

Kasilof Community Church

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My Dear Church Family,

March 20, 2020

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1: 9). These words were spoken to Joshua just after the death of Moses and his commissioning to lead the people of Israel into the Promised Land. They follow a series of assurances that God would bring them into the land that he promised to their fathers. These words also follow a mandate to follow all that was written in the Law and that Joshua was to meditate on the law so that he might be careful to do all that was in it. This was good advice for Joshua. In the days ahead of him he will need to have courage and wisdom to lead the people into the Promised Land. He was going into uncharted waters, but before he went God gave Joshua His assurance of His presence with them.

God’s advice to Joshua is good for us today as well. I heard yesterday that while the virus is bad the fear of the virus has had a devastating effect on people. Fear can be crippling and we are seeing that in our society today. People are fearful of losing their job or being out of work for an extended period of time. People who are living from paycheck to paycheck are fearful of how they will pay their bills. These are real concerns for sure. I have gone through hard times and times of fear in my life and I want to share with you what ministered to me during those times.

I. God is never surprised – Acts 4: 27-28 After the crucifixion and resurrection and after the sending of the Holy Spirit, when the church was just starting Peter and John went to the Temple to pray and while there they healed a man who had been cripple. They shared with the people in the Temple that the man was healed in the name and power of Jesus. The religious authorities did not like that so they hauled them in before the Sanhedrin (the same group that sentence Jesus to death). After examining the apostles and threatening them, the apostles went back and shared with the church what the Sanhedrin had said (that they quit teaching in the name of Jesus). The church then prayed. The following is part of their prayer.

Acts 4: 27-28 “for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.”

This passage tells me that the church believed that even the crucifixion was part of God’s sovereign plan, that God used Herod, and Pontius Pilate to carry out His plan. All throughout scripture from Genesis 1: 1 through Revelation 22: 21 the message of God’s sovereignty over the earth is loud and clear. Nothing takes God by surprise.

II. God is in Control – Colossians 1: 15-20 Hand-in-hand with the fact that God is not surprised is the truth that God is in control of all things. Throughout the scriptures, we are given a picture of a God who is in control of all things. The apostle Paul summarized this nicely in Colossians 1: 15-17

Colossians 1: 15-17 “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

Jesus is not just the creator of all things but He is also the sustainer of all things and through him all the world holds together whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities. In Romans 13 Paul tells us that we are to be subject to the governing authorities because they have been instituted by God.

Romans 13: 1 “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”

God is in control not just of the governing authorities but also God is in control of our church, and lives, and our health and well being.

III. God is trustworthy – Matthew 6: 25-34 We can be confident during these uncertain times because God is not taken by surprise and because God is in control, but also because God is trustworthy. In Matthew during the Sermon on the Mount Jesus tells us not to be anxious about clothing or what we are to wear because He will take care of us. He uses the example of how He clothes the lilies of the field and how He feeds the birds of the air to assure us that He will take care of our needs as well. This doesn't exempt us from personal responsibility. The birds go out and seek their food and the lilies take from the soil, but our trust and faith should be in God to provide for our needs.

IV. God has given us the church – Romans 12: 3-5 The Church was designed by God to give glory to Jesus and to share the gospel and make disciples. The church is described in scripture as the body of Christ with Christ being the head. Those who have trusted Christ as their Savior are all members of the body of Christ. We are not autonomous. God created man to live in community. No man is an island. We have each other. No one need feel alone. It is during times like this that we need to support each other, and comfort each other.

As we listen to the news each day it is easy to get discouraged and even to be fearful, but we should remember that God is still on the throne, Jesus is still LORD of all and we can trust Him to care for us. We also can and should care for each other. The church has the opportunity during this to minister to our neighbors, and friends and to each other.

As of now all church activities (except Youth Group and Food Pantry) are cancelled. The deacons and their spouses will be at the church Sunday morning at 11:00 to pray. Anyone who would like to join us are more than welcome.

In Christ Alone,
Pastor James