

Hey, Freshwater. We're into the second Sunday here with coronavirus. And so as a staff, we're thinking, what do we do? Do we go back to Ezekiel? It's not going to work. So we're going to kind of go forward with this word "unprecedented," and just kind of talk about different ways, different things that are unprecedented in our time, and what our response should be in the middle of something like this.

So it's unprecedented. You're sitting at home watching this thing with your family, and it's just different. Church at home, second week of this. What I want to talk about is, what does the Bible say in moments like this? We talk about this as a church family, as Christians, that we go to the Word when it is times like this, to see what God says to us.

I want to tell a story of someone in the Word, in the Bible. There's all kinds of stories of events that were just unprecedented and how they handled them. One of the stories I want to look at today is the story of David. It starts, actually, with Saul. Saul is the very first king of Israel, and he just doesn't do a good job at it. He just could not follow God in the middle of this thing. Just got derailed all the time. God, after years and years and years of this, is finally like, "I'm done," and says, "That's it."

Unbeknownst to Saul, sends Samuel, the prophet, to go and anoint a new king. Samuel shows up at this guy, Jesse's, house. Jesse has a lot of sons. Samuel says, "Bring all your sons together. Let's line them up. I'm going to pray over one. I'm going to anoint one."

Doesn't tell them what he is doing. It is kind of God and Samuel doing this thing covertly. Samuel is like, "Is this the one?"

"No."
"Is this the one?"

Goes through seven sons, and it's not the one. Samuel looks over at Jesse and goes, like, "Dude, you got another son?"

Jesse is like, "Yeah."

Samuel says, "Go get him."

Doesn't let anybody sit down, "We'll wait."

Awkward moment. Runs out to the field to get David, who is watching the sheep. David comes back, and Samuel says, "Is this the one, God?"

God says, "Yes."

So he blesses him, anoints him. In that moment, David, really, is chosen and the mantle of the kingdom falls to David. The Scripture says the Holy Spirit came on David in that moment. Then what starts to happen is really cool. David gets pulled into the court with Saul. You have this story of David and Goliath.

Saul is sitting there as king, and he is the biggest one in the kingdom, the tallest one in the kingdom. He is the king of the kingdom, and he won't go fight Goliath, neither will the army. David marches past all of them, indignant, irate that somebody like this Philistine will insult the God of Israel. So he goes out there, and as the story goes, he kills him.

Everybody loves David. Hero, yay. Saul, not so much. David, actually, because he kills Goliath, wins the hand of Michal, Saul's daughter. So he and Michal become a thing, get married. Then, as the passages go on, David also becomes best friends with Jonathan, Saul's son. David is hanging out with the royals, like, he's in. This is great. When you talk about a great plan, this is an unbelievable plan. God is just working this whole thing out.

Then the problem is, Saul started to get jealous. Started to get jealous because everybody is praising David, and David is doing all kinds of things that are so exciting. Whatever, right? Then, pretty soon, as you read through 1 Samuel, you get to later chapters, Chapter 18, and all of a sudden, Saul starts to realize God's with David. He does the math, because everything seems to go David's way and not Saul's way. That's at least the way Saul defined it, his way, right?

What's interesting is it changes, because he knows that God is with David. And it says that Saul now wasn't just jealous, he was afraid of David, because he knew God was with him. That's where it went really bad. Like, the plans just started falling apart at that point. Saul tries to kill him with his own spear. He sends a bounty out on David's head. There are multiple plots after plots of Saul trying to kill David.

Basically, amasses the army and sends them to find David. Jonathan, Saul's son, is the one who says, "David, you've got to get out of here." He says, "My dad is going to kill you."

David flees the country by himself, ends up in enemy territory, almost gets discovered. Actually gets found out. They realize David is there in this city, so David has to act insane to escape being killed. He's acting — he really is acting insane, drooling and just going crazy. Ends up, the king is like, "Get him out of here," so David crawls into a cave.

The cave is just what it is, nothing fancy. And as you look back on this, and you think about plans, as stories go of shredded, messed up, torn-up plans, this is probably one of the best ones ever. Anointed by God to be king of Israel and, now, this anointed king of Israel is in a cave.

I want you to think about something. When 2019 ended and 2020 began, what were your resolutions? What were your plans? Like, think about what you thought 2020 would be and all the plans that you had.

Spring break plans? Maybe eighth graders who are watching, you were going to go to D.C. this year. How about seniors? You're just checking off every last thing, "I am out of here. That's my plan," right?

Even all the cool things and the fun things of your senior year towards the end, gone. College students, some of you are close to graduation, and now what does that look like? You're home. You're home with Mom and Dad, like, ah.

Other plans, parents' plans, like, kids were supposed to be in school, not this. Now how do I adjust to this? Great, kids are home, but what do I do? How do we adjust? There's all kinds of plans. We all are sitting here, and trust me, I didn't have any plans — there was no plans to have me be speaking like this to a camera. It wasn't even on my radar at the end of 2019/ beginning of 2020. All our plans are destroyed.

Some of this is scary. Some of this is really scary, when you start to see where unemployment is going on. When you start to see what's happening with health and the coronavirus and how it's spreading. It's not easy.

What I want to do is pick up the story where David is in the cave. I'll invite you to turn to Psalm 57. Psalm 57. I want to ask the question, what do we do when we're in the cave? When it's just — everything is in pieces around us, and we're trying to figure out what's next? This is what David wrote when he was in the cave.

Says in Psalm 57 — we'll just read the first three verses. It says, "Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge. In the shadow of your wings I'll take refuge until the storms of destruction pass by. I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me.

He will send from heaven and save me. He will put to shame him who tramples on me."

Then it's this Hebrew word, Selah; rest, pause, stop, consider what I've just written.

These first three verses are raw, right? Just totally raw. God, be merciful.

God, I need you. God, shelter me in the storm. It's this crying out. And when you think about a cave, it's only Him. I mean, there's no plan, right? There's no, oh, he's got a store of food there. He's got light there. He doesn't have anything. It's rocks and him, damp cave.

And what he does is he just pours out in the beginning and says, "O God, O God."

I don't know whether it's that moaning, like, "O God, be merciful. O God, be merciful. I take refuge in you."

I think there's something to when we're in the cave, and when the plans are shredded, there is something about just being able to come to God and say, "O Lord. O Lord, I need you. In the shadow of your wings, I'll take refuge."

Our family, we've raised chicks from eggs. We've bought little chicks. I don't know what teaches a chick to run for shelter when they're threatened, but they just do. Even without a mom. Like, we'll buy chicks, you know, from the store or whatever, and I'll just walk into the room, and they all go to one side. They run. They're looking for shelter. The mother is that shelter. When you see chicks with a hen, they run right to the hen. It's just instinctual.

There's something inside of us, when we have no plan, when it's torn to pieces,

the only thing we do is, "O God." It's, "O God." It's like our soul cry, "O God."

It's really simple. Turn to Him. Turn to Him. Simple words, save me, right?

Protect me. Fulfill your purpose for me. That's the plan. When you're in the cave, what kind of plan do you get? Well, that's the plan. That's where it starts, that soul cry.

As the Psalm goes on, he moves on past that moment of stopping, that Selah, that rest. He says this, "God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness. My soul is in the midst of lions. I lie down amid fiery beasts. The children of man whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let your glory be over all the earth. They set a net for my steps. My soul was bowed down. They dug a pit in my way, but they have fallen into it themselves. Selah. Stop."

I think part of the plan in the cave is just being transparent. He just — he lays it out there, the attacks, the fear, the betrayal. Everything that was attacking his soul, he didn't hold back. He

didn't whitewash it, like, "Oh, if you're a really good follower of God, you downplay how bad it is. It isn't that bad. It isn't that bad. It could be worse."

No, it's a bad day. This is like a really bad day. Unprecedented. Like, everything shredded. And there's nothing about that that lacks faith, that is wrong. There's something in this that is part of the plan. If we can't be transparent with God, what are we doing?

And I think part of this is he's still tethered to God. There isn't this rage against God. Even in the middle of it, he just says this, "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let your glory be over all the earth. You and me, I'm all about you. I'm all about you, but this is what's going on. It's so hard."

I think part of just being in a place like this that's so unprecedented is being able to just tell God, "God, this is what's going on."

We've had some people already who have lost their jobs at our church. You know, we're calling people and just checking in. I hear stories of how the church is calling people, but this is hard. This is tough. And part of this whole moment right now, as it stretches out here in the weeks to come, is just being honest with God and saying, "God, this is so hard. This is so hard."

There's nothing wrong with that. Yet we do it tethered to Him, tied to Him.

The final movement of the Psalms is these last verses, 7 to 11. He says, "My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast. I will sing and make melody. Awake, my glory. Awake, O harp and lyre. I will awake the dawn. I'll give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples. I will sing praises to you among the nations. For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let your glory be over all the earth."

Did you think that's the way the Psalm was going to end? David, by himself, alone, this is hard. Like, you think we have it hard. This is hard. Like, this is hard. That's really hard, when you're Israel's most wanted, on the run. What does he do?

He praises. Like, it's unprecedented praise. Just when you think he might turn his back on God, go silent on God, whatever on God, he actually stops and he praises God. He praises Him.

Folks, 2020, how it started, that's gone. We're in a whole new season. Our whole world is in a whole new season. It's unprecedented. But I think, maybe, the first plan that we could put in place in these days ahead is this, praise Him. Just praise Him.

Praise the Lord.

He says this, he's like, "I will awake the dawn." He says, "Awake my glory." He's like, "What can I give God? It's got to wake up. I've got to get him something, right? I've got to give Him glory. Awake, O harp and lyre. I will awake the dawn. Crank it up."

I mean, you may have teenagers and kids sleeping, so you may not want to wake them up, but crank it up, right? Praise Him. It's what we were created to do. We were created to praise the Lord, to praise Him. I love how he says this, he says, "Your steadfast love is great to the heavens."

It's like, it's to the moon and back. It's awesome. It's to the clouds.

We talk about at our church, and what Christ taught us, is our mission is what, to bring glory to God by connecting to Him, by being connected to Him, by worshipping Him, by

loving Him. That is our mission, right? Connected to Him, connected to the church, and connected to his mission. This first one, that's where the plan starts, is with God. Bringing glory to Him, praising Him.

What happens in the middle of our praise is another Psalm earlier talks about that God actually lives in our praises. He

shows up. What starts to happen is His presence comes, and it's the Lord and us in the cave, together. Our souls get hidden in Him. He pulls us into refuge. And we know we're going to be okay. It's Him. He's right there. He's in us.

So if you're wondering what you should do next, praise Him. Praise Him.

That's — that's where the plan starts. Praise Him. David was most likely a late teenager/early 20-something at this point when he's in the cave. Like, he knows what this is at a young age. Some of you guys are going through something, and you're kind of scratching your heads like, what does this all mean? You can praise Him.

Some of you have been around, and you've seen some of these things, and maybe not this exact thing, been through it, but you know

what praise does. Praise Him. Bring other people into it.

Maybe you need to write a Psalm, in

the cave in Wadsworth. I mean, this is the Cave of Adullam. Maybe write a song. Maybe it's just being authentic and transparent with God, and sending it with, what can I praise Him with? How can I praise Him? I'm telling you, it is the best plan ever. It's where all plans start, when everything is shredded. What do you do first when you have your plans in pieces before you? It's Him. Praise Him, and He shows up.

Let me just pray this over you as you're there. O Lord, would you come, and

would you show up in each of these homes, and would you bring refuge and would you bring love, that steadfast love. Would you bring encouragement. And hold your people, Jesus. Hold your people. Amen.

God bless you all.