

Prepared for Times Ahead

In recent months I have often been asked about the times in which we live and what we should be doing that might prepare us for things to come. Of course, the basic Christian lifestyle keeps us prepared for the unseen and unexpected just by walking in peace with the Lord. On 9-11-2001, I was reminded of what Ps 91:1 says, "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

Back before the Y2K scare was in full bloom, I asked the Lord for guidance for the days ahead. He gave me five things we should do to prepare for the coming days and those are still quite valid today. At that time I ended my article with the words of Thomas Jefferson to his granddaughter, "*How much pain have cost us the evils which never happened.*" That turned out to be a bit prophetic looking back now at all that didn't happen in regard to Y2K. I recall that it took a bit of fortitude to leave that word posted throughout all the months and all the un-surety and fear-mongering that went on during 1999. But unlike so many words on so many other web sites we did not have to take our prophetic word down on Jan 1, 2000. I will re-post the five guidelines that I gave then as I believe they are just as valid, and useful, now.

But there have been warnings of a different nature which have been coming in the past months concerning preparation for things ahead. There have been words which confirm what I had written then, about knowing our "company" and being intimately involved in a local assembly. Being in a position where we can care and be cared for by those whom we trust and whom we are trusted by will become ever more important in the days ahead.

Prophetic voices whom I trust have given encouragement for all thinking people to prepare for times ahead by having a few days necessities prepared including food, water, and necessary medications. Some think this is not faith but fear. But I believe it is not faith to ignore those whom the Lord has sent (Matt 23:39). It actually is faith to prepare yourself for the times so that you may be in a position to help rather than to need help. Knowing the times Jesus told his disciples, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." (Luke 22:36)

Our grand parents would never have thought this to be silly or to show lack of faith. They didn't have all the conveniences and just in time (JIT) delivery of unimaginable conveniences to our local store or even to our door. They were of a necessity able to be self-reliant and didn't think much about it. If those who were in the path of Hurricane Katrina or the Mississippi flooding or any number of other natural or man made disasters had been ready with a few basics they could have been in a good position to prosper through the difficulties. Homeland Security and the Red Cross have a list of basics which you might consider as a minimum for basic preparation (I'll put some links at the end of this article.)

Our history is full of examples of people who were prepared for uncertain times and events and therefore were able to go about their daily lives without any concern until the need should arise. The minute men of our early days had their basic items ready to go so that they could be ready on a moments notice. The pioneers and frontiersmen carried their "possibles pack", which gave them preparedness for all possible events without being burdened down with anything unnecessary. Those of us who are out-doorsy types have the basics ready to go depending upon the season and can grab the basics and be out the door in short order. I can recommend having a "grab bag" or "grab-it-and-go" bag ready at all times so that under any circumstances you might be able to get out the door on short notice and be in a position to help or be out of harms way as

the case may dictate.

I have mentioned that among friends we have had discussions of these and other things we feel the Lord is communicating. One friend was not in the least convinced that there was a need to take any action of this sort. But then came the day when she had a dream to be interpreted. In the dream, not once, but three times she dreamed that an ant was on her eye and could not be removed. I immediately felt the dreams were of the Lord and that in his grace He was communicating to her the words of Prov 6:6-9, "You lazy fool, look at an ant. Watch it closely; let it teach you a thing or two. Nobody has to tell it what to do. All summer it stores up food; at harvest it stockpiles provisions. So how long are you going to laze around doing nothing?"** Well there is nothing like a little prompting from the Lord to confirm what we ought to be doing. But there is no guarantee that the Lord is going to repeat himself again and again through many methods and means. As we learn and obey He is able to prepare us for other things. Let's pay attention and act accordingly. Obedience brings peace.

Here are the five things that the Lord gave me in 1998 to prepare for the days ahead.

The first thing which the Lord impressed upon me is: 1) **It is not what you have, but WHO you know. We need to KNOW THE LORD.** When Jesus called His disciples, it was His first purpose "that they might be with Him." (Mark 3:14). Now is the time to build a personal and intimate relationship with the Lord. There has been a resurgence and an increased hunger among many of God's people for the presence of the Lord. This is according to God's plan and timing, and part of preparing the way. We are at a point; ready for the Holy Spirit to teach us a new understanding of the fear of the Lord. Those who understand the fear of the Lord will never fear what man can do. Isaiah 55:6, "Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near."

The second thing which I received is (also): 2) **It is not what you have but WHO you know.** This point was given to refer to **KNOWING THE PEOPLE** whom God has put with us to labor. The apostle Paul had those whom he called his fellow soldiers, co-laborers, and fellow laborers in the Lord. It is very important that the best soldier, the most highly trained of all, will not be released into battle until he becomes attached to a unit with whom he will fight. He literally is assigned fellow soldiers, and will not advance until he knows who they are. Likewise, as the army of God is preparing for events which we have no experiential understanding of, we will find it ever more important to know who God would have us to labor beside. Each Christian must have those whom he or she can trust. Those whom they can trust to lead, those whom they trust to follow and cover their back, and those with whom they can stand shoulder to shoulder. 1 Thes 5:12, "And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you..."

The third point which I was given is: 3) **EQUIP THOSE WHO ARE WANTING TO BE EQUIPPED.** Each of us should be involved in the training up of laborers for the harvest. (Matt 9:38, "Pray the Lord of the harvest..."). Not all are called to help equip the saints at the same level or in the same way, but all should be involved in some way. David set a precedence in Israel when he declared the word that "those that go forth into battle and those that stay back with the stuff shall both part alike." (1 Sam 30:24) Not all are called to the same type of ministry, but all of us should be involved at one level or another in the equipping of the laborers for the harvest. II Tim 2:2, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

The fourth point I was given is: 4) **OWE NO MAN.** In other words, do all possible to get debt

under control, and get out of debt if at all possible. Prov 22:7b, "... the borrower is servant to the lender." This year is the year of Israel's Jubilee, and many believe there is a special anointing for getting out of debt. In any case, it is a good time to pray and allow the Holy Spirit to give you a strategy which will lead to being free from unnecessary financial obligations. Many will find it impossible, or at least highly improbable, that they could get out of debt immediately. However, by putting a strategy before the Lord, He will be allowed an avenue to work on your behalf in this area. Romans 13:8, "Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law."

The fifth point, definitely not the least important and maybe the easiest to consistently implement and monitor, is: 5) **GIVE AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN.** As we enter the uncertain times ahead it will become more apparent who the givers have been and who they are not. Those who have the heart to work so that they may bless those who have need (Eph 4:28) will be blessed of the Lord regardless of what the economy or the secular world may endure. If we want to be in a position to have Elijah's pot of flour and jar of oil, we must likewise be willing to do what the widow woman did, which was to give first (1 Kings 17:13) in order to place herself in a position to receive. There are those who will not give during times of abundance, and they will be tested to change during times of lack. Better to enter the times ahead with the confidence of God's promise of blessings. Luke 6:38, "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

I think the words of the apostle Paul in Rom 8:16-17 are appropriate for our season, "God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children. And we know we are going to get what's coming to us — an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with Him, then we're certainly going to go through the good times with Him!"*

As I already mentioned before when I wrote in 1998 in preparation for the Y2k I ended with the words of Thomas Jefferson not to worry about things which may blow over. But I would like to end this article with a poem by Alice P. Moss that has always ministered to me in times of uncertainty and trials.

God's Bank Ain't Busted Yet!

The bank had closed, my earthly store
had vanished from my hand,
I felt that there was no sadder one
than I in all the land.
My washer woman, too, had lost her
little mite with mine,
And she was singing as she hung the
clothes upon the line.
"How can you be so gay?" I asked;
"Your loss don't you regret?"
"Yes, ma'm, but what's the use to
fret? God's bank ain't busted yet!"

I felt my burden lighter grow; her
faith I seemed to share;

In prayer I went to God's great throne
and laid my troubles there.
The sun burst from behind the clouds,
in golden splendor set;
I thanked God for her simple words:
"God's bank ain 't busted yet!"

And now I draw rich dividends, more
than my hands can hold
Of faith and love and hope and trust
and peace of mind untold.
I thank the Giver of it all but
still I can't forget
My washerwoman's simple words:
"God's bank ain't busted yet!"

Oh, weary ones upon life's road
when everything seems drear,
And losses loom on every hand and
skies seem not to clear;
Throw back your shoulders, lift your
head, and cease to chafe and fret.
Your dividend will be declared
"God's bank ain't busted yet!"

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