



Monday Morning Missive

Good Monday morning, church family. Have I told you lately how much I love each and every one of you. I feel just like the apostle Paul as he began his letter to the Thessalonians: I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. The truth is, when I think about you individually, I smile. Now, to be honest, for some of you I smile really big and for different reasons. If you need me to interpret that for you, let me know, and I will be glad to fill in the gaps.

Just as Paul said about the church at Thessalonica, I truly believe that First Baptist Church Dadeville is a GREAT church. Are we perfect? Not at all. But we are a church that is striving to move forward for the Kingdom. We

are faithfully following the Lord's leadership, and that is what will carry us into the future that God has planned for us. Sure, we are going to hit some bumps in the road. In all honesty, I told Sonya this morning how frustrated I was – and I guess I might have been complaining to God a little as well. The church was going so well. We were growing. God was blessing us with salvations. We were excitedly making plans for the future. And then, "BOOM!" Pandemic. Stay at home orders. Social distancing. And it seemed that all of our positive momentum just stopped. Have some good things happened during this time? I think so. We united the community for a little while with our "Lighting Up the Darkness." We had a great online Holy Week. Our social media footprint has grown considerably. We are reaching more people with parts of our worship services. We have been forced to be more creative and innovative as we strive to meet the spiritual needs of our community. But we

would be crazy to pretend that things haven't changed.

We know that it is going to be quite a while before all of us are comfortable with coming back together for worship and Bible Study, and we may never again be comfortable with the culture of fellowship that we had before all of this. Hugging and shaking hands may be things of the past. My heart is breaking over the thoughts of how social distancing may very well become the norm. We weren't created to do life from six feet apart. We were created for community – for fellowship and close relationships. I think the social isolation coupled with the lack of spiritual nourishment has increased the intensity of the emotions that has led to violence in many of our cities. I want you to think about this. How many of us have really felt that staying at home and worshipping was as good for us as being together in the church? Something is missing

when we don't experience the power of corporate worship. Again, please know that my intention is not to be critical of anyone who is staying home for health reasons. I think you know that I encourage that wholeheartedly. I do not want to be the cause for anyone catching this virus, but we must be careful that we focus on our spiritual well-being during these times of separation. I know you have heard the saying, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder – of someone else." Just as in physical relationships, not taking care of spiritual needs leads us to drift apart from the Father.

So, let's pray more. Let's spend more time in the Word together. When you watch the services online, get rid of all distractions. Pretend that you are sitting in church and don't let things interrupt your time of worship. Comment on the service with a hearty amen every once in a while – even post it in the comments on Facebook. Share the services

with others. Set up social distancing Bible Studies in your front yard. Start back in small groups in your driveway. Join with people you are comfortable with to watch the service in their home. Let's begin our return to normalcy together as we cautiously move forward. And to do this, we are going to start back gathering for Wednesday prayer meeting and Bible Study in the Sanctuary on July 1. I want us to renew our focus on prayer for the lost and hurting in our community and for the kind of spiritual awakening that would sweep our nation and bring healing to the millions who are spiritually blind.

Okay. I think that is enough honesty for today. Please don't read this as me being discouraged. And I don't mean to sound like I'm fussing at anyone. Truth is, I know deep in my heart that every time God is preparing to do something amazing, the devil tries to intervene. Let's blast through "the gates of hell" together

**and demonstrate to the world that nothing can
stop His church.**

God loves you, and so do I.

Bro. Ben

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