

Tuesday, April 21, 2020 Devotional

Emmanuel Baptist Church Family,

We are over a month into our isolation from each other as the gathered followers of Jesus. If you are like me, you are still feeling out of sorts even while forming new patterns of routine. I am finding it hard to preach to a camera, which I have read is true of many other pastors. I want, still, to be a good communicator of what God has given to me for you each week. And I do not feel that is happening.

For all I know it is different for you as well when you watch. There may be distractions at home that you don't encounter at the gathering on Sundays. There may be noise from others in the house who are not watching. A pet may be a distraction. The neighbor dog may be barking at a squirrel. Even without such noises, you may find it harder to hear the Lord than when gathered in the sanctuary of the church.

I have formed a new pattern to my week, but it still feels strange. You may be feeling the same.

When the Israelites were exiled in Babylon, the Babylonians encouraged the Jews to sing some of their upbeat songs of rejoicing (Psalm 137). The Jews replied, "How can we sing Yahweh's song on foreign soil?"

We are living in strange times, under strange circumstances. And at times you may find it hard to sing Yahweh's song. But do so anyway. Praise of God, focusing on Him instead of feeling sorry for ourselves, will lift your spirit. It isn't psychological. Remember, the Holy Spirit lives in you. The Spirit wants to lift your spirit in these troubled days. And praise of God is the focus of that lifting.

Hang in there. Keep praying. Keep singing of your faith. And see how the Spirit will work in your spirit.