

GBGM May 12, 2022 Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
‘Hope Does Not Disappoint Us’
Romans 5:1-5

Thanks be to God for Global Ministries. It is an impactful, relevant, and a global change-agent in the United Methodist Church. Humbled by grace, we thank God and know such faithful ministry depends on all of us. I am so grateful for these Board members and friends.

I am grateful to Roland Fernandes, our General Secretary, every single staff person, and every missionary and supporter of our mission in the world. To sit back and count missional blessings would give us eyes of hope and open our mouths to declare the praise of God for such fruitful work as the mission agency of The United Methodist Church.

Hope does not disappoint us.

“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” (Roman 5:1-2).

Yes, I need to claim and celebrate that through the faith handed to me by The United Methodist Church, I have peace. I am justified. I stand in grace. Because of my identity of being United Methodist, I am at peace with God. My hope is that this church will continue to save lives and become the rock of salvation building up every corner of the world, to be a global witness for lost lives in an interdependent network of the generations.

I believe strongly that we are the church of the future and the church of the globally minded, and that requires enlightened dedication and responsible action from us. Because we stand in such grace **hope does not disappoint us!**

As you know, church history reminds us that the body of Christ suffers with divisions and scars. Sometimes because of doctrine, sometimes because of human arrogance and dreams of monopoly, sometimes because of cultural ignorance and racism, the church has always experienced diminishment, and the church has often reduced the power of the gospel to the wages of small-minded

division. Division has wounded those who sought our bread and fish. Sharp strife and separation is a violence to the body of Christ and not why Jesus lived, taught, died, and was risen for us.

We inherit this church, and we always have received it as a bridge and a grace that symbolizes God's love lived out in practical divinity. Since we all need grace, and stand in grace, we hope in grace knowing our **hope does not disappoint us**.

Today, as one of the bishops of The United Methodist Church, I feel some responsibility for our current struggles in this season of division and uncertainty. With you, I seek the way of the Holy Spirit which leads us in paths of righteousness, and to places rich with the anointment of healing. I trust, by grace, we can adventure with hope toward a unity of vision and practical interdependence, knowing this **hope does not disappoint us**:

“And not only that, but we also boast in our suffering, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character; and character produces hope. **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 5:3-5).

As I come to the bended knee of my own authentic self, I look to the holy and enlightened tradition of the church of God, and I come with humility to its Lord with the determination to dedicate myself even more.

I was baptized in the Korean Methodist Church in Korea, I received the theological disciplines of Korean soil. It was there on that troubled and beautiful peninsula that I learned the piety of personal holiness and received the birthright of Wesleyan social holiness.

Even as I travel the farthest limits of the sea as a bishop, I am never far from my mother church, and her passion for piety and missionary zeal.

About 40 years ago when I came to the United States, I became a member of The United Methodist Church, and I accepted that church as my home, the church I have given my life to, and ministered to on bended knee.

I have transplanted my Korean Methodist heart to the United Methodist Church with enthusiasm and I have made a home in its as a Korean American immigrant.

I can say with humble gratitude that I have experienced a heart of hospitality and intentional inclusion as one of many immigrants and ethnic minorities that desire to move into the many rooms of The United Methodist Church. Your love for the poor and your passionate social holiness has given me a sense of being fully at home in The United Methodist Church.

My unique and blessed journey in the church, first serving on the Committee for Peace with Justice, then, seriously living as a Christian in the world, has brought me to the conviction that Jesus Christ's universal grace for all is the supreme teaching of the gospel of Christ. This is the grace in which we stand!

This is my passion, living on American soil as if I had jumped into the fire of love. There is no place God's love cannot reach, and that there was no missionary field that God's love could not save with Shalom.

Whenever living as an ethnic minority on American soil became disorienting and difficult, Wesley's strongly inclusive faith for social holiness held me and kept me at home as a grateful United Methodist.

I was able to experience the gospel of Christ more vividly as a minority and an immigrant in society, and it is this faith that has not disappointed me and has inspired me to bear witness to resist the domination systems with their violent and prejudiced ways. I can tell you from the dust on the shoes of my journey, **hope does not disappoint us!**

Christ comes to my mind more closely living as a stranger and alien in mainstream society. With my past, I have eyes to see and a heart to accept our gospel that requires social transformation and full civil rights for African Americans. With God, I am in relentless solidarity with various ethnic groups, including my sibling pan-Asians making America a racially egalitarian society, through daily practice and steadfast love. Can we make this house our home?

This is the beautiful heritage and hope of The United Methodist Church. It is a beautiful movement with a proclamation to accept each other and increase racial equity. Such **hope does not disappoint us!**

As I serve the church, with deep gratitude for the whole body of Christ, I drop to the knees of my heart overwhelmed with blessing that cannot be compared with anything on the earth. The Lord who illuminates the inner world with passion for universal salvation brings us hope continuously fixed on the global church, not a church with a US-centric mind. I stand among you by grace as a global missionary proud and grateful to be a part of The United Methodist Church that understands how to strategically serve the needs of global migration.

Can you cherish with me the theological heritage of The United Methodist Church with its living theology, its intelligence, experiential wisdom, and heart for cosmic unity and devotion?

Practical hermeneutics for the gospel lived in the field of history is our daily bread. My Christian hope is renewed as Wesley's was, by a keen intellect and vital piety that is not anti-rational nor anti-intellectual. God will give us a measure of honest faithfulness for a world that is now in conflict and longing for change. Such **hope does not disappoint us.**

We do not cling to the idols of certainty. We are a church that humbly asks questions and constantly struggles in the search for clarity. We can live without easy answers because of the grace in which we stand.

It is vitally important that The United Methodist Church strives to be people with a global vision. We cannot be diminished by a US-centric mindset. We must listen sincerely to global perspectives. I believe we will not have the passion to love our global neighbors if we view the world through the lenses of North American imperialistic and colonial self-interest. We must not promulgate this self-absorbed view of the gospel. Our kingdom is not of this world.

For this reason, the United Methodist Church must thoroughly reject the dogma-heavy faith of the United States. It is tired and it cannot take us any further. Our commitment must be to design strategy and policy with a third world horizon of

the poor Christ, where God's heart is grieving and lingering. Then may our church become the church of God.

The poor members of the body are indispensable, says Paul. They show us who we are and who we have not yet been. May The United Methodist Church, like its Lord, give its life away to the poor and work with the poor, difficult as it may be. With so many people leaving their land for food, or for safety and peace, we must treat these members as indispensable for the body. We can only stand in grace with a **hope that does not disappoint us.**

Thank you, my dear fellow workers in the UM vineyard. Let us bless God with wise, just, and endless love. **Hope does not disappoint us.** Thanks be to God, Amen.