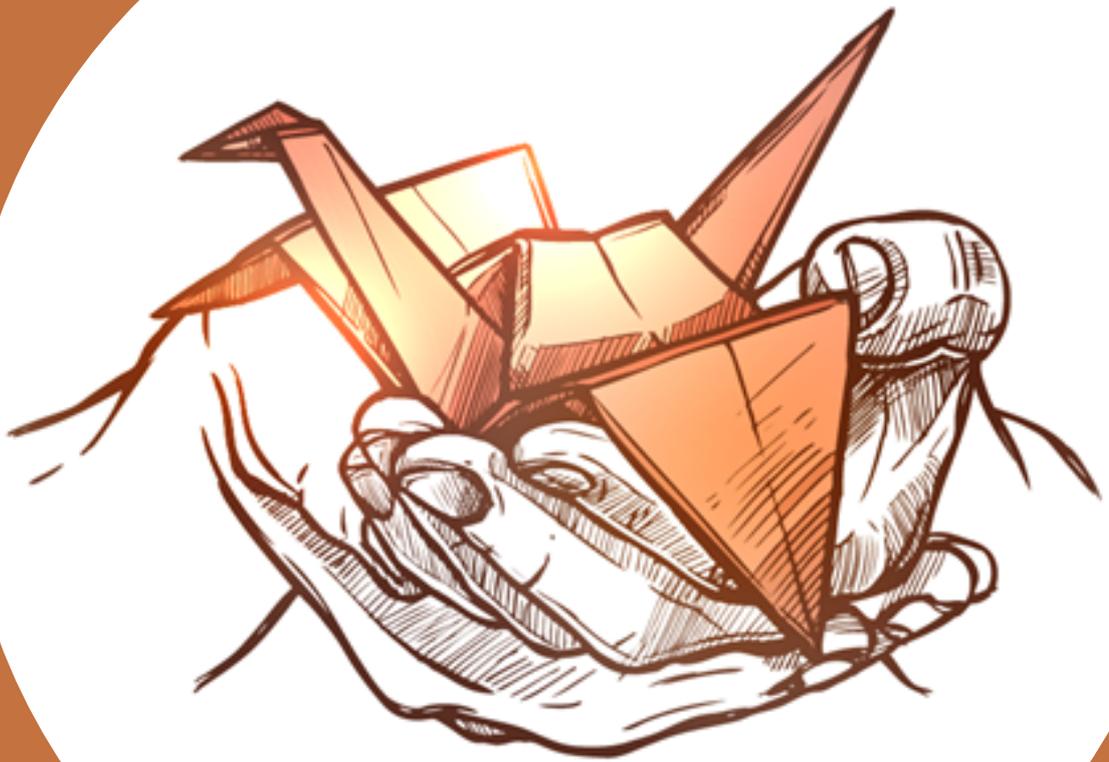

LIVING IN TIMES LIKE THESE

VCBC ONLINE SUMMER CONFERENCE



CONFERENCE PROGRAM BOOKLET
SEPTEMBER 1 - 6, 2020

**LIVING IN
TIMES LIKE
THESE**

VCBC ONLINE
SUMMER
CONFERENCE

W E L C O M E

Welcome to this year's online Summer Conference! We are so glad you are joining us this week. This booklet is meant to guide you through the sessions throughout the week and provide further notes on the sessions you will be attending.

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INTRODUCTION

TO SUMMER CONFERENCE 2020

Over the past few months, we have heard that these are "unprecedented" times, that what our lives have transformed into is a "new normal" that we will have to come to grips with and get used to.

We have heard that "we're in this together" and to "stay home, save lives" but how are we to live in this world that is so drastically different than what we knew only mere months ago? And what does the Bible have to say about this?

In Matthew 16:3, Jesus tells the Pharisees and Sadducees "You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times." The Bible is filled with prophecies, many of which have been accurately fulfilled already through Jesus' first coming.

However, there are also many prophecies, namely those surrounding His Second Coming, which have not been fulfilled yet. However, the signs are starting to occur, and it appears as though, much like the people of Jesus' time, we too are oblivious to them.

And perhaps even more important is, in light of everything happening, "How then shall we live?" For many, September, with its new schools, new programs, new jobs, is as much of a start to a new year as January 1st is.

The past half a year has been chaotic and tumultuous, giving us little time to quiet our hearts, meditate, and reflect. At summer conference this year, through messages prepared by Rev. Paul Chan, we will have the opportunity to do these things and answer the important questions of how we as Christians should live in these challenging times.

CONFERENCE FORMAT

In light of current situation, we are unfortunately unable to have Summer Conference together at Cedar Springs like we normally would in previous years. However, this does not mean that we cannot find other ways to meet and share community as we would've done there. This year, we will be meeting in small groups, either in person or virtually. Knowing that there are many other things going on at this time, we are offering two options for attending.

If you are attending our flexible track, you can visit:
<https://summercon2020.vcbc.ca> any time during the week to access the first two sessions.

This allows your group to go at your own pace and provide more time for discussion and prayer.

Alternatively, if you are attending the "live" session, you can click on the Zoom link which will be sent to you and join us all on Saturday afternoon at 3 pm. Regardless of which format you choose, we will be meeting together on Sunday morning during service for the final session of Summer Conference. Like a lot of other things, Summer Conference will be different this year. But we do not need to let it prevent us from meeting, sharing, reflecting, and growing together.



SPEAKER INTRODUCTION: REV. PAUL CHAN

Pastor Paul had been an accountant for 21 years before he received his call into full-time gospel ministry which he began at VCBC as an intern student and later served as one of the pastors. He received his seminary/theological training at both Regent College and Eastern Baptist Seminary (now called Palmer Theological Seminary).

Through serving in both Canadian and Chinese churches, he has developed a passion for discipling marketplace Christians, seeking to walk alongside them in learning to put their faith in practice and to draw closer to God in a meaningful way. Toward this end, he has founded the Total Growth Discipleship ministry and published discipleship workbooks in Chinese and written a 5-year Devotional/Small Group Bible Study Guide on-line in English and Chinese, with Spanish translation in the work. (www.totalgrowth.org).

SESSION ONE (A)

WHAT TIME IS IT?

MT 24:3-14

SPIRITUAL DECEPTION

PROBLEMS OF THEIR DULLNESS

- Core Problem: A wicked and adulterous generation
- Practical reasons?
 - Too rational to believe universal reign of God through the Messiah coming in "clouds of heaven" (Daniel 7: 13ff)
 - Been told > 1,500 years; nation gone for 700
 - "Ours is it? Really?"

THE CERTAINTY OF BIBLICAL PROPHECIES

- Jesus fulfilled at least 333 OT prophecies at His 1st Coming (Dr. Kennedy)
- Biblical prophecies "never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (II Peter 1:21)
- But: "Is ours it?"

THE SIGNS TOLD BY JESUS (MATTHEW 24: 3-14)

- Deception
- Wars
- Natural Catastrophes

WARS & CONFLICTS

NATURAL CATASTROPHIES

- Earthquakes
- Pestilences
- Famines

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- "Why did the Lord choose to give us signs that precede His coming?"
- Is it necessary?
- "Why did He call them the beginning of birth pains?"
- "What has happened to each of these signs: in the last 60, 30 or even 15 years?"

SESSION ONE (B)

THE LAST DAYS

MT 24:3-14

SPIRITUAL CONDITIONS BEFORE CHRIST'S RETURN -- THE LAST DAYS

• PERSECUTION

- Mt 24:9; 1 Pet 2:21
- What right do I have to be different from my brothers and sisters in Christ?
- Do not seek to please the world (Jn 15:18-19)
- Why do we think we should be any different?

• APOSTACY

- Mt 24:10
- Scoffers (2 Pet 2:3-4)
- False Prophets/Teachers (Jeremiah 6:14; Ezekiel 13:10, 13:16)
- Echoed by Apostle Paul (1 Thes 5:3)

• INCREASED WICKEDNESS

- Mt 24:9-12
- Itching Ears (2 Tim 4:3)Mt 24:12

LIST OF WICKEDNESS IN THE LAST DAYS (2 TIM 3:1-5)

WICKEDNESS OF THE WORLD

1. Lovers of themselves
2. Lovers of money
3. Boastful, proud, abusive
4. Disobedient to their parents
5. Ungrateful
6. Unholy
7. Without love
8. Unforgiving slanderous
9. Without self-control
10. Brutal (or savage)
11. Not lovers of the good
12. Treacherous
13. Rash, conceited
14. Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God
15. Having a form of godliness but denying its power

HOW THEY ARE MANIFESTED TODAY

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

CLOSING WORDS

"Now learn this lesson from the fig tree. As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out. You know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, You know that it is near, RIGHT AT THE DOOR." (Mat. 24: 32-33)

SESSION 1 REFLECTION

PART I - INDIVIDUAL PRAYER/JOURNALING TIME

1. In this session, we went over a lot of the "signs" and how we are seeing them in the world around us. What are some specific examples that we have noticed ourselves? (E.g. in the news, on social media, etc.)
2. How have these catastrophes changed your mindset on life/how you live your life/your relationship with God? E.g. What have you decided to invest more time into/less time into?
3. In light of all of everything that is happening, what can/should we as Christians do?

PART II (GROUP PRAYER):

1. Pastor Paul has given many examples of Christians today being persecuted all over the world? Are there any other examples you know of/stories you've heard of?
2. Here in Canada, we do not suffer the same types of persecution that those in other places in the world suffer (our odds of dying for our faith/ending up in jail because of our faith is very low compared to some other places in the world). Yet, we suffer from other types of "persecution" (e.g. we live in a very narcissistic and money/possession/accomplishment-driven culture). What are some more subtle persecutions that we face that we might not notice on the surface? What are some that we struggle with/which are some that you feel a conviction towards changing?
3. Even if we might not be experiencing much suffering/persecution right now, these times will inevitably come. How can we prepare ourselves for those times? What are we doing at the moment to prepare?
4. As a group, compile together a list of things you can pray for as a group (places in the world that are suffering at the moment, places in the world where Christians are being persecuted, personal struggles/persecutions we are experiencing in our own lives at the moment)

SESSION TWO (A)

HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE?

MT 24:42-44

THE CHALLENGE OF THE UNKNOWN HOUR & DELAY

3 PARABLES PRECEDED BY AN
ANALOGY

1ST - THE UNKNOWABLE HOUR (MT 24:42-44)

- Having to watch all the time!
- What's there to lose?

2ND - PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS (MT 25:1-13)

- Setting: a Jewish wedding
- The Challenge: Bridegroom was a long time coming
- The Reality: All 10 virgins "asleep" - metaphor of death
- Core Teachings to Sunday Christians: "I don't know you"

THE SIGNS OF JESUS' RETURN

- Events at His Return (Mt 24:16-32)
- Foretold by Zechariah (Zec 12:10)
- Paul's words in Romans (Rm 11:26)

TWO ADMONISHMENTS BY JESUS

- "No one knows about the day or hour of his coming" (24:36)
- How then shall we live (Mt 24:13-14)

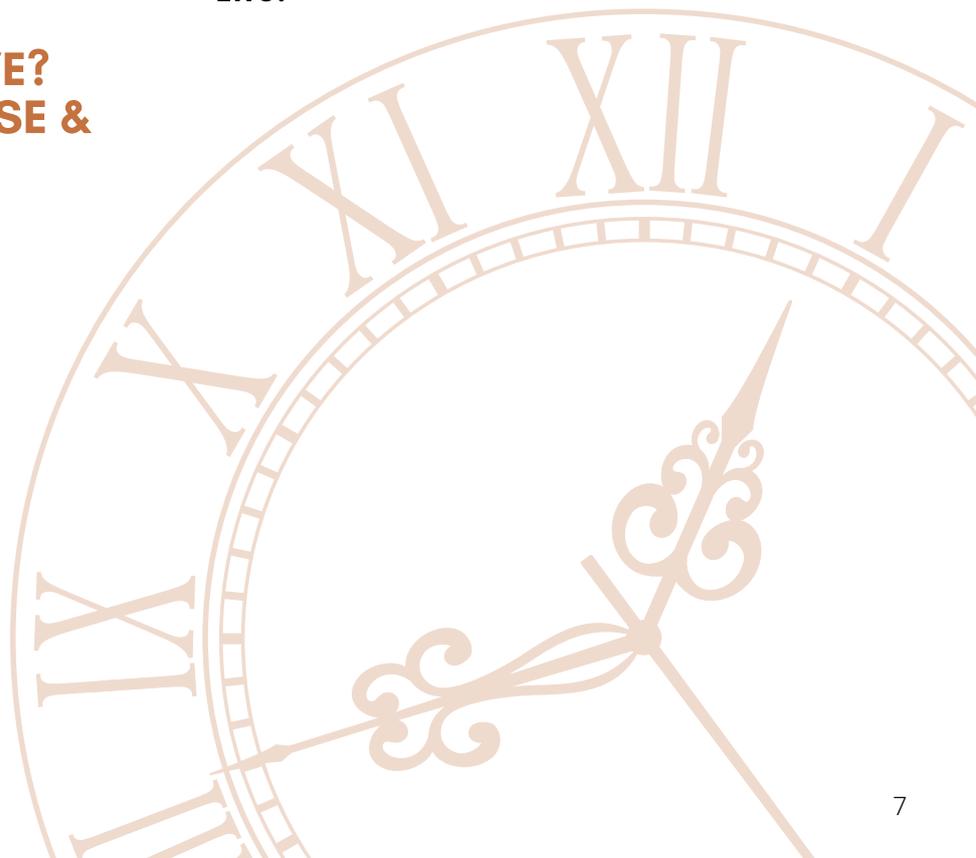
HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE? WITH A SENSE OF PURPOSE & MISSION!

- Stand firm: positive, not passive
- Preach the gospel in the whole world (Acts 1:8)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Does Jesus know you?
- Do you have the assurance of Eternal Life? (i.e. the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?)
- Why are you dragging your feet?

The Moment of readiness will never come! What at stake is your Eternal Life!



SESSION TWO (B)

PARABLES OF FAITHFUL VS WICKED SERVANTS

MT 24:42-44

3RD – THE VERY WICKED SERVANT (MATTHEW 24:45-51)

- “A very sacred and significant charge (John 21:15-17)
- His unfaithfulness is alarmingly wicked
 - Core reason: loss of sense of who they are
- His punishment is very severe as well (v51)

PARABLE IN-BETWEEN? (MATTHEW 25:14-30)

THE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT

- a. They are all given talents according to their ability (v15)
- b. Great or small gifts are really “a few things” in the eyes of the Lord
- c. All the Lord asks for is to discharge our trust faithfully

THE WICKED SERVANT

- His excuse (Mt 25:24-25)
- Real reasons
 - Resents the Master
 - Despises what is entrusted
 - Wicked, lazy, worthless
- The Judgement (25:30)

3. CONCLUSION: THERE IS REALLY NO “IN-BETWEEN”

FINAL ANALYSIS

- Challenge of the unknown hour and apparent delay
- Ultimate difference between the faithful & the wicked
 - Relationship with God
 - Punishment can go so far
 - Desire to please & be with him matter

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Desire to please Him:
being called “Good and faithful servant”

Desire to be with Him
“Come and share our master’s happiness!”

The 1st disciples are driven to stand firm and live with a sense of mission & purpose
What about you—why are you a Christian, a disciple of Jesus Christ?



reflection

SESSION 2 REFLECTION

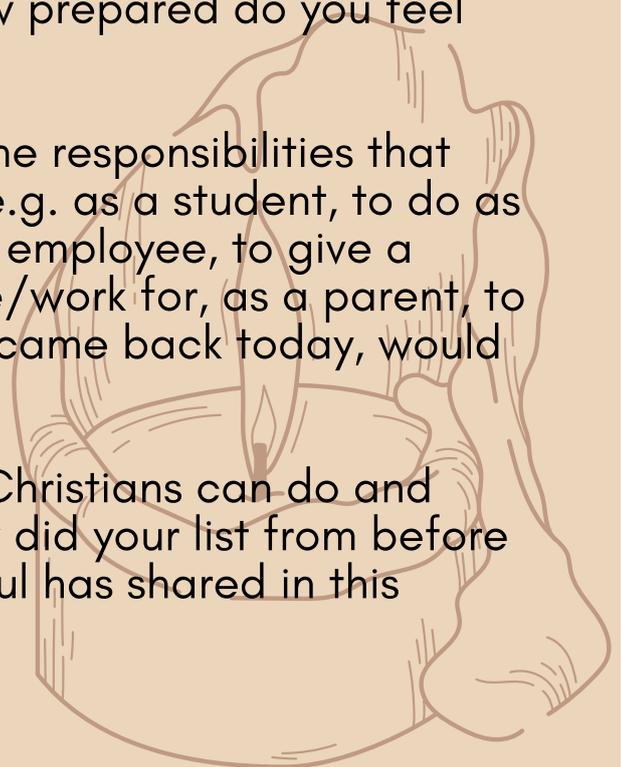
INDIVIDUAL SILENT PRAYER TIME

1. One of the main messages of this parable is the fact that we don't know when God will come, so we have to ALWAYS be ready. How do you feel about the fact that there is no "break" and that we must always be on our guard?

2. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins, half were prepared and half were not. On a scale of one to ten (one being "haven't started", ten being "I'm ready!"), how prepared do you feel for Jesus' return right now?

3. How are we doing with fulfilling the responsibilities that God has given us at the moment? (e.g. as a student, to do as best as we can academically, as an employee, to give a Christ-like witness to those we serve/work for, as a parent, to raise God-fearing children) If Jesus came back today, would you feel? Proud? Embarrassed?

4. Last session, we discussed what Christians can do and how we can prepare ourselves. How did your list from before compare with the list that Pastor Paul has shared in this session?



SESSION THREE

CERTAINTY OF JUDGEMENT

2 PET 2:4-10

**QUESTION: HOW THEN
SHALL WE LIVE?**

**ANSWER: LEARN FROM 3
CHARACTERS LIVING IN
TIME OF WICKEDNESS**

*THIS SESSION WILL BE DURING
SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE

NOAH: PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

- The evil of Noah's Generation (Gen 6:5; 6:1)
- Unrestrained sexual behaviour
- God's dealing with evil (Gen 6:5)
 - Because he cares and he loves
- God's agent & messenger
 - A righteous life
 - A preacher of righteousness
- Result: he and his family is saved and he pleased the Lord (Gen 8:21)

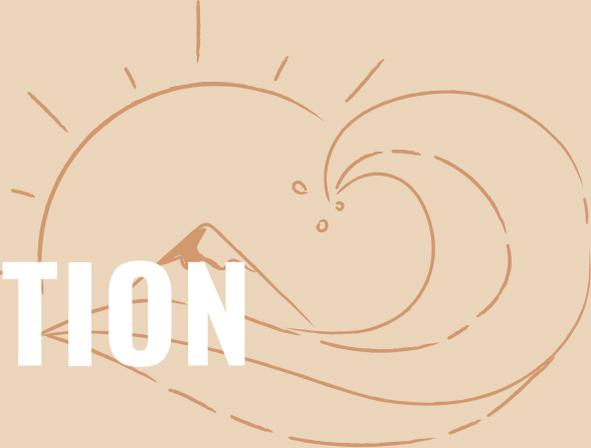
LOT: GRIEVER OF WICKEDNESS

- His time was evil (Gen 18:20; 13:13)
- In spite of his failure
 - still a righteous person (2 Pet 2:7-8)
 - a griever of wickedness
 - But what can we do?

ABRAHAM: INTERCESSOR FOR THE WICKED

- Gen 18:17-26
- He loves to share His heart with us (Ps 25:14)
- God is fair (Ezekiel 18:23)
- Identifier of God's heart (Gen 18:22)
- Learning to groan with the Spirit (Romans 8:26)

SUNDAY PRAYER REFLECTION



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Will you identify with His heart?
- Will you learn to groan alongside with the Holy Spirit within you?
- Will you join the Holy Spirit in interceding for the world?

Feel free to make use of the prayer sharing from Kathy as a guide to your prayer time. You may reflect by playing the song "It is well" with your device or simply reflect in the lyrics provided at the end of the sharing.

OCEAN

BY KATHY JUNG

*They saw the works of the Lord, his wonderful deeds in the deep.
For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. - Psalm 107:24-25*

In fear and amazement, they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him." - Luke 8:25

Human beings have always been drawn to gaze at the beauty, vastness, power and mystery of our oceans. Standing on the shore, watching endless waves, we are reminded of just how small we are. And more often than not, this doesn't lead us to fear, but instead to an unexpected calm. When our personal and global problems loom large, it is good to be small next to a God of beauty, vastness, power and mystery. It is good to dwell in the wonder of His presence, and not to be alone.

The oceans cover seventy-one percent of the surface of our earth. Oceans contain ninety-seven percent of all our water. If we could contain that water in a cube, it would be 1,332,000,000 kilometers in width, depth and height. On average, our oceans are 3.68 kilometers deep. That doesn't sound too deep. But to descend a depth of 3.68 kilometers, would be like taking an elevator down 818 floors.

Standing on the shore, watching the rolling waves, we only get the tiniest glimpse of the magnitude of our oceans. There's so much more to experience below the surface.

I'm no expert, but I wanted to share a little about how waves work:

Wind blowing on the surface of water transfers its energy and creates small ripples. Large waves are a result of the wind blowing at higher speeds, for longer durations at greater distances.

John 3:4-6 Msg - "How can anyone," said Nicodemus, "be born who has already been born and grown up?... Jesus said, "You're not listening. Let me say it again. Unless a person submits to this original creation—the 'wind-hovering-over-the-water' creation, the invisible moving the visible, a baptism into a new life—it's not possible to enter God's kingdom. When you look at a baby, it's just that: a body you can look at and touch. But the person who takes shape within is formed by something you can't see and touch—the Spirit—and becomes a living spirit.

Besides wind, we know the gravity of the earth, moon and sun all have an effect on daily and seasonal tides.

Psalm 74:16 - The day is yours, and yours also the night; you established the sun and moon.

Isaiah 60:20 - Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.]

And arctic waters that are saltier and colder, they sink, causing global ocean currents that take a thousand years to circle the earth. These currents shape our worldwide climate patterns and local weather.

Psalm 77:16 The waters saw you, God, the waters saw you and writhed; the very depths were convulsed.

Psalm 139:8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

Romans 8:39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord

Needless to say, the cause and effect of waves, is complex. Waves at the surface are mesmerizing to watch. The happenings below that we don't see, are profound. And all of it begins with a little ripple.

Being a follower of Christ is kind of like being a wave in the ocean. To observe from the safety of the shore can be a spectacular experience, but this pales in comparison to jumping in. The Spirit is a powerful wind that nudges and presses you forward. It can be a little unsettling at first.

It's energy and influence are the very reasons some would rather stay with their feet planted on the shore. But how different it is to get wet! To be soaked through, and to become part of something so much bigger than just you!

As hard as things get for me, for those I care for, and for those I see suffering, as the victim or as the perpetrator (still both suffering), prayer means there is never a time that I can do nothing. I am but a drop, but because I am part of the ocean, if I participate, matters immensely. In prayer, my eyes open to the reality that we are all in this together. And that there are deep forces beyond my understanding that swell and lengthen the reach and usefulness of the hope in my heart. The same God who's spirit hovered over the waters at creation, so values me, that he invites me to participate in his kingdom objectives. And so honoured, I pray and sometimes I act. And then I watch, to see what the ocean will do.

In prayer, you are no longer an observer, passive on your mat on the beach. You are in motion, meditatively marinating in the wet cling of truth. Sometimes you seem to go forward only to be tossed back. You never really know all of what's happening. You have lots of questions. Sometimes you're given answers. And sometimes you're given wisdom. Sometimes you feel too heavy to go anywhere. And yet you are in it, to wrestle, to discover, to have your rough exterior smoothed, and to know for yourself that power and what it might look like in you, if you let it. There is one who is closer than a brother (Psalm 18:24); closer than water on the skin. The words you mouth, and the soul meditations your heart bleeds, are the stuff of ceaseless prayers and intimate fellowship. Oh, what a vast ocean are the depths of meaning and friendship that are ours to be received!

And here's my favourite part; Sometimes I get to do nothing, but enjoy being buoyant, jubilant. Like a child I am carried, rocked in safe arms, in the lullaby of the sea. This is peace and joy. This is worship.

I have allowed myself the pleasure of listening to this song again and again. And I share it with you, that you might take part in what He has freely given to you.

IT IS WELL

BY BETHEL MUSIC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=YNqo4Un2uZl>

Grander earth has quaked before
Moved by the sound of His voice
Seas that are shaken and stirred
Can be calmed and broken for my regard

And through it all, through it all
My eyes are on You
And through it all, through it all
It is well
And through it all, through it all
My eyes are on You
And it is well with me

And far be it from me to not believe
Even when my eyes can't see
And this mountain that's in front of me
Will be thrown into the midst of the sea

So let go my soul and trust in Him
The waves and wind still know His name
So let go my soul and trust in Him
The waves and wind still know His name
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The waves and wind still know His name

**THANK YOU FOR
JOINING THIS YEAR'S
SUMMER CONFERENCE!**