

We like things to be constant in our lives. Predictable. The fewer curves we get thrown, the better. But this current health situation has thrown some curves that we don't like. Some aspect, or more likely, many aspects, of your usual lives have been upended.

But I've heard many stories of "silver linings" in the clouds of what's happening. People who have been able to work from home have found several unexpected benefits. Working from home frequently means not having to get up as early. There have been fewer miles put on those cars, meaning less money spent on gas. Working from home usually means a more casual dress code, possibly pajamas and slippers.

Having to stay at home more than was usual before has meant the world to your pets. They love having you around all the time, being able to play more often, maybe even getting more treats! When our work world goes back to its prior routine, be prepared for some sad eyes and confused looks!

Not being able to go out to eat as much for some families has meant more time together at dinner. Those meals have provided bonding and deeper conversations than had taken place for a while before Covid-19.

Whatever the negatives of any situation, there are usually positive aspects that can be found, if one is willing to see that.

The life and death of Jesus fits this "silver linings" concept very well. In establishing the New Covenant, he was constantly questioned, even attacked, for what he was doing.

Because of His miracles, He was rightly seen as the prophesied Savior. But his critics found some of His actions didn't fit their idea of what the Messiah would be like.

He didn't advocate a military overthrow of Roman rule; instead He said, "Love those who hate you, bless those who persecute you."

He didn't avoid sinners; he sought them out, like having dinner with tax collectors and sinners in Matthew 9, which the Pharisees couldn't understand. Jesus told them, "Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

He didn't look down upon those that were commonly looked down upon at that time. He engaged them in conversation willingly, frequently starting the conversations. He asked the Samaritan woman at the well for a drink; she didn't talk to him first. He

talked to the woman with the issue of blood first (yes, she did touch Him, but she didn't seem at ease in approaching Him).

In a time when touching a leper made you ceremonially unclean, Jesus didn't hesitate to touch them and heal them.

His death also fits this pattern of finding a silver lining. The song "You Are My King" highlights a few of these contrasts.

I'm forgiven; You were forsaken

I'm accepted; You were condemned

Pilate asked Him questions, giving Him a chance to defend Himself. He didn't answer.

Jesus is the Son of God; He could have called down legions of angels to protect Him. Instead He chose to die so that I could have a new life.

Obviously, he was supposed to be dead and gone. The Pharisees wanted Him dead to get rid of Him. But He rose again the third day!

The story of Jesus' life and death is the story of the unexpected, the upside down. He loves us despite the fact that we are sinners. He seeks us when we don't and won't seek Him. It is almost unfathomable to try to understand what Jesus did for us by dying on the cross, because that's certainly not how most (any?) of us would have handled the same situation. Maybe that's because we're not God, and He is!

Prayer: Father God, thank you for Jesus dying at Calvary for my sins. Thank you for showing us that Your world and way of doing things isn't our way, but it's the far better way. Thank you for loving us despite our sinful nature, forgiving us each and every time we ask, and providing for our salvation at a much greater cost to Yourself than to us. In Jesus' name, Amen.