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The daily Bible reading from the New Testament last Friday got me thinking about our current circumstances.

Jesus was asked about two tragedies that were on everyone's minds; the first being the slaughter of some Galileans by Pilate as they were offering sacrifices in the temple, and the second was the death of eighteen upon which a tower had fallen. When asked if what had befallen them was because they were greater sinners than others, Jesus said, "No, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

He then went on to tell a parable about a fig tree that wasn't producing fruit. When the gardener suggested it be cut down, the owner said to give it more time to be cared for and fertilized.

These verses from Luke 13 made me think about what we're going through, because it's only natural to wonder why things happen the way they do. Why are some stricken by a deadly virus, and others not? Why would a tornado strike in the midst of a pandemic? Is God making a statement, or do such things just happen? And knowing the love of God, how do we make sense of such?

I'm not sure we should even try to make sense of it all, because the only answer Jesus gives here is "No", followed by a call to repentance. Apparently we are to simply trust that God knows what's going on, live fruitful lives during what time we do have, and help others do the same.

Having said that, I am very grateful for the grace that has been shown us during this trying time of separation. I'm not aware of any in our body who have been impacted beyond financial insecurity, inconvenience, and disappointment by the restrictions placed upon us. In fact, the only calls I've received relative to needs have been offers to help any who might be in need.

I don't think that means God has shown us special favor. He sends rain on the righteous and unrighteous alike. I'm just overwhelmingly grateful for the undeserved grace He has shown to us.

God Bless, Rick



THE CHATHAM MESSENGER

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Hi Rick,

Hope your family is feeling well. We are all healthy here and sending out our prayers. Your article about the snow cross on the mountain reminded me that I wanted to share this story with you and Marilyn.

Last summer David and I took the five oldest grandkids to Glacier National Park. I couldn't remember if you two had gone there in your many journeys, but maybe you are familiar with Lake Macdonald. It's a beautiful lake with crystal clear water and mountains in the background. The bottom of the lake and shore are covered with thousands of rounded rocks. We stopped there several times while in Glacier because the kids enjoyed it so much. On this particular afternoon they were all wading thigh deep in the water picking out stones and skipping them across the lake. I was standing on the shore and Lyla and Magdelaine were in the water about 80-90 feet apart. Lyla called out, "Hey RaRa look at this one," and she waded in and placed this little grey rock in my hand about 1 1/2" long. Seconds later Mags called out exactly the same thing and she waded in and put another little rock the same size, in my other hand. As I'm looking them over I realized they were halves of the same rock! Out of all those thousands of rocks and standing so far apart they had picked up the two halves at the same time. We all kind of gasped. I felt God's presence and my thoughts were He was happy we were enjoying His creation and joined in the fun. The impossible is not impossible with God.

Several months later I felt prompted to look at the pictures of the rock. When I enlarged it I gasped again. On the right side was Mary holding baby Jesus and on the left a profile of Christ. I don't know if you will see that as well, and I admit when I hear stories like that I have a bit of skepticism, but for me in this case it just leaped out. I can't describe the happiness I feel when I think of that little rock and the idea that God would join in the fun.

All the best, Sue (Griffin)

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Sunday Worship Service 9:15 AM
Bible School 10:45 AM

STATISTICS

| | | |
|----------|------|------------|
| Worship | 4/12 | Online |
| Offering | | \$1,939.87 |
| Worship | 4/19 | Online |
| Offering | | \$4,545.87 |

UNTIL WE MEET TOGETHER AGAIN

Until we can physically meet together, we can at least worship and study as a body of believers over the internet. A new praise time, sermon, and communion meditation are posted at 5 o'clock on Sunday mornings at chathamchristian.org, or you can find them on YouTube by simply searching for Chatham Christian Church and clicking the cross icon.

SERMON OUTLINES will now also be posted on the website for those who want to print them and use them as study aids.



As we get closer and closer for summer camp to start, we continue to prepare the facilities. With the COVID-19 pandemic making the future unclear, we continue to move forward with plans for camp. Yes, we are making a Plan B and even a Plan C. LSCA is a place where people gather, so you can imagine this has caused a loss of revenue. So, we appreciate your gift, more than we can even express.

This is LSCA's 81st year of camp. This summer we pray that we will have 25 sessions of camp to choose from for pre-schoolers to adults. That's right adults.

Thank you for your investment in the future of this ministry. We look forward to many more years of partnering with you to see youth and adults drawn into close relationship with Jesus Christ.

Sincerely, Kerma Yotter, Camp Manager

A COMMUNION MEDITATION

By Chris Luzio

On a few occasions this past week, I saw photos and videos of the lines of people waiting to get into buildings that were already at their "corona-capacity." The lines were of people waiting to cast a vote or to get groceries or some other essential. There weren't really that many people, from what I could tell, but these queues were artificially long because the individuals had to be separated physically, each with about 6 feet of empty space around them. The "apartness" between you and me now, between all of us in this church family and all of us in our community and our nation at this unique time, symbolized quite markedly by these images of people, distinct and separate.

The writers of the Old and New Testament use a pair of words to describe being set apart, and they are the words we translate as "holy." These terms are also translated as "sacred" or "consecrated," and they are the roots of some great words like "saint" and "sanctification." But this concept of set-apartness is not akin to the social distancing we've been practicing to protect the health and the lives of others in our community. In fact, being holy isn't first and foremost about being away, it's about drawing near... because when the bible uses the term "holy" to describe Israel back then or to describe us now, it's about being set apart for God, so that His people may be with Him.

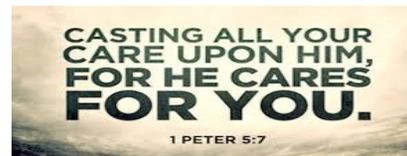
When God calls His people to holiness in Exodus and in Leviticus, He says "you shall be to Me a holy nation" and "be holy as I am holy." The call to holiness is a call to God Himself, to His character, to His presence, ...and to His love. It isn't, as we sometimes view it or as the Pharisees certainly did, a call to separate ourselves from the lowly sinners of this world by shunning them or by looking down on them from our high position of moral authority, after all, our so-called righteousness is but filthy rags. Instead, it is as Jesus himself put it when questioned for eating with tax gatherers and sinners, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

COMMUNION MEDITATION CONTINUED

There are many in our community and around the world who have taken these words to heart. I am thankful for those who are battling our current microscopic enemy, caring for and treating those with COVID-19; they are putting themselves in harm's way to serve others and to keep us all healthy. These nurses, physicians, and other healthcare workers and first responders do this to show compassion, even when it means risking getting sick themselves. That kind of selflessness is actually how one Christian author summarized the Holiness of God: "He draws near precisely when we would run away."

And there is no greater example of the Holiness of God for us than Jesus. Jesus describes himself in John 10:36 as "the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world." Jesus was "set apart" and sent into the world so that we too could be "set apart," as he also says in John 17:19, "for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth." We are made holy because Christ is holy, and because Christ practiced the other kind of "apartness," the distancing kind when he sacrificed himself on the cross.

As we celebrate communion, we are brought together in Christ because He was separated from the Father at the cross. We are reconciled to the Father through Christ's holiness because He bore the sin that separated us from the Father. May we stop to consider, at this time of temporarily physically distancing ourselves from others in order to protect their lives... may we stop to consider that it was Christ's temporary "spiritual distancing" from all the glory and the riches of heaven that gives us life. And that life is new, it is abundant, it is eternal, and it is guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus. And most importantly, that life is set apart to God, it is in the presence of Christ our Savior. It is that life with Christ that we celebrate with these emblems of His sacrifice.



It pains me to inform everyone that our mission trip for this June has been cancelled. The group scheduled to go is very disappointed, but given the conditions in the world we feel it was the right thing to do at this time. Later this fall, I will begin planning a trip for the summer of 2021 so be thinking if that might be a possibility for you to be a part of the group!

On a larger note, Casas as an organization is struggling in many ways at this time. Basically, every mission trip through June has been cancelled. This puts a huge financial burden on the organization as many materials are pre-purchased when deposits are secured. Although Andrew technically "works" for Casas, most of his income is based on monthly support from churches or individuals. However, Casas does provide health insurance for Andrew and Lacy. That might be on the table as a possible cut to help keep the organization solvent at this time.

So, please continue to keep Andrew, Casas and all our missionaries in your prayers. We must remain positive that God is in control even in times like this and will bring about good for those who trust Him.



Sorry I had to cancel last week due to the Executive Board meeting for LSCA. This week we will be covering Ephesians 1: 18-23 and the corresponding pages in our study book. If you need the Zoom link, please let me know.