

Monday

Read Joel 2:12-17

As a meme circulating around social media has said, “This is the Lentiest Lent I have ever Lented.” Lent is a time of reflection, repentance, and sacrifice on behalf of Jesus. We remember the 40 days Jesus fasted during the 40 days of Lent and recall that it is because of our sin and sinfulness that Jesus sacrifices himself on the cross. During this time of isolation and being deprived of some of the things we hold dear, we might then assume that we are in the midst of the “Lentiest Lent” ever. However, simply not having things or not getting to do what we would prefer to do is not the theme of Lent. Lent is the offering of ourselves through giving things up to focus on Jesus. You can certainly not have things and still not focus on Jesus. Suffering does not, in and of itself, bring us closer to God. When we turn to God in our suffering, spiritual dryness, guilt, and pain that God rushes in and His abundant and steadfast love becomes more apparent to us.

If you are suffering, turn to God. Offer yourself up to God. Turn to your brothers and sisters in Christ for support.

If you are doing well, keep your eyes out for those who may be suffering. You do not have to have an explanation (you won’t have a good one, anyways), but you can be present.

N.T. Wright writes in *Time* this week, “It is no part of the Christian vocation, then, to be able to explain what’s happening and why. In fact, it is part of the Christian vocation not to be able to explain—and to lament instead. As the Spirit laments within us, so we become, even in our self-isolation, small shrines where the presence and healing love of God can dwell. And out of that there can emerge new possibilities, new acts of kindness, new scientific understanding, new hope.”

You can find the whole essay here: <https://time.com/5808495/coronavirus-christianity/>

Tuesday

Read Luke 19:28-40

“I tell you, if these [people] were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

The church isn’t a building, it is a people. That may sound a bit cute and I bet you’ve heard it before, but it also comes from the fact that exactly zero people in the New Testament and the early centuries of the Church Universal would have heard the word “church” (in whatever language) and thought of a building. They would have thought of their brothers and sisters in the faith. Our current predicament isn’t unlike the worship experience of many millions of Christians

over the centuries: they met to worship in their homes because they could not gather publicly without being imprisoned, tortured, or executed. The lack of being able to go to a building does not mean that the Church does not exist. The inability to meet together is a bigger hurdle, but even then, the Holy Spirit animates us with the presence of God and the company of a cloud of witnesses to Jesus. We can still praise the Lord! Imagine the new meaning that being together in worship will bring!

Wednesday

Read 1 Corinthians 15, with special focus on v. 17

“Easter, with the joy of the coming spring, with all the happiness with which the sun warms our hearts, has become for each of us since childhood a festival dear to our hearts, a festival filled with warm memories from which we do not want to part. Who among us would want to lose even a single spring from our lives? [It feels like we’ve lost a spring, huh?] But to say that our entire life depends on Easter, that our existence would be threatened if there were no Easter – who among us would want or even could bear such a thing? But Paul did indeed say it. And because he reflected a bit more thoroughly on this question that we tend to do, we may assume that such a statement does indeed harbor a certain meaning about which one might perhaps reflect further. ‘If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile.’” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Easter Sunday 1928

Thursday

Read Luke 22:1-23

On Easter, we will celebrate this Lord’s Supper in a way that none of us have probably celebrated it before: by driving through the parking lot in our cars and receiving individually sealed containers of bread and juice. Of course, I’m sure Jesus’ original disciples would be baffled by our pews, pulpit, nice table, air conditioning, electric lights, yeasted bread, and grape juice. It turns out that the purpose of the sacrament is to commemorate the death of Jesus and the promise of His return more than performing the sacrament in our preferred manner. A month ago, many (including me, I suspect) would have thought it preposterous and against propriety to have a drive-through communion. Now, it seems like a remarkable genius. In times of trial and crisis, we discover what truly matters. What matters is that we have a symbol of our unity with Christ and with each other to nourish us for today and the days ahead. We look forward to seeing you in your car on Sunday!

Friday

Read Luke 23

It is finished.

Saturday

In preparation for Sunday worship, please read Luke 24:1-12.