

Doug Stringer: Plagues, Passover and the Power of the Cross

In Exodus 12, Moses and Aaron speak to Pharaoh and say, “Let my people go.” Yet he keeps denying them even through all the plagues.

Before the final plague, which is a plague of death, God instructs His people to take the blood of a spring lamb, sacrifice it, cook it and eat it. Then He says to take the blood of that lamb and put it on the lintel or the doorpost of the home and on the sides of the doors. As the spirit of the plague comes across the land, God’s people are protected when they are in their homes, under the covering.

This is what God is saying to us today: It’s time to separate yourself from the world, self-quarantine, take time to reset and realize that your deliverer is the Lord.

Psalms 91 tells us we abide in the shadow of the Almighty, that place of peace and protection, when we’re under the covering of the Lord. It also tells us about things that can happen in life, including diseases and plagues—and viruses. But in His shadow, we find a supernatural peace.

So, for me, God’s planned reset is an opportunity to get back in His Word and to be under a voluntary self-quarantine with the Lord. It’s not a time to watch the news all day and get more anxious. We do need to listen to the news, but then get in the Word and get the Word in us! It’s time to reset because God is about to do something in an accelerated way.

Time for the Harvest

The Lord has been reminding us for quite some time that He is

going to do something so unique that people would begin, out of curiosity, to listen and be drawn to the things of God. The church always seems to grow through the most difficult of challenges and difficulties. And the church is us! We're the microcosm of the corporate body. We are a family, the family of Christ. As we rally together in difficult times, we grow deeper in the Lord because we have a purpose beyond the circumstances.

Pandemics and diseases are things we can't see, but we see the results of them. Likewise, people wonder how we can believe in a God we can't see, yet they believe in the coronavirus because they see its results! That's why it's so important for others to see the fruit of our faith and the fruit of the gospel.

A few months back, I was sensing strongly that God was saying, "It's time for a planned reset. I am planning for the church to expand for a harvest." I wrote an article about it and shared it several times. Then, more recently, I realized that sometimes we don't get the full dynamic of what God is saying until we are living what He has been speaking—that's when we recognize it's not just a coincidence!

As we're going through this global pandemic, people are overwhelmed, anxious and fearful. But it's also an opportunity for the church to share the very message of God's mercy, grace and purpose beyond the circumstances. We have biblical promises and scriptural examples of what God has done in the past. Disease and crisis are not new.

Other types of coronaviruses have struck before. The bubonic plague, cholera and other great plagues affected millions around the world. Even looking back to Exodus 12, we see that God already had a plan of escape from the plagues of that day.

I began sharing this message weeks ago but was recently reminded of a vivid dream I had in the 1980s. I was in a

boxing match and I was winning. Suddenly I could not see my opponent, and I was getting beaten up by an unseen force. I had been a champion wrestler in high school and undefeated in boxing, so I knew how to train and how to fight. But the Lord said to me in the dream, "The battle is in the spiritual realm." Likewise, today, we can do everything we know to do in the natural, but there are unseen forces at work. We need discernment and wisdom to battle what we cannot see.

Right now, we're joining in with a cry of corporate desperation unto God, the only One who can bring salvation, healing, liberation and deliverance. With all the uncertainties around us, the one thing those of who call upon the name of the Lord have in common is a promise beyond whatever we go through and the precedence of the past.

Throughout history, when leaders have called their people to pray, things began to change within weeks of those prayers. When the president or leader of a nation calls any of us to humbly call upon the living God in prayer, there's a level of authority in those prayers because of the authority God has given to that leader, and it releases God's hand upon a city, state, nation or nations of the world.

Speak Life

There are four things that I believe God the Father wants us to remind ourselves, no matter what we go through and especially in this current global crisis:

1. Remember His promises so we can walk in His peace.
2. Keep the proper perspective.
3. Know that we have a purpose beyond what we're going through.
4. Fix our gaze on the Lord, the giver of life.

Last year, I woke up one morning and I heard the word "Zoe." In Genesis and Revelation, we see this word over and over, and it means living in God's divine presence or God's divinity.

It's the place of life where we are connected to the Creator of the heavens of the earth and the divine presence of God. Jesus uses this word when He says, "I've given you life and life more abundantly."

As I prayed and processed, I felt like the Lord was saying, "It's a season to get back to living in My divine presence." And if we can do that, no matter what we're going through, we will remember His promises, keep the right perspective perspective, and stay in a place of peace that comes from only Him and surpasses our human comprehension.

Through the storms of life and even through the crisis the world is going through, we have a purpose.

Think about the things we've been praying for: We've been praying for awakening and revival, and now it's here! We just need to reset our perspectives and our priorities, recognizing that we need one another more than ever before. And we also need to be aligned with God in greater ways than before.

I've heard from so many people who are on daily conference calls and briefings with the White House, the CDC and other agencies. While doing all they can on the natural side, they know the true answer is still in the hope of the Lord and that God will take care of it when we align ourselves with Him. That's why we must get back into His Word so we know how to speak the Zoe life of God into our families and into our system.

It's not a coincidence that God has already called leaders to declare 2020 as the Year of the Bible. We need to get tethered back to His Word so we have His authority to speak the Zoe life of God. His Word does not come back void, but we have to know His Word to speak His Word.

We want to be cognizant and listen to the news, but with all the opinions and noise, we need to fix our gaze on the Lord and pull down every vain imagination that exalts itself

against the knowledge of God or His truths. We need the wisdom God gave Solomon, and we need to reengage in the gift of discernment so we can discern who really cares about our nation and who cares about the people versus those who are trying to capitalize on misfortune.

Between the Living and the Dead

The earth is groaning! Just a week ago, an earthquake struck in Utah, then a few days later in Montana and Idaho. We see things like this accelerating. But God is not surprised. He's been getting the church ready so that in the midst of whatever takes place, we can bring God's mercy and His grace to people who are overwhelmed by sorrow, anxiety and stress.

In our home, we are taking communion as a family every day to focus on Him and not on the circumstances. Communion reminds us of the blood He shed for us as the sacrificial Lamb of God—the perfect Lamb without spot or blemish who was crucified for us and raised from the dead. He shed His blood that we might be saved, liberated and delivered.

We also anointed our door posts with oil to symbolically declare God's covering and protection. I would encourage each of you to do the same as a way to remember that God gave deliverance when a plague came over Egypt and protected His people. This is a promise to us, too, that we're under the blood if we are abiding under the shadow of the Almighty.

Stop the Plague

In Numbers 16, we read about a plague that came upon the Israelites while they were in the desert. Moses called upon Aaron to grab his censer—representing intercession to God—and to stand between the living and the dead to stop the plague.

“Aaron took it as Moses commanded and ran into the midst of the assembly, where the plague had begun among the people. He put in incense and made an atonement for the people. He stood

between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped” (Num. 16:47-48).

We, too, are prayer censers, raising up intercession individually and corporately when we cry out in passion and desperation, stand in the gap between the living and all those have been affected and died from the pandemic, and ask God to stop the plague.

“Hear my cry, O God, attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth I will cry to You; when my heart faints, lead me to the rock that is higher than I” (Ps. 61:1-2).

In times like now, people are watching and they are recognizing it’s time to come home to Christ. It’s time to get right with the Lord and with one another. But it starts with us. If there is any pride, rebellion or issues in our own lives, we must ask God to help us get right with Him so we can be under His covering by obedience to His Word, character, nature and Spirit. We must remember that Jesus is our Passover Lamb and our Savior, liberator and deliverer. As we do this and get in right relationship with God and others, we have His authority to speak the Zoe life of God into our circumstances.

In Ezekiel 37, God says to prophesy over the dry bones, which means to speak the breath of God into them. We, too, can speak life back into situations—we can speak mercy, and we can see the plague stopped. In Acts 20, when Eutychus falls to his death from a third-floor window, Paul speaks life over him and revives him, giving the people hope. If God’s people would be in agreement, getting past all the differences we have and back in alignment with Him, we will recognize our purpose in this moment is to speak life and bring hope in the midst of despair.

Government can only do so much. But the one by which all governments must lean on, the Lord Jesus Christ, has an authority when God’s people recognize that His intention is to

speak to and through His church. He gives us manifold wisdom and authority to speak into these situations, when we have the right spirit and a heart that understands His perspective. We can see things from the vantage point of the Lord when we stand upon the Rock that is higher than us.

Our Passover Lamb

Every year, Passover is a time for all of us to remember how God's people were protected from the plague. But we also remember what happened during a Passover nearly 2,000 years ago, when Jesus was crucified, and on what we now call Easter, when He rose from the grave. Paul tells us Jesus was the Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7).

Revelation says He is the Lamb who was slain before the foundations of the world (chapters 5 and 13). He is our Passover. His blood was shed that we could be under His covering, where we experience His grace, mercy and protection. We need to fix our gaze on Him and on the Word, remembering that the work of the cross and the power of the Resurrection can cover us through any kind of crisis.

We can't be distracted by all the noise and all the political divisiveness. Instead, let's focus on what we know is true. We need to be tethered with the Lord in deeper consecration. We need to fix our eyes on Jesus so we can keep the right perspective and experience His peace.

If you're among those who are not able to work right now, get into a voluntary, personal quarantine with God—get His Word in you. Because what's about to happen is an opportunity for the world to see the church shine. I believe we're going to see the visions fulfilled that God has given to so many of us—visions of people who are curious and begin coming into the church. We need to be ready for them.

Let's stand in the gap in posture and intercession. Let's agree together for God's mercy, manifold wisdom and

intervention. {eoa}

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