**Truth Currents** **11-6-20**

Let me guess what you’re feeling today. It’s called “**Election Fatigue**,” and it’s a real thing. Let’s talk about it today on Truth Currents.

**Election Fatigue**. Maybe it’s a phrase you haven’t heard before. But as early as July 14th of this year, months ago, the Pew Research Center was already reporting that there were higher levels of stress related to this year’s presidential campaign then any other presidential campaign in American history. They argued that 6 out of 10 Americans last July were already worn out by all of the campaigning and the constant stress of the election. Just this week, the day after the election, an election by the way that feels like we’re sort of caught in a loop from *Groundhog Day*. Seems like the election is all that we can talk about and all we find in the news day after day after day now.

A report a day after the election, produced by the Harris Poll for the American Psychological Association, says that two-thirds of Americans have significant stress because of this election season. 68% of Americans say they are having trouble focusing and working because of the election. That’s up from 52% just four years ago in 2016. It breaks down by party affiliation as well. They study found that Election Fatigue is a problem across the board. 76% of Democrats claim that they are overly stressed. 67% of Republicans and 64% of Independents.

The argument is that this year is so much worse than in any other year because of all the other things that have coincided with the presidential campaign. Besides the presidential election, in 2020 we’ve also had a global pandemic. We’ve had racial turmoil, riots in our cities and natural disasters all falling in the same calendar year. It’s produced the highest levels of stress that people have ever experienced in their lives. The poll goes on to break it down racially and says black Americans in particular are experiencing an especially high increases in stress. Four years ago, among black voters, Election Fatigue was registered at 46%. This year that number reports to be 71%.

The point of Truth Currents is for us to look at the events of our day and see how we can frame them mentally according to a Biblical worldview. How do we think about the things that face us in our world?

The reality is that worry and fear and stress are at record levels, epidemic proportions in American life right now. All you have to do is look at the pharmaceutical field. Look at media polls. Look at the stock market. Everywhere you turn, the violence, the shortness of people with each other. We are facing incredible stress. How should followers of Jesus Christ confront these days? The election seems to not be coming to any timely conclusion. But we know that it will eventually. And we’re concerned about how it’s going to end and who’s going to be President. Will there be riots as a result? And those stress levels are killing us. How do believers approach the uncertainty of the days in which we live?

Well, it won’t surprise you that the Bible speaks to this. The book of Philippians is a book that was written to a church in a Roman city facing serious persecution for their faith. It was a letter written by the Apostle Paul while he himself was parked in a Roman prison cell awaiting trial. There was a level of stress on both ends of this correspondence that is preserved for us in the New Testament under the letter to the Philippians. And yet in this book, in this letter in the fourth chapter Paul tells us this. As a motivation for the way we approach the world, at the end of chapter **4:5** he says, “*the Lord is near*.”

Now that’s a baseline. That’s the ground from which we operate. Basically, that phrase, “*the Lord is near*,” Paul is suggesting that Christ is near us in space. That is, He’s close to us. That is, He’s available to help us in whatever the stresses are that we’re experiencing right now. But He also means, the Lord is near in terms of time or chronology. That is, that He’s going to return soon. And He’ll make wrong things right.

Well if that’s the baseline, if we know that Christ is available to help us, that He’s eventually coming back to set things right, then Paul goes on from there to tell us this in verses **6** and **7**.

*Don’t worry about anything,* *but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

Think about this. He gives us a prohibition. He says, “*Don’t worry about anything*.” He doesn’t qualify it. He doesn’t limit it in any way. He doesn’t say, “*Well, try not to worry about the big things or not to worry about the little things.*” He says, “***don’t worry about anything***.”

Why? Because worry is in fact nothing more than meditation turned on its head. I’ve had people tell me over the years, “*Well Pastor, I don’t know how to meditate on scripture*.” Yes, you do! You know exactly how to do it. Because meditation is when you take the Word of God and you absorb it. You chew on it. You ponder it so that you can get every last piece of nutrition out of it. You can suck it dry for all that it has to fill you up and make you strong. Worry is the exact same process except instead of focusing on scripture, it focuses on the uncertainties, the things in the world that we can’t control.

Oswald Chambers, one of the great devotional writers of the modern era, has called worry, “*unconscious blasphemy*.” Because worry is nothing more than the idea, we don’t say it out loud; we just feel it deep down, it’s the idea that while we say we believe in God, the fact is we’re just not sure God’s big enough to handle the troubles of our day.

Paul says, “*Don’t worry about anything*.” The Bible never tells us not to worry and just sort of leaves us hanging out there. It doesn’t give us a command and then leave us without knowing how to do that. Paul says, “*Don’t worry about anything*.” Instead do this. “*In everything through prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your requests to God*.” The word prayer there simply describes the ability to come into the presence of God and present those things that are heavy on our hearts.

I told you before the election that we should vote prayerfully. We should have spent time in prayer before our vote. The advice doesn’t change after the election. We go to God to allow us to face the shacky world in which we live. Our prayers allow us to enter into the presence of God by the blood of Jesus Christ. He says take your petitions, your specific requests for the things that are concerning you the most and wrap them in them in thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is the backdrop of prayer. It’s the recognition that God has a great track record. And we can come to Him with confidence because we’re grateful for all the things in our past and all the things in the past that He has put on display to show us that He is still in charge.

I saw the parody account of Babylon Bee this week. And they said in one of their headlines, sort of half-jokingly, but there’s always a kernel of truth there. The Babylon Bee presented a headline that said, “*With 100% of polls reporting, Jesus Christ the King, is still on His throne*.”

Folks, we’ve got to remember that. Whether you voted for Vice President Biden or President Trump or whether you voted for somebody else or whether you didn’t vote at all, the reality is Christ is on the throne. And for Christ followers that’s where we find our stability, our security. God has a track record.

Paul says when we come with our request, wrapped in thanksgiving and make our way into the presence of God, this is what happens. “*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*.” The peace of God which passes all understanding. This peace that he’s describing, this supernatural ability to face the uncertainty of our day, this is a reality that can’t be counterfeited. It can’t be humanly reproduced. It is a supernatural act of God that He does in us. It is the peace within God Himself that He extends into our hearts.

And Paul uses great military language here. He says, “*It will guard your hearts and minds*.” That word “guard” means that peace from God is detached, is deployed like soldiers on assignment. And that peace comes to us. And it takes up a guard post around our hearts and minds and our emotions.

Folks, don’t ever forget the spiritual side of current events. There is an enemy. The prince of the power of the air, who wants Jesus followers to despair, to fear, to live in stress and anxiety. When the fact of the matter is God’s track record shows that whatever happens, however this turns out, riots in the streets, political parties vying for political power and supremacy… the bottom line is like those church members in Philippi, we are citizens of another kingdom. This is not our home.

Pray for America. Do what you can do to make things work out. But understand that the world is not crashing down today because God is still there.

Micky Rivers was a long-time centerfielder for the New York Yankees. And he was kind of a laid-back easy-going fellow. In fact, he was legendary for the fact that he never seemed to give into pressure. He never seemed to be too up or too down. He was just always happy, always easy-going. I’ll never forget hearing an interview with Mickey Rivers one time when a reporter said, “*Mick, how are you always so relaxed?*” He said, “*Nothing seems to bother you. You get into a slump. You hit into a double play. You make an error in the outfield. And yet it doesn’t seem to bother you. You just never give into pressure*.”

And Mickey Rivers said this, I’ll never forget it. In a kind of folksy way he said, “*Well, the way I figure it is, if you got control over something ain’t no sense worrying because you got control of it. If you ain’t got control over something, ain’t no sense worrying about it, cause you ain’t got control over it*.”

Fact of the matter is, the things we have control over we need to do the right thing about them. The things that we don’t have control over, we need to release those and not let them eat us alive. What we do have is the ability to make our way into the private throne room of the King and to present ourselves as children of that King and lay all of our deepest concerns and anxieties at His feet so that He dispatches His peace to take up posts guarding our hearts and minds.

I don’t know how the election’s going to turn out. But I tell you something, I have confidence that Jesus is still on His throne. Let that help you walk through these days.

This is Truth Currents.