

Theme: Like the exile, our current time of disruption should be used as a divinely appointed season to reset our priorities and practices, redeeming the quarantine to make beneficial changes to our lives.

## I. Intro - A Time of Disruption - And a Chance for A 'Reset'

- A. We are in a time of severe disruption in the world
- B. Last week we saw how the experience of the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile offered a chance to turn to God and find hope.
- C. Today: reset - redeeming the quarantine (text)

## II. God's Pattern for "Resets"

- A. God instituted a regular pattern for new beginnings
  - 1. A daily pattern for new beginnings

God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning — the first day. Genesis 1:5

    - a. God structured time into day and night
    - b. The whole creation story follows this structure
    - c. God does not have time flow endlessly through our lives with no distinction but gives us a fresh start each new day

Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. <sup>23</sup> They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22–23

    - a. God gives new mercies with each new morning
    - b. We can not live off of yesterday's mercies; we must draw them fresh with each new day.

- 2. God instituted a pattern of says, seasons, and years

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. Genesis 1:14–15

- a. Time does not flow endlessly without distinction but is structured by days, season, and years
- b. God's people in the OT structured their individual, family, national, and religious life around this divinely given structure of days, seasons, years.
- c. We often forget this due to technology today, but this is unhealthy and does not negate the God-given pattern

- 3. God instituted a pattern of Sabbath's

- a. There were Sabbath's every week, during festivals, and every 7th year. These were to be times of rest, reflection, and worship - a regular reset for God's people.
- b. There was also the special Sabbath of Jubilee every 50th year, a major 'reset' when property was returned, slaves freed, debts forgiven.

- 4. From creation God has given days, weeks, seasons, and years as a time of 'reset' for people to rest, reflect, repent, and be restored to His purposes.

- B. A major 'reset' - the exile

The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the Lord will drive you. Deuteronomy 4:27

1. Moses is warning the people that their sin would lead them into exile - a major reset in their national life.
2. This would be a very trying time for the people as life as they had known it was utterly disrupted.
3. Two possible reactions

There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell.

<sup>29</sup>But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>30</sup> When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the Lord your God and obey him. Deuteronomy 4:28–30

- a. They might entrench the very patterns that had caused the exile in the first place - idolatry (v28).
- b. Such a response would be an utter waste of any good that might come from the difficult experience of the exile.
- c. They could use the time to turn to God with fresh urgency, seeking Him with their whole heart and soul.
- d. Such a response would 'redeem the time' and thus allow the difficult experience of the exile to have a beneficial effect.

4. The basis: our merciful, covenant God

For the Lord your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your forefathers, which he confirmed to them by oath. Deuteronomy 4:31

- a. The people needed to remember in this difficult time that they were not forgotten or abandoned by God.

- b. Because God is the merciful, faithful God who remembers and keeps His covenant of grace, His people can have hope even in the darkest times.

- c. This is so foundational that Jeremiah repeated it to the exiles in Lamentations 3 and Jeremiah 29

5. Redeeming the Time: Historical Examples

- a. Paul - wrote much of the NT while in prison
- b. John Bunyan - wrote Pilgrims Progress in jail
- c. Isaac Newton - created calculus and discovered gravity while in quarantine

### III. Reset - Redeeming the Quarantine

- A. We are in a time of 'reset' - our quarantine

1. This is not the exile, but it is a time of 'reset'
2. All of us are experiencing significant disruption in our lives, and it is likely to continue for some time
3. We are confronted with the same options that confronted the exiles: try to muddle through it (continuing our old patterns), or redeeming the quarantine by establishing or reinforcing healthy habits that will enable us to experience God's design and desire for us.
4. Some are simply trying to muddle through this difficult time with little to no reflection or change.
  - a. Abortion is being touted an 'essential' service, and many are seeking them even during stay in place orders.
  - b. Gamblers - gambling on the weather since there are no sports! No reflection as to whether they should change their patterns of behavior. Vegas executives said this would help people get through this time!

- c. College students went on spring break drinking heavily and partying - and some now have coronavirus! (<https://www.nbc4i.com/nmw-coronavirus/college-students-in-florida-test-positive-for-coronavirus-after-spring-break-trip/>)
- d. European Union contemplating asking Netflix to slow down because so many people are watching Netflix it is overwhelming the web
- e. These are all examples of continuing in destructive behavior (modern idolatry) or simply trying to muddle through this time. This is a waste of what God desires to do during this time of 'exile' for us.

## B. Redeeming the quarantine

### 1. Come to Jesus for salvation!

- a. If you have never thought much about it before, or never consciously looked to Christ for salvation - today is your day!
- b. If this season has sobered you to your own mortality - look to Jesus Who gives eternal life!

### 2. Establish/renew daily time with Jesus in Scripture and prayer

- a. You were made for daily time with God, meditating on His Word and talking with Him in prayer.
- b. Without this, you will not find the inner strength to flourish during this time and will simply try to muddle through.
- c. We need to be praying for our city, state, nation, and the world!
- d. Life often crowds this out - use this as a time to reset and establish or renew this vital practice.

### 3. Ask the Spirit to reveal and remove sin

- a. God's people have always viewed times like this as a time for personal searching and repentance
- b. We should also be repenting of national sins (greed, sexual immorality, abortion, slander, dissension) and asking God to use this to remove these cancerous sins from our national body!

### 4. Spend extra time reading good books

- a. If you have books you have been wanting to read - turn off the TV and spend time reading (after you have read the Scripture of course!)
- b. I am spending more time reading Francis Schaeffer right now, feeding my soul and mind rather than merely zoning out.

### 5. Establish/renew regular family devotions or prayer

- a. Parents - you should spend time every day with your kids, reading children's bible or other great books to them and praying with them.
- b. Couple - spend time in the Word or prayer together
- c. Linda and I have been spending more time in prayer together in the evenings before we do other things.

### 6. Reconnect as a family

- a. Husbands and wives - spend time with each other
- b. Parents - reconnect with your kids, talking, playing

### 7. Establish or maintain the habit of weekly worship

- a. Join in EVERY Sunday at 10 AM - just keep the pattern so it will be easy to return to gathering as a church at the end of this time.
- b. Don't just watch - WORSHIP!
- c. Parents - take time to do children's ministry lessons with the kids.

8. Are there other habits God is prompting me to establish or renew?
  - a. Exercise, fasting, cooking and eating better?
  - b. Taking time to call or write to others?
  - c. Art, or a project that has never been finished?
  - d. Family game night, or video chat with grandparents?

C. Don't just survive this time - redeem the quarantine!

#### IV. Applying the Word

A. Have I been muddling through, or redeeming the quarantine?

1. Honestly ask myself - which have I been doing?
2. Am I just trying to get through this and get back to "normal" life?
3. Have I been seeking God as to what He is trying to accomplish in my life right now?
4. This is the time for a reset - let's redeem the quarantine!

B. Where is God specifically calling for a reset in my life?

1. Is God calling me to Jesus for salvation?
2. Is God calling me to establish/renew daily time with Jesus in Scripture and prayer?
3. Is the Spirit working to reveal and remove sin?
4. Is God calling me to turn off the TV and read more?

5. Is God calling us to establish or renew family devotions/prayer?

6. Is God calling us to reconnect as a family?

7. Is God calling me to establish a pattern of weekly worship?

8. Are there beneficial habits God is calling me to establish or renew?

C. Drawing on the Spirit's power to reset and redeem the quarantine!

#### Reset - Redeeming the Quarantine

Deuteronomy 4:27-31

March 29, 2020

Prayer

2 Thessalonians 3:16

Teaching keywords: Exile and return; confession and repentance; correction; idolatry and false gods; Sabbath and rest

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you. 2 Thess 3:16

The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the Lord will drive you. <sup>28</sup> There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell. <sup>29</sup> But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>30</sup> When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the Lord your God and obey him. <sup>31</sup> For the Lord your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your forefathers, which he confirmed to them by oath. Deuteronomy 4:27–31