

I had heard in the news the other day that a Costco in California was experiencing a flood of panicked customers frantically stocking up on household items to try to prepare for the possible threat of a coronavirus epidemic. The air was electric with fear and anxiety. Costco had to limit the number of items one customer could take out. People are scared. The Stock Market and Oil Futures are feeling the fear. The Pope has canceled public masses at the Vatican. Even Jeopardy and Wheel of Fortune are temporarily suspending live audiences due to the virus. People are definitely scared.



While caution and concern are certainly called for, I think our upcoming celebration of Easter has something to say about fear.

At Easter, we celebrate the new life God offers us through Jesus. Jesus absorbed all of our self-centered darkness on the cross and, for a spell, it appeared that God was dead. Hope was deflated. The Evil Powers had shouted, "Victory!" Then, suddenly, what was darkness transformed into an explosion of blinding light. God had been sucked through black hole of our ego-driven reality and burst through on the other side, giving birth to a whole new sparkling universe. Jesus simply called it the Kingdom of God.

And you can be a part of it.

Easter invites each of us into a *whole new way of living*. It is living in the confidence that nothing can separate you from the presence of God. It is living in the assurance that death never has the last word. It is traveling an exciting adventure where Jesus is your personal Guide through the twists and turns of day to day living, leading you into deeper experiences of joy and awe. It is living in the peace that your happiness is not the result of your own anxious striving but is a gift to be unwrapped.

And it is learning to live in the embrace of God's love, an enveloping warmth that melts our most persistent fears.

In learning to live in Jesus' Kingdom of God, we discover a seemingly magical realm where our own sensibilities (and fears) are turned upside down. We learn to love ourselves and others without judgment but with a generous clarity that sets everyone free. It's an infectious good which spreads healing and wholeness wherever it is released. It's the unstoppable Surprise of Easter.

So when fear is holding you tightly in its grips, remember you don't have to be its victim. Call out to the Star-Maker and begin to refocus on the radiating Light of His Love shining all around you. Refocus on the faithful Presence of the One Who Loves You Unconditionally, the One who will freely give you the strength and wisdom to get back moving forward again. Refocus to hear the still, small Voice that whispers that you are loved and you are strong.

No matter whether it's a disease or economic worries or relationship meltdowns or whatever, God can dissipate your deepest, most paralyzing fears... if you give him a chance. Easter invites you to let go of worn out, ineffective ways to handle life. Instead, you are invited to a banquet. Jesus sets a table before us with the most exquisite parts of life to experience. And you never, ever have to live life alone ever again. Crazy good? That's God's MO. That's Easter.

A blessed Resurrection Day to you all,

Scott

P.S. Come join us at Lighthouse Church on Easter Sunday for a free Community Breakfast @ 9:30 am and inspiring worship @ 10:30. You don't have to live life alone. Discover new friends and fresh encouragement for living!