

Joyful in Hope – Day Ten, March 28, 2002, (thoughts and ideas to encourage and challenge)

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

Romans 12:9

Today, I want to share something that was written by Mark Gacioch who is the nephew of our dear friend and member of Heritage, the late Tony Gacioch. Mark truly has a heart for the Gospel. He says some things that we need to hear now, and when Covid-19 is a memory. -Pete-

In all honesty, I needed a haircut. I really needed a haircut. No one had to tell me or encourage me to get one - I knew it needed to happen. For the past 10 years or so, I've just done it myself. I would buzz the top and attempt to trim my beard. It never looked great, but it worked, functionally.

Recently, I decided to up my style and go to a local barber shop, to try to give my wife a little something better to look at. My barber was Jeannette (not her real name), a younger lady, 24 or so. At first, she was very reserved and other than asking me what type of haircut I wanted, didn't talk.

I made several attempts at starting a conversation to no avail. I noticed she kept saying, "But I'm weird like that." Having spent much time in counseling and reading books and articles on psychology and self-talk, it really stuck out to me. She thought very little of herself.

Then, it happened. She said something else, something she thought was bad or negative, and it caught me off guard. **Jeanette said, "I'm trying to live below my means."** I was astonished. I have never heard another person in their 20's say this. *How could this be a bad thing?*

After a few minutes, I came back to that statement, saying something along the lines of: **"Do you know how refreshing it is to hear someone say that they are trying to live below their means?"** Many people are in debt, many people worry about their finances, it takes up much of their mental space. That's awesome. Stick to it, life will be so much smoother."

After I said this, she really opened up. We talked about her parents, one from Jordan, one from Palestine. I had a chance to share about my college days of having studied Arabic and having a final where I had to talk for 10 minutes in Arabic. She was a bit impressed by this and shocked. She talked of how beautiful the Arabic language is.

I didn't say that I studied Arabic at Moody Bible Institute and received a degree in World Missions and Evangelism. I was waiting to see if she would ask where I went to college. If it didn't come up, then maybe it would later. I was trying to have a conversation today that would leave one open for when I return to the barber in a few months.

As it turns out, I got that haircut just in time. **That evening we learned of the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Michigan.** Less than 2 weeks later, barber shops, along with all other non-essential businesses were closed for no less than 3 weeks while we watch and wait for this pandemic to slow down in our region.

So now what? Here in Michigan, as in many other places of the world, we are under a stay at home order. So how can you and I encourage, embolden and affirm people like Jeannette during this time?

Well, we still need groceries, maybe even gas. **Just like my simple interaction with my barber, any positive interaction we have with people right now, is very likely to stay with them.** In this day and age, we can even call, Skype or Face Time with people. Especially for those of us in lockdown, we have the time. Let's use this time to encourage people at a time when encouragement is widely needed.

Then, when this Coronavirus stuff comes to an end and we see them again, we will be known to them as a safe person, a kind person, someone who cares.

To be missional, to spread the Gospel, we don't always need to talk about God, or Jesus or salvation. **Often, my goal is to have an interaction or conversation with someone in a manner that it can springboard or allow another conversation to take place in the future.**

Yes, you and I want people to come to know who Jesus is, we may be eager for it, but they're not. The people we interact with, like Jeanette, need time to process, time to think about not just what we are saying, but who the person is who is saying it.

Put another way, let's do some relational evangelism. The Gospel is relational. God wanted to bring us back into a proper, a good relationship with Himself. We love God, because He first loved us. **Let's show our desire to know the person, to let the person know that we care about them.** To show people we love them.

During this time of uncertainty, you and I can serve God by opening doors to relationships with those in our sphere of influence. Let us show others our love with words of encouragement, with words that will lift them up. Let us reach out now, so later they will reach towards us. We may be their closest connection to Jesus.

Serving Him,
Mark

Join us tomorrow morning for our Online Worship Time, available any time after 10 AM. Go to You Tube, and type in:

HERITAGE CHURCH CLAWSON – ON THE ROAD.

Also wanted to let you know that Tom Achard has prepared some Video Bible Studies. One class is on Holiness, a class that Tom has been teaching on Sunday mornings. The second series is on Philipians. That series will be four parts. We are putting those on the Heritage Church Clawson You Tube Channel as well. They will be available tomorrow afternoon.

Ward Bartlett is working on some material that our children should find inspiring, fun and educational. Look for that next week. And look for Children's Chatter during Worship tomorrow.

And beginning this Wednesday, we hope to have our ZOOM Prayer Time available. If you would like to join us for ZOOMPRAYER at 7 PM, please text Pete, and he will send you an invitation.

NOTE: Zoom is a "live" format, so the Prayer Time will be open from 7PM – 8 PM on Wednesday. If we get a large response, we can break up into two groups, to accommodate Zoom's capacity. Please let Pete know.

Zoom can be downloaded from <https://zoom.us/support/download> on your phone, laptop, pads.

Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Jude 24,25