

STRENGTHENED FOR HOLINESS

*May he strengthen your hearts
so that you will be blameless and holy
in the presence of our God and Father
when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.*

1 Thessalonians 3:13

REFLECTION

What are you focused on today? Depending on your answer, you may either be motivated with a newfound strength, or be discouraged with worries. Some may focus on the difficult and uncertain today, with the constant barrage of news of tragedy and failure. Others may focus on distractions, chasing after anything that allows them to escape the harsh realities they are facing. But what will God call us to focus on today in the middle of a global pandemic?

In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians he encouraged the Christians who were under persecution with the hope and prayer that God would strengthen their hearts so that they would be blameless and holy in the presence of God when Jesus returns. Let us explore this verse to find things that we can focus on.

The first focus is on God strengthening our hearts. Indeed such a blessing can help us endure much pain, though it is often through a process of pain also. As we go through many difficulties in life, we can ask God to let His will be done so that we may gain godly perseverance. And this perseverance isn't just so that we can be more ready for the next pandemic or calamity, it is so that we may become more holy.

The second focus lies in the purpose for which we are being strengthened – that we may be blameless and holy before God. Ordinarily, the word holiness is not the first thing that comes to mind in a crisis, what more the need to be holy. We often focus on survival and sanity, being willing to sacrifice many things for our daily needs. It is interesting that Paul didn't just bless the Thessalonians with God's provision of enablement, but that God may strengthen them to be holy. Are we willing to be holy in our times of struggle and crisis?

The last focus is on this encouragement that Jesus will come back again and thus, the call to remain steadfast in our journey to meet up with Him. Knowing that God is also coming, and coming soon, how differently would we pursue holiness today?

Instead of focusing on temporal things around us, let us focus on things that count for eternity. Find new courage in your hearts to pursue God's holiness today in your worship, in your family and community, and in your work. Perhaps it

can be as simple as making a commitment to return to the rhythm of physically worship in church, and be prepared with a word of encouragement to bless someone as God enables you to, joining in His great work of strengthening the whole body of Christ for holiness through tough times. Jesus is coming soon! We are getting closer to that glorious day!

PRAYER

Our Father, avert our eyes away from all earthly worries to the heavenly hope of life in You. Strengthen our hearts that we may turn away from all false securities towards the steadfast faith and true hope in Christ. Remind us today of Your great love. Lead us to a life of holiness and blamelessness as we await Jesus' coming! Amen.

SUPPLICATION

- Pray for peace in the region – as many political powers strive and jostle for dominance. Pray for godliness to prevail in the hearts and minds of the various national leaders, that decisions be made for the good of mankind and not for dominance. May the Church rise up as peacemakers, sowing seeds of love and bringing fairness and much needed solutions to the suffering of many affected by these tumultuous times.
- Pray for the Covid-19 situation in Singapore. Thank God for His grace in sustaining our nation. We remember the frontliners who have been fighting hard for the safety of all and the recovery of the injured. Pray for their families that they may be kept safe. May we all play our part to keep this nation safe. May God use Singapore to be His instrument of bringing His salvation to the rest of the world.
- Pray for the many foreign workers and students who have been stuck in Singapore for more than two years since the pandemic began. Pray for open doors for them to return home safely as nations begin to open up for safe travels. May the local churches be open homes for the weary and distressed.
- Pray for the churches in Singapore as they discern the call of God in this season to be the channel of holiness and blessing to the world today. Lord, remind us once again Your calling upon Singapore to be the "Antioch in Asia." Help us to fulfil this calling.

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song."

- Psalm 28:7

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

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