



“¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.” ~Rom 13:10

We are in an odd phase in our corona pandemic. Many of us are bored, slightly depressed, missing one another, daydreaming for when life will return to “normal”. Most of us envision a return to an idyllic life, where choices in food, fun, and fellowship were unlimited; we could go where we wanted, buy what we wanted, see whomever we wanted.

And now, we are beginning to see the “light at the end of the tunnel”¹ as Umatilla County enters phase 1 of lifting the restrictions on shelter-in-place. This means we’re also entering a good news/bad news scenario. The good news is we can begin to venture out, and that’s also the bad news.

First, we need to be realistic and recognize that the pre-COVID life was generally not idyllic. The choices were never unlimited – we most likely didn’t have the money or even the inclination to indulge in all that food or fun, and many of the folks we miss were folks with whom we had issues anyway. Let’s not let our anticipation and expectation run wild.

Second, what might feel liberating for some will only bring home a sense of loss for others. Not all jobs will be recovered, not all people have survived this pandemic, not all relationships will remain intact. With almost 90,000 people having died in the United States alone, and with over 36,000,000 million people unemployed, it’s hard not to feel a greater loss, as well as perhaps some survivor’s guilt.

Third, this virus isn’t licked yet. There is no “cure”. There is no vaccine. Some treatment options are beginning to look promising, but nothing is yet definitive.

So, we who are walking the Way of Love that is Jesus’ life and mission and journey must keep this idea of love foremost in our hearts. Be gentle as we reengage with others – we don’t know how deeply they might be hurting. Be gentle with ourselves – emerging back into “society” might make us more anxious than we realize. Be careful with others and ourselves – keep up the good hygiene, wear your face covering, keep a good physical distance. Let us show our love for one another by remembering “First, do no harm.”

O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other’s burdens and the weight of glory. Listen to our hearts’ longings for the healing of our world. Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God, Amen.

¹ Don’t forget – the light might be an on-coming train...