

Reflection for Wednesday 8 April 2020

Romans 12:9-18

⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

On Sunday afternoon I did some yard work, sat on my patio, listened to the familiar hum of my neighbor's lawnmower and for that brief period of time I felt normal again. Monday morning came and I read the newspaper featuring the ever-increasing numbers of people affected by the corona virus and concerns that even the fall football season is now in jeopardy. And all at once, I was reminded that life is anything but normal at this time.

I am listening as many people talk about the "new normal" of our lives and what it will be when we can resume gathering together again, shopping at stores for fun, going out for dinner, and enjoying sporting events. What will our new normal look like? Will anything change from the normal we had in February before COVID-19 became a reality in our lives? Do we even want things to be different? So many questions and so few answers.

At the moment, we are living day to day and no one knows how long it will take for the virus to run its course in our country. In the midst of all the unknown we can reflect on what we are learning during the pandemic. As Christians we know that God's love and forgiveness is with us every moment of every day. We know that even during the pandemic we are called to be God's hands and feet in the world. On those two truths we move forward.

Here's a few thoughts on what I am learning. First, we are still the church, the community of faith. Worship looks a lot different now and we are becoming masters at zoom meetings. We are connecting with people through "old fashioned" means, i.e. the phone and we are checking in with each other regularly. We are offering food and supplies to those who need them, comfort to those who are struggling, and support to those in essential positions. We are praying more. The new things we are learning can and should continue in the future. We reach so many people with live streamed worship, we can include people near and far when we add zoom technology to our meetings, bible studies and gatherings. This time of pandemic has also been a time of learning and finding more ways to use technology to spread God's love.

Second, we are fully aware that church is not a building. Our buildings are locked and closed and yet we are still worshipping, meeting, studying, and gathering. We are a community of faith wherever two or three are gathered in God's name. It is positively freeing for me to think

that we aren't tied to buildings that require so much of our time, energy and money just to keep them open.

Finally, I am learning that our relationships with God and with each other is what really matters in life. The things I miss most are the gatherings with our community of faith, my family, and my friends. I am taking more time in prayer, in building my relationship with God. I am more open to new ways of connecting and doing things. I value this time in my life to focus on what really matters to me. And I am still learning. I look forward to what the next days and weeks will hold. I pray for health and healing for all and I give thanks for all the blessings that God is giving to me, to us, at this time.

In Peace,

Pastor Suzanne