

AN ENCOURAGING WORD FOR TROUBLING TIMES #104 (by Rev. Dr. Alice Wolfe, 8/4/20)

“??!! ?!?! !!??”

“??!! ?!?! !!??” That’s pretty much how many of us (myself included) feel about this coming school year... (and other aspects of life). We all face so much uncertainty and so many questions...

PARENTS: [Hybrid model] Where are my kids today? Wait—we’re all virtual now because someone has COVID-19? Is that for both my kids in separate buildings? [Virtual model] How am I supposed to work full time and homeschool my children full time? What if I have no or inadequate internet service? [In person schooling Mon.-Fri.] Do you really expect my young child to wear a mask or practice social distancing? What if my child gets sick... or unintentionally infects someone else... (who gets really sick or dies)?

STUDENTS: I have to go to school/stay home? How do I do this? Where’s my computer? What is my assignment? Who’s my teacher? Why can’t I ____?

TEACHERS: You’re telling me I need to prepare three different lesson plans (virtual, hybrid, in-person) for every day? How am I supposed to teach ____ virtually? What if I get sick? You seriously think we can keep young students from hugging each other, touching each other, sharing chapstick or supplies or facemasks?

With all the messiness and craziness of our world today, many of us may be feeling overwhelmed, exasperated, or afraid. How do we deal with the stress and all the unknowns and uncertainties?

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7, NIV)

As Paul sat in a Roman jail, not knowing whether he would be released or face death, he wrote a letter to the church in Philippi to encourage them in the midst of the scary and uncertain times they faced. His words can help us, too...

Turn to God and trust him... God’s got this, even if you don’t... Turn your worries into prayers... Tell God your heart, your concerns, and your needs... and thank God... Thank God for all he’s done... Thank God that he is with you and will never leave you or forsake you... Thank God that he knows what’s going on (even when you don’t), and that you can trust him to help you one day..., and one step at a time... As you let go of the burdens in your heart, God will fill you with his presence and peace... May it be so...

PRAYER:

[Take a few deep breaths..., in... and out...] Loving Father and God of all Creation, I trust you and am turning to you for your help and peace...I need you! Thank you that you are with me in this messy and crazy world! Thank you that you are bigger than and can overcome any problem I face! Thank you for always being with me and going before me! Thank you for always hearing my prayers! Help me learn to rest in you... I’ve been worrying about ... but now I lift them to you as prayers... Thank you that you are bigger than and can calm or overcome any storm I face... Calm the storm within me... and help me to trust you... and rest in you... one moment at a time... We pray for all parents, students, and teachers; give them your wisdom and peace. And, we pray that the pandemic will end soon! Amen.

LIVE IT!

Learn Philippians 4:6-7 so God can use it to remind you of his promise, presence, and peace... Before you start your day, take at least a few minutes to pray, praise, and receive God’s peace.