

Greetings in the name of Jesus to those near and those who are far,

SCRIPTURE:

1 Corinthians 15:54 (NIV) – Larger reading: 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

“When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

STORY:

An Arab worked all day and became extremely tired. At night he came back to his tent. Lit a candle to eat supper. He had but 3 figs. He cut open the first one and it was full of worms. He threw it away. Cut open the 2nd one and it too was full of worms. He threw it away. He then blew out the candle and ate the 3rd fig.

OBSERVATION:

Moral of that story ... some things are hard to swallow.

We all like the experience of celebrating a victory and hate the painful experience of defeat ... some things are easy to embrace while others are hard to swallow.

It is the desire of most of us to live a life of victory, but wander around in life as if we are individuals of defeat instead of people of victory. As E. Stanley Jones was fond of stating: “If you have Christ in your heart how about informing your face of that reality.”

I particularly like The Message’s paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 15:24 – *“Then the saying will come true: Death swallowed by triumphant Life!”*

The emphasis of a “triumphant life” captures my imagination and lifts my spirit, but why wait for death to come to experience that reality? The great news is that we don’t have to wait. Isn’t that what Jesus meant when he told those around him “the kingdom of God has come near.”

Why live as if the reward of Christian living is off someplace in a distant land, especially since it is right here within our reach? A triumphant life doesn’t mean that all the trials and tribulations of this life are past and forgotten, it simply means that we have a companion in Christ who will be with us through those times and the gift of the Holy Spirit to give us strength when we face them.

Victory is ours! Embrace it! Celebrate it!

QUOTE:

*“Step follows step,
Hope follows Courage,
Set your face towards danger,
Set your heart on victory.”*

– Gail Carson Levine

PRAYER:

Thank you Lord for giving us the victory. Now, give us the conviction to live as individuals who have already won the race! Amen!

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim

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Dream Big ... Pray Bigger ... You might be facing your own Jericho, but your shout of victory will cause the walls to fall.

In-person worship begins Sunday, October 25th at 10:30. Here are the guidelines that we will be following:

- ***Temperatures will be taken*** as you pull into the parking lot. Do not exit your vehicle until it has been checked.
- Everyone must ***wear a mask*** and the mask must stay on during the entire service – it will seem a little strange, but we will sing and pray the unison prayers while wearing our masks. The pastor and soloist will be the only two individuals permitted to remove their masks.
- Everyone will receive a drop of ***hand sanitizer*** upon entering the sanctuary. Rub your hands together until the sanitizer is gone.
- ***Practice Physical Distancing*** by: Sitting only in the designated “***Safe Seats***” and ***DO NOT CONGREGATE*** in the Narthex or aisles – we are social beings and it is only natural that we wish to socialize, but ***DON’T*** – just go find a seat. Once seated you can socialize with each other – but keep your masks on!
- ***NO SHAKING OF HANDS or HUGS.***
- ***Offering boxes*** are positioned at each door to receive God’s tithe and our offerings.
- ***No Bulletins*** – just pay attention to what is up on the screen.
- A volunteer will be checking attendance as you enter.
- ***Fill the pews from the center outward.*** Do not cross in front of anyone.
- ***Exit by the door nearest you*** – practicing Physical Distancing ... do not congregate. Just move to your vehicles. If you need to talk to someone ... call them when you get home. Please!
- ***If you have*** a headache, slight fever, runny nose, slight cough, achy body, watery eyes ... Please stay home.