

You are a Carrier
2 Corinthians 2:14-16
Living in Unprecedented Times Series

How we doing church? We are now 10 days into this stay at home order for the state of California

A)How many of you are going crazy? Feeling stuck?

Home is resembling an insane asylum

B)Hang in there church – this is going to pass- I promise it will – praying sooner than later.

I think one of the most disturbing things about this COVID-19 Crisis is this:

A)Someone can be a Carrier and not even know it

B)We have heard report after report of people who tested positive but had no symptoms whatsoever.

1)That is a bit perplexing

C)So here is something that I have been wrestling with?

1)When I have gone to the store – or out walking my dog in the neighborhood – see someone

D)The thought that comes to my mind is this: Is that person a carrier?

E)Should I cross the street? Go to a different isle?

1)Please tell me I am not alone in that thinking

It is a weird thing to think that there could be people all around us who are carriers and don't know it.

A)Listen to me carefully – All of you tuning in right now to this message –

B)I hope you will embrace this truth - You are all Carriers –

C)Not talking about the COVID-19 Virus - BUT ALL OF US ARE Carriers of something.

You might be a carrier of fear and you are passing along fear to everyone you are interacting with.

A)Although the virus is contagious - Fear about the virus is more contagious than the virus itself

B)You might be a Carrier of fear - Or you might be a Carrier of Faith!

C)Carrier of Panic or Carrier of Peace?

D)You are a Carrier right now of something – and you will continue to be in the months – to come.

1)The rest of this year –

Here is a reality that I want us to think about today.

A)This Virus is going to pass/ at some point the cases are going to start to drop

B)We are going to get back to work – get back to some sort of normal life.

C)However the effects of this virus are going to have a far reaching impact

D)Economy, just like with 911, the way we do life for a long time is going to be affected.

1)What is your attitude going be MOVING forward?

You are a Carrier here is the question I want you to consider – Is what you are carrying worth catching?

A)See what you are carrying is just as contagious as the Coronavirus.

B)What you are Carrying will have a contagious effect on the people you are interacting with

1)The people in your immediate circles will be impacted by your attitude, outlook, right now and moving forward

C)A thought I want to plant in your mind and heart today and moving forward is this:

“ When the story of COVID-19 is just a story that we tell years from now, let's make sure that our story is a story that is worth telling.”

With that thought in mind – I wanted us today in this last message – Living in Unprecedented times....

A)Turn to 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 consider the words of Paul – His life –

B)The Contagious affect his life was having on those he came in contact with.

14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph (or victory) in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

Paul was living at a time when his world – had its own virus – Called Caesar Nero.

A) Nero was referred to as one of the most despicable characters on the stage of human history.

B) His own Senate declared him to be public enemy #1

C) His reign was marked by debauchery, cruelty
1) it became extremely dangerous to be a Christ follower during his reign.

D) Fear, panic and frustration were the trade marks of his reign.

But in that season of life - Paul declared that His life bore the fragrance of Christ in the midst of madness.

15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing

A) Paul's life had a contagious effect on others

B) Paul's life had a contagious effect on the people he came in contact with –

1) The question I want us to consider today is why?

C) I want to answer that question by considering 3-4 statements that Paul makes here in 2 Corinthians

1) That give us an insight into – how he viewed and lived his life even in the midst of great difficulty

D) First statement: 2 Corinthians 5:14 – the Motivation for his LIFE

#1 He knew how greatly he was loved by Jesus

A) 2 Corinthians 5:14 - The Love of Jesus compels us

B) When Paul makes this statement the emphasis is not so much on his love for Jesus

1) But Paul's understanding of Christ love for him

C) Paul KNEW that he was greatly loved by Jesus

Some of you are thinking – well of course he was greatly loved by Jesus – He was Paul the Apostle

A) The guy was literally a Saint – Pastor Rob I have heard you call him the greatest Christian

B) That is not me! – NOT SO FAST

C) Don't forget – that before Paul became a Jesus follower – he was a Jesus hater!

1) He was on a mission to destroy THE WAY!

Jesus pursued this man Paul who was out to destroy him and his followers.

A) Jesus WON PAUL over with Love

B) Paul had an encounter with Jesus after this Resurrection from the dead.

1) Paul's eyes were opened and he realized that everything he thought about Jesus- was wrong

C) Was actually the opposite. – Jesus was God in human flesh – come to earth

1) To be the one and only savior of mankind

Paul realized that Jesus did not come for those who were healthy

A) but Jesus instead came for those who were sick.

B) He didn't come for the righteous, but He came for sinners,

1) people like him – people like you, people like me, people who are broken, and people who are in need.

C) Paul was so blown away that Jesus would be so kind to him – even when – Paul was so against Jesus

1) The love of Jesus MOVED HIS HEART

Have you ever not felt good enough, spiritually?

A) Have you ever felt like you've failed and let God down?

B) You can't believe you did what you did,

C) You can't believe what you said, thought what you thought,

1)and you feel guilty and you feel ashamed.

D)Paul felt that way too.

Paul understood that Jesus didn't come for the perfect people.

A)He came for those who are messed up.

B)He came for those who don't have perfect faith.

1)He came for those who've sinned and fallen short of God's standard of holiness.

C)He is not looking for perfect people – but people who will trust in a perfect Savior

D)Knowing – How deeply he was loved by Jesus was the motivation for all that Paul did.

E)Whenever you are at right now Know this – Jesus loves you with all his heart!

1)He is for you – He is with – He just wants you to trust Him.

No matter where this Crisis takes you and your family personally – Love of Jesus remains true

A)Singing today – His perfect love cast out all fear.

Live with confidence – He has got me

B)Nothing can separate us from his love – sickness

C)Job loss – economic Crisis – His love remains the same.

D)Rest in that – confidence in that.

E)Paul went through extreme hardship – but he never doubted the Lord's love for him.

F)His life had a contagious effect on others – because he could rest in Christ love for him.

2ND reason Paul's was a Carrier of the Fragrance of Christ

He was anchored to the sufficiency of Jesus

A) 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 *And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new*

covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life

B)Sufficient = more than enough –

1)No matter what this life throws at me - - make it with Jesus

C)A lot of prayer has been being offered – God would eradicate this Virus from planet earth

1)We should pray for that – absolutely

D)But what if it continues to linger? What then?

I'm Reminded – 2 Corinthians 12 – Paul prayed about his thorn in the flesh – God take it away....

A)Jesus said – Paul I am not going to take it away.

B)This is always going to be with you – but in the midst of the struggle – discover – Grace is sufficient

1)**My power is made perfect in your weakness.**

C)Church – this Virus is going to pass – it is, but no matter what the ramifications are for you/ us

1)We can rest in this reality – HIS GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR US

D)The presence and power of Jesus is going to see us through.

1)Our lives might look different – But it is going to be opportunity to Shine for the Lord

When people all around us are freaking out and frustrated – and life doesn't go back to normal

A)You and out can be putting forth the fragrance of Christ in our communities –

B)Because we have come to understand – life is not about our stuff, our comfort, our activities

1)Life starts and ends with living in relationship with our creator -

C)Church can I encourage you in the midst of this storm and the subsequent storms that will follow

1) **to allow your life to anchored to Jesus**

Paul wrote these words to the believers in Thessalonica.

A)The believers there were encountering a situation that might be a little bit similar to ours today.

B) They were being persecuted, facing all sorts of significant trials,

1) It was a time that where it would be very easy for their hearts to be filled with great FEAR.

C) This is what Paul said about them in writing to them 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 NLT said, "We always thank God for all of you" and pray for you constantly. "As we pray to our God and Father about you,"

D) he said, "we think of," and then he lists 3 things. 1) He says, "We think of your faithful work, "your loving deeds, "and your enduring hope.

Paul said, "Whenever we think of you, "we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, "your enduring hope."

A) Why did they have faith, love, and hope?

B) They had faith, love, and hope because of the Lord Jesus Christ.

C) Not because of what was going on in their world,
1) but because of the one who was **Lord over their world,** because of the Lord Jesus.

The three marks of a contagious Christian.

A) Faithful work, loving deeds, and enduring hope.

B) Those are the marks of someone who knows that they are radically loved by Jesus

1) Those are the marks of someone whose life is **ANCHORED IN JESUS**

C) You're a carrier. Is what you're carrying worth catching?

Third reason Paul's was a Carrier of the Fragrance of Christ

A) #3 He kept an eternal perspective

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do **not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.** For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

B) The Bible often uses this terminology for followers of Jesus – Pilgrims and Sojourners

C) I think one of the things the Lord is wanting to do right now is to remind all of us of this truth.

1) This life is not the **END ALL.**

I mentioned last week how this Virus has literally torn down our idols

A) Our focus on comfort and entertainment. – Our tendency to live for the here and now.

B) When the Lord is always wanting us to live with eternity in view.

C) Paul could live with such a freedom in life, because he realized – the things in this life are temporary.

D) That which is seen is temporary – that which is unseen – is eternal.

E) I pray that during this time – and the months that follow – that reality would be engrained in us

Eternity is what matters the most.

A) This life is short in comparison to eternity

B) Stuff is temporal – not going to last – can't take it with us – PEOPLE ARE ETERNAL

C) It is the people in our lives that are most important

1) Every person has an eternal destiny.

D) Crisis brings Clarity – And I think in the midst of this crisis the Lord is seeking to wake us up to what really matters!

Paul was a Carrier of the fragrance of Christ – because he knew what really matter!

A) He lived with eternity in view

B) He knew that people not stuff – is what matters in eternity.

Fourth reason Paul's was a Carrier of the Fragrance of Christ

A) He lived with a singleness of purpose

2 Cor 4:5 *For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.*

B) This Virus has put the entire world on an equal plain {All at RISK

C) And there is ANOTHER VIRUS that has done the same thing.

SIN VIRUS – ALL INFECTED - Universal death sentence

**A) All have sin and fallen short of the glory of God.
Sin – missed the mark**

B) All of humanity is infected – WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH = eternal separation from God

1) The wages of sin is death – but the gift of God is eternal life thru Christ Jesus our Lord

The World is looking for a Cure for COVID-19

A) Jesus came to be the Cure for – Sin Virus

B) He allowed himself to be infected – Became sin Died in our place – Forgiven / saved / set free

C) Paul understood that what mattered the most was souls – People need Jesus.

D) So his purpose was talking to and sharing with as many people as possible the Hope we have in Jesus

Imagine, if you will, when there's a treatment that's discovered for COVID-19.

A) Imagine perhaps if there's a cure or a way to prevent the spread.

B) What do you think will happen when there's that good news? - Whisper?

1) Do you think the good news will spread?

C) It will spread like wild fire, it will be the leading news story in every news agency across the globe.

D) See - Good news is CONTAGIOUS

CHURCH WE Have great news to share

A) This isn't just good news that cures a sickness, but this cures a spiritual sickness.

B) There is a CURE for the greatest Virus the world has ever known –

C) The Sacrifice of Jesus – THE CROSS / RESURRECTION

I believe with all my heart this is a wake-up call for the church to stand strong, to stand united,

A) And to be bold in what we know, that Jesus is the Good News that changes lives.

B) I've got hope in my Savior.

C) My hope is not in the government,

**1) Although I love our country and I am praying for God to give wisdom to our government leaders.
President & Vice President**

D) My hope is not in the doctors, {docs retirement

I pray for our doctors and pray for those who are treating people, safety and protection

A) My hope is not in the doctors

B) My hope is not in Scientists and those doing research and looking for a cure.

C) My hope is not even in the spiritual leaders in our nation and our world.

My hope is in the one who spoke all things into being.

A) My hope is in the one who is all-knowing and all-powerful and ever-present,

B) the one who heals blind eyes, who opens deaf ears, who has the power to raise the dead.

C) I am praying that men/women all over the world – would turn their hearts to him

D) Praying that his spirit would be poured out on all flesh

Closing

You are a carrier. Is what you're carrying worth catching?

A) Fear is contagious. So is faith. Hate is contagious. So is love.

B) Worry, anxiety is contagious. So is hope.

C) The three marks of a contagious follower of Christ.

1) Faithful work, loving deeds, and enduring hope.

What are you? You're a carrier.

A) You can be a faith spreader. A love giver.

B) And as my friend Ben Courson would say – a hope dealer.

That is what we will be when we realize:

#1 We are radically loved by Jesus

#2 We are anchored in the sufficiency of Jesus

#3 We are living with eternity in view

#4 We live with a Singleness of Purpose

15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.

C) Some will receive the message and receive Life in Jesus

D) Others will reject and continue in death

E) Our Job – To Shine – Deliver the Message