

The 72—Equipping for Kingdom Believers and Leaders
 Today's Topic: Faithfulness
 February 15th, 2022

1 The Need

- On every side there is disruption!
- A Few Statistics
 - During the pandemic 1/3 of the practicing Christians disengaged from their congregations.
 - More than 4000 churches closed in America in 2020.
 - Over 20,000 pastors left the ministry in 2020.
 - 50% of current pastors say they would leave the ministry if they had another way of making a living.
- Reactionary living is becoming normal.
- So, how do we counter reactionary living to the chaos and disruptions?
- Be awake and be alert!
 - **Matthew 24:33 (CSB) — 33** In the same way, when you see all these things, recognize that he is near—at the door.
 - **Mark 13:33 (ESV) — 33** Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.
 - **Matthew 26:40–41 (ESV) — 40** And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? **41** Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
 - **Luke 21:34–36 (CSB) — 34** "Be on your guard, so that your minds are not dulled from carousing, drunkenness, and worries of life, or that day will come on you unexpectedly **35** like a trap. For it will come on all who live on the face of the whole earth. **36** But be alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place and to stand before the Son of Man."
 - **1 Peter 5:8 (ESV) — 8** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
 - **Ephesians 6:12–13 (NIV) — 12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **13** Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

2 “Teach them to pray and never give-up.”

- **Luke 18:1 (CSB) — 1** Now he told them a parable on the need for them to pray always and not give up.
- The enemy believes that if he can keep up the attacks in our life, then we might back off of believing God through prayer.
- **Acts 14:21–22 (CSB) — 21** After they had preached the gospel in that town and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch, **22** strengthening the disciples by encouraging them to continue in the faith and by telling them, “It is necessary to go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.”
 - Paul describes for the church a dimension of spiritual warfare we all face.
- Prayer engages life and produces life.

3 “The Church is going through a humbling.”

- **Hebrews 12:26–29 (CSB) — 26** His voice shook the earth at that time, but now he has promised, Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens. **27** This expression, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what is not shaken might remain. **28** Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe, **29** for our God is a consuming fire.
- Humility is learned through the turmoil of life more than a book.
- Heat and Pressure are necessary.
- Embrace your humbling.
 - See who God is and what He is doing.
 - See who you are becoming.
 - See who is being influenced by the love of God that’s growing in you.

4 To cease believing is a slow death.

- I have seen a life that believes God and a life that does not.
 - At the end of the day, there is only one hope—it's to believe Jesus!
- **Matthew 21:21–22 (CSB)** — 21 Jesus answered them, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you tell this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done. 22 And if you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."
- Jesus is not talking about doing extraordinary and supernatural things that would be obviously outside His will.
- "Mountains" automatically create a reaction within us:
 - **Spiritual Withdrawal**—isolating ourselves in fear.
 - **Spiritual Amnesia**—forgetting how to be with Jesus and how to walk with Jesus toward victory and fulfilling our purpose/assignment/calling.
 - **Spiritual Abuse**—seeing others as a threat and responding in self-righteous anger.
 - **Spiritual Warfare**—prayerfully and strategically moving into our purpose, while also loving others into their purpose.

5 How do you get back the territory that's stolen?

- **Matthew 16:21–23 (ESV)** — 21 From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. 22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." 23 But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."
- Jesus responds with FAITHFULNESS.
 - Being true to the Father—keeping in mind the things of God.
 - Being true to who you are and your purpose—keeping in mind that I'm living out a called life.

