

March 30, 2020

Good Monday!

It's been a while since I've done this. My Last post in my Monday Encouragement was back in 2012. I put it aside because of time commitments and (if you will) writer's block (if that is anything). I thought that for a while, if at least while we together go through this pandemic, I might take some time to bring you at least a bit of encouragement as we go through this together. Maybe I'm doing this just for me—but I invite you to come along on this journey.

I can't help but notice how quiet it is. I live on Main Street (SR 613) here in Leipsic. Generally it is a very busy street full of cars and trucks going either east or west and making lots of noise as they go by. But now I can't help but notice how little traffic goes by. Obviously the stay-at-home order by the governor has a lot to do with it. The fact that a lot of employers have shut their doors to business, unless of course they are essential businesses has something to do with it as well. And all that is good—because we need to do what we can to stop the spread of this virus. But it sure is quiet.

Last week, while the weather was nice, I jumped on my mobility scooter a couple of days and went up to the church and around the neighborhood. There was an eerie silence—right in the middle of the day. People passing by would either wave or nod. We didn't stop and have a conversation. And it was so quiet.

I don't do quiet all that well. I like the noise. I like the busyness. I like being with people. But times are different right now. I can't go to restaurants. I can't visit with people. I can't even worship with a group of people that I have loved and served for over 25 years now. But it is because it is necessary in an effort to stop the spread of this COVID-19 virus that has us all in alarm—and rightfully so. I long for the noise of traffic, people, laughter, and worship.

But I can't have that now--hopefully soon. So what do I (or maybe even you) do in this season of quietness? Maybe just listen?

I'm reminded when the prophet Elijah was fleeing from the wicked Queen Jezebel. He had gone through a pretty amazing noisy experience. In 1 Kings 18, Elijah had just defeated the prophets of the false god Baal. All 450 of the prophets were put in their place as the God of Heaven proved (again) that He is the one and only true God. But in victory, Elijah had to flee for his life and ended up on the Mountain of God—Mt. Horeb. While hiding in a cave God came to him to encourage him. God told him to stand on the mount and wait for Him to pass by. So Elijah did so. As Elijah stood there a strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks—but God was not in that wind. After the wind, an earthquake caused the ground to shudder—but God was not in that earthquake. A mighty fire ripped through the area—but God wasn't in the fire. After the fire, the Word tells us that the sound of a gentle whisper was heard, and when Elijah

heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And he then heard the voice of God. (1 Kings 19:11-13)

It was in the quiet that Elijah heard from God. Can I encourage you today to consider that in this present time of quietness that God may be trying to speak to us? I don't know what His message is for sure, but He seems to have set a precedent in wanting us to hear Him. Unfortunately the noise drowns him out. I want to use these days, no matter how many days they are, to hear what God may be speaking to me. You see, I don't think He's turning his back on us—He wants more than anything to speak to us and for us to listen. I don't know what that message might be—but He is worth the effort to listen carefully to Him.

I want to encourage you to spend time listening for the voice of God as he quietly speaks to you through these tough times. It's important for you to remember that He will always keep His promise—to ALWAYS be with us—even until the end of time.

Have a great week!

Pastor Tim