

LIVE LIKE GOD IS IN CONTROL
ORIGINS SERIES PART 3 - IT'S NOT ABOUT US
Ben Rudolph

Good morning Life Fellowship. It is so good to see you here this morning. Please turn in your Bibles to Acts Chapter 12 as that is where we are going to be. We are almost done in the book of Acts so everyone sigh. We have four more weeks left before we move on to other books of the Bible.

Before I get into our narrative today, I do want to mention the Wednesday talk I am giving and I am super excited about this. To me there is no greater issue that needs to be addressed today for our culture within our church and outside the walls of our church is the issue of sexual brokenness. Michael Kostick is one of the authors I have listened to, and he is an expert on sexual addiction and sexual healing. And I heard this from him a couple of weeks ago that I thought was very fascinating. He said, *“The church is not prepared for the coming tsunami of sexual addiction and brokenness.”*

And I believe that. I believe that what we have to do is to be prepared, not only as parents who walk our kids through these issues, but with our friends, our neighbors, our spouses, because it hits every single one of us in different ways. And so I want to encourage you, whether you are going to be helping people through this, or whether you yourself are struggling, or whether you are a parent that has to navigate their children through these issues, I would encourage you to come out this Wednesday at 7 o'clock here where I will be discussing this topic with you.

Now I am not a big UFC fan and I don't watch UFC, but I know some of you probably do. And every once in a while when there is a big UFC fight, or big boxing match you will see these posters in restaurants, or you will see an advertisement on the television about a big fight. Again I am not into it, but there will be two names like Perez versus O'Neil, and they will be facing each other like they are ready to kill each other. If you have ever watched two boxers weigh in you will see they get in each other's face looking really angry. And we know that is probably going to be a good one.

So what we are about to read this morning is kind of like a battle royal. It is God versus the world, and you will see here there are two main guys in this passage, and that will be Peter and Herod. These are the men that are going to be clashing in this story. I want to let you know that this will be Part 1 and Dan will have Part 2. I am going to be focusing more on Peter, and Dan will have the bad guy. So I am pretty excited about that. I am going to be talking more about Peter, and Dan is going to be talking more about Herod.

And each of the people in this story represents two worldviews, two systems that we can live in. Peter represents the people of God; he represents the church. How do we live our lives in the system, in the power, in the way of God? And then Herod is going to represent and show us how the world lives. What is their end goal? How do they look to

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get their will accomplished on this earth? So we will look at these two different people and what they represent. So let's start in Acts Chapter 12 and we are going to read verses 1 through 19.

“About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.”

“Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door guarding the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him saying, ‘Get up quickly.’ And the chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, ‘Dress yourself and put on your sandals.’ And he did so. And he said to him, ‘Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.”

“And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him.”

“When Peter came to himself, he said, ‘Now I am sure that the Lord has sent His angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting. When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.”

“And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. They said to her, ‘You are out of your mind.’ But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, ‘It is his angel!’ But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed. But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, ‘Tell these things to James and to the brothers.’ Then he departed and went to another place.”

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Now that is a great story, isn't it? It is a story of power and of super naturalness. And I don't know about you but whenever I read a story like that, here is the question that I ask - why is this story in the Bible? Why is this story here? There are lots of stories that probably could have made the cut, but why is this story here?

I believe that this story is here because God is trying to teach His people something. And this is what it is - you and I live and walk in the world system, and God has a system. And these two systems are going to clash. If you choose to follow Christ with your life and you understand that He is your Lord, He is your authority, He is your power, then guess what? He is going to ask you to do things that run contrary with what the world is expecting you to do.

So here is what Luke is saying. These systems are going to clash. There are going to be times when young people are at school, or around their friends, and other people will find this in their work environment, or in their family, when there are going to be clashes because the way of God is different than the way of the world. We see this over and over again in Scripture. Peter and Herod are just the latest example. We see it with Moses and Pharaoh, Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar, and many other times we see these two systems at play.

And if you think about these systems they are so vastly different. If you look at how Herod dealt with things, it is about intimidation, threats, using his power to control and manipulate. It is about a position of authority to control others through violence or bullying to get his way. Or it is about people pleasing. What we just read about what Herod did is what most politicians do. I mean, Herod kills James, and because the people seemed to like that, he decides to arrest Peter. So we see these two systems at play here. And God is saying that these two systems represent the world in which we live in, and we have to decide how we are going to thrive in the midst of these two systems if we are going to follow Him and trust in Him.

So we see this story where Herod is the king and we need to understand that this is not the same Herod in Matthew who was trying to kill baby Jesus. This is a different Herod and he was Herod's grandson. This family was very wealthy and powerful. I heard one Bible scholar say that Bill Gates would have mowed Herod's lawn because that is how wealthy Herod was. Imagine one family owning the entire oil supply of the world and that would compare to Herod's wealth. They were incredibly wealthy and incredibly powerful with everything going for them.

Herod is new on the scene and he starts by arresting a bunch of Christians because he knew they were not really popular. And then he puts James to death and the people responded favorably so he goes after Peter next and plans on killing him. Now Peter is

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chained up in prison, and why is that? The reason for that is if we look back in the earlier narrative of Acts we remember that Peter has been thrown in prison before, so Herod is being very careful that Peter's friends don't help him escape. Herod put four squads of soldiers to guard him. Four squads means four groups of four soldiers each. That meant one soldier was chained to one of his arms, another soldier is chained to his other arm and there are two more soldiers watching them.

It would have been humanly impossible for Peter to escape, because it wasn't just one squad of soldiers, it was four squads of soldiers. Herod was making absolutely sure that Peter was not leaving, and that he would be able to have him killed. The church did not know of anything they could humanly do, but they could pray to God. So they meet at a house and they are fervently praying for God to save Peter.

And all of a sudden an angel shows up in the prison cell with Peter. He wakes up Peter and his chains fall off of his arms. Peter thinks he is having a dream. The angel tells him to get up and put on his sandals, and then he tells Peter to follow him. Now we don't know if the angel caused the soldiers to be asleep, or what, but they obviously did not see this taking place. Something supernatural happened here and Peter escaped.

When Peter and the angel are outside of the gate he finally realizes that he has not been dreaming, but that it was real and he was free. The angel disappears so Peter makes his way to Mary's house because he knew that if the people were praying for him that is where they would be. And when he gets to the house he knocks on the gate. The servant girl hears it and sees that it is Peter. She probably said, '*Peter - you are supposed to be in prison.*' And instead of opening the gate she turns and runs back into the house to tell those who were praying.

And this is so great because it goes to show you that if we were trying to make this story up we would have made the church look so much better than this. Okay? The servant runs inside and tells them that Peter is out at the gate and they go, '*No, there is no way that is Peter.*' Now think about that. You are having a prayer meeting asking God to please release Peter and then when you hear that Peter is outside the gate you don't believe it. You would think these people of faith would not doubt that their prayers would work.

But instead they tell Rhoda she is out of her mind. They think she must have seen an angel because they still do not believe her. And they tell her she must have seen an angel or something, but she just keeps insisting it is Peter. In the meantime Peter continues to knock at the gate until someone finally goes out to check and learns that it really is Peter. And then they start shouting and making a big commotion. Peter tells

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them to calm down, and then he tells them the story about the angel making his chains fall off and how he just walked out of the prison with the angel leading him.

Peter tells them he needs to leave, but he wants them to tell James and the other leaders of the church what has happened. And Peter then left them to go hide. That is this part of the story. Next week Dan is going to go further with the story and what Herod does in the midst of God working in this situation.

But here is the issue today. We see God is at work in the midst of when man is at work. There are two systems in the world, the way of God and the way of man; the way of the world and the way of Jesus. And these are going to come into conflict. If I could bring the issue before you today of how we navigate this road it would be with just one word - and that word is 'control.'

You and I have to come to grips with the knowledge that someone is ultimately in control of this world. And for those of us that live as if man is in control, we are going to live a certain way. And then there are going to be those of us that live as if God is in control and we will live a different way. Here is the deal - all of us live as if there is an ultimate power and authority of who is in control in this world.

When you walk into your work environment, when you parent your kids, or whatever you do, there are going to be issues of control that will confront you and you will realize you are not really in control. And that is hard for us, isn't it? We do not like thinking that we are not in control because we love to be in control. Most of us are control freaks. Is there anybody here that is a control freak? I know I am a control freak. I see some of you are being honest and raising your hand and others or you are lying. (*Laughter.*) We really are all control freaks in different ways. Some of us are controlling with relationships. Your kids test you and you want to control them. Maybe it is not relationships but it is your career. You have this plan of how you want your career to turn out and then maybe your boss makes that difficult. For me one of my greatest issues of control is time. I will tell you that I like to be in control of my time.

I love those little mobile orders at Chick-fil-A, because I can just drive up and see the line and I know I can mobile order. I don't have to stand in line, and I can cut off a couple of minutes here or there because my time is precious. I remember one time I had been in Newark and I was getting ready to fly back to Charlotte. I get to the airport at 5a for my early flight. At the Newark airport you are in this little hub and there are about ten gates and only about two food choices. And my flight was delayed and then delayed and then delayed again. When I was still there at about 2p I felt just completely out of control of the situation. But I thought that somehow by my response I should be able to control it; like if I got upset enough something was going to happen. Or if I got mad

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enough, or if I worried enough I could actually change the outcome of something. And we do that because that is how we respond when we are not in control.

But here is what we have to understand. Control is an illusion. If you think you are ultimately in control, you are only fooling yourself and everyone around you. You might have temporary control, but ultimate control is in the hands of God. And we, as the people of God, must understand that our challenge is to live like God is in control. Now is God in control? Absolutely! But many times we don't live like God is in control; we live like other people are in control.

I remember taking our kids to my sister-in-law when our kids were really young. We prepared our kids by telling them that mom and dad were going away for the weekend, and Sissy, which was their name for their aunt, was going to be in charge and she was going to take care of them for a couple of nights. And one of my sons said, "*Sissy is not in charge. I am in charge.*" (*Laughter.*) He was declaring that the minute we walked out of the room that he was in charge.

And I think we do that sometimes. We play these games like, okay the minute that person walks out of the room, I am in charge. And we are looking and jockeying for positions of control. And when we understand that living like God is in control our lives are going to look different. Peter models for us. The church models for us what it looks like living like God is in control.

And the way we see living like God is in control is this: Number one - living like God is in control leads to prayer. Notice Herod laid violent hands on the church. He kills James. He arrests Peter. He is just going down the list of the people who are influential and in charge. And what is the first thing the church does? They organized a Facebook group saying they didn't like what happened. (*Laughter.*) '*I'm against Herod.*' Or they picketed Herod's palace.

Is that what they did? No, it isn't. Here's the thing, we live in a world where we think every voice matters, and we can debate, and we can protest, and we can picket. But the first century church had no earthly power. They couldn't vote someone out of office they didn't like. If they went out there with signs saying they didn't like Herod arresting Peter, they would have been arrested themselves. That was the world they lived in.

But here is the advantage they had. They didn't trust in man's system of authority and power to get what they wanted. They trusted in God's power. And we know that when we trust in God's power we pray first. What is your response when you feel out of control? When the authority and the powers around you are pushing to try to get

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something you know is either not what God wants in your life, or it is an attack on you personally; what do you do? Do you pray first?

That is what the church did. They prayed first. They understood that in the world's eyes they were helpless, but in their hearts they knew they had ultimate help. They knew that it didn't matter what Herod said or did, or how much authority he had. It didn't matter that Herod had put four squads of soldiers around Peter, because they knew the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords.

Tim Keller is a pastor and I read his books often. One of the things I read is a quote where he said, "*The only person who dares wake up a king at 3a for a glass of water is his child.*" And we have that kind of access. See, it doesn't matter what you are going through, or when you are going through it, we know God is inviting us to respond to Him. He wants us to trust in Him more than we trust whoever is in power in Washington. He wants us to trust in Him more than we trust who is on our side in our workplace. It is not about politics. It is not about people pleasing. It is not about manipulation. It is not about backdoor deals, or strong arming people, or even buying our way out of problems.

We need to understand that when we are in a situation where we feel helpless we need to pray first. We need to go to God first. The people of God are always called to go to God first. And here is the thing - if we are being honest - one of the greatest barriers to us doing this is our own resources, isn't it? There is a great story in the Old Testament in the book of II Chronicles about King Asa. He is a young king and he takes over the nation of Judah. As soon as he takes over his first test is there is a massive army that comes up from Africa about to attack Judah and to take away their possessions and their freedoms. And he knows his army is outnumbered two to one.

So what does King Asa do? He prays. He cries out to God and asks Him to save them. He knew they didn't have the means, or the power to overcome this army, and he asks God to fight their battle. And guess what - God did. He rescued them from this massive army. Now fast forward a couple of decades and King Asa is now wealthy and powerful. He has attained a level of success in his life. And there is another army that is going to attack his nation. This army is not even half the size of the army that had attacked them before. But King Asa is at a point in his life where he doesn't have to worry about it, so he takes some money out of his treasury, and he pays another mercenary army to fight his battle.

And God approaches King Asa and tells him that he missed it. God tells him when he was small in his own eyes he cried out to Him, but when he got strong in his own eyes he forgot God. And this is something that all of us must look inside our own

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heart to see if whenever we feel strong we are tempted not to go to God. We need to see if we are depending on our own personal authority, or depending on our finances. Or our personality may be such that we can be very likeable and we may sometimes use that to get what we want. But when we are faced with a challenge or a crisis of control we need to always remember to pray first. We need to cry out to the one who has ultimate power and ultimate authority in this universe.

Now only did the church pray first, but they also prayed fervently. Listen again to what it says: “*So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.*” Notice it says earnest prayer. One of the things that is really important to realize is when we are reading a narrative or a story in Scripture we need to understand that almost every story in Scripture is linked to another story, or to a group of stories. So there are words and there are patterns that the Biblical authors, and as God has designed His Word, wanted to draw our attention to in how the grand narrative of Scripture is the same.

I believe that Luke is using this word ‘earnest’ prayer as the means to point back to the only other time where it says someone prayed ‘earnestly’ or used the Greek word to describe the type of prayer that was being prayed. And it is the word that was used to describe the prayer that Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. When Jesus was about to face the cross He got on His knees and He prayed earnestly.

And what Luke is saying is there may be moments where we are just praying casually, but there are also going to be moments in our lives where something comes to our family, or to our own personal life, that requires earnest prayer. It requires us to get on our knees and to cry out like we have never cried out before because a problem is just too big for us. Where we don’t have the answer to the issue at hand and there is no playbook for it. So we have to pray earnestly. Scripture shows us that we always need to follow the pattern of Jesus. When we are in desperate situations we need to pray like Jesus prayed in the Garden. “*God not my will but yours be done.*”

Here is another thing I love, that our praying earnestly and fervently, or how we pray is not dependent on us. We don’t have to worry about saying the right words. Look at how the church prayed. Did they pray with great faith? No, the fact is they had very little faith. And I think sometimes God is issuing reassurance to us. Do you ever get to the point where you are praying for something and it just seems hard?

Think about this, Herod had just killed James. And he was about to kill Peter. The narrative of what was happening in their lives looked a certain way, and yet they were still praying. And I love that because it means that our prayers are not dependent upon our power. Our prayers are dependent on His power. He is the one who works and

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moves. It is His will and His authority that we call on for help. It is not about us saying certain words or how long we pray.

Look at verse 16 again. It says, “***But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed.***” They were amazed. And I believe there are too few times today when you and I are amazed by God. But when we pray first and we pray fervently I believe we will be more amazed that we have ever been in our entire lives. God is calling us to something, and that is to depend on Him in ways we haven’t been. And I believe God wants to amaze us.

In the book of Acts there are different sections. We have Acts Chapters 1 through 7, then there are Chapters 8 through 12, and then Chapters 13 to the rest of the book. It is almost in three different sections. And what is so beautiful about this section of Chapters 8 through 12 is this word amaze, because the church is amazed over and over again here. Luke is trying to say that what happens when conflict comes, when trouble arises, when oppression is real, we need to get ready to be amazed because God is going to work and He is going to move. Now God may not always work and move in the way we want, but He is always working and moving.

And that leads us to this - living like God is in control not only leads to prayer, but living like God is in control leads to peace. Imagine that you get arrested today and thrown in prison, and someone tells you that you are going to be put to death tomorrow. How would you sleep tonight? I don’t know about you but I would be worried, I would be thinking about my family, and I would be trying to think of some way to get out of this. I would be stressed out, and I would be trying to bargain with God.

Now look at verse 6 again. “***Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping.***” Herod was planning to kill Peter the next morning but Peter was sleeping? Can you believe that? He was about to be killed and he is thinking, ‘*I need to get a solid eight hours in.*’ (Laughter.) ‘*I don’t want to be grumpy when they take out their swords.*’

So what is going on here? How does Peter have so much peace at a time like this? This is amazing. This should take us back to another story. It is Passover and do you remember who was arrested during Passover? It was Jesus. And remember how Peter was tested with his faith when he was around that little fire with soldiers. And a servant said, ‘*I think you were a follower of Jesus.*’ And Peter denies it. He freaks out, he swears, and he is angry. Now look how far Peter has come. After following Jesus he becomes a different man.

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And when we follow Jesus we are going to be different people too. God has been shaping Peter and molding him over the years. He has seen God work and move. It is kind of like this: choosing peace is hard, but God keeps giving us different levels to learn how to do that. And I think as we continue to grow and walk in the Lord He gives us deeper and bigger tests to challenge us to see if we can pass this test or that test. And Peter has now learned that this is just another level of trust of his love of Christ.

I remember when my kids were younger and we bought the Wii game when it first came out. There was this one game that we played and you got to beat the big boss at the end of the game. And then while we were high fiving each other we heard music and this voice said, *'But there is another boss.'* We thought we had won the game after beating this big boss, but then we found out that there was another bigger boss.

And listen, that is what life is like. You have one challenge or one test and you have to decide to choose peace right now. And then you choose peace in that test and guess what - there is going to be another challenge. There is going to be another opportunity to face another big bad boss and you will have to again choose peace in that situation. You can choose peace in your work, but then you may have to choose peace with your kids. There will be challenges over and over again that we will face.

Let me just say this - and this is the hard part of my sermon - when we talk about peace it is not believing that everything is going to work out for us. Peace is not about choosing peace and saying, *'Okay, choosing peace means God is going to make everything work out the way I want it to work out.'* That is not what peace is. And I believe that sometimes even churches and pastors teach this kind of thing that says if we follow God, we go to church and we do the things that God wants us to do that God is guaranteeing to give us the life that we have always wanted. That is not true. That is not the gospel.

We have here this wonderful story of Peter's rescue and release from prison, but do you know who else was in this story? It was James' story too and he was murdered. So here is the thing, there is no guarantee for us or who we get to be in the story. See, sometimes God chooses us to be James, and sometimes He chooses us to be Peter. So peace is not believing that God is going to make everything true that we want. Peace is believing that God is going to get what He wants, and He will be glorified.

We see this in Peter but it can be really hard for us. This is not an *'Amen, preach it'* sermon. We all want to think that we are special, that we are going to have a story of great overcoming. And God may give that to us, but we need to understand that when we follow Jesus it means we may follow Him into the crucifixion of our lives or it may mean following Jesus leads to our resurrection. There are different seasons of crucifixion and

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resurrection in our lives, but we know this, God is going to get what He wants and He will be glorified.

There is a great passage we need to look at quickly, and it is found in Hebrews Chapter 11. Hebrews Chapter 11 is a great passage of Scripture called the Hall of Faith, and it tells about how the great people of faith in the Old Testament exercised their faith in God. But probably my favorite part of this chapter is at the end of the chapter in verses 32 through 38, because I believe this is the hardest part about following Jesus in our world today. We like to think if we just go with God's system then everything is going to work out for us, but what if your career goes sideways because you have wicked people over you, and you have to choose between playing the game of manipulation and bullying, or you have to choose the way of Christ to be trampled on. There is no guarantee you are ever going to get that desired promotion. There is no guarantee everything is going to work out all right.

But we do know this, God will be glorified. Look what it says in Hebrews Chapter 11 and verses 32 through 38. ***“And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets - who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection.”*** Man, we love that part, right? *‘Preach it, brother. We are turning armies to flight. People are raised back from the dead.’* Those are the stories we love to preach, right? But let's continue to read more of these verses.

“Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated - of whom the world was not worthy - wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”

Now we are not saying, *‘Preach it, brother.’* Who wants that to be their story? And we need to understand that God is the one who is choosing. He is the one who is in control. And if God allowed His Son to be afflicted, to suffer and to die, then if He chooses us to be worthy to walk in that path, we need to choose it with peace. We can sleep well at night.

I was talking with a good friend of mine this week, and he said something very profound. He said, *‘I can always tell how well I am doing spiritually by how well I am*

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sleeping at night. That is true, isn't it? Sometimes when news is not good, or we feel out of control our minds can spin, and we can be all over the place. But here is the thing we need to understand, the guaranteed outcome of what our story will be might be unsure, but the outcome of God's Kingdom coming and His will being done is guaranteed. That is the guarantee because we know that God wins in the end. Yes, James was killed and Peter was released, but I want you to see something back in Acts Chapter 12 and verse 24. "***But the Word of God increased and multiplied.***"

Herod could do all he wanted. He could control, manipulate and use violence. He could use every bit of his authority and power to get what he wanted, but at the end of the day God's Word would increase and multiply. (*Amen.*) We still get the choice of whether we are going to pray, whether we are going to choose peace, and live by the way of God, but understand that God is going to get His will done in the end. He is going to get His will done in this country whether someone is elected or not. or whether our economy crashes. Or if it explodes.

It is not about the things that we think are the worldly powers, the worldly authority and the worldly ways that we put our trust in, because even if they are all gone we can still have hope because of Jesus. And that is what our choice should be because we know how the story is going to end. Every worldly victory is only temporary, and every set back of God's people is only temporary. We know how the story ends - God wins - He wins! He is glorified and we are resurrected. So whatever pain or suffering we go through it is only temporary.

It is kind of like watching the World Series on television and wanting the Nationals to win. I can get so into it until it kind of drives me crazy watching a game that is in the balance. But if I were to watch a game knowing who was going to win at the end, how would I watch it? It would be completely different. If I know that my team is going to win when the game is over, and even though they might be down by ten runs, I am not worried. Why then do we choose anxiety or anger or manipulation when we feel out of control? We know who is in control and His name is Jesus.

Here are a couple of questions to end with. Number one - whose system are you living under? Are you walking the ways of the world trying to control everything or trusting in people who seem to be controlling things, or are you trusting in God's control? Are you living like God is in control?

Number two - what is God inviting you to pray fervently for? God has put something in your life that you need to pray fervently for. He does this to all of us, sometimes it is our family situation, sometimes it is our work, sometimes it is our health,

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but God puts something in our lives where we need to pray first and fervently. What is that right now for you?

Number three - what do you need to choose peace in right now? Maybe you are stressed and just a little out of control and it is time to begin choosing peace. Time to trust in God's outcome, knowing that His will shall be done, and we can trust in that.

We are about to remember the Lord's Supper now. We are transitioning to a time where we are going to celebrate with a corporate communion. And I think about the two words we talked a lot about this morning - the words authority and power. There is no greater symbol or picture of God's authority and power than the cross of Jesus Christ. Let's take a few minutes now to examine our hearts as we get ready to partake of the Lord's Supper.

The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.