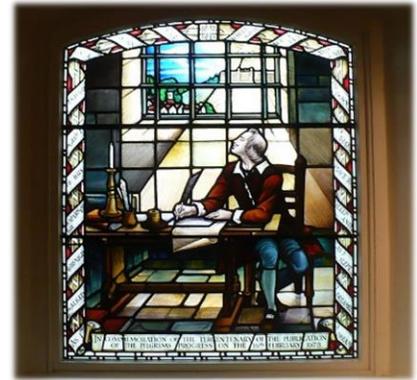


May 14, 2020

Good afternoon, Everybody.

It was so encouraging to be able to talk last night about plans for phasing back into our services and ministries. I'm sorry that it took most of the time that we normally spend in Bible study, but we'll probably have an easier time with the logistics of resuming because of having discussed them last night.



In a day or two we'll post on the church website last evening's information, along with any additions. We'll also send it to you via e-mail.

Rightly Interpreting

Though we seem to be opening a new chapter in our society's managing of the virus crisis, there undoubtedly will be many ongoing challenges with which our world will be grappling for some time. One of my foremost concerns is that Christians think rightly about this. Unless they do, what hope is there that lost people will?

We need to be watchful of what we say to each other or to the world. It betrays a serious gap in understanding that still needs spanning to say merely, *God knew that this was going to happen, or, God is able to take this away*. Both those statements are true, of course. But they are only on the way toward stating rightly the whole matter. And until it is rightly stated and accepted, both fellow Christians and the lost world are left with a grave misimpression. The consequence is that men and women are not constrained to have to consider their ways and their relationship to God in blood earnest.

All trouble, but especially trouble of this unprecedented proportion, must be recognized and interpreted for what it really is. It is God's *doing*; not just something that He *knows* is happening. But to the world, His *judgments are on high, out of his sight* (Psalm 10:5). Even those professing to be His people may not recognize calamity for what it is. God mercifully confronts their inexcusable blind eye to His doings: *If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it* (Amos 3:6)?

The only true explanation has been there all the time. *Surely the LORD does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets (Amos 3:7). They tell it truly. A lion has roared! The Lord GOD has spoken!*

I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities and lack of bread in all your places. . . . I withheld the rain from you. . . . I smote you with scorching wind and mildew; and the caterpillar was devouring your many gardens and vineyards, fig trees and olive trees. . . . I sent a plague among you. . . . I overthrew you. . .

Yet you have not returned to Me. . . Yet you have not returned to Me. . . Yet you have not returned to Me. . . Yet you have not returned to Me, declares the LORD.

Therefore . . . prepare to meet your God. . .

--adapted from Amos 4:6-12

Don't fail to give God the glory of His judgments!

And I will set My glory among the nations; and all the nations will see My judgment which I have executed and My hand which I have laid on them.

--Ezekiel 39:21

Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters

--Revelation 14:7

The great need of the hour isn't that this crisis be resolved. Nor even that the churches reconvene. It is that God's hand may be **seen**. This sounds harsh, I know, but it is actually the most helpful and hopeful thing that could be said: until God is acknowledged and humbly sought, we ought pray that this crisis **not**

be resolved. *Pray, then, in this way . . . Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.*

Ten years ago Eileen Berry wrote a hymn whose words are for such an hour as this. Two of its stanzas read. . .

*Yet daily, all around us, we see Your laws transgressed;
We see Your grace rejected, Your Word of truth suppressed.
Lord, we Your true disciples our nation's sins confess;
We long to see our people embrace Your righteousness.*

*O Lord, rain down Your mercy upon our needy land;
We know the balm of healing comes only from Your hand.
We long to see our nation return in holy fear;
We long for Christ our Saviour to be exalted here!*

Praying for All of Us Today,

Pastor Minnick