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Antidote for Obsessing

By Susan E. Pritchett Post

Have you heard people say these things?

“I’m afraid for our country.”

“I’m tired of all this. I feel helpless, limited in my ability to cope or act.”

“Plague, division, injustice, climate change, fracturing norms, crumbling morals, uncivil discourse, conflict, violence in our country, and potential war abroad. I’m obsessing about all of it.”

Maybe you’re saying these yourself. I certainly am.

And earlier this month the New York *Times* columnist David Brooks wrote in his column entitled “America is Falling Apart at the Seams”:

“But something darker and deeper seems to be happening as well —

a long-term loss of solidarity, a long-term rise in estrangement and hostility. This is what it feels like to live in a society that is dissolving from the bottom up as much as from the top down.”

A spirit of powerlessness pervades. It’s not just “grumpiness,” as some have called it.

For all that the Old Testament tells us that God took the side of the Israelites in their efforts to displace the people who resisted their invasions, we know through the teachings of Jesus that God doesn’t take sides. God gives us a spirit of discernment to distinguish right from wrong.

In our discernment we ask, “Where is God in all our current trials and worries? Where is the God we can rely on to lead us?”

Words from the Old Testament give us a clue. God’s love is all in all.

“The Lord delights in you...” (Isaiah 62:4).

“How priceless is your unfailing love, Oh God! Your people take refuge under the shadow of your wings...” (Psalm 36:7).

These passages not only console but provide hope. In times of trouble, God loves – even delights in us – and protects us.

But God calls us to do more. In Corinthians, Paul tells us that God equips each of us with spiritual gifts. Why? So we can take action in the face of disbelief, struggle, and fear. We’re not called to sit around and fret. We’re called to action through the love of God and hope inspired by that love. We’re fed by prayer and contemplation and guided in God’s will for us.

We may feel limited in what we can do, due to our own life circumstances, but we can always live our lives in love. If we are able, we can reach out to others in love and peace, risking their rejection of us, our words, and behaviors.

We can get involved by contacting our leaders or participating in non-violent protest. We can join organizations that act on the truth of our beliefs, and we can engage in the political process. We may not have control or direct

influence, but we can take part with others in bringing God's love, hope, and kingdom into the world.

Paul explains the pervasiveness of God's love:

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

With the recent holiday honoring The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we were reminded of his faith in God's love that led his quest for civil rights. He lived in a time during the Vietnam War, the threat of nuclear war, the assassination of a popular president, civil unrest, cultural upheaval, and social change. A time with parallels to our own. Yet drawing on his Christian faith, he inspired us by making God's love and hope the foundation of all his actions.

Dr. King put his Christian beliefs on the line and into action in the march toward greater freedom for African Americans.

Let us strive to believe that with God's love and grace and our own personal actions, we can overcome the challenges we face today in service of bringing our own dreams for a better future in the world. This is how positive change will come.

Let us take inspiration from the words of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice.”

As you ponder ways to respond in your life, you can learn more about the [life](#) of The Rev. Dr. King and enjoy this [music](#) from the Morehouse College Glee Club.

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