

March 30th, 2020

Dear Students,

What a strange time we find ourselves in! I realize none of you expected to be in this particular position.

None of you planned to shelter in place for an undetermined amount of time in such close proximity to your family. You didn't plan to be away from campus and friends, separated from activities that have helped shape your identity during your time at Taylor. Some of you have worked hard to prepare for events, projects and seasons that will never come to fruition. Seniors - this isn't how you planned to spend your last semester. Some of you missed mission trips and vacations. Others had semesters abroad cut short. None of you signed up to be online learners. This isn't what you planned.

Others of you are finding yourselves with some much needed margin surrounded by people you care about in a place you love. You are safe and comfortable. You're finding time to read books for fun, talk with friends and rest. Maybe you've started baking. You're getting back into nature and spending time playing with the dog. Sheltering in place feels more like sheltering in peace.

Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us that for everything there is a season, and a time for every activity under heaven. If this is your time for grief, I encourage you to grieve. Name your sorrows and allow yourself time to mourn their loss. Reach out to others and share their burdens. Provide a safe space for others to grieve as well. And know that I am truly sorry for your loss.

If this is your time for joy, be glad! Embrace your newfound freedom. Enjoy your family. Read all the books! Eat all the cookies! Reach out to your friends and allow the encouragement to spill over. And know that I am sincerely delighted for you.

Regardless of your position, I implore you to be sensitive to others' experiences, and to leave space for others to process in their own way and their own time. Extend grace, especially

to yourselves and your families. . . and maybe even your professors. As I mentioned, none of us signed up for this! Every new thing has a learning curve. Fortunately, we're in this together! Let's set out to complete the good work Christ has set before us to do (Ephesians 2:10). In closing, I'd like to share one of my favorite prayers.

A Prayer for Today

O God:

Give me strength to live another day;

Let me not turn coward before its difficulties or prove recreant to its duties;

Let me not lose faith in other people;

Keep me sweet and sound of heart, in spite of ingratitude, treachery, or meanness;

Preserve me from minding little stings or giving them;

Help me to keep my heart clean, and to live so honestly and fearlessly that no outward failure can dishearten me or take away the joy of conscious integrity;

Open wide the eyes of my soul that I may see good in all things;

Grant me this day some new vision of thy truth;

Inspire me with the spirit of joy and gladness;

and make me the cup of strength to suffering souls;

in the name of the strong Deliverer, our only Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

May the peace of God be with you always!

Amber

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