

## **What Was Great About 2020** **12-27-20**

We started 2020 with a theme: fulfilling the “One Another” commandments. We began examining the 50+ commands showing our love for one another. We sought to use 2020 as a time for improving our relationships and growing ourselves in service. We launched into this knowing that this was important, and that it was fulfilling the law of Christ.

But then 2020 took a turn no one expected. For much of the world, 2020 was all about worry and confusion. People changed everything over fears of sickness or the legal issues and challenges facing us. The confinement was worse; we saw ourselves losing freedoms and losing our means of relaxation and recreation (vacations or hobbies). This year put us into difficult struggles. Some of us lost our jobs, creating financial and emotional burdens. Then on top of it there was the difficulties of politics and social upheaval. There were riots, protests, impeachments, and political fights to a degree some of us had never seen.

For the world, this has been one of the worst years of their lives. But for those in Christ, we see something quite different.

First, what we experienced was a testing of our faith. That is something important. James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter 1:6-7 tell us that when we have difficult moments, we are actually expanding our faith in God. Our test was in choosing faith over fear. We chose to assemble not because we doubted the dangers, but because we by faith saw that it was more important to worship God than to protect ourselves. We choose spirituality over safety, risking even the wrath of community or government for worshipping with them. We saw our assembly as unnecessary.

Then came the testing of our patience with each other. In the course of studying our one-another passages, we considered how we needed to practice being patient with one another. We needed to consider (Hebrews 10:24) submit (1 Peter 5:5) and bear (Colossians 3:13) with one another. 2020 gave us an extraordinary opportunity to accept differing views and to yielding to one another and to the body and the overseers of the body.

Then we had the opportunity to learn more about to serve each other (Galatians 5:13, 6:2). This important opportunity of service permitted us to supply simple needs and emotional support to each other in a difficult time.

Finally, we were given an important reminder that the world is not permanent. We are told many times not to see this passing world as our home (1 John 2:17, James 4:14, 2 Peter 3:11-12). This year reminded us that our lives are but vapors. The world is an easily broken place, and we are grateful to know that this world is not our home.

Many years from now we will look back on this year, and perhaps realize that what was bad to the world about this year was good for us. As Joseph’s slavery and imprisonment or the persecution of the church in Acts 8, we will see that something important happened to us this year.

When you look back to this year, will you be pleased you passed the test? Or will you be ashamed you failed?