

Piercing the Darkness

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AN ANGEL CALLED COINCIDENCE

Norma Montroy

Wow, what a storm we had here in Arizona last week! Much, much needed rain! I have been told that the earthly atmosphere is a picture of the spiritual atmosphere, and I can see the correlation, even though I may not be able to be proved with Scripture. During the downpour of last week's storm, Bruce and I walked downstairs, late in the evening only to step off the stairs into a basement full of water, well it seemed like it was full, at least 4 rooms were well underway of being flooded.



We quickly started moving furniture and pulling out carpet. We got out my little shampooer to suck up the water. The more we sucked, the more it came in, quite honestly it was a losing battle, against the flow of water! You see, in front of our house, is an underground spring that is usually dry, but all the rain brought it back to life. Our house has settled and the downstairs foundation was no match for the torrential rain and the quickened spring.

We started praising the Lord, (honestly we did, we just didn't sing Spring Up O Well), and Bruce prayed and asked the Father to have His angels stop the flow of water, just like they did for Joshua when he crossed the Jordan River! He left to rent a much larger water extractor.

While he was gone, all kinds of worries were bombarding my

little brain. A small voice whispered to me, "Praise can change the atmosphere!" Standing right there in that flooded bedroom with frozen cold feet, I started singing praises and worshiping the Lord. It worked! When Bruce got home, we even found ourselves laughing (no it was not delirium), and then we noticed that the strong flow of water had stopped.

The next morning during prayer, my husband thanked the Lord for sending His angels to stop the flow of water. My thought was, "A lot of Christians would think it was a coincidence." It seems that the angels, the ministering spirits sent out to minister to and for the children of God (Hebrews 1:14) have been showing up a lot more lately, upon requests.

We conservative Christians have a tendency to pull away from the supernatural, not wanting to wade into something that may be extreme. But I have been studying the book of Acts, and angelic activity was very real! What could be more real than being in a stinky, cold prison, in chains with a guard on each side and have an angel smack you and tell you to get up and walking out. An angelic jail break!

If the angels are ministering spirits sent out by our heavenly Father to help us, why not ask Him to send them on our behalf? (we have not because we ask not) Then give the glory to God for His provision. Psalms 34:7 says, "The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them." We need to get our thinking straight – there is no such thing as "coincidence." And there isn't an angel by that name! How awesome is our Heavenly Father who has His messengers surrounding us just to deliver us out of all our troubles!!! I think that calls for a shout!!

ONLY THROUGH EMPOWERMENT

Pastor Don

The Lord has been dealing heavily with me about setting goals this year. And goals for things I can only accomplish through God's wisdom and empowerment. When we set goals through God's direction, then we also know that He will accomplish those goals. I was challenged by Jonathon, Saul's son, in 1 Samuel 14. He sets off with his faithful armor bearer to scale a cliff and fight a detachment of Philistines who were encamped against Saul and the Israelites. His sign of victory from God was that if the Philistines

invited him into their camp God would over-power them with only Jonathon and his armor bearer. Quite a goal for a young man to take on with his faithful armor bearer!

What grand designs have you and God cooked up together lately? How are you taking back ground that the enemy has attempted to hold over you or someone else? Jesus teaching on prayer in Luke 11 tells us to ASK God and to ask with an increasing vigor. First we are encouraged to simply ask and it will be given to you; and then to seek so that we will find; and still deeper to knock and be assured a door will be opened to you. I don't know about you, but some of my prayers aren't answered on the first request, so then I seek God's face to find His attention and still sometimes I find that I have to travail even harder and longer to receive God's attention. There are some matters that have taken years for God to answer and there are some matters still unanswered, but I don't give up. Now I have never attempted to climb a cliff, or confront a detachment of Philistines, but I have experienced the difficulty of fighting the enemies hold on someone I love.

So this year I would challenge you to seek God for more of those that we love who are not presently seeking Him now. When we see the catastrophic events that are happening throughout the world and in the heavens, then we must be challenged to seek God's face for the salvation of souls before Christ's soon return. By the way, do you have an armor bearer that is with you heart and soul encouraging you to do what you have set your heart to do for the Lord?

A LIFE WELL SPENT

Audrey Semprun

The preacher stands there, up in front of the congregation - but he doesn't see it as a congregation. It's an investment. It's his life he sees out there: The time, the emotion, the prayer that he has spent on these people. And they're not just people, not to the Pastor's heart. They're his people. He looks out and sees a smile or two - they're comforting, but of little consolation for the majority of the flock are blank pages, hoping not to be read. He's too inundated in the Word to see them any other way, but how they really are, through the eyes of the Spirit.

A scripture in Isaiah comes to his mind. "All my sheep have

gone astray; every one of them looking to their own way". And he knows that he's poured every ounce of himself out for them, and yet he has not reached them. He has walked before them as a godly example, pushing himself harder and harder each day, striving for excellence, only to watch in dismay as they blindly go their own way. Looking for what, he can't even fathom.

They have taken his heart and shredded it, some more so than others. They greet him with a smile, and shifted eyes - they can't look into his own. He has the answers. They're right there. So plain, and yet they cannot see. He's even told them, right out loud, "this is going to hurt you more than it hurts me". Or was that, "this is going to hurt me more than it hurts you"? No matter, because it is what it is. Yes, the hurt's there, for him, and for them. And sometimes it does hurt him more than it hurts them because they just don't see. And sometimes it hurts them more than it hurts him because they just don't see. Even still, he spends his life leading, guiding, striving, battling against those powers of darkness: Never surrendering - always at war.

And who, I'd like to ask, coined that phrase, 'Preaching to the Choir'? Lord knows, they need preached to. And they're not all invincible, and holy, and completely sanctified - not always. They're fallible; they're vulnerable; and not only that, but they are out there leading the battle! Preach to the choir! Preach to the rebellious. Preach to the blind. Preach to those that refuse to hear. Because it is also stated in Isaiah, "his word will not go out void, but will accomplish what he has sent it to do". Go in grace, go in mercy, go in strength, but mostly go in God.

And that phenomenon, I believe is called, 'cheap grace', I don't see how that could possibly exist. It states in the Bible that judgment begins in the house of God. And it also says to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. I'm not seeing a cheap grace there. Sure, grace is out there, but that grace was paid for in full by the blood of the Lamb. And the only way to obtain this great grace is by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of our testimony, and that's spoken in word and in deed. That's Spirit and in truth. And we are called to love not our lives unto the death. Take up our cross daily, and follow Jesus. That's the way of the cross. That's the way of salvation. That's the way of righteousness and of peace, and of joy in the Holy Ghost.

And me, I have found that integrity is a priceless commodity: So accessible, and yet so illusive: Because it can be gone in a

moment, in a look, in an impure thought manifesting. Who then can be saved? Am I then without hope? I am not without hope. For I have heard the preacher. I have also witnessed the weakness that I have seen in me. And I know that my only saving grace is in the Word of God, and in the daily, even constant, fellowship with Jesus. He's promised in his Word that never would he leave me, nor forsake me. And all I can do is hold on: Hold on to what little faith I can muster, and believe that God is able to keep that which is committed unto him, for truly faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. And my life-long scripture, the one that I'm going to hold on to, is found in the Psalms. "The Lord will perfect that which concerns me, thy mercy O Lord endures forever, forsake not the works of thine own hands". And for you preachers out there: Please don't give up, for we really do need you - Even the choir -

Even me.

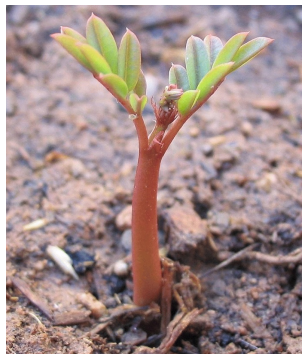
NEW LIFE

Linda J. Humes

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 1 Peter 1:7 (KJV)

Recently a fire broke out between the north and southbound lanes of the main highway through Arizona. The fire had traveled a good mile and had jumped the freeway (2 lanes wide) on both the east and west sides of the freeway. As I passed through, the smoke still lingered and firefighters were walking through with shovels and pick axes to be sure the smoldering embers didn't reignite.

Each week the remainder of the all-consuming properties of fire played in my mind . . . except for that one green bush about a third of the way in from the south, just sitting there, green and untouched. About a month after the fire the rains came and a most amazing thing happened; in the middle of the charred



blackness sprouted small green leaves. Out of darkness came life.

Like our deadness, our pain and our sin, when the Holy Spirit sprinkles us with the water from the river of life, we sprout and grow new life. We become like the tree planted by the waters, bringing forth shade and good fruit.

As satan sends forth his fires of destruction, God's children walk across the blackness sipping the water that will make them thirst no more. As their heels lift from the ash strewn, blackened ground, tiny leaves sprout up in its shadow, before the next step is even taken; soon to provide good fruit.

Lord, let us never be afraid to speak Your refreshing Word to a dry and thirsty world.

THE PARALLEL OF PENTECOST

Mary Mejia

Have you junked your New Years Resolutions yet? Each year I vow to do better and each year I fail at least in part. I am reading a new book again and I stumbled onto something I hope will help me succeed with the desire to do better. I even have hope that the destructive habits I have can be changed.

In my recent reading, the author commented on the parallels of the Ten Commandments (when God gave his people the law) and Pentecost (when God gave his people grace). He said that on the 50th day after Passover, the Ten Commandments were given to the Israelites. You remember, Moses came down from the mountain and he found a mess. As a result, a big party was shut down, the stone tablets carved by God were shattered and ultimately 3000 people died (Ex 32:28). The author then likened it to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at the day of Pentecost where 3,000 people were saved. (Acts 2:41); A whole different type of scenario.

The law was meant to show us the perfection of Jesus and our inability to totally meet its requirements. Pentecost gave us the option of relying wholly on the Holy Spirit. Our spirit is saved and we long to do what is right but we live in a sinful world inside a mortal body. We want what we want when we want it. We may try to shape ourselves up physically, emotionally, or morally but we cannot meet our own expectations let alone God's in the Ten Commandments. The more I understand my Lord, I am certain that the only sure way to change is by surrendering totally and

completely to the Holy Spirit's guidance and by allowing him to mold us into what He - God - has always planned for us to be. Is it hard work? Sometimes but the Grace is there to sustain us.

After walking in this supposition for a while I actually began realize that the issues that have been my trigger were really not making the impact they had previously. I know it was the result of prayer and the desire to hear His guidance. I am sure I will get tried on this again but Hope is my companion and I expect to see healing and change in myself because of a renewed commitment to surrender to His- to My- Beloved Comforter.

"My way is easy and my Yoke is light". Let's trade in the labor we have placed on ourselves and surrender eternally grateful for the Life in His "Good News".

I DOUBLE DOG DARE 'YA!!

Sally Bates

Our God is such a creative God, and so full of that intimate knowledge of what each of us needs at any given moment. Have you ever prayed and asked God for something that was so personal and so quietly asked for that only God knew about that need and He met you where you were to provide that special "gift" you so desperately needed? Perhaps it was a "word" from scripture that you needed to hear that answered your heart's cry. Perhaps it was a phone call from someone that let you know God had them praying for you. Perhaps something happened that changed circumstances in your life that you had only dared to ask God for.

Well - I double dog dare 'ya to ask God to give you a creative idea as to how you can minister to your mate in this month of February. When that little red heart shows up on the 14th do you have something besides a bouquet of flowers, a box of candy, or a card? Even if you miss that date surprise her or him again after the actual date and be spontaneous.

Are some of you already thinking you can't do that for whatever reason is on your mind? Have you already begun to want to just do what you've always done? Well. . . let the Holy Spirit do for you what God has done before and will do again - help you to be creative!! Do you dare to show your mate that you love them as much as God loves you? Do you dare to reach deeper than you ever have before and do something for them that will show them

you know their very heart's desire? The Holy Spirit can help you do that, you know?

I double dog dare you!! First Corinthians 13 is a "how to" on being a loving and loveable person, but even more than that logos word, let the Holy Spirit bring you a Rhema word on "how to" show your mate you love them dearly.
