

April 08, 2020

Dear Church Family,

Greetings from a wet Hanover County this Wednesday morning! Hopefully this finds you doing well. Most of us are feeling a bit cooped up, but this relatively brief inconvenience is put into perspective when we see the very real tragedies unfolding around us in Central Virginia, our nation, and the world.

We have much for which to be thankful. I am reminded of Psalm 103, a Psalm of David . . .

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name.  
<sup>2</sup> Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
And forget none of His benefits;  
<sup>3</sup> Who pardons all your iniquities,  
Who heals all your diseases;  
<sup>4</sup> Who redeems your life from the pit,  
Who crowns you with loving kindness and compassion;  
<sup>5</sup> Who satisfies your years with good things,  
*So that* your youth is renewed like the eagle.

Read the remainder of this Psalm 103 and be encouraged by the Lord. He has, indeed, done great things and will continue to do so.

Ron Taylor and I have recorded the Easter service. "Come" this Sunday prepared to worship our Risen Savior. We will be celebrating the Lord's Supper together as a part of our worship experience. Here is the text of a note, which you will find inside your DVD or CD case this week:

"Please be advised that at the conclusion of his sermon, Pastor Dennis will be observing the Lord's Supper. He invites all that wish to participate to join him. Keep in mind that the bread and grape juice are symbolic and if you don't have one or the other or both, and are unable to obtain any, it is quite alright to substitute with whatever you may have (crackers, water, tea, etc.).

"The Lord's Supper is an act of worship to commemorate the sacrifice that Jesus gave for us for the forgiveness of our sins. So whatever elements you have on hand during this extremely unusual time will be quite alright.

"Praying for an awesome day of worship and your protection. The Deacon Fellowship"

As we anticipate this Easter Celebration 2020 in the midst of the challenges of and preoccupation of many with the COVID-19 virus, it's interesting to know the meaning of Corona. It comes from the Latin word meaning **crown**. I am told that the reason the virus was named Corona, is because when a cell of this virus is viewed under a microscope, it has the appearance of a thorny crown.

In the Gospel narrative of the Holy Week leading to the crucifixion, we see that the Roman soldiers mocked unmercifully our Savior, including placing a crown of thorns on His head. One of the accusations leveled against the Lord in the hurried-up trials following His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, was that He claimed to be King of the Jews. The soldiers were making fun of Him by placing this "crown" on his head, the symbol of kingly position. The reality is that Jesus is, indeed, the King. In fact Scripture says He is the King of kings. And the thorns, while intended to further humiliate and inflict additional pain, serve to symbolize His self-denial and sacrifice in our place.

In this world today obsessed with the thorny crown virus, known as Corona, may we as believers be obsessed with our thorn-crowned Savior, who gives us eternal life . . . and "Who **crowns** [us] with loving kindness and compassion" (Psalm 103:4).