

ABUNDANT LIFE TRES DIAS



April 2020 Newsletter

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HOW TO STAY CONNECTED

Since March, the majority of us have been social distancing with the “safer at home” orders in Wisconsin and Illinois due to the Corona Virus. Here are some ways to try and stay connected during these difficult times of not being able to fellowship face to face:

Call someone or video chat with them.

Create a Zoom meeting with friends and loved ones, which we have already seen some of you doing!

Do a bible study with friends via text, e-mail, facebook group or bible app.

Invite friends to a “watch party” over Facebook, during your on-line church service (they are a great way to worship God together, when we can’t be physically together).

If you haven’t already, start to get to know your neighbors.

Get your friend group to start sending weekly email “newsletters” to each other. (Keep it simple/doable with a format like “Things I read, watched, listened to, ate, laughed about, photographed, and loved” and bulleted lists.)

Organize a “remote” game night.

Set up a standing 20 minute coffee break with a friend every morning at 11 or every afternoon at 3. (Time-boxing will keep it from feeling overwhelming or cutting into your workday.)

Research any volunteer opportunities.

Drop off a nice surprise on someone’s door step, it will put a smile on their face.



“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all”. 2 Corinthians 13:14

YOUR FAITH AND THE CORONA VIRUS

By: Ryan Bensheimer

Recently in the men's open reunion group we got into a discussion of faith. I was asked to expound on my thoughts and share so that others may understand my theological viewpoint. Faith is the core of the Bible. What does this mean? The Greek word for faith *pistis* is cognate with the Greek for believing *pisteuo*. The verb and the noun belong together. Further, the sense of faithfulness is tied into the word faith: *pistos* means both belief/faith and faithfulness in a sense of being trust over time. I want to challenge you to think in this larger sense; faith in God and Jesus means allegiance to King Jesus. For instance, when Jesus says to his disciples, "follow me;" He is asserting that allegiance implies trust. This communicates so much more within the grand narrative of Scripture and Jesus as Israel's Messiah and the world's true Lord. N. T. Wright and Scot McNight would affirm that confessing "Jesus is Lord" in the first century was more of a political statement than it was a theological one and in this grasping of the statement "Jesus is Lord," it was viewed as allegiance to Him in the face of the Roman Empire. This really comes to life when we read the story of the Centurion in Matthew 8. Do you realize that he is the only person in the Gospels that surprised Jesus with their faith? The officer requested healing for his servant who was house-bound (paralysed) & in intense suffering (terribly tortured). Jesus offered to come and heal the servant, but the centurion objected. He couldn't shame a person of Jesus' rank by inviting him into his house. He wasn't hoping for Jesus to visit — just to issue a command. Did you get that? No one else thought Jesus could heal by remote command! Even his closest friends assumed that Jesus needed to be present to heal (John 11:21). This type of allegiance to Jesus likely could have been the end of the Centurion's life. Do you see that? For him to take this kind of Faith in King Jesus was a proclamation of allegiance and that could have been met by death in light of the Roman Empire that he was supposed to be completely sworn to. He was literally willing to give His life to Christ in an act of servanthood to others.

I bet you have never considered that. Now let's fast forward. I want to praise King Jesus for an amazing Men's weekend in light of the Corona Virus. Should we have cancelled the weekend? It was a tough decision but in hindsight the answer was clearly no. Sometimes these decisions are not easy. We live in temporal fleshly bodies; yet we are also eternal beings, sons of light by which we are lightbearers of the eternal God and our flesh is the very temple. We are Aliens and existing in a world or even empire where we don't belong. Yet our decisions are influenced by the spiritual and the flesh. In hindsight I believe it was this kind of Faith that prevailed over the men's weekend. It is amazing that as of now none became ill over that weekend. At the same time, would it have mattered if we would have all become ill as a result? If you know me at all or have listened to any of my teachings or videos you will understand that I am a huge believer that God is a relational God that through His grace, love, and mercy has beautifully met us where we are and continues to do so with those that believe. God greatly blessed, honored, and protected us during an amazing victorious Men's weekend. And if you were on the weekend I think you were in awe that God had planned the prayer shawl teachings of the weekend to fall during this time of the COVID-19; if that wasn't a strong affirmation of His presence guiding us I don't know what else would be! WOW

So should we have had the women's weekend despite the virus? I actually don't think so. Wait what? How does this fit with what I just said? Often times, those on the outside can't understand spiritual things and we are urged many times in the scripture to live in a way that may be received by those looking in at the Faith. The challenge is to live in this spiritual state of incredible faith and at the same time realize that we are unfortunately still limited by the flesh of this world. Should that stop us? That's is a great question.

Here is your homework: In Acts 21 Through the Spirit they told Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. He went anyway and was imprisoned. Was that God's will or did he just use it to the best? Do you remember when Paul says "I would that everyone in this room might be like me -- except for these chains..." (Acts 26:29) Hmmmm You see Paul knew that trouble awaited him but he chose to go anyway (20:22). Had Paul obeyed the Holy Spirit at Tyre, Luke undoubtedly would simply have recorded here what he once wrote about another occasion in Paul's life. He would have said, "We tried to go up to Jerusalem, but were forbidden of the Holy Spirit," just as once he recorded that the apostle tried to go into Asia and Bithynia; but was forbidden by the Spirit... (Acts 16:6-7). I am going to leave you to study this deeper.

But to wrap this up, continued Christian experience, and spiritual insight, and understanding of Scripture, are no guarantees against missing the mind of God because we are partly flesh. That's why the bible speaks so often to this

JOURNEY OF Faith

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through texts such as Matthew 18 and so many discussions on the unity of believers. Sometimes God is very clear and if we don't follow that leading we are in disobedience; but other times we find less guidance. We ask and the leading seems faint. Why? This is to understand what faith really looks like. The heart of trusting God when it is loud and clear or when the voice is more open. In the midst of the Corona Virus how is God calling you in allegiant faith? We have seen many use their time off to bless others through internet prayer, Bible studies, gifts of helps. Maybe this is where God is calling you. Some have risen to move forward in the midst of possible danger and exposure of the virus and boldly claim power over it. Maybe God has granted you this power in his name. many will be healed miraculously by faith. Will God use you in this way? Honestly, I don't know and I am not sure that we are going to figure this one out. I do know that God can and God does! PERIOD!

Where will your faith take you?



PAY IT FORWARD

During this time of COVID, we recognize that finances can be strained. May we ask that you pray for the Pay It Forward Campaign? In order to continue to provide this opportunity, we are asking for prayers for more monthly donors or however God wants to bless this campaign. Through this campaign, participants on a particular weekend don't pay a fee to attend. At the end of the weekend (and with follow up shortly thereafter), they are invited to pay what they are able so the next group of weekend participants can benefit from the weekend as they have been so richly blessed. It only takes \$15 a month to completely fund a candidate to attend the weekend at no charge.

If you feel led to donate at this time there is a donation button on the ALTD website or you can text ALTD to 1-206-859-9405 to donate and set up your giving account (it can be whatever you feel led to donate). It is through generous donors that we can continue to give this precious gift to others. Thank you and God Bless all that have given thus far. If you can't give at this time please consider praying for the campaign.

Upcoming events

Annual Business Meeting/Secuela-Saturday, June 13, 2020 at Faith Lutheran Church (more details to be announced later)

Men's #43 Weekend: October 22-25, 2020 at Inspiration Ministries

Women's #43 Weekend: October 29- Nov. 1, 2020 at Inspiration Ministries

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