

Looking for the Light

a devotional from
ST. CHARLES AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Tuesday, March 24, 2020

by Chris Hazlaris

Read:

Colossians 1:9-14 New International Version (NIV)

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,[a] 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, 12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you[b] to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins!

Reflect:

What an interesting reading to find in the Lectionary this day! As I poured through the “readings of the day” –looking in particular seeking for a Word that would speak to the anxiety many individuals are feeling right now—I came ironically across this text from Paul’s letter to the Colossians, which exudes a tone of not struggle but of steady triumph and the normalcy of divine presence.

God has already won! What a Word! In the middle of this season of medical fear, economic worry, and (for those of you like me who love routine) powerlessness, could it be possible that God is not only here, but “winning” – pervasive, confident, and assuring that Love has the last Word? One of the most moving things about the Christian faith to me is that in our weakness, God is stronger, and the past week (as I have reconnected with old friends, seen neighbors on their porches for their first time, witnessed families spending significantly greater time together, and experienced a newfound appreciation for the outdoors), it is hard not to maintain that the Holy Spirit has been creatively thriving in the midst of chaos.

Of course, this reality does not minimize pain. Many individuals and families are losing financial stability and jobs. Isolation is exacerbating the underlying mental health issues of many. And what about those for whom “home” is not a safe place, persons suffering from domestic violence and spousal abuse? Thankfully, we serve a God who does not only persist, heal, and “win” in the darkness, but also one great and humble enough to sit and struggle with us when it feels like WE are losing. And that’s why I love verse 9. For those of you for whom this time feels like a living hell, know that “we have not stopped praying for you” – we being the church, the great cloud of saints and witnesses in heaven, and the God we serve who is thankfully so much bigger than this whole mess. For that we can rejoice always!

Ask:

It is truly amazing that this prayer attesting to God's victory and the power of love and community comes at a time in which Paul almost certainly was imprisoned in Rome. How can you best work to see God as alive and active in the middle of your "imprisonment" in this quarantine time? What communities or individuals are you called to bring peace to? What habits/reminders allow you to bring the peace of God's goodness to yourself?

Pray:

For our closing prayer, I ask that you listen to this hymn written by John Ylvisaker. Please pay attention to the lyrics and feel and know the goodness of our Lord in them, a Lord whose light can never be contained or restrained by the fallenness of our world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOMRa8FXm38>

To send us your prayer requests, click on [this link](#) and our church staff and prayer group will add you to our weekly prayer list. You will have the option to specify your request as confidential.

If you would like to contribute to our daily devotionals, please email Pastor Sarah, sarah@scapc.org.

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