

## A Few Thoughts for the Hunkered-Down

Saturday, May 30, 2020

# ***Remembering Jonas Salk and Praying for Another***

*Now there lived in that city a man poor but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom. But nobody remembered that poor man. —Ecclesiastes 9:15*

Twenty some years ago, as the century was drawing to a close, I remember a fascinating discussion at my church in regards to who was the greatest person of the Twentieth Century. I remember only a few of the suggested people, but one which I shall never forget was put forth by a retired nurse. It required little immediate thought for her to decide on her candidate for this honor, for it appeared that she had come to this conclusion many years previous. Her great hero of the century was Dr. Jonas Salk, the developer of the polio vaccine.

To date I have no firm opinions on who was the greatest of the last hundred years, but I am convinced the Dr. Salk definitely belongs among the top considerations for that honor, and he certainly would win the award for the most overlooked and underappreciated! Polio killed countless people of all ages, disabled many and caused tremendous misery and fear among our population. Salk's vaccine brought that reign of terror to a screeching halt, and for this we must be grateful.

The question is, *are we grateful?* I have never seen a statue of Dr. Salk. I have viewed a few television documentaries on polio, and Jonas Salk was not quite front and center in those histories. There are not that many buildings and institutions bearing the name Salk. Such an overlooked and underappreciated hero! Not that he was seeking fame. By all appearances he was an avuncular, bespectacled researcher and man of medicine who sought no parades or accolades. His humility, however, does not erase the question. Was Dr. Salk overlooked and too quickly forgotten? Most definitely, and this is a failing which needs addressed immediately.

Have we fully and appropriately thanked God for raising up Jonas Salk as a savior to a terrified nation, or did we too quickly breathe a sigh of relief and revert to life as usual with little thought of giving God praise? One of our prominent prayers in these days of pandemic is for an effective vaccine to be developed, and I trust that you are praying along with me for such a preventative. In our age of medical miracles as commonplace have we learned to pause and praise God? Do I pause and praise God on a regular basis for his curing my son David's leukemia, or the amazing rescue of David's son? No, I am not calling for all to be giving lengthy medical detail of their

every procedure, but do we give God the thanks that is so deserved for the amazing rescues we have experienced? And when this virus has passed, perhaps due to a vaccine, will we simply revert to life as usual with little more than a brief sigh of relief?

Let us pray for our medical community, and remember among them those who are searching for a vaccine. With those prayers, let us address a backlog of thanksgiving, and a confession of past ingratitude for earlier and amazing deliverances. Let us give thanks for Dr. Salk and pray that God would be raising up another.

Blessings,

Pastor Jim

*Lord of all mercy and goodness, suffer us not by any ingratitude or hardness of heart to forget the wonderful benefits that thou hast bestowed upon us this and every day; but grant that we may be mindful all the days of our life of the incomparable gifts which thou ever givest us through Jesus Christ our Lord.* —source unknown, early Scottish