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Hey, Traders Point family. Today we are one church meeting literally in thousands of locations around the world. So, right now I just want to welcome you wherever you may be tuning in from—kitchens and living rooms around the world.

In fact, I want to welcome everybody who may be joining us who may be a part of a church that doesn't necessarily have video or livestreaming capabilities. So, you are our guest today and I just want to say that we're thrilled to have you and we're praying for you.

We are for your church. In fact, right now our team is actively trying to figure out how we can come alongside of other churches in our city and around the state to help you, because we are one church right now during these times.

Normally, at the beginning of a message, I would say that it is good to see you. But I can't see you. So I guess it's good for you to see me, or at least I'd like to think so.

So, man, can I just tell you what a week we've had. Who would have thought that just two weeks ago we would be in the position that we're in right now, facing the kinds of challenges that we're facing right now?

And I don't know about you, but I'm sick and tired of hearing the word COVID-19. I'm tired of expressions like social distancing and shelter in place. I'm tired of asking the question: How long is this going to go? And what is all of this going to mean? I'm tired of hearing more bad news.

If I were to be perfectly honest with you, I'm tired. But you know what? I'm also hopeful. And there are good reasons for us to be hopeful right now, which is why I want to bring you a message today that I've entitled *Hold on to Hope*. Because, during these uncertain times together, that's exactly what we have to do.

There was a guy in the Old Testament by the name of Job whose life got turned upside down in ways that he never saw coming. Almost overnight Job lost his business, he lost his family, and he lost his health. And in a moment of real honesty and transparency he vocalized two questions that I think that every single one of us can relate to right now.

He asked these questions:

Where then is my hope?

And:

Can anyone find it?

You know, hope is an incredibly powerful concept. Hope defined simply means this. It is:

a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.

And I think that I can speak for all of us when I say that that certain thing that we want to happen right now is for all of this to be over. We want COVID-19 to go away. We want life to get back to normal, for us to be able to go back to work and school. We want to be able to gather with friends and family without fear or anxiety. We want to see shelves full of that beautiful, white toilet paper once again.

You know, what we're walking through right now, it's scary. And we have more questions than we have answers. It sort of feels like we're pinned in a corner of a boxing ring, just getting pummeled day after day with more bad news.

I had a friend text me last night on my status and said, "Hey, how are you and your family doing?" And he said this, and I think his words probably capture most of how many of us feel. He said, "It feels like a really bad nightmare that we can't wake up from."

You know what? Because of that, right now, I just want to acknowledge that this hurts. Our daily lives and routines have been disrupted. Maybe you got laid off a few days ago. Maybe your business is at risk. Maybe you or someone who you're related to or somebody that you love is in the medical profession and they are going to work day after day, right there on the front lines of this thing and you're worried if they have adequate protection. Maybe you've been trying to put on a brave face for family and friends, but underneath the surface you're hurting, and I think that it's healthy to acknowledge that.

I love this prophet by the name of Habakkuk. I love his honesty when he cries out to God in Habakkuk, chapter 1, verse 2. He says this. He says, "How long," any of you ask that question this last week? How long are we going to be in this? How long is this going to go on? When can we get some good news? When will the clouds finally break and we see some rays of life?

Habakkuk says, "How long, O Lord, must I call for help? But you do not listen! Violence is everywhere! I cry, but you do not come to save."

I love how refreshing the Bible is. And if I'm being really transparent today, I've had a few Habakkuk moments this past week myself where I just cried and cried out to God. I even asked him, on more than one occasion, "God, where are you in all of this?" I begged him to intervene. And through tears I asked him to give us strength. And then I sat in silence. That's when the Spirit of God began to penetrate my heart and my mind.

And he brought this passage to my mind out of Psalm, chapter 42. David writes, "My heart is breaking as I remember how it used to be: I walked among the crowds of worshipers, leading a great procession to the house of God, singing for joy and giving

thanks amid the sound of a great celebration! Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again...”

And you know what? What David writes then we can hold onto today. We can put our hope in God, and we will praise him again. I really needed those words this past week and I'm willing to bet that you do too.

And then God began to just minister to my hurting heart a few truths that I want to pass on and encourage you with today, wherever you may be. Here's truth number one. I want you to know that:

### THIS CRISIS WILL BRING US TOGETHER LIKE NEVER BEFORE

In fact, I think that we are already seeing it. One of the things that this crisis reminds me of is 9/11. I don't know how many of you are old enough to remember September 11<sup>th</sup>, but my wife Lindsay and I were living in California at the time and we were visiting family in the Midwest. And we were actually supposed to fly back to California on that fateful Tuesday morning. And clearly, we turned on the news, we saw what was happening, and we were grounded at my parent's house for several days.

Finally we decided to rent a car and drive across country back home to California. And can I tell you that it was pretty amazing the unity that we saw as we drove through all of those states across country back to California. There was a unity in our country like I had never seen before, I think until now. In fact, I think that the unity that we're going to see in our nation and around the world is going to eclipse what we experienced on 9/11.

I want you to remember this truth out of 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, verse 11. It says, “So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.” And I want to encourage you with that. Let's just continue to encourage each other. Let's continue to build each other up, just as I know that you are already doing.

What we are experiencing right now, as a nation, and even globally—this is humbling. I think it reminds us how little we actually control. And because of that, the entire world right now is focused on coming up with solutions. So I think that that can give us some glimmers of hope.

And people are looking out for each other like never before. I saw on the news where distilleries stopped making bourbon so that they can be making hand sanitizer. People are ordering curbside service at restaurants and tipping \$1,000 tips. Complete strangers are reaching out to help each other.

I'm seeing all kinds of chatter across social media where people are trying to encourage and uplift one another. I want you to know that we will get through this and we will get through it together by leaning on one another.

You know what? Most importantly, now is the time for the church—and when I say church I not only mean our church, I mean the big C church around the world, now is the time for us to come together in unity and lead the way like never before in Jesus'

name. And we're going to come together to meet this spiritual, emotional, and physical need of people in our city, communities, and around the world because that's what the church is for.

We are a city on a hill, Traders Point. We are a bright, shining light in the darkest of days pointing people to the hope that can only be found in Jesus. So there are a couple of things that I want to share with you. First of all, I just want you to know how proud I am of you as a church, and how much I love you and how much I love being your pastor—like never before.

Just in my own quiet time, I feel the heavy weight of the responsibility that I have and that our team has as we are a church trying to give hope to our city, and yet I consider it an amazing privilege that God would just say, "Aaron, I want you to lead during this time." And I want to lead by serving.

So, I just want you to know that I am so proud of you as a church. Already what I'm seeing, people reaching out to each other trying to serve, messaging us, emailing us, "How can we help? How can we give? What can we do?"

I want you to know right now that if you are hurting, and you don't need to be a part of our church for this, and you don't need to live in Indiana for this, if you're around the world and you are watching this, and you need prayer, we've set up a link for you.

If you go to [tpcc.org/prayer](http://tpcc.org/prayer) there you'll find a page where you can fill out your information and you can let us know about your prayer request. You can give as little or as much information as you like. And then if you would like somebody to personally contact you, we would love to do that and pray with you.

I also want you to follow us on all social media channels, so that you can stay as up to date as possible. On Traders Point we've got Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. And our team is working really, really hard to try to produce devotional content, prayer support, content for your kids, and students through Traders Point Live events. And we'll be trying to produce that content throughout the week.

I'm the most active on Twitter and Instagram, so if you like you can follow me on there. I'm going to try producing as much content as I can, because I want to pastor our church and our city through these really difficult days.

Many of you have asked, "How can we help?" And right now, as you would imagine, it's sort of like a tsunami has come through and we've all been trying to figure out what the needs are. So we know that food is going to be a need. We want to continue to stock food items at our locations so that when the food banks begin to run low, we can keep those stored.

Right now we are using our using our Downtown facility and there might be some other of our facilities to be determined, but right now our Downtown facility is going to be used, we're going to open that up in partnership with some other organizations to offer

free childcare for medical workers who are on the front lines of this pandemic in our own city. We know that we're going to need to help provide masks and other medical equipment so that our medical professionals can stay safe.

We want to help families. We know that there is going to be some short-term financial need. And as a church we want to be able to pivot and meet needs as they arise. And all of that is possible through your generosity.

And you know what? That's the one thing I just don't worry about. I've never worried about that for us as a church because you guys are amazingly generous, and you always have been. My first year of ministry at Traders Point was 2008 and that was when we had the great recession and you guys stepped up in big ways back in 2008, and I have every confidence that you're going to step up in this crisis that we're in right now.

So, if you want to be a part of this I just want to encourage you to go to [tpcc.org/give](http://tpcc.org/give) and you can put all of your giving online, so as a church we can be adequately resourced to meet these needs. Most importantly, as a church, we want to point people to the hope that can be found in Jesus and we want to lead the way.

Here's truth number two that I want to encourage you with:

### THIS CRISIS WILL EVENTUALLY PASS

We don't know when, but we know that it will. And when you look at the history of pandemics, we know that they grow, and they decline like bell curves. They spike rapidly, which is what we're in now, but inevitably, they peak, and they decline. Now, with everything that we know, there will probably be some additional bumps along the way that won't be as severe, but we will eventually emerge through this.

And as we navigate it, we need to hold on to the promises of God's word. In 1 Peter, chapter 5, verse 10 it says, "In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while," a little while, "he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation."

2 Corinthians 1:10 says, "He did rescue us from mortal danger, and he will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in him, and he will continue to rescue us."

I don't know all of the answers. But here's what I know. I know that God is not absent. I know that God is not silent. I know that God is still ruling on his throne.

If any of you were in our worship night a couple of weeks ago, it was so amazing. Our Northwest campus was just packed, and people were crying out to God. And we even said that night that God rules with his feet up. This did not take him off guard. God knows exactly what he's doing, and I guarantee you he is going to redeem this for our good. Just watch. God is going to do miracles through this. God is going to change peoples' lives. Hearts are going to soften. Eyes are going to be open.

And that brings me to the next thing that I want you to know:

### THIS CRISIS IS REMINDING US OF OUR NEED FOR GOD

Oftentimes we forget. You know, in Psalm 42 it says that the deer longs for streams of water so my soul longs for you, O God. And I don't like to admit it, in fact I'm ashamed to admit it, but that's not always true of me. When life is going really good for me, and I've got my health, and I've got a little extra money in the bank, I don't always long for God like I should.

And it's trials and difficulties that have a tendency to strip away the faulty things that I've previously been putting way too much trust in, and they expose the weaknesses in my life. They awaken me from my spiritual slumber. So, in that way, challenges and trials like this can be a gift.

In Ecclesiastes, chapter 7, Solomon, in his wisdom writes these peculiar words. He said, "Better to spend your time at funerals than at parties." Man, you read that and you've gotta go, "Solomon, what in the world are you talking about? That sounds so insensitive. Why would you say that it is better to be at a funeral than a party?"

And the reason why Solomon said that is because God can teach us more and God can show us more what is truly important at a funeral than he can at a party, because funerals are sobering. Funerals call us to take inventory of our spiritual life and our relationships, and they motivate us to make some necessary adjustments.

I want you to remember this, as you and I walk through and as we emerge from this valley, let's not forget our need for God. And I also want you to know that you're not alone. You might be feeling isolated in your house right now, but you are not alone.

Psalm, chapter 23 says this. "The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name. Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me."

I can't wait for this to be over. I can't wait for us to emerge out of this valley and for life to go back to a more normal routine, but when it does please don't forget. When it does, please don't forget the way that you feel right now. Please don't forget the fear that maybe you've experienced, that thirst and that longing for God.

Let's carry it with us when this begins to calm down just a bit. And let's also open ourselves up and allow God to do a work within our hearts, and draw us more closely to our heavenly Father through this time. He is your shepherd who will guide you and lead you and comfort you.

Lastly, I want to share this with you:

### THIS CRISIS WILL LEAD MORE PEOPLE TO JESUS

This crisis, I'm convinced, will lead people to Jesus around the world like never before. And, honestly, that's what I'm praying. I'm praying for a revival to spark in our land and around the globe. I'm praying for people to have their eyes awakened to the spiritual realities around us and for their hearts to be opened and that they would give their lives to Jesus, maybe even you right now.

See, I'm wondering if right now you are beginning to realize that you've needed God all along, but because this has happened and we find ourselves in these circumstances, now you finally have eyes to see it. You recognize that the power of Christ is greater in you than the troubles that are around you.

I gave that definition of hope a little bit earlier, but here's another definition:

Hope: a feeling of trust.

That's really what it is. It's trust. Trust has another name. It's called faith. And we put our faith in Jesus, which is the only reliable source of our trust. And right now, every single one of us finds ourselves in circumstances that we cannot control. That's the scary part about it.

Now, while we can play our part, we cannot control the spread of the virus. There is nothing you can do other than just play your role. We can't control the economy. We can't control the events of the day. And so, all that leaves us with is trust. I want to encourage you today to put your trust in the God, who controls it all, by placing your faith in Jesus Christ right now, right where you are.

In Isaiah, chapter 40, verse 31 it says, "But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint."

And perhaps you've never put your trust in Jesus before. Or maybe you allowed your spiritual walk with God to plateau a bit and you need to recommit your life to Jesus. Maybe you've never really felt your need to put your trust in a God you can't see and now you're at the mercy of a virus that you can't see, and it's time for you to acknowledge the God who's been there all along waiting for you to come home, waiting for you to see he created you, he loves you, and he wants what is best for you.

So right now, where you are, if you're ready to give your life to Jesus, I would love to introduce you and to lead you to him. So if you're comfortable, just bow your head, close your eyes right where you are and I want to lead you in this prayer, if you're ready, just make this prayer your own.

Father God, I come to you right now in desperate need of you like never before. I'm scared. I'm frightened. This whole thing has just totally taken me by surprise and I don't know what to do next. And, God, I'm sorry for not acknowledging you sooner. I'm sorry for not seeing my need for your mercy and love until now. That's why I'm even more thankful for your grace.

I believe that you are in control in this world right now that is so out of control. I believe that you are good and that you love me. I believe that you will lead us out of this mess that we're in, because you're a compassionate shepherd and I'm going to hold onto hope, because you are a loving Father.

So, today, I give my life to you. I acknowledge my sin and my pride, and I turn from them. I put my trust in Jesus who lived for me, who died for me, and defeated death for me so that I could have life. And I want to live for you by the strength of your Spirit, from this day forward. In Jesus' name: Amen.

Man, if you made that decision and you prayed that prayer right now, I just want to celebrate you. Way to go! We're so happy. Our whole church family is celebrating with you. You may not be able to hear them, but they are. And if you made that decision to give your life to Jesus or recommit your life to Jesus, we'd love to hear from you. Just comment on social media, send us a DM send us an email, because we would love to follow up with you and celebrate that with you and hopefully schedule a time in the near future for your baptism.

Listen. I don't know what the coming week holds for us, but I do know for certain who holds the week. So I want to encourage you to keep listening to Jesus. Keep crying out to God. Keep reaching out to help others. I love you. I love being your pastor. We are going to walk through this together and see what God might do.

Every single weekend we will gather together as we start a brand-new series of messages next week. I can't wait to jump in.

Let me pray for you.

Father, we come to you now. I thank you for this time. Thank you for technology where we can gather together even when we physically cannot be together. God, I ask that you would intervene. I ask that you would bring us comfort and peace and health and relief. God, I pray that you would curb the spike of this virus and that it would begin to flatten out and decline.

I pray that you would help the doctors and everybody who is on the front line of this thing. Keep them safe. Keep them healthy. God, I pray that we could accelerate vaccines to do what we can as human beings as society comes together.

God, I also pray that thousands, if not millions, of people's lives would be open to receiving you, that they would recognize their need for you like never before. And I pray that you redeem this and do something amazing through it.

And, as a church, we're going to lean into this. We are not closed. We are open. We are not stepping back. We are ramping up, because we want to be on the front lines of bringing hope to as many people as possible. We thank you and we love you. In Jesus' name: Amen.