

Thought provoking issues...

Comfort Amid COVID-19 Chaos

Fruitport friends and neighbors, whether you're a Christian or are unsure about faith, we hope you will be encouraged by a recent teaching series at Calvary Church on 213 W Oak St. (Well that's where the building is at least; the people are scattered across the Muskegon area gathering each week online :))

There is so much chaos today, that, for me at least, it feels a bit like the world is falling apart. There's the COVID-19 pandemic and the horrible



loss of life, of course, but then there's the loss of jobs, changes to schools, social isolation, mental health struggles. Life is war, and viruses, unemployment, and depression are just the tip of the iceberg. Our ultimate enemies are SATAN, SIN, and DEATH. Satan leads invisible spiritual forces in a rebellion against God and a war on all humanity. Sin, that evil impulse in every single one of our hearts, joins that rebellion against God and war on other people. And death, the enemy we deserve because of sin, is coming for every single one of us. When the world falls apart, how can anyone survive--let alone thrive?

In the middle of this chaos, we need a safe place to go. We cannot fight these enemies on our own. That would be a suicide mission. We need an mighty fortress and powerful ally that can protect

us from these foes. We need God. Our only hope now as ever is spiritual renewal, which is the first half of Calvary's vision to become "a church for the community." No vaccine, no friend or family, no stimulus check, no high school graduation, no Netflix, no job can ultimately protect or complete us. (Not that any of those things are bad in and of themselves.) Our only hope is to return to God and be saved by Him. You might ask, "How can that happen in a time like this?" I'd answer, "How can it not?" Where else do we have to turn when the world falls apart?

Even in times of chaos, God's people can move from fear to faith to worship to mission. This is the bold plan of action laid out in Psalm 46, which will be the focus of our new teaching series. It's a psalm of trust that begins with God's people seeking refuge in Him and culminates with His praises being sung around the planet. It's spiritual renewal in a time of chaos. The first step of spiritual renewal in chaos is moving from fear of chaos to faith in God.

And for that, we turn to Psalm 46... "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way..." (Psalm 46:1-2a NIV)

For more hope, joy, and purpose in Psalm 46, visit calvarymuskegon.com/learn-from-jesus. You are loved more than you know by a God greater than you realize.

Grace and peace,
Keith Sandison
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Calvary | Muskegon
"a church for the community"

A World Shaken by Coronavirus

Dear Editor: America, and the World, is presently shaken by a tiny virus, so tiny that it is invisible to Man's naked eye.

Fear of contracting an infection from such a small living creature, and facing sickness, and possibly death, is shaking mighty Man around the world!

It is quite possible that God, the creator of Earth and the entire universe, is trying to get Man's attention!

According to the Word of God, He tells us that in the beginning He created Heaven and Earth and everything in them, visible and invisible, and that we all belong to him.

In the same "Word of God" He told us how in Noah's time, he destroyed most of His living creation by the "Great Flood" because they became so WICKED.

Since then, He has judged and destroyed many nations. God also punished many nations, in the hope they would return to Him, and follow his ways, including Israel, his chosen nation.

This present world has become exceedingly WICKED! God predicted this would happen, and that at His "appointed time" he will judge and destroy the wicked.

Our extremely patient Creator is still trying to save us all. He loves us, and He is real, not a myth!

His Word must be taught to all. Faith comes by hearing the Word, reading the Word, and following his Word. Jesus is, "the way, the truth, and the life."

Manuel Ybarra, Jr.

Republicans: the Anti-Slavery Party

submitted by Hon. Byron Donalds

It was Republicans who...

...Fought to abolish slavery, losing 620,000 Union soldiers in the process. Democrats fought to protect and expand slavery.

...Gave former slaves citizenship and voting rights by overriding Democrat President Andrew Johnson's veto.

...Made passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 happen. Democrats, with intense dedication, filibustered it in vain for 60 days!

'Thank You' to All Those Who Protect and Support Us During the Pandemic

by Kate and Calvin Holtrop

The COVID-19 pandemic has been very difficult for many people around the world over the last few months. The situation has been the worst for the US in the last two months of that time. We are grateful to God for all of our service workers – police, firefighters, medical workers, our military, and other public servants – whom we support and thank for their service.

There is another group of equally important people who have also done their part and deserve a round of applause – private business people. As COVID-19 has spread across our country, many small businesses have taken steps to protect the public by closing their doors. Many restaurants have closed or moved solely to take-out or delivery, in order to minimize gatherings of customers. Stores like Walmart, Meijer, and other similar retail outlets, have stayed open, ensuring that our necessities are still available while continuing to provide jobs.

These retailers in particular have worked very hard to ensure that as many products as possible are available to their customers as often as possible. Managers, stock clerks, cashiers, sanitation workers, and other retail employees have worked long, difficult hours, courageously managing huge numbers of customers daily. While demand for essential products has shot up, retail workers have managed to keep products like toilet paper and sanitation supplies circulating the best they can. Shelves are stocked regularly, checkout lines run smoothly, social distancing is encouraged, and cleaning and sanitation are huge priorities for store staff. Store hours have been adjusted, in some places, so that the more vulnerable can have first access to groceries.

We thank God for the clerks, cashiers, managers, and many others who are keeping the Fruitport area, and the rest of the country, supplied with goods during the pandemic. And thank you for all the hard work and sacrifices you've made to keep your customers happy and healthy.

How to Live in a Battlefield

by Pastor Mike Scott, First Congregational Church of Fruitport

When a Christian is being attacked from a visible or invisible foe, how should or could one deal with the assault? This is an important question because Jesus forewarned His disciples that the treatment which He received would be what we can expect in the world. One would think that the offer of eternal life, forgiveness of sins, and peace and joy which passes understanding would cause a stampede to our churches. However, it results in rejection of our gospel and persecution of the gospel messengers. The church at Philippi received a word from Paul which helped them understand how to live in a battlefield.

In Phil. 1:27-30, the Pastor's heart of Paul is providing perspective on how to face attacks and crisis which come from outside the church. Later in Chapter 2:1-4 He tells the church how to survive attacks from within the church. Paul is telling us plainly the Christian daily faces attacks sometimes from without and sometimes from within. The enemy will always try to defeat us from progressing in the faith. Unfortunately, many leave the Lord Jesus' path at the instance of conflict or trouble. Let us learn what Paul wants us to understand and do when attacks come from outside the church. We can certainly see this COVID-19 virus as an attack from without. So, these are very practical lessons.

"Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not in anyway terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation and that of God. For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me." Phil 1:27-30

Paul tells three principles which we need in facing outward attacks which come to the church.

FIRST, we need to be consistent witnesses of the gospel (Phil 1:27). We are citizens of heaven, and Jesus calls us to represent and witness to the sphere of influence the reality of the LIVING GOD. Our task is to manifest Jesus through our life. We have been given the Holy Spirit who will enable us to work out our salvation and citizenship traits to this world.

SECOND, we are to cooperate with each other in the furtherance of the gospel. The church is here to do three tasks: (1) Exalt and glorify the Lord; (2) Evangelize the lost; (3) Edify each member of the church. As we unite in the Spirit and in our minds around these tasks, no kind of opposition can defeat us. When we are courageously united in focusing on loving God and others, foes see that as an evidence of our victory and their defeat. Let us cooperate looking upward to God. Outward to a lost world desperately in need of hope; inwardly in one another ministering to each other. This balanced focus will assure that the Good News is heard and seen. (Phil 1:27b-28)

THIRD, we need to expect conflict. (Phil 1:30). Our ministry puts all the churches on the frontlines of the spiritual battlefield. It is real and involves the destiny of men and women for eternity. The Apostle Paul tells us suffering is a gift (Phil. 1:29), and the conflict which Jesus and the Apostles faced will also come to us. These three principles are sequential. We live consistent lives as citizens of heaven. As heavenly citizens, we travel through the conflicts victoriously as we cooperate and stand united.

Global Death Tolls

The coronavirus isn't the only enemy of human life in full operation today. Check out this chart of worldwide deaths from January 1st through March 25, 2020:

21,297 Deaths by Coronavirus
113,034 Deaths by Seasonal Flu
228,095 Deaths by Malaria
249,904 Deaths by Suicides
313,903 Deaths by Traffic Fatalities
390,908 Deaths by HIV/AIDS
581,599 Deaths by Alcohol
1,162,481 Deaths by Smoking
1,909,804 Deaths by Cancer
2,382,324 Deaths by Hunger
9,913,702 Deaths by Abortion
www.worldometers.info