



HOPE IN THE DARK

What's Next?

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SUNDAY MESSAGE QUESTIONS

The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This week we are taking a detour from our series called **Chasing the Wind** because of the virus that has become the subject of discussion around the world. It has swept in like a wind causing fear and anger among us. A crisis like this will cause us to decide how we are going to respond and how we are going to emerge. So what are we going to do? What are we as The Crossing going to do? What's next? The decision to stop live services for two weeks has not been made out of fear, but because of our responsibility to our community to safeguard our vulnerable neighbors.

SCRIPTURE¹

Ecclesiastes 7:3 (NLT) Sorrow is better than laughter, for sadness has a refining influence on us.

Ecclesiastes 7:3 (MSG) Crying is better than laughing. It blotches the face but it scours the heart. Sages invest themselves in hurt and grieving.

Exodus 14:10-13 They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today."

2 Timothy 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline.

Exodus 14:15 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on."

Psalms 46:10 Be still and know that I am God.

OBSERVATION

What's next? That's the same question the Israelites asked at a very challenging moment in their history. The Red Sea is ahead of them and the Egyptian army is behind them. Them being about 2 million people. Pharaoh released them after 400+ years of slavery and they were terrified and angry all at the same time. They had followed God's man, Moses, into this situation and look at how it was turning out?! In addition to terror and anger, another emotion came to them – sarcasm. Now, sometimes sarcasm is funny, especially to those of us who use it, but in this circumstance, there could be no humor.

Question: When have you been terrified or angry and made "great" decisions? (A little sarcasm) What is going on in your mind during those times that make it difficult to do so?

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

Moses tried to reassure the people that God was still in control and would not let them down even under dire circumstances. Moses told the Israelites to **Stand Firm!** and to step forward into the unknown because He would save them. And that is exactly how it happened.

APPLICATION

As we walk through today's crisis, we can empathize with the Israelites who were facing certain death -- but God. As we reflect on the many times God came through for Biblical men and women, we have to know He will not fail us. God is with us. God is for us. God will never let go of us. He has a track record of helping out His children when they are in a crisis. He will do that for us!

Question: Tell us of other times that God came through for faithful Biblical people.

Question: What are you fearing today? Are you willing to give it to God in faith?

It seemed shocking when our church revealed that we will be there in on-line mode only. Then as we watched stores empty of familiar items, schools close, and social distancing became the phrase of the week, fear, anger and sadness took over. Sadness is not something we should love, but it does bring perspective when we emerge from the season we're in. Some of us will be more grateful, and generous, and more connected. Others will be more bitter, greedy and isolated. What's next will be determined by our perspective and our faith in God. Remember, when we are afraid, we reveal what we really believe about Him.

Question: How are you coping with the virus crisis?

Question: How often are you leaving your home? For what purpose?

Question: In what ways is your perspective of life changing?

The emotion of anger is a very human response to crises. We choose words that heat things up. We use it as a weapon, and right now it might even seem that what is happening is unfair and cruel, but we can't let anger drive us and be the decision maker for us.

Question: If you are experiencing anger today, to whom is it directed? What can you do about it?

Amidst anger and fear, Moses stepped up and introduced the **Fear Not Mentality**. How often in Scripture did we hear "Fear Not", from God Himself, Jesus, Gabriel, and the Holy Spirit. God has a better plan. Secondly, we are going to **Stand Firm!** We are expecting God to help us and trust in Him no matter what winds are swirling around us. It is in circumstances such as these when the "rubber meets the road" -- when our faith either works for us or it doesn't.

So, what's next for us? Here at The Crossing we will continue to do what we have always done -- advance God's mission. We have been presented with the opportunity to reach out to our communities and care for people through phone calls, skyping, buying groceries, looking in on those who are most fragile in this time.

Question: What can you teach your children and grandchildren about living through a crisis such as ours?

Question: What can you do to reach out to neighbors and friends today?

Question: When have you reflected on times in your life when God has reached out and saved you from difficult situations? Were you encouraged then that He would do that again for you? If so, then this is the time!

If we focus on God, we will feel His breath as wind from His wings as He upholds us. After all, His presence is within us. Remembering Peter's response to Jesus' question, "Are you going to leave me too?" we must respond, "Lord, where would we go? You are the Christ, Son of the Living God."

PRAYER Heavenly Father, we are confused about what is happening in our world. We seem to have little control over this virus, but we know You haven't left us. We pray for all who are ill and the families of those who have died because of it. Keep us safe and give us courage to declare Your name as we face the unknown. In Jesus' name. Amen.