**The Journey – Sermon #3 Hold Hands**

Abundant Life Church

Sunday, May 3rd,2020

Title: Hold Hands

Text: 1 Peter 1:22-25, 2: 4-5, 4: 8-11

Intro: Context of pain & suffering. The need for others.

When my wife, Dominic, was in high school she went on a trip to Florida. One day the kids got to go to the beach and swim. The rip tides were strong that day and several people swimming were pulled out in the ocean of which Dominic was one of them. They were being swept out to deep waters and they were in danger of drowning. There was a rock pier which extended out in the water and other people began to jump in the water making a human chain to reach out to those swimmers. As they got to them the swimmers ‘climbed’ that human chain to the rocks where other hands reached down and pulled them out to safety. Where would we be without someone’s hand to offer us friendship, love and even rescue?

Without Christ and the hope that He brings we can allow our world to be shrunk to the size of our pain.

The difficulty and suffering I am struggling with can set boundaries on my heart.

I can get in a survival mode. Me and mine got to make it and I don’t care about you and yours!

Get out of my way, cause I got to get all the toilet paper and meat I can get.

If you’re not here to help me move on.

I wonder why no one is helping me.

The Tennessee Star is reporting that last week in Tenn. More people committed suicide than died of the CV Virus. In one 48-hour period the medical examiner in Knox County handled cases that represent 10% of their caseload for last year. <https://tennesseestar.com/2020/03/29/more-people-died-of-suicide-than-coronavirus-in-tennessee-last-week/>

Temptation to Hoard –

God’s Answer to a Suffering World – A church that loves!

Love breaks through the boundaries of your own difficulties to touch your brothers/sisters in Christ.

I belong to everybody that belongs to Christ.

**We Hold Hands Because We Belong to Each Other**

22  Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,   
23  for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is,* through the living and enduring word of God.   
24  For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF,   
25  BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you.   
**1 Peter 1:22-25 (NASB)**

This is a quote from Isaiah 40. All flesh means all humanity. The nations of men will wither and their glory will fall to the ground. But believers have a heavenly citizenship. We belong to the Kingdom of God and we are forever joined to Him. All the power structures of this present age are temporary.

*In God’s Kingdom I was not only justified and made right with God but I was also given a love of His people and all of humanity. God is love and if you don’t love you don’t know God.*

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;   
**Philippians 3:20 (NASB)**

**We Offer our Worship to God While Holding Hands with our Brothers and Sisters in Christ**

4  And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,   
5  you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.   
6  For *this* is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone,* AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."   
**1 Peter 2:4-6 (NASB)**

Architectural Structures of His Church.

Red, Yellow, Black and White they are precious in His sight.

There is no such thing as a white church, a black church, an Hispanic church, an Asian church…no there is only HIS CHURCH.

Rich, poor, healthy and weak at His feet we worship God.

**By Holding Hands We Hold Each Other’s Heart**

7  The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer.   
8  Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.   
9  Be hospitable to one another without complaint.   
10  As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.   
11  Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.   
**1 Peter 4:7-11 (NASB)**

Above all love one another – because it will cover a multitude of sins.

***We will hurt each other, but love will cover it.***

I did a funeral a few years when two members from the same family had died and the funerals were back to back. A man showed up after the first funeral because he had had a disagreement with the deceased man in the first funeral. Such small thinking. How stupid. Years of being family, being torn apart and refusal to have mercy even in the face of death.

***The answer to fear which inspires poor behavior – start giving and showing hospitality to each other.***

There are spiritual gifts, but notice being hospitable is not, in this passage, listed as a gift. It is a call to every believer. WITHOUT COMPLAINT. Quit whining about helping people.

36  Now in Joppa there was a disciple named **Tabitha** (which translated *in Greek* is called Dorcas); **this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did.**37  And it happened at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room.   
38  Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, "Do not delay in coming to us."   
39  So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, **weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them.**   
**Acts 9:36-39 (NASB)**

People don’t need our food as much as the need out connection! We need to be wanted, loved and valued.

***Let the Holy Spirit in you flow and use your gifts to help others. Vs. 11***

God’s Spirit within me connects me to God, but also connects me to people, His people. We’ve been born again and the Holy Spirit is within me, the Holy Spirit is within you and when we do life together His Presence moves.

**Two things from Jesus**

**How the world will know we are His -**

 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."   
**John 13:35 (NASB)**

**The only prayer request of Jesus that we can answer.**

 "I am no longer in the world; and *yet* they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, *the name* which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We *are.*   
**John 17:11 (NASB)**