



Christ Redeemer Church
P.O. Box 5523
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Christ Redeemer Church

Grace. Truth. Community.

Spring 2021

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CHRIST AND THE CORONAVIRUS

Pastor Don Willeman, Th.M.



“So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.” ~Romans 8:1-2 (NLT)

Over the past year or so, we’ve learned a lot about viruses—more than we would like to know! The trouble and terror this unseen enemy has unleashed is incalculable. But it is also a metaphor for all that is wrong with our world—namely sin. Sin is a virus of sorts. You could call it, the mother of all viruses.

A virus tricks our cells into allowing it to enter. Once inside, it hijacks our cell’s operating system (it actually inserts its RNA-genetic code) and begins to replicate its own twisted and destructive agenda.

So too, with sin. Sin is not just the bad things we do, but it is an infection deep in our souls. Sin deceives us and then hijacks our soul’s operating system, making it a factory for all sorts of mayhem. God designed us to trust Him and to love others. But sin programs us to think: “I can’t trust God. Does He even care? Is He even there? Who is He anyways? It’s my life. I’ve gotta look out for me! I can’t afford to give up my precious life for others, and certainly not for God.”

Now, the virus of sin has an endless number of mutations. For example, anxiety’s genetic code programs us to think: “If I can just have enough control, if I

can just control everything and everyone, then I’ll have security.” Greed’s genetic code says: “If I can just have a little more (more than others; more than I’ve got), then I will be fulfilled.” The genetic code of hate says: “If I can just stay away from those people—if I can push those people out—then I will be safe, then I’ll be a somebody. I must exclude them before they exclude me!” The genetic code of lust says: “If I can just fulfill my desires—liberate the inner ‘me’—then I’ll finally be satisfied. I’ll be fulfilled.”

What all of these have in common is an obsession with “self,” over against God and others. And just like the coronavirus produces death, so too, sin gives birth to death. It ultimately destroys us.

What do we need? We need someone strong enough to take on the virus of sin and overcome it—someone who can take our disease into Himself, so that He can give us His antibodies. His life for ours. This is exactly what Jesus did for us.

How does Jesus become our Savior? He dies under the full effects of our sin, but then, He rises forevermore. He beats the virus! He kills sin, and so, defeats death. And now, His life becomes the source of new life for all who trust in Him. His blood is pulsating with life-giving antibodies that destroy sin and death. His life has the power to heal us in every way—to undo the twisted, hijacked genetic programming of sin in our souls and world.



THE DEFINITION OF SIN

Over the course of time, the simplest of terms can lose their meaning. Take for instance the word “sin”? What is sin? Well, biblically speaking, sin is a refusal to know God on His terms. It is a commitment on our part to make our lives work without God.

Christians of centuries past defined sin with these words: “Sin is any want of conformity to the law of God.” In other words, sin is the gap between what God requires of us and what we actually are.

So, what does God require of people? According to Jesus the greatest commandment upon which all others depend is that we “love God with all our heart, soul, and mind.” We were meant to treasure and obey God com-

pletely. Notice that this does not involve merely external conformity but an internal attitude of the heart.

We are to do all God commands with ALL our HEART. Thus, sin is primarily that attitude of our hearts that does not treasure and love God above all else. It’s that internal drive that says, “I can find ultimate meaning, ultimate fulfillment somewhere other than God himself.” Sound familiar?

Something to think about from “The Kingdom Perspective.”

1 John 3:4
4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | |
|------------|---------------------------------|
| June 18 | Father-Son Campout |
| June 22-24 | 9th & 10th Grade Youth Retreat |
| June 24-25 | 11th & 12th Grade Youth Retreat |
| July 1-3 | Middle School Retreat |

Christ Redeemer Church, 8:30am & 10:30am
Hilton Garden Inn, Lebanon, NH

Christ Restoration Church, 9:00am
Colby Sawyer College
Sawyer Fine Arts Center
New London, NH

The Quechee Church, 9:00am
1905 Main Street, Quechee, VT



Renovations at the Greensboro Property



THE SEEDLING MARRIAGE

by Jonny & Anna Shaw

The beginning of a relationship is electrifying. It may start with a spark or an explosion. God created eros love and romance. The initial strong natural chemistry is something to be celebrated. At that point the relationship is like a seedling. It’s fun to cultivate and watch it bloom.

Then you get married and really get to know your spouse!

When I married my wife, I had hardly a smidgen of sense for what I was getting into with her. How could I know how much she would change over 25 years? How could I know how much I would change? My wife has lived with at least five different men since we were wed—and each of the five has been me. ~Professor Lewis Smedes

The relationship changes, as do the people in it. Seasons come and go. Jobs shift. Challenges arrive. Health may not remain. On the surface things may look ok because there are various projects and life activities to do. These are the things that occupy us but often the underlying deeper intimacy of the relationship is being neglected.

If the initial care and attention given to the seedling is not continued, sadly growth of a marriage may be stunted. The investment stops, life goes on with its demands and a couple may wake up to the reality that the projects are the only thing keeping them together. Giving up at this stage is like halting a home construction halfway through saying “This is not working...water comes right in through the

roof.” You haven’t married the wrong person. You simply have not kept up with the building work.

How do we navigate a crisis like this, or better yet, avoid it? How do we work through these life transitions and grow in deeper intimacy at the same time? We think the key is asking “how does our love grow from eros (in love) to agape (choosing to love)”?

1. Remind yourself of God’s love for us.

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32

We need to remind ourselves “I love my spouse because Jesus loves me despite knowing the worst about me.”

2. Look at your spouse the right way

Husbands, in the same way [being conscious of God] be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. 1 Peter 3:7

Gary Thomas says that this used to seem backward to him. He thought he needed to pray for a better marriage. But Peter is saying we need a better marriage *so that we can pray*. Looking at God through the lines of a **father-in-law** resolved the dilemma. He says *If a young man came to me praising me, complementing me on my character, singing songs to me and giving me 10% of his income... And all the while I knew he was making one of my daughters miserable through abuse or neglect, I would frankly have nothing to say to him except “start treating my daughter better and then we can talk. You say you respect me? Then take care of my little girl.”* Do you look at your spouse and see a child of God?

3. Manage conflict wisely

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? James 4:1-2

Tim Keller writes about “the great problem of marriage.” The one person in the whole world who holds your heart in her hand, whose approval and affirmation you

most long for and need, is the one who is hurt more deeply by your sins than anyone else on the planet—and vice versa!

When we are hurt, we feel justified in “Rhino behavior” which is telling, or yelling, the ugly truth (but not telling it in love). This can be devastating. The opposite extreme for managing conflict is to say nothing, perhaps even telling yourself you’re showing patience and grace. With such “Hedgehog behavior” we avoid telling the needed truth in love. And then we miss the growth that is supposed to happen in marriage. Truth and love need to go together. Recognizing your own default behavior and selfish tendencies can really help next time conflict arises!

4. Get rid of threats to your marriage

Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom. Songs of Solomon 2:15

Solomon’s readers considered foxes to be destructive animals that could destroy valuable vineyards; foxes represent potential problems that could damage a relationship. The Beloved wants her fiancé to remove anything that would threaten their love. We sometimes allow relatively “little” offenses to fester. Rather than flirting with danger we need to intentionally build a hedge of protection around our marriages. For some this may mean writing a list of boundaries. We recommend at least having intermittent open and honest conversations when each spouse can express concerns.

5. Spring into action!

All relationships take intentional and proactive effort to grow. As we come into the season of Spring, we hope these thoughts can act like helpful fertilizer for your marriage. More “plant food” can be found in books by Tim and Kathy Keller and Gary Thomas.

Jonny and Anna settled in Hanover 3 years ago with Corban (9), Maddy (7) and Caleb (7). Andrew (1.5) is the only native Granite Stater in the family but they all are learning to embrace the four seasons NH offers. Jonny works as a physician at DH and they are members of CRC.



I’m inclined towards peace and quiet. Sipping coffee by a lake while watching the sunrise before most of the world wakes up is pretty close to ideal for me. My walk with God, however, seldom leaves me in my comfort zone.

Alongside my younger brother, I was raised in Schenectady, NY by a mom I can’t say enough about. She worked full time to provide for us while putting herself through nursing school and navigating our sticky family breakup. She wasn’t one to complain; she quietly read her Bible every night and sought counsel from our church family as she took each day as it came. Because I watched her faithfully do life and was a part of our church, I came to know Christ as my Savior sometime in middle school.

High school was rather quiet for me (save for one speech I gave — ask me about it if you’d like). I went to school, volunteered some, and I learned a great deal about God from rapper Shai Linne. I love how a rap-

Friends in Focus REDAL RAM

per can use savvy wordplay say so much in a relatively short amount of time, but in early high school I grew uncomfortable with the content of the music I was listening to. One of my youth ministers listened to Linne, so I bought his album. Listening to Linne’s descriptions of God’s character in rap form led me to think on God more. Since then, I’ve continued the pattern of emulating believers who have gone before me.

I arrived in Hanover in 2013 to study Mechanical Engineering at Dartmouth. Away from home, my faith blossomed as a result of my relationships with friends and mentors. I am eternally grateful to them.

I’ve now called the Upper Valley home for two years. Due to a fun sequence of events that involved a mentor stepping out on a limb for me, I am a Mechanical Engineer at Mikros Technologies. I’m discovering what following Christ in the workplace looks like as I strive to love people who are very different from me, do my job well, and find the balance between the two. I’m very glad to be a part of CRC where I’ve been welcomed like family and am challenged to grow in my relationship with the Lord.

Redal is a 2017 Dartmouth graduate, and serves as a High School Youth Group leader at CRC.



Staff in the Spotlight ROBERT MOORE

As a teenager, I felt incredibly lonely because I had grown up in church and had loved learning about God and Jesus, but I started to encounter things in my life that seemed to contradict the “Jesus-loves-me” narrative I heard every Sunday. I began to feel as though I were surrounded by hypocrites - people who loved to talk about God’s grace but used it as an excuse for how they actually behaved. I distrusted anyone who claimed to truly like me, much less love me. If people could be so disingenuous about their love for God, how much less would they honestly care about me?

As a sophomore in high school I met my friend Carter – a freshman in college. He showed a genuine interest in me and my relationship with God. His display of selfless love contradicted my view of “all the other Christians,” and forced me to question whether I was justified in judging their hypocrisy. I slowly realized that God, whose love Carter kept showing me, was breaking through to show me that I was just as bad as everyone else around me. I was the one who needed forgiveness for how I had hurt others, not to mention the very God who was pursuing me. This drove me to ask God to forgive me for my actions, and help me to turn back from the selfish life I had been living.

Since then, God has given me a deep love for his church and has been teaching me to share some of that love at CRC. During my time here I have been through some of the hardest moments of my life, and I have also been deeply blessed by the love you’ve showed me. Thank you, CRC.

Robert Moore grew up north of Atlanta, GA and graduated in 2020 from Dartmouth College with a degree in Psychology and Music. He serves as a Pastoral Intern at Christ Redeemer Church.

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