

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the first Letter of John (1 John 5:3-4)

In fact, this is love for God: to keep His commands. And His commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – In Christ, we are overcomers; our faith will conquer the world

Without faith, it is impossible to please God (cf. Hebrews 11:6). Our beginning and end is in God. God puts us on the earth for His grand purpose, for His own glory. Infinitely more loving, caring and powerful than any earthly parent, God reveals to us through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ His teachings, laws, precepts so that by following them, we may reach safely the glorious eternal inheritance God has planned for each and every one of His children. *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11).* How are we ever going to find out God’s plan if we do not have faith in Him? How are we ever going to please God if we do not know how to walk in His ways? Mostly importantly, how are we to claim the salvation Jesus has won at great price for us if we do not have enough faith?

Without faith, our idols will be ourselves or other people or things of this earth. God made us His children through adoption in Christ. In the right and natural order, we should render our worship and adoration to God only, our Supreme Good. In the absence of faith the conscience is not properly formed. The difference between good and evil is blurred. With little or no recognition of sin, the conscience is further impaired by unchecked self-pride and disorderly self-love. Herein lies the source of all misery in this world: a denial of sin and of the existence of God. Earth will become like heaven if everyone truly understands the gravity of sin and walks in the ways of our Lord. Instead, we have many false gods in this broken world.

The difference between a Christian and a non-believer is indestructible hope in Christ. Compared to a non-believer, we have indestructible hope in Christ because we possess the truth. We have true purpose and direction. Our world revolves not around ourselves or other people or things but around God, to Whom we owe all our love and loyalty and Who has rightful dominion over all. We are no less than the precious children of God but also know the truth that without God’s grace we can do nothing (cf. John 15:5). Our ultimate hope and dependence is not on our own human wisdom or capability but on God Who can never abandon us (cf. Isaiah 49:15) and Who is always with us (cf. Matthew 28:20). In Christ we can never be in despair.

Faith calls us to fulfillment in righteousness and truth. *To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said, “If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31-32).* Knowing the divine truths of God sets us free from deception, bondage to ourselves and gives us the freedom to be what God made us to be and to walk in His ways to claim our eternal glorious inheritance that God plans for each of His children. Knowing the divine truths releases us from the relentless pursuit of and enslaving bondage to earthly things, and gives us the freedom to set our sights on and work for the higher things that can never fade, rust or be stolen.

Faith enables us to operate on the level of grace open to those who trust in God. When God called Abraham, he was over 70. Yet Abraham was to become the father of nations. When Mother Mary was called to become the Mother of the Saviour, she said ‘yes’ even when she did not understand how she could have a child when she is a virgin. When Jesus called Peter to walk towards Him on the water, Peter rose and walked on the water till he grew afraid and started to sink. Faith enables the believer to operate on the higher level of grace which is not controlled by the physical laws of nature but solely by the divine power of God. This very same all-surpassing grace is just as available to us as it was to the heroes and heroines of sacred Scripture provided we have the requisite faith, faith the size of a mustard seed (cf. Matthew 17:20).

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, St Paul says we should live by faith and not by our senses (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7). Faith is about being sure of things we cannot see. *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see (cf. Hebrews 11:1).* I do not know what tomorrow or the future may bring but I firmly believe my every present moment is within Your Sacred Hands, and that Your divine grace will help me overcome anything in this world even if from the human perspective, it may seem insurmountable. Mary, Mother of Salvation, give me a lion’s share of your faith in God. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk