

This writer has a deeply religious faith, and this seeps through her writing. If that's not for you, then substitute whatever makes sense.....

Rebecca Arendell Franks
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WUHAN. It's roughly day 48 of the city's quarantine. We've been locked in our apartment complex for many weeks. I haven't eaten out since January 19. We're living in such strange times.

After my last post, which was all about locks on doors and further restrictions, my husband asked me if I've posted any of the good. But...but... well, but nothing. That convicted me.

So from the epicenter of the coronavirus, here is just SOME of the good we have been experiencing because of the lockdown: (Be warned - there is no way this post could be short.)

Our family life has never been better. Usually one weekend is long enough before I'm ready to send each of us back to school or work. But for SEVEN weeks, we've been home together with very little outside influences or distraction, forced to reconnect with one another, learn how to communicate better, give each other space, slow down our pace, and be a stronger family than ever before.

We've learned how to accept help from others. During this time, we've HAD to rely on others to show us how to get food and other things we need. People here are so good, and they want to help. It's satisfying to accept the help.

Shopping is so much easier now. It comes straight to our complex, and we just pick it up. Simple.

Right now I hear birds outside my window (on the 25th floor). I used to think there weren't really birds in Wuhan, because you rarely saw them and never heard them. I now know they were just muted and crowded out by the traffic and people. All day long now I hear birds singing. It stops me in my tracks to hear the sound of their wings.

Spring in Wuhan is absolutely stunning. God has been giving us glimpses of the beauty to come with near-perfect weather. Because of lockdown, we get to watch spring slowly unfold right in front of us with no work, traffic, pollution, or other distractions. I have pulled up my chair and am ready for the creator's show.

My cooking has gotten way more creative. I'm cooking like a homesteader. Housekeeping hasn't suffered, either.

We take naps in the middle of the day sometimes.

We've all been reading so much more than before.

I've reconnected with lots of old friends. We've talked with our families more than ever before.

We still work and do school, but all from home and all on flexible hours. It is not perfect, but it is fairly productive and good.

We are exercising more. Because we borrowed a rowing machine from school right before the lockdown, Edgar Franks has been rowing regularly at home and has lost several kilos already. I still walk in the morning as usual, but I do so with no time restrictions and now with friend Erika Carlson.

In my yoga world, I have finally done a forearm stand. I also share goofy yoga photos each day with a local friend/yogi. This keeps us connected in spirit and movement.

I could devote a whole post to the amazing community we've been blessed with because of this lockdown. We live near 4 other staff members, most of whom we didn't know well at all prior to this. Because of this quarantine, we have bonded with and supported each other in ways that I've

never experienced in 9 years of living here. (Crowd sourcing for feminine products and coffee, creatively sharing overstock of carrots and squash, etc)

Friday night, we four staff women celebrated Julia Marie Roehrkasse's birthday together. We four have never before been together without husbands, kids, or larger community. But that night, I felt like I won the lottery in the friendship department. Our gathering was genuine in a way that can only be shared by people who are experiencing the same thing at the same time and understand what each other are going through. This bond we have may lessen when our world gets back to normal, but for now I wouldn't trade it for anything. It is good.

My prayer life has never been better and my study time has been much more real. I have quiet time that is actually (usually) quiet - and I can devote real time to it. Most days I have so much more time to think, to listen, to process, and to discover. I am discovering the good gifts that God has given me and my family. More than anything, I am bowled over by his goodness at every turn. He overwhelms me with his goodness.

We had "church" by Zoom this morning at 10:30, as usual. My husband just woke up from his nap. My kid is reading quietly on the couch. I have the luxury of writing uncensored here on FB. We are about to go pick up a ham that a friend is giving us, taking her our coffee and cranberries to share.

God is providing so many opportunities for good while we are here, and he is showing us his goodness every single moment.

We are at peace in the epicenter of the virus. We are at peace in the epicenter of his will.

Fear is a faithless coward and has no place in the lives of believers. Fear and worry have no seat at our table. We're here because he wants us here, right now, for his purpose.

Coronavirus wants you to isolate and stock up and take care of your own first. Instead, look to him first while you take care of others. In community, we can do so much more than we can do on our own. God is caring for us so richly and showering us with SO MUCH GOOD each and every moment.

And the song just plays nonstop in my head - Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God.

It chases me down, fights 'til I'm found, leaves the 99.

I couldn't earn it, I don't deserve it, still, You give Yourself away. Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God.

Psalm 118:6 - The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?

Pray.

#wuhanjiayou

#prayforwuhan