



Holy Week

Joy in the Waiting

Are you tired of waiting? Does waiting seem to take up an inordinate amount of our time and attention, especially during this unforeseen season of COVID-19? What about the countless ways this pandemic has upset our plans and choked off the routines we count on? We impatiently wait for this trial to end, and we're frustrated that we can't speed along its departure.

What about the future of Temple Baptist Church? Who could have foreseen, let alone chosen, the circumstances and uncertain future now faced by this faithful part of Christ's Body? Hasn't this gone on long enough? The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that *"without faith it is impossible to please the Lord"* [Hebrews 11:6]. At times patience may be in short supply but, here, faithfulness endures. Fervent prayer continues; yet, it can feel like the "heavens are brass," impermeable to our supplications.

What are we to make of this? A reliable starting point is to own what we already know.

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Thank you to all who joined us online yesterday for our Palm Sunday worship and Communion services led by Pastors Gordon Hanstad and Kee Thang. Although we look forward to gathering together in-person here in TBC/MCF's physical home, we can draw strength for today knowing that nothing can ever thwart the victory we have through Christ's finished work on the cross, our restored fellowship with God, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that all who are part of the Body of Christ share across the ages and despite physical distance.

As we enter Holy Week, the following devotional is provided for your encouragement. Later this week, you'll received a second update that will include calendar changes and other practical information. As always, feel free to contact the TBC office or any of our elders for any questions or needs you may have.

CALL OR TEXT:

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Pastor Kee Thang:815.312.6511
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God is.

He still rules, sitting *“enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers”*

[Isaiah 40: 22].

In His presence *“there is fullness of joy; at [His] right hand are pleasures forevermore.”* [Psalm 16:11]

Difficult circumstances are always temporary. The Apostle Paul testified with unquestionable frankness that *“in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.”* [2 Cor. 7:4b]

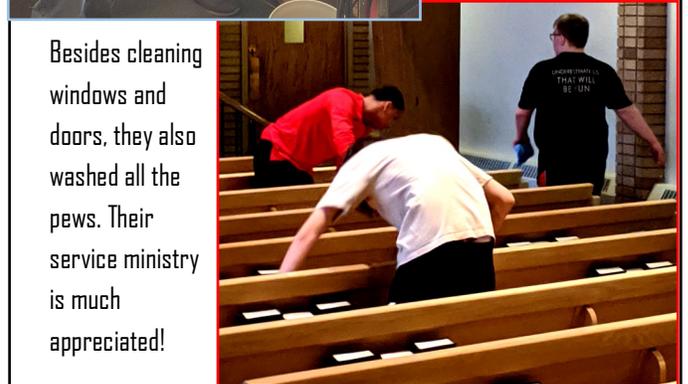
This is immutable truth on which we can stand securely, and it will endure long after today’s trials become brief passages in history books. In the meantime, God wills that we live in His joy which is a hallmark of His nature, of His work, and of the work He calls us to.

Sometimes, and this may be such a time, the work we are called to is waiting...waiting **faithfully**. Waiting **confidently**. Waiting **with joy** that knows without doubt that *“no one who hopes in You will ever be put to shame.”* [Psalm 25:3] As a pastor told me long ago, and the Holy Spirit has brought to mind often, *“while we wait, God works.”* He is never idle, and **our waiting times are never outside of His sovereignty**. God has purpose in the waiting time, and that purpose is to learn through past, present, and future experience, that **authentic joy is only found in Him, and joy is His will for us**.

Have you ever had the experience of searching for something and not finding it...but, in the process, finding something else, of greater worth, instead? That kind of discovery is a gift, and the Giver of all **good gifts** is God. [James 1:7] Whenever we are engaged in a search of any kind and find that we have been led back to God, we have ended up where we need to be all along...connected to our



Hardworking juniors and seniors from Rockford Christian High School came to TBC for a community service work day in February.



Besides cleaning windows and doors, they also washed all the pews. Their service ministry is much appreciated!

Creator and Redeemer, the Lover of our souls, Who one day will invite us into His eternal presence. It’s one thing to know this. But it can be quite another to be so aware of our Lord so much that He is our first thought. That is a goal worth pursuing, a goal that He will help us with because it is always part of His perfect will for us.

What about when we know that we are in a process outside of our control, a process that seems to be at a standstill? There are few human experiences more frustrating than knowing we lack control in a situation that we don’t like. We may be certain that we are where we should be, that there has been a path before us and another ahead of us, but we are stymied, unable “to get off the dime”. It can be a helpless feeling, especially if we have been



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calling out to God and it seems that “nothing happens.”

Our enemy is very experienced at exploiting such situations to sow doubt and despair. Many of us can attest to this. Where does this leave us? One clue is to remember God's nature and how it compares to our defeated-but-still-active foe, the [father of lies](#) [John 8:44 NIV].

God's will for us is always for our good and His glory. It's safe to assume that Satan's efforts run directly opposite. Since the serpent approached Eve in Genesis 3:4, he has consistently lured us to doubt God, His nature, His commands, and His will for us. If the enemy's goal is our misery, we know our Father's will for us is joy.

However, we need never settle for logic to answer our struggles. Our loving God has gone to incomprehensible lengths to set forth and preserve His infallible Word to us. From Genesis to Revelation, the Holy Spirit assures us that God's will for us is joy.

Here are just a few examples:

*“Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great **joy**, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.”* [Nehemiah 8:12]

“In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” [Psalm 16:11]

And from the lips of Jesus:

“I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” [John 15:11]

Finally, we do well to make the “better thing” the priority of every day. As Jesus counseled Martha of Bethany, “[what is better](#)” [Luke 10: 42] will always be spending time with Him, the God of order

Who:

- holds all things together [Col. 1:17]
- can never be caught off guard
- is always prepared.

K.H.

Colossians 1: 15-20 -

15The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16**For in Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him.

17He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. **18**And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and firstborn from among the dead, so that in all things He may have preeminence. **19**For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, **20**and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through the blood of His cross.



Please know you can always submit prayer requests to the office and specify to whom you would like them to be forwarded: pastors, elders, the Prayer Team or all of the preceding:

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