

## Identify the reason

1. Over the past week have experienced a confluence of events that can be identified as the reasons for our current struggles. There have been global/national reasons, local reasons, and personal reasons that have all contributed to your current spiritual wellness.
  - a. I do not need to suspend much time identifying the global, viral threat that is responsible for us being asked not to gather in large groups and therefore worshipping Christ on this Lord's Day from our homes.
    - i. This has caused a disruption in our normal activities and subsequently livelihoods are being threatened, and people are wondering what the next several months will hold.
  - b. Locally, over the past week we have been asked to wrestle the blessing of God's provision of snow which has brought with it downed power lines, damaged homes and possessions, stranded neighbors and family and brought even more disruption to work and routine.
  - c. And if global crisis and local hardships are not enough there are the personal struggles which would most likely still be and which are heightened by local and global events.
    - i. There is still work to do in our marriages (perhaps more now that we are spending time together)
    - ii. Children still need to be raised
    - iii. Marriages are still being prepared for
    - iv. Loved ones are still sick and death is no respecter of hardships
    - v. And of course there is the ever present alurment of sin with which we battle every day.
2. My dear brother and sister, we must properly identify the source and reason for our trouble if we are going to have any success in our struggle. After all, war cannot be waged against an unidentified enemy.

## Identify the response

1. Stop acting Surprised
  - a. Jesus told his disciples "**In the world you will have tribulation.**" John 16:33
    - i. Over the past few weeks I have had several conversations in which someone has said either in a roundabout way or directly "I can't believe this." A few were referring to personal struggles, some to trials which arose locally as a result of the storm, many referring to the covid-19 pandemic. NO matter what we are referring to say that we can't believe it, to be surprised by it or to be unprepared for it intellectually is to be out of touch with the scriptures.
2. Remember the Savior who strengthens you and His Spirit that lives in you

- a. Phillipians 4:13 is a well known and favorite verse for many and yet it is most often misrepresented
    - i. Given the context of this verse Paul is not saying Jesus will give victory over opponents in an athletic competition rather Paul is pointing out that he is able, through the strength given him by Jesus Christ, to be **content**
      - 1. This was the attitude of Job when he pointed out that it would be wrong to receive with praise the good things that God gave him and not the hard things (Job 2:10)
      - 2. Beloved you and I must learn to be content in our situation whether we are brought low, or if we are abounding. If our 401k has been cut by a third or if the market is trading over 30,000. Weather our kids have been killed in a natural disaster and our wealth stolen or if it has been restored to us ten fold.
        - a. The reason this is so crucial is because we know:
  - b. We have not been given a spirit of fear
    - i. Fear is a great crippler of action. It causes us to dwell on the “what if” rather than the “what is.”
      - 1. “What is” is Jesus delivering you from your sins, promising never to leave you nor forsake you (Deut 31:6), and declaring to you that though you will have trials in this world, take heart of He has overcome the world (John 16:33)
3. Decide to be Joyful
- a. Consider it pure Joy . . . (James 1:2)
  - b. In this you rejoice . . . you believe in Him and rejoice with Joy inexpressible and filled with glory” 1 Peter 1:6,8)
  - c. We rejoice in our sufferings . . . (Romans 5:3)
  - d. Joy in the face of adversity is a choice you make in the power of the spirit and it glorifies Jesus because he is source of your Joy

#### Identify the reward

- 1. Perfect and complete lacking nothing James 1:4
- 2. . . . the salvation of your souls 1Peter 1:9
- 3. A hope that is satisfied by having God’s spirit poured into our hearts (Romans 5:5)

**29**His disciples said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! **30**Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God.” **31**Jesus answered them, “**Do you now believe?** **32**Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be

scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. [33](#)I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

On October 19, 1856, the 22-year-old Spurgeon was preaching for the first time at the Music Hall of the Royal Surrey Gardens to accommodate the massive crowds that followed him. An attendee yelled “fire,” causing a stampede of people that left seven dead and 28 injured among a crowd of more than 7,000.