



# St John's Cathedral 聖公會聖約翰座堂

Anglican Diocese of Hong Kong Island  
Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

## Message of Hope: Life is a Gift

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*The Very Revd Matthias Der, Dean*

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Greetings from St John's Cathedral, Hong Kong! This is Dean Matthias Der. Thank you for joining us at this Message of Hope. Peace and grace of God be with you!

Some years ago, an elderly friend shared with me one of his habits in life. Every morning, when he woke up, he would sit by the bed and carefully determined where he was. Was he still here on earth or has he gone above? And when he discovered that he was sitting in his familiar bedroom, he would give thanks to God and be grateful that he had safely passed another night and now a new day had come. He said that when people got to his age, he never knew how much longer he would live so he took every day as a gift, a bonus.

Is this habit too morbid? No, actually it is a good reminder that life in itself is a gift and we should never take it for granted. And if it is a gift, we ought to use it wisely, celebrate it joyfully and live it meaningfully. In the past several months, the world we know of was put in lockdown due to the COVID-19. Many people have got sick and many precious lives have been lost. We should continue to offer our prayers for all those who suffer physically, emotionally and economically at this difficult time. One thing that this pandemic has taught us is that life can be so unpredictable and fragile, therefore, we should never take it for granted. Indeed, every day is a gift from God.

If that is the case, how do we live our days with meanings and purpose? Allow me to share with you a wonderful prayer, written by Philip Brooks, the famous Anglican/Episcopalian priest and later bishop in the United States in the 1800's.

O God,  
Give me strength to live another day.  
Let me not turn coward before its difficulties or prove recreant to its duties.  
Let me not lose faith in other people;  
Keep me sweet and sound of heart, in spite of ingratitude, treachery or meanness;  
Preserve me from minding little stings or giving them;  
Help me to keep my heart clean, and to live so honestly and fearlessly that no outward failure can dishearten me or take away the joy of conscious integrity;  
Open wide the eyes of my soul that I may see good in all things;  
Grant me this day some new vision of your truth;

Inspire me with the spirit of joy and gladness;  
And make me the cup of strength to suffering souls, in the name of the strong Deliverer, our only  
Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We offer ourselves through faith and thanksgiving to God and commit to be his servants and ambassadors for his kingdom. We will discover many new blessings in the people we meet and in the circumstances we find ourselves in.

One way which will facilitate us to do that is to count God's blessings in life. Despite of our worries or how bleak we think our future might be, there will always be things we can be thankful for. Think about the people who had extended their care through a smile, the people who had listened to our worries and those who offered kindness and tangible help when we most needed it. These are moments of God's grace which remind us that our heavenly Father is here. He will never abandon us. He will care and guide us through the thick and thin in life.

Jesus says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these will be given to you." Life a gift from God! Every day is a gift in which we can experience the presence and the love of Jesus and his transforming power. Every day is an opportunity for us to encounter God by loving him and by loving others.

God bless you all. Amen.