

James Goll Gives Hope, Having Handled Disease, Debt and Death

Recently a nationwide survey was taken to discover the mental, emotional, physical and financial health of Americans. Almost two-thirds of them admitted feeling hopeless, anxious, depressed or lonely on at least one of the past seven days. The COVID-19 crisis and now racial discord and rioting depress countless millions.

My heart aches when I read these results. Our hearts should well up with God-given compassion especially for those outside of Christ in these unsettling times. I personally am committed to encourage and share the gospel with them to give them hope. I recall the words of Martin Luther they probably never heard, "Everything that is done in this world is done by hope."

Recently, I purchased 100 copies of a timely booklet by fellow evangelist, Ray Comfort, titled "How to be Set Free from the Fear of Death" to share with people during these tumultuous times.

Shaken in a Swanky Mall

I ventured out of our "bunker" to the downtown Nashville area to one of the most exclusive malls in Tennessee. Stores include Tiffany's, Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, Versace and dozens of high end specialty stores. There, I once chatted with actress Nicole Kidman and gave her my personal testimony tract. I've also seen singer Donna Summer and various NFL Titans strolling by.

As I walked the polished floors, I found myself having flashbacks of the past. Etched on the photographic plate of my mind were experiences of crowds enjoying the atmosphere,

especially during the warm and fuzzy Christmas season.

What was once an apparent haven for happy, healthy and hopeful people has become, almost overnight, a cavern for the handful daring to return, anxious people affected by an apparent spirit of heaviness.

The few folks passing me by were remnants of “yesterday” meaning months ago. The mall resembled an old Western ghost town minus the windswept tumbleweed. It was surreal, spooky, somewhat eerie and looking like a post-rapture period or an episode of *The Twilight Zone*.

Many stores remain closed but those open were mostly empty with tailored customer reps standing idle, looking bored and forlorn with blank, zombie-like expressions. Affixed to entrances were signs with hygienic safeguards and sentimental statements like “We’ll get through this together” and “We’re a family standing side by side to see each other through.”

As I sauntered past a few folks with faces obscured by masks, I passed the roped-off water fountains to depart into the nearly vacant parking garage. I thought, *I’ve never experienced anything like this*. I felt melancholic and a bit numb. The cloud of hopelessness that permeated the premises was real, and it pervades many lives throughout America.

Hope Is an Anchor

Scripture tells us we should flee to Jesus as our “refuge” so we “might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this hope as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul” (Heb. 6:18b-19a).

My longtime friend and Tennessee neighbor, senior prophetic leader, James Goll, recently shared with me on a podcast that during these trying times we need to “drop an anchor in the sea of uncertainty so we might stand strong.”

This exemplary man of God ought to know as his life has repeatedly been swept about by serious winds of adversity. He's taken repeated body blows but continues to emerge as part of a company Scripture calls "more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37b).

The verses before those have strengthened James for years as they should us during this COVID-19 and racial crises. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. 8:35).

The Bible goes on to declare through the apostle Paul, "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).

Paul ought to know, as he experienced far greater challenges than ours at this time: "... in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. Five times I received from the Jews forty lashes minus one; Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brothers; in weariness and painfulness, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, and in cold and nakedness" (2 b-27).

James Goll has "walked through the fire" but come out unscathed. His life should inspire us to persevere.

The love of his life and his ministry partner for 32 years died prematurely at the age of 52 when they were in their 32nd

year of covenant marriage. Years prior, they were diagnosed with infertility, yet God healed them, and she gave birth to four wonderful children who today serve God passionately while she enjoys her heavenly home awaiting James to reunite with her one day.

James battled cancer for nine years as well as back problems that at times have been debilitating. I've had the privilege to be with him in the hospital and at home and be inspired by his steadfastness amidst excruciating ("out of crucifixion") pain.

Our brother accumulated medical bills over \$300,000 and felt the weight of ongoing, burdensome, crushing debt. Without the benefit and security of a set church salary, he's looked to God to supply his needs by the generosity of God's people.

Through it all, James has emerged victorious and an inspiration to all of us to persevere without complaining and maintain that anchor of hope in Jesus during these difficult days.

Here's the Deal: Jesus told us of numerous difficulties coming our way as we get closer to His return. He also reminded us, "In your endurance you will gain your souls" (Luke 21:19). Listen to his inspiring interview with me on the Charisma Podcast Network as we go forward.