

FAMILY CRISIS

MINISTRY

“Hello! Help! Is there anyone out there? What am I going to do? I need the money. I do not know who I can go to. Who should I talk to? Help me, please help me!”

On 17 September 2017, Jurong Christian Church (JCC) had the opportunity to invite members from the Family Crisis Ministry (FCM) to share their testimonies on the various forms of addiction such as gambling, gaming, drinking and activities that had



led to heavy debts with money lenders/loan sharks resulting in suicidal tendencies, family problems, divorce, mental/ nervous breakdowns, desperation, drunkenness, bankruptcy and the list goes on. The Multi-purpose Hall 1 (MPH) was filled with church members listening intently to the testimonies.

I could sense the thinness of the air when realities and life experiences were shared by the speakers. The stories hit many aspects of life with heart-wrenching episodes which we thought were only possible in the movies. No, the stories are real. I listened with a heavy-heart and was encouraged when they gave thanks to God for being able to walk out of their situations with the assistance from FCM through the love of God. Amen!

Let's pray for the FCM team that they will have the wisdom and strength from God to continue the counselling for others in such situations; leveraging on the learning lessons from their experiences to help others. Did you know that FCM is self-funded and the time that they are willing to give comes from the sacrifices of their sleep and family in gratitude to God for making their lives whole again?

As you read on, imagine how the power of God could change the lives of these people through their experiences and in turn, encourage those in need to take the first step to reach out for help. Allow me to take you through a series of thought processes as the

stories unfold. Didn't Christ do the same to reach out to those in need? ☺ There will be no pictures of the speakers shown and pseudo names will be used.

Bobby was jailed in Thailand for 20 years. He was caught in the airport in Thailand. As he was in need of money to repay all the debts, he agreed to carry gold bars for a syndicate. What he did not know is that beneath the gold bars, he was actually carrying Heroin. He was caught for trafficking drugs. Bobby's world collapsed and he was devastated. He was alone in a foreign country with no help from anyone.

He shared that his family never gave up on him after he returned to Singapore from his jail term. However, Bobby said that he got hooked on to gambling in the Casino and landed himself in huge debts again. It was then that he sought help from FCM and his debts are now almost cleared.

He gave thanks to Jesus and advocated that we need to rely on God in our lives. He said that only with Jesus, we can be happy people. As he concluded in Mandarin, he hoped that those in need will come forward to receive help and not to bury the pains and carry the burden alone.

Alex is a businessman. When his business hit a financial crisis, he started to borrow money from money lenders. The money did help him solve payments on salaries to his employees and provided interim closure to the bills for his business. His woes were concealed and he continued his business.

What he did not realise is that he relied so much on borrowing that he still ended up in debt for his business. Alex shared that there was a time when no money came out from the ATM and he felt lost again. He sank into depression and he realised that it was a vicious cycle. He could not walk out of it. It was then that his friends referred him to FCM. He started climbing out of his situation with FCM's help. He now shares his story with others telling them to raise their problems to seek help. Do not wait for help to come to you.

Mr and Mrs Wong were married for 17 years. They have two kids and have their own jobs now. They are serving in FCM to help others. When they started talking about their past, you would not have imagined that Mr Wong was gambling his life and family away on soccer betting and rolling his credit cards to tie over the debts from borrowing of money from friends and family members. He reached a stage where he ignored his friends and did not return the borrowed money from them and those he loved.

He said someone told him that he cannot do this anymore. He was destroying his life and his family. He lost his integrity and he left the burden of looking after the family to his wife. He did not share with his wife and covered up his habits and addictions.

What Mr Wong did not know is that the toll on his wife was tremendous. Mrs Wong started drinking heavily and gambling at Casinos. She started borrowing money for her debts as she could not concentrate on work and the family. She said she had no friends to help her. She could not tell her husband. Their marriage and relationship was on the verge of breaking and divorce.

The pressure of mounting debts on household bills and expenses on their children spiralled out of control and she snapped. She found herself at the top of her roof, at 15th floor, wanting to jump down. It was then that she received a call from her sister-in-law to think about her children. She was not solving the problems if she had decided to end her life. She was just passing the problems to her children.

It then dawned on her that her sister-in-law was right. She awoke from her own feelings of despair and irresponsibility as a mother. She came to her senses and sought help for her gambling addictions and marriage.

They are now believers in Christ. Mr and Mrs Wong got their marriage back and started working to pay off their debts with the help from FCM in making them realise the importance of life and God. They are serving the ministry in FCM together and have settled their debts.

As we applauded the success stories, Reverend Anthony closed the session. We prayed for FCM and those in the ministry. Reverend Anthony also reminded us to stay close to God and not let sin tempt or destroy us.

FCM is now reaching out to those who require help and support to speak up and contact them. If you or know anyone who needs such help, take the courage and start calling now!

We give thanks for the love of God. This is the Love that can be found nowhere except in Him. To God be the Glory!

Joyce Tan