



Lord's Day Worship || April 4, 2020

We're all in danger of losing our spiritual short-term memory, especially in these times that are chaotic and uncertain. Our short-term memory is our internal compass, and when we lose it, we lose our bearings and forget where we've been, where we're going, and even who we are.

Seeing life through the gospel is essential to our spiritual short-term memory for our ability to orient ourselves to our surroundings and align our peace, purpose, and passion. It's what allows us to make consistent and coherent decisions that, cumulatively, keep us moving in the direction of true flourishing. This is why it is critical that pastors, especially in times like this, act as their people's short-term memory.

I found myself getting completely disoriented recently. Transitioning our very communal, fellowship driven church to online has gone well, but man, I'm fighting what I would call a type of leadership fatigue. It seems like things are constantly changing. Just as soon as I think I have a handle on something a new press release comes out. I have found my hopes for worshiping on Easter shot down with another "shelter in place" extension. What else can go wrong. It's been chaotic, anxious, and confusing, to say the least.

It wasn't just a disorienting week for me as a pastor, though. You also have been caught up in the same storm of confusing information, competing voices, and growing anxiety about where this pandemic is going and how it will impact each of us and those we love. You might be finding your joy sapped by anxiety, your hope by fear, and your energy by the constant challenge of an ever-changing landscape. In times like this, it is especially easy to lose sight of our true north — the love of God expressed to us in Christ.

As your pastor, I recognize that it is my holy and solemn duty to function as your short-term memory. I am called to remind you where to set your mind and how to direct your hearts. Paul constantly did this with his churches. In Colossians 3, as Paul reminds the believers:

Set your minds on things that are above . . . For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory (Colossians 3:2-4).

With brilliant brevity, Paul resets the believers' internal compass (and ours) with three points that remind them who they are, where they are, and where they are going to help them orient themselves to the gospel.

First, Paul reminds us that our greatest debt has been paid. He tells the Colossians "they have died." In any other context, this would be horrible news, but Paul is reminding his children of the beautiful comfort of the doctrine of imputation. Even though we committed cosmic treason and were guilty and deserving death, Jesus died our death. He willingly became our substitute and gave his innocent life to pay the full price we owed justice. Our sin was imputed (credited) to him and he died under its penalty. He took my sin and died my death, and the condemned, sinful person I was died with him.

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Friends, your greatest debt has been paid! Let this incredibly good news sink in: You have been set free from your slavery to earning and performing and worrying! The price has been paid by Jesus for you!

Secondly, Paul reminds us that our greatest problem has been solved. He said, not only have you died with Christ, but now “your life is hidden with Christ in God.” This is the second profoundly good implication of imputation: not only has your sin, shame, and guilt been imputed to Jesus and paid for in his death, but his resurrection life and righteousness has been imputed to you. That means you are covered, at this very moment, in the security of Christ’s “indestructible life” (Hebrews 7:16). Your life is hidden with Christ in God!

Your greatest problem has been solved! There are thousands of problems we are going to have to deal with during this season of crisis, but remind yourself of this truth every single day: Your life is hidden with Christ in God! As vulnerable as you feel, as anxious as the world becomes, you are secure, loved, and protected! No matter what assails you today, nothing can touch this truth.

Thirdly, Paul reminds us that our greatest blessing has already been given. Paul tells us that when Christ appears, we also “will appear with him in glory.” This remarkable statement tells us a few profound truths. We aren’t just forgiven and declared right by God. The righteousness that has been imputed to us by God extends beyond just a record of obedience to the very glory of Christ’s nature. When Jesus appears (is made visible, is revealed at his second coming) we also will be revealed with him in glory! To share in Christ’s glory means much more than simply sharing in his radiant beauty. It means that we will share in the riches and honor of his reign. We are actually co-heirs of the kingdom with our King (Romans 8:17). There could be no greater honor or blessing bestowed than this!

Your greatest blessing has already been given! You aren’t yet able to enter the fullness of its goodness, but it is already yours! You are only waiting for Christ to return. We are only stuck in a traffic jam on the way to the wedding feast of the Lamb and the glory of his kingdom. Let’s not get discouraged or distracted by the noise!

- Our greatest debt has already been paid.
- Our greatest problem has already been solved.
- Our greatest blessing has already been given.

May we all reorient ourselves to these truths moment by moment.

With much love and affection,

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“Staying Faithful to Jesus” - 2 Corinthians 11:1-15

Call to Worship: Psalm 34:1-3, 8

Leader: I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Family: My soul makes its boast in the LORD;

Leader: let the humble hear and be glad.

Family: Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!

Leader: Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!

Together: Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

Song of Adoration – Psalm 34 (CHOOSE WHICH VERSION TO USE!)

Sing the first song on the YouTube or Spotify play list. A link to the lyrics is found at the website.

Prayers of the People

Spend a few moments praying with and for each other, our community, our church, our missionaries (Ambrose and Camiola Families), our nation, and the world.

Sermon

Watch the teaching video from Pastor Paul. Here's YouTube Channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMH1wOLwfQUI6Xydt0HQP_Q/

Songs of Response

Sing the next two songs on the YouTube or Spotify play list.

Sermon Discussion

See the next page for discussion questions.

Giving of Our Offerings

Remember to continue growing in your cheerful giving. Here are flexible ways you can contribute during this time: <https://www.mdchurch.us/giving>

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was one or two things that really jumped out to you?
2. What are influences that cause people to drift from Christianity? What are influences in your life that cause you to not make your life all about Jesus?
3. Pastor Paul said, *"Pastors should be concerned for the spiritual condition of the church. Not just concerned. That's too mild. They should be jealous. My job is to walk you down the aisle to Jesus, and I'm very concerned — jealous even — about what could mess this up."*

This is one of the reasons why Missio Dei Church is so emphatic on being careful about who serves as elders and deacons for our church. We want to see you stay the course and have the joy of presenting you to Jesus! In light of the Apostle Paul's warnings and his example of having a divine jealousy for the church in Corinth, and how your elders and deacons are to be jealous for YOU, how can you be praying for our church leadership during this season?

4. The gospel of your life and the goal of our church is that stay faithful to Jesus. Pastor Paul gave two ways to do that. They were 1) cling to Jesus and 2) be on guard against false teaching.
 - a) What are ways this week that you can long after him, make him your greatest joy, find all of your satisfaction in him and cultivate your love for him? Give some real practical, executable ways of clinging to Jesus.
 - b) What are some false teachings that you need to guard your heart and mind from? What lies are they telling you about God? About yourself? (Remember, these false teachings don't have to be a televangelist or prosperity gospel preacher. It could be what you are listening to on Netflix, a movie, podcasts, or that book on your nightstand.)
5. Who are some people that you can pray for by name who once professed the faith and has left it? Who are some friends or family that are on the brink of drifting from Jesus? Pray for them.

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