

Wednesday, April 15

It's a Jungle out There. That's the title of the theme song from one of my favorite tv shows, *Monk*. Randy Newman sings, and the raspy timbre of his voice and the rhythm of the song mimics the personality and quirks of the title character played by actor Tony Shaloub. If you've never watched the show (it ran from 2002-2009, reruns on USA Network), Adrian Monk is a retired detective known for his keen sleuthing skills. He suffered a nervous breakdown after his wife is killed by a car bomb which resulted in him being discharged from the police department. He became a recluse, with obsessive-compulsive disorder, and refused to leave his house for 3½ years. Eventually his unique skillset is needed to solve a crime and he's asked back to be a consultant with the police department. If you've never watched an episode I hope you'll give it a try – it's a comfort show in these Covid-19 times.

The show itself isn't the focus of this devotion – the theme song is. The song begins:
It's a jungle out there

Disorder and confusion everywhere

No one seems to care

Well I do

Hey, who's in charge here?

It's a jungle out there

The words I italicized are on most people's minds these days, both in a temporal sense as well as in an out-of-this world sense. Is God really in control right now? There's a great mystery in the relationship between God's sovereignty and the existence of evil. So while we believe in God's sovereignty, we also grieve and hate evil because it's the antithesis of our good God.

It's in our DNA to question if God is in control every time a crisis or tragedy occurs. In fact, John Lennox just released a book titled, *Where is God in a Coronavirus World?* The reality is society in general has lost a seeming sense of control, and the certainties of death and grief skulk in our mind. My purpose isn't to discuss the topic of pain and suffering and God's role. Yet, I do want to affirm a truth from Scripture.

From the *Message* paraphrase version, we read (Isaiah 41:13)

I, your GOD, have a firm grip on you and I'm not letting go.

I'm telling you, "Don't panic. I'm right here to help you."

I won't even pretend to have the definitive answer to the question, *Why?* I understand factors that speak to the *Why?* (original sin, apathy/rebellion towards God, God cares more about the disease in our spiritual hearts than the disease in our physical bodies, to remind us there's nothing wrong with God but there's something terribly wrong with His creation, God wants us to see the greatness of who He is and acknowledge that).

But, ultimately, His promise to be with us is what undergirds our journey through this challenging time. Read Isaiah 41:13 each morning in whatever Bible translation you have – and let it soak in your heart and mind. Let it refresh and strengthen you.

Hey, who's in charge here? God is.