



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

October 2021

God and COVID19

“Experiencing God’s Love In a Pandemic”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Main Text: Romans: 8:35 - 37

Devotional Readings Ps. 103:17, Jer 31:3,
2 Thess 2: 13 - 16

Rom 8:35-37

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. KJV

The Story

Elder Rodgers sits inside his car on the rear parking lot of his church watching as raindrops gently land on his windshield and slowly trickled down often joining others in their artful descent. He is almost hypnotized by the meandering dance of the raindrops. Ending his quiet contemplation, he glances down at his watch, and realizes it is time for him open up the church for Sunday School. As Pastor Rodgers reaches for his face mask now tucked conveniently away in his suit pocket; he carefully lifts the arms of his glasses, slips the strings of the mask behind his ears and carefully covers his nose and mouth. Then, he opens his car door and steps onto the wet parking lot, where he is greeted by two of his most faithful Sunday School attendees Sister Carlson and her mother. Unlocking the church doors, Pastor turns on the sanctuary lights and the three of them gather in the front masked and socially distancing,

they prepare for Sunday School. Today’s church for many is a far cry from what it was only two or three years ago. For many choir stands set hauntingly quiet and various seats on the pews remain empty bearing a silent witness to their previous occupants. Those few members who are brave enough to venture out to church service must sit far apart from each other as if repelled apart by some invisible force. With masks on and their faces covered, all human expressions are hidden from view and even the human voice in praise and the occasional “amen” are now muffled. For many this description of an in person service or preaching to a cold camera lens has become the “new normal” - and like me, many pastors are left to grieve over what “church” used to be.

QUESTIONS

1. What is Pastor Rodgers grieving over and why?
2. How has COVID19 cause your church practices to change?
3. Are these changes easier for some people? Why?
4. Can the church effectively win souls to Jesus during this pandemic? If so, how?

The Discussion

What do you think the most common instruction in the bible is? The answer is “fear not.” This instruction is mentioned 365 times in scripture. So, in essence, God has given us a “fear not” for every day of the year! Why do you think God had the bible writers to incorporate so many “fear not(s)” into the scriptures?

God so often tells us not to fear because, in life, there is so much to be afraid of. Every day we live in the midst of conflict and violence, hunger and disease, injustice and oppression. Yet in the midst of this God tells us, “Do not be afraid!” But, how can we not feel fearful in such an unpredictable and often cruel world?

From a practical perspective, we understand that fear is created by many factors. Some of the most potent factors are the things we don't understand, can't control and that offer us the greatest threat. Often, we just can't cope with our fears, and this can lead us either to deny what's happening or to blame those we think are responsible for the threats that we face. When we reflect on all this, it's not hard to understand why so much fear surrounds epidemics.

Spiritually speaking the bible tells us that fear is really a spirit. (2 Tim 1:7) And this same scriptures tells us that God did give us this spirit of fear. The question arises, "if God didn't give us this spirit of fear, who did?" The answer is pretty obvious. Satan is the father of fear!

Our heavenly Father wants us to know that our ultimate security is with God, who loves us and values us so much that each of our names is written on the palms of God's hands (Isaiah 49:16). God tells us not to be afraid because nothing can ever part us from God and God's love.

QUESTIONS:

1. How have you experienced fear in your life?
2. How should we try to minister to someone who is experiencing fear?
3. Why has COVID19 made people so afraid?

The Study

The Apostle Paul points out that it is not our love for Christ that hold us so closely to the Savior, but it is Christ's love for us that proves eternally inseparable.

Here the Apostle poses a rhetorical question – "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?", after which he begins to list some seven potential contenders. In many ways, all seven candidates can be described in the first one mentioned: "tribulation" or "trouble." This word means pressure; both outward and inward. It speaks of hardship

and afflictions that are so often the common companions of God's people. Paul explains that this "love of Christ" doesn't mean we will not experience such difficult hardships and afflictions. In fact, the Apostle assures us that such hardships are a part of our Christian experience. To better illustrate the often incredibly hostile conditions that God's people have endured, the Apostle Paul inserts the Old Testament scripture from Psalms 44:2. From this example we understand that for God's people there are real risks and a need for us to display a real devotion to our God.

However, the Apostle doesn't mention these incidents of tribulations as the Christian's final conclusion but rather to show us that none of these things can ever truly harm us because "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." For the believers such experiences of tribulations are but gateways to both bliss and victory! In reality, such struggles as experienced in this life never serves to weaken the both of love and devotion between Christ and those he loves, it only serves to strengthen that bond of love and devotion.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why would God allow his children to suffer?
2. Why do you believe Paul wanted us to know about this love of Christ?
3. How is this an important message for us to consider during the COVID19 pandemic?
4. What is one of the most important points you gotten from this lesson?



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