

## Coping In Crisis Series

### “How To Get the Most Out of Tough Times”

Sunday, May 24, 2020

#### Intro: Welcome

Q: The Big Question -“When can we meet together in person?”

A: Sunday, July 5

#### Plan

Our Bishop has asked all 500+ churches in South Georgia not to meet physically until June 21<sup>st</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup>.

- large crowds, difficult to stay 6 feet apart,
- singing projects molecules 16-19 feet,
- kids and adults don't social distance very well...we get excited and forget

#### Harvest Reopening Plan – (Subject to Change)

##### Phase 1: Online ONLY

(March 15 – June 28)

- **Online Services:** Message presented at 10:30am, Noon and 5pm through HarvestChurch4u.TV, Facebook, and YouTube
- **Online Weekly Bible Study :** Evening devotionals at 7pm
- **Online Resources :** HSM and Kidstown online materials available weekly

##### Phase 2: Online PREDOMINENTLY

with [“Harvest on the Hill” option](#) (July 5 unless new information emerges)

- **Online Services:** 10:30am, Noon and 5pm (continue what we are currently doing)
- **Online Weekly Bible Study :** change to once a week at 7pm – possibly Tuesday or Wednesday evening
- **On Campus:** 9:30am “Harvest-on-the-Hill” outdoor service, weather permitting
  - Music TBD
  - Social Distancing and Masks utilized – self enforced
  - Main building closed
  - H2 bathrooms open with attendants
  - Bring your own chairs, umbrellas, blankets
  - Kids “Activity packs” handed out to parents; but no Kidstown or HSM programming

### Phase 3: Online CONTINUES - Partial Reopening

- **Online Services:** 10:30am, Noon and 5pm (continue what we are currently doing)
- **On Campus:** 2 Service times, 9:30am and 11:00am
  - No Kidstown, HSM, or Food
  - Only open lobby, worship center and front restrooms

### Phase 4: Online Continues – Full Reopening

- 2 or 3 services – Service times will depend on the number of services
- Full Children and Youth Programming
- Adapted Hospitality with best practices

### Noah and the Ark

Our approach is like Noah sending out a dove, testing the waters, checking to see when it's safe

Sooo....

## How to Get the Most Out of an Online Service

### 1. Treat the online service like a “real service”...because it is.

If God can speak through prophets and preachers and donkeys (remember the story of Baalam)...He can certainly speak to you from an online service.

Decide which service you will attend. Decide as a family so people aren't running around, multi-tasking during the service.

### 2. Get mentally focused on worshiping God.

You take the initiative of setting the tone and atmosphere. You make it a worship experience by focusing on God.

Be a thermostat for the family.

### 3. Engage.

Be a participant not just a spectator. (Harvestchurch4u.TV and FB)

- 1 screen or 2?
- Text, use the message notes, make comments and prayer requests.
- Say “hello” to others and offer an encouraging word.
- Take a “Next Step” related to the message.

#### 4. Fight distractions.

Act as if you were in the Worship Center. Don't play games during the songs or check your email during the message.

Decide ahead of time to be in the moment. Don't let anything distract you from worshipping God. If it still feels a bit odd to worship online, concentrate and say, "Lord, please speak to me in this service."

#### 5. Remember we are a Battleship and not a Cruise Ship.

a. Stay on mission...in new ways.

##### 5 Purposes

- You can't do life alone. (*Call, text, zoom...*)
- Growing people change. (*Attend worship, have a QT with God with Scripture and Prayer...*)
- Saved people serve people. (*Find ways to help people...*)
- Found people find people. (*Invite others to watch with you...*)
- Worship is a lifestyle. (*Be a participant not a spectator...*)

b. **Don't wait** to come back to Church. **Be the Church where you are**. You be the minister. You set the tone. You reach out to others. You take the initiative to do the 5 Purposes.

Today: (continuing the theme of getting the most out of things...)

#### "How to Get the Most Out of Your Tough Times"

Examples:

- Wring a towel of water...twist and squeeze to get it all
- Toothpaste tube...there's always more in there!!!! Ha

Sermon in a Sentence:

"You're going to be squeezed by Tough Times, so squeeze the Tough Times back and get all the benefit out of them."

Q: How do you "squeeze" a Tough Time?

A: Look for the lesson; ask "God, what do You want me to get from this?"

Emotions seemed to have shifted.

- Fear....novelty....NOW people seemed more annoyed, frustrated, impatient, etc.
- We're going through some Tough Times.
- We need to squeeze them so we don't waste them.

*“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.” James 1:2-4 (NLT)*

- Remember, God does not cause everything. He just doesn't want to waste it.

### 3 (Potential) Benefits of Tough Times

Say **potential** because it's not automatic. We have to “squeeze” a Tough Time to get the good out of it.

#### 1. Tough times test your faith. (How is that good?)

##### Test vs Temptation

Good teachers give tests so you can find out what you know and what you don't know...then they can teach you what you don't know.

- Example: If you make a “72” on a math test, a good teacher helps you learn the things you missed.
- Example: If you get a “Needs Improvement in Communicating” on a Performance Evaluation, a good boss gives you some things to practice to get better.
- Example: But in LIFE, a test often feels like a punishment. Tough Times are a Test. Tough Times like money problems, relationship problems, marriage problems, job problems... It can just feel like someone is out to get you. This is a broken world; so of course we're going to run into Tough Times. That's just life.

Illustration: “Refining fire” ...burns away impurities...ready when Craftsman can see reflection

**Tough Times come and test your faith.** Its upsetting; it's scary. I thought God was going to protect me from this stuff. You may wonder if God has forgotten about you or abandoned you. He hasn't...you're just getting squeezed by a Tough Time.

Sooooo...

**Squeeze it back.** “Lord, I'm getting squeezed by this tough time...this pandemic...my financial situation...my job situation...etc...the heat is turned up on me and I'm feeling it. Lord, what do you want me to get from this situation? Don't let me miss growing stronger from this.”

## 2. Tough times can help build up our endurance.

*"If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?"* Jeremiah 12:5 (NIV)

*"For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow."* James 1:3 (NLT)

### Tough Times come in and it's exhausting.

How long is this going to last? I'm running out of energy and hope and faith. I'm getting tired.

Sooo....

### Squeeze it back.

"Lord, I feel like giving up. I feel weak and tired and cranky. I'm not sure how much more of this I can take. Help me Lord. Please build my endurance. I want to play the long game and grow in You all the way."

## 3. Tough times can build our character.

*"So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing."* James 1:4 (NLT)

*"You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food."* Hebrews 5:12 (NLT)

- Study of comfort and longevity in animals.
- We can get too comfortable...lazy...lethargic...

### Tough Times come in and it's Uncomfortable.

There is pain. There is discomfort in your life. Why am I going through this Lord? Your plans are messed up. This is not what you were counting on.

Soooo....

### Squeeze it back.

"Lord, I'm not who I want to be. Help me grow up. Help me mature. I don't want to stay a baby Christian my whole life. I want to learn from these tough times and grow up to be more like You. Don't let me miss the lessons that might help me grow up."

## Closing

What if we **PRACTICE** “Squeezing Back” and start getting some good out of tough times?

- Oak tree: 20-30 years to mature, some species live to 150 years
- Mushrooms: can grow overnight
- “Does bamboo take 5 years to sprout?”
  - The **Chinese bamboo tree** takes **five years to grow**. They have to water and fertilize the ground where it is every day and it doesn't break through the ground until the **fifth year**. But once it breaks through the ground **within five weeks, it grows 90 feet tall.** Jul 10, 2018

## Text MyNextSteps to 313131

Let us know what steps you are taking in your relationship with Jesus.

### Just getting started?

Text 313131 and tell us; or [click HERE](#).

- Today, I want to receive Jesus as my Lord and Good Shepherd.

### Want to let Jim know you are taking a next step closer?

Text 313131 or [click HERE](#).

This week, I will “squeeze back on these tough times” by...

- Asking Jesus for help to learn, endure and grow during this time.
- Acting on opportunities to help someone else.
- Praying for the leaders of my country, community and church.

### Have a prayer request/comment?

You can securely send it to us. Just [click HERE](#).

The generosity of the Harvest family makes online ministry possible. Thank you! Want to help? [Click HERE](#).