

SUNDAY MORNING
<p>Announcements</p> <p>Song Leader Jack Calvert</p> <p>Lord's Supper</p> <p>Prayers</p>
SUNDAY EVENING
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WEDNESDAY EVENING
<p>Announcements</p> <p>Song Leader</p> <p>Prayers</p> <p>Invitation</p>

(conclusion)
 know what the future will look like, but I don't think it's beyond the realm of possibility that it will prove to be a time of spiritual transformation, a third Great Awakening. It may well be that never again in our lives will we have an opportunity like this one. Let's take advantage of it!

ABOUT US
<p>Elders</p> <p>Jack Calvert Rodney Ellis</p> <p>Jon Barry Bill Brittenham Mike Davis Clay Morris</p> <p>Evangelist Bryan Garlock</p>
SERVICE TIMES
<p>Sunday</p> <p>Bible Study9:30 A.M. Worship10:15 A.M. Worship6:00 P.M.</p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>Bible Study7:00 P.M.</p>
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GOD’S PLAN FOR SALVATION
<p>Hear the word of truth Romans 10:13-17</p> <p>Believe the truth..... Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24</p> <p>Repent from all sins Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38</p> <p>Confess the name of Christ ... Matthew10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10</p> <p>Be Baptized in His name Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Colossians 2:12</p> <p>Walk in newness of life and be faithful unto death Romans 6:1-4; Revelation 2:10</p>



Volume XXV
 August 9, 2020
 Issue 33

Blessings from COVID-19
 M. W. Bassford

Since the beginning of this year, the coronavirus has dominated the news and our attention like no other story in my lifetime. I suspect we probably haven't seen an event this consequential since World War II. The problems brought by the pandemic are obvious: serious illness, death, economic disruption, civil disorder, and brethren arguing endlessly about masks on Facebook.

However, even though God, for reasons of His own, periodically allows the devil to wreak havoc, this still is God's world, not Satan's. Thus, every tragedy or disaster we encounter has something in it that we can learn from and use to grow spiritually. COVID-19 is no different. I don't claim to know the purposes of God, but I do know that He always has a purpose, and the arc of history always will bend toward His glory.

Last week, Rufus suggested, and I agree, that we ought to consider how we should be learning and growing through the pandemic. This morning, then, let's examine at least some of the blessings we have received from COVID-19.

The first of these is that **WE ARE HUMBLLED**. Look at the words of David in Psalm 39:3-7. As a society, the United States tells lots of lies to itself, but the biggest probably is the lie of our own sufficiency. We live in the country of the American dream and the self-made man. According to our national narrative, it's possible for any of us, using our own abilities, to ensure happiness for ourselves forever.

Of course, this is not true, but we go to great lengths to preserve the myth. Everything from Botox injections to nursing homes works together to hide the reality of aging and death from

FAMILY TALK

Continue to remember and check on our shut-ins: **Bonnie Allgor, Maxine Burnham, Ann Thomas and Francine Davis.** Cards, calls and visits are ALWAYS needed and appreciated.

Please remember **Maxine Burnham** and **Jean Cronce** in your prayers.

Keep **Tara Stinson** and her father, **Dennis Sandlin**, in your prayers.

Nancy Rowe's nephew, Cedrick is still in the hospital but doing better. Her sister is home and doing better.

Here is the current schedule of services:

Bible Study: 9:30 AM
Services: 10:15 AM
Kids Only: 5:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Additionally, we are having studies on the life of Paul:

Monday: 7:00 PM
Friday: 7:00 PM

Ladies Bible Class:

Next class will be August 11th.

(from pg 1)

us. The store shelves always are full, the credit card always swipes, and the party never ends.

Well, 2020 has been the year the party ended. Death is an inescapable feature of the national conversation. A few months ago, those store shelves didn't have any toilet paper on them. We laugh about it now, but I think all of us know in

some corner of our minds that next month it could be bread and beans and rice that aren't around. Our brightest political and scientific minds have tried to solve our problems, and they have failed to protect us.

In short, we have been stripped of our illusions of self-sufficiency. That's why, I think, there's an undertone of terror in the nightly news reports. People have spent their lives trusting in themselves, and now they have realized that they can't.

I think David's conclusion in v. 7 has to be ours. Because our lives are so short and fragile, because we are so powerless, we must put our hope in God and wait for Him. That's a hard realization for many. When you bow before your Creator, you also must admit that He has the right to tell you what to do. That doesn't sound as much fun as a life of sin and selfish pleasure! Nonetheless, in this time, it is plain to see that hoping in anything else or anyone else is vain.

Second, the coronavirus has **DRAWN US CLOSER TOGETHER.** Consider Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 12:21-22. Now, I recognize it sounds weird to say that this is a time of greater closeness in the church when our Sunday morning attendance is 2/3 of what it was, but I think that when all this finishes shaking out, that's how things will be. I fear that there will be some, not many, but some, who will fall away because of it, but I think the rest of us will be closer than we were before.

I was brought up by godly parents, and ever since I left home, I've been faithfully attending services someplace. That means that the time of

the lockdown a couple of months back was the longest time that I ever have spent without assembling with a congregation. I recognize that I was better off than most—at least I got to go to the church building and see a few Christians!

Nonetheless, the longer that time went on, the less I liked it. I heard preaching and teaching. I heard prayers. I partook of the Lord's Supper. However, I wasn't doing those things with all my brothers and sisters, and even though online services were the best we could do, it felt like the difference between eating a meal and pretending to eat off an empty plate. It didn't satisfy me. Indeed, I know that right now there still are many members here who are staying at home because of health concerns, who are still trying to do the best they can with empty-plate Christianity.

When this time is over, none of us should forget that feeling. Whenever we start taking our brethren for granted, we should recall 2020 to our minds and remind ourselves how vital they are in our spiritual lives. Even now, there are things I want to do that I don't feel like I should do. I don't think it's wise to try to pack 30 people into our home to study right now, and I miss that too. The fellowship that we have here is priceless, and I think God has used the virus to show us how priceless it is.

Finally, I think the events of this year should have **RENEWED OUR SENSE OF MISSION.** I couldn't put that mission any better than Jesus did in Matthew 5:14-16. We are the light of the world. Through our good works, we are

supposed to shine so that others will glorify God. We must remember too that the greater the darkness becomes, the more brightly our lights will shine.

Times are hard now, and they're going to be harder in the future. There are lots of hurting people out there, and there are going to be more: those who lost loved ones to the virus, those who lost jobs, those who suffered from these times of loneliness and isolation. I don't care who wins the election in November; no human being is going to be able to make all the pain go away.

We can't solve everybody's problems, but we can solve the problems that are before us. We can be generous to the poor and hungry. We can comfort the bereaved and the lonely. We can be the visible sign of the compassion of Christ.

Most of all, though, we can point those around us to God. Let's be honest, brethren. The answers that the world has been dishing out to the coronavirus problem haven't been very good, and increasingly, people with eyes to see will start looking for different answers.

We have answers. We have very good answers. Indeed, we have the only possible answers. The troubles of our time are too big for anybody but God. When we find people who are humbled and mourning, with compassion and love, we can lead them to Him.

I think it's probably true that 2020 will prove to be a transformational year in the history of our country. I don't

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