Hey Life Church family.

I am incredibly excited to preach to you today

for the first time out of quarantine.

(audience applauds)

If you are kinda wondering like, you know,

how are you having church when most places

we're not really supposed to have church.

This is actually prerecorded from earlier in the week

and what I wanted to do is record a message

that could speak directly in

to what is going on in the world.

Now, I don't want to pretend to be an expert

in any sense of the word.

I cannot tell you what's gonna happen to this virus.

In fact, I don't think even those

would call themselves experts could tell you

what's going to happen.

But what I wanna do is try to speak into the life

of our church from a perspective of us

who should have faith.

Before I kind of give you my thoughts,

I wanna try to tell you the story behind our quarantine

because I haven't talked a lot about it

and you're my church family

and I just want to share it with you.

If you haven't been here and you don't know the story,

Pastor Bobby Gruenewald and I flew to Germany

a little over two and a half weeks ago

to teach at a leadership conference.

If you can imagine, there were about 15,000 people

at this conference.

There were 7,300 at our location

where we were broadcasting from.

At that time there was only maybe 30

or no more than 40 people that had tested positive

for the coronavirus.

Unfortunately, one of those people

happened to be at the conference.

So Bobby and I went to a private small dinner

with 14 people, the night before the event started,

we gathered with the other speakers and in the next morning

I did the opening session teaching on leadership,

then Bobby and I ended up flying back

and had boarded our flight and we were midway back

to our connecting flight in Chicago

when we turned on WiFi and got the very bad news

that one of the speakers, one of the 14 people

that we had dinner with actually tested positive

for the virus.

So we immediately told the flight attendant

who notified the pilot and they moved people

out of our section and they looked very, very angry with us

and now I know what it's like to be a leper.

You don't wanna be a leper or have the coronavirus

on the airplane.

We couldn't explain to everybody.

We didn't know but they gave us looks

that were not like go to church,

they would go to somewhere else,

looks if you know what I'm saying. (audience laughs)

And when we deboarded the plane,

we met with the health officials and we decided

to self-quarantine for 14 days and very thankfully

at the end of that time we were not sick,

but we are praying for those who have been impacted.

Now, those people who are close to me, a lot of them said,

how was it?

I mean maybe like God slowed things down for you.

You got a two week vacation.

How was your staycation?

What was your favorite Netflix show?

Did you enjoy, and so on and on.

And what I wanted to say is, and I don't want to complain

because I know there are people that go through real trials

and what we went through was not anywhere close

to what a lot of people go through,

but it was one of the most difficult seasons of my life.

I don't know how to describe it, but I just,

I fought depression the whole time.

What I realized is we're just not created to be alone.

And that's why I want you to know you matter so much to me.

My family matters so much to me

and so the whole time I had to fight to think on things

that are pure, and lovely, and admirable

and focus on the goodness of God

and not the challenges of my personal situation.

I did work nonstop.

Putting a workaholic in isolation

is kind of like putting a drunk in a bar.

There was no one to stop me and I hurt,

and I worked, and yes, through all the pain

I did get closer to God.

The good news is about the eight people

that I know of in Germany that did contract the virus.

They're all doing well.

You can thank God for that.

They're recovering, (audience applauds)

and are gonna be just fine.

So, that's a little bit of the story behind what Bobby

and I went through, and that brings us to today.

Today, if you look around, open up any news app,

turn on the television, you're gonna see all sorts of news

that may even be changing as I'm speaking right now,

but we've got professional sporting events

and conferences and concerts, counseling as we speak.

We've got some schools

that are shutting down for this semester.

We've got travel bands appearing right and left

and we know that grocery stores and even Amazon

is out of toilet paper as we speak.

The world is coming to an end, okay?

What are we gonna do?

Are we going to ignore it and act like it's okay

and just have great faith?

Or are we gonna stockpile beans and rice

and stay home for the next three months?

What I wanna do is talk about our perspective

as followers of Christ, and even how I'm thinking

as we lead the church to reach a lost in a hurting world.

Personally, I'm not gonna make any longterm decisions today.

We're not gonna say definitively

here's what's going to happen over the next three months

or five months or whatever.

I found that in a time of crisis and panic,

it's best not to project and into the future.

It's always best to make wise decisions

based on what we know today, in this moment,

and that's how we're going to lead.

We're gonna lead day to day.

We're gonna watch what's happening.

We're gonna pray for wisdom and we're gonna make the best

and most wise decisions as possible.

Now, as disciples of Jesus, I hope you'll know

that the filter that forms our decisions

is very different from this world.

Our filter is not the same as this world.

In fact, the Bible tells us, speaking of the word not

that we should not be conformed to the image of this world,

but we should be transformed by the renewing of our minds,

(audience applauds)

so then we can test and approve what God's will is.

His good, his pleasing, his perfect will.

Everybody say not.

Not.

Everybody say not.

Not.

We are not of this world.

We are not like everyone else.

We are not to live in fear and that's why the title

of this message is not afraid.

Not afraid.

We as followers of Christ are not going to live in fear

with an emphasis and on not.

Everybody is saying not.

Not.

I wanna show you three ways

that we are not like this world.

The first way we are not like this world.

Number one is we live by faith and not by fear.

We live by faith and not by fear.

In fact, when Jesus was comforting his disciples

in John 14 He said, "Do not."

Somebody say not.

He said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled."

He said, "You believe in God, believe also in me."

He went on to say in verse 27 He said,

"Peace, I leave with you.

"My peace I give you."

He said, "I do not give to you as the world gives."

And because I do not give as the world gives He says,

"Do not let your hearts be troubled,

"and do not be afraid."

I hope that there's someone here

that if you've been living in fear,

if you're anxious all the time,

if you're afraid of what's going to happen,

where the economy's going, where the wall is going,

because we know Jesus, we do not live in fear.

He gives us a peace that is not of this world.

It is from His kingdom.

We live by faith and not by fear.

In fact, I love the way the new living translation

translates the words of Jesus when it says this.

Jesus said, "I am leaving you with a gift."

This is a gift.

Some of you, you should receive this gift today.

If someone gives you a gift, you should be excited.

And when you open up the gift, you cheer,

and you say thank you for this gift.

Our God has given you a gift.

And the gift He gives is peace of mind and heart.

When the rest of the world lives in fear,

we open up the gift from our God.

Peace of mind and peace of heart.

A peace that is not anything this world would understand

is a piece that only comes from heaven.

Jesus says, the peace I give

is a gift the world cannot give.

So don't be troubled or be afraid.

I hope you'll understand that God

is not sitting in heaven doing the one-handed clap.

I didn't see this coming.

Oh my gosh, I didn't see the virus coming.

I mean, I was so distracted

by the US politics with the election, you know.

I had, I didn't even see this coming.

I mean you tryna blow it in China

and I wasn't looking over there

and now it's all out of control.

I don't know what to do.

God is not panicked.

He's not taken aback.

He is not surprised.

He is not afraid.

We have to remember that our God is always faithful.

He's always in control.

Our God is good. (audience applauds)

Our God has a plan.

Our God will never leave us.

He will never forsake us.

He's worthy in all things, everything,

everywhere, every day.

He will not leave you.

Whatever you're going through, our God is working for good.

Whatever battle you're facing our God is with you.

If our God is for you, who can be against you?

Our God is present and He is always good.

We, as followers of Jesus, we live by faith and not by fear.

In fact, speaking of nots, the apostle Paul said this

in 2 Timothy 1:7.

He said, "For God has not."

Somebody say not.

Not.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity,

but of power and of love and of self-discipline.

We are not panicking.

We have the peace from heaven.

We are not fearful.

We live by faith.

Paul said this, "For we live by faith and not by sight."

We live by faith and not by fear.

Can somebody tell God, thank you for His gift of peace.

(audience applauds)

How do we respond,

when the world feels like it's falling apart?

We don't respond like the world response.

We are not like the world.

We do not think like the world.

Number one, we live by faith and not by fear.

Number two, we are sacrificial not selfish.

We're sacrificial not selfish.

Now, technically, we are selfish.

Without Christ, we're selfish.

How many of you have a two-year-old or younger?

Raise your hand again.

You never have to teach a two-year-old how to be selfish.

All right?

Have any of you ever held selfish lessons?

Come in today and we're gonna teach you to be selfish.

What I'm gonna do is try to take the toy that's really mine

that I gave you and when I do, I want you to scream, mine.

Okay?

You never have do that because by nature,

our human fall in nature is very selfish.

But our redeemed nature because of who Christ is

is not selfish, but reflects His nature.

The most sacrificial love in the history of the world.

The one who gave His life for us, dwells within us.

(audience applauds)

So as followers of Christ, we are not selfish,

but we're sacrificial in what we do.

In fact, Paul told the believers in Philippi this.

He said, "Don't be selfish.

"You're not to be selfish.

"Don't try to impress others, be humble thinking of others

"as better than yourselves."

Now watch what he said.

He didn't say go freak out and hoard supplies,

but he said, "Don't look out only for your own interests,

"but take an interest in others too."

In fact, when I look at the first century believers.

The early church,

as they were facing extraordinary persecution.

When they would lose their homes,

they would lose their families.

Oftentimes they would lose their lives for their very faith.

Let me tell you what they weren't doing.

They were not rushing to the Jerusalem megamart

to grab emergency supplies.

They were not freaking out and hoarding beans

and rice and toilet paper, okay?

We have to understand is that we are the body of Christ

and because of that we put others ahead of ourselves

and we have a fantastic opportunity to not be selfish,

but instead be sacrificial.

In fact, I love what happened in the early church

in Acts 2 we see this about all the believers

in verse 44 says, "All the believers were together

"and they had everything in common."

Now watch what they did.

They didn't know hoard.

They weren't selfish.

They weren't rushing to guard their own supplies,

but instead they sold property and possessions

to give to anyone who had a need.

What I hope you'll understand is in the next few weeks

or months, you may have more opportunities for generosity

in the name of Jesus than you could at any other time.

(audience applauds)

You may have something, someone else needs

and you recognize God has blessed me

to be a blessing to someone else.

Not just materially, but spiritually, and by faith.

You'll know people that are hurting and that are afraid

and you can not only just give them something material,

but you can give them hope.

And you can give them companionship, and you can speak faith

into the lives of others who are so often paralyzed by fear.

Scripture goes on to talk about this New Testament church

and it says that,

"Every day they continued to meet together."

Now let me ask you this, how often do they meet together?

Scripture says they met together every day.

They continue meet together in the temple courts

that was publicly, and they broke bread in their homes

and they ate together and we're glad and sincere in hearts.

They met together publicly and they met together privately

and they met together every single day, at a time

when a lot of people will be afraid to attend church.

What I want you to do is not have a once a week faith.

I want you to have a daily faith.

(audience applauds)

where every single day you wake up and say, wherever I am,

whatever it is, we're having church right here.

It may be just me and my friend.

It may be a life group.

It may be that we meet publicly.

Wherever it is, it ain't once a week faith,

it's a daily faith.

Where we gather, we pray, we study God's word,

we seek His face, we lift up His name.

We share what He gives to us.

We have an every day faith.

You may just join with those around you.

If we're unable to meet for a short period of time,

you may get your life troop and meet in your home

and have church together.

What we're not gonna do is abandon our faith.

We don't just have a once a week

gathered together church kind of faith.

We have a daily faith

where we daily seek the goodness of God.

(audience applauds)

Now, as we move forward, there'll be a lot of questions

in the short term or maybe even the longer term

of what will be our strategy about public gatherings.

Let me just be very, very clear on my personal bias,

our team's personal bias,

it hasn't changed since we started

and it will never ever change.

As for meeting together, we've always seen ourselves

as a spiritual refuge for people that are hurting.

This has always been our bias and we will always be biased

to meeting together as long as it's safe or reasonable.

As often as we can open up the doors,

we will open up the doors.

We'll always have and I promise you, we always will.

Let me say this to you though.

You're smart people, most of you.

(audience laughs)

Most of you, some of you, a few of you.

Most of you are smart people.

And what I want you to do is be smart.

If you don't feel well,

or if you feel like you could be vulnerable,

then have church at home, at Church Online.

Don't feel like if the doors are open

that you have to be there.

I promise you, you won't go to hell

if you miss a week at church.

But I don't want you to miss fellowship with God

and fellowship with people as often as you can.

So if the doors are open, you be wise, you're smart people,

but don't stop worshiping God.

Now, if it becomes incredibly obvious that is unsafe

or unwise to meet publicly for a week

or for an extended period of time,

what I want you to know is we will decide campus by campus,

state by state.

There may be some states where it is safe to meet

and others where it is not.

If we end up not meeting, what I want you to know is

we will create the most evangelistic Church Online

experience in the history

of the world. (audience applauds)

You may shut the doors, but you can't shut down our faith.

We'll preach the gospel.

We'll take it online.

We'll do anything for the sin to reach people

who don't know Christ,

and to reach people no one's reaching.

We're gonna do things no one's doing.

We will not stop preaching the gospel

and making the name of Jesus known.

If we have to gather online, we'll gather online.

Wherever two or three gather

and God is bigger than a confined space, we will gather.

Speaking of Church Online.

May I brag on those of you who gives generously?

Those of you who do, I'm not bragging on all of you,

but those who do.

Hey, because of your generosity,

our church is able to give away the platform we created.

We created the Church Online platform

and every week there are over 11,000 services

that other churches

hold on the free (audience applauds)

Life Church Online platform because of your heart,

your faith, your generosity, and think about the tool

that is created for such a time as this.

In fact, this week alone, this week,

there's approximately 700 new churches signing up

to be on the Church Online platform.

This week, (audience applauds)

700 churches this week.

So, pastors tell me all the time to tell you,

those of you who give, thank you for your generosity

to make this gift free, to keep the message of Jesus alive

online even in such a time as this.

Scripture says again, let's look at Acts 2.

"Every day they continued to meet together

"in the temple courts.

"They broke bread in their homes and ate together

"with glad and sincere hearts praising God

"and enjoying the favor of all the people

"that would happened.

"The Lord added daily those who were being saved."

With all my heart, I believe that God will use this time

in the world, when people are afraid,

they will look to Him and we will see daily people

being born into the kingdom of God

(audience applauds)

because we're not like this world you see.

We're not like this world.

We live by faith and not by fear.

We are sacrificial and not selfish and number three,

we shine the light, not hide it.

We shine the light, we do not hide it.

Jesus said this.

He said, "You are the light of the world.

"A town on a hill cannot be hidden.

"Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl.

"Instead they put it on a stand,

"and it gives light to everyone in the house."

In the same way church, here's your assignment.

Let your light shine before others,

that they may see your good deeds

and glorify your father in heaven.

You are a light.

We let it shine.

We do not hide it.

Unfortunately during this time, there'll be so many people

who feel incredibly unsettled,

unsure and anxious and they are looking somewhere for hope.

The good news is what are you.

You're a bunch of radical, faith-filled hope dealers.

(audience applauds)

You are light shiners.

You are love givers.

Listen to me, church.

The virus may be contagious,

but I'm praying for some Jesus followers

that are even more contagious

(audience applauds) with His love,

with His grace, spreading hope, spreading life.

I'm believing that the hope that Jesus brings

spreads faster than any virus all over this world.

Because listen, church.

Whenever, the world grows darker,

the light of Jesus just shines brighter.

What are we?

We are light shiners, hope dealers,

faith givers, that's what we are.

We are the body of Christ.

We don't hide our light, we let it shine.

We are not.

Somebody say not.

Not.

We are not of this world.

We do not grieve as those who have no hope.

So I did a little research today and I looked up some verses

in the new Testament that had the word not in them.

And what I wanna do is I wanna share with you a few nots

because we are not of this world.

We do not think like everyone else thinks.

I'll share with you some verses from the Scripture

with the word not whenever an angel appeared

to announce the birth of Jesus, the angel said, "Do not."

Somebody say not.

Not.

"Do not be afraid.

"I bring you good news of great joy."

Whenever Jesus came, He said,

"I did not come for the healthy, but I came for the sick.

"I did not come for the righteous, but came for the sinners,

"and the hurting, and the broken."

The good news is that because we are not of this world,

we do not live by bread alone,

but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Jesus does not lead us into temptation,

but He delivers us from evil.

And therefore we do not store up treasures on earth,

but instead we store up our treasures in heaven.

Jesus teaches us this.

He says, "Do not."

Somebody say, do not.

Do not.

Do not worry about tomorrow

because each day has enough to worry about itself.

We as followers of Christ, we walk by faith, not by sight

because God did not give us a spirit of fear

and just like Jesus is.

We're not praying for our own will, but not our will,

but your will be done.

There's good news that we are saved by grace

and not by works.

We're justified by faith in Christ

and not by the works of the law.

God did not appoint us to suffer wrath,

but to receive salvation.

Therefore, we do not set our minds

(audience applauds)

on earthly things like what you read on social media

and what the latest news report is.

But instead we set minds on things above.

Let perseverance finish it's work in you.

So we will not lack anything.

And we as followers of Christ,

we'll not grow weary in doing good.

Because we know that at the proper time,

we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Are we in a battle?

Are times difficult?

Is there a lot of opposition?

The answer is yes.

But our battle is not against people.

It's not against flesh and blood,

but against rulers, and authorities,

and powers of this dark world.

Therefore we will not be overcome by evil.

We are the church of Jesus Christ and we will overcome evil,

(audience applauds) with God.

We know, the Lord is not slow in keeping His promise.

And we do not grieve like the rest of mankind

who has no hope.

We will also not give up meeting together

as Scripture says, Yeah.

because the Lord is our helper, and we will not be afraid.

We also know that not everyone

who thinks they're saved,

or actually born into the family of God.

There are a lot of people who go to church

and try to do good things

but don't really know the grace of God.

And therefore we are not ashamed of the gospel

because it's the power of the gospel that brings salvation

to everyone who believes.

And just like the first century believers,

even amidst persecution and hardship, they said,

we can not stop talking about what we have seen and heard.

We can't stop.

We can't stop.

We can't stop praising.

We can't stop worshiping.

We can't stop giving.

We can't stop sharing.

We can't stop shining, because of what we see.

(audience applauds)

Because of what, we've heard.

And we will not be anxious

about anything, but in everything.

With prayer and petition,

we will, the people of God, make our request known to God.

And His gifts to you.

The peace of God which transcends all understanding

will guard your hearts, and your minds,

and your souls in Christ Jesus.

We are not of this world.

Therefore we are not afraid.

What do we do?

We live by faith, not by fear.

We are sacrificial, not selfish.

And we shine the light, we do not hide it.

Scripture says in 2 Corinthians 4 seven, eight, nine,

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay."

What does that mean?

The treasure is Christ.

It's His goodness.

Bad news is you're the jar of clay.

We're the body of mud.

We have this treasure, the gift of salvation.

We have this power dwelling within us to show

that this all surpassing power is from God and not from us.

Hey, we may be hard pressed on every side, but church,

we are not crushed. (audience ululates)

We may be perplexed, but we are not in despair.

We may be persecuted, but we are not abandoned.

We may be struck down, but we are not destroyed.

Because of who He is, (audience applauds)

because of what He's done, because of His power,

because of His grace, because of His majesty,

because of His truth, because it is presence

that will never leave us, and will never forsake us.

We are not afraid.

Who are we?

We are the body of Christ and the light will shine

whatever you're going through today.

Can you feel His love for you?

He's not abandoned you.

He has not forsaken you.

He is with you.

14 days I didn't have human contact.

Not a soul, not a hug, not a like share this meal.

No, it was put it down outside the door

and then walk away like a prisoner or a dog.

But I was never alone.

I was never alone.

Because our God never leaves us.

And He never forsakes us.

And He is always good.

And that's why church, no matter what it comes,

because of Christ,

we re not afraid.

So Father today,

I pray that you would build the faith of your church.

That a light would shine in this world.

God, for those who are hurting, for those who are sick,

we pray for healing.

We pray for protection.

We pray for a wisdom.

God, we pray for a vaccine.

We pray for global economic and environments.

We pray for our leaders who are making decisions.

And God we pray for your church,

that when the world grows darker,

the light would shine brighter.

And all of our churches today,

those of you that are followers of Christ,

can you say I want my light to shine?

Would you lift up your hands right now?

Just lift up your hands.

Father, I pray that every day, every day,

as people of faith every day,

that we would see opportunities to show your love,

generously, sacrificially, words of encouragement, gifts,

God inviting people to know you.

Use us God, to let your light shine.

As we keep praying today at all of our different churches

at Church Online, those of you all over the world,

there are some of you

who you might be very afraid right now.

I'm absolutely and completely convinced

that there may be times when the world does grow very dark

and people start looking around for answers.

If you're looking for answers, if you're looking for hope,

let me tell you the best news you could ever hear.

There's a longing inside of you for something more,

something different,

something you cannot find in this world.

You tried lots of things.

I don't know your story, but chances are

you might have hoped more money would make you happy

and it didn't.

More fun would make you happy, it didn't.

More travel would make you happy, it didn't.

More of this relationship or that or this experience

and you still find yourself empty is because

you're longing for something that this world can't give.

The good news is, that there is a God

that is bigger than this world.

And yet He loves this world so much

that He sent His one and only son.

He didn't shout His love from heaven.

He showed His love on earth when He became one of us

in the person of Jesus.

Who is Jesus?

He is the sinless son of God.

Perfect in every way.

Who gave His life on a cross,

and God raised him from the dead so that anyone

and everyone in this includes you

who calls on His name could be saved.

That's why I said earlier that I'm not ashamed of the gospel

because the gospel has power to save anyone who believes.

Today as you watch from wherever you watch

and those of you who recognize, I don't have this peace,

I don't have this assurance.

I don't even know where I stand with God.

Listen, when you call on the name of Jesus,

He hears your prayer.

He'll forgive all of your sins.

He doesn't just save you from eternal damnation,

which He does, but He also saves you

from a life of meaninglessness on earth.

Today as you're watching, wherever you are,

those who say, yes, I want, that I want this peace.

I want His forgiveness.

I want His grace.

When you just turn away from your sins and turn toward Him,

call on the name of Jesus, He'll hear your prayer.

He'll forgive your sins.

It'll make you new.

Those today who say, yes, I want His grace,

I want His mercy.

I want to be different.

I don't wanna be like this world.

I want a peace.

I want an assurance.

I stand with him.

That's you today.

You're turning from your sins.

You're calling on Jesus, you say, yes, Jesus save me,

forgive me, make me new.

That's your prayer.

Just lift up your hands high now all over the place

and say yes.

As we have hands going up in all of our different locations,

those of you on Church Online, you just click right below me

and as we see people from all over the world coming to faith

in Jesus, would you just pray aloud wherever you are

just pray this prayer.

Pray heavenly father, forgive my sins.

Jesus save me.

Jesus save me.

And make me new.

And make me new.

Fill me with your spirit,

Fill me with your spirit.

So I could serve you, So I could serve you.

And follow you.

And follow you. For the rest of my life.

For the rest of my life. My life is not my own.

My life is not my own. I give it to you.

I give it to you.

Thank you for new life.

Thank you for new life. Now you have mine.

Now you have mine. In Jesus' name I pray.

In Jesus' name I pray.

Could somebody celebrate this.

(audience applauds)

Celebrate loud, welcome those

who are in the dark family today.

(whooshing)

Hey, thanks again for joining us here at Life Church.

You know, as a church, it's always our hope

to help you continue to grow in your relationship

with Christ and deepen your faith.

And we have a number of resources and videos

on our YouTube channel to help you do just that.

You can find additional videos that go along

with this message content as well as past messages.

All on our YouTube channel, and a great way to know

when those become available, is simply subscribe.

Again, thanks for joining us, and we'll see you next time.

(upbeat music)