**COVID-19 FAMILY MEETING**

**4-10-2020**

These panel discussions are hoped to be expressions of hope and encouragement along with sympathy for any of our brethren who are struggling with this unprecedented experience and how it might affect our spiritual lives for the better even through temporal trials.  The LORD has allowed this as a UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH, for each of us. It is indeed a STRESS TEST for our Faith and our relationships.

We realize that this trial, like other trials, even though all are affected by it in some way, some of our brethren are going to be much more severely impacted than others. This realization should temper our own conversation in order not to increase a possible “trial of comparisons”

OBJECT: Isa. 35:3-5

“Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not, behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense, he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.”

Strengthen the weak hands: Stay spiritually engaged.

Strengthen the feeble knees: Take courage in God and Christ.

Strengthen the fearful hearts: Strive for inner peace of God in Christ.

Session 1 – “Stories of the treasure Hid in A Field”

Matt. 13:44

Rpt. 4535 “Sold All That He Had and Bought”

Session 2 – “How will we conduct ourselves during this crisis?

Rom. 14:12 “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God”

This tells us that we should be most concerned with how God, our heavenly Father regards our words and conduct.

Our hearts are as an open book to Him.

Even though we have failures, if we from a sincere heart can report that we tried our best, we know our Father is merciful.

1. How can we apply and consider Luke 21:36?

“Watch ye therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

1. Watch = pay attention. Be circumspect (Eph. 5:15-18).

Watch within ourselves, consider our own character development, our own motives (I Cor. 16:14 Weymouth – “motives of love”).

Watch without, that is, pay attention to the prophetic horizon, study God’s Word and Plan with an eye on how the prophetic timeline of events is to progress or unfold. Then as faithful witnesses for the Truth we might best understand our current and near responsibilities.

In the Garden Jesus told his sleepy disciples to “watch and pray” (Matt. 26:41 “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation, the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak”).

His disciples were sleepy, when the trial was upon them they were not sure how to act, how to conduct themselves. Peter acted impulsively, contradicting one of Jesus’ plain teachings, “turn the other cheek,” “love your enemies,”,“do good to them that persecute you”.

1. Pray = continually seek to understand God’s will for us. In communing with our Father, we are demonstrating to Him that we sincerely are trying to pay attention.

It is a way to reassure our hearts that God is in control, that He is our strength, His providences are our hope.

1. Accounted worthy = Standing at the mark of perfect love (in our hearts’ intentions, motives).

Final testing of our characters, crystallized in patient endurance of selfless love. Complete submission to the will of God, come what may.

1. To escape all these things… = Yes, this is a precious promise, a hope, that even though we might pass through very difficult times yet it is the Great Company who will, who need to, pass through the worse time of trouble, the Armageddon Crash.

This was pictured by Jesus, whom, while carrying his cross, told the weeping women to weep for themselves….

2. How can we apply and consider Luke 21:33-35?

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged (weighted down), with surfeiting (self-indulgence), and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.”

1. We have lived through many serious birth-pangs (Oil Crisis of late 70’s & early 80’s, 9-11, Eastern Electrical Grid shut down, Hurricanes, Great Recession). Since WWI and the ending of the Gentile Times, we know that this Old Order must pass away. But because of the long passage of time between birth pangs and the full or partial recoveries, we might become complacent and not feel a sense of SPIRITUAL URGENCY.

Jesus said in Luke 12:20 “But God said unto him, Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee…”

1. In this country, we have been blessed with an emerging social program of unemployment at both the State and Federal level to help those currently unemployed. And for others like retirees, they will receive federal assistance checks. There are other substantial helps, like no foreclosures, no rent, no utility shut offs, a delay in paying certain taxes, no RMDs unless you choose to. These are indeed band aids. However, brethren in other countries are not so fortunate.

Regardless, we have to try extra hard to not allow our minds and conversations to be dominated by financial concerns. Our heavenly Father knows what we have need of.

Once we have done what we can in setting our financial house in order, we do best to leave it there.

If we have not been wise in our financial choices and decisions in the past (as in the Great Recovery boom Bull market), then let us resolve before the LORD to learn from this experience and do better hence forth.

We have what the world does not – the Promised over ruling providences of our God. We are a Covenanted People. However, we have to have both a good submissive attitude as well as to do what we can with what we have. We need to give God something to work with.

Our Father is interested in our EFFORTS, more than in the RESULTS.

2. When we are in this trial, why do we need to give diligence to our words and actions?

I Cor. 4:9 “For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels, and to men”

II Cor. 3;2 “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men.”

Every one of us has some level of concern in this hardship. It is how we conduct ourselves that people will remember.

If we usually go off to work, now that we are home full time, all of a sudden, are we bringing our “work personality” home?

Are we showing anxiety or anger or being ornery or short tempered?

Often one might become demanding or regularly telling others what they should be doing.

If we find that we have been less than kind, it is good to apologize. Remember, the first one to apologize in a spat, or argument, is the bravest. Seeking forgiveness when we are wrong is a virtue. It is not a weakness.

When one cannot apologize when it is appropriate, this is weakness.

To forgive in these quarrels is kindness.

Eph. 4:26 from Weymouth “If angry, beware of sinning: let not your irritation last until the sun go down, and do not leave room for the devil.”

3. What lessons can II Pet. 1:5-7 give us in this isolation?

II Pet. 1:5-7 “And beside this, giving all diligence add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance (moderation), and to temperance patience and to patience godliness and to godliness brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness charity (agape).”

A little LOVE can have a BIG impact in a SMALL space.

Think on I Cor. 13 as well.

Rpt. 3593 “Because the Days Are Evil,” Subheading: “Helpful Rules for Daily Life”

Short form:

1. Let each resolve to mind his own business.
2. Exercise great patience with others and their faults – more than in dealing with ourselves and our short-comings.
3. Do not be touchy and easily offended.
4. If you have been slandered, you may explain, to set yourself right, either publicly or privately, but surely avoid doing more than this.
5. Evil speaking, backbiting and slandering are strictly forbidden to God’s people, as wholly contrary to his spirit of love.
6. Beware of pride as you would avoid the deadliest plague.
7. Be pure: maintain a conscience void of offense toward God and men.
8. Seek more and more to understand and come into sympathy with the principles which underlies the divine law.
9. Shun a contentious and fault-finding disposition as contrary to the spirit or disposition of Christ – contrary to love.
10. Beware of all thoughts, feelings and conditions directly or remotely connected with malice, envy, strife, hatred.
11. Do not trust your conscience.
12. Do not be bold, except for the right, the truth.

Original Morning Resolve:

“I will this day try to live a sincere and serene life, repelling promptly every thought of discontent, anxiety, discouragement, impurity, self-seeking, cultivation cheerfulness, magnanimity, charity, and the habit of holy silence, exercising economy in expenditure, carefulness in conversation, diligence in appointed service, fidelity to every trust, and a childlike confidence in God.”

Give each other space. Literally and mentally. What does mental space mean? Find your own quiet time. It is healthy.

Remember, a person who is seemingly just “sitting”, may actually be engaged in the most productive activity of their day – THINKING.

What we do in private is what we really are.

What we think in our hearts (inner most thoughts), is what we really are.

If we consider our habits of thought and finding nothing to improve upon, then it is likely that we need to re-read the New Testament.

Matthew chapters 5,6 and 7.

Phil. 4:4-9.

If you would like a greater stimulus when reading these verses, maybe read the Expanded Biblical Comments or perhaps a different Bible translation or both.

Eph. 5:19-21 “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things into God, the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”

Summary of these verses:

Rejoicing inwardly and outwardly.

Gratitude and thankfulness, regardless of our current state of affairs.

Out of reverence for God and His instructions on how we should conduct ourselves, let us be humble with each other.

Try to greet each other in the house with a smile – often.

Don’t worry about the teasing, just keep doing it and others will realize that this has become your habit.

Please and thank-you is always right.

We should bear one another’s burdens, but do not busybody.

Ecclesias have special opportunities and responsibilities to its members (and perhaps others), during this trial.

4. Practical application: what will happen if I die and leave my kids.

A. F554 – 556. Zeph. 2:3. No amount of money nor anywhere they can hide. Rather, being educated in God’s way and will, reverence for Him and a practice of the Golden Rule.

Parents may be able to assist from heaven!

Rpt. 1963 “Our Children In the Time of Trouble”

A more in-depth follow up article is found in:

Rpt. 2019 “The Lord Preserveth The Faithful”.

This article is long. THE MOST DIRECT ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND ALL IS FOUND AT THE END RPT. 2021.

There is this to be said, however; although the great financial and social trouble has not yet come and will not come for some years, yet the great coming event casts its shadows before; and we have something to do with these present-time shadows, spasms and perplexities. While the hearts of the worldly-wise are failing them for fear (not from suffering) and for looking after those things coming (not things already experienced), God's people are to be in no such fear and perplexity. We know in whom we have believed and are persuaded that he is both able and willing to keep that which we have committed to his keeping. These thunderings and dark shadows only corroborate the divine Word which foreshows them all and the glorious results to follow. We will draw the nearer to the Lord and by faith shut about us the more closely the protecting door of our Lord's exceeding great and precious promises.

But we are not to expect miraculous help except when necessary. We are to watch as well as pray, and to seek to order our course in life according to the leadings of divine providence for which we are to be constantly on the lookout. We are to look ahead ([**Prov. 22:3**](https://htdb.space/KJVBible/htdb0020.htm#Prov22:3)) and to use our best judgment accordingly, trusting in and looking for our Lord's providential guidance. This may mean a change of business or not, or even a failure in business. If you have done your best to "owe no man anything but love," and have used your best abilities diligently, and then fail, accept the result with resignation. With the consecrated the chief thought should not be ease, nor large profits, nor best wages, but best conditions: best conditions for personal development in Christian graces, and best conditions for rendering service to the Lord, his people and his truth. If you are married, the interests of your companion along these lines should have equal consideration; and if you have children, they and their interests, present and future, are a part of your charge. You will need divine help in weighing these interests, that you may give to each its proper share of consideration. If you have children, you brought them into the world, and are responsible to them and to God accordingly: you owe them not only religious instruction but secular education and a business or trade preparation, to fit them for and start them in life. If unprepared or unwilling to give them this reasonable start, you should not have begotten them. Having begotten them, they are a first-mortgage upon your time, influence and means; and in providing for them you will be blessed. Not even the gospel has a prior claim upon your time.

But the interests of your children are a part of the Lord's providential care over you, if you are one of his fully consecrated ones. If, therefore, you see opportunities for teaching your children trades less liable to strikes, boycotts and wrangling than your own—more conducive to peace and the cultivation of the graces of **[R2021 : page 193]**the spirit, be willing to sacrifice something for their benefit, if the Lord providentially shows you a good opportunity to do so.

Respecting present business trials: "Trust in the Lord and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed." "I have never seen the righteous forsaken [by the Lord] nor his seed begging bread." These promises are sure, and while doing good and trusting we may also rejoice. This does not imply that you will have no business trials and vexations and disappointments and discouragements. Such experiences may be just what you need to develop your Christian character—in meekness, patience, brotherly-kindness—Love. Your meal and oil may run low, as did those of the widow of Zarephath ([**1 Kings 17:12-16**](https://htdb.space/KJVBible/htdb0011.htm#1King17:12)); but God knoweth it and will provide, with spiritual blessings accompanying, if you will but trust him and do what you can do. The Lord may provide the things needful through our own industry, or through the generosity of friends, or by public provision. While the former is to be desired and sought, the latter are not to be despised or rejected. None of these methods are begging. Accepting proffered help is not begging.

Also, D-540. “But while there is no hope held out that this trouble can be averted, there are instructions given in the Scriptures to such individuals as would hide from the coming storm.

1. The faithful of the church are promised deliverance before the full force of the storm breaks.
2. All who love justice and pursue peace should diligently set their house in order, as directed by the Word of the Lord…”

5. Practical application: What will happen if we run out of money or lose my job/pension?

NOTE RPT. 2021 ABOVE.

However, the Lord did promise our bread and water to be sure, (unless it is to be our demise of this fleshly house). But I imagine most of us will have a bit more.

This would be a time for:

1. Be sure to access any and all State and Federal assistance.
2. Sell or let go unnecessary temporal goods.
3. Seriously consider tapping into retirement savings at least to some extent before asking others for money.
4. Ask among family members first.
5. Approach the various Bible Student Aid resources.
6. Approach your Ecclesia.
7. If retired, consider going back to work, if possible (perhaps part time).

Session 3. “Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.” Luke 21:28.

1. What are some practical examples of Luke 21:28

If this is another severe birth pang, we can still say we are living our prophetic outlook.

Let us try to be of the Wise Virgins and not the Foolish Virgins. Lead by example.

Recognize that we have to be willing to leave it all, not to try to hold on to temporal prosperity at the cost of spiritual life.

1. Is this a birth pang? Let me put it this way: Yes it is, and it may lead to more birth pangs, or it may develop into more directly into a “domino” of “cause and effect.”

INTRODUCE THE PROPHETIC TIMELINE CHART.

[www.harvesttruths.com](http://www.harvesttruths.com)

Handouts and then discourses under “Prophetic Timeline”.

1. What has happened in regard to what Br. R. expected in the 1916/1912 Forewords to the 4th Volume?

(note page 2 “after the wa.” That is, after WWI the following items he brings out are to happen.

We see the ongoing financial confusion, destabilizing effect of all the various means of exchange (currencies, precious metals, oil and other commodities, stocks and bonds etc.), which are meant to lead to a strong government that promises to bring about security for the people.

This means a foregoing of personal liberties, much of that we have been witnessing since 9-1, but it has been on a fast-track ever since and is now continuing so much that it is almost an avalanche.

NOTE:

Greater dependence upon government welfare.

Greater intrusion into daily lives (mobile phone tracking, facial recognition, drone patrols, etc.).

Electronic money transfers. Easy for remote control.

NOTE: The CARES act will pay for religious leader’s payroll and religious Houses of worship’ utility bills. Christian, Jewish, Islamic, etc.

Atheists and others are denouncing this as against Separation of Church and State.

1. Consider the four parts of this earth: Social, Financial, Political, Ecclesiastical. How will this time of trouble and more trouble effect these parts?

See above.

Bottom line, it all goes toward CONDITIONING THE MASSES AND GOVERNMENTS AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS INTO A MIND SET OF THE NEED FOR GREATER CONTROL.

Notes: Russia and Papacy.