



St John's Cathedral 聖公會聖約翰座堂

Anglican Diocese of Hong Kong Island
Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

Message of Hope: Stay close to God for comfort and strength

30th July 2020

The Very Revd Matthias Der, Dean

Peace be with you. This is Dean Matthias Der from St John's Cathedral, Hong Kong. Thank you for joining us for this Message of Hope.

Here in Hong Kong, we are now battling with the third wave of COVID-19 which has spread wider in the community than before. Fears and worries have returned to many of us. Our hearts and prayers go out to all those who have been infected and those who have been adversely impacted due to the terrible economic downturn. We pray that this virus may be contained very soon around the world.

During this time, we can easily become depressed and feel as though the ground has opened up beneath us. It is crucial that we maintain our emotional well-being. Talk to the people you trust. Share your worries and fears with your families and friends. At St John's, the clergy are here to listen and to give support. Our counsellors at the Counselling Service are also here to help. Let us know how we can care for you during this difficult time.

How do we maintain a sense of hope as this pandemic drags on and on? In the Bible, we can find many examples of people dealing with disappointments in life. From Moses to Job, from King David to St Paul and even Jesus himself, they all faced tremendous troubles in life. One thing they had in common was that they wouldn't allow their situation to weaken their relationship with God. Instead, they devoted more time to be with God and allowed his peace and power to calm their fears. Out of that, we have many Bible verses that offer comfort and encouragement.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1

"It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." Deuteronomy 31:8

Meditating on Bible verses like these is most helpful. When we meditate on the Bible, our heavenly Father, who is full of love and power, comes upon us through Jesus Christ. We experience his presence and strength.

How do we read the Bible that will bring a sense of peace to us? For one thing, we should never read the Bible the way we read a magazine or a book. As the Bible is the word of God, we must prepare ourselves spiritually to receive whatever God has in store for us. Before reading it, take a moment to still our

hearts. Read the verse or the passage slowly. Take some time to ponder what it is saying. And then read it the second and third time, each time allowing silence in between. At the end, we should offer a short prayer to God such as “Lord, you have taught us to find strength in you, help me to receive your love and strength at this time, through Christ our Lord, Amen.”

One person that I have always admired and respected is my Uncle Ben, who passed away about 10 years ago after battling cancer for many years. During his fight, he endured great hardship and suffering. However, his faith remained strong and we saw the tremendous peace that he had. One time I visited his study in his home. The room was full of comforting Bible verses all posted on the wall. I then realized that was how he fought so courageously. He walked closely with God by surrounding himself with God’s encouraging words.

Jesus Christ is with us at these difficult times. Spend more time with God through reading the Bible and praying and allow him to comfort and strengthen you. We shall overcome this together by the help of God.

God bless you all. Amen.