

Tuesday, March 24, 2020

Dear Church Family,

I am thankful for how the Lord has blessed through the 1st DVD prepared for Sunday, March 22. There were a number of positive comments made on the GroupMe app, as well as through texts and phone calls. With people in your home who viewed the DVD and who may not participate in worship regularly, plus folks with whom you shared your DVD, it may well be that more people will eventually be exposed to God's Word through this means than we have present on an average Sunday morning at church. The Lord has a wonderful way of doing good in the midst of negative situations!

Ron Taylor and I recorded a second DVD this morning, the next sermon in our current series, "The Word of Victory," John 19:30. The deacons will distribute them later this week. A number of you waited and worshipped via the DVD on Sunday morning at 11am. Whenever you choose to view this next DVD, I pray the Lord will speak directly to you through the music, prayers, and His Word. Feel free to share the DVD with others.

Things are evolving daily, but it is possible we will not be able to gather for upcoming special Easter activities on April 5th for the Cantata, and Easter itself on April 12th. If that is the case, we will set aside a Sunday when we are able to worship together again, and do the sunrise service, breakfast, Sunday School, and the Cantata. Easter will be passed, but we will call it Resurrection Sunday. The resurrection is the reason Christians worship on Sunday, rather than another day of the week, since the resurrection took place on Sunday morning.

Please send prayer requests via the GroupMe prayer app, or email/text them to Ron Taylor or myself. If you have a smart phone and have not yet signed up for the prayer app, this would be a great time to do so. It allows you to receive current prayer requests more quickly. Just contact Ron Taylor. I believe all he needs is the email address and he can get you connected.

We want to continue to be intentional about staying in touch with one another and sensitive to needs among members of our church family, as well as others. I will continue to communicate through the church's Web site, FaceBook page, and emails. If you know of someone who is not able to access things electronically, please call them, and either read or summarize those communications. For those persons on "The Acorn" mailing list, we will include this message, plus other general information concerning the church.

Again, please do not forget the importance of maintaining our giving as much as possible during this time. The financial responsibilities of the church continue

unabated. You can mail your tithes and offerings to: Oakland Baptist Church, PO Box 99, Gum Spring, VA 23065.

I believe it is helpful for believers to be reminded of certain things from time to time, and perhaps especially in the midst of our current unusual situation with the Coronavirus.

- **We are a people of faith.**

The apostle Paul reminds us that “we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). We do not understand all the science surrounding this virus or its spread, how long it will last, and if we or a loved one will get infected, and what that might mean. What we do know is that we are but pilgrims in this life, and we have a heavenly home awaiting us. In that same chapter 5 of 2 Corinthians, Paul writes, “For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens’ (2 Cor. 5:1).

- **Prayer is essential.**

Faithful Christians are people of prayer. We depend on and lean on the Lord in every circumstance of this life. We are exhorted and encouraged by these familiar words in Philippians 4:6-7, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving 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.”

- **We are the church.**

The church is not brick and mortar. We, believers, are the church, wherever we are. Jesus said of Peter, and of all faithful believers, “on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). Nothing in this world and this life can destroy the church. So let’s be about the business of being the church, ministering to one another and to people in our community who so need to know Jesus.

- **God is sovereign.**

God is ruler over all . . . this world, science, medicine, the church, and our very lives. We find this promise in Revelation 11:15, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” When our lives seem to be filled with uncertainty and unknowns, know that God is still on His throne. He is in charge. So let Him rule your heart and mind, and leave all the rest in His capable, loving hands.

What a beautiful en-couraging promise from God through His prophet Isaiah . . .

Fear not, for I am with you;
be not dismayed, for I am your God;

I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

We find the echo of these words in the well-known hymn, "How Firm a Foundation."

1 How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!
What more can he say than to you he has said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

2 "Fear not, I am with you, O be not dismayed;
for I am your God, and will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

3 "When through the deep waters I call you to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
for I will be with you, your troubles to bless,
and sanctify to you your deepest distress.

4 "When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,
my grace, all-sufficient, shall be your supply;
the flame shall not hurt you; I only design
your dross to consume and your gold to refine.

5 "E'en down to old age all my people shall prove
my sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
and when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne.

6 "The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

Blessings and warmest greetings to each one of you. I look forward to the day we will once again be together. For now, we are the church and we are one in the bond of love, which is Christ, our precious Lord and Savior.

Pastor Dennis