

Maybe it's him we need. I need Jesus; that's all!

In the bible plagues are always a call to repentance; that's change. That's Jesus urgently and forcefully grabbing my attention because I've been madly going in the wrong direction, and I haven't been listening to him, because I've been deceived.

Please don't hear 'repentance' as saying your bad and need to change. No, repentance is a wonderful opportunity to come close to Jesus. To become aware of that which is actually robbing you of the love and affection Jesus has given his life for you to live in and enjoy.

The stakes are high; why else would the God who loves us go to such an extreme. He's shaking the whole world!

I think I might be missing what God is trying to say if all I want

is to go back to how things were before the pandemic. Please, no! Please be inviting Jesus to send the Spirit to lead you in repentance. To open your mind to the lies that have been robbing you of life. Invite Jesus to speak, as you eagerly seek to hear.

It's your life that is on the line. It's the life of those you love that has caused Jesus to shake our society, our way of doing things. Invite Jesus to speak; listen, repent, change; Let go of what he calls you to let go of.

Let go of frustration and anxiety as you draw close to him. Let go of feeling insignificant and worthless as you draw close to him. Ask Jesus to grow you in living loved, finding who you are in him. Then ask him to send the Spirit so you can live true to who you are in him.

Let go of other people's opinions. Let

go of your million dollar dream.

Let go and grab Jesus for all you're worth. Invite Jesus to speak, that you might be walking and talking with him this week. Jesus' passion is for you to live in his loving presence. For you to experience the love and affection Father has for you, letting that be the air you breathe.

Today I invite you to confess to God that you don't have all the answers, or the power to make the changes needed. Invite Jesus to rescue you, trusting in him as the one with the answers, the power and authority to make the changes needed, beginning with you. Then step out into the week, walking and talking with Jesus, discovering life to the full in him. Be living in Jesus' love and affection, letting this new reality be the air you breathe out into everything you do.

12 July 2020

WHY DO WE HAVE PLAGUES?



Over the last weeks I've been reflecting on the role of plagues in the bible. We're in the midst of one right now! So have you ever asked yourself; 'Why does God send, or allow, plagues?

Here we are in the midst of a worldwide pandemic; that's a plague by another name. Fear is the air we breathe.

Why is God allowing this plague?

That got me thinking of the last book in the bible; Revelation. In this vision, given to the Apostle John, there are many plagues mentioned.

I was wondering if this plague might be one of them. Has that thought crossed your mind? Has the thought crossed your mind that we might be living in the last moments of this world as we know it? One of the signs of the end is a series of

plagues; and we're in a plague, a worldwide plague, right now.

Is Jesus walking up the path, ready to knock on the door?

If you saw a young child about to put a knife in a power point, would you intervene?

I'd hope so! You might even do it with urgency; to the child it could look like anger. But your urgency, I'm sure, would be to save the child.

That's a reflection of God's wrath; God's urgency, when it comes to saving those he loves. God's passion for protecting those he loves. God doesn't make friends with that which attacks the object of his love; no he destroys that which would destroy the love of his heart.

And amazingly the bible reveals that you are the love of God's heart; whether

you believe it or not. Amazing, but true.

In the bible a plague is always God seeking to save those he loves. God, urgently, and passionately intervening to rescue those he loves.

God seeks to use a plague to bring about repentance. Plagues and repentance go together; because it's not God seeking to destroy you but to rescue you.

In Jesus, God even risks his own life, that's the message of the cross. Jesus comes that we might 'repent'. That is, that we might have the opportunity to see life for what it really is, turn to Jesus, and be rescued, so we might live knowing Jesus, living in his loving.

I know some people don't think there is anything to be rescued from. I've often been told, in various ways, 'I don't need

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

saving, why wouldn't God like me, I'm a good person'.

Have you ever heard similar words?

I remember a guy I worked with over the summer holidays; we struck up a friendship, and they were the very words he said to me. And you know what, he was a great guy;

compassionate, generous, thoughtful, I enjoyed his friendship. He later became a lawyer and devoted himself to working for the underprivileged, fighting injustice for them. Why wouldn't God like the guy?

But the issue wasn't why wouldn't God like the guy; in Jesus, God loves him. God has jumped into the raging sea to save him, to rescue him so that he might have life.

Have you ever noticed that God is about life; life lived to the full.

Anyone interested in life lived to the full?

The guy I mentioned has worked

hard, but there is still injustice in the world. He's a great guy, but that hasn't stopped bad things happening. And one day, guess what, he'll die. What then?

Does anyone detect a problem here? A problem we might need help with. Guess what, I'm dying, and I don't have the ability to stop it! Anyone in the

Anyone interested in Life?

same boat?

I certainly detect a problem; and it is the reason our present plague is causing fear. People are scared to death of dying. And dying is only a symptom of the underlying disease. Just imagine living forever and hating yourself, feeling scared everyday, not knowing the warmth of a loving embrace, the joy of hope, left insignificant, believing you don't matter; after all you can't make the changes you see are needed.

God has come, in Jesus, and in the Spirit, that you might have life. He doesn't send, or allow, a plague because he wants to kill people. Not at all; he's passionate about rescue.

Here is what we read in the book of Revelation; "But the people who did not die in these plagues still refused to repent of their evil deeds and turn to God. They continued to worship demons and idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood – idols that can neither see nor hear nor walk! And they did not repent of their murders or their witchcraft or their sexual immorality or their thefts." (Rev. 9:20,21)

Do you notice that most people don't think there is a problem building their lives on how much they own, the house they have, their wealth is their source of security. Stop and look around at what we are daily encouraged, by

advertising, to invest ourselves in.

Things; dead, inanimate objects. Other people's opinion. Work hard and you can get what you want; just one problem, by the time you get it you'll be too old to enjoy it. Idolatry is alive and well, and it is enticing us, and the majority of people don't see any problem.

What will it take for us to see reality?

The prophet Ezekiel called people's attention to this; "they put their idol altars right next to mine, with only a wall between them and me. They defiled my holy name by such detestable sin, so I consumed them in my anger. Now let them stop worshipping other gods and honouring the relics of their kings, and I will live among them forever." (Ezec. 43:8,9)

I could read this as God wanting to hurt me, but I think I'd be missing the point. What we have here is a despairing God. His anger isn't at us but at

the deception that is stealing life from us, that is pulling us away from God's passionate love. His very desire of living among us, so that we might live and breathe in him, know life to the full in him; living loved.

But alas we look to our status; this means I'm a somebody. I place my status;

Refused to Repent!

achieved by sport, money, popularity – whatever you look to. I place my status next to God and look to it to save me, to give my life meaning, to give me significance. In my mind they become side by side; maybe what other people are saying even goes ahead of what God is saying.

And before you know it, I'm robbed of my true identity. I've got to perform, I've got to succeed, otherwise I'm nothing. Everyone else is better, or worse, I begin to believe my

own press and think how wonderful I am. And before you know it, it's God who!

I know the temptation to worship the relics of our past is a powerful temptation. As a community of faith, what relics are we tempted to trust in other than Jesus?

I invite you to take a moment and ask Jesus about what things are robbing you of the intimacy of love he wants you to enjoy with him. Stop and invite Jesus to reveal to you just one or two. Invite Jesus to reveal what you are putting next to him to give yourself worth, to give your life meaning. Ask Jesus what 'relic' of the past do you need to give up.

Is that why he has sent this plague, driving us out of our buildings; no organ, no formal ritual, no regular Sunday gathering, and we survived! What's Jesus seeking to say to his brothers and sisters?