

## Weekly Health Update from Pastor Jim – Weekend of December 15 & 16, 2018

### Dear Friends and Family:

This week I received my new chemo and the good news is they found a grant that would pay my co-pay. I take one pill a week, for three weeks and then have a week off. I took the first pill on Monday morning, two hours after breakfast, because it is supposed to go in on an empty stomach. My reaction to the chemo has been nothing at all – Praise the Lord. I did stay home just in case, because the side effect most often was vomiting and diarrhea. I did not want to be out and about with that possibility. So, for me, Christmas came early. No side effects from this chemo. Thank you, Jesus!

Our house in Virginia, according to the builder, should be done for Christmas. According to our son Chris, there are many things that need to be done before we move in, even for just Christmas. We were hoping to stay in the house rather than a hotel when we visit for Christmas. It's really hard when things don't work out like we thought or planned it would. Especially if you're like me, and you like to plan. And I certainly don't want any unexpected deviations from or disappointments with the plan at all, ever. But as I have found out, life is highly unpredictable. I keep bumping up against this as I walk through a long season of life, that is not looking like I thought it would. I suspect many of you are also facing circumstances that have left you feeling caught off-guard and unsure about what tomorrow holds.

There are thousands of scenarios that evoke these feelings of uncertainty, fear and exhaustion from life not being like you thought it would be. Whatever your situation is, you probably feel like you can't change it, but you still must live through the realities of what's happening right now. Sometimes you just have to walk in life with your "I don't know" kind of way.

The Lord makes it clear in His Word that things will not always go as we wish they would in this life: "In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33b, NIV). "Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34b, NIV). All this trouble is exhausting. Walking in the "I don't know" is scary. And sometimes we can be desperate to make things easier than they really are.

We keep thinking, if we can just get through this circumstance, then life will settle down and finally the words **happily ever after** will scroll across the glorious scene of us skipping happily into the sunset. But what if life settling down and all your disappointments going away would be the worst thing that could happen to you? What if your "I don't know" is helping you, not hurting you?

Remember those verses we just read about troubles? Here they are again in the context of the full passages:

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, NIV).

“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, NIV).

The crucial detail for us to have peace in the middle of everything we face is to stay close to the Lord. We think we want comfort in the I-don't-know times of life. But comfort isn't a solution to seek; rather, it's a by-product we'll reap when we stay close to the Lord.

I wish I could promise you that everything's going to turn out like you're hoping it will. I can't, of course. But what I can promise you is this: The assurance of Psalm 145:18 is true, “The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.”

Let's cry out to God, declaring that this hard time will be a holy time, a close-to-God time. And let's choose to believe that there is good happening, even in these places. Because wherever God is, good is being worked out for us. Preparing for the coming of the Savior. Pastor Jim