

REFLECTIONS

C₃Women - Christ-Centered, Connected, Called

April 2020

For I am sure 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

On mobile phone, best read in horizontal view.

If you need a print copy, please reply to this email.

- IN THIS ISSUE -

When we chose our C3W theme for this year we wanted to reflect on our calling to follow Jesus even as we live as exiles in this world. Little did we know then how fitting that theme would become as we are all literally experiencing life as exiles in our own homes this spring! In these days marked by the ravages of the Coronavirus, we're forced to find new rhythms of life, but those new rhythms are still defined by being **Christ-Centered**, **Connected** (even if only via Zoom) and **Called** for the sake of the world as we live with hope in this strange new landscape. In this issue of Reflections, we want to encourage you with a wealth of resources that we've found helpful in these last few weeks. As you read and listen to these, may they lift your eyes from the news of the day and fill you with hope as they center you on the promises of God for you in Jesus.



*Meditating on the
Sovereignty of God, My
Hope, and Fear of the
Unknown*



*God's Word at Work in
Our Waiting*

Mary Willson's Spring Brunch Talk

Ways to Connect



Scriptures to Encourage

Resources

- For Moms and Children
- Articles and Podcasts
- In-depth Study Resources
- Music



Adapted from a Sermon by Charles Spurgeon

God is too good to be unkind & He is too wise to be mistaken. And when we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart.

Meditating on the Sovereignty of God, My Hope, and Fear of the Unknown

A Reflection by Patrice Pedersen

I am a 65-year old Baby Boomer. My generation has not seen all the scary things my parents' generation saw though we've seen a lot. COVID19, however, is unprecedented in my lifetime. As we walk through this trial of pestilence, I must reflect on the joy and the peace of God's truth and grace.

I have found myself thinking, "This feels Biblical in proportions, doesn't it?" It does, because it is.



Hebrews 10:24 and I Thessalonians 5:11 say to *encourage one another and build one another up*. So, here is some encouragement especially for those who struggle with fear. I received a very positive email message, about three weeks ago now. The advantage of being married to a true academic is that all facts get checked by my resident skeptic. The verdict was that most of them were absolutely true. Here is a sampling from that email:

- China has closed down its last coronavirus hospital. Not enough new cases to support them.
 - Researchers of the Erasmus Medical Center claim to have found an antibody against coronavirus.
 - A 103-year-old Chinese grandmother has made a full recovery from COVID-19 after being treated for 6 days in Wuhan, China.
 - Apple reopens all 42 China stores,
 - Cleveland Clinic developed a COVID-19 test that gives results in hours, not days.
 - Good news from South Korea, where the number of new cases is declining.
 - 3 Maryland coronavirus patients fully recovered; able to return to everyday life.
 - Tulsa County's first positive COVID-19 case has recovered. This individual has had two negative tests, which is the indicator of recovery.
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I hope you find this list as positive as I did. But...

- even if no anti-virus is on the way - *God is still good.*
- even if no one is recovering at all - *God is the same yesterday, today and forever.*
- even if Apple stores all over the world never open their doors again - *God is gracious and kind, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness!*

I gratefully reflect on a recent Christian Education class on God's Sovereignty. We must encourage one another that this virus was known before the foundation of the world. Let's push on that a bit more. God can and has sent worse to move man to repentance and revival. God works all things together *for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.* (Rom. 8:28)

Here are some verses for consideration. (*I'm quoting all from the English Standard Version.*)

I form light and create darkness;
I make well-being and create calamity;
I am the Lord, who does all these things.
(Isaiah 45:7)

See now that I, even I, am he,
and there is no god beside me;
I kill and I make alive;
I wound and I heal;
and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
(Deuteronomy 32:39)

The Lord kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.
(Hebrews 11:17-19)

What I’m trying to say is that God actually *is* who He says He is, and He *can* do what He says He can do.

For me, that means that while I’m a scaredy-cat, He is the Lion of Judah! It means that in the real realm of cosmic pestilence, “No weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed.” (Isaiah 54:17)

God has said in Isaiah 51 and then in Job 19,

And the ransomed [*redeemed*] of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing

And in Job 19,
“Oh that my words were written!
Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
Oh that with an iron pen and lead
they were engraved in the rock forever!
For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at the last he will stand upon the earth.
And after my skin has been thus destroyed,
yet in my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see for myself,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
My heart faints within me!

It means that I can’t lose this. It means victory is in and with Christ forever. It means that eternal life in Him has already begun. It means simple, final, *ultimate* translation from this world to Zion, to the city of God, to the New Jerusalem, whether that translation be through COVID19 or in my case, the possibility of the return of cancer. We are not called to mere positive thinking. We are called to *powerful* thinking.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.
(Phil. 4:8)

To that end, now that I’ve quoted all these Scriptures, their respective classical settings in music are swirling in my brain. Brahms set the Job 19 verse, above, in his [German Requiem](#). From about *minute 29:40 - 33:15* of [this YouTube video](#) is the Brahms setting of the Job 19 declaration quoted above.

For those who struggle with fears that feel more real than what you believe to be true about God, you are not alone. There is a practical obedience to which we are called. The Scriptural word for that practice is meditation. We are to make the faith choice to renounce and rebuke fear before it becomes a habit and stronghold of sin. Then we must review, rehearse, chant out loud if necessary, God's truth: His word.

Recently, John Piper published a book very specifically on the topic of our current fears, [Coronavirus and Christ](#). But as I was writing this reflection, I remembered a sermon that Piper preached about how he grew up in fear and overcame it by meditating on Isaiah 41:10. You can find that sermon, [Fear Not, I Am with You, I Am Your God](#) (John Piper, 1993) at Desiring God Ministries.

It is also the very first verse I memorized when I became a believer in college and I've never forgotten it.

Fear not, *[your name]* for I am with you *[your name]*
be not dismayed, for I am your *[your name]* God;
I will strengthen you, *[your name]* I will help you, *[your name]*
I will uphold you *[your name]* with my righteous right hand.
(Isaiah 41:10)

Meditation on Scripture works. You know, I may be a scaredy-cat by my first birth, but I'm a cub of the Lion of Judah by my second!



God's Word at Work in Our Waiting

Mary Willson's Spring Brunch Talk

Like so many things during this unique season, our Spring Brunch fell victim to the COVID-19 pandemic. But we are undaunted in our effort to explore how as women in exile, following Jesus far from home, we are uniquely called to live counter-culturally for the glory of God and the sake of the world. We are so pleased to share [this video](#)

[recording](#) our speaker, Mary Willson, made for us as she leads us to meditate on 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10, entitled [God's Word at Work in Our Waiting](#). You will be both encouraged and challenged as she asks us to consider the transforming power of the gospel for ourselves and our neighbors!



We also want to have a chance to discuss the implications and applications of Mary's talk in small video gatherings over the next few weeks. [Sign up for one of these "Spring Brunch Virtual Gatherings."](#) We'll connect you with other women with similar availability and then your group can decide when to have your virtual gathering. We've created this [discussion guide](#) to help you think through Mary's talk and spur conversation.

Ways to Connect at Knox

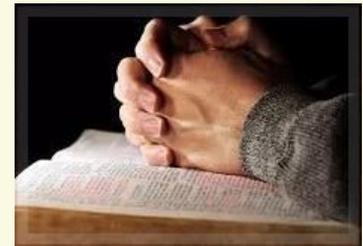


Women's Bible Studies

It's so important to continue to interact, support, pray and learn together during this time of isolation. Did you know that our Wednesday Morning and Wednesday Evening Bible studies continue to meet via Zoom? You are more than welcome to join us for either of these. If you're interested or would like more information contact [Jennifer Donovan](#).

Prayer Ministries

You can also still join others from Knox throughout the week for a variety of prayer times through conference calls. [Click here](#) to learn about these opportunities which include focused prayer groups, congregational prayer times or request individual prayer. You can also contact [Monika Lamine](#) who leads our prayer ministries if you have questions.



C3W Virtual Small Groups



It's so important to walk together through this time of quarantine so that though we're apart, we're not alone! Figuring out how to do that can be difficult, so if you're looking for ways to make those connections we want to help! [Sign up here](#) and we'll be in touch with you to see what you're looking for - a Bible study, a prayer group, a group of women to just visit with regularly - and we'll help you find ways to make those connections!

Scripture Cards

As we follow Jesus far from home in this time of COVID-19 quarantine, Scripture is our greatest source of truth, encouragement and hope as we seek to live counter-culturally for God's glory and the sake of the world. [Download](#), print, and post these around your home to encourage you on this journey.



Resources

It's easy to get caught up in the 24-hour news cycle checking on the upswing in COVID-19 illnesses and the downturn in the stock market. As good citizens, we should be informed but not consumed! In Colossians 1:1-4 God calls us to shape and discipline our minds differently: "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with

him in glory.” The following resources - [resources for moms and children](#), [articles & podcasts](#), [in-depth study materials](#), and [music](#) - can help us all reorient our minds in this time of chaos to our sure and certain hope in God through the work of Jesus!

Resources for Moms and Children

Sally Lloyd-Jones, author of [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#), has several resources for young kids [at her website](#). You can sign up for her monthly digital newsletter, find links to buy Sally’s books including a fun step by step guide to help your children write their “own book,” get suggestions for talking to your children about the Corona Virus, read her blog and find out how to connect with her via Instagram as she reads stories to children twice a week. Here’s a [Spotify playlist](#) Sally created called “Be Still.” Enjoy listening with your little ones!



Melissa Kruger is a wife, mom, author and speaker who blogs at [Wit’s End](#). She is also the director of women’s initiatives for [The Gospel Coalition](#). Check out her most recent blog entitled “[Now’s the Time! Resources for Family](#)

[Devotions](#).” This blog is chock-full of suggestions and links for resources no matter the age of your children.

Playlists for Kids

[Upbeat Songs for Quarantined Kids](#) - from The Gospel Coalition

[Be Still](#) - from Sally Lloyd-Jones

[Keith and Kristyn Getty Family Hymn Sing](#) - This

happens each Tuesday evening via Facebook at 7:15

EDT. It’s a fun few minutes with this gifted songwriting

pair and their 4 girls. You can watch the ones you miss here, too. You’ll be encouraged by how “real” it is – no staging just happens live with all the antics you’d expect from young kids!!



Resources for Talking to Your Children About Coronavirus

[How to Talk to Children About the Coronavirus](#) by Cameron Cole at The Gospel Coalition

[Helping Children with Scary News](#) by Sally Lloyd-Jones

[Parenting Anxious Kids in an Anxious Time](#) by Chad Kraska at The Gospel Coalition

[How to Talk to Children About the Coronavirus](#) a podcast (and transcript) from Pastor John Piper talking directly to kids (for older kids)

Terrific Resources from Our Knox Family

[Tips for Families at Home with Elementary Students](#) by Amy Smith

[Tips for Families at Home with Middle and High School Students](#) by Sonja Sray

Articles and Podcasts



Connally Gilliam (our 2019 Spring Brunch and Advent speaker) is interviewed about her book, [**And Yet, Undaunted: Embraced by the Goodness of God in the Chaos of Life.**](#) [**This podcast**](#) focuses on the hope we have when life is so very difficult. As always, Connally is honest and engaging.

[**The Gospel Coalition**](#) has curated [**a large selection of articles and podcasts**](#) to help us think rightly in the midst of the Corona Virus crisis. Here are just a few:

[**Suffering, Healing and the Hope of Eternity**](#) - a podcast with Nancy Guthrie and Joni Eareckson Tada

[**Practice Hospitality. Especially During a Pandemic**](#) - an article by Rosario Butterfield

[**Love in an Economic Crisis**](#) - an article by Justin Lonas

[**The Fright of Death: How Conscience Makes Cowards of Us All**](#) - an article by Tim Keller

[**Quarantine Is Hard. God Is Good**](#) - an article by Kim Seville



[**Desiring God**](#), a ministry begun by Pastor John Piper, also has a wealth of resources specifically tailored to encourage us in this unprecedented time. Here are a few:

[**Coronavirus and Christ**](#) - a list of articles and podcasts, including a short book, *Coronavirus and Christ*, that John Piper has just released (free to download as a PDF or listen to)

[**Fear Not, I Am with You, I Am Your God**](#) - A sermon from 1993 by John Piper based on [**Isaiah 41:1-13**](#)

[**Come What May: Finding Patience and Joy in a Slow Calamity**](#) - a rich meditation on the book of Habakkuk by David Mathis, executive editor at Desiring God.

The aim of the [**Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation**](#) is to consider how caring for people's souls can be increasingly wise and helpful. This is sometimes identified as biblical counseling. CCEF seeks to describe the troubles we face, how those troubles are experienced, how God speaks to us during those troubles, and how we help each other with wisdom and love. Check out their [**resources page**](#) for a wonderful array of articles that will help you engage your fears and anxieties in a God-centered way. Share these rich articles with your friends who are in need of encouragement and comfort.



[**Veritas Forums**](#) are university events that engage students and faculty in discussions about life's hardest questions and the relevance of Jesus Christ to all of life. Listen to the three latest forums specifically devoted to considering the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic.

[**Coronavirus and Quarantine: What Big Questions Can We Be Asking**](#) - a panel discussion among David Brooks, Andy Crouch, Lydia Dugdale and Andrew Schuman

[Coronavirus & Quarantine: The Economy, Career, & Jobs](#) - a panel discussion among Arthur Brooks, Andy Chan, Alfa Demmellash and Andrew Schuman

[Coronavirus & Quarantine: The Lament, Hope, & Creativity](#) - a panel discussion among Lecrae, Alissa Wilkinson, Makoto Fujimura and Andrew Schuman

In-Depth Study Resources

For many of us as meetings are canceled, stores are closed, meeting with friends at the local coffeeshop disallowed, we have an unprecedented opportunity to dig into some free study resources that our once crowded schedules precluded. Check out these excellent resources (some being offered for free for the first time) during the current Coronavirus crisis.

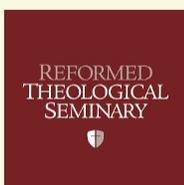
From Knox - Our Knox leaders have [gathered some excellent excerpts](#) to encourage us during this challenging time. They include meditations on Scripture, sermons, devotionals, encouragements for parenting, Puritan prayers and much more. These are all aimed at helping us center our hope on our sovereign God who is with us and caring for us amid this storm. We have this confidence because the Scripture assures us that “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” Romans 8:32

For ease of navigation, we’ve created [an index for these resources](#). These excerpts were made available to us from Westminster Theological Seminary Bookstore. The index includes links to purchase each of the books from the WTS Bookstore.



Ligonier Ministries, the teaching fellowship of Dr. R.C. Sproul, recently unlocked [Ligonier’s entire teaching series library](#) with over 2,500 lectures and more than 1,000 hours of teaching. These messages will remain free to stream through at least June 30. This is a treasure trove of solid teaching!

Ligonier Connect - Study groups at Ligonier Connect provide you with a private online classroom where you can invite friends to take any course in their library together. For a limited time (at least through June 30), [they are offering all group studies for free](#). This could be a great opportunity to connect with friends near and far as you study some excellent courses. Watch this [short video](#) to see how to create a group. Then check out the [100+ course offerings](#).



Reformed Theological Seminary has collected a variety of audio, video and written resources from their faculty including Dr. Kevin DeYoung, Dr. Ligon Duncan, Dr. Michael Kruger and Dr. Scott Swain. [Check out these resources from RTS](#).

This TGC article lists tons of free or discounted books available from a wide range of Christian publishers during the COVID

quarantine. Did you know that Audible is making their children's selections free as long as schools are closed? This article can help you navigate the many excellent and age-appropriate titles that are available through [Audible](#).

The logo for The Gospel Coalition (TGC), consisting of the letters 'TGC' in white on a green square background.

[The White Horse Inn](#) podcast, [Modern Reformation Magazine](#) and [Core Christianity](#) are a suite of ministries that seek to help Christians “know what they believe and why they believe it” through conversational theology. The conversations take place in talk show, magazine, event, book, blog and social media formats. Originally founded by Dr. Michael Horton, Professor of Theology and Apologetics at Westminster Seminary California, each of these ministries are drenched in rich foundational and doctrinal teaching in easy to access formats. These will take you deep into the Scriptures and their application in our modern moment.

Music Resources

As young David's gift of music soothed Saul's troubled spirit, so today in a time when fears are peaking around almost every corner of our lives, music can be a balm for our anxious hearts and minds. Here are a few resources that can bring truth and beauty into your home.

Resources from modern hymn writers Keith and Kristyn Getty:

- [Keith and Kristyn's website](#) - lots of great music!
- [“Christ Our Hope in Life and Death,”](#) the Getty team's newest hymn, released for Easter 2020
- [Watch the backstory of “Christ Our Hope in Life and Death”](#)
- [Getty Family Hymn Sing](#), every Tuesday at 8:15 EDT



[140 Songs for Times of Anxiety Playlist from TGC](#) - Scroll through this article for links to access this playlist on Spotify, Apple Music, or Amazon music.

