

May 17, 2020

“If You Love Me”

Prayer of Illumination: Prepare our hearts, O Lord, to accept your word. Silence in us any voice but your own; that, hearing, we may also obey your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (The Worship Book, 1970, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.))

Scripture Reading: John 14:15-21, Acts 17:22-31

Devotion:

Easter time is a special season where we come together and reflect upon who God is in our lives and define who we are in God’s life. Paul’s sermon (Acts 17:22-31) making an unknown god into a known entity whom we call Lord God is something we are challenged to do. There are many people who are not aware who Jesus Christ is and what Jesus Christ means for society today, especially, as we try to mitigate the spread of the of the coronavirus, COVID-19.

Two simple things society has asked us to do to combat COVID-19: first, is the request to wear masks when out in public, and second, to keep six feet apart from other people. Fortunately, the majority are complying with these two requests. Unfortunately, there are others who refuse to comply with these two requests.

I know there are many thoughts, feelings, and reasoning related to such matters by both compliant and non-compliant individuals. However, I feel there is also something basic missing in the actions of those who wish to be non-compliant with our government’s laws. They are not being respectful towards others and not caring for other people. I have experienced in grocery stores people’s rudeness while shopping. I have been bumped and touched by few people who grabbed items without patiently waiting their turn. I have seen people not wearing masks and not covering their faces while sneezing. Unfortunately, times like living through a pandemic bring out the worst in people.

Fortunately, however, in my random sampling of shopping at different grocery stores in the community, I have graciously and gratefully found that the majority

of citizens are complying with the law, rules, recommendations, and guidelines of what our state governor, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), the Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have been asking us to do in order to promote good public health and public safety. I know it can be stressful for many of us to take these extra precautions, and to do the right things like wearing masks and keeping six feet apart. By taking such actions we are demonstrating what Jesus Christ wants us to do and that is to love and keep his commandments (John 14:15-21).

Jesus wants us to care about people's health and wellbeing. We have to sacrifice our lives of convenience for the good of society. We have to think of others and not ourselves. Let us prepare to share with others what it means to love God and to be loved by God in this pandemic Easter season.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercessory and Supplication: (Ask people what they wish to pray for today, briefly inquire about it, and pray for them. Ask them to join in your prayer.)

The Lord's Prayer: (Say the prayer in unison.) Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Blessing: "The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord be kind and gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)