

# Soul-Recharge!

*Full-Throttle Living & Leading*

## July 2010

Soul-Recharge is a monthly periodical aimed to refresh and enrich you both personally and in your ministry influence.

## JUMPstart

### *The Confidence of God*

Psalms 18 contains some of the most overwhelming statements of confidence in God. In it, the veteran king David looks back over his life – over all the trials, giants, valleys, failures and successes – and utters this sublime ode to God's faithfulness:

**"For You will light my lamp; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness. For by You I can run against a troop. By my God I can leap over a wall. As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him ... It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of deer, and sets me on my high places. He teaches my hands to make war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze"** (Psalm 18:28-34).

What a wonderful passage to meditate on (actually I recommend you take some time to meditate on the whole psalm).

Yes, hindsight is a perfect science and one could say that it was easy for David to wax eloquent in an outrageous display of confidence at the end of his life. (This psalm was one of David's last psalms before his death, see 2 Samuel 22:1-51). One may even say, "If I had the benefit of hindsight, I'd have a riveting confidence in God even when my foresight is dim and blurred". But herein lies a vital element of faith for living in the confidence of God. We have psalms like this one, and the testimony of all of God's saints throughout Scripture for that matter, **to arm us with divine hindsight now despite the lack of clarity our foresight may offer.**

You see, **God works in us with our destiny in mind.** That is a statement worth reading again and again. God does not work in us with our present convenience or past grievances in mind; He works in us with our destiny in mind. He knows what He has invested in us and He knows how to **"perfect that which concerns us"** (Psalm 138:8). Our Father knows how to **"keep us from stumbling"** (Jude 24) and He is well able to **"complete in us the good work that He has begun"** (Philippians 1:6). Like a brilliant boxing coach, only infinitely smarter, He allows us to face sparring partners in the ring of life; designed to improve, perfect and release our God-given potential (see for example, James 1:2-4; Hebrews 12:5-11). To Him, our destiny is a done deal! But here is the rub. Do we have the confidence in His willingness and ability?

David was in no way forgetful of the challenges he had faced in his life (see vv. 4-6, 16-18, 47, 48 for example). Yet, he was absolutely convinced that no matter how sinister the gloom was, **"God will enlighten my darkness"**; in spite of how strong the opposition appeared to be, **"by You, I can run against a troop"**; regardless of how high an obstacle was, **"by my God, I can leap over a wall"**. His faith was locked into God's faithfulness: **"As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him"**. And out of this bedrock of faith; a courageous, outrageous confidence was unleashed.

Armed with the heavenly knowledge of hindsight we can declare with sublime confidence: "God was faithful to me in the past; He will be faithful to me in the future ... therefore, I can trust Him now!"

Zachnoid Tumbleweed's

## LAUGH OUT LOUD



<World Cup fever – yet not too clever>

"You've got to believe that you're going to win, and I believe we'll win the world cup until the final whistle blows and we're knocked out" (Peter Shilton)

"Germany was a very difficult team to play. They had eleven internationals out there today" (Steve Lomas)

"The Brazilians were South American and Ukrainians will be more European" (Phil Neville)

## And I quote...

"Not only can water float a boat, it can sink it too" (Chinese Proverb)

"You'll never fashion and forge the future unless you're prepared to disturb the present" (Gerald Coates)

### Just for thought>

"Courage is being scared to death – but saddling up anyway" (John Wayne)

While some have the *gift of leadership* (Romans 12:6), everyone has the *potential to lead-serve others* (1 Timothy 3:1).

The wisdom writer explained, **"He who rules his own spirit is mightier than he who takes a city"** (Proverbs 16:32). And to stress his point, he added the corollary too: **"Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls"** (Proverbs 25:28). Placing both statements in their historical context amplifies their impact.

In ancient times, who was the mighty? Who was considered the valiant? Who was given cult-hero status? Those who commanded vast armies; those who conquered cities! Flying in the face of the celebrity red-carpet glitz of his day, Solomon declared that **"he who rules over his own spirit is mightier than he who takes a city"**. Shocker!

In ancient days, what served as one's security from invading hordes and as protection from savage, wild animals? The walls around your city were your defence against the harsh realities of antiquity. Again Solomon, poking deeper than the accepted norms of the day, reveals that the one who **"has no rule over his own spirit"** is like an exposed, defenceless city **"without walls"**. Double shocker!

Enough said! Unless I learn to rule over my own thoughts, emotions, attitudes, words and actions ... I'll be of little help to others.

## Reasons

### *For A Confident Faith*

**"Always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you"** (1 Peter 3:15).

### **Conflict with Science? Part 1 – Original Assumptions**

#### **"Faith seems to be based on blind faith. Hasn't science refuted the Christian faith?"**

In our television age, watching 'historical' and 'scientific' documentaries I am horrified at the conclusions that are often drawn. I am a history fan and have a curious interest in science. And while I hold no specific accreditation in either of these fields I do my fair share of reading and studying. When I consult the more trusted references on various subjects and compare what some television documentaries teach as fact, it is unbelievable to me the inconsistencies present. Not small deviations of fact; gross divergences of opinion. And this doesn't happen occasionally but is, in my viewing experience, a norm.

Without exaggerating, I have watched historical/scientific documentaries that I confused with the twilight zone or the X-Files. Why do scientists come up with such different conclusions to the facts they claim to have? Okay, "Why?" would imply deliberate deceit so let us give 'them' the benefit of the doubt and ask, "How?" *How do intelligent people draw contrasting conclusions staring at the exact same evidence?*

The purpose of science is to observe the behaviour and events of the 'created world'. Science can only tell us what happened in a given case and then suggest, with varying degrees of certainty, what will happen in most similar cases. Thus science can tell us what, how and sometimes when. But it cannot answer the why questions. This is an important point. **Science was never intended, nor will ever be able, to answer the philosophical questions in our soul.**

Thus when a scientist analyses the facts determined by his observations, the conclusions he makes will be determined by the 'original assumptions' he began with. Thus, as often happens, two scientists may come to different – sometimes, opposite – conclusions to the same facts. Their conclusions are thus subjective; serving only to confirm what *they* expected. The nature of a scientist's assumptions then directs his research to confirm, in most instances, **what he is looking for**. We don't see things as they are; we see things as we are.

This may at first trouble us; if science does not offer concrete, absolute answers to the why questions, where do we find these answers? But this puts too much expectation on the field of science; as mentioned, an expectation that it was not supposed to fulfil in the first place. Our faith ought not to be in science at all, any more than our faith should be in last night's weather forecast. This is not to say that science is invalid. Of course not! Without science we would still believe the world is flat. But herein lies a useful lesson.

Science, in essence, did not prove that the world was flat. It only suggested the world was round giving some brave sailors the confidence to sail to the world's end ... and find out from experience that it was indeed so. Thus science played an invaluable part but without human courage and the experience itself, we would still be speculating. And it is important to note – for this is the issue – that neither science nor human endeavour gave us the explanation to *why* the earth is round. Science simply does not answer the philosophical question. Thus, science is not in conflict with the Christian faith: first, it asks different questions to faith; second, it simply observes the created world – the conclusions the scientist makes, is in keeping with his or her original assumptions.

Is there a reason you lack confidence in your faith, flick your query to [craig@crosswaveglobal.com](mailto:craig@crosswaveglobal.com)

## Answers

### *To Difficult Bible Passages*

**"Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law"** (Psalm 119:18).

#### **Why did Jesus seem to speak so badly to women?**

Jesus often addressed women with the word, **"Woman"** – He even did so to His own mother, Mary (John 19:26) – a seemingly blunt, rude expression. However, it was a completely appropriate expression in His day; roughly equivalent to our expression: "Ma'am". In this same way, He addressed men with the word, **"Man"** (Luke 5:20) the rough equivalent of our "Sir" today. Jesus was by no means derogatory to women; He, in fact, restored the value and dignity of women so horribly lost in the ancient world. One such example stands out. When **"Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word"** (Luke 10:39), Jesus welcomed her to partake of a privilege – being mentored by a Rabbi – that was culturally reserved for men alone. His value and appreciation of women smashed the cultural and religious shackles of ancient times.

# TEACHING > In Love and War

**"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood..."** (Ephesians 6:12)

Make no mistake; there is a battle raging for the nations and a satanic strategy to abort God's redemptive purpose for this planet. There is probably no more important issue – of course, there are other issues just as important – than clarifying who the enemy is and discerning his wicked schemes, **"lest he take advantage of us"** (2 Corinthians 2:11). (In making this statement I am not suggesting we need to increase our focus on the enemy. We don't. In fact, this article has nothing to do with the devil per se. If you will hang with me, you will see that my point is that, out of an unshakeable focus on the King, we must deliberately avoid "friendly fire" if we are going cooperate with His advancing Kingdom).

The epistle to the Ephesians is loaded with revelation concerning the Kingdom of God and Christ's church. In fact, leaning on his synonym for the Kingdom of God; that is, **"in Christ"**, Paul wastes little time in launching us into an understanding of the Kingdom of God in this highly explosive letter. His opening passage clarifies God's statement of intent: that **"He might gather together in one all things in Christ"** (Ephesians 1:10).

This is such an important statement that it is worth reading in another translation: **"And He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfilment – to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ"** (Ephesians 1:9, 10 NIV).

As Paul explained to the Corinthians: **"Then comes the end, when Jesus delivers the kingdom back to God the Father"** (1 Corinthians 15:24). John said it this way: **"The kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"** (Revelation 11:15). The writer to the Hebrews spoke of an increasing, unshakeable Kingdom that would "shake off" that which is not of Him and for Him (Hebrews 12:27, 28). And of course, the prophet Isaiah declared: **"the government will be upon His shoulder"** and **"of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end"** (Isaiah 9:6, 7).

For me, the epistle to the Ephesians is essentially a download on the Kingdom of God. For sure, God unpacks a crystal clear revelation of the church in its pages, using no less than five metaphors for the church. But the context is the Kingdom; using the word **"one"** twenty-one times in these six chapters, Paul emphatically shows that God's Kingdom purpose is to gather together in one all things in Christ; that is, to establish His Kingdom order, **bringing all things into their correct orbit around the centrality of His Kingship**.

The church has an essential role in the heart of God. In fact, its role cannot be underscored enough. The church is God's Plan A ... and there is no Plan B. If we, as God's church, drop the ball ... well, the consequences are enormous. As God entrusted the **"first Adam"** with the holy task of the dominion mandate (see Genesis 1:26-28); so He has entrusted His Kingdom mandate to us, the Body of the **"last Adam"** (see 1 Corinthians 15:45).

And here we come to the crux of this article. If the church is the chosen vessel of God through whom He intends to **"gather together in one all things in Christ"** it is imperative that we, the church, are correctly aligned to this purpose. And for clarity sake, this purpose was Jesus' essential desire expressed in His High Priestly prayer in John 17, **"that they all may be one"** (v. 21).

It is critical that the church stands in its God-ordained "oneness" as a vibrant, well-coordinated body rather than a dysfunctional, fractured one. We default on our God-given calling to be His means of establishing Kingdom order and "oneness" if we are a disjointed body or divided house. As Jesus Himself declared: **"A house divided against itself will not stand"** (Matthew 12:25).

The five metaphors Paul uses in his letter to the Ephesians all capture the oneness God intends: the one family (Chapter 3), the one body (Chapter 2, 4), the one building (Chapter 2), the one bride (Chapter 5) and the one army (Chapter 6). In fact, think about these metaphors for a moment.

What do we call a child without a family? An orphan! A brick without a building? Rubble! A soldier without an army? A.W.O.L! And a limb without a body? Disgusting ... dead! There are no Lone Ranger believers in the New Testament – and there are no Lone Ranger churches either!

By the fourth chapter of Ephesians, it seems Paul can hardly contain his passion any longer. He exhorts us to **"walk worthy"** of our Kingdom calling, **"with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"** (Ephesians 4:2, 3).

This is more than a plea for "unity" within a local church community or within an apostolic network of churches. Rather Paul's fervent plea is for us as the (capital B) Body of Christ to nourish what the Spirit of God has already established, lest we work against His desire to **"gather together in one all things in Christ"** (Ephesians 1:10). The next verse following this call to **"keep the unity of the Spirit"** is this statement of piercing clarity: **"There is one body..."** (Ephesians 4:4).

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*(Where we zero in on one of the ways, a very practical yet critical area, in which we as God's people oppose His Kingdom purpose – and what we ought to do about it)*

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