

Riding Life with Christ

A Message from Pastor John, March 22, 2020

What started in China in January has turned into a worldwide pandemic that is directly affecting all of us today. This is restricting freedom, to do what we want, when we want, and where we want. There is also the added concern in the security of our own health and the health of those around us. We can find ourselves looking at each person that comes close to us as a possible carrier of the virus. For many our incomes have been affected or even eliminated. These items alone have created a significant trial that we are going through.

If this is not bad enough, you can add the already heated political environment we are in. There there are the "talking heads" we listen to on the radio or watch on TV who are short on facts and long on opinions to fill up air time. Finally, we are barraged with mountains of misinformation and scams placed in front of us courtesy of the internet and our smartphones. (Smart designates a highly technical piece of equipment and not the information broadcast through it.)

Who Do We Trust in this Unprecedented Situation?

If you trust in man, I liken it to being placed on a surfboard for the first time and attempting to ride out crashing thirty-foot waves to the safety of shore without drowning or being critically injured. I don't think anyone reading this would have the ability right now to accomplish this feat by themselves. We simply do not have the physical strength, knowledge of interpreting the waves and how they react and move, the wisdom of past experiences, and skill to ride and manage the board you are on to ride to a safe landing onshore. What do you do?

You would need a highly skilled rider you trust with your life to be with you, guiding, teaching, leading, and riding right with you on your board. Through this experience, imagine what you would be learning about everything, even about yourself. It could turn out to be one of the great learning experiences of your life.

I am sure you already picked up on the analogy I am making. The surfboard is your life, the waves are the turbulence and unprecedented things going on around you and the world today, the person on the surfboard is you and how to deal with all this, and finally, the skilled rider with you on the board is our Lord, Jesus Christ. Also, His Father owns the board and sent His Son to bring it to shore.

This present situation is a significant trial we are all facing. This trial can cause anxieties and even fears that can cause us to make poor decisions. We can be very impatient people and become angry, even blaming others. We can become judgmental against those that we feel are causing any frustration or hardship we are experiencing.

This present pandemic is challenging for all of us. We need, now more than ever, to place our trust in our Lord, not just in word but in deed, and allow His Spirit to guide us and submit our desires and will to His.

The following scriptures give timely Godly guidance to us today:

Read the first chapter of James first. This message will focus on verses 1 – 18.

Jas 1:1-18 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings. (2) My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, (3) knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. (4) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (5) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him

ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (6) But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. (7) For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; (8) he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- Wisdom and knowledge on what to do? What did you do the last time this happened? None of us have an answer as it is the first time for all of us. So who should you listen to regarding what to do? You need to begin with seeking the Lord and allowing His knowledge and wisdom to guide you.
 - Pro 3:5-8 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; (6) In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. (7) Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. (8) It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.
- How much of the present situation are you in control of other than your own action? At this point it is none, why would you and I put so much effort and worry into something we do not have effect on.
 - Isa 41:10 Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.
 - Psa 55:22 Cast your burden on the LORD, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.
 - Joh 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."
- Pray and Seek our Lord in Faith, knowing He hears our prayers.
 - Php 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; (7) and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

(9) Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, (10) but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. (11) For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits. (12) Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (13) Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. (14) But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. (15) Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (16) Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. (17) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (18) Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

- Sometimes you and I can get so concerned about our worldly treasures that we can be tempted to do things that are not what the Lord wills us to do. We must remember that all earthly gain in anything in our life will fade and eventually be gone. Only the actions done by the leading of His Holy Spirit by submitting our own will to His will follow us into eternal life, treasures in heaven. Righteous and holy actions are driven by knowing His Will by knowing what He has said and revealed in His Word and confirmed and directed in prayer.
 - Your income becomes strained but sees a brother or sister in need...what do you do?
 - Food becomes hard to get and you see someone in need with no food... what do you do?

- Fuel becomes scarce and a brother or sister needs a ride...what do you do?
- Mat 6:33-34 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (34) Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.
- Mat 19:21 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."
- Mat 6:19-20 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; (20) but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

My dear brothers and sisters, I know our physical surroundings and lives are significantly affected by the COVID-19 virus and the response to it. Keep your eyes and heart focused on God. If this situation last for more than a few weeks, which is very likely, exercise patience by trusting in God and allowing yourself to grow in Him to share the fruit of His Spirit in your life. To grow in Him and allow His Will to be shared with others through you.

- 2Th 1:4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,
- Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Closing

James 1: (2) My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, (3) knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. (4) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

May God Bless you and be safe through this trial,

Will Love for you all, John