

Thursday, December 17, 2020
Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

**"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,
that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."**

John 3: 16

The vaccine is good news, isn't it? Do you intend to get it when it is available to you? Not everyone plans to get the vaccine. Some people still have a lot of questions about its safety. Other people don't perceive the virus to be as big of a threat as some do. In fact, some people perceive the vaccine to be a bigger threat than the virus itself. I suppose time will tell.

The question about the vaccine and who will trust it and who is concerned about COVID-19 reminds me a lot about the message of the Gospel. The Gospel is also Good News! It's the best news we could ever receive. It tells us that there is a "vaccine" that will make us immune to the guilt of our sins. The vaccine for this is the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus has paid the price for our sins. He was punished in our place. As it is written in Isaiah, the Prophet: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

The "vaccine" for our sinfulness exists. It is safe and it is effective. But not everyone is willing to receive it – that is, to put their trust in it. However, this is exactly how the "vaccine" for sin comes into our lives – through faith in Jesus. NO NEEDLES INVOLVED! That's good news for those of you who don't like needles.

But not everyone is willing to take this "vaccine" for sin. Some won't receive it because they don't believe sin is really as big a risk as they are being told. Others don't believe that JESUS is the cure for their sin. They think the cure lies in something else, such as their own goodness, or some other religion. Some people even believe that Jesus is harmful to them – that He is Someone to be avoided.

As Christians, we believe the Bible when it tells us that we are sinners and that there is only ONE solution for the problem of our sin, and that solution is Jesus. John 3:17 is almost as important as John 3:16. It says, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." Jesus comes into our lives, not to harm us, but to save us!

Whether or not you trust the vaccine against the COVID virus is one thing. All that's at stake with COVID is our earthly lives, which is a big deal, but it's not the BIGGEST deal. The biggest deal is eternal life. And Jesus is the only answer to that issue. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

God's Peace!
Pastor Jim