

# A Faith Response to COVID-19

*Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. ~ Romans 5:1-5*

When Paul wrote these words, he wrote them to the community in Rome, understanding that professing the Christian faith would bring persecution, oppression, and even violence to the believers. While he did not have a pandemic in mind, these words offer us some direction and perspective in the face of the coronavirus. This is a time of anxiety, uncertainty, fear, sadness, and for some, panic. It is a time of suffering.

For Christians, it is an excellent time to provide a witness to the world. So many things divide us in our church and world today; the threat of a global pandemic is a great opportunity to join together, to unite, and to stand strong in our faith. It is a time to encourage each other, to care for each other, and to put the good of all ahead of the desire of the individual. We all have the power to take basic precautions. [There are excellent resources available about hygiene, social interactions and isolations, self-care and care of others.](#) Beyond the worry and fear we are presented with a fundamental test of faith – to step out in faith for the healing, care, and wellness of God's children everywhere.

Suffering produces endurance – this pandemic will take time to run its course. We will need to stand strong together through some difficult times, even in vaccines and a cure are discovered. But this endurance produces character. Our Christian character is defined by trust in God, strength and security in Christian community, and guidance and empowerment through the Holy Spirit. In prayerful discernment, in reflective contemplation, and in thoughtful decision making, we can move through this time of trial with compassion and grace. It may be that the best way to care for one another for a time is to stay away from one another. It may be that this is an opportunity for us to learn how to be effective digital communities. It could be that we will learn to be more careful and mindful in the way we treat each other.

Through strong and faithful character, we become ambassadors of hope. The more people are able to see others deal with the coronavirus in rational, reasonable, calm, non-anxious ways, the better we will all navigate the current crisis. Those who keep their heads can be agents of God's grace to the few who lose theirs. We certainly must take this virus seriously, but we cannot afford to overreact, to panic, or to give up hope.

By God's grace, we will not only survive this, but we will come through this even stronger. We can become united toward a common cause and a compassionate response. We can love and support each other in concrete and tangible ways. We can make it through this, together. I do not agree with the minds and voices that say that God "sent" this disease, but I am thoroughly convinced that God gives us the power, wisdom, and strength to rise above our fears and concerns to defeat this challenge with grace, kindness, and love. I am praying for all you beautiful people. I invite you to join me in praying for our entire world.

Grace and Peace,

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung