Holding Fast to the Promise of God

I. WELCOME, 15 mins.
Plan one to two icebreakers for the purpose of mixing around and getting group participation or getting acquainted.

II. WORSHIP, 20 mins.
Prayerfully choose a few songs to lead people into God’s presence. During this time, cell leaders will encourage cell members to listen to the Holy Spirit and release the words of strengthening, encouragement, and comfort they have received for the cell group, the church and nations. Upon each word shared, the cell leader will lead members by thanking and praising God for His promise and/or praying aloud together for the needs, etc.

During this time, the cell leader will also lead the group to pray aloud for: (1) the mission organization or daughter church that the cell group adopts (2) the church ministry needs (3) blessings for new comers, the sick.

MISSION ORGANIZATION: ________________________, their needs: ________________________
(Please contact the church if you don’t know the needs of the mission organization.)

CHURCH MINISTRY:

III. WORD, 45 mins.
A. Sharing from last Sunday’s message.
1. What is the main message from last Sunday sermon? What did God say to you from the message?
2. How would you respond to the message? What action will you take after listening to the message?

B. Discussion Topic: “Holding fast to the promise of God”

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 1:15-24 (Please take turns to read the passage.)
Memory Verse: For all of God’s promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding “Yes!” And through Christ our “Amen” (which means “Yes”) ascends to God for His glory. (2 Corinthians 1:20 NLT)

In 1 Corinthians 16:5-9, Paul mentioned that he was going to go to Macedonia and then spend the winter in Corinth. But later, perhaps due to the negative news regarding the church in Corinth brought by Timothy, he changed his plans and made an impromptu visit to the Corinthian church. The visit was actually made to confront the church there and it was quite painful (2 Corinthians 2:1). This might have been due to the instigation of dissension and discord by self-proclaimed “apostles” (2 Corinthians 11:13). In addition, there were individuals that challenged the apostleship of Paul in the church. Hence Paul left the Corinthian church in displeasure and decided that he wasn’t going to visit the church again in the near future (2 Corinthians 1:23). He was going to let the matter cool down a bit before deciding on what to do.

Later Paul wrote a “severe letter” or “letter of tears” to the church (2 Corinthians 2:1-4) to confront the church again and to make a behest for the church to solve issues according to the teachings of the Truth. Most likely Titus delivered this letter. Then Paul was going to meet Titus at Troas. But Titus didn’t show up and Paul headed to Macedonia, hoping that he will meet Titus along the way. Fortunately, Titus brought good news from the Corinthian church—the church accepted the exhortation of Paul and punished those that offended Paul. Deeply relieved, Paul wrote 2 Corinthians, of which one of the purposes was to prepare the church for his future visit.

As a servant of God, one’s conduct and behavior must be under the guidance and supervision of the Spirit and not according to one’s own preferences and viewpoint. Just as Paul’s impromptu change of his journey, his decision was made under the guidance of the Spirit so that the church of Corinth was benefitted.

You and I are both witnesses for God on the earth. We should never act according to the “freedom” of our own will and lead people to think that the Gospel we preach can also be changed “freely.”

1. The promises of God are real (2 Corinthians 1:18-20):

   1. The promises of God never change (2 Corinthians 1:18-19): The faithfulness of God is the guarantee for His promises because He is faithful and does not change like shifting shadows (James 1:17). God is consistent with His words. (Matthew 5:37) All of God’s children cannot muddle the words of God with profit-seeking (2 Corinthians 2:17) nor distort His words (2 Corinthians 4:2). We need to entreat Him to help us to remove the sinful unbelieving heart (Hebrews 3:12). We need to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2) and faithfully preach His Gospel.

   2. Becoming tangible in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20a): God’s promises are realized through the deeds of Christ Jesus. Thus we can see that He is faithful. The changes in the lives of Paul, Silas, and Timothy are all because of the life of Christ in them as they passionately shared the Gospel for the Lord and established and pastured the Corinthian church.
3. **To the glory of God through us (2 Corinthians 1:20b):** We are but mere dusts (petty, lowly, and unworthy) with the characteristics of sinners. But through God’s precious promise, we tangibly become His children in Christ. And through the guidance of the Spirit, we can live out the glory of God and fulfill His will.

2. **How to receive the promise of God (2 Corinthians 1:19-22):**
   1. **Need to be in Christ regularly (2 Corinthians 1:19-20):** We (Paul and coworker) and you (Corinthian church) are firmly connected in Christ because He is in us all. This not only allows all of us to receive the promise of God, it also allows us all to live out the glory of God and revive this land. The promise of the Lord: I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you. You will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing (John 15:5 NIV).
   2. **Need to be willing to receive the guidance of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21b):** Through the anointing of the Spirit, God enables us to:
      a. Live out a new life (2 Corinthians 5:17): This allows us to be set apart from the world and to have new lives and new ministries. The lives we live are to be pleasing to Him and to be filled with joy.
      b. Receive the power of the Spirit (Acts 1:8): Life-changing power (Ephesians 5:18-21); power-filled ministry (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).
      c. Become more and more Christ-like (2 Corinthians 3:16-18): When our hearts are turned to Christ and obey the leading of the Spirit, the more we will be able to be face to face with the Lord, see His glory, and become more and more like Christ.
   3. **The seal of the Spirit is the guarantee that we have His promise (2 Corinthians 1:22):** When we have the seal of God, it means that we belong to Him and we have dignified status. We should not debase ourselves. The seal also means that He is our inheritance. Right now it is but a mere taste of His grace. We will definitely inherit the very abundant inheritance of God in the future.

3. **Helping others in His promise (2 Corinthians 1:15-17; 23-24):**
   1. Our conducts and behavior should be based on benefitting others (2 Corinthians 1:15-17): When Paul changed his journey, he didn’t change it based on his selfishness, but rather based on the principle of benefitting the church of Corinth. As ones in the grace of His promise, we need to be vessels of His grace. Everything we do should be based on the principle of helping others to be benefitted spiritually. When we do go and when we don’t go are based on the same principle that is to benefit others just as how He treated us (2 Peter 3:9).

2. **Need to live before Him frequently (2 Corinthians 1:23):** When Paul didn’t go, he wasn’t treating the Corinthian church according to his own flesh. But rather he was willing to patiently wait for God to do His work. The purpose for his journey to the Corinthian church was for their betterment. But whether he went or not needed to follow His will. The reason that Paul can have such wisdom was because he was living before Him frequently and completely trust in His leading.

3. **Help others to stand before Him (2 Corinthians 1:24):** No one can force others in their faith. But we can help to point out the right path for others to come to know and to experience God. We can help others in their walk to Him and experience the promise, blessing, and joy of God together with them.

**Discussion Questions:**
1. *Have you ever been moved by the Spirit to do certain things? What was the result afterwards?*
2. *Have you ever been misunderstood? How did you feel and how did you face it?*
3. *Whom are the promises of God for? How can one experience them?*
4. *What promises of God have you experienced? What are the reasons that we are unable to experience His promises?*
5. *How do you experience the work of the Spirit in your life? What is the purpose of the work of the Spirit?*
6. *How has your cell group leader helped you and cared for you pastorally? If you are a cell group leader one day, how will you care for your cell group?*

**Prayer:**

Faithful God, we thank You and we praise You! How precious and real are Your promise! We long to experience them more and more. Please keep us in Christ so that Your promises will be fulfilled on us. We also ask that You guide us with the Spirit and help us to have willing and obedient hearts so that we will become more Christ-like through the power of the Spirit. This way we can become Your witnesses. In the victorious name of Christ Jesus, Amen!

**IV. WORK (Pray for each other), 10 mins.**

Please break into group of 2 or 3 to pray for each other’s needs.