

This week I was talking to a friend of mine and she said something that really made me kind of panic. She said, do you know the year's almost over? I'm, like, nah, it's not almost over. It's still July. She said, no, we're in August. I thought about it. She's right. It is almost over. Everybody starts back to school next week. We've got that L word the week after that, and then we have a little bit of a break in October. I've grown to love October these last couple years.

It's like, six weeks of where there's not a lot going on. But then, we have the annual meeting right after that. We have Harvest Home, and then we have Thanksgiving. We have Advent. We have Christmas. We have New Year, and then we get to welcome in our new moderator and have our planning meeting. That's a lot in a very short amount of time.

And it made me start thinking about the summer and how I have done absolutely nothing that I had planned for this summer. I've got nothing accomplished that I wanted to get done. And I'm talking to my friend about this, and that's what she's saying. And she also has gotten nothing accomplished this Summer that she wanted to do.

She wanted to have a vacation and she wanted to travel. She wanted to see some things, she wanted to spend time with her grandkids, and then she wanted to see other things happen. She wanted to see our group, The Star Coalition do more. Did you want to see it bigger? She wanted to see us meeting other people and reaching out and spreading love to all of these churches that are lost right now, helping people that need help. And then she wanted to spread that into a bigger setting and more and more and more. And she kept talking about all these plans that she had. How all these great things that she wanted to do, she was not going to accomplish before school started next week.

And we all feel like that a lot, don't we? Sometimes, especially when the end of the summer hits, and we realize that we missed June. We missed July completely. I don't know where it went. We start to think about other things we've missed. We think about other things that we've messed up, things that we weren't there for, things that we didn't get to be a part of.

It brings us down, and the more we think about what we missed the sadder we get, the more depressed we get, the more lethargic we get. And as we're talking, I reminded her we've accomplished a lot this summer. Even if we focus on the negative things because it's easy to focus on the negative things, it's easy to forget about the good things that we do. And she didn't believe me. She's like, you know, there's so much bad going on in the world. It's very hard to think about the good things.

One of the people in this group has a cousin who lives in Colombia. It was a part of the earthquake last week. Her house crashed all around her. She was stuck inside for four days before somebody could get to her. Somehow, she got under a table next to an outlet and had a phone charger so she could text. But she didn't have service anywhere else. When they got to her, they found their fiancé three feet from her buried under the rubble. Wow, that was loud.

And she's telling us this story. My friend, you can see on her face, she starts realizing how lucky she is. She's lucky because she has a roof over her. She doesn't have to worry about where she's going to get her next meal. She doesn't worry that her water is drinkable. She doesn't worry, well, a lot of things. She realized she has all of these great and wonderful gifts that God has given her. But she can't help focusing on the gifts that she doesn't have. She can't help but keep brooding over what she's missing. And we talked about that. Why do we do that? Why do we sit and think about the things that we're missing? Why can't we be happy with what God has given us? Why do we always want more?

It's an Earthly thing, right? We know when the time comes, and we ascend to heaven, we won't have to worry about anything again. We won't have to worry about being sick. We won't have to worry about being hungry. We won't have to worry about anybody else cause we know we'll all be taken care of.

And as we talk about that, there's always the what if right? There's always somebody in the group that's like, what if that doesn't happen? I know this. Now, I have a friend who honestly believes he's been brought up in the church. He goes to church every Sunday, and his church teaches him that what you have on Earth you will have in heaven. So he makes sure he has the nicest car. He makes sure he has the most updated phone. He makes sure he has all of those wonderful toys that we wanted as kids.

And I asked him who are you going to call? You got this brand new wonderful phone in heaven. I'm not taking a phone with me. That's the last thing I want is to be able to check emails in heaven. I don't want that. I want the good stuff. I want to see my family. I want to spend time with my friends. We always focus on those hard things, and we don't appreciate what God has given us around us. We forget to take the time to take a walk outside, just walk down the trail one day. We forget about the opportunity to have food fights at holidays. Those are great, aren't they? Those are some of the best gifts. We have the memories that we get to keep forever. Then, nobody can take that away from us. We don't have to worry, it's a gift.

It's like God's love. We know that it's in us, We know that they have shared it with everyone around us. That is the beauty of what we have and our reader today. Our reader today, the author today, for the reading, tells us not to worry about the little things, not to sweat the Earthly things because it doesn't matter. God gave us the greatest gift of all. He gave us a life, they gave us love. They give us hope and joy. That's what we should be thinking about. The rest is only temporary. It's only here and now, but the love and hope and joy is forever. So, please remember that when you're doom scrolling and you're watching the news and everything else. It's so negative in the world. And when you panic that it's Labor Day in a couple weeks, forget about all of that. Take a second to look around. Think about those food fights. Think about the joys that you have in your life. The children, your friends, your family; remember those?

Let us pray.