

2007 Proclaimer

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, .. to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord!" - Isa.61:1-2

A teaching and exhortation medium by members of the Carmichael Church of Christ, meeting at 6044 Sutter Ave. Carmichael, CA 95608

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Background of Darkness

by Tom Moore

Notice these words of David as he thanks the Almighty for all the deliverances and benefits that he had experienced throughout the whole of his life - a life filled with many dark moments:

"Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse saith, And the man who was raised on high saith, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel: The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And his word was upon my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me: One that ruleth over men righteously, That ruleth in the fear of God, He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, A morning without clouds, When the tender grass springeth out of the earth, Through clear shining after rain" (2 Sam 23:1-4).

Is not the light of a lamp much more welcome at midnight than at noon? Scientists would be quick to tell us that the lamp doesn't really shine any more brightly when it's dark than when it's light - the darkness only makes it appear so by its contrast. But emotionally, what a difference the darkness makes! Without the background supplied by the darkness, we'd hardly love the light as we do.

Perhaps this explains why the lives of some seem to have more depth, contrast and brilliance than others. Those who've battled to maintain a luminous faith through serious failure or significant sorrow, do not have a faith that is any more "real" than another's, but it certainly "seems" so among the background of difficulty. Are we not drawn to this type of luminous faith?

The attractive power of David's passionate love for God shines with such splendor partly because of the background of failures from which he had to recover. The fleeing for his life from the hand Saul, the sin with Bathsheba, and the pain of Absalom's rebellion are all a part of the background of darkness that allowed the light of faith to shine for all to see.

And consider a man like Paul. He never staggered morally, but here was a man whose desire for God blazed with a special brightness because of the long, dark years of his lonely travail as an apostle. The struggle only made his hope more precious. The apostle Paul declared,

"For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

The suggestion here isn't that sorrow should be invited into our lives. But

when it makes an appearance, as it will in the life of anyone who dwells on this planet, we can make it our aim to shine all the more radiantly against the dark background that has developed. Our Lord was *"a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa 53:3)*, and we love Him dearly for having tasted the salt of our tears. Unlike Him, our sorrows are often the consequence of our own misdeeds. But whether the darkness is of sin or some other sorrow, we can seek God in such a way as to brighten our character with the brilliance of tested faith.

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MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

By Alan Smith

The story is told of a young man who wished to marry the farmer's beautiful daughter. He went to the farmer to ask his permission. The farmer looked him over and responded, "Son, go stand out in that field and I'm going to release three bulls, one at a time. If you can catch the tail of any one of the three bulls, you can marry my daughter."

The young man stood in the pasture awaiting the first bull. The barn door opened and out ran the biggest, meanest-looking bull he had ever seen. He decided that one of the next bulls had to be a better choice than this one, so he ran over to the side and let the bull pass through the pasture out the back gate.

The barn door opened again. Unbelievable. He had never seen anything so big and fierce in his life. It stood - pawing the ground, grunting, slinging slobber - as it eyed him. Whatever the next

bull was like, it had to be a better choice than this one. He ran to the fence and let the bull pass through the pasture, out the back gate.

The door opened a third time. A smile came across his face. This was the weakest, scrawniest little bull he had ever seen. This one was his bull. As the bull came running by, he positioned himself just right and jumped at just the exact moment. He grabbed... but the bull had no tail!

Life is full of opportunities. Some will be easy to take advantage of, some will be difficult. But once we let them pass (*often in hope of something better*), those opportunities may never again be available.

The same thing is also true of opportunities to serve Christ. God often opens doors -- opportunities to speak up for Him, opportunities to minister to someone who is hurting or in need, opportunities to make an influence on the world around us. If we allow them to pass by (perhaps because we are waiting for something easier to come along), we may miss out on them altogether.

"Continue praying, keeping alert, and always thanking God. Also pray for us that God will give us an opportunity to tell people his message." **NCV Col 4:2-3**

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." **Gal. 6:10**

May you take advantage of the doors God opens for you this day!

---Alan Smith

THOSE NEEDING PRAYERS

Jackson Agee
Jason & Marie Anderson
Frank & Tina Ayers
Edith Ayers
Jack & Dorothy Bailey
Margie Buchanan
Bill Cain
Larry Cain
Karen Daly
Larry Davenport family
Robert (Bob) Erickson
Helen Gray
Margaret Holcomb
Chuck House
Jean McCarty
Jeffry & Kaye Pennant
Berniece Raven
Wendell and Irma Rapier
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Rick Rittenhouse
Aaron Robertson
David Lovett
Gordon Wilson

IN THE MILITARY

Jason Anderson
David Lovett
Aaron Robertson
Trent Walsh

"THE WAY" THAT CAUSED A GREAT COMMOTION!

Acts 19:23-28 (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The CAUSE of that disturbance was because it concerned Christianity!
 - 1. They spoke evil of that **WAY** - **Acts 19:9**
 - 2. Saul sought those of this **WAY** - **Acts 9:2**
 - 3. Paul persecuted this **WAY** - **Acts 22:4**
 - 4. The **WAY** which they call heresy - **Acts 24:14**
- B. Gospel preaching had disrupted the financial security of the Ephesians.
 - 1. The gospel stated one God, & a major craft in Ephesus was selling idols.
 - 2. *Great thrill there because the gospel had invaded a pagan stronghold!*
- C. The early Christians had a reputation of **"turning the world upside down"**!
 - 1. We need to work till the same could be said about OUR evangelizing!
 - 2. **"Commotion"** = *"uproar, disturbance, upheaval"*.

I. IT'S THE NATURE OF "THE WAY" TO CAUSE A GREAT COMMOTION!

- A. "Gospel preaching is to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable!"
 - 1. The gospel dispels darkness with light, and *that disturbs many!* Matt.5:14
 - 2. The gospel goal proclaims "purity of life in a world of immorality!"
 - 3. And the gospel is designed to feature conviction of sin in this world! Jn 16:8-
- B. The gospel causes a commotion among those rebellious to gospel preaching!
 - 1. In observation, it's been a most favorable disturbance at times:
 - 2. At times, though, it's an unfavorable disturbance and result!
 - 3. It's still true that initial hostile commotions can turn into godly responses!

II. "THAT "WAY" DISTURBS PEOPLE BECAUSE IT'S PECULIAR SYSTEM!

- A. The "gospel way" is not just a *"way of looking at certain things."*
 - 1. The GOSPEL WAY produces God's for our thinking. Phil 4:8
 - 2. The gospel produces God's way for His people *to FEEL!* Acts 8:37-38
 - 3. And the gospel produces God's OWN SPECIAL WAY for His people *to ACT!*
- B. The GOSPEL OF CHRIST has lost valuable ground in these modern days!
 - 1. One reason is it's been so diluted in preaching, in our lives, or in our "outreach"!
 - 2. When we dilute anything, it begins to lose it's POWER OF PERFORMANCE!
 - 3. The gospel's been diluted traditions of men, by convenience, & by compromise.
 - 4. A contaminated gospel won't disturb hearts of sinners! Gal.1:6-7

III. "THAT WAY" IS STILL ABLE TO PRODUCE "GREAT COMMOTIONS!"

- A. Excitement in our hearts breeds action in our lives that'll produce commotions?
 - 1. Just like a good salesman is one who is excited about his product!
 - 2. WE need to be EXCITED about the product we're dealing with.
- B. WHEN WE GET EXCITED, OTHER PEOPLE GET INTERESTED ~ but until then, they're lost!
- C. Are we reaching interested people? Some congregations just aren't appealing.
 - 1. Some congregations may have modern facilities but apathetic members!
 - 2. Another group may not even have a building, but they have an outreach!
- D. Now to which group do you think that would apply?

IN SUMMARY:

- A. HOW CAN WE stir up the fires of enthusiasm in others ~ if we're not stirred up?
- B. Are we really putting ourselves to the task of living and working for Jesus?
- C. Obey His gospel and taste His saving power this very day!