

Another Word..April 22, 2020

Dear First Christian Church,

We pray you are continuing to be safe, secure, as well as enjoying the days that God has so graciously made for us. Remember to stay in contact with each other by phone, cards, texts, and email. Staying in touch brings us closer not only with each other, but with God.

Brian and I will continue to bring you weekly church services that are available on our website and with links on our Facebook page. You may also Google "YouTube" and type in "First Christian Ashland Ohio".

We would like to thank you for your cards, phone calls, and notes of encouragement regarding our efforts to bring you God's word. The services are reaching not only households in Ashland, but are being shared and seen in many homes across America. Praise God!

Continue to call with prayer concerns and praises. We all need the strength and power that comes from praying for others. Stay connected and stay safe.

With the daily information updates provided by our Governor, it appears there is a glimmer of light at the far end of this tunnel, and I don't believe for an instant that it is a train bearing down on us. Stay safe and secure in the confidence that we all will soon, by the grace of God, be back worshipping together on King Road.

May we pray.

Gracious God. We thank you for this time of prayer. A time when we come to you with our joys, tears, and even our anger. We love you because you listen with patience and understanding. Guide us through our despair, fear, and feelings of helplessness. Rescue us from our

troubles and keep us from stumbling until we walk in Your presence, full of life, hope, and joy. We pray this through Jesus, our savior who taught us to pray, Our Father in Heaven, holy is Your name. May your kingdom come; may your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those that sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory forever, Amen

And speaking of trains. One evening a number of years ago, Donita and I went over to her parent's house for a visit. When we arrived, we found her father and his best friend down on the living room floor playing with an old electric train set that was found in a garage. Well playing isn't quite the right word. You see, the train would not run. The transformer was plugged in, wires from the transformer were secured to the track, the track was together in a complete circuit, but the train received no power. They oiled wheels, jiggled parts, sanded contacts, and cleaned every surface they could find but it just wouldn't run. Finally they decided it was hopeless and were going to throw it away. It was a beautiful 1930's passenger train and I asked if I could have it. (I think Donita might have rolled her eyes). The next day, I carefully took the engine apart and inspected every part there was. I about gave up myself when I noticed 2 small wires, one on top of the other, each going to its own connection. Using a toothpick I cleaned between the wires and discovered that the bottom wire had come loose. I soldered it back in place and the train powered back to life. You see, without the wire being connected to a source of power, the train was just a useless piece of metal.

The same is true with us. In John 15:5, Jesus tells the disciples "I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit." But then He added, "Apart from Me, you can do nothing."

This teaching was given in a grape growing region, where the disciples would have known exactly what Jesus was getting at. Grapevines are hardy plants, and can take severe pruning. However, if the branch is cut off from the life source, the branches are worthless, just pieces of deadwood. It is the same with us.

If we remain in Jesus and let his words live in us, then we stay “wired” to our source of life, so that “we can bear much fruit, and show yourselves to be my disciples.”(vrs.8) We like the train, need to stay connected to our power source. And the power comes from Jesus through the scriptures, prayer, and His love. So stay plugged in and let the power flow!

In His Peace,

Rich