



Devotional Series...

SEASONS OF CRISIS AND CHANGE

REV. DR. MARCUS J. CARLSON
*Preparing for Amazement Ministries,
Garrett, Indiana*

Ecclesiastes reminds us of the nature of seasons, and 2020 has brought with it some of the strangest, most difficult and uncertain seasons any of us have experienced in our lifetime. We are in a season of both transition and crisis. We are transitioning into a new normal as we continue to navigate what we hope is the other end of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are in a season of crisis as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and all of its challenges, along with the death of George Floyd and the pain of the systemic racism we have yet to overcome. Add to this the normal challenges of life, and it has been a rough season for almost everyone around the world. COVID-19 brought with it great financial challenges and even greater mental health challenges. Transition and crisis are hard, painful, confusing and scary.

For the first time, we have experienced tremendous corporate grief around the pandemic: temporary changes to routine and freedoms, loss of our routines and normal lives, and more. One of the struggles is we have no template or experience for a global corporate grief. Directly naming the challenges we face is essential in recovering from crisis, but rather than dwell on those challenges, we must point and move toward hope. We cannot forget that even in the midst of challenge and crisis we are a resurrection people, a people of hope.

We know God is with us in any challenge, and God is bigger than any crisis. While that can give us both hope and peace, it does not solve the pain that comes with grief and loss. It does not always take away all of the anxiety we experience in the midst of tremendous uncertainty.

Crisis is very revealing. It reveals what is most important to us, it reveals our idols, it reveals our character and passion. In any crisis there are challenges and opportunities. While we name the challenges and work on their resolution, our focus as a people of hope who trust in the Holy Spirit should be on the opportunities.

We worship a God who redeems. We gather at Easter (although not in our church buildings this year) to celebrate a God who conquered death. One of the habits I have tried to develop (and instill in my children) is to look for the good, the redemptive work God is doing in any situation. God takes the great and makes it powerful. God takes the ordinary and makes it extraordinary. God takes the tragic and makes something beautiful. I have seen it more times than I can count in my life and ministry.

There is one question I have been asking myself and others in the midst of this unprecedented season of transition and crisis: “***What has this season made possible?***”

In the midst of the transition and crisis, the Holy Spirit is working. God is making things possible that never would have been possible six months ago — from the simple gift of more family time to the profound opportunity to bring an end to systemic racism. This is likely the churches’ greatest opportunity since the Great Awakening to bring the Gospel to people all around the world. In the midst of the challenges we face, I am filled with hope.

In the midst of this season, what is God making possible?