



# OPPORTUNITIES IN THE WAITING

The following document is a rough copy of Pastor Drost's sermon  
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- Who is the most successful trial attorney in the entire world?

According to The Guinness Book of World Records, the most successful attorney is considered to be **Sir Lionel Luckhoo**. He succeeded in getting 245 consecutive murder acquittals. Nobody else in the world has ever come close to doing that. He had tremendous analytical skills capable of tearing apart the best of witnesses.

While on his own spiritual journey, Lionel Luckhoo (twice knighted by Queen Elizabeth ) took his expertise in law, his skills in tearing apart most any witness, and carefully examined whether the resurrection of Jesus Christ would stand up to the test of legal evidence.

**Here (in his own words) is what he concluded:**

"I say unequivocally that the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that it compels acceptance by proof which leaves absolutely no room for doubt." (Sir Lionel Luckhoo)

- In the Church calendar, we are in this season of 40 days after Jesus raised from the dead.
- Two Sundays ago, Pastor Chad started us on a series of messages called **IN THE WAITING**. Each week he talked about some of the lessons we can learn about ourselves while in the waiting...
  - The first week he used Elijah's 40-day journey in the desert.
  - Last week he used another 40-day story: the story of the Israelites waiting 40 days for Moses to come down from Mount Sinai. They grew impatient, frustrated & ended up making a golden calf (an idol) and sinning against God.

When we are under pressure, the best & the worst come out of us!

**Illustration:** At first, when the COVID19 guidelines started, the 2 meter distancing, working from home, kids at home, all the hand sanitation rules... people were making jokes about it and thinking "this is great, I get to stay home!" But then, as the days went by, it all started to get old very fast. People are getting grumpy, impatient, weary, and edgy!

- Turning up the wrong direction in the store.
- Somebody walks too close and you see the dirty looks.

When we are under pressure the best & the worst come out of us!

These are trivial examples of how under pressure we can become impatient, irritable and edgy! But there are **bigger issues** like the spike of domestic violence during COVID-19 pandemic. In BC, one service provider reported a 300 per cent increase in calls about domestic violence.

If you missed Chad's message you can listen to it on our web page. [www.ssc.church](http://www.ssc.church)

- Today I'm looking at another 40-day story: the 40 days after Jesus raised from the dead and ascended to heaven. How could this world renowned lawyer, **Lionel Luckhoo**, so good at tearing apart witnesses, come to the conclusion that "the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that it compels acceptance by proof which leaves absolutely no room for doubt."

During the 40 days after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to more than 500 different people giving them extensive evidence that he had indeed risen. Men, women, people from different walks of life and in a variety of different ways. He talked with them. He ate with them. He walked with them and on one occasion he even cooked breakfast for them.



These same people were so convinced of his resurrection that they sacrificed their lives. They were kicked out of their homes, persecuted, beaten, stoned and killed for it... never once denying their story under the torture and pain.

### **The evidence is overwhelming! JESUS WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD!**

- The first person to see Jesus alive was Mary Magdalene. Jesus told her to tell his disciples to meet him in Galilee. This is what the Gospels tell us:

On the evening of that first day of the week (Sunday), when the disciples were assembled together...

### **Jesus resurrected on Sunday and Jesus met his disciples gathered on Sunday and that's why we gather together as Christians on Sundays.**

The disciples were assembled together with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders. Jesus himself came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

- Wow! They are freaking out, stressed, confused, afraid for their lives. They have just witnessed the brutal crucifixion of their leader... and His first words are "Peace be with you!"
- We are having CHURCH Online because we are in our homes behind closed doors for fear of a silent killer: COVID19 Jesus is standing in our midst and saying "Peace be with you!" He is standing with YOU and I saying "Peace be with you!"

They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence. The disciples were overjoyed having seen the Lord." John 20:19–20/Luke 24:36–43

Just a few days before, everything was confusing, stressful, fearful; but now, their hopes are renewed. Their future has changed forever. **They will never be the same!**

In those 40 days, Jesus opened their eyes to who He really was. Why He came and why He died on the cross.

"Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Luke 24:27

Then he sent them to tell the world, to preach the gospel...

"Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and surely, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19–20

**Those 40 days in the waiting transformed a small group of fearful disciples into world changers!**

**Do you suppose that this season of waiting, this COVID19 season of waiting until we get back to some "new normal", could have the potential of transforming you and I into WORLD CHANGERS?**



- I'm sure most of you have had the experience of eating at a Chinese restaurant and getting those fortune cookies with your bill. You open them (quite curiously) to see what it says. Normally they say...

*"A pleasant surprise is waiting for you"*

*"A lifetime friend will soon come your way"*

*"A golden egg of opportunity will fall into your lap this month"*

At the risk of sounding like a fortune cookie, here's what I believe with all my heart: **I am very grieved by the 3500 deaths cause by COVID19 in Canada (Since March 8<sup>th</sup> – 8 weeks). That is terrible!**

**But I also am convinced that the darkest clouds have a silver lining!**

Some of the greatest breakthroughs in history, some of the greatest discoveries, some of the greatest inventions came out of our greatest struggles!

- As a **good wine** comes from crushed grapes that have aged in the waiting, I have noticed that some of the most wonderful people in the world... some of the most caring, loving, helpful, kind, compassionate people, are also people that have gone through difficult and painful crushing experiences in life.
- **Pearls** are the product of pain . . . a precious tiny jewel conceived through irritation, born of adversity.
- **Gold, diamonds, jewels** are produced through pressure and heat.
- The **beautiful butterfly** learns strength through struggle ("The struggle is what gives the butterfly the strength to fly"). Looking back on my life, I can honestly say that I have learned more through my darkest moments than through my mountain tops. **YOU SEE, THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE WAITING!**
- About six years ago I ended up in the Emergency Room with stroke levels of High Blood pressure.... The doctors said that I could have died or taken a serious stroke. My father died from a stroke at a young age. It sure got my attention! I was faced with my mortality. I had to make some real changes in my life.
- I started to search my heart and seek God about what was driving my blood pressure up so high. I realize that there are physical contributors: salt, weight, genetics... etc.  
**But I discovered that my main problem was internal: I was driven inside!**
- **That experience has been a GIFT.** It has taught me so much about stress, anxiety, compassion, what it means to be driven, the importance of Sabbath, exercise, walking, quiet times of reflection, meditation, prayer, self-awareness, humility, breathing, and the importance of **having a centre of peace.**

Very often, our greatest God-given opportunities are found in our greatest moments of crisis.

I do not want to trivialise your struggles, your pain, your anxiety, your fears, because those are very real! **But what I want to say is this: Jesus is alive!** He conquered death! He wants to stand in the middle of your situation and say to you: "**Peace be with you!**" He wants to change your struggles into opportunities

- We are living in a crisis moment in our society. People are tired of social distancing, COVID19, working from home, no hair cuts, home schooling, screens, zoom calls, loneliness, financial stress, worry, anxiety...



I went grocery shopping the other day

- we are funneled into a line (cart is washed down with disinfectant)
- 6 feet apart - people with masks on - gloves
- it feels like a war zone - arrows/signs/warnings
- People cleaning the glass... fear/anxiety...

People seemed tired, frustrated, and edgy! I wanted to just head home!

Then I felt the Holy Spirit say: "People are hungry for a smile, for kindness, for encouragement, compassion!"

- Lady... "I'm so afraid"

**There are opportunities all around us to share kindness, a smile, compassion, a caring voice, encouragement.**

To be Jesus to a hurting world, or to your family, or your "bubble". To be the Church, a voice of HOPE!

- The other day, a pastor friend of mine, John Stewart, said "I think Jesus took us by the ear and threw us out of our church buildings into the street!"

During those 40 days Jesus spent with his disciples, they asked him, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" They were looking for things to go back the way they always were. Get rid of the Romans and make Israel a great nation again.

**But that was the wrong question! They were missing the real plan of God. Jesus tells them what God is up to...**

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 (NIV)

In other words, the Holy Spirit is going to take you "by the ear and throw you out unto the streets of the world!"

Pastors and Christians all over Canada are wondering when can we get back to church like before. **Maybe that's the wrong question!** Maybe the right question is: "What is God up to?" "What are the opportunities around us to be the church outside of the building"

- **Are you ready? Are you ready to look around for those opportunities?** Right here in our community? Are you ready to be Jesus to our world?

