving others wholeheartedly, we are bringing glory to God.

2. PRAY WITH THE COMMUNITY

To pray is to communicate with God. If we do not maintain contact with God, it is impossible to grow. We must always strive to seek God’s face, listen to His voice, and work closely with the Holy Spirit in all that we do. Although God knows what we need before we ask, He waits for our petition because it is His way of showing us that He loves us. While prayer alone with the Lord is powerful, prayer with the community is the most powerful. The Lord Himself has said, “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” (Matthew 18:20). Jesus

has also commanded us to pray for others (James 5:16) – not only for our family, friends, and fellow believers, but even for our enemies (Luke 6:28). By praying for others we are imitating Jesus Christ, who intercedes with God the Father on our behalf.

3. STUDY SCRIPTURE TOGETHER

Our physical and spiritual existence came into being by God's Word and we continue to be upheld by it (1 Peter 1:23). His Word is true, infallible and has authority (Psalm 119:89); it is the foundation on which we must build our lives. The more we seek God through his Word, the more the Spirit sanctifies us and brings a deeper understanding and intimacy with God (Hebrews 4:12)

Just as we need friends to help us weather through the storms of life, encountering the Word together allows us the opportunity to share different perspectives and insights. Through this, our understanding of Scripture is broadened and deepened. When active participants in a like-minded community are dedicated to spiritual growth, understanding of God's Word shifts from intellect to a transformation of the heart (Romans 12:2). As our lives are changed, the lives around us change too.

4. BE ACCOUNTABLE TO SOMEONE

The dictionary defines “accountability” as being “subject to the obligation to report, explain, or justify something; being responsible; answerable”. In biblical terms, accountability is God's instrument that helps us to enter His fullness and His calling (Hebrews 4:13); it is based on God's law and on God's Word (2 Corinthians 5:10).

As a Christian, being accountable to others is a duty (Matthew 7:3–5). We must develop relationships with other Christians that promote spiritual honesty as well as obedience to God. Such relationships can help us to evaluate our walk with God and with others and will help us to stay rooted on our spiritual journey (James 5:16). Whether we have committed good or bad deeds or think careless

POSSESSING A HEART FOR OTHERS

The word “hospitality” comes from two Greek words: philos which means “friend” and xenos which means “stranger”. Put together, the word is “philoxenos” which literally means “loving the stranger” or to be “generous to guests”.

Scripture calls on us to show the love of God to others (Romans 12:13) and we are required to do so. As Christians, we are instructed to not only be hospitable to friends and family, but also to strangers, outsiders, and even our enemies (Proverbs 25:21). In fact, biblical hospitality is a direct act of service, love, and obedience to God (Hebrews 13:16). And when it comes to hospitality, simplicity is a great place to begin.

1. HOSPITALITY NEED NOT BE PERFECT

In Luke 10: 38–42, we are told the story of Martha and Mary. While Martha opened her home to Jesus, her heart was distracted with preparing her home instead of focusing on the person visiting her home. On the other hand, Mary understood that Jesus was the most important thing, and that they should be focusing on Him and His needs.

We only need to possess a heart for others - and from there meaningful hospitality flows. Hospitality is not about showcasing what a perfect host we are, or what possessions we have; it is meant to demonstrate whom we follow ie. God. Being hospitable is about showing love, grace, and warmth to the person to whom we have extended the invitation (Isaiah 58:7).

Christ is the cornerstone of our homes (Ephesians 2:20), and it is because of Him that our homes are holy and wonderful. Do not feel stressed extending an invitation even if the home is a little messy; by letting our imperfections shine we allow our guests to let down their guard and be real. If we let go of the need for perfection or approval, we can simply be present with the people that God has entrusted to us, and genuine connections can be forged.

2. OFFER HOSPITALITY WITHOUT RESENTMENT

Instead of having an attitude that strangers should be grateful for whatever we offer (1 Peter 4:9), and that they should change their preferences to suit us, we should accommodate ourselves to what they need. Remember that the heart of the Gospel is rooted in hospitality, and God's divine nature is love (1 John 4:10). For where we are at enmity with God due to our sins, we have been saved and reconciled to God by the hospitality and death of Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:18).

While it is human nature to be held back by a sense of self-preservation, shutting our homes or ourselves to others means we are not imitating the love and hospitality of Christ (1 John 4:7). The display of true hospitality allows the light of God to shine from our hearts, so that His love is readily and effectively transferred from us onto others.

3. BE HOSPITABLE EVEN THROUGH HARD TIMES

Too often, while we are experiencing difficult circumstances, we tend to become focused on ourselves and our problems. By channelling our focus on caring for an outsider, our focus can be less inward and more outward. If we hide ourselves away and only invite others in when we are feeling comfortable, we prevent them from witnessing the strength of our eternal hope amidst our distress (Romans 8:24).

When we open our lives to our guests – as difficult as it is – they may be compelled to share about their own trials, and this may lead to spiritual conversations. Showing hospitality even while we are suffering allows these relationships to get deeper, faster – and we help others to realise that it is God who comforts us in our suffering (Matthew 11:28). This is also a perfect way to reinforce that all earthly sufferings are temporal, and that our forever home is not merely built of brick and mortar; we are living for a kingdom far greater than our personal kingdom (2 Corinthians 4: 16–18).

Hospitality is about serving strangers, loving them, and attending to their needs. The focus is never on the meal, nor the space, nor what

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

PERSONAL

- Conduct daily prayer with your family
- Work out to a fast-paced worship song
- Memorise one Bible verse every day
- Do Bible journaling
- Write a testimonial (email your sharing to hwah@amkmc.org.sg)

COMMUNITY

- Pray with someone
- Cook a meal for someone
- Conduct daily devotions (in-person or over Zoom!)
- Send an encouraging note to a friend
- Organise a prayer walk with your cell group

OUTREACH

- Share a Bible verse with a stranger
- Sponsor a needy family or child
- Invite someone to Sunday worship service
- Invite a stranger to your home
- Pray for an unchurched person






2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-8

REMEMBER THIS: WHOEVER SOWS SPARINGLY WILL ALSO REAP SPARINGLY, AND WHOEVER SOWS GENEROUSLY WILL ALSO REAP GENEROUSLY. EACH OF YOU SHOULD GIVE WHAT YOU HAVE DECIDED IN YOUR HEART TO GIVE, NOT RELUCTANTLY OR UNDER COMPULSION, FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER.



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