

AN OVERCOMING HOPE

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

John 16:33

REFLECTION

In a recent church school session, I screened a video clip of the crucifixion to a group of primary schoolers. The clip was made in beautiful anime style but the creators had been careful to portray in intense, vivid detail, the horrifying torture that Jesus went through. It showed how with loud, vulgar shouts, the Roman soldiers drove crude, rusty iron nails into his fastened hands and feet; how thick, viscous blood seeped from deep crisscrossing lacerations all over his mangled body, trickled into nauseating blobs on a dusty, desolate Palestinian hillside; and the haunting, helpless look in his eyes as his chest rose and fell in excruciating tremors, gasping for air...

I asked the children how they felt. Most said they were very frightened. One little P3 boy, however, was fuming mad – mad at the Roman stooges who carried out the dirty, evil work on the innocent Lord Jesus. I asked what he would do if he were there at the crucifixion. He said he would “take them on” with his “mini-gun” and command his “boys” (one of whom was his 7 year old little brother), to extricate Jesus from the abuse and bring him to a safe refuge in “a foreign country”. I told him I liked that reply very much. I was comforted knowing that this P3 boy so vehemently disagreed with the unjust suffering he had witnessed. I liked that he disagreed enough to want to do something about it.

In today’s scripture text, the Lord Jesus says that in this world we will have trouble. But He also leaves us with the comfort that he too disagrees enough with our suffering to want to do something about it. In fact, he has done it already: “Take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33b). Sometimes we forget that the evils of illnesses, injustice, death and disabilities do not have the final word and that we are not helpless against them. We need reminders that God can and has already done something about the “wrongs” in our lives, overcoming them in His glorious resurrection. He will in fact extricate us from the evils that torment us in this world and bring us one day to the safe haven of a new creation where we will revel in His final victory.

PRAYER

Gracious Lord, in this world we have much trouble, and often the troubles bear heavily down upon us and rob us of

joy and perspective. Restore to us our confidence that You, who have overcome the world, will make right all the wrongs we now see. Teach us what it means to truly take heart and to be guided by the blessed hope of the new heaven and new earth. Amen.

SUPPLICATION

- Pray for the church in BRMC and around the world to be a people formed by hope – the glorious, heavenly hope of the resurrection – so that this life’s tragedies and pain will not have the power to sap us of our courage and strength.
- Pray that as God’s children we will not lose our holy anger at injustice and our holy dissatisfaction with sickness, suffering and death. Pray that we will boldly exercise our God-given agency to alleviate suffering, offer comfort, and give hope to those in need. And in so doing, may we offer the world a glimpse of the joy of heaven bubbling from within us.
- Pray for those enduring dark and painful trials, to find peace in the Lord Jesus Christ, put their faith in Him and be anchored by the eternal, unshakeable and indestructible Christian hope.
- Pray for the Christian outreach to the poor and vulnerable. Thank God for the works of Oasis BRMC Mission @ Bukit Batok which provide care for poor families and tuition for children struggling with their studies. Pray that our outreach will bless lives and point people to Christ.

In all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Romans 8:37

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

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