

**NAME**

WS Message 4-5-2020.mp3

**DATE**

April 7, 2020

**DURATION**

26m 31s

**START OF TRANSCRIPT**

**[00:00:00]**

The following is a message from Wellsprings Congregation.

**[00:00:08]**

Hi, everybody.

**[00:00:11]**

If you are watching this on Sunday, April 5th, that means that Easter is next Sunday. I know.

**[00:00:22]**

I'm also not sure how that happened, though it does mean that March is finally over.

**[00:00:28]**

Alleluia. The longest march in recorded human history is done.

**[00:00:35]**

And here we are now, one week away from celebrating Easter, which normally at Wellsprings would mean an egg hunt and a visit from a live bunny or two.

**[00:00:47]**

So it will not be exactly the same this year. But I assure you, Miss Carroll has been doing all kinds of research on the latest innovations in social distancing. Easter egg hunts and shelden.

**[00:00:58]**

The bunny will definitely make some kind of appearance in next Sunday's worship video. So some things will stay the same.

**[00:01:07]**

I also personally take great comfort in knowing that Channel 6 ABC is still going to show all five hours of the Ten Commandments with Charlton Heston this coming weekend, so they haven't announced which day yet. They say it'll be either Saturday or Sunday next weekend. But I am totally serious.

**[00:01:27]**

If you would like to be on an epic group, chat with me and have commentary back and forth as we watch all five hours of the Ten Commandments. You should let me know in the chat or send me an e-mail because I would love to do that with anybody who wants to. Anybody, any other big Bible nerds like me. It's also around this time of year that Jews observe Passover, which actually begins this coming Wednesday at sundown. It's a commemoration of the exodus of the Hebrew people from Egypt, where they were held in slavery for generations. It's a season right now all around us when we go outside for our walks, when we open up the windows and take a breath of fresh air, we can see that this is a time of new birth in nature, a time for celebrating and remembering what it feels like to break free.

**[00:02:30]**

What it feels like to experience resurrection. In so many different ways. And yet here we all are stuck at home.

**[00:02:43]**

I saw a statistic on the news today that I didn't even believe at first, so I had to look it up.

**[00:02:48]**

It said that half of humanity, half of the people on the globe right now are under some kind of stay at home order. Four billion people. That's actually slightly more than half. There are just under eight billion people alive on this earth. Now, some of us can't stay at home, even just here at Wellsprings. We have folks who work in hospitals or in

the health care system. We have wellsprings who work in grocery stores, in the transportation industry or in emergency services, who are still going out to their jobs each day and honestly, probably working harder and under more stress than they've ever been under before.

**[00:03:37]**

Thank you all. For all of you who are still going out to work. Thank you so much for keeping us safe and fed and well. And for the rest of us.

**[00:03:56]**

This time. Waking up each morning, it might feel a little bit like. Same story, different day.

**[00:04:06]**

I've seen all the jokes, it's happened to me, too, forgetting which day of the week it is waking up in the morning and realizing I'm going to see the same people, the same walls, the same house, same desk and computer screen, probably.

**[00:04:21]**

Right. Eat the same foods, wear the same clothes, some of us. We are dealing with a lot of sameness. And a lot of uncertainty about how long this will last.

**[00:04:40]**

Last Sunday, I got to do something that I don't usually get to do. I attended another church's service, don't where it was after our service was over. But there is another church here in the city that had an online service at five o'clock. So I tuned in to watch and the pastor of that church was preaching that day about the Book of Exodus.

**[00:05:06]**

He reminded me of something. That I had forgotten in that book.

**[00:05:12]**

Something that seems like an important detail right now in the story of Moses. I know that we are a bunch of Unitarians here, so not everybody might have the story of Moses at their fingertips. I will remind you then that probably about thirty five hundred years ago, many thousands of years ago, we all know that there was an Egyptian civilization. Right. We've seen the pyramids and the Sphinx. We know that in that civilization there were pharaohs, a ruling class. And we also know that there were people enslaved by that civilization, as was common and unfortunately still happens in our world. Historians agree that one of those enslaved groups of people were the Israelites, the Hebrews.

**[00:06:06]**

They were an enslaved people in the civilization of Egypt for generations, probably about four hundred years.

**[00:06:17]**

The story in the Book of Exodus picks up in this place, and it tells us that at a certain point the pharaoh in Egypt felt threatened by the enslaved Hebrew people. There were more and more of them with every successive generation, and they had this sense of cohesion and spiritual connection from their relationship to their God that made them strong. And he felt like there was a risk there that they were going to rise up against his government.

**[00:06:53]**

And so because he felt threatened, he ordered all newborn Hebrew boys to be killed.

**[00:07:01]**

Moses was born at that time, and Moses, his mother, desperately afraid, trying to save him. Put him in a basket and she sent him down a river.

**[00:07:22]**

She prayed and hoped that somehow he would be found and brought to safety by someone who was safe, and not only did she get that he wasn't just found by any old Egyptian.

**[00:07:33]**

He was found by the pharaoh's own daughter. Moses was taken in and adopted and raised in the pharaoh's household. His identity not known.

**[00:07:48]**

He was raised as an Egyptian prince, someone who was so vulnerable, whose life was so threatened. Now living this wonderful, beautiful, easy, incredible life. But it would not last.

**[00:08:08]**

Eventually in this story, Moses' identity and his background is discovered and he has to run. He has to go into hiding to save his life. And by the time we get to Chapter 3 of Exodus, which is where this preacher I was watching last Sunday picked up his story.

**[00:08:27]**

Moses was living in a place called Midian, a sleepy, rural, mountainous place, isolated away from everything he'd ever known. Far away in the mountains, herding sheep. His entire life, he had lived the daily routine of a wealthy, privileged Egyptian prince. And now he was waking up every day washing, eating.

**[00:09:00]**

And tending to the sheep. That's it.

**[00:09:07]**

What this preacher that I was watching reminded me of, that I'd forgotten was that it is in Midian while he is living this boring, stripped down life of loss and separation. It's in Midian. Where Moses sees the burning bush.

**[00:09:36]**

This has got to be the lowest point. Of Moses's life. Away from the only family and friends he's ever known. All of his comforts gone.

**[00:09:51]**

Each day, just another long stretch of sheep and grass, the same routine.

**[00:09:59]**

With this fear also all the time over his shoulder that his life is at risk, that he could be found and caught at any moment.

**[00:10:09]**

It's in that place.

**[00:10:12]**

That he encounters the holiest presence he has ever known. And God not only meets Moses in Midian in that burning bush, he actually gives him a mission in the burning bush. He gives Moses a mission to be of help to his people. And Moses really does not want to do that.

**[00:10:38]**

He is like, now. Dude, come on. I've been through enough. Right. I have been through enough. Can you not give me a mission? Can you.

**[00:10:47]**

Can you not call me to save my people right now? Please. Can we just not? But God is like, sorry, sorry, bro. You are the man for this job. Moses. And as a little bit of extra support, God says, I will give you some help. I will connect you back up with your brother. I will send you and Aaron together. To go back to Egypt. And to try to free the rest of your people. The Hebrews.

**[00:11:25]**

They go back to Egypt and it really fails at first, their plans don't work.

**[00:11:30]**

And it is only with a lot of struggle and loss and even death. That the exodus happens. That the journey towards freedom and healing for the Hebrew people comes to pass.

**[00:11:51]**

But it does. It does come to pass.

**[00:11:58]**

It's one of our core beliefs here at Wellsprings that the burning bush is blazing everywhere. There is no place so dark or frightening. That holiness cannot touch it.

**[00:12:17]**

Sometimes it's in the deepest holes or on the grayest, cloudy skies yesterday's that the fire of that grace and love burns all the more brightly that we see it even more clearly. Early on in March, a million years ago, right before I had any realistic sense, I think, of how serious this situation would be. I read one of the articles that was going around at the time it was written by an epidemiologist. I honestly couldn't tell you the author's name now or how to find it. I'm sorry, but I remember very clearly two things that this scientist said that stuck with me.

**[00:13:08]**

The first she said people, you know, will get this coronavirus. And the second someone you know will die.

**[00:13:22]**

I have not been able to forget that. And Lord, do I want her to be wrong? We know that there are people contracting this virus and surviving and recovering from it every single day.

**[00:13:40]**

And.

**[00:13:43]**

I know that we are already seeing the names now. The names we recognize. People who have gotten sick. And people who have died. That's not over yet.

**[00:14:03]**

I think it has always been one of our greatest gifts as a community.

**[00:14:09]**

That wellsprings is a place where we show up for each other in our grief as well as in our joy. You don't have to be or feel a certain way to belong here. We will make space for you and for the hard things that happen in your world.

**[00:14:35]**

We all walk this line right now. We're all doing this dance every single day of holding off despair. While still making room, I hope. For compassion. I'm somebody who watches the news every single night. Dangerous habit in these times. It's just part of my normal routine. It comforts me to see what's happening in the world, especially in an election season. I'm always turning on the evening news because I'm just again, kind of a nerd like that. So every night around dinnertime, I will turn on CNN, even if it's just for a few minutes and depending on the day and my schedule, I'll catch usually one of three different shows.

**[00:15:22]**

I'll either see Anderson Cooper's show or Don Lemon show or Chris Cuomo's show. And on Tuesday night, this week, I turned on the news and I saw Chris Cuomo. But he was in a zip up hoodie. And he was live streaming his show from his basement. Chris Cuomo tested positive for the Corona virus this week.

**[00:15:50]**

So now he is doing his show from his basement, quarantined at home, staying away even from his wife and his kids.

**[00:16:02]**

Now, I mean, I don't know Chris Cuomo, but he's one of those public figures who has some presence in my life, just like probably for many of you, John Prine, the great folk musician, is. He is also sick right now with Corona virus. Or just like maybe Ellis Marsalis Junior or Adam Schlesinger, all of whom are public figures who have now died in the midst of this pandemic.

**[00:16:40]**

Maybe there are other names. That I don't know.

**[00:16:46]**

People who are precious to you, people who have died or who are sick and trying their best to recover.

**[00:16:59]**

If you would like to. Type those names. If you're watching on Sunday in the chat right now. We can hear those names. We can pray for them.

**[00:17:13]**

We can hold those people in our hearts altogether. This morning while we gather. And through the days and the weeks ahead.

**[00:17:26]**

What I saw on Tuesday night on Chris Cuomo show and for the past few nights now on his show, it was something that really touched me. It was just how tender all of his guests were being with him. And Chris Cuomo, is this like New Yorker tough guy? You know, his dad is Mario Cuomo. His brother is Andrew Cuomo, the current governor of New York.

**[00:17:53]**

And yet.

**[00:17:55]**

Everyone was being so soft. They were not treating this like just another routine day. Anderson Cooper was saying I love you to his friend on TV as he threw to him for the 9:00 hour. And we got to hear a little behind the behind the curtain of their friendship as Chris Cuomo started calling him Coop in return. Sanjay Gupta, the doctor who's CNN's medical correspondent. Has been calling Chris, my brother, in every other sentence.

**[00:18:33]**

Reminding him that especially now that he's sick. Chris, it's really okay to take a day off from doing the show.

**[00:18:42]**

Sanjay is telling all of us as we watch that every single night at 10 0 5.

**[00:18:47]**

As soon as Chris Cuomo comes off the air, Sanjay Gupta calls him on the phone to ask about his symptoms, to be sure that his friend has the best info about what to look for in case he starts feeling worse.

**[00:19:05]**

In these whispers of care, of looking out for each other, there is no heroism, there's no need to swoop in and save the day because none of us are going to be able to do that on our own.

**[00:19:21]**

But there is so much compassion and tenderness on display. That's what helps us heal. From the loss and the fear and the uncertainty all around us.

**[00:19:42]**

I did something else last Sunday before watching our service in the morning. I went out for a walk in my neighborhood. And I got to this one intersection like two blocks from here. I live in a pretty busy part of the city normally. But last week at 8:30 a.m. on a Sunday morning, there was nobody outside. And as I got to that intersection, I heard this whirring sound whirring. And I was like, what is that? And I heard more worrying.

**[00:20:17]**

And then I heard a few clicks and then the stoplights at the intersection changed.

**[00:20:26]**

There were no cars, but I but I finally put it together.

**[00:20:30]**

I was hearing the stoplight timers. I had never, ever heard those.

**[00:20:38]**

Before that intersection is usually full of cars, sometimes honking impatiently while they want to turn. But somebody is walking across the street and there's barking dogs and there's people talking. There's three restaurants on that corner that all have outdoor seating and just on a regular routine day, it is so noisy there.

**[00:21:00]**

I've lived here for seven years. I've never heard those stoplight timers. All of these quiet whispers. All of these burning bushes. They may have been here this whole time. We may have always loved our favorite people. But maybe we are saying and hearing I love you more often now. We have always needed safety and food and good health. But I hear now the cries of people. The strikes, the Amazon workers, the Instacart workers.

**[00:21:56]**

I hear us needing it. I hear it being honored even.

**[00:22:04]**

In these bizarre ways, the the way our government is throwing around words now like forgiveness and cares, right? The Carers Act forgiveable payroll loans for small businesses, deferring student loan payments, waiving penalties for people who take money out of their retirement protections against eviction.

**[00:22:29]**

For renters, banks offering grace periods on mortgages. It's like we've all started to realize that maybe we are all human and we need to go a little easier on each other. That's the whisper I hear right now that I would really love to see get louder. I would love to see that become a huge roar. Burning engulfed bush on fire.

**[00:23:08]**

That is not consumed. But that gives us a sense of our mission and our calling. To be here for each other.

**[00:23:20]**

There are so many things that have always been our routine.

**[00:23:27]**

But we create those routines. Individually and collectively. We make the routes that we follow. So I hope we choose to keep showing up for each other.

**[00:23:45]**

To look for the burning bush. Even in. The wilderness. Of these times. To keep the flame alive. For one another, by spreading as much of this love and care around as possible.

**[00:24:05]**

Maybe as people in this community. As people of this faith. Maybe spreading love and compassion and healing really is our mission.

**[00:24:18]**

Perhaps that's something that we can remember every morning. When we wake. On each new day we have.

**[00:24:31]**

I mean. And may you live in blessing.

**[00:24:37]**

I invite you to take a moment to join me in the spirit of prayer, maybe close your eyes. Bow your head. Relax your shoulders.

**[00:24:49]**

God of our hearts. Flame of life. That we see even more easily. At the nighttime. The fire that lights the stars and the sun above us. God, please. Be with each one of us in our everyday routines.

**[00:25:17]**

Bring us comfort and meaning on the days that are bad and hard. Stay close, especially to those of us who are scared this morning or are struggling to those whose bodies are working hard to heal. And to everyone who is living right now with worry or grief. Stay close. And may we all show up in your spirit for each other as much as we can with kindness, with compassion for the challenges that are different that each one of us is facing. Not competing, not comparing. But simply with an abundant heart that is open to receiving that love that comes from you as our source. For these prayers I've spoken and for the prayers that each of these people watching is carrying on their hearts. This morning.

**[00:26:14]**

We say amen.

**[00:26:19]**

If you enjoy this message and would like to support the mission of wellsprings, go to our Web site wellsprings u u dot org. That's wellsprings. The letters u u dot org.

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**



Automated transcription by Sonix  
[www.sonix.ai](http://www.sonix.ai)