

# I am the LORD; I Have Called You

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15 April • Monday of Holy Week

Isaiah 42:1-9

<sup>1</sup>Behold my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
I have put my Spirit upon him;  
he will bring forth justice to the nations.

<sup>2</sup>He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,  
or make it heard in the street;

<sup>3</sup>a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;  
he will faithfully bring forth justice.

<sup>4</sup>He will not grow faint or be discouraged  
till he has established justice in the earth;  
and the coastlands wait for his law.

<sup>5</sup>Thus says God, the LORD,  
who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,  
who gives breath to the people on it  
and spirit to those who walk in it:

<sup>6</sup>"I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness;  
I will take you by the hand and keep you;  
I will give you as a covenant for the people,  
a light for the nations,

<sup>7</sup>to open the eyes that are blind,  
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
from the prison those who sit in darkness.

<sup>8</sup>I am the LORD; that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to carved idols.

<sup>9</sup>Behold, the former things have come to pass,  
and new things I now declare;  
before they spring forth  
I tell you of them."

## Meditation

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Called to be the servant of the LORD, Israel failed to live up to that call. Will and can the LORD deliver Israel, His servant? Is there still hope for Israel, judged and exiled to live in Babylon? Through the prophet Isaiah, the LORD declares a new thing that He will raise a true Servant. The twist is that this Servant will be rejected, beaten and killed. Yet it is through this Servant's suffering and death that Israel's sins are paid for and God's justice upheld, giving Israel a new hope of becoming the LORD's servant again. But this hope is not for those who insist on their own way and seek their own gain. For them, there is no peace (Is 56:11; 57:21)

In Isaiah 42:1-4 the Servant is presented as having the Spirit's anointing, meek (vv 2-3) and victorious (v 4) and as one who will bring forth or establish justice (vv 1, 3-4), which He has accomplished by bodily dying on the cross for men's sins. In Isaiah 42:5-9, He is commissioned to bring salvation to Jews and Gentiles. "I am the LORD. I have called you in righteousness... to be a covenant for the people and a light to the Gentiles" (v 6).

Like Israel, we may not have lived up to our call to be God's servants. We may have placed our selfish pursuits (idols) above God, or we may not have acted justly at all times. We may now feel unworthy and that there is no hope of us being His true servants again.

The hope presented through the ministry of Christ, the Suffering Servant, to Israel of becoming the LORD's servant again is also presented to us today. Because of Christ's work on the cross, the LORD can call us in righteousness. Will you answer the call to be God's servant and embrace this hope we have in Christ? Or will you insist on your own way?

## Prayer

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Lord, give us faith to believe that You are giving us another chance and calling us afresh to be Your servant today. Help us to let go of our selfish pursuits (idols), and make us true servants who bring others to salvation in Christ. Amen.

## Action

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Get rid of the 'idols' in our lives whatever that may be.

Pray for courage and wisdom to speak to family and friends who are still living in 'darkness'.

Share with them the Good News that Jesus Christ can take them out of 'darkness' into the 'light'.

*Revd Steven Seah  
Associate Dean of Cambodia  
Diocese of Singapore*



I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness...  
-Isaiah 42:6

# And I, When I Am Lifted Up...

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16 April • Tuesday of Holy Week

John 12:20-36

<sup>20</sup>Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup>So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." <sup>22</sup>Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup>And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup>Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

<sup>27</sup>"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." <sup>29</sup>The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." <sup>30</sup>Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine. <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." <sup>33</sup>He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. <sup>34</sup>So the crowd answered him, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" <sup>35</sup>So Jesus said to them, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. <sup>36</sup>While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

## Meditation

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“And I, When I am lifted up...”

We live in a world that is troubled on many fronts. During this season of Lent it's traditional to take time to contemplate and take the opportunity to focus on what is important. Where can we give influence when so much seems beyond our authority?

John's Gospel calls out to us: “The hour is coming, it is time now to focus and follow Jesus.” Each syllable of John's Gospel radiates the brilliant light of Christ—the light that shines out in a troubled world. Christ is the world's light, Christ and no other. Born into our darkness, he became our brother. Read and savour these words and be filled with light to shine. Can you hear the word, do you perceive it?

Jesus doesn't hold back, he tells us straight: “This voice (word) has come for your sake. There will be tribulations and the world lives under the judgement of many worldly powers, but my word will last forever, beyond this world. And I, when I am lifted up...”

It's time now to focus, brothers and sisters. Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Jesus reminds us time and time again, his voice calls out for the sake of the whole world. How will they hear? How will they see that Jesus is our only hope?

Jesus says, “And I, when I am lifted up...” Let others see the Christ light in you. Drink deeply from his word this Lenten time. Lift him up and your light will shine. In this

troubled world that is crying out for hope and truth, lift up the mystery of the Living Word in Jesus Christ.

## Prayer

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Jesus, Son of Man, be lifted up in me.

Jesus, Living Word, I choose to focus on You.

Jesus, Light of the World, teach me to shine Your light for others.

## Action

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Find time today to give thanks that Jesus gave himself to be lifted up for the sake of the world. Take this opportunity to hear from God and to focus on what is most important. Consider how you might be able to bear Christ's eternal light for those around you today.

*Mr Michael Perreau  
Director General  
United Bible Societies*

# In His Name the Gentiles Will Hope

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17 April • Wednesday of Holy Week

Matthew 12:15-21

<sup>15</sup>Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all <sup>16</sup>and ordered them not to make him known. <sup>17</sup>This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

<sup>18</sup>“Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,  
my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.

I will put my Spirit upon him,  
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

<sup>19</sup>He will not quarrel or cry aloud,  
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;

<sup>20</sup>a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smoldering wick he will not quench,  
until he brings justice to victory;

<sup>21</sup>and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”

## Meditation

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The word ‘Gentiles’ has probably done modern readers a disservice, as most of us are not familiar with the term. It actually comes from the Latin, meaning ‘nations’. When this meaning is re-inserted into the text, the significance of the passage becomes clear.

Jesus was ministering in Israel. His presence there resulted in great blessings for the Jews. This may leave some of us feeling somewhat envious of them, leading us to think: ‘If only we belong to that blessed group’. However, Matthew forestalls all these thoughts by citing Isaiah 42:1-4, and thereby indicating that what was meant for the Jews is also intended for all the nations.

None is excluded; national boundaries don't matter anymore when it comes to God's great blessings! In Jesus' name all nations and nationals of the world may hope.

In so doing, Jesus was fulfilling the OT. Although the OT is predominantly about God and the Jews, we do find some portions—especially the bits that speak of God's end-time plan—which enlarge the scope to embrace all nations. What this means is that it has always been God's intention to bless all, regardless of race or language. This comes to pass in very concrete ways through Jesus Christ.

The passage also indicates that Jesus' programme will not fail. Justice and righteousness will prevail for all. What gives rise to greater wonder is the way it is performed. Jesus will not cry aloud or quarrel; a bruised reed he will not break. All the power of God is applied *gently* on us! The end of our tether is not where we find ourselves falling to our doom, but God's gentle hands holding us. If only we believe this and let go of earthly securities, and let ourselves rest in his everlasting arms instead.

## Prayer

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I am like a broken reed and a smouldering wick but in You, dear God, I can still hope. I know You will not renege on Your promises, and therefore my hope in You will never be disappointed. Teach me then to trust You in all that I do throughout my entire life. Amen.

## Action

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Let go of the earthly things that you believe you cannot do without, but trust wholly in our Lord Jesus Christ



instead. You will then find true freedom. Try it today by beginning with one item.

*Dr Tan Kim Huat  
Academic Dean  
Trinity Theological College*

# As Often as You Eat This Bread...You Proclaim the Lord's Death Until He Comes

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18 April • Maundy Thursday

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

<sup>23</sup>For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, <sup>24</sup>and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." <sup>25</sup>In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup>For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

## Meditation

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How important it is to be able to remember significant events in one's life. It can be a source of encouragement and brings HOPE to the person facing difficulties and challenges in life. You may want to recall some significant events or experiences in your life...and you say "It is a pleasure to recall." We abhor graffiti but to the one who did it thinks it's a good way to remember or to leave a message. We erect monuments to capture a historical event, so that future generations can be reminded about the hero or event.

The Passover meal is a memorial meal about the miraculous event of the Israelites on the night of their departure from Egypt. Exodus 12. You may want to read it to help you understand what the Lord's Supper instituted on the night he was to be betrayed means.

Our Lord created the mental image of his passion as

the true Passover Lamb who is a willing and sinless victim for the sacrifice of behalf of sinners. The bread (His body) broken, the wine (His blood) shed. He is the “once and only once and once for all” sacrifice for “It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Heb 10:4).

## Prayer

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In a broken world and in brokenness dear Lord we see ourselves for what we are: sinners whose sins are so great that You came to redeem us with Your blood. We are helpless and restless without You. Thank You for commanding us to “Do this in remembrance of Your one true sacrifice of self at Calvary for all sinners including me.” Amen.

## Action

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I want to come to the Communion conscientiously by proper preparation in heart and mind by His word, acknowledging I have sinned and need God’s saving grace in Christ. Freely I have received and so I must freely give.

*The Right Reverend Solomon Cheong (retired)  
Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Kuching*



...as often as you eat this  
bread and drink the cup...  
-1 Corinthians 11:26

# He Was Pierced...That We Might Believe

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19 April • Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13—53:12

<sup>13</sup>Behold, my servant shall act wisely;  
he shall be high and lifted up,  
and shall be exalted.

<sup>14</sup>As many were astonished at you—  
his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,  
and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—

<sup>15</sup>so shall he sprinkle many nations.  
Kings shall shut their mouths because of him,  
for that which has not been told them they see,  
and that which they have not heard they understand.

**53** Who has believed what he has heard from us?  
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

<sup>2</sup>For he grew up before him like a young plant,  
and like a root out of dry ground;  
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,  
and no beauty that we should desire him.

<sup>3</sup>He was despised and rejected by men,  
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;  
and as one from whom men hide their faces  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

<sup>4</sup>Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup>But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.

<sup>6</sup>All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.

- <sup>7</sup>He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he opened not his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he opened not his mouth.
- <sup>8</sup>By oppression and judgment he was taken away;  
and as for his generation, who considered  
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,  
stricken for the transgression of my people?
- <sup>9</sup>And they made his grave with the wicked  
and with a rich man in his death,  
although he had done no violence,  
and there was no deceit in his mouth.
- <sup>10</sup>Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;  
he has put him to grief;  
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,  
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;  
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
- <sup>11</sup>Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;  
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,  
make many to be accounted righteous,  
and he shall bear their iniquities.
- <sup>12</sup>Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,  
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,  
because he poured out his soul to death  
and was numbered with the transgressors;  
yet he bore the sin of many,  
and makes intercession for the transgressors.

## Meditation

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These verses (Is 53:4-5) are embedded within the Fourth Servant Song (52:13—53:12) in the Book of Isaiah.

You may have come across paintings of the Man of Sorrows, with our Lord Jesus looking forlorn and

depressed. There are also famous hymns which refrain the same idea. If you read verse 4 without referring to the next verse, you can easily come away with the idea that Jesus has a depressive and melancholic temperament. However, verse 4 gives us a fuller picture. Alex Motyer explains:

“The Servant was not an incessant sorrower and sufferer but he was notably so, not by reason of his constitution but because he took our sorrows and weaknesses as his own.” (The prophecy of Isaiah: an introduction & commentary (p. 428). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.)

In verse 5, Isaiah prophesied that the Servant will deal with our sinful state (transgressions, iniquities), our alienation from God (peace) and our brokenness (wounds).

He carried our pain (substitution, verse 4) and took our pain (penal, verse 5). There is some theological debate as to whether this can be rightfully called “penal substitution.” He may have suffered for our sins or on account of our sins, but did he take our punishment?

It is not our interest here to debate this. Either way, the fact is, he suffered for us.

You can respond in admiration and worship. You may even say, I want to live like Him. This response is certainly appropriate, especially in Lent. However, we know that the Servant did not suffer and die to elicit pity from us.

*For He died for our sake* (2 Cor 5:15, 1 Thes 5:10).

As Prayer of Consecration in the Communion Service goes, Christ's death on the cross was "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world".

Our response needs to be one of faith and trust in what Christ has done for us. We will continue to struggle with iniquities, wounds and alienation in its various forms. Reach out to the Christ of the cross today.

## Prayer

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Jesus, Saviour of the world,  
come to us in your mercy:  
we look to you to save and help us.

By your cross and your life laid down,  
you set your people free:  
we look to you to save and help us.

When they were ready to perish, you saved your  
disciples:  
we look to you to come to our help.

In the greatness of your mercy, loose us from our chains,  
forgive the sins of all your people.  
Make yourself known as our Saviour and mighty  
deliverer;  
save and help us that we may praise you.

Come now and dwell with us, Lord Christ Jesus:  
hear our prayer and be with us always.  
And when you come in your glory:  
make us to be one with you  
and to share the life of your kingdom.

*-From Common Worship*

## Action

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Take some time this week to share about the suffering Messiah with someone. Invite him to a church service, event, cell group, Alpha Course or the coming Celebration of Hope rally.

*Revd Canon Terry Wong  
Vicar  
St Andrew's Cathedral*



# Obedient Faith in Jesus

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20 April • Holy Saturday

John 19:38-42

<sup>38</sup>After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. <sup>39</sup>Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. <sup>40</sup>So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. <sup>41</sup>Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. <sup>42</sup>So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

## Meditation

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Jesus died. He is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” in its totality.

Detractors of Jesus Christ have always tried to show that either He did not die (He revived, or someone else died); or He died but did not rise (Disciples stole His body).

Jesus’ death is a fact, as Scripture and historical sources attest. The Apostles’ Creed declares: “He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.” The Son of God, the eternal Word incarnate, died on a cross in obedience to the Father.

If Christ did not die, the curse of sin and death on you and me remains; if Christ did not rise, he is not the Son of God with power, but just another human being condemned to what sin brings, death. Indeed, Christ has died! Christ has risen! Through the centuries, these two beacons of the Christian faith shine with God's love and power—Jesus' atoning, substitutionary death and His glorious resurrection. Hallelujah!

Jesus now calls us to obedient faith, to live courageously a life of total self-giving to serve God and neighbours. Thus Joseph of Arimathea, who had feared the Jews, *took courage* to ask Pilate for Jesus' body (Mk 15:43). Nicodemus, who once sought Jesus secretly by night, *came openly* to embalm and bury Jesus.

They saw “the death of death through the death of Christ” as John Owen puts it, and they believed in Jesus' words: “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” Today Jesus asks us the same question that He asked Martha: “Do you believe this?” (Jn 11:25).

Yes! The night of Good Friday is past; the sun of Easter is rising!

## Prayer

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O Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us Your peace. O risen Lord Jesus Christ, make us instruments of Your peace. Amen.

## Action

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As disciples we learn from Nicodemus and Joseph to overcome the fear of men (Jn 12:43) by believing and obeying Jesus. Let us also grow like Nicodemus in discipleship: seeking Jesus (Jn 3), speaking for Jesus to a hostile audience (Jn 7) and serving Jesus with fellow-disciples despite personal risk (Jn 19).

*Rev Dr Michael Shen  
Principal Emeritus  
Singapore Bible College*

# These Are Written That By Believing You May Have Life in His Name

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21 April • The Resurrection of Our Lord: Easter Sunday

John 20:19-31

<sup>19</sup>On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup>When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." <sup>22</sup>And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

<sup>24</sup>Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

<sup>26</sup>Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." <sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup>Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

<sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup>but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

## Meditation

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“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (v 31)

Apostle John’s objective in all that he wrote in his Gospel is that through it we may believe that Jesus is truly the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing we may have life (eternal) in his name. “These” certainly include the narrative in our text today that shows how Thomas’s doubt was transformed into faith.

Having witnessed Jesus’ death and burial, it was natural for Thomas to doubt the claim of the other disciples that they had seen the Lord alive. I can see myself responding as he did, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

As such, it was particularly comforting to me that when Jesus appeared to Thomas eight days later, he did not rebuke him for his doubt but rather, lovingly invites him to “Put your finger here, and see my hands and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve but to believe.”

It is comforting because like Thomas, I found myself in situations where I wanted to believe but find it difficult because of what I see and know around me. It is comforting because the Lord knows and understand our struggles. It is comforting to know that the Lord Himself is willing to help us deal with our unbelief.

I am also encouraged by Jesus’ concluding words to Thomas, “Blessed are those who had not seen and yet believed.” I envy those whose faith is simple like the

faith of a child. They are truly blessed. I on the other hand struggled with doubt again and again in my life. I had to humbly come to the Lord again and again with the prayer, "Lord, I want to believe. Please help my unbelief."

I am thankful to God that as he did with Thomas, he lovingly helped me and transformed my doubt to faith. I believe he will do the same for you if you are willing to humbly and honestly bring your struggles and doubts to him, asking him to help your unbelief. I believe the Lord will lovingly come to you as He did to Thomas, to me and to many others that through what was written as well as experienced, you will truly believe that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the Living God and through believing, you have the life that is both abundant and eternal.

## Prayer

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O Lord, thank You for Your love for me and Your desire for me to have life abundant and eternal. I confess that doubts do trouble me time and again. I pray that in Your love and grace, that You help me overcome my doubts as You did with Thomas. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

## Action

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1. Take time to reflect upon things in the Scriptures that you consider hard to believe or is true even for today.
2. Bring them before God in prayer, asking him to help you with your unbelief.
3. Record them in your journey and see how God help you overcome them in days to come.

4. Ask God for opportunity to share your experience that others too may have their doubts transformed to faith by the Lord.

*Bishop Terry Kee  
Bishop, Lutheran Church in Singapore  
President, National Council of Churches of Singapore*