

If my own people will humbly pray and turn back to me and stop sinning, then I will answer them from heaven. I will forgive them and heal their land. (II Chronicles 7:14)

Beloved

My theology leads me to believe God does not cause bad things to happen. They just happen. But God is with us as we face, endure, succumb, overcome. God gave His Spirit to accompany us on this journey through life. We tend to have to go through, not over, under, or around those stumbling stones which litter our path. Maybe my theology is off, but it helps me to face drought, locust, Covid-19, rain, still breezes, and times of well-being.

The world is facing difficult times right now. Huge locust are devouring crops in the Middle East and Africa. Many are concerned about Climate Change. Man caused or cyclical, it could be dry this summer. There is a Pandemic raging across the globe. Man caused or natural, just the flu or truly a severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 – with the power to infect millions and kill hundreds of thousands. Whatever it is, it has brought our country to its knees. Businesses, schools, churches closed. People sheltering in place, wearing masks, afraid. We are told over and over we are facing a new normal, and no one can tell us what that means.

We live on guesswork and “good for now” ideas. It’s difficult to plan for this week, impossible to plan for next month. The trickle down from Covid will be damaging for all. People are losing businesses, life-savings, people are losing jobs, insurance, places to shop, their social network, some their sanity. Nothing is as it was – no matter what this disease is.

People are trying their hardest to minister, to bring peace, to listen, to love one another. If we hide our head in the dirt or gather on the beach, if we return to church or watch from home, if we put on our mask, if we go to Costco or stay home and order from Amazon we are each doing what we feel is right for us. We need to honor each other’s decision. We may have to compromise – not sure which word is uglier compromise or change – maybe we will get some of what we want, maybe we will have to give up something.

While we fret and stew about if it is a pandemic or not, that it is my rights verses the health of another, as we wrestle with how to love and remember God instruction to forgive, cities around the country are burning. Angry people are destroying property, lives are threatened, livelihoods – gone. There is no safety, no peace. This is in reaction to a young cop, out of control, who takes the life of a person he was arresting. There are peaceful demonstrations – which is our right – and rioting and looting running amok in our streets.

It’s difficult to read and painful to watch. Has the world ever faced such a times as this? In II Chronicles we read “Suppose I hold back the rain or send locusts to eat the crops or make my people suffer with deadly diseases. (II Chron 7:13)

Nothing new under the sun. Sin, drought, locust, plagues. What does God ask of His children. From Micah – “That we seek justice and love mercy and walk humbly with God.” In His new command Jesus tells us we are to “love God and love one another.” We receive hope in God’s promise as God answers His supposition in II Chronicle, “That we humbly pray, turn back to God – and God will forgive us and heal our land.”(II Chronicles 7:14) This promise isn’t just for America, it is for God’s world, the world that God so loved He sent His only begotten Son.

Pastor Tonia