**Text: Hebrews 12:25-29**

**Subject: God is Trying to Tell Us Something!**

 Just the other night, there was a great storm that produced thunder and lightning. The lightning was so powerful that it struck in two places in downtown DC. It struck two National Guardsmen who were camped out in Lafayette Park steps away from the White House and the National Monument.

 Now, the strike against the National Guardsmen was not direct and the soldiers were not seriously wounded. But the strike on the National Monument was a direct hit and looked very serious.

 According to people who follow this kind of thing, they say a direct hit on the Monument is not spectacular because it is 550 feet tall and is typically hit on a frequent basis.

 However, I submit this morning that it was more significant than other times because of its timing. Let me remind you that it is was on Monday of that same week, that a certain person held up a Bible in front of a church downtown as a prop and a symbol of his own power.

 Now, perhaps it is a coincidence that lightning struck the National Monument the same week, or perhaps, God was making a statement of His own—that He is One with all the power, and if not careful, we may find ourselves in a situation that we may not be able to get out of.

 Let me just say that I realize that there are some who might argue that we are already in a situation that we cannot get ourselves out of with this pandemic that we are in the middle of.

And to that I wholeheartedly agree that we are in a tough situation that only God can get us out of and that we are still in the middle of it—that it is not over. Instead, the numbers seem to be climbing up now that the weather is starting to break.

 On top of that, we are in the middle of a time of unrest the likes of which we have not seen since the 1960’s in this Country. It seems like things are really shaky right now and that it seems like things are getting shakier as each day goes by. I truly do believe that things are getting shakier and shakier because God [really] is Trying To Tell Us Something! But, the question is: Are we listening?

 So it is in our text, in Hebrews 12:25. First, we see that is, we see that God is trying to tell us to not refuse or reject Him because it is He who is speaking. However, unfortunately, even with the many subtle and very profound ways God speaks to us, the truth of the matter is, there are too many people who are just not listening.

 As a result, God may continue to speak to us, in a hard kinda way, until we our hearts and desires have turned back towards Him. This is nothing new as we see in Psalm 60.

 In Psalm 60:2, in the KJV, it says, thou has made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it…Then, in verse 3, it says thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

 And certainly, we are astonished at these hard things that we are going through right now in this time in history.

For instance, we are in the middle of a severe economic downturn; a sever global pandemic; and we are having severe issues with brutality and institutional and systemic racism in our communities. These, indeed, are hard and difficult things and it seems like these things are getting even harder especially within the African-American Community.

I don’t know about you but I have tried to get to the root of what God is trying to shake so that I can get the message that He wants me to get; and I can only hope that others are trying to get it as well.

Now, in my search to get to the root of this thing, I have learned that what God is trying to shake, is our desires.

We know this because Haggai 2:6-7 says for thus saith the Lord of hosts; yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

Let’s pause here for a minute because the pattern indicated here seems to suggest that we must first have a shaking before we can experience God’s glory. We see here that there’s a shaking; a desire; then, we see the glory.

Perhaps, that’s what it means when people say: “you see my glory but you don’t know my story.” For most, that story is a story of being shook up in a hard and unbearable kinda’ way and then, afterwhile, and sometimes it’s a long while, God transforms what was into what is—where the only thing that remains is His glory.

Also, perhaps, that’s what the Apostle Paul meant when he said in Romans 8:18, for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

And in between the shaking and the glory, God is first revealing, and then transforming our desires.

Let’s press in a little deeper on this because our desires are located within our hearts, which really means that during our times of shaking, God is dealing with our hearts.

First things first, let me define my terms. This whole notion of shaking desires takes on several definitions. On one hand, in the Hebrews desire is what we delight in; what is precious to us. On the other hand, the ESV uses the word Treasure, and in the NASB, the word wealth is used.

Furthermore, in Haggai 2:8, God says, the silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts. Therefore, we may conclude that what God is trying to shake is our desire for earthly treasures and wealth. At the same time, it seems like what He is saying is that we should trust Him because He has everything we “need” if we would just trust Him, and if we would have any desires for anything but Him.

I realize that this is hard to do because in this world, we are so rooted in the attainment of things, and we are so socialized to wholeheartedly pursue those things, that we sometimes forget that God is the One who will supply all of our needs according to His riches in glory.

As a result, as we have already seen, every now and then, God will shake things up in a hard way, so that our hearts and desires will turn back to Him.

I guess we could say that what is central to all of this is what opportunities we seek in our hearts.

With many, if not most, we place such a high value on our opportunities for economic advancement that we sometimes value it more highly than we ought.

For us, as African-Americans, all we want is a fair shot and a fair shake and a result, we relentlessly pursue those opportunities even though they have alluded most of us, since we left through the Point of No Return The House of Slaves and its Door of No Return on Gorée Island, off the coast of the city of Dakar, Senegal.

Prior to that, for us, Mother Africa, was the land flowing with Milk and Honey; a land flowing with gold, oil, diamonds, coffee beans, and a sundry of other valuable things that enabled us to want for nothing.

As a result, now I would say we are past due for God to reacquaint us with the silver and gold that He declares belongs to Him. In fact, I would go on to say that I don’t understand why it has taken so long for God to bring us up and out of this tough situation we are in.

However, my question is somewhat answered as I considered how long it took for God to bring the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt. The Bible declares that it took God 400 years to bring them out, and the good news is, that as of the end of 2019, we reached the 400 years of bondage in America. So, hopefully, we are going through this intense time of shaking because we may be closer than we ever have been in experiencing the glory of the Lord that has alluded us for such a long time.

Now, of course we’ve all got some work to do. We’ve all got to support one another in our endeavors so that we can build and create our own sufficiency, with God’s help, within the Kingdom of God.

So then, let us continue to listen out for God’s instruction and let us continue to check our own hearts because I believe God is shifting things in a way that we have never seen before, at least not since we arrived here in America.

At the same time, we cannot forget our black and brown brothers and sisters in the African diaspora spread throughout the entire world, who have also been shook up for a very long time. For, we are all in this together.

However, before we get to the glory, let us understand our current story in America. Let me give you a few statistics indicating where we are right now.

According to an article in the Washington Post this past week, African Americans have not made any economic progress since the 1960’s.

For instance, since 1968, the median household income in African American families has stagnated at $13, 024 as of 2016, and actually has gotten worse since then. In comparison, the median income has soared from $50,000 to $149,703 in White families during that same period of time.

These data indicate that we have not made any progress and that there is a wide disparity in the wealth gap between whites and blacks in America. In the article, it was said that “everybody knows that people of color are at incredible disadvantage, but few know that it is as bad or worse than it was before the Civil Rights Movement.”

Another interesting statistic is that the typical black household headed by someone with an advanced degree has less wealth than a white household headed by someone with a high school diploma.

To add insult to injury, as of April 2020, only 48.8% of Black adults were employed, while almost 60% of White adults were employed.

This is partially due to the Coronavirus because when the crisis hit, most African American workers worked in the service industry which means they were out of work during the “Great Lockdown” of the US economy.

As a result, 1 in 5 black families report that they often do not have enough food to eat which is 3 times the rate for white families; black families are also four times more likely to a mortgage payment than white families during this pandemic.

Also, this issue is exacerbated by the fact that many African Americans had very few cash reserves before the pandemic and have even less or have completely exhausted their reserves in the past few months.

Family, these statistics are staggering and they go on and on. However, I lift them up to you today not to scare you but to inform you that we, as a people, seem to be in a dire situation.

At the same time, I still find much hope in God—that He will continue to see us through this season, as He has done now for more than 400 , and that He will make it up to us, as He has done before.

Now, if you don’t believe that God can make it up to us, then let’s consult with Job for a minute. In Job 42:1, after Job had lost everything: his children; his wife; his money; and his health, he said to God, I know that You can do all things and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

Then, in verse 10, after Job had prayed for his friends, God gave back to Job twice as much as he had- before he lost everything. Therefore, if God can do it for Job, then that means God can do it for us. (God can restore, renew, regenerate, rebuild, etc…)

However, in order for us to get what Job got, we must do what Job did. We must trust God even through these difficult times; and we must also pray for one another, and help one another, especially those amongst us who are really, really struggling during these shaky times.

 Right Now Church, I believe **that God is Trying to Tell Us Something!**

At the same time, God is shaking up things up so that, we and others, will have a change of heart in what we value the most.

In Hebrews 12:26-27, it says, at that time, His voice shook the earth, but now He has promised, “yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens. This phrase, yet once more, indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot by shaken may remain.

Let’s pause here for a minute because we see here that there are some things that must be shook so that it can be removed.

For instance, hatred, racism, and greed must be shook up and taken out of the hearts of those who, for whatever reason, feel like they were born with a birthright of superiority.

As we know, since 1492, there has been this attempt to keep the hatred going through people hearts who make up the systems, institutions. With such, these very systems and institutions have been engineered to discriminate and subjugate black and brown people.

However, perhaps, with all this shakiness going on, the time has come for God to root up and then pull out the hatred in peoples’ hearts and minds so that what will remain will be what God has ordained.

In other words, it seems like God is shaking up everything the very structures that perpetuate the love of money by those who have it and the denial of opportunities to those who don’t.

In essence, it seems that through these times of pandemic and protest, God is softening all of our hearts by levying some hard things and astonishing times upon the earth that none of us will be able to get out of without His help.

This includes that softening of our hearts that may have grown hardened bitter because of all of the hardships that we have endured during these several centuries, and many generations of unwarranted hatred and denial of opportunities for advancement that we have desired.

Speaking of desires, hopefully, our desires are changing so that we would desire what God desires for us. Perhaps, that’s what King David meant when he said in Psalm 37:4, that we should “delight [ourselves] also in the Lord; and He shall give [us] the desires of [our] hearts.”

I would venture to say that King David knew that the secret to receiving the fullness of what God has to offer is having a heart that is a heart after God’s own heart. And with such, God will bring forth whatever He has ordained for all of our lives.

And let me say again, as Job said in Job 42:2, we should know that God can do all things, and that no purpose of His can be thwarted. This is evident as we consider our strength and ability to survive the many years of attempts to annihilate us as a people.

Let’s think about it. 246 years of slavery didn’t work; 90 years of chain gangs didn’t work; 100 years of Jim Crow didn’t work; and 100 years of mass incarceration, lack of educational and economic opportunities, hasn’t worked. That’s right! Nothing has worked!

However, all of those things have had a negative impact, and have weakened us, but none of those things have worked to completely wipe us out.

In other word, We’re still here. We’re still surviving. We’re still striving and thriving, even though the statistics say otherwise and as a result, I’m telling you because of that—God is Trying to Tell Us Something! Even through our struggle.

Family, I believe this is so because God has a plan for us, even though it seems like God is taking too long. However, what I want you to know is that God is orchestrating everything that needs to be orchestrated, and God seems to be in the process of answering our pryaers and efforts to achieve equality and justice.

In fact, our prayers may not even be for ourselves; instead, they may be for future generations that we may never meet, just like the prayers of our ancestors were made for us.

A good Biblical example of this is found in Genesis 15:13 which says, then the LORD said to Abram, “know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.”

That’s right, as we have already said, the Israelites were afflicted for 400 years, just like we have been. Now, in my limited knowledge and wisdom, I certainly don’t understand the wisdom of God for such a thing.

All I can do is ask why would God do such a thing to them; and why has God allowed us to go through what we’ve gone through for so long? And, of course, we may never know the answer to that question.

However, one thing I do know is that God is no respecter of persons; and if He would make the promise to the Israelites to take them into the Land Flowing with Milk and Honey, then He is also able to take us to the Promised Land.

Certainly, that doesn’t mean that we don’t have work to do. Rather, it means just the opposite. It means that we have to keep the faith because I truly believe that God is Trying to Tell Us Something.

For one, I believe He is trying to tell us that He is establishing a Kingdom that cannot be shook. Perhaps, that’s what Hebrews 12:27 was saying: this phrase, yet once more, indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

The Kingdom here is a present-day Kingdom under the authority of the King of Kings. It is a Kingdom that cannot be shook. Rather, it is a Kingdom that is filled with every resource, every provision, and the riches of His glory by Christ Jesus that God has promised in His Word.

In the Old Testament, Haggai prophesied that He will shake all the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land, and that He was going to shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and He will fill His house with glory.

Then, He went on to say, the latter glory of this house will be greater than the former, and in this place He will give us peace.

Therefore, I believe that right now, God is shaking up the whole wide world, so that whatever is not of Him or whatever is not from Him will not be able to stand.

In other words, he shaking up all of our schisms and divisions; and He is shaking up the hearts of racism; classism; sexism; ageism; and all the isms so that none of those things will be able to stand.

However, what will stand are those things that cannot be shook. And what cannot be shook are those things that are found within the Kingdom of God.

Perhaps, that’s why The Lord Jesus Christ told us that we ought to say when we pray, Our Father which in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name;

Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses; and lead us not into temptation; for thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, Amen

In other words, God is Trying to Tell Us Something!

He’s trying to tell us that we should keep praying;

That we should keep believing;

That we should trust the process;

Because His Kingdom is coming!

And His Will—will be done!

In earth; as it is in heaven!

It’s coming in a present sense!

And it’s coming in a future sense!

In the present, His Kingdom is coming!

And His glory will be revealed in us!

That’s true even if we are all shook up!

And that’s true even if has taken a while!

And in a future sense, John the Revelator told us,

He heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven saying,

Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory, and power belong to our God!

Then, he said, he saw, a new heaven and a new earth,

For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

Then, he said he saw, the holy city, a new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man,

He will dwell with them, and they will be His people,

And God will be our God!

**God is Trying to Tell Us Something!**

He’s trying to tell us that He is our King,

And that we are His people!

He is Our King through our tough times!

He is Our King through our rough times!

And through it all, His glory shall be revealed!

**God Is Trying To Tell Us Something!**

The question is: Are We Listening!