

Hey, Freshwater. I never imagined I'd be doing one of these kind of things for a Sunday morning service. What an unbelievable week we've had, from even last week. This thing with the coronavirus has escalated beyond, I think, what any of us really expected. So, you know, it's so funny. I was out to eat last night at Wayback Burger, and I came to my car and I had a ticket. I got a ticket in the parking lot at Wayback. I'm like, what is that? I went over to my windshield and pulled it off. As you can see, it's a ticket. It says this, "For cancelling church." My fine, I have to do 50,000 prayers. That's my ticket. It's by one of the kids in our church. Totally busting us for cancelling church. It was so funny to read that.

I think what we're looking at is something that's unprecedented. What do you do, when you are in moments like this? I think a lot of us, over the years, if you lived, you know, back in the day, very few of us maybe grew up in World War II, right? You had that event, and that was this -- it was a cultural, national experience, right? It changed everything. It was a generational event that formed and framed and directed a whole culture a different direction. And the more recent we get, I would imagine, more of us could talk about, "Yeah, I lived through that."

The Korean War for some of you, Vietnam War, assassination of President Kennedy, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Iranian Hostage Crisis, the Cold War. We had the Iraq War, right? The first one in the '90s. We had 9/11. We had ISIS, even more recently. We had the recession of '08.

Each one of these were generational events that changed the course of our nation.

Whatever you believe or don't believe about this, whatever you like or don't like, or don't agree with or agree with, what we're looking at is a generational event. There's no two ways about it. It is totally affecting our culture. It'll be something we talk about in 50 years. "I remember back when."

It's huge, right? We're seeing professional sports shut down. Planes flying from countries shut down. March Madness is canceled. College students don't go to classes, right? All kinds of things. We have our governor now restricting public gatherings. It is unprecedented. I think a lot of us would probably agree, as generational events go like this, this isn't -- we really could be thankful to God that this isn't war. This isn't famine. I think it could be so much more evil and destructive.

Yet, it still remains an unprecedented moment in our life and in our generation, and the question is, who are we in the middle of this? What do we do in the middle of this? Last week, I talked about, just at the beginning, kind of doing that reset. I want to come back real brief and talk about four things that maybe can help direct us in these days ahead.

The first one is, yes, we are God's child. We're Christians. And He is the One we look to. He is the One we hold on to. Psalm 121 says this, it says, "I lift my eyes up to the hills. Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth. He will not let your foot slip. He who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper. The Lord is the shade at your right hand. The sun will not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil, and He will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore."

What we do, who we are, starts with God. It's such an amazing, centering promise. That He says, "Look, I got you. I have you. I'm not going to let you slip and fall." I know out of last week, I said, "Hey, we shouldn't fear. Christians don't fear," but, man, it's hard. You get on the news, and you hear crisis and panic get whipped up. It's hard not to struggle with fear and anxiety. I don't want anybody to feel guilty, like, "Oh, man, I can't believe I'm doing this," or think they're less than.

It's a real thing, right? This is big. I think what God would have us do is even if that fear is coming back, and it's just a constant struggle, is to go to Him. Lift your eyes off of what's

going on in front of us. Look to Him. If some of you -- some of us maybe slip more into the cynicism, the impatience, the scorn, and that can kind of rub off because of how you're looking at all this. Maybe you're getting a bit jaded on this thing. I want to invite you to look to Him. Put your eyes on Him. Walk with Him. Let Him hold you through this.

Isaiah talks about how the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercy never comes to an end. It's new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. God has this steadfast love. He wants to hold us steady. He promises to, especially in times like this, and it is new every morning. not just for yesterday. It is going to tomorrow, exactly what we need. It's be new this? So I would encourage us, as Freshwater, who are we in the middle of We are people who look to God. We lift our eyes off of where we are, and we look to Him.

He's the Sabbath Lord, right? The One who created it and said, "Hey, I want you to stop and be with me. Set your eyes on me." Maybe today is a day that you just, with who you are, your family, you take a moment and just look to Him.

The second thing, you know, who are we in the middle of this, when you have something that's so unprecedented? We're called to be these people that are sober-minded, wise. Not with a spirit of fear, but He's given us this ability to look with wisdom and logic, sobriety at what's going on around us.

So as I mentioned in our letter, the goal in front of us -- if you want to look at this through that lens, of being sober-minded and wise, the goal in front of us is very clear: To join our nation, to love our neighbor, and help flatten the curve of infections, so that our health system can handle the infections as they roll out over a longer season of time, rather than just all at once. It is for a season. Just be sober-minded about it and go, "Okay, it's for a season."

I remember how bad it was after 9/11. The country shut down, and there was this sense, like, are we ever going to get back to normal? By God's grace, we eventually did. I think that's part of this. It's just to keep the sobriety going of it's for a season. It's not easy. It's a storm. I get all that. But let's be wise in this, and let's join in on this, that path of wisdom.

I know the CDC and the WHO have put out all kinds of precautions. How do we stay clean and don't have, you know -- get the infections or whatever? I'm not going to go into all those because it's out there. I would encourage you just to look at those. That's what wisdom is. Take the steps you need to to be wise. Not only just to protect yourself but to protect those who you love.

A third thing, in this time, so let's say it's, you know, three weeks. That's kind of what our governor has put out there. There's no assurance it'll end in three weeks, but it seems like that's the goal at this point. So who are we in this season of limbo, where we don't know all that's happening, and the verdict happen with is still out on what's going to all this?

Let me ask you a question, do you to grow in your connection with and have a plan God? With the services canceled, and all the relational ministries that we have going on here canceled over these next few weeks, do you have a plan? This isn't a time for us to just take a break from our connection to God. It's going to be a brief season of quiet. I mean, think about it. No sports, no events, school is shut down, most everything is shut down. Our nation is -- has kind of cleared the deck, as it were, of activities. Our governor is telling us to stay home.

You know, it's kind of funny. I was thinking, we always talk about how busy we are, how busy we are. Now, everything is cleared. What are we going to do with this time? And as soon as I

say that, I know we've got people that are, like, "Scott, you have no idea. I've got my kids home now. I'm more busy than ever. I still have to work, and I have them. What do I do?"

I realize that, too. So my question is, what does it look like for us to go forward and not lose traction in our walk with God and our connection to Him, but actually to go forward spiritually? So on the other side of this, when we come out, we're actually healthy spiritually. Like, this is called, like, self-leadership. What are the steps that you're going to take to make sure that you're doing well spiritually? I'd encourage you to think through those things, and maybe even talk about it.

Talk about it with your family, "What are we going to do? How are we going to move forward? How are we going to make sure we're still staying connected with God?"

My last thought for this morning is that, man, when crisis like this comes, we have to think beyond ourselves. Christ would have us look around and see who is in need. Matthew 25, he tells this famous story of the sheep and the goats, and how people are separated into the sheep and the goats. The goats -- everybody on both sides, either sheep or goats, encounters people that are sick, encounters people that don't have homes, encounter people that have needs, whatever the course may be, wounded, I don't know.

The goats were the people that completely missed it all. Didn't know. The sheep were the people that actually saw the people and moved towards them. Jesus said, "In as much as you have done for the least of these, you've done for me." So what does it look like for you and I to notice who is around? To actually start to look and to think through, "Well, wait a minute. We do have parents that are going to have kids home from school and, yet, the parents work. That's got to be difficult. What can I do? How can I help?"

In as much as you do it for the least of these, you do it for Christ. We have older people in our church who are basically on lockdown to stay healthy. Some of them don't even know how to get on the internet to listen to this message. What are we going to do? Are there people you know that would say, "Yeah, they can't get out. They're in that range, 65, 70, and up, that can't be outside. How can I take care of them?"

You might have some people that get laid off. Our church might have people that get laid off and take that financial hit. That's huge. Like, that's not easy at all. What does it look like? Acts talks about how the church rallied around those who were getting hit financially and helping them out. There's going to be people we know that are consumed with fear. Maybe part of Freshwater family, maybe not. What does it look like to just sit and listen and care?

I think the important thing is that, as we go through this, we're listening to the Holy Spirit and saying, "Send me." Who is out there that they need a touch from you, they need your love, they need care? Is it somebody maybe in your community group? Someone that you sit with in your hood? I don't know. Someone you're in a Bible study with?

You know, we talk a lot about who God is calling us towards and sending us to that don't even believe in Him. What does it look like to bring the Gospel into this? And please don't -- I mean, unless God really makes this clear, don't -- just don't start the conversation with, "If you contracted the coronavirus and died, would you go to heaven?" Maybe start softer than that. Maybe pursue their heart. How are they doing? How are they doing emotionally, physically, job-wise? Care for them. Listen to the Spirit and what's the Spirit saying. How do you bring Jesus in? He is the cure, right? I mean, we're looking for the cure. We're looking for the anecdote. He is the cure. That could be far more effective.

People are looking for a cure from anxiety, from fear, from suffering, from sickness. Christ could be that cure. And this could be -- you want to talk about an unprecedented moment, this could be a moment of unprecedented openness for people to Christ.

Some of you, I don't know if -- if you're watching this video and you've made it all the way through but you're not sure what you believe about God, I mean, good for you, you made it through. But Christ wants to give you something that you don't have. It's amazing comfort. It's amazing peace. He gives you something that will put your feet on solid ground, no matter what comes. The storms that come. The winds that blow, of sickness and disease. And even more than that, the things in our life that accrue over time, the sin that piles up, the decisions that we can't seem to ever shake and ever get rid of the guilt.

Christ comes along, and He's the One. He's the only One who can come into our life, through his death on the cross and resurrection from the grave, and save us, from the guilt, the judgment, and also from what we're seeing in this culture. You can have that hope. You can experience that cure forever. Be held by Him. He says simply, "Believe in your heart that I am truly God, the Savior of this world." Confess that belief out loud. Tell someone. And I'm coming. I'll save ya. I'll be there. I'll live within you. Christ can -- as we just close, I want you to think about this. What does it look like, even today, for us to lift our eyes up to Him, the One that will hold us through this entire storm no matter how hard it blows, and hold others? Send us to bring this message and to care for those. That He can be the One to trust in, to hold on to through all of this. Let's lift our eyes up to Him. He'll take care of us. God bless you all.