

Why I Am Not the Least Bit Discouraged

It is true that there is a lot of bad news in the world today, and much of it comes as a direct assault on our faith. Radical Islam is rising. Aggressive atheism is spreading. Much of the church in the West is backsliding, and our culture is rapidly deteriorating.

But from the bottom of my heart I can honestly say that I am not in the least bit discouraged. In fact, I am more encouraged and hopeful in the Lord at the age of 59 than I was when the Lord saved me in 1971 at the age of 16. The best is yet to come!

Here are 10 reasons why I am full of faith and hope:

1. God is ruling and reigning from His throne. There is no fear or anxiety in God's presence, nor is there the slightest trace of worry or concern. The purposes of God will come to pass, and He will work out His plan on the earth. Although His heart grieves because of human sin and suffering, He is the undisputed King of the universe, and in His presence there is fullness of joy (Ps. 16:11).

2. Jesus is Lord. The name of Jesus remains the highest name in all creation, and at His name, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess (Phil. 2:9-11). If this was the only thing I knew, namely, that Jesus died for my sins, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, I would rest secure and be full of anticipation and expectation.

3. In the end, God will vindicate His people. I honestly feel sorry for those who fight against God's purposes, knowing that in the end, they will be the losers—and the ultimate losers, at that. We who love and serve the Lord will shine like stars

while they will fade away into darkness (Dan. 12:2-3). We should pity them rather than fear them.

4. Everything Satan and this world mean for evil, God can turn around for good. It's really hard to overuse Romans 8:28: "Now we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose" (TLV). Often, in the Lord, the very worst things that happen to us become the best things, and that which was intended to destroy us backfires in the enemy's face. In Jesus, stumbling blocks become stepping stones.

5. God is doing amazing things in the earth today. It is true that Islam is spreading and that false religions and cults continue to grow. But for decades now, the greatest spiritual growth taking place worldwide is in born-again, Spirit-empowered circles. The harvest continues to be reaped at an unprecedented pace, and even in countries like Iran, countless tens of thousands are being saved every year.

6. He who began the good work in us will bring it to completion. I have seen the Lord's faithfulness for more than four decades now, and my confidence in Him is greater than ever before. My trust is in His wisdom and power and goodness, not mine, and I know that I am standing strong today because He is the author and finisher of my faith (Heb. 12:2). Why shouldn't I have confidence for tomorrow?

7. Revival has turned things around in the past. Revival can turn things around today. We have had some very dark periods in our history, including the decades following the Revolutionary War, when some of our most prestigious college campuses—schools which were founded for exclusively Christian purposes—did not have a single professing believer. (This was stated in a famous lecture by the revival historian James Edwin Orr.) All this was changed dramatically when awakening came, and a greater, more radical awakening can turn things

around again in our day.

8. Political pundits have been wrong before. Many are telling us that the culture wars are over and that gay “marriage” will soon be the law across America. Many Christian leaders believe this to be true as well.

But we were once told that the war against abortion was over and that American sentiment against the outlawing of abortion had turned for good. Today, it is pro-abortion advocates who are panicking as the pro-life movement continues to grow, especially among the younger generation.

9. Worldly ways are self-defeating. All of the ways of the world—sexual promiscuity, drug and alcohol abuse, abortion, no-fault divorce, homosexual practice, materialism and greed, just to name a few—bring a society down, not up. But God’s ways bring life and blessing and stability. When the dust settles—and it may get very “dusty” for a while—the righteous will be standing strong.

10. I have seen God’s past promises to me fulfilled gloriously, and I am confident that the rest of His promises to will come to pass as well. None of us can boast about tomorrow (Prov. 27:1), and so I mean this as a boast in the Lord, not as a statement of presumption. As David once said, “*Adonai*, who has delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine [meaning, Goliath]” (1 Sam. 17:37).

To share my own story, the Lord spoke to me in 1983 that I would be in the center of a revival that touched the world, and by His grace, that promise came to pass, as I had the privilege of serving as a leader in the Brownsville Revival from 1996 to 2000, where people came from more than 130 nations to be ignited by the fires of revival. And those fires continue to burn around the globe today, not the least through the grads of our ministry school who are making a great impact

in many nations.

Since the late 1990s, the Lord has spoken to me about a coming revolution—a gospel-based moral and cultural revolution—and if I am faithful to Him, I believe I will be right in the thick of that revolution. I feel this so deeply I can reach out and touch it.

What promises has God made to you personally? And what has He promised to all of us in His Word?

Take hold of His promises and rejoice. Those who put their trust in Him will never be ashamed. Let the encouragement come!

Michael Brown *is author of Can You Be Gay and Christian? Responding With Love and Truth to Questions About Homosexuality and host of the nationally syndicated talk radio show The Line of Fire on the Salem Radio Network. He is also president of FIRE School of Ministry and director of the Coalition of Conscience. Follow him at AskDrBrown on Facebook or at @drmichaellbrown on Twitter.*