

The Helping Hand

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest” Matthew 11:28

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HOPE FOR THE HOPELESS

James Lee, a young father, phoned a large city newspaper from a telephone booth to give a reporter a heart-breaking story. The reporter frantically tried to have the call traced but it was too late. By the time the police arrived, James had ended his life.

In Lee's coat pocket, the police found a tattered crayon drawing signed in childish print by his daughter, Shirley, who had died in a fire five months earlier. On the drawing, James had written, "Please leave it in my coat pocket. I want to have it buried with me."

Immediately before his death, Lee told the reporter that he had nothing left in the world to live for and felt all alone. James had lost all hope and ended his life in a lonely telephone booth. Tragically, his story is not an isolated case. Our world is filled with people who are overwhelmed with a sense of hopelessness.

Charles Swindoll wrote: "Hope is not merely a nice option that helps us clear a hurdle temporarily. It's essential to our survival."

Our world is indeed filled with people who feel overwhelmed with a sense of hopelessness and one such group of people are the ex-drug addicts and ex-offenders. As essential as it is to our survival, hope does not come easy for an ex-drug addict or ex-offender. Having spent years in their addiction and incarceration, living a life filled with despair and desperation has left many of them without hope or purpose. It is not uncommon to know that most of them have a string of drug and prison records attached to their names and with that kind of stigma coupled with low self-esteem, they simply find it hard to start life afresh. With the inability to cope with their situation, a lot of them would return to their old habits again thus perpetuating this whole vicious cycle even further. Just as the story mentioned above, many of them saw no way out of their situation except to end their lives. They gave up because they saw no hope in living.

Here in the ministry of The Helping Hand, we hope to change that mindset. We want them to know that in spite of their past, there is still hope for them. Hope that makes them into a better person, be it a son, husband, or father. Where would they find such hope? They can find it in the person of Jesus Christ. They will find hope when they place their trust in Jesus and enter a relationship with Him.

The future is always uncertain in human terms, but we have a God who knows and holds the future. In the person of Jesus Christ, all who receive Him receive a hope for the present, the future, even for an eternity. In Him we have an anchor for our soul, firm and secure.

To God be the Glory!

CHRIST Our Cornerstone

WORK IN PROGRESS



John Siva

I would like to thank God for the privilege of sharing my testimony.

My first imprisonment was in 1997 where I was incarcerated for 6 months for consuming and possessing cannabis. Prior to my arrest, I was working for a water-treatment plant as a technician and I really loved my job. After my release, by God's grace, I was given another chance by my boss to get back my old job and I was thankful for that. Unfortunately, I was still unwilling to give up my bad habits of partying and drugs and I was arrested the second time in 2003 for the same offence. This time my sentence was 3½ years in prison. It was hard for me to accept my imprisonment and I felt lost, lonely and went into a depression. During that dark time, I met a brother who shared the love of Christ with me. With this brother's encouragement, I started reading the bible, praying, and attending chapel services and am grateful to God for this brother who helped me begin my journey with Christ.

In 2006, after my release I found a church and began serving there. It was there that I met my lovely wife. God had blessed me with a wonderful wife and opened the door for me to get my old job back once again. Things went well for a while but in 2015, I fell back to my old ways. This time I was sentenced under LT1 with 5 years of imprisonment. I broke down. Because of my addiction and selfishness, I was leaving my wife all alone.

During my imprisonment, she even lost her grandmother and mother and I was not there for her when she needed me most. Despite the hurt that I caused her, she still came to visit me, often with tears running down her cheeks. It was painful for me to see her in such agony and all I could do was to ask God to watch over her and give her the strength to go on. It was during this time that I truly cried out to God and decided to totally surrender my life to Him. Even though it was still tough going in prison, God's peace and presence helped me through.

Towards the tail-end of my sentence, by God's grace, I was chosen to go for a 6-month program at The Helping Hand. Even though I did not know much about The Helping Hand, I was very excited to go because I knew it is a Christian halfway house. At The Helping Hand, I thank God for the four-fold therapeutic program, especially the spiritual program where I developed a better relationship with God through early morning quiet-time, night time bible studies and morning devotions where we have speakers from different churches come and encourage us with the Word of God. I also thank God for the after-care groups and Sunday Church service where I got more spiritual feeding and met a new social circle of friends. I thank God too for my work in the removal department where I have learnt perseverance and teamwork.

I have completed my program but continue to stay on serving in The Helping Hand because I know that the ministry is helping me to grow spiritually and become the man that God wants me to be.

I also take this opportunity to thank the management and staff of The Helping Hand for the love, care and concern they have shown to me. All Glory to God.

GROWING SEEDS FOR NEW LIFE



Many of us get our vegetables from the wet market, supermarket, or grocery store. It is so easy and convenient to do so but have we ever considered how or where our vegetable comes from?



The Helping Hand's Urban Farm took off on 2 April 2020 after a start-up grant was approved by Central Singapore CDC. Urban farming is essentially growing plants that produce food within a city and a plan was initiated to transform a piece of grass patch lying idly behind our premises into an urban farm for therapeutic purposes, help us learn about farming and also produce food for our use.



You do not have to grow up on a farm to be a farmer but if you want to become a farmer, you can. So, with that in mind, we relied on information from reliable sources and sought help from some urban farming enthusiast to give us a helping hand to get our farm going. We started planting Xiao Bai Chai, Kangkong, Lettuce, and Nai Bai and within a month, we had our very first harvest although it was only in a small volume.

Channel News Asia caught wind about what we were doing and did a short write-up about us on 10 May 2020.

Halfway house The Helping Hand happened to start their urban farm this month and

tending to the vegetables has replaced some of the carpentry and furniture delivery activities residents did before the circuit breaker period. An under-used grass patch at the home now has 20 raised vegetable beds that is providing both food and therapy of sorts. "It teaches our residents some very important skills and values, which helps us in some ways as emotional regulators. It teaches them patience, and introduces the green concept," CEO Mervyn Lim told CNA. For now, the vegetables will be cooked and consumed by the residents, but they will look into turning the farm into a social enterprise, and may even open a café, he added.

Resident Toh Chiang Hee, who is in his early 60s, told CNA that seeing the plants grow has given him a lot of joy. "I talk to the seedlings and tell them to grow bigger and taller," he said in Mandarin.

We thank the Lord for this opportunity to start our urban farm and we pray that we will be able to meet all the objectives for why we started it.

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绝望中的希望

詹姆斯是位年轻的父亲，他在电话亭里给大城市里的一家报馆打电话，并向一位记者讲述了一个令人心碎的故事。该记者疯狂似地尝试追踪来电的位置，但是还是迟了一步，当警方赶到现场时，詹姆斯已经结束了他的生命。

警察在詹姆斯的大衣口袋里，发现了一张以童真的字体签名的破烂蜡笔画，那是他女儿雪莉，在五个月前的一场大火中身亡。詹姆斯在画上写道：“请把它放在我的大衣口袋里，我要和它一同埋葬。”

詹姆斯在临终前告诉了记者，这世上没有一件东西可以激发他继续生活下去，他心中一无可念，而感觉到的是完全的孤单。詹姆斯失去了生命中的所有希望，因此他就在一个电话亭里孤独地结束了他的一生。詹姆斯的故事并不是一个单独个案，悲叹的是在我们的社会里，还有许多生命中不知所措，充满着绝望无助的人。

查尔·斯温多写道：“希望不仅是一个美好的选择，它可以帮助我们暂时清除障碍。它更是我们生存的必要因素。”

我们的社会里的确有许多生活在绝望无助及不知所措的人，而其中的一组人就是前吸毒者和前囚犯。因长期生活在毒瘾和监禁中，他们的生命变成没有希望，无奈更失去生存的目的。普遍一般上，他们的名字都有前科或吸毒与监狱的记录，而这污点更导致他们心中的自卑感，使他们更难重新开始新的生命。由于无力应付自己的处境，许多人就重蹈覆辙回到以往的生活，这恶性循环更加恶劣。就如以上詹姆斯的故事一样，他们看不到生命的出路，唯有以结束自己的生命为最终的答案。他们之所以放弃生命，乃是因为他们看不到生存的希望与意义。

在援手之家，我们希望能改变他们这种心态。他们需知道尽管以往生活是如此的潦倒和失落，他们仍然有希望。这希望能使他们成为一个更好的人，父亲，丈夫及儿子。哪里才可以找到这样的希望？就当他们将信心交托给耶稣并与祂建立关系时，他们也就找到了这希望。在耶稣基督里，就是生命的希望。

人称“未来总是一个未知数”，但是我们却有一位知道并掌管着明天的上帝。

因此，所有凡接受耶稣基督的人，在耶稣里，他已领受不单是现今，未来甚至永恒的盼望。在祂里面，我们的灵魂奠定了坚固和稳妥的根基。

荣耀归于上帝！

The Helping Hand

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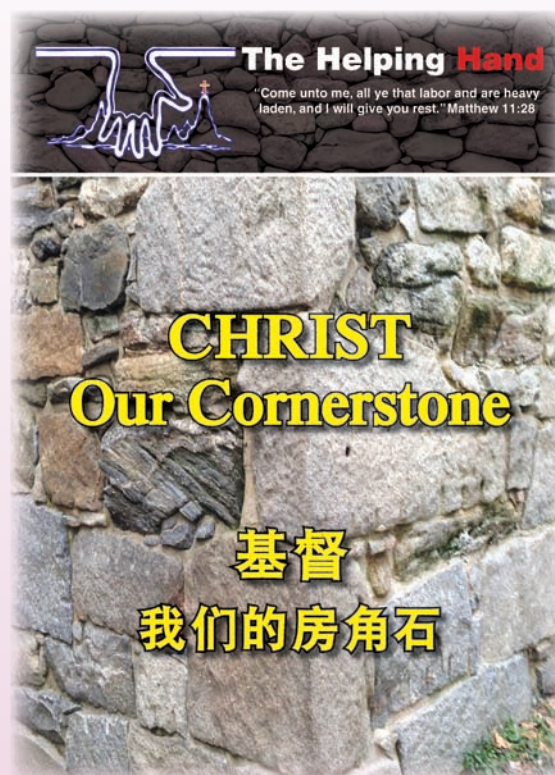
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Pray With Us

The Helping Hand's prayer requests and needs

1. Pray for the staff to continue serving the Lord with zeal and diligence. That together in unity and harmony, they will live exemplary lives that will encourage the residents and bring glory to God's name.
2. Pray that the residents who walk through the gates of The Helping Hand will come to know Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour.
3. Pray that the Lord will bless our Social Enterprise Activities so that we can generate the necessary funds to sustain our ministry.
4. Pray for a vaccine to be found for COVID-19 as soon as possible.

S/No	Items	Amount
1	Supplies for Urban Farming	\$2,000
2	2 Washing Machines (Heavy duty)	\$2,000
3	2 Vacuum Cleaners (Heavy duty)	\$1,000

We are grateful to all the people who are being used by the Lord to provide for our needs. Your every act of generosity is deeply appreciated and is a great encouragement to us as we continue to labour for the Lord.

To donate, please scan the QR Code or click the link below.



<https://www.giving.sg/web/the-helping-hand>

All Donations to The Helping Hand are tax-exempt

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