

Dear brothers and sisters of the Solid Rock Association,

When I was first charged with writing this year's circular letter, I feared failure. I feel like the least of all of you but through prayer and reflection I have found strength because I am truly blessed. God has taken the life I thought I wanted and turned it into the life I needed. God has presented me with opportunities that I don't deserve and has rewarded me beyond measure. For these reasons I write to you with a hope that the world just doesn't seem to possess, for I trust in God.

No matter if you are a preacher, a deacon, a sister shouting His praises or someone simply filling your seat in your church, you must trust in God. It seems that such a task would be so simple. To say you trust God is one thing but to live through trusting Him is something else entirely. Living through trust in God blesses your works, and as a servant of God, we must work to show this world our faith and trust. For we read in the Book of James 2:20 "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

Over the past years we have witnessed a very volatile time in our short history here on earth. We have witnessed profound loss of freedoms, loved ones, jobs, wealth and confidence of our great nation. With loss comes pain, with pain comes despair. We can suffer despair and can observe it but we as Christians know that the worst has already been suffered.

Jesus Christ took upon a body of flesh and came to this earth to suffer the greatest of despairs because He knew that we would reach these points in our lives. He knew that He was going to call your loved one's home before you were ready, knew that you would face afflictions at what seems to you an untimely manner, and He knew the world was going to try and snatch you from His embrace. He knew you could not save yourself and therefore became the perfect sacrifice. Not only was Jesus Christ our savior, but He delivered us from the spiritual pain that despair brings with a hope that can only be achieved through trust in His ways.

We read in Proverbs 3:5 through 6 "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." I ask of all us, to remember to lean not on our own understanding and to honor the Father in our daily lives.

We are preaching and praising through a worldwide pandemic. The virus that is ravaging our lands was not wanted nor asked for, but it is here amongst us all the same. It spreads at a rapid pace and takes away from us the most vulnerable. Let's take these times to realize that sin acts in the same manner. Sin is not wanted nor asked for but is here amongst us all the same. But as my season of loving sin ended, I found something that was more contagious and more fulfilling than any virus, vaccine, or medicine this physical world has to offer. Salvation! Salvation is free to those who want it and although we can not save anyone, our works can lead men and women of this world to a better life, and one filled with purpose.

Brothers and sisters of the Solid Rock Association, I feel truly blessed for this opportunity and charge you have laid upon me. Thank you to the Pilgrims Prayer church for hosting such a wonderful occasion. I want to thank all the brothers and sisters of the association for once again showing this world where we stand. I truly feel within my own heart that this is where God wants us to be and has blessed us with an association to work from. I am truly thankful that one day when my life in this world has faded, my children, grandchildren, and generations to come can come back to this letter and know that above all things I am a servant of the most high and almighty God.

Not only is the circular letter customary, but it is also a great opportunity to once again serve the man who first served me. As you have charged me, I would like to charge you as well, to trust in God above all things. To serve through trusting God so that one day you may lead someone to this most Holy of experience. So that your children, siblings, parents, and friends can see how God truly works and that is through His precious creations. I love all of you dearly and thank you once again for this opportunity to grow and serve my father. I would like to leave you with the words from Apostille Paul in the book of Romans 13:8 "Owe no man anything, but to love one another, for He hath loveth another hath fulfilled the law". I love you all and the best has yet come for those who trust in the Father.

Your brother in Christ,

Shadrach Newsome