

I WILL BE FAITHFUL

“Be confident of this very thing, He Who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

(Philippians 1:6)

I Will Be Faithful

*When disaster hits and calamity strikes, know that I am ever near.
I will never leave you, nor forsake you, so My child ... please don't fear.
You may not understand the reasons or comprehend My ways,
Just know there is a purpose and a plan in your dismay.
Humble yourself unto My Word, and you will plainly see,
That though you may lose everything, I will be all that you will need.
There is hope inside My Word, be faithful to know that I ... can work
Miracles from just the smallest seed with a prayer said in the night.*

*Know that I'm beside you, through your doubts and hold your tears...
In a precious flask I'll save to turn to joy, when you draw near.
I will pour the oil of joy upon your head and you shall see,
That the memory of the pain you hold, will have left when cleansed by Me.
I will wait most patiently, for you are precious in my sight.
Know the enemy is My tool, which I'll reveal in morning's light.
When you have nothing to give, except your tears and your despair...
Just lay them at My feet, and I'll send messengers to care...
For all your daily needs, with surprises along the way ...*

*So don't despair, My child; but be of good courage for today.
When doubt and unbelief begin to rear their ugly heads...
Know you have My grace and My mercies in their stead.
When you think you can't go on, can't even breathe another breath...
Know I am sufficient, and that My love has endless depth.
So when you fall asleep tonight, remember I am He,
Who will hold you in the night, erase your fears, and comfort thee.
Simply fall into My hands, dear child ... when you land, I'll help you see,
that every moment of your life, I have been faithful to meet your needs.*

All My Love, God

“Start where it all began, and go back from where you came”, these are the words the Lord has spoken to my heart many times in life. When I was afraid, when I was confused, bewildered, God always said the same thing, *“go back from where you came.”* I would get so frustrated because I had no idea what He was referring to most of the time. It might seem like obvious direction, but those words would come at the oddest times.

I was panicking with the last chapter I posted online, so I wrote a couple of trusted friends and told them I felt troubled. I didn't want the last thing people remembered about *Joy Unceasing*, to be crimes against humanity; I wanted the focus to be on the Promise Keeper, God Almighty. I was troubled in my spirit, because, even though I knew I was supposed to share what I did, I wasn't sure if I should edit out some of the details. I went to bed utterly exhausted after I finished *Joy Unceasing*. This particular chapter took a great deal out of me mentally, and ended up taking a twist I never anticipated. I was unsettled because of the content, because I had dredged up many painful memories, and it was overwhelming. I began to question myself, to question God, and I simply panicked.

As I lay my head on my pillow, literally having staggered into bed, I begged the Lord to give me a dream that would give me His blessing; something to tell me that I'd done exactly what He wanted me to; something that would

ease my fears and calm my troubled heart. I was looking for acceptance. I didn't get a visual dream with the details I'd been hoping for, but the Spirit of the Lord did speak. He read me every line of the poem "*I Will Be Faithful*", and chose to repeat the lines: "***when you fall asleep tonight, remember I AM He, who will hold you in the night, erase your fears and comfort thee,***" The Holy Spirit continued repeating that until my mind stopped racing, and I was lulled into a deep sleep. I was hoping for something a little more flamboyant, a prophetic vision of things to come; foolish as that may sound. But God never takes orders from His children; He always does things His Way. You'd think I would learn that by now. God knew that it was the spirit of fear harassing me in the night, trying to discourage me, trying to get me to procrastinate so that I would delay writing the last chapter, and miss my deadline. God wanted to comfort my soul; He knew what was best.

When I finally awoke, I was hit with a wave of dread. The enemy tried to discourage me with all manner of self-talk that, once entertained, ushered in doubt and confusion to my mind. I was certain that I heard the Lord promise me He would visit in the night, but I was expecting God to show up in the way that I wanted Him to. It turned out to be a morning filled with minor chaos. I had overslept, and my kids woke up ten minutes before the school bus came. I rushed them out of the house with breakfast in hand,

and sat down and cried when I realized that I didn't get the revelation I was hoping for. Why had the Lord not visited me? Was He mad, was He disappointed? Had I done something wrong? Had I included too many details in the last chapter, and inadvertently put the focus on the trials instead of the triumphs? I had done the very best job I knew how to do; so why was God suddenly silent when we had one more chapter to write? Well, I just told you He was far from silent, but it's funny how the mind rambles on and makes you forget the obvious. ***"... remember I AM He, who will hold you in the night, erase your fears and comfort thee."***

I picked up my Bible, put it next to my desk and turned on my laptop. God simply said, *"page 313"*. Panic struck me for some reason, so I didn't open it; I had no idea what I would find on page 313, but I was afraid; that wave of dread washed over me like a waterfall. I tried to ignore everything and sit down and write so I could get an early start toward meeting my deadline, and my mind went blank. I took that opportunity to check my email, I scanned Yahoo for latest current events, saw that the stock market had dropped nearly 780 points in one day - the lowest in history - and decided that I could easily become distracted for hours on end with all the bad news circulating around the globe. I decided to refresh my coffee and give it the old college try, again. I heard the same words in my mind, *"Go to page 313"*.

I finally opened my Bible to page 313. As I read the page in its entirety, I started to smile and my heart lightened just a little bit. The wave of dread was replaced by a trickling stream and a cool breeze from the top of my head down to my toes. God was, indeed, making a Personal Visitation; He just wanted to talk while I was awake. Page 313, in the little Bible I was using, recounted the story of the Prophet Elijah, 1 Kings 19 to be exact. Elijah became afraid, even after seeing God do the miraculous in his life, time and time again; he tries to get out of finishing the job he was told to do. In a nutshell, Elijah lost sight of Who was in charge. He began to take too much upon himself, and chose to look at his frailties and weakness; forgetting that God's Power operates best when we are weak. Elijah looked at the circumstances surrounding him, namely Jezebel who threatened to kill him, and he began to panic.

Funny, that's exactly how I felt, panic-stricken. I was thinking about all the ramifications of sharing so much of my life in *Joy Unceasing*, that I'd forgotten that God had a purpose and He was definitely able. I lost sight of the bigger picture, and God needed to bring me back to spiritual center, and show me that He was in control. I had no reason to fear, my job was to do what God told me to, period; and certainly not for the accolades of men. To get victory in the battlefield of my mind, I knew I had to snap out of it,

and the only way through those battles, is with the Sword of The Spirit. I had to entrench my natural mind with the Word of God, so He could saturate my soul; then, and only then, would I advance.

Elijah's message to the people all along was that they needed to stop vacillating between gods. He was tired of them sitting on the fence. If they were going to serve Baal, then they should serve Baal, but if they deemed Jehovah was the One True God, then they should worship Jehovah. Abridging the story quite a bit, there was a competition between the Prophet of God, Elijah; and the 450 prophets of Baal. Elijah was outnumbered 450 to 2 - just him and God. Elijah knew that God wouldn't leave him alone and he wasn't afraid of 450 delusional men who thought their god was so tough, so he toyed with them. He mocked them and told them to go pick acceptable sacrifices, and they would have a little contest. They would each prepare their sacrifices, and then call on the name of their god, and whichever god consumed them with fire, would show whose god was the Lord. They agreed. Elijah told them to give it their best shot knowing God would show Himself strong. It was hilarious the way Elijah taunted them, the way he reduced their god to the ridiculous sham it was. Elijah tells them, before they prayed, to completely saturate his offering with water, not once, but several times, and they thought he was out of his mind; surely he would lose with this logic. Nothing could possibly burn with

that much water in and around it, so they thought they had the upper hand, for sure. You can read the entire account in 1 Kings 18:22-39. But in the end, of course, God wins: ***“Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, He is the God; The LORD, He is God.”*** (1 Kings 18:38-39). Had to be some pretty hot fire to burn up 12 stones, and suck up all the water, even the water in the trench, don't you think?

Even after seeing all that, even after having the 450 prophets of Baal seized and killed, Elijah ran. That great triumph proved that Jehovah was LORD, and yet he still ran. Now word got back to Jezebel, about what Elijah had done, and everyone knew that she ran the kingdom. She was a manipulative seductress and major control freak, who obviously had the king wrapped around her little finger. Elijah exhausted himself running some 90 miles day and night, to get as far away as he could. Ninety miles to us is nothing, but remember, he didn't go 65 mph on the freeway; two legs can only run so fast through the desert. He was discouraged; he was exhausted mentally, emotionally and spiritually, and when he got to the entrance of a cave, he finally collapsed, Elijah begged God to just kill him and get it over with. He was tired of it all. He felt he'd done no better in his

service to the Lord than his fathers before him did. They couldn't stop the Baal worship and neither could he; he did the best job he knew how, and yet he felt as though he failed God. Elijah had given up. One little remark from Jezebel threatening his life was the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back. Elijah had forgotten all the lessons that God had taught him over the years. His eyes were focused on his current circumstances instead of focusing his gaze on God. Elijah had walked on that proverbial water, just like Peter would for real, later on in history; and just like Peter, Elijah walked miraculously toward God, His Promise Keeper - until he felt the wind and saw the water beneath his feet. When he got his eyes off the Promise Keeper, he began to sink. Elijah was sinking in the midst of his emotional waves, in the winds of adversity that surrounded him; in the torrents of his mind.

It's very easy to become discouraged, when you know God has asked you to do something, and you think you've disappointed Him. When we get this way, when we feel as though we've disappointed God in some way, we need to keep things in perspective. Thankfully, the globe isn't hung on whether or not we perform with perfection; it hangs because of God's Sovereignty. And the world does not revolve around us; it revolves because of His Mercy, period. If we get frustrated and confused in our service to God, it is likely because we've missed a message or two

somewhere along the way, and not because we didn't try hard enough. It is there at that place, that we need to redirect our thoughts heavenward. We have to remember the last thing God told us to do, and then we need to "go back from where we came", and finish the job. One of the hardest lessons to learn in ministry to others is simply this: we are not responsible for changing hearts; because we are not God - only God can change a heart. We are not responsible for saving anyone; we are to present information responsibly, and continue to run our part in the relay race of life.

While Elijah was praying to die, he fell asleep from utter exhaustion, and an angel touched his shoulder and told him to get up and eat. There is a lesson in there for the rest of us. When we are exhausted, mentally and spiritually spent to the point we want to give it all up, we need to get up and feed ourselves, with manna from Heaven; we need to feed on the Word of God and drink from the Wellspring of Life Himself. Suddenly, in Elijah's midst, there appeared a cake and a little water, and so he ate, and then he went back to sleep. God knows physically and mentally what went on in Elijah's life, He knew he was emotionally tired, and God let him rest. What God didn't want Elijah to do is become comfortable resting. After all, Elijah had run away out of fear of dying at the hands of a woman, this was absurd in that period of time. Fear is the enemy of faith, and it is never okay to run

from fear. The reason the Amour of God has no back is because God never intended us to run away, He expects us to run toward fear and defeat it. He has given us explicit instructions in His Word that most people ignore altogether. We buy the lie the enemy feeds us, and we think that whole chapter must be just some silly little allegory for religious fanatics, and then we wonder why there is little or no victory in our lives. We need to pick up our weapons, and stand our ground! Retreat should not be our middle name.

“Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist; with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all of this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of

prayers and requests. With this in mind, be ALERT and always keep on praying for all the saints.” (Ephesians 6:11-18)

It's pretty clear. We need to be wearing the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and we need to be walking in the shoes of peace. We can't wear those things like clothing, if we don't understand Who Truth is, what God's Righteousness is all about, or what God's Peace really entails. Hopefully, I have helped you ingest enough information in the previous chapters to make you want to search for more on your own. When we get those three things straight, then, and only then, can we have the strength to use the rest of the armor. The shield of faith is heavy, it requires stamina and courage. The helmet of salvation might be cumbersome to wear, but it will eliminate unnecessary blows to the head. Wielding the Sword of the Spirit requires stealth like precision and determination to hit the mark. It's like an M-16 machine gun with an unlimited supply of ammo. If you don't know how to operate it properly, and you point it in the wrong direction, you can blow your own head off. And let's not forget about prayer. Prayer, especially prayer in the Spirit, is one of the most powerful weapons in your arsenal. Without prayer, you don't have a snowball's chance.

God wasn't about to let Elijah sleep for more time than was necessary to complete his mission. The angel woke him up again and said the journey

was too great for him, that he should nourish his natural body to endure what was coming. So Elijah obeyed, and he replenished his body with what was provided to him. He went in the strength of that food for 40 days and 40 nights, a 200 mile journey, on foot, which means he might've traveled 13 or 14 days. He wandered in the wilderness, just like Moses and the Israelites, and he ended up at the same mountain of God; Mount Horeb, (also known as Mount Sinai). He not only came to rest at the same mountain, but he came to rest at the exact spot, the very place that Moses met with God. Remember, Moses was up on that same mountaintop for 40 days and nights where God entered into Covenant with His people... to bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey.

When Elijah gets to the cave – the very cave Moses found himself in the cleft of according to the original text - God spoke. He asked Elijah, “*what are you doing here?*” Can you imagine? You’ve just fled for your life, you know you’ve run in disobedience, and God asks you this silly question, “*what are you doing here, bud?*”

Elijah spills his guts to God and complains, lets Him know how afraid he is, and how justified he was in running away. “***I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the***

sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me!” (1 Kings 19:10).

After hearing Elijah, God asks him the same question, *“what are you doing here?”* Elijah repeats himself, and wallows in more self pity, thinking he's the only one who's serving God and the rest are going to hell in a hand-basket. Elijah's motives were being revealed; his personal pride was rearing its ugly head. God was about to give a demonstration of His ways to prove to Elijah that he was seeing the big picture, but he was missing the most vital of points, because of the prideful condition of his own heart. ***“The Lord said “Go out and stand on the mountain in the Presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind, there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not n the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire, came a gentle whisper...” (1 Kings 19:11-12)***

God didn't reveal Himself in the wind, in the earthquake or in the fire. Most people expect the flashy signs and wonders, thinking if it's really God, He must need to make an entrance with tumultuous thunder and the glory of extravagance. But God doesn't work that way most of the time. Like He

does today, God chose to reveal Himself to Elijah in his spirit - a still small voice... a whisper, a rustling of a breeze deep down inside of Elijah himself. Elijah's main problem was that he let fear dictate his actions. Elijah didn't stop, and try to refocus, to try and listen for the whispers of God for direction. If he had, he wouldn't have run from Jezebel. Anytime we allow circumstances and fear to dictate our next move, whether it be for job opportunities to provide for our families, the stock market, or even for ministry, God will always try to bring us back to the place before fear entered in, and help us to refocus.

God had to get Elijah into a position to hear God's still small voice from within. Most people I know disregard that little voice. They think it's just their own conscience, a gut feeling; and when they do that, they insult the One Who gives them the ability to wake up every morning. I think it's a travesty that it's acceptable for people to pray and to ask for prayer; but when one dares to say that they've "heard" from God, suddenly they're crazy. Well, I'd rather be found crazy, than ignorant any day of the week. We need to learn the difference between God speaking, us speaking to ourselves out of the inspirations of our own hearts, and listen carefully for when deception speaks. When the enemy speaks, it will always carry negative consequences, because it will be based on fear, and lies. Fear is nothing more than **False Evidence Appearing Real. When Satan comes,**

we need to be able to recognize him for what he is, and defeat him by the Truth. ***“...when he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”*** (John 8:44).

Those who claim to serve The One True God, don't get the luxury of operating as the world does; we're not allowed to run from a spiritual fight, or operate in fear, or succumb to our adversary. I had to learn that lesson the hard way, and I will relay the message God gave to me one day. ***“You don't have the right to hide behind fear. You don't' have the right to waste your gifts. You don't have the right to be so concerned about yourself, that you're not doing what you have been prepared and predestined to do. You are cheating yourself, you are cheating everyone whose life you could be touching, and you are cheating Me. If you say you serve Me, then serve Me with your whole heart.”*** That reduced me to tears, and served to put my life back into perspective. I snapped out of my spiritual stupor and onto the front lines from that day forward.

God was showing me His Compassion, but knew I needed a swift kick. After God showed compassion on Elijah, after He let him rest; after He'd displayed His gentleness, His Mercy, His Patience and Long-suffering; after God had shown Elijah His Goodness and Peace, God told Elijah to go back

from where he came, back to the place where God had sent him and finish his job. Elijah's job would entail anointing two people to be kings, and finding Elisha, the man who would wear his mantle and take his place. Through those three people, God would destroy Baal worship and it would be taken out of the land. Elijah had another assignment from God that had not yet been revealed to him; but Elijah had to learn one very important lesson: Elijah was never alone. When he complained to God that he was the only Prophet in the land who didn't bow down to worship Baal, God had to set him straight. He reminded Elijah that there were 7000 others who hadn't bowed their knee to Baal, and it was never up to him to single-handedly pull down the stronghold. This is a good reminder for all of us who will choose to hear what the Spirit of the Lord is trying to convey. It's a lesson in humility, to knock down our own personal pride, lest we fall by the sword.

We need to understand, that when God calls us to do a work, that we are not the only prayer warriors, the only intercessors, or the only ones who can get the job done for God. We're not the only Christian on the block in our neighborhoods; we may not even be the only believer in our own families. Only God knows what's hidden inside the depths of one's heart. When God calls us, we are part of an army; He's got others waiting in the wings. When we think we have to do it all, God will do everything He can

to help us pass the baton to the next person. We are running a race, yes; but it is a relay race, not a sprint. God has appointed His prophets, His evangelists, His teachers, preachers, and apostles. God doesn't expect us to do their job, only ours. ***"...Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."*** (Romans 12:3-5).

God needed Elijah to anoint Elisha to take his place for one very important reason; to use him as a type and shadow of what was to come later in history – something we could draw on today. The name Elijah means, *"Yahweh is God"*; Elisha means, *"God is Deliverance, or God is my Salvation"*. The name Elijah served to recognize the Sovereignty of God; the name Elisha would serve to prepare the people for Jesus Christ, our Deliverer. When Elijah was obedient to anoint Elisha to take his place, he wasn't being *replaced*, this was symbol of God extending more of Himself; prophecy needed to be fulfilled. If you take a close look at Elisha's life in ministry, it is a precursor to the life of Jesus.

How does this apply to us today? When God is calling us higher, and deeper for the purpose of unfolding His Master Plan; when He's calling us to go back from where we came; we are to follow the One Who is our Salvation. When God calls us to recall memories that have brought us intense pain, we are to follow the One Whose suffered more than any of us ever will, to draw strength that we may testify. Our part is simple obedience. It is not a walk of perfection God wants; it's a walk of submission, listening to His still small voice that we may walk in obedience.

The purpose of me writing this book then, is a little like what God told Elijah to do; speak the Truth, testify to God's faithfulness, and then anoint other people, so that they could take their own steps in faith and fulfill their part in the Great Commission. ***“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*** (Matthew 28:19-20)

How do we make disciples? We teach them the principles behind this very important verse: ***“They overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”*** (Revelation 12:11)

Ezekiel 47 is a good place to start. There are seven main points to this chapter, and understanding these principles will help us to help other people in their walk and witness for Christ.

(1) We need to understand the reliability of God's Word. People never like to hear rebukes, they like to hear things that will give them the warm and fuzzy feelings.

(2) We need to understand the Glory of God. We need to understand that we could never stand in the fullness of that Glory without killing ourselves, so we need to understand how we can: only through Jesus Christ.

(3) We need to take individual responsibility and stop playing the blame-game. We need to be good stewards of the portion God has given us, and use it for the most good.

(4) We need to understand the long history of our sins that are continually in the face of God's Grace and of His Provision; we need to stop murmuring and complaining that we never have enough.

(5) We need to recognize the power of natural leadership, that it can be used for good or for evil. Not everything is God's fault. We are commanded to pray for those in authority and if we don't, then it's becomes our problem.

(6) We need to understand God's Holiness, and our responsibility to obedience. We are flawed and weak, and we're prone to sin. Our greatest acts of righteousness are filthy rags to God. We can only obtain Holiness through Jesus Christ, our Mediator.

(7) We need to understand God's transcendence. God is over everything in our lives and He flows in abundance in every path that He has laid out for us. Every good and perfect gift is from above, and the Greatest Gift of all, is Jesus Christ. We need to untangle the bow and let Him out of the box.

Every believer in Christ has two occupations in common. We are all fishermen, and we are all farmers. I never thought I could do the job of a farmer; my mother grew up on the farm and I cannot imagine the hard life she had. I cannot imagine the physical stamina and strength it requires to plow a field and prepare hard ground for seeding. Then to fight the elements and have the patience to water it, keep the pests from destroying

the young seedlings, care for it, help it grow; trust God to provide a harvest. And I couldn't imagine myself on a fishing boat; having to get up wee hours of the morning, cast my nets and hope I make the days' catch. I imagine it's a smelly, dirty job that requires great patience and strength, just like the farmer.

Even though I couldn't imagine carrying out those natural occupations, I do it on a spiritual level every day; every believer does. Some of us get the rocky soil, some get clay, some get swampland to work with; our job is to till the ground with the Word, and plant the seeds of the Gospel: the goal is to get a harvest of righteousness. For those who fish, they never know how deep the water will be, what the temperature will feel like when they get their feet wet, and they might even find themselves in shark infested waters or in a pool of piranhas. God's got a wonderful sense of humor, although it's not always easy to laugh when you're in the middle of a job. ***"...The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His Harvest Field."***
(Matthew 9:37-38)

If there is one thing I've learned in my life, it is that when God decides to move, He causes all things move toward Him, and He remains still until it they do. Life, for me, has been such a mixed blessing. I look back on all

the trials He's helped me to turn into triumphs, and it's as if He refuses to allow me to remain the victim, but rather... the victor. And He does it in such a way that I cannot help but give Him the glory for it. ***"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them from them all."*** (*Psalm 34:19*). Devastating circumstances can yield miraculous outcomes if we just keep our focus on God. In spite of my tantrums, demanding tones and incessant arguing with every angel God sends my way, they always win in the end. Just as Jacob wrestled with an angel of the Lord, I wrestle; and end up pulling another muscle, causing me to walk with a limp. Over time, I realize I have yet another notch to add to my cane, and another scar to remind me of God's mark of Ownership. God, in his infinite mercy, never allows me to be snapped like a twig; yet He does allow minor scuffles to take place, because He knows that they will cause me to grow in Him. If I try to get my way, when I am fully aware that *His* ways are higher, even if everyone close to me sees a bad attitude, *God looks deeper*. He knows that my discontentment is somehow linked with a true passion to discover His Truths and share His loving-kindness to the world, in my own special way. I have lived long enough, endured enough trials, and ignorantly rebelled enough times to know that God is always faithful to dig me out of a hole, no matter the depth to which I may plummet. We would all do well to learn the first rule of holes: when you find yourself in one, stop digging.

A friend asked me one day, while we were having lunch, what I least liked about myself. It was Friday, and we'd both been through what felt like hell and back the previous week. Wallowing in retrospect and a little self-pity for things we wished we did differently, we laughed as we licked our wounds medicated by the world's greatest penicillin: chocolate! There's nothing quite like the healing qualities of a double fudge brownie supreme, topped off with vanilla ice cream and maraschino cherries! With each forkful that we knew we'd complain about later when it stuck to our hips, we shared our funny little quirks, and laughed up a storm. Laughter is good for the soul. When you can laugh at yourself and your circumstance, you realize that things aren't as bad as they seem. Even if you're faced with devastation and horror, laughter can move sorrow away like a snowplow. The more you use it, the easier it will be to get out of the driveway.

In the back of my mind, behind the pretense of our light conversation, I realized something about myself. My personality is one that requires constant maintenance. Not high-maintenance, just maintenance. God is constantly rewiring my brain, and sometimes, the circumstances that come my way, require Him to make minor adjustments. When all the bells, whistles, and sparks fly and I eventually short circuit, it is then, that I find myself in nothing but quiet blackness. It's that ominous, scary, and lonely

place where I feel utterly abandoned and alone, and it's very hard to remember that I'm not, because God is there, loving me in spite of my fears of His seeming distance. It is the place where I know a deep work is about to begin, and I must simply trust God. It is my abyss. When I am in such a place, it seems like spiritual detachment in the deepest sense, and when I cry out in agony to The Father; God always comes.

There are those times, just before I feel a flash fire is about to melt the main switch, that there is a brief reprieve from the chaos. It appears that God will turn on His flashlight, get out His utility knife, and start pulling wires. And as the Master Electrician, before He begins working, He knows to turn off my power, so that He can use His. To insure my cooperation, He pulls the plug on my abilities and gently places me in that very effective containment bucket of frustration. Have you ever been in that bucket? There was a time in my life where I hung my clothes and made my bed, right there in that very uncomfortable bucket. Just when the rubber band of my soul had finally unwound, and I stopped spinning wildly like a top out of control, I would succumb to the inevitable standstill. Dizzy, exhausted and sometimes even paralyzed with fear, God has never been bothered by my chattering teeth and wagging tongue, two things that He has left reasonably intact. He just causes me to stand motionless in that dark silence of frustration, while He quietly works with Masterful "Precision" and

“Speed”.

God has His Own definition of those two words, and with each hurdle I have overcome in God’s Special Olympics, trying ever so hard to cross that finish line, I am fixed on one truth: ***God is faithful!*** With nothing but His ***P******Power***, His ***R******Resolve***, His expert ***E******fficiency***, His great ***C******ompassion***, His Amazing ***I******nterest***, His Absolute ***S******urety***, His wonder-working ***I******ntricacies***, His persistence and ***O******bstinacy*** when we resist, and sometimes working best through our own ***N******aivety***, God continues His work with ***S******teadfast*** ***P******atience***, ***E******ncouragement***, with an ***E******xpectation*** that we will develop strong ***D******etermination*** in the end. As God, the Master Electrician splices live wires together, suddenly and finally, there are no more short circuits; there is finally peace. The frenzy of the power surge is over, the flash fire was averted, no catastrophic meltdowns, and there is finally candle-power to light the way.

When God checks His work, he removes us from our proverbial containment buckets of frustration that has held us securely in place, and He trips our main switch. With our minds masterfully restored back to sanity, He allows us to remember the bad for the purpose of recounting the good that came from it. During those dark, seemingly endless hours in God’s hands, I have learned to trust in His abilities, gaining more insight to

my own frailty. I have all I can do to just stand in awe, and wonder how He does it. With all my effort, knowledge and abilities, I seem to produce nothing but chaos. Yet, when God applies His effort, His knowledge, and His ability, this helpless, exasperated, and burned out life is once again recharged and given purpose. God always makes a way where there is no way. He always seems to find buried treasure in the desert, and precious pearls in the pig pen among the swine. I am convinced He makes everything work from nothing, to prove one thing: that *HE is God*. When all is said and done, humanity realizes that it is *God Who* is in control...and we are not.

I have come to learn God's definition of stress, and when read through His eyes, it is almost tolerable! Stress, is God's little reminder to take time to **Stop** what we're doing, **Turn** around and look for Him, allow Him to **Recoup** our loss so we can recover from our circumstance, **Exercise** faith in His **Saving** grace and realize His **Sovereignty**. When God gets ready to move, indeed it is "S.T.R.E.S.S" that causes all things to move toward Him, and He patiently stands still and waits until it does.

Even in death, the final frontier, even though we can do nothing apart from The Father drawing us to Him, it is we who come to Him, and He waits with open arms. I am convinced that with the realization of our final breathes;

we are given an opportunity to see from heaven's perspective, regardless of who we serve, including ourselves. Even atheists believe in something; it's called ignorance. And the reason agnostics can't make up their minds is because they believe in apathy. And sadly, even those who confess Christ, who are choosing to walk the fence, are at high risk to succumb to its teaching. To continue to sit on the fence in these historic and prophetic days we live; to continue to sway with whichever wind provides you the most comforting breeze; and to continue to speak with religiosity meant to *impress*, instead of living the life of faith that leaves an *impression* is the epitome apathy wrapped in a clear coat of hypocrisy. It is ignorance, apathy and hypocrisy that are the number one killers of humanity, not heart disease or cancer. The devil can give you all manner of disease, strip your body of energy, and whittle your bones down to nothing. But he cannot strip away your faith in God – only you can give him the key to that door, through rebellion.

There are so many changes taking place, it doesn't take Rocket Science to figure out that these times are very tenuous, hanging by a thread. The enemy is giving us enough rope - in our work and social lives, trivial arguments and semantics – to hang ourselves with. He wants us to get so discouraged that we will fall away into rebellion and betray the One we love; our fate ending like Judas. While times are precarious, if we are true

Believers in Jesus Christ, we have been sufficiently forewarned. Events will continue to unfold until prophecy is fulfilled. We need to stop the selfishness and rid ourselves of personal pride for the sake of Who and what is really important. We need to step back on a daily, perhaps hourly basis, and really re-evaluate why we're involved with certain things, jobs, relationships; what or who is glorified? Do we involve ourselves in projects or do our jobs to impress or out-do one another, just to get the accolades of men? Or do we do our jobs, with the understanding that every single person we meet is an opportunity to introduce them to eternity, whether it is heaven... or hell.

As I was praying this morning, the Lord quickened me to a journal entry of mine, from about eight years ago. It is completely relevant for today. When He reminded me of it, I thought of things going on in my own life - certain projects and ministries I am actively involved with - and I believe it was a wake-up call to re-evaluate why I spend my time doing what I do. I was also reminded that I am not the only one who hears from God. Everyone hears... but not everyone listens. The Lord spoke to my heart a long time ago and told me that a word in due season can save somebody's soul. I personally believe this piece is for everyone, no matter what vocation or denomination or religious affiliation you claim. God made humanity in His Image. Whether or not we recognize Him as our Father, does not negate

the fact that He is God, nor will it diminish the level of our personal accountability on the Day of Judgment.

The times are cut short, prophecy is being fulfilled on an hourly basis, and there is a great falling away among the Body of Believers. Even if we know in our hearts, the decisions we make are for righteous reasons, we still need to remain humble and admit that we never have the full picture in front of us. If we did, we would have no need for God. The Lord divulges whatever He desires, to whomever He desires... and wisdom doesn't always come through learned scholars. Every minute we spend trying to be politically correct, it costs thousands of souls. That is reality. If you call yourself a Christian; if you claim to love the Lord Jesus Christ and desire to serve Him, then this word is as much for you, as it is for me. We would all do well to take heed.

I AM Here !

*Do not be consumed this day with worry and with fear.
For I AM The Lord, your Banner...Jehovah NISSI, I AM here.
I shall be your COURAGE on the days you feel despair.
I shall be PROVISION when earthly pleasures are not there.*

*I shall be your JOY through circumstances that you'll face.
For I AM The Lord your STRENGTH, be of good courage...keep your faith.
Be watchful as these days proceed, absorb all that you hear.
You will need it in the coming days, rest in assurance, Child... I'm here.*

*Be prepared for My Beloved, yet to come into the fold.
I AM watching, waiting patiently... with tear-filled eyes and open arms.
Get on your knees, My Child, intercede for those I've called.
They are bound by many things, and they have slipped... about to fall.*

*Let ME be your mouthpiece to those whose hearts have hardened so.
I AM THE GOD OF MERCY, extend your hand to let them know...
That I AM EL SHADDAI, I AM all sufficient, all they need.
Tell them I forgive them, TRUTH opens doors they cannot see.*

*Lead them from where they are, as they stumble in the dark.
Guide them humbly to My Light, that I may gently touch their hearts.
Remember where you came from... in the pits of deep despair.
Reflect upon My faithfulness, and how I waited for you there.*

*The time is far too short, stop playing church and enter in.
Worship ME and know MY THOUGHTS, and help recapture them from sin!
Do not be quick to judge, for with the measure that you use...
I will honor truth in Word, it will be multiplied to you.*

*So live inside forgiveness, ask for MY MERCY and MY GRACE.
Without it, you will step inside the flesh and inflict pain.
There are many wounded spirits not detected by your eye.
Keep discernment close at hand and let it's wisdom be your guide.*

*Each one will be accountable for prayers said in My midst.
Be careful what you ask, know the price... and count the risk.
All hearts of this world will soon be quickened to My Call.
As I guide you to the lost, be prepared to risk it all.*

*This is the season NOT to hoard, but to share all that you have.
It is in GIVING, there's abundance... that can be blessed by My Own Hand.*

*It grieves Me when My Children rush through doors to profit gain.
Let ME do the blessing, so that I can release the latter rains.*

*Remember I AM PROVISION, I will sustain your every need.
Your OBEDIENCE shall be the gateway to the abundance that you need.
It is CRUCIAL to employ all that I ask of you this day.
For the fields are white, The Bridegroom comes...
... He will come without delay!*

*There are disruptions in the spirit that cannot be left to chance.
Pray in unknown tongues that frontline warriors will advance.
I AM unleashing greater power to those who've endured to this time.
Do not be fearful of this hour, although it WILL be of greater trial.*

*I have equipped all those I've chosen, when you are called...come hastily.
I am assembling an army to weed the tares from precious wheat.
My angels are dispatched; they are at your beckon call.
Use them to do my bidding, and they will keep you from the fall.*

*No plague shall near thy dwelling ... stay closely by My Side.
FELLOWSHIP IS CRUCIAL, for I will visit in the night.
You are returning to the time when Elijah walked the earth.
You will witness greater glory, be prepared for greater works.*

*You are in the days of miracles, let not your eyes turn from MY gaze.
For deception lurks about, devouring Truth amidst the haze.
Many signs and wonders shall you see before your eyes...
Do NOT get caught up with what you see through clouded sight.*

*Be QUICK TO TEST THE SPIRITS, discerning error from the Truth.
Fix your eyes on JESUS, and He'll reveal all things anew.
Each one will be accountable for prayers said in My midst.
Be careful what you ask, know the price... and count the risk.*

*All hearts of this world will soon be quickened to My Call.
As I guide you to the lost, be prepared to risk it all.
Be prepared for both the obvious, and the foolish things to come.
I will work all things to fulfill My Plan... until the work is done.
Be obedient, I beg you... with tear-filled eyes and open arms...
Bring SOULS into My Fold, that My Will on earth will soon be done.*

<>< Love, Abba Father <><

The message is pretty clear, it needs no explanation.

As I finish off this last chapter, and recall my own Personal Book of Hebrews, I was excited with anticipation as the Lord revealed something I hadn't considered. The number 40 has special significance in the Bible. We know the Israelites spent forty years in the wilderness, we know Elijah ate food that God prepared from heaven, and it nourished him for forty days and forty nights; we know Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights; these are to name a few. What you may not know is that the number forty is symbolic. For some, it means a time of testing and probation; one ending in victory or judgment. I turned 46 the year I finished writing down my thoughts in this book, and since then, two years have lapsed. Digging into the gematria of the language of Hebrew, I learned that the number 40 means "The Strength of God", and the number 8 means "Inner Chamber".

This December 7, my forty years, since the first day I called upon the Lord as a little girl, as recounted in Chapter 2, will have lapsed. I didn't know Him then, but He knew me. Like the early Israelites, I've spent the last forty years wandering in my own proverbial desert, wading in the misery of various afflictions, and frankly, it's been exhausting. But God is faithful, He has helped me to compile a life's worth of experience into awe-inspiring testimonies that leave everyone who read them one thing: Hope. Hope in His Word, hope in His Promises, and hope in His Lovingkindness.

Amazing Grace recounts a story in the beginning of how I was battling a health problem that might require a hysterectomy. I am happy to report that God healed me as soon as I finished that chapter; I have had no more symptoms. They just stopped, with no viable explanation. There are so many other little events that transpired during the writing of this book, it would take another volume to recount them all. All I know is that I have completed the work I was asked to do. I'm not sure what's next on the agenda. As a first-time author, without an agent, I am leaving the details up to God. Trying to minister to the world was too heavy a burden, so I set my mind to write this book for three people only; my two children, and the Lord. Whoever else may benefit will be icing on the proverbial cake, all to the Glory of God.

I will close with one final story that will stick with me for the rest of my life. It is a story, that when pondered, displays a very distinct perspective on life, one that will not allow fear to swallow up hope.

On this particular day, my mind was tormented by many questions of “why, God, why?” and “when, God, when?”. It’s hard to wait on God... to feel helpless to change your own destiny. So I went for a walk, and in the most inconspicuous place, I found my answers by observing nature. I noticed a pile of tiny little flowers growing on the grass. I don't know what they're called but they look like teeny little daisies, no bigger than a dime, and the pedals are my favorite color of periwinkle blue, with a big yellow center. I picked one, and continued my walk, admiring God's tiny little creation. I sat down on the grass and twirled the little daisy between my fingers, and I noticed an itty-bitty little caterpillar, no bigger than 2 tiny millimeters in size. I'm sure he thought his world was coming to an end... the centrifugal force and the number of tiny G's racking his body from my spinning the flower, must've made his life hell. When I noticed this tiny little creature, I felt sorry for him. I stopped spinning the flower between my fingers, and tried to peer into his little world. God began to speak to my heart.

"Look at this little creature, see how his world can be so easily disrupted by someone plucking it out of the ground? You had no idea he was there, but

I knew. Do you see what he is doing in the midst of his world that is spinning by your hand? He is eating the center of the flower, and he is gaining strength. As the breeze blows, he is not affected by his winds of adversity, he just continues to focus on the provision I have laid out for him. Spin the flower for few revolutions and then stop spinning it for a moment to observe what happens. Notice that when things are calm, he crawls freely about his world, but the minute the winds rise, or there is imminent danger, like a magnet, he changes direction, fixes his gaze on the provision before him, and simply keeps consuming. Winds of adversity will always push you toward the Source of your provision, Child. Don't let the winds carry you off the petals of life, just refocus your attention. Begin to see what is right in front of your eyes, run toward it, crawl if you must, and simply partake of all that I have provided. I want My children to be so focused on Me, that they remained unmoved and unaffected by the winds, no matter how fierce they blow, just like this little baby caterpillar. You see before you, a tiny little world and a tiny little creature going about his life, unmoved by his circumstance, not knowing how long his life might last, or when his world will fade and wither away. When I look at you, I see the same thing from where I stand. I want you to take a lesson from this little caterpillar. Become so focused on the provision that's in front of you, and when the winds come, or your world starts spinning out of your control, allow adversity to push you toward Me. Partake of Me continually, so that you

may gather strength to endure the coming days, not giving thought to how long your life will last, or when your world will fade and wither away."

A thought to ponder: If you are one who desires to know God more intimately; if you know you're not where you need to be and certain words jumped out of the pages while you were reading them, chances are, God is drawing you closer. He is in the process of healing wounds you may not even know exist. If you wish you could share the depths of your heart, and all your fears without feeling condemned by people who just don't understand, all you have to do is ask Jesus into your heart because ***"...there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."*** (Proverbs 18:24)

There's nothing flamboyant about Him, He's a very simple humble Being, yet He's a very powerful God. He doesn't require anything except a broken, humble heart. He can take any mess, and make it right; and He will take you as you are. Jesus Christ is the same today, as He was yesterday, as He will be tomorrow. The time is short. Bottom line is, we need to live each day, as if there were no tomorrow; we have no guarantees. Your life could be snuffed out five minutes from now. You just never know when you will draw your last breath. Every decision you will ever make for eternity, will be done while you're still breathing on earth. You will live forever, but there are only two options: Heaven or Hell. They are both very real. I hope you chose the place that promises no more

tears, and no more pain. This world and the people in it offer enough pain; it's there for the taking. Healing and restoration is also there, for the taking – but you need to come to The Source of Healing. If you would like to have a personal, very intimate relationship with The Father, I would encourage you to read the prayer below. God is listening, and when God listens... He performs that which He hears from a simple heart's cry.

Dear Lord Jesus...

I know I have not lived my life according to your will. I know I am a sinner. I am weary from all the rules and regulations of the world and of the “church”. I am tired, Lord.

I believe that you are the Son of God, born of a virgin, that you died on a cross, and that you rose from the dead on the third day. My heart is confused from all the religion. I just want peace ... real peace.

Please accept me as I am, and cover me with your mercy and grace. I ask you to come into my heart, and to help me enter into your rest, Lord. Please create in me a new heart. One longing to worship you.

Please teach me the meaning of fellowship and relationship with you. I want to start my life over, but I am helpless to do it on my own. I know that it is not by my might, and not by my power, but only by Your Spirit. I have proven how helpless I am without You. Come into my life,

Lord, Fill me with Your Precious Holy Spirit, that I may be transformed into the person The Father created me to be. Give me discernment and wisdom to understand and comprehend my purpose that I may bring glory to Your Holy Name. I ask these things in Jesus Name.

Praying a prayer like that will guarantee at least one thing: God will draw

you closer into fellowship with Him. My father's passing, and what would transpire from it, proved to me that God is not troubled by our tiresome trials. He sees the hurt and the heartbreak that others cannot see, and that which cannot be explained. He understands the reasons for our moodiness, our temper tantrums and selfish indulgences. He sees behind the pettiness and the thorns we portray to the world, and chooses to smell the fragrance of the beautiful roses He creates. He sees the soft tender petals, while others see the burnt and dying edges. God looks at the heart, where the fragrance is found. Overwhelmed by the beauty He sees in each heart He creates, He is fixed on His faithfulness; fixed on fulfilling the promises He's made to us, even unto death. God is The Author and The Finisher of our faith. Our vileness does not alter His character, for God is Eternal Love. Our rebellion does not alter His pursuit, for God is Unconditional Love. The depths to which we may fall, does not alter His ability to catch us, for God is Boundless Love. And our ignorance and apathy does not alter God's ability to save us, if we will only call out to Him, for God is Forgiveness, the greatest of all forms of love. We need to continue in active pursuit of God's Holiness, that we may understand His Righteousness, ***"Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God."*** (Hebrews 12:2).