

Challenges of the Christian journey:

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In this season of reflection and renewal, I feel called to share thoughts that have grown out of a deeply painful experience—one that has unexpectedly become a catalyst for my faith journey. It has driven me to wrestle with God, to seek His heart, and to yearn for His grace to heal what is broken within me and in the community around me.

The Bible teaches us a profound truth: all humans are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This is not a statement about physical appearance but a testament to our God-given capacity for love, creativity, and relationship. It is a truth that calls us to see one another through the lens of dignity and divine purpose. Yet, as we are reminded daily, sin mars this image in every one of us. It is not just a list of actions but a condition of the human heart, separating us from the fullness of God's design. Still, in His infinite grace, God offers us redemption and transformation.

This journey of faith has made me keenly aware of the tension we all face as believers: the struggle between what feels natural and what aligns with God's will. This tension invites us not to condemnation but to prayer, surrender, and trust in the wisdom of a loving Creator who knows what we cannot yet understand.

However, I must speak candidly about a growing concern within the fellowship. When division arises—especially in moments when we withhold grace—we risk damaging the very unity Christ died to create. The Eucharist is a sacred symbol of that unity. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, it is a participation in the body and blood of Christ that binds us together. To deny communion unjustly is to build walls where God intended bridges. It risks alienating those who seek Him, weakening the church's witness to a watching world.

Jesus modeled something radically different. He extended grace to sinners, eating with them and sharing life in ways that scandalized the religious leaders of His time (Luke 15:1-2, Mark 2:15-17). His actions were a living sermon that

God's grace is expansive, inclusive, and transformative. To deny grace, particularly in the form of communion, is to misrepresent the heart of Christ. Instead, we are called to embody His example, recognizing that none of us is beyond His mercy and all of us are in need of His forgiveness.

As I continue this journey of faith, I pray for healing—not just for myself, but for the entire community. I pray that we can move beyond division and into the fullness of unity that reflects the love of Christ. I pray for the courage to face hard truths with humility, the wisdom to discern God's will, and the faith to trust Him with all that we cannot yet see.

May we, together, seek to be humbled by His love and emboldened by His grace to love one another as He has loved us.

The victorious one,

Teddy Tran