



Dear CrossPointe Family,

Greetings in Jesus! I am writing to offer devotional thoughts and communicate details about how the elders are leading and praying through our response to the coronavirus. Please refer to this as you have questions.

Devotional Thoughts

This devotional is an expression of our elder team's love and care for you and a way of connecting with you in this unique season. To frame our current contextual situation I want to bring you into my recent meditations. I have been thinking about an excerpt of Jesus' pastoral care from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:25-34; ESV) where we read:

"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? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

How fitting are these words in light of the coronavirus! I've watched news reports and had conversations with loved ones, and the general tone has been fear and anxiety. These are serious times with important considerations that require wisdom, prayer, and discernment. I don't minimize that at all. But the truth of trying times is that there are more "what if...?" questions than we can imagine and our imaginations can run rampant trying to analyze and respond to the very rational "what if...?" questions that come to mind - What if we get the virus? What if we get quarantined? What if we lose out on finances and cannot meet our obligations? What if we are trapped away from our loved ones? What if the coronavirus causes all toilet paper manufacturing in the world to shut down? (OK, that one is a little less plausible!). The reason we battle anxiety and fear is because there are real unknowns in life and we sense the truth that we are not in control and are vulnerable people.

God knows our frame! He remembers we are but dust (Psalm 103:14). Jesus is not chiding us in this passage. He is infusing confidence into our weary, worried souls. He knows that we worry and are prone to wander into anxiety. Of course we are! We are not self-sufficient; we are dependent. Jesus points this out in verses 25-26 reminding us that we need food, clothes, water, and some external power to ensure our lives. He points us to the birds of the air and says: Look! They have all they need and they don't worry about anything. Little birds which we value at about a penny each (Matthew 10:29), God adorns with special and intimate care. What about the flowers of the field? They spring up through the ground at this time of year and then they wither and fade and are turned to dust and smoke within a few short months – yet Our God

drapes them in beautiful colors, shapes, and fragrances for His glory and our enjoyment. Is there any flower or bird worth more than a human life? No – we are crafted and imprinted with the dignity of God’s own image! Notice how Jesus turns the phrase and says: it is **your** (that is OUR) Heavenly Father who provides for this care. It is an intentional indication of the intimacy we have with God. We are the pinnacle of creation. If God is so careful toward these lesser, how much more care will He show to His own people. Jesus reminds us that the Father knows exactly what we need; He designed us, knows our beings, our weakness, and He cares for us with extreme intimacy. The reason we need not fear is the foundation of His perfect love and knowledge of us, His dear ones.

Certainly, coronavirus is a real issue that we must take seriously. We are doing this as a church family (see below). But make no mistake that it is God who sustains, keeps, and oversees our lives. We need not fear. Coronavirus did not take God by surprise and it is not bigger than the heart of God toward us. So what about the “what if..?” questions that linger? Jesus gives us clear and practical instruction: 1) Seek God, His kingdom, and His righteousness. Cast off fear and anxiety by running back to the God who loves you and crafted you and sustains you. Spend time thinking about God and His power and you will see fear about viruses and financial situations and every other “what if..?” take its right place as an opportunity for God’s power to show up. This is how our faith grows – by seeking God, knowing God in His righteousness, and responding by practicing righteousness. 2) Put off anxiety about tomorrow. We cannot know the answer to most of our “what if..?” questions. We are called to focus on what is in front of us today and not live in the future. Anxiety and fear are always future-oriented. They take all the possible catastrophic outcomes and drag them into the present as though they were realities. Christian, fight this off! God is YOUR God. He will not let the enemy take you from His love (Romans 8:31-38). As such we take precautions and wise steps with faith in God’s goodness. I close this devotion with a prayer for those who are struggling with fears.

Lord, every day and season is in Your mighty and tender hand. This includes our present day and the lives of the people of CrossPointe Church. We trust you God and believe you have only good in store for us, even if the world and devil would try to divide us from you through casting fear in our hearts. Take us forward in faith, knowing you are good, you love us, and you will provide. And help us to walk in righteousness as we respond to your perfect leading!

Application

I hope this devotion is helpful to you. I want to encourage you, as a family, to take time to cultivate faith and a greater awareness of God throughout this season. In application, here are a few examples of how you might do this together:

1. Read this devotional together and discuss what it means for you, personally or as a family, to put off fear and put on faith.
2. It is fitting to deepen our devotion and times of cultivating intimacy with God. Maybe this is by using the Deep Roots series ([found here](#)), or through listening to the messages from the Virtuous Contentment series ([found here](#)), or extended Bible reading and prayer. One of our members told me that he instituted a family dance and worship time... These are all great ways to personally and as a family, be more connected to Christ (not less) through this time.
3. Consider that this is a season of opportunity for serving others. We are dependent and needy people. This situation reminds us that we **get** to trust the One who is mighty

and able. Turn to God and point others to God. There will be opportunities to serve believers and unbelievers struggling with fear. We can apply our recent message on generosity as a way of seeking God's kingdom first and His righteousness. In this He is glorified and we live spiritually satisfied lives in the midst of trial. It is a way to provide hope to those who need it desperately!

Logistical Plans

With this in view, the elder team wanted to communicate a few things for the weeks ahead. Please know that we are closely tracking this situation, consulting together and gathering outside input, and communicating with our church ministry team leaders. We are doing this because we deeply love you and want to serve you. While we don't know exactly what the future holds, we do believe God has led us to a few concrete steps:

1. There will be no public Sunday meetings for CrossPointe until at least 5 April (which is the first Sunday after the end of Governor Hogan's restrictions date of 29 March). We are doing this because we trust the government that the Lord has established as civil authority and want to respect their recommendations (Romans 13) and care for our own body (1 Peter 5:1-4). We are not forsaking gathering together (Hebrews 10) rather we are temporarily adjusting it for the good of our church family and broader community. During the window that Governor Hogan established (through the end of 29 March) we are going to be constantly monitoring the situation and until we give a green light, we are suspending all other church gatherings (small groups, men's/women's studies, etc.) for the same reasons. We will communicate any changes to this as we gain clarity. So for instance if it seems safe to have small groups before 29 March we will make this clear. Our elder team is regularly discussing these matters and are available to serve you. We are in prayer for our world, nation, state, community, and most specifically our wonderful church family and ask you to join us.
2. Throughout this time, there will be regular emails and communication to our church family. We will use the [CPC website](#), [CPC Facebook site](#), and email/Weekly Update newsletter (If someone you know wants to subscribe they can [click here](#)). Here is an opportunity to serve (as I spoke about above): if you know someone who is not on email or Facebook take ownership for caring for them and help them get connected. This way they too can receive communications and devotionals.
3. We are asking the members to pursue connection with each other through various means that allow for social distance. Here are a few helpful platforms to use: call, email, social media messaging and texting, set up a group chat or group call (GoogleHangouts, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, FaceTime, Zoom, Skype, etc.). Even if you are not technologically adept there are many easy to use tools to connect and it is worth familiarizing yourself so as to ensure connection, care, and community are being shared.
4. Make your needs known. The best way to do this is through the prayer website in the member section of our website. If you do not have an account and you are a member/regular attender, you can sign up here: <https://crosspointemd.org/signup/>. Once you are signed up and signed in, you can post prayer requests and see other's requests. If you have trouble, email Eddie (espuler@crosspointemd.org) or call the

office (410.544.1880) and he can help you. Additionally, you can email or call the church office with any messages or needs you have. If you call and leave a message or send an email, we will see it almost immediately. Please do not send text messages especially for important communication. It is easy to lose track of text messages and potentially forget a message. Please send emails or leave voicemails at the church number. These both arrive instantly in our inboxes, they stay in front of us, and enable us to respond to your needs most consistently.

5. A number of people have asked about how to send tithes and offerings in during this window. Thank you for those who asked this question. The needs of the church are ongoing and often when services are suspended/cancelled, giving is much lower and it can affect our ability to minister to those in need. So to serve you, you can do any of the following: mail a check (CrossPointe Church, 365 Jones Station Road, Arnold MD 21012), drop off a check during the office hours listed above (calling or emailing ahead to ensure someone is there is wise), consider using electronic bill pay through your bank, or you can give through PayPal ([click here](#)) – but note that PayPal giving requires administrative fees and we can only give you tax credit for the amount we receive after fees. Above all, thank you for your giving as it enables us to keep extending work of ministry!
6. Note that if you need care or someone you know needs care – there are folks who have offered to help with running errands and practical needs. As such, especially for those who are older, ailing, or in any sort of risk category, make sure you are reaching out so the body can minister to the needs of one another.

In summary, we stand together under the care of a faithful, loving God! I am so grateful to be part of our church family and pray you are drawing near to His care today.

By Grace,

Ed (on behalf of the elders)