

...from the Heart



2021

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Who to Trust Going Forward

The phrase, *well, that's another fine mess you've gotten us into* had become a trademark of the comedy team of Laurel and Hardy, from the late 1920s to the mid-1940s. The 2018 movie *Stan & Ollie* wonderfully captured the antics of the comedic duo. It was always Ollie who accused Stan of getting them into another fine mess.

As we have crossed the great divide from 2020 into 2021, I believe we are in another *fine mess*. We find ourselves more divided than ever. As we look to the future, we will be hard-pressed to find a man or woman who will have peace in their right hand, and a solution in their left; that person does not exist. (For the record, if anyone shows up claiming they will set and resolve the differences of the world, brace yourself! However, that is an article for another time.)

Yet, we look for one person to point to, someone we can follow, someone we can trust. We have gotten in the habit of looking to physical beings – congressmen, senators, a president – instead of the invisible Lord. It is a terrible mistake, and one we need to snap out of, like a bad dream we need to awake from! The greatness of our nation has always depended on God's hand upon it. However, somehow we have mistaken man's hand for God. I believe it has happened *innocently* and *steadily* over time because the Lord has used certain men. However, I believe that a prophecy and warning from the prophet Jeremiah may be appropriate for our times:

Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord. He is like a shrub in the desert and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. Jeremiah 17:5-6

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It is only natural to want to see and experience the goodness of God in our land. But it will not happen as we trust men; this is a time to turn our hearts back to the Lord and trust Him. The Psalmist said it well:

It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. Ps.118:8-9

As we proceed forward, this year and beyond, this is a time when we can see the invisible become visible; the living God at work in the human heart! We are entering a time of the year that will lead us to the authenticity of the cross of Christ, and why He had to suffer upon it. Is this not a time to fall on our knees and call upon the living God for His forgiveness, grace, and guidance? He is the one person to point to; He is the One worthy to follow – the One we can **trust**. He says, practice trusting me, relinquish what control you *think* you have into my hands, and let go and recognize that I AM God;
I AM the God who controls the troubles that surround you.

The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.
Proverbs 16:4

He also says, My Living Presence is your Companion every step of the way. Is there anyone like me? Is there anyone like the Lord? I AM the One you can trust!

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.
Isaiah 40:28

Therefore, regardless of the condition or the direction our nation may go, it can be well with our soul if we ***trust in him at all times, [if] O people; [we] pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Psalm 62:8***

Sunday, April 4th, we will celebrate the Resurrection of Christ. It proclaims, there is nothing impossible for the Lord! It heralds, O, my soul, put your hope in God! It reminds us that if Christ is for us, who can be against us!

In Him, Pastor Vin



Continue to Live Your Lives in Christ

As we enter our second year of this COVID pandemic, there are many voices out there spewing all kinds of “facts” about what is going on and what it all means. They even link bits and pieces to end times prophecy and time frames that cannot be known. There have been several “prophets” coming forth with words from God about all this. Are any of them right? Only time will tell. If they speak the Word of God then the things they say will happen - period. Listen to what Paul instructs the church at Colossi.

Col. 2:6 - “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”

This sums up all the confusion to me. I half listen to all the voices out there. However, I am fully attentive to the actual Word of God. The Bible contains all the truth we need to wade through all the other information out there. Don’t be confused, and don’t be deceived. God wants you and I to be informed and make right decisions regarding all the circumstances of life we may find ourselves in.

I was taught accurately from the Bible when I first came to faith. I nurtured that by study and prayer. Of course later on by attending Bible school, my faith in the Word of God was further confirmed and enhanced. You don’t have to attend seminary in order to grasp the facts of God’s Word and his intent for our lives. He definitely does not want us to follow all the latest trends in the “Christian” culture that are being expounded.

Stick with the Word of God and the foundation that you built your faith upon in the beginning of your journey. Many voices sound reasonable, but if you test what they are saying against the Bible you may find contradictions. Don’t buy into anything that doesn’t line up to what God has already said.

Paul warned his readers ... “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the One who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel...” Gal. 1:6.

Will there continue to be tough times during this pandemic? Yes! Will God be with us through them? Yes again! Will he help us gain understanding in all of the chaos and voices flying around? Yes, if we trust Him to do so and confirm all things back to his Word.

I want to encourage you during these difficult times with no definite end in site, don’t be discouraged or afraid. God has not dropped the ball on us and doesn’t plan to.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.” Prov. 3:5-6

Blessings and peace,
Pastor Nick



Women's Ministry



“Think spring, think spring”, that is what I’m trying to do as I look out my window and see piles of snow on a frigid cold day! The way the months fly by, spring will be here before we know it but we will still be dealing with many of the issues we face today.

Over the past year, we have learned to live in a “masked” society while keeping our distance from family and friends. This goes against our deepest needs to be near those we love and desire to share our lives with. For some it has been a time of loneliness, anxiety, fear and sometimes anger. While we have a lot of unanswered questions, where do we turn for those answers.

In our Thursday ladies group we finished a chapter in the book we are reading which talked about Job and his friends. In a matter of hours, Job lost his children, his flocks of animals and his wealth. As if that wasn’t enough, he lost his health as well *but* he never lost his faith in God. These well-meaning “friends” demeaned Job and accused him of sinning against God and that was the reason for what had happened. Job continued to put his trust in the God who he believed and kept his eyes upon Him.

In this continued time of COVID and political unrest, where do we turn for the answers that we seek? Do we tune into social media or have TV on all day long to get the answers we seek or do we turn to the Only One that can bring us peace and hope in all the confusion around us?

In the book of Matthew, Chapter 11:28-30, Jesus tells us “Come to Me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in your heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

I have found peace, joy and strength as I pray each day and seek God’s wisdom in all that I do. I don’t understand all that is going on in our world but I do know that God is Sovereign over all things. His Word endures forever and that is where we need to seek the answers we are looking for.

Only our Lord know what our tomorrows will bring and I pray you will “tune” in to Him and be refreshed and renewed.

Humbly serving,
Mary Ann

The Choice Isn't Easy, But It's Clear.



The car in front of me had a window sticker: "I'm not drunk, I'm avoiding potholes." I had to smile at that one since our roads are full of them. (There was a second sticker beneath that said, "Smile if you're not wearing underwear!") I suddenly hoped no one saw me smiling. (*What would they think?*) The first sticker reminded me of two people who resisted a false accusation of public drunkenness.

In first Samuel chapter 1, Eli the priest sat near the entrance of the temple watching Hannah. Her lips moved soundlessly in intense but inaudible prayer.

Eli interrupted her with an accusation, "Why are you drunk?" In judging Hannah by her outward appearance, he further injured an already bruised spirit. If she had responded with indignation, we would not have blamed her, but she responds politely and respectfully. "No, my lord, I'm sad and grieving. I've poured out my soul to the Lord."

Fast forward about 1000 years later to the book of Acts, chapter two.

Believers are gathered, praying in an upper room. They begin to speak in foreign languages as they praise God and tell of His mighty deeds. The first insult was flung, "How are these common, uneducated Galileans speaking in our languages?" And the false accusation, "It's morning and they're drunk!"

Peter was not so gentle as Hannah in his response, but his words were full of the truth as Hannah's had been. In both situations, the accusers had a change of heart.

Eli blessed Hannah that God would answer her prayers. A year later, Samuel was born. Peter's defense led to the repentance of thousands. Former false accusers joined the body of Christ.

Jesus tells us to expect accusations, harassment, false claims, and other types of rejection. We may feel we have the right to defend ourselves, but we have a greater obligation to not return evil for evil. In his first epistle, Peter tells us why we should not seek revenge and he refers, in part, to Psalm 34 (in italics). 1 Peter 3:8-18: ESV

"Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. For *'Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.'* Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit..."

People will cause you trouble, pain, even heartache.
Your response can only be one of two options.
Which will you choose?



-Sue Cerruto, Hospitality.

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Pray for our families who have lost loved ones.  
The family of **Henry Bramwell**.  
Jennifer Crosby on the loss of Mom, **Cynthia Jones**.

#### COMING UP...

##### MARCH

March 14 - Daylight Savings Time Begins  
March 17 - St. Patrick's Day  
March 20 - First Day of Spring  
March 28 - Palm Sunday

##### APRIL

April 2 - Good Friday  
April 4 - Easter Sunday

##### MAY

May 8 - Mother's Day  
May 31 - Memorial Day



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Sunday Service at 10am  
Senior Pastor: Vincent Linguiti  
For our weekly schedule of meetings  
check out our website at [www.patchnaz.net](http://www.patchnaz.net)  
Sermons live stream on Facebook  
Find us on YouTube

#### FOOD PANTRY

OPEN: MON, WED, FRI 10AM - 2PM  
65 Franklin St. (Rear Entrance)





## PERFECT TIMING

Anyone who has competed in sports, told a joke or planned a surprise party knows the importance of timing. Proper timing marks the difference between success and failure. On a daily basis we aren't overly concerned with timing because our activities are routine. Getting the kids to karate class, making a mortgage payment, or completing a work related assignment raises little concern over timing issues. Yet we know the importance of timing when something extraordinary is about to happen. Consider the narrow window of opportunity that opened for a man named Simeon. He was nearing the end of his life but had received a promise from God that he'd see the Messiah before he died.

*<sup>25</sup> At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout ... eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit ... had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup> That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, <sup>28</sup> Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God ... Luke 2:25-28 (NIV)*

Think about the timing needed for this event to materialize. What were the chances that Simeon would enter the temple on the same day, at the precise hour that Mary and Joseph arrived to present Jesus as required in Mosaic Law? God's timing is always perfect, even when the time for what we were hoping for seems to have passed.

So let me ask you a question. How personal do you want to be with God? Most people walk through life possessing only the vaguest notion of who God is. Many lifelong Christians seem satisfied with nothing more than a cursory relationship with Him. They view God as an insurance policy that can be used when emergencies strike. Otherwise their prayers amount to little more than a laundry list of daily requests. But God wants so much more for us.

Consider the account of Katie Paige Parker, a young woman whose broken marriage had left her broken. Against the advice of close friends, Katie felt the urge to accept a foster care assignment. She took home an abandoned four day old baby boy, whom she eventually adopted. About a year later a second request came to foster another abandoned baby girl, also four days old. She accepted the assignment without hesitation. During the second adoption procedure Katie discovered the children had the same birth mother. *God's timing*, not coincidence, was at work here. Grayson and his sister Hannah were both rescued and amazingly reunited. Katie says they have patched the hole in her life. She is convinced this was God's calling upon her life.

Maybe you think it's too late, that your dream has passed its expiration date. Perhaps, for the first time in your life, you don't know what to do or who to turn to. Your problems are too big to handle and you know you need help.

Reflect on this: the reason doctors so effectively diagnose our ills and prescribe solutions is due to the consistency of design in the human body. God planned it that way. He does nothing haphazardly. He had a plan for creation and a plan for your life, prepared before you were even conceived.

In the same way God spoke to Simeon, and Katie Paige Parker. He is ready to speak to you. His voice isn't like rolling thunder; it's more like a whisper. It's a voice you have likely already heard but didn't recognize. Maybe you're hearing that still small voice right now. God's timing is perfect; the window of opportunity is open for you. Start by surrendering your heart. He has the power and willingness to completely and instantly change your life and give you a new hope. Don't wait for tomorrow, do it now, the timing is perfect.

*Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.* Jeremiah 33:3 (NKJ)

Serving Him Together,

Pastor John Mercurio