

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

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To: My dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

According to my calculations, we are in week six of “lock down” in terms of the present COVID-19 pandemic. At the last Session Meeting, which was held by WebEx, Session Clerk Rob Allan read the minutes our March 10th meeting held in the library at the church. There was not a single mention in those minutes of the coronavirus and what was shortly going to overtake us. By the next Sunday, June 22nd, regular Sunday worship was suspended and we started meeting for worship in a whole new way.

Our topic for this Sunday is Hope. Human beings always need hope. Life cannot be sustained when all hope is lost. The writer of the Book of Lamentations lived in a time when things were not going well. He was not faced with a pandemic, but he described it as a time of “affliction”. He alludes to his “affliction” and spoke of himself as a man “**deprived of peace**” (Lamentations 3:17) because of the catastrophic events that faced his country. Understandably, he was depressed. Listen to him describe his outlook at this time.

**19 I remember my affliction and my wandering,
the bitterness and the gall.**

**20 I well remember them,
and my soul is downcast within me.**

Who can blame the man? Jesus in Luke 20 spoke of a coming time with **26 men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth...** That's what happens when people lose hope. Their hearts fail them.

Fortunately for us, the writer of Lamentations was a man of faith who, despite his afflictions, was able to see God's hand in what was happening. And so he continues:

“... a place to belong!”



21 Yet this I call to mind
and therefore I have hope:

22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.

23 They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

24 I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;
therefore I will wait for him."

25 The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him,
to the one who seeks him;

26 it is good to wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.

Hope is important, but it is not just hope in anything that will do. Some people have hope but it is a groundless hope. This hope was grounded in the Rock of Ages.

Here is the basis of real hope.

22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.

23 They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

A worthwhile exercise would be for you to memorize these verses. It will be time well spent.

I want to point out one thing here. Notice that the word "LORD" is spelled in upper case letters – in capitals in the text. You will find this in most translations of the Bible. It translates the Hebrew word YAHWEH which was the sacred name for God in the Old Testament. It was so sacred that when it was printed in the Hebrew text it was written without vowels and was not even pronounced.

There are many gods but only one true God in all the world. That is YAHWEH, the God of Israel, the One we Call LORD. He is the Sovereign LORD of all creation. When we put our faith in him we have true hope – even in times such as these, when we have no idea what our world will look like when we emerge from this crisis, **22** Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. **23** They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Your servant in Christ,
Rev. Stephen Dunkin

"... a place to belong!"