

PART 4 – DON'T WASTE YOUR ISOLATION

"One of (the Sadducees), a lawyer, asked (Jesus) a question to test him. 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?' And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets'" (Matthew 22:35-40).

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust (and COVID-19!) destroy, and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust (nor COVID-19!) destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:9-10).

Now that we've been settling into our isolation, and we've had a few emails encouraging us to individually spend our time well, let's consider something else: God's blessings and commands don't somehow shift or become flexible when situations change beyond what we have known. What we are experiencing is unprecedented in our lifetime, but the word of God never changes. We confess this to each other every Sunday after I read my sermon text: "The grass withers and the flower falls (and the coronavirus spreads!) but the word of the Lord remains forever" (1 Peter 1:24b-25). We are still to love our neighbors as ourselves, we are still to who shun greed and embrace generosity, and "we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls" (Hebrews. 10:39).

So today spend time contemplating how you can be generous with your time and money as you love our neighbors and do good to everyone, especially those who are part of our body.

1) **Pray**. Ask the Lord to show you any areas where you are thinking of His gifts to you in selfish ways, and then how he would have you and your family love and compassion in meeting the needs of others.

2) **Discuss**. Spend time as a family identifying those in our body, your extended family, and in your neighborhood who are in the high-risk categories of contracting the virus and developing dangerous symptoms of COVID-19. The higher the risk categories the more isolated people must remain. Consider those with young kids at home, 24/7, and both the blessings and challenges this brings. How might you reach out to them? How might you encourage them? How might you break into their loneliness without breaking into their physical space? How might you discern any needs they might have? Who among us might need assistance? Who might need an errand run? How might you encourage others spiritually? And please don't think to yourself, "Well, I'm in the high-risk category so I'll wait for others to serve me." The beauty of ministry is it is not limited when our physical movement is curtailed! Everyone needs to be served; everyone needs to serve. Joy springs from both and God is glorified in both.

3) **Plan**. Now take all of the ideas you came up during your brainstorming discussion and choose the ones you can implement during the coming week. Don't try to meet every need today! Plan out your week with time dedicated during each day to reach out and minister to others.

4) **Act**. Put your plans into motion. Our situation is fluid and things will change, but let's put some feet to our faith this week! We can evaluate and be concerned about next week when it comes with its own challenges and trouble (Matthew 6:34).

Pray as a family, think & discuss as a family, and act as a family.

**Because of Christ,
Pastor Rob**
