

*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.* Matthew 6:33-34

Has your faith been shaken yet? This is a season of suffering and uncertainty for much of the world. In times like these, doubting and questioning are normal. In fact, going through a time of questioning, even questioning our faith, can lead us to have a stronger, deeper relationship with God in the end, so don't hesitate to struggle with God, and don't be afraid to ask the tough questions. God meets us where we are.

It's normal for times of struggle to shake our faith in God, but I admit, I've been shaken up in a different way lately. You see, I once had faith that I knew how the world worked. I believed that I could guess with some certainty what was and wasn't possible, how people would and would not behave. I thought I knew when something was permanent and unshakable, and when it was only a fad. I thought I knew how far the limits of human reason and

belief could be pushed. I had so much faith in my own ability to predict these things that I never even noticed it. I didn't know I was dependent on my ability to guess what would happen tomorrow until suddenly, I had to admit that I had no clue! When I say my faith has been shaken, I mean my faith in what I assumed to be true about people, about systems, about tomorrow. Mostly though, I'm talking about losing faith in my own expectations. And this shaking is painful, but it is necessary, at least to me. For in the pain of my confusion and uncertainty, I have had to confront how much my faith has been built, not on the sure foundation of God's presence, righteousness, and love, but on flawed, empty, and shaky human systems, and in the shakiest thing of all: myself.

If you are shaken today, you are in good company (or at least in my company!). If you are shaken, I invite you to resist the urge to start rebuilding your faith in the old, shaky things. Let's not be quick to tell ourselves that recent frightening events will never happen again, or that they are almost over and "normal" is just

around the corner. Instead of trying to shore up our old assumptions about the world, assumptions that for many of us are crumbling today, let us be encouraged to place our faith in something better. Let's accept that, as Jesus reminds us, each new day is going to keep bringing forth its own trouble. Our job is not to keep trying to predict it, but to continue to follow Jesus, seek his face, believe in the kingdom he is building, and live (as much as we can) as if that kingdom were already perfected here, as we have faith that one day it surely will be.

PENNY ENGLISH

Everyone wants to speak out on the riots, on Trump, on Biden, on race, on lockdowns and masks, on the elections, on conspiracies, on Democrats, on Republicans.... everyone has a thought, a judgment, a post just itching to be made. Just like we did all 2020. I know, I'm there with you, I've made and deleted about a 1000 statuses, and that's probably a good thing since I've also changed my mind about 1000 times as my own emotions have fluctuated.

But really, the posts are made, and the needle doesn't move. In fact it usually just leads to more fighting. Turns out everyone having an instant platform has not been beneficial for the most part, I'd say the social media experiment has largely failed. Heck, social media may even be one of the biggest culprits for the anger and violence in our country.

I wonder, as believers, if we prayed more than we posted... if things might look different? That question in itself is not meant to be a judgment as much as a "refocus", and it's not meant to be a catchy "gotcha" slogan, but rather I hope we do better in 2021 than we already have only seven days in. I'm making a call to myself and to my own church to pray more and post less. I truly believe that social media, and all the noise it brings, is actually serving to hinder the only real thing that is going change hearts and bring any kind of healing to our brokenness.... so make sure you, AT LEAST, pray before you post. In fact, pray before you even read through all the posts (if reading through posts is even a good idea at this point, which remains to be seen). I realize that this IS a post, and you're reading it, so this is

a strange statement indeed... so maybe stop reading it and pray?

2 Chronicles 7:14

if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

MATT NETZER

## THE SOLID ROCK

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

◦ *Refrain:*

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace;  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant, His blood  
Support me in the whelming flood;  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay.

◦ *Refrain:*

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
Oh, may I then in Him be found;  
Dressed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne.



## IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

### *Refrain:*

It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!—  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

*Refrain:*

It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,  
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;  
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!  
Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,  
Even so, it is well with my soul.