



“KEEP OUR MINDSET ON HIM!!”

- Our **mission** is to *Reach* people in the Name of Jesus; *Disciple* people in the Way of Jesus; *Empower* people in the Service of Jesus.
 - Our **method** is to ensure that everything we do is *Christ Centered; Word Focused; & Ministry Minded*
 - Our **message** is *the Gospel*.
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Philippians 4:8-9 The Message (MSG)

“ 8-9 Summing it all up, friends, I’d say you’ll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.”

Prayer

“Father open my eyes, so I can see Your truth. Open my ears, so I can hear Your Voice. Open my mind, so I can understand Your Word. And open my heart, so I may receive all that You have for me, that is for me. In Jesus Name, AMEN!”

Thought:

These days as I watch the news, whether morning, noon or evening, I'm convinced they should no longer just casually call it the morning or evening news, but they should call it: **The Anxiety Hour**. I imagine if you watch it too, that you probably feel the same way.

You see the tears. You see the evil. You see the injustice. You see the pain. You see the prognosis. You see no answers. You feel helpless. Etc.

If you could do something to change anything, you would; but then you think, "*what can I do?*" You assure yourself, even your loudest call would ring hallow and uncared for, in this echo-chamber called the world and current Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. **Everything seems and feels so surreal!**

There is an undercurrent of fear. The tensions under the surface of forced calmness are like riptides. They are rising. We all see them. We want to turn away. Pretend. Run. Hide. Cry. Scream.

I'll be honest, yesterday with President Trump 's extension of social distancing guidelines until April 30, meaning American life will remain shut down for at least another month, I did have my own emotional outburst in exasperation. I think I lamented and expressed angst and consternation all through the rest of the evening and night.

This morning however, during my time of prayer and solitude, I felt a conviction in spirit, almost being reminded of how I had thrown my hands up in unbelief, in response to the latest news about the extension. A question entered into my mind and spirit: "***Is this what Jesus called us to? Self-preservation and dread? Worry and anxiety?***"

If we fill our mind with the grim, we can hardly keep our mind set on Him. We can't see if we are blinded by the anger that boils over in our heart. We get distracted and what emerges doesn't look or sound like love, compassion, empathy or concern. Which means, it doesn't look or sound like Jesus.

What hit me was this: Jesus never called us to hone in on what's wrong with everything, He called us to remember God is in control of everything. This is peace!

As I have stated and expressed before, I wish to express our spiritual closeness, not only to our members, family and loved ones, but to all those who are suffering. We are thinking of those all over the world who have already contracted the virus, and we extend our condolences and sympathies to all those families who have had loved ones die as a result of COVID-19.

You are all in our thoughts and prayers today! We ask God to gather you close in love and protection and to be with those who are caring for you or who you might be caring for.

In prayerful solidarity we also think of those who have been laid off from work because of these unprecedented circumstances: the travel, retail, and hospitality industries seem to have been hit very hard in recent weeks, amongst others, and many of you have taken cuts in hours and in pay. Many small and medium enterprises have collapsed or had to be temporarily shut down. Many people in our society simply live from week to week and while this crisis is difficult for most – it can present seemingly impossible burdens for some. Thus, social solidarity and compassion during this time of social distancing is essential.

During these days I want to assure you that the First Baptist Church West College Hill family of God continues to gather around you, to accompany you along this valley of darkness and fear, with prayer, consolation, and hope in our Faithful and Unfailing God!

"But let all who take refuge and put their trust in You rejoice, Let them ever sing for joy; Because You cover and shelter them, Let those who love Your name be joyful and exult in You. For You, O LORD, bless the righteous man [the one who is in right standing with You]; You surround him with favor as with a shield." (Psalm 5:11-12)

Prayer of reflection you might pray this week: "Dear God, I am prone to worry. I let the happenings of the world sit heavy on me. I need to find Your peace. I invite You to restructure my thinking. May my hope be You. May my peace be You. May Your love flow out from me. Give me clarity. May I change what I am able to change and release what I can't. May I know that the greatest joy is staying where You are. Lord, I know that You have the whole world in your Hands. I need not fear because You are the best manager, orchestrator and caretaker. You made it all. I believe in Your plan. This is my prayer in the matchless, wonderful and compassionate name of Jesus, Amen!"

May God continue to bless and protect you always!

Pastor King