

## **Holy Week Covid Musing – April 15, 2020 – North Star Mennonite – Dan Graber**

As Jesus moved out beyond the walls of the religious structures of his day, we also are called to leave behind the hallowed place and the quiet sanctuary, and to make all of life the place of encounter where God can communicate with all human kind, where life itself becomes holy through lives renewed with his love.

**Jesus has Risen! HE HAS RISEN INDEED!**

Here is a recent story. Enjoy it but then later, identify the various aspects of what occurred. How was God at work? How was discipling occurring? Who did what? Make some lists. How was Jesus' resurrection power and love being displayed? Remember this is another ending of the Easter sermon.

I decided to come home since there was no need to continue caring for my grandchildren. So my husband and I are self isolating at the house as requested by the government and to do our part in keeping our family and friends safe.

It was a hard decision to make but after prayer and feeling Gods guidance I sucked up the financial loss and booked an earlier flight home. What transpired was a true testimony to my faith that God was with me. I took all the precautions I could, my Clorox wipes used to wipe down my seat which was chosen away from others at least on the first flight. As my flight was not international I was able to avoid the arrivals from other countries where many of the COVID 19 transmissions might occur. A few travelers and workers were wearing masks. The atmosphere was quiet and for the most part people were keeping their distance.

About 20 minutes before boarding my last flight, I took out my boarding pass and looked for my driver's license which was not in my pocket where I put it. Normally panic would set in but I felt God's nudging and saying "I'm in control Here". I went up to the departure gate and asked if the attendant could find out if a drivers license was turned in. She directed me to the general information desk which was not manned by live people, rather phones that you picked up and pushed the numbers for whatever inquiry you may have. None of them related to my concern. So I retraced my steps - Starbucks where I picked up my cold brew coffee, bath-room with no luck.

I went back to my arrival gate where the attendant said, "Sorry nothing was turned in". I still remained not in panic mode and don't know if my "God Help" was silent or audible, but the attendant asked, "Which flight did you come in on." I gave her the information. She said, "Oh that plane is still here. What seat were you sitting in?" I told her. She left down the tunnel to the plane.

Thoughts of missing my last flight were going through my mind BUT I was still calm. It seemed like it took forever. But only a few minutes later she came out holding my drivers license. It had been lying on the seat beside mine.

Off I walked as fast as I could to gate 30. The moving walkways aided my speed and I was the last one to board the flight. With no time to wipe down my seat I trusted God that the cleaners had done a good job. The seat next to me was empty when I booked but now was occupied by Ron (fictional name) who I'm sure God placed there for me to converse with. His job involved being in the public which was terminated now due to the virus. For his peace of mind he was checked to see if he had the virus and after the negative outcome booked his flight home.

I settled in and buckled up just before the pilot announced they were having problems opening the cargo door to load the last suitcases. In the next half hour during the pounding on the door just below us, Ron, the stewardess and I talked about life and how this epidemic is affecting us.

The stewardess reflected how her job put her in the front lines of dealing face to face with public with no options. How disappointed she is in not being able to see her newly born grandchild. Her son making his car payments. And how she was not looking forward to him moving home again.

Ron talked about his small business and the impact he has already felt and what would happen to his upcoming 6 month trip he has planned to live in the back woods of France.

I shared about how we as farmers rely on rail, ship and truck transportation of our grains, the unharvested grain in our fields, the ability for countries to buy our resources and the job of our elected politicians in all of this.

Another announcement from the pilot, "I've got good news and bad news. The bad news is the door is still not able to be opened so we will have to change planes. The good news is there is an extra plane in the hanger available and being started for us."

On with the de-boarding; waiting twenty minutes or so to prepare the new plane for re-boarding; and then a full two hour conversation listening to Ron as he shared his life story, with the stewardess sitting in first class in the row in front of us, who I'm sure was listening in.

As a missionary kid Ron grew up in Brazil and other places being taught the Faith at an early age. Life experiences left him a young father unable to raise his daughter so his parents did.

He met his wife and they raised two lovely children in a lively Methodist church, where Ron lead in music ministry. Five years ago he found his parents dead, from carbon monoxide poisoning in their new retirement home they had not yet finished building. Three years ago his wife passed away from cancer.

Then he pulled away from church, but didn't abandon his Faith. We talked about the judgementalness in churches in history and today and how it has hindered the churches witness in the world. We concluded that God is ultimately in control of our lives and the world we live in. Ron quoted "It is by Gods Grace that we are saved and not by any works we have done."

Even though we are to limit our contact, Ron reached out his Hand for a handshake twice before we parted saying it was good to talk and think about some of those things again. He thanked me for the conversation.

On a side note Ron was happily married as of a year ago and continues to see the good in people as he lives out his Faith life in being kind to people. Like not hoarding toilet paper as his neighbour did who has a whole wall stacked full in his garage floor to ceiling.

God was with me through that day and I felt that. I Praise and Thank Him for that and will continue to self isolate in our home for the next two weeks as I read, listen to music meditate and maybe do a few old projects left undone. Be safe, be thankful, be mindful and keep encouraging others!

This is what Jesus died for. As followers of Jesus we are instructed as Jesus did to Mary Magdalene: "Go tell this to all My brothers." Let's take advantage of God given opportunities to converse about Jesus.

Jesus tells us, "Go and make disciples of all nations. Ceremonially wash them through baptism in the name of the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then disciple them. Form them in the practices and postures that I have taught you, and show them how to follow the commands I have laid down for you."

And Jesus concludes with this reassuring promise that the resurrection proves is real. "And I will be with you to the end of the age."