

Viral Messages #15  
Where We Stand  
July 19, 2020

Last week I wanted to stir your hearts to rise up! To rise up with passion and become the church in an increasingly hostile world. To never shut up.  
To become passionate in our love for Christ and for one another.

**Passion can be defined as "any kind of feeling by which the mind is powerfully effected or moved; a commanding or overpowering emotion."**

This term "passion" is a feeling that moves the mind and the will to action. Passion and desire are that which flows from the heart and gives our lives meaning. Passion. It is a word that carries with it the idea of being consumed. In fact, the term "passion" covers a whole range of emotions that are essential to finding and loving God.

**Need; desire; longing; zeal; affection; craving; hunger. Lust...**

These emotions are all characteristics of a person who has a deep need that must be met.

❖ [Ps. 42:1-2](#) "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for the living God. Where can I go and meet with God?"

❖ [Ps. 63:1](#) "O god, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land, where there is no water."

❖ [Ps. 62:1-2](#) "My soul waits in silence for God only; from Him is my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be moved."

"My King and my God, consider my every word,  
for I am calling out to You.

At each and every sunrise You will hear my voice  
as I prepare my sacrifice of prayer to You.

Every morning I lay out the pieces of my life on the altar  
and wait for Your fire to fall upon my heart." ([Psalm 5: 1-3~~Passion Translation](#))

Have you ever met someone with that kind of passion for God? When you do you will never forget them.

In 1973 I became a youth pastor at coral park Baptist church.

Pastor Killingsworth wanted to show me how to do a hospital visit.

Miss Jane Ayers was very ill. I watched and listened as the pastor was encouraging and respectful. It was very calm and quiet until this happened.

She looked at the pastor and told him that she had something that was of utmost urgency. She told him that as she was praying this morning the Lord told her to get her things in order because He was going to bring her home in 3 days.

The pastor patted her on the hand and said these words; "Jane you're going to be fine. We will keep you seat open at church." This is when her passion hit the room.

She reached out and grabbed me by the shirt and pulled me close. This is the book.

The prayer book for the church. It must be passed on to the next prayer warrior of the church.

Take it! And you...you tell them that Jesus is real...and that He loves them...that is your call.

Three days later...Miss Ayers passed. And to this day I have tried to do what she asked.

So why don't we pant and thirst for the Living God?  
When we are out in the far country...in the separated wilderness the enemy spins us around.  
And he does it with remembering. He speaks loud and fast in voices that are very familiar to us.

When we cannot hear our shepherd's voice we will be at the beckon call of every other voice.  
The voice of shame, pointing out failures in our past  
The voice of condemnation from others  
The voice of guilt, from our own conscience  
The voices of obligation, from someone else's agenda  
The voice of hurt that calls for us to hide...  
The voice of vengeance that will not let us heal...  
These voices will isolate us. Yet, one voice calls us to choose. To choose to follow a different path. Intimacy and relationship.

When we hear his voice calling to us we must begin to choose between the value of Christ and the value of the competing voices that try to destroy us.  
Scripture tells us that to walk out of the wilderness and toward God we must practice two disciplines daily.  
Remembering and forgetting.

Let's start with remembering.  
Our faith is rooted in memory. So much so that one of the key works of the Holy Spirit is the ministry of reminding.

In [John 14:26](#) Jesus tells the disciples that the Holy Spirit will call us to remembrance:  
**"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."**

Know why this is important?

The day that we forget the works of God, from ages past until this very morning, is the day our faith starts to deform into something else: mythology, superstition, ideology, and just plain religion.

Remembering well is essential to an authentic, living faith.

Coupled with remembering well is the flip side of the coin. Forgetting.

Turn with me to [Phil. 3:13-14](#)

**(Read)**

Paul maintained his focus by **forgetting what lies behind**. A runner who looks back risks being passed. Note this as well a runner's performance in past

races does not guarantee success or failure in present or future races. The past is not relevant; what matters is making the maximum effort in the present so as to sustain momentum in the future.

The Apostle Paul maintained his focus by **reaching forward to what lies ahead**.

**"Reaching forward"** is literally translated from the Greek compound verb that means "to stretch". It describes stretching a muscle to its limit, and pictures a runner straining every muscle to reach the finish line.

Only by forgetting, Paul says can he **"press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me"** [Phil. 3:12](#)

Taking hold of God's call on our lives depends on this quality of forgetfulness. Know this. Certain memories will fight and clamor for preeminence in your life, but you must deny them.

These memories are bullies.

They seek to use up all the energy that might be better invested in remembering well or reflecting truthfully.

These kinds of memories are gluttonous and are never satisfied with just a little of your heart. They want, not just the day it had, but every day, today and tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, until the end of all of your days.

As a sheepdog, I have spoken to hundreds of people held hostage by these kinds of memories. Old wounds that they keep reopening. Old glories they keep reliving. Old grudges they keep nursing. Old taunts that they keep rehearsing. Old fears they keep reviving. These memories are a wilderness of darkness that they have lived in so long that they have forgotten the way back home.

They are what we call stuck.

True remembering gets us unstuck.

Turn with me to [2 Timothy 2:8](#).

This is Paul's last letter before he was beheaded by Rome. In it he gave words of counsel and encouragement to his young friend about how to survive criticism, and moral and spiritual warfare. But all of his counsel could be summed in these words.

**"Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David".**

The word "remember" is an imperative in the Greek. That means that this is a command from the old apostle.

In the Greek the word is in the active voice also, it carries with it the idea of "keep on remembering". Paul in effect was saying, "Remember Jesus Christ in His humanity, Timothy. Remember that, wherever you may go, He has been there before you.

No matter where your journey takes you, Jesus has already traveled there. This creates an intimacy with our God. He understands because He was one of us.

When we have a problem we are able to bring it to the One who can fully understand what we are going through.

When Jesus was in the wilderness...He remembered. He remembered His Father. He remembered that He was loved.

Do you remember well?

Turn with me to [Hebrews 10:32, 35-36](#)

**"Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering...Do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere."**

**Persevere:** to persist in anything undertaken; maintain a purpose in spite of difficulty, obstacles, or discouragement; continue steadfastly.

Why is this important?

Turn with me to [2 Timothy 3:1](#)

Vs. 1

I can imagine Paul grabbing Timothy by his shirt and snapping him out of his slumber with these words. "Realize this". This word in the Greek is in the present tense, which carries the ideas of constancy and continuity. As long as Timothy was given breath and energy to serve the Lord and the Lord's people, he was to heed this warning from Paul.

Paul also tells us that it will be in these "last days" that we need to be aware of our surroundings. The last days is the time between the first and second coming of Jesus Christ. These last days were also spoken by the prophet Joel:

**"and it shall be in the last days; God says, "That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind". Joel 2:28**

We are still living in the messianic time. That time will end with the shout of the archangel and with the removal of the church.

In those days, Paul says, "difficult times will come." "Chelepos" "difficult" carries the ideas of perilous or grievous or violent or savage. It was also used to describe an ugly, infected and dangerous wound.

The word "time" used here does not refer to chronological time but is the Greek word "kairos". This refers to periods of time, to seasons, and eras. Paul is making clear here that these savage times will become more and more frequent and intense, and as the time of Christ draws near times of peace and tranquility will become less and less frequent.

*The Barbaric Age of Self*

[Read 2 Tim. 2:3-4](#)

With that warning from Paul in mind I call you as the church of the Risen Lamb to remember...

Because of the Lamb of God's sacrifice for us; we are free.

The sacrifice that was made on that Roman cross was personal. It was for you. And for me. The account of the resurrection speaks to us of hope, of new beginnings, of victory over tears and disappointment...over pain, shame and fear. The resurrection is the death of death. Life overcomes. The Lamb wins.

**Because** of the Lamb, the resurrection declares who we are:

We belong to Him and He to us.

Because of the Lamb we are the people of "resurrection morning", a morning where new life in Christ prevailed over violence, and the age of amazing grace began!!!

In the book of [John chapter 20](#) is John's account of the resurrection of the Lamb. Read it!

I want you to note as you read John's account, that resurrection morning was personal.

As the dawn broke...a familiar name is spoken by lips that should not be speaking.

Mary gasps as she recognizes the risen Lord.

Peter and John upon finding the tomb empty, run breathless back to town...hope arises...

Two men walking together toward Emmaus, heartbroken at the death of a dream...meet a third man, who tells them about the Christ, and how all of Scripture has been fulfilled because of the Lamb. Hope restored

Ten hushed and broken disciples waiting in the upper room, fearful, and uncertain what to do next, when Jesus appears in the midst and says  
"Peace be with you."

Because of the Lamb, the tables have been turned.

The violence of all of our pain, shame and fear, that fell upon Jesus at the cross, has been turned.

Because God raised the Lamb from the grave, Jesus has delivered a devastating blow to the kingdom of darkness...

**Paul tells us that it is the death of death:**

**[2 Timothy 1:9-10](#)**

**"Grace...has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel!"**

When we least expect it, our risen Lord comes to us.

**"I am the resurrection and the life," he tells us ([Jn. 11:25](#))**

Then He invites us to share in His resurrection power and take upon ourselves His righteousness so that we can stand confidently in the presence of the Father.

I call you to remember.

Do you remember the moment you knew you were loved with a love that could not be taken or broken or lost? Do you remember the day when God's voice broke into your life like a storm, terrifying and healing all at once?

Hold that memory until it's alive, until it assumes its true size and weight and shape.

Persevere...

Until that memory reminds you who you really are!

This is when we turn toward home. With that memory alive we become acutely aware of where we are...and where we need to be. We begin to pay attention to the present. In paying attention to the present, we can arise in the power of the Holy Spirit and walk in the Spirit. We can begin to nurture expectancy about the future. We turn our face toward home...

An email from Stephanie:

Me Again,

So, after I wrote that all out, I went back and re-read it. What stood out the most was "I feel" statements.

When I was a teenager, you taught me "your feelings will lie to you." That has always stuck with me. It taught me not to trust my feelings, but I can trust God and His promises.

I can "feel" far from God, I can "feel" like my prayers aren't heard, I can "feel" like I got His message wrong...but that doesn't mean any of those statements are true. That's why the bible says walk by faith, not by sight. I don't need proof from God to know He remains true to His word. My job is just to trust Him and hold onto His promises.

After all these years, I still remember many things you taught me. You helped lay a foundation that's unshakable. It's nice to have something to rely on and return to in times like these. It's probably why I'm still around. Thank you, Rob.

Selah.