

## **Ponderings from Pastor Paul – October 2019**

I was talking with someone recently from outside our church who was passionate about the current condition of the church. He wasn't referring to the physical structure or the spiritual condition of our church. He was troubled that the spiritual foundations of the church of Jesus around the world are being cracked and eroded. He was concerned that the church seems eager to conform to the views of the world in an attempt to reach everyone.

To be fair, Christians often have a reputation in our culture of being unloving, judgmental, and simply not nice. You might blame this reputation on the media, the other political group, or a couple of bad apples, but we have all been less than what God has called us to be. We all fail and sometimes we deserve the reputation we have.

However, there are individuals and organizations, even churches and denominations, who seem to want to soften the Christian faith, so it is more palatable. I understand the argument. It goes something like this. *"If the church wouldn't take such a hard line on some issues, perhaps more people would be inclined to follow Jesus."*

If you or someone you know believes Christians need to ease up a bit with their rhetoric, then I want to ask you this. When was the last time God asked for your opinion to make his decisions? I'm guessing your answer is the same as mine. Never. It is so frustrating! If only he would ask, I would be happy to guide him.

How silly does that statement sound? Who could ever think that any one of us would be qualified to be God's advisor? I love God's words to Job when Job questioned God's plans. Job 38:1-2 (ESV) says, *Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?"*

If you believe in a God who can create the universe, how can you question that he knows best? Jesus clearly says that some issues are downright difficult or even impossible to grasp. Just because they aren't easy to come to grips with, doesn't mean they aren't God's truth. The most beautiful truth is that God loves us and died for us so we could be forgiven and live forever.

The difficulty comes when we attempt to stand firmly AND lovingly by the truth of God's Word. God commands us to do both. It is a precarious line to walk and we will fail often, but we must have faith in the God who knows best and will make good come even from our poor efforts.

I pray that the church of Jesus around the world will have courage to stand by God's truth with love and in humble service. May we be empowered by the Holy Spirit to accomplish this in our corner of the world.

God loves you and so do I!

Pastor Paul