



TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH • HELP • HEALING • HOPE

August 2020

Dear Ministry Partners;

Day 444. The nation let out a collective sigh in 1981 as sixty American hostages were finally freed and alive. The Iran Hostage Crisis that began in 1979 was finally over. I remember each night watching the network news and the very first thing each anchor would say was today is Day __ (whatever 'hostage day' it was).

It didn't matter if you watched ABC, CBS or NBC (yes, only 3 stations at the time) each began the same way. The number was front and center on the screen. There was constant media coverage of the hostage crisis. We were constantly reminded about it. I remember thinking when will this be over. The nation was experiencing fatigue, worry and anxiety over the crisis not to mention questions and doubt for those handling the situation. It appeared that there was no end in sight. But it did end and sixty American hostages were freed and alive. Fast forward 39 years.

Day 136. At the end of July, this is how many days Grace Mission (like many businesses and not-for-profits) has been closed to the public. Today, with the plethora of news stations we are reminded over and over again about the pandemic. Numbers are flashed across the screens and news anchors often are repeating what their predecessors did back in the late 70's. There is no shortage of bad news. Although this isn't the Iran Hostage Crisis it often feels like we are being held 'hostage' by a deadly virus. I think we are all feeling fatigue, worry and anxiety. It feels like there is no end in sight but much like the Iran Hostage Crisis there will be an end – a day when we can all take a collective sigh of relief when it's finally over.

FAITH and HOPE are the words I use while I wait for the end of this pandemic crisis. But fear can water-down both. In fact, it can drown them out. Thomas Merton said this:

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“You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope” (Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander, p.206).

Isn't it time to let fear die and embrace courage, faith and hope instead? Fear keeps us locked into fatigue, worry and anxiety. We get stuck in quiet despair. Each day can appear bleaker than the next.

But we don't need to be afraid. We have each other and a God who is for us. I've heard it said that the most common one-liner in the Bible is *“Do not be afraid or fear not.”* Someone supposedly counted and said it shows up 365 times, once for each day of the year. I don't know if it's true or not but I do find God's word addresses our fears again and again. When we can learn to surrender our fear to God and walk with Him through the darkness and despair, He not only brings us out on the other side, but He can breathe new life into each of us. It is then we learn what it means to trust God.

So maybe it's time to let fear die, come to our senses and believe something else. Embracing courage, faith and hope isn't just a fluffy religious concept but a provocative, life-changing idea (belief) that can transform your life. Maybe we should begin each day as **Day 1** period. No longer counting the days but living each day as it comes with courage, faith and hope.

Thank you for your prayers and support.

Living in Day One,
Pastor Amanda+