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NEWSLETTER & BUILDING UPDATE FEBRUARY 2023

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Overcoming trials, the lion, and the whale!

Dear Friends,

How can I describe what's been happening…? The Prayer House is resting during the cold winter months. The last building activity was in December when we put in the rainwater drainage system. The roof is so big that just 1 cm rain produces 2500 litres water, so we put in a system that can drain away a lot of water in a hurry. It has a huge fresh-water tank that will be used to water our (hopefully) beautiful gardens in the future!

A season of testing!

But as for us, or should I say, for me (Mark), the last 3 months has been a time of testing. We all go through seasons of testing, and somehow, we have to navigate our way through to the other side. It's not something we want, but it's something that from time to time is necessary.

Here are a few of my thoughts on the subject.

Consider it ALL joy, my brethren, whenever you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance do its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4)

There are a few key words that stand out for me.

Waiting on the other side of a trial is JOY! It's the taste of victory, of having an increased leverage against the enemy. You're coming out bigger and stronger. "***For the JOY set before Him He (Jesus) endured the cross***". And after He endured, "***He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.***".

The quality Father is looking for is ENDURANCE. It's the ability to withstand hardship or adversity, to keep going under pressure. Father wants to grow our character, so that He can increase His anointing, so that we can fulfil our destiny. Remember, we win if we don't give up. The goal He has for each one of us, is to be "***perfect (mature) and complete, lacking nothing***".

The way He matures us is through trials. It says we FALL into trials. They happen all of a sudden, when we're least expecting them. Joseph went through trials. He was sold by His brothers into slavery, falsely accused and thrown into prison. But God was with him. It was necessary for him because His destiny was to be ruler over Egypt.

When we read Hebrews 11, the heroes of the faith, they ALL went through trials (that's what made them heroes). And it says in verse 6, "***Now without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***". The trials are trials of faith, and faith is the gold currency of heaven. He wants us to come out shining brightly!

Going back to our passage in James, the next verse is really important, "***If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously, and without finding fault, and it will be given to him.***" (James 1:5)

The first thing we need to do, is understand where the trial is coming from. Not all trials come from God, yet it is difficult sometimes to know when we look at Joseph and Jesus and others, whether it is the enemy or God or both. But the fact is the enemy will try to dump stuff on us. After all, it says that he "***prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour***."

If it's from the enemy, we need to get rid of it. So, asking for wisdom, journaling, hearing from God, listening to dreams, learning to exercise authority, engaging with the courts of Heaven, all of that is going to help. The warfare is real, the trial is real, the pain is real, and we need to listen to know what to do to get the victory.

A good question to ask is, "Father, what are you trying to tell me through this?". When we come under pressure, we often find there are issues in our hearts that come to the surface, which we would normally like to forget or ignore. It could be any number of things, fears, anxiety, grief, jealousy, doubt, unresolved issues in the past, you name it. But the trial is there so that you can work with the Holy Spirit to get these things healed. Jesus is in the business of transformation, and He wants to transform you!

A few years ago, I had a HUGE fear of trusting God for finances. So, what did God do? He told me to step out in faith and trust Him for finances. I call this "white knuckle faith", because you're holding on so tight, that your knuckles go white! After several rounds of testing, Jesus completely healed me. Where there was fear in my heart, now there is peace.

I'm not fully out this current trial, but I'm walking my way through it with the Holy Spirit.

So, if you're going through a trial, realise you're not the only one! God is with you, and He will show you what to do. Remember that we win if we don't give up!

The Vengeance of the Lamb!

Last Friday was the 27th of January, the 78th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. I have always found this date to be significant. It's also something very personal for us, a marker if you like, that points to who we are, our calling and our ministry.

This year, the 27th of January was special in a different way. If you remember, opposite our house is the Fountain of Tears. It's a sculptural dialogue of suffering between Jesus on the cross and a holocaust survivor. If you've not familiar with it, click on https://fountainoftears.org.

For the past year or so, Rick (the sculptor) has been working on another piece, called the Vengeance on the Lamb. It's a lion and it's huge! And there's a lamb lying between the paws of lion, the lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world. On Friday 27th January Rick and a group of friends brought it to its final resting place at the front of his property. Now, when we look out of our kitchen window, we see a HUGE lion roaring over Birkenau.

For me, when I think about God 's vengeance, I don't think about death and destruction. The devil is the one who loves to do that. When God pours out vengeance on His enemy, He pours out life, salvation, redemption, love, everything the devil hates! He restores everything that the devil tried to destroy.

Here are a couple of photos.





Jonah's Whale

I (Cathy) always think when I pray for something, I must be prepared for it to start in my own life first. Even if I am praying something for someone, I like to ask, "Do I need this myself as well? Are there any practical steps the Lord is wanting me to take?".

For example, when we were praying for Auschwitz-Birkenau with the vision of seeing it changed from a place of darkness to light, our personal response was to move here and be life and joy here. We had to become creative because life is creative. We created a garden and created a vegetable patch. We nurtured joy, even when it was hard to be joyful (sometimes we had to get it from heaven). Whatever we are asking for in the spirit realm, we may need to be or do in the physical realm. It helps change the atmosphere, bring heaven to earth, and be a seed that starts growing and spreading.

The Lord has given us many promises, pictures, and analogies for this place. He recently gave me another insight into what He wants the Prayer House to be, another seed that's starting to grow and spread. During a lovely worship time with our friends from Krakow I was asking the Lord to speak to me, when I had a sense of Jonah's whale…

As it came, a flow of thoughts went through my mind…. **This place is to be like Jonah's whale!**

Jonah was given some instructions by the Lord, but because of his past experience, he had some insight into where this was going. So, he joined with some people going in the opposite direction and got on a boat. Things went bad. A storm broke out and he ended up out of the boat in deep water.

Sometimes, some of us find ourselves in a storm and end up out of the boat in deep water.
Sometimes, like Jonah, we deliberately go off in the wrong direction because we have had a bad experience and think we know better.
Sometimes, although we want to go with the Lord, we join with others, thinking they will take us in the right direction. But because we are going with the crowd, we end up travelling in the wrong direction.
Sometimes we are generally going in the right direction, but there are areas in our lives which are closed down to the Lord. We're often not aware of them, until the Lord highlights them to us.

So, let's not judge poor Jonah!

Now the Lord was speaking to me about the whale not Jonah. The whale - a living vessel, took Jonah from going in the wrong direction and put him on the start of his journey in the right direction. Jonah was in the whale 3 days and 3 nights, and he did some real heart to heart thinking, a mind changing time! When the whale spewed him up on the beach, he probably still had a long way to go to reach his destination, but now he was at least on his way in the right direction.

This place is to be like Jonah's whale. A place where some people will come and sit like Jonah in the belly of the whale. The Lord is promising for those people to give them some heart to heart time, a time of revelation, a time of redirection for their lives. It may be a complete change of direction, or just a minor course correction.

I know the Lord does that with all of us, but I felt this place will have a special anointing for it. A place where people can retreat (or advance) away from their normal daily lives and influences and hear Him in a new way. And when they leave, they will be in a different place to when they arrived and will be positioned for a new direction. They may, like Jonah, still have heart issues that need to be sorted out on the journey, but now they are more in line with His purposes for them.

This will be one of many functions of the Prayer House.

But it's not just about the Prayer House, it's about the whole area around Auschwitz-Birkenau! Like I said earlier, as we move out into the things that we are praying for, it grows, it spreads, even to the people around, even to the Jewish visitors to Auschwitz-Birkenau, that they too will be realigned to their calling, their calling to follow Yeshua their Messiah.

And that is why I think the Lord is saying, **"This place is to be like Jonah's whale." A place for redirection, a place for realignment.**

With love and blessings.
Mark and Cathy

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