



October 1, 2020

Dear Bethany Family,

I have to admit that this has been an incredibly difficult season for so many different reasons. It often feels overwhelming and hopeless considering everything that we're witnessing in our world and in this country. Even more, it feels like every day something else happens that further polarizes us. This division is not just outside in our country, but in our church. But I'm convinced that these difficult times also offer us an incredible opportunity as followers of Jesus to demonstrate how His love in us can unify us even in our disagreement.

One of my favorite places in Scripture is the Psalms. I love that God, in His sovereignty, organized His Word to include a large section of poetry and songs that would give us insight into the experience of others as they worked out their faith in a variety of contexts. It's been said that the Psalms contain the whole of the human emotion. From the realization of the glorious nature of God and the worship it draws out of us, to the cries of despair from the lonely as they wait for the deliverance of God. There are places where people assert their integrity and other places where they wrestle with the gravity of their sin before God. It's a book of contrasts and one that I find speaks to me and, more often than not, speaks *for* me. The book of Psalms gives words to my joy and words to my pain. It helps me see that my experience isn't unique. Someone else understands my pain. And because it is God's Word, it reminds me that God understands my pain.

*"I would have despaired unless I had believed  
that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.  
Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage;  
Yes wait for the LORD." Psalm 27:13-14*

I love the posture of confident assurance that David takes in the face of adversity. He is not only confident that God would *one day* make all things right, but that he would see God make things right. During these difficult times, we can wonder where God is in all of this. He is at work and one day I will see the results. This belief is what helps me when I feel like I'm starting to despair. I may not see it now, I may not understand how, but I will one day see the fruition of God's great plan. Until then I wait.

Our series *Choosing Joy* has reminded us that true joy is not found in our circumstances. It is in the confident assurance that regardless of our circumstances, Christ is at work in the world drawing all men to Himself. He is at work in you and in me until He finishes what He's begun. In that, I choose joy!

So while this Psalm tells us to wait for the Lord, it doesn't tell us to check out of life until it returns to normal. In the waiting, God calls us to continue to lean into relationship with Him. Earlier in that same Psalm, the writer says:

*One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.  
For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter  
of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. Psalm 27:3-4*

So my prayer for us is that together we will continue to grow in our love for God and each other, even during these unprecedented times. While “church” may not look like it did six months ago, our mission and vision is still essential in that we desire to glorify God and see people transformed into passionate disciples of Jesus. I encourage you to join me in this. Be connected. Continue growing. Go into your neighborhood and share how Jesus has transformed your life.

Here are some ways you can connect with God & others at Bethany this week:

- **Sunday Live Stream Service:** While I truly miss seeing you in the seats and greeting you in the lobby, I am grateful to see God working through our live stream services on Facebook & YouTube. I hope you are able to participate with us on Sunday morning as Pastor Jacob continues our series in Philippians and we will also celebrate communion together.
- **Bethany Nights:** Church is happening! Every Sunday night at 6:30 PM, over 60 people are gathering in our courtyard to worship, to be equipped and encouraged through a message and discussion. We’ve participated in communion, times of prayer, missionary conversations and baptisms. We even have fun activities for kids K-5. I hope you’ll join me this Sunday.
- **Bible Studies:** Take part in one of our group Bible studies. Women meet on Mondays via Zoom and Men on Tuesdays, in the courtyard. We also have in-person services for students in junior high and high school, as well as college.
- **RightNow Media:** Many of our Growth Groups and Bethany Kids are using these free Bible study video resources; don’t be left out! If you have not accessed your free account, contact us today.
- **More Information** on all of these is available on our website or you can contact us by phone at 562-597-2411 or by email at [info@bethanylb.org](mailto:info@bethanylb.org).

God is faithful. He has moved mountains and I know we will see Him do it again!

Thank you for your love and faithful support of Bethany. I'd love know how we can encourage you or pray for you. Together we will see His goodness in the land of the living!

Grace,

Pastor Jeff Levine