

Warning Lights

As you all know, I drove up north to Pennsylvania last week to visit family and friends last week. The main reason was to attend an annual “neighborhood reunion” of all the “kids” we grew up with from the old neighborhood. Some I have known since first grade. And believe it or not, there were still 12 grades in school back then and they were not all in a one room schoolhouse.

This was our third consecutive year of getting together and it seems to grow every year, even though we lost a couple of members this past year. Normally, I fly up as a 2 ½ hour flight is far better than a 24-hour 1250-mile drive. But if I drive, I can extend the visit from the three days to a week and my hounds could accompany me. You would think keeping two Dobermans couped up in a truck for 24 hours would be a miracle but they are quite the traveling companions and slept the whole way up and back with just a few pitstops.

I stayed with my sister, who bought my parents’ house where we all grew up. She has a Doberman too that looks like Mikey’s twin. She has a big fenced in yard so Rusty and Bear had a vacation with their cousin. My buddy Joe hosted the reunion this year at his “palatial” residence. We have been buds since 7th grade and he has been a Corporate Executive/CEO/Company President for various major companies. His home is likened to something the Clampett’s moved into in

Beverly Hills. I asked him how long we had to party before the owners got home. As an example, you could water ski in the swimming pool and he had an upstairs and downstairs pool table. The kitchen was a twenty-minute ride by golf cart from the den. But he was still the same humble Amigo I have known for over 50 years. Darn proud of him.

I hope this has set the stage for a peaceful image of a relaxing time away from home. Well, it was not all sunshine and rainbows. The trip up was trying at best. It did not take the entire journey to make me realize just why I usually fly. I made the mistake of driving up I-95. Normally it is not too bad until you get to Richmond, Virginia. Then from there all the way to Philadelphia, it is either a 6-lane parking lot or a Kamikaze race fueled by morons who watch too many Fast and Furious movies.

I knew there would be tests and trials on the trip but was not sure just when they would pop up. But Satan will always hit you when you are the most vulnerable. When you are really tired, when you are sick, or when you are not feeling well or you are in pain. It is difficult for him to get through the sunshine and rainbows. It rained from North Carolina to Pennsylvania. Traffic and detours could not have been worse. If I would have had a nuke, I would have used it. However, ...

2 Thessalonians 3:3- “But the Lord is faithful, Who will establish you and keep *you* from the evil one.”

After leaving on Wednesday and driving 24 hours and inventing new adjectives for the engineers for I-95, I made it to my sister’s Thursday evening.

James 1:2-4- “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials, Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But let endurance have *its* perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything.”

Okay, I expected the drive to be like a colonoscopy, so no surprise. Friday, I took my sister to an awesome local diner for lunch and caters to old folks. I realized sitting there that we were old folks too. But the food is so good it did not matter. In driving back to her house, my truck started to flash several warning lights on the dashboard. One was an engine symbol, several others also but you need an Egyptian manual on hieroglyphics to know what they mean. My dad used to call these idiot lights. Back in the day they were only for oil, water, and battery. If they flashed and you did NOT attend to them you *were* an idiot. That standard does not apply today as there are so many symbols one would have to be a Semiotician to understand them. (No, you look it up)

So, now what? The first trip Andrea and I made when we bought the truck brand new it was Tabernacles 2 years ago and it shut down on the way to North Carolina. It needed a new cylinder head. Now it is flashing brake system failure, service tow brakes, ECM, and who knows what else. I remember the good old days when you could change the spark plugs and oil yourself. Now you cannot even see the spark plugs and you need to be a computer programmer to figure out what the dickens is wrong with your vehicle. It also warned not to drive it over 43 miles per hour. Luckily, there is a Chevy dealership only 3 miles from my sister's house.

As this happened on Friday afternoon, it negated me and any travel or visitation plans I may have had for the coming week. After coming down from DEFCON 1, I had to pause for a moment and smile inside.

Ephesians 4:26-27- “*When* you become angry, do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger; Neither give place to the devil.”

No need to go anywhere. Plenty of work to do right where I was...on me.

After repenting for the long list of even newer adjectives for Chevrolet engineers, it was quite apparent God did not want me going anywhere.

1 Peter 1:6-7- “In this you yourselves greatly rejoice; though for the present, if it is necessary, you are in distress for a little while by various trials; In order that the

proving of your faith, which is much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is being tested by fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ;”

For reasons I did not fully grasp at the onset, like most of us, it takes a little longer to get through the 4 inches of skull on top of my neck. But God has His motives. We have been discussing faith and character for quite some time and there is no reason whatever that any one of us is immune from having his or her faith tested from time to time or on a regular basis if you truly want to grow.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5- “And my message and my preaching *was* not in persuasive words of human wisdom; rather, *it was* in demonstration of *the* Spirit and of power; So that your faith might not be in *the* wisdom of men, but in *the* power of God.”

We know God is intimately involved in our lives. It is difficult to keep this in mind with the whirlwinds of chaos surrounding us amidst 6 lanes of traffic or a dashboard full of flashing warning lights. Much like Peter stepping out of the boat walking on water, my faith like his faith was too short in duration as we discussed back in July.

We have God’s Word He will finish what He started.

Philippians 1:6- “Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will complete *it* until *the* day of Jesus Christ.”

He will never forsake us.

Hebrews 13:5- “*Do not allow the love of money to influence your behavior, but be satisfied with what you have; for He has said, “In no way will I ever leave you; no—I will never forsake you in any way.”*

We must remember this in our prayer life as well. *Especially in our prayer life.*

This is our open communication with God our Father. It cannot be wishy washy.

Mark 4:40- “And He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? Why do you not have faith?”

We have not been given a spirit of fear.

2 Timothy 1:7- “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound mindedness.”

If any of us think we will ever grow without trials and tests, you had better think again. And that goes for those who sit and listen as well as those who teach.

Especially for those who teach.

1 Timothy 2:7-8- “For this purpose I was ordained a preacher and an apostle (I speak *the* truth in Christ—I do not lie), a teacher of *the* Gentiles in faith and truth.

Therefore, I desire that men everywhere pray, lifting up holy hands without anger and *evil* opinions.”

When we pray, we must believe and not doubt.

Mark 11:24- “For this reason I say to you, all the things that you ask when you are praying, believe that you will receive them, and they shall be given to you.”

We know from Peter’s failed attempt at walking on water, that doubt caused him to sink. It is the same thing for us in our prayers. They will fail to make it skyward and sink if we doubt God.

James 1:5-8- “However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*. Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. *He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

Psalm 55:1-2- “Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not Yourself from my supplication. Attend to me, and answer me; I am distraught in my trouble and moan in my complaint”

We all want our prayers to be heard and how do we know for sure if we are praying the right thing or in the right way? An interesting part of the Psalm above is supplication. A Wikipedia slant on the word supplication is to ask in earnest or *humbly*. There is that word *humbly* again. We all know how important being humble is. One definition went so far as to say “begging.” I am sure there has been occasion in everyone’s life where begging was not out of the question when it came to prayer. When you pray, do you talk *to* God or talk *at* God? Are you sharing your heart with Him or giving Him your shopping list? Is it repetitious mumblings or a sincere conversation with your Heavenly Father who loves hearing from you? Do you know Him well enough to talk with Him One on one? Do you do it daily? Especially on the Sabbath?

We must remember to approach God in right standing (**James 5:16**). Asking the right things in the right manner and we know that if it is in His Will it will come to pass. This may be an area where we tend to limit God again. We will throw that caveat in “according to Your Will.” We forget the first part of our responsibilities

regarding the right way and manner. God certainly knows all of our needs, all our wants, and desires.

Mark 11:25-26- “But when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive, so that your Father Who is in heaven may forgive you your offenses. For if you do not forgive, neither will your Father Who is in heaven forgive you your offenses.”

James 5:13-16- “Is anyone suffering hardship among you? Let him pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing praise. Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him after anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick one, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess *your* faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. *The* supplication of a righteous man prevails much, being effective.”

We should be doing this at the end of every fellowship service. Ask if anyone needs prayer for anything. It is NOT a time to hold back. God’s Word tells us to come forth and ask for prayer and to be anointed. What holds someone back? Pride? Doubt? It is an opportunity to glorify God! It can be done in private if you so wish but none the less, do not limit a limitless God! Trust in Him and let your faith grow.

We ourselves must do our part to grow in our faith and trust that our prayers are effective weapons against the forces of darkness and they are heard on high.

1 Kings 8:49- “Then hear their prayer and their cry in heaven Your dwelling place, and maintain their cause,”

2 Chronicles 6:39-40- “Then hear from heaven, from Your dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You. Now, my God, I beseech You, let Your eyes be open and Your ears hear the prayer made in this place.”

1 Peter 4:7- “Now the end of all things has drawn near. Therefore, be serious-minded and be watchful in prayers;”

James 1:5-8- “However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*. Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. *He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

God did not give us a dashboard full of warning lights but His Bible is full of warnings for us to heed if we intend on following His way of life. He also gave us

instructions on how to overcome these obstacles too. There are numerous examples of those who failed to listen to His warnings, some survived and some did not.

He will use whatever method of these “warning lights” that work to get through to us to teach, lead, and guide us, to mold, shape, and form us, according to His will and purpose. He may use trials and problems by whatever means He deems fitting to tear down the strongholds that halts us from spiritual growth. We must continue to do our part.

2 Corinthians 10:4- “For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds,”

Isaiah 42:18-20- “Hear, you deaf ones; and you blind ones look to see. Who *is* blind but My servant? Or deaf, as My messenger whom I sent? Who *is* blind as he who is perfect, and blind as the LORD’S servant? You see many things, but do not pay attention. *Your* ears *are* open, but no one hears.”

Job 36:10- “He also opens their ears to discipline, and commands that they return from iniquity.”

It is critical that we not only hear but that we *listen and DO*. The trip home was a different route and a bit longer as well. There was no way I would consider the I-95 mess again. In choosing a different route, I avoided the rat race I knew from the northbound trip. Even being awake for over 36 hours, my list of adjectives was substantially shorter. My vehicle issues were fixed but I have a long way to go on the spiritual overhaul. But I am working on it. Are you?

Romans 12:12- “Be rejoicing in hope. Be patient in tribulation. Be steadfastly continuing in prayer.” Amen.

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