

A Few Thoughts for the Hunkered Down

Thursday, January 14, 2021

Sitting on the Vaccine

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" —Romans 10:14-15 (Isaiah 52:7)

The newspaper headline was a bit less than shocking: *State Delayed in Distribution of Vaccine*. I suppose we all knew this was coming. Governments at all levels have long been known for their inefficiency so it is no surprise that much of the vaccine is languishing in storage in spite of the crying need. It was also no surprise that the article did not succeed in getting to the root of the problem or giving us any genuine idea of what is going on, as these have not been particularly diligent days for the media researchers of the world. What's a reader to do?

The all too natural and easy response is to rant and rave against the government for their ineptitude. (It is also natural and easy for us to keep voting for more government to fix all our problems, but that is a discussion for another day.) How dare they sit on this vaccine! On second thought one might pause to consider the enormity and complexity of such a massive distribution. The possibilities of glitches in the system and the concerns for safety are many, and those in charge of this project do deserve at least a smidgen of our sympathy. We try to keep our frustration in check and do what we can to have a little heart for the government and medical community. It is always wise to close with a prayer that in spite of our human foibles, this wonderful cure will soon be speeding toward those who need it so badly.

As I pondered this challenge of distribution, I was struck by a sermon illustration which I had heard several times, particularly in conservative and evangelistically oriented churches. If you were raised in such a tradition you are very familiar with this little story. The preaching point being made is simply this: If you had the cure for a killer disease such as cancer, wouldn't you do everything in your power to spread that cure to the world with as little delay as possible? And wouldn't it be a scandal to do anything less? And if Christ has conquered sin and death through His crucifixion and Resurrection, wouldn't we want to waste no time and lose no opportunity to get the cure out there? It is a most reasonable appeal.

The question before us is this: How are we doing in distributing the Jesus Vaccine? To be fair, getting Jesus Vaccine takers is not as easy as it sounds, as many do not believe

in the Vaccine! We certainly believe in the Cure and the Cure's name is Jesus. The great challenge is convincing a doubting world, and now may be a more opportune season for such convincing than we realize!

Over the past hundred years our world has experienced a wonderful medical revolution which has defeated a myriad of diseases, extended lives and eased countless pains. In my own adult life, I have seen tremendous progress made against cancer. Heart disease which once took middle aged men by the busload has been reduced tremendously. The list goes on and we are richly blessed. In the nineties, when heart bypass surgery began saving people right and left from a certain death, I began to muse to myself that perhaps death had gone out of style. Of course, I knew that we remained as mortal as ever, but life was being wonderfully extended and I marveled with gratitude.

In this new and healthier world, it would appear that there are many who really do seem to believe that death has gone out of style. Not only are we living longer, but we are *expecting* to live longer, and to have that expectation challenged is more than many can bear. This virus has shaken a lot of people to their core, for up to recently they have forgotten just how frail and brief this mortal life still is. Now may be an especially opportune time to let folks know that we have the Vaccine. We give it weekly; we have it in great supply and for free, and we are open to arranging special midweek appointments.

Whatever we do, let us be sure to not be found sitting on the Vaccine.

Blessings,

Pastor Jim

We thank thee, O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou hast revealed thy Son to us, on whom we have believed, whom we have loved and whom we worship. O Lord Jesus Christ, we commend our souls to thee. O heavenly Father, we know that although we shall in thine own good time be taken away from this life, we shall live forever with thee. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Father into thy hands we commend our spirits; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

—Martin Luther, 1483-1546