

March 19, 2020

God has placed us all on quite the adventure this past week! All of a sudden, the things that we've been learning from the book of Isaiah are taking on a very practical aspect of how to live by faith when things around you aren't normal. Let's remember that "The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You." (Isa 26:3)

Numerous articles abound on the internet and in newspapers about what we are facing. I usually have trouble trying to sift through what is legitimate and what is not. When an article gets sent to me by a legitimate resource, then I take a little closer note. I have a cousin who, in conjunction with his wife, works for the CDC as a chemist and biologist, respectively. He recommended [this article](#), which has helped me to understand why the government is responding the way that they are. (Be prepared, it is long and detailed!) With this information, in conjunction with God's direct instruction to us to obey our civil authorities in Romans 13:1¹, we have chosen to not meet collectively for a time.

I'd like to explain how we're going to approach these next few weeks and then give a pastoral exhortation.

OUR METHODOLOGY:

1) We are not canceling things that are more than two weeks out. Due to the speed at which things change, we want to see how they will continue to unfold before we cancel too much ahead of time. (The exception: The Good Friday Experience has in fact been canceled, as we cannot do the extensive preparatory work in the next two weeks to make it possible.) At the same time, we are also trying to make our plans for the next eight weeks, assuming our current path is the new normal. Of course, we hope that things will change sooner than that, but to fail to plan ahead just isn't prudent. (Prov. 14:8)²

2) Thursdays we will continue to release Ridge Notes, and I'm going to drop a weekly note and/or video to the congregation there. Brittany has also establishing a common

¹ "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God."

² "The wisdom of the sensible is to understand his way, but the foolishness of fools is deceit."

"one-stop-shop" for anyone who needs to get information about the church, either through the email address of office@brbible.org or our webpage at brbible.org/update.

3) The primary focus of our LIFE groups has always been that it would be a place where people can *be known*—and that has not changed. They will be connecting virtually for now, though their focus might have to be more oriented towards shepherding and prayer. Some might have to meet in digital sub-segments rather than a large group. Each LIFE group leader will be determining the best means and method of moving forward for their group while we all continue to explore new ways of connecting and ministering to one another. For those not in a LIFE group, we want to continue to add people, as well as make more groups if you should desire to get connected through a virtual means. Please contact us through office@brbible.org so that we can do so.

4) Our Sunday services will be pre-recorded and made available early Sunday mornings. (We do not have the equipment, funds, or people who will come and train us to convert to a livestream platform.) I'll provide a guide as a follow up to the sermons for LIFE groups, or for anyone who wants to utilize an aid towards application for themselves, family or home.

A PASTORAL EXHORTATION:

How do we move forward as a congregation? Philippians 4:6-7 give us great direction when it says to "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Be anxious for...nothing. Not a virus. Not a falling stock market. Not an uncertain future. We must not borrow tomorrow's imagined troubles today. Instead...

In *everything*...let your requests be made known to God. We are to pray to the all-mighty, infinite God. This is a time for us to present to Him our concerns, our needs, our ministry opportunities, our loved ones, our futures, our neighbors, our money, and even our own health and safety.

Then what? We live our lives for the glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31)³ Without fear. With hope.

A friend sent me this little segment from C.S. Lewis' *On Living in an Atomic Age*. It addresses how we must live when our safety or livelihood is threatened. While Lewis was writing about the fear of an atomic bomb and nuclear war, the same points can be made about a virus that is potentially moving towards a pandemic:

This is the first point to be made: and the first action to be taken is to pull ourselves together. If we are all going to be destroyed by an atomic bomb, let that bomb when it comes find us doing sensible and human things-praying, working, teaching, reading, listening to music, bathing the children, playing tennis, chatting to our friends over a pint and a game of darts-not huddled together like frightened sheep and thinking about bombs. They may break our bodies but they need not dominate our minds.⁴

AMEN!

Pastor Jack

³ "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

⁴ "On Living in an Atomic Age" (1948) in Present Concerns: Journalistic Essays.