

I AM STILL THANKFUL: GOD IS IN CONTROL

For many, 2020 has been a very challenging year. Although we entered this year full of expectation and excitement regarding what we would clearly see and what we would confidently do, the year has been filled with the Covid-17 Coronavirus (sickness, hospitalizations, death, fear and anxiety); murders of unarmed Black citizens at the hands of law enforcement (no charges for the officers, no justice for the families, peaceful productive protests, opportunist who engaged in rioting and looting); lying, toxic and self-serving politicians from the White House to local governments (politicization of best care health practices, manipulation of facts and data, alternative facts, disregard for human life, dismantling of democratic norms, voter suppression and voter disenfranchisement, erosion of confidence in free and fair elections); and the list goes on and on and on.

Some are filled with so much hopelessness, despair, discouragement, depression and concern and distress that they find little for which they are thankful. Consequently, they place their hope in the expectation of the changes that will occur in the next administration and the belief that things cannot get any worse and therefore, must get better moving forward.

I want to encourage you on today to remember that God is in control, and since God is in control, I am still thankful.

Over the years, I have resolved that far too many Christians give too much power and authority to the devil. For far too many Christians, when things do not materialize as they had anticipated, they inevitably give the credit to the devil. They can be heard saying, "Devil, you a lie..." or "Look at what the devil did." Unfortunately, if we give the devil that much power and authority in our lives, we will place more emphasis and attention on him than we place on God.

Note in Job Chapter 1, Verse 10, the devil said to God, *"¹⁰ Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side?"* God did not say that He had a hedges around Job. The devil said that God had a hedge around Job. The devil knew that he could not touch Job because of God's hedge of protection around him. The devil said it, and God did not deny it. We can also be assured that God has a hedge of protection around us and the devil cannot touch us without the permission of God.

Therefore, when we, like Job, lose people and things close to us and when we lose our health and things personal to us, we can still be thankful because we know that God is in control.

WHEN I LOSE PEOPLE AND THINGS CLOSE TO ME

In one day, Job lost everything that he had and everyone that he had with the exception of his wife. As well, some of us have lost people and things close to us this year. We have lost family, friends, co-workers and neighbors. We have lost jobs, money, possessions and many things that were close to us. In response to his loss, Job gives us a perspective to assist us in responding to our losses:

Perspective: *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there"* For Job, when I came into this world I had nothing, and when I leave this world I will have nothing. Job recognized that none of us can take our possessions with us. We have heard the phrase, "You never see a U-Haul truck behind the hearse." It will assist us greatly to adopt a similar perspective - If I leave this world with what I came with, it has been a good life.

Principle: God is in Control: Everything Belongs to God. Job's perspective was accompanied with this principle. When I accept the reality that everything belongs to God – that includes me – I acknowledge the reality that I do not have to worry about losing what I have. Everything belongs to God – I belong to God – God will ensure that I have what I need.

Moses affirmed this in **Deuteronomy 8:18**, ¹⁸ *“And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. Additionally, David affirmed this in 1 Chronicles 29:14, ¹⁴ But who am I, and who are my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You.*

Therefore, I am still thankful: The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord: When I lose people and things close to me, I am still thankful. If things never turn out the way that I desire, I am still thankful. If I lose everything that I thought was necessary for me to have a successful life, I am still thankful. Why? Because God is in control

WHEN I LOSE MY HEALTH AND THINGS PERSONAL TO ME

Job lost his health as he was afflicted with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. As well, some of us have had serious challenges with our health this year. Some of us have suffered through the Covid-19 virus, some have had other health challenged that have caused pain and discomfort in our bodies. For others, it is as if our bodies have forsaken us. In response to his health, Job gives us a perspective to assist us in responding to our health:

Perspective: As Job’s wife conceded to Job’s health challenges and requested that Job, “Curse God and die,” Job responded, “You are talking like a foolish woman.” Job’s perspective was based upon ignoring the ignorant. Job recognized that there are those who do not know nor understand our relationship with God. Consequently, it is easy for them to request that we give up, give in and give over to our losses of health and the things personal to us. As we adopt the perspective of ignoring the ignorant, it assists us in keeping our faith and focus on God and what we expect God to do for us.

Principle: God is in Control: Everything Balances Out. Job’s perspective was accompanied with this principle. When I accept the reality that everything balances out, I acknowledge the reality that I do not have to worry about losing my health and things personal to me. Everything balances out. I may not be able to do this, however, I can do that. I may not have the strength to accomplish this, however, I can accomplish that. When it is good, God is in control. When it is bad, God is in control.

Therefore, I am still thankful: Shall we accept good from God and not accept the bad?: When I lose my health and things personal to me, I am still thankful. If there are things that I cannot do, I am thankful for the things that I can do. If there are things that take me twice as long to accomplish than it used to, I am thankful that I can still accomplish them. I am still thankful. Why? Because everything balances out.

Therefore, I AM STILL THANKFUL: GOD IS IN CONTROL. In examining Job’s story, who initiated everything that Job went through? God did. Likewise, when I examine my life, who initiates everything that I go through? God does. Even more importantly, in examining Job’s story, who established the limitations that were placed upon what the devil could do to Job? God did. Likewise, when I examine my life, who establishes the limitations that are placed upon what the devil can do to me? God does.

Therefore, I am still thankful: God is in Control – Everything Belongs to God, and God is in Control – Everything Balances Out

How to See Family and Friends More Safely Over the Holidays

Posted on Monday, Nov. 16, 2020 at 12:49 pm

The safest thing you can do is only spend the holidays with people you live with.

Right now, cases are continuing to rise in Dane County, Wisconsin, and the country, which means that there's more and more risk of you coming in contact with COVID-19 and becoming infected. And while you may have a mild case, there is always the potential that you could become seriously ill, have long-term symptoms, or pass COVID-19 along to someone more vulnerable than you. We highly recommend not attending gatherings with people you don't live with.

We don't recommend that anyone has gatherings this winter, but you should especially not see people outside your household if anyone in the group has one of these risk factors, [per CDC](#):

- Over age 65
- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Heart conditions, such as heart failure, heart disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Weakened immune system (immunocompromised state) from organ transplant
- Obesity
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease
- Smoking
- Type 2 diabetes

Please pay attention to [current public health orders](#) in Dane County and follow them for any get-together. If you are gathering in a county with less strict orders, we still highly recommend you follow our order requirements, as Wisconsin is a COVID-19 hotspot and you could get or spread COVID-19 to people outside Dane County.

If you are going to see people you don't live with, follow these precautions.

Everyone going to an event should quarantine for 14 days beforehand.

Quarantining, if you do it right, can reduce your risk of spreading COVID-19 at a gathering. In order for this strategy to reduce risk, though, **every single person attending the gathering needs to follow the below guidance for 14 days**. If you cannot ensure that everyone will quarantine correctly, then do not attend or host the gathering.

When quarantining, you can:

- Go outside by yourself or with people you live with
- Pick up groceries or essentials only through contactless pickup or delivery
- Work or attend school from home
- Hang out with people virtually

You cannot:

- Go to work, school, or childcare in person
- Go inside a store or other public building
- Socialize with anyone outside of your household

Change your traditions around a holiday to keep events small, masked, distanced, brief, and outside.

If you are going to gather, but not strictly quarantine, then the next best thing you can do is take many precautions at the gathering. **We strongly urge you to only spend the holidays with people you live with**. But if you are going to gather with people you don't live with, we ask that you take as many of these precautions as possible:

- Keep gatherings as small as possible. Follow gathering restrictions outlined by [Public Health orders](#) in Dane County, if gathering in Dane County borders.
- Wear masks any time you are not eating or drinking. [Wisconsin orders PDF](#) and [Dane County orders](#) require masks in many situations.
- Stay as far away as possible from people you don't live with—ideally 6 feet, but more is better. Physical distancing at gatherings [is required by Dane County orders](#).
- Limit the amount of time you are spending together.
- Hold events outside in well-ventilated spaces.

None of these prevention methods are 100% effective, and you may still be exposed to COVID-19 if you attend the event. After the event and for the next 14 days, stay home as much as possible, [monitor your symptoms](#), and [get tested if you have any symptoms](#), even if they are mild.

What doesn't help

Getting tested before an event doesn't prevent COVID-19 transmission. A COVID-19 test only tells you your status at the time of testing. If you or a household member has left home to go to work, school, childcare, sports, socialize, etc. at any time in the two weeks before you got tested, then you could still have COVID-19 and could spread it to others at a gathering. **Unless you can quarantine for two weeks before an event, getting tested will do nothing to stop COVID-19 transmission.**

Following only one or two precautions won't always prevent the spread of COVID-19. No prevention method is 100% effective, so only following one or two isn't enough protection to ensure COVID-19 is not spread at an event. For example, if you wear a mask to a Thanksgiving gathering, but Thanksgiving is indoors and close together, then you are still at a high risk of catching or spreading COVID-19. If you can only follow one or two precautions at an event, then don't attend the event.

If you're within six feet of someone for a total of 15 min in one day, it's close contact, even if you wear a mask or are outside. If you're within 6 feet of someone for a total of 15 minutes in a day, then you are considered a "close contact" of that person. You may also be a close contact if you share food, cups, or utensils, hug or have physical contact, or get coughed or sneezed on. Distancing is absolutely essential in stopping the spread, but may not be sufficient in poorly ventilated spaces. Holding an outdoor event isn't enough if you are still hugging, talking close, or sitting next to others.

The bottom line

When you could consider seeing family or friends for the holidays

- When everyone in the group rarely or never participates in higher risk activities, like attending work, school or childcare in person, socializing with others, eating in restaurants, or going to gyms
- When no one in the group is at increased risk of having severe illness from COVID-19
- When you trust that everyone in the group will quarantine for two weeks before the event
- When you trust that everyone in the group will be honest about their exposure risk and will share if they test positive after the event
- When you can keep the group small and following public health orders

When you should not see family or friends for the holidays

- When anyone in the group works in person, attends school or childcare in person, socializes in person with others, or participates in another higher risk activity
- When people in the group are at increased risk of severe illness
- When you are not sure that everyone will quarantine for two weeks before the event
- When you're not able to be certain about everyone's potential exposures
- If your group is too large for current orders or to ensure physical distancing

Test Up MKE

Test Up MKE is a new website launched to provide the latest COVID-19 information and testing access. This site provides easy access to information on the effects of the pandemic on groups disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 such as essential workers, immigrants and BIPOC communities. The website is available in English, Spanish, Hmong, Arabic and Burmese. It also has an accessibility feature for those with hearing, visual and other special needs.



BIBLE STUDY

- ✓ Facilitated by Pastor Childs --- Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. and Thursday at 1:00 p.m.
- ✓ Facilitated by Sis. Davis (for women) --- Monday at 6:00 p.m.
- ✓ Facilitated by Deacon Cocroft --- Tuesday at Noon

CALL-IN PRAYER

- ✓ Mondays at 5:45-6:00 p.m. /// Wednesdays at 5:45-6:00 p.m. and /// Saturdays at 10:15-10:30 a.m.

CHURCH SCHOOL

- ✓ Please check the website for the Church School Class Schedule

NOVEMBER MEMORY VERSE

²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 1:27

NOVEMBER MEDITATION QUOTE

“We are created in the image of God...Differences in outcomes derive from differences in opportunities.”

Samuel D. Proctor

BE SAFE, BE SMART, BE SERIOUS

I remain prayerful for your safety and security and remain available to you to listen and share regarding your needs and concerns. Please call me, text me (414-852-4010) and/or email me pilgrimrestpastorchilds@gmail.com so we can talk out and talk through anything and everything that you may be going through or need assistance

We love you, Pastor Martin and Sister Thresessa Childs