



40.DAY 2023

40.DAYS 40.VOICES 40.PRAYERS

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The Second-Generation Church

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BIBLE READING

NUMBERS 16:9 | Isn't it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to do the work at the Lord's tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them?

The Church in Singapore is now at a critical juncture, a watershed moment. The statistics show that we are now a Church where, I believe, the majority of us are second-generation believers.

The reality is that we have more new believers who are born into the faith – second-generation Christians – compared to what we would know as converts, or those who consciously come to the faith in later years.

You may have noticed this for yourself. Look around your church. While there are a few exceptional churches full of new converts, and while there are always people coming to the faith in every church, this rate is slowing.

The typical church in Singapore is likely a majority of second-generation Christians, especially among our emerging generation of young adults and youths.

So what if we are a second-generation Church? Why would this be a concern for the Church?

As a second-generation believer myself, there are so many things I want to add to this conversation. But let me focus on what I think has the biggest impact on the future of the Church.

A second-generation Christian is less likely to be passionate about evangelism, about sharing the Gospel. Maybe it's our own lack of a conversion experience. Maybe we have come to take salvation for granted and we don't realise its true value and therefore we don't care to share it. Maybe our children and our youth churches are more built for shepherding rather than for fishing, for sending out.

And so, for such reasons, I think it's easy for the second generation to lose sight of our purpose and of our commission as other things occupy and distract us in church. Let me draw from the example of Korah.

Korah was the great-grandson of Levi. He was part of the tribe responsible for the care of the Tabernacle. But in Numbers 16, tired of the way things were being run, Korah led a rebellion of 250 leaders against Moses and against Aaron. These rebels cried: You should not be placed above us. We are holy too! God is with us too!

And Moses pleaded with Korah: Isn't it enough for you that the God of Israel has set you apart and brought you near Him to do His work?

But Korah was a second-, third-, and fourth-generation leader. He was too far gone, he's distracted from his call to serve God. He's blinded by pride. He wanted things his way. And sadly, Korah and the rebellion would come to a quick end, swallowed into the earth, consumed by the fire of the Lord.

But while that was the end of Korah, that was not the end of the story for the line of Korah. His descendants were spared and, seeing the fate of Korah, they learnt their lesson.

Some would be – down the generations – restored as custodians of the Tabernacle (1 CHRONICLES 9:19-21). Some would become mighty warriors under King David (1 CHRONICLES 12:1-7), and even the Prophet Samuel would come from the line of Korah (1 CHRONICLES 6:22-27).

And the sons of Korah would leave a legacy. They would write many of the psalms we still sing today:

Psalm 42: As the deer pants for the water ...

Psalm 47: Clap your hands all ye nations ...

Psalm 48: Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise ...

Psalm 84: How lovely is Your dwelling place ...

All of these psalms and many more were written by the sons of Korah!

So here's my point. In a majority second-generation Church, we need to decide which way we will go. There is the ruinous path of Korah and there is the redemptive path of the sons of Korah.

Will we be like Korah – jaded by the institution, struggling to stay on the ancient paths, rejecting God's appointed leaders? Or will we choose to be like the sons of Korah? Humbled by the mercy of God, happy to serve and hot for Jesus, telling the world in song and in deed about how great is our Lord and most worthy is He of our praise.

As I started by saying, this is a critical juncture for the Church in Singapore: If we choose to build our church not on pride but on humility and on brokenness, we can yet raise up, not Korah, but the sons of Korah – a generation of sons and daughters who are psalmists and prophets, passionate about the proclamation.

We could yet raise up a generation revived and ready to win their generation, your generation, the youth of today, over for Jesus.

Let us pray: *Thank You, God, for this reminder that while we are broken and sinners, yet You hold forth the path of redemption.*

Even in the story of Korah and the sons of Korah, we remember that, if only we would repent and turn back to Your ways, turn back to Your path and fulfil Your mission and Your commission, then this Church will survive and

thrive. Then this generation could grow and this nation could yet return Godward.

We could yet win the youth for You, O Lord. Teach us how not to be like Korah, but the sons of Korah, singing Your praises and telling the world of Your goodness.

In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

REFLECT

- 1 What was the rebels' sin against God in Numbers 16?
- 2 If you are a second-generation Christian, how can you remain steadfast in being passionate about Jesus? If you are a first-generation Christian, how can you encourage second-generation believers to be witnesses for Christ?
- 3 What can the Church in Singapore do to disciple our emerging generation to be disciple-makers?

PRAY

- 1 Confess and repent of the dryness of our faith and let go of the many distractions of our hearts that crowd out the command of God to love Him and do His will.
- 2 Pray for both the young and old that we will be like the sons of Korah who are humble and passionate for Christ, true worshippers set apart for the work of God.
- 3 Stand in the gap to pray and intercede for the youth of today, that they will rise up in faith to take up the mantle of winning the lost for Christ and turning the nation Godward.