

Wildwood Church of Christ

August 2, 2020

Order of Worship

Welcome & Announcements

Song: #12 How Great Is Our God
Prayer

Sermon: In These Difficult Times:
Understanding What God The Father Expects

Song: #349 I Believe In Jesus
Lord's Supper

Unity! Ephesians 4:1-6

Song: #929 This Is My Father's World

Song: #892 God Is Calling The Prodigal

Song: #623 God Be With You

Compassing Christ's Course Through the Chaos

by Brian R. Kenyon – Florida School of Preaching, Director

We are certainly living in chaotic times. It is almost surreal to contemplate what is happening in this world today. The events and the way people are responding to these events are "unprecedented." Just think of the new, common vernacular of the day (social distancing, asymptomatic carrier, "BLM", etc.). Most have probably never heard these terms, and the ones who have, only rarely! During times like these, it is good to reflect on God, Scripture and the nature of this world in view of the current chaos in order to navigate through it.

Observing the Chaos

"Covid-19" (along with other terms for it) became a household name in March/April 2020, resulting in large part from its controversially being designated a pandemic and the agenda driven media's coverage of it. No matter how a person considers the real danger of the covid-19 virus and/or the effect of the increasing mandates to wear masks, he can find pages of ample documentation to support his view. Then, just when the country was coming to grips with the coronavirus, the disturbing George Floyd video surfaced. Even if Mr. Floyd were a violent criminal, there is no way that police officer should have had his knee on Mr. Floyd's neck for any length of time (since he was already in handcuffs, face-down on the pavement). No one can predict how the legal proceedings will end, but it will likely be a powder keg of more chaos!

Chaotic coverage has also led to chaotic responses to both events. Though the actual events are quite different, the reason for reactions to them have much in common. First, both involve the agenda-driven media's sensationally reporting only the worst in each situation. Of course, with the Floyd case, there is plenty evil to see without any further commentary. The connections and assumptions, though, that the media have made only bring out the worst of each situation. (Statistics show) Very few African American men are murdered by police brutality, yet it is portrayed as if most people of African descent in America are targeted by most Caucasian law enforcement personnel. Concerning the corona virus, comparatively few (compared to the overall population) even get sick, nonetheless die, (although any deaths are tragic) from covid-19, yet it is portrayed almost as if it were supernatural and that everyone is doomed to die from it. There has always been violence and rumors of destruction throughout human history, yet God informs His people not to assume the worst (cf. Matthew 24:6).

Second, both covid-19 and racist approval of police brutality are said (or at least implied) to be mostly spread by invisible, "asymptomatic carriers." This is the main cause of fear (whether real or imaginary) for the virus. People all over the world are being drilled that people do not have to be sick in order to spread the virus. In fact, they say, it is these people who are the most dangerous. That is why people are being told to self-quarantine and/or wear masks in public. Yes, there is a slight possibility of "asymptomatic" spread, but not in the cosmic portions that are being emphasized. People are also being told that racism is an inherent part of most, if not all, Caucasian cultures within the United States. Even if these cultures show no signs, they are "asymptomatic carriers" because they are Caucasian. Much of this in both cases reveal classic examples of "If you hear it long enough, it must be true." God said His people should examine the evidence first, then make conclusions (cf. Proverbs 18:13, 17; 1Thessalonians 5:21-22). Again, "asymptomatic carriers" are a possibility with viruses but very rare according to some in the medical profession. In fact, it is so rare that few people outside that field ever heard the term that is now commonplace. If racism is a heart issue (and it is cf. Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 15:18-20), can it really be "asymptomatic"? True, a person can be so deceived, he does not see it, but if he truly has no hate in his heart, he cannot be racist. He may do or say things from "cultural norms" that were formulated by racists (and when he becomes aware of these, he should stop), but that does not make him a racist. Christians are not to "judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

Third, because of the above, both situations encourage people to assume the worse in others. With covid-19, all people are assumed dangerous (i.e., an "asymptomatic carrier"), and must be considered as unclean as the Old Testament leper (Leviticus 13-14). In fact, some in the pandemic have convinced people they are dangerous to themselves – a person cannot even touch his own face! If people do not wear the recommended personal protection equipment, they are labeled arrogant and unloving to their neighbors. Concerning racism, all Caucasians are now looked upon by more people as being racists until proven otherwise. Reports indicate some municipal governments/employers forced subordinates to wear "Black Lives Matter" apparel if they wanted to keep their jobs. This proposed default assumption of the worst in others is in opposition to love (1Corinthians 13:4-7)!

Fourth, both situations deliberately push for and result in severe economic damage. The covid-19 virus was deemed (almost supernaturally) too dangerous for anyone even to go outside, not to mention engage in "non-essential" work. Most businesses shut down partially and some completely, with no date of reopening in sight. "Stimulus packages" are nice, but will definitely increase national debt (cf. Proverbs 22:7). The rioting and looting following Mr. Floyd's murder was (and continues to be) devastating to many big cities in America. Making matters worse, many local governments did not resist the destruction but stood by and watched. Obviously, a Christian can still be saved if he loses his job or suffers property loss (cf. Revelation 2:10), but having these blessings in a stable government helps him "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence" (1Timothy 2:2).

Fifth, popularly suggested remedies to both situations do not get to the real solution but lend themselves to further chaos. The primary solution to the virus is not "hazmat suits" for the entire population but a healthy immune system. The human body, including its immune system, is "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). People, including Christians, must take better care of their bodies so they can effectively function as God designed. However, for many, due to various reasons beyond their control, a healthy immune system is not an option at this point. Thus, many will not feel safe again until a vaccine is developed and widely distributed. Concerning Mr. Floyd's murder, "defunding" law enforcement is certainly not a viable solution and has already resulted in more chaos. The only ultimate solution to racism (no matter its level of symptoms) is the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16; 2Timothy 3:16-17). Living, teaching and evangelizing the Gospel will influence the tearing down of any sinful barrier between relationships with God and fellow man (cf. Matthew 5:13-16; 28:18-20; 2Corinthians 10:3-5).

Keeping Christ's Compass

So what can Christians do in the midst of all this chaos? As mentioned above, although the vehicles may be different, trouble in this life is nothing new (Job 14:1; Ecclesiastes 2:23), even chaos (2Chronicles 36:17-20; Matthew 24:4-35). Here are some things God's people can do to safely navigate their way through the chaos. First, remember that God exists and the Bible is His inspired Word (Genesis 1:1; 2Timothy 3:16-17). Since most Harvester readers know this already, space will not be used to formally prove these truths. Since these are true, Christians can take comfort in knowing that God is in control (Isaiah 41:10; Luke 18:27). Christians can also know that God's word contains all the answers to life's situations (2Peter 1:3). While staying informed is good, Christians would benefit by spending more time studying the Bible and praying than by constantly watching the news and scrolling through social media (cf. Philippians 4:6-8).

Second, realize the devil is real. He is described by several terms (cf. Revelation 12:9). The most common are "Satan" which basically means adversary (Job 1:6, 12; Matthew 16:23), and "devil" which basically means slanderer (Matthew 4:1; 1Peter 5:8). The devil's main weapon is deception (Revelation 12:9; 13:14; 20:8). He deceives people away from the truth (John 8:44; 2Thessalonians 2:9-12), and he deceives to separate people from God and from one another (Genesis 3:1-13; Isaiah 59:1-2; Acts 20:29-30; 1Timothy 1:20). Through all the present chaos, Christians must not allow the devil to separate them from God or from one another by becoming complacent in Bible study and worship, by becoming indifferent to the responsibility of loving and serving others, or by becoming radicalized in unscriptural extremes that result in apostasy (cf. 2Timothy 4:10). Now more than ever, Christians must "put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11)!

Third, resolve to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Despite the hype, covid-19 and racism are real. Christians can have a real influence for good in both situations. They can help comfort and encourage (from a distance) those in their communities who have the virus and their families (cf. Matthew 25:34-40; Galatians 6:10). Christians must also model Jesus in their spheres of influence when it comes to helping resolve racism. They must first examine themselves and repent if they are in the sin of racism (Matthew 7:3-5; 1Corinthians 10:12). Christ's church should lead the way in showing God's love for all. Chaotic times often turn people's attention from worldly instability to seeking better security. Christians have what these people seek (2Corinthians 4:7)!

Conclusion

May the chaos characterizing 2020 never happen again! As it continues, though, may God's people keep the course His compass has set that they may reach His peaceful eternal shore (2Timothy 4:7-8).

Remember in Prayer

Linda Jones has been in the Leesburg hospital, in ICU after 2 falls at home and a brain bleed. She was moved to a regular room yesterday. The CT scan showed no changes, which is good news.

Remember **Joel Prather** and his family in the loss of his sister.

Sue Longfellow – is in: Harbor Chase, 1477 Huey Street, Room #B103, Wildwood, FL 34785

Judy Glenn is feeling a little better.

Darlene Smith: Buffalo Crossings Rehab, 3875 Wedgewood Lane, Room 124, The Villages, FL 32162

Joyce Albert is going to have back surgery August 17th.

Peggy Murphy had a stent put in her kidney last week and is feeling some better.

Leigh Workman

Linda Grove

Charlotte Martin

Pat Ponsford

Ken Scott

Larry Hyder

Richard Menninger

Tara Strickland

Lew Faulkner,

Alba Cherena (she was having Bible studies with the Routzahn's before Covid-19 hit) is going to have eye surgery soon.

Monroe Haltaman, Sarah's brother-in-law, has cancer and is having some serious health issues because of it. Please keep him in your prayers.

Eight year-old **Ensley Webster**, passed away last week. If you would like to send a card, you can send them to her grandparent's house: (parents) Jay & Samantha Webster, 5679 Berryhill Road, Milton, FL 32570 (grandparents) Doug & Jolynda Webster

Teresa Broyle, Charles Wright's daughter has a rare form of lung cancer.

Announcements

Due to the rise of Covid-19 cases and recommendations from health officials:

The elders are asking everyone, including children if possible, to **please wear a face mask** to service. **Take a seat as soon as you come in and please do not visit around in the auditorium.** Our visiting can be done after service, **outside in the parking lot.** Thank you so much for your cooperation!

Thank you notes: From **Kody Whited** - "Thank you to all of my church family for all the gifts for my new home. I've used a lot of it already and it really helped me stock up the new house. I love you all so much and I am so appreciative of everything y'all do for me. Love Kody P.S. All that toilet paper sure came in handy during the shortage!"

From **Marilyn French** - "I would like to thank everyone for the cards, call and prayers during my recent heart procedure. Sincerely, Marilyn French". Their cards are posted on the bulletin board in the foyer.

Just to give you **Doug Andrews'** new address again: 5755 Lightstone Lane, League City, TX 77573

August Birthdays

Mary Costa-5; Sue Longfellow-5; Mary Murphy-8; Jennifer Freeman-10; Peggy Murphy-11; Darrell Ponsford-12; Kevin Williams-16; Bob Barden-17; Linda Routzhan-19; Liam Hicks-24; Ken Scott-24; Joyce Freeman-30; June Crenshaw-31

August Anniversaries

John & Barbara Howlett-5; Terry & Debbie Bunch-6; Jamie & Carol McCartney-11; Sam & Kaydee Blankenship-18; Steve & Melissa Young-31