

The reading this morning is Psalm 16. The congregation will respond. Please respond with the words in bold letters. A victim of David preserve me, O God. For NU. Do I take refuge? As for the Saints in the land, they are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight. The sorrows of those who run after another. God shall multiply. The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup. You hold my lot. I bless the Lord who gives me counsel in the night. Also, my heart instructs me.

Therefore my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices my flesh also dwells secure. You make known to me the path of life at your right hand, our pleasures forevermore to the Son Holy Spirit. It was in the beginning is now never shall be world without end. Amen.

Please stand for the reading of the Gospel. A reading from the Gospel of Mark 13:14 through 23. The day is coming when you will see the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing where he should not be reader. Pay attention. Then those in Judea must flee to the Hills. A person out on the deck of a roof must not go down into the house to pack a person out in the field, must not return to even get a coat. How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for nursing mothers in those days.

And pray that your flight will not be in winter, for there will be greater anguish in those days than at any time since God created the world. And it will never be so great again. In fact, unless the Lord shortens at that time of calamity, not a single person will survive, but for the sake of His chosen ones. He has shortened those days. Then if anyone tells you, look, here is the Messiah or there he is. Don't believe it. For false Messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform signs and wonders so as to deceive.

If possible, even God's chosen ones. Watch out. I have warned you about this ahead of time. The word of the Lord.

Let me pray for you. Well, Heavenly Father, we lift up our young people today. We pray that they would never be deceived by lies in this world. But they would be granted the ability to see the truth. Lord teach them truth today through their leaders. Bless them, fill them and cause them to grow as our brothers and sisters in Christ in Jesus name. Amen. All right, you guys. You're heading off that way for kids alive. All right. Would you all pray with me now, father, we thank you for this day.

We thank you for showing us your glory. We ask that more glory would be revealed. Lord, as your word is opened among us as it's proclaimed, preached, taught. Let your Holy Spirit be the one doing the teaching, though it's my lips that are moving. Let it be our hearts that are hearing you let us walk away from this place. Nourished strengthened and more equipped to do the works that you have given us to do through Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen all right.

Is that Tom and Piping in? I love it. That's good, healthy set of lungs there. If you don't mind, I'm going to wear my hat. Just being in the sun like this is pretty strong here. So on October 30, 1019 and 38, mass hysteria broke out in the United States of America. People poured out into the streets, fleeing for their lives. Churches filled as people sought sanctuary and safety in numbers and prayer. Men grabbed their guns and formed impromptu vigilante squads. Some pregnant women went into early labor.

Some people filled with terror took their own lives. A woman broke into a Church gathering and cried out, New York has been destroyed. I believe this is the end of the world. You might as well all go home and die. Maybe by now some of you have guessed what happened on that date, especially if you've read the book that's recently come Out Live. No Lies. In its opening chapters. It details the events of October 30 when a young actor director named Orson Wells took to the radio waves for the new Mercury Theater radio Show.

That show was a distant second in popularity to another that featured a 15 minutes comedy sketch intro before breaking into a commercial. And I guess people back then are a lot like us. When a commercial comes on, they did what we do. They channeled surf. And so as they channeled surf, they came across this broadcast what sounded like a very real sounding report of an alien invasion, which many people took to be an invasion by Germany with some crazy new advanced weaponry. What was

it that made America so ready to believe a lie, which actually wasn't a lie?

It was a fiction, and they told everybody so at the beginning of the program. But of course, many people did not tune in until after the program had started. Well, John Mark Comer in his book *Live No Lies* explains the late 1930s was a tumultuous time in America. Not only did many scientists speculate that there was alien life on Mars, but closer to home, people were living in a fever pitch of anxiety. America was on the verge of war with Germany. The economy was still in recovery from the Great Depression.

Food scarcity was a real and growing threat. Weeks before those living in the Northeast had endured the great New England Hurricane of 1938, which left over 700 people dead and 63,000 people homeless. Add to that the mix that it was after dark on the night before Halloween. And you've got an emotional Tinder box waiting for a spark in our country. Today, we're experiencing a greater amount of natural devastation. Forest fires, Hurricanes, floods, pandemic. We've had riots in cities. We've had the storming of our nation's capital.

Inflation is a very real threat. Division exists in our country over just about every issue imaginable, can you name an issue? Right. We'll figure out a way to divide over it. An emotional tinderbox waiting for a spark. This passage that we read today, Mark, chapter three, is often called the Little Apocalypse, because in it, Jesus sees into the future an emotional Tinder box waiting for a spark. He says the spark is going to be lit. It's called the Little Apocalypse because compared to the Book of Daniel or the Book of Revelation, which are larger pieces of apocalyptic literature in the Scriptures, this is a very little one, but it's a very potent one.

The whole of this passage deals with the near future in Jesus time, but also very likely the distant future of our time. And the context is really the tail end of Jesus teaching in the temple. In Mark, Mark has had Jesus telling people about the Kingdom of God and the values of the Kingdom of God and what it's like to be a disciple and a follower of Jesus. But here he turns a corner in a very interesting situation. The last thing he taught the disciples, if you were here last week, you heard it.

He said, Come here, come here. I want you to see something. Do you see that widow over there? Little widow had just put in two small coins into the temple treasury. And he said, Everybody else has been giving out of their abundance. But she out of her poverty, gave in everything. All she had to live on. This is what I want you to take note of. The disciples are very much like us, aren't they? Yeah, Jesus. They take note for only a moment. And the very next thing, if you want to look in Mark chapter 13, the very next thing they say.

As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, look, teacher, what massive stones, what magnificent buildings, full of nationalistic pride, full of awe. At the wonder of the works of King Herod, who had commissioned this building and had been working on it for years and years. They don't get it. Jesus had just been telling them, I'm telling you, look at the faith of this woman who's putting everything on the Lord. And instead, what are they looking at? What our eyes always tend to look at, what's big and what's impressive.

And Jesus is trying to warn them. If that's where your eyes are, when those big, impressive things come down, you will be vulnerable. You see, turmoil is the natural state of a world in rebellion to God. He might as well stand among us today and say, America is going to be dismantled stone by stone. That's what he tells them. Do you see all these great buildings, not 1 St here will be left on another. Everyone will be thrown down. If Jesus was standing here and said to us, America is going to be dismantled.

America, as you know it will no longer exist. What would we do? Well, Peter, James, John and Andrew come to Jesus privately and they say, Tell us verse four, tell us, when will these things happen? What will be the sign that they are about to be fulfilled? They want to know the details. They want to know the when. Like, how is this going to happen? They want to know the externals. But Jesus always points us to the internals, doesn't he? He says, Watch out. Watch out, then.

No one deceives you. Many will come in my name claiming I am here and will deceive many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. America is going to be dismantled. Can you imagine Jesus saying that and then saying goes, but do not be alarmed. Do not be alarmed. How do you get there? How do you get to a place where you read the news? You hear the reports, you see the conflict and you're not alarmed you're as stable as can be.

That's what Jesus is looking for and trying to build in us. Such things must happen. Turmoil is the natural state of a world and rebellion to God. Such things must happen. But the end is still to come. Turmoil is not even a sign of the end. Oh, my gosh. You see what the Chinese are doing? The apocalypse is near. Oh, my gracious. You hear what those tech Giants are saying? The end must be near. Jesus says such things must happen, but the end is still to come.

They're not in control of the end. God is. Do not be alarmed. Such things must happen. Nation will rise against nation and Kingdom against Kingdom. Oh, my gosh. There's the Nazis. This must be the end of the world. No, he said it was going to happen. Nations rise against nation, Kingdom against Kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains. Jesus wants to build a stability in us that looks at all the turmoil of the world and actually sees the birth of the Kingdom of God coming forth out of it.

Paul said as much in Romans chapter Eight as he was encouraging the Romans and saying, I consider our presence. Sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. He's saying, is that your longing, or are your eyes on the world? Are you desiring the very life of God to be within you, within your family and your work and everything you do? Or are you alarmed? The whole creation, Paul writes, has been groaning, as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Creation itself is reacting against the sinfulness and fallenness of humanity. Not only so, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, to daughtership, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. You see what Jesus wants us to understand? What Paul wants us to understand. What the Holy Spirit, speaking through the prophets, wants us to understand is that inwards suffering acts as a stabilizing force for external turmoil so Jesus can save us in this world.

You will have many troubles, but they're not. I have overcome the world. What are the troubles you're going through right now? Some of you sitting here, probably they're great. Some of you are going through troubles. You scarcely know that you can share them with others, although we can and we should for call to carry each other's burdens. But whatever troubles you're going through, Jesus is standing in the midst to say, don't be alarmed. Fear not. I have overcome the world. William Faulkner, I think, was on to something again.

This comes from the book Live No Lies, quotes him, saying, It's hard believing, but disaster seems to be good for people. What I imagine is that William Faulkner looked around in times of trouble and saw people of faith who, instead of caving, put their faith even deeper into God and maintained a steady head and a steady heart through times of trouble. Who took this teaching of Jesus into their very souls, who realized that suffering internal suffering is a stabilizing force against the turmoil of this world.

But does God want us to suffer? Does he really want us to suffer? I imagine that's a question that comes to us. But if we take this passage, I would say the answer to that is now, because if you look in verse 14, Jesus says, when you see the abomination that causes desolation, standing where it does not belong. And then Mark throws in, let the reader understand. Then let those homes flee to the mountains. And he goes on to tell them how they should escape, that Jesus had no desire to see people go through physical suffering, a suffering that he foresaw when he walked into the city of Jerusalem and cried out, as it's recorded in Matthew, I think 23 and Luke, chapter 19 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who stole the prophets.

However, I've longed to gather you as a mother hand, gathers her chicks under her wings, but she would not come. And in Luke, he says, if you only knew what would bring you peace. See, Jesus knew

that if Jerusalem had received him, had put all their faith in Him, they would have given up looking for a political Messiah to fix everything. But they never gave that up. And so Jesus, seeing into the future, saw a political Messiah rising, who led the people of Israel against the Romans and actually expelled the Romans in 66 Ad.

They were actually kicked out of Jerusalem for a time. But they reorganized and amassed and under the leadership of the general Titus, they laid siege to Jocelyn. They allowed people during that siege to come in for the festival of Passover, but they never allowed them out again. And for four years people were inside of Jerusalem under siege until eventually they built up the ramp works, and they set fire to the city. And they destroyed the temple and fulfilled Jesus words to the letter not 1 St was left on another.

Jesus wanted them to avoid that. And in the same way in our lives, he comes to us with His word, teaching us about how to live our lives. How do we love one another? How would it carry out our marriages? How would raise our families? How are they interact with culture all around us? And we ignore it to our peril, to our desolation. Jesus doesn't want that every word of Jesus is true, and it's for our good. Everything that the Word of God has to say about human identity, human sexuality, human politics, human discourse, human flourishing is true, and we ignore it in our peril.

So Jesus wants us to avoid physical, emotional, mental suffering and rather that our suffering would be the suffering he underwent. Suffering for the sake of others, the suffering for a longing for the Kingdom to come in the midst of a broken world, a desire to see the Gospel spread out throughout the world. And here's what you need to know. There's a key verse in here. He's giving all his warnings in verse 16 and 17. And he says, Pray that this flight will not take place in winter because the streams are swollen then, and your escape routes would be cut off because those days will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world until now and never to be equalled again.

And perhaps he's using hyperbole there when you think of the Holocaust, and you think of all these other horrible things that have happened in our world, I would say they equal those things, but maybe they don't. All I know is Jesus is warning people. And then he says this, if the Lord had not cut short this day, no one would survive. If he had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, hear that for the sake of the elect, that is you who knew before the foundation of the world, whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life before one of your days came to be you, whom he knew in your mother's womb.

But for the sake of the elect whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. That's a word we got to get into our hearts, folks, but for the sake of Kate. But for the sake of Daryl. But for the sake of Joe, it's the word we need to get into our hearts when we're facing the troubles and turmoils of this world. And when we get alarmed to look up to Jesus, who for our sake for the sake of the elect, died upon the cross, was dead and was buried.

Experienced the calamity. The desolation cried out, My father, why have you forsaken me, who's desolate so that we will be fulfilled? He went through the turmoil so that we would be stable so that we look at him. And we know that in the midst of this world, when the troubles come and we feel the alarms start to rise, we say, Wait a minute, wait a minute. Where's my faith? When somebody comes to us telling us something that is almost too fantastic and horrible to believe. And the alarm starts to rise.

Maybe it's true. I don't know. But either way, God's got it right. Another example from that book, this blew me away. This is how people use fear in each other's lives. There was a rally in Texas saying, Stop the Islamisation of Texas. And then there was a counterprotest to that rally that said, Protect Islamic truth. And the whole rally, both sides was organized on Facebook. Do you know who was organized by Russians? Some Russians sitting at a desk somewhere, decided to stir up a little trouble in Texas by preying on people's fears.

But not so with you. Do not be alarmed. Jesus said, So when people come to prey on your fears, let that be the sign to you to turn your eyes towards Jesus, the author and Perfector of our faith, our

stability. So we sang at the beginning a song about we've gathered in his name. We've waited for this day. That Sunday is a day that recenters us on Christ to go out into a world that wants us to believe, lies all around and to go out completely stable and secure in his love for us.

That's what gathering the worship is all about. That's what the Lord is accomplishing in and through his people, even right now, as he's here in our midst. So, Lord Jesus, we ask that stability would come to us. We ask that we would not be alarmed. But as you have said, you've told us everything. And your words are true. That you are all we need in the face of these days. So strengthen us. Let us be a stabilizing force for the world around us. Let us draw people towards your greatest.

A glorious name. It's in that name that we pray. Amen. Amen.