



Listen To Him!

²⁵*I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶I will give you a new heart and **put a new spirit in you.***

I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

²⁷*And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

²⁸*Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; **you will be my people and I will be your God.***

(Ezekiel 36:25-28)

Hosanna!! *Even the rocks would cry out* (Luke 19: 40). Good morning, gents!! It's Palm Sunday and this is one of my favorite passages in the Bible. All of Creation fell together and all of Creation, even the rocks, will be redeemed. It's a gorgeous day out and a beautiful moment in the life of our Savior to celebrate. One for which He waited for centuries. *Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!* (John 12: 13) And yes, even in these bleak and dark times, we can commemorate and rejoice. Uncomfortable situations can confuse us and dissuade us, but they **need not derail us**, when we cling to the One who loves us and whose right hand upholds us (Psalm 63: 8).

God in flesh rode triumphantly into Jerusalem on a colt, an event prophesied centuries before (Zechariah 9: 9), willingly embracing the cross to save us from our sins. To know and love Him better, to understand how He felt that day, rapturously happy and profoundly sad, we must turn to the Bible together. Illumined by His Word, God's purpose and plan becomes clear to us.

We pray for a heart of sincerity and the Grace to understand in Faith and grasp and follow Christ's teaching. Christ is (often uncomfortably) characteristically blunt. What He teaches **is not common sense**. It is **revelation from God**. And so, we need the direction of the Holy Spirit to help us reach and embrace the Truth. Striving to find fulfillment apart from God's Truth will always prove futile.

Hosanna, a Hebrew word meaning, 'save us, please,' morphs into a phrase of confidence and Faith in His Salvation and becomes a proclamation of praise: *Hosanna in the Highest!!* (Matthew 21: 9)

Jesus was riding into the worst suffering and toughest trial in the history of mankind. We talked about three possible modes of deliverance from trial. We can ask the Father for removal of the trial. Jesus tried that; not His Will (Luke 22:42) or plan. There was a purpose for all this. We can have deliverance from the trial thru death, like Stephen (Acts 7:55) into Security. But Jesus was bringing the security, for us, thru His death and resurrection. We can receive sustenance thru the trial, as we know that He has promised to never forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

And what of us; how do we respond to the trial? We are in the midst of a tough one now. Last week, we said that we could: drag behind the curve in ignorance, denial, mockery, despair and outright lies. Or we can run ahead of the curve in presumption, bravado, false hope, pride and outright lies. Or we can reside in the now, neither ignorant nor presumptuous, learning from yesterday and planning for tomorrow, preparing and responding within what we have available – the resources of God. We can't see tomorrow and yesterday has faded; stay alert to the direction of His Holy Spirit with eyes of Faith, open to the now.

Living in the now takes discernment, focus and Faith. Perhaps we can glean some Wisdom from the ancient Hebrews and how they handled their 'now.' How did they respond in captivity -- like the frog in the pot? Perhaps we can draw some parallels to how we respond today. In our affluency, are we slowly deteriorating? Like the Israelites, we seem to have a revulsion to repentance. They ignored the prophets and would not turn to God, even as they endured an eighteen-month siege.

Now the king of Babylon was very intent and earnest upon the siege of Jerusalem; and he erected towers upon great banks of earth, and from them repelled those that stood upon the walls; he also made a great number of such banks round about the whole city, whose height was equal to those walls. However, those that were within, bore the siege with courage and alacrity, for they were not discouraged, either by the famine, or by the pestilential distemper. (Josephus, historian, Antiquities of the Jews)

What would it take for us to give up our favorite sin? The Hebrews were hauled off to Babylonia for 70 years. Anyone paying attention knew that disobeying God would bring dire problems. The prophet, Jeremiah, warned, *the Lord once called you a flourishing olive tree, beautiful with well-formed fruit. But with a mighty roar He will set it on fire, and its branches will be consumed. The Lord of Hosts, who planted you, has decreed disaster against you on account of the evil that the house of Israel and the house of Judah have brought upon themselves, provoking Me to anger by burning incense to Baal. (Jeremiah 11: 16, 17)* As we know, prophets always seem to run counter-culture to what the people want to hear. The teachers of the law and the pharisees were called out by Jesus as hypocrites for not living what they were teaching. How will this brood of vipers, *escape being condemned to hell?* (Matthew 23: 23)

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you,
how often I have longed to **gather your children together**, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings,
and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate.
For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord.'*
(Matthew 23: 37-39)

And then there is the practice of picking and choosing what we want to hear. Sound familiar?
*For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching; but having **itching ears** they will
accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions; and will turn away from listening to the
Truth and wander off into myths. (2 Timothy 4: 3, 4)*

Let's take a moment and look at Israel from a bird's-eye view. The dismantling of Israel began about 130 years before the burning of the Temple. This seminal, formative event was only exceeded by the final departure of God's Glory from the Temple and Jerusalem, until it would appear again in the Person of the Holy Son of God. The Presence of God would depart the Temple and the City and move to the Mount of Olives (*Ezekiel 11: 23*); the very same mountain where Jesus would someday ascend to Heaven. Tho the Lord does not forsake His people, does He sometimes withdraw His Presence, Glory and protection? Is that what is happening to us today? God seems to be fed-up with folks *whose hearts are devoted to their vile images and detestable idols, I will bring down on their own heads what they have done, declares the sovereign Lord. (Ezekiel 11: 21)*. God also instructs Ezekiel, however, that eventually, *they will be my people and I will be their God (vs. 20)*.

Over the years, God had consistently called for repentance and Israel continually preferred the vile images and detestable idols. For over 200 years, they had available the prophesies of Isaiah. The Assyrian empire was expanding westward, and this was a threat to Israel and one which Isaiah proclaimed to be a warning from God to a godless people. During the times of the Babylonian captivity, they had the prophesies of contemporary Jeremiah, but they kept on. Jeremiah, a Judaeen prophet whose activity spanned four of the most tumultuous decades in Israel's history, is recorded as lamentations or oracles of a turbulent time.

In afterview, we know the Israelites had a hard row to hoe, but they were never without understanding. They always had the opportunity to repent. They were called by God to repent or be hauled off and even as they stared down the barrel of the Babylon shotgun, they remained stiff-necked. The leadership knew that they were flying in the face of God and yet continued to ignore the prophets. Interesting, we have today the same God who calls for repentance and we have the benefit of every report in the Bible (and we have the Son who brings salvation, Hosanna!) and yet we carry on.

Currently, we feel like we are being 'pulled thru the knothole,' against our will. If our response is to put our Faith in human strength, and put our Hope in political leaders, if we ignore the Word of God and listen with itching ears to ungodly counsel – we will fail to find Peace in adversity. Altho the battle belongs to the Lord (...); we have our part to do. We must build, so to speak, in harmony with His design – or we build in vain.

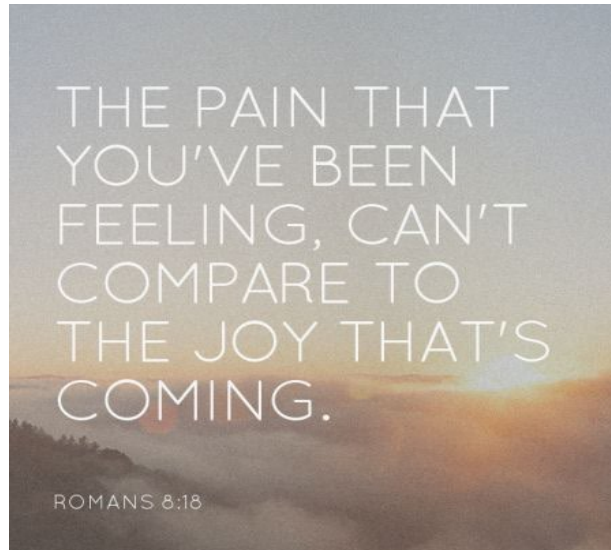
*Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it, labor in vain.
Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. (Psalm 127:1)*

Pray that we would learn from the reports of the Hebrews and their challenges and their responses. Pray that we would repent, live in the now and allow Him to sustain us. He promises that if we would turn from itching ears and listen to His wisdom, turn from the vile idols – He will heal our land.

*If my people, called by my Name, turn from evil and seek my face.
I will hear, I'll forgive, and I will heal, I will heal their land.*

*We, your people, called by your Name, turn from evil and seek your face.
Hear our cry, Lord forgive, come and heal – come and heal our land.*

(2 Chronicles 7: 14)



Let's go into prayer.

P.U.S.H. Pray Until Something Happens

Prayer: a passion for the Presence of God!



*Be joyful in Hope, patient in affliction, **faithful in prayer.** (Romans 12: 12)*

*Prayer is more powerful than all your self-efforts. Pray **big** and watch God work.*

When prayer becomes your habit – miracles become your lifestyle.

Thru prayer, we can repent directly to God. We can draw the strength to turn from our idols. From His Holy Spirit, we can receive the power and Wisdom to *recognize* our idols.

Thru prayer, we can shed the bravado and pride and humble ourselves before a compassionate God. I can, let my words be few ([Ecclesiastes 5:2](#)) and listen to Him.

Walk prudently when you go to the House of God.

Draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools... Do not be quick to speak, and do not let your heart hastily utter a word before God.

After all, God is in Heaven and you are on earth. So, let your words be few.

(Ecclesiastes 5: 1, 2)

God is real. Sin is real. Hell is real. Jesus Christ is real. The blood He shed in the crucifixion is real. The Holy Spirit is real. Faith and the absence of faith are real. Heaven is real. The human soul that will exist forever in Heaven or in hell is real. Those are the great realities of the universe, and none of the fearlessness that you see in the movies is based on any of them. Therefore, it's worthless as something to admire or to aspire to.

*What God is doing — among a million other things — in the coronavirus, is **forcing the issue of reality**. And one of the litmus tests of whether your life is based on reality or based on the mirage of God-ignoring pillars, **holding up the cultural temple** of secularism, is fear. The test of the foundations of your life is fear. Oh, what a precious gift God is giving to us to discover, while we still have time, that the pillars holding up our peace are hollow and made of papier-mâché. That's a gift.*

There are glorious, rock-solid, indestructible reasons and warrants and grounds and foundations for not being afraid of what the coronavirus can do to your health or to your business or to your family or to the economy or to Western civilization or to history as we know it. There are foundations in reality not to fear any of this.

So, my question is, who is it that can have warranted, well-founded, justifiable, God-given, God-sustained freedom from fear and unshakable, sweet, abiding contentment? And the answer is given in one verse — one of the most sweeping, all-encompassing, stabilizing, precious, well-known promises in the Bible:

We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. ([Romans 8: 28](#)) ([John Piper, Pastor, author, chancellor, desiringGod.org](#))

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

(1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18)

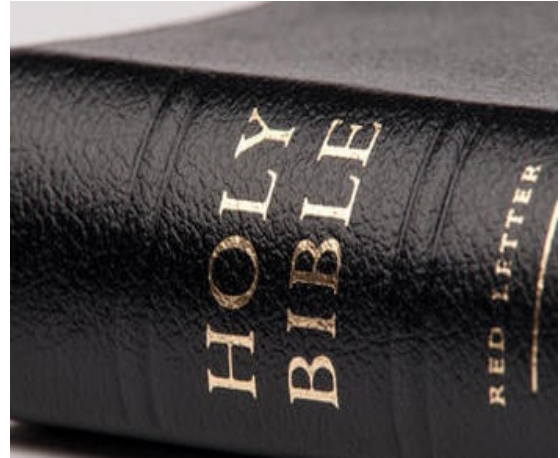
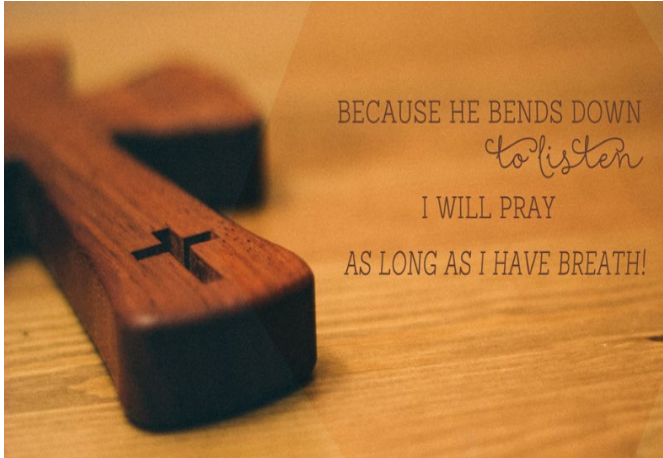


Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. (Luke 18: 1)

Prayer is our powerline.

Prayer is the intimate, honest expression of the soul's dependence on God.

Who can you pray for today?
Who might God be putting in your path?



*In the morning, Lord, You hear my voice;
in the morning I lay my requests before You and wait expectantly.
(Psalm 5: 3)*

Let the fragrance of our prayers arise



I constantly remember you in my prayers. (2 Timothy 1: 3)

God Sightings/God Residing

See God thru His amazing creation. Embrace God thru the work He is doing inside you.

Stop and consider God's wonders. (Job 37: 14)

Fix your eyes on Him. (Hebrews 12: 2)

*I believe in Christianity as I believe in the rising sun;
not because I see it, but by it, I can see all else. (C.S. Lewis)*

Hey, Brother, do you ever play the 'if only' game, especially in hard times?? If only (for example) we can get all these bills paid – then life will be good, and I'll be content! Really?! Jesus isn't enough? If He is not enough, if I'm not content here and now, what makes me think I would be content *if only* I were in another situation? How do we learn to let it be OK, and learn to rest, in Jesus? It is a matter of focus and the discipline of God-sighting; of recognizing Him and His Peace and being thankful for all His blessings. A matter of savoring His goodness, taste and see (Psalm 34: 8), and learning more about Him and growing in Faith, trust and patience. When we see God, we can recognize that life is all about glorifying Him and not me; we can ask Him to teach us contentment.

If you are looking for Hope, reassurance, direction look to Him.

Lots of sharing this morning, glimpses of God:

Mike W. was privileged to deliver vinyl gloves to the Police this week. He felt a strong appreciation for the work they do. As we huddle in our homes from the virus, they are on the front lines protecting us. God is so present in the Scriptures as Mike and Paulie are reading thru the Bible and also studying Romans 8 as it is abounding with deep Wisdom.

David W. also appreciating the fresh Spring air; while out running, noticing and appreciating the Spring flowers blooming and God resounding in life coming in all around.

God is also present in the efforts of Bethel Kids and their Mom's in home ministry.

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and he delivers them.

Taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him.

Fear the Lord, you His saints, for those who fear Him lack nothing. (Psalm 34: 7-9)

Rich was quite impressed with Mike (the Pillow Guy) Lindell and his clear presentation of Gospel Truth. The whole world was watching. Believers got a glimpse of God's Hope.

Appreciating the welcome, warm Spring air, Rich worked on the patio to the sound of the neighborhood chimes playing, the *Ol' Rugged Cross*. God is in the air, in the music and in our hearts.

*On a hill far away, stood an old rugged Cross, the emblem of suff'ring and shame.
And I love that old Cross **where the dearest and best**, for a world of lost sinners was slain.*

*So I'll cherish the old rugged Cross, till my trophies at last I lay down.
I will cling to the old rugged Cross and exchange it some day for a crown.*

*Oh, that old rugged Cross so despised by the world, has a wondrous attraction for me.
For the dear Lamb of God, **left His Glory above to bear it to dark Calvary.***

*In the old rugged Cross, stain'd with blood so divine, a wondrous beauty I see.
For the dear Lamb of God, left His Glory above, to pardon and sanctify me.*

*To the old rugged Cross, I will ever be true, its shame and reproach gladly bear.
Then He'll call me some day to my home far away, **where His Glory forever I'll share.***

*So I'll cherish the old rugged Cross, till my trophies at last I lay down.
I will cling to the old rugged Cross, and exchange it some day for a crown.*

Jay was delighted to see co-workers, sequestered at home, to use this time for family bonding.

Mike saw God's beauty exposed in Hanna's beautiful singing and ukulele playing, impressive.

God sightings stir us to worship. And I stand in awe of You.

Have you seen God, lately?

Focus on Faith

Faith is not a cushion for me to fall back upon – it is my working energy. (Helen Keller)

It's not the strength of your Faith that saves you, but the strength of Him upon whom you rely.

(Charles Spurgeon, Pastor, author, 'Prince of Preachers')

The Church has faced trials before, dating back to the first century and has always found a way to continue. Thru the depression and two world wars, the Church has always found a way to keep meeting. Now it's our turn and we will find a way to persevere. *We are not alone. The same Jesus Christ who has gotten us thru every adversity in the past will get us thru the adversity we face in the present. Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4). And that He is Jesus. If we keep our Faith in Him, Jesus will get us thru this time as He has always done for His Believers. We are still the Church. We are still the family; we are going to stay together. God is still going to get the Glory. And we are going to walk in the victory as the Church together; and when we come back, we come back stronger in the Will and Grace of God. (Pastor Sheldon, Springfield, Missouri)*

Pastor Steve referenced the movie Apollo 13, when NASA Flight Director Gene Kranz overheard two NASA Directors discussing the low chances of survival for the crew after the lunar landing was aborted. Kranz responded by saying, "With all due respect, sir, I believe this is going to be our finest hour."

Pastor Steve said regarding the covid-19 pandemic, "This will be our finest hour."

Some trust in chariots and horses, but we trust in the Name of the Lord our God. (Psalm 20:7)

Jesus rode a donkey to show that He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

He is the King to reign from shore-to-shore forever (Zechariah 9:10).

Is He your King?

(Pastor Steve)

Faith is: to Hear (Romans 10: 17), to Believe (Hebrews 11: 6), and to Obey (James 1: 22) the Word of God (Matthew 6: 33, 34).

Faith is the currency of God's economy.

Conclusion

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you, righteous and having Salvation is He,
humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zechariah 9: 9)*

Jesus knew this Truth as He rode triumphantly into Jerusalem on a colt. He was jubilant as the long-awaited day had finally come – He would free His people from the power of sin. Jesus also knew the terror and suffering that He was about to endure; but Jesus, as man, lived in the now and it was time to rejoice. Jesus, as Son of God, actually transcended all of our concepts of time; but He was the Good Shepherd and exuberant to be gathering His flock. We are His Children, His flock, and as we face suffering and hardship, we too, can look ahead to the Glory and wonder that is ours and rejoice.

*For I consider that the suffering of this present time, are not worth comparing
with the **Glory that is to be revealed** to us. (Romans 8: 18)*

In a time of world-wide chaos, are we doing our best to understand God's course, and learn to conduct ourselves as He commands, in concert and Faith? This is no time to be doubting or ignoring God; or mocking His prophets or trusting in chariots and horses. This is a good time to ditch the itching ears and listen to the One.

*While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said,
"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. **Listen to Him!**"
(Matthew 17: 5)*

Hey, guys, have a good week leading up to Good Friday. When He says, from the cross, *it is finished* (John 19:30), listen to Him. It's good news! Thanks to Him, it is all just beginning for us. We will see you Saturday on Zoom (go to Mike's blog and) and we will finish chapter 8 and possibly move on into chapter 9, *Union With Christ*. Can't wait to see you all. Let's talk about it; you'll be glad you did! Your Bro. in Christ, Dale.

Breakfast Benediction

May you all be Blessed real good!

⁷ *But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.*

⁸ *We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; **perplexed, but not driven to despair;***

⁹ *persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. (2 Corinthians 4: 7-10)*

*Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the Glory and the majesty and the splendor,
for everything in Heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the Kingdom;
You are exalted as head over all.*

(1 Chronicles 29: 11)

.....and may the dust of your Rabbi's feet cover your clothing.

*God sent His only Son to save us. He died upon a cross for all our sin.
I praise the precious Name of Jesus, He walked out of the grave they laid Him in.*

*I serve a Savior; **it's what I was made for.** His Grace and Love I don't deserve.
I will be faithful, humble and grateful; my life is greater because I serve a Savior.*

*This world can be so full of heartache
The pain, it causes cuts just like a knife, Aw, but the Bible says, "The one who loves his life will lose it,
And the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.
If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me, where I am, there my servant will also be.
If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him" (John 12: 25,26)*

*I serve a Savior
It's what I was made for.
His Grace and Love I don't deserve
I will be faithful
Humble and grateful.
My life is greater 'cause I serve a Savior.
My life is greater 'cause I serve a Savior.*



O magnify the Lord with me; and let us exalt His Name together. (Psalm 34: 3)