

YOU CAN'T

QUARANTINE

THE

GOSPEL

An Urgent Call to Every Believer
During this Global Pandemic

GREG STIER

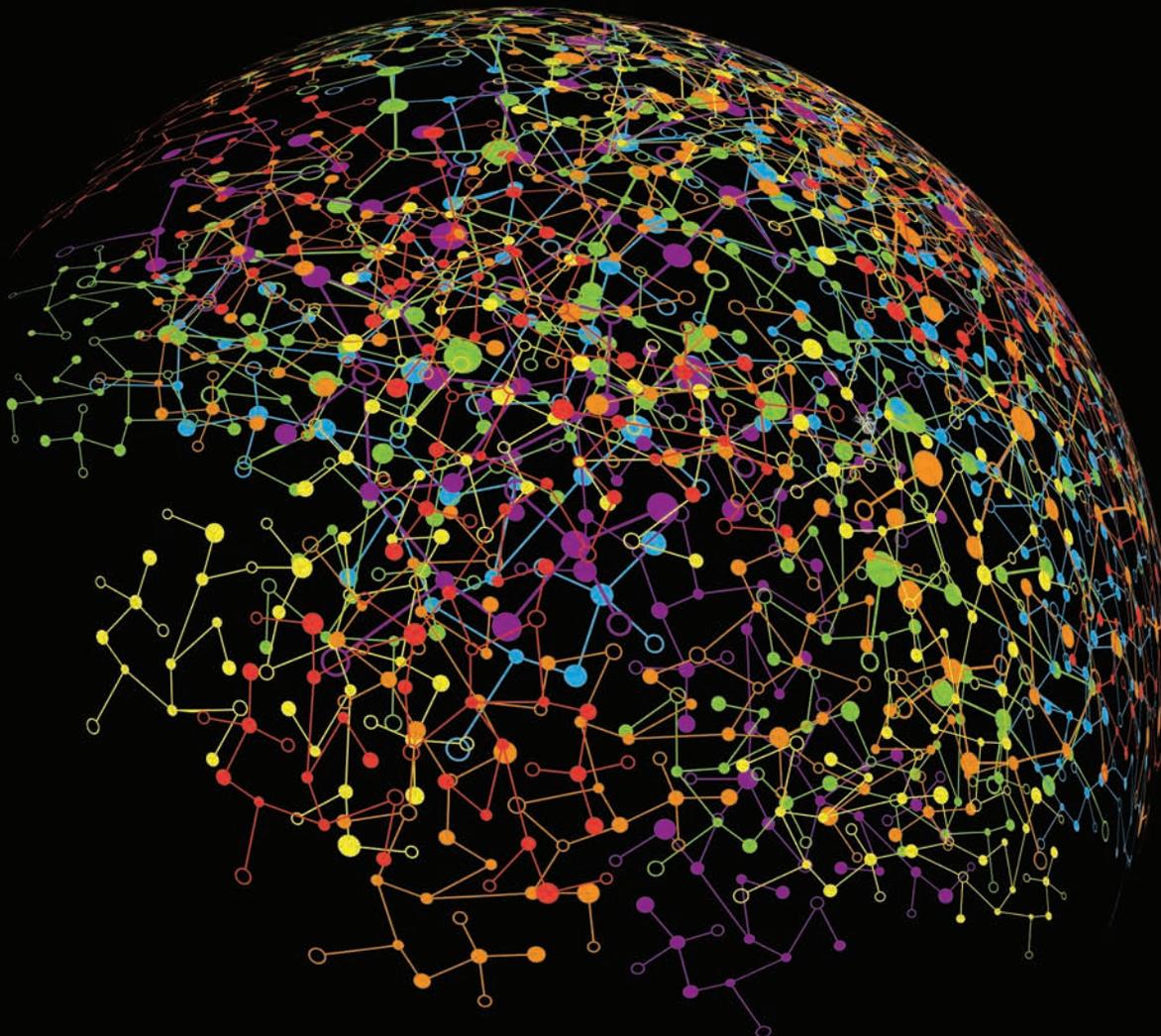


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INTRODUCTION:

THE URGENCY OF THIS MOMENT

“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

ESTHER 4:14

Unprecedented times lead to unprecedented opportunities.

Yes, the world is experiencing a pandemic different than anything we’ve seen before, and because of the unknown, and to some degree the additional access we have to information in this digital age, many in the world are panicking. They are, rightfully, nervous about getting the deadly COVID-19 strain or losing their jobs because of the virus’ impact on the economy. At the very least they are mourning the loss of being able to participate in sports, social gatherings, church, and community events.

All of this panic is exacerbated by social media, the news and the latest pandemic rumors, both true and untrue. Fact and fiction mix to become a drug that induces a frenzy of fear and misinformation for many.

But panic can also be turned purposeful. It’s often during a time of panic when people are most open to the Gospel. Suddenly, people are willing to talk about life, death, hope, and fear. People are open to talking about God like no time I can remember since the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

Just a few days ago I went door-to-door in my neighborhood and asked my neighbors if I could pray for them during this time of crisis. It was

shocking to me how many were open to talking about God right there on their porches. Although a screen door and 6 feet (or so) may have separated us, we felt closer than ever before!

As believers, we must make the most of this time to point people to Jesus. We need to pray for people like never before, care for people like never before, and share the good news of Jesus with people like never before.

Why? Because many of them are open to the Gospel like never before!

When a teen queen named Esther encountered a crisis of Biblical proportions, she was challenged by her uncle Mordecai to risk everything to save her people. He asked her to take the bold step of appearing before the King uninvited (a potential death sentence in that culture) and appealing to him on behalf of the Jewish people, who had been wrongfully condemned to death. Mordecai reminded her that perhaps God had put her in this position, "for such a time as this".

What was her response? It's laid out beautifully in Esther 4:16, *"Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."*

Esther prayed, called others to pray, and then risked everything. Her historic words "And if I perish, I perish," are a roadmap for every believer during times of crisis.

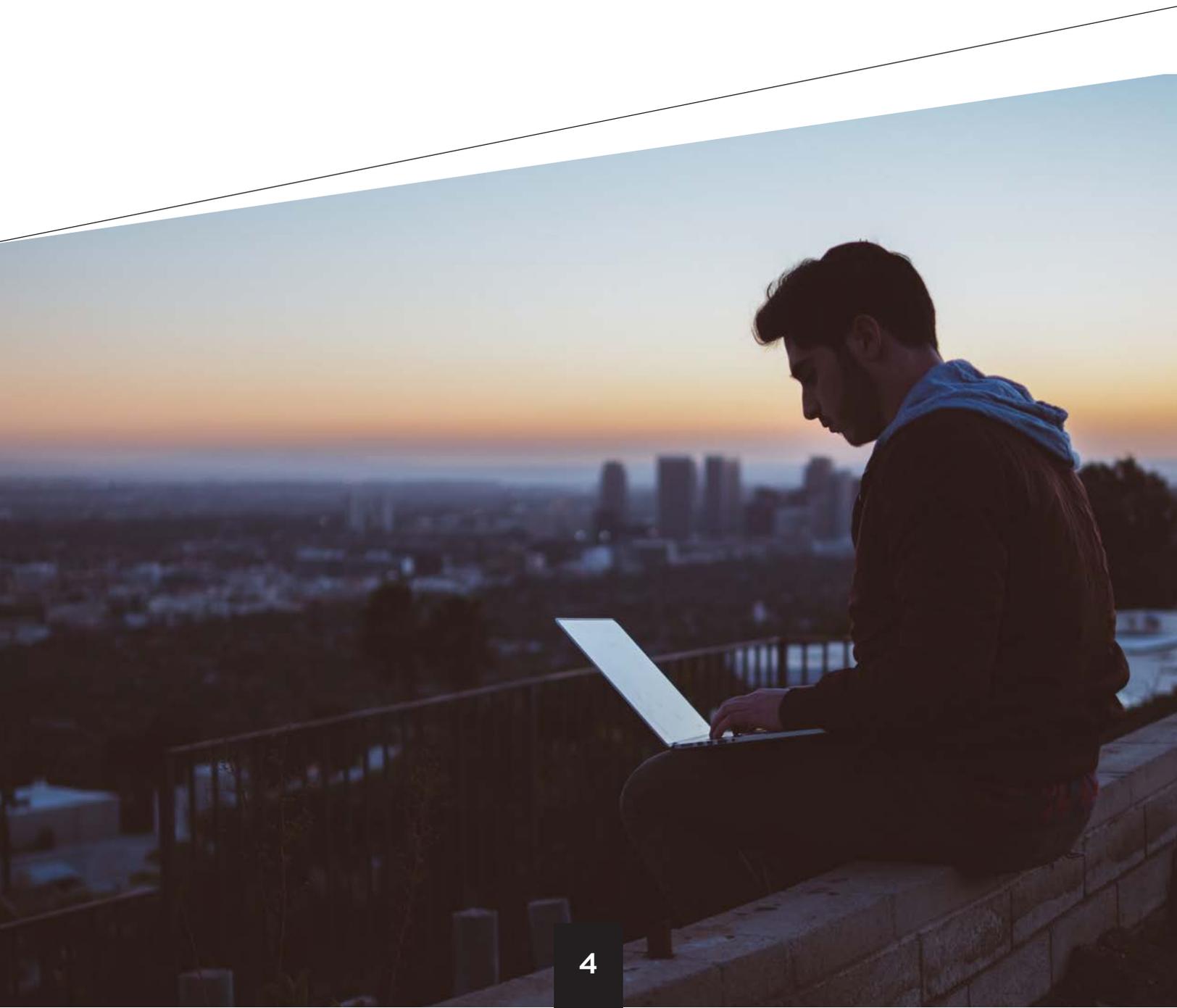
This is no time to hunker down in fear; this is a time to look up in faith. This is a great time to reach out, rather than freak out.

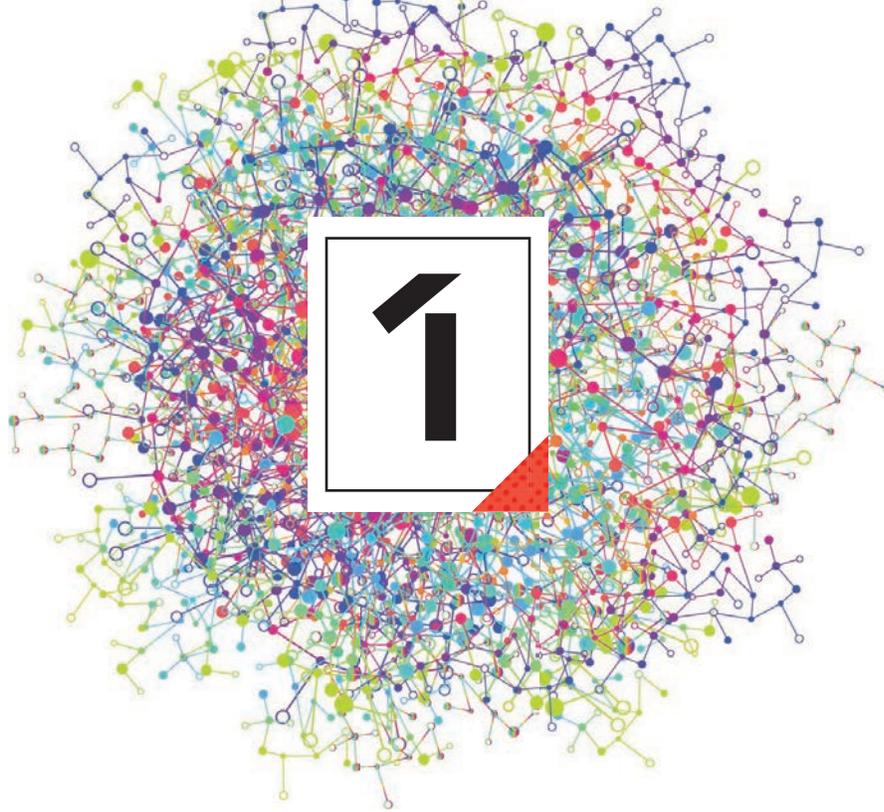
You can share the Gospel via social media. You can share hope from 6 feet away. You can be the voice of peace in a culture of panic. You can pray and call others to pray.

We, like Esther, can be used by God to bring hope to a world that desperately needs it right now. That hope is found in Jesus Christ!

My prayer is that this little book will inspire you with the unprecedented opportunity before us at this very moment of history; and, yes, in spite of the very real danger of this virus, it gives the Church a huge opportunity to shine the light and share the hope of Jesus like never before.

My prayer is that this book encourages you during this time of global pandemic (and panic). The word “encourage” means to “infuse courage into someone.” When you’re done reading the last word on the last page of this book, I hope you’ll be more courageous in how you are facing this once-in-a-hundred-years challenge.





THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT CHAINED (QUARANTINED)!

“And because I preach this Good News, I am suffering and have been chained like a criminal. But the word of God cannot be chained.”

2 TIMOTHY 2:9 NLT

In 2002 I wrote a book for Moody Press called, *Outbreak...Creating a Contagious Youth Ministry Through Viral Evangelism*. I did massive amounts of research on viruses and pandemics. Why? Because I wanted to make a connection between how quickly a virus spreads under the right conditions and how the Gospel spread in the early church.

If there ever was a good contagion, it's the Gospel. And, in the original “outbreak”, the book of Acts, we see this good news spread from Jerusalem to Rome in less than 30 years, without social media, without airplanes, and without a website (www.theapostlePaul.com).

The Gospel spread from person to person in a viral way, and the world has been forever changed because of a Jewish carpenter-turned-rabbi named Jesus who triggered an outbreak that is still changing lives 2,000 years later.

Little did I know that when I penned this book in 2002 that the world would be facing a global pandemic in 2020. I had no clue that almost two decades later we would be facing an outbreak that would rival the worst pandemics in history when it comes to the speed of spread. And I never would have predicted that all that research I did on viruses (as it pertains to the Gospel) would be eerily relevant again.

In the book, *Outbreak*, I wrote these words, “Viruses spread fast. Take the common cold for example. A cold can infect every member of a household in days. It can tear through an office in no time. It can spread from the infected to the infectee via a simple handshake. Speed is the calling card of the virus.”

It’s that speed that we need right now. We need hope to spread quicker than ever before. Why? Because people are nervous like never before!

People were nervous in the Apostle Paul’s day as well. A mentally unstable and morally reprobate dictator named Nero had taken the throne of the Roman Empire and there were no guarantees of anyone’s safety, especially if you were a Christian. Paul himself was imprisoned and waiting to appear before Nero to plead his case. While in prison he wrote these words to his younger protégé, Timothy, *“And because I preach this Good News, I am suffering and have been chained like a criminal. But the word of God cannot be chained.”* 2 Timothy 2:9 NLT

I love the last sentence of this powerful verse, “But the word of God cannot be chained.” Paul understood that the viral power of the Gospel transcended any prison cell. He knew that once it was released verbally, it had a viral effect that could not be stopped by chains or guards or evil emperors.

During an earlier imprisonment in Rome he wrote these words to the Philippian believers:

“Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.”

Philippians 1:12-14

Paul's imprisonment led to the Gospel's jailbreak. According to historical accounts, there were approximately 10,000 soldiers in The Palace Guard (also known as "The Praetorian Guard"). Paul was reaching the Roman soldiers he was chained to for Christ. In turn, they were leading other soldiers to Jesus. Soon, the whole Palace Guard had been exposed to the contagious Good News. In addition, Paul's boldness while in prison inspired others to be contagious carriers of the Gospel! It started an outbreak!

I'm sure you're getting the connection here. Stay-at-home orders from the government may hold us back on some level, but the Gospel cannot be quarantined!

This contagious message spreads best under certain environmental circumstances, and crisis is one of them! Persecution, problems and pandemics can actually end up helping to spread the Gospel faster and farther than ever before. We see this clearly in the book of Acts:

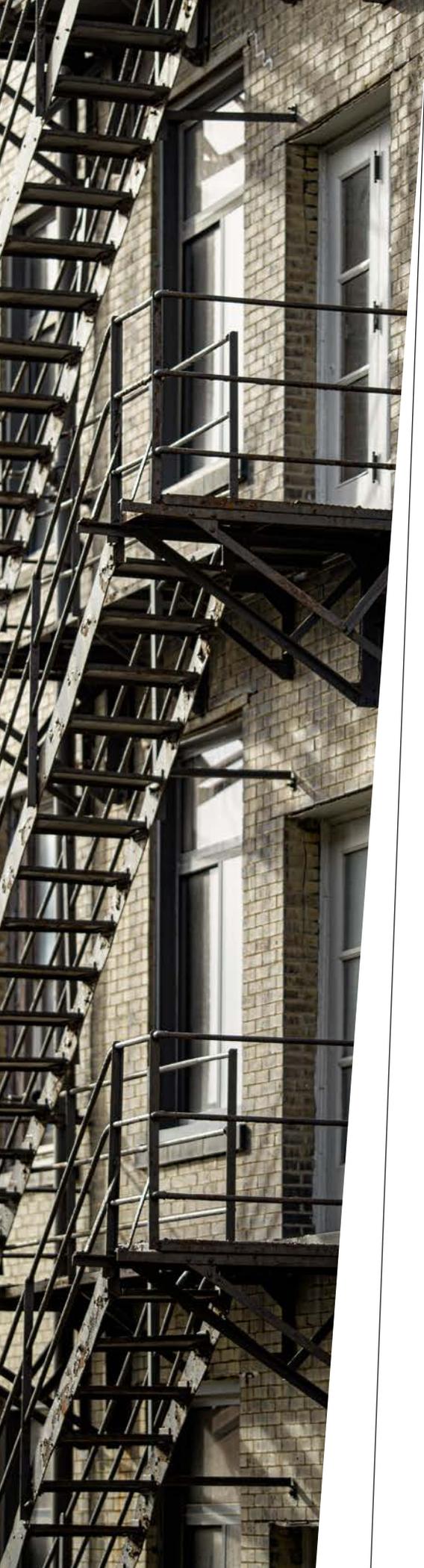
"On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison. Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went." Acts 8:1-4

For those of you old enough to remember the 1984 movie, Gremlins (I was a teenaged movie buff in the early 80's, so I definitely remember), a young boy receives a cute little creature called a mogwai as a pet that he named Gizmo. Along with the pet he is given three rules: 1) don't expose him to sunlight, 2) never let him get wet, and 3) never feed him after midnight.

Of course, these rules get broken. When a glass of water is accidentally spilled on Gizmo it causes him to multiply into more gremlins, and the multiplication of gremlins soon spirals out of control.

In the same way, when you "spill" persecution, problems, and pandemics on Christians, the result is that we begin to multiply.

This multiplication happened in 1949 when Christian missionaries were expelled from China after Communists took over. At the time there were only an estimated one million Christians in this vast country, but today,



some experts estimate that number to be as high as 100 million believers.

Big problems bring people to their knees. This was seen in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 9/11. When the commercial planes commandeered by terrorists hit the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and a farm field in Pennsylvania, America was rocked to its core.

For weeks and months after the attack people turned to God all across America. Churches were filled and souls were saved in the aftermath.

When history's ultimate pandemic, The Black Plague, devastated Europe in the mid 1300's, it didn't lead to an immediate revival of the institutionalized church, but it did lead to a ground-level turning to God for many Europeans.

It also led to a growing dissatisfaction among many with how organized religion handled the plague and the people infected by it. Many thought the priests were rushing out of the infected areas when they should have rushed in. They also felt that the church was enriching itself instead of risking life and limb to rescue people who were infected with this devastating plague. This dissatisfaction simmered into a boil over the next two hundred years.

Finally, on October 31st, 1517, Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the Wittenberg Door in Germany. His act of defiance publicly declared the injustices of the Roman Catholic church, both in practice and in doctrine, and His stirred up the spirit of rebellion already brewing deep in the hearts of many Europeans, especially with organized religion. Much of this discontent was due to their handling of the plague. As a result, the Reformation swept across Europe and the

Protestants rose up as a faith-alone-in-Christ-alone force that is still reverberating today.

Persecution, problems and pandemics are often the fuel for explosive church growth. People are looking for answers. Their sandy foundations (of health, wealth, security and safety) are crumbling underneath them. Many are open to looking for a new and sure foundation, The Rock of Ages, Jesus himself!

We must maximize this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to point people to Jesus. We must pray for people, care for people and share the Gospel with people like never before. But how do we do that effectively?

Just like there are three rules for having a gremlin as a pet, I'm going to give you three rules for unleashing the Gospel (even while you, like Paul, may feel chained in your house).

1. MAKE SURE YOU ARE "INFECTED" WITH THE GOSPEL PERSONALLY.

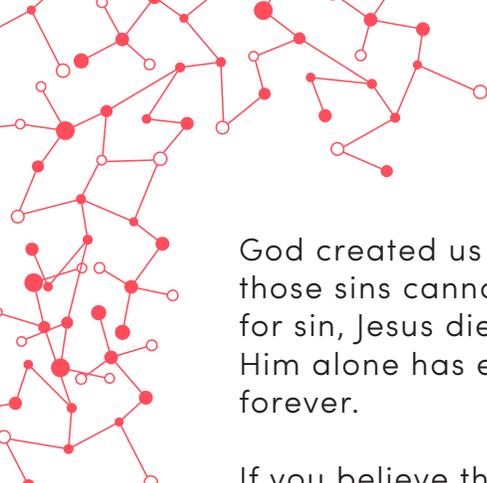
2 Corinthians 13:5 gives us a sobering reminder, *"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?"*

Before I challenge you to share the Gospel, let me encourage you to make *sure* you have *received* the Gospel. Because you can't share what you don't have.

Sadly, there are many people who are going to church who aren't necessarily going to Heaven. That's why Paul told the Corinthians to examine themselves to make sure they really were in the faith.

The good news is that God wants you to know, that you know, that you know, that you have a relationship with him. 1 John 5:13 puts it this way, *"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."*

God wants you to know that you have eternal life and when you believe in Jesus, based on what He did on the cross, then you can know it! Let me explain this Gospel message to you in a simple six sentence paragraph:



God created us to be with Him. But our sins separate us from God. And those sins cannot be removed by good deeds. So, paying the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again. And now, everyone who trusts in Him alone has eternal life. And life that's eternal starts now and lasts forever.

If you believe that Jesus died in your place on the cross for your sins and then rose from the dead, and if you put your faith in him alone to forgive you for all your sins, then you are saved. You are forgiven and given; forgiven for all of your past, present and future sins, and given a new life and new standing before Him as a child of God!

So, first things first, if you've never put your faith in Jesus let this contagious message of good news infect you right now. You can say this silent prayer in your heart to God:

"Dear God, I know that I've messed up and have sinned against you in so many ways. And I know that I could never be good enough to be in your perfect presence, being the sinner that I am. But I believe that Jesus died in my place for my sins. And I believe he rose from the dead. I trust in Him alone right now to forgive me for all my sins and give me eternal life. Thank you for adopting me into your heavenly family. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen."

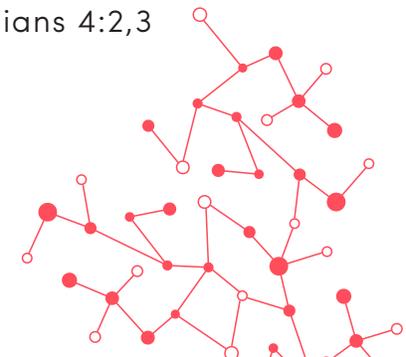
Now, saying this prayer doesn't save you, but your faith in Jesus does. So, if you put your faith in Jesus just now, you are a part of God's family, never to be abandoned or kicked out! This is not a license to sin, but a reason to serve Jesus for the rest of your life!

Let someone know right away that today you caught the contagion of Christ! Then start spreading this message right away.

2. PRAY THAT GOD WOULD USE THIS TIME TO ADVANCE HIS GOSPEL THROUGH YOU.

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains."

Colossians 4:2,3





Even if we are working from home, away from our friends and locked out of our schools, we can pray. When there is little else we can do, we can pray. You can't quarantine the Gospel and you can't quarantine the power of God unleashed through prayer!

It is when we pray with unshakeable faith that we see God's mighty hand move like never before. Mountains are moved, miracles are witnessed, the lost get saved, pandemics die out, and the church rises up!

And it's often when we are put in a position where we feel the most helpless (like now) that God provides the most help. It's when we, like the Apostle Paul, feel the weakest, that God shows himself to be the strongest (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

No story I've ever heard makes this point like the story of Hudson Taylor, the revolutionary missionary to China in the 19th Century. God used him and the China Inland Mission, which he founded, to pioneer evangelistic inroads into the heart of China, when few others were willing to go that far. But then, at the height of his efforts, in the busy swirl of missionary work, he fell and injured his spinal cord. This was a time when he was desperately recruiting missionaries for the work in China and now all of that had to stop.

Here's how his children described what happened after the accident in the classic book Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret:

"Then came gradual paralysis of the lower limbs, completely confining him to his couch. Laid aside in the prime of life, he could only lie in that upstairs room, conscious of all there was to be done, of all that was not being attended to—lie there and rejoice in God. Yes, rejoice in God! With desires and hopes as limitless as the needs that pressed upon his heart, with the prayer he had prayed and the answers God had given, with opportunities opening in China and a wave of spiritual blessing reviving the churches at home that he longed to see turned into missionary channels and with little hope, humanly speaking, that he would ever stand or walk again, the

deepest thing was joy in the will of God as 'good, acceptable and perfect.' Certain it is that from that place of suffering sprang all the larger growth of the China Inland Mission. A narrow bed with four posts was the sphere to which Mr. Taylor was now restricted. But between the posts at the foot of the bed-still the map! Yes, there it hung, the map of the whole of China, and round about him day and night was the Presence to which he had access in the name of Jesus.... The outlook did not brighten as the year drew to a close. Mr. Taylor was less and less able to move, and could only turn in bed with the help of a rope fixed above him. At first he had managed to write a little, but now could not even hold a pen."

Talk about quarantined! Hudson Taylor was confined in bed for months and "all" he could do was pray. But as it turned out, this time of quarantined, concentrated prayer led to much greater spiritual fruit than he could have ever accomplished working tirelessly to recruit new missionaries for China.

It was soon after he was quarantined to his bed that a paper Hudson Taylor had previously written burst into the Christian press and spread across England. One by one the needed missionaries were recruited, and God began to pour financial blessings into the ministry. Hudson Taylor said, *"One of the happiest periods of my life was that period of forced inactivity, when one could do nothing but rejoice in the Lord and 'wait patiently' for Him, and see Him meeting all one's need."* God forced him to attend to his first calling and God took care of the rest!

This time of national and global lockdown could be our period of "forced inactivity" just like Hudson Taylor experienced. This could be the time we see the most spiritual fruit, if we use this time to pray and wait on the Lord!

You can't quarantine the Gospel for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. And you can't quarantine prayer for it is the power of God for the transformation of situations.

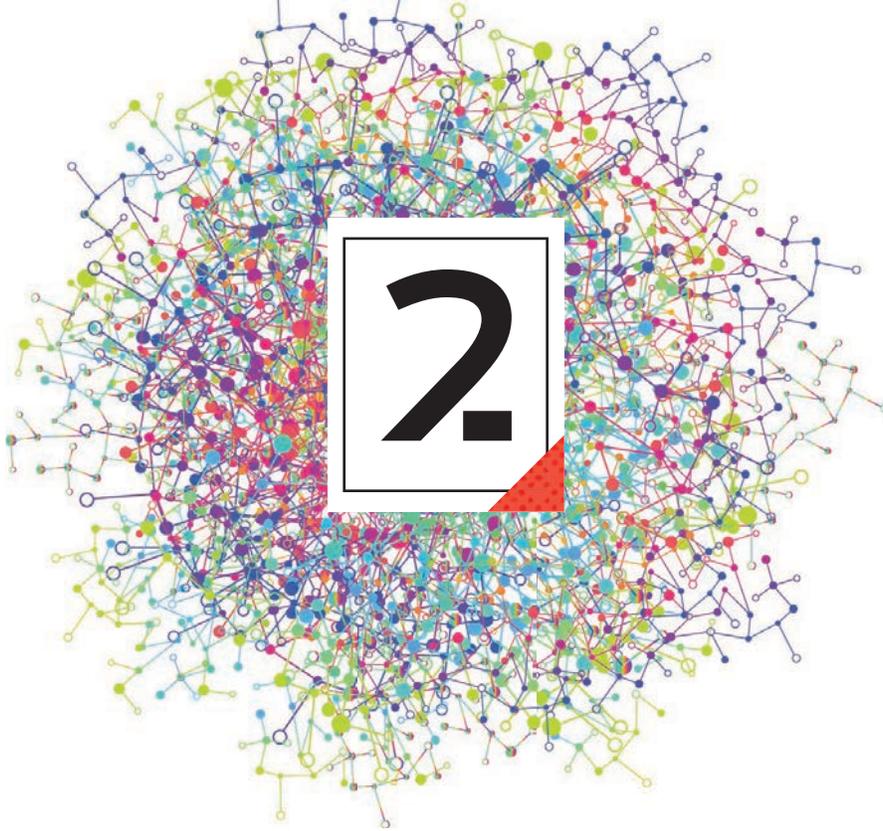
3. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO REACH OUT TO OTHERS.

Whether scrolling through Facebook, talking to your neighbors outside (from six feet away), or shopping at the grocery store (looking for toilet paper, sanitary wipes, or other necessary survival supplies), there are still opportunities to encourage and minister to people.

Just the other day I was on a hike with my family in the foothills. Coming down after reaching the top, we ran into three older people waiting at a trailhead and we struck up a conversation from six feet away. Within minutes we were talking about life, hope, and, you guessed it, God. After just a few minutes of talking I was able to quickly walk them through the Gospel. While none of them put their faith in Jesus right there, all of them were open to discussing the Gospel.

Start praying for, looking for, and taking opportunities to bring God up with those you encounter, both online and in public. We live in unprecedented times and we have an unprecedented opportunity to share the Good News.

We may feel quarantined, but you can't quarantine the Gospel. God's word cannot be chained!



SANITIZED AND MOBILIZED

"Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and, 'Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.' In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."

2 TIMOTHY 2:19-21

I almost lost my life when I was five years old because of a burst appendix. My mom thought I just had a bad fever, but soon realized that it was something far worse. When she took me to the emergency room, they diagnosed that my appendix had burst four or five hours earlier and they needed to remove it immediately and put me in ICU.

According to the Mayo Clinic website, a ruptured appendix "spreads infection throughout your abdomen (peritonitis). Possibly life-threatening, this condition requires immediate surgery to remove the

appendix and clean your abdominal cavity. A pocket of pus forms in the abdomen.” It’s a very serious situation and can ultimately lead to death.

I’ll never forget waking up in bed feeling sore in the lower right side of my abdomen from the surgery. I also remember the two clear tubes that had been jammed down my nostrils into my stomach cavity. Every few hours I would hear a machine turn on which would suck greenish/blackish pus and poison through the tubes and out of my body. This went on day and night for two weeks. It was one of the most serious brushes with death I’ve ever experienced.

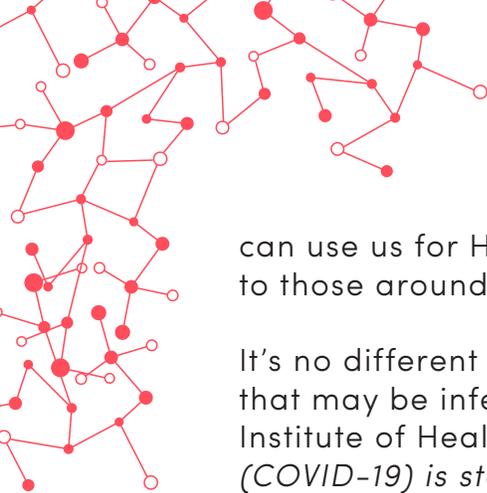
The doctors had one goal after removing my burst appendix, and that was to get every ounce of poison out of my abdomen so it wouldn’t kill me. They worked day and night until my body was poison free.

In the same way, the poison of sin has burst into our souls due to The Fall. When Adam and Eve sinned against God, they poisoned all of humanity with a sinful nature that is part of every person at birth. Once we put our faith in Jesus, based on His death for our sins and resurrection from the dead, we are forever forgiven for those sins. In a sense, He, like a skilled surgeon, removed the source of our sin, and separated it *“as far as the east is from the west”* (Psalm 103:12).

Like a good Doctor, He continues to work to remove every bit of puss and poison, until we are fully cleansed, and this takes time. As a matter of fact, the job is ultimately not done until we are in the presence of Jesus Himself in our glorified bodies.

Until then, He is working to drain every ounce of sin out of my life. As 2 Timothy 2:19-21 makes clear, God desires for us to be pure so that He





can use us for His holy purposes, chief of which is advancing the Gospel to those around us.

It's no different than how we are treating this pandemic and objects that may be infected with the coronavirus. According to the National Institute of Health, *"The virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is stable for several hours to days in aerosols and on surfaces, according to a new study from National Institutes of Health, CDC, UCLA and Princeton University scientists in The New England Journal of Medicine."*

<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces>

That's why sanitary wipes are flying off the shelves at most grocery stores. Lysol's stock must be rising, even while the market is in massive flux. We want to stay away from this virus! Any surface that is contaminated, we will do our best to make sure it's cleansed.

It doesn't matter how expensive the object is. If it's contaminated, it's contaminated! You'd rather use a virus-free pencil to jot a note to a friend than a \$100 pen that has the coronavirus on it.

That's exactly what 2 Timothy 2:20,21 is telling us:

"In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."

God would rather use clean wood and clay vessels than dirty gold and silver ones! And here's the thing, we can participate in the cleansing. That's why Paul writes, *"Those who cleanse themselves from the latter (sin and wickedness according to v.19) will be instruments for special purposes..."*

What is this special purpose? The advancement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others! Paul is reminding Timothy through these verses that as he works to sanitize his soul from sin, God will work to mobilize his impact for the Gospel.

What does all of this have to do with us and the current global pandemic? If we want to make a maximum impact for His glory, if we





want to be useful to God in advancing His Good News to a world that desperately needs it, we must work to sanitize our souls through the power of the Holy Spirit.

James 4:8 puts it this way, *“Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”* God wants us to wash our hands and purify our hearts. He wants us to be sanitized so that we can be mobilized for the Gospel.

During this time of national and global lockdown and slowdown, may we pause and reflect on our own sins and struggles, and allow the Holy Spirit to take a spotlight to our hearts. May our prayer be the same as David’s in Psalm 139:23,24, *“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

Here is a list of questions to pray and ponder when it comes to sins of the soul:

- Are you giving in to the powerful sin of lust? (Proverbs 6:25)
- Are you secretly addicted to porn? (Job 31:1)
- Do you habitually feast at the table of slander and gossip? (Psalm 15:2,3)
- Is there anyone in your life whom you have refused to forgive for any sin or wrong they committed against you currently or in your past? (Ephesians 4:32)
- Are you addicted to alcohol or drugs? (Ephesians 5:18)
- Do you consistently compare yourself with others and struggle with envy or jealousy as a result? (2 Corinthians 10:12)
- Are you a glutton when it comes to food? (Proverbs 23:2)
- Has wealth, working out, your job, sports, ministry or anything else, become an idol in your life? (1 Corinthians 10:7)
- Are you consistently going to church and growing in your relationship with God and His people? (Hebrews 10:24,25)

- Are you engaged in an inappropriate relationship (sexually or emotionally) with anyone? (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8)
- Do you regularly exaggerate or lie? (Ephesians 4:25)
- Do you have an anger problem? (James 1:19,20)
- Do you treat others with kindness, compassion, love, and patience - even in traffic - especially at home? (Colossians 3:12-14)

Obviously, this is not an exhaustive list of sins, but it's a start. Read these questions slowly, look over the verses that go with each, and ask God to cleanse you from whatever sins (on this list or not) you struggle with. As you do, remember 1 John 1:9, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

This time of quarantine is not just for reaching out, it's also for looking in. It's time to deal with those secret sins (the ones nobody else knows about) and the not-so-secret ones (the ones everyone who knows you is aware of). It's time to purify ourselves from the latter so that we can *"be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."* (2 Timothy 2:21)

If you want to get mobilized, then it's time to get sanitized!



HOW JESUS DEALT WITH A PANDEMIC

There's a scary scene in the movie *Outbreak* where a military epidemiologist talks about the spread of the virus. Standing in front of a large virtual map, he says, "The infection will start here" (pointing to a single red dot). "Within 12 hours it will spread this far" (the red covers a larger portion of the map). "Within 24 hours it will spread this far" (half the map is red). "And within 72 hours it will infect the whole of the United States" (the map is flooded with red).

When I watched that scene at the time, I couldn't help but think of Acts 1:8 where Jesus told His disciples how the Gospel would infect the world (in a good way!). He said, "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,*" (the single red dot), "*and in all Judea and Samaria,*" (the red covers a larger portion of the map). "*and to the ends of the earth.*" (the whole map is drenched with the red blood of Christ!).

When I watch that scene today, I am reminded that, as bad as the current pandemic is, we have a message that is more viral. It can spread fast and far if we just unleash it. The difference is, the Gospel doesn't kill you, it transforms you! It doesn't make you ill, it makes you well. It doesn't lock you down, it frees you up!

So how do we unleash it? We pray. We care. We share.

We learn from Jesus Christ himself, how to start a viral outbreak in Mark 1:35-42. In this passage, Jesus becomes the ultimate carrier and starts a movement that is still spreading like a holy pandemic 2000 years later. Let's read this passage together,

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: 'Everyone is looking for you!' Jesus replied, 'Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.' So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean.' Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed." Mark 1:35-42

We see in this passage that the ministry of Jesus wasn't quarantined away in some monastery or out in a desert. It was strategically aligned for exponential growth. And what Jesus did, we can do, and what He started, we can continue. How? We Pray, Care, and Share.

1. WE PRAY!

Jesus set the pace for prayer. In Mark 1:35-37 the Bible tells us, *"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where*



he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: 'Everyone is looking for you!'"

Jesus was always escaping ministry opportunities to pray. You wouldn't want Jesus as a conference speaker, he'd always be gone on a prayer walk somewhere and nobody could find Him! In a sense, He was quarantining Himself so that He could spend time talking to God the Father before He dove into the hard work of spreading the Gospel.

During His time praying in a solitary place, I'm sure Jesus was asking the Father for wisdom and strength. I'm sure He was interceding for His disciples and those He was reaching out to with the Good News of the Gospel.

Intercession is a very special kind of prayer. The Latin word for intercession comes from two words that mean "I go" and "between". In other words, an intercessor "goes between" the people we are praying for and the potential danger they are facing.

I'll never forget my daily walk to Brown Elementary as a kid. It was about a ten-block walk from my house. That doesn't sound like much, but Denver is known for its major snowstorms and, sometimes, it could be a long, cold walk to and from school. So I talked my mom into buying me a thick leather jacket that we found on sale. It was the coolest thing I owned and it kept me warm during the frigid Colorado winters.

And on one particular day, I'm especially glad that I had it on. That was the day that two German Shepherds, that were often loose in our neighborhood, ran across the street and attacked me. These dogs had, once again, escaped their backyard and were headed full speed straight for me. My heart was pounding as I backed up to a chain-link fence and prayed.

I knew these dogs were about to attack. They weren't barking, they were charging with their ears back and their teeth bared. Without thinking, I crossed my arms in front of my face and grabbed the chain-link fence I had backed up against. I was standing with my arms blocking my face and holding on as tightly as I could as these dogs tore at me, trying to pull me to the ground. I knew that if these dogs could pull me off the fence and onto the ground, they could easily kill me. I was fighting for my life.

For at least a few minutes, these dogs tore into me. They bit and bit and bit but couldn't bite through my thick leather jacket and, by God's grace, they couldn't drag me to the ground. But I knew that I couldn't last very much longer. I could feel my fingers slipping and my grip giving way.

Then, out of nowhere, a little old lady named Ma Zeemer came shuffling down the street with a baseball bat. She was yelling and screaming and waving her bat. She got right in between me and those dogs. She threw herself in the danger and swung that bat until finally those two dogs ran away.

Ma Zeemer saved my life.

Ma Zeemer was my intercessor, because she got between me and the danger, she got between me and two ferocious dogs. She risked everything to save me. She risked her comfort. She risked her time. She risked her safety. We must do the same thing. Because, in a very real sense, there is a pack of wild dogs attacking our family and friends. They are the hounds of Hell.

Begin to pray daily for the yet-to-be-reached-for-Christ people you know who desperately need to be infected by the contagion of the Gospel. When we pray for those who don't know Jesus, we come between them and the danger with a divine baseball bat. Become an intercessor and stand between your friends, family, co-workers, classmates, and teammates, and the danger they are facing...the danger of a life and an eternity without Christ!

2. WE CARE!

How does Jesus show He cares? First of all, He cast out demons. There are literal demons and figurative demons that many people are wrestling with today, especially during this global pandemic!

But before we talk about figurative demons let me spend a few moments talking about literal demons. We are in a battle with an invisible, but very literal enemy: Satan and his army of demons. They



are diligently seeking to deceive, distract, discourage and destroy us right now.

If you really take a look at this world you can easily see that the forces of darkness are real and that the Devil is doing everything in his power to stop us from loving and serving Jesus.

In 1 Peter 5:8 the Bible says this about Satan, *“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”*

A lion can roar at 114 decibels. It’s louder than a jackhammer and almost as loud as a jet engine. A roaring lion can be heard from up to 5 miles away.

Satan is roaring his hatred at humanity in visceral ways. Every time you read about another serial killer on the loose, aborted baby or trafficked child, a demon is smiling behind it all.

I can guarantee you that Satan and his army of fallen angels want to leverage this pandemic to steal, kill and destroy. They want to steal joy, kill relationships, and destroy lives. However, as followers of Jesus, we are empowered by Him to bring healing and transformation to those ravaged by these literal demons.

I believe there are also figurative demons as well.

We’ve all heard the phrase, “boy that guy is really wrestling with some demons.” These may be habits or thoughts or baggage that a person is struggling with that can lead to loneliness, depression, alcoholism, suicide and shattered relationships.

These kinds of demons have been exacerbated during this time of global crisis and pandemic.

Maybe you’ve lost so much money in the stock market you’re worried about your retirement. Maybe you’ve lost your job due to the massive cuts in business across America and you’re worried about paying the mortgage or even putting food on the table.



If you are feeling the stress of all this, then how much more stress are they feeling who don't have Jesus as their solid foundation? We must reach out them with the love of Jesus! We must work under the power of the Spirit to cast out the demons they are wrestling with, both literally and figuratively.

Jesus cast out demons and He healed the leper.

The Bible had very specific instructions on how to deal with lepers in the Old Testament. They were isolated, of course, because leprosy was highly contagious, but instead of wearing a mask if they were infected, they were supposed to yell "Unclean! Unclean!" when they were around those who were healthy. Can you imagine the stigma of that?

In Mark 1:40-42 we read how Jesus broke protocol as He reacted to, and interacted with, a leper, *"A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean.' Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed."*

Now, I'm not saying that you should go out and hug someone with the coronavirus, but I am saying that you need to care for them and care for all of those who are afraid of it, which is pretty much everyone.

Christians have set the pace in caring for the hurting throughout Church history. When everyone else rushes away, out of fear, Christians rush in, out of love.

Moses Lee wrote these words for The Gospel Coalition:

“In AD 249 to 262, Western civilization was devastated by one of the deadliest pandemics in its history. Though the exact cause of the plague is uncertain, the city of Rome was said to have lost an **estimated 5,000 people a day** at the height of the outbreak. One eyewitness, Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria...Having noted the difference between Christian and non-Christian responses to the plague, he says of the non-Christians in Alexandria: At the first onset of the disease, they pushed the sufferers away and fled from their dearest, throwing them into the roads before they were dead and treating unburied corpses as dirt, hoping thereby to avert the spread and contagion of the fatal disease; but do what they might, they found it difficult to escape. Non-Christian accounts confirm this sentiment. A century later, the emperor Julian attempted to curb the growth of Christianity after the plague by leading a campaign to establish pagan charities that mirrored the work of Christians in his realm. In an AD 362 letter, Julian complained that the Hellenists needed to match the Christians in virtue, blaming the recent growth of Christianity on their “benevolence to strangers, their care for the graves of the dead, and the pretended holiness of their lives.” Elsewhere he wrote, “For it is a disgrace that . . . the impious Galileans [Christians] support not only their own poor but ours as well.”

So if Jesus set the pace for caring by touching and healing a leper, and Christians throughout history have set the pace for caring by rushing in when everyone else was rushing out, how can we set the pace for caring during the current crisis?

We should set the pace for safety, sanitization and social distancing.

I know that this doesn't sound super spiritual but there's an old civil war saying that used to go, “Trust God and keep your powder dry.” During this current pandemic we could put it this way, “Trust God, wash your hands, and keep your distance.”

As Proverbs 27:12 reminds us, *“The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty.”*

It is no act of love to infect someone with the coronavirus or to risk getting infected. We must use the proper protocols for sanitization, safety, and social distancing if we are really to love those around us.



We should set the pace for peace.

We are living in a social media driven culture of fear and fear mongering. We need to be the voices of calm and peace during this time. Jesus said, *"Blessed are the peacemakers..."* (Matthew 5:9). May we be the peacemakers during this time of rumor, frustration, and anger. May we be the voices that calm people down instead of stirring them up.

We should set the pace for encouragement.

Ephesians 4:29 reminds us, *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*

Maybe this means that you send an encouraging text or note to one person you know who doesn't yet know Jesus. You could include a couple of encouraging verses or passages in your message to them. This would be a great way to begin to open the door to a future Gospel conversation.

During times of crisis and isolation, alcohol abuse, drug use, depression, anxiety, and suicide tend to go up. This is the time to love our neighbors by walking with them through these massive challenges. Whether it be going to the store for someone else, calling to check in on them, or just engaging in an open and uplifting conversation, we need to encourage those around us now more than ever.

3. WE SHARE!

When Jesus was away praying, His disciples sought desperately to find Him. Here's how Mark 1:36-38 records their search and his response, *"Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: 'Everyone is looking for you!' Jesus replied, 'Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.'"*

Jesus had a greater purpose than just to hang out in one place. His purpose was to share the good news of the Gospel with as many people as possible.

But how do we do this during a pandemic, when everyone is sheltering in place and we're not supposed to come within six feet of each other? We unleash the Gospel verbally (staying the appropriate distance apart) and virtually!

Share the Gospel verbally!

Here's the great thing about sharing Jesus during a pandemic, people are open to talking about it! You could start with a question like my friend Andy does, "These are some pretty crazy times huh?". And people just start talking! You can then make a simple segue like this, "While this stuff is pretty scary, my hope is built on a foundation that is strong, not religion, but a relationship with God. Where do you find hope during this time?"

Whether you use those exact words or something like that, just bring it up. Another way you can bring it up is by asking someone how you can pray for them during this time.

Once you're in a spiritual conversation, you can make the shift toward sharing the Good News of Jesus. In the final chapter of this little book



I'll give you an effective way to articulate the Gospel message using a simple acrostic Dare 2 Share has used to train millions of believers over the last three decades.

Share the Gospel virtually!

Now is the time to post about your faith in Jesus (not your problems with the government response to the virus or complaints about the pandemic!). Now is the time for you to tell your Facebook friends why you have hope in the midst of the chaos.

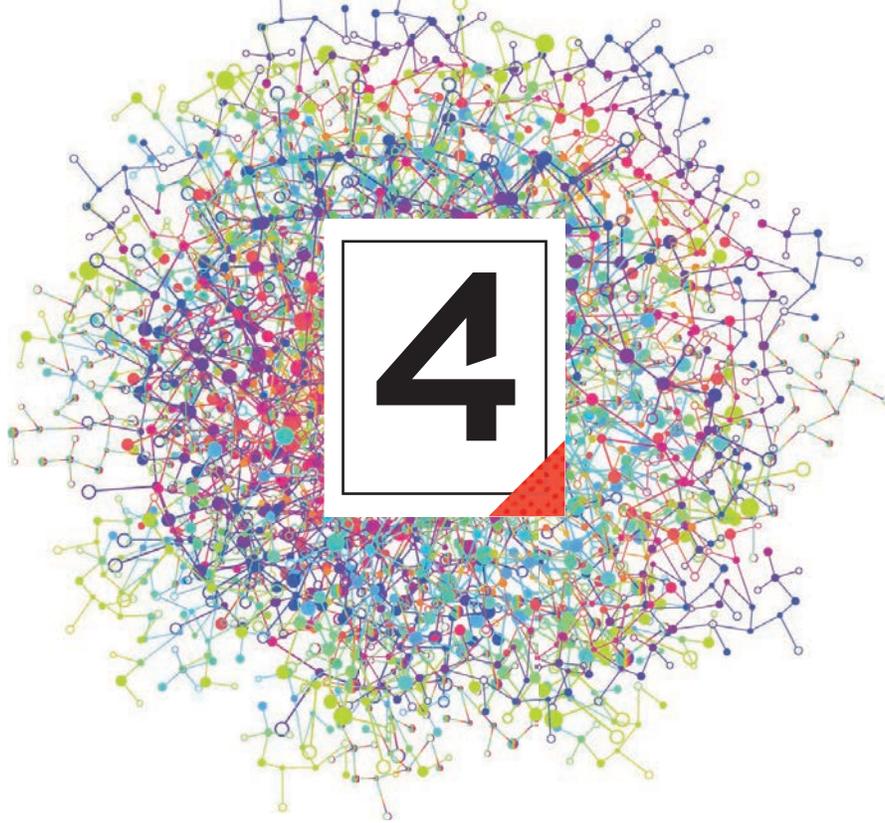
As 1 Peter 3:14,15 reminds us, *"But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. 'Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.' But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..."*

Although this passage is about how Christians endure under unjust suffering, I think we can apply the principles to how we endure a global pandemic as well. Why? Because during times of trouble and trial most people freak out! As we keep our faith and face this trouble with joy in our hearts and smiles on our faces, people will wonder about "...*the reason for the hope that you (we) have.*" (1 Peter 3:15). This can lead to countless Gospel conversations, both verbally and virtually.

You can't quarantine the Gospel, and you can't quarantine social media. Look at Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, texting and WhatsApp as mini pulpits through which you can lovingly, graciously, and boldly point people to Jesus!

Jesus prayed, cared and shared. That's how He reached out to a people infected with a pandemic called sin. That's how we should reach out to them too.

We have just released a new feature within our [Life in 6 Words](#) app that now allows you to have a spiritual conversation virtually with your own voice. The end of chapter 5 has more details on how to have both a face-to-face and a virtual conversation using this app.



CONTAGIOUS CARRIERS

"Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him."

1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-29

God loves to use the unlikely to accomplish the impossible to bring Himself maximum glory. He chooses the bad, the broken, the bullied, and, sometimes, even the bullies, to exponentially advance His kingdom.

In my book *Outbreak*, I wrote these words about who God often chooses to use, "He loves to use the most unlikely of heroes. Think of some of the surprising choices he has used throughout Biblical history to be the instruments of transformation:

He chose:

a novice boat-builder named Noah
an elderly patriarch named Abraham
a stuttering shepherd named Moses
a reluctant queen named Esther
a confident senior citizen named Caleb
a God-fearing prostitute named Rahab
a young dreamer named Daniel
a fig-picking prophet named Amos
a frisky warrior named Samson
a prejudiced preacher named Jonah
a terrified Benjamite named Gideon
a patient ex-con named Joseph
a converted tax collector named Matthew
a determined cupbearer named Nehemiah
a cricket-eating, camel-fur wearing, water drenched mad man
named John!

The same pattern holds true in church history!

He used:

a quirky monk named Luther
a cross-eyed preacher named Whitefield
an ambitious shoe salesman named Moody
a teenaged pulpiter named Spurgeon
a lanky country bumpkin named Graham."

Why does God choose to use the unlikely to accomplish the impossible? Again, the answer is in 1 Corinthians 1:29, *"...so that no one may boast before him."* God gets the maximum glory when He uses the weakest vessels to accomplish His grandest purposes! Maybe you feel like a nobody. Perfect! You are the ideal candidate for God to use during this time of crisis!

Do you know who else is ideal for God to use? Teenagers! As you'll read later on in this chapter, God has used teenagers throughout church history to advance His mission and message! He wants to use teenagers in the midst of this pandemic to trigger a spiritual outbreak of hope!

During this time where school is online and teenagers are getting stir crazy, we can set them on a holy mission – the Great Commission! At

Dare 2 Share, we call this mission “THE Cause”, because teenagers are into causes and this is the greatest cause of all, The Cause of Christ himself as articulated in Matthew 28:18-20,

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

This is THE Cause that Jesus unleashed to His youth group. Yes, I said “youth group”. Because if you look closely in the Gospels, every indication is that most of the disciples were in their teen years when they began to follow Jesus.

In Matthew 17:24-27 Peter and Jesus and the disciples head into Capernaum but only Peter and Jesus pay the temple tax. If you cross-reference this passage with Exodus 30:14 you’ll read that this tax was only for those twenty years and older. The text tells us, *“All who cross over, those twenty years old or more, are to give an offering to the LORD.”*

All the disciples are there, but only Jesus and Peter pay. If I’m reading these passages correctly, Jesus was a youth leader, with only one adult sponsor (and one really rotten kid named Judas!).

Before he ascended into heaven, Jesus entrusted them with THE Cause of going into the world and making disciples of all nations! If the King of kings and Lord of lords entrusted this holy mission into the hands of young people, then so can we!

Here’s the good news about Generation Z (the nickname of the current generation of teenagers), they are looking for a cause and they have the means to accomplish one!

Teenagers are already connected verbally and virtually. Try as we might, they will figure out ways of connecting with their friends! You can’t quarantine the gospel and it’s really, really hard to truly and fully quarantine teenagers. I know, because I have two of them!

If we inspire, equip, and unleash them to share the Gospel both verbally (as they talk to their friends from six feet away) and virtually (through

Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, etc.), we will see teenagers leading the way when it comes to witnessing!

Did you know that according to the latest data, the average teenager has over 425 online and face-to-face friends! If we can inspire and equip them to leverage their social media equity for the spread of the Gospel, they could take the Gospel farther and faster than any generation before them!

In the next and final chapter of this book, you will hear about a tool, the Life in 6 Words app, which will help you equip your teens to share the Gospel verbally and virtually. I strongly encourage you to use this tool yourself and encourage every Christian teenager you know to do the same.

Why? Because teenagers have been used by God throughout church history to lead spiritual awakenings!

In the 5th Century a 16-year-old teenaged captive named Patrick had been abducted in his homeland and brought to Ireland to be a slave, but it was during this time when God broke his heart for the Irish people. He prayed for them relentlessly, finally escaped, and was called by God to go back to reach them with the Gospel.

He recruited other young people to join him as they traveled all across Ireland, and eventually Europe, preaching the Gospel. This movement had so much momentum that it went on for 500 years after Patrick, or as we know him, St. Patrick, died.

More than 1,000 years after St. Patrick, there was a young monk named Martin Luther whom God used to raise up hundreds of other young men and women, many of them teenagers, who couldn't keep their mouths shut about the Gospel. The result is what historians have nicknamed "The Reformation".

I could go on and on about how God has used teenagers throughout history. I could tell you how:

300 years ago he unleashed 300 young missionaries called Moravians around

the world as a result of a 100-year-old non-stop prayer meeting in Herrnhut, Germany.

250 years ago John Wesley recruited many of the unlikely, including teenagers, to be circuit riders and ride horses from city to city to preach the Gospel under the hardest of conditions.

Jonathan Edwards, speaking of the 1st Great Awakening, said, "The Revival has been chiefly amongst the young."

150 years ago God used DL Moody to rock the city of Chicago with the Gospel; he was mobilizing teenagers and children to spread the Gospel.

70 years ago (roughly) God used teenagers to spread the Gospel all across the United States through ministries like FCA, Young Life, Youth for Christ and Cru.

And millions have come to Christ as a result.

God loves to use the unlikely to accomplish the impossible.

1 Corinthians 1:27 tells us He chooses, "*the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.*" (KJV) If that's not a case for God choosing teenagers, I don't know what is.

Some people would say that the last great spiritual movement in the United States took place fifty years ago with the Jesus movement. It started with a handful of converted hippies in San Francisco. Out of it flowed The Calvary Chapel movement, The Vineyard movement, contemporary Christian music, and youth ministry as we know it today. This movement started in San Francisco, spread to Southern California and began to spread to cities across America.

In the sixties and early seventies God used young hippies, wearing bellbottoms and beads, to be the vanguard of awakening. Today God wants to use those Netflix and TikTok obsessed teenagers to lead the way.

Do you know some, or even one? Inspire and mobilize them to bring the Gospel to their world. They are the carriers who are most contagious! Who knows? Maybe God will use this pandemic to mobilize an army of teenagers to usher in the next Great Awakening!



THE GOSPEL CHANGES EVERYTHING!

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile."

ROMANS 1:16

I don't come from a typical, religious, church-going, pew-sitting, hymn-singing Christian family. No, I come from a family filled with body-building, tobacco-chewing, beer-drinking thugs...and that's just the women!

Seriously, three of my uncles were competitive bodybuilders, the fourth one was a bouncer at the toughest bar in Denver, and the fifth one was a Golden Gloves boxer and Judo Champion. My family was so violent that the mafia in our city nicknamed my uncles "the crazy brothers". Now, when they mafia thinks your family's dysfunctional that's a bad sign.

But God sent a preacher to our family who would change our lives forever. This preacher's nickname was Yankee. He spoke with a southern accent, but, for whatever reason, his nickname was Yankee.

One day he went to the house of my Uncle Jack, the toughest of all the brothers. My Uncle Jack was a bodybuilder and street fighter who kind of looked like Wolverine (from the X-Men) and had been in and out of jail his whole life; once for choking two cops unconscious who were trying to arrest him.

So, Yankee went to his house and knocked on his door. Jack came to the door with no shirt on and two beer cans in his hands, one for drinking beer and the other for spitting chew (you didn't want to get those mixed up). He flung the door open, looked at Yankee and grunted, "What do you want?"

Yankee said, "I'm here on a dare from Bob Daly to tell you about Jesus."

Jack said, "Well, I don't know Jesus, but I know Bob, so I'll give you five minutes."

They sat down at Jack's kitchen table and Yankee explained the Gospel to my Uncle Jack in a way he had never heard it before. At the end, he asked Jack, "Does that make sense?". My Uncle Jack said, "*Hell yeah!*". That was his sinner's prayer, "*Hell yeah!*".

My Uncle Jack put his faith in Jesus on the spot. Now, have you ever met one of those new believers who is so excited about Jesus, but they don't quite know the rules yet? That was my Uncle Jack! He started telling people about Jesus right away, and, if they didn't accept Jesus, he might give them Moses right upside the head.

His excitement was contagious, and he was always telling others about Jesus. So much so, that within a short period of time, my Uncle Jack had brought 250 people out to Yankee's church, many of which he had already told about Jesus: powerlifters, bodybuilders, and street fighters.

I'll never forget watching the radical transformation the power of the Gospel worked upon my entire family. And I can guarantee you that the crime rate in North Denver dropped a few percentage points when my family came to Christ.

You see the Gospel changes everything! Do you believe that?

The ultimate answer to the pandemic we are facing today isn't sheltering-in-place, social distancing, or incessant hand washing. Because the ultimate pandemic isn't the coronavirus, it's sin!

While shutdowns, distancing, quarantines, and hand washing can help keep us safe from COVID-19, nothing, except the Gospel alone, can rescue us from the pandemic of sin.

Henry David Thoreau once said, "For every thousand hacking at the leaves of evil, one strikes at the root." The Gospel is the only thing that can strike at the root of evil. Everything else is just hacking at leaves. That's why I love Romans 1:16, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile."*

As I wrap up this book, I wanted to leave you with three keys to unleashing the full power of the Gospel during this time of national and global crisis.

The first key is:

1. IGNITE GOSPEL URGENCY.

I think we often forget the urgency behind proclaiming this message with our lives and our lips. Paul reminds us when he writes in Romans 1:16, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes...."*

The original Greek word for "salvation" is *"soteria"* and it means, *"the rescue or deliverance from danger, destruction and peril."*

So, what is the danger, destruction, and peril that we must rescue others from? The answer is this: we must rescue the lost from the Hell they are headed to and the hell they are going through apart from Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:8,9 shows us in no uncertain terms the Hell they are headed to, when it says that Jesus, *"will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might."*

Jesus called Hell "the outer darkness" in Matthew 8:12. He calls it an unquenchable fire in Matthew 3:12. And in Matthew 25:46 Jesus calls it "eternal punishment."

If you somehow discovered the cure to the coronavirus you would share the cure with anyone you knew who had been infected. Not only that, you'd share the cure with everyone everywhere! You'd verbally tell everyone you met. You'd get on social media to virtually tell every one of your friends and followers. You'd go on street corners and get on radio interviews. You'd call TV stations and travel on airplanes to meet country leaders. You'd shout it from the rooftops, "I have the cure to the coronavirus!!!"

Well, you and I have the cure to something infinitely worse than COVID-19, and those in this world who don't believe the Gospel are headed somewhere worse than their sickbeds or deathbeds. They are headed to a Christ-less eternity in Hell. There, they will be forever separated from the love of God. There, they will suffer for their sins for eternity, because they did not hear and believe the good news that Jesus already suffered for them and paid the price for their sins on the cross.

There's a Hell they are headed to... and there's a hell they are going through.

How do people make it in this life apart from Jesus, let alone the next life? Did you know that suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among teenagers in America? In my home state of Colorado, it is the #1 cause of death among teenagers.

The fear and anxiety that bubbled in their hearts before this pandemic is now boiling, and it's not just teenagers who are afraid. More and more adults are terrified as well.

Many have built their entire lives on the pursuit of health, wealth and happiness. But because of the impact of this pandemic, millions are seeing the fragility of their own mortality and watching their retirement



accounts dwindle and their stock market investments nosedive. Jobs have been lost by many. Hope has been lost by many more.

Only the Gospel can rescue them! The Good News of Jesus gives us a glimpse into a glorious eternity and enables us to keep this current world (and all of its problems and pandemics) in perspective.

Jesus told his disciples these comforting words in John 14:1-3, *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*

That same comfort that Jesus brought to His disciples’ troubled hearts, we can bring to the troubled hearts of family, friends, co-workers, classmates, teammates and neighbors! That comfort is the Gospel!

Start thinking about those in your world who don’t yet know Jesus. Start praying that God will give you opportunity and boldness to share The Cure (Jesus!) with them.

Romans 1:16 reminds us of our Gospel urgency. It also reminds us of the 2nd key:

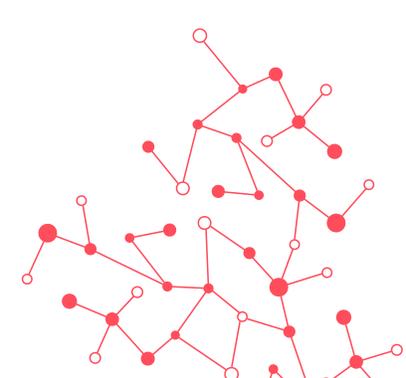
2. MASTER G.O.S.P.E.L. FLUENCY.

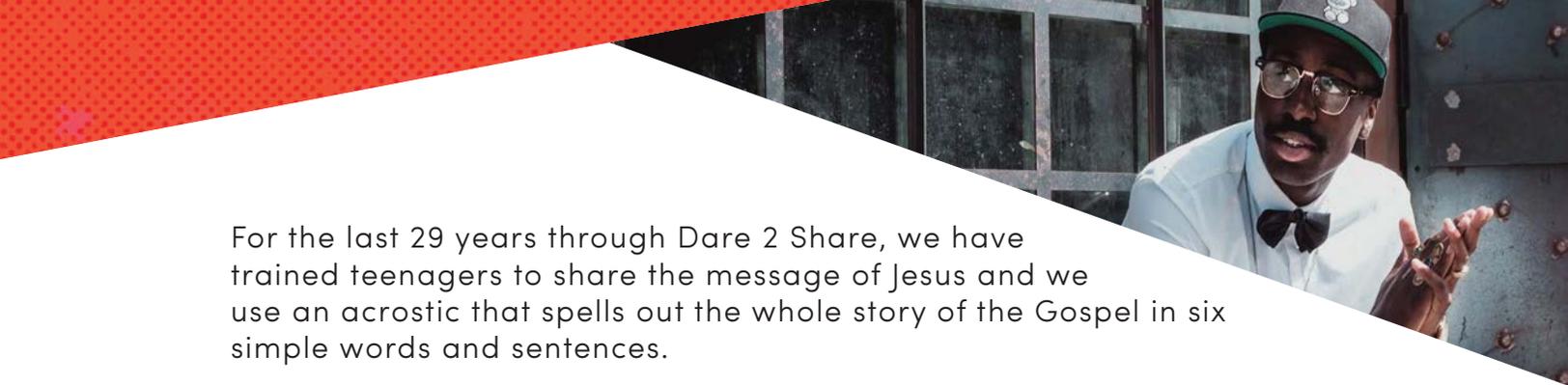
Gospel urgency reminds us of why the Gospel is important to share. G.O.S.P.E.L. fluency reminds us of what the Gospel message is. According to Paul, *“it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes...”*

I don’t know how it works. I don’t know how God infused divine power into a stick that Moses used to part the Red Sea and deliver His people, but He did. I don’t know how God infused divine power into a message to deliver the lost, but He has.

You verbally share it with a person and the Holy Spirit quickens their hearts to believe and, boom, you see people transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.

So, what is this message, and how do we become fluent in it?





For the last 29 years through Dare 2 Share, we have trained teenagers to share the message of Jesus and we use an acrostic that spells out the whole story of the Gospel in six simple words and sentences.

I'm going to unpack the G.O.S.P.E.L acrostic with you right now; one sentence at a time and, in the process, I'm going to tell you the whole story of the Bible in six sentences.

GOD created us to be with him.

Imagine, at the beginning of time, God, in the midst of utter darkness in the universe saying *"Let there be light,"* and there was light. Suddenly, the dark universe was illuminated with brilliance.

Day after day, for six full days, He'd say *"Let there be..."* and there was. *"Let there be sky,"* and there was sky. *"Let there be land,"* and there was land. *"Let there be sun, moon and stars,"* and there was sun, moon and stars. *"Let there be birds, let there be fish, let there be animals of every kind,"* and there were birds and fish and animals.

He spoke it all into creation by saying *"Let there be..."* and there was.

But, on the sixth day when he created Adam, he didn't say *"Let there be man."* Instead, He said, *"Let us make man..."*

With everything else in the universe, He spoke into existence, but with Adam and Eve He got His hands dirty.

Now, imagine God in the dirt and the dust and the mud. Imagine how muddy he must have gotten. Imagine His hands covered in the dirt. Imagine His lips covered in mud from breathing into his nostrils the breath of life! The first thing Adam saw when he opened his eyes was the smiling muddy face of his Creator! He got muddy to make man.

That's the risk God was willing to take to be in relationship with humanity. With Adam he got muddy and with Eve he got bloody; He reached into Adam's side and pulled out a rib and forged and formed Eve from it.

God created us to be in relationship with Him. He loves you and cares about you and He's still willing to get in the dirt to be with you. If you're

reading this today and you don't feel loved, please know that you are loved!

Just like He handcrafted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to be with them, He handcrafted you in your mother's womb to be with you!

God created us to be with Him.

OUR sins separate us from God.

Adam and Eve only had one rule, not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but Adam and Eve broke that rule, and immediately all of humanity became broken. From Adam's single sin came every other sin and struggle that humanity would ever suffer. You can trace racism, bullying, war, hate, and every crime, every sin, every catastrophe, every death, and, yes, every pandemic that plagues humanity back to Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden.

Just like one little viral particle infects a human body and makes the whole person sick, the one "little" sin that Adam committed infected the whole of humanity. Every baby ever born since his sinful choice, except Jesus, has been born controlled by and fueled by sin.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they were kicked out of the Garden of Eden. This garden that God had planted himself, this garden which represented the dwelling place of God, was corrupted by Adam's sin. So, he kicked them out and set a guard so that they could never enter back in.

That garden represented the presence of God, and them getting kicked out of it meant that all of humanity was banished forever from God's presence. Yes, He still loved them, but no, He could not live with them any longer because He is a holy God and cannot dwell with sin.

In the same way, God loves us, but our sins separate us from Him because He's so perfect. We have been forever banished from his presence because of sin.

Here's some even worse news:

SINS cannot be removed by good deeds.

Throughout the Old Testament, the people of Israel often tried to remove their sins by their good deeds. But no amount of blood, sweat or tears could ever remove them! The blood from all the millions of animal sacrifices could not remove their sins. The sweat of all the Jews trying to obey the 613 commandments of God could not remove their sins. The tears of all the prophets who wept over the sins of the Israelites could not wash one of their sins away!

What's true of them, is true of us. No matter how hard we try, we could never remove our sins by good deeds. Good deeds just cover up our sins. It's like using cough medicine to treat COVID-19.

You and I are sinful, separated from God, and no amount of good deeds will ever change that. But here comes the good news.

PAYING the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again.

In the Gospels, we see that God sent his Son into the world to become the God-man, Jesus Christ. He lived the perfect life we could never live and then he died the horrible death that we deserve to die.

On that cross He shed His blood, He poured out His sweat and He cried out His tears. So ultimately, it wasn't our blood, sweat and tears that saves us. It's His!!!

While hanging on the cross, He screamed out "*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*", which means "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?"

But He knew the answer. He knew that the Father had taken His cup of wrath and anger and hatred for Adam and Eve's sin, for every one of your sins and my sins, for every single sin of every single human that has ever lived or will ever live, and He poured out in full measure on the body, spirit and soul of Jesus. And, for the first time in eternity, there was a tremor in the Trinity, as the Father turned his back on the Son, because the Son became sin for us, and because the Son bore our sins in His body on the cross.

Then Jesus screamed the scream of ultimate agony and victory, "*It is finished!*", which means the price of your sin and my sin has been paid in full.

- Whatever sin you've done, IT IS FINISHED! The price has been paid.
- However far you've gone, IT IS FINISHED! The way back has been paved.
- However much you've sinned, IT IS FINISHED! Its' been nailed to the cross.
- However much you owe Him, IT IS FINISHED! Jesus paid the final cost.

It is finished! It is finished! **IT IS FINISHED!** The price of our sin's been paid in full!

To prove that He was the way, the truth and the life, He came back to life and conquered death by His resurrection! Now He is in this room offering you eternal life, which brings us to the "E" in the G.O.S.P.E.L. message!

EVERYONE who trusts in Him alone has eternal life.

Romans 1:16 makes it crystal clear what we must do to be saved, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes..."*

That word "believe" means to trust. Those who trust in Jesus alone to forgive them for their sins receive the gift of eternal life.

LIFE with Jesus starts now and lasts forever.



Eternal life is a personal, permanent relationship with the God of the Universe. This life starts now, not after you die and go to Heaven. He wants to give you real life! He wants to give you a purpose to live for now that makes a difference. He wants you to live a life worth living!

The very last chapter of the very last book of the Bible, Revelation, reminds us that, if we've put our faith in Jesus, we will live happily ever after.

This is the whole story of the Bible. This is the cure. This is the G.O.S.P.E.L.:

GOD created us to be with Him. (Genesis 1,2)
OUR sins separate us from God. (Genesis 3)
SINS cannot be removed by good deeds. (Genesis 4-Malachi 4)
PAYING the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again. (Matthew-Luke)
EVERYONE who trusts in Him alone has eternal life. (John)
LIFE with Jesus starts now and lasts forever. (Acts-Revelation)

I encourage you to memorize this acrostic. With it you'll be able to share the Gospel. Think of each sentence of the G.O.S.P.E.L. as chords on a guitar. You memorize the chords, and then you play music. The more you get the chords down, the more beautiful the music sounds. Memorize the G.O.S.P.E.L. word for word and then you can make beautiful music when it comes to sharing the Good News of Jesus.

Ignite Gospel urgency. Master G.O.S.P.E.L. fluency, and, finally:

3. LIVE OUT A GOSPEL STRATEGY.

In Romans 1:16 we see Paul's Gospel strategy lived out powerfully. It was built on first reaching Jews, and then reaching Gentiles. On his missionary journeys into new territories and cities, he almost always started in the synagogues with the Jews, and then took it to the streets to reach the Gentiles.

Today, many believers use the Prayer-Care-Share (from chapter three) as an effective strategy to reach their world:



1. Prayer - Start praying for three people by name every day.

As someone once said, "We must talk to God about others before we talk to others about God." Prayer is the first and most important step in living out your Gospel Strategy.

At Dare 2 Share we developed a visual to help remind people to pray for, care for and share the Gospel with those in their circle of influence. We call it The Cause Circle.

The Life in 6 Words app has THE Cause Circle built into it. The app is available free at either Google play or the Apple store.

If you don't have a smart phone, you can download THE Cause Circle at www.dare2share.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Cause-Circle-Prayer-Care-Share.pdf, print it out, and put it somewhere as a reminder to pray consistently for the three people you are hoping to reach with the Gospel.

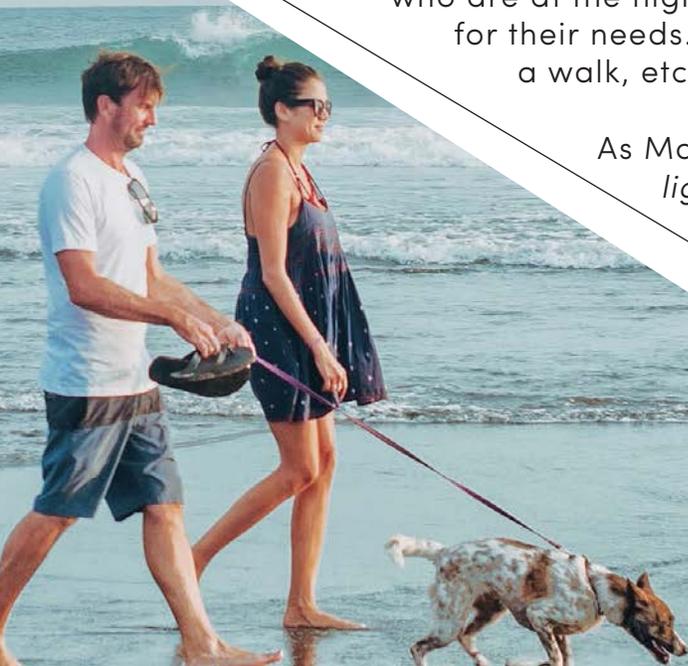


2. Care - Start caring for those three people in real ways.

At this time of quarantine and social distancing, we need to double down on asking others how we can serve them. Sometimes just asking questions and listening is the best way we can care for people.

Acts of kindness also go a long way. Offering to help neighbors who are at the highest risk can keep them healthy and provide for their needs. Getting their groceries, taking their dog for a walk, etc., the possibilities are endless.

As Matthew 5:16 states, *"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."* People often become more open to hearing the gospel when they see it lived out in front of them.



3. Share – Engage others in the conversation that matters the most.

Now is the time to share your faith! We are living in a time of heightened awareness of our own mortality, and many people are feeling vulnerable and are open to hearing some good news.

I'm sure you've noticed how many people are out and about in neighborhoods, in parks, and on walking or riding paths. People are longing for connection, and this is a great time to start conversations (from six feet away!).

But many times, the hardest part of sharing your faith is just bringing it up. For an easy way to start a gospel conversation, download the free Life in 6 Words App. We've designed this app to be engaging, intuitive and to clearly lay out the Good News of Jesus Christ very quickly.

God has used the [Life in 6 Words app](#) in powerful ways to empower teens and adults alike to share their faith. Based on the G.O.S.P.E.L. acrostic, this app enables the user to begin a Gospel conversation through three simple questions. The first is, "If you were to describe your life in six words what would they be?"

The person you are talking to is shown a list of fourteen words that range from "freedom" to "struggle" to "money" to "purpose." They take time to choose their words and push "next." As they explain why they chose those words, the person taking them through the app is able to discover more about them, their lives and their priorities.

The second question is, "Do you mind if I share with you my six words?" Then the believer is able to walk them through their own six words and share their spiritual journey along the way.

This leads to the third and most critical question, "May I share with you how the Bible describes life in six words?" If they are open to hearing you, literally swipe through the G.O.S.P.E.L. message and explain each point along the way. There's a little Bible icon in the corner that you can use to pull up verses for each point.

At the end, they are asked if they are ready to put their faith in Jesus. They are given the opportunity to push one of two buttons. One says, "I'm ready." And the other says, "I'm not ready yet."

This is such a simple way to share the Gospel message. I've used it hundreds of times in conversations with friends, family and strangers. What's amazing is that I've never been turned down to go through it. Of course, not everyone is ready to trust in Jesus, but everyone loves to choose their six words and talk about them.

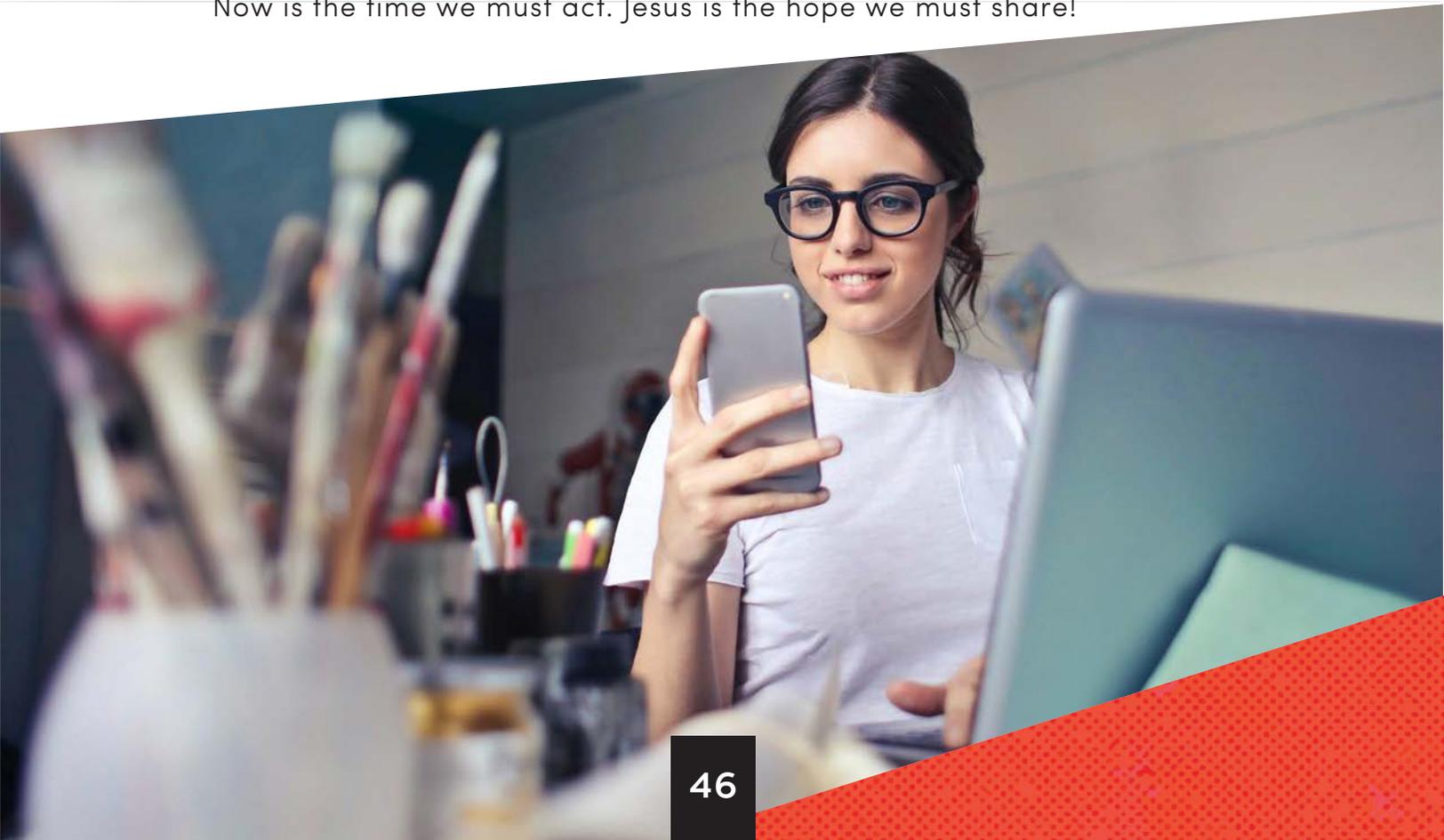
It's super easy to use! As I tell teenagers, "If you can swipe and read, then you can share the Gospel."

Download the [Life in 6 Words app](#), go through it, and start using it. The mobile app has an audio feature that enables you to share the Gospel virtually. This means that even if you are quarantined at home, you can use this app to start Gospel conversations with anyone via social media or phone-to-phone.

My prayer is that these three action steps (prayer, care, and share) will help you reach out (while everyone else is freaking out) during this time of global upheaval.

We must ignite gospel urgency, master G.O.S.P.E.L. fluency, and live out a Gospel strategy if we are going to see the Good News of Jesus bring hope to the broken world around us.

I close with a poem I wrote that calls us to get this cure out to everyone. Now is the time we must act. Jesus is the hope we must share!



THE CURE

There is a bigger mission,
one great work left undone.
It is the final mandate,
from God's one and only Son.

It's the call to preach the gospel,
to those who don't yet know,
to point them to the remedy,
and show them where to go.

Though breathing they are dead,
they're rotted from within,
souls once-for-all infected,
with the virus we call sin.

Jesus alone is The Cure,
on the cross he conquered sin.
Through the power of His resurrection,
new life it can begin.

Before he ascended into Heaven,
he gave to us His mission,
to preach the Gospel to all nations,
and save them from perdition.

The Cure is in your hands and heart,
it's yours to share with all,
will you pass it on to others,
and heed the Savior's call?

Eternity hangs in the balance,
Heaven or Hell await.
We must get to them The Cure,
before it is too late.

