

Kingdom Down #10 - How to be Godly and Healthy in Crisis

- Well, good morning. My name is Pastor Mark Driscoll. This is my wife and best friend, Grace. And in our family, we've got five kids. When a hard season hits or complexity comes, we like to call a family meeting. Everybody sits together, usually on the couch, and I like to lead and teach and direct and converse, and Grace likes to pray. Well today, we know that it's an unusual Sunday as all around the nation and globe people are doing church at home. And I just want to say thank you for inviting us into your life, inviting us into your family, inviting us into this season. And I wanted to invite my wife, Grace, to just pray for you. As we've been praying for you privately, we want to pray for you right now, publicly, and then we'll jump into the great book of Daniel. If you've got a Bible, go to Daniel 10. And sweetheart, if you would open our time in prayer and pray for all these people that are part of our extended family today, I know they'd appreciate it and I would, too.

- I'd be happy to. Dear Lord, thank you that You are the God who created us and all of the world. Lord, thank you that You still are on your throne and control. Lord, I pray that You would teach us to walk by faith and not by sight right now. Lord, that as we look around, we will see chaos and panic and hard things. But Lord, I pray that we would look up to You, and that You would teach us how to love our neighbors, that You would teach us how to walk in faith in this hard time. Lord, just teach us to work together. Lord, teach us to continue to proclaim Your Word and Your truth. Lord, we love people and we want to show that we do that, like you did Jesus, when You were here. So Lord, just teach us through this season and use it to save many lives, Lord. We love You in Jesus name, Amen.

- Amen. Thank you, baby. Love you. Well, if you're joining us online today, we're in Daniel 10. And I've been in Daniel to 12 week sermon series, one chapter in the book every week. We're in chapter 10. And if you're new, hey, you got some free time, go to markdriscoll.org, go to YouTube, go to iTunes, catch up on the book of Daniel. And the reason I'm going to continue in the book of Daniel is I believe that God's timing for this book and my preaching of it, which has been a great joy, is absolutely providential. It is perfect, and it is prophetic. God, in Daniel, about two and half thousand years ago was revealing to him the great future that lied ahead for all of human history, and we are now living in the midst of unfolding of what was revealed to Daniel. And so I titled the sermon today, How to be Godly and Healthy in a Time of Crisis. And if you're like me, you were watching the news a lot this week, one of the things that shocked me was this current continual refrain, and that is quote, that the world is at war against an unseen enemy that is seeking to take our life. That is amazing. If you are a Christian, you know that that is not just the storyline this week, this is the storyline every week in all of human history. That the war that we are fighting right now is actually part of a much greater war. That in addition to the unseen enemy of a virus, we have the unseen enemy of a sin nature. That ultimately, this or leads to the death of all people, and that is why our hope, our faith, our trust is in the person in the work of Jesus Christ. And it is a great honor to teach you God's Word today. And I want to start by telling you that this war that the world is now fighting together is actually part of a much

bigger and greater war that started a long time ago. Revelation 12, back in eternity, says this, "Before the earth was inhabited as it is today, before human history was unfolding, before you and I existed, God existed eternally, and he created divine beings to live and minister in His presence." Here's what we read of them in Revelation 12:7-9. Now, war arose in heaven. We have a war on earth, before that, there was a war in heaven. All of our little wars are part of this great war, this eternal war, this cosmic war. Everyone is going through the same experiences right now, but only the Christian equipped with the Word of God has perspective to see things from God's vantage point, and we received that here. It speaks of Michael, you'll meet him again today in Daniel, and his angels fighting against the dragon, that is Satan. And Satan and the demonic realm is real, and they are seeking to do all they can to eradicate human life on the earth to bring death and destruction to those that God intends life and love. And the dragon and his angels fought back. So there is a war. But he was defeated. The good news is that God always defeats Satan. That is ultimately the source of our eternal hope. And there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon, that is Satan, was thrown down that ancient serpent, who was called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. He was thrown to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. The great war in heaven was won by the angels of God, and then the enemy of God was cast down to earth. You need to know that that war is now here, and the war that we are experiencing is part of that great war. That sets the backdrop for the book of Daniel. Daniel lived about roughly two and a half thousand years ago. And Daniel was unable to go to church. Tell me if these variables sound, in any way, like our present moment. Daniel's church was closed. He could not attend. The people of God could not gather. They did not have technology as we do, but they were enduring and experiencing exactly what we are this week. Billions of people across the earth who are Christians are unable to go to their church because today, their church is closed. That was exactly the backdrop for the prophecy in Daniel 10. Why is it important that the church would be open? That the Word of God would be preached, that the worship of God would occur for the wellbeing of God's people, and that the witness of God would go out to the world. So the Word would come to the people who would then worship God and then witness to the world. And when the church is closed, those things are then more compromised and complicated. Their church was called the temple. It was closed, and it was, in some regards, exactly what you and I are experiencing right now in this very prophetic moment. Number two, the people of God were weary. They had been unable to open and attend their church, not just for a few weeks or months, for 70 years. Imagine that the church that you love, the church that you know, the church that you miss was closed, not just for a few weeks or months, but for 70 years. That ultimately many of the people who were members had passed away, many new generations had been born and everything had changed. They were unable to go to church. In addition, they were weary. And Daniel is a man who, at this point, is in his 80's. He's been walking with God faithfully since his teen years. But at this point, he's in his 80's, and it's been 70 years since he got to go to his church. It's been 70 years since he got together with the children of God. I want to put in perspective for you what we are dealing with. It is not new. The people of God have endured similar circumstances, even more extreme circumstances, because in Daniel, they are not at home, they are in exile. They are actually in Iran, modern day Iran, 700 miles from home. So imagine everything that we are going through, geopolitical, everything that is economic, the

churches closed for 70 years, and you were taken hostage by an invading army, and you were forced to live 700 miles away from home for your entire adult life. That's the storyline of Daniel. If there's hope for him, there's hope for you. If there's a way forward for him, there's a way forward for you. If God had a plan and a destiny for what he was experiencing, God has the same intent for you. And so what God does here, God gives perspective. That's what you will see with me in Daniel today. He shows things God does from His divine vantage point. Everyone goes through the same thing, and the children of God need to have the perspective of God, and that my hope prayer and goal for you today. In addition, they were fighting, as you will see, an invisible unseen enemy that was coming to kill them. Ultimately, it was demonic forces at work in his day. And today, I would submit to you that much of what we are experiencing is in addition to physical, it is also spiritual just as you will see in Daniel. And so ultimately, God has one reality in two realms. There is the physical world that we see, there is the spiritual world behind it that only God sees. Occasionally, God lifts the veil of human history, and He allows us to view our experiences from His perspective. That is my preface to Daniel 10. You are now going to get to peer into the unseen realm. You will get to see human history and your part in it from the perspective of the God of the Bible, Who knows and rules all of human history. And so beginning in Daniel 10, you're going to see that as Daniel is in a very complicated scenario, that his life is at risk, that people are in danger, that the church is closed, that it seems like evil and death are winning, and that God is far away. He experiences something called complex grief. "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict." Again, a great war against an unseen enemy who comes to take human life. "And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision." So this is revelation from God. "In those days, I, Daniel, was mourning." He's grieving, he's processing as you and I and all of humanity are this week. "I ate no delicacies." His appetite was gone. "No meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks." So he is literally isolated. He has limited supplies and he has three weeks where he is trying to understand what is happening and make sense of it for his soul. There's another book of the Bible that explains this same period of history, and the name of that book is Ezra. In Ezra 1, we see that God moved the heart of this King to allow the children of God to go home and reopen the church. I'm telling you, we need to pray that when the time is right, God opens the heart of governmental officials to allow the children of God to go back and open their church. If their church was closed for 70 years and they had the opportunity to open it, if ours are closed for a few weeks or months, we need to know that God will provide us the same opportunity that he did, them, and that is a governmental decree that allows the people of God to return and open the house of God. Ezra 2 says, "Though, Israel, the nation and the temple, their church was open, only a small number of people returned, only 50,000." I want to know that I believe on the other side of this event, this great war that we are in against an unseen enemy, that when the church of God reopens, it will not be empty it will be full. I believe we could be on the brink of a massive ministry opportunity. If anyone was hoping in their 401 , in their government, in their medical copay or deductible, or the security of their investments for their future, they now realize that they need a new place to place their hope. His name is Jesus Christ, and that hope is the eternal Kingdom of God, which ultimately rules and reigns forever without any of the complexities that you and I are facing. I want you to know that

your faith is tested in this season, and that when all is said and done, we want you to have the same fervor, the same heightened awareness, the same sense of urgency for the things of God that you do right now. And all churches need to be filled and flooded with the children of God. And then in chapters three and four, it tells us the story that is, they were seeking to open their church. In Ezra 3 and 4, great opposition came against them. Some of it was spiritual, some of it was physical. I am telling you this, that there will be great opposition to open the church of Jesus Christ. I know that economically, things are in difficult straits. I know that businesses are struggling, but I am telling you, opening the church of Jesus Christ is at the top of God's priority list, and that ultimately, there will be some form or fashion of opposition for those churches that are closed to get open. That's the backdrop of Ezra 1, 2, 3, and 4. If this all sounds very familiar, guess what it is because the Word of God doesn't just tell us what happened, it tells us what always happens, and it's happening again. Now, to set up the story of Daniel. At this point, as I said, he's in his 80's. He's buried many of his friends. He has been under a very difficult season his entire adult life, 70 years, faithful, unable to be in the presence of God with the people of God singing the praises of God. At this point, Daniel is feeling powerless. Perhaps the reason that he does not return back to Jerusalem from Babylon is because he's too old to make the journey. He's in a high risk category, is what we would say today. That in addition, he feels powerless because everything that is happening, geo politically, economically, spiritually, he is not in control of. There's nothing he can do. He's done everything he can do, and now it is out of his hands and it is fully in God's hands. The one thing that he gets to decide is what his character will be and how he will respond. His God given name, through his believing parents, was Daniel, which means God is my Judge, meaning I live under God's judgment. No one else matters much, it's ultimately who he says I am. I want to do what he tells me to do. When he arrived in Babylon, they gave him another name, Belteshazzar, that means bail or a demon god is ultimate god. So Daniel had to get up every day and decide, "Am I Daniel or Belteshazzar? Am I going to live in faith or in fear?" Am I going to act the way that God tells me or will I react the way that everyone else is?" You and I have that same decision. That ultimately, circumstances may change, but character cannot, particularly in moments of crisis. Now, let me explain what Daniel is experiencing here, and you'll see it unfold as we continue through chapter 10. Number one, he's experiencing what some would call isolation. He says, "I was alone, I was alone for three weeks." Today, we're being told social distancing, physical distancing, isolation. He was experiencing isolation. Just look at the variables. Global upheaval, economic problems, political intrigue, the church is closed, and he is isolated in a high-risk category. Daniel is not just isolated however, he's experiencing solitude. And this is something that the children of God can understand that others cannot. That even when you are alone, you are not alone because God is not restricted by flights, God is not restricted by quarantines, God is not restricted by distancing. The God of the Bible draws near to His children. The Bible says this, and I want you to cling it right now as a promise, and that is that he is an ever present help in times of trouble. Question, is this a time of trouble? Answer, yes. The good news is you're not isolated, you have solitude. Isolation is where we are separated from everyone and everything, solitude is where we still have God's presence and peace to be amidst us and to be among us. You need to know that even if you are isolated, even if right now, you're watching at home or on your phone, that ultimately you do not need to have isolation, you can have solitude. You can sing, you can pray,

you can worship, you can invite God's peace and presence into your midst, and that's exactly what Daniel is doing, and that's the model that he sets for those of us who are experiencing some sort of isolation today, not to view it as isolation as nonbelievers do, but to see it as solitude, a meeting with the Lord, as Daniel does. In addition, number two, he's experiencing something called complex grief. It says he's overwhelmed, that he is mourning, that he can't eat. You're going to see his mood continue. This is complex grief, and it's exactly what you're experiencing. It's exactly what the whole world is experiencing right now. Oftentimes in life, when something hard happens, we experience it, process it, grieve it, mourn it, learn from it, heal from it, and move forward from it. Complex grief is like an avalanche. It feels like everything in life is broken loose, and it's all just coming to us at once and bearing us and overwhelming us. That is complex grief. That is complex grief. There's a man in the old Testament named Job, and he had this similar experience. He was a godly man like Daniel. And it says that as a courier was bringing him bad news, we've got a lot of bad news this week, before that courier or messenger could finish delivering the bad news, the next courier arrived with more bad news. Literally, Job is like on the front porch of his house, and it's bad news, and another guy, and he could see another guy in the distance, it's just bad news as far as the eye can see. That ultimately, when that happens, you experienced something that the counselors will call complex grief. Meaning you're overwhelmed, your system is flooded, you've not been able to process everything that you've been through. Let me just say that right now, what you are experiencing is what Daniel experienced, and that is complex grief. And Daniel was godly. Daniel had faith. Daniel knew the Word of God. God ultimately was faithful repeatedly in the life of Daniel. And he was still overwhelmed. So it's not a sin to be overwhelmed, it's not a sin to be struggling to process everything that you're hearing in the present and fearing for the future. But one thing I would give to you by way of just pastoral encouragement, I would strongly encourage you to manage your intake of bad news. The soul was built for good news. Good news is about the death, burial, resurrection, forgiveness of sin, eternal life through Jesus Christ. Bad news overwhelms and floods the soul. It causes complex grief. And with our constant 24/7 news cycle, plus the panic on social media, I'm not saying deny reality, but my encouragement to you, so that you can receive information and then process it and pray through it, that you receive your information in ways that are organized. Meaning set a few times through the day while you'll check media, social media, your platforms and communication channels, and then literally turn your phone off. Ultimately, you cannot go through this entire episode constantly plugged in to bad news and not able to process any of it. Daniel is taking time here to process his complex grief so we can learn from it, heal from it and then move forward. And one of the ways he processes his complex grief is lamenting, and this is all a model for you. So here's what we read next. "On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, that is the Tigris, I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist." This is a divine being, possibly an angel. "His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of a burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. And I, Daniel, alone." Again, not isolation, God is with them, so it's solitude. "I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. So I was left alone and saw this

great vision." What happens? No strength was left in me, complex grief. He's overwhelmed and processing. "My radiant appearance was fearfully changed." He's overcome with dread as he gets bad news. "And I retained no strength. And I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell in my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground." The timing of his experience, he tells us, was when God's people would remember their deliverance from Egypt. Part of the difficulty is that you and I, we forget history. We forget that the same God who delivered them is present with us in the midst of our crisis and turmoil. This was the season where they would look back when they were in bondage and slavery, and everything was against them, and they seem doomed and destined for death in Egypt, and then God supernaturally, miraculously delivered his people. As you look at the faithfulness of God in history, that helps to overcome your fear of the future. We do not know the future, but we know the one who rules and controls it, and he has historically, continually been only good to his children. Daniel reminds us of that by mentioning the time of year. And what happens is, and this might be a bit of a shock to you, here is Daniel, a human being, and then joining him are divine beings. This is possibly the angel Gabriel, we don't know. The name of this being is not mentioned. But throughout the Bible, these divine beings are mentioned repeatedly. They're called the assembly, the Holy ones, the council of the Holy ones, the hosts, the seed of the gods, the amount of assembly, according judgment, and the heavenly hosts. Just in the book of Daniel, divine beings keep showing up. A watcher, a Holy one, the Holy ones, an angel, a thousand times a thousand, 10,000 times, 10,000, The host of heaven, the Prince of the host, Gabriel, the Prince of Persia and Michael, the chief Prince who you'll meet in a moment, a man clothed in linen and a Lord. Here's the big idea. That in addition to God's human family, God has a divine family. Just as God has his servants in the seen realm, God also has them in the unseen realm. And here's what we are seeing. When we are in a war, God's entire family is in the war, meaning the angels and the divine beings are in the fight with us. You need to know that. You need to know that there are realities going on behind the reality that you see. There are realities that only God sees. That what is playing out physically is also playing out spiritually. God made this world good. He made us very good. He made us for life. When very bad things happen and threaten death, you know that it is a demonic attack in warfare. It is ultimately physical, that is to be sure, but the causation behind it is ultimately spiritual. And these two realms form one reality and work together. As Daniel is suffering in the physical realm, and God's people are fearful in the physical realm, he gets a revelation the curtain is lifted, and he sees that the divine beings are in the fight with the human beings. I want this to encourage you that God is at work, and God's divine family is part of this war. Now, what happens here for Daniel as he is experiencing all of this anxiety, he experiences something called physical depression. Mental, emotional depression is where you lose all hope, and this is where people even consider horrific ends to their life. We don't want that for you, we love you. Physical depression is not where you've lost faith in God or any sort of hope for the future, you're just exhausted. Physically, your body is processing all of the information that you are hearing and all of the emotions that you are experiencing, and ultimately, you get exhausted. You know it's a spiritual battle when you reach the point of physical exhaustion because divine beings and demonic beings, they don't share in the limitations of our humanity. Demons don't get sick, demons, don't need to be quarantined, demons don't need to hydrate, demons don't need a day

off, demons don't need a nap. They war against the children of God day and night, and they expose the limits of our humanity to where we're just exhausted and overwhelmed. Some of you are experiencing that, Daniel did. How did he process it with lamenting? When complex grief occurs, and you feel yourself physically depressed, exhausted, overworked, and overwhelmed, the answer Daniel models for us is something that the Bible calls lamenting, lamenting. The longest book in the Bible is Psalms. It's prayers and songs of those people who are in trial and tribulation and trouble. As you read those, and you should, you'll see people are processing, right? They are dealing with their grief. They are mourning appropriately. There are different categories in the Psalms. The number one primary category is the lamenche. These are people who do not know the outcome of the hardship that they're in, but they are processing their complex grief and bringing their burdens to God. They are recognizing that what they are needing to carry is going to crush them so they need God to help them carry the burden that they are carrying. A whole book of the Bible is built on lamenting. There's a whole book of the Bible called Lamentation. In addition, the Lord, Jesus frequently lamented. It says in Isaiah that he would be a man of sorrow. The shortest verse in the whole Bible is that Jesus wept. If you've shed some tears this week, that's okay. You're not ungodly. Jesus did, Daniel did, you can. That is the way that the soul processes information to get to the place of hope is through the process of lamenting. Couple of things I want to share with you about lamenting. Number one, when you lament, you allow yourself to feel. In this season, don't just numb yourself. Some of you are binge watching, binge drinking, binge eating, right? Don't do that. Instead, allow yourself to feel and process because you don't want to become numb, you don't want to be the person who has really nothing left for God or others, especially those who you love the most and need you the most. You still need to feel. Lamenting allows us to work through a process of fear and anxiety and grief in relation with the Lord. Number two, when you lament, you process your pain in the present and your fear of the future. Lamenting is where you come to the point of reality in the presence of God. You say, "Okay, God. Okay. This is why I'm struggling with today right now, and then this is what I'm scared of in the future. This is what I am seeing, and it greatly concerns me." Lamenting is the way of getting to reality and inviting God into that reality in the present, as well as the future. Number three, when you lament, you can consider the ways that you have contributed to the pain that you're suffering. This is not to be a stinging rebuke in a season of hardship, but how many of us right now are looking at the situation that we're in and saying, "I should have done differently with my finances, with my schedule, with the architecting of my life. That I made some foolish decisions that now have me experiencing more anxiety and pain." Let's hope, trust, and pray that God will meet those needs. But once that pressure is relieved and once we're on the other side of this, please don't go back to life as it was. Don't go back to life it was. If there were things that you could have done to live more wisely to prevent this degree of pain, God forgives you, God will help you, but God also wants you to make some course corrections. If you are not good with your finances, now is the time to focus and to make plans for the future. If you are not invested in the Kingdom of God, spiritually participating in church or praying or giving or serving, now is the time to make the course correction and to make those eternal investments that'll continue, even after the crisis is abated. Lamenting allows that. In addition, when you lament, you learn to empathize and sympathize with others who are hurting. Sometimes when we're hurting, we become very selfish. All we're concerned

about as ourselves. As we lament and we invite God into our circumstances, God opens our heart to see the needs of others. Others are struggling, others are hurting, how do we have compassion for them, how do we love them, how do we help them, how do we serve them, how do we seek to bring the peace and presence of God's love into their circumstances as well? Lamenting allows us to deal with our stuff so we can help them with their stuff. In addition, when you lament, you work through the cycle of grief. Certain trauma counselors and therapists, over the years, have sorta come up with something that they call a cycle of grief. Phase one is denial. Many of us, I think heading into this situation, had varying degrees of denial. They're overblowing it, it's not a big deal. In addition, some people are still denying. It's a big conspiracy. Whatever the case may be, they're denying that we actually do have a global problem. Once you move through denial, you get to anger. Then people are angry. Well, why didn't somebody tell me, why didn't they fix this, why don't we have the solution? And then bargaining, negotiating with God, negotiating with your boss, negotiating with your government to try and get the best possible outcome for you. And then number four is depression. Okay. This is reality. It really is like this, life really is different. And this is the way that it is. The counselors will then say that the next phase is acceptance. Okay. This is where we're at. We need to push forward. Let's deal with reality and move into tomorrow. And I would add, for the Christian, number six, thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. Praise God in all circumstances, right? The Bible says to pray with prayers of thanksgiving. You know that you've worked through a lamenting cycle, not when you're grateful for everything that happened, but you're grateful for who you became through the trial. And what I can't guarantee you is the outcome, but I can guarantee you that if you'll walk with God, the outcome of your character will be fantastic. Your future may be difficult, but your character can be fantastic. That's the storyline of Daniel. Back to the story. He can't control the future, but he can invest in his character. He can find reasons to thank and trust and praise God and minister to others in the midst of his difficulty. Lastly, I would submit to you that what lamenting does, it keeps us from pithy heartless, religious trite responses. That ultimately in times of crisis, sometimes God's people are well meaning, but we feel awkward. We don't know what to say or do, so we just say a verse and then pretend that it's over. I believe in the whole Bible. I've been teaching the Bible my entire adult life, almost every week for 25 years. I've preached pretty much verse by verse through about half of the Bible. So trust me in this, I love the Bible, I believe the Bible. But ultimately, let's say there is a single mom who's faced with a decision of I don't have childcare, and if I don't go to work, I lose my job. Just telling her God is in control doesn't really help because she still has a problem. God is in control. But ultimately, we need to be emotionally present with people and helpful to people and sympathetic to people. And certain Christians, in the midst of this, will just try and quote certain verses, and what it does, it shuts other people down, and it basically tells them not to lament or process. Here's the most popular one that you'll hear a lot. Romans 8:28, "God works out all things for the good of those who love and are called according to his purpose." That verse is true. I banked my eternity on it. Here's the problem, it doesn't tell us when. In a million years, we'll look back and say, "God, thanks for straightening that out, but tomorrow might be complicated." So we need to love one another, we need to encourage one another, we need to be in the midst of it with one another, walking through it with others, allowing them to emotionally process, lament, unburden and allow the same for ourselves. That's what Daniel's doing. Daniel, a hundred percent,

believes in the sovereignty of God, the Kingdom of God, the second coming of Jesus Christ, the eradication of sin, the resurrection of the dead. It's all in the book of Daniel. But in the middle, what he says is, "I'm exhausted, I'm overwhelmed, I don't know what to do." That doesn't mean he's ungodly and doesn't believe in the sovereignty of God, that means that he is godly and trusting in the sovereignty of God, even when he doesn't see how it's working out practically, immediately. What we see here as well is that ultimately, your pain is part of a great war. The storyline of the Bible and the storyline of Daniel is that there is a great war in the unseen realm, and all of our wars in the seen realm are part of the great war. I'll read this lengthy section to you from Daniel 10. "And behold, a hand touched me." So a divine being shows up to visit Daniel. "And set me trembling on my hands and knees." He's just overwhelmed, right? Some of you felt that way this week. Actually, I know people that they were trembling, I know other people, they just had to sit down. He's there. It's okay to be there. You're not ungodly if you're there. A guy in the Bible is honest enough to tell us that he was there. "And he said to me, 'O Daniel, man,'" this is important. "'Greatly loved, greatly loved.'" You're greatly loved. I just feel inclined in the spirit to tell you this, all of this is not entirely personal. You are experiencing personal pain, difficulty, complexity, fear. So it feels very personal, and how you're processing it, all that we're going through globally is also something that we're processing individually. And you can take it very personal and say, "God, why are you doing this to me?" Let me say this, Daniel was in the same circumstances that we were, that we are, right? Again, churches closed, he's isolated, he's not eating or drinking according to his normal routine. He's fearful of the future. He's getting lots of bad news, he's feeling overwhelmed. And he didn't come to the conclusion this is personal and God is attacking me and God hates me or God has turned his back on me or God has changed his mind about me. And just to remind them of that, a divine being, perhaps an angel, shows up and says, "You are greatly loved." You need to know that right now, what you're experiencing is personal, but it's not a personal attack from God. It may be a personal attack from Satan, but ultimately, the whole world is in the same boat. And the sea is raging and the storm is rising, and we're all feeling seasick at the same time. But you are greatly loved, you need to know that. You are greatly loved. This word that is brought to Daniel is true for all of the children of God. You are greatly loved. He goes on. "'Understand the words that I speak to you and stand upright, for now I've been sent to you.' And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling." He's not okay. It's okay to not be okay. "And he said, 'fear not,'" number one command in the whole Bible. "'Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before God,'" so he's been praying for three weeks, "'your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.'" Now, if you're looking at the timeline, okay, humble guy, Daniel, fasting and praying, crying out to God, waits three weeks, nothing happens. Maybe you feel like that. God, I love you, I trust in you, I called out to you. It's been weeks, nothing. Why? Is it that God doesn't exist, is that the God doesn't love you, is it that God doesn't care, is it that the God is overwhelmed? No, there are things happening that you may not be seeing, but God reveals. This is amazing. Hang in there. He goes on to say, "'The Prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days.'" This is a spiritual battle. This is a demonic battle. "'But Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me for I was left there with the Kings of Persia and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days.'" I bring you news about the future. "'For the vision is for the days to come.'" Some have asked, are we

in those days? I don't know. Daniel saw into the future, we are now in the future, are we in that future? I don't know. The point is that ultimately, we need to prepare ourselves every day for death or the second coming of Jesus Christ because at some point, he will return or we will pass, and if we're ready every day, we'll be ready on that day. He's looking into the future. "When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute." He's like, "I couldn't even handle anymore." Some of you were there this week. "And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips." So this is a divine being or an angel. "Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me. 'O my Lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me.'" Sometimes the more you know, the worse you feel. The more news we get, sometimes the worse we feel. Our communication now is instant, constant, and global. That means that we get more bad news than any people in the history of the world. Daniel gets some bad news, and he's overwhelmed by it. It's okay. It's okay for the complex grief to hit. It's okay for you to lament. It's okay for you to not be okay, but then run to God until ultimately he makes you okay. That's the story of Daniel, and that's the hope of the remainder of the chapter. He goes on, "'I have no strength and no breath is left in me.' Again one having the appearance of a man, divine being, touched me and strengthened me. And he said, 'O man, greatly loved,'" repeats it, "'Fear not,'" repeats it. Two things come from God. You can't order them on Amazon, you can't find them at Costco, peace and courage. You know what the world needs right now, peace, internally and courage to process the future. This is a divine gift from God for the children of God. "'Peace be with you, be strong and of good courage.' And as he spoke to me, I was," what's he saying, friend, you're right there probably in your living room, watching on your phone or laptop or iPad. What's he saying? "'Strengthened.'" Question, did circumstances externally change? Answer, no. Did circumstances internally change. Yes. Yes. That God gives us supernatural strength and a peace that surpasses understanding to his children who bring their trouble and need and grief to him in time of crisis. That's exactly what God wants you to do. I just think this is so shocking how absolutely timely the timeless Word of God is. A godly man, church is closed, gets a lot of bad news, is isolated, is not eating according to his normal cycle, feels completely overwhelmed and exhausted, lacks peace and courage, is filled with fear, meets with God, and though things don't change, he changes. God gives him peace in place of his fear, God gives him courage in place of his own immobility, where he can't speak, he can't think, he can't act, he can't move, and now his strength is restored and his courage is full. God wants the same for you. God has the same for you. There is hope for you. His circumstances were more difficult, dark and dire than ours, and he had been away from church for a very long time, but he was not away from God because God is an ever present help in time of trouble. He says, "As he is spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, 'Let my Lord speak for you have strengthened me.' Then he said, 'Do why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight.'" God's divine family is in the fight with his human family. Our war is not against flesh and blood, but powers, principalities and spirits. It's not just against viruses and nations, it's against powers, principalities and spirits. That everyone needs to fight in the physical realm and do that, which is safe for human wellbeing and flourishing, but the children of God also need to go to war in the unseen realm just bringing our request to the God of heaven as Daniel did because some things are beyond our control, but they're not out of God's control. He goes, "'The Prince of Greece, after I believe, he will come, and I will tell you what is inscribed

in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your Prince." Let me say this. When we pray, some delay is demonic. Some delay is demonic. Here's what the angel says. "Daniel, you humbled yourself, you prayed. You prayed, prayer went right to God. He heard it, answered it, sent me here immediately to answer the prayer. But the problem is, Daniel, I've been in a war for three weeks to get here." You probably have never considered this. There is God, there is you. There is also the demonic, satanic, the darkness of the unseen realm. And sometimes when things happen we say, "Okay, God, what are you doing?" Fighting, laboring, trying through his servants. You need to know that when you pray and you don't get an immediate answer, that delay might be a demonic battle. Daniel still pray for three weeks. You need to pray for as many weeks as it takes, but keep praying. The same thing happens not only in the spirit realm, but in the physical realm. The Apostle Paul says this in 1 Thessalonians 2:18 in the New Testament. He says, "We wanted to come to you again and again, but Satan hindered us." Paul said, "We're trying to get to you, but there is a war to get there." What is true in the physical is true the spiritual. Your prayers are heard by God if they are in the name of Jesus Christ. Your prayers are answered by God if they are in the name of Jesus Christ. And sometimes, the delay is demonic because there is a battle. As God is sending his divine family into the fight to help his physical family, there is a fight for them to get there. What we see here is that like the military, the unseen realm and the demonic and the angelic, it has rulers. We hear of them as princess, chief princes and kings here. They also have geographic outposts. He names various geographic places that have strongholds. What this means is that there are certain places that Satan has set up, basically outposts for demonic work, and he is seeking to take human life and to keep the church of Jesus Christ closed there. In addition, though, he has a soldiers like Michael. Michael is an angel, a divine being. Right now, we're looking for the government and the military and those in authority to help. Well, we also need to pray to the God of heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to invite whomever he wants to deploy into the fight with us and for us. This man or this divine being, this angelic being, Michael, I should say, is called an Archangel, he's a warrior. Jude 1:9, it says that, "He was the one who contended with the devil." We read in Revelation 12 at the beginning of the sermon that Michael and his angels led the fight to defeat Satan and demons. That ultimately, God will deploy his divine family to help his human family. This is why we pray, and when our prayer is not immediately heard, we don't assume that God is not answering, we assume that there is a war to bring relief to the children of God. I hope this gives you encouragement. People don't know this, people don't see this, and so what God does during this season of crisis for our season of crisis, he opens up our understanding to see things from his perspective so that then we trust that he has not forsaken or abandoned us. Now, lastly, a few things in closing. What got you'll through his crisis will get you through this crisis. What got Daniel through his crisis will get you through this crisis. Number one, the ministry of presence from God. God was present with Daniel. God is present with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. He will never isolate himself from you. That ultimately, he received an angelic visit, which seems amazing to us. You have the presence of the Holy Spirit if you are a child of God. You have the presence of God, which is even greater than an angel showing up just to visit you for a moment. Is the Spirit of God being with you continually into the future? You need to know that God's ministry of presence is available to you. Number two, he was reminded that he was greatly loved and his

suffering was not personal. I know that you're suffering. We're all suffering in various ways, emotional, physical, spiritual, mental, financial, relational. Just know this, if you are a child of God, this is a global situation as it was in the days of Daniel. This is part of the great war that began in heaven and now continues in various battlefronts on earth, but that ultimately, it's not personal. You are greatly loved. Your relationship with God should only be strengthened through this season. Number three, he had a humble heart that prayed. The angel shows up and says, "You were humble and you prayed, and your prayer was heard." The moral of the story is don't tell God what to do, but tell God how you're doing. A humble heart to pray. Right now, it'd be good to spend more time in prayer than you probably ever have. And when this crisis is over, and I promise that ultimately, we will get to the other side of this by God's grace. That ultimately when we're there, you should still pray like you're praying right now. That that sort of urgency and fervency should not wane. Number four, our reminder to fear not. When you get bad news, the human inclination is fear. The number one command in the Bible is fear not. Why? Because we need to be continually reminded. As we get bad news, we need to be reminded We're loved, and we don't have to be afraid. It doesn't mean that everything will be okay out there, but it means that we can be okay in here because of the peace of God, which surpasses understanding. In addition, a strengthening touch from God that brought peace and courage. I'm praying that God would touch you in some way that you would sense his presence and his peace and his provision and his pleasure. You need a touch from God. Just as he came to literally touch Daniel, so he literally comes to touch you. A reminder of the reality of spiritual warfare in the world that ultimately there's a lot more happening than we know or understand could even fathom or imagine. I need you to keep things in their biblical, global, historical context, and ultimately not just look at the war you see, but remind yourself of the war behind the wars as Daniel did. A focus on the Kingdom of God and of Jesus Christ to ultimately get home. Daniel's whole goal is to see the children of God return to their home so that they can worship God freely so that Jesus can come, and he can cure this great global pandemic of sin that is infected us all and ultimately causes us all to have a day of death. Hear me in this. We all, we all have this unseen enemy, this sin nature, that ultimately comes to infect and to kill every single one of us. Our greatest problem is sin, our greatest enemy is death, and our only hope is Jesus Christ. All of this happened, their church, the temple got reopened, the worship of God continued. Jesus arrived there to fulfill other prophecy in the Bible. He lived without sin, He died in our place for our sin. He is the cure for the global pandemic of sin and death. After He died, three days later, He rose. He returned to heaven where He rules and reigns in an invisible Kingdom, and He is coming again to make His invisible Kingdom visible on the earth. Our hope is in the second coming of Jesus Christ. Our hope is in the resurrection of our bodies like Jesus Christ, where sin and death are no more, fear is gone, Satan and his minions are defeated and destroyed and disarmed forever. That ultimately, our hope is that one day, Jesus is coming and ultimately, we know what eternity will look like for those of us who belong to him. And lastly, a reminder that God knows and rules all of human history. If you've been with us and Daniel, you have seen repeatedly prophecy where God predicts the future, and it comes to pass. God is over history. God knows and rules the future. The future is not open, it is not uncertain. It is not chaotic, it is controlled by God. I don't know what he has on the other side, but I think that we should prepare our hearts for a great ministry harvest and opportunity and see what God has for

us on the other side. I love you. Thank you for hanging in there with me for this special, timely sermon from Scottsdale, Arizona. Wherever you happen to be today, I just want to give you a few closing next steps. Number one, maybe you're watching this with family or friends. What we do in the Driscoll family on Sunday, we get together and say, "What was your takeaway from the text of the sermon?" Have that little conversation. Be the church as much as you can be in the context that you're in. What is your text or takeaway? Number two, share prayer requests. Pray for yourself. Here's what I have as a request. Think of someone else. Who else can we be praying for? And also thanksgiving. Find something in the middle of this to thank God for. And then lastly, if you're with your family, get together for dinner tonight. We do this every Sunday at the Driscoll house. We pray, we talk about the sermon, we enjoy a meal together, and we keep some normal in the rhythm and something to look forward to relationally every week. And if you can't do that physically, do that digitally with family or friends. FaceTime, whatever the case may be, Skype, whatever opportunity you have, sit down tonight with people you love, have a conversation, break bread, spend some time together and ultimately try to get as much normal into this abnormal season as possible. We love you. I'll be here for you every week, 9:00 and 11:00, Sunday mornings from Scottsdale, Arizona. I will be opening the Word of God because you need a Word from God. Father God, thank you for an opportunity to teach. Thank you for technology. Thank you for these dear people, these dear people, Lord, that give us the opportunity to speak into their life during the season. I pray against the spirit of fear, and I pray instead, Lord, for peace. I pray against the paralysis, and I pray for courage. And God, I pray that as they considered Daniel, that you would send the Holy Spirit to make them like Daniel, who ultimately was like Jesus and whose name we pray. Thank you.