

Six Ways to Bear Witness in a Pandemic

BY **ISAIE NDAYIZEYE**

HOPE Rwanda Co-Director As co-director of the Rwanda savings group program, Isaie oversees spiritual integration efforts and manages relationships with HOPE Rwanda's church and ministry partners. Starting as a field coordinator in 2011, he became HOPE Rwanda's spiritual integration coordinator in 2014. An ordained pastor in the Pentecostal church, Isaie leads and nurtures HOPE staff, partner staff, and volunteers and has been instrumental in increasing church partner ownership for the savings group ministry. He has a degree in education from the National University of Rwanda and served as a teacher prior to working for HOPE. Isaie is married to Rachel, and they have three children: Jassiel, Ithiela, and Jaden. www.hopeinternational.org

The COVID-19 pandemic is a time of much fear: fear of hunger, loneliness, lockdowns, poverty, even death.

It's also a time of loss. Weddings are canceled. Graduations are missed. Church buildings are empty on Sunday mornings, and many businesses are closed.

At HOPE International, we've been asking the question:

Amid this fear and uncertainty,



how do we **bear witness** to Christ and His Kingdom?

Thankfully, we can look to the example of Jesus to see how He reacted in the face of doubt, loss, and hardship.

Abide in God's Word.



When Jesus was tempted in the desert (Matthew 4), He turned to Scripture. Sometimes God's Word is our only solution, our only rest, our only response. May we encourage one another to abide in the Word of God and find our strength within. May we also find creative ways to share its hope and truth with others.

Pause for prayer.



In Matthew 14:22-27, after miraculously feeding thousands, Jesus sent His disciples ahead so He could spend time alone with His Father. From this time of prayer, He saw that the disciples were caught in a raging storm and met them on the water. We are often busy with good things, but now is an opportunity to pause, pray, and focus on what's most important.

Look beyond ourselves.



While hanging on the cross, amid His own agonizing suffering, Jesus looked down, saw His mother, and cared for her needs by designating John as her son (John 19:25-27). Each of us experiences these challenges differently, but let's keep our eyes open for ways we can reflect the love of Jesus to others.

Care for physical needs.



In John 21:5, Jesus met the disciples at the edge of the sea. They'd spent the entire night fishing but caught nothing. Jesus saw that they were hungry and tired and provided miraculously. How can we follow His example to help others meet their basic needs?

Encourage one another.



After His resurrection, Jesus repeatedly encouraged followers in their moment of hopelessness. He met them where they were, in their isolation and despair, to provide hope and peace (see John 20:11-22, Luke 24:13-34).

Show humility & grace.

In John 13, in the critical context of His Last Supper, Jesus washed everyone's feet. Even Peter, who would deny Him. Even Judas, who would betray Him. Their feet were dirty, and He washed them. A tangible example for us in this season: Our church partners are distributing food to all who are in need, not only their members. You know when you're watching a live soccer match? You're afraid because anything could happen to your team. But after you've won 1-0, when you're re-watching highlights, you don't have that fear—you may even smile because you know your team won.

It's the same for us now, despite the uncertainty brought by the coronavirus pandemic. We know the outcome. Jesus is not overwhelmed; He is not surprised—He has already won.

So, as we continue to bear witness to the Kingdom in this season, may our eyes remain fixed on Jesus, the King. He is our hope, our peace, and our victory.



Each month, we send out a list of prayer requests from around the world to a group of dedicated supporters who partner with us through faithful prayer. Will you join us? 