

COURAGEOUS FAITH

*"Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
all you who wait for the LORD!"
Psalms 31:24*

REFLECTION

People who know me often commend me for my optimism, reminding me again and again how much my rosy outlook on life brings them timely and needed encouragement. Indeed, I thank God for graciously granting me a cheerful, positive personality which has become a powerful tool for Christian ministry. It is natural for me to spread "rainbows and unicorns" and endless possibilities wherever I go. In difficult times, while others struggle and lament, I seldom despair.

However, I recently came to realise how my optimistic outlook has also brought with it something else not so noticeable to others yet detrimental to my walk with God. My deep desire for all things wholesome, beautiful and promising has shielded me from the fear of confronting realities that are ugly, messy and broken in my life and ministry. I found so much comfort in positivity that when challenges came, I mentally blocked them out. Somehow, everything looked better than they really were when viewed through my lenses. Problems that were glaring and urgent to others, seemed to me minute or even non-existent. Over time, I had subconsciously developed a way of coping with crises: by constantly minimising them and painting over them with a bright layer of "optimistic paint". Sometimes I even mistook this for "faith". But there is a name for this condition of my soul: denial.

God wants us to neither resign to despair nor resort to denial. Instead, He wants us to face our problems squarely with courage. This does not mean we should rush ahead to solve problems in our own strength. But at the very least it means not to belittle the problems or pretend they are not there. David did not defeat Goliath by denying that his enemy was anything other than the vicious and powerful giant that he was. In Psalm 31, the faith that David learned in times of adversity was not one that ran away from troubles but one that stayed strong and took courage in the face of those troubles. He learned to be rooted both in his actual reality as well as in God's compassion and might. Let us likewise not turn to coward denial but take a bold, courageous look at our circumstances, even as we look to the LORD to bring us through them (Psalm 31:24).

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we confess that sometimes we use the word "faith" as an excuse to avoid confronting issues that need to be addressed. Instead of walking with You in true courageous faith and looking to You for deliverance, we became paralyzed and unfruitful. Please grant us courage today to deal squarely with the crises in our lives. Even then, may You preserve our peace by reminding us of Your power, and let not our overwhelming problems crush us with despair. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SUPPLICATION

- Pray for believers in your circle (small group, church school, ministry, family, etc.) who are facing difficult situations in their lives. Pray for them to have courageous faith that swings neither to despair nor denial, but constantly looks to God for strength so that they may be strengthened to manage those situations with God's enablement.
- Pray for BRMC as a whole to remain fruitful in winning souls for Christ despite the challenges, restrictions and constant changes. May we be known as a strong and resourceful community that support one another with courage, trusting that the Lord who has called us is ever dependable and faithful.
- Remember in prayer Oasis, the BRMC Mission at Bukit Batok. Thank God for the outreach ministry to people in this HDB heartland, and the special ministries among the poorer foreigners and their children. Pray for the staff and community at Oasis that God would grant them His rich resource to accomplish His purpose and work at Bukit Batok.
- Pray that the COVID vaccines be accessible and affordable to many people in poorer countries even though they are readily available. Pray that the various obstacles which prevent accessibility be torn down.

*"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong."
1 Corinthians 16:13*

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

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