

The Time Has Come

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[GraceLife Church, Edmonton](#)

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Key Passage: Various Passages

We now have come to the preaching of God's Word. And normally, I would ask you to open your Bible to a particular portion of Scripture at this time. But today we're going to be doing something a little bit different. We're going to be addressing the present set of circumstances that we are in a little more topically.

I'm going to be referencing a lot of verses today. And you can flip with me if you want or just make note of those verses. I might have you flipped to a couple. And I'll let you know what those are. But for the most part, I'm just going to be firing off verses, as we work through this time together in God's word.

When we say Jesus is Lord, what are we saying? When Jesus declares that "all authority has been given to Me on heaven and on earth," what is He declaring? When Scripture says that Jesus is the head of the church, what does that mean? When scripture commands us to be in subjection to the governing authorities, are there limits? Can the government dictate to the church how it must worship? What accountability does the government have? Is it ever appropriate for the people of a nation and province to hold its government accountable? These are some of the questions we are going to seek to answer today.

We want you to understand why we're doing what we're doing, and why we believe that faithfulness to Christ demands this of us.

But I need to give a disclaimer at the outset. My primary aim is to inform you, and help you understand why we are doing what we are doing, to sort of bring you in on the discussion that, I guess, has been taking place for nearly ten months now. But there is a bit of a challenge for me, and this challenge is, in particular, for those of you who are live streaming. Some of you, with our support, have been live streaming the entire time, the entire pandemic.

Others have been coming but only recently have, with our support, opted to live stream. And I want to reiterate my support to you who are live streaming from home. We want you to be fully convinced in your own mind. We recognize the need for you to be fully convinced about how you're going to navigate this season. Having said that, it is virtually impossible to do what I'm about to do without it seeming like I'm trying to persuade you to think differently. There may even be moments of conviction. But that's not my primary intent. My primary intent is to both support and defend our decisions. At the same time, each one of us really needs to consider whether or not it's the Lord who is speaking through me. God speaks through the proclamation of his Word. And

I am an ambassador of Christ. And if I am accurately representing the Word of God to you, the believing community, then it's not me who is ultimately speaking, it is God who is speaking through me. So if there's conviction, you need to take me out of the way and assess whether or not that is the Lord speaking to you.

And I want to give you a lay of the land. So you have an idea of where we're going, we're going to do a bit of Q & A this morning - questions and answers. And here are the questions we're going to be answering:

What is the church?

Who is the head of the church?

What is the gathering?

What elements are essential for the corporate gathering?

Why do we gather?

Are we permitted to gather at present?

Does the government have the authority to prevent us from gathering?

Do the present circumstances warrant such government overreach?

And lastly, I'll even dive into why is this happening?

And so, let's get started. I think that's eight questions if I've counted right. Might be nine. I may have woven one in to two.

First, what is the church? What is the church? And again, we're going to be using some selected Scriptures throughout this time, in our study of God's Word today. What is the church? And to answer this question, we need to address it on two levels. The first is on the universal level. We call this the universal or invisible church. The universal church is made up of all those who have new life in Christ. All believers who are alive today, in this world are of the church and of course the church is also in heaven, but for the sake of our discussion now, all believers in the world today: the redeemed, the called, the justified, the new covenant people of God, the bride of Christ, the body of Christ. That's the first level. The second is on the local level. We call this the local or visible church. This is where a group of believers come together in a local assembly to accomplish specific, divinely ordained purposes. Purposes that are clearly outlined in the New Testament. Purposes like worship, edification, participation in the ordinances, evangelism, to name a few. And since the church is the means by which God is displaying his manifold wisdom and glory in the world today, to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (Ephesians 3:10), it is critically important that the church be visible.

That it gather into local assemblies and order itself in accordance with the New Testament with elders and deacons, where the Word of God is preached, where the gospel is proclaimed, where the ordinances are practiced, where the "one-another's" are practiced, where a local assembly is being built up to all maturity. That's the second level. And it needs to be said that there is absolutely no way to be a faithful Christian without being vitally connected to a local church.

Many of the imperatives of the New Testament require belonging to a local body of believers. It is impossible to be obedient to Christ, and not be active in the local church.

So what is the church? The church is the universal body of believers that gathers into local assemblies to accomplish the great commission.

Now on to our second question, who is the head of the church? Or we could say it like this: who is the head of the body? Is Caesar the head of the body? Is a lead pastor the head of the body? Are the elders the head of the body? No, Christ is the head of the body. Ephesians 1:22, "And God put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him, who fills all in all." Jesus Christ is the head of the church. And that is true of the universal church, as well as each individual local church. Colossians 1:18, "He also is head of the body, the church," referring again there to Christ.

And so what does headship represent? It represents authority.

Jesus is the supreme and ultimate authority over the church, both universal and local. What does that mean? It means He is the sole and final authority of all matters related to the church. It is His right, and His right alone, to govern each local assembly.

How does He do this? Through His Word, as local churches organize themselves in accordance with that Word.

And how are local churches to be organized? They are to be organized under a plurality of biblically qualified men, who are also members of the body and have a stewardship, whereby they are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the Word of God, the very word of Christ, the very headship of Christ is properly taught and implemented. A stewardship and responsibility for which they will be held accountable by Jesus Christ Himself.

So who is the head of the church? Not Caesar. Not Jason Kenny. Not Deena Hinshaw. Not the lead pastor. Not the elders. The Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.

Now critical to the life of any local church is its worship. This has always been and this will always be. God's people are to come together and worship corporately.

So the third question is this: what is the gathering? What is the gathering?

And you'll notice we've asked this in a particular way. We have asked what is the gathering? Not what is "a" gathering. For example, is a Bible study "the" gathering? Is women's ministry "the" gathering? Is an elders meeting "the" gathering? Is youth ministry "the" gathering.

No, that is not "the" gathering. That is "a" gathering. Why? Because these are microcosms of the body, particular segments of the body. When these groups gather, most of the body is - what? - absent. They are gatherings but they aren't "the" gathering.

So then what's necessary for "the" gathering?

That the full body of Christ with its elders and deacons come together for corporate worship. That the full body of Christ, with its elders and deacons come together for worship. And Sunday, both biblically and historically has been set apart for this purpose. Why? Because Jesus rose from the grave on a Sunday, and the church was birthed into existence on a Sunday. Acts 2, the day of Pentecost. The 50th day, which is Sunday. And so the corporate gathering is when the entire family is present, when we come together to worship God and minister one to another. A foretaste of heaven when all the redeemed will be together in the presence of Christ.

Which leads us to our fourth question: what elements are essential for the corporate gathering? What elements are essential for the corporate gathering? And when we ask this question, we are asking what elements has the head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ, stipulated as essential in His Word? What does the Lord of glory say is essential?

Well, first, the public proclamation of the Word of God. 2 Timothy 4:2, "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction" - here the word "preach" there calls for a public proclamation by one who fills Timothy's shoes, a man of God, 2 Timothy 3:17.

Second, the second element, the second essential element, the public reading of Scripture. 1 Timothy 4:13, "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, and teaching." The corporate gathering ought to include a regular and extended reading of Scripture, and often connected with that is, third, corporate prayer. We're called to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We're called to "pray at all times in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:18). And how much more corporately?

In fact, just listen to Romans 15:5-6 for a moment. How else could this really be expressed? If not either in song or prayer, it says this: "Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord you may with one voice" - literally, "one mouth" - "glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ".

Paul exhorts men to lift up holy hands without dissension when the church gathers to worship in 1 Timothy 2. And so the third element is corporate prayer.

Fourth, corporate singing. In fact, turned to Ephesians 5 for this. Corporate singing, verses 18 and 19. There are a couple of pieces I want to touch on here. It's a familiar portion of Scripture. Ephesians 5:18 says, "do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation" - here's the command - "but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord."

Now, either speaking, singing and making melody are so connected to the command to be filled with the Spirit that they're virtually commands themselves, or the evidence that one is filled with the Spirit is expressed in these actions. But either way, speaking, singing and making melody are essential. And so when the government says you can't sing, they are either forbidding what God commands, or they're quenching the evidence of the Spirit's filling of a congregation. But either way, they're in rebellion against God.

And by the way, "making melody in your heart" doesn't mean making melody without a sound. The "your" in your heart is plural, while the heart is singular. So a congregation is being addressed - plural, to sing with one heart - corporate. Which means when pastors tell their congregations to sing in their hearts, and appeal to this

verse, they are guilty of pastoral malpractice. Singing out loud is essential, an essential element to the corporate gathering.

Fifth is the element of fellowship. Yes, fellowship is an essential element of the corporate gathering. Listen to Hebrews 10:24-25: "...let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds." We are to consider - we are to think on how we might provoke one another to love and good deeds; "...not forsaking our assembling together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

You can see here the author of Hebrews places the command to consider how we might stimulate one another to love and good deeds. He connects that with the not forsaking the gathering of the saints. Why? Because it's necessary to come together physically, to accomplish the purpose that is laid out here in Hebrews 10:24 and 25. That means that what takes place before, during and after the corporate gathering is essential to the gathering.

And it's the one element that most obviously can't be fulfilled virtually. The live stream cuts a person off from both giving and receiving the 'one-anothers', and there are about 60 commands, or 60 'one-anothers' in the scriptures.

So that means that right now the government is forbidding what God commands. Pastors need to understand this. The government is forbidding what God commands. The 'one-anothers' are a requirement, a duty, an obligation to obey Jesus Christ. You must be together physically to accomplish this end, and corporately to fulfill the biblical mandate. What they call socializing we call fellowship and it's expressly forbidden which, by definition, demands the church humbly defy the government.

Sixth, is the ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The question has to be asked, and this is a question we won't answer today. But it has to be asked - the question that has to be asked is whether or not we can take the essential elements of the corporate gathering and make them virtual without fundamentally altering what they are.

Just because technology, wonderful as it is, facilitates certain things doesn't mean the Lord Jesus Christ is blessed in heaven, that we are giving up the physical gathering and claiming the beauty and wonder of virtual reality.

Jesus gets to decide whether you can parse out the elements of the corporate gathering, and do them virtual without fundamentally altering what they are. And it's a difficult question.

Seventh, is church discipline. It's an essential component of the corporate gathering. And just think about it for a moment: church discipline begins at step one where one believer goes to another believer and shows them their sin, which is an aspect of fellowship. I mean, in theory, step one is happening all the time, in homes, here in the gathering. It's happening all the time.

But nevertheless, the latter stages of church discipline must take place corporately, which doesn't mean they have to take place every time we gather, but it is to say that when it takes place, it must take place corporately,

since it calls for action on the part of the entire assembly. And to be a part of the assembly you have to assemble.

And for privacy reasons, at minimum, you can't practice church discipline virtually.

Seven essential elements for the corporate gathering: the public preaching of God's Word, the public reading of Scripture, corporate prayer, corporate singing, fellowship, the ordinances, and church discipline.

Which leads us to our fifth question: why do we gather?

Why do we gather? Well, for one we gather to worship; to commemorate what God has done through His Son in the Gospel. To commemorate what God has done through His Son in our salvation. To simply worship the Triune God and ascribe to Him honor and glory. We gather to worship. But we also gather for the equipping of the saints.

And I want you to see this for a moment. Turn to Ephesians 4. You might even be in Ephesians 5 - turn to Ephesians 4. We're going to look at verse 11 and following.

It says this: "And He gave," referring to Christ, "some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers" - note this - "for the equipping of the saints" - for what? - "the work of service" - to what? - "the building up of the body of Christ;" - for how long? Verse 13 - "until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature, which belongs to the fullness of Christ".

So listen, our job, as a leadership, is to equip you, the congregation for the work of service, and in turn, you then work the work of servants. And this contributes to the maturing of the body of Christ. Now, this should be obvious to many of you. But the government is essentially forbidding you from the work of service.

You can't come together physically for Bible studies. You can't come together physically for women's ministry. You can't come together physically for men's ministry. You can't come together physically for youth ministry. No fellowship events for those with the gift of helps or hospitality.

The government is forbidding you from the work of service. So, we're equipping the saints, for the work of service to the building of the body of Christ. And the government is saying, "No, you can't do that work of service". The government is saying you can't do that.

And, inevitably, someone will say, "but they're still allowing us to do most of our ministries, we just have to do them virtually".

To which I would say, well then, let's just do everything virtual. Let's just go to permanent virtual. Let's do everything in our lives virtually. If there's virtually no difference, pun intended, then let's just do what we do. And really do what many churches are doing - we'll just go permanent livestream. We'll be virtual Gnostics, where the physical is bad, but the virtual is good. We'll do virtual parenting. Virtual date nights with our spouse. Virtual physical intimacy with our spouse. We'll dine in restaurants virtually. We'll do virtual shopping.

Let's just figure out a way to do everything virtual. All of human existence, make it virtual.

I think you get the point. We gather to worship, and we gather to equip the saints for the work of service. But the government has virtually forbidden - again, pun intended - the ongoing execution of that work, which again, puts them in opposition to - who? - to God, and puts us in a position where the government is forbidding what God commands. So let's summarize what we've seen so far. The church is the universal body of believers that gathers in local assemblies to accomplish the Great Commission. Christ is the head and supreme authority of each local assembly.

The Gathering is when the full body of Christ, with its elders and deacons, come together for corporate worship.

The essential elements of the corporate gathering are the preaching of God's word, the reading of Scripture, corporate prayer, singing, fellowship expressed in the 'one-anothers', corporate participation in the ordinances, and the practice of church discipline.

And we gather for the purpose of worship, and to equip the saints for the work of service, a work that is critical to the progressive maturity of the body of Christ.

You with me so far?

Which leads us to our sixth question. And really, it's at this point that our focus will shift a little bit, where we'll begin to kind of get into the nitty gritty of the present state of affairs. The question is this: are we permitted to gather at present? Are we permitted, by our government, to gather at present. In fact we can say it like this, have we been permitted to gather at any point by our government in nearly 10 months?

Think about that for a moment. Do you realize it's been nearly 10 months since some churches have been together physically for a gathering? 10 months. We haven't necessarily felt that because we've been gathering. But there are churches that for nearly 10 months have altered the way they gather corporately, to the extent that I would say they aren't gathering corporately.

And for some reason, Christians have really struggled with this one. Pastors have really struggled with this one. I was on a call with a number of pastors, upwards of 90 of them - and I didn't take a survey, so I don't know how many of them felt this way - but the voices that spoke, we're incredibly thankful that Jason Kenney were permitting them to gather at a third capacity.

'What a kindness. How kind of Jason Kenney to allow us to gather at a third capacity,' as if Jason Kenney is the head of the church.

The obvious answer is no. We're not permitted to gather. That's why the RCMP was here today. The RCMP was here along with AHS because we're not permitted to gather. They do not permit us to gather.

You say, 'But James, we're allowed to gather at 15%.' Okay, you're right. We're allowed to have "a" gathering. But we aren't allowed to have "the" gathering. Again, for 10 months now, the government has forbid us from corporate worship. To be compliant, we as elders must tell a significant portion of the body, they can't worship.

Think about that. As under-shepherds of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are being told by the government to tell the flock of Christ, 'Sorry, you can't worship today. It's not safe. The government says so.' That is pastoral malpractice.

That is the difficulty for us; struggling to tell people, "No, you can't worship today. No, you got to worship online."

Do we have that authority? Can we tell people they're not allowed to worship? That the people of Christ here at GraceLife, for which we're responsible, that they aren't allowed to come and worship? You say, "But James, that's what you did when the pandemic began." You're right. And it was born out of ignorance: ignorance about the virus, ignorance about what a proper response to our government is in a situation like this. And it was incredibly difficult.

Put yourself in my shoes: how, how do I shepherd people I can't even see? I was coming here and preaching sermons to a camera. I would get home, and I can recall just taking my suit coat off and hanging up my jacket, and just wondering, "What in the world are we doing?" To prepare all week long to minister the Word of God to God's people, and I can't even see them. Couldn't even see you. Didn't have any opportunity to interact with you after the service. Didn't get to see you interacting with the body. Didn't get to see the other elders interacting with you as well.

We refuse to tell people of this body, they can't come.

Our responsibility as shepherds is to open our doors. We are opening our doors to worship.

I told AHS this morning, we don't know if we're going to be compliant today. Because we don't know whether or not you're going to come. That's up to you. You're adults. You're well informed.

You know the nature of the situation legally, you know the nature of it medically. You understand. You're here because you want to worship. I'm not going to make that call for you.

And so really, this is the critical component that people need to understand. If you disagree with the way we're handling things, this is the - this is the nub right here. This is the juggler. Our responsibility as shepherds is to open our doors to facilitate God's people coming together in worship.

But at that point, what you do is out of our control. We can't make you come. But faithfulness for us is simply opening our doors and doing ministry as usual. And these are incredibly difficult times.

I mean, if pastors are struggling with them, how much more those allotted to their charge? And so, faithfulness, for you right now - and I'm speaking to you who are live streaming - faithfulness for you right now may mean staying at home and live streaming. You have our support in that, but with the information we have, we refuse to forbid the flock from gathering corporately. Look, if you're going to come get a virus and die, we wouldn't want you to come.

99.7% of people who come down with COVID-19 are going to recover. Do you realize that there are plagues in the Old Testament that got unleashed on Israel in a single day that killed 1000s? And we're concerned about the flu, essentially.

Now, a time could come when we'd have to do something to ensure we're ministering to those who aren't here. But right now, it's really one week at a time for us. We're doing exactly what we believe the Lord would have us do, come with may.

{Thank you, James} You're welcome.

I need to say that it is impossible for us to be in this place without a unified leadership. We have - what is it? - seven or eight men: I mean, you've got Mike in LaCrete, is doing the same thing. Jake comes in, cut from the same cloth. We have men that are together and united. That is a wonder in and of itself. I know pastors right now who want to open the doors and can't because their leadership is divided. I know of one pastor who is at a point where he was considering to walk away from his church, because his elders were holding him back and he felt like he was walking in pastoral malpractice. I think it is time for those elders to resign.

So are we permitted to gather at present? The answer is a categorical no. But we're gathering anyway and we're gathering in obedience to the supreme authority, to which every knee will bow, both in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord – including Jason Kenny.

Which leads us to our seventh question: does the government have the authority to prevent us from gathering? Does the government have the authority to prevent us from gathering? And this needs to be answered from two perspectives, both biblically and legally.

To answer this question, biblically, let's start like this: where is all authority derived from? It's derived from God. "I am the Lord, and there is no other; Besides Me, there is no God," Isaiah 45: 5. That means that every sphere of authority has received a delegated authority.

It has been delegated to them by God.

And that means two things. One, that God determines the limits on that authority. Government is a minister of God (Romans 13:4) and therefore it must fulfill the purpose for which He sent it. And, two, everyone who exercises authority is accountable to Him - whether it's an RCMP officer, Jason Kenney or Justin Trudeau - each individual will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ for their exercise of their authority.

And there are distinct spheres of authority. You have the home. You have the church and the government. And there's a certain measure of overlap between them. For example, murder committed in the home will bring the enforcement arm of government and they also bring with it consequences in the church. A crime committed in the context of the church will, too, bring the enforcement arm of government and could have implications for the home.

But though there are overlaps, there are clear lines of distinction. For example, the church doesn't get to make governmental policy. Correct? The home doesn't either. So the question is this: can the government dictate to the church how to worship? No, absolutely not. In fact, it's not even open to negotiation.

At some point in the pandemic - and I'm not inviting these pastors for this, it was at a particular point in the pandemic, but - in Ontario, there were some pastors that reached out to the Justice Center for Constitutional Freedoms. At that point, I think they were limited to 10 people, and they upped the ante on the legal side of things to put some pressure on the government and the government contacted these pastors - cut the whole legal proceeding off at the bypass - contacted these pastors and ask them what they wanted. And the pastors said, "we want 30%." What do you think the government said? But, don't worry about it. What did the government say? They said 'yes'. Now, did the government have science and medicine to back up that decision? No, you know what, that was? Sheer politics. They were counting the cost of a legitimate action by citizens of the country against their unjustified actions.

But there is no negotiation.

You might remember that Pharaoh tried to negotiate the terms of worship. God said to Pharaoh, let my people go that they may celebrate a feast to me in the wilderness. And what did pharaoh do? He refused. So God brought 10 plagues against Egypt, wiped out Pharaoh and his army. After the ninth plague, here's what Pharaoh said to Moses, he said this: "Go, serve the Lord;" - and here comes the concession, the negotiation - "only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you" (Exodus 10:4).

So Pharaoh gets to the point where he's ready to cave, makes this offer, this negotiation... concession. And how do you think that went for Pharaoh? He doesn't get to set the terms of worship. God sets the terms of worship. And Pharaoh died.

Listen, the government receives its authority from God. God sets the limits on that authority and will hold them accountable and there are in no way permitted to dictate to the church how to worship. Period, paragraph, end of story.

But that's biblically; can they legally? Well listen to the beginning of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law, as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

Let me say it again: the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits, prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

Do you know what that means? It means the government is subject to the law of the land. You know, we oftentimes act like the government is the law - that whatever the government says goes, there is a law that governs this land. Government is subject to that law, and that law is fundamentally in place to protect the citizens from tyrannical governments.

And so we aren't the ones that are in civil disobedience. The government is. They need to justifiably prove that what they're doing is necessary. That the infringement on our civil liberties is necessary. It's our responsibility as the citizens of this country to hold them accountable. In fact, I would say this, a failure to do so would be a dereliction of duty.

Now, it's the courts that are going to ultimately decide whether or not they have justifiable grounds. But as citizens in order to know whether we should be exercising our fundamental rights and freedoms, we have to assess the situation. So let's do that. And as I do this, let me just say at the outset that I understand that people have lost their lives due to COVID. So I understand that there are people who are grieving the loss of a loved one because of this virus. And so I'm not in any way, shape or form wanting to belittle that loss.

But death is happening all around us. In fact, the measures that are being put in place in terms of lockdowns are likely resulting in more deaths than the virus itself. And I'll make a comment about that in a moment. So yes, death is tragic, but this is a virus. And that is just part of life in a fallen human world. In Alberta, out of a population of 4.4 million, as of last night, there have been 841 COVID related deaths.

And it's important to express it like that, because that number doesn't distinguish between those who died of COVID, and those who died with COVID. 818 of the 841 died with a co-morbidity. And so you would have to go into the details to discern whether COVID killed them, or whether they were dying or were killed by something else peripheral to that. It's also worth noting the average age of those who've died is 82. Right in line with the statistical averages.

And it's also worth pointing out that the annual death rate is also in line with the statistical annual averages. That means the presence of COVID-19 isn't resulting in an abnormal amount of deaths. In fact, the definition of a pandemic was changed about 10 years ago in relationship to H1N1. At one time, a pandemic was defined by that which resulted in an excess number of deaths over and above the annual averages. That was changed 10 years ago so you don't have that now, but they can still call it a pandemic, because the definition has been changed.

And so it isn't justifiable on the basis of deaths. Stop for a moment - 10 months, nearly now, 841 people have lost their lives. Tragic, it is. But that's a COVID related death. 841. If you put that into your calculator, you would get an error message. I can't even give you the percentage of that. It is like a fraction of a fraction of a percent of the population of Alberta that has lost their lives in relationship to COVID-19.

By the way, they also say 99.7% of people who come down with COVID-19 will recover. 99.7%. And I'm sure there are a bunch of statistics out there. But nevertheless, 99.7% - that's basically 100%.

So the question is this: how are they justifying these measures? How are they justifying these measures? Well, it all revolves around - what? - the presented fear that the health care system is going to be overwhelmed. And so the concern is that we're going to overwhelm the health care system. And so every effort is being made to prevent that possibility from ever occurring. And yet there is no evidence that it actually will; that if you just let the virus do its thing, gave people information about how to be responsible in relationship to the virus, that things wouldn't just go on as normal.

The number of ICU beds, as I understand it, is not out of the norm. In fact, I've even talked to one individual in the health care system who says there's no flu, he asked, "Is there a flu, influenza?" No. Why? Well, it's probably because it's being recognized as COVID. The flu has always been with us.

So you would think that we'd allow the system to be stressed just a little bit, before avoiding an outcome that might actually not occur. And again, what's amazing is that the deaths resulting from lockdown measures dwarf

COVID related deaths, upwards of 10 to 1. That's 10 lockdown related deaths for one every one COVID related death. Japan - you heard this? - reported 2000 suicides in the month of October alone. 2000 suicides at that time was more than the number of COVID related deaths up to that point.

So how do they keep the concern around overwhelming the healthcare system going. Cases- there are supposedly 19,260 active cases at present. Now, why do I say 'supposedly'? Because of the test they're using. The PCR test, prone to false positives. In fact, apparently it wasn't ever intended to be a diagnostic test and can't diagnose viral illnesses. In addition, when running a test on a person's nasal swab, Alberta is employing 40 amplification cycles. Even the beloved Dr. Fauci has apparently said anything over 35 is essentially useless - proves nothing. It's estimated that anywhere from 50 to 90% of positive COVID cases are actually false positives. Which, and I'm not a doctor, makes the whole asymptomatic issue rather convenient, doesn't it?

So, it's all about cases. That's why they're pushing tests and testing. That's why it's such a great virtue, that a government is doing so much testing, because it's guaranteed that if you test you're going to get positive cases. And if you can increase the number of cases, then you can put fear in the people that they're going to get COVID-19 and die. And you can justify this idea that we have to make sure the healthcare system is not overwhelmed. I would just say this, and I'll say this somewhat tongue in cheek, you know what make COVID-19 go away. Just stop testing. Just stop testing.

What about social distancing? Well, it's important to note the virus is airborne. So while social distancing might mitigate the spread of the virus through the notorious water droplets, the virus can remain in the air for one to three hours.

The water droplet is not the only way that this virus spreads.

So, what about masks? Well, masks, according to doctors can function like a petri dish on your mouth, where you have the virus just sitting over your mouth all day long. And some say that the statistics demonstrate that those who wear masks are actually more prone to getting the virus. And furthermore, while they may conceivably protect you from a water droplet, they can't protect you from the airborne virus - those masks can't keep that out.

And furthermore, there are all kinds of negative health issues associated with masks. Dentists call it mask mouth - decaying teeth, receding gums.

And so does the COVID virus provide justifiable grounds to limit fundamental expressions of our rights and freedoms? And I'm not a judge. But I would say any just judge would have to look at the facts and deem that, no, it doesn't. And I don't know what it is. It's either incompetence, or malicious deception. As far as I can tell, there are only two options. Either the government is incompetent. I'm not a doctor, but I seem to have better information than they do. Either they're incompetent, or they're deceiving, really, the world. And I would just say this, that governments all over the world right now, whether it's incompetence or whether it's malicious deception, are storing up wrath for themselves for the day of judgment when they will stand before Jesus Christ and give an account for their governance.

All that to say this: on biblical grounds alone, we have every reason to meet, and do so to the glory of God. The Scriptures require it, and the government can't forbid it. But we also have a responsibility to meet on legal grounds. And this too, is tied to Scripture.

This second greatest commandment is that we love our neighbor as ourself. And right now our neighbors' civil liberties are being eroded by either incompetence or malicious deception. And anyone who's experienced communism will tell you that communism just seeps in unnoticed until, boom, it's there, and it's too late. There's nothing anyone can do about it. And nearly an entire generation of men gave their lives for our freedoms, did they not? And we are here falling asleep at the wheel and just handing over our civil liberties to the government.

Not me. I'm sounding the gong, and on the basis of this second commandment, I refuse to let this country's government just steal the civil liberties of an unsuspecting, trusting people who don't know the truth, don't know reality as it really is, don't understand the nature of this world system that Satan is its ruler, that governments aren't good, necessarily. There may be individuals in the government that are, but as a system, they are not upholding the honor and glory of God.

So does the government have the authority to prevent us from gathering? Not biblically, not legally, in my estimation, and not legitimately.

So why is this happening? Well, it's not that hard to figure out, and you don't need to be a conspiracy theorist to do so. But it would help to know just a little bit of eschatology. 1 John 2 and verse 18, says this, "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know it is the last hour." That verse indicates that while there are many antichrists, and there are many, there is yet one who is to come.

The apostle Paul calls him the man of lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, "who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called God and object of worship", the very next verse. In Revelation 13 indicates that during the reign of the Antichrist, you will need a mark to buy and sell. Now, we're not going to get into the timing of the rapture at this point in time. Just stay with me on this.

Revelation 13:16-17. A time is coming, when you when the mark to buy and sell. It says this: "And he", referring to this one, "causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name".

So what is that? You essentially have there a one-world government, with one-world economy, where you're going to need a mark, to be able to buy and sell to feed yourself.

And so that's the direction that everything is going. God, and His sovereign plan and purposes, fulfilling His eschatological plans, is moving everything toward this reality of a one-world government.

Now, that's not going to happen overnight. It's not like countries like Canada and the US, or Australia, or the UK are going to be experiencing the joys and blisses of freedom, and then all of a sudden, boom, there's the Antichrist. There's going to be a conditioning of the people to bring them to the point where they believe that

this arrival of the Antichrist is the best thing for them. Where they embrace his arrival with a look to him as the Christ, essentially, as their Savior.

So the question is, can we see the beginnings of that coming to fruition? Now, in our day. We can. There's been a globalist push for years. Globalism is a buzzword of government and media. It's virtuous. That's why they hated Donald Trump so much. He's not a globalist. He was an America-first kind of a guy and they hated that.

Globalism has been a push that's been taking place for a long time. In fact, our own, very own Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, recently said this to the economic global community - and this is a quote that I watched him speak in a video with my own eyes - "This pandemic has provided an opportunity for a reset. This is our chance to accelerate our pre-pandemic efforts to reimagine economic systems that actually address global challenges, like extreme poverty, inequality, and climate change."

You'll notice how that's just cloaked in language that's so virtuous. Listen to that again.

"This pandemic has provided an opportunity for a reset..." By the way, Jason Kenney has referred to this. Our own media actually has spoken out against this, one particular author for the Sun. "This pandemic has provided an opportunity for a reset, this is our chance to accelerate" - notice - "our pre-pandemic efforts to reimagine economic systems that actually address global challenges, like extreme poverty, inequality and climate change".

I didn't vote for Justin Trudeau, but as an elected official, I don't think he ran on globalism. I don't think he ran on reimagining economic systems. I don't think he ran on any of that.

So what is this globalist agenda? Well, I think you'll find is this - to increase governmental power by increasing governmental dependence.

Governments want more power. That is the bottom line and to get more power, it has to convince its people that it needs more government. And there are a few different ways it will seek to do that. For one, it will take steps to make people more financially dependent on the government that one way we'll do that is tell them they can't work. Tell a people they can't work, cripple them financially, and then print money to offset the difference. For two, it will either create or capitalize on a crisis in order to offer itself as the people's Savior. It's exactly what Trudeau is talking about there.

And that's how Hitler came into power. Germany was in great need, great financial hardship, and Hitler came in promising to be the savior of the country. And now we know what happened.

And in the meantime, while this globalist stick push is taking place, the globalist left wing agenda will infiltrate the media, the public school system, the universities, and the government. And you know, that's already happened. Through and through, that's been underway for years.

So why is this happening? Because everything is moving toward the end.

Does that mean the Lord's coming is near? Well, it's nearer than it was. I'm not a prophet, or the son of a prophet. Only God knows when the Lord is coming back. But it's certainly near than it was.

And our job is to be faithful. Our responsibility is to be faithful, to be obedient. To be a city on a hill, Matthew 5:14. To not hide our light under the lamp, Matthew 5:15. But to let our light shine before men in such a way that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:16.

So listen, this is a call to be prepared. I don't know if normal is coming back, folks. And if you're hoping and banking on normal, I mean, just take the vaccine for a moment. The goalposts have been moved in this pandemic multiple times. Ontario, when they announced the arrival of the vaccine, announced "We got this vaccine, that's great. But let's keep our strongest defense against the virus. Avoid crowds, social distance, wear masks. Don't celebrate Christmas with your family."

So the test is going to be whether Jason Kenney does the same thing. Does he move the goalposts? He said, 'We're almost there. We're almost out. The vaccine's just around the corner, just hang in there just a little longer.'

Well see what happens. And whether or not the goalposts move yet again. But the bottom line is, is you got to be ready. Children, it's time to get ready. Everyone needs to get ready. Everyone needs to get prepared. You need to be ready to let your civil liberties go. You got to be ready to kiss this world goodbye. You got to be ready to take a stand for the Lord Jesus Christ. And to receive whatever comes, wherever persecution comes.

The world, many of the world is not going to understand what we're doing. They're not going to understand why we're doing it and they're going to hate us all the more for it. We know they hate us already. Others will look at it, and they'll be thankful that we're standing but either way it doesn't matter. Our aim and ambition is to be pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ. And to be ready to stand on his account.

And that means this. You need to make sure that you are settled up with God. It is time to make sure that you are ready to meet God.

I don't know what the future holds. I don't know what tomorrow brings. Right now my life is one week at a time and I don't even have a guarantee for tomorrow. You need to be ready. You need to settle out of court with the Lord Jesus Christ. You do not want to go into court with the Lord Jesus Christ. You want to bypass court by trusting Christ now, by recognizing that you have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God; that if you refuse to embrace Christ, you will die in your sins you will suffer under the full unadulterated, unhindered righteous indignation of God for all of eternity. The only way of escape, the only way out, is to turn from your sin and look to Jesus Christ and believe on Him that when he was on that cross, He paid the full penalty for sin. And that He died. And then He rose from the grave and is now seated the right hand of God. And if you would believe in your heart, that God raised Him from the dead, and confess Him as Lord, you will be saved.

Times are changing, folks. I don't know what the future holds. But it's time to stand. It's time to get ready. It's time to be weaned from the comforts of this world. And to honor and glorify Christ.

Let's pray together.

Well Father, we acknowledge that You are God, You are King, You are Lord, that Jesus Christ Your Son is the King of kings and Lord of lords. And so we recognize that You are Lord over everything, Lord over politics, Lord over the church, Lord over all of human existence. And Father, we would pray for our government at this time, that

You would grant them repentance, that they would come to see themselves as sinners in need of a Savior, that they would come to realize that they are in rebellion against You, that they are trampling underfoot the bride of Christ, the very bride for which Jesus died. That You would bring them to repentance and faith in Your Son, and that we would see the fruit of that repentance in a just and gracious and benevolent governance. Lord, ready us as a people - ready the body of Christ in this province, in this country. Wake up pastors, Father, God, I pray, to stand and prepare their people to stand. And we pray that You will be glorified as we try and aim to honor You and all that we do. In Jesus name, amen.