

In the midst of the world's bad news,

# THE GOOD NEWS!

Beautiful Savior's Weekly Worship & News

5/13/2020

## **PASTORS' PEN:**

**WEEK NINE** of "ALL activity at Beautiful Savior - paused and postponed." Monday, May 18th, our county government will be providing guidelines for a gradual OPENING of life in our area - including church activities! WAHOO! When that actual day does arrive, God's people at Beautiful Savior will be notified the week before. Our plan is to begin with Sunday morning worship and Sunday School/Bible class with "social distancing" guidelines (masks, separation in the pews, no hand shaking, only individual communion cups, etc). These guidelines will be determined after the May 18th briefing and will also be provided to everyone before we resume worship. If everything goes well on Sunday mornings, we will then gradually include other weekly activities. ALL ARE ADVISED TO DO WHAT YOU THINK BEST FOR YOU AND YOURS! THOSE WHO ARE AT A HIGHER RISK OR ANYONE WHO IS JUST NOT READY TO VENTURE OUT ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONTINUE TO STAY IN AND STAY SAFE! Live worship will continue to be posted on our facebook page along with some kind of mailed weekly worship aids. Like our nation, we hope to have a safe gradual process leading to full normal church life in the next few months! Yet, whether together or separate, we believe, trust, and worship only Jesus Christ the LORD in whom is LIFE! Continue to pray for protection and healing for all people around the world, an end to this virus, and that God uses this to bring ALL fallen sinful creation back to Him!

## **CATECHISM REVIEW: LORD'S PRAYER: 5th Petition** (for meditation and prayer)

"And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." What does this mean? We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us."

## **WEEKLY WORD - ONE CHAPTER EACH AND EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK: Acts 8-14**

We continue with the early church! With our brothers and sisters in Christ we read the exact same BIBLE chapter each and every day of the week! Wow, what a sense of unity and togetherness! Please include with your daily devotions. There is no greater blessing than being in Jesus Christ and His saving Word!

## **SERMON/DEVOTION: Acts 17:16-31 - "Very Religious"**

According to the latest research, 86% or 6.69 billion of the 7.79 billion people around the world classify themselves as "religious." Leading the way is Christianity at 26% or 2.1 billion people, followed by Islam at 19% or 1.5 billion. Those who call themselves "non-religious" are 14% of the world's population or 1.1 billion people! Here in the USA self-identifying "religious" people are 81.8% of the population or 270 million people, with Christianity at 73.7% or 244 million, other religions at 8.1% or 26 million, and non-religious at 18.2% or 60 million people.

In our text, Paul called the people in the city of Athens in Greece, "very religious" (v 22) and some, "devout persons" (v 17). The city was "full of idols" (v 16), each made of "gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man" (v 29). The Greeks had many "gods," and just in case they omitted and offended one, they even had "an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god'" (v 23). Certainly, like the vast majority of the world and the US - in any era - they were "very religious!" Unfortunately, being religious doesn't mean all that much; being sincere, faithful, and obedient to any religion or "god" is not good enough!

Paul they call a "babbling" and "preacher of foreign divinities" (v 18) as he tells them a "new teaching" (v 19) and "strange things" (v 20). He informs them about the Creator, "who made the world and everything in it" (v 24), and "gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" (v 25), and has "made from one man every nation of mankind to

live on all the face of the earth" (v 26). The Creator's intent is that all creation "should seek God" (v 27). Although "very religious," their "ignorance" (v 30) is not ignored - all humanity is to "repent" (v 30) or turn to God! Paul makes known their "unknown god" - twice we hear, "he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection!" (v 18,31).

Our world and country is still "very religious." In the past the Greeks, Romans, Vikings, Egyptians, American Indians, Aztecs, Mayan, Buddhists, and many others worshiped multiple "gods;" many still do today. Included amongst their followers were, and are, the faithful, sincere, devout, and obedient - many would die rather than dishonor their "gods!" Our present world and country is also "full of idols" made of "gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man." Even those 1.1 billion people around the world and that 60 million in this country who call themselves "non-religious," have their idols. Their "gods" include themselves; money and riches - what they can buy and have; things and possessions; fame, attention, respect, and pleasure. Many "non-religious" movements today are in reality religions; their followers believe, trust, and follow. Some of these "gods" and idols are sexual "freedom," the planet, politics, and abortion! The believers of these religions are as sincere, devout, and dedicated as any! Yet, even though the vast majority of the earth consider themselves "religious" - even though ALL the earth is even if they deny it - as we see again during this time of uncertainty, fear, and death, these "idols" can't do much! These "gods" can't save especially at death! Tragically, these "very religious" also include many who call themselves "Christian!" Many people of Christ also have lives "full of idols" of gold, silver, stone, and man's imagination and priorities and follow other "gods!" The one GOD and CREATOR condemns this "ignorance," and "commands all people everywhere to repent" - including Christians! As Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Mt 24:35). ALL manmade "gods," idols, religions, beliefs, and faiths - and all who adhere to them - WILL pass away and die! ONLY those who repent and believe the ONE Creator and God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - will endure and live forever!

This is the Good News or Gospel God has spoken to fallen sinful humanity for 10,000 years, since Adam and Eve. As God spoke through Paul elsewhere, "Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles" (1 Cor 1:22-23). This is His message - the "new teaching" and these "strange things" that continue to be declared by "babblers" and preachers of "foreign divinities!" The unknown god is made known! He alone created ALL things good, just like Him! Yet, humanity - as it still does - sought another "god" - themselves! They looked to themselves rather than to God and lost His created gift of LIFE; they died, eternally! Yet, the Creator never abandoned His creation; He sent His Son to do what fallen sinful humanity can never do - be reunited with the one God and Creator and His gift of LIFE! Jesus died the death that all who sin deserve - death and hell; He died in the place of sinners - you and me! Yet, the Good News that is mentioned twice in our text is that Jesus rose from death defeating sin and hell forever! In Jesus there is forgiveness of ALL sin and victory over sin, death, and hell! In Jesus Christ God's created gift of LIFE now and forever is restored! This is God's "Good News!"

It's all due only to Jesus Christ the LORD. As His Word states, "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 Jn 5:12). In and of itself, "very religious" doesn't mean a thing or do a thing; being sincere, obedient, and devoted to any "god" or idol doesn't mean life now or after death! Many who believe and follow idols "formed by the art and imagination of man" are traveling the road to eternal damnation! MANY "very religious" people will die and endure hell despite their faithfulness or conviction! What the world needs is what God provides - more babblers to babble, more preachers to preach "foreign divinities," "this new teaching," and "strange things" to the 5.69 billion people around the globe, including the 84 million in this country, that do not know Christ - to make the unknown god known! He is Creator, LORD, and GOD and He continues to reveal Himself through His Word! He created all things good, and in love sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for the sins of the world and rise to restore LIFE! Ignorant, very religious, people full of idols - ALL people of the world, including Christians - hear, heed, repent, believe, and trust ONLY the ONE TRUE GOD - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! ONLY in Jesus Christ - His life, His death, His resurrection - is there forgiveness and God's created blessing of LIFE, now and forever! AMEN!

*"There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven  
given among men by which we must be saved." --Acts 4:12*