

These days, we hear the word “unprecedented” a lot. But disease, fear, and suffering are not new. My cousin Gary tells a story about his Smucker grandparents Dan and Verna in 1919. Leaving their home in Oyster Point, they arrived at the Ohio farm they had bought, only to find that the family they bought it from was still in the house, the wife sick with the flu. Soon Verna caught the flu and it went into double pneumonia.

Her husband wrote, “...and my sister was there to help us. She got flu too and was in bed. And the other brothers and sisters were afraid to come in the house. They put food by the door for us. I had my clothes on for weeks night and day and not much sleep.

“The doctor had given my wife up. He thought she wouldn’t get well. But I poulticed all night with different bags of poultice and kept them as warm as she could stand them. And then the doctor was surprised the day after he said that because she finally got well and strong and hardy again.”

Their little daughters aged 8 and 10 were up all night chopping and frying the onions he used as a poultice. Their father prayed all night long as he was changing the poultices.

Pandemics are not new. But neither are faith, hope, and love.

Some of us may be comfortable at home with everything we need, safe from the spreading illness. But many others, even if not infected, are feeling the stress of losing job, running a home school, worrying about how to be absolutely safe when going out to shop, and just grieving life as they knew it just weeks ago.

We need to fry figurative onions and offer steaming hot poultices of calling and checking on people, helping to stock the shelves of Thrive, and just offering words of encouragement during a hard time.

As Paul said in II Corinthians 4:8: “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair.”

**WE GET  
KNOCKED DOWN  
BUT WE ARE  
NOT DESTROYED.**

2 CORINTHIANS 4:9

