



## Bulletin 21

Dear Church!

In chapter 4 of the second letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote,

*“Therefore, because we have this ministry, we do not lose heart!”*

Thence he continued his encouragement to his fellow disciples. He was speaking from in the midst of persecution both outside and, shamefully, also from inside the church. Nevertheless, his perception of the world, his place in it and the faith remained *steadfast*.

In the same year he wrote also to the Roman church,

*“If God is for us, who is against us?”*

*and a few verses on...*

*“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Sadly, these verses are all too often only dwelt upon at funeral services, **but they are words for us all here and now!** Right now, life has changed for us, but not our purpose or our ultimate security in Jesus Christ.

Not long after the beginning of all the restrictions we have come to know, I remember talking about rather enjoying the take-off and landing of a flight in a plane but getting easily bored and frustrated in mid-flight. Right now, we are well and truly into those mid-flight blues. So many restrictions and yet still

no firm promise of timing on vaccine, and still we remain without the certainty of a cure. These are indeed testing times for all of us in one way or another.

It was James, who in his epistle, wrote,

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you encounter trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance....*

It's not that there is joy because of our trials, it is because we are assured that the testing of our faith *will eventually yield* a greater perseverance in our Christian lives. The writer to the Hebrews reminds us (12:11-12),

*No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields a harvest of righteousness and peace to those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your limp hands and weak knees....*

So let us continue to let these times shape and form us. Let us prevail upon Christ to strengthen our limp hands and weak knees. Let these times keep asking us what really matters and where our true joy and confidence are to be found. And, most importantly, let us pray that we **remember** these lessons and that what they are forming in us **remains** when these days have passed - **as they will in the end!**

I wonder if you have been keeping a journal of your thoughts and things you want to remember that you have learned? Maybe now would be a good time to start so that what are currently times of testing will indeed, when we look back, be times which brought about blessing.

As I quoted from Archbishop Tutu, I will always remain not so much an optimist, but a prisoner of hope! We will get there in the end! And in the meantime, what a blessed church family we have to travel with!

Praying every blessing in Christ upon you,

Rev Karl