

Devotion #1 – In Times of Trial

Thank you for joining us for a time of devotion and prayer. Yes, these are frightening times. No one knows how the virus is going to impact the world, our nation, let alone our own lives. This we do know; it is impacting our lives already and the news changes almost hourly. There are health concerns, financial concerns, stores are sold out of important products. Our lives are facing new anxieties, new worries, new fears of the unknown. A person in his mid 70's just stopped by my office and said, "In my lifetime I have never faced anything like this before." So how do we face the unknown? How do we survive the times that are putting all of us to a great test?

Some of these answers are obvious and you know them yourselves. First and foremost, we turn directly to God. God is in control. God is all powerful. God is more powerful than any of our worries and fears. God will find a way for us to thrive in this difficult time. Yes, we turn to God who has everything that we need. The Bible says **Hebrews 4:16(NLT)** ¹⁶So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when and where we need it most. We turn to God in prayer. We bow before the Lord our God our maker for He is our God and we are His people. God is calling us all to walk closer with Him, to feel His Holy Presence all around us and in us. He knows all our needs even before we ask. It is called living in rich fellowship, deep Communion with our Holy God, always being aware of His Presence. He promises never to leave us nor forsake us. When we take God at His word, our souls grow less anxious and are more at rest. There is no shortage of God's peace that passes all human understanding. We enter the Throne Room of God in prayer. It is good to be silent in God's Presence and let yourself know with absolute certainty that you are right before God. Then it is good and healthy to pour out to God your heart as honestly and bravely as you can. Don't hold anything back including your worries, fears, and anxieties. The Bible says, "Cast all your cares upon the Lord for He careth for you." God enjoys

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hearing everything you say to Him. He is there for you. It is good to begin the prayer like this, “Dear Heavenly Father, because of the work that Jesus did for me on the cross, I come into your Throne of grace to find your grace and mercy in this time of need.” Then be quiet in God’s Holy Presence before you pour your heart out to Him. Just as parents and grandparents enjoy heartfelt talks with their children and grandchildren, God enjoys you conversing with Him.

Secondly, we present ourselves to God before His Holy Word. It is through the study of the Word that one’s faith is strengthened. If you do not know where to read in these difficult days, I would encourage you to read through the Psalms. They will touch every need you have. 1 Peter in the New Testament was written to Christians who were discouraged because of their human suffering at that time. Anywhere you read in the Bible, God has much to say; please be in it. The difference between an immature and mature believer is this, immature Christians need to be fed by others; mature Christians have learned to feed themselves as they read the Bible and good solid Biblical Christian books. God renews us by renewing our minds and He renews our minds by taking in His truth. God’s truth sets us free so we can soar in these trying times.

Isaiah 40:31(NLT) ³¹But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” The Word of God was given to us for our instruction and encouragement so that we will never lose hope and endure patiently without falling apart (Romans 15:4 my paraphrase). God’s word has everything we need to hear from God.

And last, but not least, we turn to God in worship as we gather together in the name of Jesus. “Come let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our God our maker the song sings.” If we gather in our homes for the worship service to be streamed live, we will be worshipping together even though we may be miles apart. We are together in the Lord Jesus Christ, and worshipping with those who have gone before us who are with the Lord

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Jesus. You are not alone in your home. We are part of the gathered saints worshipping the one who has given to you the gift of life and eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We will gather again soon. Please remember you are loved with an everlasting love and underneath are the everlasting arms. Amen and amen.