

Do Not Fear. Trust in God

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Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0 : 00] Good morning. What a week we have had and what a response we've seen to this coronavirus all the way from people panicking to being encouraged and people using and exercising extreme precaution. Last week the elders met and we determined that the best course of action for our church at this time was to observe Romans 13, to obey our government authorities and to heed their advice.

And so, as you know, that's what we've decided to do, that we have canceled all church meetings until April 5th. And next Saturday we will, as a body of elders, reevaluate whether or not that needs to be extended as we are receiving information, new information on not even a daily basis, but an hourly basis, almost a minute by minute basis.

And so we as a church, I as your pastor, I urge you and I encourage you to heed the warnings of our government officials, of those who are experts in infectious diseases, that if you're ill, please stay home.

If possible, please, please avoid being in close contact with people who are ill or who could spread the virus. As a matter of fact, I encourage you that if you need help, if you're afraid of getting out, or if getting out might cause problems for you, please contact the church.

I have been impressed by how many people have contacted me already from our church and they've asked, is there anybody that I can help? Can I go shopping for someone?

[2 : 09] So please, exercise caution and please allow us the ability to be able to serve you during these difficult times.

Most importantly, let's not forget that God is in control. God is in absolute control. And one day, hopefully soon, we will be back together.

We will be back together in this place and we will continue to worship our Lord in this facility. We're going to worship today. And you know, even though we are not physically present together, we are still the church.

We are still a part of the body of Christ. And truly, the building is not the church. It's the people. And so even though we can't meet together, and that grieves me that we're not able to do so this Sunday, and at least next Sunday as well, that we're still the church.

And we can praise God for the ability that we have to be able to stay in communication with one another and to worship the Lord together, even in this way, online.

[3 : 23] And so as we worship together this morning, one thing that I felt was important, that we try to keep things as normal as possible. So many things are changing right now.

And so there was talk about maybe filming the service in some other location in our building. But I feel that with so many things changing, this new normal coming into place, that the best thing that we can do as a church is try to keep things as normal for you as possible.

So we're going to worship in our sanctuary. Pastor Dan and Doyleen will lead us in song from their normal places, and I will be back to preach again from this pulpit, where I am pleased to preach to you Sunday after Sunday.

Will you please join me in prayer? Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we are thankful for you. We are thankful to know that you are a God who never panics, that you are a God who is never uncertain of the future, that all things are truly under your control because you are sovereign, because you are all-powerful.

And Lord, we thank you that you are good, that you love us, that in our times of fear and uncertainty, your encouragement to us is not to, well, just try to work it out on your own, but to come to you, to come to you through your word, to come to you through prayer.

[4 : 47] And that when we do so, Lord, you promise us that you will encourage us, that you will remind us that we have nothing to be afraid of because you are a loving Heavenly Father who sent his Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins.

That believing in him, we have eternal life, and that we know that no matter what happens to us in this life, that we have the hope of the life to come. And so, Lord, though we are scattered about in different locations this morning, we know that collectively we are your church, we are your people, and that we can worship you in spirit and truth, whether it's in the church building or in our family room or any other room or any other place for that matter.

And so, Lord, we pray that our worship would be pleasing to you, and we ask that you would use it to bring glory and honor to the name of Jesus Christ, reminding us of the fact that we have nothing to fear, but we must simply trust in you.

And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Psalm 103 has a wonderful word to say to us today.

It says, This is the word of the Lord. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

[6 : 33] It's an opportunity we have today to worship the Lord wherever you happen to be, in front of your computer, watching on a phone, wherever you happen to be today. This is a great opportunity to worship the Lord.

Actually, every day, every hour of every day is an opportunity to worship the Lord as long as we have life and breath. So, I encourage you today to worship the Lord with us as we sing these two songs, On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand, and Nothing But the Blood of Jesus.

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

I dare not trust the sweetest spring, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand, All other ground is sinking sand, All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness seems to hide His face, I rest on His unchanging grace. In every high and stormy gale, My anchor holds within the veil.

[7 : 56] On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand, All other ground is sinking sand, All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, His covenant, His blood, Supports me in the whelming flood. When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay.

On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand, All other ground is sinking sand, All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound, Oh, may I then in Him be found, Rest in His righteousness alone, Fall blessed to stand before the throne.

On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand, All other ground is sinking sand.

[9 : 10] What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh, precious is the flow That makes me white as snow.

No other fount I know. Nothing but the blood of Jesus. For my heart and this I see Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my cleansing this might be Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh, precious is the flow That makes me white as snow.

Oh, no other fount I know. Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh, no other fount I know.

[10 : 25] Nothing but the blood of Jesus Not of good that I have done Nothing but the blood of Jesus Oh, precious is the flow That makes me white as snow No other fount I know Nothing but the blood of Jesus This is all my hope and peace Nothing but the blood of Jesus This is all my righteousness Nothing but the blood of Jesus Oh, precious is the flow That makes me white as snow Oh, no other fount I know

Nothing but the blood of Jesus I'm going to be reading this morning from God's Word Paul's epistle to the Romans Chapter 8, verses 26 to 30 Let's stand in honor of the reading of His Word Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness For we do not know what to pray for as we ought But the Spirit Himself intercedes for us With groanings too deep for words And he who searches hearts Knows what is the mind of the Spirit Because the Spirit intercedes for the saints According to the will of God And we know that for those who love God All things work together for good For those who are

called according to His purpose

For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed To the image of His Son In order that He might be the firstborn Among many brothers And those whom He predestined He also called And those whom He called He also justified And those whom He justified He also glorified Let's pray Gracious God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ If these were the only verses of Scripture that we had We would know there is a Father And a Son and a Holy Spirit And we'd know that God loves us And has saved us We would know Lord That no matter what happens in this world All things are working together for the good of those

Whom You have saved We would know that you knew people before eternity That you predestined us to be conformed To the image of your Son Which is sanctification We would know Lord That you were calling a people out for your namesake Justifying them And ultimately glorifying them Father I thank you That the church Can worship We can worship In church We can worship at home We're to be a worshiping people At all times And in all places Circumstances Do not determine Our worship The Word of God God Gives us The pattern Of worship I thank you Lord That we can meet As Highland Park Baptist Church

We may be doing it in unique ways For a few Sundays But we will still meet And we will be worshiping Perhaps from our homes Or other places But God will be exalted Christ will be glorified And the Spirit Will be obeyed In all things Thank you Lord For this church For what you're doing here And we do thank you In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ Amen It's been our habit as a church When we gather That as Tom mentioned We stand for The reading of God's Word And so Again even though we are Meeting in different locations Let's go ahead and do that now I want to invite you To turn in your Bible To Psalm 18 I want to read verses 1-2 I love you O Lord My strength [15:30] The Lord is my rock And my fortress And my deliverer My God My rock In whom I take refuge My shield And the horn Of my salvation My stronghold My God I want to add a blessing To the reading Of his Word I remember when I was A little boy I liked to spend A lot of time In my backyard Especially in the summer months Playing And one of the things That I enjoyed playing most Was wiffle ball With my father After our Our wiffle ball games My job Was to Collect all the balls That had been hit over Into our neighbor's yard And so I had permission From my neighbor To do that But when I did What I was supposed to do Was to exit through Our gate And enter through Their gate Get all the balls And then

And then go back The same way Well One time My dad After our game Was over He went to the other side Of the yard To do some yard work And so I was out of his view And so I decided At that point in time That it would be easier And more fun To scale the fence On my side Jump over Into my neighbor's yard Quickly throw all the balls Back over into our yard And then Climb back over The same way That I had come So I did that I climbed over our fence I landed in our Neighbor's yard safely I grabbed all the balls I threw them back over And I was climbing Over the fence Back into my yard And as I was descending I lost my Footing And I fell From nearly the top Of the fence All the way to the ground And I landed on my back And had the wind Knocked out of me That was an experience That I had never Experienced before And as I tried To suck breath In unsuccessfully I got really Really Really Scared I thought Perhaps That I might Even Die Though I was In a state Of panic I somehow Managed To get to my Feet And ran To my Father Who Must have Heard my Crash landing Because he was Running towards Me I ran Into my Father's Outstretched Arms He knew What had Happened To me Without My Having Had Said A word Which was Good Because I couldn't Speak But knowing That I was Safely In the arms Of my Father And then Hearing His Voice His Words Of comfort That That gave Me Comfort As I Soon Began To be Able To breathe Again I have No doubt That you Like me After the Events Of this Past Week Have felt As if The wind Has been Knocked out Of you As if The wind Has been Taken out Of your Sails A virus That we Knew about Back in December That was On the Other side Of the World Has made Its way To our Home To our State To our Community It has Spread far And it Has spread Wide In a Matter Of a Few Short Months Our Government Has attempted To weaken Its impact By asking Us to Practice Social Distancing School Has been Postponed Or even For some States It's been Canceled Altogether Some Businesses Are asking Their Employees To work From home Those who Make an Hourly Wage Have Had their Hours Severely Reduced There is Fear That in The coming Days People Will lose Their jobs As we Try to Discern What the Economic Impact Of all Of this Will have You may Be worrying About how You're Going to Pay your Bills Schedules That were Filled With Activities And

events And vacations And plans That we Had made Months Ago Were Wiped Out Overnight A new Normal Has begun To set In Though I Believe With certainty That Things will Return To the Way That they Were It's just A matter Of when For all Of these Reasons And for Many Others I have No doubt This morning As you Listen To this Message You may Be feeling Out of Breath Concerned About what Tomorrow Will bring Concerned About what The future

[20 : 33] May hold And I'm Sure That you Like me Are ready For this Pandemic To be Over In times Of uncertainty In times Of fear In times When we Feel Stressed And anxious And worried About tomorrow God Pleads For us To run To him To run Into his Safe And outstretched Arms That will Comfort us And we Do that Primarily By running To his Word And in It The arms Of God Have a way To wrap Themselves Around us And we Hear his Voice Telling us Do not Be afraid I am The same Yesterday And today And tomorrow Do not Be anxious You trust In me And so This morning That is exactly What I want To lead us To do To run To the arms Of God And to be Reminded Of it Of his Promises To be Comforted By His Voice To be Reassured That he Is with Us That he Is for Us That he Will not Forsake Us That he Works all Things together For the Good That he Is in Control That he Is greater Than any Of our Circumstances That he Is far Greater Than the Coronavirus And that Ultimately The Greatest Hope That we Have In this Life Is in The life And in The death And in The resurrection Of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ In the Old Testament King David Having been

Rescued and Delivered From his Enemies Sang a Song of Praise To the Lord Which we Have read Psalm 18 1-2 And in It he Retail's The Faithfulness Of god To him Who Was there To comfort Him During his Times of Uncertainty I want to Read that Scripture Again He says There He sings To the Lord There I love You Oh lord My Strength The Lord Is my Rock And my Fortress And my Deliverer My god My rock In whom I take Refuge My shield The horn Of my Salvation My Stronghold And so Here God Reminds us That in Time of Fear The answer Is not To run To walmart And clear Out their Shelves Of all That we Can get Our hands On But to Take refuge Primarily In him To fortify Ourselves Behind the Walls Of biblical Truth

To be Joyful In our Great And divine Warrior The lord Of our Salvation Jesus Who is The christ Whose cross Shields us From sin's Penalty Because he Bore our Burdens In his Body On the Cross And whose Resurrection Three days Later Forever Sealed Our Salvation So here's The main Idea Of this Morning's Message Christians Should not Fear But trust In The lord Now the bible Talks a lot About fear No doubt Because god Knows how Fearful We can Be Especially During times Like these Where we Realize just How truly Out of Control Things can Get How truly We are not Able to Have that much Control Even over Our own Lives One thing

I've been Reminded of This Week These past Couple of Weeks Is that Fear Is one Of If not The greatest Of human Emotions I've already Mentioned many Of the fears That we are Facing during This time Of national Emergency These fears Have led To the Ransacking Of supermarkets People Are preparing For the Worst But it's at Times like These that I Think it's Important that We stop And we Ask Ourselves Why are We so Afraid Is there Something Undergirding All of The fears That we Have I believe That there Is Underneath The fear Of running Out of Supplies

[25 : 35] The fear Of losing Our jobs The fear Of not Being able To pay Our bills And the Fear Of facing Uncertainty Is one Underlying Fear That fuels All others And it Is our Greatest Fear And so That's the First thing I want to Talk to you About this Morning Our greatest Fear Underneath All fears Is the Fear Of death When times Of crisis Strike Close To home We are Reminded Of our Own Mortality Writing About the Impact That World War II Had on Those Who Lived Through It C.S.

Lewis The great Christian Author Wrote This He said What does War Or in Our case This Pandemic Do To death It Certainly Does not Make it More Frequent 100% Of us Die And That Percentage Cannot Be Increased It Can Put Several Deaths Earlier But I Hardly Suppose That That Is What We Fear Yet He Says War Does Do Something To Death It Forces Us To Remember It War Or Again Pandemic For Us Makes Death Real To Us And That Would Have Been Regarded As One Of Its Blessings By Most Of The Great Christians Of The Past He Concludes From Then To Now The Reality Of Death Has Not Changed I Hope That No One Else Dies From

The Coronavirus I Hope That You Who Are Listening And I Who Speak To You Will Never Contract This Disease Or Any Other Person For That Matter But Even Still If All Viruses Suddenly Ceased To Exist If All Wars Were Put To A Sudden And Complete End It Would Do Nothing To Erase The Inevitability Of Our Own Deaths Times Like These Can Lead Us To Feel Helpless But We Don't Like Feeling Helpless So What We So We Do What We Can In Order To Comfort Ourselves And

Apparently For A lot Of Us Buying A lot Of Toilet Paper Makes Us More Comfortable But In All Seriousness Death Is Something That We Will All Experience And The Bible Asks Us It Asks Us Repeatedly Are You Ready For It Are You Ready For It And Then It Also Tells Us Repeatedly That For The Believer For Those Who Have Responded Positively To The Gospel Who Know Jesus Christ As Lord And Savior That We Have Nothing To Fear Including And Especially Death Why Why Don't Christians Have Anything To Fear Why Shouldn't Christians Fear Well This Brings Me To The Next Thing I Want To Talk To You About This Morning Which Is Our Great Savior Our Great Savior During Jesus Earthly Ministry He Called Twelve Ordinary Men To Come Along Side Him And To Serve With Him As His Disciples These Ordinary Men Became Extraordinary After The Events Of That Glad Morning When They Realized That The Tomb That Had!

[29 : 42] Of Their Crucified Savior Was Empty But Prior To That Moment They Were Clueless As To The True Ministry Of Jesus Even Though He Had Told Them Repeatedly Of His Mission And Of His Purpose For Which He Had Come In One Instance He Did That In Luke 9 Verses 18 Through 22 There It Says Now It Happened That He Was Praying Alone The Disciples Were With Him And He Asked Them Who Do The Crowd Say That I Am And They Answered John The Baptist But Others Say Elijah And Others That One Of The Prophets Of Old Has Risen Then Then He Said To Them But Who Do You Say That I Am And Peter Said The Christ Of God And He Strictly Charged And Commanded Them To Tell This To No One Saying The Son Of Man Must

Suffer Many Things And Be Rejected By The Elders And The Chief Priests And Scribes And Be Killed And On The Third Day Be Raised Now That That Seems Pretty Clear To Me But Sometime Later Maybe Even Years Later As The Time Of Our Lord's Death Approached He Prepared The Disciples Again For What Was About To Happen To Him And As He Was Reminding Them Of This As He Was Preparing Them For This He Must Have Looked And Seen A Lot Of Confused Faces A Lot Of Anxious Faces A Lot Of Fearful Faces And So Jesus In John 14 1 Through 6 Comforts His Disciples With These Words He Said Let Not Your Hearts Be Troubled Believe In God Believe Also In Me In My Father's House Are Many Rooms If It Were Not So Would I Have Told You That I Go To Prepare A Place For You And If I Go And Prepare A Place For You I Will Come Again And Will Take You To Myself That Where I Am You May Be Also And You Know The Way To Where I Am Going Thomas One Of The Disciples Said!

The Lord We Don't Know Where You Are Going How Can We Know The Way Jesus Said To Him I Am The Way And The Truth And The Life No One Comes To The Father Except Through Me If You Had Known Me You Would Have Known My Father Also!

From Now On You Do Know Him And Have Seen Him Much Of The World Wants To Turn A Deaf Ear To God's Appeal Today In The Midst Even Of This Global Pandemic But The Lord Of Heaven Who Governs Every Germ And Every Molecule In The Entire Universe Says To Anyone With Ears To Hear Do Not Be Af Faith Trust In Me Our Lord Who Looked Forward To His Death For What It Would Accomplish Pleads For Us To Come To Him But He Has Also Issued A Warning To Those Who Refuse And Who Continue To Live In Fear Matthew 10 26 Through 31 Records That Warning Jesus Says So Have

[33 : 29] No Fear Of Them For Nothing Is Covered That Will Not Be Revealed Or Hidden That Will Not Be Made Known What I Tell You In The Dark Say In The Light And What You Hear Whispered Proclaim On The Housetops And Do Not Fear Those Who Kill The But Cannot Kill The Soul Rather Fear Him Who Can Destroy Fear Fear Not Therefore You Are More Valuable Than Many Sparrows While The Center Of Disease Control Races To Contain The Virus The Lord Of The Universe Our Father Who Is In Heaven Is Attending To Every Single Hair On Your Head He Rules Over All Things And Yet He's Not Too Busy Or

Too Uncaring To Know You To Love You Anyone Who Has Been Given The Gift Of Eternal Anyone I Should Say Who Has Been Given The Gift Of Life Certainly Knows The Fear Of Death And Anyone Who Has Been Given The Gift Of Spiritual Life Eternal Life Has Experienced How The Gospel Has Turned That Old Fear Of Death Over On Its Head The Apostle Paul A Man Who Before His Conversion Sought To Put An End To The Church Of Christ Who Encountered Our Resurrected Lord On His Way To Doing That Very Thing Had His Life Radically Transformed By Him And As A Result Of That Meeting He Who Sought The Death Of The Church Became One Of The Greatest Leaders For The Church

In His Efforts To Spread The Gospel In His Efforts To Start And Begin New Churches Paul Encountered Many Near Death Experiences Ultimately History Tells That He Was Ex Ex Ex For His Faith And For His Proclamation Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ But Throughout All Of That Suffering!

He He Had Encountered That He Had Endured He Wouldn't Stop Sharing This Good News That Brings Absolute And Total Life Transformation To Those Who Believe It He Just Couldn't Stop Telling People Of This Great Love Of Christ That Puts All Fears To Death In Philippians 1, 21 through 23, he talks to us about this very thing, about how he is not afraid of death any longer. He says, therefore, me to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which shall I choose? I cannot tell. I'm hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

[36 : 54] Paul looked forward to his death, not because he had some kind of a death wish, but because he knew what dying meant for him. And so again, I wonder, can you say the same today?

Do you know what dying means for you? Maybe you're hearing this and you're wondering if any of it is true. Perhaps to you it sounds good, but maybe it sounds more like a bunch of wishful thinking. Well, one thing that I think we can all agree on is that this world is not as it should be. There is something broken in our world, isn't there?

And we all long for it to be better, for someone or for something to make right of all that is wrong in our world, to fix what is broken. Well, the Bible tells us that in the beginning, God made everything. And that all that he created was good. And that he created human beings specially to reflect his image. Genesis 1 27, it says there, so God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him male and female. He created them. And then again, in verse 31 of that same chapter, God says that he saw everything that he had made. And behold, it was very good.

And there was evening and there was morning on the sixth day. You see, this was God's design. Everything and everyone existed in perfect harmony and fellowship with one another and with their creator. All was as it should be. Now, obviously, we see today that that is no longer the case.

[39 : 16] The perfect creation. The perfect creation and that perfect harmony and fellowship no longer exists like that anymore. And so the question that we should ask is, why not? What happened?

The Bible answers that question. In Genesis chapter 3, sin entered the world. It entered through Satan's temptation of Adam and Eve and their decision to rebel against God's command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And when they rebelled, they plunged all of the human race under the curse of sin. And as a result of that, the Bible says in Romans 3.23, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. If you have children or have had children or have been a child, you notice that nobody has to tell a child how to misbehave. It comes instinctively to them. In fact, as parents, we spend, I think, most of our time trying to teach our kids how to be good and why they should be good. I remember a time with my son. He was maybe three or four years old at the time.

And in the place where we were living, in the family room, there was curtains. And they were attached to a large curtain rod. And so Jack was having fun playing with his toys. He noticed the curtains and decided that that would be fun to tug on. And so he and Danny, his mother and I, we were watching this.

And we realized that, you know, he's pretty strong for a little boy. And there is the potential that he could pull the curtain so hard that that heavy curtain rod would come crashing down on his head. And so as good parents, we pulled him away from that situation. We tried as best as we could to communicate to his little three, four-year-old mind that what he was doing was dangerous. And so he went over and he was playing and all seemed to be well. And then a few minutes later, guess what he did?

[41 : 46] He headed back over to the curtains. But this time, this time, he made eye contact with me and he pulled on him with a smile. Why did he do that? Well, because of our sin nature. Not only do we rebel, but we get enjoyment out of it. We were born with a nature to sin, to act rebelliously.

We are born broken and we are born into a broken world. This is the testimony of Scripture. Again, in Romans 3, 10 through 12, As it is written, None is righteous, no not one, no one understands, no one seeks for God, all have turned aside, together they have become worthless, no one does good, not even one. Now this is bad news.

When you look around our world, don't you observe brokenness? When you turn your attention inward, don't you see brokenness within yourself? Don't we all agree that things are not how they should be, both externally and internally? I think that if we were honest with ourselves, we'd see that. And we know that. And so we all try to pursue different ways ways to fix with what's both broken in our world and with what's broken within ourselves.

Some turn to politics and politicians and political systems in hopes that they will fix our brokenness. But if we look back on history and we observe our present times, you see that to this point, they have been totally unsuccessful. And so others then turn to money or they turn to relationships, even to substances and abusing them and many other things. And they do so to try to fix their brokenness. Hoping that they will give us purpose in life or to escape, help us to escape our past failures. But again, none of them, none of them are capable of providing the salvation that we're looking for.

[44 : 42] We can concur with David in Psalms 51, 3 through 4. For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.

Against you and you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. Again, he's addressing God so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. So ultimately, the Bible says that all sin is committed against our Creator. All sin, the Bible says, is an act of rebellion against God.

Therefore, God warns us in Romans 6, 23, for the wages of sin is death.

Now, bad news just got a lot worse. God warned Adam and Eve that if they disobeyed Him, they would die. And when they disobeyed Him, though they did not die physically, at least not in that moment, they did die in that moment spiritually. And all of us are born in that same condition. And as we've seen, the wages of sin is death. You know, two of the greatest words put together in all of the Bible are these.

[46 : 26] But God. But God. But God, being rich in mercy, being rich in grace, has made a way for us to have restored fellowship with Him.

He has made a way for our sins to be atoned for and to be forgiven, to be completely washed away. He has made a way that heals our brokenness permanently.

How has He done that? You're probably familiar with this verse. John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

You see, God invaded this broken world by coming in the flesh. He sent His Son, Jesus. Jesus, who became the God-man, fully God and fully man.

Jesus was as we are, but without sin. He was able to live the sinless life that we were incapable of living.

[47 : 46] He came, as we've seen, with a mission that culminated with His crucifixion and then three days later, His bodily resurrection from the grave. 2 Corinthians 5, 21 talks to us about His mission, what He came to do, what was accomplished on the cross.

It says, our sake, God the Father made Him, God the Son, to be sin who knew no sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

What's awesome is that 700 years before the arrival of Jesus Christ on planet Earth, the prophet Isaiah foretold His coming and what His coming would accomplish.

I want to read that scripture with you. Isaiah 53, 1 through 6. Who has believed what He has heard from us and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

For He grew up before Him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him and no beauty that we should desire Him.

[48 : 53] He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hide their faces, He was despised and we esteemed Him not.

Surely, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with His wounds we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.

Every one of us has sinned. But Jesus, the Bible tells us, has shouldered the consequences of it.

[50 : 00] He became sin who knew no sin so that we who believe can be born again.

Born from above. Can have fellowship with God restored now and forever. We can have our sins completely removed from us, forever taken away and are being clothed.

We've been clothed through salvation with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. How do we receive such a gift? Well, Romans 10, 13 says to us very simply, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Now, you may be hearing this and you aren't a Christian. You don't go to this church. You don't know who I am.

But you have questions. And so, if that's you, I encourage you, please contact me. Please. Provide you with my email address.

[51 : 08] Go to our website, highlandparkbaptistchurch.net and get a hold of me. I mean that sincerely. I would want nothing more than continue to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with you.

If you've heard this good news and you have believed it, please contact me as well. We want to know. We want to know that you have called upon the name of the Lord, that you have been saved. We want to continue to disciple you. Or if not, we want to plug you into a church where you will continue to grow in your knowledge of Jesus Christ and your ability to serve Him in a body of a local group of believers.

and finally, I want to address those of you who do know Christ as your Lord and Savior with my final point, which is this, our great responsibility, our great responsibility.

When I was writing this message, at first I wanted to say that these events have provided us with a great opportunity. And while that's true and while they have, I believe that it is more important for us during this time to emphasize our great responsibility as followers of Jesus Christ to rise up now during this time and to let our light shine brightly and brilliantly in our world.

[52 : 36] If you have experienced the perfect love of Christ that casts out all fears, if you truly understand that to live is Christ and to die is gain, then let me tell you, brothers and sisters in Christ, now is the time.

Now is the time. Not to be primarily concerned with yourself. As our Lord made the ultimate sacrifice for us, so now is the time for us to model His example.

Now I want to make a caveat to that statement. Please hear me out. I implore you to exercise discernment in this. If you are ill, don't be a hero.

Stay home and allow other people to help you get better, to meet your needs. If you have contracted this illness or contracting, I should say, this illness could put you in danger of losing your life, then please let us serve you.

please. You know, I am pleased to report, as I mentioned earlier, that this week I have been inundated with requests from members of our church who have asked, Pastor Mike, if anybody needs me to shop for them, if there is anything that I can do, whatever I can do to help, please let me know.

[54 : 06] And so, I implore you, if that's the case for you, if you need help, please contact contact the church office and we will have somebody serve you, meet that need, and please don't rob us of the opportunity to be the church and to love you as Christ has commanded us to.

We are only at the beginning stage of this. We don't know what's going to happen. Things could get harder.

And if that's the case, then we, as God's people, will have to step up our efforts. If the hospitals or those caring for the ill need help, then let's be the first to answer their call.

Let's lead the way in serving our community. You know, we are not the first generation of Christians that have encountered such a pandemic.

We can look back into church history for outstanding examples of men and women of faith who understood that to live is Christ, but to die is gain.

[55 : 22] As a matter of fact, I was reading an article this week that mentioned many of those faithful and one of them that stood out to me was Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth in A.D. 165.

At that time, Marcus Aurelius was the emperor of Rome when plague struck the people. And it did so over a 15-year period, killing a quarter to a third of those who were living in the Roman Empire. Historians have speculated that during that time there were maybe about 45,000 Christians, which sounds like a lot, but was in reality less than 1% of the total population.

But despite their small numbers, their response to the pandemic won them the admiration of many, and many came to faith in Jesus Christ as a result of their gospel testimony.

Dionysius said of that time, Most of our brother Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another.

[56 : 42] Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to the very need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy.

And he continues, For they were infected by others with disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains.

Many in nursing and curing others transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead.

This, my friends, is part of what it means to live like Christ, taking death in order to give life.

I hope and I pray that this pandemic does not produce nearly the same amount of casualties that that one did back in AD 165.

Nor do I hope that it lasts nearly as long, and I seerly do not believe that it will, but nevertheless, the time for Christian response is now. I said earlier that one thing I've been reminded of these past couple of weeks is that fear is one of, if not, the greatest human emotion.

[58 : 04] But so is love. And now is the time for us to show how great our love is for the Lord and for one another.

Now is the time for Christians to show that the great love of Christ that we daily experience is greater than any fear.

And so there are four ways that I encourage you to respond. First, Christians pray. We may feel out of control, but we must be reminded that God never is.

And so I encourage you to pray for those who have been infected. Pray for the families of those who have passed away. Pray for those who are giving care. Pray for our leaders, our president, that they would make wise decisions for our nation.

Don't just pray for the United States of America. Pray for the world. Pray for our missionaries. Pray for our military who are all over the world and pray for their protection and pray for their bold gospel witness.

[59 : 27] Secondly, Christians, encourage. Don't panic. Be precautious, but do not panic. This past week I was getting my hair cut and the lady who was cutting my hair doesn't normally cut my hair, but the lady who does was over busy.

She saw me and she ran over to me and she said, have we missed the rapture? Is this the apocalypse?

What do we do? And, you know, at first I was thinking, well, I hope that I haven't missed the rapture because that's really bad news for me. But I was able in that moment to remind her of what God's word says, to remind the other woman who was cutting my hair and we had a great conversation for about five minutes talking through these things.

It was an opportunity to share the gospel. It was an opportunity for me to encourage them not to panic, not to fear, but to trust in the Lord and I encourage you to do the same.

Third way we should respond is that Christians serve. I encourage you to go check on your neighbors, especially your elderly neighbors. Make sure that they're okay. See if there's anything that you can do to help them.

[60 : 45] Check on your church family. Seek to meet whatever needs that there are. Go shopping for other people if you can. And again, if you have needs, allow the church to serve you.

Please contact the church. We would love to do that. And then finally, Christians trust. When you feel uncertain, when you feel worried, whether it's about what this virus is doing or could do to you or the impact that it's having on our economy, your job, your ability to pay your bills, whatever the case may be, when you're anxious and you're afraid, Scripture tells us, God pleads with us, the first thing that you should do is to turn to Him and to cast all your anxieties and your fears upon Him with the promise that He will give you peace that surpasses understanding.

And it's through trusting in Christ by turning to Him, turning to His Word, that we are reminded of the promises that we have in our Lord that tell us that we have nothing to fear.

We must merely trust in Him. Let me pray for you. Lord God, I pray for those who are hearing this message. Lord, you know where they're at in regards to salvation.

Lord, I pray that your Spirit, through the preaching of your Word, would stir within them the realization of what your Word says about being born spiritually dead, of our need to be reborn, our

need to trust in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

[62 : 28] And God, I pray that even though we're separated physically, that God, your Word has the ability and your Spirit has the ability to move in people's lives far and wide.

And so, Lord, I pray that if that's the case, that they would be put to, or rest assured that, Lord, Jesus has taken away our sin, that His empty tomb reveals that He truly was the Son of God, that His payment was sufficient, that there is life for those who believe now and forevermore.

Lord, for those of us who know Christ as our Lord and Savior, Father, I pray that we would respond in a way that astounds the world.

I pray that we would be precautious as we do that, but I pray that instead of thinking primarily about ourselves or our own safety, that we would have the mind of Christ, the attitude of Christ, who put others before Himself.

That, Lord, whatever we can do, that we would do it, and that we wouldn't wait to be asked, but that we would be proactive to respond, and that as we respond, Lord, my prayer and my hope would be that our lights would shine, but it wouldn't just be our good works that people see, but they would hear our good words, the gospel, the truth that Jesus Christ saves, that He alone is the way, is the truth, and is the life.

[64 : 02] Thank you, Lord, for all that you are, for all that you've done for us. To you be the glory forever and ever and ever, we pray. Amen.

Amen. I know not why God's wondrous grace to me He hath made no, nor why unworthy Christ in love redeemed before His hope.

But I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day.

I know not how this saving faith to me He did impart, nor how believing in His word brought peace within my heart.

But I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day.

[65 : 35] I know not how the Spirit moves convincing men of sin, revealing Jesus through the word, creating faith in Him.

But I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day.

I know not when my Lord may come at night or noontide fair, nor if I'll walk the veil with Him or meet Him in the air.

But I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day.

But I know whom I have believed and am persuaded and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day.

[67 : 11] Amen. Now may the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. May the Lord bless you and keep you.