

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ~ MAKING DISCIPLES ~ EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY

THE BLESSED HOPE

Part 4

By Rayola Kelley

We have been considering the Blessed Hope from the premise of doctrine, the resurrection of the dead, and from attitude. Our attitude must be upright to ensure honorable conduct. This attitude must come from a lowly disposition, and express itself in meekness in order to properly occupy until Jesus comes for His Church. Such an attitude will ensure that we, as saints, will live in expectation of His coming. Whether we meet Jesus through the door of physical death or in the clouds, we must always live in expectation of being raised up in the complete likeness of Him in His life, resurrection, and glory.



As I stated last month, we do not know what this will entail. There are still mysteries attached to the resurrection. However, our hope is not based on the mysteries, but on the Word of God. The promise is that if we are truly planted in Jesus' death, we also will be planted in His resurrection to be brought forth in His likeness.

We can meditate on the concept of what it means to be brought forth in His likeness, but the Bible is clear as to how this likeness will manifest itself. According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, "likeness" means to resemble, make like, shape, and similitude. The Apostle Paul tells us that we are being conformed to the image of Christ (*Romans 8:29*). In other words, we are being formed in such a way that we will clearly resemble Him. To be conformed, we must let the mind of Christ be in us (*Philippians 2:5*). This

means we will be made like Him in our way of thinking. We are told that we must be planted in His death in order to be shaped like Him in a new way of life (*Romans 6:3-5*). Jesus instructs us to learn of His disposition of humility and His attitude of meekness (*Matthew 11:29*). This points to us having the same similitude or uniformity as Christ in the way we handle matters and conduct our lives.

The likeness of Christ also implies that His life is being worked within us. In fact, the inner man is being renewed daily by His life (*2 Corinthians 4:16*). This is why the Apostle Paul stated that the life he lived in his fleshly body was not his life, but the very life of Christ (*Galatians 2:20*). As you realize that we are being made like Jesus in the barren wilderness of the grave of the world, you will begin to understand more of what the Apostle Paul meant when he made this statement: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (*2 Corinthians 3:18*). Unlike Moses who veiled God's glory, Christians are to serve as a mirror or open reflection of Christ (*2 Corinthians 3:13-14*). As the Holy Spirit works Jesus' life in us, we begin to reflect His image more and more. In other words, Jesus' glory is being reflected through us. As we are conformed to His likeness, His glory will come forth in greater measure. One of the reasons for being left in the grave of the world is so Jesus' glory can be uncovered in us as our self-life and personal identity succumbs to death. It is His glory shining forth through us that becomes that attractive light to those who are seeking real hope. This is why Jesus reminded us that we do not put a light under a basket, but we let it shine forth in the darkness (*Matthew 5:14-16*).

There are different glories that are being reflected. There is the false glory of the world, the fading glory of

man, and the counterfeit glory of religion and Satan. Depending on who or what we serve will determine the glory that is being reflected from our lives. What glory are you reflecting? This brings us to what it means to maintain a life that will reflect Jesus' glory in this present age. It is vital that as Christians we come to terms with this matter. We already know that we must have a right attitude towards Jesus. Attitude will determine emphasis and focus. Focus will influence the direction of our affections. Affections must be disciplined so that they enable us to see a matter to the end.

We now know that our attitude must be disciplined by expectation of one day being completely identified to Jesus. Such an expectation realizes that when we are raised up in His likeness, that all the promises of God given to us will be fully completed. In light of this expectation, we can discipline our focus heavenward. For centuries God's people have been looking heavenward. These individuals did not worry about whether Jesus was coming at that particular time, for they expected Him at any moment. However, the benefit of looking heavenward in light of hope caused their affections to go heavenward towards the One they were expecting (*Colossians 3:2*). As their affections were set upon Jesus, the influences and activities of the world became less and less important, as their priorities and preferences clearly changed.

As the attitude is aligned and the affections of love and devotion set you upon the right source, then the preparation can begin. We must be prepared to meet Jesus at all times. Receiving Christ is the initial part of being delivered from the influence of the death of sin upon our lives, but now we must be delivered from sin's workings in our life, and be delivered through the activities of sin that abound around us. Salvation is an ongoing work that addresses the past, and confronts the present as it prepares us for our future meeting with our precious Lord.

To ensure preparation, we must live in expectation of His coming. This is why we are told that we do not know the day or hour when it will happen (*Matthew 24:36, 50*). Clearly, we will not know exactly when Jesus is coming back. However, we are aware of the parable of the fig tree (*Matthew 24:32-35*). The fig tree represents Israel becoming a nation.

We can speculate at this point that Israel becoming a nation in 1948 signals the starting of a season in God's plan. Since we are told that this generation shall not pass until all of these things are fulfilled, we can somehow mark the last generation based on what is happening in Israel. A generation is considered from 40 to 50 years. Obviously, the last generation did not start when Israel became a nation. Some believe since Israel failed to secure the temple mount in the six-day war in 1967 that this event possibly marked the last generation. Last year marked the forty years of this generation. Does this mean that, at the most, we have ten more years left?

Jesus made a very important statement in *Acts 1:7* after He was asked when the kingdom would be restored back to Israel. Here is His answer: *"It is not for you to know the times or the season, which the Father hath put in his own power."* Remember, there is a difference between knowing a matter is true and having an opinion. Jesus said that people would not know the beginning or ending of the times or the season.

Strong's Concordance gives us insight into the meanings or implications of these two words. "Times" implies a fixed, designated or particular period. Season points to the proper time in which the right opportunity will present itself. When you consider that a thousand years to us is but a day to God, you must acknowledge that He does not operate according to a timeframe or a particular space of time. To us seasons last for four months, but to God there is no time limit to His seasons. We might be able to say that the season that leads to His coming started when Israel became a nation, but we have no concept as to how long the season will last or whether a particular event in history that surrounds Israel

truly marked the last generation. To try to figure it out is nothing more than speculation.

Once again we are reminded that our expectation is not according to times or seasons, but it is based on Jesus coming back. We prepare in light of this expectation, not according to speculations. In other words, some ancient calendars mark the year 2012 as a year of great change. How many people who live in light of speculation would see such knowledge as an opportunity to live as unfaithful, irresponsible servants towards God for a few more years? Jesus made reference to those who possess such an attitude as being subject to wrath (*Matthew 24:48-51*).

Since it is established that we cannot be sure of the times, seasons, day, or hour that Jesus is coming, we must be constantly in the mode of preparation for that great day. The point of preparation must begin from the premise of love. We love Jesus; therefore, we are in love with His appearing. Whether, we are the bride or the Body, we are ever aware of Him coming back. This is not only a desired event, but it is an event that brings hope to our very souls. To operate from and in this love, we must choose to love the Lord with everything in us. If we love Jesus, we will also love His truth.

The major warning concerning Jesus' return is to beware of the great deception that will be prevalent (*Matthew 24:4-5, 23-25*). If we love the truth, and strive to maintain its integrity in our own lives, we will not be as prone to be caught up with the various waves of deception that roll through Christendom.

If our heart is with Jesus, and our affections directed at Him, we will be watchful as to what we expose ourselves to, what we embrace as truth, and what we walk according to. We will be aware of the times, seasons, day, and hour we are living in to ensure our own spiritual well-being (*Matthew 24:42*). Sadly, there are people who want to remain ignorant about such matters. But, how can the Spirit lead us into all truth, prepare us to live victoriously in this present age, and warn us of future events if we are not walking in truth about our personal lives, as well as the environment around us (*John*

16:13)?

Preparation is a discipline of the soul. It enables us to learn how to possess our souls in patience as we give way to the work of the Spirit, and the life of our dear Lord (*Luke 21:19*). Daniel warns us that in the end days the saints will be worn out (*Daniel 7:25*). I don't know about you, but as I contend with the times we live in, I am becoming weary with the indifference, selfishness, lawlessness, and the utter foolishness that is often abounding around us. Such attitudes and practices can suck the very life out of you if you do not keep your eyes heavenward. Clearly, as believers, we must possess the character of our own souls by disciplining our focus and source of hope.

Preparation will also ensure that I will live in a state of readiness. In other words, I will be ready to meet Jesus (*Matthew 24:44-46*). Depending on my spiritual maturity, I will possess to some measure the lowly disposition of His life, the meekness of His attitude, the wisdom of His mind, the character of His ways, and the oil of the Holy Spirit. Such a character will ensure my readiness to meet with Him.

Preparation also entails praying. In *Luke 21:36*, we are told to watch and always pray that we may be accounted worthy to escape the things that are coming on the face of this earth so we can truly stand before Jesus. Notice how the emphasis is on standing before Jesus. We all must be counted or reckoned worthy to escape the judgment and wrath that will come upon this present world. Clearly, this means we must be seeking our Lord's will in all matters. We must be watchful over what is true in our spiritual lives, ready to do what is obedient and honorable, and in prayer that we will not bring shame or dishonor to our Lord no matter what is happening around us.

Every age has its tribulation. Each period has caused those who knew Jesus to look upward knowing that whether it be through the door of death or in the sky that His redemption was always drawing near to those who would draw near to Him in sincere faith.

I have had a real sense for the past eight years that 2008 would bring some major changes to the world we

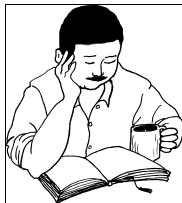
GOD IS SPEAKING By Jeannette Haley

If you've ever experienced any sort of ear problem or hearing loss, as I have, then you know how indescribably miserable it is. We take our ability to hear for granted (along with just about everything else) until we lose it. Then, everything within us becomes centered on that particular disturbing disability. We agonize over our loss, and long for the problem to leave so that we can once again function normally.

God has much to say to us about hearing. This "hearing" has to do with "listening" to His Word. God says, *"To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it"* Jeremiah 6:10. How God's plea should stir our hearts to respond, "Lord, speak to me!" Yet, we see God asking "who will listen?"

God wants to speak to us. He is always speaking to us, but are we listening? Did not the Lord God speak to the first man, Adam, and instruct him from the very beginning? Did they not have sweet communion until Adam sought for his independence from God and His commandment? Even so, did not God call out to him, "Where art thou?" (Genesis 3:9) God spoke to Eve, giving her the first promise of a Redeemer. He spoke to Cain, warning Him to do right. He and Enoch "walked together" for three-hundred years, until He took Enoch home. God spoke to Noah, telling him of His plan to judge the world for its wickedness. Thank God, Noah not only listened, but obeyed, or none of us would be here today. Consider God's call and promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Think about God's relationship with Moses, Joshua, King David and others down through the centuries.

God spoke to His people through His judges, prophets, priests, kings, servants, and handmaidens. He has revealed the eternal glories of Christ through the witness in the wilderness (the Tabernacle); through the feasts



established for Israel; through the sacrifices; through terrible judgments and glorious triumphs. God speaks to the whole world through His creation, through the glories of the sun, moon and stars. Everywhere one looks in nature, whether within the animal kingdom, beneath the waters, or above the clouds, one can see the mighty power, wisdom and glory of God.

We can experience His mighty, wonderful works through our five senses. Not by zoning out into some mindless New Age type of "contemplative spirituality" but by listening to the countless sounds in nature, to inspired music, to gifted singers, to name a few. Think of what a marvelous thing it is to be able to hear, to taste, to touch, to smell, and to see. These things are given to us by God so that we can enjoy life. Have you stopped lately to simply thank Him for the gift of life? Or, do you take it all for granted?

God is issuing a warning, but the people do not hear. He says, *"...my people know not the judgment of the LORD"* Jeremiah 8:7b. Why do you suppose this is so? The Lord says, *"How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us?"* Jeremiah 8:8a. Has mankind really changed all that much since Jeremiah's day? The answer is no. Don't we think that we are the most intelligent, the most advanced, the most favored of the Lord? But the truth is, *"The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?"* Jeremiah 8:9.

So we see that God is saying (and are we listening?) that His people do not *delight* in His Word because it is a *reproach* to them; therefore, they lack wisdom. Reproach means shame, rebuke, and disgrace. Why is God's Word a reproach? God's Word is truth and light; therefore, consider that when the sword of the Word comes down and exposes our pride, rebellion, and stiff-necked, self-serving ways and attitudes, we have a choice to either humble ourselves and repent, or justify our sin and reject God's Word. If we choose to reject His Word, then we become devoid of wisdom. God's Word reveals who we really are, *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword,*

piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" Hebrews 4:12, 13.

We can all look back at the Children of Israel and see their outward and obvious rejection of God's Word. We can even compare ourselves to them and smugly point out that, after all, we live in an "enlightened" and "civilized" age where no one actually bows down to idols or believes that they have any real power in and of themselves. But, this is simply not true. For one thing, the Roman Catholic Church is an idolatrous and pagan belief system. (If you don't believe it, we suggest that you read, "A Woman Rides the Beast" by Dave Hunt.) As a whole, we have simply become more shrewd and clever in playing the religious game that gives the outward impression that we are God-fearing Christians, while remaining idolatrous at heart. Many a devil hides behind religious garb and jargon, but the Christian who knows God and His Word will be able to discern truth from error in the midst of it all.

What is being passed off today as "Christian" in the "commercial mainstream" falls under the category of the antichrist spirit, but people love it because it allows them to remain in their pigpens of perverted religiosity, darkness, delusion and wickedness. As in Jeremiah's day, except for God's faithful remnant, people really do not delight in God's Word, for it is indeed a reproach to them. It calls them to accountability before a holy God. Thus, they have embraced the new "Bible versions" from corrupted Gnostic manuscripts, because the Spirit, power and anointing that brings conviction is lacking. (A good book on this subject is "Gnosticism: The Doctrinal Foundation for the New Bible Versions" by Janet Moser, available from Southwest Radio Church.) The post-modern Christian has without so much as a whimper, allowed for the elimination of both the authorized version of the Bible (KJV) as well as the old hymns that proclaim the Gospel with clarity and power.

Everything today in the post-modern, seeker-friendly, emerging, man-centered church is geared towards bringing the world into the church, or, like the groups who hold "church" in basketball courts, breweries and bars, drag the "church" into the environment of the world. It's all about making the church look like the world, talk like the world, and dress like the world, entertain like the world, and sound like the world. All distinctions between the world and the church are being eliminated as fast as possible from the pulpit to the pews. The result is such a church also reeks with the stench of the world.

No wonder people are flocking to these compromising churches! How convenient to offer all the trappings and comforts of the world, while giving people a false sense of spiritual security through a steady diet of vain philosophies, psychobabble, and emotionally-charged, superficial nonsense, while ignoring and eliminating the complete and convicting counsel of the Word of God! How devious and wicked it is for the heartless hireling shepherds to tickle people's itching ears with flattery and smooth speeches that poisons their souls and turns them away from the very truth that has the power to deliver them from death and destruction! Oh! How clever and subversive are the ways of the devil in the midst of those who despise God's Word, to make them enemies of the very God that they claim to serve. Jesus warned, *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"* Matthew 7:21-23.

It's amazing and heartbreaking how many Christians have never read the Bible through even once, yet the Bible is God's *Word* to us! It is God's revelation of Jesus, the living Word. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"* John 1:1. How can we truly know God, know His will for us, un-

derstand why we here, how we are to live, and where we are going if we don't read, study and meditate on God's Word? How can we discern good and evil, and test the spirits if we are ignorant of His Word? How can we make proper judgments and decisions if we do not have His Word in us? How can we live by faith, and not sin against Him if we haven't hidden His Word in our hearts? How can we appropriate the promises as well as the conditions of God's Word if we never study it? *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* 2 Timothy 2:15. How can we stand against the lies of the devil, the seduction of the world, the lusts of the flesh and stand in times of persecution and tribulation if we are ignorant of His Word?

The Holy Bible is God speaking to us. But, much to the shame of multitudes who claim to be Christians, as well as to this nation that claims to be Christian, the pure words of the Lord have been rejected for fables (so-called "Christian" novels, fantasy stories, and "feel-good" books, none of which proclaim the Gospel). These can be compared to wells without water. There is no truth, substance or life in them.

It is by knowing and obeying God's Word that we "need not be ashamed." God's Word should be the delight of our hearts. We should be joyful when we are reproached (or reproved), corrected, and instructed in righteousness by His Word, so that we may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 16, 17)

The Word of God should be our most prized possession. Its worth is incalculable. Saints through the ages have been tortured and martyred in order to ensure that others, such as you and me, could hold this priceless treasure in our hands. Christians around the world today are likewise persecuted and martyred for owning or distributing Bibles, yet how much do we take it for granted? How many of us could stand with Job and say, *"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back*

from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" Job 23:10-12?

A. W. Tozer put it well when he wrote: "The present neglect of the inspired Scriptures by civilized man is a shame and a scandal; for those same Scriptures tell him all he wants to know, or should want to know, about God, his own soul and human destiny. . . .

"Whatever keeps me from the Bible is my enemy, however harmless it may appear to be. Whatever engages my attention when I should be meditating on God and things eternal does injury to my soul. Let the cares of life crowd out the Scriptures from my mind and I have suffered loss where I can least afford it. Let me accept anything else instead of the Scriptures and I have been cheated and robbed to my eternal confusion." (Excerpt from "That Incredible Christian")

As we consider our devotion, or lack of it, to God's Word, let us be reminded of our Lord's words in *Matthew 4:4*: *"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* [Emphasis added] As we continue reading of Christ's temptation in the wilderness, we see that Jesus always quoted God's word to the tempter. Therefore, if we are to overcome the enemy of our souls, shouldn't we be able to likewise say, *"It is written"*? In all of our years of ministry in the area of deliverance, we have yet to see Satan respect anything other than the Word of God. You can quote your favorite Christian leader, author or guru all you like, but Satan will only mock you.

Oh! That we would all humble ourselves and cry out with the Prophet Jeremiah, *"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts"* Jeremiah 15:16. God is speaking to you, and to me through His Word. Do you have ears to hear? If so, He is saying: *Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you. I will make known my words unto you"* Proverbs 1:23. Are you listening?

know. Sadly, I do not sense these changes will be pleasant. But as believers, the one aspect of our lives that will never change is Jesus. He is the Rock we can cling to, He is the Bread that nourishes us, He is the One who can uncap the rivers of Living Water in our soul, and He is the One who not only redeemed us, but will come back for us. Let us rejoice in such hope. Let us live in confident expectation of this glorious promise. Let us learn how to rest, knowing that one day all of God's promises will be fulfilled in our lives when we are raised up to meet Him in the air. Let us be part of that group who, with such assurance, will be able to declare: "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20c).

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

Q: *How involved in politics do you think a Christian should be? Shouldn't every believer be doing all they can to save America?*

A: This issue has caused conflict for some Christians. The conflict rests with the fact that we as believers hold dual citizenship: here in America and in the kingdom of God. Since we hold dual citizenship where must our loyalties reside, with this nation or with heaven? After all, we can only serve one master at a time. This is also true for maintaining our loyalties or allegiance.

The Bible is quite clear about our responsibilities as citizens in His kingdom and of this world. Let us begin with our citizenship in heaven.

Our Allegiance: The Bible is clear that we are to obey God rather than man. Clearly, if there is any conflict between our two citizenships, we must adhere to God, rather than our nation. This is why Christians are often persecuted because their allegiance is first and foremost to God, and not the godless leaders of their country. After all, God has redeemed us and deserves our complete devotion and service. However, to ensure that God is in His rightful place, we must set our affections on things above and not on this earth (Acts 5:29; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Philipians 3:20; Colossians 3:2).

Our Responsibilities: As Chris-

tians we hold the official capacity of ambassadors in this world. In other words, we officially represent the kingdom of God. This is why we have been commissioned to preach the Gospel and make followers of Jesus. The beauty about the kingdom of God is that all who are poor in spirit, broken in heart and oppressed by the world are welcome to become a citizen of it by way of simple child-like faith (*Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 10:14-15; 16:15; Luke 4:18-19; John 7:37; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19*).

This brings us to our responsibilities towards the world. Clearly, our allegiance must be to God and the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, when it comes to our country, we must start from the premise of having a right attitude towards it.

Attitude: The Word of God is clear that we are not of this world. Granted, we are in it, but we do not belong to it. We may have been born in this world, but our spiritual birth identifies us to a better promise, place and hope. However, we are in this world; therefore, what attitude must we have towards it to ensure that we keep our association with it in the right perspective? We are told that we must possess the attitude of a stranger and the disposition of a pilgrim (*1 Peter 2:11*). As strangers we are passing through, and as pilgrims our affections rest elsewhere. As a result, the world will have no hold or claim on us; therefore, it will not be able to influence our focus and walk.

Our Responsibilities: The Bible does not instruct us to do something we do not have the means to carry out. Saving America is not within our means. As far as voting, I believe we need to take advantage of this privilege and make our voice known, but we cannot save this country.

The Bible is clear about our responsibilities towards the country we are living in. The Apostle Paul dealt with this subject in *1 Timothy 2:1-3*: "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, For kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior." Our main responsibility is to pray for our leaders for the sole purpose of living quiet and

peaceable lives. Such lives allow us to worship and serve our God in quiet confidence, without fear of persecution. I do not see in these instructions that we are to be a conscience of this nation. Granted, we are to be a light that stands distinct in godliness and honesty in the darkness, for we represent an unseen, eternal kingdom; but I do not see where we are to try to line this nation up according to our perception of righteousness.

We cannot legislate righteousness, but we can plead our cause to God to give us righteous leaders. However, as a nation, we must be worthy of such leaders. Leaders represent the attitude of the people. If people do not insist on moral integrity in their personal lives, they cannot expect it or demand it from their leaders.

Admittedly, I am not excited about the presidential choices we have this coming election. But, I must consider what the quality of these people's lives and leadership are telling me about the moral and spiritual condition of our nation. When you consider that prayer has been taken out of schools, the Ten Commandments out of public places, children are still being aborted, governors are being caught in such compromising situations as prostitution sting operations, senators are arrested for such things as making possible improper advancements, sexual perversion is being taught as an acceptable lifestyle to our children, and home schooling and preaching against homosexuality is being made illegal, perhaps it is time for us to truly repent as a people, instead of trying to save what appears to be a sinking ship (*Proverbs 14:34*).

"Some men will spin out a long prayer telling God who and what he is, or they pray out a whole system of divinity. Some people preach, others exhort the people, till everybody wishes they would stop, and God wishes so, too, most undoubtedly." - Charles Finney

"We are too busy to pray, and so we are too busy to have power. We have a great deal of activity, but we accomplish little; many services but few conversions; much machinery but few results." - R. A. Torrey

LETTERS & EMAILS



"I appreciate the fact that you are concerned about the upcoming elections. . . . How far our country has sunk is deplorable. And the fact that only the worst choices have made it front and center indicates where America really is—and unfortunately, we will probably get the president we deserve." - WA

"I understand about telling people that only the REAL Jesus can set them free, I have been crying over the air waves for two years just that and I am finding that people would rather stay in bondage to the world system then let GOD set them free. My heart breaks for these people but they do not want the truth they want a numbing band aid instead, and most people with DID/MPD do not want to give up their alters. I think it has a lot to do with taking responsibility for their actions and leaving a comfort zone, even if that zone is killing them. The Lord just will not allow me to stay in any kind of comfort zone. Every time I start getting to comfortable HE has a way of rocking my boat and moving me on. Serving HIM is constant movement and growth as you well know. I have said over and over to people, if you really do not want to make a commitment to GOD with all you heart and do not want to change and give up your old life don't bother to ask HIM to heal you, because it will hurt, it is hard work and you cannot go back. Why anyone would want to is beyond me? But anyway it is always sooooo worth it. HE never leaves us and HE gives us all we need to make the amazing journey to wholeness. It is a life journey and such an amazing journey! Jesus is the only way people can be healed and delivered but that sadly is not what they want to hear. Some finally figure it out after all other ways fail, and some never do. But we are hear to lead people to HIM and that is all we can do." - AR

"I want to express my sincere thanks to for devotions everyday. I pray that you will live till we all live to meet Him in his glory. You send my greetings to the Church and the family as a whole." - Ghana

"Hello Rayola and thanks for all your wise words. You and Jeannette are always right on the mark with all your advice and writings. It inspires me to become more like Jesus." - MO

"Rayola, I've got to give you a tip of my ol' Irish hat! This series on The Blessed Hope has been such a comfort and encouragement to me personally! There have been several deaths amongst our family and friends during February, and our Blessed Hope is where my thoughts have turned for comfort. You have just reinforced "where I'm living"! Nice work!

"*THE WINDS ARE BLOWING AND THE PARTY IS OVER* - J. Haley What can I say? You've hit the proverbial nail with this one, and I admire you so much for not sugar-coating ANY of it! My heart is sad for those who "profess" Christ, yet cannot perceive that the winds are a blowin'! Living in Florida, I know what winds can do, and these people are setting themselves up for destruction! As you said "My people are DESTROYED for a lack of knowledge." (Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.)

"Q & A - *CHRISTIANS AND SPORTS* - R. Kelley—Last, but not least, I attended a church that was so HIGH on sports it was truly in the realm of idolatry! Every bit of advice you offered is true! I also realized that they loved this kind of idolatry due to the 'competitive spirit' behind it! There is no Godliness in competition, as God Himself has told us to prefer others before ourselves. Phil. 2:3 'Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.' There should not be any competition amongst believers, but society has set up the masses for the fall, and they seem to think that by being the 'top dog' in competition, that it impresses God. One day they will find out this is just NOT so.

"Another jam-packed buffet for all of us, and I thank you Ladies for working so diligently on the newsletter

every month, so that we, the Remnant, can FEAST!" - FL

"I can remember back in the old 'church' one time I had mentioned to _____ that I was using a video and exercising 20 minutes a day with it. Can you believe the next Wednesday night that [pastor] then preached a message about exercising and Christians really shouldn't be doing it because it took away from being devoted to God? I'm not kidding or exaggerating either! 'People even wore special clothes to exercise in', he stated. I couldn't believe what I was hearing! I told [husband] that is the worst sermon I ever heard and I've heard some bad ones. What a difference it is being in your church. I'm so glad I'm out of that hole. I just had to say something." - ID

"This [daily devotion] is good, Rayola. The sloopy goopy love stuff has permeated the church until everyone thinks they are God's gift to the world. I still say the gifts of the Spirit are just that, the gifts of the Spirit. Please pray for my mother. . . it is not looking good . . . I want to see my Mom saved, eternity is such a long forever time and God only has good for her." - WA

"Thank you so very much for a great newsletter. . . Rayola, loved your article on the 'Blessed Hope'! Very sobering indeed. Great encouragement to live a godly life before our Lord Jesus Christ. And the Q&A concerning sports was very good as well. As we know, this is a pleasure-seeking, sports-worshipping society we live in. Thank God for the Holy Spirit who leads and guides us into all truth. Jeannette, put that sledgehammer down!!! Very hard-hitting article! Yes, the winds are blowing (especially towards the United States and the apostate 'church' contained therein). Wow, it is really time to seek the Lord like never before! God give us, Your true children, a burning, yearning passion in our hearts for You that we may follow hard after You Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you . . ." - MD

"I loved this one! [Daily devotion] It sure puts the kybosh on all of the SELF-help books, and all of the SELF-ESTEEM that is being promoted from the pulpit pimps!!!!!!!!!!!!!! GREAT job!!! And THANKS!!!" - FL