

## **STAY SAFE**

***“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise like a person who builds a house on solid rock (Matthew 7:24).***

As I was coming out of the grocery store on Monday night the teenage employee who was at the door monitoring people entering and exiting said to me “*STAY SAFE*”. It is not the first time I have had somebody say this to me during the pandemic. Prior to Covid-19 we would maybe expect to hear the words “*STAY SAFE*” in situations like:

- A parent saying these words to their children before they go off to the park to play or ride their bike around the neighbourhood,
- A coach telling his/her players to keep safe as they practice or play,
- A parent telling their teenager to stay safe when they go out with friends at night,
- Or saying these words to an employee before doing a task that involves some risk or danger.

We consistently hear this message to stay safe through this pandemic:

- STAY SAFE by practicing proper hand washing,
- STAY SAFE by wearing a mask,
- STAY SAFE by social distancing from others,
- STAY SAFE by staying within your social bubble,
- STAY SAFE by limiting your outings to essential trips.

I myself conclude each of my mid-week messages to you with the words “GOD BLESS AND KEEP SAFE”.

Yes, the message of “*STAY SAFE*” is a frequent one these past 9-10 months.

It is not a new message. We see this message come up often in *The Bible*. The first time we see it is in Genesis 2 when God gave Adam permission to eat the fruit from any tree in the garden except from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God told Adam that if he ate the fruit, he would surely die. God was giving Adam all the advice he would need to stay safe in the Garden of Eden.

The world became an unsafe place in so many ways after Adam and Eve sinned. When God rescued the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt and lead them to Mount Sinai, He once again provided advice on how to “*STAY SAFE*” by giving them the Ten Commandments. As I point out each time at church when

we say the Ten Commandments, God gave these rules to the Israelites to teach them how they could keep safe by living in a proper relationship with Him and with one another. It didn't take the Israelites long to put themselves in danger by worshipping the golden calf they built. We are told 3,000 people lost their lives that day.

Throughout the Old Testament, God reminded the Israelites through His prophets that the best way to KEEP SAFE was to turn back towards Him and obey and follow Him. Time and time again the Israelites failed to keep safe by worshipping pagan gods instead.

We see this message of how to KEEP SAFE appear again at the end of Jesus' teachings on the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus finished His sermon telling the parable about two builders:

- They each built a house.
- They each experienced the same storms.

One house collapsed as a result of the storm and the other kept safe. Jesus explained through the parable that the key to staying safe in the midst of a storm is by both listening to His teachings and following them. The builder whose house did not stay safe in that storm listened to what Jesus said but then ignored it.

We are experiencing a terrible storm as a result of this pandemic. It has been ferocious and devastating at times. One of the ways to KEEP SAFE during this storm is to follow all the guidelines set out by our health officials and elected officials. The other way to keep safe is by taking Jesus' advice in this parable to heart: KEEP EMOTIONALLY AND SPIRITUALLY SAFE in this storm by listening to Jesus' teachings and following them. By doing this we will KEEP OURSELVES "SAFE" *spiritually and emotionally* from storms like fear, doubt, worry, loneliness, insecurity and lack of faith and trust. This pandemic has been a hard storm for all of us to endure at times. This storm will not cause us to collapse emotionally or spiritually as long as we are listening to Jesus' teachings and obeying them.

Let's KEEP SAFE physically as we wait for enough vaccines to return our society and life to some form of normal. Let's KEEP SAFE emotionally and spiritually as well by listening and obeying Jesus.

Wait for it....

**God Bless & Keep Safe**  
**Pastor Dean**