

## Introduction:

A lot has been said about 2020 and we can all agree, it has been one for the history books. I got to thinking of the events throughout the year, some personal, and some national in scope. Here's my list as best as I can remember:

**January** – Australian Wildfires (47 million acres burned, 34 deaths); Prince Harry and Meghan quit the royal family, death of Kobe Bryant and his daughter in helicopter crash; some news about a virus in China.

**February** – Florida College lectures cancelled due to out break of measles on campus, Dale Nabours passes away, started seeing more people wearing strange mask, first time my temperature taken before entering a building, entrance into nursing homes restricted, Impeachment of Donald Trump.

**March** – More news about the virus, more mask wearing, tornado goes through Tennessee killing Rodney Pitts daughter, son in-law, and grandson; Mark Thompson dies on March 14 while out in Phoenix, everything shuts down, no March Madness, shut down of businesses deemed non-essential, churches either shut down or go to out door worship, thousands dying in New York City, the pandemic is here. On March 9<sup>th</sup> stock market crashes. Steve Schultz passes away and my first virtual funeral.

**April** – the shut down continues, efforts to contain the virus continues, Presidential election continues.

**May** – 25<sup>th</sup> George Lloyd dies, riots ensues in major cities, churches start meeting in some places on a limited basis, some businesses open up.

**June & July** – riots, cancel culture takes hold, Seattle is a mess as are other cities. Black Lives Matter and Defund the Police movements continue.

**August** – west coast fires, more people die, Presidential election with virtual conventions.

**September** – economy rebounds, virus numbers hold steady, hope of vaccine increases.

**October** - Presidential campaigns, virus news continues, some states shut down businesses due to virus numbers increasing.

**November** – Presidential election over, more people infected with virus, more people dying, news of vaccine sounds good with hope of distribution in December.

**December** – finally made it to the end of the year.

What 2020 has taught us?

I) **Take Nothing For Granted / Be Thankful For What You Have**

A) **Things we had and did without thinking**

1. Toilet paper, food on store shelves, the ability to go into a store, eat at a restaurant, go to a funeral, etc.
2. Going to worship, going to work was replaced with working at home or not working.

B) **It is hard to not take things for granted when they are always there.**

1. ***Matthew 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.*** Became more relevant as some food was in short supply. Reminded

me some of Tula, Russia back in the 1990's.

**1 Timothy 6:6** *Now godliness with contentment is great gain.*

2. A re-evaluation of what is and is not important. Health of family members took on increased importance.
3. Saw generosity as people reached out to help each other.

**1 Timothy 6:17** *Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

## II) Distance Creates Distance

### A) People tried to stay in contact by various means.

1. Zoom, Google Meets, and other social platforms became useful instruments in reaching out and conducting business.
2. Yet increase in suicides as isolation increased. Human contact and face to face is important.

### B) Lesson from those who did not settle in Canaan.

1. **Numbers 32** Gad, Reuben and half tribe of Manasseh asked on remain on the eastern side of the Jordan River.
  - a. Moses pointed out their obligation to their brethren to go and fight in Canaan.

**Numbers 32:6** *And Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben: "Shall your*

***brethren go to war while you sit here?***

b. They agreed to go and fight with their brethren.

***Numbers 32:25*** ***And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying: "Your servants will do as my lord commands. 26 "Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our livestock will be there in the cities of Gilead; 27 "but your servants will cross over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, just as my lord says."***

2. They receive the land.

***Joshua 22:7*** ***Now to half the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the other half of it Joshua gave a possession among their brethren on this side of the Jordan, westward. And indeed, when Joshua sent them away to their tents, he blessed them, 8 and spoke to them, saying, "Return with much riches to your tents, with very much livestock, with silver, with gold, with bronze, with iron, and with very much clothing. Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren." 9 So the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, which they had obtained according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.***

3. But they also saw the danger of being separated from those on the western side of the Jordan River.

- a. They built an altar which created a stir among the other tribes.
- b. The explanation is noteworthy.

***Joshua 22:24 "But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, 'In time to come your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, "What have you to do with the LORD God of Israel? 25 "For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between you and us, you children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the LORD." So your descendants would make our descendants cease fearing the LORD.'***

4. Sayings like "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" is not necessarily true. Absence can make us forget one another.
5. Afraid the church is going to suffer for a long time due to the shut downs.

### III) There is Nothing New Under the Sun

- A) The experiences of a generation may be new to that particular generation.

***Ecclesiastes 1:9 That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun. 10 Is there anything of which it may be said, "See, this is new"? It has already been in ancient times before us. 11 There is no remembrance of former things, Nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come By those who will come after.***

1. My generation had not had a pandemic before but there have been previous "pandemics"

- a. The bubonic plague of 541-542 killed 10% of the world's population
  - b. The black plague 1346-1353 some estimate half of Europe's population died.
  - c. Spanish flu 1918-1920 estimated 500 million died
2. Economic hard times, food shortages, riots, have all happened before.

**B) Can give us comfort and hope**

***1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.***

1. Whatever trials you have to endure, others have done so.
2. Others have suffered in time to need, faced persecution, health issues, etc.
3. The key is to remain faithful in times of trials.

***James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.***

4. Think of those in ***Hebrews 11*** and what they endured in service to God.

***Hebrews 12:3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become***

*weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.*

**IV) Importance of a Solid Foundation.**

***Matthew 7:24*** "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

**A) Foundations of sand will not stand against the storms of life.**

1. Some families have crumbled with divorce.
2. Some people have turned to drugs to overcome the disappointments.
3. Some have become unfaithful to God.

**B) Foundations that will stand.**

1. That built upon the Word of God.
2. Families who adhere to the Bible.
3. Christians who read and study on a daily basis.

**Conclusion:**

The key is to have faith in God and remain faithful in all circumstances.