

COLLOQUIES with Pastor Brian

Getting Back To a Safe Place

One of my favorite movies of this decade was “The Martian”. The film depicts an astronaut's (Matt Damon) lone struggle to survive on Mars after being left behind, and efforts to rescue him and bring him home to Earth. Today, that seems something of a stretch, right? Here we are stuck on earth, trying to rescue ourselves and depending on your situation and perspective, some have very different ideas about how that rescue might look. Yet there are some emotional parallels. We thought things were doing well, at least as well as things go. Then an unexpected event, massive consequences and finally, the attempt to get back to a safe place. To return home.

Scripture has been telling us this story for a long time, though it is often couched in terms of “We were in a garden, a disaster happens in the Garden and we lose it (or it loses us), and God is now trying to get us back to The New Garden, inviting our cooperation. The rest of the stories in the Bible continue this theme to some extent. Our scripture this week comes from John 14:15-21 which tells us of God’s great desire to NOT leave us alone, but to re-gather us to Jesus and Oneself.

Our other scripture is located in Acts 17, verses 22-31 and it features the newly minted evangelist Paul. Here, Paul is telling the Greeks of Athens the unknown God they seek is actually seeking them AND ready to know them as children invited to God’s life through Jesus.

So both stories feature rescue missions, like that of “The Martian”. And to me, all three stories resonate with me in extraordinary ways. First, I appreciate that all three stories are offered to us as ways to get help. John’s gospel is written to remind the listeners that no matter how bad things get, God won’t abandon us. The word used in the gospel is ‘orphan’ and the writer promises that God won’t let us become orphans. In this somewhat lonely world of sheltering in place, virtual gatherings and non-contact hugs, we need to hear these words because aloneness is in our everyday practice. But this is not forever. And God says we won’t be left alone.

Second, we are worthy of love and being alive. In “The Martian” other people make amazing sacrifices to help bring the lost astronaut home. In our scripture, again and again we hear that we are worthy as God’s creation to be loved and to return this love to God. Sometimes this world we live in acts as if our place in it is negotiable or at worst, problematic. But the Gospel of love never says anyone is beyond God’s love or less than worthy of grace. There are no exceptions.

Our congregation is called to live by these principles. We are called to remember God has not abandoned us and to reflect this in our lives as worshippers, as family members and as disciples of Jesus the Christ. We are also called to show we believe that ALL are worthy of Love and Grace.



That no one is beyond redemption and the fruits of it including safety, healing and grace.

This week, I hope you will join us in the activities that mark the lives of active disciples, even as we practice in some new ways.

We will be honoring the graduates in our midst, so please help us lift them up.

We will be looking at ways that we can open our congregation back up for worship and for the community groups that use our building.

We will be considering the ways that we can reach out to our community and support the communities greatest needs in childcare going forward.

We are providing group calls and bible studies and covenant groups each week so our church can continue growing as a community in faith and love.

We may be called “Resident Aliens” in the scripture, but by no means should that mean we feel alone. If you or anyone you love is seeking conversation, contact or just being heard, please let me know as well. I’d be very happy to talk with you or your loved ones.

Peace in Christ, fellow travelers. Things may look strange now, but the God of love is still calling us home. I’m glad to be with you on this journey.

With thanks, Pastor Brian