

## **Coaldale Mennonite Church**

2316 – 17 St., Coaldale, Alberta

***“Rooted in Jesus, Growing in Grace, Connected in  
Community, Branching into the World”***

**Keeping in Touch – July 9, 2021**



- ✓ As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, the Alberta Government has lifted all Covid protocols. At CMC, we are taking a more gradual approach to moving forward. We are highly recommending that masks continue to be worn in church. We will continue to physically distance in the sanctuary. Every other bench will be available for seating. Hand sanitizing stations will remain throughout the church. Registration ahead of time is no longer required.

Please do not attend in person if you are experiencing the most common symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat).

- ✓ The Live Stream of the Sunday Service will begin at 11am. You will be able to find the Live Stream on **You Tube** and searching **Coaldale Mennonite Church**.

- ✓ **Sharing and Announcements via Zoom** will be at 10:30am on Sunday. The Zoom invite is below:

Topic: Sharing & Announcements

Time: July 11, 2021 10:30 AM Edmonton

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86330933958?pwd=WVRkREF5YzhJSzRjNVg5RE53V0JNUT09>

**Meeting ID: 863 3093 3958**

**Passcode: 284587**

- ✓ **If you are attending Sunday morning service and would like to participate in the Zoom Sharing & Announcements, you may join us in the Fellowship Hall at 10:30am.**
- ✓ **Church Council Meeting** – Monday, July 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm via Zoom.
- ✓ **Men's Prayer time** – Wednesday at 8:30am at church.
- ✓ **Office Hours - Thursday, July 15<sup>th</sup>** – Jodi will be in the office from **8:30 – 10:30am**. Gary will be in the office for his regular hours, 9am – 4pm.
- ✓ **Jodi will be on vacation from July 17<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>.**
- ✓ **Gary will be on vacation from July 23<sup>rd</sup> to August 15<sup>th</sup>.**
- ✓ **The church office will be closed on Tuesday, July 20<sup>th</sup>, Friday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> and Monday, July 26<sup>th</sup> due to Jodi's & Gary's vacation time overlapping.**
- ✓ **Thank you** for the support and encouragement from our loving church family. We appreciated all the phone calls, cards, encouraging words, flowers, gifts, and visits.  
With our love, Dennis, Trina, and family
- ✓ **Starting next Sunday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, our Sunday Worship Services will be returning to a 10:45am start time.** The **Live Stream** will also start at **10:45am**. Our Zoom time of Sharing and Announcements will be discontinued but we will be having a time of Sharing and Announcements during the service. The Sharing and Announcements will only be seen during the actual livestream. They will not be put on YouTube to be seen at a later day. If you have questions about this, please call the church office.
- ✓ **Givings for July 4, 2021: \$5895.00** Budget \$5895.00
  - **E-transfer** is available for your donations to the church email:  
[cmchurch@telusplanet.net](mailto:cmchurch@telusplanet.net)

## Leading us in Worship this Sunday:

Worship Leader: Joan Willms

Music: Peter Janzen

Speaker: Gary Giesbrecht

Scripture Readings: II Samuel 12:1-14; Acts 15:1-21.

Sermon: "On BECOMING less religious and more spiritual."

Sound: Bill Chapman

Media: Jared Reed

Usher Team: Team 4



## PRAYER FOCUS



### Pray for:

- † **David Giesbrecht** who is recuperating at home.
- † **Our seniors at the various lodges and those in their homes.**
- † **Rock Solid Refuge**
- † **Safety as people travel for vacation and summer adventures.**

(If you would like to have a prayer request in this weekly update, please contact Jodi at [cmchurch@telusplanet.net](mailto:cmchurch@telusplanet.net) or 403-345-3363.)

## Note from Pastor Gary

### On BECOMING Less Religious and more Spiritual - Part II

Last week I wrote about this subject, when it came to Sunday, a kidney stone was making its presence felt and I could not speak as I had planned. So, I am going to continue the reflections that I began last week. I would like to start from a different place.

During the time of the Covid-19 measures have we become "less religious and more spiritual?" To answer this question, we must define **religion** and **spiritual**.

Webster defines religion as: "1. relating to or manifesting faithful devotion to an acknowledged ultimate reality or deity (such as) a religious person - religious attitudes. 2. devoted to religious beliefs or observances - joined a religious order. 3. scrupulously and conscientiously faithful, fervent,

zealous. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/religious> For our purposes, I would like to speak of religion related to the Christian faith in general. For instance, the Apostles Creed is a very specific statement of Christian belief. Most Christian churches have a constitution, which includes a statement of faith that provides a foundation by which to exist. This would affirm the belief in God as the triune God (Father, Son and Spirit), the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and so on. Scripture also helps us to form a governance or a way to function as a church. These basic beliefs and boundaries help us define what it means to be a church. Over time, the basic beliefs and our understanding of scripture become separated from the life that we live. The result is that we could become legalistic, and hypocritical in what we believe and how we live our lives. This was the problem that Jesus had with the Pharisees and teachers of the law. In Matthew 23:11-29, Jesus says “Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees” seven times pointing out the hypocrisy of their lives. “To BECOME less Religious and More Spiritual” is the journey of being transformed from the inside out.

Spirituality has two parts to it. Dallas Willard, in **Renovation of the Heart** (p.13) says: “We live from our heart. The part of us that drives and organizes our life is not the physical. This remains true even if we try to deny it. You have a spirit within you, and it has been formed. It has taken on a specific character...The human spirit is an inescapable, fundamental aspect of every human being; and it takes on whichever character it has from the experiences and choices that we have lived through our made in our past.” He goes on to say (22) “That spiritual formation for the Christian basically refers to the Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself.”

Mike Yaconelli talks spirituality in these terms: “Spirituality is not a formula; it is not a test. It is a relationship. Spirituality is not about competency; it is about intimacy. Spirituality is not about perfection; it is about connection. The way of the spiritual life begins where we are in the mess of our lives. Accepting the reality of our broken, flawed lives is the beginning of spirituality not because the spiritual life will remove our flaws but because we let go of seeking perfection and, instead, seek God, the one who is present in the tangled ness of our lives. Spirituality is not about being fixed; it is about God’s being present in the mess of our lives.” (**Messy Spirituality; God’s annoying Love for Imperfect People**. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002. P. 13.)

During this time of Covid-19, we abandoned our church as we knew it. Do you think we have become less religious and more spiritual?

I. Perhaps we have become less religious because we have had to attend our worship service in a virtual setting.

- a. It is private and unless we say something no one knows if we have attended it.
- b. The leadership in the church has had to make decisions to keep up with the changing mandates and ensure these are kept.
- c. In one way, we could say that we have become religious in how we have kept the mandates. We have become religious in how we have tried to use Zoom and Livestreaming.

II. Spirituality has become more individual – we have had to make choices in how and when we worship and connect in community. Does this mean we have become more spiritual?

- a. We have had to live with isolation, and for extroverts this has become very difficult and has led to more anxiety and depression.

- b. Introverts may have enjoyed this time of being alone.
- c. It has impacted families in a negative way as younger children cannot understand not being able to socialize with their friends at school etc. And parents have had to take more time with their children as school attendance has been sporadic. The list could go on.

In II Samuel 2:1-14 (NIV), King David is confronted by the prophet Nathan regarding the sexual sin he had committed with Beersheba and killing her husband Uriah. The prophet Nathan becomes a bearer of bad news. Is the role of the prophet Nathan spiritual? How does religion (the Jewish faith as David knew it) help David to move from religion to grow deeper spiritually.

*“The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, “There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. <sup>2</sup> The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, <sup>3</sup> but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.*

*<sup>4</sup> “Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.”*

*<sup>5</sup> David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! <sup>6</sup> He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.”*

*<sup>7</sup> Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. <sup>8</sup> I gave your master’s house to you, and your master’s wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. <sup>9</sup> Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. <sup>10</sup> Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.’*

*<sup>11</sup> “This is what the Lord says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. <sup>12</sup> You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’”*

*<sup>13</sup> Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.”*

*Nathan replied, “The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. <sup>14</sup> But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the Lord, the son born to you will die.”*

Nathan helped David see his sin in a way that he could take ownership of it and recognize that he had sinned. After David had listened to the parable, Nathan said, v.7 “you are the man!” and in vs.13

David responded, "I have sinned against the Lord." Within the context of the Old Testament, confession and forgiveness were part of the religious practices. Had Nathan not confronted David, what would be different? David would have carried on with life as usual as if nothing had happened. In terms of his worship and dedication to God, he could have participated the rituals that emphasized the importance of confession and forgiveness but never felt the power of it. Having been confronted by Nathan David entered a deeper relationship with God and his prayer of confession and forgiveness is recorded Psalm 51. Please read Ps. 51.

What can we learn?

1. Nathan addressed the spiritual problem which religion on its own could not specifically identify. For instance, had David's spirit been sensitive to what he had done he would not have needed Nathan to identify his sin. He could have gone straight to God and confessed his sin.
2. That God is interested in transforming the spirit, and it may take someone from the outside to help us understand our blind side. While this might be hard to hear we need to learn to listen, and on the other side when we talk to someone it must be said without judgement so that person can take responsibility for their actions.
3. Forgiveness and confession were part of David's experience within his faith practices, and when he realized that he had sinned he knew what to do. David transferred his understanding of confession and forgiveness to his spiritual life, and that is where he met God in a very powerful way.
4. So we could say that David became less 'religious and more spiritual' through this experience. He did not hide behind his religious beliefs pretending the problem did not exist, rather his beliefs gave him the foundation to understand his problem from a spiritual perspective and he took appropriate action.
5. On BECOMING less Religious and more Spiritual, the emphasis is on BECOMING. If we just focus on our beliefs and increase our knowledge of the Bible, it does not guarantee that our 'spirit' will be transformed. On the other side when we talk about the transformation of our 'spirit,' the foundation for this transformation is found in Christ and the only way we know about Christ is in Scripture. "On BECOMING less Religious and Spiritual" is about the "Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself" (Dallas Willard).

Pastor Gary Giesbrecht



**To Contact the Church**

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