

2021 WEEK 5: January 31 – February 6

Wake Up and Smell the Tulips



As I write this, the world has been in the grips of a deadly pandemic for nearly a year. Millions of Americans have contracted the COVID-19 virus since it first appeared in the U.S. early this year and more than 230,000 U.S. citizens have died from the disease.

We did not expect this. This was not what we signed up for in January. We are like the young couple who gives birth to a child with special needs. During pregnancy, they eagerly plan for the arrival of their child as if they are planning a trip to Paris. They study travel guides and make a list of the many exciting things they hope to see and do when they get to Paris – visit the Eiffel Tower, tour the Louvre, walk along the Champs-Elysees and visit Versailles.

However, when their plane lands, they find themselves in Holland – not Paris. Yes, Holland is beautiful. It has canals and windmills and acres and acres of beautiful flowers. And the people in Holland are wonderful. But . . . it's not Paris. The couple is disappointed because they were looking forward to experiencing the sights and sounds of Paris – and Holland is not what they were expecting.

We can relate, can't we? Perhaps we had plans to travel this summer, to attend a high school reunion or a college homecoming game. And we assumed we'd be able to gather with our family at the holidays and continue attending worship services at church. But suddenly, in mid-March, our plans and assumptions came to a screeching halt. This is not what we expected -- and we're disappointed.

But, like the young couple who find themselves unexpectedly in Holland, we, too, can find beauty around us. We can be thankful for the technology that allows us to remain connected with distant family and friends and to continue participating in Sunday school classes and worship services. We can enjoy the peace and tranquility of reading a good book or by working in our garden or simply going for a long walk.

Like Joseph – whose life suddenly was upended and inalterably changed when he was sold by his brothers to a band of Ishmaelites (Genesis 37:25-28) – we can experience the peace and love of God even in the midst of a pandemic. Look around. The tulips are in bloom.

Rob Billingsley

Scripture:

Matthew 11:28-30

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

James 1:2-4

Philippians 4:6-7

Psalm 23

John 16:33

1 Peter 5:7