Vessels of Power

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: “Vessels of power”

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 4:1-12 (Please take turns to read the passage.)
Memory Verse: But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us (2 Corinthians 4:7 NIV)

In 2 Corinthians Chapter 3, Paul mentioned that he has letters of recommendation as a minister of the new covenant. The difference between the ministers of the new covenant and the old one is that the ministers of the new covenant need to rely on the Spirit to bring down the glory of the Lord. Then he continued to teach about other things that the ministers of the new covenant need to watch out for in Chapter 4.

1. Ministers of the new covenant need to stay holy and need to preach the genuine Gospel with the hearts of servants (2 Corinthians 4:1-5):
   a. Stay holy: In Chapter 4 verse 1, the original text for “lose heart’ is ek-kakeo. Ek means “come out” and kakeo means “evil.” It means that we cannot have evil come out as we have accepted the responsibilities as the ministers of the new covenant due to God’s mercy. But rather we renounce secret and shameful ways and we do not use deception or do we distort the word of God (2 Corinthians 4:2a). We should never be like those who peddle the word of God for profit (2 Corinthians 2:17). We need to know that whosoever cleanses himself (from what is ignoble and unclean, who separates himself from contact with contaminating and corrupting influences) will be a vessel set apart and useful for honorable and noble purposes, consecrated and profitable to the Master, fit and ready for any good work (2 Timothy 2:21 AMP).
   b. Preaching only the genuine Gospel: The work for new covenant ministers is to set forth the truth (2 Corinthians 4:2b). But we need to be prepared in our hearts that there will be people who resist against the Gospel. This is to fulfill the words of the prophet Isaiah “Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (Isaiah 53:1). Isaiah 53 is referred to as the “Chapter on Messiah.” It contained the prophecy about the coming of Jesus 700 years later to fulfill the glorious salvation. The most special part is that Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about Him (John 12:41). Isaiah already knew that the god of this world will use whatever means possible to blind the hearts of men so that they cannot see the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4). This is an extremely sad thing as the outcome of unbelief is to perish (2 Corinthians 4:3).
   c. With the hearts of servants (2 Corinthians 4:5): Even though we may be rejected, we still need to preach with humble hearts of servants on the message about our Master Christ Jesus. A servant isn’t to preach about himself. What the Master is looking for is faithful and wise servants that He can send out (Matthews 24:45). If we do this, He will call us good and faithful servants upon the second coming of the Lord.

2. Ministers of the new covenant need to have treasure in the earthen vessel (2 Corinthians 4:6-12):
1. The coming of treasure (2 Corinthians 4:6-7): In the beginning when the world was formless and empty and darkness was over the surface of the deep, God said “Let there be light.” The purpose of this was so that created men can walk in the light just as God is in the light because God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5-7). At the time God has yet to create the heavenly bodies. So the light that came to the world is Jesus who existed before the creation. This confirms what Jesus said—“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (John 8:12). Because life is in Jesus, this life is the light of mankind (John 1:4). When each of us is saved, we become those that follow Him and walk out of darkness. We come to know that the glorious light of God is shown on the face of Christ Jesus. And we also receive this light of life to become the treasure in us the earthen vessels. Hence the all-surpassing power of God can be shown through us.

2. The purpose of the treasure (2 Corinthians 4:8-9): Paul had profound experiences on the importance of the treasure inside him. Hence he said in Chapter 12 of 2 Corinthians that “That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Corinthians 12:10).” We can see that Paul knows that nothing can separate him from the love of Christ—not trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, nor sword. He is more than conqueror through the Lord inside him (Romans 8:35, 37). This is the mighty purpose of the treasure.

3. Increase of the treasure (2 Corinthians 4:10-12): Paul said in Galatians that “those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24).” He also said that “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” The more we are willing to let the Spirit in crucifying our old life, the more the life of Christ (the treasure) will increase and the more we will be like Him. Moreover, our change will have positive influence on the believers around us and help them to see that this is a path of glory and the same life will start on them.

Discussion Questions:

1. Are you minister of the new covenant that God is currently using? How are you going to carry out your mission?

2. Have you been rejected when you shared about Jesus? What was your reaction? Are you now willing to continue to share?

3. Why is it that some people have special characteristics that attract you? What are these characteristics?

4. What do you know about the glory and the light of God?

5. Please discuss how we can become Christians where “He must become greater and I must become less.”

6. Please discuss about your spiritual life. Cell group leader please lead everyone in proclaiming the word of God (2 Corinthians 4:7). Remember to see each other have more treasure in the earthen vessel next week. Reminder to everyone: please attend cell group meetings steadily.

Prayer:

Dear heavenly Father, we thank you for being chosen. We received Your salvation because You chose us. You also chose us to become the ministers of Your new covenant. May Your Spirit lead us daily in our ministries so that those we minister will become more and more like You. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

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

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