



**Pastor's Message**  
**April 10, 2020**

Dear Apopka Church Family,

How do you handle the feeling of isolation? How do you cope with distance? I am reminded today of Jesus, who was isolated, who experienced a distance we cannot imagine. In Matthew 26:36-38, in *The Message*, Jesus says to his disciples, "Stay here while I go over there and pray." Taking along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He plunged into an agonizing sorrow. Then he said, "This sorrow is crushing my life out."

Later, on the cross, we hear His cry: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Matthew 27:46). In *The Desire of Ages*, page 754, Ellen White wrote, "At the ninth hour the darkness lifted from the people, but still enveloped the Savior. It was a symbol of agony and horror that weighed upon His heart. No eye could pierce the gloom that surrounded the cross, and none could penetrate the deeper gloom that enshrouded the suffering soul of Christ." That darkness of abandonment, heaven withdrawing from the Savior because He was carrying my sin to that cross—I still am stunned at the thought of this.

Maybe you have felt like this. Isolated. Abandoned. Wondering even if God Himself was still there. Well, I tell you the truth... He is there, because Jesus is here! Mrs. White continues, on page 756: "Suddenly the gloom lifted from the cross, and in clear, trumpet-like tones, that seemed to resound throughout creation, Jesus cried, 'It is finished.'" At that moment, we are told that the veil of the Temple was torn. If you can imagine being there, you see a new path into that place. "A new and living way is prepared for all. No longer need sinful, sorrowing humanity await the coming of the high priest. Henceforth the Savior was to officiate as priest and advocate in the heaven of heavens... There is now an end to all sacrifices and offerings for sin. The Son of God is come... having obtained eternal redemption for us" (page 757).

Very shortly afterward, Christ left the grave, the glorified and risen Savior! "When (Satan) saw Christ come forth in triumph, he knew that his kingdom would have an end, and that he must finally die." Christ rose again, one with the Father again, never to be abandoned again, and never to leave us abandoned. "I will not leave you orphaned," Jesus said. "I'm coming back. In just a little while the world will no longer see me, but you're going to see me because I am alive and you're about to come alive..." (from John 14:18-2, MSG). "The Friend, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send at my request, will make everything plain to you... I'm leaving you well and whole."

In faith, we know we are not abandoned, and we are never truly isolated. We know Christ has risen! We know He gives us the Holy Spirit, Christ-in-us! Ask for the Holy Spirit today. Be reminded that Christ is alive, and that you are never alone.

Stay in touch with each other, pray for each other, and stay safe.

Every blessing in Christ,  
Pastor James

## Update for the Week of April 11 – April 18

**Virtual Sabbath Worship Services:** Go to [www.apokasdachurch.com](http://www.apokasdachurch.com) for our local Sabbath School options (many more options have emerged, and more are “in development”... stay tuned!), Hope Sabbath School and Virtual Worship Service. Our worship services are split into two video sections: “Build 7 – Church Life” and “Build 7 – Virtual Worship.”

- Local Sabbath School Options
  - “Perspectives” Sabbath School, James Johnson: 7:00 PM, Friday evening. Go to <https://zoom.us/j/597674660>.
  - Adult Sabbath School Quarterly 1, George Crawford: 10:00 AM, Sabbath morning. Go to <https://zoom.us/j/914391071>.
  - Adult Sabbath School Quarterly 2, Jack Carey: 10:00 AM, Sabbath morning. Go to <https://zoom.us/j/601759026>.
  - Adult Sabbath School Quarterly, Hugo Kennedy: 10:00 AM, Sabbath morning. Go to <https://zoom.us/j/3999743097?>
  - Seeker’s Class, Scott Shelton: 9:55 AM, Sabbath morning. Go to <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/2249739986>.
  - Youth Sabbath school, Joel Rivera: Time: 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada) <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/421371976?pwd=ODhERHZPNytqbDY4R28wTzlQOEZ4QT09>  
Meeting ID: 421 371 976, Password: 037402
- Message: “The Jesus-Centered Life: Getting On the Beeline.” Thank you, Cylin Broker, Joemily Rivera, and Joel Rivera (Jr.) for reading our Scriptures this week!
  - *Next week’s message will be brought to us by Pastor Joel Rivera.*
- Featured Offering for this week will be presented by Mariah and Mackenzi Bryan: *Christian Record Services*. Our local mission in Apopka is locally supported. Thank you for your support of God’s work in our community!
  - You can give online at <https://adventistgiving.org/#/org/ANTBBB/envelope/start>
- Our family prayer will be presented by George Crawford.
- Larry Campbell will be giving a brief “Build 7 Connections” feature regarding our building project and our upcoming Business Meeting on April 19, 7:00 PM, via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/531220179>.
- Our family prayer will be brought by Renoir Marcellus.

### Morning Prayers

Every morning at 7:30, we invite you to join together in prayer via Zoom. The gathering is hosted by Elder George Crawford, and it is a tremendous blessing. Simply go to the internet, and go to <https://zoom.us/j/150286450>, or dial in by phone at (929) 205-6099 and enter the Meeting ID when prompted: 150286450.

### Journey Through the Word

We continue to study Matthew on Wednesday evenings. Joel Rivera leads this excellent study that has also moved online. Go to <https://zoom.us/j/676008518>, or dial in at (929) 205-6099 and enter the Meeting ID when prompted: 676 008 518.

## **“Shepherding Groups”**

Maynard Lebrun, James Johnson, our elders and others have been working to divide our church contact list into groups of 12 “home contacts.” This includes members and others who have been connected to Apopka SDA. We want to do our best to keep in touch, especially during this very strange time! Starting this week, many of you will begin to receive a phone call, text, or email from the leader of the group you are in. We are still working on many of the contacts to be sure they have someone responsible to keep in touch. Please be patient with us as we continue to work out this initiative.

## **For Your Prayers**

- Tim McGuire, son of Kristen and Norm McGuire, as he recovers from his automobile accident.
- Cindy Locke’s brother.
- Pastor Dick O’Ffill.
- Celeste Gomes’s family.
- Bill Allen and family.
- COVID-19: The health of our families. Those who will be facing financial difficulty. Our young people as they are dealing with isolation and a new way of being educated. Teachers, who continue to work hard to continue to provide a good education. Especially first responders and health workers who are dealing with this crisis first-hand.