

## I Have a Secret

A Lord's Flock General Assembly Topic

By: **Sis. Techie Rodriguez, Elder-Founder**

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The world as we know it is face-to-face with a formidable pandemic, gripping everyone with fear, panic, and uncertainty. It is so easy to become despondent with the troubles life throws our way but spiritual strength is our weapon in these trying times.

### 1. Why is it easy for us to lose hope?

#### 1.1 The Outer Self (2 Cor. 4:16)

- St. Paul acknowledged the outer self, composed of the physical body and the mind, as perishing. This frail earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7), is doomed to die and is corrupted day by day by sins, trials, burdens, and problems.

#### 1. The Fallen Nature of Man (Rom. 5:12)

- The fallen nature of man by virtue of original sin causes people to commit all forms of wickedness toward us, hurting us, and causing us to lose heart.

Thankfully, St. Paul shared with us his spiritual secrets that caused him not despair no matter what circumstances he found himself in.

### St. Paul's Spiritual Secrets

#### 1. Fresh Strength for Every Day

- Despite our dying outer self, "our inner self is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16).
- God's grace is sufficient in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9).
- We strive to grow deeper in our relationship with God everyday through prayer, reading the Bible, fellowship with other believers, and going to Church.

### 2. Momentary Troubles Produce Unparalleled Joy (2 Cor. 4:17)

- It would have been easy for St. Paul to lose heart. He caught affliction in Asia that utterly weighed him down to the point of despair (2 Cor. 1:8). He faced countless persecutions and hardships in the course of his ministry (2 Cor. 11:23-29). He knew that his sufferings were temporary and paled in comparison to the eternal reward that awaited him.

### 3. Fresh Perspective (2 Cor. 4:18)

- We must, therefore, fix our eyes on the intangible that is eternal, rather than tangible, which is fleeting.
- Thus, St. Paul urged us to, "rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. 4:4).
- We must dismiss all anxiety and pray with thanksgiving. Then, "God's peace, which surpasses all understanding, will guard our hearts and minds" (Phil. 4:6-7).

When burdens press us to quit, we must remember that nothing we face in this life lasts forever; for the sufferings of this present time are incomparable to the glory we will experience in God's presence (Rom. 8:18).

**Reflection:** What weighs you down that makes you feel like giving up?

Remember that no struggle is meaningless for everything that takes place is part of God's plan.

**Transcribed/Written by:** Sis. Jane Boholano

**Edited by:** Sis. Jennifer Ilagan

**Approved by:** Sis. Vera Tuplano

**Sponsored by:** Sis. Rhia Ilagan