



Welcome to our Church



2014 Motto: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18a

Rooted in the Living Word Empowered by the Holy Spirit Abiding in Christ only Daring to Hope and to Love Yielding Fruit To God's Glory

"The Courage of Esther: Confronting Evil Forces"

Speaker: Elder Ernest Chew

1. Connection and Purpose

1.1. Where?

- In our Bibles, "Esther" is at the end of the Historical Books and before the Wisdom and Prophetic Books.
- In historical sequence: Daniel in exile, then Esther in Persian capital, then Ezra and Nehemiah assisting those who had returned to Jerusalem. Esther, the wife of the Persian King Ahasuerus (1:1) = King Xerxes I.

1.2. Why?

- No mention of "God" in the Hebrew text of 10 chapters. Yet it was included as part of Old Testament Scripture, as God's Word.
- Hadassah/Esther and her cousin-guardian Mordecai were the Jewish heroes who with courage and wisdom saved their people from the genocide planned by Haman, the King's most powerful minister.
- This deliverance was remembered by the Jewish Feast of Purim [= "lots", 3:7 and 9:6), which is still observed today, with the reading of the scroll of Esther.

2. Character in Perspective

- Who? Mordecai to Esther: "who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Key verse, 4:14, ESV).
- What kingdom? King Cyrus of Persia defeated Babylon, and established the largest empire of that time. He allowed the Jews to return from Babylonian Exile to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:1-4). Some Jews remained in Persia; they included Mordecai and Esther, in the Persian capital city of Susa.
- When? The 3rd king after Cyrus was King Ahasuerus/Xerxes (reigned 486-464 BC). (Est.1:9-22 to 2:1-18). On time and eternity, see Ecclesiastes 3:11.

3. Coincidences or Providence?

- How Coincidental? *The Global Study Bible* records seven coincidences: 2:17; 2:21-23;5:2; 6:1-3; 6:4-12; 7:8-10; 8:2 and 10:2-3.
- How Providential? "Who makes the incidences 'co'?" (Lorne Sanny, former Navs president). Are these events just coincidences or merely chance? Or are they examples of how God is in sovereign control over all situations and human schemes, and works everything out for His good purposes? (Romans 8:28; also 35,37). Think of other great "reversals" in biblical history: Joseph (Gen.50:20), Moses (Acts 7:35), David (Acts 13:21-22), Jesus (Acts 2:23-24).

4. Choices and Problems

- When Rulers go wrong -- this foolish King made hasty decisions on Vashti's deposal and Haman's proposal which had had far-reaching results.
 - When evil seems to triumph -- Haman's pride and hatred in planning to kill Mordecai and the Jewish people (3:5-6 and 5:9-14). "Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes" (3:6)
 - Behind Haman, "the enemy of the Jews", was the age-long enmity of the Amalekites against Israel, and behind it was the power of Satan, always challenging God's plans and purposes.
- When good people are confronted by crisis, evil, and peril. What were Mordecai's and Esther's responses? (Focus on 4:10-16). We have also come to our "royal position" as children of God, saved by His grace, for times like these. May our choices be shaped by His Word.

5. Conclusions and Principles

5.1. Where is God...

- in the book of Esther? Not absent, but hidden (Isa.45:15).
- in our experience? As aliens and pilgrims on earth, we are often in a minority, and feel alone, in the dark. But God is always present, even when we do not sense where He is (Psalm 139:7-12; 1 John 1:5; Isa.50:10; Psa.23:4). Today is Pentecost Sunday, when we remember how the Spirit of God came with power on the disciples in Jerusalem, and the Church was born. Remember Paul's words to Timothy (2 Tim.1:7).

5.2. "Where are you?" (1st question after Adam's fall, Gen.3:9) "Walk by faith, not by sight", "walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (2 Cor.5:7 and Rom.8:4).

- Receive God's revelation in Christ (Matt.11:25-28; 2 Cor.4:6).
- Respond with resolution to His Word and Spirit (Acts 4:29-31). Look at the Cross. Where was God? Had He forsaken Jesus? "God is Nowhere"? No, "God is Now Here". Jesus is "the Resurrection and the Life". Remember John 16:33. "Be strong and courageous" (Joshua 1:6,7,9,18). Yet "be careful.." to meditate on and obey God's Word (1:8).

Esther's critical role in saving her people is remembered yearly by the Jewish Festival of Purim. How do we remember Jesus' crucial role in saving His people from their sins? We call it the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, the Breaking of Bread, the Holy Communion, every Lord's Day!

My Response: Our Response during the service is an act of worship. Do write your reflections on a Response Form and place it in either of the Offering bags or in the Black Box at the Hall entrance. **Holy Communion:** We welcome baptized believers to join in the Lord's Supper.

Offering: Red Bag - General & Ministry Fund/Blue Bag - Missions Fund.

If giving by cheque, you need to address it to: "Bethesda Frankel Estate Church"

June's Pulpit - The Courageous Series



Men & women with extraordinary courage in the Bible. They faced fear, the status quo, discouragement and even imminent danger to experience His grace and victory. Are you paralyzed by a daunting circumstance, uncertainty or feel alone in your situation? Be encouraged. Be strong & courageous!

- Today** "The Courage of Esther – *Confronting Evil Forces*" *Elder Ernest Chew*
...the courage to face danger and uncertainty before finally seeing His deliverance.
- 15 Jun** "The Courage of Barnabas – *Coming Alongside Another*" *Mr Jose Philip*
...the courage to encourage the forsaken into their Godly destiny.
- 22 Jun** "The Courage of Deborah – *Conquering for Him*" *Elder Alex Lo*
...the courage to arise in our assignments to the praise of His glory.
- 29 Jun** "The Courage of Elijah – *Continuing Despite Despair*" *Mr Jason Wong*
...the courage to see beyond the darkness, embrace His promises & persevere in faith.

5 weeks to... **BFEC & BKK Community Carnival**

Date: Sun 13 July 2014 **Time:** starts 9am with Combined Service for members
Venue: St Stephen's School (Canteen & Field)



Praise God that many of you have responded to the call to set up food/games stalls to volunteer for various areas. Come talk to us if you're inspired to contribute individually too (e.g food items, crafts)

Coupons on sale TODAY! Purchase it to bring family, friends, classmates, colleagues, the uncle or aunty from the coffeeshop/market/lift/others. **Visit the booths set up after 8am service (Tarpaulin & outside of Annex) & 10am service (outside of Annex).** Min \$20 sheet of coupons (*perforated into ten pieces of \$2 coupons*). All proceeds will go to St. Andrews Autism School & Prison Fellowship Singapore.



Special Carnival Briefing for all cell leaders, ministry heads & food/games stalls I/Cs on Sun 29 Jun, immediately after 10am service at the Chapel.

Our JSS children thank God & you for your prayers. They had a great outing last Sun at the Green Corridor!

JSS will be closed TODAY. It will resume the following week, 15 Jun at 10am.



Last Week's Service... "The Courage of Caleb: Choosing God's way"

Numbers 14:24 (NIV 1984)
"But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it."

Always remember: God + me = the majority. Every time we stand up and speak up for righteousness, we are standing with God, and together we become the majority, even though we may visibly appear to be in the minority.

Our Response:
O Lord our God, thank You for the example of Caleb, who, at the verge of entering the promised land, had a spirit of faith, and chose to follow Your way. And thank You for Your provision of our salvation in Christ, and for Your promise of eternal glory. We pray for the grace to rise up and act to take possession of what You have provided for us. Please help us to make the most of every opportunity to serve and obey You. Also, please empower us to be courageous rather than fearful, especially with respect to standing up for You and speaking up for righteousness. We may face "giants", but we know that with You on our side, we are well able to overcome. We pray for the grace to choose to follow You whatever the situation, and to encourage others to do the same."



Frankel Intercessors Ready Everywhere & everytime

Have A Prayer Request? Write it on in the Response Form so we can alert the F.I.R.E. team to pray with you.

Our Condolences & Love to...

Ong Teck Chye, Ong Teck Chin & Ong Bee Bee (& their families) on the homecall of their sister, Ms Ong Bee Eng on 3 June 2014.



Short Term Missions - 4 to 16 Jun 2014.

Do continue to uphold five Frankelites (Dai-won, Iris, Vylvianne, Natvianne & Evelyn) as they volunteer as child care workers at the Mekong Delta Runion in Chiangmai, Thailand, organized by OMF International for missionaries.

Thanksgiving: Praise the Lord for meeting all their financial needs through Frankelites' generosity.



Reno Works in June Do pray with us as contractors do re-tiling, water-proofing and drainage works in our church premises. For more info, see the yellow notices detailing the works. Thank you for your understanding.

Every Day with Jesus Jul/Aug 2014 issue **Poet of Hope** is now available at \$4 each from the church office. This issue reflects on the life of Jeremiah & his challenges in facing the independence & complacency of the people of Judah. Learn about prayer, obedience & our security in God as we journey together through this remarkable book.

Marriage Preparation Classes

Couples who intend to marry in 2015/2016 should sign up now for this course. Classes will be conducted in 2nd half 2014 & start once 3 couples have signed up. Apply at the church office.



Creche Ministry... We will like to invite parents with children between 18 - 30 months old to register them at the Creche for a drop-off service. We also seek the congregation's co-operation and understanding in ensuring that **priority be given to such parents to be seated at the Annex.** There is ample room in the sanctuary even if you should come after 10am.

Social Action Opportunities

Would you be THE ONE?



Use your God-given talents & gifts to bless the underprivileged in your community. Your involvement can be one hour per week, over a season or even one-off!

- ◆ Bethesda Care and Counselling Centre:
 - ⇒ **For elderly**— a driver, helper, meal deliverer, escort for medical appointments.
 - ⇒ **For children**— be a friend, organizer for enrichment activities, companion assist for stud/praytime/general assistance.
- ◆ Prison Fellowship Singapore:
 - ⇒ **For children**— be their tutor, helper, driver, friend, organisers, life skill trainers, counsellors & psychologists.

Training will be provided where necessary. For more information or to volunteer, please leave your name & contact with Pauline Chung (98710943) or email to social_action@bfec.org.sg

OTHER MEETINGS THIS WEEK

- 51 Cell Groups... meet during the week.**
- 9214 (Seniors):** Fellowship (Sun 10am); Frankel Lights (Mon 10-11.30am - **closed in June** & Games (Thu 3pm)
- International Fellowship: Sun 10-11.40am** (Filipino & Indonesian) Level 3 Excel Room & Classroom C3 - **Closed in June**
- Ladies' Group Meeting: Tue 8pm**
Speaker: Mrs Joyce Erdman (The Navigators)
- Church Prayer Ministry: Fri 8pm** Topic: "Ruth"
Speaker: Oh Swee Eng
- Peranakan Ministry: Sat 4pm** Topic: "Tuhan, Bapa kami"
(God, our Abba Father) Speaker: Elder Jeffrey Goh
- Foreign Indian Workers' Fellowship: Sat 9pm.** Ground Floor classroom at front playground.