

Looking Forward to Normal

Steven Furtick

But this is not normal. This is not normal. And we hear a phrase a lot, at least I do right now, and listen, since this is not a normal weekend, I'm not a normal preacher, this is not a normal church, you're not a normal person, either. Matter of fact, the only people that think you're normal are the people who don't know you.

John Ortberg wrote a book called "Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them". So anybody that you think is normal is somebody that you don't really know. "Everybody's normal", John Ortberg said, "till you get to know them". Your wife is weird. You didn't see the weirdness of your wife when you were dating her. Your wife was weird when you met her, you just didn't know her yet. And so, what we're looking at right now is a sentiment that a lot of people feel, and here's what I'm doing.

I did not give them my title for the message, because I wanted to try something new today. Rather than put it up on the screen fancy, I wanted to do my own special effects today, 'cause I don't know what's gonna happen in the next weeks to come, but what if we can't put the title up anymore, and I still need to preach to people? Well, I'm gonna make my own title card, okay? I'm doing my own stunts today, and here's the phrase I've been hearing from a lot of people. I'm gonna show you this, get ready to zoom in on it once I write it, but I've heard this, oh, man, like, I've heard it at least 100 times, whether it's people on the news or people that I know, or our staff here at Elevation, and here's the phrase. This seems to be the goal.

Let me shut up for a minute, so I can concentrate on writing. I'm not a very good multitasker. Don't wanna misspell anything. Oh, I love it, 'cause I've heard this a million times, and I've bet you said it a few times, too. Here's the phrase, I'm hearing this a lot. Can y'all see it? I can't see whether you can see it or not, because there's no, like, IMAG in the screen, 'cause there's nobody in the room that needs to see IMAG. It's just not normal. Normally, I would just look over here to my left or my right, and I would see if it's a tight shot, but can y'all see it? Is it a good shot?

This is what I'm hearing a lot of people talk about right now, and this is just a piece of Elevation Church stationary, I just wrote it down, 'cause it's not a normal Sunday, so I didn't wanna preach a normal sermon, and throw it to a normal title. But I'm hearing this right now, like, oh, man, I just can't wait till things get back to normal. Okay, put that in the chat. If your thumbs still work, put it in the chat. "Getting Back to Normal".

I'm hearing a lot of people talk about how long is it going to be before things get back to normal. And honestly, I'm ready for some normalcy in the Furtick zipcode as well. I really am, I'm ready for some normalcy to our schedules. I'm ready for some normalcy to date nights with my wife. I mean, I know that sounds, like, real fancy or frilly at a time when people are hurting so much, but, there's something nice about things just being normal. Even little things being normal, like, I don't even like sports that much, but I miss 'em. I don't even care about the outcome, I just like to have it in the background, 'cause it's normal. It's normal.

Normal is nice. And you really don't realize how much you need normal until you are forced to live without it, 'cause I was talking to one of my friends about normal the other day, and I

promise you I'm gonna preach from the Scripture in a moment, because my scriptures are Exodus 14:10-15 and Romans 12:1-2. So go ahead and turn to those two books, one in the Old Testament, one in the New. But I've been hearing this phrase so much, "Oh, man, I just can't wait till things get back to normal". But, something arrested my attention the other day, is that the person who was saying to me how much that she was waiting for stuff to get back to normal, had complained to me two months ago, before any of this global pandemic started, about how much she hated her life. And that was weird to me. Because, the normal that she had been complaining about two months ago was the normal that she would give anything to get back to right now.

Some of us would give anything for normal right about now. Would give anything to get to deal with the annoying person that you work next to if you could get back to work. Oh, I would sit next to Teresa all day, and pretend like her stories were good, and funny, and interesting, and her breath didn't smell bad. I would love some normal right about now. It's like when you go to college, you know? If you went to college, and you hated your hometown, and then you get dropped off in the middle of a new world, and nothing is familiar, and you were complaining, "I just can't wait to leave Moncks Corner". Shout out Moncks Corner, we sent Convoy of Hope and Elevation Outreach resources and teams all week to help those who were devastated. You're gonna be seeing about that soon if you haven't already.

But, man, I hated my hometown for a minute till I left it. And then, everything that felt small to me started to feel, I don't know, like instead of confining, it felt comforting. Here's what I'm trying to say, 'cause I think I'm being a little too vague for you, okay. Some of the stuff that you're praying for right now is the same stuff you were praying away two months ago. And isn't it weird how quick we can shift to where what we want to get back to is the same thing that we wanted to escape from? Y'all ain't helping the preacher a bit today. It's so, so easy in a moment like this for us to make our goal getting back to normal.

But here's what the Lord showed me, this is where I need my hot pink Sharpie. I think red would've been better, but I couldn't find one, so I'm doing hot pink. And I want us to shift our mentality today, and this may be a whole teaching series, I don't know, because I'm hearing so many people say, "I wanna get back to normal", "I wanna get back to the way things were", "I wanna get back to", and the Lord posed a question to me this week. What if normal is something to look forward to? And what if the normal that we knew is not the normal that God is leading us into next?

I'm about to throw my title card at you, Holly. This might be the most anointed message that I've ever preached in my life. It's called "Looking Forward to Normal". Why do we assume that normal is back there? Why would we, as Christians, who serve a God who is always moving forward, from glory to glory, from strength to strength, why would we serve a God like that, a God whose very essence is defined by resurrection, why would we serve a God who is defined by resurrection, new beginnings, and think that the whole goal is to get back to something that we knew before?

And I hope that certain things are normal again. I hope, for God's sake, that my kids can go back to real school again. I hope, for God's sake, that certain things in our society change. I hope, for God's sake, that there's a time where, you know, these chairs can be full of people again, and even the obnoxious parking volunteers at Elevation, I missed 'em today. You know, the ones that do too much? You know, the extra parking volunteers, where you're like, it's 8:45, it don't take all that. Just wave me to my parking space, man. Just 'cause you got a

baton doesn't mean you have to act like a clown.

But I even miss the hyperactive parking volunteers. I even miss the people in the church who looked bored while I was preaching. The ones who looked like terrorists when I was preaching to 'em. I miss 'em. I want normal back. But God has been speaking to my spirit, e-fam. God has been speaking to my spirit, Indonesia. God has been speaking to my spirit, and yours too, but you just didn't have the language for it. God said, "I'm bringing you into a new normal", because what you thought was normal wasn't really normal. It was just what you knew. And I'm gonna show you this from the Scripture.

Turn in your Bible, or let's be honest, just wait for it to come on the screen. I'm acting like y'all got books spread out all over the coffee table. Fact of the matter is, you're probably stirring your oatmeal right now. But, turn in your Bible to Exodus 14, and let me show you how God's people have always been trying to go back to normal at the moments when God is trying to bring us into something new.

Now, this message is for my business owners in the church, those of you who are hoping things go back to normal, but you know that they won't, but you don't know what to do. This message is for those in the church who are trying to deal with a level of uncertainty that was unprecedented in your life before, and you're just trying to even get a daily schedule figured out. This message is for you. This message is even for those who have lost something in this season that you will never get back again. And the question becomes, what is the new normal that God has known all along? What is the new normal that I should look forward to?

Now, remember this and write it down, faith looks forward. Faith looks forward. And you'll see in Exodus 14, remember, a nation who has only known slavery in Egypt for 430 years. When that is all you've known, that's what is normal. On one hand, they hated it. They hated it, because not only was there no freedom in it, but there was frustration that was increasing, because the Egyptian taskmasters had begun to require more from the Israelites than they could reasonably do. I mean, they'd make 'em make bricks, but they wouldn't give 'em straw. Go fetch your own straw, and make the same number of bricks. So you still gotta fulfill your quota, but you're not gonna have enough to do it with.

So now, listen, this is a generation of people who had gotten used to never having enough. I wonder for us, has never enough become our normal? Like, I'm not talking about last week, or the week before that, and I'm not talking about bank account. I think the spirit of this age is the spirit of never enough. We can never get enough information. We can never get enough what we call connection. It's not really connection, it's just the apparatus, it's just the illusion of connection that really keeps us more fragmented than ever before, so now, we call ourselves connected in the world because we have social media.

I'm thinking about introducing a new trend, social distancing is catching on, we're practicing it right now, but how about social media distancing? That's when you can go more than five minutes without your phone. Y'all ain't saying nothing. Social media distancing, it's a thing, put it in the chat. Five minutes without your phone. See, to us now, it's just completely normal for us to be overloaded all the time, and just to have access to everything that's happening in the world, and then we wonder, why are we so fearful, why can't we feel? It's because we were intended to carry so much in our minds and in our hearts, but to us, it's just normal.

We're used to making bricks without straw. Many of us are used to never really getting

a good night's sleep. That's just normal. We're used to running around, this and that and the other. We're used to spending too much money, it's normal. Totally normal, it's what the neighbors do. It's what my dad did. It's what my dad's dad, so, what we're seeing in Exodus 14 isn't just God's people coming out of Egypt as a territory, they're coming out of what they've known as normal. So while it sounds sexy, open the grave, I'm coming out, I'm gonna live, but what if you've gotten so used to death that real life seems weird? Get back to normal, I'm not so sure.

Now, this is how the Israelites expressed it. Y'all ready? Exodus 14:10. "As Pharaoh approached", wait, Pharaoh represents fear. Pharaoh represents the old. Got it? Pharaoh said eat, you eat. Pharaoh said make bricks, you make bricks. Pharaoh is the old boss, the old regime. Pharaoh is the old ruler, but he's also the one who fed you. So Pharaoh is the one who fed you and Pharaoh is the one that you fear. A lot of the things that we get used to meet certain needs in our life, and until we know a better way to meet that need, we will always depend on the wrong source. That's what addiction is. It meets a need.

That's, for some of you, what that person that you keep running back to every three weeks that isn't good for you is. That's a form of Pharaoh. That's what certain thought patterns that we embrace are to us. See, they're familiar, and this is the principle that I wanna show you. When you are afraid, you reach for what's familiar. When you are afraid, you reach for what's familiar, and this is very explicit in Exodus 14:10. "As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians", the ones they were running from: "marching after them. They were", what does the next word say? "terrified", they were afraid.

Put that right there on one side, they were afraid. They experienced fear: "They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die'?" The sarcasm is dripping in this statement. Egypt was famous for graves. Three-quarters of their land mass was set aside for graves. So when they say, "Were there no graves in Egypt"? it's like saying, were there no trees in Charlotte? It's like saying, was there no orange at Elevation? It's like saying, was there no electric guitar in Slash?

I'm gonna try keep trying till I hit somebody. It's like, that's what Egypt was known for. It was known for graves. And watch this. When you feel afraid, you crave familiar, even if familiar is killing you. Egypt was killing them, and on one hand, they're crying out. "Get us outta here. We'll go anywhere, we'll do anything. God, just make it stop". Some of y'all were praying that three months ago. "God, I need a change". "God, this is not working". "God, I'm not happy". "God, I don't feel joy". Remember? Remember three months ago? When you were praying, "God, help me get my priorities".

Remember your new year's resolutions? I know that was, like, BC, Before Corona. You're like, oh, well, I've gained 17 pounds since then, I'm just trying to breathe. That's my new new year's resolution, take another breath. But when you feel fear, you reach for familiar. When God showed me this, I realized why, to me, sometimes negative feels normal. A lot of times, when I'm feeling uncertain, unstable, little thing, big thing, I reach for something negative because negative is what I know. Not because I had horrible parents, I had great parents. But I will say this. My dad was not normal. His childhood was not normal, his dad killed himself when he was nine, on his ninth birthday. That was not normal.

In fact, one of the last things that my dad said to me while he was alive, he said, "I only ever wanted to be normal". He was talking about how, through his upbringing, when he was sent to reform school, and just the different things that happened in his life, you know, blowing through two marriages before he met my mom and all of that, he was saying, "I just always

wanted to be normal. I've never been normal. I've never been normal. I've never been normal". The Bible says that about Moses, who was leading the people out of Egypt. Did you know that? Says in Acts 7:20, that Moses was no ordinary child. Isn't that cool?

So say this as a compliment to whoever you're sitting next to, and I hope this doesn't start an argument, tell 'em, "You're not normal". In fact, tell 'em stronger, say, "You've never been normal". There's nothing normal about you. Angie, look at Josh and just tell him, come on, say it in the Josh Blackson voice. "You've never been normal". Josh Blackson, the deepest voice in, the man from Michigan. You should've sang bass in a southern gospel quartet. Only problem is, you're tone deaf, but you got the range for it. You've never been normal. You were a boy scout, but you weren't normal.

See, look. Normal is just a story that you've told yourself. And so, the Israelites, God helped them, they are standing at a Red Sea, which is a body of water that they have no context for, like us right now. We have no context for this crisis. We have no context for this challenge. We have no precedence for this global pandemic, because we've never lived through one. So when they fell terrified, watch what they did. They craved familiar. "Were there no graves in Egypt"? We'd rather be dead in Egypt than alive in uncertainty.

They craved the grave over having to stand in front of something in an uncertain situation, and so do we. We do it all the time. We go back to places that kill us, people that kill us, patterns that kill us, routines that kills, bottles that kill us, pills that kill us, stations that kill us, feeds that kill us. Keep going? Websites that kill us, accounts that kill us, thoughts that kill us, 'cause it's normal, and normal is nice.

Normal is nice. If you don't think so, you've never had a nice, old sweatshirt. It's nice 'cause it's normal. It's not nice 'cause it looks good, it looks terrible. You look homeless, but it's normal. "Oh, I like this. This is my good sweatshirt. These are my good underwear", with seven holes in it, but it's got seven holes, but it's normal. It feels familiar. So watch this. Oh, I'm anointed by the Spirit of God today, to help you see, normal is not all that.

"I just want it to be the way it was". We wanna go back to Egypt. Take us back to Egypt. The place you were crying out to God to take you from? Now, you wanna go back? "Yeah, I wanna go back". I wanna go back to normal. God, I will never complain about my kid's teacher again, just as long as it doesn't have to be me. I'm going back to normal. Normal. I just want normal. Just normal. I just need something normal. That's why I wanted to come in the building to preach to you. I was like, do you wanna do it in a studio? I was like, no, no, no, no. Because I want people to get a little bit of normal. I think it'll help people.

You know, all I'm trying to think about these days is not the normal that I wanna get back to, because I have a feeling, and I think you do too, let's just have the funeral right now, that we are not going back to normal. We're not.

I was on a Zoom call this week with a department in our staff, and by the end of it, I was beating the desk, saying, "Y'all aren't getting it". Everything has changed. Y'all are having a normal meeting, this is not a normal time. People need the Gospel more than ever before, and y'all are talking about what happened ten days ago.

And right now, for our ministry, we have to be in the moment, because people need this oxygen. This is not a normal time. This is not a normal church. And I hope in some ways, I hope this building is full again, but I hope we never just go back to normal, where we come in church and act like, you know, it's just our right to come in

here. I hope we never go back to normal, where we just come in and we can't get the eye booger out of our eye until the fourth song, until they play our favorite song, and everything has to match our preference, and we just kinda yawn and wait for it to be over. I hope we never go back to normal. I'm never going back to normal.

Just because something is normal to you, does not mean that it's normal to everyone. And that's very important for us to understand. Like, best example I can give you is with my kids. Are y'all getting something out of this so far? Okay, Abby said to me the other day, "What would you tell 9-year old Steven Furtick", 'cause she's nine, "if you could tell him anything"? So I was like, "I would tell him that one day, you're not gonna walk through Walmart looking at CDs, figuring out which one to buy. You are going to be able to instantly listen to any music in the history of the universe on a device that is the size of a notecard. I would tell him that video games are going to radically change because see, for us TEC Mobile was high-tech".

Now, when my kids are playing video games, they laugh at my video games. Because their normal was something that I didn't even know to imagine. Like, we didn't have, for instance Abby, we didn't have Roblox, "Flying Unicorn", neon unicorns, flying, driving, neon, exploding unicorns. We didn't have any of that. And once you bought the game, you didn't have to spend any more money on it. That's new. That's new. You bought it one dang time. One time. Now, you had to blow in it until you had a seizure to get it to work, but once you bought it, it was yours. And you didn't have to buy anything else for it. You didn't have to grind to get your team ready. My God. It's a video game. Not a job. But it's your normal.

It's your normal that we put trolls on the video screen. Look at me sounding like an old man. It's your normal that we rented the movie, "The Trolls World Tour". And we didn't have to go. See back in the day, let me give you a history lesson, back in yonder years, back in the times of Jesus, Blockbuster Video reigned supreme. Come on, y'all don't know nothing about late fees. And I know you don't know anything about rewinding, or you pay an extra \$0.99 cents. If you don't rewind the tape, I'm taking you back, that was normal. Not now. Not now.

My daughter's never been in a Blockbuster in her life. Blockbuster, what's Blockbuster? Alright, so here's the question. I'm gonna go deep on you. Are you holding onto a Blockbuster blessing? Something that God is trying to put out of business in your life. Something that God is saying, "You know what? I'm taking you through something uncertain alright now". Who is this for? "I'm taking you through something right now that you've never seen before. But just because you've never seen it before, doesn't mean it's not normal".

Thank you, Jesus. Just because I have never known it, doesn't mean it's not normal. You mean, it can be normal for me to have a heart that is at peace? Yes. Yes. That's how it's supposed to be. You are supposed to have peace in the middle of the storm. Jesus did. He's slept through stuff that we scramble about, because He's not from here. See, when you're from someone else, or somewhere else, it changes what you see as normal. Help me preach. Stand up and help me preach. Because I come from a different place. Because I am not from this world. Because it is not my home, I do not have to accept the patterns of this world as normal. I don't have to accept Egypt as normal. And what if God is trying to bring me into a new normal? But I'm so afraid that I reach for what's familiar?

Can I tell you one new normal I think God is trying to give us right now? Better priorities. Because we are so toxic in the way we treat each other. What we say to each other. How we categorize and box each other. But we can't box each other like that anymore. Now, I need you, and you need me. And if we don't all do what we're supposed to do, we may not ever

get out of this. God is making a nation. God is bringing the people through the Red Sea together. But not for them to go through. For them to get there, there's something they have to give up.

Question. What is God calling you to give up to get there? What if there's a new normal? What if your true nature has been so buried and embedded in what Roman's 12 calls the patterns of this world. Can I show you this? Y'all sit down. I'm still feel like I'm just barely started this message. I'm gonna teach it again next week, but let me get as far as I can today before the time runs out. What time am I supposed to be done? Like ten minutes? Twelve minutes? How long? I don't even know what that clock means. How many of y'all kept stop looking at clocks and days of the week awhile ago? What month is this? I dunno. But here's what I wanna show you from Romans 12:1. Some of y'all have heard this scripture before, but let's put it in God's context, okay?

Just like the children of Israel were going through the Red Sea, and remember all they've known as normal. All their parents knew as normal. All their parents' parents knew as normal. All their parents' parents' parents knew as normal. This is 430 years. Look how weird our world has gotten in just a few weeks. Okay, this is 430 years of you thinking you're never supposed to have enough. You'll never be free. This is what it's like to be in bondage. And some of you know this, cause you've been in bondage to depression. You've been in bondage to patterns of thought. And this is a chain breaking scripture in Romans 12:1.

And I never saw it before, y'all. I never saw it before Rob, Debbie, Chelsea, Dawn, Lisa, Shaniqua, May, Sharon. I never saw it before. Somebody's name on here is Honey. That is not a normal name. I like it. If it's my message. My name is Honey. What's your name? My name is Honey. That's one way to get a date. Alright. My name is Honey, call me Honey. But watch the scripture in Romans 12:1. Are you ready? This revelation to me, I've read both of these scriptures a lot. They're both classic passages. The children of Israel are coming through the Red Sea. They wanna go back to Egypt. They wanna go back to what they've known. They wanna go back to what's familiar, because they are afraid. I'd rather go back to what is negative, even if it's not really normal. So we'll call negative normal, just because it's what we know. You see this? Some of the things that I've called normal my whole life aren't normal.

And this scripture shows me just the full extent of it in Jesus Christ. Now let's put the gospel on this Old Testament passage. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy", that's not normal. That's not normal. How many of you, in a relationship can just do wrong over and over and over and over, and over again, and the person fully accepts you? Only God. So, in view of that kind of mercy, and that's where we get used to things. We get used to things that we used to be grateful for, we've become entitled to. But remember, for this community that Paul is writing to, none of this is normal. They're used to relating to God through a sacrificial system.

So when they come before God, they have to make offerings and spill blood in order to have their prayer request heard. In order to meet with God. In order to atone for sin. So this is not normal for Paul to be talking about mercy. Coming to God on the basis of grace. This is new. This is a new normal. And you know what their temptation was? To go back to the old way. So he's telling them, "No, no, no, no, no. In view of God's mercy, I urge you, I need you to, I'm begging you to stop trying to get back to normal. Stop thinking that there's something you could do to earn God's love, and realize that it's already been done through the gift of His Son Jesus Christ, that the blood has already been shed".

Instead of getting back to normal, move forward into this new way of life, and instead of

offering pigeons and turtle doves, and lambs, and goats, and rams, "offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true", true, your true, "and proper worship". This is your new normal. Your new normal is that you are forgiven and not condemned. Your new normal is that you are a child of the most high God. I am no ordinary child. I am a child of God. Me and Moses have Acts 7:20 in common. I am no ordinary child. I am a child of God. I am a royal priesthood. I am holy nation. I am set a part. I'm not trying to be normal. Normal is broken. Normal is broken. The culture is broken.

The world is weird and it didn't just get weird when a virus was unleashed. The world has been weird for a long time. I'm gonna show you in the bible, Romans 12:2, this is way before coronavirus. You got it? Romans 12:2, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world", why not? Because the world is weird. "I don't know about Christians, they're weird". You know what's kinda cool about going through something really traumatic? What used to be weird now is the only thing that works. That's the only thing I'm excited about. I'm not excited about anybody being sick, anybody dying, anybody losing their job, anybody losing their company, anybody losing their life's work. I'm not excited about anybody having to work 20 hours days. I'm not excited about any of it. But what I am excited about is that our faith finally fits.

See, the world always operates by logic, but now we've come to a Red Sea. And so the world is trying what it's always tried. Ah, more information. Ah, ah, ah. And none of it works. So now, there's room to do what Romans 12:1 says, and worship isn't weird anymore. It's not weird to worship now, is it? Because the only thing I can do now is call on God. People are praying right now who used to think praying was superstitious. It's not weird anymore. For once, we're not the weird ones. We're not weird. For just a minute, let's just take this moment. It's like we're a middle school boy who finally hit a growth spurt, and our voice isn't cracking, and we finally fit. The church finally fits. You could send this link to somebody today, and they wouldn't be annoyed that you invited them to church. They'd be excited. They are bored to death. They've got three ulcers. They've got ulcers in places where you don't even normally get ulcers.

So, faith finally fits. This is our moment. This is our time. This is what we were born to do. I wasn't born to be normal. We fit. It's amazing moment. Finally, there's space for faith in your life. Long as everything's normal, there's no space for faith. Oh, I got this. I figured this out. Blah blah blah. Here's what I do. I take the kids here, and I take the kids there, and I take the kids there, and I take the kids there. The Lord said that in this season, He is helping people reset their schedule. And since you didn't want to do it manually, now as the whole thing is shut down, one of the new normals that God might bring us into, is that we have a different baseline for busy. Or a reordering or priorities.

Think about this. Many of us worshipped soccer more than we worshipped the savior. I know that sounds like one of those clichés. I would normally do it in the country preacher voice. "Y'all worship soccer more than the savior". But it's the dang truth. And I don't have anything against soccer, other than I hate it. But listen to me, church. Listen. You listening to me right now? Sit up and listen to this. God said, "I'm not trying to get you back to the normal to where you worshipped your kid's activities and left no space for Me". Not trying to bring you back to that Egypt where you had to make bricks without straw. And you were just spending your money, and spending your time. And never full, and holes in your purses, and just running after this, and running after that. To impress people.

So now you're going through a season where you can put on any clothes you want, and nobody is gonna see them. God's reordering some priorities because Romans 12:2, put it back on the screen, please. I feel this message. Y'all want another week of this next week?

Thank you, Jesus. "Do not conform" anymore, "to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind". Why? The world was weird to begin with. It's not normal. And even the way you develop your construct of the world is important, right? If you get your construct of what the world is like from the news, you will not know normal. The news does not make money by showing you normal. The news makes money by showing you the most extreme example to keep you watching.

You think the news is there to inform you? The news is not there to inform you. The news is there to engage you so you'll keep watching. So, you're getting your construct of the world right now from the news, the news, the news, the news. That's not normal. I'm not telling you not to check the news. I'm telling you not to watch it. Just all the time. It's not normal. That is not normal. You know how the world has these patterns. It's like all these patterns of the world where we overextend ourselves all the time. And we do all these things to impress people. That has never been normal. That's just been culturally accepted. That doesn't make it normal.

What does God call normal? That's what I wanna know in this season. What does God call normal? I told Elijah the other day, I don't care if you like sports or don't like sports. If music is your thing. Cause I grew up with this, too. The kids who did sports were normal. The kids who liked music were weird. You know what? I'm 40 and I probably can't play sports anymore either, even if I was good at them at one time. But I can still make music.

So, watch this. What was weird then is making ministry happen now. Can I preach? Do not be conformed. That's to be acted upon by the outside. That's conform. You can make it what you want it to be. That's what the world has done to us for so long. Your faith goes here. Don't talk about your faith. Your faith is just this. That's not normal. The world is weird. Faith is normal. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. And now we get it. That the unseen is the most significant. I've been preaching this since the beginning of the year. But now we finally get it. That what is unseen is most significant. We get it because we're fighting a virus that we can't see.

So now, we understand that the things which are seen were made of things which do not appear. Faith finally fits, because we are standing in front of the Red Sea, and we no longer understand. And we can't count on the things we used to count on. And in one sense, we want them back for comfort. But God cannot bring change while we hold to comfort. There is a new normal. There is a better you. A truer you. A real you. The patterns of this world are just pretend. It is not real. There is a peace that comes from above. There is a wisdom that whispers. And it doesn't shout. And God said, "I'm not trying to get you back to normal. I'm trying to bring you into it". I'm looking forward to normal.

Somebody say it in the chat. I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to God reinventing me. I'm looking forward to God increasing my capacity to connect with people for real. I'm looking forward to God. I prayed that God would help me with my gratitude. I'm looking forward to being able to put it into practice in the next season. I'm looking forward to normal. Not trying to get back to it. I left Egypt. I'm not trying to conform to the pattern of this world. I want God to transform me by the renewing of my mind. And that starts with what I thought was normal. What I thought was normal wasn't normal. It's just what I knew.

I'm so glad my dad wasn't normal. I mean, at times, I wasn't. But, looking back, I got my passion to preach from the fact that he wasn't normal. I'm not trying to be normal. I found out that what the world calls normal, God calls broken. So when I pray for healing, understand I'm not just praying for bodies to be healed in this season. I'm not just talking about immune systems. I'm talking about belief systems. Do you hear this,

preacher? I don't know. He looks kind of wild today. I am wild today. I'm ready. I'm ready to flip this thing upside down and what the world calls weird, God calls normal. Jesus was the only one on the boat who was normal. Everybody who was freaking out in fear, they were weird.

So, I pray that God would bring us into, watch this, a new normal. There's nothing normal about faith. There was never meant to be. There's nothing normal, there was nothing normal about a shepherd boy fighting a giant with a slingshot. You thought that was normal? What was normal was all the boys with the heavy equipment who didn't know how to do anything with it. There was nothing normal about a virgin birth. You ever had one? Did you get here that way? Well if that's the way Jesus came into the world, what makes us think it's gonna be any different now?

So when we pray for Him to show up, He's not gonna show up looking normal. There's nothing normal about stretching your staff over the sea. There's nothing normal. There's nothing normal about what we're going through right now. There's nothing normal about the panic. There's nothing normal about the fear. There's nothing normal about the order of things. There's nothing normal about the rules. I pulled up to a red light today on the way to church, and I was like, "Do we still stop for these? I don't know. Maybe we don't anymore". Nothing is normal. And yet maybe God is bringing us closer to what He wanted for us all along. Maybe. Maybe God is resetting and revealing. Resetting, revealing.

Be not conformed outside in to the powers of the throne that be. Transform inside out. Transform inside out. Stuck in my house, but God transform my family. Transform my mind. Transform my habit. Give me new neural pathways. Give me, teach me new ways to trust You. I'm not trying to get back to normal. I'm moving forward into a new normal. That's what the kingdom of God is. It's a new normal. A new way of being. A new form of humanity. A new level of faith. Do it, God. That's what faith is. It's a new normal. "Blessed are the poor in spirit", Huh? That's weird. No, that's the way it is. We've just been weird for so long that we got it out of order. But God is bringing us into new normals.

How long till we get back to normal? You keep waiting all you want. Or you can worship. You could keep resisting, or you can receive. I love what God told Moses. When the people were looking for someone to blame. You know how we do. Yeah, it was the bats. It was the lab. It was the, this. It was the, that. It was her that got. We always want somebody to blame. But blaming somebody doesn't bring you into what God is taking you into. And no sooner did they get to this uncertain place, till they start to say to Moses, "Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone'", this is verse 12, Exodus 14, "'Let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" Moses answered the people", Hear the word of the Lord. Hear the word of the Lord.

"Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again". What does that mean? You're never going back to normal. You're moving into a new freedom. I'll minister this to you like it was just us. I love it, cause it can just be like we're having a conversation right now. We're not in a big crowd right now. It's just me and you. And the Lord told me to tell you, you're never going back to normal. In fact, some of the stuff that you thought was normal, it wasn't really normal. It was just old. This is a season to embrace the new norma