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Pastoral Reflections—August 2020

Dear Churches,

I saw a quote the other day that has stuck with me and that I've tried to keep in mind as I read or hear any news of the Covid-19 pandemic or other difficult news that comes out and have people, including Christians, on opposite sides of the issues. This is it: "The proper Christian response to the COVID-19 crisis is still love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." -Michael Svingel

This quote hit me and made me contemplate; am I responding to this pandemic overall with the fruit of the Spirit? Or am I responding to this pandemic and stories about what is happening in a way that isn't Christ-like. What are my thoughts or what are the words I write on Facebook or say to friends about this situation showing about the Jesus I follow and the Spirit which I believe lives in me? Am I tempted to respond to news or a friend or even a stranger's comments with an insult about how they are obviously wrong or am I allowing the Spirit to guide my responses with peace, kindness, and patience? Am I letting my frustration with how long this pandemic is taking and the seemingly increasing timeline on returning to some sense of "normalcy" fill me with anger or hopelessness? Or am I seeking to see how God might be using this season to grow a deeper sense of self-control and faithfulness through hard times in me?

My challenge for us, myself included, is whenever we are reading or watching the news or on Facebook or talking with those who disagree with us, to try to take a step back and think: Am I responding with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? And if how we want to respond doesn't fit with any one of those, then ask God to help us stifle that response and find a more Christ-like way to respond instead. These are hard times we are living through, but we are still called to look at how Jesus lived, how He responded to hardship and suffering, and to be like Him. And as Romans 8 says, we have the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead living in us to help us do that.

*God bless,
Pastor Eric*