

## Reflections On The Past Year And What We Know

I have read reflections on what happened starting last March. For some people the beginning started with the great toilet paper shortage, others the cancellation of all the basketball games and March Madness. A few congregations cancelled their services due to the governor's request. For Regena and I, it was the events of March 14<sup>th</sup> and the next seven days. Her brother, Mark Thompson, passed away on March 14<sup>th</sup>. I preached on March 15<sup>th</sup> and the next day we flew to Phoenix. On the way there the airports were still "normal" with a good number of people traveling and the planes was typically full. We received our drinks and peanuts which is again typical for such flights.

In Phoenix the restaurants were closed to indoor dining and there were food shortages. Two of Regena's sisters with their husbands flew out there and we stayed in Mark's house. We commented how Mark had just gone to the grocery store and stocked the house with food. Little did he know he was preparing it for us. I paid six dollars for a gallon of milk and other items were impossible to find. Funeral homes were shutting down so we only viewed Mark's body before flying back home. We came back on Thursday partly because the fear of airline travel stopping was real.

Meanwhile the governor of Kentucky ordered restaurants and many businesses closed. Churches were closed due the pandemic as were 'non-essential businesses.'" Walmart was open on a limited basis and of course masks was mandatory. For about two months our services at Lilac Road, as was the case with many congregations, were conducted on line.

May started to see the restrictions lifted and somethings opened up. Churches started meeting in their buildings on a limited basis. Eventually our services returned to their normal times. Members have been in and out of quarantine with some it has been multiple times. Family members have been sick and some have passed away due to COVID19. As a nation we lost over half a million people due to the virus, businesses have gone bankrupt, some Christians become spiritually weak and have fallen away.

Here we are a year later, hopefully things will improve and the pandemic will be behind us soon. One word that keeps coming to mind is “knowledge.” The very word “science” means to know, it is the quest for knowledge, for truth.

We make decisions based on one of two things. First, what we believe to be true. Such belief may be true or false, it may be misguided or proper. It might be based on traditions handed down to us, what we have been taught, or studied for ourselves. However, we make our decisions on what we believe to be true. Second, emotionally we might be compelled to make certain decisions. Anger, love, fear, and desire are powerful and can mislead or enable us.

There are certain things we, i.e., doctors and scientists now know which would have been useful a year ago. Primarily the treatment and prevention of the spread of COVID19. There are many diseases which a hundred years ago were life threatening but today are easily treated. One day COVID19 may very well be in that number.

Let us make spiritual application with this word “knowledge.”

That all “knowledge” is really knowledge. Just because we believe something to be true does not make it so. God allows us the freedom to believe what we want. “And for this reason, God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,” (2 Thessalonians 2:11). False teachers can lead us away from God’s word. Hence, we need to study God’s word in order to discern truth from falsehood.

It is our task to increase our knowledge of God’s word, to be good students, ‘rightly dividing the word of God” (2 Timothy 2.15) Knowledge is one thing Paul prayed the church at Colossae would increase in, “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:9-10). Twice he uses the word knowledge in our passage. He saw their spiritual growth being linked with their understanding and application of the inspired word.

To the church at Ephesus, Paul stated how they would receive such knowledge. “How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ).” (Ephesians 3:3-4).

Knowledge must be combined with love. In fact, Paul points out that part of knowledge is learning about true love. He speaks of this when dealing with idols and the eating of things sacrificed to them. “Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.” (1 Corinthians 8:1). Later on Paul writes, “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:2). Part of knowledge (knowing idols do not exist) is being able to apply such knowledge with those who did not have this understanding (love). In other words, don’t use your knowledge as a weapon but as a tool of love.

Knowledge not only comes from study; it comes from application. The slogan “Just Do It” rings true. What good is knowledge without application?

Let us be diligent in seeking true knowledge, loving it, and applying it. –  
Dennis Tucker