

“If God is For Us Who Can Be Against Us?”

INTRO. VIDEO – B.C. – DAN STEVERS

TODAY WE BEGIN AN EMPHASIS ALL THIS SPRING ON HOPE IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING ON A DAY WHEN WE CELEBRATE RESURRECTION THAT CAME OUT OF A DEATH. WE MAY BE ASKING A LOT OF QUESTIONS ABOUT WORLD EVENTS, AND OUR OWN PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES. ONE NAGGING QUESTION MIGHT BE- IS GOD REALLY THERE? DOES GOD REALLY CARE? THE VIDEO SHOWS FROM THE BEGINNING GOD IS FULLY COGNIZANT OF WHAT GOES ON IN THE WORLD AND DOES HAVE A PLAN TO INTERVENE. WE BELIEVE THAT PLAN IS THROUGH HIS SON. SO TODAY WE CELEBRATE WHAT GOD HAS DONE IN HISTORY TO INTERVENE AND GIVE US REASSURANCE IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS, FAILURES, SETBACKS AND SUFFERING. GOD HAS A STORYBOARD OF HOPE HE IS WANTS TO WORK OUT IN YOUR LIFE. McKenna Harris). THAT IS WHY WE CALL THE GOSPEL THE GOOD NEWS! "HOPE TO HELP YOU COPE!" COULD ANY BODY USE THAT TODAY?

9 YEAR OLD NOLAN BRANDY RECOVERING FROM MONDAYS SHOOTING. I WANT US TO PRAY!

I ALSO WANT US TO PRAY FOR FAMILY OF JONATHAN MARTINEZ WHO WAS LOST. BECAUSE OF JESUS OVERCOMING DEATH THAT FAMILY HAS HOPE. JESUS SAID "LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME; FOR TO SUCH BELONGS THE KINGDOM OF GOD!"

THE CHRISTIANS ATTACKED AND KILLED LAST SUNDAY IN EGYPT ARE WITH JESUS TODAY.

THIS MORNING WE ARE GOING TO LOOK INTO THE BOOK OF ROMANS IN THE N.T. WRITTEN TO CHURCH IN ROME DURING FIRST CENTURY WITHIN ABOUT 30 YRS. AFTER CHRIST DIED AND ROSE. THEY WERE GOING THROUGH GREAT PERSECUTION AT HANDS OF NERO AND OTHER TYRANTS, BUT BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS THEY MAINTAINED THEIR HOPE. (YOU CAN OPEN YOUR BULLETIN TO FILL IN AND FOLLOW ALONG.)

FOCUS THROUGHOUT BOOK IS GOD'S GRACE. **Grace = a favor we don't deserve. (will ask you to repeat this definition at times throughout the message this A.M.) IF SOMEONE EVER TELLS**

YOU WE BECOME SAVED/READY TO FACE GOD BY FOLLOWING A SET OF RULES/REGULATIONS – POINT THEM TO ROMANS. GOD KNOWS LIFE IS TUFF THIS SIDE OF HEAVEN – KNOWS WE WILL FAIL. NEED HIS GRACE.

****EARLY YEARS IN MINISTRY I MADE LOTS OF MISTAKES. . .I WAS SHOWN A LOT OF GRACE. WHY I AM STILL A PASTOR 39 YRS. LATER!**

ILLUS. – AT 22 LOST MAP TO CABIN – TRY THE CABIN DOORS NEAR THE LIFTS

GOD/ELDER SHOWED ME GRACE! TICKET IN FRONT OF CHURCH/AND LATER THAT SAME YEAR - ON WAY TO TRAFFIC SCHOOL. LEARNED QUICKLY. AGAIN SHOWN GRACE (WHICH IS WHAT??).

BIG IDEA: God is for us, not against us. (He proved it by sending His Son)

****COURTROOM ILLUS.
A CHANCE LATER IN THE SERVICE TO EXPERIENCE HIS GRACE FIRST HAND.**

WHEN YOU GO THROUGH ALL KINDS OF FAILURE, TEMPTATIONS, TRIALS FOCUS ON THIS PROMISE: **ROMANS 8:1. Therefore, there is**

now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. FOR THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED GOD'S SON AS THEIR SUBSTITUTE!

OPPOSITE OF HOW SOME SEE GOD. YOU MAY BE ASKING. . .

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I. IF GOD IS FULL OF GRACE, WHY IS THERE SUFFERING?

SUFFERING IS NOT GOD'S IDEAL, BUT HE WILL WORK WITH WHAT HE HAS. ROM. 8:18-21 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that[a] the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

A. WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT. . . Much (not all) of our suffering comes from our own poor choices.

WHEN WE MESS UP, IT EFFECTS OTHERS. REALLY TRUE IN ADAM'S CASE. (JESUS BELIEVED IN ADAM AND EVE.) GENESIS TEACHES ADAM'S DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD EFFECTED ALL OF CREATION. WE SHAKE OUR FISTS AT GOD WHEN THINGS GET BAD, BUT LOVE INVOLVES FREEDOM TO CHOOSE. CHOICES HAVE CONSEQUENCES. THAT'S REAL LIFE.

A FALLEN WORLD WAS NOT GOD'S IDEAL, BUT HE PROVIDED GRACE AT GREAT COST TO HIMSELF AS A BACK UP PLAN FOR ANYONE WHO WOULD BECOME HIS CHILD. WE DON'T DESERVE IT – WE CAN'T BE GOOD ENOUGH TO FACE A PERFECT GOD ON OUR OWN - IF YOU THINK YOU ARE GOOD ENOUGH - BY HIS GRACE HE DOESN'T SHOW OUR INNERMOST THOUGHTS ON A SCREEN!

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT - ALL *THE GOOD* WE STILL ENJOY IN A FALLEN WORLD IS BECAUSE OF HIS GRACE. (WHICH MEANS?? - A FAVOR YOU DON'T DESERVE!)

***ILLUS. LET'S SAY FOR NO REASON SOMEONE COMES TO YOUR DOOR W. A 100.00 BILL ONE DAY, NEXT, AGAIN FOR 10 DAYS. THEN STOPS**

AND GOES TO NEIGHBORS. YOU GONNA CRY, “YOU DIRTY CHEAT. RIP OFF!!”. HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?? IT WAS ONLY YOURS BY GRACE ANYWAY.

B. ROMANS WAS WRITTEN BY PAUL (formerly Saul of Tarsus). WHO WAS SHOWN GRACE. HE SAYS ONE REASON WE CAN FIND HOPE IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS IS THAT GOD PROMISES TO SEND HIS SPIRIT TO INTERCEDE FOR US WHEN WE ARE WEAK. CHRIST RESURRECTED SO HE COULD COME TO US IN THAT WAY. **ROMANS 8:26-27. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.**

WHEN YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT TO PRAY IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS, CHRIST IS ALREADY INTERCEDING BEFORE GOD AND STANDING *FOR* YOU AGAINST YOUR SPIRITUAL ADVERSARY, SATAN. VERY REAL SPIRITUAL ENEMY IN THE BIBLE. (NOT HORNS AND A PITCHFORK)

ACTS 16:25 - PAUL AND SILAS SINGING HYMNS IN JAIL AT MIDNIGHT WHILE OTHER PRISONERS LISTENED. GOD WAS ABOUT TO INTERVENE. Gives me hope in whatever I face.

**II. ANOTHER WAY HE SHOWS YOU GRACE =
God takes difficult circumstances and uses them for good.**

YOU MAY NOT SEE IT YET, BUT HOPE WILL GET YOU TO SEE IT EVENTUALLY! ROM. 8:6 - the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. v.24 - who hopes for what he already sees? WHEN WE HAVE HOPE WE WAIT PATIENTLY.

IT TOOK A DEATH BEFORE THERE WAS A RESURRECTION. ON FRIDAY NOBODY THOUGHT IT WAS GOOD!

Nobody imagined no body 3 days later!

ROMANS 8:28. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who[a] have been called according to his purpose.

Hard times can make us bitter or better.

WE CHOOSE.

A. DOESN'T SAY ALL THINGS *ARE* GOOD OR THAT GOD MAKES ALL THE BAD HAPPEN, BUT TURNS FALLEN EXPERIENCE INTO MEANINGFUL PURPOSE WHEN WE GO TO HIM AND SURRENDER TO HIS WILL.

– SHARON'S DAD; MY SISTER IN LAW, CELESTE, ONE OF OUR GUYS AND FAMILY THROUGH RECENT JOB LOSS AND PATIENCE FOR GOD TO PROVIDE (THEIR NOTES IN PRAYER REQUESTS) - WHEN WE FOLLOW CHRIST HE DOESN'T TAKE AWAY OUR INDIVIDUALITY OR PERSONALITY – BUT DEVELOPS US WHEN WE SURRENDER TO HIM. USES TRIALS TO FILE ROUGH EDGES AND SETS YOU FREE TO BECOME ALL YOU CAN BE TO LIVE OUT A MEANINGFUL PURPOSE. OFTEN JUST WHEN YOU THINK THE BOTTOM HAS DROPPED OUT AND CAN'T GET WORSE!

***ILLUS. FRIEND WHO WENT ON A MISSIONS TRIP TO HAITI TO DIG A WELL FOR A VILLAGE. SHARED W. ME - BRINGING CONTAINERS – DRILLS, FOOD, EQUIPMENT. PORT AUTHORITY DEMANDED \$14,000. ASSOC. PASTOR WENT IN WHILE THE REST PRAYED. 2 HOURS LATER – CAME OUT AND SAID THEY COULD GO AHEAD.**

**WHAT HAPPENED? LED HIM TO CHRIST.
CHARGED MINIMAL 1,000 FEE (NEW
CHRISTIAN). WE SEE STUFF LIKE THIS MORE
WHEN WE DEPEND ON GOD AND HAVE HOPE!**

**III. “HYPER (SUPER) CONQUERORS” – ROMANS
8:34-39. Who then is the one who condemns? No
one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who
was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and
is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate
us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or
hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness
or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:**

**“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be
slaughtered.”[a].**

**37 No, in all these things we are more than
conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I
am convinced that neither death nor life, neither
angels nor demons,[b] neither the present nor the
future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor
depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be
able to separate us from the love of God that is in
Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**A. IN THE PROCESS OF BRINGING GOOD OUT
OF THE BAD IN AN IMPERFECT WORLD. . .**

**NOTHING CAN STAND IN THE WAY OF GOD
SHOWING HIS LOVING US. . .**

**1. “ TROUBLE, HARDSHIP, PERSECUTION”
WON'T SEPARATE US FROM GOD. EMPEROR
NERO – GARDEN PARTIES, TORN APART IN THE
RING. THEY COULDN'T HAVE IMAGINED AT THE
TIME THAT A FEW CENTURIES LATER IN ROMAN
COLOSSEUM – NO ONE CELEBRATES NERO –
THOUSANDS COME TO CELEBRATE EASTER,
AND THE RISEN CARPENTER FROM NAZARETH!
CHRISTIANITY DIDN'T DIE BECAUSE THESE
PEOPLE HAD THE HOPE THAT IF JESUS ROSE,
SO WOULD THEY! THAT GOT THRU TO PEOPLE!
THAT HOPE IS PASSED DOWN TO YOU!**

**2. DEATH? – 1 COR. 15 - JESUS APPEARED TO
OVER 500 WITNESSES OVER 40 DAYS AFTER HE
ROSE. FIRST GOSPELS CIRCULATED WITHIN 30
YRS. (MARRIED 35 YRS. - CAN STILL
REMEMBER LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY. NO TIME
FOR MYTH). DISCIPLES HAD NO FEAR OF
DEATH AFTER THAT. ALL WERE MARTYRED
FOR THEIR BELIEFS. HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN?**

**2. LIFE – WON'T SEPARATE US FROM HIS LOVE
– INCLUDES TRIALS, DISTRACTIONS,
ENTICEMENTS THAT TAKE US OFF COURSE. AS**

THE GOOD SHEPHERD HE WILL LEAVE THE 99 TO GO AFTER THE ONE! US!

3. ANGELS/DEMONS – ROMANS SAW BEHIND THE WIND, CLOUDS, HAIL – BELIEVED JEALOUS OF HUMANITY.

4. PRESENT/FUTURE. – FEAR OF WHAT IS COMING. THE “WHAT IFS” THAT PLAGUE YOU WHEN YOU ARE TRYING TO SLEEP - PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT. IF JESUS CAME TONIGHT AND YOU HAVE ANSWERED HIS CALL, YOU ARE HIS! BESIDES, 90% OF WHAT WE WORRY ABOUT WON'T HAPPEN.

5. V. 39 – HEIGHT/DEPTH – ASTROLOGY POP. CULTURE IN ROME – SPIRITS RULED ABOVE AND BELOW THE HORIZON. POSITION OF STARS EFFECTED LIFE – ABSOLUTELY NO EVIDENCE. THE STARS DON'T GUIDE YOUR LIFE, BUT GOD CAN IF U LET HIM.

CONCLUSION: GOD IS FOR US. HE ALONE CAN JUSTIFY. HE CALLS. IF WE ANSWER, WE ARE CHOSEN/ADOPTED AS BELOVED CHILDREN. THAT'S GRACE. THAT IS GOD BEING FOR US, NOT AGAINST. WE CAN COME TO HIM WITH AN OPEN HAND EVEN IN OUR FAILURES. WE DON'T NEED TO SWEEP OUR SIN UNDER THE RUG

WITH HIM. HE CAN'T WAIT TO FORGIVE AND RESTORE!

****HE WILL LEVERAGE EVEN OUR FAILURES FOR GOOD IF WE TURN AND FOLLOW HIM. OUR LIVES CAN BE HIS “STORYBOARD THAT TELLS OTHERS ABOUT THE HOPE THEY CAN HAVE THROUGH HIM”.**

ACTION STEPS:

1. TRY TAKING A STEP CLOSER TO GOD TODAY. DO YOU HAVE TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT GOD TO TRUST HIM A LITTLE MORE, OR CAN YOU START THE PROCESS BY RESPONDING TO WHAT YOU *DO* KNOW? (IF YOU STRUGGLE W. BELIEF, COME BACK AT LEAST ONE MORE WEEK FOR DR. CRAIG HAZEN – “TOUGH QUESTIONS/ REAL ANSWERS”, AND SEE WHY YOU CAN BELIEVE GOD’S PROMISES AND HOW THEY CAN WORK IN REAL LIFE). BOOKS AND DVDS AVAILABLE. WRITE DOWN QUESTIONS ON CC CARD TODAY AND PLACE IN OFFERING OR EMAIL THEM TO ME. PLUS JOJOS GRILL A DOG AND SHAVE ICE AFTER EA. SERVICE. **NOT FREE. (WE BELIEVE IN GRACE, BUT YOU STILL HAVE TO PAY FOR YOUR LUNCH THAT DAY!).**

2. THINK OF A RECENT EVENT OR FAILURE THAT YOU WENT THROUGH OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE EXPERIENCED THAT WAS DIFFICULT. CAN YOU BEGIN TO SEE HOW GOD MIGHT TURN WHAT HAPPENED INTO SOMETHING GOOD?

VISUAL – YOU MAY HAVE BEEN WONDERING WHAT HAS BEEN HIDING UNDER THE RUG ALL THIS TIME. COULD REPRESENT FAILURES, SIN, PAST SECRETS THAT ARE MAKING US SICK THAT WE TRY AND SWEEP UNDER THE RUG, FEARING CONDEMNATION. CHALLENGE TO BRING INTO THE LIGHT BY CONFESSING TO GOD TODAY AND LET HIM LEVERAGE FOR GOOD AND LET YOUR LIFE BE A STORY OF HOPE TO OTHERS. (BRING OUT WRAPPED PRESENT.) WE CAN “PAY FORWARD” THE GRACE GOD HAS SHOWN US. WHO DO YOU KNOW WHO NEEDS YOU TO SHARE THE GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SHOWN? WHEN WILL YOU DO IT?

3. JOHN 20:1-8 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus

loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. TAKE SOME TIME TO READ OVER THE ACCOUNTS OF CHRIST’S RESURRECTION APPEARANCES ALONG WITH **1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11**. (We have free New Testaments for you along with a gift book today at the Info. table.)

IF YOU COULD KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT JESUS REALLY DID RISE, WOULD IT CHANGE THE WAY YOU LIVE? WOULD IT CONVINCING YOU THAT GOD REALLY IS FOR YOU AND NOT AGAINST YOU? THAT THE PROMISES WE LOOKED AT TODAY ARE TRUE?

BE WITH US NEXT WK.

IN THE MEANTIME, GET TO KNOW HIM AND YOU WILL GET TO KNOW HIS GRACE – WHICH IS?? (A FAVOR YOU DON'T DESERVE) HE IS WAITING TO SHOW IT TO YOU! IT'S A GIFT. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS REACH OUT AND RECEIVE IT!

PRAY (SINNERS PRAYER. INVITATION FOR BAPTISM). On Your CC CARD CHECK YOU RECEIVED CHRIST, PUT YOUR INFO AND WE WILL SEND YOU A FOLLOW UP HAND OUT. STOP BY AND PICK UP A NEW BELIEVERS NEW TESTAMENT. LET SOMEONE KNOW WHAT YOU DID WHO CAN ENCOURAGE. JOIN A SMALL GROUP! CHANCE TODAY! HAVE SOME STARTING IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS.

OFFERING - MIRACLE OFFERING

- GABE GARCIA - EXPERIENCED A RESURRECTION OF SORTS BUT INSURANCE HAS RUN OUT FOR THERAPY

- IJM - FREES YOUNG GIRLS FROM HUMAN TRAFFICKING - PROSECUTES PERPETRATORS, RESTORES THE LIVES OF VICTIMS. ALSO RESCUES WIDOWS FROM LAND GRABBING.

HALF OF WHATEVER YOU GIVE TODAY - WE ARE GOING TO GIVE AWAY TO THESE TWO CAUSES AND THE OTHER HALF WILL SUPPORT THE MINISTRY OF SOLID GROUND SO THAT WE CAN CONTINUE TO REACH OUT TO OUR COMMUNITY AND BUILD PROPLE UP IN THEIR FAITH IN CHRIST! LIKE YOU! Give in boxes if came prepared or w. paypal at ipad in back or online through our website - instructions in bulletin.

“Hyper Victory Meets The World”

Big Idea: God is for us, not against us.

I. Suffering is not God’s ideal, but He will work with what He has. Romans 8:18-27

A. When you think about it, most of our suffering comes from. . .

All the good we still enjoy is because of His _____. All we have is by _____.

Grace =

B. God promises to send His Spirit to _____ for us when we are weak and don't know what/how to pray.

II. Out of grace God takes the _____ and turns it into _____. Romans 8:28

A. Doesn't say all things are good

B. He is for us. Doesn't take away our individual personalities, but develops them when we trust Him.

III. Hyper/Super Conquerors – Rom. 8:29-39

A. Doesn't predestine us to be lost. It's the GRACE PLAN that is predestined!

B. Nothing can separate us from His love

1. trouble, persecution or hardship

2. death

3. life

4. angels/demons

5. present/future

6. height/depth

Conclusion: God is for us. He justifies. He calls

ACTION STEPS:

1. TRY TAKING A STEP CLOSER TO GOD TODAY. DO YOU HAVE TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT GOD TO TRUST HIM A LITTLE MORE TODAY, OR CAN YOU RESPOND TO WHAT YOU DO KNOW?

2. THINK OF A RECENT EVENT THAT YOU WENT THROUGH OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE EXPERIENCED THAT WAS DIFFICULT. COULD YOU SEE HOW GOD MIGHT TURN WHAT HAPPENED INTO SOMETHING GOOD?

3. TAKE SOME TIME TO READ THE ACCOUNT OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION APPEARANCES IN 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-8. IF YOU COULD KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT JESUS REALLY DID RISE, WOULD IT CHANGE THE WAY YOU LIVE? WOULD IT CONVINCEN YOU THAT GOD REALLY IS FOR YOU AND NOT AGAINST YOU? WHY?