

20 Pentecost 2021

“O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.”

In 1983 in Lawrence, Kansas, Mary Winchester investigates a sound coming from her infant son Sam's nursery. She sees a figure standing over his crib, and then she goes downstairs and sees her husband sleeping on the sofa, realizing that the person upstairs is an intruder, she goes to confront him. Her husband, John, is awakened by her screams and finds her pinned to the ceiling with a slash across her stomach. Mary bursts into flames, and John is forced to evacuate the house with Sam and his older son, Dean, while the house erupts into flames.

And so, begins the first season of the series called ‘Supernatural.’ It ran from 2005 until 2020. 327 episodes of Sam and Dean Winchester fighting demons, werewolves, vampires, ghosts, and even Satan himself. Accompanied by the angel, Castiel, they traveled the roads of America in their 1967 Impala fighting evil wherever they found it.

Jan and I have seen the first fourteen seasons and are taking our time through the 15th and final season.

As you might expect, there have been many story lines through the 15 years it has been on television. One of the more intriguing ones was the archangels infighting among each other and heaven in total chaos. We are told that God has walked away, and no one knows where He is and why He left. This leaves Satan free to do whatever he wants along with all his demons. Sam and Dean along with fellow hunters have their hands full in their fight with evil. God's disappearance and apparent lack of interest in human or heavenly affairs should be surprising to all of us. But how many times do we ask ourselves the same question. Where is God and why isn't she helping us?

How often do we find ourselves in the shadows of despair, the darkness of depression, or the shade of sadness? We are not only looking for a way out but someone to show us the way.

The author of Job presents such an experience for us this morning. The darkness of deep desolation oozes through the expressions of searching for God everywhere and finding God nowhere. This is not a TV show where fantasy trumps reality. Dark nights often accompany faith and spirituality.

“Brian Houston, founder and pastor of the Global Hillsong Church and author of ‘There Is More: When the World Says You Can’t, God Says You Can,’ shared a story about a man from Australia who found himself at the end of his rope. He was in the midst of a painful divorce, and when he thought it could not get any worse, he was diagnosed with cancer. The man became so depressed that he decided to commit suicide by jumping off a mountain. However, on his way up the mountain, he encountered heavy traffic due to people directing cars to the Hillsong church for an event. This struck the man’s curiosity, so he decided to check it out. At the church, he listened to music and words of hope and love. He quickly realized there was a solution to his problems. On his way to end it all, he encountered the grace and love of God. Instead of ending his life that day, he decided to begin truly living.”

(By Pablo Diaz Posted in Power of Prayer, May 1, 2019)

Unlike Job, as far as we know, this man was not searching out God to have a conversation about the troubles that he was facing. However, he was literally climbing the mountain top where he did indeed meet God face to face.

Katy Rose, a Christian Blogger can relate; She says, “We go through trials and tribulations to where we feel alone and like we have nobody to talk to. We know what

the word of God says but still we have trouble finding the faith to believe it during the storm. We hear in the word of God that He will never leave us or forsake us but, still, we feel like that verse speaks to everyone but us at that very moment. We ask God questions and wait on his answers..."

Job wanted more. In Chapter 22, Eliphaz counsels Job to get right with God, assuming that he must have done great wickedness, thereby bringing his troubles upon himself. Job did not agree.

Job feels that he cannot bring his case against and before God, since God keeps hiding (vv. 8-9)

"But if I go to the east, he is not there;

if I go to the west, I do not find him.

9 When he is at work in the north, I do not see him;

when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him."

The words from Psalm 22 speak of searching for God in time of spiritual darkness, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? 2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.... Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help."

We will not find ourselves speaking these words from the cross, as Jesus did, but have felt them none the less. There have been times for most of us, when we have been faced with the illness or impending death of a loved one and desperately prayed to God, day and night, for healing. More so when the illness involves a child. We enlist the help of friends and family to pray. If the healing does not come, like Job, we may want to desperately make our case to God, be rightfully angry with God, to accuse God of not caring, or to even to doubt the existence of God, all these options can lead to a loss of

faith. It does not take a lot for us to look at the world around us and wonder where God is, and does He care?

There are so many people today who deny the existence of God. Some say that God is dead but to believe that one must admit that God existed in the first place. We may never change these minds even when they are deep in despair. But those who are earnestly searching for God can find solace in other Christians. Sometimes people need context. They need to feel and know the God who is right in front of them. That might come through prayer, Scripture, meditation, and experiencing a relationship with other Christians. It has been said that we may be the only God that others will ever see and know. We definitely do not have all the answers. Every single one of us will need the helping hand of a friend to lift us out of the depths which we often find ourselves. We must be Jesus to each other. Can we find God on our own? Yes. But it happens more often through a relationship with other Christians. We know that God lives and is very real. God **will** reach out to us in our time of need and lift us up with the hands of his servants.

As Paul tells us: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”. The good news is that God is very real and He loves us for who we are. God does not have to search us out because She never left us, especially when we are hurting. Job discovered this. Paul knew it to be true. And Jesus lived within this reality. We truly are never alone and never have been.

Amen!