

Romans 12:2 -Be Not Conformed - 14 October 2012

Last week we spoke on the message of dying and how the secret to living is dying. It is death that leads us to life. It's a miracle of life! In fact, we see it all around us, every corn of wheat has to fall to the ground and die and when it dies, it brings forth much fruit. And so, I hope, I trust you've been using the little souvenir... er... last Sunday to remind yourself of this deep spiritual reality. And er... I was glad to receive some positive feedback, positive encouragements from some of you and er... a dear brother he emailed me and said, "This morning I happened to observe that the three bean sprouts have grown. I began to think about your message last Sunday on dying to self in order to live. What a divine paradox to ponder on." Indeed this is something you need to ponder, you need to think, you need to er... chew on, that it will come more powerfully and deeply in your life. I then saw some Facebook entries. I've sought permission from all our brethren who have these Facebook entries and this dear brother he said, "This is day zero, this is the day I placed the seed into the cup and... and er... put water into that receptacle and on day three life begins. On day three the beans begins to die and life begin to emerge and on day four it has become quite a sprout and it begins to trend towards the sun." He said this is called phototaxis umm... going towards the light. Some other brethren also post up and remind themselves of the biblical passage in John 12, that except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. This is by a couple, and so you see the couple here, both of them same direction, both of them same height, probably the same environment the bean is growing in. Another sister, she posted up that the secret to living is dying, Romans 12:1. And er... this is from sister Daphne and Eugene, they were with us last Sunday, sharing with us about the work in Indonesia. And they write... they wrote, "The more a man dies to himself, the more he begins to live wholly unto God." And this is a beautiful picture to remind us of the beautiful paradox of life. One of our sisters said, "The secret to living is dying. Loads of hidden meaning in that paradox. Got my answer to my prayer." And there are others, who also have other lessons to learn. Umm... let me share with you this: it says, "Thank you for the Christians that stand up for Jesus each day, no matter what this world may think. These believers never sway." So we should be like Christians that will stand tall and strong for Jesus Christ. So I really appreciate all those dialogues and entries and posts to encourage yourself to contemplate on the reality, that the secret to living is in dying. 0:03:21.2

Now as I also think about these things, I realised for the green beans to grow, to blossom umm... it takes more than the seed itself. It does require some environmental factors. You look at all the pictures, all their seedlings, all their

sprouts look a little bit different. Some are taller, some are shorter and the difference is the environmental factors as well. For those who place the sprout near the sun, it will grow towards the sun. For those who put sufficient water, it will grow well. For those who put too little water, it will not grow well. The environmental factors are critical. And I'm also reading from some of you that say, "After a period of time, you've got to transplant this into soil. Otherwise it will also die." So these are the factors in place. It reminds me that as a Christian, the world around me plays a big part in my development. The world and the environment around me does affect the way I develop. Have you ever seen a watermelon like this? This is a square watermelon from somewhere in Japan – Zentsuji, alright? And this watermelon is grown this way because in Japan, space is a premium. So if you want to have watermelons, the big round ones won't fit into the fridge very easily. So they custom made this kind of watermelon that will store into the fridge, refrigerator conveniently. But it's not easy to make this, it's not cheap. Umm, in Singapore I'm told a watermelon, it's anywhere from \$5 to \$10. In Japan, the square watermelon costs a whopping... anybody knows? \$200. Same guess as the first service. It costs a whopping \$100. To be exact, about \$82.83 USD. It's quite a hefty sum to buy a watermelon. But how did the watermelon get to be like this? It was not meant to be. God did not make watermelons like this. But it became like this because they grew them in boxes. And as the watermelon developed and grew in a box, the box became the limiting factor. It became the environment that shaped the ultimate fate of this watermelon. You see, the watermelon, the way it grows is dependent on its environment as well. I'm trying here to share with you that there is a reality to life. Our lives do not live in a vacuum. There are environmental factors around us that shape the way we ultimately turn out. Isn't it so? 0:06:23.7

The way you dress today, isn't it shaped by the environment? If you live maybe three thousand years ago, the men will wear skirts. If you are from China, you're the Kungfu style. But now nobody wear skirts or no Singaporean Chinese wear skirts because that's not what everybody is doing. The way we dress, the way we talk, the way we eat, it's very dependent on the environment. The way we think, what we value, the dreams we possess, the goals we have in life, they are very much influenced by the world and the environment around us. We are affected by our friends. We are affected by our colleagues, our family members. We are affected by the media. How television portrays lives, how the radio talk shows go, how the internet media is all about. It affects us. I'm sure all of you by now must have heard about Gangnam style. I mean it's a stupid dance, in my mind. But it is a hit all around the world. I checked it last night. It has garnered 450 million views on Youtube. 450 million views on

Youtube. It's a worldwide phenomenon. You see people all imitating and mimicking the Gangnam style. Singaporean... Singapore also has the Gancheong (Dialect word meaning very anxious) style (Laughter from Congregation). If you watch the video. PM Lee speaks about it. Why do people talk about these things? Why do people mimic these? Because they are influenced by the media. Sometime ago you have what they called planking. The young people you know what planking is? It's a... I... I think it's really stupid. But people all over the world do planking. They... they lie prostrate, they lie flat, horizontal like a plank, they take photos of their unique planking situation. I'm told people get injured and... and even die from planking. But they do all of that, not because they themselves wanted to but because they saw others and they were influenced by others. And after planking they have owling. They squat there like an owl. And then they have teapotting. All kinds of things. And that's the power of the world around us. I dare say today, who you are today is largely influenced by the world. Now if the "tau geh" (Dialect words meaning bean sprout) is to grow, it's got to be careful of... we've got to be careful about the environment it's placed in. For watermelon to grow in a certain way, we also realise the environment plays a big part. Today the Bible tells us in Romans chapter 12, be careful about the environment you are growing in. Because Paul says in verse 2, "And be not conformed to this world." The word 'conformed' means to be fashioned. The world today is exerting an influence on us, to fit us into its mould. There is a pressure, there is an influence, there is a force all around us. That is called the world and the world is trying to conform us, fashion us, shape us, to be like it. We are all made to be round but the world wants you to be square. God intends for you to live an abundant, joyful, Christ-like life. But let me tell you the world doesn't want you to live that. The world wants you to be a square. The world wants to limit you. And therefore, Paul says, "Be not conformed to this world." I like what J.B. Phillips translation has to say about this. It translated this way where it goes, "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mould." The world is actively seeking to squeeze you into its mould. The world is actively hel... making you, influencing you, to be not what Jesus intends you to be. I'm supposed to be a round watermelon, but he want... the world wants me to be square. Now let's look at what this verse really means. 0:10:43.8

First of all, let's try to understand what is the meaning of the word 'the world'. What is the world? What is Paul saying here? Now, the world is exerting a pressure on me, but where is the world? What is the world? If you were to understand the word 'the world' or the phrase 'the world', it's important for you to first realise what it does not mean. Then I'll tell you what it means, alright? So let's go on a negative, what it doesn't mean, then we'll see what it means.

What is the world? First of all, I think the world is not primarily about a place. The world is primarily not about a place. You see, this is why some people get off tangent. They say, don't be conformed to the world, they interpret it to mean God doesn't want me to go MBS Casino – Marina Bay Sands Casino. Now I'm not encouraging you to go. But I'm saying that the world is not just about going to Marina Bay Sands Casino. Be not conformed to the world also doesn't just mean you cannot go to a nightclub or to a KTV lounge. It's more than that. The world is not just about a place. You can don't go to these places but still be absolutely worldly, you realise that? I don't go to Marina Bay Sands. I don't go gambling. I don't... I don't go to the lounge. But it doesn't mean you are not conforming to the world. In fact, sometimes I feel the most Holy of places can become the most worldly of places. Think with me back in the days of Jesus. The temple was supposed to be the most holy place but man has turned it to be the most worldly place as well. This is where they make money from the poor. They have changed the house of prayer into a den of thieves. The world has got into the temple. So the world here does not refer to a place. It's not about a specific physical locality. This may jolt your thinking a bit. But the Bible tells us Jesus ate and drank with sinners and publicans. Where do you think he will go? Grand Copthorne Waterfront? 5 stars hotel restaurant? You think he's going to go there? I doubt it. He's going to go to where the gangsters, the hooligans would go in those days. He'd go to where the Ah Bengs and Ah Sengs (Dialect words meaning hooligans) would go in those days. He will go to the bad places the Pharisees have ruled out in those days. He went there. That did not mean that he was conformed to the world. You see the world is not primarily about a place. 0:13:56.4

At the very same time, I believe the world is also not about possessions. You see, this is what people think. It's over simplifying things, but this is what people think: do not be worldly means do not be rich. A rich man is a worldly man, a poor man is a godly man. That's the kind of thinking we have. Do not be conformed to the world means I can never drive a Mercedes, a BMW. I can never live in a penthouse in Orchard road, I can never have possessions because having possessions is equal to being worldly. Is that true? Wah, so fast no. Think again with me. In the Bible there are many godly men, who are at the same time very rich. One such man is... is the man Job. Job is a very rich man. The Bible tells us he has thousands of those animals. And I tell you in those days, those animals are like Mercedes and BMWs. He has thousands of them. That didn't mean he was a worldly man. Abraham had hundreds of them. That did not mean he was a worldly man. David and Solomon, they have plenty of riches. That doesn't mean they are conformed to the world necessarily. You see, having possessions doesn't mean you are worldly, at the very same time, having no

possession doesn't mean you are not worldly. There are plenty of poor people who are absolutely greedy and covetous and worldly as well. Worldliness is not a simple line where you say you have riches - you are worldly, you are poor - you are godly. No! It's too simple a line to draw that way. It's oversimplifying things. Because I believe worldliness is not about the possessions, it's about the obsessions. It's not what you have on the outside, it's what you are harbouring on the inside. So worldliness is not primarily about a place. Worldliness is also not primarily about possessions.

Thirdly, I think worldliness is also not about being with the wrong people. Aha! Paul says, "Do not be conformed to the world." I know what it means, it means Christians cannot mix with unsaved people. Christians cannot mix with worldly people. Christians must stay within themselves. We must stay in a little hut up there in the mountain. We must stay away from the world. You know that's where monasteries come out of. That's why people have monastic nomadic kind of a life. Because they have interpreted, conform to the world to mean being, mixing around with the people of the world. What is that? Really what the world is? Even if it's, I think Paul is a very confused man. Because he tells us in 1 Corinthians 5: 9 and 10, "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators, yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world." So is... what is he saying here? Basically he's saying this: now Christians I do not want you to be influenced by the people who are living in adultery. These people in church are living in adultery, avoid them. Don't be influenced by them. At the very same time, it doesn't mean today that all Christians who withdraw to a very faraway place to live among ourselves, because it is impossible. We've got to be in this world to influence the world. And it is not God's will for us to totally withdraw. Jesus himself was Holy but this is stated by Vance Havner, I quote him, "Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and yet at the same time He was a friend of tax collectors and sinners." Worldliness is not about mixing with the wrong people. It's when the wrong people get into you. That's the difference. I showed a picture I forgot to mention, and here it is. I think worldliness is not about possessions, as well in a sense, as depicted here by the Amish people. You know about the Amish people? Heard about them? Their group, I think there are two hundred over thousand, nearing three hundred thousand Amish people in America today. They follow a certain cultural style of living. To them it is wrong to use modern technology or to be dressed in a modern sense. And therefore they frown upon engine powered vehicles, they live in a very simple, er... lifestyle, very, very distinct from the people all around them. Because in their mind, worldliness is about possessions. When you possess a computer, when you possess a

motor-vehicle... er... motor-powered vehicle, when you possess a dressing that is of the world, you are worldly. Is that really worldliness? I'm afraid not. I don't think we can draw the line like this. But it can also get into our thinking this morning. Some of you feel, eh... how come this church don't have pews. You know what are pews? Pews are ... if you look at traditional churches, the long benches, everybody sits on the pew, and er... you say how come this church don't have pews. This doesn't look holy. This is a worldly church. Use lights, use projector, use Powerpoint. Eh... pastor you use this light sabre, this is... this is worldly. It's not worldly, I don't think it's worldly. Worldliness is not in your possessions. Some people have reflected, actually our church, we should sing with hymnals. You should not have the words flashed on the screen. You should sing with hymnals because that is more holy. I'm not so sure about that kind of a thinking. And there may be some who feel that as preacher, I cannot quote a verse out of my iphone. If you want to read the Bible from pulpit, you must read it from a physical black and white hardcopy Bible. Because that is more holy. But you see, that's the way people have been thinking. Holiness we think it's about the place. Holiness is about the possession or worldliness is about the people we mix with. It's not these things. So what is it, you say? Umm, Jesus himself said, "I pray not that you should take them out of the world." Jesus is not saying you avoid people, He wants you to be with people. But He wants you to be kept from the evil. He goes on to say in verse 18, "As you have sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." It is God's intention for His people, His children to be in the world but not of the world.

What is the world? It is not about the place. 0:21:07.2 It's not primarily about possessions. It's not primarily even about the mixing with the people of the world. What is it? Let me suggest to you, the world is primarily a power. It is a power. Do not be conformed to the world. There's an influence that the world exerts. The world is essentially a power. And this power is not just in the physical locality, nor in some dollars and cents, nor in some people. But this power is all around us. It can be in the casino, a KTV lounge or it can be in this building. It can be right here where we are. It's all around us. It is on your TV screen. It is on your internet. It is everywhere. This is a power all around us. To do what? That seeks to draw men away from God. This is what the world is. The world is an influence under the dominance and control of Satan, the evil one. Orchestrated to draw men away from God. And it is all around you! You can be influenced by the world at home, in your office, in your school, in the army, when you are having recreation with your friends in the movie theatre. It can happen anywhere because the world is the power all around us. You say, "Pastor how do you know these things?" Let me share with you a few verses. The Bible says in

Galatians 1, that this world is an evil world, meaning it is always anti-God. It's evil. It doesn't want you to draw near to God. This world is evil. That's its objective - to draw you away from God. And this is totally under the control of Satan. Paul says, "In time past, you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air." Satan is called the prince of the power of the air. Elsewhere in 2 Corinthians, he's called the god of this world, he rules this world. And he's orchestrating all things to lead you to disobedience, to lead you away from God. That's what the world is. It's not about money, it's about God. It's not about dressing, it's about God. It's not about computer gadgets, it's about God. It's an anti-God system that Satan is working all around us. And where does this world work by the way? If I say to you, the world is attacking you today, where does it attack? If I tell you, tuberculosis is attacking you today, where does it attack? It attacks the lungs primarily, of course it can attack somewhere else, but lungs primarily. But if I say to you, the world is attacking you, where does it attack? (Response from congregation) The heart, or it affects the... (Response from congregation) flesh... er... flesh not so much lah. I don't see it eat here and there. But the world attacks the... (Response from congregation) the mind! How do I know that? Again, Scripture informs us. The god of this world has blinded the minds. Let me tell you this, because of our upbringing, we watch a lot of ghost movies. I have, er... since young, I watched lots of ghost movies. Those who are older like myself, 'Jiang Si Xian Sheng' (Dialect words meaning zombie man) remember that? Umm... all the horror shows and my concept of evil is that it try to scare you. Boo! Grrraahh! That's my understanding of evil. But you know when you look at the Bible, Satan and his minions attack primarily not your sight. He's not here to scare you but he's here to deceive you, to blind you. He walks on a mine. 2 Corinthians 4 tells us, he blinds the minds. In 2 Corinthians 10, verse 5, it's about spiritual warfare. And what is needed is that we will bring captive every thought under the obedience of Christ, because the devil works on your mind. The world exerts its pressure on your minds. The influence is most fundamental than how you behave, it's how... what you believe. And that's what the devil wants. And by the way, it's all around us in the sense. The devil can use a very good thing and turn it for evil objective, you realise that? He can use the church and turn it for his objective. Back in the garden of Eden, you remember? What did the devil use to draw Adam and Eve away from God? What did he use? Sinful thing? No...no. He used a good thing. He used a perfect thing. He used that which is untainted. He used the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That was a good thing but he turned it for a evil objective. Therefore the world is all around us. Using anything around us to draw us away from God. And it works in your mind. It works in your mind. He cannot force Adam and Eve to eat it, but he can deceive them into eating it. The Bible

tells us in 2 Corinthians 11:3 that the devil beguiled Eve through his subtlety. Our minds today also can be corrupted. That's where he works, the mind.

So let's come back to Romans 12. Be not conformed to this world. Where is the world going to effect its changes or influence? It's on your mind. It's on your mind.

0:27:29.6 And next week, we're going to look at what it means to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. But today let's recognise this, the world is limiting, hindering, drawing you away from God. And it is a power all around you that seeks to do so. It's under the dominion of a very intelligent enemy, the devil. And it's working on your mind all the time. You say, "Pastor, how do I know if my mind is shaped by the world already?" How... what is a worldly mind like? In what way does it show up? Let me suggest a few ways alright?

Number one, I believe the way we view success and purpose of life is very much shaped by the world already. I believe so, just think about it. The world tells you the meaning of life is to have more. Isn't it? More money equals to more possessions equal to more privileges equal to more happiness. That's what the world teaches us. That's what everyone talks about. That's what advertisements tell you.

Advertisements say, you've got to get this, drive this car, you'll be happy. Buy this condo, you will be happy. Buy this handphone, you will be satisfied. The world is telling you, that your satisfaction is found in your possessions. That's why I think young people study hard. What drives them to study hard? So that I can get good grades. Good grades to do what? So that I can get a good job. To do what? So that I can have a good income. To do what? So that I can have the resources to afford what will bring me happiness. That's what the world tells you. Advertisements, television, even friends. We look at each other and we say, "Eh, where do you stay huh?" "Wah, your car very nice har." "Eh, why you... this kind of Cherry QQ "Lau Po Chia" (Dialect words meaning lousy old car) also you drive." (Laughter from Congregation). And we look at each other based on what you have, and what you have not. The social pecking order is ordered after the world's philosophy. Oohh, that guy is rich, so when he comes to church I will greet him. But if he's not rich, "bo chap" (Dialect words meaning ignore) him. Maybe you are not as overt as that but in your mind a rich man is to you more important than a poor man. You know what? That is not biblical, that is not from God. Where does it come from? It comes from the world! Because it wants you to believe that your satisfaction is found in what you have or have not. And not who you belong to. And I say it has come into the church. This philosophy is not just for the world, this philosophy has come into the church. It's what we believe. You don't seem to be convinced. Let me say this, blatantly, openly, it's what we have believed. Ask our students, our own children who has trusted God. Ask them why

they study. Don't tell them the answer, Just ask them why they study. And hear their answer, you know what they are thinking about. Ask our young adults, why are they working so hard? Now I'm not against working hard. I think it is a... it's a good Christian ethic. We must work hard but the question is why? Ask them why? Ask our young families, why? Ask our better halves, why? And deep in our hearts, we must admit that to a very large extent, this round watermelon is now becoming more like a square. It has come into the church. And I say it has come into the church not just amongst the people, but even on the pulpits - in the preaching of God's Word. I know, the... the hot topic in churches today is about the prosperity gospel. And indeed to me, and I'm not saying who and so on, I'm saying the teaching of the prosperity gospel is an anti-God, worldly philosophy. Because you are saying: To me, what I want out of life ultimately is health and wealth and not God. God becomes my servant to achieve that ultimate goal and that goal is my God. The health and wealth gospel is not the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is an anti-God teaching that leads us ultimately to idolatry. To worshipping something that is not God. You see, it has crept into the church, without people knowing it.

Can I suggest to you another way we are shaped in our thinking besides the meaning of life, the purpose and success and significance. I believe it is the way we view the origins of life. Talk to anybody off the streets, never been to church, ask them how did the world come about? They say, "Oh, by chance lah! There was a cosmic explosion some billions of years ago and we are now a product of chance." We are evolved from frogs, from monkeys, from apes because this is what is true. Is that true? But why are people believing that evolution is the answer and not creation. Who told them that? Certainly not the Bible. The world has influenced people through textbooks, through so called scientists, professors, journals, articles. I've been to museums all over the world, been to some places and they say, oh this was what happened hundreds of millions of years ago and so on and so forth. People won't believe the Bible today because they have been shaped to think this world is a product of chance and evolution. What does the Bible say? The Bible says, "The fool has said in his heart there is no God." The Bible tells me, deep within the soul of a man, according to Romans 1, we know that there is God but we won't admit there is God. Because the world tells us, it's evolution, folks! Not creation. The Bible cannot be trusted. Science can be trusted. The Bible cannot be trusted. You guys who believe the Bible, you are old-fashioned, you are irrelevant. You Christians are just stick-in-the-mud. And this is what the world would want to tell you. You know this is a world that also teaches you things about authority. The world shapes the way we view authority. This world wants you to despise authority. Think about it. A popular

cartoon series in the past is called the Simpsons. Right? I'm not sure whether it's still running today. It is? Wah... still going on. Wah... it has quite a long life huh. The devil is certainly using it to squeeze it dry. The Simpsons. Now Simpsons tells us of a main character, his name is er... or rather a family... the main family is the Simpsons of course. And the cool guy is... Bart Simpsons. The cool guy Bart Simpsons is the son of the family, isn't it? Now who's the loser in the family? Huh? Louder lah! The loser in the family is Homer... and he is the father of the family. You know that is the consistent theme, if you noticed in the media that is portrayed today. The father is the loser, the son is the cool guy. What it's teaching you is that tendency for us to despise the authority God has set in our lives. It's subtle but it's not from the Scriptures. It's not from God. 0:35:35.2 It's from the world. Maybe I bring it a bit closer to home. We live in a country where politics is now becoming a hot... hotter and hotter topic, isn't it? I'm sure the next election will be even hotter. And I'm... I'm convinced that Christians we must do our part to vote wisely, intelligently and let me say this, I'm not here to support any political party. But I do sense that there is a growing discontentment with the government. I'm saying government, I'm not talking about party. There's a growing discontentment with the government and it is expressed in complaints. The way we say, what we say, the way we write on Facebook. The way we write in the media. And let me say this, this is not from God. I don't believe it's from God. The Bible tells us that godly man prays for the government. He prays for the leaders, he doesn't complain against them. But you see, everybody around us is complaining, therefore if the box is square, I'll have to be square. But the root of it is that it teaches us, it shapes the way we think to despise authority and ultimately despise the authority that God is in our lives. It's an anti-God philosophy. Think about the realm of sex. This sensitive word. This is a sex obsessed world, isn't it? Why? Well, the devil wants us to pursue something other than God. Sex. Besides money, the next thing people go for is sex. And so you have bombardments of adultery, extra-marital affairs, pre-marital sex in the media, in the TV, in the movies, all around you, in the literature, until we think it is fine for us to have extra-marital or pre-marital sex. And you know what, as we do this, we corrupt the beautiful picture that God intends for his people. Christ and his church. It's an anti-God philosophy. You think about homosexuality today. Fifty years later, I make a prophecy, you can stone me if it doesn't occur, I'd have probably died by then. (Laughter from congregation) I think homosexuality will be the accepted norm in terms of lifestyle choice. People will think of it not as sin anymore but it's just a lifestyle. But... but pastor, it is so clear in the Bible, it's a sin. Yes, it's a sin. But the world is shaping us to think otherwise. And soon enough, you give it enough time and if people are not taught the Word of God, we will soon imbibe it, swallow it, and

totally believe it. It's just a matter of time. Your children, I fear for them. But you see this is not surprise to anyone of us, the world is always exerting its influence to draw us away from God. And the saddest part I feel, is that it has come into the church, as I've said. It's come into the church. It's come into the leaders, it's come into the pulpits where it teaches you to pursue health and wealth apart from God. That is your ultimate goal. It's come into the church. 0:39:09.6 Worldly methods and philosophy are brought in, to draw people in a sense to church, but not to God. It's come in, in a sense of teaching us a God who doesn't want... or... they don't believe that God will send anybody to hell. They want a Santa Claus, not a God of wrath, not a God of holiness, they hate to talk about this thing. Because the world likes us to think of a God who is kind and gentle and is easy and will never judge sin. And therefore you have a cheap Grace, you have a cheap gospel that doesn't really save. The world has come in, to the world, into the church.

Now, what chance do we stand, against such assaults? We have a formidable foe alright? We have a formidable foe. He is very, very powerful. He is very, very intelligent and he wills the whole world in his hands and he is doing all that to let the world get into your mind. To shape you, to limit you, to cause the beauty of Jesus to be stagnating in you! What chance do we stand against him? The Bible tells us, and I like you to remember this: John 17:17. A prayer that Jesus made for the disciples is a prayer I would like you to be praying this week. This is my challenge to you, every week, every day this week, take out this verse, John 17:17, and say to yourself and pray to God, "Lord, sanctify me, through your truth, because your Word is truth." You see Jesus says in John 17, I pray for my disciples, I pray for my people, I'm not praying that they will be taken out of the world, because they have a mission. They are here to shine for me. They are here to bring people to you God. I'm not praying that they will be out. I want them to stay. But Lord, preserve them. Whilst they are in the world, let them not be of the world. Whilst they are in the world, don't let the world get into them. So Lord sanctify them through your truth, your Word is truth. That's what we should pray. We are asking God to do what we cannot do, to protect us, our minds, our thinking, in an age where everything is collaborating, conspiring to draw us away from God. We pray for His protection. That means every Sunday when you come to hear God's Words, you pray God sanctify me through your truth. I've been hearing what the world is teaching me, I've been watching television, I've been hearing the radio programmes, I've been reading these newspapers and all of that is shaping my mind. My friends are telling me this, my colleagues are telling me that. I'm tempted to do this. But Lord this morning, sanctify me through your truth. Every morning when you come to God in your Bible reading, ask Him to sanctify you

through His truth. Everytime you gather in small groups, it's so important for you my friends, to be gathered in communities, in care groups where the Scriptures is studied, so that your minds can be transformed and not be conformed. It's so important! Because the world is powerful. So be in the world but not of the world. The only chance we have is when we ask God to do it.

After the illustration of the "Tau geh" (Dialect words meaning bean sprout), the bean sprout, I thought along Romans 12:2 and I said let's try something else. And this is what I did. This is my son. And on Monday, I... I thought this might be something to experiment and to show you and so I gathered some watercolour paint. And er... got my son to help me out. And little Shawn is excited to do it. He was really excited. "Daddy, what are you gotten do? What are you gotten do?" Well, we first made some er... watercolour and then we took the green beans and we poured the watercolour onto the green beans. We wanted to surround the green bean with the colours of the world. And I wanted to see what will happen to the green bean. Let me ask you, what do you think will happen to the green bean? (Inaudible response from congregation) Sorry? It turns green. OK, the green bean turns green. (Laughter from congregation) It turns... anyone? It becomes colourless (Response from someone in congregation). Wow, that's quite cool if it can become colourless. It changes colour (Response from someone in congregation). It turns into a rainbow... I...I...I was hoping to do this and to show you rainbow coloured bean sprouts. How cool that will be. And let's see what happens alright? Day zero is like this. Are you in suspense? (Laughter from congregation) Wow, this is cool huh? Day 1, it begins to die and life begins to emerge. By the way, this is using plain water, colourless, alright? This is my control. In science experiment, you need controls. So this is my control surrounded by a myriads of rainbow colours. 0:44:48.0 Day two, more life springs out. And this is Day five... Day four or five. I saw it this morning again. It has not changed much. So it's about Day six already. But let me ask you, what did you learn? Class, (Laughter from congregation) what did you learn from our scientific experiment? Ok, the lights can turn on a bit, because I need to see your face, I can't... I... preaching you need to look at people, alright? So, umm, what did you learn? Class? Wow, the genetic compositions are stronger than the elements of colours. Umm, Bee Hin, in simple terms it means... wah... your eyes are so sharp ah? Can see it's not impacted? (Response from congregation) Ok, alright. So he's saying that the colours couldn't quite change. The ultimate fate of the... of the bean sprout lah... it's still green lah. Alright, good! That's one observation. Very sharp his eyes! Any other observation? Very obvious one. (Response from congregation) It stunts the growth right? Everyone else is cannot made... alright... this guy is really blossoming. It's on the

same day but everyone else is stunted. Stunted. Er...it's not easy to live in the world lah, alright? That's what I can learn. But to prove Bee Hin's point, he feels that they are all green, they are not coloured in its internal. I give you close up picture. This is a close up. And you could see, if you look carefully, it is definitely green, but there are some spots of pink and it is stained with pink. I did not wash it to test it but I believe what it shows is that the water or the colour could stain it on the outside, but it could not get in to the inside. To prove it, I show you another one which is the yellow colour. Umm... this is a badly taken picture but I hope to convince you that the yellow colour didn't get into the green colour. It was still a green bean sprout. What about the red one? It's even clearer here, the red ones are stained with red colours on the outside. But essentially it is still green. Alright, lights can come on.

So I was a little bit disappointed that I couldn't present to you rainbow colour "Tau gehs" but I was delighted to share with you the lesson of a "tau geh". I think we should all be "tau geh" Christians. Not "tow kay" (Dialect words meaning boss) Christians ah. That's not very good, biblically we should be servants, but we should be "tau geh" Christians. Why "tau geh" Christians? Two reasons why. Number one, we all need to learn that it is in death that we live. It is in dying that we really start to live. Number two, we can be in the world but the world need not get into us. Would you be a "tau geh" today? Would you want to be a "tau geh"? I... I wish I'm a "tau geh" Christian. Ok, say to one another, "I want to be a "tau geh" Christian." (Laughter from congregation) Reaffirm this reality – I want to be a "tau geh"! Simple, humble, but I have two great lessons of life. I die to self and the world doesn't get into me. This is two great lessons of life, right? I'm a humble, simple "tau geh" but I die and I live and the world, though I live in it, doesn't get into me. You say how can I be that? How can I really be a "tau geh" Christian? You've got to come and say to the Lord, "Lord sanctify me through your truth. Lord you save me. You save me. I want to present myself a living sacrifice because you love me, you gave yourself for me. I'm... I'm destined for greater things. I'm destined for Christ-likeness, I don't want to be like a square watermelon, I want to be the round watermelon, I want to be like you. So God, give me the courage, give me the conviction, help me to believe that you have overcome the world. And it is faith that overcomes the world today. Help me to believe that as I pray, sanctify me through your truth. You will do it." And imagine what happens when Gospel lighters today pray that prayer. We will be like the "tau gehs" swimming in the world of colours but we will stand up pure. We will stand up distinct, when everyone else is yellow and green and purple and blue, we are true to Jesus Christ. That's what makes us irresistible and attractive to the world. Not because we are like them but because we have a life different, we think differently, we

behave differently. Our goals are different, because it's Jesus in us. And as we mingle with them, they see the life of Christ. We by the Grace of God can help them come to Jesus. That's what it means to live the gospel and to give the gospel. When our lives will so shine like that salt that is different, like that light that is different, it draws all men to Jesus. And that is what makes Jesus glorious. So my friends, this week, pray, "Sanctify me through your truth, thy word is truth. Make me a "tau geh" for Jesus' sake."

Let's bow for a word of prayer. This morning we're looking at a very simple but important lesson of life. The world and the environment around us are orchestrated by the evil one, to seek, to draw you away from God. It's working on your mind all the time. Everytime you watch a television programme, you read a newspaper article, everytime you talk to someone, the world is at work. And my friends, we are no way able to defend ourselves apart from God and His Word. So this morning, would you humbly pray? Lord, I want to be that living sacrifice, that glorifies you, that enjoys the beauty of Jesus in me. Lord I want to live for you. I realise there's a lot of the world in me. What my ambitions are right now, they are not of you, they are of the world. My behaviour, my thinking, God change me, do not allow me to be conformed to this world. Transform me by the renewing of my mind. Sanctify me through your truth. And you know what, God will do it. Because that's what Jesus prayed for you as well. He prayed that as we are in this world, as we want to fulfil the great commission in this world, that we will not be of the world. So dear Lord, we thank you this morning, that in a simple message such as this, we can ask you to protect us, to guard us, to sanctify us. Your Word is powerful; Your Word is cleansing; Your Word leads us to Jesus. And would you therefore this morning set us apart, that we will be like that light that shines on the hill that draws all men to you. Make me a stranger, make us pilgrims, journeying in life, towards Christ-likeness. We thank you. We ask all these things now in Jesus' name. Amen.