

## A LETTER FROM PASTOR JOHN

Dear Hebron,

We began Lent with the imposition of ashes. The form of a cross was placed on our foreheads and we reflected on the truth that until our Good Lord's return, there is no cure for being human. We are created out of dust and to dust we will return. This last week of Lent is called, "Holy week". During this week, we walk alongside Jesus and we recall the faithful willingness of our Divine Savior who not only came to be *with* us in our weakness, he actually *became* us. He *became* our limitedness. He *became* the burdens of suffering. And as he hung on a cross, the assumption was that He would die and seemingly become dust like us. Instead, he *became* our victor and salvation.

Death has been around for all of human history minus the 2 minutes it takes you to read the first 2 chapters of Genesis. Still, we have difficulty knowing what to do with it. People try their hardest to prolong life with healthy eating, creams, and vitamins to keep hair and body parts where they belong. At other times we focus on whatever joy or peace we might attain through the building of relationships, legacy, wealth, and fun. We figure if life is a journey with limits, we ought to make the most of what we can.

Life is by all accounts however, grace - it's a gift. We can't earn or purchase it. We don't get to dictate its terms or conditions. We just end up with life one day through no work of our own. Within the gift of life is consciousness, freewill, and personality. There's a body, soul, and a treasure trove of talents and dispositions that make life for all of us uniquely different. Within life as we know it however, is also the incomparable aliveness of knowing and being in relationship with our Creator God: to be loved by Him, given our worth and identity, bestowed calling and purpose. Yes, life is a gift indeed, because life ultimately comes from and is in relationship to God.

As we journey through Holy week, it is my prayer that you would see God's answer to death and the incredible activity of a loving God who chose to even die himself. He sent His one and only Son who didn't just come to make the most of life in death. He came to engage it. He submitted his sinless life and accepted it. Jesus died on the cross physically, but He also died relationally - separated from the heavenly Father as he became the sins of humanity. It doesn't make much sense why anyone would choose death over life - especially someone else's. But they say love makes us do "stupid" things. God made an unbalanced trade that day when Jesus died. He traded in his divinity and life for our frailty and sin. He took on our death and all the smaller movements of death we experience in between. In exchange, he gave us His life, His restored intimacy, and His unconditional love. Yes, life is a gift indeed.

This year's Coram Deo will walk through passages that remind of God's "stupid" trade in. It will Lord willing, remind you of God's immense love and power; the value and worth you have before God, and it will spur you on to sow love and life into this world through the life and love God has given you.

Coram Deo,  
Pastor John Kim