Blessings in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Recently, Hampshire county instituted further restrictions on gatherings, with a limit of five people together in one place. I still believe that this is within the rights of the government to protect the people in general and not any kind of restriction on our religious liberty. Unfortunately, I don’t see how I can continue to hold worship services in the church with these restrictions. I will be looking forward to having fellowship again as soon as possible.

Until then, I will attempt to reach out to everyone via e-mail or regular mail, with a sermon/message/devotional etc. I don’t have the technological know-how to do these things with live streaming or on Facebook. (To be honest, I don’t want to know.) However, with these things being written, you can look over them at your leisure and during a time you can devote to study of God’s word.

Please remember to keep each other in prayer. We are still the body of Christ, even if we can’t get together on Sunday’s.

If you are receiving this by mail and would prefer e-mail, or by e-mail and would prefer mail, please let me know. I just need e-mail addresses or mail addresses. If you would prefer to not receive these at all, there will be no hard feelings, just let me know. Please let me know how things are going with you and your family, so I know better how to pray for you.

In Christ’s love

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Psalm 105:1-7

What we are going through now in our lives is something we have never experienced before. This is a difficult time; a time of uncertainty. This is a time that suddenly shows us how little control we actually have in our lives. In the long run, this is a good thing. We who are Christians sometimes forget how much we are supposed to depend on God. Depending on God through Jesus Christ, is where our comfort comes from. We put our lives in His hands. This doesn’t mean recklessness, that would be tempting the Lord; we do what we can to live our lives and stay healthy, but we actually depend on God for what happens in our lives by prayerfully putting our lives in God’s hands.

It turns out that one of the best things we can do is to worship God. When we worship God, we remind ourselves of how powerful and how faithful He is. God is always faithful to His word. His word tells us that when we turn to Jesus as our Saviour, no-one will ever be able to take us from His hand. His word tells us that neither height or depth or demons or death or anything else will be able to separate us from His remarkable love. He will never leave us or forsake us; God will not let us down. And He is all-powerful; He has the strength to hold us and to keep us from any harm. There is nothing in all the universe able to defeat Him or overpower Him. We can put all our confidence in our faithful mighty God.

When we worship Him, we keep these things in mind. We can recall all the wonderful things He has done that are recounted in the Bible. We can recall all the marvelous things He has done in our own lives. Worshiping God involves dwelling on both these things in gratitude. How awful on our part, to neglect thanking God for the good things in our lives. It is easy to forget those blessings in times like this when we are so focused on the confusion of the world. Again, this is why we must praise Him; so that we don’t forget how faithful and kind He is.

The verses of this Psalm that we are looking at are an admonishment to worship God. The rest of the Psalm shows how to recount the mighty works God has accomplished. I thought it would be good to consider these first seven verses so that we might praise Him ourselves. Not only does worship do us good, but God deserves it; He is the only One who does.

*Oh give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples.*

Think back over your life; all the good things that have taken place came from God. Think about your salvation; if not for God’s great mercy and the work of Jesus on the cross, we would all be lost for eternity. Be sure to thank Him for what He has done, knowing that the best is yet to come. We can thank Him for that blessed hope.

He invites us to call upon His name; if we don’t call upon Him, we are missing so much in our lives. Remember that God loves us more than we can imagine, He wants to hear from us. He wants us to call upon Him; to trust Him with our lives and everything in it. He wants us to trust Him with our salvation.

When we think of all the wonderful things God has done, how can we keep from telling others? As human-beings, it is natural for us to want to share good things. When we tell others about God, we are worshiping Him. He inhabits the praises of His people. Sharing God will bring others into His Kingdom.

*Sing to Him, sing praises to Him;
Speak of all His wonders.*

The tongue is something we must be so careful with. We are warned about it in the book of James. *And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.* But the Christian has a great restrainer and guide: the Holy Spirit. By His strength, we can use our words properly, for the worship of God and the upbuilding of other people.

How blessed are those who can sing. They have been given a special gift by God. It is tragic when someone with this blessing uses it entirely for their own purposes and to gain their own praise. The gift of melodious voice ought to be used to the glory of the One who bestowed it. If you can sing, sing to God, sing about God. What better way to show gratefulness for this gift?

For those of us lacking in this gift, speaking of His wonders is fully acceptable to God. Doing so is worshiping Him. Speaking of God’s glory is a music in our own ears and a testimony to the ears of others. The word speak can also be translated “meditate”. To think about God takes our minds off ourselves and our problems. It reminds us that God is willing and able to care for us.

*Glory in His holy name;
Let the heart of those who seek the Lord be glad.
Seek the Lord and His strength;
Seek His face continually.*

It is our nature to seek our own glory; but the Christian life is a calling to seek God’s glory. Our own glory is from being His children. This is something for us to boast about. In Jesus Christ, we are part of God’s family; He is our Father and we can be happy that the almighty God of the universe calls us His children. No matter what someone else may say about our relationship with God, we have no reason for shame. We are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and so, we are acceptable to God. He will care for us.

Notice that the word “seek” comes us three times. When we accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, that is not the end of our seeking; it is only the beginning. Seeking God is a lifelong occupation; we will not come to the end of learning about God, of finding new things in Him. Jesus tells us to first seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; that is a command. The promise follows with all good things being added. It is a joy, in and of itself, to seek God; additionally, we can be glad for the wonderful promises that come with seeking Him.

Seek His strength. Especially in times like these. We must depend on God to bring us through; we are obviously not in control, but we know He is. Pray and ask for that strength to persevere, ask for wisdom; He will give it abundantly. Seek His face, seek God Himself, just because He is God. He is worthy to be sought and He has favor on those who do. He is glorious God; try to imagine what it will be like to stand in His presence one day. We don’t need to fear that day because of Jesus.

*Remember His wonders which He has done,
His marvels and the judgments uttered by His mouth,
O seed of Abraham, His servant,
O sons of Jacob, His chosen ones!*

Israel, who are the seed of Abraham and the sons of Jacob, are told to look back are the works of Yahweh with awe. The Bible records wonderous works, like creation and bringing the Israelites out of Egypt and into the promised land. It records His judgements such as the flood and even the destruction of Jerusalem; and His judgements of blessing when Israel was obedient. God is to be worshiped and thanked for all these things. They need to be told to future generations and to all nations. This is worshiping God.

We are called to this same remembrance. In Galatians 3:29 we are told, “*And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise*”. How beautiful this is; by accepting Christ as Saviour, we have become spiritual seed of Abraham. As sons of Jacob we are chosen by God. He chooses those who cling to Jesus and depend on the sacrifice He made on our behalf. But notice also that as seed of Abraham we are His servants.

We are to serve the Lord. He has bought us with the high price of His blood and we belong to Him. One of our primary duties as servants is to worship Him. But this is not hard when we dwell on His power and His faithfulness and His love. As Jesus said, His yoke is easy and His burden is light. It is amazing that when we focus on worshiping our Creator, our problems and cares lighten.

*He is the Lord our God;
His judgments are in all the earth.*

When providing the ten commandments, Yahweh started off with “*I am the LORD your God*”. We proclaim this truth, affirm our belief in that statement, and praise God when we say, “*He is the LORD our God*”. How precious to us that He is willing to be our God; that He will have us as His subjects. Even more; as His children. How can we not be thankful? How can we not be amazed? How can we keep from worshiping Him?

He is God of all the world; of all the universe; of everything that is seen and unseen. In His perfect timing He will bring all evil into judgement and cleanse creation of all evil. Nothing will escape Him. All the more reason to worship our God for Jesus, who took our judgement upon Himself. In Christ, we are declared “not guilty” before God. We are safe, no matter what happens during this life.

All of us are under a special kind of stress because of the virus that has been unleashed on the world. I also know that so many of us in this congregation are facing harsh difficulties besides the virus. Everything has been made so difficult and complicated. This consideration of worshiping God isn’t meant to paint some rosy picture where everything is easy and carefree: it’s not. This is a hard time.

But Christians are not hopeless like the rest of the world. We understand that suffering is part of our sanctification; part of our being made like Christ. We take comfort in knowing that God cares about us individually, and that anything that happens to us is in accordance with His purposes. In this we can rejoice, knowing that we are being used by God in His plan to glorify Himself and rid His creation of all evil. We can also have joy knowing that anything we face now will be nothing in comparison to our reward in heaven.

Prayer

Blessed LORD, we ask that Your Holy Spirit fill us in this time, to drive out all fear and anxiety. You are our hope, and our hope is sure. May all of our suffering be for Your glory. We are Your servants; use us as You will.

We pray this in Jesus’ name

Amen