

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Sermon

This pandemic has a lot of people talking about the end of the world. They're talking about calamity and apocalypse. And when they use that word "Apocalypse," they are using it the way that we're used to seeing it in the movies - like when some asteroid is on a crash course with the earth or the zombies start taking over the world. And it's certainly an odd time. But, I'm not so sure that what we're dealing with is an "end of the world" kind of apocalypse here.



A seminary professor of mine, named Bill Brown, wrote recently to remind us, that the real meaning of the greek word for Apocalypse that we find in the Bible doesn't mean "the end of the world." Instead, it really means - "an uncovering," "an unveiling," or "a revealing of the truth."

And in that way, I do think we're living through an apocalyptic moment. I do see God using this awful pandemic to uncover a lot of truths that we have gotten really good at hiding away as a society. I see God wiping clear the glass through which we see the world, revealing all of the warts and blemishes of our world in ways that are hard to ignore anymore. Showing us all the

work that we still need to do before we will live in the Kingdom of Peace and Justice that God dreams of for us to share.

- This apocalyptic moment has revealed how this world considers the safety of people in rural areas where there are nowhere near enough hospitals or medical professionals to respond to potential outbreaks.
- It has revealed where this world puts its trust, when, after hearing about stay-at-home orders, people run out to buy guns, rather than making plans to share what we have with those in need.
- It has revealed how this world values the work of the people who raise and harvest and transport and sell our food and how little we pay them in return for this life-giving service.
- It has revealed how this world cares for the health of people of color in this country who seem to be dying of Coronavirus at twice the rate of white people because they have not received the same level of healthcare over the course of their lives and have developed underlying and chronic medical conditions.
- It has revealed how this world provides for people in impoverished nations, when 5 countries in Africa don't have a single ventilator, and a place like Liberia is allowed to have only 6 ventilators to serve a country of 5 million people - and one of those ventilators is hidden behind the walls of the U.S. Embassy.



And though all of this news is difficult for us to hear, and it makes us awfully uncomfortable, it is Good News, because God is wiping clear the glasses through which we see this world. God didn't cause this pandemic, but through it, God is showing us the truth. At least now we can see it. And that's the first step toward lament and confession, change and reconciliation.

The good news is that this truth comes from God. And God can purify our souls if we are obedient to God's truth. God can transform this world if we refuse to ignore its faults and

commit to helping heal them. This God, who is revealing all things, is compassionate enough to forgive our sin and mighty enough to save this broken world.



So, I don't think we're facing the end of the world like we see in the movies, but perhaps, if we are willing to look at what God is revealing to us in the midst of this apocalyptic moment, and we are willing to remember what we have seen, and we are willing to do something in response - then perhaps this can be the end of a world after all.

- I pray that it can be the end of a world of injustice that casts aside the poor and the vulnerable, and the beginning of a world where we learn to value God's image in all human beings.

- I pray that it can be the end of a world driven by greed, and the beginning of a world that loves generosity.
- I pray that this might be the end of a world where we strive after the perishable things of this moment, and the beginning of a world where we learn to invest in the things of God that will endure forever.
- I pray that this will be the end of our childish ways, and the beginning of a spiritual maturity.
- I pray that, at least in some ways, O God, this might be the end of selfishness, and the beginning of a genuine, mutual, love shared by all of God's beloved people.

And I hope that you will keep on praying with me.

Let it be so, O Lord. Amen.

This sermon was first shared with Aurora First Presbyterian Church, by Rev. Doug Friesema. To receive future communications from the church, please contact:

firstauroraoffice@gmail.com

(303) 364-2609

1585 Kingston St.

Aurora, CO 80010

Aurorafpchurch.com

facebook.com/aurorafpchurch