

Bishop Gary Lewis – South Georgia Church of God Prayer Revival 4-5-2020

Sam Chand

1. **Happy Palm Sunday!** Today is the historic “Triumphal Entry” of Jesus into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey as people are welcoming him with Palm branches and Hosannas. Little does anyone know that in the next 8 weeks change will accelerate the trajectory of Jesus’ mission. He began his ministry at about 30 years of age (Luke 3:23). For approximately 3+ years Jesus has been preaching, teaching, selecting leaders, healing, feeding, helping... but now the trigger is pressed on Palm Sunday!

Following Palm Sunday, He will institute the Lord’s Supper, be betrayed and arrested, crucified, buried, resurrected, revealing Himself as human and divine, giving final instructions and vision to the apostles, ascends into heaven, about 120 gather in the upper room, the Holy Ghost descends on the Day of Pentecost and the church is launched—into all the world! All that in about 8 weeks!!

So much changed. So much changed so fast. Nothing went back to how it used to be.

In this context of today being Palm Sunday triggering quantum changes, my assigned prayer topic is so timely.

My prayer topic assigned to me is **The Change**.

Some are calling this the C-Generation for Coronavirus Generation. I think C-Generation is for **CHANGE Generation!**

Over the last few weeks I have been personally in touch with hundreds of Pastors and churches all over the world. I’m going to list those changes, say a sentence or two about each of them and conclude our time by taking you to the REAL PALM SUNDAY and give you a free book just to help any way I can.

CHANGES: These are my thoughts curated from hundreds of conversations... *Pastors and leaders can utilize this for conversations and collaborations.*

STRATEGIC: (What, Who and Why—*HOW YOU THINK*)

1. You have changed.
2. How you think has changed.
3. Your organizational behaviors / culture has changed. Abilities – Outlook - Incentives
4. Your church has changed. It’s no longer the BUILDING but the PEOPLE. You won’t go back to the same church!

5. Every day is Sunday now! Week days are as important as weekends. Can you do services during the week? Day time? Evening time?

Now, there are greater opportunities for evangelism. Like Nicodemus people are coming to Jesus at night – online!

6. Your plan to holistically minister to people:

Focused preaching on “Others” and “God’s Faithfulness”...

- (1) Spiritual health
 - (2) Mental health
 - (3) Relational health – Family / Dependency on others
 - (4) Physical health
 - (5) Financial health – Financial insecurity leads to health issues, food insecurity, medical bills etc.
7. PASTORS & LEADERS:
 - (1) While leading others, don’t forget to take care of yourself.
 - (2) Connect with other Pastors & Leaders and check up on them.
 8. In this time right now, there are no large or small churches—it’s a level field.
 9. These changes are deep—there’ll be a new normal that will keep emerging and stay in flux for some time. You’ll KEEP CHANGING.
 10. Crisis accelerates change...which accelerates conflict. Crisis brings out more of whatever was in the person before the crisis.
 11. Decision making and execution.
 - (1) Speed of decision making
 - (2) People involved in decision making
 - (3) PASTOR is emerging as the final decision maker
 - (4) No perfect decisions—only good for right then
 - (5) CASCADE the communication of decisions
 12. How you’re thinking about money:
 - (1) Regular income (tithes & offerings)
 - (2) Special projects already in process
 - (3) Missions – local and global
 - (4) Salaries
 - (5) All other fixed costs
 - (6) Contingency plans for 10%, 20% and 30% reduction in income
 - (7) Reach out to regular contributors even send pre-postage-paid offering envelopes and assure online giving is encouraged
 13. During crisis, the leader has to handle the crisis but also keep their eye on new emerging leaders. As well as those who were leaders who cannot deliver under this pressure.
 14. Do not engage with and waste energy on people who cause dissention.
 15. Your go-to people have changed. Your technology/IT people who used to be in the background, last to be consulted and usually told what you wanted are now in the forefront and they are advising and executing. You can do without most of your staff/leaders—but—now tech is “essential”.

16. How you'll do church **AQ** = After Quarantine
- (1) Two kinds of people:
 - a. How long will this last?
 - b. What can I do to improve while we're in this crisis?
 - (2) What are you packing in your suitcase?
 - (3) What unique opportunities are you envision for your church? And how are you preparing for them now?
 - (4) What do you need to Start – Stop – Continue?
17. This plague is not the real crisis—the real crisis is coming our way even now and will last for a while. This plague is just the trigger—not the bullet. The real crisis will be:
- (1) Marriages in trouble
 - (2) Domestic abuse
 - (3) Child abuse
 - (4) Substance abuse
 - (5) Alcohol abuse
 - (6) Depression
 - (7) Shame
 - (8) Economic setback
 - (9) Lessened in person church attendance
 - (10) Disappointment for those wanting to go back to how it used to be
 - (11) Babies being born to parents not ready for another child
 - (12) All these new babies coming to our church without an adequate nursery
 - (13) Missionaries who the church couldn't support

...Pain (no choice) is now – suffering (choosing our responses) for the short and long term.

18. Leading in ambiguity is the highest level of leadership. When you're 100% sure, you're too late.
19. Currency needed for leadership in changing times:
- (1) Trust
 - (2) Past Decisions
 - (3) Leadership Equity

TACTICAL: (How, When, Where, How Much, Evaluation...*WHAT YOU DO*)

20. How you deliver church services. I have seen more innovation in the Church in the last few weeks than I have seen in decades! Pastors and leaders who were resistant, now are forced to lean into it—even promote it.) TODAY – I have preached at my home church in India, another church in Atlanta with thousands of viewers, and now with you—leaders from around the world—without leaving my home!
21. How you'll organize your administration, meetings, communication etc.
22. How you'll connect to new salvations.
23. How you'll do water baptisms.
24. How you'll do baby dedications, weddings, funerals and other rites of the church.
25. How you'll do counseling.
26. How you'll do children and youth ministry.

27. How you'll do small groups.
28. How you'll disciple and grow people.
29. How you'll deliver Pastoral Care in hospitals, nursing homes and even people's homes.
30. How you'll develop and train leaders.
31. How you'll rethink the highest and best usage of your building. (Working from home offices vs. on church location.)
32. Restructures will allow you to scale. Adjust to doing fewer things—better.
33. Every parent is a homeschooler now...help parents with virtual support groups.

5 C's From Celebration Church, Austin, TX

1. CARE – Care for yourself, people in the church and staff
2. CLARITY – Clarity in our message and methods
3. COVERAGE – Reach every age group
4. CONSISTENCY – Consistency in presence, finances and values
5. COMEBACK – We will come back from this--stronger

PEOPLE ALWAYS...

Rockets didn't put people on the moon—dreamers and PEOPLE did.
 Internet didn't connect the world—innovators and PEOPLE did.
 This message isn't coming to you via technology only—PEOPLE are making it happen.

PEOPLE ALWAYS!!

Pray for your Pastors.

God trusts YOU! He placed on the planet knowing that He could trust you to adjust to the new realities and LEAD the CHANGE.

Back to Palm Sunday! PALMS are mentioned only two times in the NT. Once in the Gospel of John and next in book of Revelation. Same John is speaking of PALMS & The REAL PALM SUNDAY!

Revelation 7:9-12 King James Version (KJV) ⁹ After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and **palms in their hands;** ¹⁰ And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. ¹¹ And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, ¹² Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

JOHN 12	REV 7
Old Jerusalem	New Jerusalem
A few people	Can't be numbered
Only Jews	ALL people
On Earth	In Heaven
Fickle crowd	Loyal crowd
Only as King	King of Kings

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