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**'Too Much,' 'In a Funk' and 'Losing Hope': Struggling Under the Weight of Daily Bad News  
*The Wired Word* for the Week of September 12, 2021**

**In the News**

While *The Wired Word* often begins with stories from national or even international news sources, some items in other media have our attention today, and we suspect some of you may identify with the mood of these accounts.

One is a blogspot that a member of the TWW team reads. The site, called *Tales of Wonder*, is the work of blogger Marla Schalesky, the founder of a California charitable organization that works with at-risk kids. Her September 1 posting is titled "Too Much."

"I've been pondering how life can just be too much sometimes," Schalesky said, and she went on to mention some things from her past week, including, on the global level, Afghanistan, Covid and the Delta variant.

She added that at a local high school there was a fatal stabbing resulting in one 17-year-old dead and a 17- and a 14-year-old arrested. Elsewhere in the community, "a double homicide, another attempted homicide, and more."

On top of that, Schalesky had to deal with life-threatening health incidents with two of her children.

"It's all too much," Schalesky said. "We were not created to bear the burdens of the world. But these days, the 24/7 news makes it possible to know all the heavy, horrible things going on in the world, to add to the burdens of community and family. It is just too much," she said.

"So, I find myself emotionally battered. Weary. Burdened. Exhausted," she wrote.

This week, another TWW team member received the weekly email newsletter from the church he attends. It announced that because of rising Covid cases in the community, the church, which had finally been able to return to in-person worship services right before Easter, was now once again suspending in-person worship.

In the newsletter, the pastor, Rev. Mark Parsons, wrote, "I don't know about you, but I'm feeling weary and frustrated these days with the increasingly dangerous Covid situation here in our area. And that says nothing of the weight I feel about the unrest in Afghanistan (and the ugliness of people arguing) or the hurricanes, floods and wildfires in our country."

Parsons admitted that all the "bad news at hand" was bringing him down. "I'm just in a funk," he said. "These are not the best of days."

In a similar vein, another TWW team member commented, "Because of my responsibilities with TWW, I read a lot of news, always in search of story ideas for the two lessons each week. I rarely miss a day reading news, but I am noticing a cumulative effect. A lot of the news is worrisome, and after a while it weighs on me. I'm a fairly buoyant personality, but this is heavy stuff."

But if many of us are weighed down or in a funk over the news, it's worse for people who are living it. J.S. Park, a Christian chaplain at a large hospital in Tampa currently filled with Covid patients, wrote in a Facebook post, "I am losing hope," he said.

"I am trying to hear patients with Covid force out one word at a time; I hold screens for them as they speak to their loved ones, squeezing themselves just for enough air to cough," Park said, adding, "Those are the ones who are not intubated."

Park went on to explain that in six years as a chaplain, he has never felt nauseous at the sight of injury or illness. But, he said, "This week that changed. This week I walked through bodies."

He said, "My bones are locking. My eyes burn with tears and tears. My nightmares are filled with the dead. I have had headaches and jaw pain every day the last few weeks. The nurses and doctors: if I am head under water, they are drowning in the deep."

Park knows that bad news depresses those that hear it, and he acknowledged that people are "tired of hearing about the pandemic ... tired of masks and quarantine and debates about vaccinations. ... But I am begging you: even in your tiredness, I am begging for your vigilance. Please do all you can to be safe."

Park added, "I have lost hope at overflowing morgues and ICUs and funeral homes. When families cannot be close to say goodbye. And reading the news: it is too much to bear."

More on this story can be found at these links:

[Too Much. Wednesday, September 1, 2021. *Tales of Wonder*](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=p7UIwXTJqWZjvaMKDrDFtpGFPLotOEdD8RnXFQId2qQ1RJJ-2F1NSBbRhgF8mkF3Fya5NU_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5pX-2B4mjuDCCg4obivXWanH9pQk5V27em7-2BvtdytkXQW5EViVlYBkQPbXHqWmA2YYP1WBn7r650s-2FBkOaauj2OjS-2FBFU8A7GHjBhtUNG8Rfn7PRGDQaZTWp5l6RWdeDhFs8FOj3-2FyuDYZGIOAMUi35BgnPrdGh5oShX5fXIAyQzEArw2yG2FD4Rbo8Xze7ZxhKWu9E-2FgsPdXfB5SE0Ob1yK-2BRBBHqwmgXuVJbs-2FaRtWQo)[Midweek Email Update: Sept. 2, 2021. *First Presbyterian Church*](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq-2FB7BfzX0ieZQe-2Fq53msZIv27UNivtlfBeUZsHIABPTnLccUAKpxVwnxe6Pz-2Fi7x-2B6VcQYdifhXfttCVyBJZOMk9vaPl0-2BYFSgowxmymLYQ8pYN9_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5g6PwrbnEBpoINvGAXNhfFpN9qnN-2FuGSbbMj4gOTOJfd8lqh884n0P-2FCjhKurK23b54UiA4Z7Tz67ONt1dwG0pPVuCm9rER-2BiajXw2rT1FQyypMO6rcJoag8sOoXkEqQZI74nQn-2FxYL4mNH9ghjKDW06qQPMDjoRM6Vkj85k1TcS4zbXckdsg1JI5Jl3iCgIUcq7V6WqO9v36P-2FdnK0Tx7aS8rkLXra68vdK9BMFzRzF)  
[Facebook posting. *J.S. Park*](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq9xhdIgrtuTmsrzJRkMUD0oz-2BjbAEC-2FuNLZ-2FlzSnbUEu4X35ftBv911sxSfj4z5Ka3naPP75S-2FXcOBVGfCtwbps-3DCJYx_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5rw11JVgQ-2BCAMJpl0TG9af-2Bj1qRUMCkZea0uAdIXi6OpKhs83Pq0PYws-2F8qlLkmCzL65VO48tEpsHdRskIcVD2-2Bbq18ke9IXu3bY3VAFq-2B3eapHC1WuW00O3b4i22r-2FMQFb1apteCpH2ZmcUp4raou5-2FfjbvTRwfhqeyGKJ-2F0WRTz-2FnzutWCmY2In-2BB1VdWlb2OyRknZC-2FLHMDmyBl0PnMfbqwX92APJWeMDRgb8wbsh)  
[When Too Much News Is Bad News: Is the Way We Consume News Detrimental to Our Health? *The Conversation*](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq4MZ3ga5FNtLHFiNg-2FLvGIb895-2BYXtvPbS6bseQ1tk3PL-2BLPZ1GlmgHebMmnDTMpQ-2BOMulAitGXDWcKfHFcHp8OMf54X7i093ywdW5EUIVCQB-2Be17SnLg6WES473Ub5P3c-2FBnzTix-2B7fExC4WHQJddM-3DDVYL_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5lFKsSw5np5bXeQ2R8-2Fza36bSDv7U0yxnhfzJtfi-2BGnWyVhG9adVkx5-2BX1I5i3ljCjJUvhy7K2Jyj6in3SCIQx9cdB2etXGPSzRxbNIVwYLVIwGnffKrhny5GmcFeON81ioTPEvk-2FXiRDwlnAHmbP2GjLRRKZVkF1cIEWo79MQgATe7au775GAudCKUmSHlR6H09HOgqsMEZExmrOwfPGT5xeRCX6sexLgc7A7DwNHGY)

**Applying the News Story**

The word *funk* has several meanings, but as used by Rev. Parsons, quoted in the "In the News" section above, to describe his mood, it is synonymous with "depressed." Schalesky used other words --  *emotionally battered, weary, burdened, exhausted*. Park spoke of physical symptoms: *nightmares, headaches*and*jaw pain*.

The article from *The Conversation* in the links list above explains that the way we consume news these days, with it being available 24/7, where we can "doomscroll" endlessly, and on social media, where we sculpt and cultivate our news through immediate feedback such as reactions or shares, has a greater negative impact on us than in earlier times when news was limited to one-way outlets like newspapers, and to radio and television, where news broadcasts were limited to specific times. The article goes on to talk about how we can control our news consumption and thus lessen its detrimental effect on our health.

That sounds important to us, but for this installment of *The Wired Word*, we are more interested in how the people in the "In the News" section above individually responded. We will mention their responses in the scripture reflections below and listen for God's word to us.

**The Big Questions**

1. What responsibility, if any, do we have in situations that appear too big for individuals to effect any change?

2. When have you grown spiritually from being depressed or feeling overwhelmed or empty?

3. How does God's steadfast love and willingness to hear your prayers help you in times of trouble? When does it seem that praying does not help? What do you conclude from that?

4. What sort of explanation do you give others when you are asked why God allows things that make for bad news to happen?

5. In what ways does bad news help you to hear the Bible differently? more personally?

**Confronting the News With Scripture and Hope**Here are some Bible verses to guide your discussion:

**Isaiah 40:28-31***Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
   The LORD is the everlasting God,  
     the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
   his understanding is unsearchable.  
He gives power to the faint,  
   and strengthens the powerless.  
Even youths will faint and be weary,  
   and the young will fall exhausted;  
but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,  
   they shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
they shall run and not be weary,  
   they shall walk and not faint.*  
(No context needed.)

In her response to the "too much" effect of bad news, Schalesky gave a personal testimony. She said, "I'm finding things that I've known are true are, well, *really true*" (italics added), and she went on to quote some lines from the Bible reading above, as well as from a couple of other passages.

**Questions:** When has life's pressure or the drumbeat of bad news enabled you to find help in scripture passages you'd read or heard before but hadn't previously identified with? When has the weight of bad news blocked you from receiving help from the Bible? What, if anything, helped in the meantime? What was the impact on you when you were later able to return to scripture?

**2 Timothy 1:7**  
*... for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.*(For context, read [2 Timothy 1:3-14](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzgPaiQTBmXozYJSL5RMZP4c9A2-2FggN2iiXTIQpozi54uQdLxIkt0b5sdF7IhvCY7l04r55_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5pDIef3caQnznAaSySgpE-2B-2FN22kp0AdTezAXVvXoBdSQ-2Fe3PGFZzji-2BB1mZDzHTXl01ht1OnWU6fMce-2FM5K6EHy19AApHlW05hjFpDpUsnDNLgyAsxtMD-2FSUNFnLsOnzgad9rh4LDLuNl-2FDsUdNSO5XrQT4WSUqVDOTyXnYgxhkt9SfqkMJVbUrCVUIfOPT3yEEzwTidxcbjFR4o-2BnHRYW7EmL18a9NDbRRoCFnV4hDH).)

After admitting he was in a "funk," Rev. Parsons went on to quote the verse above, noting that other translations appropriately substitute the word "fear" for "cowardice." "The point is the same," Parsons said. "We don't have to live in fear because God has given us a spirit of power, love and self-discipline."

Parsons said, "These days, some are quoting only the first part of this verse to justify their complete disregard for the overwhelming proof that vaccines, masks and social distancing save lives. But if we stop with the first part of the verse, we miss the full message.

"The second part is equally, if not more, important," Parsons said. "We don't have to live in fear because God has given us a better spirit, one marked by power, love and self-discipline. We have *power* in these dark days because we are not alone: God is with us. We have *love* in these days because God has shown us how to love one another even in the rough times. We have *self-discipline* in these days because God empowers us to make wise decisions for the well-being of self and others. No matter what we face, God's spirit is within us, shaping us more and more into the likeness of Christ Jesus and giving us all we need to get through these difficult days."

**Questions:**To what degree does the Covid pandemic awaken fear or worry in you? Does this Bible verse help? Why or why not? In what ways are you aware of the God-given spirit of power, love and self-discipline in your life? (If possible, give some examples.)

Many people who have received the anti-Covid vaccine consider it to be a blessing. Do you? Why or why not?

**Psalm 6:6***I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping.* (For context, read [Psalm 6:1-10](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzgzrTlVCP5-2Bm2pcs74txFaR9NZc4f-2Fr0eRtFRMqo2-2BTK-2Fu8ma5EkWSFXb3Velb9iuFIPuX_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5k8azQDC-2FqodpHoOeC2yv2U8vmAvtg-2FQXK-2FFD7mF-2BP5bxEc7krCNH2sfyZRDreFJIHMLTLCGntV6I2aVIGKaMhDIFyxGiDsyplH5iR4NwE4Np5ElAJcljxKXtuSUZWpAXmvqArcK-2FQNq-2FvEyv8jgwEraI8VkrB-2FU6lAluMuh6A9x5JxsCJQKspG4l52xIBJb-2F8J52DOZJ2r5R4aD7nL375X8L67zcar3afyxSjnI-2Bj54).)  
**Romans 8:26***Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.* (For context, read [Romans 8:18-27](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzgSyBqfrH56NmBG6W29PCdiW-2B4AnpXk5LEbcjRi-2B8zuOr3cpkcdwzkseewEZg8xloyq6N1_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5pTgQeIrRSqfpAqMI94-2FYDVqraz8PaV7CjuXnFu1OocHBt8fM7xY337yYYGiBSi-2BBOXaFL8I9rPunxoxBPm6KtBnQV2PGm391-2FNt2MbJLgE3H9qIIySCzcr8QadICVz-2FL8UjVe-2F7NBLglcLO3TkX1jIM-2FCbdBAl-2BuWqKIpqkqeZgwMv5yDge5HkPmThBH2UZH4cjwKJxXavMksfn2TBC34ygwRpW8bwbGLOS2sWcg4KK).)

In his posting Chaplain Park didn't reference scripture, so we have suggested the two verses above, which seem appropriate to Park's comments.

The superscription above Psalm 6 identifies it as "Prayer for recovery from grave illness," and we think that covers being emotionally and physically overwhelmed as well. Problems, pain, suffering, troubles -- these are all part of the human condition. But so is the help of the Lord.

Thus the psalmist turned for help to God, praying, "Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing ... deliver me for the sake of your steadfast love" (vv. 2, 4). The psalmist does not detail what help he received, but he concludes, "The LORD accepts my prayer" (v. 9).

Park did tell of the content of his prayers: "I'm losing hope. But I don't want to. My God, I don't want to. I am going to work. I am going for my patients. I am their sidekick and cheerleader and confidante and ear and support. I am here for them. I ask God to be anything they need. I ask God for strength to enter these rooms. I ask God to [help me] hold as much as I can. I will hold their grief for them. I would take it all, if I could. God, I would. God, be near."

The Romans verse tells us that God's Spirit intercedes for us when we cannot find the words or energy to do so ourselves.

**Questions:**When have you been so overwhelmed that you found it hard or even impossible to pray? What hindered your prayers? When have you relied on the Holy Spirit to pray on your behalf? What was the outcome?

**Galatians 6:2, 5***Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ... For all must carry their own loads.*(For context, read [Galatians 6:1-6](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzgTMaknCvecIw6GBCHXPBC3nGeWH0W2I88Xa8SY-2BuqG9YLXS-2Fz3gX0O7rIyLeP1CHFsaR3_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5scNAyc281MaFO2xdOEi4dLou-2FSG9bn80dBZ83QTIVQmEupPNu9GR9snZsSNBiMZ2F8FW-2BhAfOVBecVgGuIQ8UmymF0BWvkpDHg8Nx-2BCEtImiayAASv7tFmECkpEmEcO6V0u-2FA4Rb9Q44nT5AyYWd2kHe8aKE9hgoLjgH04xp2ZFxOyqIHEgcAULTlLij-2F8Y2iVIiBaSJXeYyBeY5h1zDyHpQoqJ2ESRmyoyzLIEndCs).)

What can we do when the weight of  bad news becomes too heavy to carry? In his letter to the Galatians, Paul has something to say about that.

In fact, he has two things to say about it, and at first glance *the two seem to contradict one another*. Verse 2 says, "Bear one another's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." If we are the one with the heavy load, this verse suggests that we find someone among the Christian community to help us carry it. No problem understanding that.

But wait! In verse 5 Paul says, "For all must carry their own loads."

So which is it?

It's not that hard to see why Paul says both things in the same paragraph. The advice that Christians ought to bear one another's burdens is an excellent statement of what *should* happen in churches, among friends, in communities and in families. But "all must carry their own loads" is a reminder not to place unrealistic expectations on others. Don't think for one minute that a burden shared is a burden gone. Others can lighten our load but they can never fully remove it. In the final analysis, we continue to carry it ourselves.

But look again at the admonition to bear one another's burdens. Paul says that by doing so, *we fulfill the law of Christ* -- which, John 13:34 tells us, is this: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." Another way to say that is that when we try to help someone with the weight of their problems, we are being Christ-like. Note that it doesn't say we are solving someone else's problems. Only occasionally can we do that. But helping them carry their burdens is a Christ-like action.

What does that mean? Sometimes it just means listening, letting someone tell us what is weighing on them. Sometimes it means calling them up and just asking, "How are you doing?" Sometimes it means sending a card or a text. Other times it means showing up -- such as when the person is grieving.

But Paul's remark in verse 5 needs to be heard, too. We can dump our burdens on others and leave the solutions all up to them. As *The Message* paraphrases verse 5, it reads "Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life."

**Questions:** In what practical ways can you "bear one another's burdens"? Does verse 5 actually contradict verse 2? Why or why not?

**For Further Discussion**

1. Comment on this: C.S. Lewis said something to the effect that whatever is not eternal is eternally out of date.

2. Respond to this: It does cost us something to bear one another's burdens. Howard Thurman, former Dean of the Chapel at Boston University, tells in one of his books of a crisis that took place in his young daughter's life. Everybody in the family had made their summer plans. But just before Thurman and his wife were ready to leave for some promised speaking engagements, they received word that a companion who lived with their family's aged grandmother in another town had died. Someone would have to go and be with the grandmother during the summer.  
              The family talked it over. Thurman's commitments could not be postponed. It was decided the daughters would take their turns and care for the grandmother until the parents returned from their conferences.  
              When this decision was reached, the youngest daughter rushed from the table and ran up the stairs. The door slammed. Thurman followed her up the stairs, knocked at the door and found her stretched across the bed, weeping. He said to her, "I didn't come up here to urge you to stop crying. I came to explain to you why I think you are crying. I don't think you're crying because you don't want to go away for the rest of the summer and miss the fun with your friends. You're crying because for the first time in your life the family is asking you to carry your end of the stick as a family member. Something inside you knows that when you get on the train tomorrow, one part of your life will be behind you forever. You'll never again be quite as carefree and unaccountable as you were before."

3. Consider this, heard in a sermon: "As you know, there are all kinds of places to hear bad news. Some people hear it in doctors' offices. Some hear it in courtrooms. Some hear it in the principal's office. Some hear it from the bank. Some hear it from their spouse. Some hear it in emergency rooms or in startling phone calls in the middle of the night. Some receive it in the form of pink slips. Some hear it from the media. And so on.  
              "It occurs to me that the way we respond to bad news is a measure of not only our maturity, but also of our mental and emotional health, the extent of our support system and the depth of our spirituality. In short, denying bad news indefinitely, especially when it is facing us with incontrovertible evidence, is a failure to fully embrace this life God has given us.  
              "I'm not talking about being a masochist. We'd have to be crazy to like being on the receiving end of bad news. But we'd also have to be unrealistic to suppose that we never will be, or that we are somehow immune from trouble. Near the end of Jesus' earthly life, he said to his disciples, 'In this world you will have trouble' (John 16:33, NIV). Not 'You may have a few problems.' Not 'You may have an occasional irritation.' Not 'You may have a few sad moments.' But 'You will have trouble.' Let's not gloss over the first part: You will have trouble.  
              "But then Jesus added this, 'But take heart! I have overcome the world,' and we must also hear that. You will have trouble, you will receive bad news, and no denial, no bargaining, no weeping and wailing, no blaming the messenger will make it not so. But don't lose heart. Trust in me, said Jesus, for I am stronger than the world.  
              "According to what we know about how the original disciples ended up, they had plenty of trouble; they ran into lots of bad news, personal and otherwise. And they did not try to deny that it was bad. But they also did not say, 'Look what the world has come to!' Instead they said, 'Look at what has come to the world!' There was a reason that the word they spread about Jesus was called the Gospel, for it means *Good* News."

4. Discuss this from a TWW consultant: News reporters used to quip, "If it bleeds, it leads," indicating that reports of tragedy increased sales. People are interested in tragedy and are fearful that the tragedy might also hit them. Fear also can be used to manipulate emotions and beliefs. In times past, news of tragedy tended to be based upon personal experience or the report of a neighbor. Nowadays it is mediated through organizations with their own agendas, and they magnify, minimize, ignore or even invent reports (such as the ivermectin overdose hoax last week) to further their own ends. So, while some people get "in a funk" over the inundation of bad news, others tend to get cynical to the point of eye-rolling at the repetitive variations of bad news, which they come to see as manipulative more than informative. As one recently said sardonically, "We are now eighteen months into 'two weeks to flatten the curve.'" For many people, the funk is not from "news of bad things" but from "bad (untrustworthy) sources of news."

5. David Sedaris in a recent posting in *The New Yorker* about his father's death opens by talking about how guilt-free he feels about ignoring the news most days. It's not that he doesn't care but that he's spared from a daily train wreck of bad news. Is ignoring most news a good idea for you? Why or why not?

**Responding to the News**

1. This is a good time to consider how to determine whether someone in a deep funk over the news is in just temporary pain or, in fact, is suffering from a mental condition that needs treatment by a mental health care professional. Your pastor may have had experience in making that determination and may be able to help you with it.

2. Given that feeling overwhelmed is normal, consider what preparations you can make to help you or someone else get through those moments? Do you have, or can you create, a designated prayer or sacred space? Do you have a list of activities to do that lighten your mood (listen to music, watch a movie, read a book, cook or bake, work a puzzle, etc.)? Other?

3. Some think that to change your mental state, you need to change your physical state. If you are able, what physical activities might you choose? If you are unable to do physical activities, is it possible to change your physical location (even going to another room, outdoors, etc.)?

**Prayer**

O God, enable us to grasp the full message of your Word, that we may be better carriers of burdens, better conveyors of hope and better disciples of Jesus Christ. Be with all who are weighed down by bad news. Make us faithful in prayer, and let your Spirit pray on our behalf when we cannot find the words or energy ourselves to do so. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Other News This Week**

**Fear of Eviction Plagues Many Already Hit Hard by the Pandemic  
*The Wired Word* for the Week of September 12, 2021**

**In the News**

After falling behind in her rent, Elvira Kennedy, 76, was evicted in July from the home where she had lived for a quarter century. The owner of the property, Bethel A.M.E. Church, had worked with her dozens of times since 2003 when she got behind on rent to help her avoid eviction. It's not clear what made this situation different from previous occasions when Kennedy failed to pay what she owed.

Willie Johnson, a man Kennedy took in when he found himself homeless, was also displaced. In his opinion, the eviction was "not very church-like."

Columbia, South Carolina, NAACP branch president Oveta Glover went further in her criticism: "It's an ungodly thing for anybody in the church to evict ... a 76-year-old lady and put her stuff on the streets ... in Covid season, I don't know where God is in this matter."

Over the two and a half decades Kennedy occupied the premises, the rent for her two-bedroom home increased from $650 to $1,150 a month, which is still less than the average rent for a comparable dwelling in Columbia, where she lives.

Laura Nichols of Landmark Resources, the rental property management firm that handled the eviction proceedings against Kennedy, said they tried to reach the tenant several times in different ways to try to settle her bill of almost $10,000 and work out a way for her to stay in the house, but she didn't respond.

Bethel A.M.E. is heavily invested in the neighborhood and has "brought about healthy positive change in this community," according to Dr. Caesar R. Richburg, pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church. "I don't see [that] the church has done anything wrong." He said Kennedy never called him to ask for assistance.

According to the National Association of Realtors, 58% of housing providers with fewer than four units say they have tenants who are behind on rent.

Gentrification also drives up the cost of housing for low-income households. As more affluent professionals who can pay higher rents move into the neighborhood, long-time residents on fixed incomes are priced out of the market.

The federal eviction moratorium, which is set to expire on October 30, only applies to rentals with federally backed mortgages. The house Kennedy occupied didn't have such a mortgage.

The eviction moratorium and rent subsidies were meant to assist workers who lost jobs during the pandemic, but only $3 billion of nearly $50 billion in federal aid has actually reached tenants and housing providers, as states and local municipalities lack the infrastructure to effectively dispense funds. Nicole Paluzzi, a housing attorney for Charleston Pro Bono, said many people don't know about the availability of Covid-relief rental assistance or how to apply for it.

Dana Karni, manager of the Eviction Right to Counsel Project in Houston, said, "The lay of the land has been confusing at every level, not just to tenants, but also to landlords, court personnel and judges."

A Census Bureau survey estimates that 11 million adults are behind on rent, with more than 3.6 million Americans believing it is likely or somewhat likely they will be evicted in coming months.

Tenant advocates call eviction the "Scarlet E" that marks tenants as permanently undesirable.

"This thing [an eviction case] hangs over your head. It labels you, and that is not who you are," said Felicia Nelson, who had trouble finding an apartment in Omaha, Nebraska, due to an old eviction case that appeared on background checks. "The whole process really feels criminal."

Once a housing provider files for eviction, for any reason, it can be almost impossible to expunge that from a tenant's record, even if the tenant wins the case or if the case is dropped.

While a few states and cities have passed laws to make it easier for tenants to seal their eviction cases, housing providers and tenant screening companies say such laws can compromise property owners' ability to properly screen out people who would likely become problem tenants.

Meanwhile, a growing number of housing providers face the possibility that they will suffer the loss of thousands of dollars in unpaid rent. Uncollected rent has a domino effect, leading to housing providers deferring maintenance on their properties, struggling to pay their own bills, including mortgages, and facing potential foreclosures as a result.

Kennedy relocated to North Carolina where she is staying with family members. She indicated she held no animosity toward the church or property management company.

"Things happen," she said.

More on this story can be found at these links:

['It's Not Very Church-Like.' SC Woman Evicted From Church-Owned House After 25 Years. *The State*](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq6tuzXe8fi0YvaU8LtIGCZlO-2FuaUwOoB-2Bq03kuWj4Tcf5x-2FCVfh2-2FzOySciLf208EPUjKf56Mv64RCDqcTI7GPs-3D4AoO_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5omdn2E6mn9cKvMq5YEtAzrAJB-2FEURxVRTQg8ptnJaeWoLe1qhw914P7YpCyW2oTs4MxP1S7BFCgRxBMReDwZPjBEoS-2FY4dPqjwPBbI8DnUJ3UI5C9hhyfiwj2geOm6S83RS53BOHJPlnGrMmuGAMXQim1pJXSnkVvK7t5s-2Frrt7IiiHiWPEyfh2bQb25IIoclYUeHsoOhafYn5vuPg0LSXxonGR-2BlBaVPlhdf7ysDx-2F)  
['Absolutely Nothing We Can Do': Landlords, Tenants Struggle as 'Half Measure' Moratorium Pleases None. *Yahoo Finance*](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq8hSuASIDjPgUl-2BY6jA8FqPeUUC7996HeD0n1c8PkrMtfYYwIfPch661T8pNoXo1vdvUhJEurjfTMFkkW4aQtnKPef7jSzzRy-2FxoXxrNjHjAPujp4rozhrvanqrL7s1f6B3mgYIV14FJ1sbcTUBAzM-2FV92A8gVI8G6J3xh5QUS4b60Xm_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5nVNScy0JxHE1VAX-2BfBDiFQo-2BFVUasqJPDhbAw3DwvT-2FVrE0ftVxamdyug-2FUuv1JmGdZtiXtiIQ2ZdAUVoIa2kK2-2FTaRn5NRkpSvV7n7SbocszT9Q4Vs7dNvIfTk3cBDWbg7X9pgXAovmhX2eq593u616BW-2FN-2FCwMiJrWwqbBPq2LpU02NGfiq-2FRp22BMKruYQG9vOVzxC-2Fh9lhA4pdbE9osdV7tF8n5C3Boqzl-2FA6EW)  
[Evicted, Despite a Federal Moratorium: 'I Do Not Know What I Am Going to Do.' *The New York Times*](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq6tuzXe8fi0YvaU8LtIGCZnFcsaDKFRABHs2HyA5IZGveZMJMdgWVeDPUowChCl9f6LZfBWf0tkxltJ1QUa8K0Dn5s3ntS6AFDLlCyCznAUoNoeF_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5rvB5kbaz6P4tIJ1NCI5mFmUxKDgWcotMYEiFosz01vVV-2B-2B-2BqA-2FV4eRTEAILSZsImMjS4esXKtfOQVbcX-2B2ReWK-2B3fmgkAXjEl1xlYpvqitWudJ1AGacSLYtZ9HhnwTVXTjblIIkiMkCcZdi6segrBb6KispgTre7HJWEZi167BKldqch0UJ3JYd14fuq9wGHzkWtPiDimmLB4ubHM2t2iut6Z3RF4l49fW0EyxKMtJR)  
[It Is Impossible to Afford Rent Almost Anywhere in the U.S. With a Minimum-Wage Job. *Baptist News Global*](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlqw-2B94HsPDbYmGso21zHEaFjMNOBj-2FYGvQCISfOlpeJBnGQMMuhmObBhpv0TBwKvQ4C2Dck5-2BSTQvMz7u-2BbdJJ-2BoBAJaUhbfQ8zf5-2FnX55YII8fTfXJDs9YjJuROjMh7zKHXMxhbFswf0EtXr6f-2Buppne9nZm95EMah4cpmmIVWFPwrP6_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5qSct12hbILFgPgclSfHnqk3iz-2FMxRa8siirS28AR-2FN1C-2B0LqCpTNUwugZxtWuSxsMcVxGN941jfWxxZLTjvv1PGSmHYks7c1OaYqLaBeRx8PTUDGj9KfBJqxrVRLuStOgUbptWbbuWFoGUPnbmTi0AO2XeN1-2FErClbh5ymwjFZdCimofS9ZEwVsBvDKVq8VgKsi8lovDY61W7VW-2BsqgJiM3DGl5aL7Hm9UnregXn5Rh)[The Stigma of a Scarlet E. *The New York Times*](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq6YOfkj2istBKNkMuALHndjaeFajuEapDaF0KeXImAElyEmeMoPogQYFl249ecFgHRLdMA0s92Ooq6JSnhO-2BV0z5bvMvOZ8wGoizTqb2Z3dduXvC_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5tmO8-2FqRs0fZ-2FruPBauwdiZ8DYh7PKl5rBHbgauNlkWZsM58XSYpsVrNKDk5LOIvB97LO1bOiEREq7t4XjI4-2FLO5Lmj9gL-2B7ILcjlX-2BiDHtlBFx4nZZRN6dll9ubv9S3xqjV6ozsIcFFTPWgFiKdZ2tZz8J5Fwx5y79BO5AMtEonIVILzzm7OBqguD3sM7oJ4wnQzlLfrov70uZgnM14-2FuT2VBb0tBsIe-2BOfWK1PzdUH)

**The Big Questions**

1. Have you been impacted, either as a tenant or as a housing provider, by the pandemic, and if so, how?

2. Generally speaking, what responsibilities do housing providers and tenants have toward each other?

3. What can be done to make our country's system for housing people more fair, moral and equitable for all concerned?

4. What role, if any, can the church play to assist tenants facing possible eviction? What role, if any, can the church play to assist housing providers who are struggling to pay their own bills due to tenants' nonpayment of rent and other factors?

5. What should Christian tenants do if they are facing eviction? What should Christian housing providers do if their tenants fail to live up to their obligations as stated in their leases?

**Confronting the News With Scripture and Hope**Here are some Bible verses to guide your discussion:

**Isaiah 58:3, 6-7**  
*"Why do we fast, but you do not see?*  
*Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?"*  
*Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,*  
*and oppress all your workers. ...*  
*Is not this the fast that I choose:*  
*to loose the bonds of injustice,*  
*to undo the thongs of the yoke,*  
*to let the oppressed go free,*  
*and to break every yoke?*  
*Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,*  
*and bring the homeless poor into your house;*  
*when you see the naked, to cover them,*  
*and not to hide yourself from your own kin?*(For context, read [Isaiah 58:1-14](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzglWIVPN0Fo7Pv3I8eLGelisGoJRDoU7wxJIE5KhOB-2BD6epBfgpuXty1mW2JzASZEjEGY1_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5r7OMmfQn-2Bar6hC-2FeN8WWilr0tdhGNgmK1dXKpIX-2B6toU9RtB6SP2VEi0fWJ8stp3x8JUhEa3zLWwrT7BtvbXQ1C9uBpygpDZWYxkRK3BG8eZ2F-2Bm5VICQ2xHf-2BCdAnTi03Uo-2FqCrrnxEn-2Bg3uCWEmJXnX61kyLzODZXlG7-2Bi3HsWNfb06BiSxdiKFXEK3WXIJSQV7dqrmrwPd5XDlYhCiZRk0mfqnd3sDCvisTbab5X))

This passage addresses people whose form of religion is ostentatious but hollow of compassion and justice. They make a show of fasting and outwardly humbling themselves, but God sees the heart in their actions: They only fast to curry favor with God, while oppressing their employees. But God is not impressed by religious rituals unaccompanied by right living.

In [Leviticus 25:35-36](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzgusKb4K1XY-2B-2B3nQZTb8lj8dbTuidzllmXdee6wTKnyqHRsno6hm6icl8ZZcPlz3R3tG6O_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5txSmgDTdva1X-2BZK8HZiuAV7BhiETYTZWQp-2BjP-2FN3siPqcM9cUV7jUltLATGIse-2BWkrm5Hnpi65akZ6t1Iefb7vJ4sheCDQY2qlLvuhdC5dEns-2B87FU0RTNEzeaQ5siS9JsD-2Fxd-2BcrVvO4sc47D1UVemoMLkTn6AZd0vEB80DLHfWcxzNqJVqJ-2FWUgcvKgYrEa8cOKH-2FqpN6X1yrWst68ysTbo13yFfQ3yks5xkt-2F99U), God commanded his people to help poor kinfolk who do not have the means to support themselves. If those in difficulty needed a home, God's people were to let them live with them, to "bring the homeless poor into [their own] house."

**Questions:**What limitations, if any, do you see in the Leviticus 25 passage? Should Old Testament laws such as these apply to Christians today, and if so, how would they be implemented? If not, why not?

How do you "fast" as an individual in the way God chooses? How can communities of faith "fast" in this way? What actions, if any, should the church take to urge government, businesses and other social structures to work to end oppression, injustice, hunger, homelessness and poverty?

**2 Kings 4:8-10**  
*One day Elisha was passing through Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived, who urged him to have a meal. So whenever he passed that way, he would stop there for a meal. She said to her husband, "Look, I am sure that this man who regularly passes our way is a holy man of God. Let us make a small roof chamber with walls, and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that he can stay there whenever he comes to us."* (For context, read [2 Kings 4:8-37](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzgktrtH84Wqj9xLNrrbR3tcRDmCkZH366iyW6vPTh-2BAAGVLi42vt-2FsUgKSR-2B1Po-2FZj7n7h_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5oP88zGx-2B65w0b-2FAGr5QaauIG4kuk-2BQpSCT3E3dBXdMOImgv2aRzokmnCahz1jmbIo9zZ38LDGxCApSiyrBn4CiYAORjPDOOSQwlom5eWDUBKVFT8qUTRDBzpvcMurdNQLiUpw6iCfKRVHMGaeHj74u66S1NVXW9X4L-2Ff1hi9jIn3TozwgMi5RCo2XtEYg3oOVmqEaclyyUvDLqhI7bS0c7y2obx-2B2cxKqlpmlzyZSHC))

In this incident, a wealthy woman puts her resources to good use by providing food and housing for the prophet Elisha. When he inquires how he might repay her for her kindness, she asks for nothing in return (vv. 11-13). But Elisha knew that the woman had no son, and that her husband was elderly, so Elisha prophesied that she would have a son, which came to pass in due time (vv. 14-17).

When the child was older, he fell ill and died. In his mother's distress, she went to find Elisha, who came to the house to find the boy lying dead on his bed. He prayed to the Lord, and after a time, the child sneezed and opened his eyes (vv. 18-37). The prophet returned the boy, alive, to his mother.

**Questions:**What prompted this woman to open her home to the prophet? How was her life changed because she did so? When, if ever, has your life been radically changed because you showed hospitality to someone? Explain.

How might the behavior of the woman in this passage serve as an example for us today? Based on this incident, should everyone feel obligated to provide shelter for transients? Why or why not?

**Psalm 84:3-4**  
*Even the sparrow finds a home,*  
*and the swallow a nest for herself,*  
*where she may lay her young,*  
*at your altars, O LORD of hosts,*  
*my King and my God.*  
*Happy are those who live in your house,*  
*ever singing your praise.* (For context, read [Psalm 84:1-4](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzgyPXg3IbZI66IAm3nipYE0JuiH4zzXeRQ3W3J-2F7a9JMANI6ViKO2LVaUVUnaLojchaogW_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5k5dwqZG9mkI9GLmjySI8GNm-2BdTMX5-2Bz06RgNaCmDw4M3uRbPMNADXMKcuM5zhFvz-2BdOe3Ta9N6kuWCYFq0kdmvAoB8Gr2HARebLWY4AB5DL4LnMsL5K0m7MwU9NuFBB0IblBSw84MoLfR14bn1OGPBpvQ68sflrtRg3KaP51yGTnaiFOGCybq1I1DDvSHivJRVTLeaK6j-2FS7tEpy5d7sUc0XeQ5Ohv-2BuEe6cidUwVxW).)  
**Luke 9:57-58**  
*As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."* (For context, read [Luke 9:57-62](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzgA36eeTsFDkixFFKZOe0PQbmkTyUTaez9tmgCuK-2Bg-2BHuhW9iErJASR6xmWsxe-2BOE-2FSA12_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5gTC-2BptbfhHrPjsbCtVpLRLhTehV6FvPAT-2BPkXTKlw-2BPxvWbyhhfk48xcmp2Ngf-2F88lDKP8DWSDMujMD4Xc-2B3VI6koeVRSRW4prCYm3AVNJgKs0TKCStkK7vkYSANfD-2FS8mJXVteB4lUf8-2BwqQzWA5DYOENT1mLuX-2BvvIDRQBZGavcnFtCf7sukmnuRFnIJGVrYVBqLXAdFYjrknQEovgPb8qpathwecpFR2DehDVcU7))

Perhaps Jesus had Psalm 84 in mind when he answered the man who declared that he would follow Jesus anywhere. Even animals have a place to call home, and the tiny sparrow could build a nest in the very house of God, but Jesus was born in a borrowed stable and buried in a borrowed tomb.

The scribe who said he would follow Jesus wherever he went probably thought Jesus was headed for a glorious kingdom. He didn't understand that Jesus and his disciples stayed the night outside, or with whoever opened their homes to them. There were no luxury accommodations awaiting them at the end of the day. It was more likely that they would experience privation, poverty and homelessness. Was the would-be disciple willing to pay the price of following Jesus, if that were the case?

**Questions:**Would you still follow Jesus if you knew you might not enjoy the comforts of an easy life? If you knew you might end up evicted and homeless? Why or why not?

**John 14:1-3**  
*[Jesus said,] "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."* (No context needed.)

In Revelation 7:15, one of the elders tells John that "the one who is seated on the throne will shelter" those who have suffered in this life and who worship God day and night in the next life ([Revelation 7:13-17](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzg4mw07nZEPNsORsSSITV0qGlPPsOZ-2BMC3hlUfqYYIjDq31zbHmRi-2B-2BgsjhrYlIICkvw7M_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5mK-2B0KZKx6oBoOGwONpUsXlHQVjBCdUPnpUAqdE9PV9ImjrqkK6oYB-2F4uZoHpeZmCMho3o-2BdiZj3HvyuEh-2FtZbOG-2FJ95OIOcgcpvAm16D7vVzTftU26-2BmkfwZOfyYWWSKnh9ROrBn0tlRtHe51L7aIgthgiLRbx2APzf6YvHryelU8xUc6K-2B-2F1vfeCy8irArqr4IGJJISng3-2BnBdkMshjLWBCDuZuYr-2FUGlTezQmnvnN)). Paul likewise assures the Corinthians that there is "a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" ([2 Corinthians 5:1](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzg-2Bld1PUNQnWTddP28oec6kD-2By59F6ahGUYIQVPEq-2BhofsK32bK3q2-2Bnufx-2BEoTnGyPBs__2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5nptc3PIgxtyCkwG6qDrsnwDJwFNdIHgWoe8QB8f4u4NSALjt7S2gO1wDFWiMZDTzcMD7RjoXZ77JqKraSBHarYcxHqdHGNjSTJep7MuI5wj0O9AAl04NwmH-2BmsjFRHwzBw9plWmiXM9j0-2BVVcc-2B-2BsaTAQk4s9GPbByMoc9GYtQCIYIX-2BVZM3QaxTrBhpnu2EewsUz-2BRIMMfMgSS-2BERxPjHmbXa2XAsK9VZi3i73JLPs)).

Those who put their trust in God and in Jesus can take comfort that the day is coming when everyone will have a home where they can find shelter. Even those who find themselves homeless in this life can look forward to a time when earthly inequities will be swept away, and all human needs will be met.

But Jesus was not just concerned with the afterlife. We note that even as he hung on the cross, he made sure to provide shelter for his mother in the home of the disciple he loved ([John 19:25-27](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzgY6DbbpLNHEZ6haJz6Bd3Vhtda7IDqzlaiGILQJfH-2BkZ1hfyMGNL4BAtvyOLee4EwUOx4_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5lNT7ODArCYynNZECUvApZ-2F4JI-2F-2BCYzC5N0XJlWsRJQWuOCrbLM-2BkZNYjrpy4TPtMXWGACL8fyvwIkyDjpGpseJPFsPDAt8gFfhmXtDZ4yLeAKGP6MLyurdN93Fi9Mm8BkzxTqDU1remzvWpBqfl4Y2uFWadiB3i-2BoAMQZql8sqqRHe9ZesdzTnW-2BHPFDADrs1xW61VsbVT3i5urVAdor-2FP-2BlpvrJFOz4pBNHypbmwdB)). That disciple immediately stepped up to take Jesus' mother into his own home, to treat her as his own mother.

**Questions:**How important is it to you to have a place you could call your own? Why do you think Jesus wanted to assure his disciples that he was preparing a place for them? How important do you think this passage is to people who are facing eviction or displacement for other reasons?

What conclusions might we draw from Jesus' provision for his mother's need for shelter and loving support during the rest of her earthly life?

**For Further Discussion**

1. TWW team member Mary Sells mentioned [St. J.B. Cottolengo](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq61p0luJwrIFuhZf6sTRrIkgwQGsPbo7oDg6LpXiu-2FMOsOJBOrbhYcThwmCKWdOSnUi8kcrvTvvgzoB8hQeweDQ-3DlC61_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5p-2BMPS9uWnViIgOQDsdc1RzpAoD0ktxi6wRPscBTU8zp8jjmZxEpVh6oa4BJncbUfJ5FLGKMIavM3Y323svHw-2BFMj23TNNK0a9asBFSRo-2FcC-2BkI4AbQe8-2Bgx-2Bmc8IBdEk4qxnPmpxElf7MqD9ikbY51vcOOUDYQYqbVw-2B6GTD9oW2WSOQ4Duif8QiT2K2zeLzCEOTM31meDa47tIn1zDT9gVijldOuWke-2BHK6flb4HgI), whose life was transformed by the death of an impoverished pregnant woman denied access to hospital care because she was thought to be infectious. The remainder of his life he was obsessed with seeing Jesus in the marginalized: those who were poor or sick or had limited physical or mental abilities. He always followed the law of the times, yet he found that his work with the people often led to changes in the laws to provide more social justice, to be more inclusive of the needy. The religious order he founded follows this charism even today.  
              How do we put aside any bias and skepticism we may have to see Jesus in the various players in the eviction drama? Where is Jesus in the owners, the renters, the lawmakers? Where is Jesus for us who may be one of the players, or may be simply an onlooker trying to understand and help from a Christian perspective and ethic?

2. React to this: During her lifetime, a team member of *The Wired Word* has been a tenant, a homeowner, a housing provider and the proprietor of a bed-and-breakfast. While functioning in the last capacity, she and her husband took in a woman with five children and her stressed-out dog, after a tree fell on the family dwelling, rendering it uninhabitable. The innkeepers told the woman to pay what she could, while she worked to secure a more suitable long-term housing arrangement.  
              For three weeks, the innkeepers fed the entire family daily breakfasts and some additional meals, at no cost to the family. The woman gave them cash in the amount of what they could have received from other renters for approximately only one night's stay.  
              When the woman indicated she expected to remain at the inn indefinitely, taking up the entire housing stock at the inn, on whatever terms she felt she could afford, the innkeepers said they couldn't accommodate her anymore. The woman exploded: "And you call yourselves Christians!"  
              The innkeepers apologized, but said they had no choice. The renter also called herself a Christian.

3. How does the language we use to identify people affect the way we perceive them? What changes when you call a housing provider a "landlord" or a "slumlord"? What happens when a tenant, occupant, resident or lodger becomes a "deadbeat gaming the system"?

4. Read [Genesis 3:22-24](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzgWZoFxOQK-2BrYpICyx7Fiu1z1NZUWC1TSyUnyrhW1aXXxMjHL0zIrRjMlAZ8-2BSk-2BWe2CrD_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5g-2F8xxhPAov1GzkMLjPpKGNXOgQcPKDLPu2KEBBXIoQ9JWIMMUpLt8cUwBpogdeVR3uERiRehm5rx8LgB4XTik4e2RZhKEae8rioYoyaWNNFKei7cnUoUTCF4uQPlQa1QP38Y8YbVqTjkD6uSo99kYlFG3L-2FE2oyMfq2BmSSuZhJ8Pg3pm3DfGgWfV2p0C7ZrGPq3h09xuwET-2FJc6dzoZBo0Nx7PUup7wdRJAZZj51JI). Would it be accurate to call Adam and Eve the first tenants evicted from their home? Why did God drive them out? Was God justified in doing this? Explain.

5. Read [Genesis 4:8-16](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq7yUGu2EWPSz-2Brkxn3-2Blc81laFvNpatXtNw2c8uopxzgmdqxB81LTU3RhT1elogjkja6f9t8yNEugUiL0Wb3-2FDFA93NB9wLnXo4n-2FT7UyKcY_Nr5_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5uziEescRQyTzNPP88-2BzcBbbya7nXLKLA1T-2BVaGifH2eVPpU7O-2B-2FaTsfjq6cBLbOA8bdpdpASrGno0-2BtGfjldWp6lsXthUjFsxPS361fSso6vsxrNnDORTlj9mzLaz0w9eKqDIXdJ5adrCMJ-2F6oER1HyDwFTcCfN3g4eU0gbjDC3Mr8w4FYFB-2BBhMhwELojOCjsfQ-2FbI5KGceZGnKo6RjZrJJHBNE7U1Aeww7oWq-2BhJe). Would it be correct to say that Adam and Eve's firstborn son, Cain, was also evicted? Why or why not? Who was responsible for Cain's separation from God and from his family? What do God's actions reveal about his attitude toward Cain?

6. Discuss this: A person working 40 hours a week for $7.25/hour (minimum wage) cannot afford to rent a typical two-bedroom rental home anywhere in the United States, according to this year's *Out of Reach* report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (see the *Baptist News Global* article in the links list above). A full-time worker would have to earn at least $24.90 per hour in order to afford rent for that size dwelling, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).  
              Baptist minister Samuel Gunter, executive director of the North Carolina Housing Coalition, said, "When people hear the words 'public housing,' ... [many] assume that this is for people who don't work. But frankly, everyone's working. ... The fact that you can work 40 hours and not afford housing -- that's not the way it should be."

7. Quickly scan and respond to the blog ["Searching for Home."](http://url6748.thewiredword.com/ls/click?upn=FXq18njYKHucetmqt-2BDlq6wlB-2FaQ0GCLtiLr5Jc7jCiNk00gMMQOlxomg0CRqFhVa2aAD3Ze44QdBAmlUNvoqEXB1AxDPHD9UD5zks32iZyhsgyrqt-2Fd-2FiSqvQ8btuXapHU4EfaRA-2BFDLLpWA6nx7w-3D-3DPT3a_2Bkgba3oAouSOj-2BLDiRS8b3L-2Brhg-2FgPERpG5-2Ff-2FE8Qr4vijYdYV85HlFKYbm3wRaJr-2Bq5rRiZNGEJq5t17erU4qASCde8Ewq5LLYdP0J-2FvM7WoKAiISkucS54QDLi-2BzEBff5nlSSWFCDnbOtkFhyzAUWrrmJZbApvcyMDi6Wy0m7aucIyUtwSIGxxXkAfAQibVpcy-2FKul5-2F-2FNqOe-2BfbFxL87YE-2FBr-2Fm8LWnTvKyhkAvxIypcmFVloMa9g0I62gAN6QGskoz6MXGpakVydIFF5gva0bWrVkS67wxf7qrUMGGm8ELAldiyIW4cdGm6zA-2FEz43-2B2O7lMU1sKeYzs7VnK4AT5ps7YYkShIhMiWaktb4CKlPsu4gD9QDrs1-2FWb5822wuXyLo0V7tj7I97BhWG7oY-2BNrCHmHYu3M8Q1OX6IQZ-2BCyIpq-2Bfy171r3xLU8xxwHsZ-2F5RWXmM-2Bh37C37aOLWyYsoA8e3f1EIY97RdCFbHt-2BMKemmNPn5AKYWYbcFPWL)

**Responding to the News**

Reflect on how God has been a shelter for you in the past. Consider how God wants to use you to shelter those in need during these difficult days.

**Prayer**Suggested by Psalms 27:1-5; 61:3-4; 90:1; 91:1-4, 9-10; Isaiah 25:4

Most high and almighty God, in whose shadow we live,   
you have been our dwelling place in all generations,   
a refuge to the poor and needy in their distress,  
a shelter from the rainstorm and the ruthless,  
a shade from the heat and the hateful.   
Grant that we may live in your house all our days,  
beholding your beauty, seeking your understanding.  
Hide us under the shelter of your wings in the day of trouble;  
so may we joyfully offer sacrifices of praise to you  
for the protection you provide those who trust in you.   
We pray this in the matchless name of Jesus. Amen.

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