Good morning everyone we have been having some problems getting on. We're saying that we're live we're just late, that's all. So we're gonna go ahead and get started. You can pass the word that we are streaming now and want to say hello to our church family, especially. I pray that all of you are well and safe this morning in the midst of all this chaos and and unsettledness. I miss you and I miss the fact that we are not able to meet together this morning. I also like to say welcome to anyone else who's not in our church family if you've tuned in. It's it's good to have you with us as well and you know this coronavirus epidemic is affecting all of us it has literally changed the way that we live that's why I am here and you're not you're at home and I do hope that wherever you're gathering that you're able to hear and be blessed today some have called this the new normal so many things have changed and it's going to last for a while who knows there maybe some aspects of all of this that will remain the main thing is we want to connect with you I want to share a message with you a message of hope and encouragement from God's Word and also believe it's interactive and correct me if I'm wrong but is there a chat box to the bottom right or somewhere on your screen and if you can find that as you're listening to the message or by the time the message is over if you would like to give a response or even ask a question or just make a statement of some kind that would be great and we will look at those and respond to those a lot of the things that have happened have brought uncertainty anxiety and fear and a lot of unsettledness I feel it too isolation routines have been stopped etc I thought it might be good for us to begin with psalm 46 god is our refuge and strength a very present help in trouble therefore we will not fear even though the earth be moved and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea though its waters roar and be troubled though the mountains shake with its swelling there is a river whose streams shall make glad the City of God the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High God is in the midst of her she shall not be moved God shall help her just at the break of dawn the nation's raged the kingdom's were moved he uttered his voice the earth melted the Lord of Hosts is with us the God of Jacob is our refuge let's pray father and God and heaven we thank you we thank you that your Almighty God you are in control you're strong we also thank you that you are a loving father to all of us you care about us you are not absent in this this virus pandemic but rather you are with us we ask you O God today that you would just give us insight and encouragement from your word and by your spirit so that wecan gain your perspective with hope and understanding so come and bless us as we share together and we ask this in Jesus name Amen years from now someone may ask us where were you during the corona virus pandemic indeed this is a historical event that is unlike anything we've ever seen it really is changing so much about our lives this storm has impacted also our economy and lots of people are uncertain about so many things I was watching or listening I should say to partials program the other day and she was interviewing a man named Sam storm who was a theologian and also the pastor of a church and he made this statement and I thought it captured very well what is going on he said it's like God pushed the pause button no sports to watch no bars to gather in for those who would know restaurants to dine in and for many people no job to go to I just want to share this morning my own personal journey and experience with all of this I admit that when I first heard about the early reports I wondered is this over or done are we hyping this up too much but I will say that as I took time to listen and to be come more aware and more informed I've come to realize the serious nature of this threat and so uh obviously as many of you have been we've been praying and I was praying and one of the things that came to my mind to pray is I heard so many voices calling for so many things I said to the Lord Lord it would be great if our president would call the nation to prayer or just ask for prayer something like that to show some humility because we really can't fix this on our own we really do need you and as you know on Saturday March 14th while I was driving in the car it came over the radio that he had called for a National Day of Prayer to take place the next day Sunday March 15th and I in my cart was so excited I I said Lord this is exactly what I asked for and maybe perhaps many other people have asked for as well and so my first thought was Lord answer these prayers of your people like you've done in the past and do something that only you can do put a stop to this virus this outbreak this pandemic well I shared some of that with the church on the 15th last Sunday and then on the 16th of March in my journal I wrote down these these thoughts that came to me I I thought about the fact that for the last several years the amount of prayer that has been going on in our nation from God's people has been enormous I continue to find website after website organization after organization ministry after ministry so much talk about prayer but also a lot of prayer going on and we know that's been happening right here in our own locality and in light of that I thought about the fact that God has answered our prayers I believe that in the year 2016 which was so pivotal I believe God intervened he he gave us a reprieve and we've been praying ever since then and now we're in another pivotal year of 2020 and so all of a sudden here comes this this virus this disease this threat and what are you doing Lord will you answer the prayers of your people and put a stop to this or is it somehow your will that we go through this and I I didn't know the answer to that I still don't know the answer to it but this is what we've been asking the Lord what are your intentions you know when we're going through stuff we need a word from God and I remember on that morning I was alone in the house and I put my Bible on the in the kit in the area where we eat and I took out a piece of paper or pad of paper and I laid it on the island in our kitchen and I would walk around I do that sometimes you say where are you going well mainly in a circle but I was praying and I'm talking to God and when he would speak something to me I'd come back and and jot it down I really believe that God can let us know what he's doing and he can give us the wisdom to know what he's trying to accomplish and how we should respond to everything that is going on so as I was praying about all of that needing a word from God the next morning March 17th I went to my time of prayer and I began my reading which for that day was in Luke chapter 8 and when I read Luke chapter 8 this is what happened Luke 8 talks about the time when Jesus calm a storm and I'm going to talk a little more about that in just a moment and while I was reading that account of how Jesus miraculously stopped a storm that was threatening the lives of his disciples the Lord brought to my mind another storm the one that the Apostle Paul had to go through in Acts chapter 27 in chapter 28 and I thought about how different they were in one a storm was stopped in its tracks in another the storm continued but God was involved in both of those so God stopped a storm but in acts 27 I think I could say this God used a storm and so I think of God God has something for us this morning from both of those texts of Scripture first of all Luke chapter 8 verse 22 we read now it happened on a certain day that he got into a boat that is Jesus with his disciples and he said to them let us cross over to the other side of the lake and they launched out but as they sailed he fell asleep and a windstorm came down on the lake and they were filling with water and were in jeopardy so here I am in that morning prayer and this is the scripture that's before I'm anything I'm thinking okay they are in jeopardy in this text just like we're in jeopardy today if he heightened my awareness that's for sure so I kept reading and they came to him and awoke him and said master master we are perishing as a matter of fact the Gospel of Mark says do you not care that we are perishing and Jesus arose and he rebuked the wind and the raging of the water and they ceased and there was a calm Wow God Jesus spoke to the storm and it immediately stopped it was a miracle but then he said to them where is your faith and they were afraid and marveled saying to one another who can this be for he commands even the winds and water and they obey Him so what can we take from this storm story well first of all I would say God knows everything and he's not caught off guard to illustrate that notice in the text that it was Jesus who said to the disciples let us cross over the other side of the lake the question is didn't he know the storm was going to come I believe he did and that raises a very interesting observation that even though he knew the storm was coming it was he who initiated this whole thing it was his idea that they cross over the lake well if he knew was going to happen then why did he allow it to happen well like many times I can't answer that conclusively but this is what came to my mind Jesus had something he wanted his disciples to learn about him something new that they had not seen before but I also believe that Jesus wanted them to find out something about themselves as well and isn't that the Christian light that everything that happens on one hand God is revealing himself to us and on the other hand he is also revealing to us more about ourselves and that is how we grow and that is how God changes our lives and makes us more of what he wants us to be so Jesus knew and here they go across the lake as a matter of fact he not only knew the Bible says he went to sleep a matter of fact the Gospel of Mark tells us he was asleep on a pillow what does that tell you he grabbed a pillow because he wanted to go to sleep so Jesus knowing the storm is coming decides to take a nap and yet we know he was at absolute peace he knew it was the Father's will that this happened you see so here's another principle that I share with you it's very obvious God will take us through storms God doesn't always stop storms sometimes he allows us to go through them Isaiah 43 and verse 2 says when you pass through the waters I will be with you and through the rivers they shall not overflow you when you walk through the fire you shall not be burned nor shall the flame sport you I emphasize the word through because God doesn't say here oh I will be with you and I will take you around the river or the storm I will take you over the fire no he says I'm going to be with you and I'm going to take you through these difficult times that come and we must understand that he is with us he did not say I will be with you and you will avoid these things you're going to go through them but I will be with you so we know that God knows everything he's with us always he's never caught off guard he knew all about this virus coming of course and somehow someway he's taking us through this for a purpose second thing that I pull from this passage is that God is all-powerful nothing is too hard for him the scripture again says he Jesus arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water and they ceased and there was a calm he stopped what was threatening them he could do that again I've been praying he would do something my wife and I pray this a lot that God would do something that only he can get credit for it as he would choose to do so a sudden drop one of the things that comes to my mind is how they've said it usually takes what two and a half years to get a vaccine all these statistics maybe God would give wisdom to us so that things will drop much quicker than we expected I don't know what God's going to do but here's what I do know nothing is too hard for him and Jesus taught his disciples that in this storm on the lake and finally I also realized that God is looking for faith What did he say to them when they were so rattled they said we're going to die and he said where is your faith why is it another gospel says why is it that you are so fearful for us as believers this is not a time for fear it's time for caution it's a time to be aware but it's not a time for panic it is not a time for fear Isaiah 41:10 fear not for I am with you don't be dismayed for I am your God other verses alike this say fear not I will help you I love this one another one in the psalm says fear not I will hold your hand how about that God invites us to take hold of his hand and I'm glad to know that we're not really hanging on to him he is hanging on to us there's an old song that was written years ago my dad used to sing it and it's called I will pilot thee and the lyrics go like this sometimes when my faith would falter and no sunlight I can see I just lift my eyes to Jesus and I whisper pilot me the chorus says fear thou not for I will be with thee I will still thy pilot be never mind the tossing billows take my hand and trust in me God loves you he loves us all he's asking us to take hold of his hand to trust him as he takes us through this very difficult time so that's what we take from the first storm now let's shift gears for just a minute and talk about the other storm that the Spirit of God brought to my mind that morning and that's the one that occurred in Acts chapter 27 this involves the Apostle Paul he has become a prisoner of Rome for preaching the gospel and he has appealed to Caesar so they're gonna take him from where he is all the way to Italy to stand before Caesar in the city of Rome and God has told him that he will make it there and so they set out and they come to a place where they should have stayed it's called fair havens as you read that account it was not a time that they should have kept going it was very dangerous but they were in a hurry and the place they were staying the Bible says wasn't the nicest and they said no let's press on but anyway so they took off and we read here what happened I'm reading from acts 27 verse 18 and because we were exceedingly tempest tossed so this storm came this northeastern storm came upon them we were exceedingly tempest tossed get the picture I mean it is bad and the boat is going up and down and you know what that means sickness and and all the things that go with being out on a lake or in the ocean or whatever and in a severe storm the next day they lighten the ship on the third day we through the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands now when neither Sun nor stars appeared for many days think about that this is a raging storm and no small tempest beat on us all hope that we would be saved was finally given up so just like the disciples on the lake everybody on this ship except maybe Paul said we're all we're gonna die we're not going to make it the next verse but after long abstinence from food and Paul stood in the midst of them and said man you should have listened to me and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss but now I urge you take heart for there will be no loss of life among you but only of the ship now how did Paul know that how is it that he could tell them that because he got a word from God and this is what we always need when we're going through times like this Paul goes on to say for there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve don't you believe that Paul had been praying the whole three days but he didn't give up praying I'm sure and then he got an answer and the Lord told him what was going to happen here's what the angel said do not be afraid there we go again don't be afraid Paul you must be brought before Caesar and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you therefore take heart men Paul says to them for I believe God that it would be just as it was told me so in the midst of this horrific storm as Paul was praying the word came from God that got him through and it has been my experience and it is my experience now that when I need to hear from God the most he always comes through a verse of scripture a song maybe something another believer says that encourages me God has so many ways of communicating with us by his word by his Spirit and through his people he is so faithful amen I can't hear you okay well thank you dear however he goes on to say oh and by the way when we go through stuff and we're praying for a word from God and he expresses and tells us what his intentions are it will always be to accomplish his good purpose I believe that God is able to bring good out of what we're going through I've heard so many others say the same thing it looks so awful not everything that happening is good but God is going to bring good out of it for us and yes perhaps even for our nation it's amazing to me how our president getting along with the Governor of California they're complementing one another and the mayor of New York and usually these two men would be political rivals or their ideologies would be vastly different but now they're coming together isn't it amazing how when we are in a situation like this what's really important comes to the top and so there are many many things that God can do in a time like this well indeed they did run aground on an island and we read about that in acts chapter 28 beginning at verse 1 so here they'd gotten through this storm by the way if you read all the text it lasted for about 14 days the storm the whole trip probably was about 17 days 14 days of this intense storm they kept throwing things off the ship they kept doing what they could to stay alive and to survive but God intervened and got them to safety and they did indeed crash or shipwreck on an island we pick up the reading in verse 1 of chapter 20 now when they had escaped they then found out that the island was called Malta they didn't even know where they were they were in a new place they'd never been before and the natives showed us unusual kindness for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold when they got on board this island all of the sailors all of the government officials the Centurion and the guards that were there to watch the prisoners I don't know if I mentioned that earlier Paul is a prisoner yes I did but he's on this boat with a bunch of other prisoners and they're all in a place they look around say where are we we've never been here before I believe that one of the things that God is telling us is he is going to bring us all to a new place as a matter of fact he already has a place we've never been before we've never seen anything like this therefore we must adjust to this normale we must adjust God has so ordained this thing that we now have adjustments that we must make and we are making it's difficult we don't like it but he's teaching us something as we learn to adjust we also must be willing to change in whatever ways are needed in order not just to survive but as believers so that we will be able to function and accomplish what God wants to accomplish through us at this time and I believe it's always a time for us to respond to God with repentance let me go back to my yellow piece of paper I did jot down a few things that I thought God may be up to first I thought God is getting our attention as a nation and we as the Church of Jesus Christ he's getting our attention that's pretty obvious another thing that I jotted down was this it seems that God is touching the area where many times our faith is in too much and that's money stock market has gone way down businesses have shut down this is unusual it is it's never happened this way and all of a sudden thoughts about businesses going bankrupt in the government with this huge amount of money they want to send everybody we're we're scrambling but Almighty God I believe has touched our dependency on money we need to think about that as the Church of God I remember back in the day when we were having our sacred assemblies and God was talking to us as we prayed and I remember saying this at one of those assemblies would it be okay with you would it be okay with us if God would allow an economic crash if that's what it took to bring revival not saying that's what he'll do but a would it be okay with us that is a very important question and we have to think about our need to repent of our over dependence on money another thing that came to my mind is this I believe that God is speaking to us about our over attention to brick and mortar that is our building how times has God spoken to us about getting outside the church and out into the community and many of us have started to do that now we can't even come to our building is it wrong to have a church building no but God seems to be in in this at this time taking that away from us as well but you know this is not the church I'm here at the building we call Cortland Trinity but this is not the church we are the church you and I are the Church of Jesus Christ and God has just done this to speak to us about this as well we are the church and we will survive and we will continue because God is with us and then there's a second thing that I see from this passage and that is God will reveal himself to us in new way so he's gonna take us to new places he already has who knows how that's gonna all filter out but he's also going to reveal himself in new ways notice what happened on the island of Malta when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire a Viper it's a snake came out because of the heat and fastened to his hand bit him what got him so when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand they said to one another no doubt this man is a murderer whom though he has escaped the sea yet justice does not allow him to live so Paul think about this 14 days in this horrific storm they're shipwrecked and they survive and then us which should have killed him but it's interesting to note just as the Islanders said it's what should have happened they've waited for him to sort of swell up and die but he didn't listen to what the Bible says he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm miracles unusual things that God can do those of us in our church family we've been talking about this all the things we see God doing we know it's him we know it's his hand and that's going to continue even more for years for years I had been praying for more of the Holy Spirit to manifest among us just as the Bible would tell us that he not only wants to but we'll do God will reveal himself in new and different ways it's interesting to note Paul had been shipwrecked before we read that in Corinthians but he had never been bitten by a poisonous snake my point is this God is going to show up in new ways and reveal himself to us in new ways and that includes this next point and that is this God will open to us new doors of opportunity new doors of opportunity let's keep reading it says in that region on this island there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island whose name was Publius who received us and entertained us courteously for three days and it says and it happened that the father of pube ulis lay sick of a fever and dysentery and so Paul went into him and prayed and he laid his hands on him and healed him so when this was done the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and they were healed they also honored us in many ways in when he departed they provided us such things as were necessary and it happened amazing here they are in this island what door opens well-to-do men on the island entertains them just so happens his father is sick very sick very ill just so happens the Apostle Paul lays hands on him prays for him and this man is healed that door opened on this island that Paul had never been to probably would have never made plans to go to but here he is and in this new place he had never been to before as God is revealing himself in new and powerful ways now this door opens up and I believe that God is going to do all of those things and open doors of opportunity he already is we're taking inventory of what we can do there are so many things that have happened that put so many people in a position where they need help we prayerfully want to respond to these opportunities and I want to ask this question what would Paul have ever ministered to these people had it not been for the storm is it not true that it was the storm watch this Paul was in this ship and they were headed to Italy they were headed to Rome that's where he needed to be and God sent a storm an awful storm and took him on a big detour and all the people with him and they ended up on the island of Malta and the Bible says they were there for three months before another ship came where they could be taken on their journey to Rome isn't it amazing listen to this isn't it amazing that God sent a storm that caused the ship on which Paul was a passenger to be shipwrecked so Publius and his family and the natives on the island of Malta could experience God could know God's great power and of God's great love that amazing and this is what God does as we as we understand that even in a storm God is directing and redirecting us and I know the Bible doesn't say that the people on the island but came to faith in Christ it doesn't say that but I have to believe that many of them did they saw the power of God they experienced that they they experienced the love of God and I'm sure Paul as he would shared with them about the things of God all because of a storm and when I think about all of this I am excited I can't wait to see what God is going to do next and that is our hope this morning that God is in control he is Almighty God and on one hand he could stop this virus in its tracks or bring it to a faster halt and I think we should pray for that but on the other hand he is allowing and may allow us to go further in a storm that he chooses not to stop but in both instances we see that he is with us that he is in control that he's looking for faith and he's gonna take us to new places and give us new opportunities we've never imagined before to be able to do ministry and share the gospel and show our community that same power of God and that same love of God all for their benefit and all for their salvation and all for their eternal betterment let's pray father thank you for your mercy your grace that you've extended to us this storm has us rattled in many ways the world around us who doesn't know you they're really rattled but God I pray that we could be alight at this time that we would take hope in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and that we would realize that you are bringing good out of this already in its go only going to get more so we will continue to pray we will continue to trust you and we will take hope and find great comfort and encouragement and the things you've told us this morning thank you for being our Almighty God and thank you for being our loving father in Jesus name we pray amen did we get any feedback any I think we did have a couple of things that were sent in early maybe sue if you wouldn't mind you can come up and where is the microphone so a couple of people I pulled a couple of things off of the internet and so just stand up here with me six feet apart okay okay this is from Betty Hostetler and this was from Friday God wasn't taken by surprise by this outbreak in fact he is removing the idols we Americans have set up and calling us back to him sports are gone work is gone school is gone plans are gone money is gone do you see what he's doing he's showing us that he is the true treasure all of those things can be gone in a heartbeat don't love them don't build your life around them he and he alone is worthy of our devotion trust and love don't miss the message that was copied from a post by a David Kibler about how appropriate and secondly this is from Sabrina on Friday Sabrina Baker scripture from Exodus 33 14 the Lord replied my presence will go with you and I will give you rest we live in a time where fear and uncertainty can be suffocating I truly believe that God is allowing this pandemic for a reason we live in such a fast-paced society that we barely even look up and acknowledge him what if we would slow down what if we took the time to pray and to focus on the beautiful relationship that Jesus died for what would our world look like if the church as one united body knelt down and prayed with pure and honest hearts after all 2nd Corinthians 7:14 says if my people who are called by my name would humble themselves and pray and seek my face then I will hear from heaven forgive their sin and heal their land we serve such a powerful mighty God can you even begin to imagine what he's working on amongst what we see as chaos times may be scary and chaotic right now but we can rest in the fact that God has us he has a beautiful plan and I'm beyond excited to see what he has in store so rest brothers and sisters and look up to the one who truly loves you alright well I don't know if anyone took advantage of what's called chat and all that we're all new at this we're learning and growing we don't know how long that this will continue that we will be doing church in this manner but no matter what we're glad that God is with us and we have this assurance that he will protect us he will comfort us he will encourage us and he will give us his his special direction by his word through his spirit and even through the body of Christ so be safe and trust in the Lord and let us remember that he is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we could ask or think according to the power that works in to him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus from generation to generation even forevermore amen have a great day everyone god bless English (auto-generated)