

A Coronavirus Comeback

Ex14:15&16 NLT Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving!¹⁶ Pick up your staff and raise your hand over the sea. Divide the water so the Israelites can walk through the middle of the sea on dry ground.

Israel in slavery to Egypt 400 years.

Moses is leading them out of bondage, and they find themselves pressed against the Red sea with the Egyptians chasing hard after them.

- They had never lived through something like this.
- They were scared to death.
- They thought Pharaoh was going to slaughter them and their children.

Was there a lot going on in the world at the time? – Yes

- Were people fearful? – Yes
- Were some suffering? - Yes

Moses being the leader had a responsibility to not be dragged down into the thinking of everybody else.

- They’re saying, let’s go back.
- We’re going to die

But God held His leadership to a higher standard.

- God’s response to His leadership - “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving!

Uncharted Territory

None of us have ever lived through an international shutdown of non-essential businesses before.

- We have never seen a time where schools, churches, and most everyday types of businesses were closed.
- We have never had social distancing rules for six feet of separation before.
- Many around us are out of work, out of money, and afraid.

- This is uncharted territory.
- Pastors and leaders do not have all of the answers.
- Nobody does, but that is okay.
- The Covid-19 Pandemic is teaching us so much.
- What an opportunity to learn!

Our church and its leadership must face this crisis as it unfolds just like everyone else.

- We should use this as an unparalleled opportunity to get better at everything we do, and to learn from everything we're experiencing.

Jesus Is Our Role Model

Never once in His lifetime on earth did He panic.

- He never became anxious over anything.
- He was focused on His mission of truth.
- Through prayer and submission to the Spirit He calmly maneuvered through every crisis.
- This must be the way that every believer today handles this crisis.
- We must face each circumstance calmly and with absolute spiritual resolve and confidence.
- We must not be easily shaken.

Consider the day that Jesus received word that his friend Lazarus was sick.

- Jesus simply did not panic, nor did he chuck aside what He was doing and rush to his friend's sickbed.
- He loved Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary.
- The expected thing to do was for Him to rush to them immediately.
- Instead he tarried a few days.
- When He did arrive at Lazarus' house, they told Him that his friend had already been dead for four days.
- Had Jesus arrived before Lazarus died, He would no doubt have healed him.
- Instead He did an even greater miracle by raising him from the dead after four days in the tomb.

If you stay calm and find your peace in the Holy Spirit, God will use you in a greater capacity if you do not panic in emotional distress like everyone around you might be doing.

- **That is what believers must do in a crisis.**

What is my point?

We are currently on the Pathway to the Future

- God had called Moses to bring the enslaved nation of Israel out of Egypt.
- Pharaoh would not let them go.
- So, in the night by the millions they begin their journey to the Promised land only to find themselves pressed against the Red Sea and surrounded by Pharaoh's army.

At perhaps its darkest moment, God opened a door to the future for Israel.

- To go there every one of them had to pass through the divided waters of the Red Sea.

Right now, every one of us is going through a similar passageway.

- If you know anything about God, you can easily see this coronavirus crisis is the pathway to our future.
- This is our 'go forth from Jerusalem' moment.
- This is an open door to the most fruitful hour in modern church history.
- This is the stretch the envelope time where we develop as believers and learn to use every talent and resource at our disposal for the expansion of God's Kingdom in our communities and around the world.

Many among us have become criers overnight.

- We should be not be so.
- We should be more visionary than ever.

To our leadership - Expand Your Shared Vision

In the early 1990's. Sony corporation had a vision that was unprecedented.

- They weren't just 5 or 10 years ahead (as most large businesses were) in their planning.

- Sony had a detailed business plan than extended 400 years into the future!
- 400 years!
- It was detailed.
- It would change as time and reality dictated, but it was a bold statement that they were in this for the long term.
- It revealed the heart of visionary leadership that emphasized they cared as much about the distant future as they did the present.
- It meant that as challenges and misfortunes arise, they intend to endure, overcome, and get through it as a corporation.
- It meant they were always going to be the leading edge and never lag behind.
- If you research the history of their products you will see this remains to be true.

Believers must also realize we are in this for the long-term.

- Our God knows the end from the beginning, and He is a revealer of hidden mysteries to those who diligently seek Him.
- A bold and God-inspired vision for the future will pull us forward beyond today.
- We must reach forward for the prize.
- We press forward toward the promises of God.

This is the era that believers need to get alone with God,

- let Him reveal to you the plans He has for you,
- and then lead your friends and family there.

This is where God does His greatest work, even if through incapable people.

- Through faith.
- Trust Him.

The Value of His Countenance

Something I have never heard discussed before by anyone, and yet it is most important for any Believer in Jesus Christ to do, concerns **the countenance you present to others in times of crisis.**

People do not really need to see or hear your opinions,

- but they do need to see and hear Jesus.
- We should never compete to have our voices and opinions heard, and sadly that seems to be what social media is all about.
- We must seize every opportunity to promote Jesus and the Kingdom of God to other people.

In John 12:20 some Grecians came to Philip and asked of him, **“Sir, we would see Jesus.”**

- This crisis is the opportunity to present Jesus to people who might not have otherwise sought His face.

Many people today are promoting their theories, prophecies, and opinions that promote fear rather than trust in Jesus during this time.

- As a believer, the best thing you can do is withdraw from these things.

I remember the foolishness of Christians who were deceived in 1988 when a small booklet was mailed out to thousands of churches and pastors across the nation.

- It was titled, “88 Reasons Why The Lord Must Come in 1988.”
- Many swallowed its fallacy hook, line, and sinker.
- Why?
- Because some of its scriptural “proofs” followed some of their flawed assumptions.

One church had a lock-in. They went inside their church and waited for the Lord to return.

- Deception can be so ugly and humbling.

Similar things happened in 1967 with the 6-Day War.

- One pastor preached a conference the night before, and said, “When the barbed wire fence comes down look up because the Lord will be coming!”

- That very night it came down!
- As soon as he heard the news, he hit his knees in prayer.
- He prayed all day long waiting for the sound of the trumpet!
- It agreed with his flawed assumptions.

It happened again in 2000 with theories of computers shutting down and the conspiracy theories surrounding Y2K.

It happened again after Sept. 11, 2001.

Some are making the same mistake right now with the Coronavirus Pandemic.

False assumptions are always rampant, but only you can choose what to believe and emphasize.

At Acacia Preach and believe The Word of God.

God's Word never fails.

1 Timothy 1:4 tells us, "Neither give heed to fables."

1 Timothy 1:6 tells us, "From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling." The term "vain jangling" means "empty discussion."

As a believer you must avoid the empty discussions of social media, biased mainstream news media, and other opinion shapers.

- Don't become distracted, angry, or obsessed by the issues.
- These are filling your mind with carnal thoughts and not God's vision for your life, your family and your church.
- It will affect your spirit negatively.
- That is not Christlike.

Instead, we should turn to the infallible Word of God and believe it like never before.

This is a time to learn about faith, love, and having a sound mind.

- It is a time to learn about the peace of God that passes understanding.

- To trust the providential care of God.
- We should tell others of the countless times God has brought His people through crisis, famines, floods, and pestilences.
- Tell everyone about a God who has shown his faithfulness to you.
- Offer them hope.

The Word of God is true.

- People need to hear the Word so we should Share the Word!

Never lower yourself to the mindset of a fallen world.

- At Acacia, we believe the Gospel of the everlasting Kingdom of God.
- We believe in and trust our Heavenly Father for all that we have need of including salvation.
- It is the good news!
- As you do so you will draw forth water from the wells of salvation.
- There will be peace in the valley.
- Hope will spring forth.
- Healing will come to people in crisis.
- God's Word shall not return void.

This pandemic shall pass.

- If we present Jesus throughout this ordeal, we will not be ashamed when this storm is history.

We are believing God for a Coronavirus Comeback.

- We are doing things now that we've never done before.
- We are actually reaching via our Live feeds on Sunday many more people than we were with just our in-house Sunday service.
- In order to bring this live service to you today we've had to do a lot of work and gather sufficient equipment to bring you the best live experience possible.

- We're still working on it and it is going to get much much better.
- Once we are all back together here at Acacia, that Live Feed is going to continue to reach hundreds more each week via Social Media.
- Something we've wanted to do all along, but never could take the time to do.
- Coronavirus forced us into it and now **a new ministry of this church has been born.**

Tuesday Nights Live at 7 pm is another live event that is happening via social media as a need we saw during this crisis.

- This time of reaching into God's Word for direction and encouragement will continue even after the crisis is over and we are able to come back together.
- Coronavirus forced us into it and now **a new ministry of this church has been born.**

Our Life Group ministry has taken off this last couple of years.

- This last semester was in full swing and probably the best semester we've had thus far.
- It was cut short due to the Coronavirus.
- So, we have had to find other means to host our Life Groups.
- Via zoom an online meeting place, we launched 2 weeks ago a Life Group that is dealing with the stress and anxiety that the current crisis has created.
- The day will come when we are able to come together again to have all of our Life Groups.
- But I believe these will also continue to be hosted also via the internet.
- This will reach many more people than we are able to otherwise.
- **Online Life Groups**
- Coronavirus forced us into it and now **a new ministry of this church has been born.**

I keep hearing from you folks,

- I can't wait until we can have church again together.
- I can't wait to be able to worship with my church family.

- I can't wait enjoy the fellowship of God's people.

I believe Coronavirus has taught us the value of being at church when the doors are open.

- I'm believing God for a Coronavirus Comeback.
- Where people who have been told they couldn't come together to worship eventually comeback to church with a renewed passion to celebrate and worship our risen Lord.
- I believe we have all learned how important it is to be fed the Word of God.
- Because we never know what the next crisis could bring that might shake our faith if it has not been fed and founded upon the Word of God.

Coronavirus has taught us all how fragile our natural existence really is.

- Socially, economically and health wise.
- As American believers, prior to this virus, we experienced God's blessings to the point that we have never had to face the challenges that so many of our Christian brothers and sisters around the world have had to face.
- Persecution, famine, disease, isolation, and no healthcare at all.
- My prayer is that our hearts will truly remain humbled by the defenselessness we have experienced these last many weeks.
- And that that humility will place us at the feet of Jesus and into His caring hands of provision.

When this is all over.

- And we are months and years past this crisis, we are going to ask ourselves...
 - What did coronavirus teach you about your faith in God?
 - What did it teach you about your need for a church to lean on when the times get tough?
- I believe the resounding response, is going to be, it brought us closer in our faith to God.
- It taught us how much we need Him and how very much we need one another.
- It showed us a pathway to the future.

- It opened the door to opportunities that we never had before.
- It forced us out of our comfort zones and into uncharted territories of outreach.
- It showed us that with God's help our resilience and confidence in Him, can be stronger than our crisis.

Listen, nowhere in the Word of God does it tell us that we will never go through a storm.

- Or be sick
- Or lose a loved one
- Or suffer in some way.

But Jesus did tell us that He would never leave us, and He would never forsake us.

Romans 8:35, 37-39 Exclude vs 35

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

We are already beginning to experience a Coronavirus comeback.

- We are already seeing people's lives being touched by God's providence and His healing power.
- We are seeing hearts that were hard towards God, becoming soft and hungry to experience His love.

We still have a way to go.

- Probably months yet before things are back to a semblance of normalcy,

- But there is going to be a Coronavirus Comeback that is going to bring with it renewed faith in our hearts.
- Realigned vision for the church
- Realized salvation for many who have chosen this time in their life to give their hearts to Jesus Christ and experience all that God has for them.

Dionysius and his account - plagues that overwhelmed Rome in the third century AD.

While the Romans were fleeing Rome and leaving others suffering alone, the Christians stayed in the city to help those who were suffering.

The church grew tremendously in this time due to the faithful witness of believers risking their own comforts to serve the pagan Roman society.

As a result, Christianity was welded into the fabric of Rome and many thousands believed in Jesus Christ as a result.

- Let's use this time to minister to our community!