

Spiritual Practices during a Pandemic

A 5 week study offered for adults at Unity Presbyterian Church

Week 5: Hope

[Jeremiah 29:11-14](#)

“My Hope is Built on Nothing Less”

1 My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.

3 His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay. (*Refrain*)

Refrain:

On Christ, the solid Rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

4 When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh may I then in Him be found,
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.
(*Refrain*)

2 When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil. (*Refrain*)

Source: <https://hymnary.org/hymn/PH1990/379>

Experience:

Listen to [this short podcast](#) from *On Being*, called “Living the Questions” where Krista Tippett responds to the following listeners’ question, “How can we be present to what’s happening in the world without giving in to despair and hopelessness?” Krista is responding to different world issues that were in the news in 2018, but her response is very relatable to our current situation.

Watch this [Ted Talk](#) where Peta Murchinson, mother of two young children, talks so eloquently about “Finding Hope in Hopelessness.” *Beware! It’s a tear-jerker (and there is one f-word).*

If you have access to a hymnal, look for hymns about hope or what other hymns can you think of that talk about Christian Hope?

Reflect & Discuss:

1. In the “Living the Questions” segment, Krista Tippett says. “I don’t actually think we are equipped, even physiologically or mentally, to be delivered catastrophic and confusing

news and pictures, 24/7. We are analog creatures in a digital world. So I don't follow what happened in the last 20 minutes, all day long, and I think that's actually, right now, a spiritual discipline." How does having access to 24/7 news impact the way you see the world? Do you or do you not limit your intake of news each day? Why or why not?

2. Krista Tippett continues in the "Living the Questions" segment to say, "The other spiritual discipline and way to stay grounded is that however seriously we must take what's happening in the world and what the headlines are reflecting, it is never the full story of our time. It's not the last word on what we're capable of. It's not the whole story of us." How can we remind ourselves during this pandemic that this is not the whole story; that we will move past this at some point? How can that recognition give you hope? What scriptures remind you that this is not the whole story?
3. Krista Tippett says, "Hope is a muscle." She also, says, "It is a choice." Do you agree? What does it mean to you to flex your hope muscle? How do you choose hope?
4. In her TED Talk, Peta Murchinson introduces her experience living as a parent with a dying child by saying, "Living in grief means life is more illuminating... The power of joy, love and kindness gives me a sense of hope." How can you share a simple act of joy, love or kindness to someone who may be experiencing grief or loneliness today?
5. In describing some of the experiences of human love and connection she as had, Peta Murchinson says, "Perhaps, in our situation, it is just a desperate need to do something when you are so powerless." What about the pandemic has left you feeling powerless? Have you felt the desperate need to do something? If so, what?
6. Because there is not a cure for the disease that her daughter has, Peta Murchinson says, "The present moment is the only place where I want to be right now. I've been forced to live here and letting go of tomorrow, next week, next month, allows me to focus on what really matters right now." Most of us can not relate to her particular experience. However, being at home during a quarantine and not knowing how life will be changed once the pandemic is over and when that will actually happen can make it more difficult to plan for the future. How have you been forced to live in the present more than usual recently? What have you learned from that experience?
7. Peta ends her Ted Talk with these powerful words, "The human capacity for hope is so strong that even when you are told there is no hope, somehow, you still manage to find it." Community support, kindness and love have given Peta and her family hope during this difficult time in her family's life. How can we share hope with others when we can't gather in person? What has given you hope during the past couple of months?
8. Looking back on the past five weeks, what have you experienced in this study that gives you hope?