

Covid-19: Hysteria or Health Concern?

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman addresses the balance between faith and fear during the Covid-19 pandemic, emphasizing the importance of prayer, wisdom, and church support.

Duration: 1:00:40

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Philippians 4:6

Topics: "Faith over Fear", "Spiritual Resilience"

Description

Shane Idleman addresses the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the need for the church to respond with faith rather than fear. He encourages believers to seek God, obey governing authorities when they align with God's Word, and maintain a spirit of grace and wisdom during these challenging times. Idleman highlights the importance of prayer, fasting, and staying informed while not succumbing to panic or misinformation. He calls for a return to spiritual strength and reliance on God's promises, reminding the congregation that true peace comes from trusting in the Lord amidst uncertainty.

Transcript

Here's my challenge this week. I want to speak into what's going on to some degree, but I don't want to have that time take away from really looking at God's Word and strengthening and building us up because we all know that's what we really need. That's why we're here this morning.

And I didn't know what to expect this morning at our early morning worship prayer, but we had 60 people just seeking God and looking for His strength. But my plans changed radically. I don't know about yours.

A lot has changed. And I want to speak into a few different issues before I get into the main thrust of the message. Regarding my sabbatical, we're taking it day by day.

I mean, obviously, right now, it doesn't look like that's going to continue. You know, the captain can't go hide in his office when the Titanic has been struck. These are usually the times when we need to step up our game, not continue to back off of it.

So again, day by day, but that's what it's looking like now. A number two point I wanted to get across to you, you know, not everyone is excited about today's service. You know, I hear from those who are, you know, not understanding things.

Our church position is that we do obey governmental authorities when it doesn't go against God's Word. Scripture is clear on that. And they are not going against God's Word.

They're telling churches, they're limiting churches. First, it was an encouragement at 250 people in one room. I don't know if the balcony will count.

We're gonna have to figure that out. But they encouraged that. And then the governor just released, I think it was Saturday, Friday night where it's mandated in California, 250.

And then, you know, the city here locally, we don't follow under the city jurisdiction. We actually follow under LA County jurisdiction with the county supervisors. And so I've got friends in those departments.

We're looking, you know, we're just keeping an eye on things because at one, we don't want to, here's a hard balancing act. We want to submit to the governing authorities, use wisdom and do what we can. But at the same time, we can't be handcuffed to a spirit of fear.

Now, welcome to my world and trying to find that balance. So that's what we'll be seeking. That's what we'll be looking for.

We're not going to be a rebellious church. I don't care what they say. We're going to, you know, because we have to use cautious.

We have to be cautious. We have to use wisdom. What is the spirit of God? What is he wanting? Also, number three, we have to remember who we are as a church, as Christians.

We actually run into battle. We don't run from the battle. We run into the battle.

We are the difference makers. We look to God and God alone. So the church has to be that voice.

On one hand, you have people, the world watching saying, ah, hi, you're canceling services. I knew you couldn't trust in God. But on the other hand, you have people saying, why are you spreading something that shouldn't be spread? And you're trying to find that balance there.

I'm going to get into this in just a minute. Number four, we want to use wisdom, but we don't want to let fear control us. And talking to our local officials and a sheriff's department and the hospitals, I can see a lot of times where they're coming from because the hospitals are already, you know, at capacity.

And if there is more outbreaks here locally, the hospitals are going to be inundated. So nurses or, you know, doctors, it's so we don't want to give them more of a burden, but we also don't want to let fear when actually the very thing we need might be the very thing we're running from that being God, you know, how do, how do you be led of the spirit and be sensitive? And because the Bible does command us to obey our governing authorities, unless that governing authority says you can no longer worship God and seek God and look to the Bible, you have to look to know this God being Caesar or whoever. So it's a balancing act of finding that balance.

But we do want to encourage people if you're remotely sick, definitely stay at home. If you're elderly and you have a compromised immune system, we want you to encourage you to, to, to stay at home. And these are just wise things to do, because I also believe that the Bible doesn't want us to tempt or test God.

When God says, if you pick up a serpent, you're not going to be bit. You're not going to die. If you're, if you're, you're immortal in the center of God's will.

Now, how foolish would I be to go out and grab a rattlesnake? So yeah, I'm going to quote that scripture. See, that's a mocking of God's word. That, that, that's a, that's a kind of a defiance there.

God's saying if in the act of ministry, if going out and ministering to people, the deadly, the serpent doesn't bite you or the poison, you know, you, you will not be harmed. If you're in the center of God's will, you are immortal. Now people do die in the center of God's will.

Absolutely. But it's finding again, that balance. So we're going to use wisdom, but not let fear control us.

We would also encourage the church people have been asking, obviously continue. Many, many are watching online now. I would continue to support your local church.

Many, all churches are going to take some type of financial hit, of course. This is, we don't know where this is going to end up. We're trusting in God, but we want to encourage people to still continue to support works of ministry because we do have families who want to reach out to, families in need.

It's also a, not a recommendation, but something we want to do here. If there's those shut in at home, the elderly or those shut in at home, let us know. We'd like to be the hands and feet of Jesus and help in that area.

We've got people that are hurt financially. So this is actually a time not to really decrease our giving, but to maintain that giving. And I believe God will bless that as well.

Number six. Oh, this is a biggie. Be gracious.

Be gracious. Not everyone sees things as you see things. You're going to have nurses and doctors might see things a little bit different than how you see them.

You're going to see the anti-vaccine people not agree with things that vaccine people agree with. And we've got to be very gracious with one another on Facebook. And I posted something the other day, my wife said, Oh, that probably wasn't a good idea.

You hurt feelings. I'm like, yeah, I probably did. I got to watch that, you know, and it's just funny things, right? You want to bring some humor, but some things that it hurts, I'm sure you want to know what I posted, but I'm not sure I want to tell you.

It was from me. I'll tell you it was because I apologize and repentant, but it was from a satire website. And the headline was parents are worried.

They'll have to raise their own children as government shut down the schools. But some, but some people really rely on the schools, you know, to get to work and things. So I, I kind of probably shouldn't have done that one, but, you know, so I'm learning to be gracious.

I get upset at some of the misinformation out there. I will say this, men, now is it time to lead your families? Did you catch that? Men, now it's time to lead your families, not in a spirit of fear. We're not having a spirit of fear in our home.

We're educating our children. We're equipping our children. And if you're single, or if you're don't have a husband home, or maybe a spiritual husband, then lead your families in the right direction.

This is when others are listening to what we're saying, listening to what we're doing. We have a huge amount of influence that we're not really aware of. Many people don't know this as well, because we don't say a lot.

We don't toot our horn too often, but this church has some influence even nationally. Five people right now on the president's advisory board are following what we do at this church and this ministry. I hear from them.

I did a podcast with one of them on Friday. We'll be releasing it soon. So we have to be very, we have to be stewards of this gift that God has given us called West Side Christian Fellowship.

So I'm just asking for your prayers on what that looks like, because every decision I make is upsetting someone. Think about that. Try that for a while.

Every decision, every choice with what we do with services, there's opinions out there. So that's why at this point we really need to seek God and God alone, but listen to the advice of others. Listen to wise counsel.

We need to do that, but a lot of people are responding in fear. They're reacting in fear. They're not responding into what God's word says.

So let me just get into this. This is going to be a popularity warning. What I mean by that is this is not going to be popular.

What I'm about to say right here, I got it actually from John Piper. I was thinking along the same thoughts as he was in his recent article, kind of confirm what I was was feeling, because in these times we not only need to encourage from the pulpit, we also need to convict. These are wake-up call times.

These are times where people need to be convicted in their sin. They need to be convicted and point them to Jesus. A friend of mine who moves somewhere so he could enjoy the party life, and we text him back and forth.

He's like, man, I sure hope they come up with a cure vaccine soon, even though the flu has a vaccine by the way. It doesn't always work. Can't trust in that.

I'm going to get emails on that one too. Let me just get back to the point. So I said, there's already a cure.

Haven't you heard? And he texted me, I'm like, 2 Chronicles 7.14, if my people, and I believe that, I believe God's word is that powerful, that if his people call upon his name, he will hear from heaven and begin to heal their land. Listen, at some point you have to say God's word is not just theories in a book, but it's a life to be lived. It's a faith to be grasped.

It's a boldness to walk in the courage and strength of the Lord. Either you believe it or you don't. God's word is eternal.

God's word is truth. And you remind people of those promises. So what is happening? Well, here's what could be happening spiritually.

Sin affects all of us. As John Piper wrote, when sin entered the world through Adam and Eve, God ordained that the created order, including our physical bodies, would experience corruption and futility as a result of sin. This is what happens in a sinful, fallen world.

But also sickness can redirect us. God sometimes inflicts sickness on his people as a purifying and rescuing judgment, which is not condemnation, but an act of mercy for his saving purposes. I can tell you this much.

Millions and millions and millions and millions of more prayers have went up this week. Oh, many more people. The President of the United States of America calls a national day of prayer today.

And I don't like this any more than you do, but I've been ordained and called by God to speak the truth in love. You will not experience revival without pain. If you look at all the past revivals, I can take you to the first great awakening.

America, they said in their journals of Wesley and Whitefield and Edwards, they said there was such debauchery as we had never seen before. The drunkenness, the sexual sin. And then see, God, in all of that, God says now there's revival.

Why? Because their birth has to take place. There has to be travail. There has to be a pregnancy.

There has to be a pain. Then the child is born. When Zion travails, sons and daughters are born.

Revival. There's always pain in that revival. God's got to get his people to a spot of brokenness and humility.

And it hurts, doesn't it? I wish it was the opposite. I wish it's when we're watching sports all day and eating too much and life is comfortable. That's when God brings reawakening and revival.

It's often the opposite. In the midst of sickness and disease, turmoil and tragedy, out of World War II came an incredible prayer movement. All the tragedies can point you to God if you let them.

So sickness can redirect. But also, number three, sickness can be a judgment from God. Boy, that's a point we want to gloss over.

Sickness can be a judgment. God sometimes uses disease to bring particular judgments upon those who reject him and give themselves over to sin. I like what Billy Graham said many years ago.

If God doesn't judge America, he'll have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah. Yes, we're concerned about the deaths that have occurred, but do you know how many innocent children were slaughtered during the time I came up here? Where's the outcry? And then number four, God's thunderclap. All natural disasters, whether floods, famines, locusts, tsunamis, disease, are a thunderclap of divine mercy in the midst of judgment, calling all people everywhere to repent and realign their lives by grace with the infinite worth of the glory of God.

So in the midst of great tragedy can be also great triumph. So before I get into really the scriptures to encourage, I want to give you four practical tips, because I believe, as I was thinking about this, actually a good, I don't know how many you've read the bulletin, but I left my house at 4.30 on Thursday morning, got to Burbank Airport, and flew into Dallas-Fort Worth on my way to Michigan. On the tarmac in Dallas-Fort Worth, I opened my email and it says my event's been canceled.

I go, that's nice to know. Three hours ago would have been much better timing. So I waited.

The next flight was seven at night to get back. So it was an 18-hour day there in the airport. But fortunately, I was able to put a lot of this together, just stuff that I was putting on my heart.

And God brought these things to mind, just reading a lot of what's going on, same things that you are. And I believe that sermons should have an element of practical application. I think we should be able to speak to people practically as well.

And I want to just do that if I could this morning. Number one, as we go into the season, make sure you're your facts from reputable sources. Amen? Get your facts from reputable sources.

I found a good one. People will Google this, I'm sure. It's called the Coronavirus Explained by an Infectious Disease Expert and a Pastor.

March 11th by Miguel Nunez. It's on the Gospel Coalition. You can find good information from unbiased sources.

And let me just sum everything up for you. The reason why this is so alarming, two reasons really, is the fear of the unknown. You know, I don't want to break down the strain of the coronavirus or COVID-19.

And it's a fear of the unknown. How many affected? How is this going to turn out? It's really killing our economy. You know, they don't know what to do with it.

They're just, this is a new thing. But the bigger fear is being what's up in the media. That's really where this is coming from.

And that's why they'll use language like the death toll. And I'm not minimizing even one death. But if you compare that to the flu, if you compare it to other things, it's being grossly, grossly exaggerated.

And how many people have come down with the virus that are fine? And there's a working through process of this. And so there's a fear factor that's going on. And unless some of you don't know this, I will tell you up front, there is a big ulterior motive behind a lot of this.

So yes, this is a valid concern to some degree, of course. I mean, we're not naive. But also, if you had a different president in office, this would be downplayed.

As soon as you see a media article that says, presidential elections will be canceled, you have President Trump for four more years, you'd see the media really quickly change their entire tune. They would change. Oh no, everything's fine.

Everything's fine. You can find articles. Did you know that Bill Maher said this, a left wing, I'm hoping for a crash of the economy so we can get rid of Trump, bring on the recession.

The New York Times exposed the real reason behind the coronavirus hype, crash the market to harm Trump's reelection chances. Folks, this is truth. This is a reality.

This is why they're creating chaos and frenzy. Look at everything, the top news stories. It's just all about alarming the people and upsetting the people.

The media is creating this fear frenzy. Why don't they report every flu victim that died last year? 30,000 people here just from the flu. Death toll rises to 20.

Death toll rises. Why? Because there's an agenda behind this. Now, I'm not minimizing what's happening.

I'm not living in a bubble. I'm not naive. But at the same time, you have to remember the forces working behind this.

Have you ever heard that phrase, stirring the pot? You know, everything's fine until someone stirs the pot. Now, I'm not saying everything's fine, but there's a pot stirring. This is pot stirring at its greatest.

And here's why. Maybe it's just me feeling this way, but the response of what's going on doesn't match what the virus is producing. You know, you think this is a black plague.

It's like closing down everything. Because, see, when the economy crumbles, mass hysteria, civil unrest, the agenda begins to come into play. What's behind? What's trying to be pushed behind all this? Now, of course, God allowed it.

It could be of just natural origin. It could be the Chinese maybe, you know, created. Who knows? All we know is it's something.

We have to deal with it. We have to deal with it the right way and use wisdom. But make no mistake about it.

How they're reacting to what this is. Did you know, I think it's in China. They just released 60,000 people because now they're fine who initially had the virus.

At some point, you know, the body builds up immunity with the antibodies, the white blood cells, and your immune system begins to work against these things. So our response must be physical or spiritual. Well, okay, both.

I'll give you that. But primarily, our response needs to be spiritual. That's why the president called a national day of prayer.

That's why we had 6 a.m. worship this morning, all Sundays. That's why a group were here all night last night, praying and seeking God. That's why we're having a prayer every day at 12 o'clock over the hill there in Lancaster.

More information is, guess where at? In the bulletin. Or get somebody's your lead. We're doing that.

Our response has to be spiritual. Do we ever walk by our sign out front for months and months, and now finally we can apply it? If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, and I believe that God will begin to renew his people. So what we're also going to do is call the church for those who can or want to.

We want to call a time of fasting for those who would like to do this. We're going to begin on the 22nd of this month, and three weeks is to Easter. 21 days of fasting, whatever that looks like to you.

It could be missing meals. It could be water fasting, juice fasting. This isn't a time where you bend God's arm.

What fasting does is it positions your heart to hear more clearly from God. It shows God how bad do we want this. And you can look at Ezra.

You can look at Nehemiah. You can look at David. Throughout the Old Testament history, they would call people, sound the alarm.

Sound the alarm. Call a sacred assembly. Let us begin to petition God again with prayer and fasting.

Fasting starves the appetites of the flesh, and it allows you to begin to seek the heart of God. And number two on this practical information section, be informed, not overwhelmed. Amen? Be informed, not overwhelmed.

And I wanted to talk to you a little bit more about this, but I think we all are kind of on the same page. We want to be informed. We want to wash our hands.

Amen? Haven't we been saying that forever? You know, and if somebody's sick, you know, encourage them to just stay at home and get some get some sleep and just practical things we can be doing. We want to respond to love. We don't want to hold the rattle stake and entertain it.

Do you know there's people who hold rattlesnakes in church services? In the South, Pentecostal, and they've died? Quoting that scripture? See, you must find that balance. And I remember on this issue, I saw Howie Mandel show up for work in his hazmat suit and big, you know, mask and different things and pray for those people. It's a true fear.

It's a paranoia, because often it's because they don't know God. So of course they're fearful. They're fearful of anything, because we have to point them to the true source of hope and peace, which is God and God alone.

But they can't understand it, right? Because the heart hasn't been converted. As soon as the heart is converted, that's where peace and joy come from. Now I'm going to give you just a heads up here.

Your panic level is directly related to how much media you're watching. You want to write that one down? Your panic level, the panic level that you're seeing out there, is directly related to how much media a person is watching and listening to. Because you're not even, believers aren't even given a spirit of fear.

Fear has to be fostered. Fear has to be fueled. Fear has to be sought and embraced.

You don't have that spirit of fear within you. You have peace and love and a sound mind that God has given you. So we actually have to go out and find fear and then feed on it.

And then from that, we are fearful. That's where fear comes from in the life of a believer. Now with kids and not expecting things, fear comes into my heart sometimes, into my mind.

And we have to learn to just cast away that fear. And then number three, obviously do what you can physically. Do what you can physically.

A healthy immune system. Now I'm not going to go into a lot of detail because I have on YouTube, you can find it under fasting forum or the health expo. There's great ways to build up your immune system.

But we have to remember that those things in and of themselves don't really, you know, fix a problem. And what I mean by that is I talked to a friend of mine at a health food store. He said, we sold out of all elderberry, clodial silver and echinacea, olive leaf oil.

And I said, yeah, as they're driving to Carl's Jr. You know, it's a lifestyle. A lot of those things I just mentioned affect your immunity because your immunity requires a response. You take turmeric and cucumin and all those things that are good.

You know, I'm not, I'm not shying away from that. But the best thing you can do for your body is less stress, more time in God's word, deep sleep. And people, here's the sad thing.

Now people are running to alcohol and medication. That's not going to help. The people are posting things.

I think it's funny. It kind of is, but it's, it's like, it's like pretty, people are pretty soon, the liquor stores are going to look like Costco. If these kids are home any longer, you know, or, you know, because everybody's worried about everybody being at home and, and turning to liquor and tranquilizers and Xanax, and that's not going to, those things by nature don't help with fear.

They actually, did you know that one of the withdraws of medication, alcohol is fear and anxiety. When you're coming off of that, it actually, it heightens it. So my thought is rest, good food, good diet, take nutrients.

I could go into a whole discourse right now about the importance of high dosages of vitamin C. Don't take my word for it. Look it up. Look at all the studies.

They used to give cancer patients intravenously, dripping high, high doses of vitamin C to actually kill the cancer cells. Now they don't allow that in America. That's why people go to Mexico and different places, but there's, God has given us natural remedies as well, but you don't trust in those.

You know what I mean? In other words, I'm not going to go grab a whole bunch of natural remedies and trust in those. I'm using all things that God has given us to take care of our bodies through prayer. Did you know fasting is a great immunity builder? Fasting and taking time.

There's a food shortage, but that can be okay if you turn to fasting and prayer and seeking God. Isn't it interesting? We live in a time where a piece of, a roll of toilet paper is more important than the word of God. We, nobody, I've, have you seen a story where bookstores are running out of the Bible? Think about that for a minute.

We're, we're, we're, because we're allowing, if we didn't read that in the media, Costco would not be full and gone and missing and Trader Joe's. I just wanted some bread. It's all gone.

What, what, what, what's creating this? It's a frenzy and we have to be careful who and what we read. Yes. Be equipped.

I got it. But what is really influencing you? And then four, this is where I really wanted to get to this morning. We must consume spiritual food.

Amen. We must consume spiritual food throughout the old Testament. Even into the new, there was one general theme.

The Bible says, be strong and be courageous, be strong and be courageous. And there's a verse I keep falling on the last week. It was, it was actually given to a high priest named Azariah in the old Testament.

And it's something interesting. You're not gonna believe this. It says in those days in second Chronicles, I believe in those days, it was not safe to travel about for all the inhabitants of the land were in great turmoil, but as for you, be strong and do not give up for your work will be rewarded.

See, I take those promises to the bank there is a hope. If we look to the right source, is there not? And I I've heard you guys have been been doing a new song while I've been gone. I've been a little jealous.

I'm glad Brad did it this morning. There is a song. I know it.

Well, you guys pay attention before I came up a melody that never fails on mountains high or valleys low. My confidence, my hope will rest in you and you alone folks. You've got to get back to that.

That has to be your anchor. If you're not in worship and in the word and prayer more than the media, you will be swayed, be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. So if the mind is not be renewing mine included, if it's not be renewing and renewed and reprogram back into God, oh, that's right.

That's what God's word does. Haven't you done that before? Oh, that's right. That's what God works.

God's words. We're going to be okay. I forgot.

CNN says we're not. I mean, you look at the headlines, worst case scenario by the CDC. I don't want to know the worst case scenario, but I want to know best case scenario by God.

And we, and we have to reprogram and renew our mind, saturate your mind on these truths. Proverbs three, five trust in the Lord with some of your heart. What? Oh, I got to fix that for the next service.

Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding. What that word lean means is it's, it's I'm kind of putting myself up against something. Like I'm propping myself up against this pulpit.

I'm leaning against, I'm looking for support. I'm hoping in this will not fall. So if I'm leaning on my own understanding, I'm not going to get good direction in all my ways.

Acknowledge God and he will direct your path. So trust in the Lord with all your heart. So what does that mean? God, my finances, my health, my relationships, my children.

I I'm, Lord, I'm trusting you. I'm trusting you with all my, my heart, all my soul. And I'm amazed that a thousand people can go to Costco, but they don't want to come to church.

The only people push the little things for your credit card. By the time you check out hundreds and hundreds and hundreds, where's the outcry? You ever seen the doors open at Costco? They're running. They are running to get somewhere.

They running to church and they got, I need more of you. I need more of you because they're not trusting in the Lord and God almighty. So remember that trust in the Lord.

That means trust means put your thoughts, your finances, your marriage, your children, anybody worried about their kids or grandkids, what we're leaving them, what the, what you, you put all that into the hands of the Lord. And then Psalm 28, seven, the Lord is my strength and my shield in him. My heart trusts.

My heart exalts. And with my song, I give thanks to him. So now we have a verse that talks about where my heart is at.

My heart is giving thanks to God and getting off of the pity party. Anybody start a pity party this week? Check your retirement has dropped 30%. And our, in our case, all of our family events have been canceled.

All the stuff that kids were looking forward to all the, my daughter's in gymnastics and was going to do state finals and go to the regionals and done. It's everything's over. Everything's canceled.

And you begin to, you know, you begin to have a pity party and you begin to, you know, kind of, traveling or this or that, but we have to remember that God tells us to give thanks to him. Look at the houses we live in, the opportunity that's out there, that this could be a great opportunity to witness to God and to really bring our lives back and really hone them in. What is really important? Do you know a lot of idolatry was just removed? What am I going to do all day? Sports is gone.

Well, I don't know what to tell you, but we all need trust in God and be thankful. Matthew 6, 25. Therefore, I tell you, this is Jesus.

Do not be anxious about your life unless a major virus hits the scene. Do not be anxious about your life unless it gets really bad. Do not be anxious about your life unless it gets challenging and difficult.

That's one thing I love about the Bible. There's not a lot of wiggle room. Jesus, it's like, it's like Jesus said, do not be anxious about anything.

Why? Because I'm still on the throne. I'm still the prince of peace. I'm still who's going to fire Jesus.

Have you thought about that? Everything shut down except God. God doesn't go to sleep. He said, he told Israel, he, he told the nation of Israel.

He said, I am an ever present help in time of need. I do not sleep. I do not slumber.

There are no gods before me that all the other gods are, but rubbish. But this God, the living God, I will not sleep. I will not slumber.

Israel, America, if you just call on the name of the Lord, you will be safe. Not you might, not God will consider. It's an ever present help saying, come to me all are weak and heavy laden.

Seek me with all of your heart and you will find me. Cast your burdens on me because my prayer is like, oh, I've been missing preaching. I'm glad I came back for just a little bit because it's that spirit of God.

It's the spirit of God taking over, pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments. Who's going to conquer God? Who's going to tell God what to do and what not to do? Who's going to silence the voice of God when God says, I will work all things together. For those who love him, for those who called according to his purpose, I will work all that together.

Listen, this isn't a pie in the sky. I really believe this stuff. I've lived it.

Did you know you have to go through things like this to really know who God is? Does a person ever get in shape without training their body? Develop muscles where there's tension, there's pressure because of that. Do not be anxious about your life. Oh, wow.

This is really relevant. What you will eat, Costco, what you will drink. I mean, it's kind of funny, but it's not.

We just go there for normal stuff. You can't even get normal stuff. I know there are houses somewhere.

If this is you, you need to repent and bring it here. I can really picture closets full of toilet paper. All right, Lord, I hope this is you because I told myself I wouldn't say it, but it came back to mind.

We're going to have to actually lock up our toilet paper here. We've had some missing from last week. That needs to be brought to the surface.

Listen, there's so many rabbit trails I could take right now and get political and funny, but I'm not going to because Jesus says, don't be anxious. Don't be anxious about what you eat or what you will drink, nor about your body. What you will put on is life more than food and the body more than clothing? Is life not more than food and body more than clothing? It is.

So when we trust in Jesus, here's what we forget. Yes, you will go through challenging times. Some listening to this will lose their job.

There's a lot listening, I'm sure going to be in live stream too. Some listening will come down with COVID-19. Some will probably pass away.

Some will be stripped of financial resources, of plans, all kinds of things. Yes, the Christian life is not about, I know we've been told it's your best life now and you can have all this good stuff and a big house, but that's not the Christianity of the Bible. The Christianity of the Bible is this, summed up, Jesus said, I will walk through it with you.

Paul says, I know how to live when I have a lot. I know how to live when I have a little. I know how to live when I have great joy.

I know how to live when I have great adversity. The Christian life is going through the road of life with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords holding you through the storm, guiding you through the valley. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

Why? Because God is with me. I had to walk through. So see, it's not about avoiding all these things.

It's about who's going through them with you and trusting in Him and resting in who He is. But don't be anxious for that. Most Christians that are anxious and fearful right now are not meditating and spending time with God.

You can't live in God's Word, read the Psalms, pray, be thankful, and always be fearful. They can't exist in this. Do you understand that? If fear is dominating in my life, I guarantee I'm not in the Word as much.

I guarantee I'm not in worship. I guarantee I'm not bringing my thoughts captive. I've allowed my thoughts to take me captive in fear and anxiety.

One or the other prevails. It's like if I had a big thing of water. You fill it up.

You can't fit any more in there. So as we dwell on who God is, we seek Him, we put our family in that direction, we put our faith in that direction, we get back in the Word and worship, and we begin to be filled with those things. And that's what comes out.

That's how you get rid of anxiety. You actually have to push anxiety out, push fear out. So we are really, a lot of us are responsible for the fear that we're allowing to come into our hearts, into our minds.

I can tell you, I mean, as I stand right now, if I were to get this, as I stand right now, I do not feel fearful. When it's my time, it's my time. In January, I had bronchitis.

I felt like I was, this is it, I'm done. I was, I mean, you feel, you know, if you've been really sick, you feel like, Lord, take me now. And so we have to just trust in Him and give it over to Him and not be anxious.

So that's when Jesus says, don't be anxious, tells me I can be anxious. Have you thought about that before? Do not fear. Okay, that tells me there's a choice.

Anytime God says, do not do something, that tells me I can do something else. Be strengthened in your faith. Be encouraged in your faith.

Let not fear come into your heart. You don't have a spirit of fear, but a spirit of peace and timidity and a sound mind. Don't be anxious about your life.

And so these are all action words. Your mind is so powerful, you can change the course and direction of your life by your thoughts. Don't worry, I'm not getting Joelstein on you.

I'm actually preaching to more people physically today than he is, if you know that. Because a lot of churches are closed down, churches in Texas and California, and if they're above a certain number. We are trying to keep, again, if you're just tuning in, but we're trying to keep a pulse on what's allowed here in Los Angeles County.

We want to respect that, but at the same time, we want to worship God. We want to worship God freely. We want to encourage, we're still doing Wednesday nights, Wednesday night services at 6 p.m. We want to encourage you to come.

Do you need, anybody need a hump week, build up time of building up midweek? You're going to, because many people aren't listening to what I'm going to say come Monday morning or even after church. You're going to see what the latest and greatest is. Listen, you're listening to media hell-bent on deceiving and creating a spirit of fear.

Many of them don't even know it, but that's just what they do. They're controlled by the prince of this error. They're controlled by the demonic type of persuasion.

Now, there's a legitimate concern. I'm not dismissing that, but where's the positive headlines? You got to search to find those. I mean, one positive, positive headline I found from a doctor and a couple of other doctors that research, and these guys are immunologists.

Oh, I pronounced that right. They focus on our immune system. They say, I don't remember the numbers, but how many people actually have it and don't even know it? And their body just fights it like no other

virus.

A bacteria is a single cell germ that you can kill with antibiotics many times. A virus can't, you can't. A virus has to find a host, and that virus, when that host is, when the virus is identified, the body increases.

The white blood cell count increases antibodies, and it goes and attacks that virus and kills it. And what they do with vaccines is they give the person a little bit of the disease, whether it's in a dead state or not, so the body can. Now, I have thoughts on this.

Trust me, I'm not going to go there. I don't want to upset people, but the best recourse we can do right now is to be healthy spiritually and allow that to flow out into us physically, because did you know that your thoughts control a lot of your physical health? You know, if I'm always fearful and anxious and using caffeine and alcohol and ups and downs and no stress and no sleep, that kills your body's immunity. It absolutely destroys it.

Unforgiveness and bitterness and anger, all those things, all those things. If I had time, I could even take you to scripture, talk about a and different things. It hurts you physically.

So the best recourse is spiritual health, is it not? It doesn't mean a person doesn't ever get sick, but it means they're healthy from the inside out, and they don't explode or implode. Implode, do you know the difference? Imploding is when the pressure on the outside is greater than the strength on the inside, and something implodes, and that's what's happening. The strength in the inside isn't greater than the media and the onslaught of information that's coming from the outside.

You have to be greater. Oh, scripture just came to mind. Greater is he who that's in you and me than he that's in the world.

So God, that strength, that foundation is greater. So you can't implode. A person can't implode when that spiritual strength, that pressure in the inside, is pushing out.

It's greater than the pressure that's coming in from the outside. Psalm 91, I love this one. And those who know your name, they put their trust in you, for you, oh Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you.

Remember that last little couple words there. God has not forsaken those who seek him. If you seek me with all of your heart, God says, you will find me.

See, if anything, this is creating genuine seeking. I'll give you that. All right, now people are serious.

Okay, I'm seeking God with all my heart, with all my strength. This has created such a frenzy that I have to find God. I need to hear from him.

I need to know him. And that's a promise you can take to the bank, is that God says, if you seek me, you will find me. I will not forsake those who seek me.

And what about some hope? Well, Isaiah 26.3, you will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News, because he trusts in you. You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts you, because you trust God. Now, perfect peace doesn't mean walking around always imperfect.

Nothing ever upsets me. It means perfect, complete. There's a completeness about your peace.

There's assurance. You're resting in who God is, and you can walk around and feel that peace of God that surpasses all understanding that doesn't even make sense. Why? Because my mind is stayed on you.

You see the consistent theme here about your mind? Just about every verse talks about what we should be focusing on. Now, here's a trick. Before you post something on Facebook, I'm preaching to myself right now.

Before you post something on Facebook, finally brethren, whatever things are pure and noble and honest and upright and worthy to be praised, meditate on these things. Philippians. That should be our life's goal during this season.

Finally things, whatever, finally good, noteworthy, important to God. Things that are pure and lovely. Meditate on these things.

Let this be the focus of our attention. And then Philippians. Do not be anxious about anything.

Sorry, I put some of these scriptures in early, early this morning and didn't get it to the media team in time. Philippians 4. I just felt God wanted us to saturate our hearts on this. We don't need to know more about the coronavirus.

I think most of you know more than me probably on what's going on. We need to get back to the solution for what's going on. And that is a meditating, a concentrating, a focusing on God's word.

And that's where we need to find ourselves. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, except if it has to do with national disasters, every situation by prayer and petition. Wait a minute, what is prayer? Prayer and petition.

Praying, I'm praying to God, but I'm also petitioning God. You know it's okay to ask God for things? God, remove this evil. Open the eyes of the blind.

God, and there's a praying and there's a petitioning with thanksgiving. Present your request to God. So here's what it says.

Here's the cure to anxiety. You try this today. You tell me if this doesn't work.

I've never had somebody say, you know what? I spent two hours in prayer. I opened the Bible. I found Psalms.

I spent, and I just did not, I got more from the Laker game that used to be on. You never hear that. If a heart's genuinely seeking God, of course you'll get the little, you know, smarty pants that want to, you know, challenge everything.

But if you genuinely seek God, it says, do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, you take it to God in prayer and petitioning with thanksgiving. Present your request to God and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding. Here's what that means.

This doesn't make sense. How can they look at Christians and believers and say, doesn't make sense? Why aren't you fearful? Why aren't you concerned? Because I have the peace of God and it will guard your heart and your minds in Christ and Isaiah 41. So do not fear for I am with you.

Do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you and I will help you. I don't know if this is encouraging anyone else.

It might just be encouraging me, but God says, I am there to strengthen you and I will help you if you look to me. And then finally, I want to end with this one, Isaiah 40, 31. We all know this, but this is interesting.

But those who wait upon the Lord, another translation says, but those who hope in the Lord. So those who hope, those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar up wings like eagles.

They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. Isn't it interesting? Those who wait on the Lord.

This is a confident expectation of what God is going to do. Waiting shows the value, does it not? And if you were, when you got married, did you ever say, unless we get married tomorrow, I'm not doing this. No, it's in the waiting.

You are so valuable to me. I'm going to wait for this. I'm going to wait on you, God.

Your presence, your power is so valuable that I'm going to just sit and I'm going to wait. I'm going to watch you move. I'm not going to get anxious.

I'm not going to get fearful. I'm not going to make stupid decisions. I'm not going to run and cower away in fear.

I'm going to trust you and you alone as I wait on you. And then it's interesting, strength comes from waiting, not rushing. You want to get really strong spiritually? Wait on God.

Don't rush ahead. Get into the word, get into prayer, begin to seek him with all of your heart and allow that to strengthen you. We must be relentless in our pursuit of God.

We must be ruthless and rooting out and dealing with our own sin. And we must be quick to repent and seek the restoration of our fellowship with God when we fail. That's really my point for you this morning is we've got to get our hearts and our minds back on who God is, not what the media says, but who God is and not allowing fear to grip us and fear.

How many of us are making decisions based on fear? Okay, only some people are honest, but we're making decisions based on fear. And what happens is we take our fear into our homes and we bring fear into our children when we should be building them up and encourage them in the Lord. Trust me, Christians have went way through things way, way, way worse than this.

I'm not minimizing it, but go talk to the underground church in China. Go take a trip to Iraq and Syria where they're being beheaded. Acid is thrown on them and parts of their body are removed for following Christ.

We remember God walks through the storm with us. We've heard too many messages about God will take you out of the storm. No, I'm learning, he takes me through the storm.

He take, come on, walk with me, let me take you through the storm. Jesus said, when the rains come, when the wind comes, when it beats upon that house, it will not fall because it is built on the rock of Jesus Christ. He said before that, he who hears my word, he who hears my word and does my word, I will liken him to a man who built his house upon the rock and it did not fall.

The same storm came. The man who heard the word and built on sand, the same storm came. The rain falls on the just and the unjust alike.

There's a time for war and peace. There's a time for famine and plenty. There is a time and a season that people will go through difficulty, but we know the God who's going to see us through.

We know the God of eternity. And my concern is that many people that are so afraid are afraid because they don't know who God is. It's actually not a bad thing to die and be in the presence of your savior.

Have we forgot that? That's actually good news. I mean, of course it's easier to say, but if I'm ever on my deathbed, just don't be sad. I'm about ready to see the king of kings and the Lord of lords.

I'm about ready to hear, well, well done. Now, good and faithful servant, because God has sustained me. He's held me.

It's one of the most joy. It's the most joyful times of a person's life. Christ has conquered hell, death and the grave.

So we don't need to fear those things. Yes, we're cautious. We don't want to use loose family members.

I don't want to be sick. I got it. But at the end of the day, I have to hold on to God and God alone.

He is the anchor that keeps my boat close to shore. He is the foundation. He is a boy.

I wish we could go through all the names of God in the Bible. He is your Sabbath rest. He is your strong tower.

He is your shield. He is your strength. He is the alpha and the omega.

He is the beginning and the end. He is a state sustainer of all life. He is a savior.

He is the lion. He, he is everything is an all sufficient savior. We look to him and him alone.

Look to look to Christ this morning. Look to him. So too many people have a half hearted approach to God and they are lost.

A friend of mine who just moved to go have fun and party at a place. I won't tell you. I said, I said, Hey, how's it going now? You need to find a good church.

He goes, Oh, I know. I don't. I might need to resort to that.

I mean, I hope they come out with the vaccine soon. And I said, you haven't heard. I'll send it to you real quick.

There's good news. And he's waiting. I send second Chronicles seven 14.

If my people who are called by my name, listen, will cry out to me, call out to me and people, I get emails from people. You won't believe this. You can't use that verse.

That was for Israel. Listen, I understand context and theological consistency. I understand Bible hermeneutics and homiletics.

I got it. But when God says, if you humble yourself, if you pray, if you seek me and you can repent, that's a principle you can take to the bank that God will honor his word because that's all through. That's all through Genesis to revelation.

Genesis call upon me and you will be saved. Revelation call upon me and you will be saved throughout all of the Bible. It's history.

It's God's story, redeeming lost mankind. The word repentance goes out. Did you know that Jesus called and said, preach repentance, not love.

Go out two by two and preach repentance. And Jesus went out and preach repentance. Turn to me all your weak and heavy laden.

I will give you rest. Call upon me. I will save you.

My burden is light. My yoke is easy. Call on the name that saves.

There is no other hope under heaven by any other name than Jesus Christ. We have to look to that and that alone. Listen, I'm not an actor up here.

Christ has changed my life. As of right now, he could strike me down with the coronavirus. It doesn't affect me.

But come tomorrow after, let's say media all day. I'm scared. So you got to build.

You got to get to a point where you've got to strengthen yourself in the Lord. Don't don't count on the church. Don't count on me.

I appreciate it. But you've got to be like David at some point. And he strengthened himself in the Lord because people let you down.

I'll let you down. You follow any pastor around for a week and you're going to think a lot less of him. So we idolize all these guys on TV, right? Or wherever.

Oh, you just follow him around for a week. You might see a little cuss word. You might see a little anger.

You might. We see we're all in the same boat. You have to strengthen yourself in the Lord.

Jesus is one who will never fail you. He'll never let you down. He's always there.

We've got to get back. The church has to get back to the old truths. Do you remember? Do you remember when they used to preach holiness? Holiness and righteousness and judgment and the wrath of God and repentance.

Yes, grace and love and mercy. But we so dumbed down the gospel. And all we talk about is the pleasant things and not the difficult things.

Jesus talked about both. That's the only way you can truly help people is you offer hope and encouragement. But you also tell them about the wrath that is to come.

You tell them about repentance and the need to turn from God's wrath. If you don't think we need to talk about that, then you need to readjust your focus on the cross. It cost him so much he had to die on the cross because of the wrath of God to satisfy the wrath of God.

Now we have something that's called imputed righteousness. It means the righteousness of Christ is imputed on those who are believers. And another big word, propitiation, means that Christ absorbed the wrath of God.

See, sin had to be paid. Can a righteous judge see a case before him and just say, oh, sorry, go? No, because he's a judge. So he has to judge righteously.

Same thing with God. Sin had to be judged. And that's why this is an amazing, that's why they call it good news.

Jesus absorbed the wrath of God for you and those listening. And we have to tell people about that. No matter how unpopular it is, we have to let people know, yes, there is a day of reckoning.

There is a day of judgment. God is not happy with the sin of America and shedding innocent blood and mocking him and calling what is good evil and evil good and allowing LGBT agendas to run our school districts. I'm all for those who struggle with sexual sin.

But I have a problem against the agenda that is perverting the next generation. There should be a righteous indignation. Jesus would be upset at that.

You better believe it. He ministered to the individual, but he would speak against the agenda. He would speak against the sin that were destroying people.

And that's what we have to do again. We have to get back to that point of repentance and brokenness. Pastors have got to stop wanting to be popular.

They need to start being powerful because they've been filled with God's spirit in the prayer closet. And they tell people what they need to hear, not what they want to hear. I'll share something with you.

I don't know if I have with all of you. But many of you know, the number one email we get right now for the last couple years is, I need to find a good Bible believing church in my area. Can you recommend one? But a close second or third is, when I first started listening, I did not like you.

But God began to work in my heart. God began to break my heart. And you begin to tell me things I needed to hear, but I don't want to hear.

That's the only way you can help people. There's only way you can help people. I just found out this week.

We had a guy visit Wednesday night service. Just got out of jail that day. Wanted to meet the church.

It changed his life in a federal prison. He just told me all 150 people in the Bible study are listening to this church. And without a doubt, he said, I would not want to hear this a few years ago.

But God had to get me broken and humble in that prison cell with just myself. And then I'm ready to hear what I need to hear. That's what we need to do.

You need to tell people what they need to hear, but it has to be, you have to tell them what they need to hear while you're hugging them at the same time. That's a good picture. Let me tell you what you need to hear and you hug them.

Not this approach. We have too many mean red face pastors. You're going to hell.

The true people, the true preachers who preach hell have tears in their eyes. You can't preach hell until you first wept for the people you're preaching to. And I mean that.

There's such a brokenness. If you've ever asked God, be careful to pray this. God, I want to see things as you see them.

God, give me a brokenness for these people and you won't be able to stop weeping. I see the LGBT agenda. I cry more than I get upset.

Oh God, they're so lost. The sexual sin, the adultery that's caving in. Our nation is swimming in a cesspool of filth and sin, but the church is going to help pull them out.

The church is going to show them the light. The church is going to help people, not hurt them. We have to help, not hurt, but we also have to be honest with people.

When you've grown the most isn't because you've been hurt. You've grown because people told you what you needed to hear.

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