

June 29, 2014

## *Mostly Personal...*

Loved Ones,

A few months ago, while developing some initial thoughts for our present *Heaven* series, I sensed a strong inner word from The Lord concerning difficult days in the near future. The gist of what I received was this: months of difficulty were on the way for many in the Lord's flock, and Father wanted us to know about it in advance.

I know many do not believe that Holy Spirit gives any word unless it is *positive and good*. To those who hold such a view, I would simply remind you of the prophetic declarations from Agabus to Paul and to the church at Antioch. (Acts 21:9-11; Acts 11:27-29). I would also remind you that one of our weaknesses is that we don't always assess accurately what is *good*. And don't forget the warning of The Lord to the Pastor of the Church at Smyrna about days of trouble they would soon face (Revelation 2:10, 11).

During that afternoon of prayer, I sensed the Lord give me direction concerning the *Heaven* series, and I felt Him say three things:

In the days of coming adversity...

1. The Lord would lead some of us **away from** the floods and fires (various trials and troubles) and we would see the Lord's strong power to preserve us and deliver us from trouble altogether (Psalm 91).
2. Others will see the Lord walk with us **through** the floods and fires. Though we are not spared from the flames, we will not be burned; though we walk through the river at flood stage, the waves will not overcome us (Isaiah 43:2, 3).
3. Some of us, I felt Him say, would be going Home to be with The Lord. This was not perceived as a negative thing and certainly not punitive in any way. But many would go home suddenly and unexpectedly. Many of our pillars of stability and strength would go to The Lord, and it would seem like a vacuum was created in our lives – an emptiness that could not be filled. In those moments of desperation and despair, the Lord would come in a way we have never experienced.

The first two points did not surprise me. The third one did.

Part of the perplexity is that all three things are part of life and can be observed during almost any season of life. We all have trials and everyone dies. But I felt this was a statement revealing that there would be an **unexpected intensification and increase** of these things. God's people would experience a shaking of their faith in greater measure than most of us have known. The trials would be substantial. The flood waters would

appear uncrossable; the flames would seem unquenchable. Some we thought would be with us for long time would be taken away. That seems to be an accurate description of what we've been facing the last eight months or so.

However, the sustaining thoughts to me were as follows:

1. God warned us about it in order for us to walk in His comfort and confidence!
2. God reminds us that no matter what we face, we are going through it to a better day!
3. God is showing that whatever battle we face, whatever loss we endure we will become convinced that He is greater than anything that comes against us. No weapon created to destroy us will be successful (Isaiah 54:16, 17).

***GOD IS ABOUT TO GET BIGGER IN OUR LIVES  
THAN WE EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE!***

Please understand that these three directions were not to be defined as *bad vs. good* or even as *good; better; best*. Each of these paths, I was told, were blessed by The Lord, and based on His perfect wisdom for our individual lives.

My advice to you, as we see increasingly frequent occurrences of these things, is to stay close to The Lord with prayer and humility, stay full of His Word, and stay close to the people of God whenever possible.

**And remember this every day – WE WIN!  
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS – WE WIN!!**

I love you so very much!

“And now unto Him, who is able to do for exceedingly great and powerful things – even beyond what we could ask or even think – by His mighty power that works in us continually!” – paraphrase of Ephesians 3:20

I love you,  
*Pastor Stephen*