

Here Is a Fresh Word From the Lord To Help You Get Through These Difficult Times – Bob Cole, Montana, USA

On my last trip to Europe it started out great. I arrived in Frankfurt on Friday, February 28th. I stayed overnight in a hotel and drove 4 hours to Dessau the next day. For the next 15 days everything seemed normal, but I could tell that slowly things were changing. I had church meetings in Dessau, Weimar, Konigswald, Kitzingen and Frielendorf, Germany. I also was able to visit a couple pastor/friends and their wives.

Slowly at the beginning of my trip things began to change. The Auto Show in Geneva, Switzerland was cancelled just days before it was to take place March 5th-15th. It gathers more than 700,000 visitors from around the world. I have been to the show twice. Also a Watch Exhibition in Switzerland and a New Inventions Exhibition were cancelled. The Book Exhibition in Leipzig, Germany was cancelled, as well as other exhibitions in Germany and France that were scheduled for March.

The world as I knew it began to change rapidly on March 16th. I was supposed to drive to France on March 16th. I was supposed to drive to Switzerland on March 17th. On March 16th the borders to France, Switzerland, Germany and other European countries suddenly were closed. That meant I was no longer free to travel from one country to the next. The good thing is that I was in Germany where I would fly home from. When things changed I drove to Kranichfeld, Germany to stay with my friends to figure out what to do.

From March 16th – March 21st everything began to close. The churches began closing. In the next 2 days the 4 pastors whose churches I was scheduled to preach in had to cancel the meetings. The possibility of them not being able to have meetings was new for them also.

In Germany the hotels, shops, restaurants, pools, fitness centers, schools, universities, and some work places, etc. all closed down this week one by one. This was my experience. I believe your experience was similar.

I was able to change my plane ticket and leave for the US on Sunday, March 22nd. It took 5 flights, but I was so blessed to be home on Monday, March 23rd. I want to thank everyone who was praying with Lorraine and me that I would get back home.

Never could I have imagined 95% of the flights being cancelled in Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Atlanta, Chicago and the airports and cities being like Ghost Towns.

I arrived at the Chicago O'Hare Airport from Atlanta on Sunday Night at midnight. I stayed overnight in the airport until 8:00am when my plane left for Salt Lake City, Utah. It was one of the longest nights of my life. A few planes took off Monday morning from Chicago before my flight. I was shocked to see when it was time to board the planes there were not many passengers on these big planes. The flight to Minneapolis had 12 passengers, New York 13, Seattle 19, and Salt Lake City 19.

- I never thought in my lifetime that I would have to be in self-quarantine in my own house for 14 days. I know for other people in different countries it was much longer.
- It is amazing how many people are wearing masks and gloves now everywhere.
- I see people with vests that say "sanitation team" wiping down everything in sight.
- I never thought I would see so many stores out of toilet paper, hand sanitizer, rice, beans and soup.
- I never thought I would not be able to greet people with a kiss, handshake or hug, depending on the country or culture.
- I never thought as I walked by people and looked at them, the thought would go through my mind "are you a carrier of COVID-19."
- I never thought the day would come that I would not have the possibility of going to church on Easter Sunday.
- I never thought my church meetings that had been planned for months would be cancelled weeks in advance because of social distancing, mandatory quarantine and travel restrictions.
- I never thought the day would come when I would not be able to swim with my wife, eat at our favorite restaurant and see a movie at the cinema.
- It is amazing that the price of gasoline is the lowest in years, yet the tourist places are all closed.
- I never thought I would see so many people at one time from around the world getting sick, and some people are dying as the numbers are changing daily.
- I never thought there could be so much instability in the world.
- It is amazing how many children and adults are having to do their schooling online.
- It is amazing how many sporting events have been cancelled around the world.
- I never thought my friends from Germany would have to cancel their trip to visit Lorraine and I during the Easter holidays because they are not even allowed to enter the US.
- I never thought that the news media could create a pandemic of fear worldwide that is almost worse than the Corona Virus. You would think that half of the people in the world have COVID-19 and the other half are standing in line to get it.

In 1918 there was the Spanish Flu. The virus infected 500 million people worldwide. It killed 20-100 million people worldwide, depending on which source you want to believe. 675,000 people lost their lives in America.

With the exception of death, taxes and problems, nothing is forever. At this time everything that can be shaken is being shaken. Every day we hear about the Corona Virus or COVID-19. We are living in unprecedented times. There is the uncertainty of politics, politicians, finances, the economy, businesses, sports, education, healthcare, travel, the future and life in general as we have known it. I have never seen so many people discouraged, depressed, hopeless and fearful.

That is the bad news. Now I want to share with you the good news! The first thing that I want to do is to free you from the responsibility of having to solve all the problems going on in the world today.

As Christians what should we do?

I believe that I have a fresh word from the Lord to help you get through this time that we are living in now.

This week the Lord led me to Philippians 4:11 where Paul says, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Over the years Paul found himself in many difficult situations. Read 2 Corinthians 11:21-28. He learned (which means he didn't always know) how to be content. His circumstances changed all the time, but he was able to be content.

We are now going to look at what Paul had to say in the book of Philippians chapters 1,2,3 and 4. I would encourage you to get out your bible and turn to the book of Philippians as we go through this teaching together.

Paul did not say at the beginning of Philippians chapter 1, I have learned to be content. He said it in the middle of the last chapter. Let us look closely at some things that he said earlier so that we have some understanding as to why he could say with certainty, "I have learned to be content."

1. In Phil. 1:2 - Paul says "grace be unto you." What is grace? It is supernatural divine enablement! It is God's supernatural power flowing into your life to give you the strength spiritually and emotionally to face each day and go forward. Ask God daily for an impartation of His grace and receive it by faith.
2. Phil. 1:3 - "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." Give God thanks for the people that He has brought into your life such as family, friends, neighbors, etc. Also know who belongs in your future and know who belongs in your past. When God wants to bless you, He brings people into your life. When God wants to protect you he removes people from your life.
3. Phil. 1:4 - "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." Pray for people joyfully. There is a big difference between praying for people and praying with joy. This includes everyone, even your enemies.
4. Phil. 1:6 - Be confident that the Lord will complete the good work that He has started in your life.
5. Phil. 1:9-11 – Continue to grow in love and have excellent character.
6. Phil. 1:14 – Be bold to speak God's word without fear. Be a voice, not an echo! To speak God's word means you have to know God's word. Continue to spend some time daily reading the bible.
7. Phil. 1:21-23 – Be free from the fear of death. Paul says, "if I was only thinking of myself, it's better to depart and be with Christ." To die is gain. But for you it's better that I stay and help you with your spiritual progress." In Hebrews 2:15 the word says, "God has delivered us from the fear of death." This is one of the biggest fears people in the world have. They do not even want to think or talk about it. For us as Christians, it is something to look forward to. Being with Jesus and in heaven is something to look forward to.
8. Phil. 2:3-11 – We learn from Jesus Christ to be a humble servant. In Philippians 1:1 – Paul refers to himself as a servant of Jesus Christ. We want to be humble, and not have an exaggerated opinion of ourselves. The way that we get to great in the kingdom of God is to be a servant of all. Acts 20:35 says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."
9. Phil. 2:16 says – "Holding forth the "word of life." Remember, there is life in the Word of God. Matt. 4:4 says - "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."
10. Phil. 3:10 says – "That I may know him." In this crisis you have the opportunity to get to know the Lord in a better way than ever before. Worship Him as Jehovah Shalom the Lord your peace.

Jehovah Jireh the Lord your provider. El-Shaddai the Almighty God, the miracle working God, the God that can do what you cannot do. The God who is more than enough, etc.

11. Phil. 3:10 – “and the power of his resurrection.” We can think that we have to die and then we can experience God’s resurrection power. The truth is sometimes our hopes, emotions, faith, visions, dreams can seemly die, but after death comes resurrection. Let God resurrect your hopes, emotions, faith, visions, dreams, etc.

12. Phil. 3:12-14 – translates “to pursuit God’s purpose, plan and will for your life with passion.” Stay focused on God’s calling for you.

13. Phil. 4:4 – says, “To rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say rejoice.” Make it a habit to rejoice in the Lord. To rejoice is a choice. Remember, at this time Paul is in prison, in a terrible environment, writing to people outside of prison telling them to rejoice. Did he do this? Read Acts 16:25.

14. Phil. 4:6 – translates, do not worry about anything, but pray about it. God wants to be involved in all the details of your life, including the small, medium, large, x-large and the xxx-large details. Pray and afterwards give God thanks for everything.

15. Phil. 4:7 – after you have prayed, receive God’s peace. Phil. 4:8 – Think about things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of a good report. Think about good things, not bad things, good news, not bad news.

16. Phil. 4:12 “Be thankful for what you have, instead of complaining about what you do not have.” 1 Timothy 6:8 says, “And having food and clothes let us be therewith content.” If you take China, India, Africa and South America, 2 billion people in the world make \$2.00 a day or less. Try to convince these people how bad your life is.

17. Phil. 4:13 – Jesus Christ will give you the strength to do all things.

18. Phil. 4:15 says, “no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only.” Continue to be a giver with the things you have, such as your time, encouragement, service, finances, etc.

19. Phil. 4:19 – Believe for the Lord to continue to meet all of your needs. There is not a shortage in heaven!

20. Phil. 4:20 says, “Now unto God and our Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Continue to give God the glory He is so worthy of. I believe that if you will continue to do these things, you will continue to have the victory in this difficult time we are living in. You will be able to be content and be salt and light in the earth. Continue to trust in the Lord at all times. Remember His love for you, His goodness and faithfulness.

I want to thank you for reading this article. I pray it has been a blessing to you. I know I gave you 20 points to think about. I encourage you to take the point that spoke to you the most and integrate it into your life, then you can move on to the other points. We will get through this together!