



CALVARY MONUMENT BIBLE CHURCH
LOVING, LIVING, LEADING FOR GOD'S GLORY

NEVER THE SAME AGAIN

Pastor Chris Lenhart | April 23, 2020

ACTS 3:6 (NKJV) THEN PETER SAID, "SILVER AND GOLD I DO NOT HAVE, BUT WHAT I DO HAVE I GIVE YOU: IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH, RISE UP AND WALK."

Our lives can be transformed in an instant. I want to encourage you to prepare your hearts and minds for when the time comes for us to regather in CMBC's building. Things will not look the same as they did before COVID-19. There will be many changes. Perhaps it will even feel as if a total transformation has occurred. The space that once occupied so many loved and cherished traditions will look the same, but new methods and modes of gathering will make it feel very different.

I guess I share this with you today, long before we will probably be able to gather in our building again, because I know that many of you might be disappointed when we do. If you have expectations that things will be like they were before coronavirus, my desire is that you to might take this time away to prepare. I too will miss many things, like huddles in our foyer for snacks & fellowship, passing of communion and offering plates, large ABF classes, shaking hands and giving hugs...not having to wear masks. Sure, over time some of these 'new' realities may fade, but the effects and outcomes of this crisis will live on.

Think back to life in American prior to the devastating events on 9/11/01. Our lifestyles are very different today than prior to those events. We are reminded of this reality every time we enter an arena, stadium, airport, or theatre unable to bring bags or packs without inspection. 9/11 changed our world. At the time, when it happened, we had no idea how things would look different; we could only speculate. Today, we face a similar situation. We can only speculate how things will change on the other side of COVID-19, but we know there will be change.

While there is much that we don't know, there are several realities that should give us great hope for the future. God is not done building his Church. The cornerstone of his Church is Christ. Christ is our hope of glory. When we gather again in our building, we will need to commit to focusing more on that which is unchanged—the character and nature of our God—and less on that which has changed. Some of us handle change well; some of us struggle with changing our socks. Grace will be needed for all.

Peter and John met the man in Acts 3 at the gate of the temple. He was lame from birth. He was a beggar. Peter and John first fix their eyes on the man, then they help him redirect his focus on them. Where our eyes are fixed is important. When he turns his eyes towards them, he expects to receive something from them, and indeed he will, just not what he expected. We turn our eyes towards our unchanging God in this season. We know he is using this situation to prune us in order to produce more fruit; we do not know what to expect.

What the man at the gate was hoping for was a taste of the same he received each day before. What God had in store for him was so much greater. Could it be, Church, that we will find ourselves in the same place as this man when our building reopens? Might we be hoping for a taste of the same we had before, when God intends to do and give us so much more? After he heals the man, Peter helps him to his feet. When we become acquainted with one posture for so long, it is hard to move towards a new posture. We will need help, but oh, just watch how this man rises! Immediately, as he was being lifted up to his new normal, he began to receive strength in his feet and ankles. God transformed him, God strengthened him, God moved him forward. He will do the same for us.

What transpired after this man began moving with a new posture? Well first, he really made a scene! Leaping and praising God, celebrating the newness, rejoicing in his transformation, he entered the temple and guess what else happened!? People took notice. Something was different. Vibrancy, energy, new life. And isn't this just how God works? He knows we struggle with change; he created us and knows us perfectly; he knows this will be hard. That is exactly what he wants because his strength is made perfect in our weakness. We are going to learn a new way. Things will be different. There will be change. Let's fix our eyes on the unchanged, rejoice in the new postures of ministry, and let the watching world look on with wonder and amazement at what God will do!

ACTS 3:10 (NKJV) THEN THEY KNEW THAT IT WAS HE WHO SAT BEGGING ALMS AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE OF THE TEMPLE; AND THEY WERE FILLED WITH WONDER AND AMAZEMENT AT WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM.