

## Daily Devotional, May 7, 2021 It is Well

***The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life. Job 33:4 (NIV)***

Why do we fear change so much? I am guessing that the centrality of that fear is due to the unknown; we don't know *what* the future holds.

Over this past year, we were all being asked, even forced at times, to change, change again, and then change course once more with no real definite end in sight to all of this darkness we were required to endure. And although the old adage, "Change is the only constant", has been present in our lives for more than a year, we may soon be entering a stage where we will all get to breathe a bit more freely.

In my case, change has often led to some challenging situations. And yet some of those changes have led to greater opportunity. While I have genuinely had many good examples of change in my life, I find it interesting how my mind can dig up the challenging times or even creates future scenarios wrought with terrible outcomes. If I let my mind whirl out of control, I easily feel overwhelmed and stressed. Yet, I believe God's unfailing grace encourages us to step back and determine our "ponder point". Am I letting my mind run wild with the worst possible "what if" scenarios, and then reacting out of panic? Or am I allowing myself to be centered and grounded, and able to respond with a calm mind and gentle heart?

Our breathing happens for us involuntarily every moment of every day. In fact, I'm willing to make a pretty safe wager, that you are breathing right now! Many years ago, I tried my hand at yoga, as a means to bring more relaxation into my life. I remember one thing that the instructor said, above anything else, was that yoga was a breathing practice. I had gone there to learn relaxation and she was talking about breathing! Honestly, I thought I had just signed up for a huge waste of my time. But I've come to know we can use our breathing as a tool to calm our nerves, relieve our stress, and manage our pain. And our breath is free and available to us every moment of every day.

I'd like you to try a simple exercise. Can you breathe slowly and deeply just one time? Now, try that again; but this time, inhale deeply and as you exhale slowly, let your shoulders relax and fall gently at your sides. In that moment, you offered your mind a break from the constant barrage of discouraging news and instead became aware of your breath. This is commonly known in yoga as mindfulness. When we take these moments to "empty" our minds and replenish ourselves, we are stronger and more resilient for whatever lies ahead. The longer you try it, the more resilient you get.

Above all, fear doesn't play fair with us, but God does. Lean on God in prayer. Keep breathing – slowly and deeply. You will remind your heart that this too shall pass, and you will be in a better place to face the unknown future, a future that is beginning to look brighter. Let us face it with a renewed hope, relaxed, with peace, and the knowledge that God is with us lodged deep within our souls. It is well.

***Prayer: Dear Lord, sometimes I feel I cannot face tomorrow, it is hard to keep going with such anxious thoughts running through my mind. I ask for your peace to flood my being, that each moment I would surrender these worries, fears and anxieties to you. I ask for your presence to walk with me through each part of my day, that I would not feel alone but know that I am loved. You are all I need. Amen.***