

Introduction:

- In 1945, Sir Alexander Fleming won the Nobel Prize in Physiology of Medicine for his great contribution to the field of medical research, including most notably the discovery of penicillin. It is said that **he made his discovery while working in a dusty, run-down laboratory.** By chance, mold spores blew through an open window and landed on some exposed culture plates, growing over—and killing—the dangerous Staphylococcus bacteria which had been growing in the plates. This chance contamination of his experiment launched a chain of research which ultimately led to the discovery and practical application of the life-saving antibiotic, penicillin. A story is told that some years later, as he toured a modern, state-of-the-art laboratory, he was apprised by the guard of the lab's super-sterile environment. "It's a pity you didn't have such an immaculate facility as this to work in when you were conducting your research. Think of what you could have discovered in such a place!", "Not penicillin," Fleming purportedly replied. **APPLICATION** Were it in our power, we would wish for a state-of-the-art laboratory, a sterile environment in which to conduct our lives. We all yearn for a life that is free of the troubles and stresses of an imperfect world. But it's in the dusty, moldy laboratory we call "real life" where we make our most profound discoveries.
- My goal this morning is to encourage your hearts, no matter what you may be facing. I believe this year will be a challenging year in many ways and I believe that we can prepare for it, if you will. When facing trouble or trials...
 - Some people are afraid.
 - Some are fearfully excited... "the tribulation is about to begin."
 - Some are confused...what should I do?
 - Some are just turning it off, denial.
- In Jn 16:31-33 we find Jesus response to disciples who just told Him they believe. To which Jesus asks: *"Jesus asked, **Do you finally believe?** But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."* (John 16:31-33, NLT)
 - Do you really believe? Do you think so...ok, we'll see because here is what going to happen.
 - You will be scattered and you will leave me alone. But I am not alone...Jesus is demonstrating peace in the Father.
 - Yes, you will have trouble but take heart!
 - There isn't a human being alive on this planet who isn't acquainted with troubles. Times of difficulty arrive unexpectedly, remain indefinitely, and take deep root in the mind. It is no wonder, then, why Jesus's promise in Jn 16:33 also takes deep root in the minds and hearts of so many Christians: *"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*
- I. You Will Have Trouble** This is a fact of life. I don't want to create fear by imposing scenarios.
 - A. Have you figured out that life has trouble in it? And that, that trouble seems to always come in varying degrees?

- B. There are two words for trouble in the scriptures that I want us to look at. Maybe even two types of trouble we should be aware of.
1. Jn 16:33 tribulations/trouble. Jesus said, "*In this world you will have trouble.*": The Greek word is *thlibō* which literally means "to press," "squash," "hem in," then "to be narrow." Another form of the word means "pressure". It can also mean "to afflict or harass", "to cause discomfort or oppress". Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). TDNT (p. 334). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans. Have you ever experienced any of that kind of trouble? Mick, "Pleased to meet you won't you guess my name."
 2. James 1:2 trial/troubles. James says to count it all joy when you encounter trials/troubles. The word used here is: *peirao* – "to put someone to the test." James does not suggest that God himself sends sufferings to educate believers but He does allow us to be tested through troubles because trouble give us opportunity to prove faith and produce steadfastness. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). TDNT p. 823). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans. Have you ever felt like you have taken that test before? Maybe you have and now it is time to pass it.
 3. Look at what trouble does...
- C. Trouble often comes in the form of crisis, great or small.
1. Crises are negative changes in human or environmental affairs, especially when they occur abruptly, with little or no warning. More loosely, a crisis is a testing time or an emergency.
 2. Crises. IE. Tornado, Hurricane, car accident, cancer report, failed test, pink slip, divorce papers, flat tire.
 3. Crisis has several defining characteristics, they are:
 - a) specific.
 - b) unexpected.
 - c) non-routine events that create high levels of uncertainty.
 - d) require change.
- D. Trouble causes uncertainty.
1. And uncertainty is what is scary! IE. I don't like needles but, I really appreciate the nurse that says, "Ok, you are going to experience a pinch and stick." Does anything change when she says that? No, except now the uncertainty is gone. This is what we see Jesus doing in the Word. He knows uncertainty is coming (to us) so He tells his disciples so they won't fear, worry have anxiety. (I will have more to say on this later.) So the underlying question is...
 2. How do we handle uncertainty? Three basic responses.
 - a) Generally we worry. We generally handle uncertainty with fear or in other words... worry and anxiety. Life is full of uncertain things but this doesn't need to cause us stress. How well we handle uncertainty affects our emotional well being and peace of mind.
 - b) The Biblical way to handle life when it is uncertain is by faith! Faith in God opens us up to His peace and His promises allowing His Spirit to move in and through us.

- c) Many people leave their position of faith. When something unexpected happens, good or bad; the worst thing that we can possibly do is withdraw our faith in God. Those times are probably a test of faith; and how we respond during the event determines if we pass the test.

II. Living In Uncertainty

- A. There is no way you can pass through this life without experiencing trouble. And if you are a believer you are sure to find trouble because the devil hates God and God's children. The majority of trouble that we see in the NT is related to persecution because of the Gospel.
1. *"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*
 2. (2 Cor. 1:8-9; 4:10-11; 11:23-ff).
- B. And Jesus says in Mt 6:34 Each day has its own trouble. If each day has trouble, we must learn how to deal with this in Christ. So if I am promised trouble, I had better get equipped with the promises to handle it. I need to have a pathway to peace established in my life.
- C. Trouble/uncertainty also causes emotional stress and fear. And emotional stress drains us.
1. Let's look at five scary things Jesus says in Mt 24. He is talking to his disciples.
 - a) Mt 24:2 Not one stone left upon another. Disaster
 - b) Mt 24:9 You will be hated. No one wants to be hated.
 - c) Mt 24:15 When you see...the abomination of desolation. Ultimate darkness.
 - d) Mt 24:33 Know the end is near...it is at the gate. Anytime you hear, "This is the end," it is disconcerting.
 - e) Mt 24:36 You don't know the hour. Uncertainty.
 2. Mt 24:25 *I told you before hand*. "Pinch and a stick!" Jesus gives us four things not to do crisis.
 - a) Don't be deceived 24:4
 - b) Don't panic...don't be afraid 24:6
 - c) Don't be offended 24:10
 - d) Don't let your love grow cold. 24:12
 3. Therefore what do you do? You prepare having been warned.
 - a) Mt 24 is followed by three parables that tell us to be prepared!
 - b) Preparation is the key. So let me try and help us with that.

III. What Should I Do To Prepare?

- A. Do the basics: This is a given.
1. Stay in the Word.
 2. Talk to God, prayer.
 3. Stay connected to the body of Christ.
 - a) Not just to receive.
 - b) But also to give.
 4. Serve others this is the theme of one of the parables following Mt 24.
 5. Fast - Basic Christian discipline.

- B. Cast your cares upon Jesus "*casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*" (1 Peter 5:7, ESV)
1. 1 Peter 5:5 states that God opposes the proud. (Proud means I am doing something without the help of God.)
 2. Finding peace means we must humble ourselves to Him. Humility means I am trusting Him. And the goal is to trust Him unconditionally.
 3. Until you have that unconditional trust in God you will not find the grace promised to the humble.
- C. Abide in Christ. "*I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing*" (John 15:5).
1. There is an identity that is required to do this– the one given to you by God.
 2. There are activities that go with the identity. The basic disciplines done from heart not works.
- D. Enjoy Peace. "*And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.*" (Colossians 3:15, ESV)
1. The peace of God... indicates peace *with* God "*For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*" (Romans 14:17, NLT)
 2. Know the Prince of Peace Is 9:6
 3. Live in the fruit of spirit – peace. The strength from the Holy Spirit is called temperance.
 - a) Peace is a fruit of the spirit and it is sustained by yielding to God.
 - b) "*You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.*" (Isaiah 26:3, ESV)
 - c) The peace that comes from God starts with resting our minds on Christ in unconditional trust. The amount of peace that we receive from God is directly proportional to the amount of trust that we have in Him; then His peace becomes a catalyst for His grace. Our faith in Him precedes the results.
 4. Peace, strength, and righteousness are all products of the Holy Spirit who we receive within us after we draw close to God by using unconditional trust.
 5. Christ's presence in us makes His rest available. Judges 6:24 [When Gideon says in vs 24 "The Lord is Peace" or Jehovah-shalom, he is saying when we are near God we are at peace! That is what God's presence meant to him. He was near God and He heard from God.
 6. When we are anxious or afraid, we need to go to our heavenly Father. With Him, no problem is too great, and no one cares more about helping us! And as we stay near Him, we will have Peace. As the psalmist said, Ps 91, we need to "dwell in the shelter of the Most High."
- E. Don't fear. "*do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*" (Philippians 4:6, ESV) Have unconditional trust in God.

- F. Comfort others. “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. For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:4-5, NLT) – *thlibō*

Conclusion:

- In Gary Richmond’s book “A View From The Zoo”, he describes the birth of a giraffe: “The first thing to emerge are the baby giraffe’s front hooves and head. A few minutes later the plucky newborn calf is hurled forth, falls ten feet, and lands on its back. Within seconds, he rolls to an upright position with his legs tucked under his body. From this position he considers the world for the first time and shakes off the last vestiges of the birthing fluid from his eyes and ears. The mother giraffe lowers her head long enough to take a quick look. Then she positions herself directly over her calf. She waits for about a minute, and then she does the most unreasonable thing. She swings her long, pendulous leg outward and kicks her baby, so that it is sent sprawling head over heels. When it doesn’t get up, the violent process is repeated over and over again. The struggle to rise is momentous. As the baby calf grows tired, the mother kicks it again to stimulate its efforts...Finally, the calf stands for the first time on its wobbly legs. Then the mother giraffe does the most remarkable thing. She kicks it off its feet again. Why? She wants it to remember how it got up. In the wild, baby giraffes must be able to get up as quickly as possible in order to stay with the herd, where there is safety. Lions, hyenas, and leopards, all enjoy young giraffes, and they’d get it too, if the mother didn’t teach her calf to get up quickly and get with it. **APPLICATION:** Satan roams about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He roars to get us in fear, to make us uncertain. He roams because he is looking for who is edible.
- Count it all joy... “Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.” (James 1:2-4, NLT) Did I not say, “If you believed you would see...”
- “Dear friends, don’t be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world.” (1 Peter 4:12-13, NLT)