

## The Sermon - In 10 Sentences Or Less

1. Many of us, and America as a whole, during CoVid show predictable symptoms of being overly-stressed/anxious, like emotional reactivity, imaginative gridlock, a desire for quick fixes, herding, and scapegoating.

2. These behaviors and attitudes have a physiological cause - our amygdalas are hijacking our brains, routing our mental processing down to our brain stem, and from there into our bodies.

3. When our brains get overwhelmed by our amygdalas, we become reactive, and lose what makes us uniquely human (the use of our prefrontal cortex).

4. As Christians, we are called to be "at peace to give peace;" in order to do that, we must take steps to counteract or tame this involuntary neurological instinct.

5. To be "at peace," we must take responsibility for our own emotional state of mind, and not give it away to our circumstances.

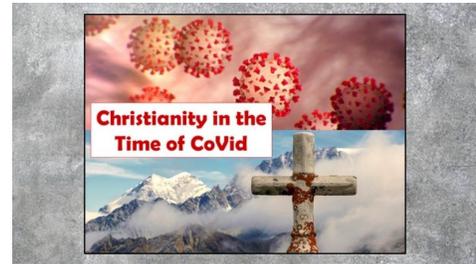
6. To be "at peace," we must offload our anxieties and stresses onto God, for we aren't meant to carry their weight alone.

7. To be "at peace," we must slow down, even if for just 30 seconds, so we reroute our mental processing to the thinking part of our brains.

8. To be "at peace," we need to come back to the present moment and to our own bodies, because stress and anxiety pulls us into the ambiguous future.

9. To be "at peace," we need to take the next right step, and leave everything else, including the outcome, to God.

10. To be "at peace," we need to laugh together; meditation and laughter are the two single most effective ways to calm an overly-stressed/anxious brain.



### **Verse for the Week**

"So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today." (Matthew 6.34)

### **Prayer for the Week**

Pray this for yourself and for all those who call KW home, but also for our country and for our Christian witness to peace during the pandemic.

"God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time, accepting hardships as the pathway to peace, taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it, and trusting that God will make all things right if I surrender to His Will, so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen." (Reinhold Niebuhr, 20th-century)

### **How to Be a Non-Anxious Presence and Make Peace**

Everything below is taken from an article by a Christian mediator, Douglas Noll, skilled at being at peace so that he can bring that peace into situations that don't have it:

- To be a peacemaker, you must not get caught up in \swirling, confused, chaotic emotions, which are largely a product of an overly-stressed/fearful brain.
- Being a "non-anxious presence" enables you to be more clear-headed about solutions and more adroit in difficult situations, but it will also lower the anxiety throughout the entire group.
- Peacemakers recognize and contain their own anxiety, so that their presence, far from escalating conflict, actually serves to diminish its destructive effect.
- Anxiety's major tone is seriousness, often an affliction in itself. It is always content-oriented. Its major antidote is playfulness. Your capacity to be paradoxical, challenging, funny, sometimes crazy, and even subversive often can do more to loosen knots than anything else. Keep the load light whenever you can.
- Those who are highly anxious have also lost any hope that it can be resolved, not to mention transformed. Maintaining a "non-anxious" presence exudes confidence that hope can be restored, which will help others be more engaged, less adversarial toward one another, and ultimately find the solutions they need. A single non-anxious presence is the surest route to a good outcome.

### **E. More to Come**

What we talked about yesterday is a sprawling subject, to be sure. That's ok, hopefully this email will help you digest it a little more, and the Midweek Minute will try to do the same in a few days. Look for it, there's more to come.