

Shalom, Greetings in our Risen Lord!

Only in Nebraska can we go from one-day frost advisory, to almost 100 degrees. A drought to flood, from calm to 80 mph winds, and every other type of weather in between. The old adage if you don't like the weather wait 5 minutes couldn't be any truer.

Besides the external weather being totally off its rocker, I know for many in our congregations and beyond their lives feel the same way. Out of control, out of sync, and a barrage of everything in between. The sleepless nights and worried moments spent on waiting for a Doctor's call or diagnosis, the countless trips to specialists hoping that maybe just one will have an answer, the hours waiting in a hospital or nursing home while a loved one recovers, the looming idea of surgery or nerve wracking procedure. The thoughts of will things get back to normal, or is this the "new normal", prevail on so many minds.

Couple in the eternal worries, anxieties and fears. How much worse will things get overseas? How much longer will we be burdened with the skyrocketing fuel, how high with the interest rates go that could affect purchasing a home, vehicle or loan. Why is everything in the news horrible. People are feeling the disturbance in the force.

For those that know me, I have been blessed and cursed with the gift to see and understand the spiritual realm. It's not for the faint of heart, but even though I have seen the powers and principalities moving and scheming it has surprised me the number of people that "feel it too" and they don't understand. The veil between realms is becoming very thin. I say this now as many have come and talked to me about the unrest, the uncertainty, the disturbance that they can not name or claim. Maybe this is speaking to you as well. My encouragement to you is to take heart.

Paul talked about this quite a bit in his letters. He said we should never be comfortable in our bodies as they are just a temporary tent. This is not our home, our bodies are of this world but your spirits belong to God and we will one day soon exchange the earthly perishable for the heavenly unperishable. Jesus told his disciple that in those days it will be like birth pains. For anyone who has ever been pregnant and experienced bringing life into the world you look at these words differently.

It's not just about the pain, suffering or groaning. There are moments before where the fight or flight feeling kicks in. You want to crawl out of your skin and just get away. I have been feeling this for quite a while now, and I know I am not alone.

When the disciples pressed Jesus about these things he said you will have trouble, you will have persecution, but take heart for I have overcome this world. And as Christians, born again believers we are victorious in and through him and his resurrection.

Many have come questioning, looking at signs, trying to read the signals and I see the parallel with what is going on in many lives of uncertainty right now. Not so much a lack of, but no patience at all. We live in a time when we can get anything we want quickly, with a press of a button, a phone call, an email or a text. We have We have overnight delivery, 2 day Amazon, instant communication, 24 hour news, speedy checkout, door dash for the food you want now.

This has made waiting a lost art. Patience? What is that? So when we are thrust into these circumstances of life where we are forced to wait, to wonder, to painstakingly sit by the phone for answers, we don't know how to handle being patient.

I can not imagine what it would be like to face these times of the unknown without God, without that close relationship to rely on his ways and timing even when they do not fit mine. Jesus said in Philippians 4:6 "Be **anxious** for nothing, but in prayer bring your prayer requests to God".

We may have prayed for patience, or to be freed from being a control freak, or for God to take away the anxiety, or fear, or anger, or guilt or depression; whatever it is that has had you by the throat and heart. Jesus will, but it doesn't show up express mail with a bow, he gives us opportunities to learn those traits. And in the process while you are earnestly asking and seeking maybe patience, through the trials you will also learn Trust, reliance, security, humility, grace, and hopefully a much deeper connection to God.

And with those gifts you will also receive Phil. 4:7 Then he will give you the PEACE that passes all understanding. Jesus says Peace I give, not as the world gives, let not your hearts be troubled neither let them be afraid.

My prayer to each and every one of you reading this, if you are in a tumultuous season. That God will give you His Peace that does pass all understanding as you learn to patiently wait for his answer.

Pastor Penny