

# Solidarity with.....?

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Good evening, brothers and sisters in Christ. Allow me to convey the warmest greetings from the Church of the province of Myanmar.
- We have all together six dioceses in Myanmar. The Church started in 1877, and then 1970, we got our own province.
- Here, everybody here, you are holding the Bible because of your teacher is Bible lover, Dr. Paul Barker.
- Actually, I have collected at least three or four verses, but I just gave Dr. Paul Barker just one passage for them.
- So allow me to preach, not so dig down into the Bible, the passage that I give you, but to dig about what we have experienced as a church in Myanmar.
- [ 1 : 23 ] It was in 2008 April in Chunzhong village in the Delta area in Myanmar, when the Sanmi school camp of the Delta region just finished.
- A group of Sanmi school children from the villages came to me. Each family member also came to me and asked me to lay my hands upon them to give the blessings.
- So I did according to their requests. But a month later, it was in second week of May 2008, when the rescued and relieved team from our province went there.
- Only 20 of them left, and the rest altogether, around about 100 people and children, were disappeared and became victims of the Nagi cyclone.
- When I went to this affected area in the first week of John, 2008, the priest in church of that area showed me a photo, a group photo.
- [ 2 : 39 ] I can see the Sanmi school children. In the center is myself, hugging them and smiling them.
- But in this photo, all gone. Only myself left in this wall. That dreadful incident struck me and made me to have deep pain in my heart.
- We can't imagine how much suffer for the remnant who lost their family members and who had faced the Nagi cyclone.
- So, altogether, 200,000 people in Myanmar died by this Nagi cyclone.
- Here, many questions emerged from the people regarding it. What is the main cause of this destruction? Who is responsible for it?
- [ 3 : 49 ] How to face and how to overcome the consequences of this Nagi cyclone? Some may say that the source of this natural disaster comes from the selfishness of the human beings.
- They may say human beings cut the vast amount of the trees from the forests, which maintain the valence of the weather of the world.
- They dig the ground and take out the considerable amount of the wild from it. And we use it as a petrol for the motor vehicles.

This causes a great negative impact upon the ozone, as you know. But the profits of producing timber and oil only go to a few companies owned by very few business persons.

Some may answer this question differently. When we made a combined service of our Christian churches in Yango to pray for the Nagis victims, in the Holy Trinity Cathedral, which Dr. Paul will go and preach there, in Yango, one of the foreigners from Philippines, came to the warship and rose up and shout that, it is a curse of God for the sinners.

[ 5 : 33 ] You don't need to go to that affected area to make your rescue and rehabilitation works. It is a curse of God.

He said like that. Some may say, Oh God, why you allow this dreadful event to happen to us?

Why me? Why us? You said you would protect us from all dangers in Paris. You said you love us.

Now you make us to have a great suffering by this Nagis cyclone. You are so cruel to us. And so on and so forth. Some may say like that.

So, for Christians, how do we respond to this tragic event? And how do we face it? Not only by this Nagis cyclone, you may see, you saw in the refugee camps in Thailand, your brothers and sisters now, wandering around the forest, without food and without shelter.

[ 6 : 45 ] 20 years. Many people die in the forest. Should we say God is so cruel to us? Should we say it is a curse of God for the sinners like us?

Should we blame on others? Because of you, because of you, because of the company? It was so difficult for me to answer these questions. Nevertheless, unexpectedly, when I visited to the affected areas, I had found the answers for these questions.

Before I reached this area, I expected that the Vietangs are so desperate and full of fear and trembling, and they may ask something, they may ask me food and shelter for them.

And then, when I reached there, I was so surprised by their request. they said that, Dear Archbishop, please, rebuild a new church for us as soon as possible, so that we may worship in it and we may have divine strength to face and to overcome all the negative consequences of the Nagy Cyclone.

I was surprised. They didn't ask me food and shelter and medicine and money. Not at all. They just asked me to worship at the building, the church, to send the priests and the catechists to them.

[ 8 : 31 ] I was so surprised and it reminded me to recall two scripture passages from the Bible, the Old Testament. The first one is from Job 1, verse 21, which says, Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I shall depart.

The Lord gave and the Lord have taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised. What a wonderful passage for us to keep in our hearts to face all tragedies in our lives on this earth.

As we know, Job lost all his properties and his children, but he did not blame to others and to God.

Rather, he praised God amidst his tragedies. Another passage is from Job 2, verses 9 and 12.

His wife says to him, Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die. His wife blamed him, but he replied, You are talking like a foolish woman.

[ 9 : 50 ] Shall we accept good from God and not trouble? This time, Job was afflicted with the painful soles from his feet to the top of his head, as you know.

Even he has not, he has to take a piece of a broken pottery and scrub himself with it as he sat among the ashes. How pain he is.

So his wife asked him to cast God, but the response of God, a job for his wife is, shall we accept good from God and not trouble?

Dear brothers and sisters, what is your underlying principle to face all the challenges in your lives? What is our driving force to face and overcome all the problems, difficulties, suffering, tragedies, and pain?

For Job, it comes from his total submission to God, which can clearly see in the above mentioned two incidents.

[ 11 : 11 ] Naked I come from my mother's womb, and naked I shall depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised.

Shall we accept God from God and not trouble? His total submission to God strengthens him to have confidence to see God in his own flesh, which is nearly almost disappeared by his pains and sufferings.

He said like this, And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. I myself will see him with my own eyes.

I and not another. How my heart yearns within me. Job chapter 19 verses 26 and 27.

When the various who are the victims of Nagis asked me to rebuild the church from them to worship instead of asking me food and shelter, I realized how big and strong confidence and trust they have in God like Job.

[ 12 : 31 ] I was ashamed that I do not have such confidence in God like them who have face-to-face experience with the Nagi cyclone who are in great trouble and pain.

If I were one of them, I will ask food and shelter first, and probably I will forget about God or blame God in this situation.

God will help me to help me to help them. I will help me save them but they give me back the spiritual blessings which is to have confidence in God in every circumstances.

God will be to have them. God will help me in every world. They still need urgent support from us.

What should we do? How can we help them? Here a scripture passage comes into my mind and my heart.

[ 13 : 35 ] That is rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position.

Do not be consited. Romans chapter 12 verses 15 and 16. When Saint Paul wrote this letter, he himself was in great danger.

The Christians at the time in Roman Empire were faced with the great persecution. Saint Paul teaches them how to face together that challenge and how to overcome this dreadful event and suffering.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn. Here, Paul teaches us to have solidarity among us, to hold our hands together and to face all challenges.

Therefore, together, with the national and international donors, the Church of the province of Myanmar is trying to help the needy and the affected people, both Anglicans and non-Anglicans, Christians and non-Christians, and so on.

[ 14 : 53 ] By doing so, we try to fulfill its calling as God's hands reaching out to those who are in need and helpless in this war, like our brothers, Karen, in the time border, too.

Despite the loss of many lives and devastated areas, we are deeply tasked by the concerns and help of our international friends from abroad, like ABM or USPG and so on.

Rather, who were real face of humanity, solidarity which has already fulfilled, revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is really the mark of the solidarity.

In fact, one of the characteristics of the church is that we need each other. When we begin to deny this point, we fail.

We fail. This mutual connectedness and dependence or solidarity must be regarded as our core value as we face all challenges in this world.

[ 16 : 09 ] Here, at the last point of the sermon, we need to answer some questions. Why and how do we become Christians? Why the existence of the church in this world?

Especially, I ask myself, why do I become the minister of God? Archbishop? Why do we become Christians? Because it is our own choice or our own efforts to be Christians.

Why the existence of the church in this world? Because the church is for church sake, church activities?

Why do I become Archbishop? Because I have to bossy over others? Here, a scripture passage from the gospel of John comes into my mind, which says, You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.

John 15, verse 16. My dear brothers and sisters, we become Christians not mainly because of our own choice, but because of Christ's choice.

[ 17 : 32 ] We become ministers not because of our own effort and skills, but because of being appointed by Christ. Therefore, we do not own ourselves anymore, but Christ is the Lord and the Master of us.

we should not live according to our will and should not do everything by our own wishes and wills. But according to John, Christ asked us to go and bear fruit.

So, where to go? Where to go? To go everywhere Christ wants us to go. Maybe it is the place full of green pastures and it is besides quiet waters or maybe it is the valley of the shadow of death.

Your brother Tom, Tom, Hop Tom, go to the Thailand border. It is a kind of the shadow of the death, valley of death. Your brother Paul will go to Myanmar.

It is a kind of the valley of the darkness there. what we have to do in these places to bear the fruit, fruit that will last, which is to share the blessings of God to others, the salvation of God to others.

[ 19 : 03 ] To me, the blessing of God is more than the material blessing. It is a spiritual one and much more profound than that of the material blessing, food, shelter, money, and so on.

Moreover, we can share this blessing even though we are faced with problems and difficulties, even though we are in great pain and suffering, like Job and like people from Delta, the Nugget's victims.

response. How did Job respond to the loss of his children and properties? He responded that, Nugget, I came from my mother's womb, and Nugget, I shall depart.

The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised. Christ. When his wife told him to curse God, and when he is in the great pain, caused by the souls, he replies to his wife, Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?

When his friends accused him, he responded to them, full of confidence, that, after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh, I will see God.

[ 20 : 31 ] I myself will see him with my own eyes, I, and not another. To me, these are the real blessings and fruits to bear.

If we have confidence that we are really truly chosen by God, like Job, we will be able to bear the fruits and blessings to others, among our sufferings in every circumstances.

I thank God. People in Balmer are much suffering, much more suffering, 50 years. But we thank God, because among our suffering, God gave us a strength, that, to give a smile to others.

among our tears. We have belief, we have faith, in our diocese in Kompau, in Balmer, we have many grass.

When the drought came, in summer, you cannot find the grass. When the rain comes, some drops come, the green grass come out.

[ 21 : 49 ] we have money, we have no money, no food, no education, but we believe that if we pray to God, to make this green grass to become food and shelter and money, it will become.

this is the faith of the people of Myanmar, the Christians, your brothers and sisters. So, my brothers and sisters in Christ, let us join hands together and bear the fruits to others and let us share the blessings of blessings that we received from God to others.

May God bless you all.