

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

May 23, 2020

“Open It!”

An update to the update

Our grandson Will, just a little over a year old, is sitting in his highchair next to me. We have our dinner but we are waiting for Angie to fix his meal. Meanwhile, Christie hands him a corn-on-the-cob to keep him occupied while he is waiting. Will, even at his tender age, is already speaking in sentences and, after spending some time examining the cob of corn, says, “Poppy... *open it!*”

We all are saying that right now, though not about corn cobs. After weeks which seem like months of being in the throes of a closed country, there is an increasing chorus of voices now that are saying **“Open It!!”**

On Wednesday, with the approval of the other elders, I provided a fairly detailed update on the prospects of returning to services and what that might look like. However, yesterday President Trump, out of the blue, drop a bombshell, declaring churches “essential.” Trump cited the opening of hardware stores, liquor stores and abortion clinics, and said that it is unfair to prevent churches from meeting. “Churches,” he said, “are important for the psyche of our nation.”

We agree, of course. And statistics seem to bear this out. Suicides have spiked. Domestic abuse cases are at an all-time. Most of us in the Folsom church feel a slightly frustrated and a little bored by being forced to stay at home. Although, I can say that Christie has brought new meaning to “Honey Do...” (I’m not complaining; maybe a little). I think all of us are trying to make the best of it and are even finding some benefits in this. Why? Because we have a Christ-centered perspective.

But many do not. There are families in our society that are suffering during this quarantine. Imagine a husband/father who out of work and already has a serious drinking or drug problem. Now he is at home 24/7 with his children and wife. That’s a bomb just waiting to explode. That’s why local governments have deemed liquor stores “essential” — the alternative could be worse. If you deprive someone access to something they are addicted to, they’ll take it out on somebody.

In other words, this pandemic, and the stay at home order, has “unintended consequences.” Yesterday, even Dr. Anthony Fauci, a strong proponent of the lockdown, warned of “irreparable damage” if states remain locked down for too long.

The impact of these statements has led leaders in several churches to decide to “get back to church” this weekend.

One high profile preacher, John MacArthur, has declared that Grace Church in Sun Valley, CA, will begin meeting — “responsibly” — this coming Sunday.

Like Amos, I’m not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but for about two months I have been predicting June 7th as the date of getting back to the building in some capacity. That is looking likely now even if we stick with following the governor’s timetable. He sees churches opening in “phase three” of his plan and Sacramento County should be in that phase at least by the first week in June.

Our health and safety committee will be issue some recommendations soon and the elders will review those and make a decision about when and how to begin meeting in a responsible manner. For a church our size, it will be a gradual return to normal, meeting in multiple services on Sundays, with no regular Bible classes at the building. It will be awhile before we can get back to close contact in classrooms, although we aim to do that as soon as we can do it safely. When we resume meeting on Sundays, we plan to have a live streaming option available for those who are more vulnerable to the disease or who otherwise feel they should stay home.

While we may not be able to meet all together for awhile, I’ll be proposing that we offer a series of classes at the building every day and/or evening of the week. The classes will be held in the auditorium where we can keep an appropriate distance from each other. The classes will cover various topics and books of the Bible and will be a great opportunity to beef up our Bible knowledge and it will also provide some of our men with opportunities to teach. Of course, we’ll keep attendance under the health and safety guidelines.

These classes will expand our opportunities to see and greet each other. Ideally, even after we all start meeting again on Sundays and Wednesday, I would like to see us continue offering classes throughout the week as a regular part of our work here. There is so much to learn!

Meanwhile, we are resuming our 10 AM class via Zoom on Tuesday (May 26th). As soon we get the word, we’ll go live and move the class into the auditorium. We’ll continue to Zoom it so others can participate.

Much more to come, but for now let’s enjoy this good news! *“Open it!”*

[You may have noticed that the regular, weekly View is still a thing. I’ll have that ready later today — dp]