

## Various Thoughts During Our Quarantine Week

It may sound good; you have to stay isolated for at five days and if the symptoms disappear you can go out wearing a mask for 5 more days. After all, it is hot out side and who hasn't at one time or another wished they could just sit back and relax for a while? Here I am, three days into our isolation and about ready to go crazy. Days one and 2 were spent laying around and not feeling good, in fact, getting comfortable was impossible as my body, including my lungs, hurt. But now I am feeling a little better and I dislike being inactive.

Here's some thoughts, so far, from this week.

My Sunday mornings have been the same routine for over thirty-five years. I get up, shower, look over my notes for Bible Class and/ AM sermon, get "my preaching clothes" on, and leave for the church building. The break in this routine was really hard. Due to her exposer to us, Hope stayed home also. Regena felt worse than I, and spent the morning getting rest. Both Hope and I got dressed in our "church clothes", found a sermon on line. Hope made the comment about it being good this did not seem natural. Perhaps with many of us the shutdown in 2020 alone in insolation made staying at home easier than going to services and to a point it became "natural." Staying home should never seem natural to a Christian. Yes, there are circumstances where one misses services but those are the exception rather than the rule. As Hebrews says, "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." (10/24-25) Our assemblies are important for our spiritual well-being. We are encouraged by one another, we worship together, grow closer to each other, and have a relationship with one another. This is what the word "fellowship" means, a common bond, association, and working together. Christians grow best out of isolation.

We should never find it easier to miss services than to attend. I am afraid many will be lost due to the spiritual apathy which seems to have developed due to 2020.

Another thought is how blessed I have been to preach these last thirty-five plus years. Like all men, I realize my time here on earth is limited, and I have tried to do my best each and every time in filling the pulpit. Such is true no matter one's age or health. Just about every preacher has a lesson titled "If This Was My Last Sermon" the truth is it is always your last sermon until the next one. Whether giving

an invitation, teaching a class, waiting on the Lord's Supper, leading a prayer, or singing praises to the Lord, we should do it as if it could be our last time. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going." (Ecclesiastes 9:10). The time to do your best is not "someday" but today.

My last thought is connected to a headline I saw about the Zac Brown band. One of the bands founding members, John Driskell Hopkins, disclosed he has ALS. Late 2019 he noticed some problems with walking and his hands. However, due to the shutdown in 2020 it took a long time before he could be tested and diagnosed. His symptoms seem to be moving at a slow rate and he hopes to perform for a number of years. This hit a cord with me due to one of our members having ALS and passing away in March of 2020. One thought is how Steve Schultz set a great example for all of us as he loved being a member of the Lord's body. He taught me to not complain. Going back to an earlier point, he taught me to value each and every service we can attend. One positive with having a long-term illness is having the time to realize our blessings, the time to take care of those things which need to be done before facing God, and to say things which need to be said. As Paul wrote, "Take great care, then, how you live--not unwisely but wisely, 16 Making the most of every opportunity; for these are evil days." (Ephesians 5:15-16 TCNT) The NKJV says to "walk circumspectly" which means carefully, fully alert where we are stepping. Noting makes one more aware than thinking about one's responsibility to God.

How are you walking today? Are you using it to its fullest potential? Are you ready to face God in judgment? Today is your day as you will decide how you will live it. "For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Corinthians 6:2) -- Dennis Tucker