

## Pandemics and Sour Milk

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For nearly 30 years I have journaled through my quiet time. Events. Prayers. Emotions. All together. This morning as I sat outside in the backyard fretting over this virus and the accompanying ripples, I wrote down all the things that could happen just to voice my fears. Could this get worse before it gets better? Yes. Could the stock market tumble and I lose my savings and investments? Yes. Could people I know get sick? Yes. Could people I know die from this? Yes. And as I started to write that last yes, my pen wrote yet. Yet.

***“Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope....”*** That’s a verse from Lamentations. I know it well because yet was my word for the year in 2016. The whole passage goes like this,

*“I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is. So I say, “My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the Lord. I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them and my soul is downcast within me. YET this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”* [Lamentations 3:17-23](#)

There is just a slight difference in the word yes and the word yet.... But it is HUGE. Could the worst happen? Yes, it could. Yet we have hope. The Lord’s great love is with us. His compassion and mercies are new every single morning. His mercies replenish every morning even more regular than Walmart or Costco can restock the shelves. There is plenty for everyone. We don’t need to line up. We don’t need to hoard it to make sure we get our share. Like manna in the desert. It’s just enough and just when we need it.

I now have time to sit and contemplate all of this because we don’t have school. Arizona has AT LEAST the next two weeks off. We are putting together online curriculum for our students in case this is a long haul. Well, my curriculum happens to be Old and New Testament. I had prepared lessons for my students before spring break. My 7th graders would start Philippians and my 8th graders would continue in 1st Samuel. I think God has aligned us well. Philippians is one of the letters that Paul wrote while he was under house arrest in Rome! Four whole chapters reminding his friends to rejoice during affliction written by a man compelled to live with social distancing by the government. Here’s what he said:

*“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which*

*surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” [Philippians 4:4-7](#)*

Weird how timely that is now.

Now my 8th graders are reading through the story of Saul and David. We’re right to the part where Saul is chasing David and trying to kill him. David’s very life is at stake and he pens quite a few Psalms. One is [Psalms 4](#). It begins like this, ***“Answer me when I call to you O my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; be merciful and hear my prayer.”*** It ends like this. ***“You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound. I will lie down and sleep in peace for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.”*** David had joy even when he and his men were without provisions and on the run for their lives. Timely again.

Jeremiah, King David, Paul. All three men from different generations and periods in history faced with adversity and hardship, yet all three show us the steps we can take to finding peace in turmoil. Go ahead and cry out to God. He can take it. He wants us to come to Him. Remember and Rejoice. He has done so much for us already and he wants us to call it to mind and have joy. And then have more joy. That’s what REJOICE means... Give thanks. And then what will happen? We will have hope. The peace of God will guard us. We will sleep in peace.

I know this isn’t a typical post. But it’s what has been on my heart all day. This day that started off with uncertainty and fear didn’t get much better. Our dog Duke died today. We walked with him right up to the Rainbow Bridge where Karl was waiting to greet him. Tonight we opted for comfort food for dinner. Cereal. As I took the first bite, the milk had turned sour. Seriously. Country songs have covered days like today. But I don’t want to look at the circumstances around me and turn fearful or bitter. I want to act and react as Christ would. Living also like Jeremiah, David, Paul who followed hard after God.

Could this worldwide pandemic disrupt all we know? Yes. Could your dog die today? Yes. Could you eat nasty cereal that makes you want to spew? Yes. ***YET THIS I CALL TO MIND AND THEREFORE I HAVE HOPE.*** Thank you, Jesus, for new mercies that I don’t have to stand in line or elbow people to get. Regardless of the news. Regardless of the panic and fear on social media. I will choose Joy. I will choose it again. And Lord... May I sleep in peace tonight knowing that you are on guard.