

“Thinking Positive?”

In the past few days our minds have been flooded with a barrage of information concerning the progress of the corona virus within our nation. Turn on TV, it's corona virus; visit with people, it's corona virus; try to work, it's corona virus; think about going to the store, it's corona virus. Reading this devotion, it's . . . corona virus again? It seems to never end!

People are striving to be positive with light-hearted jokes and creative videos which solicit laughter. Leaders in government are trying their best to reassure everyone that things will get back to normal once we weather this storm. Hallmark is showing Christmas movies and some people are decorating with Christmas lights in an effort to make people feel good in the midst of minds cluttered with corona virus thinking. These are ways in which the world strives to find some kind of positive thinking for the moment.

In Philippians 4:8 we are told: *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.* Maybe your temptation when reading these words is to say sarcastically, “Whatever! How can I think about such things with so much negative information thrown at me from every direction of life . . . or death these days!” *Finally . . .* at the end of the day you may feel emotionally, physically, mentally and even spiritually drained.

The apostle Paul even had the confidence to follow up these words in Philippians 4:9 by telling us: *What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.* So, what have you *learned and received and heard and seen* in Paul. When you open God's Word and read his letters you encounter a sinner who lived in a world of sin just as we, facing death each day, whether by persecution, physical illness, through an accident, or . . . whatever, even a virus.

However, you also encounter a sinner who lived ***with . . . the God of peace*** by faith in Jesus. Jesus did much more than lead people to positive thinking in an effort to distract you from facing your mortality for a moment. He gives sinners the ability to live ***with . . . the God of peace*** by His suffering, death and resurrection, even with mortality looming on the horizon of every day, all the time, virus or no virus. Thus, Paul confessed earlier in his letter to the Christians in Philippi: *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain* (cf. Philippians 1:21).

Thus, as our minds get filled with reports and discussions about death tolls and ways to avoid more death, we go to the source which reveals what is eternally *true . . . honorable . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . commendable*, excellent and *worthy of praise*. We fill our minds with God's written Word, the Bible. There the Holy Spirit brings us to Jesus in Whom God's promise from Isaiah 26:3-4 find its fulfillment, not just at the end of the day but all day long: *You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.* The God of peace is with you in Christ!

— Pastor