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## LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

One of my biggest criticisms of the mainstream media is its bias towards sensational events since all media outlets share the same end goal of making as much money as possible. It is always important to keep this fact in mind whenever we read/listen to any news outlets because if we do not it is very easy for us to have a skewed outlook on the world. The world is not as dangerous, violent, unjust, etc. as the news makes it seem to be. Sharing the world with almost 8 billion other people means that the media can never possibly cover every human event in the world. Of course, recently all of the major media outlets have been united in their coverage of the Coronavirus and its impact on the global community. The news coverage is around the clock and there are times when it feels like things are changing by the minute. It is a unique experience in human history in that we have never been so connected before through our technology in our response to a pandemic. Looking back in history there are obvious comparisons we can make with the Spanish flu of 1918 that infected 27% of the world population and resulted in up to 100 million deaths. The advancements in medicine and communication since 1918 means that our global community is much better equipped to respond to this kind of event and the hope is to prevent millions of deaths. So I have found that I am grateful for the news coverage that helps us coordinate our efforts to prevent the spread of this new pandemic.

This all reminds me of how Christians are called to respond in times of crisis. In Matthew 7: 24-27 we read: *“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined.”* It is easy to feel scared, worried, even overwhelmed as we navigate this global health crisis but as Christians, we have been given the grace of faith and trust in God who takes care of us at all times. Instead of panic and fear we are strengthened by the peace that God gives us which helps us to respond to the challenges that we face with clear minds. There is a famous quote from Karl Marx which is “Religion is the opium of the people” which is actually taken out of context, but the quote is often used as a criticism of religion as a way for people to ignore real world problems. My response to this is that rather than ignoring real world problems, our faith in God reminds us that the crosses we bear both as individuals and as a community will never be too heavy for us. Looking back again in history at horrible events like the Holocaust and the Black death we are reminded that world has already experienced similar hardships and survived. The storms of life are often unpredictable and they are a powerful reminders that we are not in control. Not being in control can be scary until we realize that our faith teaches us that God is in control.

***May the peace of Christ that the world cannot take away reign in your hearts.***