

## A Few Thoughts for the Hunkered-Down

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

### ***False Hopes – Laughable and Otherwise***

*A king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.*

*The war horse is a vain hope for victory, and by its great might it cannot save.*

*Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him,  
on those who hope in his steadfast love,  
to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.  
Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and shield.*

—Psalm 33:16-20

My morning was a gloomy one as I was feeling blue with all the continued lockdown and troubles in our stricken world. Then came the glorious FAX which changed everything! It was a letter from a law firm in Toronto, Canada with some sad yet wonderful news. Apparently, I have a wealthy relative in the Great White North, Alan Haun, who died and left a large sum of money behind. I was found to be his nearest surviving relative, and all I need to do is to call this law firm and the money will be on its way. I also suppose that they will want some bank account numbers of mine to make the transaction complete. How lucky can a guy get? And don't tell my brothers and sister about this!

The letter actually did brighten the morning a little as Mary Anne and I got a laugh from it, and it was a little more imaginative than some of the other attempted scams I have encountered. For just a moment I thought, with some real sadness, of the poor foolish souls who fall for these scams. There must be suckers out there or they wouldn't be sending these letters. Such gullibility and lack of discernment is laughable, until I thought of the many schemes which we fall for every day.

The Bible tells us of our true hope and warns against false ones. There are countless times recorded of when our ancestors turned aside from their true hope in God to false gods. When Moses' visit to the mountaintop seemed just a little too long, the Israelites easily and naturally returned to their pagan ways by making an idol and engaging in wild behaviors. We too can easily turn from God as we seek comfort in all sorts of earthly indulgences. We may point to those who are given to wild living and boast that we do not stoop that low, but when we drift from God and begin to over-indulging in comfort foods, endless television and other escapes are really just

following a milder form of the same sin. We seek comfort and hope in that which will only fail us.

Note that the scriptures warn us, not only against wild indulgence, but also against false hope placed in “more reasonable” kinds of earthly hopes. In the 33<sup>rd</sup> Psalm kings are cautioned against trusting in large armies, strong warriors and mighty war horses. Truth be told, if I was a king with all of the above, I would be feeling quite secure! Perhaps I would be feeling the same kind of secure that Goliath felt when he faced a weak and unarmed shepherd boy, who didn’t even have a horse. We are warned against trusting in worldly strengths and securities, which may not be so strong and secure as we believe. Perhaps you have been taking proper care of all your earthly goods and seem to have your investments in all the right places. Good for you. That sounds like it could be good stewardship, but be warned, for they are only earthly goods. Our real trust, hope and security is to be found in God, so it is upon God that our lives and hopes should be focused.

We may know better than to make a call to the alleged law office in Toronto, but do we know better than to pursue mere earthly hopes when God is calling us to a close walk? We live in a world where false hopes abound. Some are obviously foolish, while others are look like good, safe bets. Let us be able to affirm with the psalmist, gladly and assuredly from the heart: *Our soul waits for the Lord; **he** is our help and shield.*

Blessings,

Pastor Jim

P.S. There’s no need to send any sympathy cards about my Uncle Alan. I’m starting to get over it.

*O God, who never forsakes those that hope in thee: grant that we may ever keep that hope which thou hast given us by thy Word as an anchor of our souls, to preserve us sure and steadfast, unshaken and secure in all the storms of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. —Source unknown*

*O Lord, in whom is our hope, remove far from us, we pray thee, empty hopes and presumptuous confidence. Make our hearts so right with thy most holy and loving heart, that hoping in thee we may do good; until that day when faith and hope shall be abolished by sight and possession, and love shall be all in all. —Christina Rossetti*