



Message from Pastor Tim

May 2011: The Hope of Easter

I have a friend who I have known for over 20 years. He was a member of a congregation I served. We served together on a board of a local organization. We used to play golf together every Friday. But our friendship has grown weaker of late. He joined an "evangelical" congregation and was "rebaptized". That congregation is heavily into the teaching about the "end of times". So when we do talk now there is usually some reference to "signs" that the end is near. Earthquakes, tsunami, falling stock market, fiscal crisis, the ineffective nature of government, these all fall into his thesis that the Messiah is about to return and the world, as we know it, will be coming to an end.

It is a captivating theme. A person would have to be blind to see that within our own communities, where we live, things are not the same as they were even five years ago. So it would be rather easy to be praying for the Second Coming of Christ so that the slate could be wiped clean and the world could start over again.

I just can't get into that notion. God will do what God needs to do. I don't have to be on the sidelines rooting God on.

Recently I finished a book by Carol Howard Merritt (a Presbyterian minister) entitled "Reframing Hope". In the book Rev. Merritt writes about how when she was pregnant with her first child she had cravings. She craved a particular kind of fruit. She couldn't name it. It just had this particular kind of sweetness to it. She imagined it having this particular texture when you put it in your mouth. She could image it, but she couldn't name it. She looked all over the stores in the small town in Southern Louisiana, where she was living, but she was not able to find the fruit that would satisfy her cravings. But that did not stop her from craving.

In a distinctively male way, I can relate to what she is talking about, because I look at the world in which I live and I have cravings, that I can't name, haven't seen, don't even know if they exist anywhere. But that doesn't stop the cravings. I crave for peace and justice in the world. I crave for the lion to lie down with the lamb. I crave for a time when people will live in unity with one another. I crave for a time when we will not continue to exploit the poor, just so that we may become rich. I crave for a society which goes out of its way to assist the widows and the orphans. A world in which no one has to go to bed hungry, or lacking for clean water. A society where strangers are welcomed into our midst, because by greeting them, we may have an opportunity to host angels. I crave all of that and more. I can't always name it. I haven't seen it with my own eyes, but that doesn't stop me from craving it.

In the glow of Easter, Jesus Christ has given us all a craving. A craving for newness of life. A craving for peace. A craving for hope. His death and resurrection mean nothing if not a new world, a new order, a new creation.

You can look all around at "signs and portents" and tell me how you believe the world is coming to an end. I'm not buying it. I am sticking with the hope of Easter, the hope of the cross, the hope of the empty tomb.

Thank you for being a congregation of people who also crave. Your cravings give hope to my cravings. May the "cravings" of Easter continue to guide our hearts and our minds. **Pastor Tim**