

**Thursday, January 21, 2021**  
**Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...**

**"For I am not ashamed of the gospel,  
for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,  
to the Jew first and also to the Greek.  
For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith,  
as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'"**

*Romans 1: 16-17*

Faith is a natural part of life. It's not just a "religious" idea or an element of Christianity. As I write this devotion, and as you read it, millions of people in our country and in other parts of the world are rolling up their sleeves and exhibiting faith. They are allowing a person they likely do not know inject their bodies with a chemical they have not seen, which was created by people they have never met, to fight a virus they have never seen with their own eyes. Is this science or is it faith?

All human beings are creatures of faith no matter how hard some of them try to say they are not. Of the millions, and eventually billions, of people who will eventually receive the vaccine for COVID-19, only a fraction of them are Christians, and yet they are living by faith. The fact is it is impossible to live our lives in this world without exhibiting some kind of faith. There will always be someone or something or some natural "law" that we trust and believe in.

What sets Christianity apart is not the concept of faith itself, but rather the object of our faith. It is Who and what we are putting our faith in that makes us Christians. We are putting our faith in Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection for the forgiveness of our sins. We didn't see Him do it. Some people did, but they are no longer with us. And even of those who saw Jesus die on the cross and heard about the empty tomb, only a few of them actually placed their faith in Him as their Savior. And some don't even believe they need a Savior.

Whether or not you plan to receive the vaccine when it is offered to you is, to some extent, your business, and, as far as I know, you have the right to refuse to receive it. Similarly, no one forces you to believe that you are a sinner who needs a Savior and that Jesus Christ IS that Savior. In fact, not even God will force to believe in Him. He will enable you to believe, but He will not make you believe.

If you do believe in Jesus as Your Savior, you are blessed. You have never met Him face to face. You didn't see Him die on the cross and rise from the dead because it happened over 2,000 years ago. But we have it from a very reliable source that it happened and that it happened for you and me. (The reliable source being the Bible, and those who wrote about it because they saw it happen.)

Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples, was skeptical when He was offered the "vaccine" for sin. He said, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." This is kind of like the equivalent of someone saying, "Unless I see the lab in which the vaccine was created, and see the process, and talk to the people who created it, I won't roll up my sleeve and get it." Of course, all that is at stake in the case of COVID-19 is an earthly, temporary pandemic. It's temporary whether we all get the vaccine or not, because Jesus will come into the world some day and put an end to this world. But when it comes to trusting in Jesus as your Savior, your eternity is what is at stake.

Jesus did Thomas a personal favor when he doubted. He appeared to him to show that He had risen from the dead. And He said to him: "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

You may already believe in Jesus as your Savior. If you're reading this devotion, there's a pretty good chance that you do. You believe even though you have not seen. Don't take your own faith for granted. Not everyone has "rolled up their sleeve" to receive the Good News of Jesus. Let us thank God for the faith that He has given to us. And let us continue to be diligent in offering the Gospel to others as often as we have the opportunity.

God's Peace!

Pastor Jim