

April 6, 2020

# *Reflections*

## **Careful, not Fearful**

We learn lessons from everything we experience. Sometimes those lessons are good and help us throughout our lives. Some of those lessons are perhaps unintended yet can cause us harm or make us fearful many years in the future. Last week's Bible Study lesson told the story of a woman whose mother was allergic to cats. During her growing up years, the girl learned that cats caused suffering and illness. As an adult, she developed a phobia of cats. She moved out of a good roommate situation when the roommate desired a cat. She broke up with a wonderful boyfriend, when she learned he had previously lived with a cat. Through some therapy she learned what it meant to be allergic to cats and that the condition is true of only a small number of people, but cats bring great joy to others. She finally got a kitten for herself that she wanted since she was a little girl.

When COVID19 was still a new term, people began wearing masks in public. This response was primarily one of fear. People thought they were protecting themselves. But most masks do not protect the wearer from getting sick. The particles are so tiny, they float right through masks. The masks that do offer protection are in short supply and needed by healthcare workers. So, the CDC asked people not to wear masks. As we continue to understand this virus better and acknowledge how much we don't know, the CDC changed its recommendation this week to say that it may be a good idea for everyone to wear masks in public. However, the rationale for this recommendation is very different. The mask you wear does not protect you, it helps to prevent you from spreading an illness that you don't even think you have. While you may have no reason to fear this illness, we live in a community with people who do: older people, people who have been through cancer treatments, people with compromised immune systems, and people who care for those people. So now, wearing a mask in public is not about fear, it's about being really careful with others.

When all of this is over, I wonder what lessons we will learn and carry with us. I hope we do not learn a lesson of fear. In normal times, God created us with amazing bodies and immune systems that protect us from all the things that we share when we are together. I hope we do not develop a fear of each other and being together. We are created for community. We worship God who we understand as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Community is at the center of the very nature of God.

I do hope we will learn the lesson of being careful with each other. People walk around our community with special needs, hurts, and struggles all the time. Many of those we can't see. Those people need our special care. I hope we will continue to be careful with each other with our words and our actions. I hope we will continue to offer grace, patience, and compassion to all we meet. We don't know what they've been through, what special circumstances and griefs they might be going through. We can offer encouragement and love in all times. Maybe this time is a time to practice and to develop those muscles of love and kindness that will stay with us.

See you Sunday,  
Pastor Melissa