

From Our Pastor

This past Sunday, I had the privilege of baptizing one of our covenant children. Just a few moments ago, I received a call from my cousins who asked me to conduct the funeral services of their mother. On Monday, another member of our flock had to enter a nursing home because he is struggling with dementia. Yesterday, I spoke with a man who was deeply concerned with the moral decline of our country and the weakness of the Church in America. The young struggle to make God relevant to their daily lives. Then adulthood sets in and sins that seemed harmless as kids now become monumental as adults.

Feelings of loneliness and depression abound.

Life can be overwhelming. And without having enough perspective to truly evaluate our time from others, it sure does seem that our world is becoming unraveled at the seams. Our tendency is to want to fix this world. And it is right that we should do our part to make the world a better place. But it may feel to you that you are using a coffee cup to bail water from the Titanic with gaping holes in her side. Into the madness of life, God speaks.

ESV **John 16:33** I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Knowing this does not change my situation. But it does change my perspective. How often do I begin by wanting God to make my life easier? I want him to get rid of the trials. I do not think that this is bad to want him to do this. But I am learning that there is something that I need more than the trials removed. I simply need Him. I need him to pull me into his loving arms. I need him to tell me, "Everything is going to be OK" and it not be empty words.

After the incident of the Golden Calf in the wilderness, God gave to Moses an interesting dilemma. God was so angry with the Israelites that he threatened to no longer go with them on their journey to the Promised Land. What is confusing is that he tells them that he would send some other angel to go with them. They would reach the Promised Land, but God would not be there at the end, or along the way.

That raises an interesting question. If God could take away all of your problems, but he would no longer be with you, would you take the deal?

Moses does not. Being with God was even more important to Moses than getting to the Promised Land. Interestingly enough, Moses only looks at the Land from Mt. Pisgah. He dies never having enjoyed the Land. But what did he enjoy? He enjoyed 40 years of fellowship with God in the Tent of Meeting, outside the camp.

I have a hunch that the trials of our lives are here to stay. Certainly, the kindness of God measures them considerably and for that we should be truly thankful. But at some point, we must make a choice that we would rather have the trials AND God, than no trials and no God.

There is a day coming when the trials will indeed end. For those who continue in the faith, God will give us the rest for which we yearn. But until then, we must learn to direct our hearts to God. He has promised to never leave you or forsake you. Offer yourselves to him each day as a living sacrifice. He finds great pleasure in you when you humble your heart before him.

Be comforted by the fact that he is NOT overwhelmed by your problems. He has overcome the world. He doesn't ask you to fix it. He desires that you learn to walk with Him through it.

If our faith is going to have the mettle to endure the darkest of hours, it must be firmly fixed upon Christ alone. Take some time right now to lift your eyes above your struggles to the God who cares for you. Find your rest in him alone.