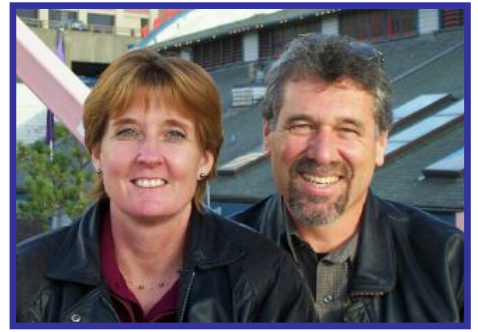


Hal and Cheryl Large

Ministering in El Salvador



April 2007

Since the beginning of the year, the Spirit of God has put upon my heart the conviction that this would be a year of judgment and tribulation – not for the world, but for God's own people, the church - *"for it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God"* (1 Peter 4:17). God does this motivated by a jealous love for His covenant people. He would "redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:14). This would only be accomplished in our hearts by the heat of trials and testing. It would be for the revelation of the true condition of our faith and to bring about acknowledgment, confession and forsaking of our sin.

But, how difficult it is to acknowledge our sin. First, what is kept in darkness must be brought out into light. This will involve manifesting the true motivations behind our "selfless" service and sacrifice. It will also most assuredly deal with the obvious contradiction between what we know and what we do, what we preach and what we practice. It isn't enough to just say the truth, know the truth and confess the truth. Unless there is obedience to the truth, there is no faith. What we truly believe is established, not by what we say but what we, in fact, do.

And what we do, even in our religious circles, is look, think, plan, execute and react without consulting God. The miraculous work of God in us and through us has been relegated to the dusty pages of history as a way to excuse a religious life without spiritual power or Godly love. Churches are built upon people who are "sharp", ambitious, disciplined and knowledgeable with great organizational ability. The idea that our life and ministry is utterly dependent upon God and realized by prayer is mouthed by our lips but our practice contradicts everything we say.

Before God, it is abhorrent. It is the mediocrity He spits out of His mouth. Through the prophet Isaiah, God gives a warning that should not be taken lightly: *"Woe to the rebellious children, declares the Lord, who execute a plan, but not Mine, and make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, in order to add sin to sin; who proceed down to Egypt without consulting Me, to take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore the safety of Pharaoh will be your shame and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt, your humiliation"* (Isaiah 30:1-3).

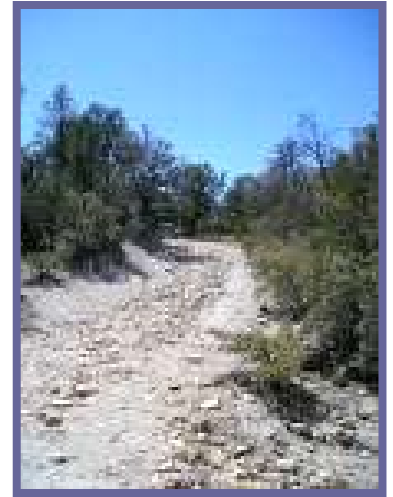
I know it isn't often we talk about God's judgment and wrath, but it is very much part of who He is. He is to be feared. We would do well to pause and meditate deeply upon our ways (Habakkuk 1:5). When our eyes are opened to our failures, fears and frustrations, we would do well to admit the truth. We are angry. We are making decisions without receiving direction from the Lord. We carry heavy burdens. We are critical and judgmental of others. We are very dependent upon what others think of us. We argue and defend ourselves, anxious to prove our innocence or to be approved by others.



Judgment and testing are God's way of bringing us to a deep longing for change, a confession of failure and dying to our own goodness and righteousness before God. We are left before Jesus - alone, exposed and broken. It is in our death that we find life in another. Our eyes are turned to Jesus. Our confessions lead us to Jesus. Our brokenness guides us to Jesus. It is in Jesus that we find our life. We fall to the ground and die that we might live by the Spirit in Jesus.

In the fire, made hot to reveal the impurities, we will do one of two things: either we will humble ourselves and agree with God or we will resist His work, harden our hearts and fall away; *"Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness"* (Hebrews 3:7,8). Our hearts become hardened; like having a stone placed in them every time we are in disagreement with God. Our suffering brings us in disagreement with how God is treating us and a stone is set in our hearts. He asks us to forgive another as He forgave us. We refuse and

another stone is placed in our hearts. He sends us to ask for forgiveness and we refuse, our hearts are hardened and another stone is placed there. Even though the blood of Christ was shed to resolve these hurts, offenses and pain, *"to bind up the brokenhearted . . . to comfort all who mourn"* (Isaiah 61:1,3), we do not honor God; we do not give Him thanks (Romans 1:21) and another stone is placed in our hearts.



In the parable of the sower, Jesus declares that because of the stony heart, His Word will not produce fruit (Luke 8:13). It is good seed which is sowed. The rain from Heaven falls upon the seed, but because of the stony ground, there will be no fruit. These are the stones which are revealed to us by tribulation and trial. The fire reveals the impurities in our hearts, the disagreements we have with God Himself, with His decisions and His commands. He has given us the way for our hurts to be healed, for the desires of our flesh to be overcome, for us to find life in His blood, but not all will believe. Some will die in the desert, self-righteous, embittered and disobedient.

God calls upon us to admit our hearts have become hardened, burdened and resentful. He reveals this to us as we are afflicted in the desert. He shines the light upon a life without fruit, barren and powerless, and He offers to us His Son.

"Jesus therefore said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life . . . for My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.'" (John 6:53-56)

"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

This is the lesson we are to learn in the blazing furnace. Our impurities are revealed IN ORDER THAT we may be healed by the blood of Christ and receive His love.

We are cut off from our idols in which we had our hope of life. We lived by the flesh and now the flesh is consumed. We are face to face with our sin, our rebellion, our desperate desire to control. We cannot hide from the truth any longer. We can admit it, confess it, bring our broken life to Christ and be healed. The hearts we had hardened against God can be broken before Him, poured out before Him and the stony places taken away. The seed will be sown, the rain from Heaven will fall and the good earth will yield its fruit again. This is the good work God would do in us as He brings judgment into our lives.

So, we are preaching and teaching through the Old Testament prophets and it has been painful but good. We are seeing some who harden their hearts and gather their filthy rags around themselves as if they were princely attire; others are exchanging their worthless raiment, stained and full of holes, for the clean and glorious garments of the righteousness of Christ.

Next week, we travel as a church to camp for three days of fellowship, prayer and ministry.



The theme will be "Seeing Jesus In Our Spiritual Warfare". We will have seven sessions of praise and preaching, each session followed by times to meet together in small groups to share and pray.



By faith, I declare this: On April 30, 2007, we will place in the hands of Esperanza Sandoval all that is lacking for the purchase of our second property for the Family of Faith Church. As of TODAY, we have



received in cash and checks \$29,963.07. We have also received the promise of \$5,000 more, which is being sent by an individual in the States. The Community Church of Greenwood has also pledged \$15,000 in funds to be dispersed when the entire price of the land is in hand (\$70,298). So, adding this all up, we have in cash, pledges and commitments a total of \$49,963.07. That means we are trusting God to receive \$20,334.93 during the month of April. We have come a long way by faith since I wrote to you a year ago confessing my fears and how God pushed me out of the nest and made me fly. Almost \$120,000 has been raised during this year. We are so close to the final purchase price of this second property. I would just ask you to pray that God will

supply our need. Come alongside us in prayer and beseech God with us for this last \$20,000. Join with us in the struggle and you will join with us in the praise.

We can report with joy how God took one of our church families through a fiery trial and, by His grace and faithful love, they have learned to trust Him, wait upon Him, surrender to Him and live in the peace Jesus has promised to give us. Blanca Estela and Emilio were set to adopt beautiful twin boys when one of the boys died suddenly of dysentery. Complications arose when the 16-year-old father suddenly appeared at the funeral and declared he wanted his son back after having abandoned him for seven months. The government agency overseeing the case knew the courts would not even hear the suit until the father was 18 and, until such time, they could only give the surviving twin to Emilio and Blanca Estela, with the understanding they might lose custody of him in two years. They had many misgivings as to how Emilio and Blanca would respond to such an uncertainty. They contacted David Caceros (a doctor in our church who was caring for the child). David contacted me and together we went to visit Emilio and Blanca Estela. With voices firm with conviction (and tears in their eyes), they declared their faith:

'From the very beginning, they had been given the assurance from God that these two boys were theirs to care for and love. They buried one and they declared that if God took the other from them in two years, that would be in His hands. They would be faithful to God by loving and caring for the surviving twin as their own child and trust Him for the future.'



To be very honest, I have never seen such a beautiful scene of Godly serenity in the midst of terrible agony. They were joyous in just fulfilling God's will for their lives, however long they were to be given to serve this small child. They were willing to do it. Well, two days later, they were holding little David in their arms with smiles from ear to ear. Pray for this dear couple as they love and care for their God-given son.

Thank you for your prayers for us. We continue a heavy schedule of personal discipleship, counseling, preaching, teaching and prayer. We are sustained by Christ in answer to your prayers. We are

Yours for souls,



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