

Beloved Family and Friends, “When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Grandma Hansi has asked me to write this October newsletter. She has returned from her mission trip to Ukraine, very understandably with the enervating effects of jet lag. And, to add to this, is now experiencing the emotional trauma from the recent “graduation to glory” of her eldest daughter. She promises to share some of her experiences of this mission trip in the next SAIL Letter. If you wish to receive a complimentary copy of that issue, please write or email a request. Anyone wishing to subscribe to the SAIL Letter, please fill out coupon and mail. Checks must be payable to Hansi SAIL. See coupon for details.

Many of our neighbors and friends and even family members are right now suffering through the devastating effects of the recent storms that blasted through Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and other areas along the southeast coast of the mainland USA. Their homes and belongings are storm-tossed and flooded out, their homes damaged beyond repair and even livelihoods gone.

Although not so much in the news, there are many who have suffered equal loss as wildfires raged through parts of the western USA.

And, if you are not or have not been in the immediate areas of these disastrous happenings, you may be suffering through a personal crisis, as many of our friends and family write and share. Someone’s spouse – or parent – or child – has passed from this life into glory, leaving a giant hole in our every day. Or it is becoming more evident that an elderly parent or a spouse is succumbing to Alzheimer’s – and the resulting confusion and loss of companionship is just as difficult to bear. And, yet more personally, we ourselves may be experiencing the trauma of disease such as brain cancer or other health-related problems where the diagnosis is equally severe.

Grief. How do we deal with it? Storms. Earthquakes. Fires. Death. Some days it seems as though hell itself is bent on destroying us. And, it is. No surprise there. The enemy comes to kill, steal, and destroy, but Jesus came that we “*may have life, and that (we) may have it more abundantly.*” John 10:10

Many Christians, and even non-Christians, wonder and ask if perhaps God is trying to get our attention? Well, I believe I can answer that question with a YES. Why? Because He is always trying to get our attention. Are we listening? If so, what is our response? My prayer for each of us is: “*Do not be anxious about anything, but in EVERYTHING, pray and thank God. And the peace that passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*”

September always brings a flood of memories to my heart, as 29 years ago I went through a seemingly unexceptional pregnancy, only to give birth to a baby girl who died a too-short 12 days later.

My life was completely turned upside down. There seemed to be no rhyme or reason for her condition. Had I not taken as good a care of my body as I knew how? What was God trying to tell me? In my naiveté, I thought Christians were not supposed to suffer.

No, actually Jesus never promised that we would not suffer! In fact, He told Peter, “*Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*”

So very many of us have most likely felt or are feeling like we have been put into a flour sifter! Through no direct consequence of any sin behavior on our part, we are experiencing tumult in our very depths. We look around and see nothing but wreckage; all our belongings have been strewn about or destroyed. All we have left is a thin sliver of hope, clinging to God, hoping He will not let go of us.

Well, His promises are true, His word NEVER fails. May I share some HOPE found in God’s Word?

First, we must begin with 2 Timothy 3:16 regarding God's Word: *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."*

Have faith that God sees the bigger picture. He looks from eternity: *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."* (Jeremiah 29:11)

The peace that passes all understanding we remember from Psalm 23:4 *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."*

Jesus offers His arms wide open, when He says, *"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."* (Matthew 11:28-30)

One of my very favorite passages in all Scripture, is found in Isaiah 40:29-31: *"He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary."*

And from the New Living Translation of Philippians 4:19: *"And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from His glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus."*

And, finally, from John 14: *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."* (v. 27)

The only way I was able to survive that devastating loss in my own life was to let God's Word and His promises be my succor. Did everything immediately turn right side up? Did I stop feeling the unbearable pain? No, but as I walked through each day, I could sense God's loving presence walk with me. The tears still come, from time to time, even this many years later, but rest assured, beloved of the Lord, He will NOT let go of you. *"My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me."* (Psalm 63:8)

Glory Hallelujah, we shall not be moved!

Jessie

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