

Ponderings from Pastor Paul – May 2021

This last wave of COVID-19 has hit a bit closer to home for me. Not only is Michigan currently leading the country in positive cases, but the Port Huron area was for a time the leading county in our nation for new cases. My wife was born in Port Huron and grew up just outside of town. We got married and lived in the Port Huron area. Our children played sports and went to high school there. I worked for more than 25 years in the area. We have a lot of loved ones there.

I worked with Tammy for eight years when we were both middle school counselors. She is a couple of years older than me, which I reminded her of frequently, but she had always been in relatively good health. She has been on a ventilator for the last week due to COVID-19. For whatever reason, this was the straw that broke the camel's back for me. It got very personal.

I have been praying for Tammy. Our church has been praying for Tammy, as well as for all those dealing with the coronavirus. Because we worked so closely, I have no question about Tammy's faith. I know where she is going when she leaves this earth. Hopefully, it will not be anytime soon.

I wonder what it will take for some of the other waves in our world to become more personal for me. Waves of violence and hatred seem especially rampant.

My younger sister lives in Minneapolis. There was another shooting there a couple of days ago, followed by the subsequent riots we have all come to expect. My sister is moving to the Los Angeles area next month for a new job. I'm not sure things will be any better there. I'm not sure it's going to be better anywhere.

I can't do anything about Port Huron or Minneapolis or Los Angeles. I can't do anything about the pandemic or the weather or other people. There's so much I can't do anything about. But believe it or not, this gives me hope rather than sadness. I have hope because there are many things I can do something about. Those things that have always been personal. My family. My home. My church. My community. My faith.

It may sound otherwise, but I am not depressed or even melancholic. I am actually quite optimistic. God has called me to be where I am, and I am confident he will use me where he has placed me. And he will use you where you are. He

has put each of us in the time and place he can use us most effectively. It simply must get personal.

Some reading this likely feel social distancing has made our world less personal. I would argue that getting personal is not only an issue of geography, but also an issue of the heart. When our faith is personal, when the hurt of the world around us is personal, when the love of God becomes a personal and visible expression in our lives, then the world we are personal with, will see what a personal God he is.

I can't do a lot. What I can do, by God's grace and through his power, I will do. The rest I will leave in his hands and trust in his personal plan for me and for you. May God's Holy Spirit move in each of our hearts to get personal where he has placed us.

God loves you and so do I!

Pastor Paul