

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
March 31, 2021

"THE MORE WE GET TOGETHER"

Let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. Hebrews 10:25

"The more we get together the happier we'll be." You might not remember this song from your childhood, as it was written and first recorded by a fella named "Raffi" in 1976, but if you have children or grandchildren, you're probably familiar with it (maybe too familiar). Raffi is Raffi Cavoukian, a Canadian singer/composer of Armenian descent. I was thinking about this during the morning today, and how much truth there is to this statement during this year's Holy Week. Let me take you back to last year. Holy Week was just a week deeper into April than this year, but it seems like the two are eons apart. That's because Holy Week 2020 came along during the initial lockdowns of the Covid-19 pandemic and we were not allowed to gather in groups of more than 10. That meant that our worship services were seen by the vast majority of our TLC members and friends on Facebook. For the few of us here on Maundy (Holy) Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter we were presenting a worship service intended for 100s of participants in an almost empty church. It was a strange atmosphere, and not nearly as fulfilling as Holy Weeks past. All that has now changed, and we are free to gather together in worship, with the proper precautions, remembering, celebrating, and even participating in the Passion of Jesus, His sufferings, death, rest in the tomb and ultimate resurrection. All that makes me very happy, and I pray that it does you too! Gathering for worship is looked at by way too many Christians as something that "we have to do". Some see it as an obligation and perhaps even a way to appease God and His Church. "If I show up for church fairly regularly and put something in the offering plate, I can keep the pastor and the elders from visiting me at home." That's missing the whole point! Worship is not something that God gave us as an obligation, it's a gift that He gives us for our benefit, both here in this life and for all eternity. Worship is not a "have to" but rather a "get to". God invites us to come to Him...come into His holy and loving presence to receive His gifts of forgiveness of sins and the assurance of eternal life in Jesus Christ. God even draws us to this place, to our church along with all the other true Christian churches around the world, by the power of the Holy Spirit so that we might share in these benefits. Left to our sinful selves we're enemies of God and haters of everything about Him so we would never darken the door of a church without that pull from God the Holy Spirit. Gathering together around our Savior Jesus in Word and Sacrament is a happy occasion, at least it should be. Yes, we confess our sin and guilt at the beginning of the service, but then immediately hear the sweet words of absolutions; that our sins are forever forgiven in the shed blood of Jesus. What a relief and joy that is! From there we get to sit at the Master's feet and listen as He teaches us in His Word, empowering and growing our faith and trust in Him, which gives us increased peace, hope and contentment. Our Lord Jesus then feed us at His table His very body and blood offering even more of His mercy and grace for our world weary bodies and souls. Our response is praise and thanksgiving as we sing out in wonderful songs and hymns. Jesus also urges us to come to Him with our prayers, our cares, concerns, intercessions, and requests as He listens intently, with undivided attention, to God the Father's dear beloved children...that's us! If all of this doesn't lead to joy and happiness. I don't know what hope there is for us along those lines. "The more we get together, the happier we'll be." I thank God for the opportunity that we have this Holy Week to do just that! And to keep doing it over and over and over again until such time as we're all together forever before the throne of God in His heavenly kingdom enjoying the most awesome and incredible worship that exists anywhere in this universe and beyond.