



PITMAN ROAD
CHURCH OF CHRIST

May 3, 2020
Volume 2, Issue 5
500 Pitman Road
Sewell, NJ 08080
856-589-1500
www.pitmanroadcoc.com

PITMAN ROAD POST

Our Mission

Meet others where they are and together be transformed into the image of Christ.

A PEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

THE WORLD CHANGES, GOD DOESN'T



Joey Peacher
Preaching Minister

The Black Death was a devastating global epidemic of bubonic plague that struck Europe and Asia in the mid-1300s. The plague arrived in Europe in October 1347, when 12 ships from the Black Sea docked at the Sicilian port of Messina. People gathered on the docks were met with a horrifying surprise: Most sailors aboard the ships were dead, and those still alive were gravely ill and covered in black boils that oozed blood and pus. Sicilian authorities hastily ordered the fleet of “death ships” out of the harbor, but it was too late: Over the next five years, the Black Death would kill more than 20 million people in Europe—almost one-third of the continent’s population. You might think such a devastating and oh-so-medieval pestilence has little to do with our 21st-century world, but you’d be wrong: the modern impact of the Black Death is evident all around us, from our hospitals to our Halloween costumes. The Black Death gave us the image of the grim reaper, affected today’s property laws, sparked the Protestant Reformation, and revolutionized hospitals.

Because they did not understand the biology of the disease, many people believed that the Black Death was a kind of divine punishment—retribution for sins against God. By this logic, the only way to overcome the plague was to win God’s forgiveness. Some people believed that the way to do this was to purge their communities of heretics and other troublemakers—so, for example, many thousands of Jews were massacred in 1348 and 1349. Some people coped with the terror and uncertainty of the Black Death epidemic by lashing out at their neighbors; others coped by turning inward and fretting about the condition of their own souls. Some upper-class men joined processions of flagellants that traveled from town to town and engaged in public displays of penance and punishment: They would beat themselves and one another with heavy leather straps studded with sharp pieces of metal while the townspeople looked on.

I don’t know how Covid-19 will change our society. There has been speculation. Already, there are changes. Will they remain when this is over? Heightened awareness of contagion, working from home, changes in public transportation, perhaps a shift from large shopping venues to smaller businesses, how we greet one another, how office spaces are designed, how cities are planned, more homeschooling and support for it, more online interaction. There are people now who view this pandemic as divine punishment for our idolatry, our greed, our immoral and unethical way of life. Perhaps it is. God is a jealous God, who desires we love only Him with all that we are. (Nah 1:2, Luke 10:27) Perhaps this is another opportunity to seek God and show God’s love to a world of darkness. (Phil. 2:15) Perhaps the Hebrew prophets, like Hosea, saw a world that repeatedly needs to be broken down before being fully restored. Perhaps God allows this cursed world to break us down in hope of us relying on Him to rebuild us into something more beautiful. Only God knows.

I know that we do not need to win God’s forgiveness. We do not need to beat up ourselves or lash out at our neighbors or blame leaders for what this cursed world has thrown at us. God’s forgiveness has already been won by Christ on the cross. He has thrown our sins into the depths of the ocean, buried forever beneath the waves. (Micah 7:19) All of creation groans for a time when sickness and death are no more, and God can use whatever COVID-19 throws at us for our own good (Romans 8:28). Changes come and go. Society changes. Black Death did it. COVID-19 is doing it. God’s love and transformative power does not change. I have no idea what good will come from this pandemic or what changes will remain when it’s over, but I do trust God to work and fight for me and I know that He never changes.

(“Black Death” from History.com & Perry, Kellen: “14 Ways the Black Death Directly Shaped the Way We Live Now”)

FROM DANIEL'S DEN

"HEY DAN, HOW ARE YOU WITH THE GOVERNMENT SHUTTING DOWN CHURCHES?"



Dan Cooper
Connections Minister

First, never in a million years would I have guessed that the US government would shut down churches. After all, we are "the land of the free and the home of the brave." But, believe it or not, here we all are in the midst of a time when the government is saying you may not have church!

Second, the writer of the book Ecclesiastes says, "there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecc. 1:9). So, this is not the first time Christians have been forbidden the right to worship. For the greater part of the first, second, and third centuries, Christian worship was forbidden. Therefore, Christians worshiped in secret when they worshipped. As a matter of fact, there are dozens of countries in the world right now, today, that forbid Christians from worshipping.

Third, while it may surprise you to hear me say this, "I am OK with this government shutting down churches at this point in time. (Please keep reading!) If the government were only saying to churches, "you may not have public meetings," I would not be OK. But, since they are closing athletic competitions (local, college, and professional) countless stores and restaurants, along with multiple other businesses, I do not feel persecuted by our government. You may or may not agree with me, but the current policies do not persecute churches anymore than they pick on countless other places/organizations where large groups of people typically assemble.

Finally, the government shut down of churches has forced us to get creative. The shut down has forced us to think outside the box. The shut down has forced us to rethink the way we do church. And that is good. The shutdown has forced us to re-examine our traditions! The shut down is forcing us to separate man-made traditions from biblical doctrine.

Not only that, by streaming our Sunday services, most of our regular members are involved in Sunday worship, and we have tapped into an entirely new audience. There are people from other parts of the world, and there are people from right here in South Jersey that are joining us for our assembly times that never did that before. And that is very good!

How long will the shutdown go on? None of us really know for sure. Undoubtedly, it will continue until June, July, or maybe even August. But when we do meet again in person, what a grand day that will be! There will be much rejoicing. Kind of like our first day in heaven! Eagerly anticipating our first day back at church, and eagerly anticipating our first day in heaven together. Wondering which of those days will come first?

In the meantime, I am reaffirming my belief in the knowledge that "for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called in according to his purpose." Romans 8:28

Much love for you, and eager anticipation together, **Dan**

Romans
8:28

AND WE KNOW

that all things work together for good to them that love God
to them who are the called according to his purpose.

THANK YOU

TO ALL ESSENTIAL WORKERS
FOR KEEPING US SAFE!



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Ministers

Joey Peacher, Preaching Minister.....jpeacher@cochrist.org
.....979-599-4590

Dan Cooper, Connections Minister..... dcooper@cochrist.org
.....856-589-4197

Office Staff

Dottie Grillo dgrillo@cochrist.org

Katelyn Ikeorha..... kikeorha@cochrist.org

Elders

Mike Broylesmbroyles777@gmail.com

Horatio Fentonhoratiofenton@comcast.net

Brian Holdenbchandle94@hotmail.com

Garth Hutchinson609-414-2606
.....grth.hutchinson@gmail.com

Mike Lazarteacher.engineer@comcast.net

John Peoples609-617-7451

Dave Perine davidt.perine@comcast.net