

FAITH
IN THE FACE OF
FEAR

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Whether the Bridge Breaks or Holds

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:21)

We're going to get through this!

That's the message we're hearing with increasing frequency these days. The curve will flatten, the economy will rebound, the restrictions will lift, and we'll get back to some kind of normal. Dreams of backyard barbecues with your neighbors or of a trip to visit your family in Alberta will one day be a reality again. If we have a little patience, we're going to get through this.

But what if we don't?

That's not a very pleasant thought but it bears a little reflection on our part. The sobering reality is that some of us are going to feel the effects of this virus in painful and lasting ways. It may take the shape of a lost job, the evaporation of investments, the postponement of a wedding, or even the death of a loved one. We, as a whole, will get through this. But some of our individual stories will bear the marks of this difficult chapter.

How are we supposed to deal with that?

A short parable by C.S. Lewis offers us some important perspective. In 1954 he wrote a letter to a friend, Mrs. Jessup, who was struggling with fear. Lewis presents a little story that contains a big lesson:

Two men had to cross a dangerous bridge. The first convinced himself that it would bear them, and called this conviction faith. The second said, 'Whether it breaks or holds, whether I die here or somewhere else, I am equally in God's good hands.' And the bridge did break and they were both killed: and the second man's faith was not disappointed and the first man's was.

The first man put his faith in the bridge, trusting that it would hold them. When it broke, so did his faith. The second man put his faith in God, entrusting himself to God's good hands whatever may happen to him. Even though the bridge didn't hold, his faith did.

That's the kind of faith I want to foster in this season.

We can't put our faith in the economy, even though it will likely rebound as the experts predict. We can't put our faith in our health being unscathed by the virus.

Rather, we put our faith in God, whose goodness can be trusted whether we live or die. His life and love transcend any barrier we may perceive, even the barrier of death itself. He is bigger than that. And he is good.

Fostering a faith that remains firm whether the bridge breaks or holds will make us people of hope, and that is something our neighbors need right now. They need to know that God can be trusted in the midst of difficulty, and they need to see that peace in our lives. Perhaps this is part of what it means to "shine like stars in the universe as we hold out the word of life" (Phil. 2:15-16).

We're going to get through this.

But even if we don't, we are still in God's good hands.

Further Reading:

Philippians 1:19-26

Key Verse:

"I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death." (v. 20)

Calibration Prayer:

God, I am so thankful that your life is stronger than death. It is only in that confidence that I can say with Paul, "Where, O death is your sting?" (1 Cor. 15:55). Help me to be an agent of hope for those who need to know that you can be trusted, whatever we may encounter.