

PASTOR SCOTT: Hey, Freshwater. Good morning to you all. I'm sure you're sitting there wondering what's up with the suit coat. It's Palm Sunday. So I don't know if you guys are like me, but you're going through this past week going, what day is it? Like, is this a Thursday, Tuesday? I have no idea. If you're losing track of time, like I am, I feel your pain. So know this is most assuredly Palm Sunday, so, hey, we're going to celebrate the entry of Christ into Jerusalem, the triumphal entry.

If you're new to our church, we're saying, you're jumping into the podcast stream, I don't know what this is called, Facebook something or other, but we're glad you're here. If you want to text "welcome" to the number that appears on the screen, do it. Right now, I've got to tell you, that just feels so like a televangelist. That's -- yeah. So text it. We'd love to know if you want to be a part of Freshwater.

Also, good news, we're going to do a drive-in service. Stop laughing. We're going to do a drive-in service on Easter Sunday. We're trying to put this together, but it looks like we'll be able to broadcast. Anyway, I'm going to hand this off to Jake. Jake, take it away.

(Worship - "Raise a Hallelujah.")

PASTOR SCOTT: Hey, Freshwater. Good to see you guys. This morning, we've got Brian and Nettie Hogan here. Everybody say hi to Brian and Nettie.

NETTIE: Hi, Freshwater.

PASTOR SCOTT: Brian and Nettie.

BRIAN: Hi, guys. Miss you guys.

PASTOR SCOTT: Some of you may not know this, but Brian is the Chairman of our Elder Board here as we head into 2020. I guess we're now into April, but he's the Chairman of the Board. And we brought you guys both in because you, obviously, are going through something right now. Why don't you just share with us what's happened here in the last couple weeks.

BRIAN: Yeah. Well, actually, I thought, first of all, I want to say thanks for your leadership in this. It's been cool to see you guys -- and Sean and Jake are here, too -- it's been awesome to see you guys leading in this, and just the gifting that God has in your lives and what you're doing. It's really awesome.

For us, yeah, it's been an interesting time over the last couple weeks. On March 20th, I was laid off from my job. I'd worked there for 20 years, which was, you know, kind of a surprise for me. We had began talking about our response to the coronavirus, what we were going to be doing, and we sort of discussed some of the financials of the business, but I didn't really see it coming for me.

Last Friday, I was laid off; it was a big surprise for me. It's different now. I've worked through the initial part of it. But, yeah, that's where we've been for the last two weeks now. We've been sort of processing through the new normal for us.

PASTOR SCOTT: Yeah, what's that been like? I mean, you have the -- it comes, and then you've got some days after. What is it -- how are you guys feeling?

NETTIE: It's interesting. It's something that I thought would never be part of our story. Now to be part of our story -- I just thought, this is a sure, secure job. He's going to be there until the end. This is going to be forever. When he called me and said he was laid off, all these

emotions, just a gamut of emotions, of fear, of shock, of how can this happen to us, and how can this happen now, and what are we going to do? Then later thinking, what is God up to? Does he have something? What does he have going on here? It wasn't a surprise. God wasn't like, "Oh, shoot," or "Oops" or "I didn't see that one coming."

Knowing God already knows this was going to happen, He already knew, and that He has something up his sleeve, something waiting for us, was an encouragement later on.

BRIAN: Yeah. I remember my response while I was still at the office was a little bit of shock, but I was still in office mode. I was still just doing my thing. I'm a processor, like, I was making sure I had everything in order, making sure I finished these things out, got this taken care of. I remember the moment I walked in the door at home and I saw Nettie, I absolutely lost it. You know, it was just -- I'm not a person who shows emotion much, and I was just completely overcome. You know, it's all of the thoughts that you would think go through your mind, like, "How am I going to pay my mortgage? Am I going to lose my house? How am I going to feed my kids?"

All those things come rushing at you in a moment, and it was all as soon as I saw my wife. I was okay. I was able to talk to the kids. For three days, every time I saw her, emotionally, I couldn't hold it together. I just thought, what in the world is wrong with me? I've lost control of my emotions which, you know, for me --

NETTIE: Doesn't happen.

BRIAN: It doesn't happen, right. So it was a crazy roller coaster. There'd be times I felt fine, and everything was okay, and other times where I couldn't even stop just the outpouring of -- I mean, I was crying.

SCOTT: Sorrow.

BRIAN: Yeah.

PASTOR SCOTT: Sorrow.

NETTIE: Mourning a loss.

BRIAN: That's a lot of what it was. There was a time -- I expressed this to Nettie one time -- I had injuries in my knees and ankles, and I had to stop playing basketball just with some of the guys been playing with. I grieved it as if I actually felt a loss. This is the same thing; I think I was feeling. I know my identity is not job. I know that's not who I am. But when you work there for 20 years, like, you take on -- it becomes part of you, in a sense. I think I was grieving sort of the loss of a piece of who I was.

PASTOR SCOTT: Sure.

BRIAN: Over the last weeks, I've had to remind myself who I am. I'm not defined by the occupation that I happen to perform. So, yeah, it's been a lot better the last week or so. You know, there's been so many people that have just taken the chance to call and just sort of process things with me and ask how I'm doing.

Like, there's a lot of blessings in the middle of all this that you don't even really realize. We've realized just how meaningful the relationships are we have with people, a lot of people in this church. You begin to realize what's important. We're going to be fine to get by.

PASTOR SCOTT: Yeah.

BRIAN: God's in control. Like she said, God knew this was coming. This wasn't a surprise to him.

PASTOR SCOTT: You guys referenced it a couple times, and we've obviously talked, so how, in terms of God's Word -- you've been praying and talking with Christ and reading His Word. What has helped you process through this, the feelings, the loss, the whatever, the shock? What parts of His Word? What are you guys hearing from Him?

NETTIE: Well, there's one thing from Job. Let me read it so I get it right.

Job 1:21, "And he said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

I appreciate just the facts of the matter, like God gives, God takes away, but he is still to be praised. So I just -- for me, that's just a reminder of who He is, who we are, that He still has it all ordered, that His -- nothing about God has changed. Nothing about his character has altered. He's still loving. He is unchanging. He is still faithful. He is still present. He still provides. And He still cares. He sees the details. He sees the tears in our pillow. He sees, you know, joy in moments. And He is still God. So, yeah, that's just been an encouragement.

I told Brian that so many things I feel like God has drawn my attention to over the past few days and weeks. Just not even specific things. So if I'm reading in Joshua right now, just how God cares for his people, how he leads them, how -- yeah. I just feel like there's been a lot of encouragement.

Family has been really encouraging to us. Like Brian said, friends have been really encouraging, just with the verse they'll send or checking on us. Yeah, always something good.

BRIAN: Yeah. What's -- I think I told you this earlier. Like, one thing I've really seen in the middle of all of this is my life is a lot slower now. I have so much more brain space than I did before. Where, in the past, maybe you'd read something, and it might impact you in the moment, but then the weight of the world comes on you, and you're thinking, "Oh, I have to do all these things, these 500 tasks to get done," and you don't really have time to think through, you know, some piece of truth that maybe God spoke to you that morning.

A couple things that just stuck out to me, like, you know, God speaks to me in interesting ways. I think He's got a way of speaking to each of his children, just the same way I have a way that I talk to my daughter or talk to my son. God speaks to his kids that same way. And I think there's a learning of how God speaks to us, and the way God happens to speak to me is through pieces of Scripture. So multiple times over the last few days, like, some things just come to my mind, and a lot of times what ends up happening I start to think, "Wait, is that a song or a piece of Scripture?" Most times, it's a song that actually is also a piece of scripture. You know, just things that came up. There was this verse that came out of Lamentations, you know, about God's mercies being new. "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases," was the piece that came to me.

The other day, I was thinking, and the thought came to me about something Jesus said on the cross. He said, "Into your hands I commit my spirit." I was like, I know that's somewhere in the Old Testament. I looked it up. It's in Psalm 31. It's just an amazing story of God's faithfulness to David when he is being pursued by his own son to kill him.

In the middle of it all, there's this one little piece. I actually want to share that. When I read this, I almost lost it. It just helped me understand, God knows what we face. Like, people over the years have experienced these kinds of things before. In this chapter where it talks about, "Into your hands I commit my spirit," David is saying that to God. There's this part that says, "Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I'm in distress. My eye is wasted from grief, and my soul and my body also. For my life is spent with sorrow and my years with sighing. My strength fails."

What's funny is I noticed it about myself, and Nettie noticed, she's like, "Why are you sighing all the time?" I come up from searching on the computer for a job. She'd be like, "Are you sighing?"

It was just a confirmation for me that God knows the feelings we have. God knows where we are. This is not a surprise to Him. He can be trusted in the middle of it. You know, I love that I have Scripture to go to. I don't know what I would do without having some sort of a foundation to stand on. I probably wouldn't be where I am today. I certainly wouldn't be here talking about it.

You know, God has given me the opportunity to share with another person who has gone through the same situation with me. He's going through it this week, and I went through it two weeks ago. It gave me a chance simply so say, "You're going to be okay. Here's what you're going to experience, but you're going to be okay."

It's just how He works. It's peculiar. I never would have chosen this road to go down, or this path, but in the middle of it, God is still right there with us.

PASTOR SCOTT: I wonder, we didn't plan this, but as we just even turn to the Word here, and it's Palm Sunday, and hear a message, before we do that, can, you know, as Chairman of the Board, like, spiritual leader in our church, could you just pray for people as we close, and with this in mind and what people are going through? Yeah, just, I think this time, if you could close us in prayer, that's probably the best thing, and lead us into the Word here. Is that cool?

BRIAN: Absolutely. Lord, we trust You. We know that You are here with us. There's no question in our minds that You love us. You've displayed that for us on the cross. You laid down Your life for us. Lord, we're into a season when we celebrate Your sacrifice for us. Lord, You've given us so much. I love the verse in Isaiah that says, "You keep in perfect peace those whose thoughts are fixed on You because they trust in You."

Lord, I pray that over our church. I pray that we would be people that in all the uncertainties and, Lord, I just recognize that part of what we're facing is a small thing compared to what others are facing or will face around the world over the next few weeks and months. I just pray that we would be a church, Lord, that has perfect peace because our minds are fixed on You and we trust in You fully. I pray that over us, God. I pray that blessing from You to us.

And I just pray, Lord, that we would be people that would be able to say even as You said, "Into your hands I commit my spirit," that we trust you fully for whatever the future holds.

We will walk with You in faith, believing that You are faithful to Your Word, and that You are with us. Thank you for being that kind of God who is in the middle of it with us.

Lord, you came into our world, and you made the difference in our lives. I just pray, Lord, that each of us would experience Your closeness and Your presence in these days.

In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

PASTOR SCOTT: Thanks, man. After hearing Brian and Nettie's story, I'm sure many of you are wondering, how can you help the families that may have needs that arise? We have a benevolence ministry here. If you want to give towards that, you know, write your check or, you know, whatever you're doing, automatic payment, getting online on our web site or an app, and just make it to Freshwater Community Church, and the note option you can check or write as benevolence.

We have deacons and deaconesses, much like in Acts, the early church. The deacons and deaconesses were taking care of those people that had physical needs and financial needs. We have a ministry right now that they're taking that and running with that and helping out those in our family that do run across hard times, especially in this period that we're in.

I want to let you know just two things out of the meeting we had, Facebook live meeting we had on Wednesday night, two things that we let the church know about.

The first one is we are going to run another Alpha starting April 21st, because we do believe that God's mission is still going forward. And this is a season and time where people are going to be looking for answers. They're going to be desperate for community.

We believe that Alpha can provide that. So we want to invite you, challenge you, to consider those you could invite to be a part of that. It is going to be online through Zoom, and there will be large group times. Watch the video and then the breakout rooms within Zoom. We'll establish little, basically, the table conversations around there. Every week, you'll have the same group of people.

Want to encourage you to be praying through that because people are going to be looking for answers. People will be looking for comfort and stability in such an unstable time, and we believe that God can really move through that. So April 21st, mark that down. It starts at 7:00 on Tuesday nights. It ends before June. It is only a nine-week session. It is not the full length that we normally do. It'll be done before June hits.

Also want to let you know that, as a leadership, we're calling the church to prayer. We've been just over these last weeks praying and trying to discern what should we do as a church. And we feel, at this point, the first thing we need to do is pray. It's a prayer vigil, is really what we're doing. Seven days, 24 hours a day, starting Palm Sunday, this day, 10:00 a.m., and going to Easter Sunday, 10:00 a.m. We'd encourage you to get online, get on our web site, and sign up. There is a Sign-Up Genius there. We broke it up into 15-minute increments. We're calling the church to pray. We need to pray, folks. We need to pray.

There's three topics, and you'll see that on our web site. We'll have that posted. Three topics that we're talking about. One is personal. Our corporate, we'll calling the church to come before God and to say, "Refine us, purify us. Lord, what do you need to say to us about what's going on in our lives spirituality? Are there any idols? Is there any sin? Lord, would you come and cleanse us?" The second topic is to pray for our country, to stand in the gap for our country and to say, "Lord, we see the sin, the rampant idolatry, the unrighteousness that is throughout our country, in the halls of our leadership, and we stand in the gap for our country and say, Lord, this is sin. We do see it's sin. Lord, forgive our nation." Also, to pray for our nation mercy, to call out mercy to God, "Have mercy on us," and to pray for our leaders, that they would pursue righteousness, and that God would give them wisdom on how to lead our country through this. The third topic is reflected more on us again. It's a corporate call to pray, "Holy Spirit, fill us, and, Holy Spirit, lead us," and to pray that for every person here. Pray it over yourself. Pray it for our church, that He would fill us with His presence, and He would lead us forward. Please take this serious. We're calling everyone who calls Freshwater home to prayer. Please join in and pray.

Invite you to turn to John 6 as we begin just this time to look at His Word. This is Palm Sunday. It's that moment when Jesus comes into Jerusalem, and everybody is praising Him as the king and the messiah. It's interesting to understand the context, the broader context that's going on here. Because Jesus and Israel is in military occupation right now. They've been conquered by Rome since 63 BC. All they've known since that day, when Rome invaded Israel and took them over, is tyranny, oppression, taxation.

Rome was at the height of its power. Israel was under its iron fist. It was constant. It was everywhere. It was just the way of life. Every Jew faced it when they woke up, conquered, defeated. They were at war. They lost the war, but don't think for a minute that if they had an opportunity to throw off Rome's rule, they would have done it in a second. Like, it's all they could think about. If you don't -- there's context after context where you see this, but one of them is right before Palm Sunday, Jesus' triumphant entry. It is John 6. Jesus has just done a number of healings that people were witnessing.

There's about 5,000 people gathered. They didn't have food. It's that famous miracle where Jesus takes this grade schoolboy's lunch of fish and bread and multiplies it and feeds 5,000 people. At least 5,000 people. Some would say he actually -- they were only counting the men, so it could have been upwards of 10,000 people. A grade schooler's lunch fed everyone.

In that moment, when everybody realized they had been fed and they collected all the food at the end and there were all these leftovers, this is what they concluded. Verse 14 of Chapter 6, "When the people saw the sign He had done, they said, 'This is indeed the prophet who is come into the world.'" You're like, "Well, what is that about?"

It's a fascinating conclusion, right? It means nothing if you don't know the context of it. It's a reference back to Deuteronomy 18:15. Moses is talking to Israel. Let me go back there. He's giving messages and instructions from God -- I have to get it open. It's not coming open -- and what he ends up saying, at one point, he says, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me" and -- this is Moses speaking -- "from among you and from your brothers."

That's what they're quoting. That's what they're referencing. Why would they reference that, because it seems like an obscure thing. It's not for me. Why? Because they are looking for what, to be delivered? Moses was God's prophet and leader who He used to feed Israel bread. He did the miracle of bread, the manna. That's what we called that, right? Manna is literally translated. What is it? It was bread from heaven to the ground from Moses, his leadership as the prophet.

It's what God used to deliver Israel out from under oppression from Egypt. So Israel has always been waiting for the second Moses to come. Here, Jesus comes and does this amazing miracle with bread, right? Feeds 5,000, maybe 10,000. They immediately think, "Bread, Moses, we're getting free."

What they try to do is interesting. "Perceiving then," Jesus says in verse 15, "that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king."

Logical conclusion. We've got our deliverer. We've got our king. It is time to kick Rome out. We know what God's doing. What does Jesus do? He just kind of somehow shimmies away up to the mountain, walks away from it all.

Fast forward to John 12. Jesus has just raised Lazarus from the dead, so people were now believing. Like, there was more faith and people are going nuts. You don't see someone who is dead for three days come back to life. It just doesn't happen. And people were all worked up

and excited and believing in Jesus, or at least believing he could do miracles. Large crowds were gathering. Here, we have this triumphal entry in John 12. I'll read it. It says, "The next day, the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. They took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!' Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, 'Fear not, daughter of Zion, behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt."

"His disciples did not understand these things at first, when Jesus was glorified. Then they remembered that these things had been written about him and then done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they'd heard he'd done this sign."

So the disciples don't know what's been going on. You hear the theme of John 6, right? The King of David, right, or the king from the line of David, "Hosanna in the highest, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

They're desperate for freedom. They're desperate for deliverance.

You read over in Mark 11, and it's the same thing, "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David."

Matthew 21 records that they were calling out, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

It's all these references of a Messiah, a deliverance. But it's all couched, and it's all intertwined with the way they're doing the math, the way they think it should happen. I mean, the reference to David is huge because David gave -- David was given this promise, unconditional promise of an everlasting line of kings that would come through his family line.

So they're referencing the rule and the throne. It's all intertwined with their dreams of being free. Their dreams of Israel being restored to its former glory, if not even greater.

What they were doing was they were making Jesus king for what He could do for them, and what their ideas should look like. You know, given what happens in John 12, the triumphal entry, I would imagine a lot of the crowd was thinking, "He's going to march right into Jerusalem, right up to the palace. He's going to take out Herod, he'll destroy Rome, and we are going to take over Israel and restore Israel."

What does Jesus do? Well, he actually walks over to the temple, kind of checks it out, leaves. It all just kind of dissipates. Next day, He comes in and cleans out the temple of all the corruption that was going on. Nothing happened like what they thought or imagined.

That was a royal entrance. Riding on a donkey, that's what royals did as they came in. The conquering hero, the conquering ruler coming into the city. It was a royal entrance, and then nothing happened.

What's interesting is the crowd got it right, maybe despite themselves, but they got it right. He is the King. He was the King of Israel. He is still the King of Israel. He is -- was the highest and still is the highest. He is the Messiah. He's the Son of David, was and is. It's entirely appropriate that He rode on that donkey. It is entirely appropriate He received their praise. Everything about what Jesus did, everything was actually appropriate.

Let me ask you something. As we look at this story, do you believe Jesus destroying their plans and dreams, or at least not even addressing them, was the best thing that could ever happen to them?

Think about it. He didn't rescue them from Rome. He didn't do what they wanted.

He did something better. He saved them. He died for them. He left them in the middle of the mess in order that he can make it possible for them to be saved for all eternity, and to spend eternity with their knees bowed to him, singing and praising, "Glory in the highest. Blessed is he whose name is Lord."

See, Jesus came with a mission. He came with a purpose. It was to come and save this world through his dead body sacrificed.

That was it. He was coming to save this world from sin and judgment. He was going to come and conquer death. Even the raising of Lazarus was a foretelling of what was going to happen to Him. He was going to open a door, a way to heaven and into His presence.

Let's just be honest though for a second. It's really easy to look back 2,000 years and go, "Man, what were they thinking," right?

We can see it all 20/20 in hindsight, how they did the math wrong and all of that. Let me ask you something, in light of that, and this is Palm Sunday, with all that's going on in our world and in our nation and in our state and in our town with Covid-19, do we have ideas about what God should really do?

As we survey the damage that's going on health wise, if people are calling this a war against a virus, and I think we're all doing math, and we're all adding things up and trying to work out the answer and say, "This is what God should do" or "This is what we think God should do," but is our math the same as God's?

Are we demanding He fulfill our dreams and our vision of what should happen, or can this Palm Sunday be a Sunday, a moment where we can see Jesus for who He is? And we can come to Him, really, with hands empty, not with a plan, not with an "I got it figured out, Jesus; this is what you have to do" agenda, but just to come to him and say, "Wait a minute. Hosanna, it means praise. Praise to the highest. All glory to the highest. Blessed is the name of the Lord. Blessed is the Son of David."

Say it with a heart that draws near to Him. Jesus still has a mission. He still has a purpose. He is still the highest. He is still the Lord. He is still the King on David's throne, and He sees your life and He sees my life.

And He does, right now -- like, stop and think about that. He sees you. He

sees me. He sees all of this. You think about even the story with Brian and Nettie and so many more families in our church with similar stories. It's on top of other things, as well.

Stop and think about, He sees you.

He sees exactly the math that's going on in your life. And it's not only that He sees you, He knows you. He is Emmanuel. He is with us.

But He has a mission, and he has a purpose, and it is not a bad mission and it is not even a neutral mission, it's a good mission. It's a good purpose. Because He is a good God. His plan is really, really good. Like, it is perfectly good for you. It's a good plan.

Just like that triumphal entry, and they didn't understand it, but that triumphal entry led somewhere. It was a plan that led to the cross, the best thing that could ever, ever happen to us, but filled with suffering for Him.

I wonder if this Palm Sunday we can do this as a church. Wherever you are, and whatever mess you're in, whatever struggle you're in, whatever you're facing and is coming towards you -- and we're all going through a lot of similar things, but there's others, as well, things that are being thrown into this -- if you find yourself sighing, a lot, if you are concerned about where the paycheck is going to come from, if you're grieving right now, I want to invite you to do something.

I want you to do what happened on that Palm Sunday so many years ago. Do it with now an understanding of who Jesus is and His purpose in our lives, and that it is a good purpose, His plan for our lives. To be able to say this, and this is going to cost us, but to be able to say, "Hosanna in the highest.

Praise you, Lord. Glory to God in the highest. Blessed be the Son of David. Blessed be the One who sits on the throne."

As this day unfolds here on Palm Sunday, I want to encourage you to just praise Him, all day long. Praise Him all day long. He's still on the throne. He's worthy of our praise. Let's line the street, as it were, line the path, and praise our Messiah, our King, the One who is on the throne.

God bless you all.

(Worship- "You Are My All In All.")