

Ponderings from Pastor Paul

I'm guessing you have noticed, but the world around us appears to be coming apart at the seams. The coronavirus pandemic has killed more than 400,000 around the world. Dams have collapsed and entire towns have been wiped out, affecting us and those we know and love. Our country is on the brink of a race revolution that often tips toward violence. The political climate is polarized and few seem to want to listen to the voices of their opponents in an attempt to work for understanding and compromise. The hurricane season began earlier than normal and a second wave of the pandemic is predicted.

I know that's a pretty doom and gloom start to an article, but the reality is that there is plenty to be afraid of. That is, unless you have a God you can trust to carry you through times like these. In the bible, God regularly gives words and visions of assurance so that we do not have to be afraid. One of my favorites is the story in 2 Kings chapter 6 as Elisha and his servant are surrounded by a great army, but God is with them. In verse 16, Elisha says to his servant, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Elisha prays and God opens the servant's eyes to see the army of the Lord prepared to defend them.

The unbelieving world looks at the events of our day and trembles in fear. We can open our eyes to see that God has an army greater than the chaos around us. Christians know that not only do we have faith in the God of creation, but we have faith in the Savior of the world. The God who restores all things through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus says in John 16:33 (ESV), "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Life is going to be tough sometimes, but Jesus has overcome. He has won the victory, and he shares that victory with us. John writes in 1 John 5:4 (ESV), "For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." It is our faith, which has been given to us by the Holy Spirit, that provides the path to victory in overcoming the world. Faith in a Savior who suffered for you. Faith in a God who promises his love will endure through our times of suffering. Faith to strengthen us in those times,

so we can emerge on the other side knowing he truly was with us. Faith given to us to encourage the hearts of those struggling in fear today.

God calls you today to not be afraid, but to rejoice in his victory. He calls you today to recognize the power of his salvation and to be a part of his plan to draw the world to him. May we be strong and courageous in these days and may God empower us to share our reason for courage with a world living in fear.

God loves you and so do I!

Pastor Paul