

There are plenty of things that are disturbing in this world
Between the news and those things we face personally—life can be pretty overwhelming

How do we navigate this world and all of these things that overwhelm us?

We've heard it all before...

It happened for a reason

God is trying to teach us something

God is in control

Just believe

I'll pray for you

We react against these answers that don't work for us—that try to make it something it's not

Truths that have been turned in such a way that they don't help—and end up hurting us

God might use a bad thing—but God doesn't give us bad things to teach us

God has given up control to free will—if God was in control, why did it happen?

I'm all out of blind faith—I can't just believe

Prayer? —what do you think I've been doing and nothing happens

For too many, the church is a place of denial and living in non-reality—full of quick fixes

As a friend said, we went to church all dressed up, in denial of reality at home

So, what do we do? —there is nothing new here, just important reminders

First thing is to tell the truth—the whole unvarnished, real truth, without pretense

Including how you feel about the whole thing—that's part of the truth

Put all of the pieces out on the table—including the ones that don't fit or go together

Do it with someone else or a community of people you trust to Listen with you

By ourselves, it is way too easy to get caught in the dead ends

We were never meant to do this alone—we were created to be in community

Then Listen and allow God to speak—not even about way forward—just Listen—what do you hear?

When ready, invite God to show you the next step

For those issues which you face directly

Consider asking a Meeting for Clearness to sit with you—a Quaker concept

To help you in the Listening process

For larger issues—it is good to ask a larger community to seek Leadings together

Don't try to solve the whole thing—take it one step at a time

Quaker phrase—Live up to the Light you have, and more will be given to you

We often want the whole answer—trust that what you are given is enough to begin

More will be given in good time—maybe it can be seen around this corner

But—there are some additional truths to hold throughout this process

You are enough! We are enough!

I don't mean that you're enough to do everything in front of you

There will always be more than you can do or be

But you are enough to do everything that God asks of you—enough to follow Leadings

Enough to take the next steps

God doesn't ask for perfection or success—God asks that we are faithful
Shift the questions to—what does it mean to be faithful in this? can I/we be faithful in this?
When I bring my full self and put it before God and am faithful to what I can do
Then we trust God to make something of that—Wait and see what God will do
It is the loaves and fish miracle—what they had was 2 fish and 5 pieces of bread
Jesus blessed what they brought to him and it was plenty

That takes us to trust—sturdy trust—this isn't about belief or knowing things
It is raw, hanging on to God trust—accepting that God is with us and lives in the gaps
It isn't about trusting in the outcome—but trusting that God is with me always
We tend to focus on the outcome—have faith in the outcome
Have faith that the chair will hold you up
Rather—trust that God will be with me should the chair break
Our trust is in God—who is with us and who meets us where we are
Together we walk forward, step by step
Choosing to live unafraid—Fear Not! —Trusting God

Continually go back to Listening and ask God what's next
This isn't a Listen once and go forth—but a constant Listening for new movement
A constant process of following the nudges as they come
Pay attention to the God movement all around us—as well as within us

Remember that God's strength/power is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)
Feels backwards—we think that if we do good, God will help us out
But we just come as we are—nothing more, nothing less—the rest is up to God

It's also a process of continually asking what's mine to do? what is my purpose in all of this?
Story of a man carrying water everyday
Every day he lost water on the way to the house, apologizing about losing water
Answer— “no, look at the flowers on the path from the well to the house”
Is my divine purpose to carry water to the house? Or is it to water the flowers?
When things don't go as expected—pause and ask again what my purpose is in all of this

All along the way, practice goodness—do the fruits of the Spirit
*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity,
faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23 NRSV*
Persevere—hang in there for the long run

In the end, I think the whole thing comes down to trust—this radical idea of trusting God
God is with us and will never leave us—no matter what
Trust God on the journey and trust that we are enough to follow our Leadings...