

What's Next?

Script - Lk. 11:9-13

Introduction - Waiting for the other shoe to drop.

A. Biblical issues we might not have thought about before the corona virus

1. Sheltering in place (Gen. 6-8 in the ark; Isa. 26:20-21; Ex. 10:21-23; Ex. 12:22).
2. The isolation from social distancing, wearing a mask and lack of interaction (Ex. 10:21-23).
3. Some are not able to buy or sell without government approval (Rev. 13:16-17).
4. Erosion of you individual rights (worship services closed, etc).

B. How would you know about these issues?

1. If you are like Jesus and have the Holy Spirit reveal things to you (Jn. 3:34; 16:13).
2. If you were a prophet (Amos 3:7).
3. If you are listening to a biblical preacher (Rom. 10:14-17; 2 Tim. 4:3-4; Eze. 13:22-23; 13:6-8; 2 Cor. 11:13-15).
4. If you are personally familiar with the scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 17:11).

C. What can we learn about what is to come?

1. God knows the future (Dan. 2; Isa. 42:9; 46:10).
2. There are going to be some things that we go through that we don't understand until later (Lk. 2:16; Jn. 13:7; Lk. 24:6-7; Mt. 25).
3. If we stay familiar with God, through His word, then we may gain special insights into current events around us (Jn. 13:19).
4. Ask God to send the Holy Spirit into your life (Lk. 11:9, 13). What will this do?
 - a. We will receive comfort in difficult times (Jn. 14:16-18).
 - b. We will be drawn closer to Jesus and reveal things to come (Jn. 16:13-14).
 - c. We will receive insights and understanding (Acts 2).
 - d. He will help you be in the right place at the right time (Judges 6-7; Acts 8:26-39).
 - e. He will convict us of sin (Jn. 16:8).

D. Appeal (Lk. 12:37; Mt. 5:6; Lk. 21:28).

I Know who holds Tomorrow by Ira Stanphill

I don't know about tomorrow, I just live for day to day,
I don't borrow from the sunshine, For it's skies may turn to gray.

I don't worry o'er the future, For I know what Jesus said.
And today I'll walk beside Him, For He knows what lies ahead.

Many things about tomorrow, I don't seem to understand
But I know who holds tomorrow, And I know who holds my hand

Ev'ry step is getting brighter, As the golden stairs I climb
Ev'ry burden's getting lighter, Ev'ry cloud is silver lined

There the sun is always shining, There no tear will dim the eye
At the ending of the rainbow, Where the mountains touch the sky

Many things about tomorrow, I don't seem to understand
But I know who holds tomorrow, And I know who holds my hand

Ira Stanphill was an accomplished musician and minister. Ira served with 9 different organizations in the capacities of youth director, music director and pastor. He preached across America, and in 40 other countries. He wrote over 500 gospel songs, such as "Mansion Over The Hilltop", "Jesus and Me", "We'll Talk It Over" and "Happiness is the Lord".

On April 23, 1939, he married Zelma Lawson. Zelma, a minister's daughter, was a gifted musician who "played piano by ear and accompanied her parents on a local radio program." Ira and Zelma had a son, Ray. For years, Zelma traveled with Ira and joined him in serving the Lord as they shared the gospel in one crusade after another. However, life was not perfect and Zelma eventually became disillusioned with the life they had created. Zelma eventually decided that ministry was not for her and left Ira. He is said to be devastated and continued to try to reconcile with her, remain true to his vows and forgive her. The couple were divorced on October 7, 1948, after almost a decade of marriage. There are varying accounts surrounding their separation including longing to become a celebrity, addiction and other men. What is clear is that the marriage did not last. Zelma would eventually marry John E. Cowan. Sadly, Zelma died in a car accident on February 12, 1951. During the years of separation, divorce and her death, Ira is said to have sunk into a deep depression. I Know Who Holds Tomorrow was written during this difficult and trying time in Ira's life. Ace Collins writes in Turn Your Radio On that Ira Stanphill was driving when he began to hum and then sing a song. He was singing about not knowing what the future held but trusting God with the future. Upon arriving home, he rushed to his office and his piano and jotted down the words. Following Zelma's death, he married Gloria Hollingsworth on June 7, 1951 and the couple had two daughters together. Stanphill would continue to share the gospel and write hymns and songs of faith for the remainder of his life. But, he would face other difficult times on which he had to trust in knowing who holds tomorrow. In 1976, he was diagnosed with "a malignant tumor in the right front quadrant of the brain." The surgery was successful, but it is said that his personality changed following the surgery. Ira lived another seventeen years following his surgery. In his later years, he can be found on the Gaither Homecoming videos. Ira Stanphill died on December 30, 1993 and His widow, Gloria, died on August 22, 2017.