
Traders Point Online, welcome. My name is Ryan. I'm one of the pastors here. If this is your first time checking us out, we are so thankful you are. We would love for you to check out our website tpcc.org. And here are some of the things you'll find over there.

For parents who are tuning in, we have a special on demand service for kids birth through 6th grade. Like I said, it's on demand. So, whenever you're ready, it will be ready for you.

And some other stuff that is there. For all of our students in 7th through 12th grade, student ministry has completely moved online. We are zooming Sunday nights at 7 p.m. All the links, all the information you need, is right there on our website.

And it's even so much more than that. All the updates we put out throughout the week, our COVID-19 response page, our Make a Difference page, it is all right there. I'm telling you—y tpcc.org.

Hey, I'm super-excited about today. We're jumping into a new series of messages called *Waymaker*. Aaron Brockett, our lead pastor is going to be preaching today. So, wherever you are, whether you are in a living room, a kitchen, bedroom, bathroom. Yeah, I said it. I know right now there are people watching from the bathroom and I'm oddly okay with it. Wherever you are, lean in, lock in as we dive into the message.

Aaron

Hey everyone, I'm so glad you could join us online from wherever you are tuning in around the world. In fact, I'm so grateful for technology like this that allows us to be connected together when we can't physically gather.

And I'd love just to celebrate last weekend. Last weekend we have 10 times the number of people engage with us online than we do in a normal weekend. So, I just think that is amazing.

Today we are beginning a brand-new, three-part series of messages called *Waymaker*. If you recognize that word, it is because we've been singing a song around here lately with that title. That is the title of the song. In fact, the lyric goes like this, "God is a miracle worker. He is a promise keeper. He is a light in the darkness. That is who he is."

Right now, more than ever, we need a fresh understanding and a reassurance of who God is in these uncertain times. And so, this is going to lead us all the way up through Easter weekend.

You know, right now every single day we get these news reports that tell us about the increasing cases of COVID-19 around the nation and around the world. What we don't get a daily statistic on is the increasing cases of fear, worry, stress, and anxiety.

And if we were to get a report on those, my guess is that those are reaching epidemic proportions as well. You see, today maybe you're not as concerned about catching the virus and maybe some are, but you are deeply concerned about the growing stress you feel.

Maybe it's the disruption in our daily routines, the economic impact that all this is causing. Maybe it's the uncertainty about the future or the feelings of isolation you are going through right now. That's enough to increase all our levels of anxiety. In fact, maybe even right now you're beginning to question God.

One time in Mark 4, after a long day of exhausting ministry, Jesus gets into a boat with his disciples. He goes below deck and falls asleep. As he is asleep this unexpected storm just comes out of nowhere. And the storm is waging, the wind is blowing, and the waves are crashing. The rain is coming down.

The disciples, they begin to panic and they run below deck to where Jesus is and what do they find Jesus doing? Jesus isn't pacing. Jesus isn't worried. He is not sitting there wringing his fingers. Jesus is sleeping. And the disciples question him right there in that moment.

They say, "Jesus, don't you care about this storm we are in?"

And maybe right now that question deeply resonates with your heart and mind. Because right now there are some of you, and you've worked so hard for this business and you are now at risk of losing it. So, you cry out to God and say, "Don't you care?"

"God, how are we supposed to care for our medical professionals who are on the front lines of this thing? They don't have the face masks, the ventilators, and the supplies they need to do their job. God, don't you care?"

"God, how am I supposed to manage working from home when my kids are going to school at home?"

"God, how am I supposed to get along with my brothers and sisters when we're always under the same roof together without any break of routine?"

"God, this new normal is almost unbearable. Don't you care?"

"God, somebody that I love has a medical emergency, and they were rushed to the hospital. But because of this virus, we're not allowed to be with them right now. God, don't you care?"

"God, this is my senior year. And I was so looking forward to graduation and prom. Now all of that seems to have evaporated. God, don't you care?"

“God, these retirement years were supposed to be our best years. But now, due to the economic uncertainty we’re not sure what tomorrow holds. God, don’t you care?”

And maybe as you begin to feel that question in your heart and mind, and maybe you’ve even vocalized it, it’s come across your lips, you feel a little tinge of guilt in questioning God. I just want to tell you right now, “Please don’t feel guilty for questioning God.” It’s okay. In fact, God invites it.

In fact, that’s when Jesus shows up in Mark 4, when the disciples had the courage and the transparency to question him. And they rush below deck, wake Jesus up, and they say, “Jesus, don’t you care?” and it was right there in that moment when Jesus acted. And he did a miracle. Jesus stood up and said to the storm, “Knock it off. Be still,” and the storm obeyed him.

And right now, today, we need a miracle. We need a miracle worker. I believe God is a Waymaker. He is going to make a way. He already is making a way for us through this really, really challenging time.

And maybe today you believe that in your head, but you’re like, “Aaron, I want to believe that, but how is he going to do it? And when is he going to do it?”

I think one of the reasons why this season we’re in is so painful and fear inducing—here is what is happening to all of us. We are being forced away from self-reliance to complete reliance upon God.

We are self-reliant people. If we have a challenge or if we’re facing some sort of a crisis, we are like, “Tell us what to do. We will develop some solutions. We’re going to go after this and knock it out.”

I think one of the things that’s unusual about this is we don’t have a lot of answers and we’re told to stay at home. So, we can’t just rely upon ourselves. So much of this is outside of our control.

Right now, I want to invite you to lean into God now more than ever. And maybe that is hard for some of you because maybe you don’t believe in God, or this is rocking your faith in God. So, in those moments of doubt, what we need is a clear understanding of who God really is. We need to examine the attributes or the characteristics of God. Those can only be found in the names of God.

I don’t know about you, but I always kind of grew up thinking God’s name was pretty straightforward. His name is God. It means God. And that’s about it. But actually, God has a whole bunch of names. There are 23 compound names in the Bible given for God.

El Elyon and El Shaddai

There are more than 40 compound names given for Jehovah.

Jehovah Shalom and Jehovah Jireh

Those are at least the ones I can pronounce. So, the question is: Why does God have all these names? Why is it necessary for God to have a whole bunch of different names? Did he just get bored? Is he sort of like the artist formerly known as Prince, or Puff Daddy, or P-Diddy or whatever he is calling himself now days?

Does God just get bored and he changes his name because of that?

Well, that's not the reason God has all these names. God has various names for a couple of primary reasons. The name actually describes his relationship with people.

I have several different names I go by. My name is Aaron but my kids call me dad or daddy. A whole bunch of you call me Pastor Aaron. Some of my close friends call me AB. My wife, she calls me Babe, that's my favorite one. And not everybody calls me by the same name. The name actually defines and describes, to a certain extent, the relationship I have with you as a person.

That's one of the reason God has different names. You see, his desire for us is to know him, and to know him better. So, he gives us these different names that help us in our relationship with him.

David one time wrote this in Psalm 9:10. "Those who know your name trust in you..."

You see, God doesn't just ask you to trust in him blindly. God's trust he asks of you is directly connected to his character. And the name describes his character.

In Proverbs 18:10 it says this. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe."

I think another interesting thing to know is not only do the names of God describe the relationship he has with us, but God also is describing the need we have as people. So, when we have a certain need and cry out to him, God gives another one of his names and he says: I will meet that need.

So, for example, if we are in need of healing, and I think we are, God says he is our:

Jehovah Rapha: The Lord who heals you

If we are in need of peace, which we are right now, God says he is:

Jehovah Shalom: The Lord is Peace

Right now, if we are in need of real community and we're feeling isolated and alone, God says he is:

Jehovah Shammah: The Lord is there

The name of God comes out of the need of the people. And the name that describes God tells us how he is going to meet that need.

And every time we have a need, there is always something that proceeds it. It is this luminous thing that is striking fear in so many of our hearts. It is uncertainty. And if you read through the history of the nation of Israel, uncertainty was the culprit. You see, the whole desert experience they went through was because of the uncertainty behind it.

These were people who wanted to know, “Where are we going?” and “What is the answer?” and “When will we emerge from this challenge?”

In the last couple of weeks of talking and hearing from a variety of people, so many of us feel helpless right now because everything just sort of feels out of our control. And we wonder, “What can we really do?”

In Exodus 3 there is a leader named Moses. He felt this way. God asked Moses to step up in uncertain times and to be a leader. Moses’ head was filled with all sorts of doubt. He was uncertain about his ability to make any sort of difference at all.

And God responded to Moses and he encouraged Moses, not by saying, “Hey man, it’s just going to be okay.” God didn’t give Moses a pep talk and say, “Hey, just dig deep inside and find the strength you need.” God didn’t look at Moses and say, “Moses, you are good enough, and you are smart enough, and dog-gone it Moses, people love you.”

That’s not what God said. God looked at Moses and he gave Moses a name for who he is. This is what God said. God said.

“I Am”

And that might seem a little vague. You might read that and say, “What in the world is that supposed to mean?” But that is anything but vague. God was being crystal clear right there in that moment. He is saying, through this name, that he is the one everlasting, true God. That he has no beginning and no end. That he is whatever you need at any point in time, no matter what you’re going through.

He is Yahweh, the God who is. And in that name, we discover that the strength and the power we need right now is not found from trying to muster it up from within, but it’s from leaning into who God is. He says to us, as a people, “I am. I am what you need.”

In these days of uncertainty, when we’re not quite sure what tomorrow will bring God says: Would you lean into me? Would you bring your uncertainties to me?

There was a Dutch experiment done a number of years ago in which they separated volunteers into two groups of people. And the first group was going to receive 20 intense electric shocks. Now, I just have to stop right there and say, “Who in the world volunteers for this?” We have a hard time getting people to volunteer in our Kids’ Ministry, but apparently there are people volunteering to get intense electric shocks.

But anyway, that’s what they did. The second group of people, they are told they are going to receive three intense shocks and 17 very mild shocks. Here is the catch. They are not going to know when they are going to get the three intense shocks.

Here’s what the research showed. Those who only received three intense shocks, as opposed to the 20, they demonstrated more physiological stress and anxiety by sweating, having a more rapid heartbeat than those who endured the 20 shocks. The reason why is because they didn’t know when the three were coming.

Do you see what that is showing us? It wasn’t actually about what was happening to them, but it was about the uncertainty of when it would happen.

But I think the most difficult thing about this virus and this global crisis that we’re in is the uncertainty that it brings, and all the questions it stirs up in our hearts and minds. How many more cases will there be today? How many more deaths are on the horizon? How much longer will this go on? Will my loved ones be safe? What’s going to happen to my job or my business?

Those are very real questions. But I want to encourage you with this. If you stay in that uncertainty for very long, what happens is it begins to breed fear. And fear is the real enemy here, not the virus. You see, fear is what causes people to panic. Fear is what causes people to worry. Fear is what causes people to hoard food and supplies.

And listen to me, Traders Point. We are not a people of fear. The number one command in God’s Word is two words, “Fear not.” And it is given to us 365 times. I don’t think that is an accident, that is intentional. I think God knew that every single day when we wake up, not just when we’re in a crisis, but when we wake up there is always something we could potentially be fearful of.

And God says to us: I don’t want you to be a people who live in fear. I want you to be a people who lean into me and trust me.

I love what a guy by the name of Jon Acuff says about fear, “Fear is a feeling, afraid is a choice. When fear shows up, I feel it fully. But then, I have the choice to stay in it or choose hope. Some days, I have to choose it 1,000 times.”

I agree with what he is saying. That fear is a feeling, and it’s very natural to feel that fear. But afraid is a choice. And whenever you begin to feel fear, I want to encourage you to choose hope. And you choose hope, not blindly, you choose hope by really clinging to who God says he is in these moments. By rehearsing his attributes, by remembering his character, by

remembering how he has come through for you in the past, by rehearsing his name in your heart and in your mind.

So how do you choose hope?

Well, it's by taking all that uncertainty we all feel and taking the energy of that and channeling that into love. We begin to love other people really well through this crisis. I want you to understand this. The opposite of fear isn't faith.

The opposite of fear isn't faith, it's love.

In fact, God's word tells us that, "Perfect love drives out fear." And God is a miracle worker. I believe he is already at work in this. I believe God is working miracles, and will work miracles. You've heard me say, "We will come through this together." It may not be overnight, but God is going to do some tremendous things in and through this.

I think the way he is going to do it is by showing us that we can love each other really, really well. God is going to work miracles through his people as we comfort people, as we reassure people, and reach out in selfless love to meet the needs of others.

Did you know the word comfort comes from two Latin terms? And it simply means this:

"con" and "forte": "to make strong together".

When we comfort one another, what we're doing is we are strengthening each other. That we are being strong together. Now, we might be told to stay home and socially isolate, but now, more than ever we need each other, like never before. We need to offer words of comfort. We need to pray for one another. We need to encourage each other so we can be made strong together. That's literally what it means.

I love what Paul writes to a church in Corinth when they were going through a very similar crisis. He says to the church in Corinth in chapter 1, verses 3-4, "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."

You see, wherever hardships may be, God proves to be near. And God is near in and through his people. Now, more than ever, the church needs to step into this crisis and bring the hope that comes from Jesus Christ.

I'm so proud of our church family. I want to continue just to give you updates about what it is we are doing right now. We want to be a light in our city. In fact, later this afternoon I'm going to jump onto a zoom call with pastors from all over the City of Indianapolis. We're going to encourage one another and pray for one another, and see what we can do to partner together.

You all have donated over 6,000 food items so we can keep our food banks replenished. As those shelves begin to empty we want to tell you how to safely donate so we can keep those food pantries full.

Right now, we want to serve our foster families and vulnerable children in our city. That's not going to change. You can go to our Amazon wish list where there are a number of items you can purchase. We'll try to get those into the hands of foster families so they can serve children.

We are actively talking to city officials and influencers in our city about how we can use our facilities to try to help—whether that's offering daycare to the children of medical workers, whether that's providing a safe haven maybe for the homeless, or people who really need shelter. We are just constantly asking, "How can we as a church be of service in our city during this time to bring people hope?"

I want to thank you all for your generosity. I want to thank you for your prayers and your encouragement as we seek to make a difference in this world in the name of Jesus Christ.

You know, when we look back on church history we see that when Christianity got started it was just a very small group of people. It was a very small percentage of the Roman Empire, but it grew into a movement. And you've got to ask yourself, "How did it grow from such a small group of people into such an influential movement?"

Part of the answer to that is that it took a couple of pandemics. In fact, pandemics have always been a time in which God's people stepped up and pointed people to the hope that could be found in Jesus.

In fact, in AD 260, while Marcus Aurelius was emperor, a plague struck and some have thought it was smallpox. Over a 15-year period it killed a quarter to a third of the Roman Empire. The estimates at the time were that there were about 45,000 Christians in Rome. That equaled up to about eight percent of the Empire. Despite their small number, their response to the pandemic won admiration and a greater following.

In fact, Dionysius the bishop of Alexandria reported this, "Most of our brother (and sister) Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains. Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead."

Now, that's a bit sobering and I'm not suggesting we need to unnecessarily put ourselves in harm's way, but what I am wanting you to notice there is that it was Christ followers who were the first to rush to the front lines. It was Christ followers who stepped up, they didn't shrink back.

And I've been in contact with a number of our medical professionals, doctors and nurses, who are in our hospitals here in our city and are part of our church family. That's exactly what they're doing. They are putting themselves in harm's way. They are leaning in. I've been praying over them, praying for their health, praying for their safety.

But right now, church, is when we step into this. Right now, is when we don't succumb to fear. We hold onto hope and we point people to the hope that can be found in Jesus. We take the energy of our fear and turn it into love. And we love others with the love of Jesus Christ that he has so richly given to us.

You see, Christians were different throughout history, and today we need to be different as well. One of the worst things that could happen to us might be one of the best things that could happen in us and through us.

I heard Pastor Andy Stanley say something very similar to this last week. I took it and changed some of the verbiage to make it my own. But I really love this idea.

“When the story of COVID-19 is just a story we tell, let's make sure our stories are stories we're proud to tell.”

In other words, one day in the future when we look back on these trying times and it's just a story we tell, may we be proud of the stories we tell. May we talk about how it produced a greater faith and a greater hope and a greater love within us. May it be one of the finest hours of the church and we lead more and more people to the hope that can be found in Jesus.

And I think during these times a lot of lessons can be learned from our friends in third world countries. I know the first time I ever traveled to a third world country I was totally unprepared for what I was going to see. I was unprepared for the abject poverty I was going to be exposed to.

And what was really jarring and eye-opening for me wasn't necessarily the little shanties people called home. It wasn't the mom who had HIV and was caring for five kids on less than a dollar a day. It wasn't that family who was mourning the loss because malaria had wiped out so much of their family.

What was really eye opening to me was worshipping with them, and going with them to church and standing there worshipping watching these people joyfully cry out to God. And then the pastor would say something that maybe you've heard in church before.

The pastor looked out at all these people and he said these words, “God is good.”

And they said back with such joy in their faces, “All the time.”

And then he would say, “All the time.”

And they would say, “God is good.”

That was so humbling to me because I sat there and, here it was, I had so much. I wasn't facing the financial needs they had or the health needs they had, and yet I couldn't bring myself to say those words with as much joy as they did.

And so, now is one of our finest moments to demonstrate the hope we have in Jesus. To not succumb to fear, but to lean into love. And could we, as a church right now, be able to say with such joy in uncertain times that God is good all the time. And all the time God is good.

Let me pray.

Father, we come to you right now. And I just ask that you would bless the people on the other side of that screen as they are engaging with this time of worship. God, I know there is a lot of fear and uncertainty in the world right now. We need to be honest about what we are feeling, but we need to channel that to you.

And God, more than ever, we cry out to you and we lean into who are and your character, your attributes. We rehearse your names. You are the God who heals. You are the God who intervenes. You are the God who wants to make a difference.

And God, right now we need a miracle worker. We know you are going to actively do miracles in and through us as a people, and we don't want to miss it. God, let us be awakened by your Spirit to what it is that you want to do in these days.

You see, in moments of crisis like this there is a lot of mourning, a lot of hurt. There are a lot of things we're losing right now, but there are also a lot of opportunities. And there are a lot of things we're gaining right now. And there are going to be new things you're going to do, by your Spirit and through the power of your word that wouldn't have ever happened had we not been walking through this crisis.

So, Father, right now I pray that you would give strength to people who really need it. That if some right now are feeling themselves succumb to fear I ask that your Holy Spirit would minister to them and give them courage and strength to lean into you and hold onto love as we seek to get through this together.

And God, we believe you are good all the time. Even in the midst of a crisis like this. And all the time you are good.

We ask this in Jesus' name: Amen.