

April 2018

"TRUTH"

**A SURE WORD
FOR TODAY**



Truth is like a mountain, It cannot
be moved and it never changes

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NEWSLETTER UPDATE

This month we start a series of articles on the subject of revival. More than ever, we need to see God pour out His Spirit in a fresh and powerful way. We have an entire generation that has never had a chance to see something like this for themselves. They must see it; it is life-changing!

Some may say that God is already doing great things. Yes, God is always involved in doing many great and wonderful things. But we should not confuse this with the great outpourings of His Spirit that have occurred from time to time throughout church history. To do so is to almost certainly miss what God is about to do today.

Please be sure your pastor has the opportunity to see and read these articles. Also, share these articles with your friends, and encourage them to subscribe so they don't miss a single issue. In my spirit, I feel now is the time to get this critical information to God's people.

FEATURE ARTICLE: “ARE YOU DESPERATE?”

WARNING: You are entering the “TRUTH ZONE”. You may not like what you read. It may make you feel uncomfortable. That is not my goal. My goal is to help you and provide spiritual guidance for you and your family in a time of great spiritual darkness. You can be sure that what you read here will be TRUTH!

Throughout church history there have been a number of great outpourings of the Holy Spirit. These great outpourings have been given names such as "The Welsh Revival," "The First Great Awakening," "The Second Great Awakening," "The Azusa Street Revival," "The Jesus Movement," etc. The name matters not, but what God accomplished in those great revivals does. While each had its own unique fingerprint, all had one common thread; they forever changed the face of Christianity, and in some ways changed the course of nations.

Because I believe another great outpouring could be on the horizon, I feel it is time to write a series of articles about why I feel this way and what a fresh move of the Spirit might look like. In these articles I will not attempt to do a complete review of what God has done in the past. Others have researched this fascinating subject and have done a superb job of sharing their findings.

Rather, I want to try to help individual believers and church leaders know how to properly wait for what God may be preparing to do, and also to position themselves to be able to receive what God eventually does. To do this, I will rely heavily upon observations I made back in the late 60's when the great Charismatic Renewal changed the world. I want to start by sharing what the spiritual climate was prior to that great outpouring.

Miss Linda and I started serving as pastors in 1965. We were excited to be given the position of Ministers of Youth & Christian Education in a small Assemblies of God church in Grand Island, Nebraska. We gave it our best and worked hard to be a blessing. But in spite of how hard we worked, I must confess, we saw limited results.

Two years later we hit the big time. We were offered our own church of 25 people in Maxwell, Nebraska. Once again, we gave it our best, worked very hard, but saw very little results. Our enthusiasm was beginning to show cracks and we were starting to question the glamour of being pastors.

Three and a half years later we moved to Gering, Nebraska. Little did we realize we were jumping from the frying pan into the fire. I won't go into detail, but suffice to say, we were burned out and ready to take a different path with our lives if something didn't change soon.

Everything we did felt like a work of the flesh. Yes, a good work, but still a work of the flesh that lacked the power and presence of God. We were going through the motions of church but there was very little life in it.

I share this because it seems to me that in so many ways, what I am seeing today mirrors the conditions we experienced back then. It was not a happy time then, and it is not a happy time now. I need to explain that last sentence.

In Acts 3, Peter spoke of “times of refreshing” that God sends. When we look back on church history, it is easy to see this. Those times are wonderful and we all long for them. **But as sure as there are times of refreshing, there are also dry times.** This also is easily observable. Why does God do this? Keep reading!

When the dry times come, church leaders are left to do the only thing they can; rely on the strength and abilities of their flesh. **Needless to say, this brings limited results and the work of the Lord becomes exhausting!** At the same time, they must endure the criticism of those who are quick to stand in judgment and opposition of spiritual leaders who are trying to do their best while in a bad situation.

These are things I see happening today. Books have been written pointing out the shortcomings of the church. Well-known church leaders have gone on record trying to convince us that the way church is being done is wrong. People pick up this thinking and then take to social media with harsh words aimed at the church and its leadership.

I must say, this deeply grieves my spirit. It is so easy to find fault but doing this does nothing to solve any of the problems that faultfinders seem to want to talk about.

“ ARE YOU DESPERATE? “

In fact, what they are doing just exacerbates the problem by setting in motion a chain of events that actually hinders pastors from being able to lead their congregations into the things God has for them. I must explain.

When pastors face this unwarranted attack, they tend to get defensive. This is probably their self-preservation instinct kicking in. The foolish and inexperienced will lash out at their accusers. Others will respond by trying to convince their congregations that what they are currently doing is nothing short of amazing. Few realize this takes them down a road that will never lead to true revival. How so? **People who are congratulating themselves on their great accomplishments will never feel desperate for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.** Why should they? They are convinced they are doing just fine without it.

I think we all need to stop and think for a minute. We need to consider the possibility that at this point in time, we may be experiencing a dry time in church history. Some will counter by pointing out that there are places where God is pouring out His Spirit. Well, God bless them. We all wish it were happening everywhere, but like it or not, it isn't. **Unfortunately, you can't export it and you can't import it because you don't own it.** But the fact remains that when God sends a true revival, it sweeps the world and is never confined to just a few churches.

In the meantime, things can get very difficult. During this difficult time pastors do their best to minister to those God has entrusted to them. There are still faithful servants who cling tenaciously to the truth of God's word and are not afraid to boldly proclaim it. They deserve our support and our prayers. Because Miss Linda and I went through just such a dry time, we have incredible respect for these true spiritual giants. They are our heroes.

If you are a pastor, I beg you, keep doing what you are doing even if you feel exhausted. Even if it feels like a work of the flesh, continue to be faithful. Cling to truth and ignore the criticism of those who only want to talk about what is wrong.

But, above all, don't try to convince yourself or your congregation that God is doing amazing things. Humble yourself and openly admit that it is a dry time and that **you are in desperate need** of a fresh genuine move of God's Spirit. **These are desperate times that demand desperate people.**

If you have been guilty of being openly vocal with your criticism, I pray God will show you how wrong your actions have been and that you will cry out for forgiveness. Then **begin crying out in desperation** for God to do what only He can do. Yes, only He can do it. There is not a pastor on the planet that can make it happen! Instead of trying to point the finger of blame, we all need to become **desperate** for God to do what only He can do.

By now you should have noticed how many times I have used the word “**desperate.**” I believe this is why God allows us to go through the dry times. People who live beside flowing rivers will never be **desperate** for water. But people who have chosen to trek through the desert will quickly become **desperate**. No matter how much reserve water they start with, eventually they will run out and then **desperation sets in.**

Jesus is our fountain of living water. He wants us to see that we cannot survive even a day without Him. But we don't see it. We get caught up in our plans and our programs. We go day after day never realizing that we have left the banks of the river of life and have started into the desert. Listen to what He has to say to us.

Jeremiah 2:13 (RSV)

"...for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water."

Only when the things of our own making have left us dry and thirsty can we start to realize just how **desperate** our situation is. This is what has started to happen today and this is one of the reasons I believe revival is on the horizon.

CONTINUED NEXT MONTH



A M I N U T E W I T H M I S S L I N D A



“Wonder Woman”

One of the highest grossing films of 2017 was "Wonder Woman." It is a typical action movie about a young woman with superpowers that

saves the world. I was amused because long before the movie came out, my husband often would call me “Wonder Woman.”

This started when we moved up to the mountains and didn't have family close by to help us move heavy objects. My husband would enlist my help and after completing the task, he would call me that ridiculous name. While I didn't feel like "Wonder Woman," I did like it when our kids and grandkids would say, “How did you ever do that?” (Secret...we learned to use our brains instead of our backs.) Then one day I was reading my Bible and came across an interesting verse that got me thinking.

“I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge.” **Psalms 71: 7 KJV**

Certainly, I will never possess superhuman physical strength, but yet over and over, the Lord admonishes us in His word to **“be strong.”** Here are just two verses that apply specifically to women.

Proverbs 31:17 AMP

“She equips herself with strength [spiritual, mental, and physical fitness for her God-given task] And makes her arms strong.”

Proverbs 31:25 (GNT)

“She is strong and respected and not afraid of the future.”

In addition to these two verses, I found 25 times where God instructed His people to be strong. In most of these verses, it is obvious that God is referring to more than just physical strength. I think it would be accurate to say He was referring to strength of character, strength of convictions, and strength of faith. He was referring to inner strength.

Ephesians 3:16 (CJB)

“I pray that from the treasures of his glory he will empower you with inner strength by his Spirit...”

If we want physical strength, we can't sit on the couch all day and watch TV. We must go to the gym and pump iron. The more we push ourselves, the stronger we will get. We have a neighbor who is a body builder. Every morning he leaves the house about 5:15 and heads to the gym. The results are very easy to see.

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But how do we build the inner strength the Bible talks about? As usual, when God tells us to do something, He also tells us how to do it. He tells us to "...be strong in the Lord." There are dozens of scriptures that all have one thing in common. They all tell us:

OUR STRENGTH COMES FROM THE LORD!!!!

If our strength comes from the Lord, then we must live in an intimate relationship with Him. It is our closeness to Him that will result in us being filled with might in the inner man. We find ourselves boldly proclaiming:

Philippians 4:13 (TLB)

"...for I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power."

Psalms 118:14 KJV

"The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation."

Psalms 18:32 (GNT)

"He is the God who makes me strong, who makes my pathway safe."

For the last three years, we have had to put up with roadblocks caused by the big flood. We have tried to make the best of it and have come to enjoy looking for what new progress we might see each week. Recently we had something happen that gave me reason to think.

We were following the pilot car through the roadblock area when the caravan came to a complete stop. Right where we stopped was something that totally amused us. There on my side of the road was a truck. This was not just any truck.

I am usually the one who is quick to acknowledge that God is always active in our lives. In my world there are very few coincidences. My husband will often shake his head and roll his eyes at some of the things I say. But this time my husband was quick to say that, without doubt, this was a sign from God for me. He said it was God's way of telling me to accept the label he gave me years ago. (He never misses a chance to tease me.) Hmmm...I wonder, was he just teasing?

Psalms 71:7 KJV

"I am as a wonder ("woman" - my husband's words) unto many; but thou art my strong refuge."



PROPHECY UPDATE

“IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME!”

One of the things so fascinating about Bible prophecy is to see how, sooner or later, current events line up to what the Bible has said. There are times when you read the Bible, compare what you have just read to how things currently are in the world, and find it almost impossible to believe that the things written in the Bible have any chance of ever coming to pass. However, given enough time, you begin to see things in the world change; and soon what you read in the Bible no longer seems impossible at all. In fact, they begin to appear very probable.

There are many illustrations of this. The most obvious would be the regathering of the Jewish people to their homeland and the rebirth of the State of Israel. In the mid 1800s, what you read in the Bible would have seemed like a fairy tale. It would have been something no one could have imagined ever becoming a reality. Yet things changed, and in 1948 the fairy tale became reality. One of the little-known facts from that time period is something that seemed to run totally contrary to what the Bible predicts. I speak of the relationship of Turkey with the fledgling State of Israel. Few people realize that Turkey was the first Muslim majority nation to formally recognize Israel as a nation state.

Israel declared its independence in May 1948. Israeli-Turkish relations were formalized in March 1949. Military, strategic, and diplomatic cooperation between Turkey and Israel were accorded high priority by both countries. This mutual cooperation continued in spite of the 1967 and 1973 wars. According to a New York Times report in 1999, the strategic partnership between the two countries had the potential to completely alter Middle East politics. The Israeli Air Force even practiced maneuvers in Turkish airspace, and Israeli technicians were modernizing Turkish combat jets. There were also plans for high-tech cooperation and the two nations even entered into a mutual defense pact.

All this seemed to run totally contrary to what the Bible said would happen during the war of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38-39.

Ezekiel 38:4 (TLB); 5-6 (NLT)

“I will mobilize your troops and cavalry and make you a vast and mighty horde, all fully armed. Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya will join you, too, with all their weapons. Gomer and all its hordes will also join you, along with the armies of Beth-togarmah from the distant north, and many others.”

The nations cited by Ezekiel are each referenced here by the names of their Old Testament predecessors, yet they all represent nations which exist today. Centuries before Russia became a power on the world stage, biblical scholars identified Magog as the nation of Russia and Gog as the ruler of Russia.

The other nations referenced in Ezekiel 38 are identified below, with the original Hebrew translation listed first, followed by its modern-day equivalent.

Persia = Iran

Cush = Ethiopia

Put = Libya

Gomer = Turkey

Beth-togarmah = Turkey, Armenia, and the Turkish-speaking people of Asia Minor

Here again, we have an example of the Bible saying something that just didn't line up with what we saw happening in our world for over 50 years. Then in 2005 things began to deteriorate between the two countries, and in 2013 diplomatic relations were completely broken off.

As of this writing, Turkey has joined with the Catholic Church in declaring East Jerusalem as the capitol of Palestine. She has become one of Israel's most virulent enemies. All this proves once again that if things in our world don't agree with the Bible, just wait...

It's only a matter of time!

And that my friends,
is the “Truth!”