

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.
Amen.

The Bible says, “Be still and know that I am God.” I am firmly convinced that the Creator of heaven and earth, God Almighty, wants us to stop in our tracks and listen to Him. Our pace of life in this area is so fast. One of the first times I drove up here 20 years ago from a small farming town in Central Illinois, something happened that I will never forget. Driving close to the speed limit in the middle lane of the toll way, a car passed us using the right lane speeding well over 80 miles an hour. I about jumped out of my skin. I did not see the car coming and it went by us so fast that I could not believe it. In rural Mt Olive there would be weeks that I would not even drive on the freeway, let alone a toll way that seemed more like a racetrack. Startled to the quick the thought went through my mind, “We are not in Kansas anymore” hearing the voice in my head of Judy Garland in The Wizard of Oz. The pace of life is so fast where we live. This leads us to our first point. 1. The pace of life can be too fast and harm us physically, emotionally, spiritually, and relationally.

Physically, unrelieved stress due to our fast-paced lives lowers our immune systems, making us more susceptible to all sorts of illnesses and yes, diseases. Emotionally, unrelieved stress due to our fast-paced lives causes our emotions to be on overload and before long leads to burnout of all sorts. Spiritually when our pace is so fast, we do not take the time to literally stop, be quiet, and listen to God. And even if we do take some time for God, it is often rushed, and we miss out on all that God is trying to reveal to us through His Holy Word. Last but not least our fast-paced lives stifles, harms, and even hurts our relationships one to another for we fail to take the time to stop and listen, I mean really listen, to those around us. We do not take the time to invest in our relationships in a healthy way that brings honor and glory to God.

The Lord God knows us better than we know ourselves. He is so intimately acquainted with us that he knows our every thought and he knows our words even before we speak. Therefore, when God says, "Be still and know that I am God" God knows exactly what He is saying to us and He does so for our good. Point #2 is this. In these next few weeks, the majority of us have a great opportunity to stop our fast pace, look to God, and listen intently to what God is saying to each and everyone of us.

It is our prayer that as a result of the state ordered shelter in place, we will come out of this physically healthy, emotionally uplifted, spiritually strong, and relationally improved. Let us stop right now, be still, and pray for this to happen in all our lives. Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your great concern for all of us. Thank you that You love us with an everlasting love and underneath are the everlasting arms. Lord God, we are in a place that we have never been before, in our villages, our counties, our state, our nation, and the entire world. The virus is wreaking havoc all over the world. Lord, you have our full attention. Please help us to hear your every word. May we take in your wisdom from above and turn off listening to the lies from below. Forgive us for our fast pace that pushes away that which is most important. Please help us all to put you first in our lives. Please be our first love and cause us to truly love one another even as you love us. May our human relationships become more dear to us than ever. And may the entire world be still before you and know that you are God. This we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Most of the listeners to this talk know well the story of the Exodus. God uses Moses to lead God's people from being slaves in Egypt into the promised land, the land of Israel. Dr Erwin Lutzer's program, Running to Win, recommends this book as do I. It is called, The Red Sea Rules, 10 God Given Strategies for Difficult Times, by Robert J. Morgan. God's people were in a heap of trouble. In front of them was the Red Sea. Behind them were the armies of

Pharaoh en route to kill God's people. With the Red Sea in front of them and the armies of Egypt behind them, there was no escape. Their end was in sight.

Friends, this is where knowing God, being in relationship with God, listening to God Himself makes all the difference in the world. God has His people right where He wanted them, between and rock and a hard place. Point #3 is this. Realize that God means for you to be right where you are, and He will make a way for you. Some of you are in an impossible situation today with nowhere to turn, with no safe place in sight. It looks like you are about to lose everything that you have worked your whole life for. Charles Spurgeon writes "The Lord will make a way for you where no foot has been before. That which like a sea threatens to drown you, shall be a highway for your escape." God specializes in overcoming the impossible for all things are possible with God. God promises to find a way for us fearful people and of course Jesus will not only show us the way, Jesus is the way. The Bible says, "When you pray, keep alert and be thankful. Be sure to pray that God will make a way" (Col 4:2-3 CEV). God's power is greater than the sea in front of you and the armies of Egypt behind you.

God's people did not know of God's plan. They cried out to God and Moses. Moses himself cries out to God asking God complaining that God had brought them out there to die. I close this talk quoting Exodus 14:13-14 ESV making this our final point. "Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will work for you today. For the Egyptians you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent. (Just stay calm NLT).

God put His people in this tight spot to show them His great power of deliverance. Friends, in the tightest of spots God often does His greatest of works. The Lord will fight for you and God asks us to be quiet in His Presence and "just stay calm" for He promises to bring good out of it all to the glory of God. You are not alone. God is all around you and the God, the Holy

Spirit resides within you. The sea is about to part and you will walk forward on dry ground, just the way God wants you to do. Jesus will always provide the way. Be still before God and you will find the way. Amen and Amen.