



## Weekly Resource

### May 18, 2020: Abundance

Dear friends,

We hope that you are all staying healthy and safe, especially as economies start to open and unemployment continues to rise. During this time when so many of us are feeling the effects of scarcity so very acutely, we thought you might enjoy this resource on God's abundance.

We humans are built for community. It's crucial that we remain connected during this crisis, holding one another in love and support. This weekly resource is a great tool to stay connected with your current and past JFM small groups. It is also a great resource to use individually, or with groups of friends or family to stay connected and engaged in a meaningful way. These reflections will provide a time to pray together, check in with one another, and have conversation around a short passage.

In the meantime, we're offering tips and tools for facilitating all of our current programs through videoconferencing, including tutorials on how to use Zoom. While we hope that this weekly resource will spiritually sustain your community while in quarantine, [now is also the perfect time to start one of our regular programs](#) (perhaps Engaging Spirituality, which is now a virtually-friendly series of three 8-week programs). The call to seek justice is just as important now as ever!

Last but not least, generosity is, at its core, a benefit to everyone. When you donate today, your gift helps us sustain individuals committed to making the world better. [Click here to help out](#). Also, please feel free to [forward this resource](#) to friends and family!

Thank you for continuing to care for one another during this time of heightened anxiety. Know that we are praying for you!

Stay well,

The JustFaith Ministries Staff



## Welcome and Opening Meditation (5 minutes)

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When everyone has dialed in, begin your time together with these or similar words:

**Welcome, friends! It's so good to be with all of you, despite that we can't be together in person. Today we'll begin with prayer and spend a few minutes checking in with each other. Then we'll have some conversation around a short reflection on abundance and scarcity before closing in prayer. Most importantly, though, this will be a time to care for one another and to be the community we're called to be.**

Let's take a few seconds of silence to pause, to listen to our breathing, and to be present in this space.

Pause for 30 seconds before beginning the opening meditation.

### **WE ARE NOT IN THE SAME BOAT . . .**

I heard that we are all in the same boat, but it's not like that. We are in the same storm, but not in the same boat. Your ship could be shipwrecked and mine might not be. Or vice versa.

For some, quarantine is optimal. A moment of reflection, of re-connection, easy in flip flops, with a cocktail or coffee. For others, this is a desperate financial & family crisis.

For some that live alone they're facing endless loneliness. While for others it is peace, rest & time with their mother, father, sons and daughters.

With the \$600 weekly increase in unemployment some are bringing in more money to their households than they were working. Others are working more hours for less money due to pay cuts or loss in sales.

Some families of four just received \$3400 from the stimulus while other families of four saw \$0.

Some were concerned about getting a certain candy for Easter while others were concerned if there would be enough bread, milk and eggs for the weekend.



Some want to go back to work because they don't qualify for unemployment and are running out of money. Others want to kill those who break the quarantine.

Some are home, spending 2-3 hours/day helping their child with online schooling while others are spending 2-3 hours/day to educate their children on top of a 10-12 hour workday.

Some have experienced the near death of the virus, some have already lost someone from it and some are not sure if their loved ones are going to make it. Others don't believe this is a big deal.

Some have faith in God and expect miracles during this 2020. Others say the worst is yet to come.

So, friends, we are not in the same boat. We are going through a time when our perceptions and needs are completely different.

Each of us will emerge, in our own way, from this storm. It is very important to see beyond what is seen at first glance. Not just looking, actually seeing.

We are all on different ships during this storm experiencing a very different journey.

– Author Unknown

**Then say: Let us pray silently together for those whose needs are not being met during this time.** (You can simply say “Amen” after a minute has passed).

Optional: Close with the Lord's Prayer, inviting the group to use the wording of their own tradition, or to read the words below. If using video chat, have everyone unmute themselves so that you can pray in unison.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory. Forever. Amen.**

## **Check-In Time (10 minutes or so)**

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Ask these open-ended questions. If you are by yourself, journal about them.

*Note: If you're with a group, these questions have the potential to take up a lot of time. Some weeks may require more check-in time than others, depending on the needs of the group. To provide a shorter yet meaningful check-in time, choose ONE of the questions below, and ask participants to share a ONE sentence response.*

- **Before we begin this week's reflection, let's take a few minutes to check in. How is everyone feeling?** (It will be a bit more difficult via phone to know if someone is being talked over or is trying to get a word in.... Be sure everyone has a chance to speak).
- **What is something you're struggling with this week?**
- **Where have you seen a sign of hope this week?**

*Other optional questions include: What is something you've learned about yourself during this time of social distancing? Where have you experienced a "thin place" in the last week? Where have you seen beauty this week? What is one new behavior you'd like to continue doing when the virus has passed us by?*

## Reflection (15 minutes or so)

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**Read the following passage and play the following song provided in the link below:**

Today we may feel scarcity of hope and spirit. Today we may worry for unemployed loved ones, hungry children, exhausted essential employees, and lonely elders to name a few. Today we might feel that there is sadness, confusion, and loss. Today, in this hour, in this minute, and in this second, we might feel that we are scratching the surface of a parched desert. Perhaps we are wondering when and how we will ever find a patch of land to plant seeds and sustain ourselves and those we love.

But God sends manna from heaven. God multiplies fish and loaves. God multiplies all that we lay at God's feet, even in seasons that feel scarce.

Do not be afraid to name the scarcities. Those of your own and those belonging to others. Lift them up, and let them be blessed, to be declared good and to be multiplied. Let them be claimed by God who makes all things right.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGrrmQGaOCU>



(Multiplied, Rivers in the Wasteland by NeedToBreathe. 2014. Atlantic Records.)

Allow for a minute or two of silence, then read the following scripture.

Psalm 36: 5-10 (ESV)

- 5) Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,  
your faithfulness to the clouds.
- 6) Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;  
your judgments are like the great deep;  
man and beast you save, O Lord.
- 7) How precious is your steadfast love, O God!  
The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
- 8) They feast on the abundance of your house,  
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.
- 9) For with you is the fountain of life;  
in your light do we see light.
- 10) Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you,  
and your righteousness to the upright of heart!



Let us pause for silent meditation.

*Pause for 30 seconds.*

Then ask:

- How are these passages speaking to you today? What wisdom can you receive from them?
- Where have you seen or experienced God's abundance in your life today?
- Was there a particular line in the song or scripture that stood out to you? Why?
- What barriers are in place that do not allow you to let God do God's work?

## Closing Meditation (10 minutes-ish)

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Then say: Before we join in the closing meditation, let us pause to acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is as close as our very breath.

*Pause for 30 seconds. Then say:*

**We will now hear a reflection by Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM entitled "Lockdown." which he wrote on March 13th. Fr. Richard has given permission for this reflection to be circulated widely.**

Yes there is fear.

Yes there is isolation.

Yes there is panic buying.

Yes there is sickness.

Yes there is even death.

But,

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise

You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet

The sky is no longer thick with fumes

But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi

People are singing to each other



across the empty squares,  
keeping their windows open  
so that those who are alone  
may hear the sounds of family around them.  
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland  
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.  
Today a young woman I know  
is busy spreading fliers with her number  
through the neighborhood  
So that the elders may have someone to call on.  
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples  
are preparing to welcome  
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary  
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting  
All over the world people are looking at their neighbors in a new way  
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality  
To how big we really are.  
To how little control we really have.  
To what really matters.  
To Love.  
So we pray and we remember that  
Yes there is fear.  
But there does not have to be hate.  
Yes there is isolation.  
But there does not have to be loneliness.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
But there does not have to be meanness.  
Yes there is sickness.  
But there does not have to be disease of the soul  
Yes there is even death.  
But there can always be a rebirth of love.  
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.  
Today, breathe.  
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic  
The birds are singing again  
The sky is clearing,  
Spring is coming,  
And we are always encompassed by Love.  
Open the windows of your soul  
And though you may not be able  
to touch across the empty square,



Sing.

Then, in these words, invite any participants who have a prayer, a concern, or a request to briefly share it:

**We are disciples on a journey.**

**We are the body of Christ, broken for the world.**

**We hold one another as we carry the concerns of our neighbors.**

**If you feel moved, please share your prayer aloud.**

Leader: We pray also for the members of the JustFaith community across the country. Unite us through the power of your Holy Spirit, that together we might participate with you in the building of your Kingdom, in order to create a more just and peaceful world. Amen.