

20200503 Isaiah 35:4 FEAR - PART 1 - WHY WORRY?

FEAR - PART 1 - WHY WORRY? (In the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic of 2020) The relationship between Pain, Fear, Worry, and Anxiety

Many have said, "Worry is like a rocking chair. It will get you started, it just won't take you anywhere."

Worry is born in fear. Fear is the emotion that arises within us when we expect some negative event or outcome. When those events happen, from past logic or experience we know that we will feel pain. I think it is really the pain that we are afraid of. It is the fear of us being unable to control the outcome of some set of circumstances that will bring us pain. That fear then gives birth to anxiety which is the doom and dread felt while anticipating whatever is the thing that is feared that will cause the pain. When I was little and would worry about things, my mother would say, "It'll be okay". Mom was right because mom knew that the Lord Jesus who had loved me and redeemed me, would take care of whatever was worrying me in that moment. The solution didn't always happen as fast as I wanted it to be resolved, but she let me know that God was sovereign in my life and NOTHING would happen to me that was outside of the knowledge and concern of my shepherd who loved me totally. I remember when we used to have a flat tire, or be stopped by a train in traffic, or have some other thing delay us, mom would talk about all the things that God might be protecting us from: a bad wreck, an airplane crash, a negative that had been stopped because of His divine mercy and grace.

Fear is common to all of us. I did a study this last week about fear and I found 18 different words that are variants used in Hebrew and Greek in the scriptures that mean fear or that are related to fear. Before we talk about the fear that cripples us, I want to say that some fear is what is put into us to protect us.

Fear can be a protector and preserver. For example, if a young child knows that a hot stove will hurt them, out of fear they won't put their hand on things that they know are hot. If we see a man with a gun who looks like he may be menacing, we run the other way. We stay away from cliffs and high things because we fear falling, based on the knowledge we have of what happens when a person falls from a high place. A good fear of being in danger is born out of prudence. Prudence is knowing before hand (or thinking through) the consequences of your thoughts and

actions. Prudence is when we know the hot stove will burn us, we fear the pain of that burn, so we stay away from the hot stove. That's not the kind of fear that cripples us.

I want to talk today about crippling paralyzing fear. It stops you in your tracks and derails the very best you. We have all seen this country gripped in fear over the Covid-19 virus. The media is serving up fear 24-7 on every news outlet. I'm going to put some of those fears right out there:

1 Fear of catching the disease or fear of a loved one catching it. We think through the painful horrific death of not being able to breathe. We fear being left alone if our loved one doesn't make it. What will we do? How will we survive? How will we move forward in life? These are the kinds of questions that eat away at our minds; they rob us of peace/shalom.

2 We also fear this thing going on for months. It is stressful to just go to the store to get the groceries and the things that we need. It has so disrupted our lives in so many ways, we just can't think of what it will be like if it goes on for months (or some folks have said even years). This fear of things going on for months is the fear of the unknown. This leads to worry of the unknown: will I keep my job? Will the economy collapse? Will my stock portfolio disappear? Will I be able to get food? Will my life ever get back to "normal"?

3 Then there is the fear of this Covid-19 creating social instability. There now seems to be a war against anything and everything the president suggests or recommends. If he maintains self-isolation, the economy may collapse. If he opens the economy up, the death toll may be unbearable. I've heard folks express fear that the Chinese might have actually engineered this virus as an act of war against the west. Could we be in the middle of a bio-war and we don't even know it? Yesterday someone asked me if I believed that Trump might suspend the election. These fears are all seated in the unknown. They are fears of the pain we will experience if it all comes tumbling down. Portfolios lost, a currency ruined, and system in collapse.

These fears of the unknown can wreak havoc on our psyches. Some of us are beginning to feel like we're going crazy or something. I go out pretty much every other day or so, and I am careful. I sometimes put on an N95 mask and gloves. I feel silly, but I don't want to needlessly put my hand on a hot stove.

So, some of this fear that we are feeling is like the fear of putting your hand on a hot stove. It is constructive fear. We know that this is a contagion being spread across the earth primarily from one person to another. We've been told to enact social distancing, but even introverts are growing weary of it. It has been prudent to have time alone; to stay removed socially from others. This slows the contagion, and it buys time to figure this thing out.

But as I mentioned, many people have been ratcheted into total anxiety about the Coronavirus by the media. Some of that fear is justified, but some of it produces excess anxiety that hurts more than it helps. So, what does God say to our fearful hearts?

God says in Isaiah: *"Say to those with fearful hearts, 'Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you' "* (Isaiah 35:4). You see, God knows that we will fear the "enemy" whatever it may be. He knows that we will grow weak and begin to be consumed by our fears. He wants us to be careful in how we deal with the enemy (even if it is a virus), but to understand that the final outcome is in His hands.

Jesus says in Matthew: *"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own"* (Matthew 6:34).

So, the first thing we know is that as humans, we are going to fear. We also know that this fear of some unknown pain will produce anxiety and worry, and Jesus tells us to stop and focus on the day at hand.

Jesus had a lot to say about worry. He reminds us in scripture, over and over, how much He loves us and how trusting in the Lord can give our weary and worried minds our greatest rest.

Matthew 6:25-27 *"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?"*

Matthew 6:34 *"Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."*

Matthew 11:28-30 *“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

Luke 12:25 *“And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?”*

Jesus is saying over and over **WORRY WON'T CHANGE ANYTHING.**

The Apostle Peter had been a worrier his entire life, and when he sat down to pen his memoirs (so to speak), and he wrote.

"CAST ALL YOUR CARES (ANXIETIES) ON HIM FOR HE CARES FOR YOU!" (1 PETER 5:7) Peter is saying put all the things you're anxious about before the Lord, and leave the outcome up to Him because He loves you and He cares about you.

I have just begun studying New Testament Greek and it is a joy. I'd like to share something that I've just learned. We need to look again at that primary passage we read a few minutes ago

In Matthew 6:25 Jesus commanded His followers, *“Do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”*

The tense of the Greek verb is properly translated, “Stop worrying.” But the tense of the verb changes in Matthew 6:31. Let me read those last couple of verses to you, ³¹ *So do not worry, (this should read 'don't start worrying') saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’* ³² *For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.* ³³ *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.* ³⁴ *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

So, why am I talking about all this verb tense stuff? I'm doing it to show you that Jesus is saying **"If you are worrying, quit; if you haven't started worrying, don't start!"**

God's Word is clear—believers are not to be given over to anxiety. I've told you all over and over that there is no room for fear in the heart of a believer. But it's not simply a cold, abrupt command we have to follow about stopping our worry. Scripture is clear that we should not ever focus on the plans, needs, and uncertainties of tomorrow. We should not be manic in our pursuit to avoid the pain they may or may not come. And, scripture is totally clear about where our focus should be. This was true when Jesus said it, and it's true right now. *“Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).*

What will this bring us? It will bring us peace. Jesus said, **John 14:27** *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”*

We will talk more on Sunday about practical steps to help us replace the worry in our hearts with God's peace.

FEAR - PART 2 (In the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic of 2020)

Sunday Morning - April 26, 2020

Overcoming worry and anxiety and replacing it with Peace

Worry originates in the fear of pain. We worry because we fear loss of some kind. It might be the expectation of pain, or a loss (like the death of a loved one), but worry is always tied up in the expectation of something bad happening.

I've been asked if it's a sin to be a chronic worry wart. I'm not sure it's a sin, but I CAN tell you that it is not the way God wishes us to live. I do know that a person who is a worrier is unable to have a positive path forward for their lives. It is easy to worry yourself sick or at the very least to become immobilized by fear. As I've taught many times at Union Grove, worry will leave you totally stressed out and paralyzed.

As I spoke on Wednesday, when we worry, we end up worrying about things that we can't control or do anything about. We looked at Matthew 6 where Jesus said, " 'Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?' (Matthew 6:27)." What Jesus is basically saying is, "Don't start worrying about ANYTHING. And, if you do start worrying, then stop!"

Someone in our congregation wrote me a text this week and said, I don't really have trouble with worry, but it is anxiety that is my problem. Anxiety is worry lived out. **Anxiety** is your body's natural response to stress. It's a feeling of fear or apprehension about what's to come. You might feel anxiety on the first day of school, or maybe going to a job interview, or giving a speech or a sermon. That anxiety you feel is born in being fearful or nervous about some discomfort or pain that's looming out there.



So what is the cure to worry? Well I'll tell you. It is TRUST. To rid yourself of worry, you must trust in His love and protection. God loves me and He loves you, the the proof that He loves each of us is that He sent Jesus who gave His life for my salvation and yours.

If we can trust God for our eternal destiny, then we can trust Him for our daily needs. Jesus said in

Matthew 6:34, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself,' (Matthew 6:34)."

So, how do we go from the head knowledge of believing God will take care of our tomorrow to the heart knowledge of resting in Him to do so. How do we get beyond anxiety and fear to shalom. I think it comes from perhaps putting your worries into His hands every day. You do it over and over. When fear and anxiety come, take them to the Lord in prayer. When the worries of life threaten us, we must answer them with the truth of God's Word. You will never get over your anxieties and worries until you know what the Bible has to say about them, and until you believe in your heart that God will do what He says He will do. The Bible is clear that God knows all about your situation. He knows all about what's going on in your life, and you can trust Him for the future because He loves you and knows what is best for you.

I want to be very clear about something. This does not mean that you shouldn't plan for the future or take whatever steps you can to deal with the possible loss of your job, or take steps to avoid this Covid illness going on. As I told you all on Wednesday. You do your part, and leave the outcome to God. If oil hits rock bottom, don't stake your future in a job in the oil field. I'll tell it to you maybe in a funnier way, If the grocery store runs out of toilet paper, don't wring your hands and sit waiting for the store to get more toilet paper. Ask God to help you figure out how to keep yourself clean. This may seem trivial to you, but what I'm saying is, "Don't worry. If you can do something about your situation, then get off of your backside and do something about it. If you can't do anything about it, trust God that He'll take you through this painful difficult time.

For example, many of you all know that I have a little female dachshund that I love and adore. A week or so ago, she suddenly became partially paralyzed in her back legs. It has torn my heart out to watch her struggle through the grass just to go and do her business. I've asked God to heal her, but I've taken her to the vet and I'm doing exactly what the vet told me to do. I have to trust her to God or my heart will be full of sorrow. My eyes will be full of tears. I love that little dog so much. So what do I do? I do what the vet says, and everytime I take her outside I lay my hands on her and ask God to heal her. I'm doing what I know to do, and I must trust God to do what He will do. Any less than that will destroy my personal peace.

On Wednesday, we looked at Matthew 6 in detail. This morning, let's look at other truths from God's Word with which we can overcome anxiety and worry.

Corrie Ten Boom said, "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow. It empties today of its strength". Strength for today comes from God's Word.

Start with an expectation of good and not of bad. **Jeremiah 29:11** For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Colossians 3:15 says, "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful." How do we get this peace, this shalom. I think it starts by saying, "LORD JESUS RULE IN MY HEART". "Lord, I can't do this anymore. Take control of my heart, my emotions, my mind, my all."

2 Thessalonians 3:16 says, "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all." Paul was assuring that little church in Philippi that the Lord CAN AND WILL give peace AT ALL TIMES and IN EVERY WAY.....That means in any circumstance that comes our way.

On Wednesday, I quoted one of mother's favorites. She taught me as a little boy, the power of 1 Peter 5:7. Mom would tell me, "CAST ALL YOUR CARES ON HIM FOR HE CARETH FOR YOU." That means throw them on the Lord. Get them off of your own shoulders.

Psalms 55:22 Cast your burden on the LORD, and He will sustain you; He will never permit the righteous to be moved. The righteous are promised a firm bottom on which to stand.

This always gets a little confusing because we as humans complicate our lives over and over. I know when I had accumulated more cattle and more equipment than God wanted me to have, I was spending all of my time chasing my tail and trying to catch up. I had to do what I could do and leave the rest to God. What did I do? I sold about 200 cows and almost half of my equipment. When things are no longer peaceful, do what you can do and leave the rest up to God.

GETTING OVER ANXIETY

Now, let's talk about the anxiety that comes with chronic latent fear. For those that don't know, "latent" means something laying there in the background waiting to do whatever it's going to do. You may not have your eyes on the problem, but you've kept your heart focused on the problem. It might be all kinds of things..... a niggling health problem stewing in the background, the fear of being alone the rest of your life, the fear of being stuck with someone for the rest of your life, or the fears associated with aging and passing through eventual death.

Proverbs 12:25 "Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad." So right there scripture tells us one of the dangers of anxiety is that it will weigh us down. Anxiety will anchor us firmly to our problem and will never let us be free to experience peace/shalom.

And then we can rephrase mother's favorite.....**1 Peter 5:7** Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. I think mother loved this verse because she suffered with anxieties. She chose to battle her weakness with the power of God's word.

Paul is explicit in his letter to the church in Philippi. **Philippians 4:6-7** Do not be anxious about anything, BUT in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **And** the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Can you see the formula here?

Don't be anxious + pray with thanksgiving laying it before God = a guarded mind and heart (PERFECT SHALOM)

That takes us straight away to another wonderful promise of God.



"Thou wilt keep him/her in perfect peace whose mind is fixed/stayed/focused on Thee."

Worry Goes Away When We Focus On Him

When we keep our focus where it needs to be, on Jesus, worry will be displaced by trust and will lose its grip on our hearts.

KEEPING MY FOCUS ON HIM

Matthew 6:33 "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you". Stop seeking the world. Stop seeking the treasure. Stop seeking to be secure in every situation. Seek **FIRST** the kingdom of God. Go back to the beginning. Spend some time in worship, prayer, study, reflection. Peace **WILL** COME.

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And **let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

I love this verse so much. It says so much. It reminds me that in this life, I am on a race that is marked out for me. God has a journey for me and I must live it. I can live it by His rules or by my own. His way will bring peace. My way will bring chaos.

As I make this run through my life, I have a crowd of witnesses CHEERING ME ON. You have a cloud of witnesses CHEERING YOU ON. It's like you are in the arena of life and God wants you to know that YOU ARE NOT ALONE. Theologians have debated for centuries who this cloud of witnesses is. Could it be those who have gone on to heaven before us? Well, yes. Could it be angels? Well, yes. Could it metaphorically just be the idea that others went through pain like we have? I don't really think so. I think it speaks of those in Hebrews that have just been listed in that great hall of faith. And yes, it very well may include my mom, dad, grandparents, and others.

So what am I to do as I run this race being cheered on by many? Well, one thing you and I are to do is to "throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles." For me, that means gettin rid of the stuff that is totally distracting to me. My life is becoming simpler and simpler and I am enjoying it more and more. I have slowed down enough to enjoy what I have and that is a refreshing change.

I am also asking God to remove the sin that so easily entangles. You should do that to if you are to obey this scripture. I don't know what sin gets itself around your heart, but it might include worry and not trusting God for your future. THROW IT OFF. It might include gross dissatisfaction in your job or some other facet of your life. Rip that out by the roots and hand it to God. Now what?



"Let us run with perseverance the race set out for us." Perseverance is that sticktuitivity. It is commitment, hard work, patience, and endurance. When I was little I was taught that it meant, "If at first you don't succeed, try try again." I'd change that just a little to read, "If at first you don't succeed try try again and keep asking God if you're following the "race that's set our for you."

We've discussed today some positive steps to overcome worry and replace it with peace; real peace - Shalom. We're each in a race. Throw off what is holding you back from the things God has for you. Keep you mind fixed on Him today, and keep placing all your fears on Him. He promises that He cares for you. Change what you can and leave the rest up to God.

Join me again on Wednesday, and we'll take a deeper look into God's Word and the promises He gives to replace our fears with faith and to replace our worries with wonder.

Let us pray.

COVID-19 FEAR - PART 3

"Fear takes us over the cliff, but Faith takes us to the rock".

For the last 2-3 weeks I've spoken over and over about the fact that there is no room for fear in the heart of the believer. Together we have claimed the promises of God concerning fear. Probably my favorite is 1 Timothy 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of love, power, and a sound mind. And of course that beautiful line out of Psalm 23, "Yeh though I walk through the valley of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me."

Worry, which accompanies fear, is the opposite of faith and trust. Faith says, "God is able". Fear says, "God is not able." Worry says, "I cannot trust God to take care of this." Faith says, "I can trust God with any and everything that might come against me." While fear cowers, faith stands. While fear frets, faith prays. While fear looks within at one's own strength, faith looks to Jesus the author and creator of all things. So what really is faith?

Faith is being certain of what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1) It is the absolute belief that God is in charge of what goes on in every area of my life and your life. This holds true, even when we may not be able to see the tangible proof of such care and concern. Faith says, "Lord, I believe that you are the Lord of my life." At its core, fear is weak belief or unbelief. When we do not believe the promises of God, fear grips us and takes control of our emotions. As we've been able to practice throughout this pandemic, faith is what frees us from fear. But, how can I increase my faith?

Recently, I taught a sermon that reminded each of us that faith comes by being exposed to and absorbing the Word of God. Scripture tells us, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." (Romans 10:17) This means that faith increases as our understanding of God's promises increases. Curiously, faith is not something we can somehow muster up on our own. Faith is a gift from God and it is not of any works we ourselves can do. (Ephesians 2:8-9) Faith comes forth as fruit in our lives as we are yielded to the Holy Spirit of God. Paul describes it as a "fruit of the Spirit". (Galatians 5:22-23)

Faith is a believer's confident assurance in God. It is a BEDROCK belief that God loves you, God cares for you, and God desires that His children prosper. Many Christians ask me why they don't prosper when that is what God promises us. I will say that most of our financial.

emotional, and life hardships are created by our own decisions. We fail to plan or we fail to put our time, talents, and treasure into the things that God wants us to concentrate on. We spend a lot of our resources pursuing things that really God doesn't even intend for us.

Many of us who claim to have no faith or to be consumed by fear and anxiety really never really pour ourselves into God's Word. We see the Bible and its instruction as a last resort.... something to turn to when we've exhausted our own efforts. One thing we've learned in this pandemic is that there are still many things that mankind cannot control. God is in control whether men acknowledge that or not.

I like to think of living by faith as living a "faith resting" kind of life. I had a pastor once that referred to it as living a "faith rest" kind of life. Faith rest living is what God desires to produce in each of us. It begins with "hearing the Word" and then meditating on the Word. I've made a point to share many verses with you all this past month on what God promises to do with the things that bring us worry and anxiety if we will let Him do so.

It's through the hearing the Word or reading it, and then meditating on what it is really saying that we grow more and more confident to live a life that is full of God's power and a kind of life that gives no quarter or no space in our hearts for fear. If you remember one thing I've said when I am gone, I want you to remember that there is **NO ROOM FOR FEAR IN THE HEART OF A BELIEVER**. There is no room for fear **ONLY** when we allow God to fill our hearts with so much faith and understanding of Who He is and what He wants to do for each of us. It just pushes fear out of the way.

Hopefully you've spent some of this time of isolation praying, and listening to what God desires for you in the days to come. I am so glad we made our way into all of this by studying Psalm 23. Isn't that just **ABSOLUTELY AMAZING**. I can't think of any piece of scripture more perfectly suited for understanding His love and care for us as a Shepherd through **ANYTHING!**

Over and over in the Psalms we see David trusting in the Lord and having **FAITH** that pushes fear out of the picture.... it pushes it out of the way. David assures us from 3,000 years ago when he says, "When I am afraid, I will trust in you." (Psalm 56:3) David shows us what relationship with the Lord is all about. We will see in Psalm 119 that David treasured God's Word, "I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands" (verse 10); "I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways" (verse 15); "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (verse 11). These are the words of empowerment that carry us through Covid-19 and anything else that will come our way, and we can be certain that other things will come our way.

I talked last week about whether or not it was a sin for us to worry. I told you I think that it probably isn't a sin, but it isn't the way that God wants for us to live. God is

kind and understanding toward our weaknesses and lapses of faith. Part of our growth comes in trials, and that is what we've all been through over the last couple of months. Hardship and adversity is God's way of letting us grow. We hear the Word. We experience the hardships of the human experience. Then, in applying God's Word to our hearts and lives, we can begin to live lives that are not ruled by errant emotions. Emotions such as fear take us over the cliff, but faith takes us to the ROCK.

¹Hear my cry, O God;

listen to my prayer.

²From the ends of the earth I call to you,

I call as my heart grows faint;

lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

³For you have been my refuge,

a strong tower against the foe. (Psalm 61)

The different trials we go through strengthen our spiritual muscles and enable us to go through greater trials and troubles. Remember when Kelton reminded us of the various trials that David went through (a bear and a lion) that strengthened him for his great day of battle with Goliath. When David volunteered to engage Goliath, he said, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine". (1 Samuel 17:37) David knew that God had proven faithful and He would prove faithful once again. The same thing applies to us.

God's Word has promises for us that are applicable to anything and everything we are going to come against in our lives. Even with Covid-19 on the decline we will find ourselves in other battles. There will be problems with finances. There will be problems with our health. There will be problems with our emotions. Each and every one of these is covered in that precious promise Paul related to the church in Philippi. "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19). If you call on the Lord my friends, He will show you the way. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not to your own understanding. In all of your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths." That's not just a nice thought. THAT IS A PROMISE OF GOD.

When we do find ourselves beat down in sickness or uncontrollable suffering, we can remember that scripture tells us, "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and

character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

We live in a broken world and we will continue on some level to experience the fallout of living in that brokenness. We will go through other trials that if left to our emotions will take us into the realm of fear instead of faith. The answer at that time will be the same as it's been through what we've all just experienced. "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 4:7) Church, that is a promise. It is time to take hold of the promises of God. Believe God is Who He says He is and that He will do what He says He will do. I am so proud of each of you. I have not heard of a bunch of fearfulness in our ranks. It has been important to remember and truly realize that the church is not the place in the grove. The church is in each of us who are believers and followers of Christ.

This article is total crap and nonsense. Trump was elected by approximately 50% of the American people, and he has done a great job with the pandemic and most thinking working people wouldn't have done it any differently. This 50% who elected him are not "deplorable" people. They are the working men and women who were tired of so-called leaders putting the American people and the American economy last. The author shows his complete ignorance of the political federalist structure of the United States. He should reserve his criticism for his own country whose leaders have yet failed to create an economic system that does not necessitate her young educated people leaving her shores to make a living in Australia, Canada, England, or the United States or anywhere else they can flee to get a job. The US remains the major economic engine of the world. Millions are desperate to enter and take advantage of the opportunities this country STILL affords to anyone of any class of any race of any religion or of any philosophy. We are a federal system and Trump cannot and should not "lock down" the totality of the country. That power is reserved in the individual states by the 10th amendment of our constitution. That would make him the demagogue and the dictator that this author claims he is. Fintan O'Toole needs to take an on-line course of American civics.