Good morning to all the church family.

I am again reading in my devotions in Colossians - this time in chapter 2. Although this chapter has many of my favorite verses such as 13 & 14 where I find my sin has been nailed to the cross, I would like to look at the first 7 verses.

*For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for those who have not met me face to face. My goal is that their hearts, having been knit together in love, may be encouraged, and that they may have all the riches that assurance brings in their understanding of the knowledge of the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this so that no one will deceive you through arguments that sound reasonable. For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and firm in your faith just as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. NET*

We can identify with the first verse where we do not see each other’s faces. Can we identify that our hearts are knit together in love? It is easy to forget those whom we do not see regularly. But we see Paul intensely interested in people that he had never seen. In this time of separation we need to remember one another, pray for one another and reach out to one another. Our connection is Christ, our Savior and Lord, and who brought us together in the first place.

So how do we overflow with thankfulness – especially in this time? The old hymn calls us *to count your blessings, name them one by one*. In our prayers we need to focus on thankfulness for what God has done. We need to remember the big things, that revelation in our hearts that is Christ Himself. That it was a mystery – something we would never understand on our own – but He revealed it to us to our salvation. And to rejoice in all the *treasures* we get in knowing Christ. Then we need to rejoice in those personal blessings He has given – most of which are you all. There is health, security, jobs, etc., but our greatest blessing is always the family of God.

I have been encouraged by you all through emails, texts, calls and personal visits – yes, the church is still open! In this day when we are trying new things encouragement, understanding and constructive criticism are welcome. We canceled the service for the first two weeks because that was reasonable at the time. We are canceling at least this next week and maybe through April because that seems reasonable. But how long until it is no longer reasonable for a church? Two months? Four months? Please continue pray for the leadership. We said from the beginning that we would look at the situation on a weekly basis because it was presented to us as short term. Pray for this situation. It is changing faster than we can keep up.

There is wisdom God wants us to glean from this situation. Are we looking for it? God does not say that we are to rejoice in all things, *except* quarantines. Paul told the Philippians simply, “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say, Rejoice!” So let us be known as people who rejoice always.

In Christ Pastor EA