

SUNDAY ARTICLE

ST DAVID'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ♦ 29 MARCH 2020



A Prayer in Fearful and Uncertain Times

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One of my greatest fears is for the health of my children. Perhaps because from infancy they've battled asthma and chronic illness. More likely, it's because I fear what I can't control. I don't like feeling helpless. I don't like not knowing what to do in a situation. While they are much healthier than they were as young children, it doesn't take much for that fear to resurface.

A couple of weeks ago, our state had its first case of the Coronavirus. And it didn't take place in some big city location. It wasn't in a town or place I'd never been. It didn't happen to a person I could feel passing sympathy for and then move on – as I might when hearing about a tragedy on the evening news.

It happened in the suburbs, in our little homeschool program one of my kids attends. A fellow student was tested positive. The school was closed until the fourteen-day window passed and those who were in contact with the student were quarantined.

My son did not have contact with the student, so I did not anticipate him getting sick, but we stayed home anyway, mostly out of care for others. There

was so much fear and unknown about the virus that I knew once people heard about it, they would not want my son to be around them.

While we were homebound, my son came down with flu-like symptoms and I felt that momma-fear kick in. Could it be the virus or perhaps the flu? What if his asthma flares up as a result? The last time he had the flu, we ended up in the ER. I felt anxiety grow as I tried to figure out what to do.

Because of our association with the school, we had difficulty finding a place to have him tested, but the paediatrician managed to find a hospital which had all the necessary gear and equipment to do so. It was a memorable experience and I am grateful for the care and precaution provided by the doctors and nurses. Within a few hours we learned he had the flu and the next day, we learned he did not have the Coronavirus.

A lot has happened in the past two weeks. Since then, most things have been cancelled, including speaking engagements I scheduled many months ago. All the schools around us are closed. Churches are closed. There's a lot of uncertainty for all of us. Should we go here or there? Should we cancel this or that? What does it mean for work? What will happen to the economy?

What if? What then?

I always turn to the Psalms when my emotions overwhelm me. When I fear the unknown, I can't help but think of David, hiding for fear of his life in the caves of En Ghedi. I had the opportunity to visit En Ghedi during our trip to Israel a couple of years ago. It was a surreal and emotional experience, seeing the place I had imagined in my mind while I studied and wrote *A Heart Set Free*. While on the run from King Saul, David hid there and wrote Psalm 57.

“Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in You my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by. I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfils His purpose for me.” (verses 1-2)

This psalm is a helpful reminder for all of us as we find ourselves homebound, stuck in our own caves, anxious and wondering about the future. Our refuge is found in God. Let us cry out to him.

I wrote this prayer a few years ago and updated it to reflect our current circumstances:

Will this be a short-term hurdle or a bigger problem than we can imagine?

A Prayer in Fearful and Uncertain Times

Father in Heaven,

I come before You with a distracted heart and mind. I turn on the news and feel anxious. Each channel is the same. I scroll through social media and I see uncertainty in every post.

I am grieved for the losses across the world. I am frightened for those who are susceptible to this virus. I am filled with uncertainty and worry about what the future holds.

What about those who can't afford to take time off from work? What about those who are weak and vulnerable? Will this be a short-term hurdle or a bigger problem than we can imagine?

My mind starts spinning and swirling and I get caught up in all the what ifs of life. So, I come before You as the psalmist did, with raw honesty. I come before You with all these thoughts and emotions and lay them before You.

I come before You because You are King and You rule all things.

I come before You because You are my Father, my Abba. You adopted me as Your child and have given me every privilege that comes with being a part of Your family.

I come before You because You are my merciful Saviour. You alone can rescue me from fear, sin, temptation, and all the unknowns.

I come before You because You are my Provider, Jehovah Jireh. You created all things and own all things. All I have comes from Your generous hands.

I come before You because You are my Redeemer. You alone can redeem and restore all that is broken in my life and in the world around me.

Forgive me for turning my gaze from You and looking at the worrisome things happening around me.

Forgive me for forgetting that You are with me.

Forgive me for not trusting.

Forgive me for not crying out to You sooner but trying to conquer my fears in my own strength.

Forgive me for not living in complete dependence upon You.

*You alone
can rescue
me from
fear, sin,
temptation,
and all the
unknowns.*

I pray for the vulnerable. I pray You would protect them. I pray You would provide for those in need.

I pray You would raise up the church and help us to be the hands and feet of Jesus, meeting the needs in our communities. I pray we would be happy to be uncomfortable for the sake of others.

I pray You would stop this virus in its tracks.

In my own life and heart, give me a peace that passes all understanding. Though I don't know what will happen in the future, help me to trust You.

Help me to remember that You are not surprised by all the chaos and uncertainty. Help me to remember that nothing will happen today that takes You off guard. You are not asleep or too busy but are actively involved in every detail.

Help me to wait and watch for Your glory.

Help me to obey and do the right thing in the moment, knowing You are there in all the moments to come.

Help me to see You as greater than all my fears.

Most of all, help me to remember Jesus, the One who cried out in the garden on the

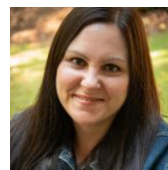
night He was betrayed, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Remove this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will" (Mark 13:46).

I thank You that "for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

Even now, He intercedes for me – what a marvellous assurance!

Be my refuge "until the storms of destruction pass by." You are my true place of safety.

I pray all this in the name of Jesus, amen.



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She serves on the Presbyterian Church in America's national women's ministry team and is the editor of their blog

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Source: <https://www.christinafox.com/blog/2020/3/13/a-prayer-in-fearful-and-uncertain-times>

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