



Dear Friend,

Do you ever wake up with your mind already going full speed on the “what ifs”? Sometimes it seems as if every disaster that could possibly ever happen has landed in my thoughts, and my heart is pounding in fear! That’s how I woke up just a few days ago - not a pleasant or healthy way to start! I wish I could tell you that I had a “sure-fire” method for turning days beginning like that into ones ending in peace and joy, but I don’t. I can tell you, however, that various things I try that usually help...

First, I turn to prayer. I ask God’s help to STOP my mind’s churning and to plant it in the here-and-now, by focusing on God. I have a short set of prayers I learned from the novel “A Scent of Water” by Elizabeth Goudge, that I repeat over and over: “Lord have mercy. Thee I adore. Into Thy Hands.” Or sometimes I use “The Jesus Prayer” instead, until God is my focus again and not those horrid “what ifs”. Then I’ll pull out my Bible and read the last three verses of an Old Testament book I barely knew, until a wise friend quoted them to me:

17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: 18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.
(Habakkuk 3:17-19)

Then I read three verses from Epistle of Paul to the Philippians :
4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:4-7)

Mind you, I may have repeated those first prayers all through dressing, making breakfast, (and who knows what -all-else?) before I get a chance to settle down in peace and quiet to read those Bible verses. (You probably have others that comfort you.) By now, I am no longer in “panic mode”: I can tell God all my fears and get them “outside” where I can get some perspective on them. Observing my fears - or general anxieties - in the clear light of day helps to shrink them down to a more manageable size!

Finally, I can remember all the times in the past when God has given me help and support in my need, and then I am able to trust that He will do as He has done before. So this is my “SPOORT” to lift me out of fear and anxiety, one I need to learn to exercise frequently!

- S - STOP the hamster-wheel of “what-ifs”
- P - PRAY to focus on God, not fears
- O - OPEN my Bible to comforting passages
- O - OBSERVE my fears more objectively
- R - REMEMBER all the times God has helped before
- T - TRUST that God will continue to do as He has done

I hope these suggestions may help you get through a rough day sometime. Right now, I’m glad to share them with other members of our Church Family!



Here are the Gospels for the next five Sundays of Pentecost, our longest liturgical season:

- June 18 - Matthew 9: 35-10: 8, OR Matthew 5: 1-10**
- June 25 - Matthew 10: 24-39**
- July 2 - Matthew 10: 40-42**
- July 9 - Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30**
- July 16 - Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-25**



Now here are Excerpts from Psalm 55, from Nan Merrill's "Psalms for Praying":

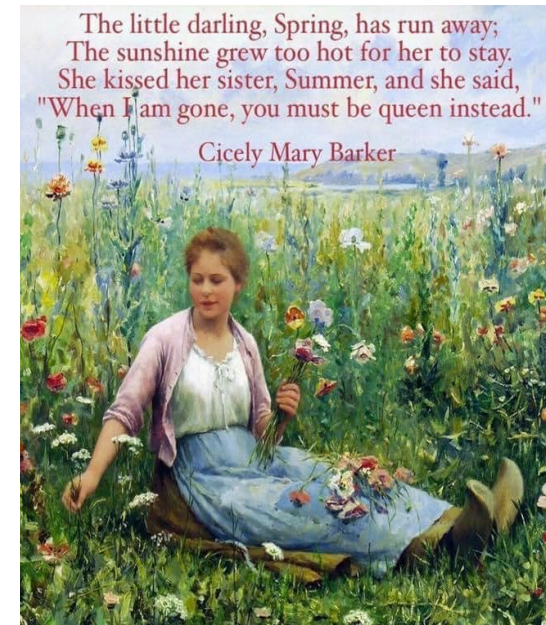
It is not a specific doubt that taunts me - then I could bear it. It is not a known fear that rises up within - then I could face it. No in my deepest being I feel that you have abandoned me. We used to hold sweet converse together; within the silence we walked in harmony and peace. I cry out to you in the midst of my pain. Yes I call to you knowing that you will heed my cry. I moan in my loneliness and then surrender myself to you. You will give me strength to search within, to find the source of my fear. Your love will make itself know to me, bringing comfort and stilling the disquiet within. With gentle and tender guidance I shall find my way home.
Into your heart I commend my soul.



Finally, here's a short prayer/poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, from "The Book of Uncommon Prayer":

My Days Go On
I praise Thee while my days go on;
I love Thee while my days go on:
Through dark and dearth, through fire and frost,
With emptied arms and treasure lost,
I thank Thee while my days go on.

May you enjoy our first full month of summer!
(M.C.)



With Love and Prayers
from your St. James'
Parish Family



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