

Be in Touch With the Source

The United States is experiencing a period of isolation as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Our community has adopted a Stay-at-Home ordinance, asking people to remain in their homes except trips to the grocery store, pharmacy and essential destinations only. This is necessary to slow the transmission of the virus.

This comes at an important season in the life of the faith community. Ash Wednesday was the start of the Lenten season, just a few weeks before the coronavirus began its impact on our country. Lent is usually a time when people attend additional worship services and often step up their own home bible reading and devotional time. Because of the national and local guidelines restricting gatherings attendance at public worship is not likely. Thankfully, many churches are able to offer streaming services to their members and Facebook posts include inspirational messages to help us deal with this crisis.



I recently read a very timely Max Lucado devotion about simplifying worship (from And the Angels Were Silent.). It suggested “getting rid of the clutter” in our lives to better focus on our personal spiritual development. Our pre-coronavirus lifestyle was “cluttered,” diminishing time for family and to be in the Word. Because of the stay-at-home directive we now have the opportunity to prioritize faith and family. Attending public worship led by the pastor and Sunday School led by competent lay leaders is the foundation for understanding how God’s Word applies to our life, and is still available on-line. Spiritual leaders provide wisdom to scripture. We can build on that foundation in our homes. We have direct access to the source – the Bible. We may have previously relied on Sunday morning as our only interaction with the source. Home bible study opens up an entirely new dimension to our faith. To paraphrase Max Lucado, Jesus is the greatest teacher and has the “final word on Bible teaching.” God the Father is the one who blesses our efforts. Yes, we need preachers, teachers, elders and counselors.” Now is a great time to step up our own individual reading and study. Do you feel inadequate? Type into your browser your spiritual question and the internet will direct you to articles with faith-based wisdom. Even though we normally worship and learn in a group setting, faith is an individual relationship with God.

As we approach Easter and start reading scriptural accounts of the crucifixion we will read about the temple curtain being torn, when Jesus Christ died on the cross. *At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split (Matthew 27:51).* According to Professor Daniel Gurtner (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), “The meaning of the curtain’s tearing is wrapped up in its old-covenant function to separate the Israelites from the direct presence of God. Because Jesus has died on the cross, the gates to God’s presence are open, and the age of the new covenant has dawned. To explain further, the veil separated the ‘holy of holies’ from where others could see and go.” In old covenant times only the High Priest could enter the holy of holies, and he acted as our intercessor to God. The tearing of the curtain gave each of us direct access to the source -- God. Jesus becomes our intercessor at the time of final judgement, but in everyday life, we can pray directly to God.

Max Lucado’s concluded his devotion on “Simplify Your Faith” with something that really applies to this time of “stay-at-home:” “You have a Bible? You can study. You have a heart? You can pray. You have a mind? You can think!”

This is a great opportunity to connect with your family and reach out to your neighbors. Step up your individual relationship with God through reading, studying, prayer and thinking.

Question: What personal relationships are you improving during this coronavirus pandemic?

Prayer: Most gracious Heavenly Father. During this time of isolation let us take the time to enhance our spiritual life through study of Your Word and through our personal prayer time with You. Amen.