

“We Are Living In Uncertain Times”

-How many of you feel we are living in uncertain times? (...)

-Do you ever get unsettled when listening to the news, reading the newspaper or looking at the internet? (...)

-Do any of you know what tomorrow will bring? (...)

-We are definitely living in uncertain times. It's unsettling to listen to the news, read the newspaper or look at things on the internet. We don't know what the future will bring, but as Christians we know the One Who does know the future.

-All through the ages people have gone through very unsettling times.

-How many of you remember the loss of a job, the loss of finances, the loss of a friendship or a relationship, or the loss of a loved one? (...)

-All of us have encountered uncertainty in those times and are still encountering it in our everyday life today. That is just the reality of life.

-As Christians we have a Resource that we can depend on Who brings us a peace which passes all understanding. Do you know Who that resource is? (Jesus!)

-Jesus tells us to release all our worries to Him, in fact we are to entrust everything to Him. When we do that, we are freed up from the fears of the unknown or trying to come up with a plan to fix everything that seems wrong.

-Let's read Verse #1 together on our Verse Sheet out loud: (Matthew 11:28 *“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*)

-Jesus spoke these words to a crowd that surrounded Him in Galilee. These were normal, everyday people who came to hear what He had to say. He knew each of their hearts and knew they were weary and burdened with the cares of this life and the fear of their future. And what were the first three words in this verse that He said to them? (“Come to Me”)

-Notice the verb “come” to me. It takes action and an act of will for us to choose to “come” to Him. He doesn't force Himself on us, He let's us choose to come to Him.

-Let us ask ourselves this question: “Are we willing to take action and choose to turn to Him first instead of others with our burdens and cares?” (...)

-Wouldn't it be so much better to turn to the One Who knows all about us, our burdens and knows exactly what we need? (...)

-And what did He say He would give them? (“I will give you rest.”)

-Is this the kind of rest that the world can give or a supernatural rest that can only come from knowing Jesus? (...)

-It is the kind of rest that only Jesus can give a weary soul. The kind that penetrates our hearts and souls and gives it the rest that only He knows we need the most and can only come from knowing Him and trusting Him.

-Let's read our 2nd verse together on our Verse Sheet: (John 16:33 *“I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world!”*)

-Jesus spoke these words to His disciples before His crucifixion, but they were recorded for us to read today as well.

-Where did He say we will have peace? (In Him)

-In Jesus alone, we will have the peace we need for our souls in times of struggle.

-In this verse, what does Jesus say we are going to have in this world? (Trouble!)

-So trouble is inevitable in this world. But what did Jesus say at the end of this verse to do and why? (“Take heart. I have overcome the world!”)

-What does “Take Heart” mean? (...)

-Jesus uses it as a verb. He is saying that taking heart is an action. We must choose to take our hearts and be encouraged, to have hope, to be bold and confident and not to give up, to be of good cheer, to have courage and to CHEER UP all because we trust in Him! Whether we take heart or lose heart is simply a choice we make by trusting in Him.

-What did Jesus say He did to the world in the last 5 words of this verse? (“I have overcome the world!”)

-He has already overcome the world. This is not something He is going to do, He has already done it for us. He overcame sin and death so we may live fully in the power of His peace, His strength, and His joy in a troublesome world.

-Let’s read our next verse on our Verse Sheet together, #3: (Psalm 20:7 “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but *we trust in the name of the Lord our God.*”)

-What does this verse tell us some people trust in? (Chariots and horses)

-What do some people put their trust in today for security? (Homes, money, bank accounts, people, etc.)

-What happens to most of these things when real trouble comes? (Because they are temporal and not supernatural, they usually can disappear or go away.)

-Again, this verse reminds us at the end Who we can trust in. Who is that? (The name of the Lord our God.)

-Trusting in the name of the Lord our God is trusting in God’s supernatural attributes and divine character. All throughout His Word He shares with us His unfailing character, His heart of mercy, His unconditional love and His abounding protection.

-His Word also shares with us His willingness to carry our burdens.

-Let’s read our next verse to see what it has to say about this, #4 on our Verse Sheet: (Psalm 68:19 “Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, Who *daily* bears our burdens.”)

-So how often does He bear our burdens? (Daily!)

-Not just at times of great need, but in our everyday needs as well as our great needs. He is God our Savior, God our Provider and God our Burden Carrier.

-Let’s continue to read more about Who He is in these times of burdens and uncertainties. Let’s read Verse #5 together on our Verse Sheet: (Psalm 27:5 “For in the day of trouble *He will keep me safe in His dwelling; He will hide me in the shelter of His sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.*”)

-What does this verse say that God will do in the day of trouble? (He will keep us safe and hide us in the shelter of His sacred tent and set us high upon a rock.)

-When David wrote this, he was describing God’s protection over his spirit in times of physical and emotional trouble. David knew that his spirit could find refuge in God and that God would keep it safe and shelter it from the enemy. He knew that God Himself was his Rock, his Strength and always his final Refuge, just like He is for us today.

-Let us read verse #6 together on our Verse Sheet to see what we may have to do sometimes in the day of trouble, this was also written by David: (Psalm 27:14 “*Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.*”)

-What are the first four words? (“Wait for the Lord...”)

-David sometimes had to wait for the Lord just as we sometimes have to today. Is waiting for the Lord easy? Why or why not? (...)

-Waiting for the Lord is not easy, and He knows we struggle in waiting. But God is worth waiting for... because He uses that time to renew us and teach us more about Him and more about who we are IN Him.

-We can also wait with expectation, knowing Who God is for us in times of trouble and He will move when He knows it is best.

-David encouraged us to be strong and to take heart again, trusting that God is going to move in His time.

-So how do you think we should wait on the Lord? (Expectantly)

-There is another verse written by David that tells something else we should do as we wait on the Lord. Let's read it together, #7 on our Verse Sheet: (Psalm 37:34 "Wait for the Lord *and keep His way.*")

-We not only wait expectantly, but also by doing what? (Keeping His way.)

-How do we know what God's ways are? (By reading His Word, the Bible, He reveals His ways to us.)

-So, as we wait expectantly, we also wait by "keeping His ways". We read His Word, the Bible, and act obediently to it in all our situations. This is giving Him Lordship in our uncertain times as wait on Him.

-When you are waiting on Him in those uncertain times, waiting expectantly and "keeping His way", there still may be times when it seems like that cloud of darkness will never lift. But even if that cloud doesn't lift for a while, there is light that we can find within it.

-Let's read our next verse together, #8 on our Verse Sheet, to see what that can be: (Psalm 119:105 "Your Word is a lamp for my feet, a *light on my path.*")

-What can be a lamp for our feet and a light on our path? (God's Word)

-God's Word is filled with verses that bring a light of hope and peace and promise from Him in times of darkness and uncertainty. If we just crawl into His lap and open His Word, His light of comfort and hope can pour into our souls.

-Let's read our next verse together to see what else His Word has to say, #9 on our Verse Sheet: (I Peter 5:6 "*Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time.*")

-What are the first two words? ("Humble yourselves")

-Okay, we are to "humble ourselves", but under what? ("God's mighty hand")

-So He can do what? ("Lift us up in due time.")

-Did you know that God gives grace to the humble? He gives grace, wisdom, faith, holiness, peace and joy to those who humble their hearts under His mighty hand. And then He, *in His wisely appointed time for each of us*, gives us exactly what we need to lift us up in each of our situations.

-This passage continues with our next set of verses, #10 on our Verse Sheet: (I Peter 5:7-8 "Cast *all* your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.")

-How much of our anxieties are we to cast on Him? (All!)

-Because why? (He cares for us.)

-When you have a child or a loved one, and something is bothering that person, don't you want them to tell you about it? (...)

-Our Heavenly Father is the perfect Father Who is even more concerned than we ever could be to cast our anxieties on Him.

-Notice the second verse as it reminds us to be self-controlled and alert over this matter because the devil is prowling around looking for someone to devour with anxieties.

-How can the devil use anxiety to devour us? (...)

-Anxieties are burdensome and often sinful because they usually arise from unbelief and distrust in God handling things for us. The devil uses anxieties to torture us and distracts our minds,

making us unfit for our duties that God has called us to do and hindering our delight in God Himself.

-Satan loves to rob us of our joy and trust in God and he uses anxieties to do this.

-We must be self-controlled and alert when this happens, running to God and not away.

-Our last verse tells us how to do this. Let's read it together, #11 on our Verse Sheet: (Galatians 5:16, 22-23 "Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. But the fruit of the Spirit is *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*")

-How do you "Live by the Spirit"? (When we come to know the Lord Jesus as our Savior, He gives us His Holy Spirit to live inside of us. His Spirit then leads us and guides us to live in a way that is agreeable to God's nature and not our sin nature. He guides us to not gratify our sinful self but gives us His fruits to live by.)

-What are the fruits of the Spirit that He gives us to live by? (Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.)

-Think of an unforeseen circumstance right now that you may be dealing with:

Are you showing patience? Are you showing Love? Are you showing self-control? Kindness? Is this easy?

-As Christians in these uncertain times and unforeseen circumstances, we should have our minds set on what the Spirit desires. On His fruits that He gives us.

-This is the battleground: my way and desires or His way and desires? In ourselves, we are weak and unable to do the right thing. But with Jesus, the Holy Spirit empowers us to yield to God's ways versus our own desires.

-When Jesus came to earth, He knew we needed an example to follow. He was that perfect example. He knew we needed to be empowered because we are helpless to change ourselves. He gave us the Holy Spirit to live within us and transform us.

-So back to the original question: How do we face these unforeseen circumstances and uncertain times?

-Stay close to the Lord through prayer and Bible reading.

-Cast all your cares on Him.

-Remember He knows the future and He has a plan for each one of us.

-Choose to yield to His ways, not your own ways.

-Live empowered through the Holy Spirit.

-Experience His abundant love, presence, and perfect peace.

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2. John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that *in Me* you may have peace. *In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world!*”
3. Psalm 20:7 “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but *we trust in the name of the Lord our God.*”
4. Psalm 68:19 “Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, Who *daily* bears our burdens.”
5. Psalm 27:5 “For in the day of trouble *He will keep me safe in His dwelling; He will hide me in the shelter of His sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.*”
6. Psalm 27:14 “*Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.*”
7. Psalm 37:34: “Wait for the Lord and *keep His way.*”
8. Psalm 119:105: “Your word is *a lamp* to my feet and *a light* for my path.”
9. I Peter 5:6 “*Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time.*”
10. I Peter 5:7-8 “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”
11. Galatians 5:16, 22-23 “*Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*”