

What Keeps You Going?

Good Morning, Thank you for joining us today.
I'm Pastor Bill and this is Solid

When Covid hit last year and (*for the first time that I know of*) — whole countries shut down and ordered everyone to stay in their houses;

I have to admit that for the first time in my life — I truly became concerned for the outlook of the world as we **knew** it.

I say Knew it — because a year later, things are still **not** as they once were.

--

At the beginning of last year, we had made plans in our church, for the directions that we felt would be pleasing and honoring to God; and we were about to make some additions to our leadership team; the week that everything stopped.

In one week, my phone went crazy with phone calls on how we could continue to speak HOPE into people's lives, while being confined to our homes.

The people we needed — (*to make this possible*) stepped up, and we entered the media-age — in one week.

You've heard the phrase "**Ready or Not**" ?

Well let me tell you — I was **FAR** from ready.

That first Sunday I practiced my sermon in front of the camera for around an hour or more.

Justin was very patient with me — and especially the fact that none of our equipment was geared to do what we were about to do.

We made all kinds of adjustments — took a deep breath, prayed together and watched as Justin’s hand dropped to signify “We were live”.

Because I was sooo overcome with fear; I could barely breath — and to keep myself still for the camera, I had to hold my hands twisted in the pulpit, so that if I moved, the tug would remind me to stay put.

***I had told multiple people a few months prior to this, that I would NEVER be putting video messages on the internet. The best I could handle, was audio recordings — that were extensively edited (thanks to the help of Linda T.)

Have you heard the saying — “Never say never”?

Well — my never, was short lived.

— — —

Over the next few months, we got some new equipment and made some adjustments and I began to see people on the other side of that camera, who were looking for Hope.

Responses started to come in — and our team who fielded them; were gracious enough to shield me from the critics.

I heard about the people who would not normally enter our church — receiving different encouragements from our services.

Now when I look into this camera, I see those people’s faces, waiting to hear what God has for today.

What once terrified me, now has become a blessing — that carries further, then I was able to reach before.

What once looked like a huge stumbling block, has now become a new level to stand upon.

— — — —

I remember hearing about all the crazy things that started happening and the talk about the end times.

I remember on one of the first Sundays (*that we were finally able to gather again*), I came into church and asked Merritt to help me move the pulpit off the platform.

That Sunday ((The only time in my life — well, so far)) I delivered God's word — sitting in a chair.

I started that Sunday by saying, "This is what we're hearing. But what does God's word say? Let's find out right now."

In that service, we looked at the things that Jesus said will take place before He returns.

We discovered that several of them, have occurred already, but some have not ((at least — not yet)).

*******That Sunday I did Not preach a message; That Sunday we gathered together and looked for hope in God's word.***

— — —

About a month after that message— I couldn't get away from all the voices that were speaking of the end coming (*to several significant parts of our world*).

In numerous ways fear was building all around us (*for what the future holds*) — and I began to feel that if the end was coming, then I had better get serious in telling people, what to expect and how to prepare.

By the end of last summer, I began to hear in our congregation, that the messages had gotten stuck on one season of scripture.

I discovered that My Fear, my obligation as a pastor and my attention in the word of God — had twisted together and had taken over.

And people were beginning to struggle with finding hope in the current situations **and now in church too.**

The truth is; FEAR is very controlling and it tends to stop people from moving.

That's why coaches, military leaders and strategists — teach people to build fear in their opponents.

Fear causes us to shrink back, to pause, to delay — it causes us to miss opportunities. Fear stops people in their tracks.

Fear is a tactic — and your spiritual enemy loves to cause it in you.

—But I tell you this morning, that there is a weapon that stands against fear.

The Bible, (God's Holy Teaching) handed down to mankind — is also called "The Truth".

In John 8:31-32, we find that Jesus says,

"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Jesus tells us how to be set free from fear (set free from other things too) but for today we're looking to escape fear.

Jesus tells us that if we follow in His written word, we will find the truth — (*stored inside it*). And these truths will set us free from the fears that the enemy is working so hard to build inside us.

In God's word, we find the truths that set us free from our fears.

((I can not address the individual truths that tear down every fear in one message or even in a series of messages. Because It takes the whole bible to address every fear known to mankind.))) — But I tell you, if you're struggling with fear today— God's word holds the specific truth — that will set you free from it.

***How strongly do you want to be set free? Would you search through a pile of keys to find the one that will release you?

Will you dig through God's word to find your key?

It is in there — — would you take the time to dig for it?

— — — —

Our title for today is:

“What keeps you going?”

— — —

And I'm going to jump right into our key scripture for this morning also:

(Romans 15:13) ESV says,

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace *in believing*, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

— — —

May You be FILLED with peace and joy through your belief in Jesus.

May this belief — open you **to** the working of the Holy Spirit within you— preparing you to overflow with HOPE.

***Are you overflowing with HOPE?

— — —

When doubt and fears flood your world — what keeps you going?

***The truth stored in God's word, says that your belief in Jesus — brings you peace, joy and hope.

Because you believe in Jesus:

— You'll find that There's NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN — God has seen it all — and seen each day and moment, as it approached.

—>Receive peace — He knew this day was coming — He's built His plan for you — around it.

You can be at peace today because He already knows every event in your life that will cause you to trip— and His hand will always be there to catch you, as you do.

There are times in life, that will knock the wind out of you; some will leave us dazed and confused; while others will cause us to question our faith all together.

**Even in this — you can have peace, because you know that God missed nothing when He looked your life over (from beginning to end) and He declares that He will give beauty for the ashes found in our lives.

Nothing has escaped His attention

So receive peace — you are in His hands

— — —

Because you believe in Jesus:

— When you discover that you are not capable of living up to God's standards (You keep falling short) Every success opens your eyes to another area that you missed. — —

When you discover that you are not capable of living up to God's standards — — You may find sorrow and possibly shame; but don't hold onto those — reach for the truth — — —>

Jesus didn't leave the splendor of heaven to come down to this broken world — to take a vacation.

He left heaven and came down to this world, because it was obvious, that no person in this world, could or would ever; get everything in life — perfect.

He left heaven to save the souls of mankind.

He left heaven to make the way for us to enter into heaven.

The truth is: NO HUMAN is perfect — none except God — None except Jesus (*who is fully human but also, fully God*).

Jesus came down from heaven because we need a Savior; and He did exactly what was needed to save your soul, and mine.

When you are reminded that you keep failing to live up to God's standards — — **Receive Joy** — because Jesus came to your rescue already.

— — — —

When shame and regret come knocking at your door — tell them, “Your time here will be short — giving opportunity for my heart to seek repentance — ***But don't get comfy*** — cause Joy is coming in the morning.”

Don't think you're taking up residency in my life— because my Savior has already paid that debt.

Shame and regret — your job is strictly to point me to my need for a Savior.

Thankfully I already know, that when I see your face — I need to turn around so I can focus on His face again.

Shame and regret — your only purpose in my life; is to tell me I've made a wrong turn. To turn around quick, and get back on track.

There's no long term parking here — for you; because the mercies of my God are new every morning.

Every morning, He sets me back on my feet and says, “Good Morning My beloved child. Are you ready to try this again?”

— — —

If this is the word you need this morning? — receive it **and be filled with joy** — Your God abounds in mercy.

— — —

Peter asked Jesus, “How many times should I forgive a brother who sins against me?”

***What was Jesus' response?

((I'll give you the simplified version))

— **More times than is worth keeping track of.**

****We've already established that God lives by higher standards than we can achieve— — so if we are to forgive beyond keeping count, anyone who sins against us;*

Then what level of forgiveness would you suspect that God is at, for all those who sin against Him?

Receive JOY — God's mercy for you is new this morning.

And He's asking, “Are you ready to try again?”

— — — — —

I want to share with you, another scripture this morning:

(Romans 12:12)ESV which says,

12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

— — — —

I shared the stuff this morning about some of our experiences in Covid last year, because of the places that those times of tribulation took me.

I share all this this morning because, the place that many of us go to, when things get rocky, the waves start crashing against us, the walls seem to be caving in — the place that many of us go to — is not the place that God wants us to run too.

I share this because the truth says, that Hope is found in Jesus Christ.

The word of God says that

(Romans 8:38-39) ESV

38 I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Our hope of salvation through Jesus Christ — can not be hindered by anything outside of our own desire to set our hearts on Him as Lord and Savior.

So Rejoice in the Hope that we have, securely established through the work of Jesus, our Savior.

Rejoice in how firmly secure this promise is — — and continually remind yourself to be patient in troubling times.

Not only patient; but constantly in prayer.

— — — —

You see Jesus gave us this example too— in every trial and turbulent portion of Jesus' life; we find Him going off to pray.

Even He — knowing things that others could not fathom, walked through difficult times in His life — constantly separating to dive deep into prayer.

It's important that we receive these teachings, from God's holy scriptures — because we don't really know what tomorrow holds.

And if vast tribulations are truly going to sweep across this world, as many are predicting; then my heart for you this morning is that you will know, the truth.

You will know how secure your hope in Christ, truly is.

You will know to be patient as the tribulation works through its course.

And you will know to **run to God in prayer.**

— — — — —

I have 2 more scriptures to pass on to you this morning, as we close up our service today:

1 — (John 16:33) ESV

33 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.**”

— —

Jesus has already made it through; the door is open and all who follow His voice — will make it through the narrow gate — into paradise with God, for all of eternity.

— — —

What keeps you going?

Could it be the fact that in God's eyes, all these things have already come about and He still declares that all the followers of Jesus, can have peace in the times of tribulation, because your souls are already accounted for.

Your name is already inscribed in the Lambs Book of Life.

What keeps you going — when the world around you is screaming and crying **“Give up!!!”**?

What keeps you praying and reaching, seeking for His leading and praising His name?

What keeps you going — — when every natural thing around you says, “Give up — It's over”?

+++++

Let the Holy Spirit lead.....

+++++

This is my closing verse for today....

No matter what today holds; no matter what tomorrow holds; no matter what next week, next month, or even next year holds

— No matter what the day holds — — remind yourself of this ((God has already seen this day all the way through)) — He knows what it holds and He declares His promise again; My plans are not to harm, they are to lift you up and to give you hope and a future.

God's will is that none would perish, but that through this journey— all would come to repentance.

A day may hold trouble; but God tells us to approach it with faith, confidence, patients, Hope and above all else — prayer.

*****Fear is building all around us and tends to stop people from moving –**

So – What Keeps You Going?

— — — —

Would you all please stand and let's the song inspired by (Psalm 118:24)

This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

=====

Play Song

=====

Close in Prayer.....