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# *Walking through Hell Unscathed*



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Hidden Manna Ministries

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Mexico is in harvest time. It is seeing a great harvest of souls. We are seeing many just walk off the street into our services to get saved, not transferring from one church to another, but receiving Jesus for the first time. Many are coming to the Lord, not only in our church but in others as well. People young and old are coming to the Lord. Not too long ago a woman, who had been a Jehovah's Witness for nine years, racked with depression, anxiety, and discouragement came into our service. She had just come from her service and was on her way home, having asked her leaders to help her out, but to no avail, was wandering in the streets looking for answers. She knew she needed prayer but didn't know where to go for it. She heard the worship music and came into our service. When we prayed for her she immediately felt relief. In the middle of the night she began to retch and vomit out stuff and felt the presence of something leave her. She now feels great and has no more depression, anxiety, or discouragement. She knows God delivered her and has left the Jehovah's Witness movement at the cost of great persecution because she had an encounter with the Living God. What nine

years of arguing doctrine couldn't do, God did with one prayer. God is harvesting souls here in Mexico.

It is also a time of harvest for all the corruption and lawlessness that Mexico has sown and lived by for many years. As the harvest is always greater than the seed sown, likewise the corruption and violence here is of epic proportions as it is becoming common place to see and hear of hand grenades going off, machine gun fire, high speed chases and all sorts of movie like violence, and all this is in the day time. Just the other day over 200 bullets were fired at a police truck before hand grenades were thrown and burnt the truck and the 4 police officers inside to a crisp, no identification was able to be made, they were just charred skeletons. Other times police as well as other people have been found cut up in pieces and left in garbage bags somewhere on the street. Stories like this lace the front page, the back page and the pages in the middle of all the daily newspapers. One wonders when it will ever end; and we are just a small town here in Mexico. As a pastor, my challenge is to keep the people out of fear mode and from staying locked inside their homes. God has given me a promise: "I will walk through hell unscathed". Yet as I prayed this over myself, I

prayed it for my family, my wife, and for my congregation as well. I want us all kept safe in the midst of Hell. Jesus could walk through hell unscathed and His protective power can cause us to do the same. I believe that we will begin to see great testimonies as God keeps His people safe in the midst of hell.

As we began this year, and there was lots of talk about crisis, God instructed me, He warned me: "Don't get in crisis mode; do not go down that road. No matter what you see, no matter what others say and do, no matter what your finances look like, no matter what the news says, don't go down that street." He continues to remind me of it as well, for it is a great temptation especially when you see things begin to dry up. He said, "If people want a crisis they can have one but for you, stay out of it". One might say, "I'm just acknowledging what is fact, I'm just being truthful, that's just the way it is." But we must remember the spies that were sent to spy out the promised land, they were just being honest and truthful. The truth was that they really did see giants, they really did see enemies and walled cities; they weren't making up stories; they were being truthful, and yet God wasn't pleased. They never entered the

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promise land. Why? They were not in faith, they were not trusting God. Yet God, in regards to our circumstances and situations, has not told us to analyze them by our senses, rather to acknowledge Him, that is being truthful. To acknowledge Him is to acknowledge truth, it's to bring Him on the scene. Joshua and Caleb saw the same giants and the same walled cities that everybody else saw, but they had a different spirit than everyone else, one of seeing God in the midst of hell. People that want to be "real" or "honest" or "truthful" need to be careful that the truth of the present situation doesn't nullify the power of God, as it did in the passage of Joshua and Caleb. Those very truthful and honest people rose up to criticize and persecute those who stood firm in the faith. It's an easy thing to do, criticize those standing strong, we never think we're guilty of it. Yet it was Caleb's faith that preserved him 45 years as he watched all his "real" contemporaries perish around him. Caleb passed through hell unscathed, which is a great testimony. Think about it, for 45 years he had to wait because of others' unbelief. He had always believed, yet because of others' unbelief he was kept from enjoying his inheritance for such a long time. Yet in all this he never became bitter, or resentful, or angry while God brought judgment on that people. That in itself is a tremendous testimony to Caleb's account. That is what is meant when I say that we will walk through hell and be unscathed. I also believe though, that it literally

means in the natural as well. That although all sorts of crazy things surround me, God will keep me unscathed by faith, the same way Caleb was kept.

The book of Daniel relates two stories of God keeping his children unscathed while in hell. First, Shadrac, Meshac and Abednego were taken captive. They were being forced at the cost of their lives to worship a strange god. When they wouldn't, crisis came. They, being threatened with being burned alive, stood strong only to see a great deliverance and a national testimony. That story never fails to provoke faith in my heart. Daniel, as well, was keeping his eyes on the Lord in a dark time when he was thrown into the hungry lions' den. Yet because he was in faith God delivered him and not those who had accused him. Daniel is a model of what to do in times of crisis; for he was fine one day and in crisis the next. Yet he did not panic but stayed focused on God and he was not let down for doing it. It would have been easy for him just to say, "I'll skip praying for one month", but he didn't; he wouldn't.

We can be assured, as the New Testament says, "all these things happened to them as examples", that we will probably need the encouragement of these testimonies of those who have believed before us, in these last days.

The story of Joseph is also a great encouragement as well. Here was a man whose blessing of God on his life provoked jealousy and bitterness from those around him. Sold as a slave from his very own brothers he goes to work for Potifer. Every single thing Potifer owns

becomes blessed because of Joseph and he knows it. Wrongly accused for his strong conviction not to enter into sin, he is thrown into prison where that too prospers because of Joseph. Once again he is mistreated by being forgotten about by those he had helped and encouraged. Yet God was with Joseph when he was sold as a slave, when he was wrongly accused, and while he was in prison. When he was forgotten by man he was not forgotten by God. He went through hell from his brothers, bosses, and inmates, yet through it all he remained unscathed. Amazingly he was able to keep his heart clean and focused on God in such situations and God exalted him for doing so.

The Bible relates another story of a people who paid too much attention to the news and it went bad for them and they lost everything. 2 Kings chapter 7 shows us a story of the Israelites in crisis and a word of the Lord comes through the prophet Elisha saying, "Hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord: 'Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.'" So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, "Look, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?" And he said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it." 2 Kings 7:1-2 NKJV The crisis had so gotten a hold of this man's mind that he was not able to see the hand of

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God anymore. He was a prince upon whom the king relied on for support and should have been the first to encourage the king to believe the word of the Lord, yet his mind was trained by the crisis and not the Word. As a result, when the Word of the Lord came by mouth of a renown prophet he was in total unbelief. He saw it but did not partake. However the way the provision came is what is impressive. Four lepers wandered into the abandoned camp of the Syrians having lost all hope, to surrender themselves in hopes to find food before they died. Here's the account.

Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why are we sitting here until we die? If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die." And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one was there. For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses — the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!" Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact — their tents, their horses, and their donkeys — and they fled for their lives. And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and

carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid them; then they came back and entered another tent, and carried some from there also, and went and hid it. 2 Kings 7:3-8 NKJV Here is the interesting thing about this story: the Syrians. They allowed what they heard, or thought they heard, to put them in crisis mode and run from nothing. Nothing but sound scared them into losing all they had, food, gold, silver, clothes, transportation, everything except the clothes on their backs. They literally ran for their lives with no one chasing them, there was no crisis. When we allow the news, and all sorts of things besides the Word of God to lead and guide us we will have the same results as the unbelieving Syrians, whom being neighbors of Israel, should have had some grounds for faith in the Lord, as did other nations that surrounded Israel.

When I heard of the swine flu here it seemed to me that the news was making it into something big. Yet I refused to allow any fear in our home nor in our congregation. Those who paid attention to the news were always talking about how bad it was even though we had not one case here or even close by. Yet those whose mind was stayed on the Lord and His Word were able to testify of the Lord's power and love to those who allowed fear to creep in.

As we stay in Him we are secure. I told my church at the beginning of the year that we will purchase property while the world says, "crisis" and build a place of

worship for His glory. Two months ago we paid cash for our property to the amazement of everybody, (what would be the equivalent of \$1,150,000.00 in US dollars) and now have a provisional building bigger than the one we were renting. While the world says crisis we'll march on to do the will of the Lord and manifest His glory. Were not going into crisis, however we could if we wanted to just by reading the daily news. The decision is ours. God is not scared nor taken back by any of this and we don't need to be either.

For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. Rom 8:19

For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be *the* First-born among many brothers. Rom 8:29 These verses show that God has something greater in mind for us.

There are three stages of sonship, infancy, adolescence and adulthood. Even though one is son, if he is an infant he is not capable of handling the affairs his father. Same with an adolescent, although he is maturing he is still lacking. When the Bible says that creation is groaning, waiting for the manifestation of the adoption of the sons of God it means that it awaits for the maturing of the sons to be able to take on the affairs of the Father in a responsible and correct manner. That is what the word adoption means to an eastern mind. Not necessarily one who has been rejected and taken in to another family and

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made to be son. That is our definition of adoption. Yet adoption in this context means maturity to handle effectively the affairs of the Father. At one time Jesus was an infant. Even though He was the son of God he was not commissioned yet by the Father, that came when He was 30. That's when He received the adoption as son, meaning one able to correctly and responsibly take on the actions and affairs of the Fathers business. This is why when God spoke from the cloud He said, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased,". God was transferring upon Jesus sonship even though He always was a son, God was recognizing Him and given charge over all His affairs. This is also why Jesus said, "If you've seen me you've seen the Father". He had been commissioned in the Fathers stead. This is also why God when appeared on the Mount of transfiguration He said, "This is my beloved son, listen to Him". Jesus recognizing this said, "I only speak and do

what I see the Father doing. He was fulfilling His adoption. Creation groaning is it awaiting for the church to mature and receive from the Father the transferring of His affairs. While we know we are sons we are under tutors until the day, appointed by the Father, when the day of adoption comes, when God declares, "This is my Son with whom I am well pleased".

There are too many stories in the Bible that show when the world was in crisis God came through for His own. Egypt was in crisis with plagues and all sorts of things while the people of Israel were safe and secure in Goshen. One day Ruth was practically begging for bread, the next day she was wife and heir to the owner of it all. Esther, in time of crisis, received a promise of half the kingdom if she wanted it. God moved heaven and earth literally for the once lying, deceiving people of Gibeon who had just recently come into the covenant. But if the best I can offer is a sympathetic ear to those

and say, "I know, the crisis is bad" then I have nothing to offer to anyone, no message, nothing different, no good news, no hope. God has commissioned us because we have something better. Really, this is God's greatest hour to shine. Never has He had to come through for so many of His children at one time. No wonder the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. If the church rises up to the adoption planned by the Father to carry out His affairs on the earth the limits are off and there is no telling what we can do. There is an old war poster of uncle Sam pointing saying, I want you to join the army to defend the country, in a similar way Jesus looks to you and says, "I want you to bring my glory to the lost world in these last days, in times of crisis. Answering the call depends on us.