

What did God say to us as we listened in 2020?

When we started this listening journey together back in April, the first word that we heard was **wait**. We had just entered quarantine, we were being forced by a pandemic to wait on many things. And throughout this entire experience, God just keeps inviting us to let this difficult time teach us how to wait patiently on the Lord. This word wait came again to us loud and clear in the month of December with the reminder that Advent is all about waiting. One of you recently wrote to me about the kind of waiting that God is asking of us. *“This waiting is not like being in line at the DMV! It’s that we’re in the Lord’s incubator. We’re not sitting still out of boredom. We’re holding still so that He can form us. Mold us. Transform us. Make us new.”*

Week 3 was a picture—the picture of a tsunami-like **wave**. One of you heard Jesus say in a dream about this wave—“The thing that we worship is the thing that overtakes us.” Many of you have shared since that update that you’ve had similar pictures and dreams as the meaning of this picture continues to unfold.

The next word that we heard was **sovereignty**. One of you shared these thoughts back in May and they continue to be incredibly relevant for us right now:

“We are experiencing a seismic Global shift. It’s a time to realize God’s sovereignty. The god of economy is going to lose its place and will be replaced by sovereignty. He is doing a big shift that we can’t fully see. It goes beyond time and space. Align yourself with God.”

Also in May, we sensed God telling us to take the posture of **Looking Up**. In these difficult days, don’t look down in despair, don’t look around, as if our salvation and hope come from each other, but look up at Jesus who is our hope and our salvation. And then, this theme circled back around in October when Greg Gallagher shared what he had been hearing. He sensed God caution us about the many ways that we cry out **We Need a Savior**, while God continues to remind us that we have a Savior. Greg heard Jesus say to us **“all eyes on me”**

At the end May we heard a promise that there is a **harvest** coming. And, God is drawing our attention to some of our farming practices that don’t produce good fruit, asking us to realign ourselves with His ways, and to allow ourselves to be **pruned**.

Many times throughout the last 9 months, we’ve heard the call to **repentance**.

Specifically as our nation experienced the pain of grievous acts of racial injustice, we were reminded that God asks His people to lead the way in the healing and restoration process, and recognize that biblically this kind of repair always starts with repentance.

Along the way, we have also heard the call to repent of our idols of comfort, of consumerism and of control.

At the end of May we celebrated Pentecost. Through a variety of means, God began to lay on our hearts this vision of each Christ follower as the **mobile temple**. One of you shared a picture that God had given you. It was an aerial view of our city (like looking at a map), and the Church was scattered all throughout our streets and neighborhoods. And when viewing from above, there were clusters of light shining in all of these places.

This person went on to say: *“This is such a unique season where the Church has been ‘scattered’ out of our centralized buildings and gatherings to our homes and neighborhoods. It seems that in the West we have almost idolized our corporate worship services and have come to make those the very definition of ‘church.’ It’s fascinating to contrast this with the early church or with the underground church today in places like Iran or China.”* This person says, *“I’m wondering how God might use this season of ‘scattering’ to remind us that we ARE Christ’s Church engaged in His mission whether or not we can meet in big services (as wonderful as those are). And rather than viewing this lack of ability to gather corporately as a negative thing, God is challenging me to look at it as a unique opportunity for the Church to ‘preach the word’ and make disciples in the places where we’ve been scattered.”*

Another word that helps us wrap our hearts and minds around what God is doing is the word **wineskin**. New wine, new wineskins. It’s an agricultural metaphor used by Jesus as He talked about the new covenant that would be established by His own blood—the Gospel of the Kingdom that would no longer fit into the old paradigm.

As God brings this metaphor to mind for us in these days, we get to ask: could there be old ways that we are clinging to that are getting in the way of what Jesus is currently doing in His church?

Two themes that have come up again and again are **Unity** and **Purity**. Back in July, I shared some words that I could sense God saying to us as both encouragement and challenge: *“My Beloved Church: Your idea of what unity looks like is limited. If you are willing, I will deepen it. It is being tested and challenged right now. Will you let me deepen your view of what My perfect unity looks like? Up to this point, you’ve only tasted and seen a surface version of unity. There’s more. Will you allow these difficult times to take you there?”*

One of you wrote to me along these same lines: *What if the current situation is a refining fire sent to burn off the impurities in the church? As the fire gets hotter, the impurities come to the surface and we can ask God to purify us, or we can just have gold-plated garbage.*

Many of us have received visions and promises of **revival**. One of you heard the words *“Kingdoms are falling. He is victorious. Revival is rising in his name.”* When this person sought the Lord for further revelation, they sense that the revival is now. It’s happening right now, without all of us being together.

More recently, we’ve had dreams and visions of a tree—it’s a tree that looks on the surface like it may not survive, but underneath, very deep growth is happening. These deep **roots** are a preparation for things that lie ahead, things we can’t yet see, but God can.

As we enter a new year, with continued and significant challenges ahead of us, there is a call to the discipline of **fasting** as we continue to listen fervently. Fasting is one way to invigorate our prayer life and our prayer times. It helps us remember how desperately we need God. He is our food, He is our bread of life and our living water.

The last thing that I want to make mention of is how in these last nine months, one of the ancient prophecies has come alive among us. It's from Joel chapter 2, and was quoted by Peter at Pentecost.

**“Your sons and daughters will prophesy.
Your old men will dream dreams,
and your young men will see visions.”**

It is happening. Our kids, in many ways, are leading the way as their roots are going down deep. They are learning to discern God's voice at early ages.

It's happening, many of us are noticing more and more how God is speaking through our dreams, and that He is giving us words and visions for His church.

I hope that you are encouraged as we look back, that God has been giving us His living and breathing Word to sustain us as well as to prepare us for what lies ahead.