

WE WILL MAKE IT THROUGH

- A. Introduction: Welcome everyone! Due to the national emergency that has been declared because of the corona virus pandemic, we are once again livestreaming from our home. For the next several weeks we are foregoing our regular weekly gathering as per the President's request.
1. In these sessions I want to share some thoughts from the Bible about what is happening and why. My goal is to encourage and comfort you and give you hope in the midst of challenging circumstances.
 - a. Because of this pandemic and the related economic issues, there's a lot of fear among people and, understandably so. But God's Word to His people is always: Fear not for I am with you.
 - b. Fear not doesn't mean don't feel afraid. It's normal to feel fear when something scary comes at you. Fear not means don't let fear determine your response to these challenges. Fear not means let God's Word determine how you see your situation and how you act in the midst of it.
 1. Ps 56:3-4—What time I am afraid, I will trust in you. I will boast in your Word. In the face of fearsome circumstances you choose to believe what God has said despite what you see and feel.
 2. You recognize that nothing can come against you that is bigger than God who is with you and for you. And He will get you through until He gets you out.
 2. Part of dealing with fear is gaining understanding about what is happening and why. The Bible gives us a lot of information about what and why. We're taking these few weeks address some of what the Bible says so that we can calm our fears. We continue our discussion tonight.
- B. Last week we said that the Second Coming of Jesus is near. And, we pointed out that the Bible predicts that events such as pandemics will precede His return. We'll say more about that a little later on tonight.
1. But there is an issue we must address first. I saw a headline the other day that read: Where is God? Many people have asked that question. Where is God? Is He behind this? How can a loving God allow a global pandemic? Why doesn't He stop it?
 - a. We must be able to answer these questions because you can't be without fear if you believe that the most powerful Being in the universe is using His power against you in some way.
 - b. How can you truly trust God to help you get through the trouble if you think that He is somehow behind the trouble you are experiencing, either directly or indirectly?
 - c. I've heard people say that God is sending us a message and that He's trying to get our attention through this global catastrophe. However, God is not behind the pandemic in any way.
 1. How do I know? Because when Jesus was on earth, He never did anything like this to anyone. You see, Jesus is God and Jesus shows us God. Jesus is God's message to the world.
 2. Heb 1:1-3—Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. But now in these final (last) days he has spoken to us through his Son (NLT)... (Jesus) is the perfect imprint and very image of [God's] nature (Amp).
 - d. Jesus is God become man without ceasing to be God. Two thousand years ago Almighty God took on flesh (a full human nature) so that he could die for our sin, so He could take our place at the Cross and be punished for our wrongdoing. Heb 2:14-15
 1. While on earth, although Jesus did not cease to be God, He did not live as God. He veiled His deity and lived as a man in dependence on God as His Father (lots of lessons for another day).
 - A. Here's the point for our discussion. Jesus, through His works and His words, showed us what God is like. Jesus said: If you've seen me, you've seen the Father, not because I am the Father, but because I do His works and speak His words by His power in me. John 14:9-10; John 8:28
 - B. John 5:19—Jesus said: I only do what I see my Father do. If Jesus didn't do it, then God the Father doesn't do it. When we read the Gospels (eyewitness accounts of Jesus'

actions) we see that He healed broken and diseased bodies. He sent no tribulation into peoples' lives—no pandemics or economic disasters. He fed hungry people and calmed natural disasters such as storms.

2. Matt 7:9-11—Jesus actually authorized us to understand God in terms of a good earthly Father. If you wouldn't do it to your child, then God's not doing it to you.
2. That brings up a reasonable question. If God is not behind or approving of the hell and heartache in the world, then what accounts for it? Consider these thoughts.
 - a. When God created human beings He gave men and women free will or the power of choice. God wanted humanity to freely choose to serve Him, choose to live in loving relationship with Him.
 1. But, giving men and women free will opened up the possibility that they would choose independence from God. And that's exactly what has happened.
 2. Since the beginning of time, all kinds of choices have been made that God is neither behind nor in favor of in any way. And, choices come with consequences, both good and bad.
 - b. The first human being, Adam, chose independence from God. As the first man, he was not only the head of the human race, but he was earth's first steward. Consequently, his actions affected both the family resident in him and the family home. Gen 2:17
 1. Because of Adam's choice, there was a fundamental change in human nature. His first son, Cain, jealous of his brother Abel, murdered him and then lied about it. This inclination toward evil has continued to express itself in each subsequent generation. Gen 4:1-9; Rom 5:19
 2. Because of Adam's sin, a curse of corruption and death entered all of creation. Adam's sin corrupted the natural laws and processes set into motion by God at the beginning of time.
 - A. This change resulted in blight, drought, famine, destructive storms, and earthquakes throughout the world. Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12
 - B. Matt 6:19—Jesus summed up life in a sin cursed earth this way: Moths and rust corrupt and thieves break through and steal. If you leave a peach out on the kitchen counter, it will eventually rot—not because God made peaches to rot but because that's life in a sin damaged world.
 3. As a result of Adam's sin, all human beings are born into a fallen world. This means we must daily deal with the changes produced in humanity and creation by our first parent's sin.
 - A. Weeds, decay, natural disasters and death are currently part of earth's makeup. We have bodies that are mortal and subject to sickness, old age, and death.
 - B. We interact with people who make unwise and sinful choices that can directly affect our lives in negative ways. Each of these factors makes life on this planet toilsome.
3. You must understand that God's primary purpose in this sin damaged world is not to make this life the highlight of our existence. His primary purpose is to bring all men and women to salvation from sin and make them His sons and daughters through faith in Christ so that they can live with Him forever in a perfect world. John 3:16; II Pet 3:9
 - a. God is much more concerned about the eternal destiny of men and women than He is with stopping every instance of suffering and pain in life. If a person has a perfect, pain-free life now, but ends up eternally separated from God because of his sin, his wonderful life is all for naught.
 - b. Life on this earth in its present condition is only a tiny part of God's plan for us. We are eternal beings, and the greater portion of our existence is after this life, first in Heaven then on the new earth—this earth renovated and restored. Rom 8:18
 1. I am in no way minimizing the pain people experience in this life. However, a proper perspective on the big picture (the fact that God is gathering a family for eternity and we have a future and a hope) can lighten the load of our hardships because we understand that the loss, pain, and suffering is temporary.

2. No one currently in Heaven is lamenting the fact that he lived in dire straits during his lifetime or that she left this earth under brutal or catastrophic circumstances. They are looking forward to returning to this earth once it is renewed.
4. Here's something else we need to know. God is so big and so great that He is able to use human choice (even those He doesn't approve of) and work it for good as He causes it to serve His purposes while He gathers His family. Rom 8:28; Eph 1:11
 - a. The Bible is filled with examples of real people who lived through very difficult circumstances, and because the entire account is recorded (beginning, middle, and end) we can see clearly how God worked and caused it to serve His purposes. Those accounts give us hope.
 - b. When we read them we find that God brought genuine good out of real evil and brought maximum glory to Himself and great good (both temporal and eternal) to multitudes of people. And we see that He got his people through until He got them out. (lots of lessons for another day)
- C. Now, let's go back to some things we said last week. The Second Coming of Jesus is drawing closer and closer and the Bible tells us that events such as pandemics will precede His return.
1. Let's review the main points. We have to remember the big picture. A plan is unfolding, a plan devised in eternity past before this world even existed—God's plan to have a family. Eph 1:4-5
 - a. That's the reason for creation. God created men and women to become His sons and daughters and He fashioned the earth to a home for His family. However, both the family and the family home have been damaged by sin.
 1. Jesus came to earth 2,000 years ago to pay for man's sin by dying on the Cross and open the way for sinners to be transformed into sons and daughters of God through faith in Him.
 2. Jesus will come again renovate this planet and cleanse it from all corruption and death. He'll restore it to a fit, forever home for God and His family. Jesus will complete the plan of God.
 - b. Matt 24:6-8—Just a few days before Jesus was crucified several of His first followers asked Him what signs will indicate that His return is near. Jesus listed a number of signs—wars, ethnic strife, famine, pestilences, and earthquakes—and He compared them to birth pangs (they will increase in frequency and intensity).
 2. Notice that these birth pangs are not the work of God. They are all expressions of the corruption that is present in the world because of Adam's sin. All of these things have been occurring in this world since time as we know it began. They are part of life in a sin cursed earth. Why the increase leading up to the Lord's return? There are a lot of answers to this question. Consider these thoughts.
 - a. Wars and ethnic strife come out of corrupted human nature. It's estimated that the number of people living on earth now is equal to the total number that has ever lived on earth.
 1. More people means more fallenness which means more people with hatred and war in their heart which results in more murders and wars. More people means more choices that produce consequences that are harmful and contrary to the purposes of Almighty God.
 2. Add to that, the counterculture movement of the 1960's that swept much of the world removed many of the cultural restraints that previously kept human behavior in check. Fifty years later, we're reaping the consequences. The internet and social media has taken it to a whole new level.
 - b. Earthquakes, famines, and pestilences come out of the corruption that is in the earth because of man's sin, beginning with Adam. Rom 5:12—When Adam sinned, sin entered the human race. His sin spread death throughout all the world, so everything began to grow old and die (TLB).
 1. Gen 1:28—Humans were ordained by God to be earth's caretakers and, because of that, our behavior affects the earth. Scientific studies demonstrate that creation responds to the activities of man. Quantum physicists have shown that when light is observed it is in the form

of energy. When light is not observed it takes the form of matter.

2. We know what Adam's sin did. But the Bible makes it clear that man's sin continues to affect the earth. Murder pollutes the land (Num 35:33). Sexual sin defiles the land (Lev 18:22-25).
 - A. Isa 24:5-6—The earth suffers for the sins of its people, for they have twisted the instructions of God, violated his laws, and broken his everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse consumes the earth and its people (NLT).
 - B. Sin has a cumulative effect. The Bible compares sin to leaven or yeast (I Cor 5:6). A little bit of yeast spreads quickly through a whole lot of dough—the more sin there is, the more effects there are on the family home.
3. The entire creation was subjected to the bondage and corruption of death because of what Adam did and creation longs to be free. Rom 8:22—For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of child birth right up to the present time (NLT).
 - A. If we were to read the entire passage (v8:18-21) we would find that the context connects this verse to the second coming of Jesus (more than I can explain now).
 - B. All creation is longing for the return of the Lord and will rejoice when He returns because He will root out the corruption and death caused by sin. Ps 96:11-13; Isa 55:12-13
- c. There's no natural cure for what ails humanity and the earth because the root problem is spiritual. It will take the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to make things right. And He is soon going to do just that. We just have to make it through the birth pangs—and we will.

- D. Conclusion: My purpose in sharing these lessons is to help you deal with the fear that rises up because of what is going on in the world. You need to know that Almighty God is not the source of the chaos and catastrophe in the world. He is our help and our deliverer.
1. But you also have to understand that right now we live in a fallen, sin damage world and we will be affected by the birth pangs coming on the earth.
 - a. If you go out in a rainstorm, you're going to get wet (be affected) even if you have a raincoat on. But, we can make it through the storm by the grace of God. That's life in a sin cursed earth.
 - b. Just as there was a generation that saw the first coming of Jesus (and experienced things unique to them), so there will be a generation that sees the second coming of Jesus and will experience things unlike any other generation. But God will see us through.
 2. Let me close with a passage of Scripture written to those who go to the Lord for safety and protection in times of trouble—Psalm 91 (*Good News Bible* translation).
 3. We don't have to fear what is coming on the earth because God will get us through until He gets us out. More next week!