

Carriers of the Glory

Ringling in my ears are the words of multiple prophets who  are saying, “Get ready, the world is going to change fast, and so is the church.” Some share the message from a more positive standpoint, others from a less positive one. The first kind causes me to anticipate what is coming; the second makes me nervous.

I don’t always like to think about what the future holds from a natural standpoint, particularly when it’s not pleasant and I can’t change it. But I know one thing: Whatever happens, God’s purpose for His people is the same—to reflect His glory. As we do, Habakkuk’s prophecy will be fulfilled and “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14, NKJV).

The other day I was reading Paul’s letter to the Philippians, in which Paul wrote something very provoking. He expressed his confidence that God, who had begun a good work in the believers at Philippi, would finish His work—that He would complete it, keep at it until it was done, until they were either dead or Jesus had returned (see Phil 1:6). Prior to that day I had not remembered that Paul’s encouragement was being sent to the people while Paul was imprisoned.

The apostle went on to say: “It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:7-8).

Paul was in a seemingly God-forsaken situation, yet he was filled with the very presence and heart of God and was able to speak encouragingly to the Philippians. Later on in the same letter, he wrote: “Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I

know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:18-21).

Paul wasn't pontificating. A person can't do that when he is in the midst of a dark, dirty, bug- and rat-infested prison. I may be able to get "carried away in grandeur" imagining how I would respond in such situations when in reality I am sitting in my living room reading my Bible or lying on a beach chair listening to the waves wash up on the sand. But when I'm facing a serious situation, my response is going to come from what's really inside me.

Like Paul, I have lived in the midst of devastating circumstances. And I could come to the point of saying what he said for only two reasons.

The first is that I know God and trust Him. When you know someone, you either trust him or you don't, based on your real-life experiences with him. Trust is built; it doesn't suddenly appear.

In other words, I trusted that my situation was well known to God and that it was His absolute best for me at that point in my history. I didn't say it was a vacation. But it was God's absolute best for me because of what He was working in me.

I had that perspective because I trusted Him. There was purpose and intention in it. I was not a victim of the chance clashing of interplanetary astrological signs. My life and all its details are written in God's scheduling book. He knew I was there, and He knew before I got there I would be there.

Second, I know God loves me. When I doubt someone loves me and

my life experience with that person becomes difficult, I begin to believe he does not have my best interests in mind. In fact, I become suspicious that he may not care at all—or worse, is trying to do me in. Yet if I have confidence in the person's love for me, I will stick it out despite the bumps in our relationship. I know that something greater is going to emerge out of the current challenge.

Paul was in prison, yet he was encouraging the Philippians. How can you inspire others when you yourself are in a disastrous situation? At the end of his letter, Paul spells out the answer. He says he had learned to be content no matter what his circumstances were. Note that he didn't say the ability to be content had suddenly been imparted to him; *it was something he learned*.

He writes: "Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength" (Phil. 4:11-14, NLT).

Learning is a process and involves a particular type of education that enhances our lives in some way. Here Paul is referring to spiritual understanding that comes through living a life of knowing God in both the highs and the lows of life. Paul knew God—he had intimate knowledge of and experience with Him that created an attitude of trust and confidence in being loved.

So Paul became consistent in his life, not believing one day and doubting the next depending on his circumstances. He was reliable, steady, dependable, constant and unswerving. Why? He had learned He could do anything, go through anything and survive anything that came His way because of Christ within Him giving Him strength.

Paul also said, "Christ in us, the hope of glory!" Your life, my life is about a glory being released in us and through us. It's about the glory realm.

The word "glory" in Greek means dignity, honor, praise, worship; its root word means "to be of reputation." Christ's reputation is being heralded through our lives. Because He dwells in us, others are led to Him. As Paul said, we become the very fragrance of Christ.

But it's not in the smooth places in life that His glory is best manifested; it's in the midst of trouble that people find out who you and I really are. If we can't say with Paul that we have "learned how to be content with whatever [we] have," then the next step in our educational process is to learn a lesson about who God really is when the chips are down. He will then work a new glory in us. At the end of the "new day," I believe the bottom line is the manifestation of His glory in and through us.

Today, whether you are trying to salvage what's left of your flooded home; find a new occupation because you can no longer fish in oil-polluted waters; rebuild after a hurricane, tornado or earthquake; regain peace after the loss of a loved one; or recover from the results of any other disaster in your life, remember: You can be a carrier of the glory, not only on the other side of trouble, but in the midst of it.

About the author: Barbara J. Yoder is the founder and senior pastor of Shekinah Christian Church () in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and is known for her cutting-edge apostolic and prophetic breakthrough ministry. She travels nationally and internationally ministering in churches, conferences and seminars. Yoder is the author of several books, including *Taking on Goliath* (Charisma House). To order a copy of the book, click [here](#). This article was adapted from an entry titled "The Glory Realm" that appeared on her blog page at [.](#)