



Sermon – March 22, 2020
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Verses Covered This Week

2 Chronicles 15:1 - 17

Amen. Good morning church family. It is good to see you and what I mean by that is I am prayerful and hopeful that You are seeing me and I am seeing you via a red dot that is looking at me in my face. And if you find that funny, know that I won't know if you find that funny because I can't hear you laugh or respond. But I am so grateful and thankful that we live in a day when we face such a crisis, that you and I still have the ability to see one another. We still have the ability to worship across our homes. We still have the ability to hear the word of God and to open the word of God and to be moved by the Lord.

Now I know you got an e-mail with questions and there's a lot of questions in there. Let me just tell you; when I wrote those questions, I wrote those questions knowing that some of you, you only need to pick four of them because each question you answer you're going to have a five-minute answer. But I also had to write the questions for those of you who probably with teenage sons who, they're going to give a one-word answer to those questions. And so you might need 30 or 40 questions to get any kind of conversation going. So use those as you will to have some form of a Life Group time with your family and with your roommates, whoever you are with.

So if you've got your Bibles and I hope you do since you're at home, I want you to take them. We're going to go back to 2 Chronicles and we're going to pick up, we're going to move forward in the narrative about King Asa. And last week, we watched as King Asa comes to the throne and contrasts to his grandfather and his father, he has rejected the idolatry and paganism of his forefathers and he has turned to the Lord. And he has, in his own life, sought the Lord in obedience and he has trusted the Lord. And then out of that he has led the people to trust the Lord. And God grants them rest. We watched him walk in unwavering trust where they experienced God's peace. And we watched as an army of unprecedented size came to their doorstep. What do you do when fear comes to your doorstep? We watched them respond unwaveringly in trusting Christ. Now they still showed up. They still suited up. They still fought the battle. But it was done in an unwavering confidence and trust that who is there who can stand between those with power and those without. Except You, O God. And we are here by Your name. And of course, it says that God routed them. Routed the Cushites, rather the

army. Israel gains new territory, new cities. And now we pick up as they return to Jerusalem. 2 Chronicles chapter 15, verse 1.

¹Now the Spirit of God came on Azariah the son of Oded, ²and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the Lord is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. ³For many days Israel was without the true God and without a teaching priest and without the law. ⁴But in their distress they turned to the Lord God of Israel, and they sought Him, and He let them find Him. ⁵And in those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for many disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands. ⁶Nation was crushed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every kind of distress. ⁷But you, be strong, do not lose courage, do not despair, literally do not let your hands fall limp, for there is reward for your work.

Asa and the people, Asa and his warriors, they come back. And as they come back, God moves Azariah to, with a word, to go out and speak to them. And so Azariah comes out to them and he says, "Listen." And by listening he doesn't simply mean hear. He doesn't simply mean, "Hear these great things of God I'm going to tell you and please respond with an amen." He says, "Listen, pay attention to these things with the heart to do them." And he tells them a truth and he gives them a charge. The truth, he says, is this: "That the Lord is with you when you are with Him." Now what does he mean by that? Because God has already said clearly in His word, He's told the people of Israel, "I am with you. I will not fail you. I will not forsake you." So what does he mean by God is with you if you are with Him? Does that make God's presence conditional upon my obedience? No. He's not talking about God's presence. God is present. The fullness of God, all of who God is, He is omnipresent. All of who God is is in every spot and every, go down to the smallest molecular level, pull out to the largest, God is there in His entirety. What he's referring to is the experience and the blessing of God's guidance, of His protection. He's saying that God is with you. God is with you in support of you when you walk with Him. He says, if you seek Him, He will let you find Him. He says, God is a God who desires to be found. God is a God who is looking for seekers. And he says, "So seek Him." He says, "If you forsake Him, if you choose to turn your back and walk against Him, then understand that God will act against you." And how?

So he goes on to describe a story of Israel's past. He goes on to describe what is likely either the time of the judges, the book of Judges, when everyone did what was right in their own eyes. Or it could also describe the period that the Southern Kingdom has just come out of under Asa's grandfather and father. Both are applicable. Both we see this pattern. We see a time when the people of God are not seeking the true God. The priests of God are not teaching the people of God to know the true God. And the law of God is not being taught or honored or obeyed. It's a time when people do what is right, but then distress would come. This pattern would happen. The people of God would walk in disobedience. Distress would come. In that distress, at some point it would click, we need the Lord God to deliver us. And they would turn, they would cry out, and in their turning, their repentance, he says in there that they would turn to the Lord. That's the idea of repentance. That they were once looking this direction saying, "This is right." They recognized this is wrong so they turn to look at the Lord and say, "The Lord, You are right, God. You are correct." So they cry out to Him for deliverance. He responded by delivering

them. And they would return to Him because God is not just a God who is looking to be sought. God, before any of us have ever sought Him, is a God who seeks us. You see Him act with discipline in the lives of His people. You see Him act with grace and mercy in allowing His people to find Him. Even though they walk so wickedly. You see, Azariah, comes out and presents this truth. Truth. Asa, people of Judah, listen. God is with you when you are with Him. So seek Him because He will let you find Him. And know that if you choose to reject Him that He will bring distress and calamity upon you for the purpose of turning you back to seek Him. And so here's the truth. But it leads to the charge. Look at verse 7.

⁷But you, be strong

Literally, the idea is take courage. Courage is there. Take it on. And do not despair. I mention that phrase literally means don't let your hands fall limp. Such an incredible picture that you can see going through various things. You can think of a boxer. What's the number one rule of boxing? To keep your hands up. If you let your hands fall limp, you get knocked out or you end up like Rocky Balboa. Why does he always look so bad in his face? Because as I researched boxing this week, he never keeps his hands up. Or it's the idea of a worker or a craftsman who's building something, constructing something. And if your hands fall limp, the work stops. This picture of why would my hands fall limp; my hands could fall limp because of exhaustion. My hands could fall limp because of discouragement and despair. My hands could fall limp simply because of complacency. I think what's done is good enough. Or my hands could fall limp because I quit. And anyway, he says, "Asa, people, take courage. Don't let your hands fall limp. There is reward. God is a God who honors those who honor Him. God is a God who honors those who walk in obedience with Him." And so Azariah presents the truth to give a charge which leads to a response. Look with me, look in these verses, in verse 8.

⁸When Asa heard these words, the words of the prophecy which Azariah the son of Oded spoke, Asa took courage

And watch his actions.

He removes all the abominable idols from the land of Judah and Benjamin and the cities which he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim.

He goes in; he's already taken out the high places and the alters. But he makes a campaign and he goes and takes out every last object of idolatrous worship in each city. It says he restores the alter of the Lord. This would be the bronze alter at the temple where they would do burnt offerings to make sacrifices pleasing to the Lord and restorative for one who is in sin. He restores proper worship. He gathers all of Judah, Benjamin, those from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon who resided with them, for many defected to the southern kingdom because they saw that Asa's God was with Him. He gathers the people of God. And we'll see in a moment he gathers them for the purpose of as a group renewing afresh their desire and their commitment and their submission to seek and obey God. But his actions are not just to lead people. Drop down to verse 16. It says:

¹⁶He removes Maacah, the mother of King Asa, from the position of queen mother,

Why? Because she had made a horrid, literally an obscene, a vulgar, an image that is so disturbing it cannot be described, as an Asherah, Asa cut down her horrid image, he crushed it, burned it in the brook Kidron.

You have Asa. Asa takes courage and in his own response of obedience, he continues to move out the idolatry of his land, to lead his people in correct worship, to restore correct worship. But his obedience even leads him to make the costly decision of taking his own mother and removing her from a position of great political power. Because she has not honored the Lord. So we see in Asa's life what's described at the end of verse 17,

¹⁷nevertheless Asa's heart was blameless all of his days even though the high places were not removed from Israel.

The high places remained in the northern kingdom. The northern kingdom did not look at Asa and respond to the Lord. But Asa walked blamelessly, not in perfection, but in whole-hearted obedience. He walked rightly with God.

But Asa didn't just respond in obedience. The people responded in obedience. Look back at verse 10. So the people assembled. They hear the cry together and they come. And they assemble at Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteen year of Asa's reign. They're likely assembling at the time of the Festival of Weeks, or the Festival of the Harvest. Which you and I would know in the New Testament as Pentecost. This was a festival where they would take as a response of thanksgiving to the Lord for His provision, they would do two things. They would offer sin offerings, burnt offerings, to deal with any sin that is there. And then they would take their first fruits of the harvest and they would offer them to God recognizing that God is alone the provider. And so they come together in this festival and they sacrifice, verse 11, to the Lord: 700 oxen, 7,000 sheep from the spoil they brought. So they sacrificed. They entered into renewed worship with God. It says, they entered into the covenant to seek the Lord the God of their Fathers with all their heart and soul. And this is the first time since before things went south under Solomon that the people of God, they come to God and they say, "God, we understand the covenant You made with us at Mount Sinai. The covenant that we find in Exodus. And we are coming to renew ourselves to follow you, to seek you, to honor you. And to do it not just in theory, but with all our heart and soul. Which is not a division of the human body, but it's saying that the wholeness of my being, I am coming to seek God. That is what they have shown up to do. And the result of this is whoever would not seek the Lord, the God of Israel, should be put to death whether small or great, man or woman. Now that sounds harsh to you and I, but what they are doing is simply carrying out the full extent of the law as God gave it in Deuteronomy. If any of the people of God refused to turn from idolatry, then they were to be put to death. So they are taking the law and saying, "God every extent of Your word, we will follow." And in committing to this, it produces not a complaint, not something ominous, but joy. Moreover, they made an oath to the Lord with a loud voice with shouting, with trumpets, with horns. All Judah rejoiced concerning the oath which they had sworn with their whole heart. And had sought God earnestly. A truth, a call, a right response, and God honors it. It says that God let them find Him so the Lord gave them rest on every side.

We find in this story a different circumstance in some ways than where you and I are today. But we find a people coming back from a moment where God has shown Himself to be faithful.

Where God has shown His power. And the people in coming back are confronted with a truth. The truth of what it means to walk with God. They are given a charge to not come back and turn into complacency. To not come back and go, "Oh, praise the Lord. God has delivered. We can sit back." But to seek Him afresh, to renew the covenant, to walk well. And we see their response is faithful. Church family, I realize that in this passage, the circumstance is a little different. They're responding after the end of a deliverance. You and I are in the middle of the trial. But as I prayed through this week, God would not let me move away from this text. He would not let me move from this text because I believe that in the midst of this trial, that we have not yet seen the Lord's deliverance and what we are facing with the Coronavirus. We have not yet seen the Lord's deliverance. And what's going to happen when we do get past this? How will the economy go? What will happen with jobs? How will things, will there be a new normal? We have not seen what the result is. We are in the midst of it. But in the midst of it, I believe it is clear. God is calling you and I, church family. He is calling us to renew afresh our seeking of Him. And to take courage and to courageously obey Him. To seek Him afresh. You watch in this passage. It says that if you seek Him, you will find Him. It says that Asa led them to seek, they entered in the covenant to seek the Lord. It says that they sought Him earnestly. Understand today, church family, God is a God who desires to be found. He is a God that according to Scripture far before we ever seek Him, He seeks us. In this is the love of God. Not that we loved Him; but He loved us. We love why? Because He first loved us. For God so loved the world. Not the world so loved God. But God so loved the world He sent His only Son. God is a seeking God. But He desires that His people seek Him. He desires and is willing to be found. This is what it says, Hebrews 11, if anyone desires to please God, he must, without faith is impossible to please God. For one must believe that God is and God is a rewarder of those who seek Him. It says, "Ask. Keep on asking. Keep on seeking. Keep on knocking. For the one who asks will get an answer. The one who seeks will find. The one who knocks the door will be opened." You and I are called to seek. And in this time when daily life has been upended, when there is fear, when there is panic, when there is for some maybe still going, "I'm not really so, I think this is an overreaction." Whatever place you find yourself while in this time, will you commit to seek the Lord afresh with a new and greater urgency? Knowing that finding Him, He will, He will reveal Himself. It may not be instantaneous. See, sometimes that's our modern sensibility going, "Well, I'm going to seek God. I'm going to come out. I'm going to pull out my Bible and I'm going to meet God like Moses did at the burning bush." That is a bad expectation. Sometimes the seeking of God whether it's for an answer and direction, sometimes the seeking of God to know Him deeper is a slow process. Where we seek day in and day out knowing, resting in faith, unwavering trust, that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. I will not instantaneously come to a full knowledge of Him. His will and His unsearchable character, actually I will never come to that moment. I will spend all of eternity seeking, knowing Him deeper and deeper and deeper.

So will you seek Him this week in the word? What's your time in the word been like this past week? Have you sought Him? Perhaps God is allowing some interruptions for us as His people that we would really regain and recapture a heart that gets in His word daily. If you say, "I don't know how to get in His word daily." Or "I don't know where to start." I know for a fact, I know that in the college ministry daily, we're posting on Instagram and Facebook places to read with questions to use. Go and use those. I know the Youth Ministry's doing the same. I know Randy with the adults is putting out things. If you need help, we are here to help you. But seek Him in His word. Are we seeking Him fervently in prayer? Let me just ask honestly. In the midst of

everything that's happened in the last week or two, truly if you were to look honestly, how much have you been driven to your knees in prayer? I mean truly driven. Are our hearts breaking that there are men and women dying? That there are men and women dying without the gospel right now. Are our hearts breaking that there are people who are laboring non-stop in other countries and even in our own moving? Are we supporting them in prayer? We realize are we broken hearted for those losing jobs? Are we seeking Him in prayer? Or are we casually moving to what we have to do now? Are we seeking Him and fasting? You see, sometimes God does, it says in Scripture, it's not if you fast. Jesus says, "When you fast." And fasting is for the purpose of seeking God, for the purpose of hearing from God, for the purpose not that it makes us better in God's eyes. But for the purpose of dedicating ourselves to seek the Lord in a new way. And so out of this, church family, I want to ask something of you. That you would join me and the staff this week. We're going to send you an e-mail with more instructions. But on Wednesday I am asking that we as a church family commit to pray and to fast together, during lunch on Wednesday, to seek the Lord. To pray for wisdom for our leaders. To seek the Lord and to seek His will and to seek His hand ending what we are facing today with the Coronavirus. God has called us as a people to seek Him. Now if you're unable to fast, please don't ignore what you need to do medically. Some of you will not be able to. But those of you who are able bodied and can, will you join me and the staff in seeking the Lord afresh and earnestly this week? Because as we seek Him, we will find Him.

And when we find Him, we discover that He has called us into a covenant relationship that demands obedience. And the only way for you and I to obey is to take courage. It is a call. This passage is a call for you and I, not just to seek Him afresh with the renewed urgency, with a renewed fervor, with all our heart and soul. But it's to seek Him for the purpose of knowing Him, to obey Him, to follow Him. And that demands that we take courage and not go limp in doing what is right. You and I cannot obey the One we're not seeking. How we seek Him, the state of our seeking, will determine our obedience. But as we seek Him, as we obey Him, we understand that we must take courage. That's the command, verse 7, but you take courage. Then notice, verse 8, it says, and Asa took courage. You see, courage is not a passive command. A passive command is be filled with the Spirit. I can't fill myself with the Holy Spirit. Only the Spirit can fill me with Himself. But I am told to take courage. To out of unwavering trust, last week right, out of unwavering trust in Him to seek Him and to take courage. To reject despair. You and I in the midst of this crisis cannot let our hands fall limp. We cannot let our hands fall limp from exhaustion. We certainly cannot let it fall limp because we are despairing or discouraged because we're asking what is going on. We cannot let our hands fall limp because we are complacent or we're just ready to pack in the towel and give up. We must follow in courageous obedience. And courageous obedience does not mean to act foolishly. It doesn't mean go pick something that's super dangerous and charge into it. No! It means doing what is right, what God has clearly revealed in His word. And doing it in the face of good or bad. Doing it in the face of whatever it could cost, whatever worries that would arise out of it. It means coming to Him and obeying what is clearly said even when it's hard. Just give you some thoughts. What does that mean for us today? One. God has said in His word clearly that you and I are to submit to the governing authorities. Our governing authorities have asked us to take some prudent measures and some loving measures, to keep inside, to do those things. So let me tell you. What is courageous obedience mean now? It means staying at home. It means honoring what the government has asked us to do. They've not asked us to do anything that defies a clear command from the Lord. Actually, they've asked us to be prudent, to see danger

coming, and to act wisely to stop it. They've asked us to be loving, to recognize that there are those at risk whom we can protect by taking some self-disciplined actions for a few weeks. We submit to the government.

God says not to neglect the gathering of ourselves. Well your tuning in right now. That's part of not neglecting it. But it goes beyond that. Courageous obedience right now means keeping in the front of your mind, who can you be diligent, who in your Life Group do you need to reach out to? What are ways that you can connect? How can you use FaceTime, Zoom, to connect with those, to see each other face to face? To be faithful to community. To be faithful to pray. To be faithful to those. Now is the time. Courageous obedience demands we step up. God has not given us a pass on serving. The history of the church is when plague hits, when things hit, when trials hit, the church does not run with the rest of the crowd. Instead we step in. Courageous obedience means how will we serve today? Right now if you go to the church website, if you go on to Facebook, there are links to say, "Need help. Will serve." If you are willing, if there's a way in which you can serve; to take groceries to someone, to help babysit someone who doesn't have school and has to work. Go volunteer. How has God moved, open doors to serve?

In the midst of this time, God's command to tithe faithfully of our first fruits has not gone. And some no longer have first fruits from which to tithe. And that command is not there. But for many of us, we still have first fruits. And God has not given us a pass on faithfully rendering to Him what is His, the tithe. Global pandemic does not remove this command and it will demand courage in the midst of a financially unstable time to say, "Lord, I am trusting You and obeying You. I am giving of my first fruits to Your local church and I'm going to learn how to give online." The sad reality is many believers will ignore this command in this time and some of the fallout of what happens to Coronavirus will be churches whose doors shut because we were not courageous to give. God has not taken away the command to lock arm in arm and strive for the sake of the gospel. God is right now at work moving for the sake of the gospel to make disciples. People's hearts are open. They're saying, "Where is God? What is going on?" God has not taken that responsibility away from you and I. So how can we step in to courageous obedience? To be a people who seeks the heart of God. To be a people who seeks to proclaim the gospel to a lost and dying world. A world that is watching every foundation they have placed their trust in crumble. God has not taken that command away from you and I. Are our eyes open? Are we willing to step in to courageous obedience to check on a neighbor? To reach out whether that be online or whether that be here in town? But to see God, where are you moving and making disciples? Students, as you're at home and things are idle, maybe courageous obedience means having to stand, having to dig deeply into your trust in God so that you do not allow secret sin to ruin your life as your hands are idle and the screen is in front of you. Kids, maybe courageous obedience to you means in these days you're at home being diligent to say, "Mom, Dad, what can I do to help you?" Maybe courageous obedience means not arguing with your brothers and your sisters and being a peacemaker in your home. Courageous obedience is what God's call is. Will we walk in a new, a renewed courageous obedience with God today? Understand that courageous obedience may also not be taking action. It may mean waiting. It may mean waiting. It may mean that there's something, obviously all of us have had plans interrupted. Have had things that have not gone the way they were. Even as I look through things, plans I had for the College Ministry and things are shifting and things are moving, all of us have plans that are shifting and we are being forced to walk in courageous obedience which

may mean waiting. Waiting on God's timing. Waiting on God's provision. Waiting on His deliverance. It may mean waiting, but not just waiting idly, waiting while I seek Him wholeheartedly. Knowing that if we step up in courageous obedience, it may be costly. Do not forget for Asa to obey and walk into courageous obedience, for him to take courage, meant the disposal of his own mother and someone of great political power. It may cost us. But it is rewarded. God sees our obedience. He sees what is done in secret. You see that in the Sermon on the Mount. He sees what we do before men as unto Him. And God is a rewarder of those who honor Him. That reward may or may not be seen in this life. But it will absolutely be seen in our home in the new Jerusalem where you and I are true citizens.

Now in all this as we take courage for the purpose of obedience, let me just remind all of us that we do so without complaining or arguing. So that we may prove ourselves to be blameless and pure children of God. Living in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom we shine as lights. As we hold fast to the word of God, Philippians 2:14 through 16. In this time when things are changing, in this time when obedience demands that we seek the Lord afresh, that we take courage to walk rightly, can we be careful not to complain? We don't complain about honoring the authority in our lives. We don't complain about spending time with our spouses and children. We don't come across to the world as a people who just complain because things aren't going how we want. But rather we take courage and rather than complaining we rejoice that the God we are seeking and the One whom we are taking courage to obey, He is the Lord. We rejoice. You see that in the text. When they commit to this oath, it's not with complaining, it's not ominous, it's not "whoa is me." It says, they made the oath to the Lord, in verse 14, with a loud voice, with shouting, with trumpets. It says, all Judah rejoiced. We do this with joy. Joy, not tied to what circumstance we find ourselves in. But joy tied to the character of our God. Because the God that we are seeking, who we are taking courage to obey, we rejoice because He is *Yahweh*. He is the faithful God. He is the Lord. He is merciful, He is gracious, He is patient, He is full of loving kindness, truthful, faithful, forgiving, just, and righteous. He has not forsaken His promises. He has not forsaken His people. In fact, we don't fall with Him under the old covenant; we fall in with Him in the new covenant. Bought with the precious blood of Christ. Christ who has come. Christ who has taken our place, who has received our punishment. Christ who has risen. Christ who currently, it says, is sustaining and upholding all things by the word of His power. Christ who is in control. Christ who is coming back. Jesus, our Lord and Savior. We rejoice because we are in a covenant with Him. And our worship is transformed. Church family, it is imperative that we commit ourselves to seek Him afresh now. To take courage and respond in obedience now. To rejoice in our worship now. Because history shows us that when deliverance comes, we are prone to forget. Ten lepers are healed by Christ. Only one comes back to say, thank you. Pattern of disasters, there was great hope in America after World War II that revival would sweep the nation as people flocked to churches. But within a decade, it died out. 9/11 the same hope arose. But less than a decade, that died out. Likely after this, there will be people who flock asking where is God. So if we do not now in the midst of the trial seek Him afresh and take courage and follow Him in obedience and rejoice, there will be a danger that when deliverance comes, we will run back to our same level of business and distraction as before.

There's a member during the Soviet Union when the iron curtain fell, a man who had been faithful throughout the time of the Soviet Union to smuggle Bibles, to work with the churches, he went in for the Sunday after the curtain fell, he was excited. He thought the churches would be

packed and he was surprised when the church wasn't. So he went to the pastor and he said, "Where are all the people? I figured that now that there's freedom that people would be flocking here." And the pastor said, "Well, now that they have freedom to go to the west, everyone has gotten so excited about the new found freedom that they've run to the malls." For 80 years we've sought the Lord to give deliverance. So now on the first Sunday after His deliverance come, we've run right back to the materialism. You see, if we don't commit now, church family, there is that danger. The end of the Coronavirus will come. Don't know when. Life will return to some form of normal and maybe a new normal that exists. Church family, the question is not whether or not an end is coming, but will we be found now to be seekers of God. Will we be found now taking courage and obedience? Will we be found now rejoicing? Or when it comes will we be found running back to the same busyness and distractions of our self-driven desires and culture. Our God goes before us. Our God is with us. Our God is faithful. Church family, He does not fail or forsake. He is not asleep and He does not grow weary. He is currently in the same place that He was when the Israelites cried out, "Deliver us from Egypt!" He's in the same place He was while they wandered through the desert. He is in the same place He was when David stepped out to face Goliath. He's in the same place that He was when Asa and the men of Judah stood on that battlefield crying out, "Lord, who is there but You?" He's in the same place He was when Jeremiah cried out and no one responded and Babylon conquered. And He is in the same place that He was when His Son, when He allowed His Son to go on a cross. He's in the same place He was when His Son rose from the grave. He's in the same place that He will be when you and I see Him face to face in the new Jerusalem. He is on His throne. He is faithful and true. And we can worship Him with resounding joy. Not because our path is clear, but because we belong to the One for whom darkness is as light. Church family, we have a history of walking well as a church, but I believe God is calling us in the midst of this trial to walk even more faithfully. Will we seek Him more completely? Will we in love obey Him more courageously? Will we rejoice in who He is; what He has done and what He is doing? As the heart of our worship, not our circumstances. Today is not the day to remain settled in the status quo. But it is the day in the midst of unprecedented crisis and fear to come to Him across the city in our homes and renew afresh our commitment to walk well with Him. Let us seek Him afresh with unbridled courage and joy-filled worship. The time is now. The world is watching. Our hands must not fall limp. But may we hold them high lifting up the glorious banner of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Pray with me.

Father, You are in control. And Your call on our lives has not changed. Maybe now because there is trial coming, maybe now because things are shifting, maybe now distractions, it's easier to see through them to recognize Your call has not changed. You have called us to seek You with everything. You have called us to take courage and obey You. And to do so rejoicing and with joy because it is You to whom we belong if we have responded to You in faith at Your offer of grace. Father, I am not in each and every one of these homes. I cannot see or hear anyone of the people listening right now. But, Spirit, You are there. I don't know what each person's response needs to be. You do. Father, may we respond to You today.