This CoronaVirus shutdown reminds me most of that period of time right after 9/11 when the airplanes taken over by terrorists crashed into the World Trade Center, Pentagon, and here in an open field in Shenksville, Pennsylvania. People were anxious. People turned their hearts to God. People prayed a lot more than they ever did. The old saying that there are no atheists in foxholes always came to mind; no one in the heat of battle doesn’t believe in God and doesn’t pray to God. I suppose even people who are unfamiliar with Christ and prayer are praying now. Praying “To whom it may concern…”

I remember after 9/11 I was flying out of Reagan National Airport right next to the Pentagon in Northern Virginia to go to a national church meeting. The airport had just reopened after the event of 9/11 that September. I remember going to the airport and thinking to myself, “I must be crazy to be flying so soon after 9/11”. I was then serving the Presbyterian Church closest to the Pentagon on 9/11. The airport was within a couple of miles of my church. And there was sort of a dark gallows humor in that period of time. Passengers would play, “Spot the Air Marshall” on the airplane. He was always the large, burly marine-like looking guy with a buzz cut flattop haircut sitting in the back of First Class as you entered watching your every move. When you smiled at him he didn’t smile back. So the passengers all sort of quietly enter the plane and take our seats and right before take-off the pilot comes on the speakers and says in the calmest voice he can muster –“I just wanted to let you know that upon take-off we will ascend very rapidly at a steep angle, and then we will veer sharply to the left. Don’t be concerned; we have to do this because the airport is so close to the White House.” Super calm voice. So we took off and rapidly accelerated into a very steep climb. You know, sort of with the g-forces pulling your eyeballs back in the sockets. Then the plane veared super sharply to the left so you felt the left wing could touch the ground. The funny thing about it was that no one said a word or even made so much as a peep. We were way too busy praying. There were only praying Christians on that plane.

But I have to tell you this. While we had a prayer service right after 9/11 and it was standing room only in the sanctuary with more than 800 people in attendance. And while church services probably were double in attendance through Christmas that 9/11 year. Once January came, the church went back to (quote, unquote) “normal”. Once the fear and concern were gone, so too, were the Foxhole Christians. People prayed for awhile and turned their heart back to God for awhile. But four months later everything was the same. When people weren’t afraid anymore they stopped going to church. They were the very definition of being a “Foxhole Christian”. When in danger they were a Christian and they prayed and went to church. When the danger passed they went back to their old ways. I’m going to say something to you that you probably may not like. NO FOXHOLE CHRISTIANS. You are a Christian and you attend worship and you pray and study and serve on bad days and good days. When the sun shines and on the darkest day. If you only pray to God when you need Him, He knows the truth of your heart. You don’t really love God; you only love God for what He can do for you. People who only come to church after 9/11 or when we can re-gather after the CoronaVirus has abated are FOXHOLE CHRISTIANS. And there is no such thing as a Foxhole Christian. You’re a Christian every day, in every season, or you’re not a Christian at all. So you need to decide right now where you’re going to be sitting on Sunday mornings six months from now. Once the Foxhole is over are you still worshipping and grateful to God? Because God knows your heart better than you do… Figure it out NOW.

The New Testament book of James asks us: “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?” (James 4: 2) It says: “You lust and you do not have.” “You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.” (v. 3) James writes: “Whoever wants to be a friend of the
world makes himself an enemy of God.” (v. 4) He writes: “God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (v. 6) The Foxhole Christian prays to God to get something from God. The true Christian prays to God to discern the will of God and to give their life to HIM. So we need to figure out right now who we choose to worship, serve, and live our lives for...

Its been interesting to me to listen to some of the public service announcements lately. I hate the one where an overpaid NFL player intones: “everything will be alright”. O. and where does your authority come from? Are you a doctor or a scientist? Are you a knowlegable public figure? An expert theologian and ethicist? To be sure, we worship you and we pay you too much and we hang on your every word, but you are being revealed as the entirely empty, vacant and useless drone you truly are. Stop being friends with the world. Stop worshipping people who are not worth worshipping. Stop giving people who should have no authority some authority which they do not posses. Another one, is a singer who intones, “Stay home, stay safe, everything will be alright”. She was paid $59 million last year. She has multiple homes all with walls all around and surrounded by armed body guards. Why do we vest such authority in a singer of songs? Why do we hang on her every word? Why do we pay her so much? Why do we worship her? Do you not know that friendship with this world makes you an enemy to God? Haven’t all these celebrities just been revealed for the useless people they truly are, all sound and fury signifying nothing, smoke and mirrors, empty suits? No depth, no character, empty. But our modern culture worships them over the Lord God Almighty. For me, I will give credibility and authority right now to the women who stand behind the customer service counter at Giant Eagle far more than these so called celebrities and American Idols. Because the women behind the service counter are putting their lives on the line for me and our community so we can eat. I’ll listen to what they have to say over any self-important, overpaid rock star any day. We better decide who we’re going to worship and serve after the CoronaVirus has gone away. We better decide whether our heart is with God today and tomorrow and forever. Or whether we have a divided heart and there are other things and other people we worship and give our life and our time and our money to. Don’t you know that friendship with this world is enmity with God? You can’t be a Foxhole Christian. Impossible. You can’t have one foot in the world and one foot in the Kingdom of God. Both feet and all of you and all of your heart must be the Lord’s.

My wonderful home church pastor, Rev. Bob, told a story of going over to Europe to fight in World War II; he was going over in a troop ship. And he noted that the chapel on the troop ship was full every day with soldiers praying to the Lord God Almighty to rescue them from death. In one of those services Rev. Bob prayed to the Lord and promised that if he was brought back safely home he would become a Presbyterian Minister and serve the Lord for the rest of his life. The Lord did spare him. But one of Rev. Bob’s observations was that the chapel on the troop ship bringing him back home safely after the war was over was largely empty, whereas, the chapel of the troopship going over to Europe at the beginning of the war was full to overflow. No foxhole Christians, noted Rev. Bob. And to his credit he came home and dedicated the rest of his life to serving God. So when this CoronaVirus stuff is over will our churches be full and filled with praying people? Or are there just a lot of Foxhole Christians, here today and gone tomorrow? God will not be mocked. He will not answer our prayers now when we are afraid if He knows that in our heart we will return and worship the gods of this world –pro athletes and movie stars and rock stars, rather than His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Friend, what kind of a Christian are you? Decide today. Amen and Amen.

By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, Pennsylvania
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!