In Times of Trouble try not to grow weary of doing Good.

Many of us have been looking on with dismay at the sudden fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban. Afghanistan is one of the most beautiful, stark yet hostile countries I have ever been in, you could actually feel the oppressive presence of Satan and his legions in this part of the world. Over the last few thousand years this country has seen many empires come with mighty plans and leave with their tail between their legs, from Alexander the Great, to the British in the 1800s, Russians in the 1990s and over the last 20 years the Americans. It has seen the sacrifice of many lives and the damaging of others – spiritually, mentally and physically.





I spent a short time there late in 2009 and early 2010, my role was to pastor the Australian military flock by conducting services at the Ghan Chapel with it's cross of sacrifice, managing Poppy's, visiting the patrol bases and conducting memorial services for some of those who had fallen, enduring the same privations that the others faced – rocket attacks, frustration, weariness, depression with the 'ground hog day' and how to encourage others when you felt flat as well as moments of laughter.



There are a many of things that have remained with me however two of great note – one was the cross of sacrifice that was in the Ghan Chapel. This had been largely organised by CHAP Stephen and I quote CHAP Charles' eloquent statement about this cross *"at the front, behind the altar of The Ghan Chapel is a large cross bearing a Crucified Christ. My chaplain colleague's intent was to remind all who visit The Ghan Chapel of the sacrifice made by Christ for us all; and the sacrifice our soldiers have made in that particular theatre."* The 'light' behind the wooden cross was made from parts of Australian vehicles that had been destroyed by IEDs. This cross is currently located at the Kapooka Chapel.

At this time, we can despair of the apparent futility of the sacrifice of Australian soldiers in Afghanistan however if we pause and reflect on Christ's sacrifice at the time His death seemed futile, however this futile act has had eternal consequences for many and has enabled those who accept the 'foolishness of the gospel' to become redeemed children of God.



One of the other things, that struck me, was the relevance of the Gospel message and Jesus' parables. In the parable of the Sower (one of my favourite) we hear about the Word (seed) falling on different types of soil. In the first photo (taken whilst on foot patrol with soldiers) this came into real focus as seen in the photo, you can see the fertile ground, the stony ground when stunted plants would grow and the hardened pathway where nothing will grow. I am sure that through the faithful witness of Christians in Afghanistan that many of the foreign soldiers who served there and some of the people of Afghanistan will have come to a lifesaving knowledge of Christ.

As Paul stated in Galatians 6:9 – *Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

So take a moment to pray for those who served in Afghanistan, their families as well as the people still there, that Christ will change the hearts of the leaders of the Taliban and they may become like Paul. Pray also for peace and calm to prevail on that Nation that has only known war and conflict.