

Our Firm Foundation

*The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him.
Nahum 1:17*

Though 45 years ago a songwriter wrote, “the times they are a-changin’,” it’s no less true today. Unfortunately, many recent changes aren’t exactly welcome. With 2009 comes the new American president while the economy struggles, businesses fail, unemployment rises and homes are lost. On top of our domestic troubles, turmoil bombards the Middle East, terrorism lies in wait and peace continues to elude Israel.

Closer to home we may face personal struggles. Last year many of us lost loved ones, battled illness, or faced disappointments in our relationships and jobs. Some local families were left homeless by the recent fires. In tough times we may ask, “Why?” or “How could God let this happen?”

Thus we need a strong foundation to keep from crumbling. Jesus told a parable of two types, rock and sand (Matthew 7:24-27). These foundations illustrate the possibilities from which we choose the basis of our life’s hope and trust. Interestingly, these are the only options given; there is no middle ground of “rocky sand.” Therefore, if we trust in God and His Word our foundation is strong like rock, but if we trust in anything else we build on flimsy sand. Still, God’s Word can’t possibly fail and the things of this world can’t possibly endure.

In fair weather all houses may seem secure; it isn’t until the storm hits that the different foundations become apparent. Likewise, our vulnerability isn’t obvious when living comfortably; prosperity can even distract us from God. Yet adversity paints an entirely different picture. Fiery trials can melt away our prosperity, but not the iron in our soul, His Word by which we stand. Consequently we remain strong in tough times because our hope resides not in the uncertain things of this world, but in the certain promises of God:

About national uncertainty, the Lord our Sovereign promises:

Not that the human electorate would choose wisely, but that the only wise God chose us as His elect (1 Peter 2:9)

Not peace on earth, but peace with Him (Romans 5:1)

Not that our nation would stand forever, but that we will stand forever as citizens of His Kingdom (Ephesians 2:19)

About physical trials, God our Creator promises:

Not a fair countenance that fades but a beautiful inner spirit that endures (1 Peter 3:4)

Not that our earthly flesh won’t suffer, but that it will be transformed forever into an incorruptible body (Philippians 3:21)

Not that we’ll never face death, but that we’ll never face the second death and condemnation (Revelation 2:11)

About financial uncertainty, the Lord our provider promises:

Not freedom from debt, but freedom from sin because He paid our debt (Colossians 2:14)

Not security in our job position, but security in our position in Christ (John 10:28)

Not a permanent earthly home, but an everlasting place prepared in the Father’s house (John 14:2)

Not a fleeting financial inheritance, but a permanent inheritance in His kingdom (1 Peter 1:4)

About family and relationship trials, Abba, our Father promises:

Not that we won’t lose loved ones, but that He will never leave or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5)

Not that we’ll have a large human family, but a permanent spiritual family with a multitude of saints (Ephesians 2:19)

Not favor in the eyes of people, but acceptance to God in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6)

About emotional constraints, the Lord our Peace promises:

Not an absence of weeping or grief, but His nearness to us in sorrow (Psalm 34:18)

Not that all things will work out as we plan, but that all things will together for good in His plan (Romans 8:28)

Not everything we think we want, but everything He knows we need (Matthew 6:25-26)

About fleeting time, the Everlasting God promises,

Not that time won’t pass quickly, but that His Word will never pass away (Matthew 24:35)

Not that we won’t age, but that we can flourish and be fruitful in spite of old age (Psalm 92:14)

Not endless days, but the fullness of eternity in His presence (Psalm 16:11)

These and many more precious promises are ours, sparkling in adversity like shining stars in the nighttime sky. His Word is always present, even as the stars are equally present in the skies of both our night and day. But just as the heavens are revealed when the earth is dark, we see eternity more clearly when our heart dims the things of this world.

Indeed, long ago one man’s song declared, “the times they are a-changin’.” But the better lyrics are timeless and inspired by the Psalmist who praised God, “He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will never be shaken. (Psalm 62:2).”