



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC The God who “Pays It Forward”

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THEME Minister the Grace of God/Blessing Others

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

BLESSED TO BLESS

What does it mean to ‘pay it forward’?

A few years back, Elder Chua and a few others felt led to pass on the blessing that Bethesda Katong had first given us (by seeding us and helping us become who we are today). Thus in 2016, BBTC embarked on its first Blessing Campaign, the key motivation being that since we serve a God who blesses us **all the time**, our testimony then must be to pass on the blessing. After all, we are blessed to bless.

And unlike the secular world, which blesses for self-gratification, the Body of Christ blesses **in Jesus’ name, for God’s glory**.

THE GOD WHO “PAYS IT FORWARD”

[Rom 5:8] But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5 was a letter written by Paul to the Romans. It talks about the revelation of God’s righteousness in His plan for salvation, focusing on the benefit of justification – that is, the sweetness of being made right by God to be with God. And it explains how our God is a God who ‘pays it forward’.

What it means to “pay it forward”

While the concept of ‘paying it forward’ was made popular by a movie in year 2000, the notion had existed before then. In law, ‘paying it forward’ was the term used to describe the act of passing a good deed on to another party instead of returning it to the benefactor.

This concept comprises two key principles:

- The first being the principle of **multiplication**; one person impacts three lives, and those three go on to touch another three – and so on.
- The second is about **meeting real needs**; to do something that the beneficiaries cannot do themselves.

One shining example of a man who did this was Jesus! Jesus modelled these two principles; He didn’t begin with three people, He started with twelve. And from that dozen, now billions of people around the world are followers of Christ. Jesus also met real needs, the most critical one being the need for salvation, our reconciliation with God.

Jesus “paid it forward” by

1. His death [5:6-8]

*⁶For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ **died** for the ungodly. ⁷For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone who dare even to **die**. ⁸But God demonstrates His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ **died** for us.*

Although we were still unrepentant in our ways, God paid for our sins by dying for us because He loved us. While worldly wisdom perceives dying for another – even a good man – as a difficult thing to do, Jesus **willingly** died for **all**.

And as Jesus ‘demonstrates’ His love to us, in the present tense, we can be assured that His salvation is still available. The window of Grace is still open!

But knowing God’s love is not a cognitive exercise. As it is the work of the Holy Spirit, it has to be discerned through the spirit, through **revelation**. Only then will we truly understand the depth of His love for us.

2. His life [5:9-11]

*⁹**Much more** then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, **much more**, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.*

Many of us may think that salvation is the end goal, being reunited with God when we die. But that’s not the full picture! Verses 5-8 deliver a powerful message of divine love – but there is **much more** to it! Jesus, in His great love for us, came to give us **life**, to bring heaven into our hearts for us to live a transformed life. The gospel message is not about destination but transformation.

Much more than the death of God, much more than being reconciled, the gospel speaks of how we shall be saved with life. With His resurrection, we are saved from God’s wrath. If He had remained dead, we would all still be condemned. His resurrection also brings us perfect joy! Not a life that is devoid of troubles, but a blessed assurance of victory over them – with our Saviour by our side.

BLESSING AS A LIFESTYLE

Last week, Cassie Carstens made a point: that if Jesus’ priority was in building God’s kingdom, then so should ours be. If it isn’t, then we regard ourselves higher than Jesus, that a servant would dismiss the work of his Master.

Just as Jesus went out to the masses to meet them where they were and to love them, God does not wish for us to be an inward-looking church. He intends for us to be an outward-facing one, to make blessing a way of life instead of a once-off act, once a year.

Thus, the future of BBTC hinges on our response to the question of “how then shall we live”?

QUESTIONS

How is God's concept of paying it forward different from the conventional definition that we know of?
How have you been a recipient of His blessings in your life?

We know the gospel is not just about the destination but transformation. To you, what does a 'victorious life' look like? How do you live your life differently?

The aim of this year's Blessing Campaign is to make blessing others a lifestyle. How can you integrate/incorporate small acts of kindness regularly to bless people and show God's love to them?