

Noticing discomfort. Living in Joy.

Over the last couple of weeks, I have been paying close attention to what friends and family members have been posting on social media. For a period of time the only posts that I saw, even if they were just pictures, were focused on discomfort. People were commenting that they were tired of not being able to do what they wanted, or not looking forward to having to wear a mask. One person I know posted these words, which I am sharing with you with her permission, "Oh great, another thing wrong. Our pool has a hole in it; it was supposed to be the thing that kept the kids out of my hair this summer." Even pictures on Instagram and Facebook have predominately been memories from years before with comments such as, "What a beautiful spot we found last year, wish we could be there now." Or "What I wouldn't do to be able to stand in that crowd again."

I think it has become easy, maybe too easy, for us to notice discomfort. In some cases, if we are not careful, we have become so accustomed to it, that we actively look for it. The other day we were cleaning off our deck to make ready for some new outdoor furniture to arrive; one would think it would be a good and exciting time, but as we cleaned I heard one of my sons say, "this is a nice deck, but it would be better if the spiders wouldn't build their webs on it; I am so tired of cleaning them away." So many of the conversations that we have lately have a spin of discomfort connected to them, we are noticing more and more the harder parts of daily living and not only are we noticing them, we are commenting on them. We seem to be living in a state of lament. We notice when friends don't call or text, we notice when the rain just won't stop, we notice how long it has been since ***(you fill in the blank)***

Over the last couple of days, though, I have begun to notice a slight change. The people around me seem to be lifting up little bits of joy; seem to be living fully into those little joy filled moments. Just today someone I know in town stopped by on her way past my house and talked to me from her car. She expressed to me how excited she was because she was on her way to the post office to pick up a package; that's was it, the joy was that package had arrived. My dad has been posting on Instagram, almost on a daily basis, picture of the flowers growing in his back yard and has used the hashtag *#lovemygarden*. Someone else posted a quote from a blogger who reminded her followers that just because your friends haven't reached out in a while, doesn't mean that they don't love you. All of these and many more are example of everyday joys.

Psalm 119 says this, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and light to my path." The word of God is a word of hope, love and importantly joy, but in times such as these we need to remind ourselves that its crucial to notice the hope, love and joy. When discomfort abounds it is really important to get excited for that package, or that flower, or that little bit of sunshine between rains. It's important to find something that makes you smile and laugh, when everything makes you want to cry. Not because we should fake our way through life, but because life is not just filled with discomfort. All around us every single day are hundreds of little bubbles of joy, but we must take the time to notice them. It takes a shift in our thinking. Maybe when that Facebook memory appears from that awesome camping trip with friends last year, rather than fist saying, "oh I wish we could do that now," say to yourself, "That was a great time; I really love those people."

Maybe when the spider builds yet another web on your deck, instead of saying, "another thing to clean," you could say, "Look at the beauty of that work." It takes just little shift in our mindset, but that little shift away from noticing discomfort to living in joy can make all the difference in the world. It literally can be the light to our path. I know friends, that this time that we are living in is filled with

struggle and change, but even in the face of it, there is still so much beauty, so much hope, so much love and so many opportunities to live in joy. Let that joy light your path, find a way to see the good; for the promise of God is that goodness abounds.

Sincerely,

Rev. Adam Hall