

POWER, LOVE AND SELF-CONTROL

*"For God gave us a spirit not of fear
but of power and love and self-control."
2 Timothy 1:7*

REFLECTION

In the 1970s and early 1980s, there was a charismatic renewal which generated much interest in the work of the Holy Spirit. Many conferences were organized attracting Christians from different denominations to experience a more expressive form of worship. One positive outcome of this charismatic renewal was a call to return to a spirituality which is more affective than dry. More importantly it was a rediscovery of the neglected works of the Holy Spirit. The charismatic renewal took place not because churches were too cerebral. It was more like a church which had become too self-satisfied and sterile. The spiritual awakening jolted a complacent church to wake up to the reality of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. However, there were also downsides which accompanied the charismatic renewal. One of which is the suspicion of the use of the mind in Christian expression of faith. There was also a careless dismissal of the contribution of church tradition. Another one is the lack of appreciation of our rich Asian cultures. But a common negative reaction felt by many Christians is one bordering on superstition and crippling fear.

Paradoxically, while it is true that the renewal helped Christians to be more aware of the Holy Spirit, it had also heightened anxiety among the more vulnerable Christians to become pre-occupied with the presence of evil spirit. For some of them, every illness or misfortune was attributed to certain spirit. When there was anger, blame it on the spirit of anger. When someone was violent, it was the work of the spirit of violence. And all manner of sins were apportioned to the works of some evil spirits which had taken control of a person. There was no sense of personal moral responsibility. That is, of course, a serious moral flaw. More disconcerting, however, is that those who were weak began to fear being attacked or possessed by evil spirit.

The advice from Paul to Timothy provides a sound corrective to those who became too preoccupied with the presence of evil spirit which may disturb a person. If ever we are afraid of spiritual attacks, remember that God has not given us a "spirit of fear; but of power, and of love and of sound mind." (1 Tim. 1:7, KJV) Anytime we feel burdened by worries and all kinds of fear, turn to this advice from Pastor Paul and take comfort that our Lord has given us the spiritual resource to overcome our distress.

PRAYER

"O Lord, help us not to be overtaken by unhealthy fears which may sometimes cripple us. When we are anxious, help us to look up to you for the power to overcome those fears so that we are freed to live a life strengthened and protected by you. Amen."

SUPPLICATION

- Thank God for the spiritual resources come from the Holy Spirit. He has purposed for us to live a full and fulfilling life. One of which is clearly stated in 1 Tim. 1:7. Pray that we will be found faithful in our walk with him.
- Thank God that many Singaporeans have been blessed with material comfort and easy access to healthcare. Yet we are mindful of those who are struggling in life even within our community. Pray for these people that their needs will be provided; that they will receive timely assistance and God will use us Christians to be channels of blessing to people in distress.
- Lift up to God the unstable situations in many countries. Most of the governments have to deal with the heavy responsibility of managing the COVID crisis in the midst of a restless and sometimes uncooperative population, economic downturn, political uncertainty and a general sense of gloom. May God have mercy on us and show the leaders of the world the way to cooperate and get us out of this disruptive time.
- Pray that God will raise up committed Christians in different spheres of life and professions who will excel in what they are doing and contribute to the well-being of the Church and society.

*"We heed, O God, thy summons
And answer: Here are we!
Send us upon thine errand.
Let us thy servants be."
John Haynes Holmes*

If you need any prayer or pastoral care support, kindly contact the pastoral care team via:

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