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Hope in the Time of Coronavirus

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This is one of those moments when you realize you are not in control. You are a child at the top of the Ferris wheel when it stops moving. When it starts swaying you ask your dad, "How do we know it won't fall?" Our current crisis shows that we don't always know.

Six weeks ago feels like six years ago. We wake up and wonder what bad news is waiting. We are disoriented, afraid and bewildered. We worry about our parents. We worry about our children. We worry about people living in poverty. Health care workers are overwhelmed. Nursing homes fear for their residents and staff. We want to close our eyes, crawl into a ball, and wake up on the other side.

But despite seemingly endless opportunities to worry, we can live with hope and grow from this.

Below are a few tips that can help you cope during this unprecedented time:

Look for bright spots

Some are working more hours than ever, but many have extra time. Many who have longed to slow down now have to. We may learn to sleep again. We might actually get the recommended eight hours. Some homeschooling classes may end with students getting suspended and teachers drinking on the job, but parents are discovering they enjoy their children and their teachers are underpaid. With all our hours at home, spring cleaning is a legitimate option. We may find small glimmers of hope if we look at this through the right lens.

Help when you can

Putting your energy into helping others can help break the cycle of anxiety. Find virtual volunteer opportunities. Donate to your local food pantry. Consider giving money (even part of your stimulus check) to someone who needs it more than you. At Plymouth Church, we are coordinating our members to support folks in our community who may be struggling right now, including seniors, parents with young kids, single people, and those with underlying conditions. Helping in small ways will make a big difference—for others, and for yourself.

Find moments of gratitude

Of course, be grateful for friends and family who are healthy, for our heroic health care workers, and for the essential employees who keep our society moving forward. But take some time to reflect on the things that we once took for granted. When this is over, we should be more grateful for a heartfelt hug, dinner in a restaurant, walking our children to school, and worship in a sanctuary.

How will be different when we are past these hard days? This crisis is a terrible, painful, and dangerous opportunity to grow. We can become more like the people we hoped to be. We can be better for each other as we go through the worst. And when the worst is over, what lasts will be our love for each other.

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