

KEEPING A HEALTHY PERSPECTIVE

We finally had a family outing last week. On Tuesday afternoon, all three of us gathered in the car and drove to Paris for our family outing. The funny thing was our family outing was to get our second vaccination shots. We laughed about it in the car when I brought it up. It really was a reminder of the times we have been going through when getting our vaccine shots all together constituted a family outing. Being able to laugh and keep a healthy perspective like this has helped us deal with the disappointments of not being able to do as many family outings due to COVID.

We have had to change our views or perspective of things as a result of this pandemic. It has been a reminder to us of:

- how fragile life is and how quick things can change,
- how it is a fallen and scary world in which we live,
- how we should never take for granted the everyday things in life,
- how we need to think about what things are truly important to us,
- how our lives were perhaps too busy and out of control prior to this.

Our lives have been turned so upside down as a result of this pandemic it has forced us to change our perspective about these and many other things. It is so important to be able to maintain a proper and healthy perspective when we go through stressful times like this. Sometimes however, the stress of the situation may take away from our ability to maintain that healthy perspective. David found himself struggling with this very problem in Psalm 13.

David was going through much stress and despair when he wrote this psalm. His despair was evident each time he used this expression: "**how long.**" Four times David used this expression revealing his despair:

- O Lord, **how long** will you forget me? Forever? (verse 1)
- **How long** will you look the other way? (verse 1)
- **How long** must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day? (verse 2)
- **How long** will my enemy have the upper hand? (verse 2)

David was definitely struggling with despair at this particular moment, and it was causing him to have a negative perspective about his situation, as well as of God. We need to remember that David had a close and unique relationship with God, but this crisis caused him to lose sight of having a healthy perspective of his reality with God's help. The good thing that David did here was to continue to keep talking with God. As David expressed his feelings to God, he was slowly able to gain a healthier perspective about the

struggles and realities he was facing. By the end of his conversation in prayer with God, David was able to say:

**But I trust in your unfailing love. I will rejoice because You have rescued me. I will sing to the Lord because He is good to me.
(Psalm 13:5-6)**

As we see in David's words here, he was not only able to profess trust and hope in God, but also experience peace despite the stress he was still going through. This change all resulted from spending time with God in prayer.

It is very important as we go through stressful situations to be able to keep a proper and healthy perspective on things. Just like David, we might have found ourselves feeling very distressed at times during this pandemic. Many of us might be thinking the worst of this pandemic is behind us now. The reality is there will still be things as we move ahead that will cause us distress. I think if we experience a fourth wave, and possibly another shut down as a result, it will cause many people to become distressed. I overheard two clerks at a hardware store recently say to each other that they do not think they could handle it emotionally if things were to shut down again. There are so many unknowns as we move forward into our new reality of life post-pandemic. There might be a few setbacks and bumps along the way as we see life return to some form of "new normal." There will also be the usual list of things that cause stress in our lives:

- family problems,
- illnesses or care-giving situations,
- work issues,
- debt or financial struggles,
- death or grief.

In order to maintain a healthy perspective that allows us to keep laughing and hoping, it will be so important for us to follow David's example by talking over our problems with God. Prayer will be so vital for us, as it has been up until this point. The more we pray, the more we will be able to regain that right and healthy perspective that will bring peace back into our lives with God's help. In fact, we can view our prayer time with God as a family outing with our Father in Heaven.

Keep laughing, keep hoping, keep praying and keep safe.

God Bless.

Pastor Dean