

Bowing in Prayer

Suggested Scripture Reading: Luke 21:14-15

Quoted verse:

But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. -Luke 21: 14 (NIV)

Studying in Japan as an exchange student for almost seven months was taxing yet very rewarding. I was away from my family, my most intimate circle of friends, my home church, and my church district. It was difficult. I do not speak Japanese, but I was thankful that a strong Filipino community of scholars welcomed me in the Science City; and English speaking-cafes and supermarkets are around. I also found a church affiliated with my denomination, making my stay more bearable and productive.

A friend once invited me to his birthday party. I did not know any other guests except that we attend the same university. After filling up my plate, I bowed to utter a short prayer. One woman asked about my religion. "I am a Christian," I replied. Other than university life being talked about, it suddenly became a conversation about religion and church. After a couple of hours, some new friends who belong to other religions said they have come to understand Christianity better.

On my way back to the dormitory I pondered, *Did I speak the truth? Did I show that my relationship with Christ is the center of my life? Did I help others to see that love is the focus and the essence of my faith?* Today's verse gave me peace. As long as we keep our relationship with Christ, we can trust God to help us say and do the right things at the right time.

Oftentimes, we find contentment in knowing that living a godly life is in itself a way of sharing the Gospel. Indeed, it is true. But confining oneself to such dimension of witnessing is not enough. The verse quoted above challenges us to verbalize our faith. Speaking about our faith involves knowing the faith. After all, aren't we called to love the Lord our God with all our *mind*, soul and strength?

Prayer:

Lord, give us your grace to allow us to speak on your behalf for your greater glory that people will come to know you and make you known. Amen.

Thought for the Day:

I am a spokesperson of Jesus Christ.

Guide Questions:

1. Do we always speak the truth about our faith in any circumstance?
2. Do our actions show others that Christ is the center of our life? In what ways can we help others see Christ's love?

Under Construction

Suggested Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 1: 1-10

Quoted verse:

For I am confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will continue to perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.- Philippians 1: 6 (NIV)

We can easily get frustrated with a lot of road constructions that cause slow traffic and bumpy ride. Some recently constructed roads are being bulldozed and rebuilt; some are left half-done, unfinished causing a lot of inconveniences. We all bear with the ongoing constructions, they are inconvenient yet necessary. Life goes on.

The suggested Scripture reading and the quoted verse draw parallel to our daily experiences. We usually refuse to be used by and for God because we deem ourselves to be unworthy, incapable, inexperienced. However, just like how infrastructures being built are still and can still be used while constructions are ongoing, we can still be of service to God even if our lives are being (re)constructed by our Master Builder with Him promising to finish to completion the task of restoring us back to his image. It is very inconvenient yet necessary so we can all serve him with our best.

Prayer:

Lord, give us your grace to serve you and your people even if we still being reconstructed in your image. We also rededicate our lives to your tender hands that we may be conformed to your design. Amen.

Thought for the Day:

God can use me even if I am under construction.

Guide Questions:

1. What are aspects of your life that needs major repairs?
2. Who are the "construction workers" that God uses to shape your life?

Contributor of the Month



Richard Mel Caplis, 20 years old, is from Atabay United Methodist Church in the Ilocos South District of Northwest PAC. After serving as an exchange student to University of Tsukuba in Japan, he was elected to be the National Executive Secretary of the United Methodist Youth Fellowship in the Philippines for the Biennium 2016-2018. He also serves as a Certified Lay Speaker of the Church since he was 13 years old. He helped in founding *Imago Dei*, the ecumenical, interdenominational, Christian campus ministry arm of the United Methodist Church in University of the Philippines Baguio. As of this writing he is currently finishing his BA Social Sciences degree from the mentioned university.

RM, as his friends call him, continuously struggles to view everything good as grace of God- undeserved, unmerited generosity of God. Such serves as his personal life dictum. This is rooted in his understanding of the love of God as always prevenient. Though strict and formal in his dealings, he remains approachable and can be a dependable friend. He is thin yet he eats a lot and enjoys *sinigang na baboy* the most.