

Careline newsletter

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WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THE NEW NORMAL?

Pastor Dennis shares his own thoughts about where we are and where we are going after this past few months of quarantine, civil unrest, and public meeting restrictions. What will the future be for the Church, the Bride of Christ, who has been commanded to not forsake meeting together in a world where some are being commanded not to meet?

Remember back a few months ago this year? Back when the COVID-19 or Coronavirus pandemic shutdown first began? Most of us thought that we would be back to normal after just a few weeks. Now, here we are, having gone through a completely abnormal spring and summer and we're headed into an autumn season that will probably be even stranger. There are so many opinions, so many polarized positions about whether we should meet, or not meet. Should we wear masks everywhere, including our own cars when we drive alone or wear no masks anywhere? You don't meet, you get criticized, you meet and you still get criticized. Some people never want to go out of their houses ever again from fear. Many in the ministry have questions about what the pandemic situation and the fear it induces means for the future of congregational activity. I mean you have some mega pastors on the east coast that have completely shut down and do not plan on meeting back live until some time in 2021. Then you have some pastors that are not supposed to be meeting at all in California and they are pushing the envelope and meeting at risk of being jailed for doing so. I listened to one Catholic Cardinal who is in charge of the parishes in San Francisco and they say the county has limited them to only one person at a time coming into the church to pray. Will the Church ever be normal? Or what will the new normal even look like?

I think we have to come to the realization that for now, and for the foreseeable future, the old normal Church model is gone. It doesn't mean we will never get back to what was considered normal for us, it just means we can't expect it anytime soon and what do we do in the meantime? Or what will even the old normal look like in the future? This is nothing new for the Church. Through the centuries, she has faced many challenges, most of which rivaled anything we are currently experiencing. Whether we like it or not, change comes, change just happens. There was a day, back when I was a boy, when people went to church so regularly, you could earn an attendance award. You only missed being in church if you were deathly ill or out of town. People used to attend church 1-3 times per week on average. Today, people consider themselves faithful, some even going to far as to assume membership automatically if they view an online live stream or even an archived online worship gathering 2 times in a month! There used to be the mindset among churches, "Build it and they will come!" That doesn't work today for the most part. You can build it and many drive right by without a thought of ever attending. Now many are saying we have to build with all the technical aspects in mind first so as to cater to an online service primarily, even before we consider meeting in the flesh. In my opinion, this sounds so impersonal and frankly, horrible to me. I love providing alternatives when people can't be physically present, but to plan a church that is virtual first seems like a terrible future.

The pandemic has torn apart the dreams and aspirations of many business owners and organizations. The future goals, and vision of these organizations as well as their day to day methods of operation have been forever changed. Many businesses have had to rethink, how they operate as a business, how they build their facilities how they train their employees, how they market, etc. I say all this for a couple of reasons:

1) These are people that need to be encouraged and ministered to and now is an opportune time for the church, for the people of God to rise up and be their encouragers, for us to be cheerleaders and supporters. Why? Because Christ can bring a calm in the midst of the storms of life. The pandemic has created a storm in many businesses and individual lives. Many are scared out of their wits of how to live in this world and the future world. They're not sure they can adapt, or that they will make it. As a church, we need to equip ourselves to minister to these people all around us. Negativity and darkness must be overcome by goodness and light.

2) I want us to realize, God is SOVEREIGN! Did you hear that? God is still on the throne, and He was fully aware of this virus, and the fears that it would bring. Nothing surprises Him. We must realize that. God gave us common sense, it's true, but we also have to remember that God did not give us the spirit of fear. Fear drives us to look more inward instead of exploring safe opportunities to impact lives around us. He has called us to be busy about Kingdom work, to be light and salt here and now. Not when there is a vaccine, not when the government tells us that it is ok. Now, no matter what the condition of our world. This command was given to God's people when they were being beaten, killed and jailed for their faith. How do we keep our Kingdom minded tasks in front of us? That is what we should be asking. God didn't call us to set in our basements in fetal positions, afraid, wondering when will it all end. Even when Paul was chained between two guards, he didn't keep silent, he ministered to the Church in letters and he ministered to those in jail and even to the very guards who were holding him. He witnessed to them and lived for Christ right in front of them.

3) We have to realize that the box that we have been ministering within just got all the sides knocked off of it. We still serve the same God we have always served, we have the same Gospel that was established in Genesis, and seen visibly at Calvary's Cross through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and still gives people hope today. We must ask, how we connect people to that same immutable truth that they have always needed and still need in new and innovative ways, some of which have never been used or explored. It is not simply doing everything online in a virtual world, because that is not sustainable in the long run. People need connection with people in the flesh and not only with a digital image. We serve a creative God, and He has designed us to be creative just as He is. Our response to His call should spur us to become even more creative with solutions to the current problem. If the underground Church could function, we too can function and not only survive, but thrive.

4) Scripture tells us in 1 Chronicles 12 about the Sons of Issachar - that they knew the times in which they lived and they knew what to do! These men were out of the box of tradition and in connection with the Spirit of God. Acts 2:17 records Peter teaching that in the last days things are going to show themselves in a different manner. He quoted Old Testament prophecies in Joel and Amos saying that the young men will see visions and your old men will dream dreams. Well, here we are in a time when we need to see visions and dream dreams. Is the Church going to respond accordingly, like the sons of Issachar? I believe we are close to seeing the end times march in to place, it's time to think outside the box, because time is getting shorter and shorter. As Christ shared in the parable in Luke 19:11-13 "Occupy till I come!" We need to be busy, not hiding in our traditions, not hiding in fear, not hiding with our half-destroyed box, but let's get out of the box and dream some new dreams. We need to be on our faces, on our knees asking God to give us new dreams. We know what He gives us He can accomplish and He WILL fulfill.

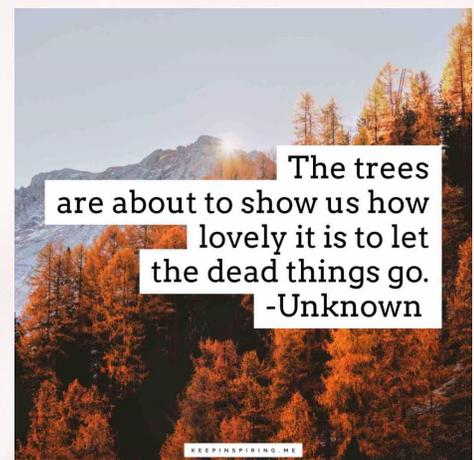
Pondering these things along with you,
Bro. Dennis

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams." ... Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams."

—ACTS 2:17—

"What God says is best, is best, though all the men in the world are against it."

— John Bunyan,
The Pilgrim's Progress



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7:00 PM TruChoice Virtual Banquet Online	2	3 Elisa Garza Carrol Kelly Sue Pharris Julie Shamblin
4 Regular AM Schedule	5 Jack Spurlock	6 CELEBRATE RECOVERY 6:30 PM	7 REGULAR SCHEDULE	8 Ewan Castle 6:30 PM Praise Band Rehearsal	9 Libby May	10 Virginia Kinser  Youth Conference 4 PM—11 PM
11 Kai Sandoval Regular AM Schedule Youth Conference 4 PM—11 PM	12 Albert Uhr	13 Wally Thompson CELEBRATE RECOVERY 6:30 PM	14 Haley Bryson Maria Garcia REGULAR SCHEDULE	15 Nathan Bryson Pete Harris 6:30 PM Praise Band Rehearsal	16 Carrie Smith	17
18 Jim Brewington Regular AM Schedule	19 William Locke	20 CELEBRATE RECOVERY 6:30 PM	21 REGULAR SCHEDULE	22 6:30 PM Praise Band Rehearsal	23	24 Joy Beall
25 Regular AM Schedule	26	27 CELEBRATE RECOVERY 6:30 PM	28 REGULAR SCHEDULE	29 6:30 PM Praise Band Rehearsal	30	31 FALL FEST 2020 TRUNK OR TREAT SUPERHEROES 

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, October 10—Sunday, October 11

Youth Conference in LaVernia, TX. \$10 per student. We'll be enjoying a time of worship, teaching, games and fellowship. See Randy McDaris for more information or contact Randy at 210-557-2151 or randy@calvarysanmarcos.com



Saturday, October 31—6:00—8:00 PM

Contactless TRUNK or TREAT. Our theme is SUPERHEROES! We'll be celebrating TRUTH, JUSTICE, and ESSENTIAL WORKERS including First Responder Heroes. We'll be helping the kids of our community enjoy a safe Halloween alternative, see some of their favorite superheroes and introduce them to the HERO of all heroes, Jesus. Sign up to host a car at Kiosk #1 in the auditorium.

WHO OWNS WHAT?

In my occupation as an insurance agent, I often run into cases that can become very complicated. For instance, when insuring a large ranch, I often run into the situation of multiple entities having ownership in the property and/or the operation of the ranch. These multiple entities might be limited liability companies (LLC), family limited partnerships (FLP), trusts, estates, corporations and so on. So, the challenge lies in managing the insurance properly so that all involved entities have coverage against property damage or liability claims. In tackling any problem, the process should always begin with taking an inventory. I always need to know "who owns what..." Who owns the land? Who owns the dwellings? The barns? The equipment? The vehicles? The livestock? Once you know who owns what, then the next questions are who operates the ranch? Is it leased out to another entity? Is there any farming? Is there any hunting? I cannot protect and manage the risk properly unless I know the answers to these questions

This thought of "who owns what" leads to directing the same question toward ourselves. Are you the owner of all your worldly possessions such as your car, your house, your bank account, your retirement account... your golf clubs? (ouch!)

The Holy Word of God declares in Psalm 24:1 that "the whole earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord." It even goes on to say that all those who dwell here belong to the Lord. The Word declares further in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 that "you are not your own." So, if we are not the owner than who are we? Let's face it folks, as a born-again believer we are servants. We are servants put in charge of managing what the owner has given us. (Luke 6:10-13) Another question as we take inventory of ourselves is to ask "what kind of manager am I..." Are you following God's direction given to us in Proverbs 3:9? Are you honoring God with everything you own? Are you honoring God by giving Him the first and the best? (ouch again!) God in His infinite wisdom and grace gives to us so that we can give to others through His kingdom work. God uses people like me and you.

I leave you with God's message found in 1 Corinthians 12:4-7. God's various gifts are handed out everywhere, but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere, but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's expressions of power are in action everywhere, but God Himself is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is; everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. So, my fellow believer, let's strive to be good and faithful servants, managing the gifts God has given us in order to promote and grow the Kingdom of God.

May the Lord Jesus bless you,
John Clarke

