

Wednesday, May 13, 2020
Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

**"Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.
Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt,
so that you may know how you ought to answer each person."
(Colossians 4: 5-6)**

I've been learning a few things about life and Christian discipleship during this whole coronavirus thing. I've been making a few notes along the way as thoughts come into my head. I have some ideas for a couple of sermon series, once we are back together again. One sermon series will be called, "Practicing Jesus-Focusing," which is a play off of "social distancing." Another series I am planning to do will be called, "Crisis Christianity."

I was sitting in the waiting room at the eye doctor one day last week. There were fewer chairs than normal. And a thought came to me as I observed the man across from me wearing his face covering, as was I. The thought had to do with how obvious our face coverings are. There is nothing subtle about them. And everyone knows why we are all wearing them. I started to wonder what it would be like if there was some way to know if someone was a Christian or not just by looking at them. (Wearing a cross is NOT the tell-tale sign!)

In order to try to keep from getting COVID-19, most of us are trying to practice social distancing. In order to stay healthy, we need to just ASSUME that everyone around us HAS COVID-19! And don't take their word for it if they say they don't have it. They may not even know for sure themselves.

Our Bible passage above is suggesting that believers should "make the best use of the time." I believe the NIV says, "make the most of every opportunity." It strikes me that you and I should just ASSUME that everyone we come across is NOT a Christian, and that we should make the most of the opportunity that we have to figure out a way to share the Gospel with him or her. And you can't trust their answer if you just ask them if they are a Christian. They may think they are, but when you go a little deeper, you find out that they are not. You also find out that they don't even know what it really means to be a Christian.

I have learned this because of what our little group from church, which we have named the "Special Ambassadors," has learned when we were going to the mall once a month to find people to share the Gospel with. Our usual first question has been, "Are you a Christian?" Many people say, "Yes." But then when you ask them what they think it means to be a Christian, so many of them will say something like, "It means to believe in God and to try to be a good person." That's when we ask if we can share with them what the BIBLE says it means to be a Christian.

By the way, just so you know, to be a Christian means that you know and believe that Jesus paid for all your sins when He died on the cross and rose from the dead. And that's the only reason we get to go to heaven.

But the point I am making in this devotional thought is that you and I need to assume that the people we meet are NOT Christians, and that they desperately need to hear from us what Christianity is all about. Is this easy to do? Not for most of us. But they need us to do it.

God's peace!
Pastor Jim