**MEDITATIONS ON FAITHFUL WITNESS**

**SIM FOUNDER’S DAY 2019**

“Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne and from Jesus Christ, who is the ***faithful witness***, the first born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.” Rev 1:5

**PART 1**

The word for “witness” is “martyrs” in Greek, and has several shades of meaning, including “one who does what he has seen or heard or knows.” However, it does not mean we have to die or be a martyr for Christ to be a faithful witness. Rather, it is about the testimony we bear.

Christ is a faithful witness because he is our great high priest who has offered himself and died and then risen from the dead to obtain new life for the rest of God’s children. He is a faithful witness to God’s Word and work. He completed the work of salvation and is seated at the right hand of God’s throne.

You (your team, the church) are called to be a faithful witness of his wonderful light in a world of big, unfriendly powers hostile to Christ and his kingdom. As Paul said, “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Eph 6:12)

**Please pray:**

* For you and your ministry team and church to find creative ways to be a faithful witness in times of difficulty.
* For protection against the temptations or influences of Satan which might prevent you and your church from being a faithful witness.
* For God’s help as you seek to live a holy and blameless life, as you guard your doctrine and that you might bear fruit in every good work.
* Jesus has called us to be his witnesses. Read and memorise Matt 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8.

**PART 2**

What do we anticipate to be the result of the faithful witness? The answer is found in Rev 7:9-10

 “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

The apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos for being a faithful witness of Jesus. John the Baptist was beheaded for being a faithful witness and forerunner of Christ. We must be prepared to suffer for Christ as faithful witnesses. But we have the promise and assurance of 1 Cor 10:13 and Rom 8:35 that God, in his unfailing love, will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear.

How do we remain a faithful witness and be patient in turbulent times? We must repeat what we know:

* That we are washed from our sins (Rev 1:5) by his blood
* To carry our own crosses daily
* That He is the same yesterday, and today and forever (Heb 13:8, Rev 1:8)

**Please pray:**

1. For courage and perseverance in the midst of personal tests and trials.
2. For churches and believers you know who are going through persecution and martyrdom for the sake of Christ
3. For the Lord of the harvest to send forth his labourers (faithful witness) and that the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of those who are presented with the Gospel

**PART 3**

Jesus Christ is a faithful witness of God the Father because “no one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father” (Jn 6:46). He came incarnating the Word of God, demonstrating grace and truth to us (Jn 1:1, 17-18). All gospel workers are called to incarnate Christ to the world.

This year, SIM pioneered a new initiative called “Faithful Witness in Forgotten Communities” to share the good news of Jesus with those who have never heard it. We have identified several specific communities where there is no church and virtually no Christian witness. Twelve to fifteen workers will be placed in teams and sent to these places, led by an experienced worker. This is in direct response to our purpose and mission statement “to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in communities where He is least known” and our vision statement “to see a witness to Christ in communities where He is least known”

The first three places are:

1. **Thailand**: The city of Ayutthaya, which is the ancient capital city of Thailand but has virtually no Christian witness.
2. **Mali**: The Hassaniya people, in which there are just four known believers among millions, are open to receiving workers
3. **Chad**: A team will work with partner agencies in eastern Chad, among people who have no church in their mother tongue.

**Please pray:**

* For workers to be identified and sent to each of these countries. Pray for each team member and for a total of 45 workers by February 2021.
* Praise God for the first two families who have started with Faithful Witness this year. Pray for the six people who are currently preparing to join a team and for many others who are praying about joining a team.
* Praise God for each of the team leaders. Pray that God would give them wisdom.
* Pray for three new locations to be identified by February 2020 so the work can expand.
* Pray for the already generous funding to continue and for wisdom about how best to use the resources God is providing.
* Pray that we will stay in step with Jesus all the way, led by his Holy Spirit and guided by his Word and His love for all people.