



SERVICE TIMES:

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:30 AM
5:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

ELDERS:

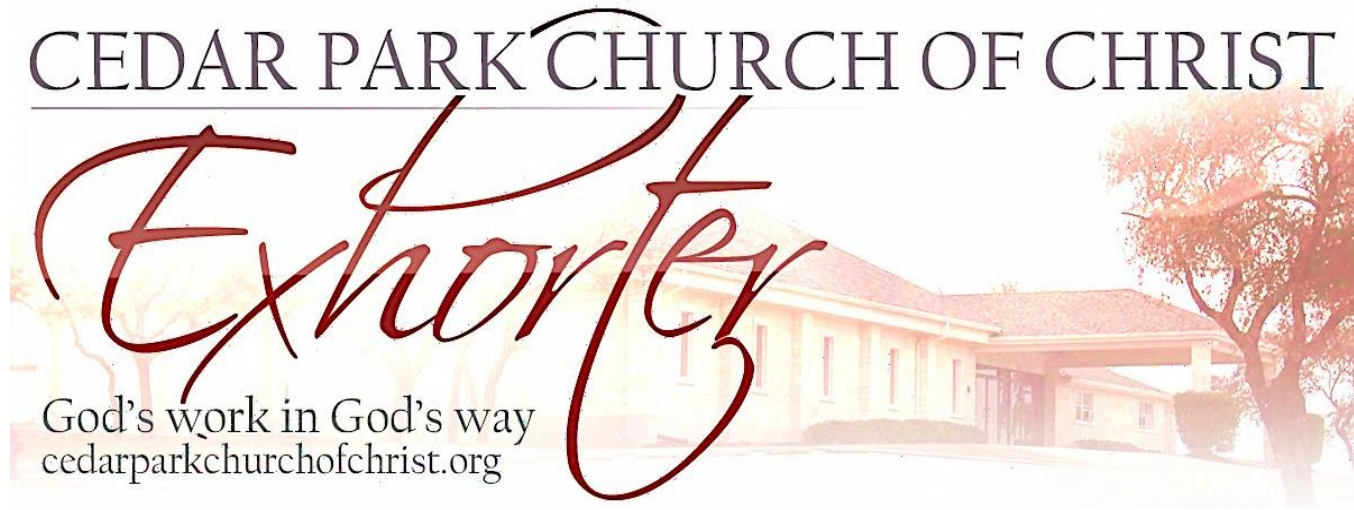
Todd Cox
Travis Everett
Jimmy Griffith
Bryan Tacker
Paul White

DEACONS:

Derek Anderson Ryan Griffith
Dan Harbin Craig Hecht
Danny Meek Phil Parker
Jason Stannard Travis Starling
Steve Turquette

EVANGELIST

Paul White



July 12, 2020

Giving Thanks In All Things

While putting the kids to bed one night last week, my middle child asked me a question in a serious tone with a concerned expression on his face, “Daddy, did Satan cause the Coronavirus?”

A child of only four years old can draw conclusions and use logic based on different bits of information. He has experienced great transformation to his routines. This is not meant to dramatize his experience nor suggest he has had it poorly, but factually speaking his daily routine has changed. Bible classes still occur, but only virtually over video chats and in some cases it is with children they are unfamiliar with. There are fewer visits from grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. There is no going inside the library and Mom doing curbside pickup is not nearly as fun as attending story time or getting to browse through the books. Masks are worn on the rare occasion the family leaves the house together. The list could continue, but I think just one more is needed to make the point. The content of our prayers has changed.

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The prayers he has listened to and said, and obviously absorbed, for the past four months have included the following sentiments:

- For the Coronavirus to go away
- Appeals on behalf of those who have contracted the virus
- Comfort for those who have lost loved ones

There have been several positives that our family has drawn out from these bizarre times, but still the child perceives the virus as a “thorn in the side” of society. Although his mother and I have been diligent to not speak negatively about the situation in front of the children, he was voicing some fear and concern.

How would you have responded to the question: “Did Satan cause the Coronavirus?” My mind immediately jumped to the first chapter of Job when God asked Satan where he had come from and Satan responded by saying “from going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.” I also thought about 1 Peter 5 where it states that Satan prowls around like a roaring lion. Therefore, I do believe it is possible that Satan initiated the virus to cause pain, suffering, and change, which can lead to anger, anxiety, and annoyance. This ultimately can lead to defiance, depression, discontentment, and arguing, all of which would fall under Eph. 6:11, where it says that Satan has schemes he deploys to go about his purpose. However, I also thought of the countless occasions in the old testament, when God used hardships and devastation for his purpose, to bring his people back into his fold (see Judges 2:14-15 and Haggai 1: 9-11). Finally, you have the ninth chapter of Ecclesiastes where you will find that “time and chance happen to all”.

I believe it is the intuitive desire of parents to want to be able to have all the answers for children as well as having the children feel safe and secure. So how did I answer the question?

I gave a strong “maybe” and then went on to give reassurance founded in the facts that God is in control of all, regardless of the source of circumstances and that we can trust God to see us through troubling times.

- Isaiah 41:10 “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
- Joshua 1:9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”
- Psalm 115:3 “Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.”

I have given this conversation much thought, and there is a specific action I want to take moving forward. As stated previously, from these strange times has come some positives for our family. Life has slowed way down, enabling us to start a garden together, go on more walks, learn to ride bikes (the children that is), play new games, and attend group meeting Zoom calls to name a few. Basically, we have gone from being super busy during the summer to being able to better enjoy the family, and I am thankful for this. I am thankful for my brothers and sisters in our group, who have been an encouragement every week. I am thankful for our elders, who tirelessly strive to shepherd our flock in a positive and right direction. The list could go on.

These thoughts ought to be at the forefront of my prayers, being sure that thanking and praising God takes dominance over my requests and concerns. Once this happens, the whole tone of the prayer shifts to God being good and in control, which is how it ought to be, because our God is good and in control. These are facts that transcend the test of time.

- Travis Starling



*The emptier the pot, the quicker it boils,
The emptier the wagon, the more noise it makes.*