

A CASE FOR SPIRITUAL SECURITY

PHILIPPIANS 4: 4-9

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YOU KNOW, ANY WAY LOOK AT IT, THE APOSTLE PAUL WENT THROUGH SOME VERY TOUGH TIMES. I MEAN, HERE WAS A MAN WHO HAD LOFTY IDEALS AND HIGH ASPIRATIONS. HERE WAS A MAN WHO HAD TRAVELLED THE ENTIRE TRACK OF THE KNOWN EMPIRE. HERE'S A MAN WHOSE NAME WAS RENOWNED IN EVERY MAJOR CITY OF HIS DAY. HERE WAS A MAN WHO STOOD BEFORE GOVERNORS AND KINGS AND PRINCES AND EMPERORS..

HERE WAS A MAN WHO WAS ABLE TO PUT TO SHAME THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOLARS AND THEIR RENOWN LEARNED OF THE DAY, BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT WISDOM. HERE WAS A MAN WHOSE MESSAGE IMPACTED AND CHANGED THE VERY COURSE OF CIVILIZATION.

BUT, WHEN YOU COME TO THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS HERE WAS A MAN WHO WAS IN PRISON. THE TIME THAT HE WROTE THIS BOOK, PROBABLY BETWEEN SOMEWHERE 61 A.D.. AND 64 A.D. HE WAS CHAINED TO A PALACE GUARD AND PROBABLY WHAT WAS A RENTED APARTMENT. THAT GUARD WAS CHANGED EVERY SIX HOURS AND A NEW GUARD WAS COMING TO TAKE HIS PLACE.

WHEN YOU BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THAT, YOU SEE THAT IT WAS UNDER THAT KIND OF DURESS, THAT OVER HALF OF THE EPISTLES, THAT PAUL WROTE, WERE WRITTEN IN PRISON. HE WAS LET LOOSE FROM THAT PRISON AND FROM THAT PALACE

GUARD IN ABOUT 65 A.D.

AND THEN HE WAS LOOSE FOR ABOUT A YEAR, AND HE WENT BACK TO PRISON AGAIN. THIS TIME, HE WAS PUT IN THE DUNGEON. THE DUNGEON WAS UNDERGROUND. THERE WAS NO ENTRANCE OR EXIT, BUT A TWO-BY-TWO KIND OF HOLE IN THE TOP. NO WINDOWS, NO DOORS, NO VENTILATION. NO CHAIRS, NO BED, NO KIND OF DESK. NO KIND OF FURNITURE.. NOTHING BUT THE DAMPNES AND THE DARKNESS OF THE STONE WALLS.

BUT, HERE IT IS, THIS SAME MAN WHO WRITES TO TIMOTHY AND II TIMOTHY, CHAPTER FOUR, VERSES SIX TO EIGHT. AND OUT OF THAT CIRCUMSTANCE, SAYS, "I'M NOW READY TO BE OFFERED THE TIME OF MY DEPARTURE IS AT HAND. I'VE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT, I FINISHED THE COURSE, I'VE KEPT THE FAITH. HENCEFORTH, THERE'S A CROWN OF LIFE LAID UP FOR ME, WHICH THE LORD, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE SHALL GIVE ME AT THAT DAY.. BUT NOT FOR ME ONLY, BUT FOR ALL OF THOSE THAT LOVE HIS APPEARING."

NOW, WE HAVE TO ASK OURSELVES, HOW COULD A MAN, UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES AND THAT SITUATION, POSSIBLE WRITE A LETTER AND SAY TO THE PEOPLE, TO WHOM HE WAS WRITING.. REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS, AND AGAIN, I SAY REJOICE. SOME HOW OR OTHER, WE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND, THAT THE APOSTLE PAUL GOT A CASE FOR SPIRITUAL SECURITY.

HERE WAS A MAN WHO WAS SECURE IN EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM, HE WAS SECURE IN HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. HE WAS SECURE IN HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD. HE WAS SECURE IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PEERS AND THE OTHER PEOPLE WITH WHOM HE HAD INTERACTION. HE WAS SECURE WITH IN HIMSELF. AND BECAUSE OF THAT SECURITY, HE WAS ABLE TO HANDLE ANYTHING THAT CAME HIS WAY.

NOW, I'M SURE THAT IF WE'RE REALLY HONEST TODAY, THE NUMBER ONE PROBLEM THAT MOST OF US HAVE, IS REALLY, HOW TO LIVE IN SECURITY-- THE LACK OF SECURITY IS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL FOR MANY OF THE KINDS OF DISEASES AND EMOTIONAL DISORDERS AND PROBLEMS THAT WE HAVE TODAY.

WE GET ALL BENT OUT OF SHAPE AND OUT OF JOINT, IN OUR LIFESTYLES, BECAUSE WE LOSE THAT SENSE OF SECURITY. IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE ALL HAVE

OUR OWN PALACE GUARDS. IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE'VE ALL BEEN IN OUR OWN DUNGEONS. WE KNOW WHAT IT IS TO LIVE UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES. FOR SOME OF US, IT'S A DUNGEON OF ANXIETY AND APPREHENSION AND/OR ADDICTION. FOR SOME OF US, IT'S ANXIETY OF DEPRESSION AND DISCOURAGEMENT AND DISILLUSIONMENT. FOR SOME OF US, IT'S THE ANXIETY OR THE DUNGEON OF FEAR AND FRUSTRATION AND FAILURE.

FOR SOME OF US, IT'S THE DUNGEON OF HOPELESSNESS AND HELPLESSNESS AND HAPLESSNESS. BUT, WHATEVER YOUR DUNGEON MIGHT BE, THE THING THAT WE LEARN IS, IS THAT THE BIBLE GIVES US SOMETHING THAT NOTHING ELSE IN THE WORLD CAN GIVE.

THE BIBLE GIVES US THE SENSE OF SECURITY THAT IS BEYOND ANYTHING THAT THE WORLD KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT. AND THE APOSTLE, PAUL, MODELS TO US, WHAT THAT SECURITY IS. THERE'S NO MAN WHO IS UNSECURE, COULD WRITE WHAT HE WROTE. BECAUSE HE BEGINS IN VERSE SIX, AND SAYS.. "DON'T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING, WHAT SO EVER, BUT TELL GOD EVERY DETAIL OF YOUR LIFE, AND EARNEST AND THANKFUL PRAYER." THIS IS THE PHILLIPS TRANSLATION. "AND THE PEACE OF GOD, WHICH TRANSCENDS ALL HUMAN UNDERSTANDING, WILL KEEP CONSTANT GUARD OVER YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS, AS THEY REST IN CHRIST JESUS. AND WHATEVER IS TRUE AND WHATEVER IS NOBLE AND WHATEVER IS RIGHT AND WHATEVER IS PURE AND WHATEVER IS LOVELY AND WHATEVER IS ADMIRABLE. IF THERE'S ANYTHING EXCELLENT, IF THERE'S ANYTHING PRAISE WORTHY, YOU THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS."

THEN HE HAD THE AUDACITY TO MAKE THE STATEMENT... "WHATEVER YOU HAVE LEARNED OR RECEIVED OR HEARD.. WHATEVER YOU'VE SEEN IN ME, YOU PUT THAT INTO PRACTICE. YOU FOLLOW THE MODELING THAT I'VE GIVEN TO YOU, AND SOMETHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN.. THE GOD OF PEACE WILL BE WITH YOU."

NOW I'M UNDER THE IMPRESSION AND BELIEVE WITH ALL MY HEART, THAT IF WE COULD LEARN TO LIVE IN THESE VERSES, IT WOULD CHANGE OUR WHOLE MODUS OPPERONDAI. THE VERY THING THAT I READ PRACTICALLY EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE, AND QUOTE TO MYSELF, ARE THESE VERSES RIGHT HERE. THESE ARE THE VERSES THAT HAVE SEEN ME THROUGH MANY A DIFFICULT TIME. BECAUSE THE BIBLE MAKES

A CASE FOR SPIRITUAL SECURITY THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN.

THIS IS THE MESSAGE OF JOB, ELEVEN AND EIGHTEEN.. SAYS, "YOU WILL BE SECURE, BECAUSE THERE IS HOPE AND YOU WILL LOOK AROUND YOU, AND YOU WILL LIE DOWN AND REST IN SAFETY."

THIS IS THE MESSAGE IN PSALM, NINETY-ONE AND FIVE. "YOU WILL NOT BE AFRAID OF THE TERROR BY NIGHT.. AND YOU WON'T BE AFRAID OF THE ARROW THAT FLIES BY THE DAY." THIS IS THE VERY MESSAGE THAT WE GET FROM PSALM, ONE HUNDRED AND TWELVE, VERSE ONE.. THE PSALMIST STARTS OUT WITH THAT PHRASE.. PRAISE THE LORD! THEN HE SAID.. "BLESSED IS THAT PERSON WHO FEARS THE LORD AND THE ONE WHO DELIGHTS IN HIS COMMANDS." AND IN VERSE SEVEN, IT SAYS, "HE WILL NOT FEAR IN THE TIME OF BAD NEWS, BECAUSE HIS HEART IS STEADFAST AND TRUSTING IN THE LORD.. HIS HEART WILL BE SECURE.. HE WILL HAVE NO FEAR. HE, IN THE END, WILL LOOK IN TRIUMPH, UPON HIS FOES."

AND THIS IS WHAT THE WRITER OF HEBREWS, HAD IN MIND, IN HEBREWS CHAPTER SIX AND VERSE THIRTEEN. WHEN WE HEAR HIM SAY AND NO UNCERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES. IN HEBREWS, THIRTEEN AND SIX, HE SAID.. "AND WE HAVE THIS SAYING, THE LORD IS NEAR AT HAND. WE WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT CAN MERE MAN DO TO US.. IF THERE'S ANY MESSAGE THAT NEEDS TO BE PROCLAIMED, FAR AND WIDE, THROUGH THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, BY EVERY PERSON WHO CLAIMS THE NAME OF THE LORD, IT'S THAT OUR SECURITY IS NOT IN WASHINGTON. OUR SECURITY IS NOT IN MOSCOW. OUR SECURITY IS NOT IN WALL STREET. OUR SECURITY IS NOT IN DUNN AND BRADSTREET. OUR SECURITY IS NOT IN OUR HOLDINGS. OUR SECURITY IS IN THE FACT THAT THE LORD IS WITH US, AND IF GOD BE FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US ?"

AMEN, AMEN AND AMEN... WELL, HALLELUJAH.. WELL, PRAISE THE LORD IN THIS PLACE. WELL, MAGNIFY HIS NAME.. HALLELUJAH.

I WANT YOU TO JUST SAY THAT WITH ME.. THE LORD IS WITH ME... THE LORD IS WITH ME. I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT CAN MAN DO TO ME ?

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT ? DO YOU BELIEVE THAT ? WELL THEN, LET'S PRAISE THE LORD. AMEN.. HALLELUJAH.

WELL, YOU SAY, PASTOR WALKER THAT SOUNDS FANTASTIC.. IF I COULD JUST

LEARN TO LIVE BY THAT SECURITY. IF I COULD HAVE THAT IN MY LIFE AND HAVE IT MY HEART. BUT YOU KNOW, I GET IT ALL TOGETHER. I GET IT ALL FIGURED OUT, BUT THEN, I SEEM TO LOSE IT.

YOU KNOW, WE'RE GREAT AT TALKING OURSELVES INTO BEING DEMORALIZED. WE'RE GREAT AT TELLING OURSELVES HOW BAD THINGS REALLY ARE. I MEAN, YOU KNOW, IF YOU REALLY TAKE WHAT YOU SEE ON TV SERIOUSLY, AND YOU TAKE WHAT YOU SEE IN THE HEADLINES, SERIOUSLY. AND EVERYTHING THAT YOU READ SERIOUSLY IT'S ENOUGH TO GIVE YOU LICENSE TO COMMIT HARRY CAREY.

I MEAN, YOU CAN LOOK AT THIS WHOLE THING AND SAY, "YOU KNOW, THE WORLD IS GOING RIGHT DOWN THE TUBES.. THERE'S NOTHING THAT'S GOING GOOD." I'VE DONE IT AS WELL AS YOU HAVE, I HAVE FLIPPED THE DIAL, LOOKING FOR THINGS THAT WERE WORTH LOOKING FOR.

YOU KNOW, I EVEN FOUND MYSELF, FINALLY SETTLING ON LAWRENCE WELK, AND ENJOYING IT... LAUGHTER... WHEN YOU GET TO THAT, THINGS ARE PRETTY BAD... YOU'RE COMING TO A PRETTY ALL-TIME LOW. NOW, US ELDERLY FOLKS, WE REALLY LIKE THAT..

BUT, WE TALK OURSELVES IN BEING DE-MORALIZED. DID YOU EVER NOTICE THERE ARE THOSE PEOPLE THAT REFUSE TO SEE ANYTHING GOOD IN ANYTHING. TO GET ANY SECURITY OR ANYTHING OUT OF LIFE. TO SAY, REJOICE IN THE LORD, ALWAYS AND AGAIN I WILL SAY IT REJOICE.. IT JUST HITS THEM LIKE.. WHAT IS THAT ?

I HAVE NO CONCEPT OF THE MEANING OF REJOICE.

* I HEARD THE STORY OF A NEIGHBOR, WHO WAS A CHRISTIAN AND FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD. YET, A NEIGHBOR, WHO WAS THE MOST DEPRESSED MAN HE'D EVER KNOWN. EVERY TIME HE GOT AROUND HIS NEIGHBOR, HE FELT LIKE COMMITTING HARRY CAREY, BECAUSE THE FRIEND WAS SO DEPRESSED. AND HE SAID THERE'S NOTHING EVER IMPRESSED HIM. BUT, THIS NEIGHBOR LIKED TO DUCK HUNT, AND HE HAD THIS DOG, THAT WAS A VERY UNUSUAL DOG. AND HE SAID THIS DOG WILL MAKE HIM COME ALIVE, IF ANYTHING WILL PERK HIM UP, THIS DOG WILL. SO HE TALKED HIM INTO GOING DUCK HUNTING. GOT THERE IN THE BLIND. AND THE DUCKS CAME OVER.. SHOT A COUPLE OF DUCKS.. SENT THE DOG AND LO AND BEHOLD

THE DOG, INSTEAD OF SWIMMING, JUST WALKED ON THE WATER, WENT OUT AND GOT THE DUCK AND BROUGHT IT BACK. LOOKED AT HIS NEIGHBOR.. THE NEIGHBOR NEVER BLINKED AN EYE. ANOTHER FLOCK OF DUCKS CAME OVER.. SHOT A COUPLE OF DUCKS, DOG JUMPED ON THE WATER.. DIDN'T EVEN GET HIS PAWS WET.. JUST RAN RIGHT ACROSS THE WATER, GOT THE DUCK AND BROUGHT IT BACK. FINALLY, THE OWNER OF THE DOG SAID, "WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT MY DOG ?" YOU KNOW, I WAS THINKING.. THAT'S THE ONLY WATER SPANIEL I'VE EVER SEEN THAT DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO SWIM... LAUGHTER..

NOW, ISN'T THAT THE WAY THAT LIFE GOES FOR ALOT OF FOLKS ? SOME OF YOU ARE JUST FIGURING IT OUT, BACK THERE.. WOULD YOU HELP EACH OTHER ? I KNOW IT'S AN INTELLECTUAL JOKE FOR THIS TIME OF THE MORNING.

BUT, YOU KNOW THE PSALMIST SAYS IN PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND NINE, VERSE ELEVEN...THY WORD, HAVE I HID IN MY HEART, THAT I MIGHT NOT SIN AGAINST YOU. BUT HIDING THAT WORD IN OUR HEARTS, DIFFICULT AND REALLY MAKING IT WORK, BECAUSE SOMETIMES WE THINK IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. THAT IT WILL WORK FOR EVERYBODY ELSE, BUT IT WON'T WORK FOR ME.

*IT'S LIKE THE JUNIOR CLASS TEACHER, WHO WAS TRYING TO TEACH HER CLASS OF JUNIOR BOYS. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE EVER HAD A CLASS OF JUNIOR BOYS OR NOT. OR YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOUR CHILDREN WERE JUNIOR AGE. YOU KNOW, THEY WERE BUNDLES OF ENERGY. I REMEMBER TEACHING A CLASS OF JUNIOR BOYS UP IN MCKINLEYVILLE, CALIFORNIA, ONE TIME, RIGHT ON THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BORDER RIGHT AT THE OREGON BORDER. AT AN OLD RAMSHACKLED BUILDING, WHERE THE JUNIOR BOYS HAD THEIR CLASS. I WAS THERE AS A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION YOUTH DIRECTOR, BUT THEIR TEACHER DIDN'T SHOW UP THAT SUNDAY, SO THEY SAID, "WOULD YOU TEACH THE CLASS ? YOU SUPPOSE TO KNOW ALL ABOUT THESE THINGS." SO I DECIDED THAT I WOULD TEACH THE CLASS.. TWENTY-TWO JUNIOR BOYS, IN THIS ONE LITTLE PLACE. IT WAS A COOL MORNING. THEY HAD OPEN GAS-SPACE HEATERS, AND THE SPACE HEATERS WERE ON. IN ABOUT MID-WAY THE CLASS, I'M GOING ALONG TEACHING.. THINKING I'M DOING A GOOD JOB.. ALL OF A SUDDEN, I SMELL SMOKE. I LOOK, AND THERE'S A KID'S SHIRT ON FIRE. ONE OF THE BOYS HAD TAKEN HIS PAPER AND

PUT IT IN THE OPEN HEATER, GOT IT LIT AND LIT HIS FRIEND'S SHIRT, IN THE FRONT SEAT. PARENTS LATER TOLD ME THAT THE KIDS CAME HOME.. SAID IT WAS THE GREATEST SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS THEY'D EVER BEEN IN, IN ALL THE TIME THEY HAD BEEN GOING TO SUNDAY SCHOOL. WELL, SHE WAS TRYING TO GET THIS CLASS OF JUNIOR BOYS.. AND YOU KNOW, JUNIOR BOYS ARE NEVER CLEAN. HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A CLEAN NINE-YEAR OLD ? OR A TEN-YEAR OLD, OR AN ELEVEN-YEAR OLD.. THEY JUST WON'T STAY CLEAN. WE USED TO GET UP ON SUNDAY MORNING, GET OUR BOYS READY FOR CHURCH, FIRST.. THAT WAS A MISTAKE.. BY THE TIME WE GOT READY TO GO, WE LOOKED AT THEM.. THEY LOOKED LIKE THEY HAD BEEN THROUGH THE CAR WASH AND THEY WERE DISHEVELED FROM TOP TO BOTTOM. SO, WE'D GET UP AND GET DRESSED AND GET THEM READY, AND THEN GRAB THEM BY THE EAR AND SIT THEM IN THE CAR.. JUST SO THAT THEY WOULD LOOK HALF-WAY DECENT WHEN WE GOT TO CHURCH. I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED DURING CHURCH, BUT BY THE TIME WE GOT READY TO GO HOME, THEY LOOKED LIKE THEY HAD BEEN HIT BY A STEAM-ROLLER. BUT, THAT'S JUNIOR BOYS... SO SHE LOOKED OVER HER CLASS, AND THEY NEEDED A CLEANING UP AND THEY WERE ALL DISHEVELED.. AND SHE SAID, "I NEED TO TEACH THESE KIDS, CLEANLINESS." SO SHE WAS TEACHING THEM PROVERBS... SHE SAID, THERE ARE SOME OTHER PROVERBS THAT ARE NOT IN THE BIBLE.. ONE OF THEM IS CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO WHAT ? AND SHE ASKED THE CLASS.. CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO WHAT, SHE ASKED AGAIN. FINALLY, ONE LITTLE BOY SAID, "WELL, I KNOW WHAT IT IS.. CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE.... LAUGHTER... AND THAT'S WHAT A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE WORD,, REJOICE IN THE LORD, ALWAYS AND AGAIN I SAY REJOICE..THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE...

BUT, WHAT IS PAUL REALLY SAYING ? LOOK, IF YOU WANT SECURITY IN YOUR LIFE.. IF YOU WANT TO HANDLE ALL OF THE THINGS THAT YOU'VE GOT TO HANDLE, NOW HERE'S THE WAY TO DO IT.. HE LIFTS UP THREE WORDS. AND THE FIRST WORD IS PRAISE.. REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS, AND AGAIN I SAY, REJOICE.. LET YOUR GENTLENESS BE EVIDENT TO ALL, FOR THE LORD IS AT HAND OR THE LORD IS NEAR.

NOW WHAT IS HE REALLY SAYING, WHEN HE SAYS THAT ? HE SAYS, YOU GOT

TO START OUT WITH PRAISE. THAT THE FOUNDATION STONE FOR SECURITY STARTS WITH PRAISE.. NOW, NOT JUST ANY KIND OF PRAISE. REJOICE IN THE LORD, ALWAYS. NOW LET'S DO IT AGAIN... REJOICE IN THE LORD, ALWAYS.

IT'S AN INCESSANT PRAISE.. IT'S A PRAISE THAT NEVER STOPS. YOU DON'T JUST PRAISE WHEN YOU'RE FEELING GOOD. YOU PRAISE WHEN YOU'RE FEELING BAD. YOU DON'T JUST PRAISE WHEN THINGS ARE RIGHT. YOU PRAISE WHEN THINGS ARE WRONG.

IT BECOMES A LIFE-STYLE. IT BECOMES A PART OF THE WARP AND MOVE OF WHO YOU ARE. I'LL REJOICE IN THE LORD, ALWAYS. I'LL DO IT INCESSANTLY.

NOW, WHEN YOU LOOK IN THE LIFE OF PAUL, IT WAS AN IN SPITE-OF-PRAISE. HE LEARNED HOW TO PRAISE IN SPITE OF. HE PRAISED IN SPITE OF THE FETTERS.. IN SPITE OF THE VERY FETTERS THAT HE HAD. WHEN YOU LOOK IN ACTS, CHAPTER SIXTEEN. YOU REMEMBER, HE WAS PUT IN JAIL. AND HE AND SILAS WERE PUT IN THE STOCKS. AND AT MIDNIGHT, THEY PRAISED THE LORD, IN SPITE OF THE FETTERS.

AND WHEN YOU LOOK AT HIM AGAIN, IN ACTS, CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX, VERSE TWENTY-NINE. WHEN HE IS TRYING TO PLEAD FOR HIS OWN LIFE, BEFORE AGRIPPA AND BEFORE FESTUS AND BEFORE FELIX. AND HE LOOKS AT FESTUS, AND HE TELLS HIM ABOUT THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AND FESTUS, WHO WAS A ROMAN GOVERNOR LOOKS AT HIM AND SAID, "PAUL, YOU'RE MAD.. MUCH LEARNING HAS MADE YOU GO INSANE. AND THEN HE LOOKED OVER TO KING AGRIPPA, THE PUPPET KING THAT WAS APPOINTED BY ROME, OVER ISRAEL AND THAT PUPPET KING.. AND HE LOOKED AT KING AGRIPPA AND HE SAID, "BUT KING AGRIPPA, YOU UNDERSTAND.. YOU'VE READ THE PROPHETS, AND YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ARE TRUE. " AND AGRIPPA SAYS, OK PAUL, ALMOST YOU PERSUADE ME TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN. AND PAUL SAYS, "WHETHER I PERSUADE OR WHETHER I DON'T, I WISH THAT ALL PEOPLE WERE LIKE ME, EXCEPT FOR THESE CHAINS."

AND WHEN YOU FIND HIM OVER IN II TIMOTHY, CHAPTER FOUR AND VERSE SIXTEEN.. HE SAID, "YOU KNOW, ALEXANDER THE METAL WORKER, DID A GREAT HARM TO ME, AND WHEN I HAD TO STAND UP BEFORE THE TRIBUNAL, THERE WAS NO ONE WHO STOOD WITH ME.. NOT WITHSTANDING, THE LORD STOOD WITH ME AND HE STRENGTHENED

ME, BECAUSE I PRAISED IN SPITE OF. I PRAISED IN SPITE OF ALL THESE THINGS, BECAUSE I REJOICE IN THE LORDS, ALWAYS. BUT, IT'S NOT ALWAYS IN SPITE OF, BUT IT'S A PRAISE THAT'S BECAUSE OF... BECAUSE OF THE LORD.. HE IS THE FACTOR.

THE LORD IS NEAR, AND WHEN THE LORD IS NEAR AND YOU REJOICE, IT BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN US. AND WHAT IS THE BEST IN US ? LET YOUR GENTLENESS BE KNOWN TO ALL PEOPLE.. SO YOU GET RID OF THE BITTERNESS, AND YOU GET RID OF THE ANGER, AND YOU GET RID OF THE RAGE, AND YOU GET RID OF THE FEAR, AND YOU GET RID OF THE NEGATIVISM, BECAUSE WHEN YOU PRAISE, THEN THERE'S ONE THING THAT COMES OUT...THAT'S THE GENTLENESS, AND THE GENTLENESS THE BIBLE TALKS ABOUT, IS THE WAY THAT GOD HAS WORKED WITH US, BECAUSE HE DEALT WITH US GENTLY, AND GENTLENESS COMES AS A RESULT OF GRACE, AND GRACE IS A RESULT OF THE CROSS, AND THE CROSS IS THE RESULT OF THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE LOVE OF GOD IS THE RESULT OF.. THAT WE HAVE BEEN CREATED FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, AND WE'RE THE APPLE OF HIS EYE... AND HE WANTS US TO LIVE AN OVERCOMING LIFE. AMEN, AMEN AND AMEN.... HALLELUJAH.. WELL, PRAISE THE LORD. PRAISE THE LORD....

YOU KNOW, THERE ARE A LOT OF DIFFERENT WAYS TO PRAISE GOD. WE TALK ABOUT ALOT OF PRAISE...REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS, AND AGAIN I SAY REJOICE.

YOU KNOW, I'VE HAD A LOT OF FUNERALS HERE IN ATLANTA... OVER SIX HUNDRED.. I'VE KIND OF LOST COUNT... BUT, I REMEMBER IN THE EARLY DAYS, WHEN WE WERE AT HEMPHILL,*THERE WAS A MAN WHO WAS IN OUR CHURCH, WHO WAS A TREMENDOUS MAN. HE WAS ELDERLY, HE WAS GETTING ON IN YEARS AND WAS QUITE SICKLY FROM TIME TO TIME. BUT, SOMETIMES DURING THE SERVICE, HE GOT BLESSED REAL GOOD, AND I'LL NEVER FORGET THIS. HE PUT A BIBLE ON TOP OF HIS HEAD.. HE CARRIED ONE OF THESE BIG THOMPSON CHAIN BIBLES. AND HE PUT IT ON TOP OF HIS HEAD.. THE OLD ATTORNEY, JUST WALK UP AND DOWN THE AISLE, ABOUT THREE TIMES.. THEN HE WOULD GO AND SIT DOWN.. THAT WAS HIS WAY OF PRAISING THE LORD. HE WAS A TREMENDOUS MAN.. EVERY ONCE IN AWHILE IN THE WORSHIP, AT THE TIME WHEN THE LORD WOULD BE MOVING, HE'D JUST BLURT RIGHT OUT AND QUOTE THE

TWENTY-THIRD PSALM AND THE HUNDREDTH PSALM AND HE HAD A BIG BOOMING VOICE, AND IT WOULD JUST FILL THE SANCTUARY. IT WAS A BLESSING TO ALL OF THE PEOPLE. HE CAME DOWN TO THE TIME TO DIE, AND HE WASN'T DOING WELL. AND I WENT OVER TO HIS HOUSE AND HAD COMMUNION WITH HIM. HE WAS IN BED. AND I'LL NEVER FORGET, THE HOLY SPIRIT JUST FILLED UP THE BEDROOM. AND ALL OF A SUDDEN HE PUT THE BIBLE ON HIS HEAD. HE HAD THAT BIG THOMPSON CHAIN BIBLE, AND HE GOT IT ON HIS HEAD AND HE HELD IT.. HE COULDN'T WALK. HE JUST SAT UP IN THE BED. THEN HE BEGAN TO QUOTE SCRIPTURE.. AND HE GOT DOWN TO THIS .. REJOICE IN THE LORD, ALWAYS AND AGAIN I SAY REJOICE..AND HE JUST GOT KIND OF HUNG UP ON THAT. OVER, AND OVER AND OVER, AGAIN.. HE WENT REJOICE IN THE LORD, ALWAYS, AND AGAIN I SAY REJOICE..THEN THE HOLY SPIRIT MINISTERED THROUGH HIM. HE BEGAN TO PROPHECY ABOUT WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN TO THIS CHURCH. AND WHAT YOU SEE HAPPENING RIGHT NOW, AND THAT WAS WAY BACK IN THE EARLY SIXTIES, ABOUT SIXTY-FOUR, I SUPPOSE. WHAT HE PROPHESED THEN, HAS COME TO PASS TO A TEE.. AND HE DIDN'T KNOW THAT I WAS SITTING THERE WONDERING, LORD WHAT IS THE FUTURE GOING TO BE, AND WHAT IS MY FUTURE GOING TO BE.. AND WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ? I WAS GOING THROUGH A HEAVY TRIAL, BUT THAT PROPHECY WAS MEANT RIGHT FOR HIS PASTOR, AND I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT DAY AS LONG AS I LIVE..

AND WHEN WE CAME DOWN TO HIS FUNERAL, IT WAS A TIME OF GREAT REJOICING AND THE TIME OF GREAT PRAISE, BECAUSE THE JOY OF THE LORD IS OUR STRENGTH. HALLELUJAH BE TO GOD... THE JOY OF THE LORD IS OUR STRENGTH.. PRAISE... HALLELUJAH.

BUT, YOU KNOW THE SECOND WORD, HERE. THE SECOND FOUNDATION... IF YOU'RE GOING TO LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR SECURITY, IS PRAYER.

NOW, VERSE SIX, IS A VERSE THAT I'VE ALWAYS STRUGGLED WITH, BECAUSE IN THE PHILLIPS TRANSLATION SAYS, "DON'T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING, WHAT SO EVER." AND THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION SAYS, "HAVE NO ANXIETY ABOUT ANYTHING OR BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING."

WELL WHAT HE IS REALLY SAYING IS.. "DON'T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING WHAT

SO EVER.. NOW, THAT'S A HARD DEAL.. I MEAN, IF SOME OF YOU QUIT WORRYING WHAT WOULD YOU DO ? IT WOULD MAKE YOUR LIVES VERY, VERY DULL.. IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE SOMETHING TO WORRY ABOUT, BECAUSE YOU'D BE WORRIED BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT WORRIED.

AND YOU KNOW, IT'S AMAZING TO SEE THAT WHEN THINGS ARE GOING WELL.. HOW TERRIBLE PEOPLE HANDLE IT. GOD, WHAT HAVE I DONE ? I'VE DONE SOMETHING WRONG.. I FEEL GOOD. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING, WHAT-SO-EVER, IT SAYS, HERE.

NOW THE BOTTOM LINE OF THAT IS, BUT TELL GOD EVERY DETAIL OF YOUR LIFE AND EARNEST AND THANKFUL PRAYER. NOW NOT JUST ANY KIND OF PRAYER, EARNEST PRAYER, THANKFUL PRAYER, MEANINGFUL PRAYER, SINCERE PRAYER.. THAT COMES OUT OF A RELATIONSHIP THAT BELIEVES THAT THE WORD IS WHAT IT SAYS IT IS.

AND LUKE EIGHTEEN AND ONE, CHRIST TOLD HIS DISCIPLES, "THAT WE OUGHT TO PRAY AND NOT FAINT." THAT PRAYER IS THE THING THAT KEEPS US FROM THE FEAR.. FROM THE WORRY, FROM THE STRESS. THE THINGS THAT TAKE AWAY OUR ENERGY. NOT TO FAINT.

WE KNOW THAT PAUL SAYS IN I THESSALONIANS FIVE AND SEVENTEEN, TO PRAY CONTINUALLY. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING. WE UNDERSTAND THAT. WE OFTEN QUOTE, II CHRONICLES, SEVEN FOURTEEN, "IF MY PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, WILL HUMBLE THEMSELVES AND PRAY AND SEEK MY FACE, TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS, THEN WILL I HEAR FROM HEAVEN.. FORGIVE THEIR SINS AND I WILL HEAL THEIR LAND. I'LL DO ALL OF THOSE THINGS FOR THEM." WE DO ALL OF THAT.

BUT, YOU SEE I'M OF THE OPINION THAT WE AREN'T REALLY SURE THAT PRAYER REALLY WORKS. YOU KNOW, WE THINK THAT PRAYER IS A COMPUTER... AND WHEN WE PUSH THE BUTTON, WE OUGHT TO GET INSTANT FEED-BACK. IF WE DON'T GET INSTANT FEED-BACK, THEN WE KICK THE MACHINE AND COMPLAIN TO THE MANAGEMENT. HELLO....

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN ANYBODY ANGRY AT A VENDING MACHINE ? HAVE YOU EVER

BEEN ANGRY AT A VENDING MACHINE ?

I THOUGHT I'D SEEN IT ALL, THE OTHER DAY.. BUT, I SAW A NEW ONE JUST THE OTHER DAY. HOW TO HANDLE AN UNCOOPERATIVE VENDING MACHINE.. IN THE AIRPORT. THEY'VE GOT ENOUGH PROBLEMS IN THE AIRPORT WITHOUT HAVING PROBLEMS WITH THE VENDING MACHINES..

I JUST THOUGHT ABOUT SOMETHING, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO TELL IT.. BUT, ANYWAY..^{*} BUT THIS GUY WENT UP TO THIS VENDING MACHINE, AND I WAS BEHIND HIM, I WAS GOING TO GET A CUP OF COFFEE. WAITING TO GET ON A PLANE AND JUST KIND OF GOOFING AROUND.. WAITING TO DO THAT. PLANES ARE ALWAYS ON TIME, WE ALL KNOW THAT.. NEVER LATE. NEVER CHANGE GATES, NEVER LOSE YOUR LUGGAGE. NEVER FOUL UP YOUR SEATS. MARVELOUS. ALL OF THE ABOVE HAPPEN TO ME, ONE DAY. BUT NONE THE LESS, HE WENT AND GOT HIS COFFEE AND IT ONLY FILLED UP HALF OF THE CUP. THAT MADE HIM MAD TO START WITH. SO HE KIND OF SHOOK IT AROUND.. SHOOK IT SOME MORE, TURNED AROUND A SAID & SAID A FEW CHOICE THINGS TO ME AS IF I WOULD UNDERSTAND IT I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT LANGUAGE... I NEEDED SOME OF YOU LAYMEN TO TRANSLATE IT. SET YOU UP, DIDN'T I ? SO THEN HE SAID WELL, HE KIND OF DECIDED THAT'S THE BEST I CAN DO, BEST I CAN DO.. AS HE TASTED IT AND IT WAS AWFUL, BECAUSE THE MIX GOT ALL FOULED UP. SO WHAT WAS LEFT, HE TOOK AND BAPTIZED THE MACHINE ... LAUGHTER... SAID A FEW CHOICE WORDS AND WENT ON HIS WAY.

BUT, YOU KNOW THAT'S IT. THE THING ABOUT IT IS, THAT IF WE COULD EVER UNDERSTAND THAT PRAYER DOES CHANGE THINGS.

*YOU KNOW, I READ THE OTHER DAY IN A PERIODICAL, THAT CAME ACROSS MY DESK, THAT THERE WAS SOME RESEARCH DONE BY A CARDIOLOGIST, A HEART DOCTOR, IN CASE YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT A CARDIOLOGIST IS. AND HIS NAME WAS RANDY BYRD, DR. RANDY BYRD, IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA. AND HE HAD THREE-HUNDRED AND NINETY THREE CORONARY PATIENTS, IN THE SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL HOSPITAL.. IT WAS WRITTEN UP IN THE MEDICAL NEWS, OF MARCH 3RD, 1936. HE, BEING A CHRISTIAN, DECIDED HE CHECK OUT PRAYER. SO THE PATIENTS DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT, THE OTHER DOCTORS DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT. BUT HE

DIDN'T DO AN ANTIDOTAL STUDY, HE DIDN'T DO AN INFORMATIONAL STUDY. HE DIDN'T DO A QUE-SORT, BECAUSE ALL OF THAT'S TOO BIASED AND IS PRETTY PRE-JUDICIAL. BUT, HE DID WHAT ALL DOCTORS LIKE, AND WHAT ALL RESEARCHERS LIKE. HE DID A DOUBLE BLIND, RANDOMIZED, RESEARCH. SO HE HAD A CONTROLLED GROUP, AND HE HAD AN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP. AND SO HE TOOK THE VARIABLE, DIVIDED HALF OF THEM UP AND HAD PEOPLE PRAYING FOR HALF OF THOSE PATIENTS. AND THE OTHER HALF, BEING UNPRAYED FOR. HE HAD FIVE TO SEVEN PEOPLE ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, PRAYING FOR EACH ONE OF THOSE HEART PATIENTS EVERY DAY. THEY PRAYED ONE PRAYER FOR THEIR SPEADY AND COMPLETE RECOVERY. SOME OF THE PEOPLE GOT TOGETHER AND PRAYED. SOME OF THEM PRAYED SEPARATELY IN THEIR HOME. BUT, EACH PERSON HAD FIVE TO SEVEN PERSONS ASSIGNED TO THAT INDIVIDUAL. THEN HE BEGAN TO CHECK.. OVER A SIX-MONTHS PERIOD, HE FOUND THIS OUT: THAT OF THE PRAYER GROUP, ONLY THREE HAD TO TAKE ANTIBIOTICS, OF THE NON-PRAYER GROUP, SIXTEEN HAD TO TAKE ANTIBIOTICS. OF THE PRAYER GROUP, ONLY SIX OF THEM HAD, WHAT THEY CALLED THAT LUNG FILLING UP WITH FLIUD OR WHATSOEVER THAT IS, THAT PULMONARY EDEMA, FOR SOME OF YOU DOCTORS... BUT, OF THE NON-PRAYER GROUP, EIGHTEEN HAD THAT PROBLEM.. OF THE PRAYER GROUP, NONE OF THEM HAD TO HAVE AN INTUBULATION, OR A TUBE INSERTED IN THE TRACHEA SO THEY COULD TALK, BUT OF THE NON-PRAYER GROUP, TWELVE HAD TO HAVE THAT HAPPEN. OF THE PRAYER GROUP, THEY ALL RECOVERED AND GOT OUT OF THE HOSPITAL, SOME SIX TO EIGHT WEEKS EARLIER THAN THE NON-PRAYER GROUP. AND WHAT THAT DOCTOR CONCLUDED, WHEN HE GAVE THAT REPORT TO THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION, THAT PERHAPS THE THING WE OUGHT TO DO, IS THE FIRST THING WE OUGHT TO WRITE IN EVERY PRESCRIPTION.. IS PRAYER. AND THE ONE THING THAT WE LEARN FROM ALL OF THAT IS, REGARDLESS OF HOW BRILLIANT AND HOW IMPORTANT AND PRACTFUL AND HOW HELPFUL, MEDICAL SCIENCE REALLY IS, AND WE WOULD BE IN TROUBLE WITHOUT IT. YET, WE KNOW ONE THING.. THAT EVERY GOOD GIFT COMES FROM GOD, WHO IS THE FATHER OF LIGHT WITH WHOM THERE IS SHADOW OF DURING, AND WHEN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, HE IS THE SOURCE OF EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS. AMEN, AMEN AND AMEN..

WELL, HALLELUJAH. WELL, PRAISE THE LORD.

WELL, PRAISE HIM IN THIS PLACE... HALLELUJAH.. PRAYER WORKS! HALLELUJAH..
WELL, PRAISE GOD.

SO, WHAT WE HAVE HERE NOW, WE HAVE PRAISE AND PRAYER.. BUT, PRAISE PLUS PRAYER, EQUALS PEACE.. NOW, AND THE PEACE OF GOD, WHICH TRANSCENDS ALL HUMAN UNDERSTANDING, WILL KEEP CONSTANT GUARD OVER YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS, AS THEY REST IN CHRIST JESUS.

NOW, THAT IS A FANTASTIC STATEMENT IF WE COULD EVER LEARN TO LIVE THERE. NOW, I'VE PREACHED ALOT ABOUT PEACE. I'VE TALKED ALOT ABOUT PEACE. AND, YOU KNOW, I'VE DEFINED IT TO THIS CONGREGATION, TIME AND AGAIN... BUT, THERE'S SOMETHING HITTING ME ABOUT THIS VERSE OF SCRIPTURE. BECAUSE DEALING WITH PEOPLE, AND TRYING TO PREACH IN WAYS TO MEET PEOPLE'S NEEDS.. I SEE SO MUCH INSECURITY. SO MANY PEOPLE LIVING WITHOUT PEACE.. SO MANY PEOPLE FRETTEING ABOUT SO MANY THINGS. SO MUCH NIT-PICKING AND HAIR-SPLITTING.. IT'S AMAZING.. YOU SEE PEOPLE GET FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, BRIGHT, NEW AND FRESH AND THEN WE THROW THEM TO THE CHRISTIANS.. WOW! AND YOU COME OUT WITH GLOOM AND DOOM AND GRIPE. MANY A GOOD PERSON RUINED BY CHRISTIANS. YOU KNOW, THEY USED TO THROW THEM TO THE LIONS, BUT NOW WE JUST THROW TO THE CHRISTIANS, AND SAY, "HERE, RUIN THIS GUY." YOU ALL STILL HERE.. I'M DODGING IN CASE SOMEBODY THROWS SOMETHING.. EVERYBODY STILL HERE ?

IT'S AMAZING.. WE LOSE PEACE SO EASILY.. NOW I LEARNED SOMETHING ABOUT PEACE. FIRST OF ALL, IT'S A TRANSCENDED PEACE. IT'S A PEACE THAT COMES FROM GOD. IT TRANSCENDS, OR IT'S BEYOND HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.. SO IT MEANS, YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT.. SO IT MEANS, YOU HAVE EXPERIENCE, WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND IT. IT MEANS, YOU HAVE IT, WHEN YOU OUGHT NOT TO HAVE IT.

DO YOU GET THE PARADOX? YOU HAVE IT, WHEN YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE IT. IT'S OPERATING, WHEN YOU SHOULDN'T BE THIS WAY.

*WHEN I WAS A BOY, AND WE FIRST STARTED OUT TO SCHOOL. I WAS LIVING IN WINDSOR, ONTARIO CANADA. MY FATHER WAS OPENING UP A CHURCH THERE. WE WERE LIVING WITH ANOTHER FAMILY.. I DIDN'T KNOW THE PEOPLE HAD THEIR OWN PERSONAL HOUSES FOR THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF MY LIFE. I THOUGHT EVERYBODY JUST LIVED

TOGETHER. WE WERE LIVING IN THIS HOUSE, WITH THESE PEOPLE. AND I HAD TO START KINDERGARTEN, AND CANADA WAS AHEAD OF US, SCHOOL-SYSTEM-WISE. WE LIVED IN A FRENCH NEIGHBORHOOD.. AND ALL THE PEOPLE AT THE SCHOOL TALKED FRENCH AND VERY BROKEN ENGLISH.. AND THE TEACHER SPOKE FRENCH AND VERY BROKEN ENGLISH.. AND I LIVED IN TRAUMA. FOR THE FIRST SIX WEEKS.. I WAS SCARED TO DEATH. I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND A THING THAT WAS GOING ON. BUT, IN THAT HOUSE THERE WAS ANOTHER MINISTER LIVING, WHO HAD BECOME SICK AND WAS DYING WITH CANCER. AND THEY HAD SENT HIM HOME TO DIE. AND I USED TO BE AMAZED.. I WOULD GO INTO HIS ROOM, AND I KNEW HE WAS DYING. AND AS A CHILD, I GUESS I WAS ABOUT FIVE YEARS OLD, SIX MAYBE. IT'S THE FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH LOOKING DEATH IN THE FACE.. AND WHAT I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WAS.. THAT SOMETIMES, IN THE NIGHT, I WOULD HEAR THIS MAN SINGING HYMNS... SOMETIMES, IN THE NIGHT, I WOULD HEAR QUOTING SCRIPTURE.. SOMETIMES, I WOULD HEAR HIM SAY, "PEACE, O THE GREAT PEACE OF GOD." AND SOMETIMES THE FAMILY MEMBERS AND THE PEOPLE WHO WERE PART OF THE CHURCH, WOULD COME IN AND MINISTER AND HE'D GET TO PRAISING THE LORD, AND THEY WOULD GET TO PRAISING THE LORD. AND IT WAS INCONGRUENT TO ME.. HOW COULD THIS BE ? BECAUSE, THERE WAS A PEACE THAT TRANSCENDED HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.. I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND IT AS A SIX-YEAR OLD. IT WAS BEYOND ME.. BECAUSE, EVERYTHING SAID, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE PEACE IN THIS SITUATION, BUT HE HAD IT.

MY FATHER PREACHED HIS LAST SERMON IN THIS PULPIT, RIGHT HERE IN 1975. HE WAS SEVENTY-FOUR.. HE DIED ON DECEMBER 23, 1975. A COUPLE OF MONTHS PRIOR TO THAT, HE PREACHED HERE. HE GOT VERY SICK, WE KNEW THAT HE WAS DYING. YOU DIDN'T KNOW IT, WHEN HE PREACHED IN THIS PULPIT.. WE THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO DIE SOON, UNLESS A MIRACLE TOOK PLACE. SO THEY CALLED MY BROTHERS AND I, AND WE JUMPED ON A PLANE AND WE WENT DOWN THERE TO SEE, AND PERHAPS FOR THE LAST TIME, ALIVE. HE WAS WEAK AND SICK, BUT HE WAS ALWAYS STRONG ENOUGH.. ALWAYS WAS ABLE TO TALK AND GET INVOLVED, AND WE WENT INTO THE ROOM AND SAT AROUND.. AND WE GOT TO TALKING, GOT TO TELLING STUFF, GOT TO LAUGHING. HE GOT TO LAUGHING, TEARS COMING DOWN HIS EYES FROM LAUGHTER. WE GOT

TO MAKING SO MUCH RACKET, THAT IN CAME THE NURSE. I'M SURE SHE WAS AN ARMY NURSE... LAUGHTER.. SHE CAME MARCHING IN THERE.. SHE SAID, "WHAT IS GOING ON IN THIS ROOM ? DON'T YOU KNOW THIS MAN IS DYING.. HOW DARE YOU LAUGH ?" WELL, IT WAS STUPID... OR WAS IT THE PEACE THAT TRANSCENDS ALL HUMAN UNDERSTANDING? THERE IS A PLACE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD, THAT YOU CAN LIVE WHEN IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW BAD IT GETS, THAT PEACE IS RESIDING IN YOUR LIFE, AND IT WILL SEE YOU THROUGH.. HALLELUJAH BE TO GOD... IT WILL SEE YOU THROUGH!.. IT WILL SEE YOU THROUGH!.. AMEN.. HALLELUJAH.

TRANSCENDED.. WHEN YOU THINK YOU DON'T HAVE IT.. THAT'S WHEN YOU'VE GOT. AND IT'S PROTECTIVE. KEEP CONSTANT GUARD OVER YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS AS THEY REST IN CHRIST JESUS. YOU COULDN'T STAND SOME OF THE STUFF WE HAVE TO STAND, IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE GUARDING PEACE OF THE LORD.

* WHEN OUR SON DIED, I THOUGHT THAT'S IT.. I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO STAND THAT. HOW WILL I GET THROUGH THE FUNERAL ? YOU KNOW, ALL THE THINGS YOU SAY, AND ALL THE THINGS YOU PREACH SOUND GREAT... THEN YOU'VE GOT TO PRACTICE THEM. YOU KNOW ? AND I REMEMBER, WE WALKED IN FOR THE FUNERAL THAT DAY, CAME IN THIS DOOR RIGHT HERE.. SAT DOWN ABOUT THE THIRD PEW, DOWN THERE. THE NEW LIFE SINGERS.. MANY OF WHOM ARE IN THIS GROUP OR IN THE OTHER GROUP. THEY GOT DOWN TO THAT PART, IN THE PROGRAM, WHERE THEY SANG HALLELUJAH, AND THAT HALLELUJAH BEGIN TO RING AND ECHO THROUGH THIS BUILDING. THERE WAS A PEACE THAT WELLED UP IN ME. I HAD MY ARM AROUND CARMELITA, AND SHE FELT LIMP UNTIL WE STARTED SINGING HALLELUJAH... THAT WORSHIP OF THE LORD. I COULD FEEL THE VERY STRENGTH GOING THROUGH HER BODY, AS THAT PEACE BEGAN TO TAKE EFFECT. AND WE BOTH SAT THERE IN GRIEF AND SORROW, BUT YET IN PEACE AND JOY. NOW THAT'S THE MOST INCONGRUENT THING YOU CAN EVER FIGURE OUT. BUT, THAT'S THE PEACE THAT TRANSCENDS HUMAN UNDERSTANDING, KEEPS CONSTANT GUARD OVER YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS AS THEY REST IN CHRIST JESUS.

THEY CLOSED THAT PROGRAM.. PRAISING HIM. WE WALKED OUT OF THIS AISLE, AND THERE WAS A STRENGTH THAT TOOK HOLD OF US.. KEEP ON PRAISING HIM.. KEEPS CONSTANT GUARD OVER YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS.

*THE BEGINNING OF WORLD WAR II. THE ZAM-ZAM, WHICH WAS THE NAME OF AN AMERICAN SHIP, WAS SUNK BY THE GERMANS.. BY THE NAZI'S. WAS REALLY AN ACT OF PROVOCATION.. THEY WEREN'T TRYING TO KILL EVERYBODY ON BOARD. THEY JUST WANTED TO PROVOKE THE UNITED STATES. IT WAS AN ACT OF PROVOCATION, AND THEY LET IT BE KNOWN, THEY WERE GOING TO DO THAT. AND THERE WERE NO SHIPS OUT THERE TO PROTECT IT. WE DIDN'T HAVE ALL THE SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY WE'VE GOT NOW. BUT, THEY SENT WORD TO THE SHIP, THAT THERE'S GOING TO BE A SUBMARINE COMING.. THERE'RE GOING TO TORPEDOED, AND THOSE PEOPLE HAD TO GET READY TO GET SHOT DOWN.. TO GET SUNK. AND THEY DIVIDED THEM UP INTO TWO PARTS: PUT HALF OF THE PASSENGERS IN ONE PLACE, AND HALF IN ANOTHER PLACE. AND THEY HAD TO WAIT ALL NIGHT.. NOT KNOWING WHEN THE DEVASTATING BLOW WOULD COME. AND THE AMERICANS WERE SENDING SHIPS TO HELP. AND ALL OF A SUDDEN IT HAPPENED, EARLY IN THE MORNING.. WHILE THEY WERE ALL ROUNDED UP, THERE WERE VERY FEW CASUALTIES.. THEY GOT ON RESCUE SHIPS, EVENTUALLY. AND EVERYBODY FINALLY GOT TOGETHER AND ASKING EVERYBODY.. "HOW DID YOU HANDLE IT.. WHAT DID YOU DO ALL NIGHT ? WASN'T THAT A TERRIBLE WAIT, WAITING FOR THAT TORPEDO TO COME ? I COULDN'T DO THIS.. THIS ONE GOT HYSTERICAL, THIS ONE GOT SICK, THIS ONE FAINTED.. THIS WAS ALL HAPPENING, AND EVERYBODY WAS UP TIGHT, OBVIOUSLY. THERE WAS A LUTHERAN MISSIONARY ON BOARD. THEY LOOKED AT HIM AND SAID, "HOW DID YOU HANDLE IT ? DID YOU SLEEP ? CHECKING HIS FAITH, HE SAID, "WELL, I WAS FRIGHTENED LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE.. I WAS APPREHENSIVE ABOUT EVERYBODY ELSE.. WHERE THEY PUT US. WE HAD TO SLEEP ON THE FLOOR. IT WAS HARD. IT WAS COLD. I COULDN'T GET COMFORTABLE.. THEN I WENT TO THE WORD. I BEGAN TO READ PSALM 121: VERSES TWO THROUGH FOUR.. MY HELP COMES FROM THE LORD, WHO IS THE MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.. HE WILL NOT LET YOUR FOOT SLIP.. HE WHO WATCHES, WILL NOT SLEEP.. HE THAT WATCHES OVER ISRAEL, NEITHER SLUMBERS NOR SLEEPS. " SO HE SAID, "LORD, THERE'S NO USE TWO OF US KEEPING AWAKE ALL NIGHT.. YOU'RE GOING TO WATCH AND NOT SLEEP, I THINK I'LL GO TO SLEEP." HE SAID, "I HAD A GOOD NIGHT'S REST." GUARD YOUR HEART AND MIND, AS THEY REST IN CHRIST JESUS..HE WHO GUARDS ISRAEL,

DOES NOT SLUMBER OR SLEEP.. HE'S AWAKE, HE KNOWS YOUR NEED, AND HE'S GOT THE ANSWER TO EVERY NEED, BECAUSE IN HIM, WE LIVE AND MOVE AND HAVE OUR BEING.. AMEN, AMEN AND AMEN.... HALLELUJAH.. WELL, PRAISE THE LORD IN THIS PLACE.. WILL YOU ? AMEN, AMEN.. WELL, PRAISE HIM IN THIS PLACE.. GLORY BE TO GOD...

YOU KNOW, I'VE PREACHED LONG ENOUGH.. I WANT TO SING 'BLESSED ASSURANCE, JESUS IS MINE. O WHAT A FORTASTE OF GLORY DEVINE.. SOMEBODY FIND ME A HYMNBOOK, FIND THE NUMBER AND BRING IT TO ME, PLEASE.. BLESSED ASSURANCE... WILL YOU DO IT FOR ME ? SOMEBODY, QUICK. WHERE'S ALL MY PASTORS, DON? GET THE BOOK, RIGHT THERE.. FIND IT FOR ME.. BLESSED ASSURANCE.. YOU GOTTA LOOK UNDER 'B'.. LAUGHTER.. VERY GOOD. ALRIGHT, SHALL WE STAND, TOGETHER, EVERYBODY.. AMEN, I WANT YOU TO SING THAT WITH ME...

YOU KNOW, YOU COULD SING, 'NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I SEEN' GLORY, GLORY, HALLELUJAH... OR YOU CAN SING, 'BLESSED ASSURANCE'. NOW, WE'RE GOING TO SING EVERY VERSE HERE, TIL IT TAKES.. NOW, WHAT I'VE GOT, IN EVERY SEAT IS AN ELECTRONIC MONITOR. I'VE GOT A SCREEN, RIGHT HERE, AND IT SHOWS WHEN IT TAKES OR IT DOESN'T TAKE.. SO I'M GOING TO START POINTING OUT.. THE WORD DOESN'T TAKE. YOU'VE GOT TO LEAVE HERE TODAY, WITH ASSURANCE..