

2020 04 05 – COVID-19 Perspectives

Matthew 21:1-11

“As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred to its depths, demanding, “Who is this?” The whole city was shaken, it was in turmoil, people were confused, wondering what was going on, wondering who this person on a donkey could be!

They were used to Jewish pilgrims arriving in the city on foot. They were used to soldiers arriving in their armour and helmets, carrying weapons. They were used to Roman governors in chariots appearing at the head of columns of imperial cavalry. But who was this man on a donkey surrounded by peasant followers? Who was this man in simple clothing sitting on a lowly animal with only a cloak for a saddle? Who was this man and why was he in Jerusalem?

Of course it was confusing; of course it was hard to know how to react. But many of the people in Jerusalem had a step up on us: they were Jewish and they knew their Hebrew Scriptures. They knew that the prophet Zechariah had spoken of a King who would arrive “riding on a donkey, on a colt – the foal of a beast of burden” (Zechariah 9:9).

Some of them would have made the connection. And they would have known the prophet’s next words were this, “The ruler will banish chariots from Ephraim and horses from Jerusalem; the bow will be banished. The ruler will proclaim peace for the nations” (Zechariah 9:10).

This was a mind-blowing, body shaking, city stirring event. This man, this Jesus of Nazareth was arriving on a donkey in order to make an announcement. He was using a palm parade, a first-century protest march to let people know that he was bringing in a new time, a time when the Roman invasion of Judah would be no more, a time called the reign of God, a time of justice and peace. The people had no idea how much their world was going to change... but they knew that the change had already started.

We are also in the midst of a mind-blowing, body shaking, city stirring event. This COVID-19 pandemic has already changed our world. People are talking about this being an historic event that will be written up in the history books. But what's not clear, at least not yet, is what those history books are going to say. What's not clear, at least not yet, is how this new time in which we are living is going to impact the time to come. What's not clear, at least not yet, is how much we are going learn, how much we are going to adapt, how much we are going to change.

There is so much we could be learning from the circumstances in which we are living. One of those things is our understanding of time itself. Broadview magazine has an online article by Miriam Spies called "COVID-19 has forced us to reimagine time. This isn't bad." Miriam introduces herself in this way: "As an ordained minister and a PhD student, I experience immense privilege. I also live with cerebral palsy." This is part of what Miriam has to say about time:

People with disabilities, their families and support people know how to live in time differently. For me, activities of daily living take longer and require more support than they do for many others. Sometimes, I become frustrated with myself when I feel like I should accomplish more in a period or finish a task more quickly. I, too, get sucked into the demands of task lists and expectations that I have set for myself. However, when I am being gentler with myself (often at the urging of loved ones), I remember I live in “crip time.”

Disability activist Alison Kafer [explains](#) that “crip time” requires reimagining our sense of what can or should take time and noticing that our expectations of what can be accomplished are based on particular minds and bodies. She writes, “Rather than bend disabled bodies and minds to meet the clock, crip time bends the clock to meet disabled bodies and minds.” <https://broadview.org/covid-19-disability-time/>

Miriam notes that in this COVID-19 time in which we are living, all our clocks are bending. She says, “We are reimagining ways of connecting and caring for one another in the absence of many of the routines and obligations that previously determined our schedules.” I’ve heard many of you express this same truth! Personally, I’ve spent more time connecting with family and friends on the phone over the past two weeks than I ever have before in my life. So we are being forced into a different perspective, a different way of being that puts connecting with loved ones and caring for others over commerce or productivity.

I'm going to invite you now to use Chat to share some of your own COVID-19 perspectives. What have you learned? What are you noticing? How is your understanding of life changing? What or who is coming to the forefront in this new time? I invite you to type your thoughts (in words, phrases, sentences) into the Zoom chat and I will read some of them before continuing.

Jesus came to Jerusalem with a world-bending message of peace and justice. We know that he died for his non-violent revolution. But we also know that his Spirit lives on in us and in the church that was created by his peasant followers. His message of peace and justice still lives and the creation of God's reign continues.

For instance, in this time of COVID-19, the UN has called for a global ceasefire. On Friday, António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations announced that progress was being made, that the ceasefire had "been endorsed by some 70 countries so far.... When asked if he hoped the global ceasefire would last beyond the extent of the COVID-19 pandemic. Guterres said, 'A ceasefire is an opportunity for peace. A ceasefire is an opportunity for political negotiations.'" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q14_LGEmGg4

What will be the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic? It really depends on us, on you and me and all the other people on this planet. We are in the midst of a mind-blowing, body shaking, city stirring event. Will you take this opportunity and allow this moment to create positive and lasting change in you?