

Psalm 93**Matthew Williams**

Good morning, my friends. I wish I could see each of your faces right now. I really miss being able to worship together as a church family. There is no substitute for gathering with the people of God, under the Word of God, to sing the praises of God. One of my earnest hopes for the future, whenever it is safe for us to assemble, is that we would never take the privilege of corporate worship for granted.

It's easy to do that, isn't it? We forget what an incredible blessing it is to sing to one another, to share the Lord's Supper, or to pray for each other in person. Missing a week here or there for work, illness, or vacation may not feel like a big deal. Two weeks go by. Four weeks go by. And you start to realize just how much God created us to do life together, side by side. We experience the presence of the King in the presence of his people. Through the company of our brothers and sisters in Christ the Lord reveals his personal love and care for us, which is why King David said in Psalm 16:3, "As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight."

It's been quite a 10 day stretch. Last Thursday, we were still preparing to meet on Sunday morning, albeit with some health precautions. Now we're navigating a situation as a congregation where we have no idea how long we will be apart. As hard as it is, I know it's the right decision. It's an important and very practical way we love our neighbors and honor the sanctity of human life.

In that regard, I'm deeply grateful for the wisdom and authority the Lord has given our governing officials, especially the folks that serve our community in a public health capacity. Many of you know our brother, Alex Samuel, Director of the Chesterfield Health District. I don't know if you're able to tune into this live stream or not, my friend, but I want you to know we thank God for you and are praying for you.

I strongly encourage all of you to honor the guidance and recommendations coming from our governing officials right now regarding social distancing. As Christians, we have no reason to fear death. The Lord also calls us to submit to the authorities he has established. In this case, it's a very practical way we love our neighbors. You might be just fine if you get sick, but many will not. So let's be



careful to walk in humility and consider the needs of others more important than our own.

I also wanted to give a quick shout-out to all the kids listening in this morning who usually don't get to hear me preach because you're in King'sKids. I love you guys and am praying for you too. Sudden changes in your weekly routines can be unsettling. One of my goals in bringing some shorter messages from the Psalms instead of continuing our series in the Gospel of John is to care for you and not just your mom or dad.

For those of you who are watching as families or with your roommate, take a few minutes after I've finished speaking to talk about what most encouraged you from God's Word, share where you sense your need for God's help right now, and pray for one another. We're in this together, young and old alike.

Our elders and deacons are doing their best to make contact with every member of our church by phone over the next few weeks to hear how you're doing and learn how we can serve or pray for you. But please don't hesitate to reach out on your own before then. Social distancing in a physical sense is good and right. Relational isolation is not.

If you haven't already, check out some of the resources we posted on the [COVID-19 section](#) of our website, including practical suggestions for staying connected as a church family, continuing to support the gospel ministry the Lord has called us to through financial giving, and how to immediately contact our church leaders if you or someone in your family gets sick.

Now let's turn our attention to God's Word. If you have a Bible, open it to Psalm 93. It's one of the shortest psalms in the psalter. I also believe it tells us exactly what we need to hear as we begin navigating uncharted territory, both as a church and as a nation.

Psalm 93, "The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting. The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring. Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty! Your decrees are very trustworthy; holiness befits your house, O LORD, forevermore."



There are many reasons you might be fearful or anxious right now. You could get sick. You could be out of a job. You might be worried about your spouse working in the hospital, your elder parents in a nursing home, or how you're going to survive another week with the kids at home and nowhere to go. There are reasons to be afraid. And at the same time, there are better reasons to trust the Lord.

That's why I love the psalms. In so many words, they tell us over and over again – Fear not! You have better reasons to trust the Lord. Psalm 93 reminds us of one of the most important of the bunch. We trust the Lord because he is the King of all creation. In five short verses, we discover two implications of his sovereign rule and how we should respond as his people.

IMPLICATION #1: THE WORLD IS NEVER OUT OF CONTROL BECAUSE GOD IS ALWAYS IN CONTROL

The psalmist begins in verse 1 where we too must begin in every situation, both expected and unexpected. Viral pandemics are not an exception to the rule. "The Lord reigns."

Right now, it feels like the coronavirus is reigning – radically altering our daily lives, sending the stock market into turmoil, shutting down the world economy, and leaving all of us feeling rather powerless. Pick your favorite news channel. A viral genome in a protein shell appears to be calling the shots. Everyone else is scrambling to catch up and cope with the fallout.

And that's precisely why we need to turn to God's Word in situations like this because we need to remember the coronavirus isn't the king. The LORD, Yahweh, he's the king. He doesn't just exist. He isn't just aware. He isn't rolling with the punches or frantically figuring out how to work all of this for our good. His personal and absolute authority over every atom in the entire universe remains supreme. And his kingdom, his redemptive rule over his blood-bought people, remains secure.

At no point in the history of the world has God ever needed a contingency plan or dealt with something unexpected. He was in control before this outbreak. He remains in control in the midst of the outbreak. He will still be in control when it's over. The images in verses 1-2 tell us just how comprehensive his reign really is.



Because I can't see all of you I have no idea what you're robed with. I have a sneaking suspicion some of you are still in your pajamas. That's fine by me because you're not a king. You're not sitting on a throne. You're probably sitting on your couch.

What are the kings of the earth robed in? If you've ever watched or seen pictures of a coronation they're usually attired in robes of costly material, rare furs, and precious metals. You know what the King of all creation is clothed in? Look at verse 1. He's "robed in majesty." Blinding glory. Shattering splendor. Unapproachable light. That's God's outfit.

We put on a belt of cloth or leather. The Lord puts on a belt of strength. The garments of his cosmic rule are strength and majesty and always have been. Why? Because His throne (verse 2) is established "from of old." There has never been a time when God was not in control of all things and there will never be. Why not? Because it's who he is. His throne is "established from of old" BECAUSE he is "from everlasting." In other words, the eternal identity of his person guarantees the eternal nature of his reign. He can no more cease to rule all things than he can cease to exist.

So what does that mean for you and me and the world we inhabit? What's the implication? Look at the end of verse 1. Because the throne of God, his supreme rule and authority over all things, is eternally established, what else is established? What else is not subject to the whims of fate or viral genomes? What else is never out of control even when it feels completely chaotic? "Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved."

Because the throne of God is established, the world he created is established. That doesn't mean we won't feel moved, threatened, or shaken. The last few days have provided plenty of opportunities for all three. It does mean no matter what happens with this virus, the world is not out of control because it is firmly under God's control. Our world is established, and your world is established.

IMPLICATION #2: THE STRONGEST FORCES OF NATURE ARE NO MATCH FOR THE POWER OF GOD

I love the consistent honesty of the psalms. It doesn't stop after verse 3 with what is true at a high level about our King and the world we live in. He is always in control, but it doesn't always feel that way. There are countless situations in life, viral

pandemics included, when it feels like another power is greater, another power is stronger, another power is more decisive.

One of the strongest powers in the natural world is water. Frozen into a glacier, it moves rocks the size of houses. Overflowing a river bank, it snaps massive trees like toothpicks. Steadily eroding a cliff face, it brings million-dollar homes crumbling to the ground. The psalmist chooses two water images in verses 3 and 4 as symbols of the destructive power of nature – “the floods” and “the waves of the sea.”

“The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring.” Floods are relentless. The very repetition of the word captures what they feel like. Floods don’t play nice. They’re not a respecter of persons. They do what they want wherever they want.

The coronavirus feels exactly like that. It’s relentless. It keeps growing and spreading. Whenever you turn on the news, it’s there. When you wake up, it’s there. When you go to sleep, it’s there – harming, confining, and killing – effectively immobilizing the most powerful nations in the world.

Have you ever heard water thunder or felt the might of the waves of the sea? On the West Coast of New Zealand, there’s a place called Pancake Rocks where the cumulative force the surf pours through a series of cracks in the cliff beneath your feet, producing a tremendous sonic boom. I still remember the shockwave in my chest. I think of the time I went out into the surf on the Outer Banks with a boogie board as a storm was approaching and got slammed into the sand by a wave that wasn’t even 10 feet tall.

The Smithsonian Magazine recently reported some of the biggest waves in recorded history. “An earthquake followed by a landslide in 1958 in Alaska’s Lituya Bay generated a wave 100 feet high, the tallest tsunami ever documented. When the wave ran ashore, it snapped trees 1,700 feet upslope.” Water is powerful. It crushes ships. It devastates cities. Few things represent the destructive power of the natural world better than a flood or the waves of the sea.

Yet what does verse 4 tell us? “Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty!” The parallel between the three-fold lifting up of the flood in verse 3 and the three-fold declaration of the power of God in verse 4 is intentional.



Friends, the strongest forces of nature are no match for the power of God and the coronavirus is no exception. No matter what it does to our city. No matter what it does to our economy. No matter how it affects you or your family, know this – the power it wields is significant, but the power of God is infinitely greater.

At his command, waves go silent, outbreaks cease, the sick are healed, little girls and dead men rise from the grave. There's no might, there's no power in the universe that exceeds the power of God. Pick the most intimidating force of nature imaginable. God is greater.

So how should we respond? If the world is never out of control because God is always in control and the strongest forces of nature are not match for the power of God, what does that mean for us? What difference should that make for the way you respond to the concerns of today and the unknowns of tomorrow?

OUR RESPONSE: THE WORD OF GOD IS WORTHY OF OBEDIENT TRUST

Look at verse 5. "Your decrees are very trustworthy; holiness befits your house, O LORD, forevermore. At first glance, the last verse could seem out of place. "Wait, aren't we talking about the authority and power of God over creation? What's up with pivoting to the trustworthiness of the Bible – God's written decrees – and our corporate holiness as the 'house' of God, the church?"

Here's the connection. If God is always in control, and if the strongest forces in our world are not match for his power, what makes all the sense in the world? Believing that he is able to do what he has said he will do. Why? Because the promises he makes to us in his Word – promises to guard, protect, sustain, comfort, and provide for his children – are not divine hopes or futile wishes. They are guarantees.

You won't find a power in the universe that can stop Almighty God from doing what he has said he will do. It's not even a contest. To say his decrees are "very trustworthy" is almost an understatement. They are the one thing, the only thing, in the entire universe that is perfectly trustworthy.

It's those words, his words, you hold in your hand in the pages of your Bible, Friend. Devote yourself this week and all the more in the weeks to come to reading them, studying them, meditating on them, and obeying them, because they are completely trustworthy. The authority and power of God isn't just something that hangs out there bringing some kind of abstract comfort for Christians in difficult



times. It sends us running to the pages of his Word because we know his supreme authority and unrivaled power render his words very trustworthy.

Many of us suddenly have more discretionary time in our daily rhythms. Take advantage of that, friends, to ask the Lord to show you where you can grow in becoming more like him. As the King of Creation, he isn't just worthy of your trust. He's worthy of your obedience. The longer we're separated, the harder it will become to keep fighting for holiness. The personal gathering of the people of God is a precious means of grace.

Yet what has the Lord promised? Though the church may not be with us, the Holy Spirit is always with us. The One who is "mightier than the waves of the sea" dwells in you, Christian. He will help you. He will empower you. Holiness befits your house and he has graciously given you his Spirit to lead you in the same.

When you're weary, trust him. When anxiety knocks at the door of your heart, trust him. When you're tempted to give into sin because you feel desperate for comfort, run to him. When you feel like you're going nuts because you're stuck at home, trust him. The Holy God has promised to make you holy. He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion. Why? Because his decrees, his commands, his promises and desires, are "very trustworthy."

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the Lord proved the trustworthiness of his word, his faithfulness to do what he has said he will do when he laid down his life for us on the cross. There is no greater demonstration of the Lord's commitment to keep his promises to us.

So when you're tempted to waver in fear this week, what should you do? How will you respond if a reporter asks, "What would you say to all the American who are really frightened right now?" The answer from God's Word is clear. Look to the cross of Christ. It's the final and definitive monument to the faithfulness of God. For there the King of Kings – the one who controls all things, whose power is supreme – conquered the greatest enemy of all – sin and death.

Fear not, my friend. You can trust the Lord. He is the good and faithful King of Creation. Let's pray and ask for his help to keep our eyes on him no matter what the future holds.

