

3-30-20 - Content

After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee. When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me." - Matt. 11:1-6

I was supposed to be in Mexico right now. I was supposed to be in Oaxaca, sitting with my three closest friends sharing life, ministry, prayer, and companionship. I was supposed to be hiking the mountains of Southern Mexico, eating tacos, and catching up on a year's-worth of stories.

What were you supposed to be doing today, before the world changed? "I was supposed to be in school." "I was supposed to be on Spring Break with my family." "I was supposed to be living without fear of illness or financial problems." I think all of us would answer this question differently, but we all would answer with longing for what was "supposed to be."

Jesus has always been clear when it comes to our "supposed to be"s. These assumptions are our creations, not His, and as such, they fall victim to the changes of this world. Last week I suggested that you look out a window and see that nothing God has created has changed because of a virus while most everything we've created has. This goes for our "supposed to be"s as well. They never survive their first meeting with change.

Jesus Himself was an unmet assumption, and failed "supposed to be". He, as Messiah, was "supposed to be" a military, political leader, a king who would rule in might and lead his people to a glorious future reigning from David's throne over a kingdom the Jews could be proud of. That's what Jesus was "supposed to be". And even John the Baptist, Jesus' close relative, fell for this trap. "Are you really the Messiah or should we go on waiting?" he asked Jesus. You see, Jesus was a wandering, homeless Rabbi, teaching the masses, but not leading them to war. He had no white stallion, no throne of gold, no political aspirations. Instead, He taught a gospel that itself wasn't what it was "supposed to be."

When life isn't as it's "supposed to be", how can we ever be content? When change shatters our plans, how can we learn to be ok with that? The answer is that contentment doesn't come from "supposed to be"s but from faith, from trust in God. Things like coronaviruses and financial uncertainties and panicky news shows help us to see just where we have put our faith. If our faith is in stability, in a bank account, in comfort, in our own ability to control this world, then our faith has been and will continue to be destroyed by every global pandemic, every historic event, and every change that comes to our lives, causing uncertainty. But if our faith is truly in Jesus Christ, then we know that change is inevitable, that change is also in God's hands, and that change doesn't change God. We rest content in the reality that come what may, God has us in His hands and will not leave us in danger. "God's got this," has become my lifeline in the past decade. If it's true, and I fully believe that it is, then we can be content come what may.

Questions to ponder:

Is COVID-19 revealing that you've put your faith in something other than God?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how content are you?

How might you grow in your trust of God, in your contentment with His control, this week?

