

Pastor: Here's the Only Way We Can See America's Healing

No one argues that 2020 has brought major problems. Not only has COVID-19 turned our world upside down, bringing death and destruction in its wake, but we face other obstacles as well.

Pastor and author Dr. Michael Stevens says we're dealing with "a virus called injustice" as well as "a third virus intertwining and intermingling ... And that's the virus of racism, whether you want to call it systemic, institutional or even the overt and obvious, there's a white silence that's leading, unfortunately, to violence," he says.

In a recent episode of his *Straight Talk With Dr. Mike* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network, Stevens seeks to answer the question he says many white evangelicals have: "Why the outcry? Why the outrage, why the upset ... what's the big deal?"

Stevens says, "The truth of the matters is you cannot just simply get over 430 years-plus since slavery [entered] the United States of America. You cannot sweep under the rug the Jim Crow [laws], the civil rights movement of the '60s. And you just can't simply say, 'It's something of the past; as Christians, as believers, we're to walk hand in hand and act as if it never happened.'"

But Stevens has another question as well: "Who's standing on the Word? ... Where is the objective, independent, solid unwavering Word of God? Where's that in this equation here? And I know we have so many African Americans who say, 'Oh, I'm so sick of you using a white man's Bible with the white man's Jesus, trying to colonize and shoved down our throats this white man's gospel,'" but I'm a firm believer after 30-plus years of being saved and walking with the Lord and being filled with the Holy Spirit : white, black, red, blue or

green, the Word of God is the word of God.

“And there’s something about the spirit of the word that penetrates ethnicity. There’s something about the Word of God that penetrates nationality. I believe that the word of God stands,” Stevens says. “How shall a young man cleanse his way but [by] taking heed to the Word of God?’ ‘Thy word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.’

“The Bible says in Psalm 107 20, ‘He sent forth His word, and His word healed them, and the word delivered them from destruction,’ Stevens adds. “If America wants to be healed, we’ve got to go back to the Word of God. If America wants to be healed or delivered from destruction, we have to go back to the Word of God.

“Second Timothy 4:2 reminds us to preach the word. We’re preaching opinions, we’re preaching emotions, we’re preaching commentary and all types of popular narratives. But where’s the preaching of the Word of God, the grafted, unchanging Word of God?”

For more of Dr. Mike Stevens’ teaching on “burdened in black America,” [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast. {eoa}

We Long to Experience God’s Glory, but Are We Willing to Pay the Price?

All believers long to experience God’s glory. At least we would say we do. But to what lengths will we go to receive all

He has for us?

Pastor Todd Smith has been discussing the glory of God on the *Kingdom Ready* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. In a recent episode, He is joined by his wife, Pastor Karen Smith. She says our part in receiving God's glory is not "works or any deeds you have to perform. ... [God] says, 'Are you willing to allow Me to cut off some things in your life or to expose some things in your life so that you can draw closer to Me?'

Todd has firsthand experience with this during the North Georgia revival, and he shares what happened. "I'm at the altar. The glory of God has come into our building ... I'm praying in the sanctuary, and I'm the dark, and I make the statement, 'God, I will do whatever You ask me to do, and I will pay whatever price you want me to pay, to encounter You and to experience more of Your glory.

"And immediately He spoke to me, and He says, 'Todd, there are people, your past elder, whom you have hurt. And I need you to make that right now, here.' And I wasn't expecting that at all. I wasn't anticipating God to say anything like that. But it was like if he would have said that to me in the very beginning, I would have run from it."

But, Todd says, God waited until his heart was ready. "And He with precision tapped on that area of my heart at the right moment, when I was willing to do whatever He asked me to do.

"And as a result of that, I submitted and said, 'God, I will do it. I will go to these men that I offended and I hurt, and I will ask them to forgive me,'" he says. "Now that was tough, very difficult for me to do; my flesh fought against it. But I pressed in, and every time I asked the individual to forgive me, the glory of God went to the next level in my life. And the glory inside of our church also went to the next level.

"So the glory of God is dependent upon ... the leaders in the churches, the leaders of those churches and the church members

of how pure we can become with God's grace and mercy working in our lives. The purer we are, the more sanctified we are, the greater the glory," Todd says.

To hear more about God's glory and how He works to reveal it, [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast. {eoa}

Prophetic Word: In This Changing Season, Don't Sleep Through Your Day of Opportunity

Our world is in a new and ever-changing season. As we come out of the time of quarantine due to COVID-19, we face new decisions, challenges and outcomes. Author and speaker Caleb Hyers points us to Scripture for advice:

"Know the importance of the season you're in and a wise son you will be. But what a waste when an incompetent son sleeps through his day of opportunity! The lover of God is enriched beyond belief, but the evil man only curses his luck. The reputation of the righteous becomes a sweet memorial to him, while the wicked life only leaves a rotten stench" (Prov. 10:5-7, TPT) is the passage Hyers quotes on *The Faith-Rest Life* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. He says, "It's important that we know how to change seasons. ...If we're not able to change seasons, well, we'll carry the unrest of yesterday into tomorrow. Nobody wants that. I don't want that. I know you don't want that either."

Hyers points out, “We’re walking into the importance of the season; we’re walking out of understanding all of the importance surrounding it ... because the kingdom is advancing with or without you. ... The kingdom is advancing in times of lockdown. The kingdom of God is advancing in times of reopening, and it’s up to you and me to be wise and partner with that kingdom.’”

“Let me just call you up and wake you up today to say, ‘Listen, don’t sleep through your day of opportunity,” Hyers says. “There’s a great new day dawning around us. And we have a wonderful opportunity to partner with the kingdom and see heaven come to earth. ... And so we have to take our take great pains really to evaluate the importance, what was important from the lockdown season, what’s going to be important to take with us, what’s going to be important to leave behind, what’s going to be important to grow in, what did we learn in this time?”

To hear more of Hyers’ powerful teaching on the topic of partnering with God during this changing, challenging season, [click here](#) for the entire podcast. {eoa}

Here’s How You Can Avoid Worry Even When God Seems to Take Too Long

It seems 2020 may qualify not only as the year of COVID-19, political turmoil and racial unrest but as the year of worry. We worry about our finances. We worry about catching the

coronavirus. And we worry about what may happen next.

That's why author and speaker Seth Dahl believes in the biblical principle of avoiding worry. "God has a lot to say about worrying. He takes it quite seriously," Dahl says to host Jeff Struss on the *Power, Presence and Glory* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. "Just because worry is basically, 'If I'm worried, I'm not trusting, and I'm not praying. Like Paul says, 'Hey, don't worry about anything, but pray about everything.' So if I'm worried, I haven't been in prayer.

An experience with his family where God didn't meet a specific need until the last second sent Dahl into a study about trust, both through science and the Bible, he says. That led to his book, *Curing Worry God's Way*. And one day, he was playing trust fall with his kids, a game in which a person deliberately falls, trusting others to catch him.

His son asked, "Dad, why do you keep waiting till the very last second before you catch us?"

"I'm like, 'Well, buddy, if I caught you right away when you start to fall, it wouldn't even be fun for you. ... Would you want to play?'"

Dahl's son said no.

"So is it more fun for me to catch you at the last second or to catch you right away?"

"Catch me at the last second."

Dahl realized his son trusted him to catch him, which of course was the point of the game. "And right there, I decided ... if God caught us too soon, it wouldn't be fun. And I need to look at life as though I'm in a giant game of trust fall, and I need to put my arms out [and] love it. Even if it's down to the last second, it's like, 'Wow, Lord, this is going to be

way more fun than the last time, because You're waiting longer to catch me. ... I'm Your kid, You're my dad. And I'm trust falling back into You."

To hear more of Dahl's teaching on trusting God and avoiding worry, [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast. {eo}

Your Spirit-Filled Secret to Defeating Strongholds of the Mind

Spirit-filled believers have the deep desire to grow in their Christian walk. In fact, the apostle Paul instructs us to "work out (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) your own salvation with reverence *and* awe and trembling (self-distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ)" (Phil. 2:12b, AMPC). But how do we do this?

Prophetic prayer minister Rebecca Greenwood, co-founder of Christian Harvest International, shares the answer on the Victorious Prophetic Warfare podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. "This Greek word for 'work out' implies something that we do with thoroughness," she says. "It is a complete through and through process to attain to a desired finished work ... There can be a desired finished work of victory in your life."

"So when we are saved, it literally means that we when we are going through salvation, once we receive salvation, there is

deliverance, preservation, safety and salvation,” Greenwood says. “So we have to be intentional. ... And so we have, when we’re intentional, this process of becoming more and more Christlike, not only in our actions, but also in our thoughts and our emotions.

“You see, I believe our thoughts and emotions, sometimes our especially our thought life, [is] the last thing that we really get freedom in because it’s something that can remain hidden and other people might not see or know,” she explains. “Now, none of us is excused from the need of overcoming wrong beliefs, thought patterns and strongholds that have gripped our minds and emotions.”

Listen to the entire podcast to learn the biblical secret for breaking down these strongholds in your mind and emotions.
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The One Voice You Must Heed in These Extreme Times

Editor’s Note: This is part 2 of a series. For part 1, click [here](#).

What you and I need more than opinions from cable news pundits or another YouTube video, is to hear what God is speaking to us, our families, and our churches. I can tell you what God has spoken to me regarding the moment, but ultimately you need to hear from God how you are to live relative to the pandemic, economy, unrest and so forth. Further, believe God for fresh manna each day—the Holy Spirit wants to continually comfort

you, speak to you and guide you!

The Lord told Joshua three times to “be strong and of good courage.”

The phrase “be strong” is from the Hebrew *châzaq*, which means: courageous, valiant, manly, strengthened, established, firm, fortified, obstinate, and mighty. It also carries the sense of a command for the preparation of battle (see Josh. 1:6-7, 9; 1 Sam. 30:6; 2 Sam. 10:12; Ps. 27:14; Zech. 10:12; Hag. 2:4).

Yet not only was God giving Joshua instructions on how to be strong (Josh. 1:8-9), but the command to “be strong and courageous” also imparted the strength and courage to obey and realize the promise. God empowered Joshua in His command. Prophetic declaration releases God’s power to do the impossible.

Grace is much more than forgiveness; it empowers you to be who you are not. You are becoming like Christ because of the power of the Holy Spirit, who is the agent of grace. Grace infuses life and power within you to become like Christ, walk in your God-given identity and do the impossible as God leads. By His grace, we overcome!

Joshua was being prepared to lead the people into the promised land. As a nation, they were about to face the giants and walled cities a previous generation feared 40 years prior. They needed to be strong and of good courage and prepared for battle.

Church, it should be obvious that we are in an immense spiritual battle right now. It is time to be strengthened in the Lord, in the power of His might, to be prepared for battle to face the spiritual giants plaguing our world. Prayer and intercession still move mountains—only believe, keep praying and don’t lose heart—the battle belongs to the Lord!

David

Another example of the Hebrew word *châzaq* and the concept to “be strong” is found in the book of Samuel, when David and his men were defeated at Ziklag:

“Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God” (1 Sam. 30:6, NKJV).

Prior to this, David had been through a wilderness season. He was chased by Saul for years after defeating Goliath and falling from Saul’s favor. At one point, David was so desperate, he pretended madness at Gath, the city of the Philistine king (and of Goliath). Rejected by the Philistines, David flees to the cave of Adullam. God begins to bring those in Israel who were distressed, in debt and discouraged, to David in the cave—about 400 men. God was refining David to lead and was preparing future leaders and warriors for Israel—none of them could see it completely.

David eventually gains permission from the Philistine king to live in Ziklag, a town in the Philistine territory. David finally had rest from Saul, but God wasn’t finished preparing him or his mighty men. After being rejected by the Philistines to go to battle with them against Saul and the army of Israel, David and his men return to Ziklag to discover that the Amalekites have taken their wives, children and property with them. It’s perhaps the lowest point David faced in his wilderness years. His trusted men, so grieved, turn on David and are ready to stone him.

In times of crisis, be careful not to accuse your leaders or others—God may have allowed the situation! He is the master potter and uses every setback and situation for His greater good in our lives and for His purposes.

What did David do? He inquired of the Lord, “So David inquired of the Lord, saying, ‘Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I

overtake them?' And He answered him, 'Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all'" (1 Sam. 30:8).

David strengthened himself or literally "made himself strong" in God. He knew that to overcome obstacles he had to strengthen himself in the Lord. David drew on God's empowering grace through prayer, worship and hearing God's voice to be strong.

David and his men acted on God's word, defeated the Amalekites and recovered all. Right after this incident, Saul dies in battle, and David is made king over the tribe of Judah. Seven years later, David would be made king over all the tribes of Israel.

In times of crisis, it is critical to hear God's word and direction. His perspective changes our thinking and our attitude, and strengthens us!

I'll pick up next week looking at Paul and his admonition to Timothy to be strong in the Lord. Take time this week to wait upon God to hear a fresh word from Him. These are extreme times; all of us have been challenged and tested.

What is God saying to you right now? How are you to respond? What areas of your heart is God refining? How can you engage in this spiritual battle we are in? Be strong and courageous, church, Jesus has triumphed, and He is leading us to victory! {eoa}

Your Spirit-Filled Key to Responding to Change, Transition and Crisis

At the beginning of 2020, I told our church confidently, “I believe 2020 will be a great year.” However, the events of 2020 seem to indicate the opposite. But what if national awakening is unfolding amid the suffering, frustration, and unrest?

Through it all, the church is being tested and refined. God is allowing adversity to bring forth a pure faith that is motivated by love—not hate. God is purifying our love for each other. How can we pray for revival in our land when we have anger at other believers in the church? God is more concerned that we love and value one another than being “correct” on all issues. Everyone is entitled to their thoughts, beliefs and opinions. However, we are to “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3, NIV).

Jesus said all the Law and Prophets hang on these simple commands:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30-31, MEV).

We are to love others as we love ourselves—always. Much of the hatred in our world would cease if humanity, from a renewed heart, could love others with God’s love.

Unity is not uniformity on every issue, but loving Jesus in such a manner that His love overflows to others by treating

them with honor, kindness, tenderness and love. I have been saddened the last couple of weeks at the vitriol between Christians over social media or between each other—yes, between Christians—over various issues plaguing our nation and the world. Keep in mind the axiom, “united we stand, divided we fall,” still holds true in the church and society. The enemy thrives on division and chaos. Let’s respond in an opposite spirit by allowing the fruit of the Holy Spirit to shine through.

If you were unable to listen to my sermon last Sunday, “Strengthen Yourself in the Lord,” I encourage you to do so. I shared insights in the sermon I’ll not be able to capture in this article. I believe it is a timely word for the church.

This article will be part one of a two-part series on strengthening yourself in the Lord. Today I want to look at Joshua and David and how they responded to change, transition and crisis.

Joshua

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses: “Moses My servant is dead, so now get up and cross over the Jordan—you and all this people—to the land that I am giving to the children of Israel. I have given you every place that the sole of your foot shall tread, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Mediterranean Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory. No man will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, I will be with you. I will not abandon you. I will not leave you.

“Be strong and courageous, for you shall provide the land that I swore to their fathers to give them as an inheritance for this people. Be strong and very courageous, in order to

act carefully in accordance with all the law that My servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn aside from it to the right or the left, so that you may succeed wherever you go. This Book of the Law must not depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night so that you may act carefully according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way successful, and you will be wise. Have not I commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

After the exodus from Egypt, God invites Israel to possess their inheritance in the promised land. Unbelief robs a generation, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. Forty years later, Moses dies, and God directs Joshua to "cross over." The Jordan River is at flood stage, perhaps a mile wide, and in the natural, it's not the time to cross.

Joshua and the nation are mourning the loss of their leader Moses. It may have seemed to the people, "How can we go on?" But God speaks, "Moses my servant is dead, now arise and cross over!" Joshua was probably mourning too, saddened that his spiritual father and mentor has passed on. But once God speaks, something shifts in Joshua. During times of transition and crisis, it is important to wait on God to hear what He is speaking and then act confidently. We are strengthened in the Lord by His voice, by His presence and by His leading, among other things.

Remember, when Jesus is leading, obstacles become opportunities!

Courageous faith sees opportunity in contradiction. It is a faith that deflects chaos and releases God's peace in a turbulent world. When God directs, faith ignores the circumstances and sees the opportunity to live in promised inheritance. Confidently trusting Jesus amid the uncertainties of life determines how much we abide in God's peace, joy and

victory.

Could it be that 2020 is destined to be a great year? It's not how we would have planned it, but God, who knows the end from the beginning, is still in control! He didn't cause everything occurring this year, but He is working all things together for our good—even among those who don't believe. {eo}

How David Wilkerson's Prophetic Word to His Brother Helped Launch Teen Challenge

In the late 1950s, Pastor Don Wilkerson helped his late brother, famed evangelist and bestselling author David Wilkerson, pioneer the groundbreaking Teen Challenge ministry in New York City, and he still ministers through the renamed Adult & Teen Challenge ministry center there today. But how did that come about?

Don shares the story with host Caleb McCall on the *Recovery to Recovered* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. He was attending Bible school when he first heard about David's ministry to gangs, he says, and he wasn't surprised. "My brother was always doing different things, on the edge in terms of ministry," he says. "And I didn't think anything of it."

Some time later, his sister invited him to visit New York to

support David, who was holding an evangelistic crusade for gangs. Don shares the story. “‘Sure, we’ll go,’ I said. So I went, [and] it just so happened in the providence of God, I was there the night that our most famous celebrated convert, the first convert, Nicky Cruz—yes, vice president of the Mau Maus—that he and his gang went forward.”

That event served as Don’s introduction to the ministry to which he would devote his life. “I didn’t think I would ever be involved because I grew up in a preacher’s home. My father was a pastor, and after school training, I had every intention of going back and pastoring with him in Pennsylvania in a nice church.

“Then my father suddenly died. And my dream—there went my dream. And so that meeting in the arena was kind of like the seed that was planted in me, kind of a foretaste,” Don says.

But he still had no idea the Lord would lead him to join the New York City ministry.

“Then my brother called me when I was in school and asked if I would come and help. And he actually gave me a prophetic word on the phone, and he followed up with a letter. I kept that letter because he said in it, ‘I see that there is a revival coming among the troubled youth of our country.’”

Their partnership between the two brothers marked the start of a ministry that has seen thousands of young people escape addiction and turn to Christ over the years. For more of Don Wilkerson’s inspiring story, including his recovery from COVID-19, [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast. {eo}

Why You Can Trust God to Bring You Healing From Trauma

The experience of trauma is a common problem. Studies show that in 2015, trauma was the No. 1 cause of death in people from ages 1-46. In that same year, the cost of trauma was \$671 billion in health care and lost productivity combined.

But podcast host Ruth Hendrickson knows we have a God who can set us free. In a recent episode of *Real Truth With Ruth* on the Charisma Podcast Network, she unpacks the concept of trauma and how we can find deliverance. “There’s some teaching out there that says that we use the body of Christ to believe as believers are exempt from trauma,” she says. “They need to look at Scripture because I see great men and women of God who experienced trauma. And they had to also have God-moments where God came in and intervened and brought healing.

“It was always there if they were willing to take it. Second Corinthians 1:3-4 says, ‘All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.’”

Hendrickson adds, “We’d look at life, and we’d expect to have the proverbial rose garden. But every rose garden has thorns. And the thing is, God ... gives us this beautiful life to live. And then He says every once in a while, we’re going to get scraped, we’re going to get poked, we’re going to get hurt by those thorns. And yet He carries the very healing balm that we need.

“So yeah ... we’re going to have some tough times as we go through life, but we have a God who heals,” she says. “We have a God who redeems. He goes back; He reclaims the ground; He

sets people free. He rebuilds the ruins. That's who our God is. We have to remember that. Like Paul, we need to have an attitude that trusts God to bring the healing. And we will press through to that healing, and we will be determined to have the fullness of that healing ... Because it's a promise from God, a promise from the throne room of heaven.

To hear more of Ruth Hendrickson's teaching on how God can heal you of trauma, [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast. {eoa}

Prophetic Minister: Your Breakthrough Key to Lasting Freedom in Christ

Prophetic minister Kathy DeGraw has a passion for helping people understand their true freedom in Christ and receive complete deliverance. She knows most believers live in self-condemnation, guilt and shame.

But, she says on the *Prophetic Spiritual Warfare* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network, "My Bible says, 'There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.' ... you need to believe it so you can receive it: You are in Christ," DeGraw explains. "And friends, that alone is going to help you get free and stay free, and break off those shackles and chains, because knowing who you are in Christ is going to break off those mindsets of guilt, blame, shame, condemnation and regret."

DeGraw tells listeners that although it's difficult to watch,

she loves the movie *The Passion of the Christ*. “I like the courtyard scene where Jesus is at the whipping post. His hands are cocked to the post. And He sees John and Mary and Mary walk in the courtyard, and He gets back up on His feet to take more beatings.

“He was kneeled down over that post, and He sees them. And out of love and knowing what He has to do—the atoning work of the cross—He got up and took more beatings when he saw them,” she says. “I hate that my Savior had to go through it. But I look at that, and it’s like, “Christ took it for me. The hope of glory took it for me so I don’t have to carry it.’

“And friends, when we’re carrying unforgiveness towards ourselves and others, then we’re saying what Christ did in that courtyard isn’t any good. ... I don’t want to say that. I want to know that what He did was good enough for me; it was more than good enough for me,” DeGraw says. “And it’s more than good enough for you, but we don’t receive it. And then because we don’t receive that we can’t receive our breakthrough, friends. We can’t take off those shackles and chains.”

To hear more of DeGraw’s teaching, based on her new book, *Unshackled*, [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast. {eoa}