The New Creation

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: “The new creation”

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21
Memory Verse: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV)

1. Love compels us to live for the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:14-15):

a. The compelling love:
What compels a Christian to be determined to please the Lord and live for the Lord is: Christ’s love compels us! He sacrificed His life on the cross for us. He who had no sin was made to be sin for us and took the most relentless punishment, so that we can not only be exempt from the sentence of everlasting death, but also receive the everlasting life. Such love keeps pouring into our spirit, soul and body like a great flood, compelling us to make a response to it.

b. The ministry out of love:
The love of Christ is the driving force of our lives and ministries. Had we not been touched by the love of Christ, we would not have the corresponding lives and ministries. It is impossible for someone who has experienced the kindness and great love of the Lord not to be compelled by such love, or not try to rush to follow Him. Wherever He is, all who He loves will be there, too.

c. The manifestation of love:
If we as believers are convinced of the truth that “one died for all”, we will enter into the truth that “all died” as the result. The love of Christ and His death are inseparable. The reason why we can feel the love of Christ is that we all saw His death. Had we not seen the death of Christ, we wouldn’t have been touched by His love. Today we need to go back to our first love very often, and serve Him out of love, instead of friendship or our sense of accomplishment. Love is the ultimate foundation for our fellowship with God.

2. The new creation to live for the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:16-17):

a. The new creation:
Since the old self has died with Christ, and the new creation has been resurrected with Him, from now on we shall regard no one from a worldly point of view. That means all the value systems, priorities, and ways to interact with each other that we used to follow need to be renewed and rearranged.

b. The ministry of the new creation:
We shall no longer regard Christ from a worldly point of view. Instead, we shall regard Him from a spiritual point of view. It is impossible to know Christ with our natural wisdom and rationality. Trying to regard God from a worldly point of view will not get you anywhere, either. Trying to serve God from a worldly point of view will never please Him, for what is offered is merely strange fire. Only by the revelation of the Holy Spirit can
someone confess that Jesus is the Lord. And only serving the Lord in the spirit can please Him.

c. The life of the new creation:
A very important secret to living like a new creation is to unite with God in Christ and enjoy His spiritual provision. A branch apart from the vine cannot bear fruit. This is the law of life.

d. New direction:
As a new creation, we cannot still live in the past. We need to forget not only all the past iniquities, failures and shameful things, but also all the past achievements and accomplishments. Don't try to keep them in our minds. Forgetting what is behind, straining toward what is ahead, and pressing on toward the goal (Philippians 3:13) should be the attitude of our lives. Life is like a giant wheel that keeps rolling forward. You will actually lag behind if you don’t want to move forward.

3. The commandment to live for the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:18-21):

a. Stewardship of the gospel:
God has entrusted us with the ministry and message of reconciling the world to Himself, which is to preach the gospel. When God reconciled us to Himself through Christ, He also gave us the ministry of reconciling, just like what Pastor Zhiming Yuan once said in a gospel rally: “You cannot just keep the antidote in the pocket for yourself, and watch others die from lacking of the antidote.” Regardless what our ministries are, we have to focus on reconciling the world to God Himself. We work as a team while staying in the position we are called for, and serve each other with the gifts of the Holy Spirit to reconcile the world to God.

b. The Gospel ambassadors:
God gave us the ministry of reconciliation and calls us Christ’s ambassadors. But such ambassadors are different from the worldly ones. Christ’s ambassadors have been touched by God’s love, so they are willing to humble themselves to “pledge” and “urge” people to restore their relationships with God using manifold wisdom and out of love.

c. Content of the gospel:
Christ’s ambassadors focus their ministry on preaching who Christ is and what He has done. “The only begotten son of the everlasting God” is Christ’s identity. “He who had no sin was made to be sin for us” and “so that we became the righteousness of God” is what Christ has done.

Discussion Questions:
1. Try to recall and share your first experience of God’s love. How did it feel?
2. Isn’t it true that you are deeply intrigued by such love that you can still walk in God’s way and serve Him in the ministry you were called for? If serving Him has yet to become your life style, please share the reason. How are you going to overcome it?
3. This world likes to judge by appearance. Were you ever judged like this before? How did it feel?
4. How does this statement “People judge by appearance, but God looks into our hearts.” help you stay away from a worldly point of view?
5. What does this statement “You will lag behind if you don’t keep moving forward in your spiritual life” remind you of? Please share how you manage to live like a new creation.
6. Sometimes you need to preach the gospel with your words. But what it really takes is to “pledge” and “urge” people to be reconciled to God with our actions and our lifestyle. Please make a self-assessment on your effort in this aspect.
7. Cell group leader, please bring brothers and sisters to God with today’s passage, and pray by faith for them!

Prayer:
Dear Lord, we thank you and we praise you, for you offered yourself so that God made you who had no sin to be sin for us, and we become Christ’s ambassadors as new creations. We thank you for giving us this glorious ministry. May the Holy Spirit always pour down God’s love, so that we can serve the Lord with joy and march on in the new direction in His love. 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.