

March 24, 2020

## **Good morning, Everyone.**

Last night Linda and I drove over to Chris and Esther Bakers' house on Keith Drive (empty since their wedding) to see if the lights were on. They have made it available to Jeremy and Caroline Dion and their three children, who were to arrive late yesterday afternoon from Australia. We were anxious to see if they'd made the long, grueling trip safely.



The lights were out in the house, but Jeff and Melody Dion's van (loaned to Jeremy and Caroline) was in the drive. So evidently the travelers have safely arrived and were sound asleep (smile). Praise the Lord.

They now face two weeks of self-quarantining. Jeremy has badly damaged fingers from a saw blade accident in PNG, and Caroline is struggling with sickness from the new pregnancy. Let's pray that the Lord would graciously spare them from also having contracted the virus while en route from the other side of the world.

## **Tonight**

The elders have their monthly meeting this evening. For the first time we'll be doing it through ZOOM in order to avoid unnecessary exposure.

Our agenda will mostly concern various ways in which to continue ministering to the church during this crisis. We'd be glad for your prayers for a confident sense of the Lord's guidance (smile).

## Thinking

Many, perhaps all of you, are doing more reading of classic Christian books than you usually have opportunity to do. I'm elated to hear it. Your Bible and heart-warming books, read with a good appetite, and prayed over with an open heart, will keep your thinking fixed where it ought to be; on the Lord.

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you (Isa. 26:3 ESV).

The word translated, *stayed*, is used in the Old Testament for *framing*, or *forming* something. Concerning Adam; Gen. 2:7, *The LORD God **formed** man of the dust of the ground.* Or concerning Divine plans and purposes; II Kings 19:25, *Have you not heard? Long ago I did it; from ancient times I **planned** it. Now I have brought it to pass, that you [Sennacherib and his Assyrian army] should turn fortified cities to ruinous heaps.*

But the most important usage for us to note today is the following.

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Gen. 6:5 NASB).

Every *intent*, every *forming* or *framing*, everything on which those pre-flood people *stayed* their minds was continually evil.

The newspaper had an article last week that reported that liquor-store sales are way up. I saw somewhere yesterday that Netflix stock is surging during this crisis. We all know the enjoyment of an occasional, clean movie. But there are so few that don't tarnish, if not soil a spiritual soul.

Here we are, in what lost people themselves are calling the biggest global crisis in a hundred years. And what are many of them doing? Turning to God, Who is graciously attempting to get their attention? Or

**staying** their minds on more and more of the same vanities and iniquities for which God is afflicting the nations with this virus?

In the day that the Lord GOD of hosts called you to weeping, to wailing, to shaving the head and to wearing sackcloth. Instead there is gaiety and gladness, killing of cattle and slaughtering of sheep, eating of meat and drinking of wine: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die" (Isaiah 22:12-13).

How fearful that the LORD then responded, *Surely this iniquity* [their careless, frivolous responses to His judgment] *shall not be forgiven you until you die* (v. 14).

Dear people! Would it not be a fearful sin for us to be **staying** our minds on more and more vanity and worldliness during this very time when the LORD God is dealing with the whole world in a way that none of us ever have experienced within our own lifetimes? Is it not time to wash ourselves and to make ourselves clean (Isaiah 1:16)? And to **fix** our minds upon *whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there be any excellence and if anything worthy of praise?* And chiefly, to **form**, to **fashion** our minds to think more upon the Lord? Will He not hold us accountable if we read no more scripture, memorize no more scripture, read no more spiritually-minded books than we did before all of this? And, "yes" (there are also good things to watch), view no more truly edifying things than we may have done before?

Will we not actually incur more guilt than the blind, heedless worldlings all around us? Do *they* know anything to do other than to watch even more senseless, godless movies? Do *we* (!)?

Turn this time to the very best! Work on your mind! Work on your ability to **frame** it so that it is full of God!

*The thought of God should be the Christian's panacea. It should cure all his ills at a stroke (Maurice Roberts, The Thought of God).*

Praying for You Today (smile)

Pastor Minnick