

FAITH CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

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Vol. 26 No 1

“From the Pastor’s Desk”

February 2018

HAVE YOU HEARD THE GOOD NEWS

Recently, the news media carried a story about an alarm that signaled the citizens of Hawaii about a possible missile attack upon their homeland from North Korea. For thirty-five minutes the people in Hawaii lived in abject fear that their life was about to be snuffed out. It turns out that the reason it took so long for the government to tell them it was a false alarm was because the governor couldn't remember his Twitter password; therefore he could not log into his twitter account to get the message out to his citizens that everything was okay. In the meantime, there was panic in the streets.

We live in a time when it seems that the public is being badgered with all kinds of bad news. It seems that we have gotten to the place where- if there is any good news we have become rather cynical and suspicious that even though it sounds positive we doubt or at least question whether it is true. Even when there are people who could help brighten our day with something positive, they are either unavailable, or lack access to the general public to help calm people's fears. And that is why I have chosen this topic in case one of my readers is having a bad day and need to be reminded of some good news.

Someone has written; *“We are never beneath hope, while above hell, nor above hope, while beneath heaven.”* The late Charles L. Allen reminded us that when you say a situation or a person is hopeless, you are slamming the door in the face of God. Too often, I think that if we have only “hope” that it is not enough to carry us through adversity. But I dare to differ, because hope is really the parent of faith. It is hope that starts one believing in possibilities as well as causes one to look for opportunities to help make things change. Therefore, we should keep hope alive.

We as Christians need to make a habit of spreading the “good news.” What I mean by that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am amazed how few people ever share the good news even when the opportunity presents itself. People will talk about their misery, ailments; problems with their children, neighbors, as well as share about the fears of what their afflictions are going to do to their body...all of this information should motivate a child of God to share the good news. That God cares about them, and is ready to help them in their time of need but, like the governor they have a hard time remembering their password on their twitter account to get the good news out. In the meantime, a community is in panic as to what is about to happen to them.

Eugene Kennedy said, *“The main business of friendship is to sustain and make bearable each other's burden. We may do more of that as friends than we do anything else.”* Now, I realize there are some people who prefer doing all the talking and very seldom listen. They will talk all day if you let them. However, I think maybe after listening away, you have earned the right to respond. I would counsel that when you have earned the right to respond, use it to the best advantage. Just stop them even in mid-sentence and then share the good news of the Gospel, even if they claim to be religious; be brief, but share the good news. Maybe when they get away from you they will think about what you said and if they do...the Gospel will do its own work inside of them.

I have learned something as a minister of the Gospel. The Word of God has power of its own. Once it is planted in the ear of a person, it tends to reach the heart. Once in the heart, it can change a person's perspective on life and those issues, which tend to cause them to panic in their time of crisis. There is enough power in the Gospel. And it is life changing once it is given its freedom to do its work.

GOOD NEWS FROM MY MORNING DEVOTIONS

This past week, in my morning devotions, I came across a passage of Scripture, which I have read many times, but this time it seemed to stand up right off the page of my Bible. The Apostle Paul wrote the passage to the Romans. He made a reference to Abraham in which he said *"In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be."* Romans 4:18 (ESV) He hoped against hope... My mind would not stop dwelling on this part of the Scripture.

Therefore, I naturally decided to see what my Bible Commentaries had to say about this passage. One of the writers said that Abraham's hope was one against him, because it was a natural ordinary human hope. All the arguments of sense, and reason, and experience, which in such cases usually beget and support hope, were against him; no second causes smiled upon him, nor in the least favored his hope. So if Abraham relied on *"positive thinking"* as some people would suggest he do, he would have probably given up in despair.

So this raised the question in my mind. Then what kind of "hope" did Abraham have? What was it that caused him to hope against hope? Well I could only conclude that Abraham believed in hope, which arose, as his faith in God did, from the consideration of God's all-sufficiency. In other words Abraham got his hope from a faith that he already possessed in God as being the "All Sufficient One." You see he placed his *"hope"* not in his flesh, because what he was at his age as well as his wife, was under the most natural circumstances nearly impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Now, Abraham had not conjured up the idea of being a father at that late age. God had to send angels to give him the message that he was going to be a father. So what we see here is that Abraham's hope against hope came as a result of trusting God to perform what He had promised. If God said it, that was enough for him. He didn't need to check to see if such a thing could happen at his and his wife's age. He only needed to rely on the "good news" that he had received from the angel of God.

There is good news that each of us need to believe. Now if we are looking inward or even outward for the performance of what God has promised in His Word we are going to be in trouble. If we are like Abraham, looking heavenward, then we too can have hope against hope. Because our hope is not built on our performance, but rather on what God has said through His Word made alive in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

LEARN TO RELAX IN CHRIST

We are being told many things by virtue of the daily, earthly news. Like the people in Hawaii, the news may tend to cause us to panic. When we read about Kim Jong-un in North Korea and what he wants to do to us Americans, this may cause some to panic. When we read the latest news about certain diseases and then told there is no cure this may cause others to panic as well. When people around us who lately have come down with the latest epidemic of the flu in which the shots for the "flue" didn't help this time because the health department missed it...naturally the soul tends to despair. But we must not despair. We too need to step up to that level in which Abraham did, and place our hope in God...He is the "All Sufficient One."

Bruce Larson, a dynamic pastor in Seattle Washington, told a story about himself when he almost drowned in a storm at sea in the Gulf of Mexico. He found himself swimming far from the shore, having tried to reach his drifting boat. The waves were seven or eight feet high and the sky was dark with gale force and winds. He was drifting out to sea when the Lord spoke to his heart and actually saved his life. What the Lord said to him was this: *"I'm here Larson, and you're not coming home as soon as you think. Can you tread water?"* Somehow, that had never occurred to him. He said, had he continued his panic effort to swim back to shore, he would have exhausted his strength and gone down. Pastor Larson listened to God and was blessed with many more years of ministry. Maybe someone needs to hear some good news today... the good news is God is with you, don't panic, just relax in Him and do what He tells you...and then you will make it. Amen.