

Voices: Hope is revealed in our obedience to Christ

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There is an [e. e. cummings poem](#) nearly everyone who made it past eighth grade has read at least once in their life. I find myself returning to it every now and again because, despite its apparent simplicity, it creates a vivid image of love more relatable and striking than some of Shakespeare's images: "i carry your heart with me (I carry it in my heart)."

Cummings draws a clear and heart-wrenching picture in these few words. Wherever he goes, he carries his love's heart with him.

The poem is relevant because there is no other way to describe what I feel right now in this chaotic world of ours. I carry the news with me; I carry it in my heart.

The crying children at the border; the endless moral failure of those we call leaders; the flooding, drought, wildfires and other natural disasters made worse by a thing many either deny or outright refuse to talk about; the physical, emotional, mental, virtual and real violence facing those who do not look like me; the infighting slowly ravaging large swaths of the Church; and the cancers, job losses, divorces and other afflictions that now seem regularly to befall those I care about.

I carry all of this around with me in my heart.

I have been tempted towards apathy, but apathy is not the answer, is it? When evangelical theologian Francis Schaeffer asks, "How should we then live?" he answers that apathy is never the answer because in our weakness our worldview and its merits are exposed. "It is important to realize what a difference a people's worldview makes in their strength as they are

exposed to the pressure of life.”

Christians have no excuse for apathy precisely because we know the strength of the foundation upon which we have built our lives. We must remain engaged despite our weariness because we know to retreat would be admitting defeat and would paint an image of God absolutely false in its weakness.

So, what’s a Christian to do? What should I do when I feel the overwhelming weight of all I carry with me?

I should obey Christ.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest,” Jesus promises in Matthew 11:28. Look closely and you will notice his is not a request, but a command. Those of us who find ourselves heavy laden for whatever reason are to go to him. He is not asking, but telling!

What other response is appropriate when given a command by our King but to obey? Resist the urge to overcomplicate this. Simply stop what you are doing and turn full-bodied to him, ready to believe in him and the relief he offers.

Obedience to Christ is inherently hopeful.

We are a hope-filled people. Far too often, we let hope get pushed aside for something far less than what this world needs from us. A. W. Tozer notes in *A Crucified Life*, “Obedience is a primary component of the Christian life.” Our obedience to Christ is a hopeful act and can bring hope to a hopeless world. We need only to obey.

Hope is shown through obedience to Christ.

Saint Thomas Aquinas pointed out when a good is known, the opposite evil also is known. My heart is heavy laden by a broken world that is relentless

in joyous pursuit of evil. Yet, I know there is hope. I know hope is there for me in Christ. I know the hope he offers will be revealed to the world through my obedience.

For too long now, the world has known more evil than good. Too many of us have grown apathetic and weak in our apathy, giving ourselves over to believing the world is a hopeless place.

Now is the time for us to stem the tide of hopelessness and make Christ's name known to the nations. We do this not through our tweets or comments or votes, but through the simple act of faithful obedience to Christ.

Eugene Peterson said, "Every time you engage in an act of faith in Christ, you are training another person." Let us train the world around us to know Christ and the hope he offers.

I no longer have to carry the news around in my heart with me. With the burden lifted from my heart, I turn in faith to Christ and obey him.

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