

“The Winning Witness of WITH-ness”

(Christ, CoronaVirus, & The Church)

Exodus 3:15

March 15, 2020

INTRO: Good morning & welcome to a blessed, worldwide, victorious uniting of God’s people.

➤ Before I pray to open our time together...

Please *hear & take to heart* my opening words once more...

- **GOOD** morning...
- **Welcome** to a...
- **Blessed**...
- **WORLD-wide**...
- **Victorious**... *(short-term AND long-term)*
- **Uniting** of... *(supernatural-gathering)*
- **GOD’s** people.

Looking, living & loving UP... will help us all to settle down. – JDP

Let’s **PRAY** to begin.

CONTEXT:

- A day unlike any other in our church’s 15 years
- A day ***just like EVERY other*** in our 15 years...

UN-like

Temporal

Virus

Pandemic-fear

On-line uniting

Special Word & worship

JUST-like

Eternal

Victorious

Problematic-fall

On-line uniting

Special Word & worship

T/S: Let me show you how our loving LORD has beautifully blended our two contexts together...

BIG IDEA:

God's Word and His prophetic-vision speak directly to our world and its problematic virus!

We have the Vaccine!

His name is Jesus!

We have the eternal Vaccine

to this temporal virus...

THE Gospel of Jesus the Christ!

"The Winning Witness of WITH-ness"

(Christ, CoronaVirus, & The Church)

Note the order of those references... *with hand gestures!*

Our sermon series addresses our society's sickness(es):

- Series: *Gospel Gardening – Roots, Fruits, & Boots*
 - Roots = **Patterns**, Promises, & Presence...
 - Sin-soaked, broken, swamp of a world
 - Sovereign Savior of the sick & sin-filled followers...

➤ Series text: **Proverbs 29:18**

Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law.

T/S: Today we will be reminded from God & His Word that trying times, even tragic trials... call us to remain calm-in, concentrated-on, and committed-to Christ.

TEXT: Exodus 3:15

*God **furthermore** said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The **LORD**, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and thus, this is My memorial to all generations / (or this is "how") I am to **be remembered** throughout all generations.*
(**8X** references to God... "I AM" is the key to everything!)

PREVIEW: (Speaking to our church, our communities, our cities, our culture & all the world's countries & continents)

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| A. Father Knows... | Consider |
| B. Fear Not. | Command |
| C. Faith Now! | Commit/Commission |

T/S: As we begin, **let's acknowledge & answer** the tough questions that many are asking...

- Where is God in times like these?
- How does a "good" God let bad things happen?
- Can you explain evil's cause & collateral damage?

Remember: "...there's nothing new under the sun."

Historical Fact: 12/26/2004 (a Sunday) over 200,000 souls were taken into eternity via the Indian Ocean tsunami - many were entire church families in the midst of worship... AND... God the Father, God the Son, & God the Holy Spirit were, are, and will always be sovereign, good, & loving!

Here's what the Bible teaches & what our sermon will show:

1. God's ordained **FALL BROKE everything** in creation! (see [Romans 8:20-23](#))

It's important to note that most people

WILL die TWICE...

It is critical to understand that the "good news" is

NOT universalism... - JDP

2. ***Sickness & death are used by God at times to demonstrate love, mercy, & urgency*** ([1 Cor. 11:27-32](#))
3. God uses disease & death at times as judgment on those who reject Him & His Word, His will, & His ways... (see [Acts 12:23](#) & [Romans 1:27](#))
4. ***"All natural disasters & diseases are 'a divine-thunder-clap,' calling ALL people, everywhere to repent & realign their lives, by grace, with the infinite worth of the glory of God."*** - John Piper (see [Luke 13:1-5](#))

I. FATHER KNOWS...

God also/furthermore said to Moses,

When we read Exodus 3... we're reading a Father's love letter to His children in bondage & fear...

8...I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey... 10 Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." 11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" 12 He/God said, "But I will be with you, & this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He/God said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (vv.1-14 = 32X)

- I SEE...
- I HEAR...
- I KNOW...
- I CARE...
- I am COMING down to lift you/them UP & OUT!
- I AM... and I AM WITH you!

See I AM's: **Design; Deliverance; Disciple; Delight; DNA**

T/S: Here's the KEY to everything today (and forever)!

I AM Defines & Defends Christ, Christianity, & the Church!

Jesus IS the great I AM!

- I AM is our Bread... Sustenance!
- I AM is our Light... Vision
- I AM is our Gate... Authority
- I AM is our Shepherd... Provider/Protector
- I AM is our Resurrection & Life... Guarantee
- I AM is our Way, Truth, Life... Meaning of Life
- I AM is our True Vine... Life-giving Source/Power

Ephesians 4:15 - Truth in love is always the eternal answer!

Matthew 11:28 – *“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”*

T/S: **Job 42:2 & Philippians 4:13**

“I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

“I can do ALL things thru Christ who gives me strength!”

II. FEAR NOT.

Luke 12: 4 & 7

4“I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do... 7Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

T/S: Hear our verse again... listen in light of Jesus' words...

Exodus 3:15

God also/furthermore said to Moses, **“Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’**”

The Old Testament witness of those who have walked in with-ness includes: 1) walking into and **out** of lion's dens; 2) walking in and **out** of fiery furnaces, walking into and **through** overwhelming armies & ambushes...

It is no different in the New Testament. Peter's with-ness witness walked on water and defiantly into persecution. Read Hebrews chapter 11... “with-ness” witnesses walk away from worldly stability and riches, they walk(ed) on mission right into martyrdom. In the end, everyone who truly walks in-Christ, as a “with-ness witness,” walks with victory into eternity!

Amen & AMEN

WITH you = **IN** your storms/struggles (cf. all of human history)

"Fear not" = the **#1** most repeated biblical command...

WITH-ness is our **Wellness**

WITH-ness is our **Witness**

WITH-ness makes us **Fearless!**

Eternal security is Good News!

- See John 8... *"The truth will set you free... indeed"*
- **Biblical faith rests in the fact that temporary struggles cannot stop eternal solutions!** - JDP

2 Timothy 1:7

*God has not given us a spirit of fear,
but of power and love and self-control.*

Please read & take to heart: **Joshua 1:9** & **Romans 8:31**

*"BE strong & courageous...
If God is for us, who can be against us?"*

Revelation 21:8 = No cowards in heaven!

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

Beware! Cultural fear fights against biblical faith. - JDP

To be clear, while the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom,
the *fear of anything else* is the beginning of **sin**. - JDP

*** **Beware** the deceptively damaging & destructive one-two punch... of **fear & sin**... **The first fear may not take you out but it sets up the second sin that will...** (like lobbing a high snowball...)

While fear won't damn you, the faithless sin it breeds will! - JDP

Hebrews 11:6 – *Without faith it is impossible to please God!*

NOTE: Jesus with the 10 lepers... **Moravians did the same**

Hebrews 13:6-8: *So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?” **7**Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. **8**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

VIDEO: “Alan Hirsch - Lordship”

T/S: Remember, **temporary** things can **kill** us... **BUT**
they can't eternally HURT us!

1 Corinthians 15:55

Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting?

III. FAITH NOW!

A **superficial understanding** of the burning bush account will produce a superficial understanding of the **biblical faith & biblical Church...**

Ekklesia in Koinonia (cf. Acts 2)

We are the Spirit-filled, saved & set-apart, supernaturally unified & sacrificial servants of the Almighty I AM!

A **superficial embrace** will lead to a superficial embrace of **biblical Church...**

Homothoomadon (cf. Acts 2)

We are supernaturally unified together with a riotous passion, and Spirit-filled power, all for the shared & single purpose of BE-ing God's people – an all-in army of ambassadors who are fully devoted followers of Christ who champion His glory, grace, and gospel!

Exodus 3:15

God **furthermore** said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' (I AM) **is My name forever, and thus, this is My memorial to ALL generations**

Here's another way of looking at what the LORD told Moses:

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Genesis 1:1 to John 1:1
- Matthew 28:18-20 to Acts 1:8

If the burning bush account doesn't light your gospel fire of faith, you won't really live-as... or love-sacrificially, the family of God or who He wants us to seek & find. - JDP

Luke 19:10 ...*the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*

"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Jesus knew that fear paralyzes us and hinders our ability to respond effectively to the challenges of life.

- Greg Laurie

I AM & "I AM WITH" are truly UNIQUE in every way!

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| ➤ GOOD NEWS | vs. bad news |
| ➤ FAITH | vs. phobia |
| ➤ INTIMACY | vs. isolation |
| ➤ PROMISE | vs. poison |
| ➤ Getting SAVED | vs. growing sickness |
| ➤ VICTORIOUS | vs. virus |
| ➤ TREASURE | vs. torture |
| ➤ Eternal LIFE | vs. living-death |

Remember: *spiritual viruses* (sin) *have always abound*

What Joseph told his sinful, virus-championing brothers
still holds true today...

What you/Satan intended for evil, God has used for good!

VIDEO: *“Alan Hirsch – BE the Church”*

***** What would happen if ALL the medical experts and service suppliers ran in fear, stayed at home, and sought only to protect themselves???**

➤ In one sense, everyone could say: “I understand”

➤ At the same time, there could be a deeper unrest

Now apply that same thought process to the missional community that you just applied to the medical community...

While CHRIST is the eternal Vaccine, we, Church, ARE the missional-medical community!

Mark 8:36

***For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world,
and forfeit his soul?***

God + nothing = everything & everything minus God = nothing!

- JDP

CLOSE: BE ready & fluid, stay focused, and work hard!

“Seek first the kingdom of God...” – Jesus the Christ

Psalm 33

- 1** Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous;
it is fitting for the upright to praise him.
- 2** Praise the LORD with the harp;
make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.
- 3** Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully, and shout for joy.
- 4** For the word of the LORD is right and true;
he is faithful in all he does.
- 5** The LORD loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of his unfailing love.
- 6** By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
their starry host by the breath of his mouth.
- 7** He gathers the waters of the sea into jars ^a;
he puts the deep into storehouses.
- 8** Let all the earth fear the LORD;
let all the people of the world revere him.
- 9** For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.
- 10** The LORD foils the plans of the nations;
he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.
- 11** But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever,
the purposes of his heart through all generations.
- 12** Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people he chose for his inheritance.
- 13** From heaven the LORD looks down
and sees all mankind;
- 14** from his dwelling place he watches
all who live on earth—
- 15** he who forms the hearts of all,
who considers everything they do.

16No king is saved by the size of his army;
no warrior escapes by his great strength.

17A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;
despite all its great strength it cannot save.

18But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him,
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,

19to deliver them from death
and keep them alive in famine.

20We wait in hope for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.

21In him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in his holy name.

22May your unfailing love be with us, LORD,
even as we put our hope in you.

Jesus Calms a Storm

Mark 4:35-41

35On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, **“Let us go across to the other side.”** **36**And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was.

And other boats were with him. **37**And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. **38**But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” **39**And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, **“Peace! Be still!”** And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. **40**He said to them, **“Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”** **41**And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Malachi 4:2 - But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. **11** Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

We have the Vaccine!

His name is Jesus!

Once you've died to sin & self nothing else can hurt you! - JDP

We have the eternal Vaccine

to this temporal virus...

THE Gospel of Jesus the Christ!

Let's PRAY!

Ephesians 3:20

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more
than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at
work within us...*