

4.19.20

It's Just, Time

Luke 13:31-35

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." ³² And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. ³³ Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.' ³⁴ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵ Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

Luke 13:31-35

At that time some Pharisees said to him, "Get away from here if you want to live! Herod wants to kill you!"

32 Jesus replied... "Go tell that fox that I will keep on casting out demons and healing people today and tomorrow; and the third day I will accomplish my purpose. 33 Yes, today, tomorrow, and the next day I must proceed on my way. For it wouldn't do for a prophet of God to be killed except in Jerusalem! 34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones God's messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn't let me. 35 And now, look, your house is abandoned. And you will never see me again until you say, 'Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

Context and Content

In reading this passage from Luke's gospel, Jesus certainly knew that Herod's threats were not meaningless, but that they were the same control and intimidation tactics he always used for stirred up Jews.

Perhaps Jesus also discerned that the Pharisees wanted Jesus to stop doing what He was doing and perhaps were trying to "fake news" Jesus.

Regardless, right here in this exchange is where we would do well to see something that is so much needed today. It is not that Jesus is unfazed by Herod's threats (real or not) - as much as it is that He is laser-focused on fulfilling His calling and finishing His mission. That train had already left the station, and at that point there was nothing going to stop Jesus.

Listen again to His response: "You can tell that fox, I'm casting out demons and healing the sick for the next two days, and the third day I'm going to finish what I started." (13:32-33).

To me, is it striking for Jesus to have that kind of response under the super-intensity of being told that the very person who had be-headed your cousin was now wanting to kill you! Wow...

I can only ask myself, "Have you ever been that focused or committed to a mission or calling like that"? It's not just the sheer will and determination that's impressive for me - it is the fearless and forceful resolve.

Here is what I came to do - here is how I'm going to do it - and by the way, I'm on the clock - here is my timeline.

Excuse me? Was Jesus giving us all “one more three”?

Of course He was...

There is some small variation as to when Jesus spoke these words - but there is no doubt or dispute that He spoke them. The dialogue and its participants dictate that it was not while He was in Jerusalem during Passover.

John's Gospel details the most accounts of Jesus being in Jerusalem. John recalls Jesus being at 3 Passover's, two other Festivals his 3 years of ministry.

So, if you add His last Passover visit and His first (baptized by John his cousin in the Jordan), then Jesus was in Jerusalem at least five times in the three years of His ministry.

However, because of the intensity of the moment, more than likely this conversation with the Pharisees happened in the days leading up to His final Passover. Probably the week before.

Look at verses 34, 35 in this passage.

If you think for few moments about what Jesus told the Pharisees He would be doing for three days - defeating darkness - bring hope and healing - and finishing His mission.

It all connects directly to what actually happened for the Jewish people and the 3-day window they would have with Jesus.

They used that Passover window of three days to arrest, condemn, crucify and bury Him. He used those three days to become their forever Passover. The Jewish people were all gathered in Jerusalem, the place where Jesus would save and deliver them - they would not let Him.

During those three final days Jesus though in His grave, He was indeed bringing deliverance and casting out demons and darkness - He was indeed bringing hope and healing, and of course on day three He was finishing that work through the power of His resurrection.

Wrap your mind around that.

The connections of this rather abrupt but poignant conversation and the Messianic and Resurrection implications are still amazing to me.

I get there has always been the existing elements of the mysteries of the sacraments.

As a seeker of truth - I count on those mysteries.

But which of us, knowing what we know about ourselves can truly say they understand the grace and love freely extended for our redemption and salvation?

Having processed that, you can't pursue Jesus without also realizing the transparency and full disclosure that was continually shown through His every action and through every word that came out of His mouth.

In every way possible, to both His followers and His enemies, He proclaimed Himself as God's revelation to the human heart. "I'm going to cast out demons, heal the sick, and finish this mission." That is not a mystery.

Under stress and duress, in the face of threats and death He just kept revealing Himself to us so that we might be saved.

And here we are... It's just, time.

Luke gives us one more chance to hear Jesus give us one more three.

Listen...

Urgency is not the same as panic. We know what panic is - we have all witnessed it first-hand on the world stage these past two months. urgency is something different. The words we have just read from Jesus were urgent.

In those words, to Herod and the Pharisees, He remind us that he is the Master of Time - not just our earthly time, but all of time and timelessness.

Jesus came into time from timelessness to give us the hope of what is timeless - eternity.

When you and I honestly seek Him and His Kingdom and faithfully tell others about why and what we are seeking we are on the clock and God knows the timeline.

What does that mean? How about this? Its just - time.

IT'S NOT PANIC TIME - IT'S JUST, TIME

"Go tell that fox that I will keep on casting out demons and healing people today and tomorrow; and the third day I will accomplish my purpose."

...Jesus

- **Time for Discernment and Demonstration - Over Demonic Forces and the Evil Opposition**
- **Time for Healing and Hope - For Our Sick and Suffering**
- **Time for Fulfillment and Finish - Of Our Calling and Mission**

4.26.20

It's Just Time (Part II)

Luke 13:31-33

At that time some Pharisees said to him, "Get away from here if you want to live! Herod wants to kill you!" 32 Jesus replied, "Go tell that fox that I will keep on casting out demons and healing people today and tomorrow; and the third day I will accomplish my purpose. 33 Yes, today, tomorrow, and the next day I must proceed on my way. For it wouldn't do for a prophet of God to be killed anywhere but in Jerusalem!

Today's Target and Teaching is...

Time for Discernment and Engagement - Over Demonic Forces and the Evil Opposition

Week One of this series (It's Just Time), I shared the historical and biblical context for the passage of Luke 13:31-33. Now... the implications of the Messianic fulfillment and Resurrection power aside, this poignant and forceful response to the Pharisee's regarding Herod's death threat is more than just another wow moment in His spiritual engagement against the evil forces of religious sin and corruption.

Let me clear the air real-quick here on their conversation, and then we are going to move – these guys were not just bad guys – they were evil and demonic guys.

And when Jesus said to them “You tell that fox, I’m going to be casting out demons and healing the sick for the next two days” It included His engagement with them – and whatever was going to happen between Jesus and the entire Sanhedrin was going to happen – it was as they say “ON.”

During this time of Covid-19 calamity and crisis, Reunion has responded strongly to this message, we have heard Jesus and taken this personally. We have determined that our mission and ministry is deeply connected to the ministry and mission of Jesus from the engagement of that day.

Two Things...

One - we are not taking any of this out of biblical context, nor are we projecting ourselves into a role or position where we do not belong. Jesus Himself, gives us our connection and point of entry right here in

John 14:12...

“I’m telling you the truth, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”

Two – Just because we are engaging with Christ in this mission and calling does not mean that we are now “Dragon-Slayers” and “Demon-Chasers.”

In this COVID moment that we all are in there is no need or requirement for an army of unloving, unbalanced, unwise, and dogmatic zealots.

The moment does however require resolved, passionate, disciples of Jesus, who will live out their faith before a frantic world – fearlessly, forcefully and passionately. Not wacky – real. Not pulling back – pushing forward. Not shaky – solid. Not foolish – wise. And finally, not selfish – selfless.

As the coronavirus and the coronavirus economy shakes our apparently low-immune planet, and the “stay-home” protocols emotionally wear down those who are physically healthy but on the financial ledge – we wonder what our threshold really is.

Many things about this are not setting well with many folks. One example for that might be that elective surgeries are now permitted, while abortion clinics have remained open for business. This kind of logic and mixed message are hard to reconcile and justify.

Many Christian leaders feel caught within the tension of obeying civil authority – protecting the physical health of their communities, and yet having the knowledge and conviction that the Church of Jesus has survived and flourished during much worse in her history. There is a daily avalanche of un-vetted information and gross mis-information – and tomorrow most of it will be contradicted by another round of mixed-messaging.

The truth that we all know is that the experts, scientists and doctors (for which we are grateful) would kill one another faster than the virus if they were all quarantined in one room together.

So, the world's influencer's who have through digital media and technology led 7 billion humans to believe that this world has everything and that they alone have all the answers - now peeks through that same window of technology to view a COVID world - that really doesn't have everything and they certainly do not have all the answers to anything.

And, that is an even greater pandemic.

The world leaders (both good and bad) are now daily exhausting all their energy and our resources to do what they say "is best" to 'save lives" to "contain the virus" and to minimize the fear, anger, mistrust, exploitation, politics, and psychological breakdown that comes with it all. Something doesn't seem right - don't you think?

For a few weeks I wrestled with feeling that there was some underlying evil and demonic forces that were attached to the COVID-19. When I got into the words of Jesus in Luke 13:31-33, I was fully ramped up.

But soon I realized it was just too easy to villainize an unseen contagion – natural or man-made (depending on whose story you believe). I'm still ramped up and I do believe that Christ intended the sick and diseased of our day to be healed, and for the demonic forces that do exist be driven out and overcome.

I also believe that true and genuine disciples of Christ have been given the mantle and the mandate to pray for both healing from disease, and deliverance from evil.

In fact, that is why we are in going in deep with Luke 13:31-33. And while you're at it, you could add...

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

1 John 5:4-5

For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

My library contains the complete works of the profound theologian and author – Karl Barth. As he was dying in 1969, from a bacteria-based disease that had aggressively deteriorated his kidneys he wrote the following... this monstrosity does not belong to God's good creation, but rather has come in as a result of the Fall. It has in common with sin, and with the demons also, that it cannot simply be done away with - but can only be despised, combated, and suppressed... the main thing is the knowledge that God makes no mistakes and that "proteus mirabilis" (remarkable mutating bacteria) has no chance against Him.

If you fully embrace Barth's dying words you might end up viewing the Creation of God as a good thing gone bad—once those greedy and hate-filled humans got their hands on it. But is that God's view?

Listen to Jesus walk some of that back into its place in Matthews Gospel

24:6-14...

And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately. 7 Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world. 8 But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.

9 "Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers. 10 And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other. 11 And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people. 12 Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come.

What I hear in this apocalyptic warning is that every imaginable and unimaginable wickedness, every disaster and tragedy, every pandemic and persecution, every liar and deceiver will unfortunately have their say and will have their day. People will become afraid and give up.

BUT...

The enduring righteous will be saved, and the Gospel of God's Kingdom will be preached to the entire world.

Like I said about my guy Barth, the tendency could be to blame kidney eating bacteria's and immune busting viruses on the first two humans God created – too easy.

Yes, sin came into the world through their disobedience, and, Yes, their sin has impacted every human being since.

But as Daniel Harrell, of Christianity Today writes “unless God's creation defies every characteristic of biological reality, bacteria and viruses are not bitter fruits of the fall, but among the first fruits of good creation itself.”

If our world's most brilliant biologists, doctors, and scientists are correct in their research, life as we know it could not exist without them.

This we know - God makes no mistakes... period. And, as Barth said, bacteria and viruses indeed are mirabilis (Latin; meaning remarkable, amazing or wondrous! But aren't those the words we use to describe God's masterpiece called Creation?

And wouldn't they be part of His Creative plan from the beginning?

Think about it... Death itself is required for organic life to exist.

And as lovers and seekers of truth we know that this is also true of eternal life as well.

Christ died so we could have new life.

Romans 6:8-11

And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. 9 We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. 10 When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. 11 So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

Would it not be more correct to see God's remarkable Creation not as Paradise Lost, but rather as Paradise not yet finished or fulfilled?

The writer of Revelation (22:13) calls Jesus both the source and fulfillment of all creation—the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

His mission - love (John 3:16)

Even sacrificial love cannot be coerced, demanded or forced.

Oh no, here we go...

So, God allows for free will so that genuine love and real relationship are possible. Allowing us the freedom to love also means we have the freedom to reject it. Within that one dynamic lies the tension for the "Why would a loving God allow such suffering crowd."

In order to have real relationships with people, God permits the possibility of no relationship.

If we apply this theologically solid logic to nature (where humans consist and exist) we can also see the theological reality that nature has been endowed with the same freedom.

The same ocean that mystifies and inspires - can also flood and destroy. The same sun that breath-takingly sets each evening here in Arizona - can also scorch, burn and deliver life-threatening heat advisories. The same earth that serves as a foundation to our feet - can also quake and fracture causing mass destruction. The microscopic organism and bacteria that supports life - can also contagiously take it away.

Here is our launching point for Luke 13:31-33. Jesus, though he did say to the Pharisees, "tell Herod today and tomorrow I'm going to cast out demons and heal the sick" did not rid the whole world of all evil and every viral infection - those are both part of natural cause and course, and many times, the result of human sin and mankind's willful choice. What Jesus did do was overcome the world, and for all who freely choose to believe - save us from it!

To briefly unpack that; He indeed saves us from our sins - but not always from our suffering and death. He didn't even save himself - He purposefully gave Himself. He is the good that overcomes the evil of demonic forces, He is the wounded Healer – who heals disease and brokenness - and He gives Himself to us. The Hell Jesus descended into, was in great part our sin and humanity. He went there to overcome and deliver us out from it.

Our first calling as believers and disciples of Christ remains to love to God and to love our neighbors as ourselves. But a significant part of that mission is to resist the devil, overcome demonic forces, and pray the prayer of faith over the sick so that they will recover.

James 5:13-15

Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. 14 Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.

Yes, there is real evil and there are very present and active demonic forces at work in our world – we have established that is how it is. We are to be as Jesus said, “in this world, but not of this world.”

Our mission and calling (which is known by our love), is to discern demonic forces and threatening diseases and to demonstrate the witness and presence of God through power of the Holy Ghost!

John 16:33

“In this world you will have trouble,” Jesus said. “But keep the faith! I have overcome the world.”

With faith, hope and love, we abide the tension between beginning and end, between anxiety and peace, between what is and what will come.

Next week we can begin our conversation on the discernment and demonstration of the Holy Spirit and what that looks like in these certainly uncertain COVID moments.

Right now, I just want to pray with each of you...

5.3.20

Its Just Time (Part III)

Today's Teaching Target is...

Time for Discernment and Engagement - Over Demonic Forces and Evil Opposition

Last week I laid a strong biblical foundation for the unquestionable goodness of God's Creation and creative purpose.

We can't move forward in discernment and engagement of demonic and evil forces without acknowledging that God did not create good only to be overtaken by evil. Within the goodness of God there is no evil.

There is good and there is evil...

But, what God Himself has made good - there can be no evil.

We are just getting started so don't flatline on me!

Let me explain...

The incarnation (God with us), the crucifixion (forgiveness through sacrifice), and the resurrection (conquering the power of sin and death) of Jesus, not only establishes this as truth; but places Christ in the position as *eternal guardian* of all that is good...

And for those who call and believe in Him – He will deliver from all evil. Jesus is the mediator of all that is good between us and God. So that when God sees us (even though we have sin)

He only sees what He has made good.

Romans 3:22-26

We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

²³ For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

²⁴ Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.

²⁵ For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, ²⁶ for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Because of Jesus, you and I ARE the goodness of God, and we are on “good-terms.” So, hold on to that good thought and to the good work of the Father in us, as we open up the conversation about discerning and engaging demonic forces and evil opposition.

This week...

I want to continue the series ***It's Just Time*** with not only solid biblical instruction on a fairly misunderstood mandate; but I want to also issue a strong spiritual challenge for every believer in Christ, who is part of the community at Reunion and beyond. I am certain that you are going to clearly see both the instruction and the challenge are birthed and given validation within the words and intent of Jesus.

Luke 13:31 – 32

At that time some Pharisees said to him, “Get away from here if you want to live! Herod Antipas wants to kill you!”

³²Jesus replied, “Go tell that fox that I will keep on casting out demons and healing people today and tomorrow; and the third day I will accomplish my purpose.

John 14:12

I’m telling you the truth, WHOEVER BELIEVES in Me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

Mark 16:17-18

These miraculous signs will accompany THOSE WHO BELIEVE: Believers will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak in new languages. ¹⁸ They will be able to handle snakes with safety (yuck!), and if they drink anything poisonous, it won't hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick, and they will be healed.

Without oversimplifying or misinterpreting the words of Jesus in these verses... there are at least **three indisputable truths** that any believer who humbly stands before God as His righteousness in Christ Jesus - should know and use.

One – We have been given the ***mandate of Jesus*** to not only resist the devil and His demonic forces but to defeat those forces that stand in opposition against us.

Two – We have been given *the* ***authority of Jesus*** over the demonic forces and influences in our world. He has power and dominion over all things demonic and evil.

Three – We have been given the ***assurance of Jesus*** that demonic forces do not have the power or ability to harm us. We do not need to fear or flee any demonic forces or form of evil.

Clearly, we are not on our own here!

Jesus is with us.

He not only gives us our mission - but He supports the process of discerning and engaging demonic forces and evil opposition as well.

He not only said it was real...

but He gives us real help in the time of trouble.

Our next step is to acknowledge that in spiritual warfare, Christ has wisely put in place certain “rules of engagement.”

This should not be a surprise to anyone who is knowledgeable enough to understand the benefits and protective dynamics of spiritual authority in Christ, and the biblical “chain of command.”

Here are some of those engagement rules we should follow and certainly not ignore or resist.

There is something here for us to learn.

Discernment and Engagement of Demonic Forces and Opposition is not for the arrogant, ignorant, or those who rebel against authority. In this context, Arrogance is Pride – Ignorance is Foolish – Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft.

James 3:14-16

But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. ¹⁵ For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly,

unspiritual, and demonic. ¹⁶ For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.

1 Samuel 15:22-23

What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.

²³ Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft, and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols.

Discernment and Engagement of Demonic Forces and Opposition must be supported by a submissive and humbled life of prayer and committed faith.

James 4:6-8

And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁷ So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come close to God, and God will come close to you.

Discernment and Engagement of Demonic Forces and Opposition is not only centered in full belief of the authority and power of the Resurrected Christ, but is also a command response to the active work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer.

Ephesians 6:10-12

Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹² For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 1:19-23

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power ²⁰ that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. ²¹ Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. ²² God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. ²³ And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

Ok, we can't go on and close out this morning without pulling back the curtain on the ideas and principles of submission and surrender in the context of our conversation.

The submission and surrender part of the strategy against demonic forces and evil opposition is so critically important...

To be honest, my heart was so full I didn't think I could get to it all.

So, I borrowed some insights from the global evangelist and writer Daniel Kolenda, who has a wonderful revelation regarding submission and surrender in spiritual warfare.

Here is how this all connects:

Because of our humanity, you and I may not always walk in perfect victory over sin, self, and the devil, as Jesus did.

But... as God's children we are called to grow consistently under Christ's authority. There must be *"no end to the increase of His government"* in our daily lives (Isaiah. 9:7).

Jesus' victory over the forces of darkness cannot merely remain a theological or positional truth.

It must become real and practical.

It must become part of our daily sensory template or spiritual imprint.

We must actually walk in authority over sin and demonic opposition as our Christian character grows into the image of Christ.

And, when there is a discernable or potential conflict with demonic forces and opposition in around ourselves and the people we love, we have assured confidence that IN Christ – we have authority over those forces.

But when we willingly concede to Satan in our own lives, we will find it extremely difficult to take authority over his influence and opposition on someone else's life or circumstance.

This is both a spiritual and practical matter.

If we concede to something, we agree with it.

This agreement then manifests in our behavior, even if we use our "command and authority" words to declare God's truth.

Such distance between our words and lives will carry no weight against demonic forces and evil opposition.

It's important here to understand the distinction we are making.

I am not saying we have authority over demons in our own strength... even when we are good enough or disciplined enough.

Our authority does not come from a stockpile of our good works or strategic acts of self-discipline – our authority is not from our goodness if there is any.

Our authority comes from our submission to God's authority.

In fact, submission to God contradicts human pride, self-confidence, and religious works.

This is important to hear this morning...

Submission to God allows us to see our deep and desperate need for His grace.

But that kind of humble surrender to God must still happen and must happen in a practical and real way.

So here it is, if we do not push through to submit to God in our life-choices and behaviors, we actually are resisting His authority.

How then can we possess God's authority while also resisting it?

Without that submission we have no authority to confront demonic forces and evil opposition.

When we submit to God, we receive His authority – YES... which then enables us to release and share with others.

We need to see that our ability to resist Satan and his demonic forces is connected to our submission to God, and for good reason:

All spiritual authority comes from God.

We have no authority over Satan in and of ourselves.

And, in order to release God's authority, we must first submit to it.

Remember this...

Humble yourselves before God. Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you...

This is a great place to stop, reflect and pray...

By now most relevant Christians are discerning the demonic advancement and the evil agenda that has attached to our current circumstances and socio-political climate. It is polarizing – and truthfully that is how good and evil are supposed to be. We have spent way too much time filling in the gap with gray. It's Just Time to acknowledge and not ignore... Demonic forces and evil opposition need a nesting place – evil attaches itself to people - places - and things. There is a definite and aggressive movement against Christian ideology, Christian worship, and Christ followers within our great nation. This movement has attached itself to very high-profile cultural institutions popular mediums and global platforms...

Here is something we need to reconcile – those demonic forces and the evil opposition were aggressively active long before the COVID-19 and the *flatten the curve* protocols. What they have done is use the momentum of the pandemic. Christians are just finally waking up and do not like what they see.

There is also a strong and growing sense that it is just time to spiritually engage ourselves against a real and present darkness.

So, what does that look for me and everyone I love?

What is that going to look and feel like at my church and in my community of faith moving forward?

Go tell that fox... today and tomorrow I'm going to cast out demons and pray for the sick. PRAYER

Next week we can open the conversation about spiritual discernment and practical engagement of demonic forces.

5.10.2020

It's Just Time – Part IV

We cannot engage demonic forces and evil opposition until we have first discerned the nature and intention of what has come against us – what stands at our door.

Discernment is given by God, through His Holy Spirit. It is received through the insights of a mind that has been renewed by God's word. Discerning believers will seek to grow in their understanding and knowledge of God's truth – they will not hide or run from it.

Here is biblical definition for discernment we can use to keep our context and focus.

Biblical discernment is the ability to decide between truth and error, right and wrong, good and evil. It is the process of making careful yet decisive distinctions in our thinking and perceptions through our knowledge and relationship with truth. In other words, the ability to think and perceive with spiritual discernment is synonymous with an ability to think biblically when demonic forces and evil opposition are standing at our door.

According to the New Testament, spiritual and biblical discernment is not optional equipment for the believer - it is required – and for good reason.

1 John 4:1

Do not believe every spirit - but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Ephesians 5:6-14

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not become partners with them; ⁸ for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰ and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³ But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴ for anything that becomes visible IS light.

Obviously, discernment is for our good, for our spiritual health, for our protection, and for our ability to overcome all that is evil and seeks to overcome us.

But even more importantly, so that we can righteously engage with Christ in the distinction of what is good - and in exposing what is evil; to resist it, cast it out, to overcome the deception of what is demonic and evil.

To find movement forward in our understanding of biblical discernment, we start with Christ Jesus at the center, as the source, and the fullness of power; then, the Holy Spirit alive and active in us as the revealer of truth, the work of righteousness, and witness of fire. Because of our surrender and submission to these two, biblical

discernment then follows to become the lens, the sensor, the locator, the illuminator, the engagement qualifier. If we are locked in here - we can see, sense and know (discern) demonic forces and evil opposition with clarity even long before they arrive - because of the presence of Jesus - the Word of Truth, and the revealing work of the Holy Spirit in us.

Here is my best way of explaining...

Biblical discernment is like the High Def Magnification Rifle or Spotter Scopes used by long distance marksmen and snipers. The high-end scopes are fully capable of giving vision and precise detail for distances, elevation, and windage up to a mile and more. The scope can discern the target - identify what it is, and the conditions around it. What you need then is the right rifle, ammo, and of course the right marksman to engage the trigger.

To continue in that context...

Ephesians 6:10-12

Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹² For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

I said last week that demonic forces and evil opposition need a nest – a “Heartbreak Hotel” if you will... ironically, evil mirrors the goodness and mercy of God, in that it

attaches itself to people, places and beliefs (ideologies/values). Not in righteousness - but rather in rebellion; those people, places and beliefs that deny and reject truth, devise false narratives (lies), create confusion and communicate fear, initiate division and distraction.

True Biblical Discernment gives the follower of Jesus the ability to think clearly about all areas of life so that we are not compromised by those forces of evil influence and opposition. Without active biblical discernment in our life, we and those we love are vulnerable.

Big statement... so take a moment.

Here is our desired response. We resolve by faith, that this is not our path today! Yours or mine. We will NOT leave ourselves and those we love, vulnerable to demonic forces and evil opposition.

We are learning and acknowledging the power and authority we have over ALL demonic forces and opposition through our submission and surrender process to the righteousness and truth of God in Christ Jesus!

It is Just Time for Christians everywhere to use the gift and weapon of discernment that God in His wisdom has provided for us through His uncompromised and unchanging truth!

Ephesians 4:14

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. ¹³ This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever, they sound like the truth.

Discernment must continually cross the path of our journey of faith to keep us in conscious awareness and understanding that we are living in one of the most spiritually and biblically relevant times in all of history.

Can you sense that?

If so, then you can see that the need for the gospel of Jesus, and the message of hope and redemption is maximized by our times.

Let's shift our focus but not our context...

Sociologists and cultural experts have long maintained that each era has a unique spirit, a nature or climate that sets it apart from all other eras. More than a vibe – more like defining ideologies, philosophies and values.

For example, In Germany, during the take-over attempts of the Hitler's Third-Reich, such a spirit was known as Zeitgeist, from the German words Zeit; meaning – time, and Geist; meaning spirit.

It refers to the spirit of the times, or the spirit of the age. In other words, it is the attitude, intent or mood of a culture during a particular time period that gives rise to its unique values and beliefs. Some will insist that the true zeitgeist of any era cannot be known until it is over, and that only the artists, musicians or philosophers can discern it - so the writers can document it.

I disagree – biblical discernment is available to followers of Jesus and people of faith at all times and all places if they are spiritually and biblically present and emotionally available in that moment for God to speak and the Spirit to reveal.

John 16:13

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

1 Peter 5:6-11

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the

world. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

From the biblical perspective the zeitgeist is not an abstraction or speculation – it's real man!

Literal spirits—with power, demonic spirits—from their high places actively pushing a deceptive agenda by attaching themselves to reasonable but deceived people, places, and beliefs (ideologies and values).

There is an interesting way in which the zeitgeist of each era most often seems to find itself in opposition to the Christian or biblical worldview. There is a consistent theme of loathing and antagonism for Christ and all that He stands for.

This hatred is both implicit and explicit. This is what John meant when he warned about “the spirit of the antichrist, which . . . is already in the world” (1 John 4:3).

A demonic and evil zeitgeist sets itself against Christ. Everything Jesus taught and represented is its enemy. And this is how Christians (you and I) end up in the crossfire.

Daniel Kolenda writes, “demonic forces and evil opposition have no teeth. They only have a silver tongue. The weapon of evil and demonic force is deception. He works through the minds of men with the ideas of men to influence the world.”

Let's push that through a biblical grid of truth from...

1 Thessalonians 6:1-4

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ² For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.

It is the knowledge of the word of truth and seeking first the righteousness of God that allows us to discern what is evil and demonic - the more truth and knowledge of God's righteousness we know - the more discernment of evil opposition we have.

John 8:31-32

Jesus said, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

There are more than enough warnings for us to be spiritually sensitive and biblically aware of the times and seasons and of strategic demonic forces and opposition that currently exist and has attached to our world. The call to righteousness faith and biblical discernment is given to us in Christ to prevent full

exposure to a deception meltdown, dangerous or foolish vulnerability and a tragic outcome.

Biblical Discernment intersects the Christian life at every point. And God's Word provides us with a needed discernment for every issue and circumstance of life. Before engaging the enemy - this is where we must begin - Discern.

2 Peter 1:3-4

God has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

One of my favorites Aleksandr Solzhenitzin once said...

"The thin line between right and wrong – good and evil runs right through all of us."

Because this true, and because coming against evil for the follower of Jesus must start in submission and surrender to Him. We need to be precise – not sloppy. We need to be knowledgeable not ignorant. We need to be - biblical not secular. And, we need to be faithful, humble and responsible – to discern for not only ourselves, but for our families and to our communities. This is message is not about the

COVID. The COVID is real and it is a deal. But we ARE moving forward – that is what the Church of Jesus does, and we are His Church.

**MOVING FORWARD WHILE USING BEST PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING
RESTRICTIONS.**

We are moving forward to discern and engage demonic forces and evil opposition that have used the COVID-19 Virus to attach themselves to people, places, and beliefs that pose a threat even more lethal than our physical health and well-being. I'm praying for you and I know you are praying for me.

Pray

Do these FOUR THINGS with me this week...

Pray with Understanding – Intercede in the Spirit

Listen More Closely – Speak More Cautiously

Read Widely – Read Wisely

See Evil Driven from You – Give Witness to What You Have Seen

5.17.20

It's Just Time: Healing and Hope - For the Sick and Suffering

As Reunion continues to react and respond to the call of "It's Just Time", we see there is more to be done here than dragon-slaying and delivering the world from all evil. Because it is clearly in the job description, the efforts and the mission of righteous resistance does not end or go away until both us and this world passes away! And that truly is all good – so we will continue to fight the good fight of faith against demonic forces and evil opposition. But knowing that it's just time for even more...

It's also just time for **healing and hope** to become part of our ministry and mission - along with the manifestation and unleashing of God's power in us here on earth.

In Luke chapter 13, when the Pharisees told Jesus to leave Jerusalem because Herod was trying to kill him – He responded to the evil that had attached itself to the culture, religion, the oppression of all ages with three things:

Overcome Demonic Forces and all Evil with Good

Provide Healing and Hope

Complete the Mission I Have Been Given

Through the circumstances of our viral outbreak and national fear pandemic, we are now treading in deep political mistrust and suspicion, with an ever-widening economic volatility and disparity. Instead of uniting, far too many are dividing – and that is what demonic and evil opposition does when it has found a vehicle and platform to attach itself to.

Divides communities, destroys trust, demolishes all hope in humanity.

But healing that brings hope, and hope that brings healing restores it all.

Just after Easter we embraced the message and mission of Luke Chapter 13:31.

The second mission in that message Jesus gave to the Pharisee's was **"I am going to heal the sick."**

We clearly know that from John's Gospel, Jesus intended for His followers to follow His lead in this mission - and He gave us the command to do greater things in His name and by His authority. Listen to James the brother of Jesus talk of the expectation and provisions of healing and hope.

James 5:14-16

Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord.

¹⁵ Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

We begin with the biblical knowledge that healing and hope are a message and mission for us today – It's Just Time.

So, I would like for us to start this process with this biblical truth.

Healing that brings Hope – Hope that brings Healing

Jesus knew that – He was that.

He healed the sick so God the Father would be glorified and that hope would come to those who had suffered. However, in reality He was also the hope that brought the healing. And faith in Him gives access to both.

That God was redeeming and reconciling the world through Jesus is clear. But how?

The obvious answer of course was in His death and sacrifice for our sin. But let's listen to the Messianic prophet Isaiah...

Isaiah 53:25

My servant grew up in the Lord's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him. ³ He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. ⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! ⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole.

So, what did Jesus do while He was living that for two thousand years could make people pay attention to the death of just one man?

He healed to bring Hope and He gave Hope to bring healing.

Yes, He taught as no one else taught, He loved as no one else loved, he gave what no one else could give... Healing that brings Hope, and Hope that brings Healing.

Mark 5:21-43

Jesus got into the boat again and went back to the other side of the lake, where a large crowd gathered around him on the shore. ²² Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, ²³ pleading fervently with him. "My little daughter is dying," he said. "Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live."

²⁴ Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him. ²⁵ A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal from many doctors,

and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse. ²⁷ She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe. ²⁸ For she thought to herself, "If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed." ²⁹ Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition.

had ³⁰ Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my robe?" ³¹ His disciples said to him, "Look at this crowd pressing around you. How can you ask, 'Who touched me?' "

³² But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she done. ³⁴ And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over."

³⁵ While he was still speaking to her, messengers arrived from the home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. They told him, "Your daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now."

³⁶ But Jesus overheard them and said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just have faith."

³⁷ Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn't let anyone go with him except Peter, James, and John (the brother of James). ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw much commotion and weeping and wailing. ³⁹ He went inside and asked, "Why all this commotion and weeping? The child isn't dead; she's only asleep."

⁴⁰ The crowd laughed at him. But he made them all leave, and he took the girl's father and mother and his three disciples into the room where the girl was lying. ⁴¹ Holding her hand, he said to her, "Talitha koum," which means "Little girl, get up!" ⁴² And the girl, who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked around! They were overwhelmed and totally amazed. ⁴³ Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone

what had happened, and then he told them to give her something to eat.

Two miracles of active faith; one healing that brought hope, and the other, hope that brought healing.

Jesus loved and offered healing to people - people of all cultures, religions, oppression and age.

He loved and offered healing to people divided because of culture, religion, oppression and age...

He loved and offered healing to people that did not trust because of culture, religion, oppression and age.

He loved and offered healing to people who had become hopeless in their life circumstances. Christ's physical and psychological healing of Jews and Gentiles were symbolic of His love and spiritual healing for all.

Christ loves and offers healing of relationships between people of differing ideologies and political views — a healing that comes as people move forward to love and forgive each other, accepting one another in Christ's name.

Jesus loves and offers spiritual healing to all individuals, cultures, nations, and religions that will believe and honor Him.

Absolutely nothing has changed about that.

Jeremiah 29:11-13

For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² In those days when you pray, I will listen. ¹³ If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.

We can see the healing and hope He gives is for our future, but not exclusively for the future: Christ offers healing now today to individuals, communities, cities, nations - healing and transformation.

Psalm 46:1-3

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

The Church of Jesus Christ, can see some of that fallout of humanity before our very eyes. The threat and reality of sickness and real hopelessness attacks not only physiological well-being, but psychological and emotional health as well. Most mental health experts say that the symptoms of the two should not be treated separately, but as holistically as one. There is significant clinical evidence and supportive research that both physiological and psychological health has a direct impact one to the other. Jesus knew this – and that is in part why He healed the sick the way He did.

Healing brings Hope – Hope brings Healing

Yes, it was a sign to unbelievers. Yes, it was to glorify the Father. But also healing the sick both physiologically and psychologically was to restore health and hope to people of all culture and religion, oppression and age.

Jesus knew these combined sicknesses and afflictions that break people down... mind and body, and then ultimately the human spirit that reaches for God.

That is why Jesus comes to us with healing and hope and that is why we hear His response, **"I'm going to heal the sick."**

When the sick recover physiologically or psychologically and are made whole - there is hope.

There is hope not only for the one who was afflicted and troubled, but for everyone who is a witness or knowledgeable of that healing.

When Hope comes, faith is strengthened and the sick, diseased, and ill are healed and delivered.

It's Just Time for Reunion bring this kind of healing and hope to all that Jesus brings to us.

Until this moment, the circumstances and landscaping for bringing hope to our affluent American culture through physiological and psychological healing in Jesus name has truly been an interesting and challenging proposition. Here are a few talking points as we consider our Christ given mission to healing and hope.

One

Because of the continued advance of modern medicine and medical breakthroughs in digital transplant technology, internal medicine, surgical procedures and prosthetics, and advanced physical and psychiatric therapy we have had the privileged blessing of access and availability to the finest medical healing practices in the world. We can even have a facetime diagnosis or misdiagnosis with a full treatment plan with some physicians now.

Two

Even with skyrocketing insurance premiums, 5K deductibles, encrypted procedure coding, embedded billing classifications, and of course the pre-existing condition coverage plans creating medical money pits we that actually has become a greater challenge for most Americans than they're health. Many just opt to ignore treatment or disregard symptoms and health concerns simply because the process is just too difficult and overwhelming. In spite of all that frustration and concern,

mainstream America has had access to needed and preferred resources and so we just have not had a sense of hopelessness or the conscious need for believing in or practicing a prayer of faith. Generally speaking there just hasn't been enough interest, desperation or difficulty to seek God for a divine healing or supernatural intervention.

Three

We can access a prescription treatment protocol for almost any physical or mental illness – prescription drugs are the fuel for our nation's economic engine so they will always be available and accessible. **We have a plan** for managing our pain, our illness, our disease.

We also can self-research; create our own natural, organic or holistic approach to a healthy lifestyle and naturopathic remedies. Most of those are almost biblical anyway right? The point is that we can find almost endless options for sickness, disease, and illness.

Those are legitimate and logical talking points and they truly represent some of the greatest miracles, blessings and resources of our lifetime. They represent the

prosperity of our great nation. Hundreds of generations before us never had the availability of what I would describe as a miraculous reality.

But, it certainly appears that at least physiologically and psychologically this is no longer the case.

We have all witnessed a new reality – one without most of those miracles, blessings, and resources. We witnessed a new reality without live church, sports, or entertainment; no school, no work, no dining out, no catching a movie or hanging out at the local watering-hole; not being able to buy anti-bacterial hand sanitizer, toilet paper, napkins, paper-towels, beans, red-meat, baking flour, or even bleach.

We couldn't find masks, gloves, respirators, generators, and when we saw the empty shelves day after day some of us even panicked. The nation of freedom and boundless had no freedom and very limited access to those resources.

Yes, there is hope – and there is a hope that brings healing.

But, where do we go from here, and what does that look like when it's not certain what tomorrow holds?

Well, it's just time to really know for certain who holds tomorrow. Was that just a song or is that a reality?

I think most have seen enough now to know that we are going to need to put our hope and trust in someone or something other than ourselves, our celebrities, our politicians, and our social media platforms.

We have seen enough to know now that we are going to have to have faith and belief in the God who heals and brings hope to all when what you thought you had can't be had.

We have seen enough to know that it could all still be there, but we just can't have it.

Healing that Brings Hope - Hope that Brings Healing

Pray - Communion

5.24.20

It's Just Time – Part 6: Hope That Brings Us Healing

I finished last Sunday, with three talking points that I need to use to continue the conversation regarding “a healing that brings hope and a hope that brings healing.” This week I want us to narrow our conversation to just include the biblical truth of Hope that Brings us Healing.

One

Because of the continued advance of modern medicine and medical breakthroughs in digital transplant technology, internal medicine, surgical procedures and prosthetics, and advanced physical and psychiatric therapy we have had the privileged blessing of access and availability to the finest medical healing practices in the world.

Two

In spite of high premiums, high deductibles, encrypted coding, embedded billing classifications, and pre-existing conditions mainstream America has had access to our needed medical coverages hospitals and preferred resources. Even people who do not pay for insurance get insurance and get treated. So... we just do not have a sense of hopelessness or the conscious need for believing in or praying a prayer of faith to someone we cannot physically see receive treatment from.

Three

From the convenience of our homes through online access we can secure a prescription treatment protocol for almost any physical or mental illness. According

to data received from CDC and National Center for Health Statistics, Medscape.com reports that 44% of all Americans take at least 1 prescription medication, and 17% take 3 or more medications.

We have a plan for managing our pain, our illness, our disease. We also can self-research; create our own natural, organic or holistic approach to a healthy lifestyle and naturopathic remedies. The point is that we can find almost endless options for sickness, disease, and illness.

I'd like today begin with these verses of hope from Paul to Titus.

Titus 2:11-14

**For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people.
12 And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures.
We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and
devotion to God, 13 while we look forward with hope to that wonderful
day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be
revealed. 14 He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse
us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing
good deeds.**

In last week's process the question surfaced, "why not more miraculous healings, supernatural interventions, and churches who pray prayers of faith for those kinds of healings?"

Great question, and I believe I have an answer, and it is not simply that evil and sin are overtaking us, or that churches now pray those prayers behind the scenes away from the public eye, or even that we took God and prayer out of government and education, spiraling our nation into a moral decline and decadence to become a narcissistic, hedonistic generation without faith in God or value for Creation. Now, not that all of that is not true, but let's just say, "the genie is out of the bottle and is not going back in."

And besides, if that were solely the case, there would not be millions upon millions of people in the Middle East, China and India coming for the first time to their hope and faith in Christ. And believe me they are coming – under the threat of death, prison, loss of income, beatings, and disease. They have found hope in Christ and they are coming.

We need to understand that Biblical truth reveals something there – it reveals to us that when sin increases, grace increases even more.

Romans 5:20-21

God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. ²¹ So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So, let's be clear – the lack of miraculous and supernatural healing is not JUST a **rebellious sin thing**. I believe it is ALSO a **hope thing**.

In thirty-eight years of full-time ministry, I have witnessed a true spiritual cultural digression in our great nation's shifting appetite and tastes.

We have developed a huge appetite for getting what we want and have little to no taste for just simply receiving what we need.

In the miraculous reality and blessed affluence of our great nation settling for what we need is boring, irrelevant, and mocked by the modern secular ideology.

What was once good for us and what was once needed by us, no longer interests or stimulates our palate – in fact it's no longer on the menu.

As a result, the craving for what **we want** has become relentless, and even more so is the constant devising of **how** we are going to get **what we want** – because **what we want** now is somehow never enough.

It's a strange thing... but it is a thing.

2 Timothy 4:1-14

I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom: ² Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is

favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching.

³ For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear.

⁴ They will reject the truth and chase after myths.

That type of digression nearly makes conversations about supernatural healing and Jesus-like miracles almost unnecessary and unwanted in our day.

But this American Christian and cultural digression was not just the result of people turning their backs on God in rebellious sin.

It has also in been in large part the replacing or transferring of our hope regarding health, wealth and well-being almost exclusively into the resources and availability of things we believed to be the miraculous realities of a nation and a culture that was blessed and highly favored by God.

God has blessed us, and He has truly favored us. He did supply our every need according to His riches in glory. (Philippians 4:19)

The transfer of hope was confusing and difficult to recognize because the digression came while those blessings came. But was made possible as we all began to put our hope in the rich resources and capabilities our blessings instead of the Source or Giver of those blessings.

Focus was transferred to the blessing and the healing, and not the Hope that gives or brings it.

And with that comes a flawed sense of entitlement – and a complete transference of Hope.

This changed our appetite from believing in our blessed hope that meets our needs, to devising a man-made ideology that God is obligated to bless us with what we want. Hope went from being need-based to being solely based on what we want when we want it.

Real blessing now meant that God was just sitting by waiting to give you here and now your heart's every little desire. of your heart. Transferring our hope and trust in God to hoping and trusting in what we have and what was available – the Gift and not the Giver.

Romans 8:23-28

We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. ²⁴ We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. ²⁵ But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)

²⁶ And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us

with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. ²⁷ And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. ²⁸ And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

It seems a bitter irony, that the very God who gives us the blessing of a **miraculous reality** is also the God whose great expectation is that all our hope remains steadfast in Him. We sing it... "All our hope is in you Lord; You're the Light of the World"

Listen to Paul the Apostle, as he quotes Isaiah the Messianic Prophet to the persecuted Christians in Rome.

Romans 15:12-13

The heir to David's throne will come (Jesus), and he will rule over the Gentiles.

They will place their hope on him.

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Before going any further we should look at a couple of significant passages of biblical truth that in context, should lead us directly to placing our hope firmly in

who God is for us and not what God gives to us. Yet, that has not always been the case.

Warning: these verses have been used, misused and abused over the last forty years in American Christianity causing much of the deception and stumbling that has us right where we are today. Replacing and Transferring Hope.

Spiritually entitled, now firmly planted into the expectations of our miraculous realities and highly favored blessings. Sounding pretty convincing while demanding from God what we want from Him, and not trusting in God for what we need from Him.

Hope that brings us healing.

None of it seemed bad or wrong really.... Doesn't God love us like children? Doesn't He want to give us good things? Doesn't He say he will give me the desires of my heart?

Sure, He does, but not at the expense of transferring our hope from that which brings us healing.

Psalm 37:3-5

Trust in the Lord and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. ⁴Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. ⁵Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you.

John 14:11-13

Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do. ¹²“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.

¹³You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!

1 John 5:13-15

I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life. ¹⁴And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. ¹⁵And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.

Forty years ago, we were not as affluent, the blessings of our miraculous reality did not yet include digital imaging, laser technology, stem-cell research and advanced medical protocols – and we had less information and less access to the information that we did have.

Urgent Care was a 3rd generation Family Practice Doc; Naturopathic Medicine was just “old fashioned home remedies.”

In that limited environment our hope had not wholly transferred from being God-Blessed to becoming the Blessed-man. Our hope still reflected hope in the God we trusted.

At that point, we were still able to value and be grateful when our needs were being met. Commanding that God give us what we want wasn't even on our radar yet – but sadly, it was coming. There is a heavy price to pay for getting what we want, when we want it. The price is too often that we do – get what we want. And most often it isn't even close to what we needed. We need hope that brings healing.

Fast-forward, as an everyday reality we have the technology to make people hear and see better – we can transplant hearts, livers and kidneys, build new joints, ligaments and prosthetic limbs. That probably covers about two-thirds of the miracles of Jesus, right?

We can have church anywhere anytime now; virtual, replay, live stream, Facebook, YouTube, Google and a few others. Watching at from the comfort and safety of our home or work on our smart tv, phone, tablet, or computer has been a huge blessing and a lifeline to many.

It is one of those miraculous realities! But that is not where we put our hope.

Reunion family and friends please be careful and prayerful about **where** and **who** you put your hope – especially now.

Don't transfer your hope away from the biblical Jesus – it may feel good but it will not lead to healing.

Sometimes, getting what we want keeps us from getting what we need. Right now, in the moment we need hope – He is our hope that brings us healing.

We need this hope because we now all know, just how quickly our life of miraculous reality and blessing entitlement can disappear.

Let's Pray... for Hope that brings us healing.

(supplement notes)

The talking points from last week can direct us back to the origin of our transfer of hope and gives us our answer as to why the indifference and lack of interest and belief in supernatural healing and hope for physical and mental/emotional sickness and disease. Why the loss of Hope that brings us healing?

5.31.20

Its Just Time Part 7: Fulfillment and Finish - Calling and Mission

Our teaching template has been built the last six-weeks from the revealing response of Jesus to the Pharisees in Luke 13:32-33. From that response of Jesus, we embraced the threefold "It's Just Time" message.

One: Discernment and Engagement Over Demonic Forces and Evil Opposition

Two: Healing and Hope For Our Sick and Suffering

Three: Fulfillment and Finish of Our Calling and Mission

As we open our final conversation of the "It's Just Time" series, we look to the third and final message of Jesus to the Pharisees in Luke's Gospel.

Luke 13:33

...and the third day I finish my course.

These few words of Jesus were spoken to men He knew would be deeply connected to His destiny - yet did not control it. Because of the greed and willingness of the Pharisees to do anything for power, evil had attached itself to them and to their religion/politics.

With this verbal interaction, Jesus signals also that it was Just Time for the Fulfillment and Finish of His Calling and Mission.

Yes, on the ground, the ranking position and reign of power for some of these men gave the appearance that they were the ones calling the shots and controlling the narrative of Jesus - but in all reality they were not - God was. This was His plan not theirs. And, because they had opened the door to evil, they were no longer in control of the outcome or narrative for their own destiny.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

To prepare us for this morning, I have prayed each day of this week, this prayer that God downloaded into my spirit...

Father, may the community, family and friends of Reunion sense and know Your presence; may You be felt, and may they be seen by You; I pray Holy Spirit renew their minds so they may dream the dream again of serving You with an impassioned relentless heart; I believe Father, for a re-awakening to their spirit, for assimilation to You, for a resurgent hope that they might receive revelation and speak the life defining word of Your truth; I pray You captivate their desire and imagination, that they will lead and love all those whose destiny they are about to rewrite and for those lives to whom they will forever be united. I pray that their

calling and mission be fulfilled and finished in You. I pray this in the authority and power of Your Name Jesus - So Be It, Amen, So Be It.

I believe both this prayer and the words of truth from Jesus, are given in preparation for our very own Fulfillment and Finish of Calling and Mission. My hope is that you receive it as such as you respond to the Holy Spirit speaking to you.

This final statement of Jesus to the Pharisees in Luke, is a purposeful preview of God's plans for us. As Jesus did, we trust and surrender, fully embracing the Father's will as our own - to lead us to those "living-faith moments" where clarity, authority and an unflinching response are needed. As true believers in Christ Jesus, we share in and become one with His Word (fellowship and unity). In that place is where we too will find "our" call and mission (as we should).

John 17:4-8

I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. 5 Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began. 6 "I have revealed you to the ones you gave me from this world. They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you, 8 for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me.

John 17:14-18

I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 15 I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. 16 They do not belong to this world any more than I do. 17 Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. 18 Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.

Now, having known the love and mercy - the cost and discipleship shared in Christ Jesus; we also begin to recognize a certain sense of shared destiny and purpose as well.

In this fellowship and unity of calling and mission is the kind of fulfillment and finish we seek to this life. It comes full circle to us in these moments.

So that is a good place to start right there...

The clarity and authority of Jesus in His response to the Pharisees is not alarming when we understand it was part of the fulfillment of His love, trust and obedience to His Father (something we should definitely follow Him in).

Look and listen for the pattern of consistency Jesus established in this, so that at any given moment in any given circumstance He could speak with command authority and complete certainty when it was absolutely needed.

Even Jesus did not speak or act independently or simply on His own; but according to the words and will of the Father who sent Him. You will see this as a big point - don't overlook it. No matter how it sounds, Jesus did not go rogue...

John 8:14-18

These claims are valid even though I make them about myself. For I know where I came from and where I am going, but you don't know this about me. You judge me by human standards, but I do not judge anyone. And if I did, my judgment would be correct in every respect because I am not alone. The Father who sent me is with me. Your own law says that if two people agree about something, their witness is accepted as fact. I am one witness, and my Father who sent me is the other.

John 10:36-38

why do you call it blasphemy when I say, 'I am the Son of God'? After all, the Father set me apart and sent me into the world. 37 Don't believe me unless I carry out my Father's work. 38 But if I do his work, believe in the evidence of the miraculous works I have done, even if you don't believe me. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father.

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.

John 10:14-18

I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, 15 just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

17 The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. 18 No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.

John 6:38-40

For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. 39 And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. 40 For it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day.

John 14:19-21

Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. 20 When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me.

And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.

John 4:34

Then Jesus explained: My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work.

So, from a messaging perspective what did you hear Jesus saying about fulfillment and finish - calling and mission?

Let me share the "message capture" that I heard and put together in order to process the words of Jesus - the word of truth.

- This is Who Sent Me: The Father
- He is Why I'm Here: The Mission of the Father
- I Am Seeking and Saving the Lost: The Calling of the Father
- The Ideology and Religion of Men Are Not in Power Here: The Authority of the Father
- I Will Freely Give My Life - I Will Also Take it Back Again: The Fulfillment of the Father
- Here is What Keeps Me Going: The Mission of the Father
- When We are Done Here - This is Where I'm Going: The Finish of the Father
- When You are Done Here - You Can Join Me: The Promise of the Father

This biblical messaging clearly reveals to us the importance of understanding the fulfillment and finish the calling and mission of our own life, in our own time and place in history.

I know that sounds slightly OTT, and a bit of a dramatic over-reach - but it is not. We are His people, called by His name, filled with His Spirit, entrusted with His message and given a mission whose time for fulfillment and finish has come. We either believe that or we don't...

If we don't - then let it ride, see where it goes.

If we do - then let's get to it, it's time.

What is the Fulfillment and Finish of our Calling and Mission?

Jesus said it...

Discern and Engage - Demonic Forces and Evil Opposition

Healing and Hope - For the Sick, the Lost, and the Suffering

I want to quickly introduce into the mix the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel; a fairly well-known OC character with NC connections.

Ezekiel will help us to close the It's Just Time series next week. I will give you some historical context for Ezekiel next Sunday, but for now want to just quickly share his context and connection to the Fulfillment and Finish of our Calling and Mission message.

Ezekiel is known for several blockbuster prophecies to His people. The Divine Chariot, The Destruction and Rebuild, Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones, and the Third Temple.

The words and visions of Ezekiel have contributed to God's revelation to His people in much more than religious shaming and righteous rhetoric to his fellow-exiles. Our connection to Fulfillment and Fulfillment - Calling and Mission is summed up his two Ezekiel prophetic phrases:

God will Destroy, Devastate and Disperse

God will Rescue, Restore and Rebuild

To connect Ezekiel's OC prophecy to the NC moments, events, and times of men and nations today, we must wisely look beneath the hard surface to the underlying and unchanging principles of Who God Is.

Ezekiel honored and applied this knowledge of God to the tragic and chaotic situations of his own times, with His own people.

550 years after Ezekiel, Jesus revealed this same God to us in a New Covenant - by Fulfilling and Finishing His Calling and Mission in complete unity with God the Father..

2000 years after Jesus, do we know what both He and Ezekiel knew about God? If we do, then we know that It's Just Time for Fulfillment and Finish of Calling and Mission in our time.