

A Trial that Will Become a Testimony...
(June 23, 2019 by Rev. Anthony Menzel)

What will be said today can put us at risk for persecution, and while I am willing to be persecuted for the Lord Jesus, I will also use the wisdom necessary to avoid unnecessary suffering for me, my family, the other leaders of this church, and our congregation in general...

I am requesting that today's message not be taped...
The notes for today's sermon will also not be posted on the Internet

It is almost 8 years to the day that we had our first church service in this building on June 26, 2011.

Now it is time for us to leave...

Sometimes the Lord Jesus moves suddenly after a long time...

I do not have all of the answers yet...

But I do need to share with you all as a congregation what has happened...

Read the letter...

Scripture 1: James 1:27

²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

God willing, this will be our last Sunday in this building...

After service anyone who wants to look at items that we were going to sell in the garage sale should come to the dining room and take whatever you want...

The rest of the items will be donated to the Habitat for Humanity Restore or other charities...

I will no longer donate to the Salvation Army because they are also supporting gay rights...

The doctrine of Abundant Love Christian Church is very clear...

Section 9 of the church's Declaration of Faith, which describes the church's doctrine and is part of the church's constitution says the following:

Section 9. The Church's Relationship to Secular Society: Society should be just for every person, including the unborn and the elderly, regardless of their background or beliefs. While every person should be able to prosper in society and Christians should seek to show love to all people, Abundant Love does not condone behaviors that are against Biblical teachings. For example, marriage can only be between one man and one woman. ***Romans 1:24-32; Matthew 5:43-48; Acts 10:34***

Thus, just like the Lord Jesus, we hate the sin but love the sinner...

And because we love the sinner, we have to tell him or her what he is doing wrong as the Lord Jesus leads us...

We cannot condone their sins...

Thus, I intend to give the church's 15 day notice to the Episcopal priest, as per our rental agreement, that we will no longer be meeting here...

All of our church's belongings will be removed from here today...

If anyone outside the church asks why we are leaving, I ask you to refer them to me...

According to our rental agreement, I do not have to give a reason why we are leaving...

However, if Father Rod asks me, I intend to tell him that for us the main issue is not necessarily the flying of the flag, it is not taking us into account at all when making this decision...

He and his congregation have the right to do whatever they want in their building...

However, we no longer feel comfortable being in a building where we are not included in decision-making...

For example, over the winter, when homeless people were allowed to stay here, we were told that they were staying...

We were not asked how that would make us feel concerning our safety...

He addressed an issue regarding one of the people who ended up being a potential sexual predator...

However, this pattern of being excluded from decisions make us feel uncomfortable with continuing to meet in this building...

I ask everyone to pay attention to group texts this week regarding where we will meet next week...

Anyone who is not part of a group text should be contacted separately...

If you do not receive a notification about our location for next week by Friday, please contact me...

Scripture 2: Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

In all honesty, this rapid movement of God has been stressful for me...

However, at the same time I am rejoicing...

I feel that the Lord Jesus is forcing us to move up to the next level...

Rev. Juana, Maria, and I have already been looking at properties for the church to buy...

I believe that it is likely that we are going to go from renting to owning our own building as a result of this trial...

I ask you all to stay in unity during this trial...

Let us keep meeting together in faith...

If we trust the Lord Jesus, He will give us the victory...

Scripture 3: 2 Chronicles 20:1-32

It happened after this *that* the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and *others* with them besides the Ammonites,^[a] came to battle against Jehoshaphat. ² Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from ^[b]Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which *is* En Gedi). ³ And Jehoshaphat feared, and set ^[c]himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. ⁴ So Judah gathered together to ask *help* from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

⁵ Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, ⁶ and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, *are* You not God in heaven, and do You *not* rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand *is there not* power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? ⁷ *Are* You not our God, *who* drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? ⁸ And they dwell in it, and

have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, ⁹ ‘If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name *is* in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.’ ¹⁰ And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them— ¹¹ here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. ¹² O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes *are* upon You.”

¹³ Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD.

¹⁴ Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. ¹⁵ And he said, “Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle *is* not yours, but God’s. ¹⁶ Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the ^[d]brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. ¹⁷ You will not *need* to fight in this *battle*. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!’ Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD *is* with you.”

¹⁸ And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. ¹⁹ Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high.

²⁰ So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.” ²¹ And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying:

“Praise the LORD,
For His mercy *endures* forever.”

²² Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. ²³ For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy *them*. And when they ^[e]had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

²⁴ So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there *were* their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.

²⁵ When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the ^[f]dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. ²⁶ And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of ^[g]Berachah, for there they blessed the LORD; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day. ²⁷ Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies. ²⁸ So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the LORD. ²⁹ And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of *those* countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. ³⁰ Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

The End of Jehoshaphat's Reign

³¹ So Jehoshaphat was king over Judah. *He was* thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. ³² And he walked in the way of his father Asa, and did not turn aside from it, doing *what was* right in the sight of the LORD.