

Friday, May 1, 2020
Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world."

(1 Peter 5: 8-9)

If you never watched the news, or read the newspaper, or looked on the internet, or never went to the stores to see people wearing masks, or never talked to anyone, it would be conceivably possible to have no idea that there is a pandemic going on. Nothing really "looks" different. Trees look the same. Clouds look the same. Grass keeps growing (now that it's Spring). You can't actually SEE the coronavirus with the naked eye. As I drive my car every day, there are other people driving cars just like before. Traffic lights are still working. Street lights come on at night. In fact, the only reason we know that a pandemic is happening is because important people have told us so. And most of us believe them. And most of us are trying to take the prescribed precautions to "mitigate" the situation. (That's a new word I have learned in the past 2 months.)

This thought tends to strike me each night when I take Chubbs (our little Maltese dog) out for the last time of the day. The night is quiet as usual. Our cars are parked in the driveway as usual. Everything looks the same as it did 5 months ago ... except for no snow!

In the Bible reading above, Christians are being told to remember the reality of life in this world. We can't know of this "invisible" reality without being told. And so we are being told to be "sober-minded and watchful." In other words, be aware of the situation even though you can't see it. We can't physically SEE the devil prowling around, any more than we can SEE a microscopic virus. So we take God at His Word that this is what is happening.

Most (I guess I can't say all) people in the world believe that Covid-19 exists. We believe the medical world when they tell us it exists, and we have seen how it has infected so many people. Do we believe the Bible when it tells us that the devil is on the offensive, especially against Christians, and have we recognized the damage he has done in our world already?

God's Word is the "expert" when it comes to spiritual things, just like the medical scientists are the experts when it comes to the coronavirus. Many people believe the medical world about the coronavirus. That's why so many are wearing face coverings and attempting to practice social distancing. It is so very important for you and me to believe the Word of God about our "invisible enemy" who is prowling around looking for someone to devour. In other words, the devil is looking for someone who is doing nothing to keep his/her faith alive and well so that he can derail their faith in Jesus.

So, even though I can't see the devil trying to derail my faith, I need to know that that's exactly what he is doing. And so I need to take the Bible's "mitigation" recommendations seriously. I need to "resist him" when I sense his pull on my life. I need to cover myself with the Armor of God: the Belt of Truth, the Gospel of Peace, the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Salvation, the Sword of the Spirit, and Prayer."

We know that the devil is a defeated enemy. Jesus defeated him by dying on the cross and rising from the dead! He has no authority in our lives. That's why the Bible says we can "resist him."

But we need to be "sober-minded" about his continued efforts to destroy our faith in Jesus. We need to stay in the Word even though we cannot worship together. We need to keep praying because the Bible says, "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." And we need to remember every day: "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

God's peace!
Pastor Jim