

- > Great Day beautiful people!..... ***Let's dive right in!***

- > **On** (Sept. 26-27), our hometown was subjected to a massive storm called: "**Helene**"...(a hurricane that made it inland to Valdosta, as a Cat 3 or 2). Windspeeds gusted to **120+ mph**, uprooting tons of giant pine & oak trees. The storm hit at midnight, and the sounds of the wind howling, and trees breaking & falling, was beyond scary! In that moment, **Fear** was a major factor. There was an ever-present fear of trees falling and crashing through roofs, possibly crushing people to death – many homes were destroyed. **Was the fear real?** **You know it!.... Trust**... **Trust** is a constant & major factor in this life - **we either Trust things, or we don't!**

- > How many of you would honestly admit, that you **struggle with** (or even **worry about**): things happening in our country, that feel **out of control**?...(chaos everywhere). Maybe you felt uneasy with the recent election? Or with the open southern border? Or with the current price of gas, food & other commodities?

- **So**, **What if** I told you, "**Don't worry about it - it's not a big deal!**" - "**Why are you so worried & worked up, about things that are out of your control?** If I said that, would you be mad at me, for **NOT** empathizing with you?

-- The Bible tells us (*and we tell each other*), **“Walk in Faith”** -

“Be Steadfast in your faith” - **“Be Immovable in your faith”**. **But, are we?** *Are we immovable & steadfast in our holding to faith in God, when **the crud hits the fan?***

...(Are we the boy David taking down the giant, **OR** Are we the soldiers shaking in their armor?)--(*Do we really, have **“STEADFAST”** Faith?*). (*Biblical **“Steadfast”** means: **“loyal to”; “devoted to”; “firm on”; “unchanging”***).

ex: **Look**, people are all so **confident** when they go hiking in the woods, **UNTIL** the bear shows up! **Likewise**, we are all great **“faith-walkers”**, **UNTIL** the big & scary stuff comes our way! **Yet**, bears, and big & scary stuff, does not alleviate *God’s desire for us* to: **Trust Him Exclusively!** (*exclusively means to: **Trust Him Solely, with EVERYTHING!***)

-- **Seriously**, **If God IS God, then why do we let the big & scary things of this world, freak us out?** **I mean:** **What are all the big & scary things to us, if we truly believe that our God (our Father, Savior, Lord & King), is really **“The One & Only, Overcoming, God”** of all?**

> **Sometimes**, I think that when things are good, we have no problem Trusting God. **But** when we things are **NOT** good, is when we have a **“Trust-differential”**...(we have a **varying degree of Trust, in God**).

Maybe our "*Trust-differential*" **kicks in**, when we:

- 1) Don't **agree with** what God is doing in the world.
- 2) Feel like things are way **out of OUR control**.
- 3) Feel like there are things **threatening our safety**.

> **What are these things to us Christians... things that cause us to show "varying degrees" of Trust in God?**

-- **If you** have a Bible, join me in looking at: **John 21:19b-23**.

Jesus appears to the disciples, following His resurrection from the dead. Jesus builds a fire, and uses some of the disciple's fish to cook breakfast. Suddenly **verse 19b** says, "*Then he (Jesus) said to him (Peter), "Follow me!"*" (So, *Jesus & Peter leave the greater group, and take a stroll along the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Can you just see them there, walking along, arm & arm? So Jesus was seeking to restore Peter, after he had "denied knowing Him" 3 times.* **Don't miss that:** Peter "**denied knowing Jesus**", at the point that he was **fearful** for his life! What happened to his "Exclusive, Unshakable, Trust"?)

- **Verse 20**, "*Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?"). 21 When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" 22 Jesus answered, "If I*

want him to remain alive until I return, **what is that to you?**
You must follow me." 23 Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "**If I want** him to remain alive until I return, **what is that to you?**" NIV **Come on**, grab those 2 thoughts, out of the last sentence: Jesus said, "**If I want**" (*meaning: Jesus IS in-charge!*).... and then He said, "**What is that to you?**". Jesus could have asked: "**Why is that something to you?**" **low**: "**I don't get why that circumstance, or that person, or that storm, is bothering you - YOU are supposed to HAVE FAITH "in Me", no matter what!**"

-- **Come on**, we all do it... **We question God's Resolve**, every time that things begin to look bad, in our life-sphere!
Seriously, When God allows troubles to come our way - we quickly counter with a lack of Belief & Trust in Him.... **Look**, we pray all the time: "**Thy kingdom come, thy Will "BE DONE", on earth as it is in heaven**". **Literally**, We say, God's Will, **WILL BE DONE**, on earth, as it is in heaven!
Do we really know what all is going on in heaven right now? **We proclaim** every time that we recite "*The Lord's Prayer*", "**yeah God, do Your thing on earth, as You are doing it in heaven**" - **BUT**, we may **NOT agree/care** for the things that He is actually doing, *that we don't understand!*

- God is working His "Master Plan" to save the world, and nothing or no one, CAN CHANGE His Resolve to seeing the masses of human beings getting saved...(*masses of people that He loves immensely*). He won't stop working His Mission, until He saves all the savable – then He will finally close out this broken world...(*even amongst our objections*)
- ...God is causing things to happen in heaven (*and on earth too*), to ensure His Salvation Plan is fulfilled. There is a cosmic battle happening right now (*between the forces of good & evil*), to try and stop God's Plan (*and we all see it & feel it down here.....*). **But God** is already **The Victor**, since Jesus OVERCAME satan & evil, on the cross of Calvary! **Boom**, "**It Is Finished**" Jesus said – and all we have to do is: "**Trust Him on this!**". Evil has already been dealt its death-blow, even if your heart cannot see it sometimes!
- > Back to John 21, verses 19b-23, Jesus told Peter twice: "**What is that to you?**" (*a question*). But He also told Peter twice: "**YOU must follow Me!**" (*a command*). **Likewise**, Jesus says that "WE" **CAN & WILL** follow Him too - for He said that: the minute we ask Him into our heart (*to be our Lord & Savior*), is the minute **Act's 1:8** kicks into gear: "**you will receive Power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses... everywhere & to everything!**" NIV **Exclusive Trust of God, starts here!**

- **Now**, the first time that Jesus told Peter to follow Him, Peter got right up and did follow Him (*along the shores of Galilee*). **But**, in-between the first & second "**Follow Me**", Peter "**looks back**"...(*very reminiscent of when he: walked on the water with Jesus, but then looked away from The Lord, and sank*).
- ...Peter's follow-thru (*with Trusting & Following the Lord Solely*), abruptly ended, with Him questioning Jesus! (See how we all question the Lord, and show a lack of Trust in Him?)
- **OK Then**, Peter opened his mouth and asked, "**Lord, what about him?**" Peter said, "**LORD**, what about him?"
- ...The term "Lord", has a meaning. In the Hebrew context, "**Lord**" (*spelled only with the "L" capitalized*), means:
"**Master**" – as referring to: a servant speaking to their king.
- So Peter responded to Jesus' question by identifying Jesus as his **Master (King)**, **but then** he went on to question his King "**What about him?**"... (**OK**, *just saying, but most kings would have had Peter's head, for questioning him like that!*)
- **In my personal belief**, the reason Peter objected to John following he & Jesus – was because Peter was **jealous** of John's deep relationship with Jesus! Go back to **verse 20**, "*Peter turned and saw that the disciple, whom Jesus loved, was following them*". Maybe Peter doesn't **AGREE** with Jesus, for letting John follow them? Maybe Peter thought he should

have been restored in private? Maybe this whole moment (of restoration), felt **OUT OF CONTROL** to him? Maybe Peter **FEARED** that John would tell the others, about this very private matter between Jesus & himself? No matter what the Truth was in Peter's heart – **he questioned the Lord of Life!**

...Let me get back to, "**What is that to YOU?**" Just what are all the things going on, in our world today, to us?

Only God knows what He **HAS TO DO**, to get us all into His Kingdom. Only God knows what He **HAS TO DO**, to get us to worship Him alone. **Look**, God loves to **BLESS** us, when we do what is right! God sometimes has to **DISCIPLINE** us, when we do what is wrong! But God sometimes has to **BRING US TO OUR KNEES**, when we refuse to obey His Word & Will, and quit doing wrong! God will do whatever He has to - to Save us, and to bring about His Kingdom Come!

...and what can any of us do about that? **Psalm 135:6** says, "**The Lord does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.**" NIV

...Again, Whatever He allows to happen on the earth (or in America), that is **His business!** As His children (servants), we are to **AGREE WITH** His Work, to save the world – and we are NOT TO: panic, worry, or have anxiety! **Seriously folks**, **God is STILL** large and in-charge – **AGREE** with His Business, even if it does not make sense to you!

- **Believers** always proclaim, “**The works of The Lord, are a mystery**” *....and the Supernatural, leaves us in awe!* **But**, God hasn’t left us, in total darkness. **Ephesians 1:9-10** tells us, “*he (God) **made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment - to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.***” NIV
- **Good glory**, that passage tells me that: God HAS forewarned us (*explained to us*), about all the things going on around us, in these last days. He explained these mysteries to us, so that we will “*Completely Trust Him*” – **KNOWING that** everything is **OK**...(*no matter what crazy stuff He has to do, to bring this world to its finale*’).
- ...**And**, that’s why I believe, that Jesus chastised Peter with the whole “**What is that to you?**” – He was telling Peter: **Quit freaking out** about: 1) things that are you don’t **Agree with**, or 2) things that are **Out of your control**, or 3) things that make you feel **Uneasy or Fearful**.
- Jesus then moved Peter to **do something better** – He said to him, “**YOU must follow Me!**” He was saying: Peter, if you will just focus on Me (*instead of what troubles your soul*), then you Know & Feel “**the Peace**” that comes only from Me!

- **So** Jesus tells you & I today: No matter what **I am** doing in the world right now, "**YOU have to follow Me!**" – "**YOU have to keep your walk with Me tight!**" – "**YOU have to keep your eyes **FIXED** on Me". Our faith in Jesus, should be so strong, that: **1)** any disagreement with anything that is going on, shouldn't matter.. **2)** any feelings of something being out of control to us, shouldn't matter.. **3)** anything that tries to present itself as fear to us, shouldn't matter.. all of the chaos going on, should "**bounce right off of us**" - **because** God is STILL "**The One & Only, True, God**" - He is STILL on His Throne – everything is **OK**, there in The Palm of His Hand!**
- > **John 16:33**, "*In this world you **WILL have trouble**. **But**, take heart, I have overcome the world!*" **Isn't that statement enough, to SETTLE our troubled souls? Shouldn't it be? He's got the Power.... Power to overcome death & the grave... Power to raise us all from the absolute dead... And surely, He's got The Power to keep the storm from completely wiping us all out... etc., etc., etc.**
- **Therefore**, we are NOT to freak out with all the troubles going on, because God is the Creator of all that there is - He is the Caregiver & Protector over His people - He is a Promise-keeper - and He is with us all the time (**HE never forgets, or forsakes us...(always with us)** - **WE are the apple of His Eye**)

- When God makes a Promise to us, He **WILL keep it!**
When God says that He will save us out of this world, and bring us in His Kingdom (*when we accept His Son's sacrifice & offering on the cross*) - then He **WILL do so!**

* If God's Promise is **Solidified in you**, then what all goes on in this crazy world, should NOT bother you one bit! Where is our "Mustard-seed" sized, Faith & Trust in God?

- What has God already told us? Jer. 29:11, "*For I know the plans I have for you,*" declares the Lord, "**plans to prosper you and not to harm you**, plans to give you hope and a future." NIV God said that He has "**Good** & "**Great**" plans for our life & future...(*plans that will NOT harm us*).

If we Truly believe this: What is there to question/fear?
...Frankly, Peter never should have looked back, **CONCERNED about John following them...** John was **Jesus' business!**

> Folks, it is football season... and if you've ever have seen a team closing out (*Solidifying*) their win - they will do what is called the: "**Victory-Formation**"... they line up tightly together, snap the ball, and take a knee to run out the clock.

-- Good brothers & sisters, WE should be lining up (*everyday*) in the "**Victory-Formation**" in **Christ**... for the clock is running out on this world (*and the devil knows it*). We should

be living “**The Victory**”, for indeed Christ has **Overcome** all forms of evil – and is seated in heaven, beside His Father, and He has ALL AUTHORITY!

- **Please**, see this message from God’s Reality... We were created **BY** God, **FOR** God...(we are His!) All the craziness going on, is in God’s Plan & Hand – **therefore**, we should NOT get ruffled one bit! Our Trust & Faith must stay SOLIDLY glued to our All-powerful, All-present, God. We should live out “The Truth”, as Job did (**Job 13:15**), “*Though He slay me – YET, will I Trust Him!*”

- **No matter what**, we should sing, “**Because He lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He lives, all fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future - life is worth the living - just because He lives!**”

- **Beautiful people**... Do as Peter told us in **1 Peter 5:7**, “**Cast** *all your cares/anxiety/worries/troubles/on him, because He cares for you.*” Understand, the word “**Cast**” here, means to: “**throw upon/deposit with**”... (*like throwing your heavy equipment on the back of a camel*)... And don’t worry if Jesus cannot handle it – He said that His burden is light; *He’s got it!*

- **So**, folks, “**Cast**” (“**Throw**”) **every one of your cares & burdens, upon Jesus** today... cast them (*throw them*) to

Him, in Absolute & Full Trust **in Him!** *You can do it right now, thru prayer....* Jesus is totally listening for your call, this very minute.

-- Prayer.....

> **Hear now this closing Word** (*God's Word to us*), written by the prophet Isaiah - found in **Isaiah 41:10**, "*Do not **fear**, for I am with you. Do not be **dismayed**, for I am your God. I will **strengthen** you and **help** you. I will **uphold** you with MY righteous right hand.*" NIV

Message sidenote: *I made a scriptural error when recording the message. Near the end of the message, I spoke of Jeremiah 29:11, but I referenced it as Philippians 29:11. Please know that the scripture content was right, just the passage name was announced wrong.*

Discovery questions:

- 1)** When life throws you a curve ball (*something that is unexpected and not pleasant*), do you experience anxiety, worry, fear, confusion, anger, hostility, etc.?
- 2)** How do you typically “react” when the curve ball comes your way?
 - 2a)** Are you truly happy, or saddened, about the way that you reacted to the curve ball?
- 3)** Do you believe that Jesus Chris really HAS overcome evil & the grave, and therefore IS “The Victor”?
 - 3a)** If you DO believe that He is The Victor over all things; then WHY do you freak-out, panic, worry, etc. over things that you perceive are bad or harmful?
 - 3b)** Do you really believe in Jeremiah 29:11 that: God really does have good plans for you and your future – plans that would never harm you?
- 4)** If this lesson was about “you” instead of Peter; how would you respond to Jesus’ question, “What’s That to You?”
 - 4a)** Would you really tell Jesus that: you freaked-out (*during a time of trouble(s)*) – because you opted out of seeking Him & His Peace, to follow your own intellect & life-fixes?