

Living In . . .

by Lynn Trogdon

***“I am the vine; you are the branches.
If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit;
apart from me you can do nothing.***

John 15:5 (NIV 1984)

“We are living in unprecedented times.” Events of March 2020 have engraved this sentence in our memories. The entire world, it seems, locked down. Travel, schools, large churches (and likely soon to be small ones, too) canceled. Chick-fil-A – a mainstay of American fast food – closed all inside restaurants and now provide only take-out and drive-thru meals.

Living in. We are all living in some state of mind, some turmoil—or peace—every day. Yes, the coronavirus COVID-19 added a new level of wild and strange to our world. We are living in – well – a hot mess. “Breathing through the anxiety” one post announced, even as others served only to push the waves of anxiety a little higher. Panic, anxiety, fear – call it what you may. Suddenly it feels like we are living outside, not in. Outside usual practices and relationships. Outside restaurants. Outside church. Perhaps even, if we’re willing to admit it, outside how we thought a good God acts.

However, in the world of followers of Jesus, nothing has changed. We are still called to *live in*—but not in a world of anxiety. Jesus’ instruction to abide, to remain, to live in him and with him moment by moment, is the same instruction he gave over 2,000 years ago. In one huge and important way, the world is the same as it has always been. God is sovereign. Jesus is the vine. And we are his branches. Regardless of the state of our world, this giant truth has NOT changed! And we need to be reminded . . . and remind ourselves often . . . that our planet is not suddenly spinning out of control (though it feels that way. Feelings can fool us, can’t they?) It still spins on the same axis God set it upon at creation. That axis is God the Father, Jesus Christ his only Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The tricky part is finding ways to *live in Jesus* while a novel virus, crashed stock market and empty grocery store shelves scream another message. What kind of message will we be?


It’s odd timing for me. Last week I enjoyed a delightful first. My first silent retreat – unplugged – alone. Three delightful nights and days with my God. He calmed some stormy emotions and fears as I settled into my spot for the weekend. Bright sunshine lit the rooms and my heart. This Monday morning – eight days later – oh, my goodness, I’d never have believed our world could have changed so quickly.

God, the Storm Calmer, has not left the building. He is not impotent. He is not slumbering or sleeping. His eye is still on the sparrow, and all his beloved creation. God is still in control. He’s not been caught by surprise. He knew this season of illness and panic was coming.


“I plan to journal in my new notebook while living in isolation,” a friend said. It’s a good practice. In writing this, I’ve purged . . . and found a small way to live in Jesus rather than dwelling on all the other.

Will you do the same? Let’s Journal for Joy! Each time you see a leaf below, complete the sentence 3 to 5 times.


 I am living in . . .

 My words and actions say . . .


Now, it’s time for a perspective correction! **Write John 15:5.**


 Jesus says . . .

Acts 17:28 says the same thing in a slightly different way. ***“For in him we live and move and have our being.”***


 If I live in Jesus, then . . .

My thoughts and actions sometimes shout something different. How about yours?

 I need to tell . . .

 In Galatians 2:20 below, underline or highlight every occurrence of live or live in.

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.
The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave
himself for me.”

 Dear Jesus, help me live in . . .