"Leadership cannot really be taught. It can only be learned.”

--Harold Geneen

Contemporary Comments

"The Gospel Comes to Thessalonica" | July 7, 2012 | Order Info


"It was like driving into hell. The sky was orange, filling the car with that eerie green-gold light that always foreshadows bad things. What wasn’t orange was black, and the sky roiled with the clouds of smoke…. But the closer I got to home, the heavier the smoke became. It was like ground fog, filling all the spaces with white, settling in the low places. Ash was falling on my car like the faint beginnings of winter snow."

This is how Kim Marie described her trip home from work last week—the first day of the Waldo Canyon fire in Colorado. And what horrific damage it has done since that first day! It’s being deemed the most destructive wildfire in Colorado history. As of Monday, it had burned over 18,000 acres and destroyed 346 homes. Approximately 3,000 displaced people are still not permitted to go back home.

Amid the smoke and ashes, some residents are turning to God for comfort. Christian author Patton Dodd told CNN that he’s witnessed “a reflexive ‘my house and things don’t matter in the long run anyway’ spirituality,” among some of the townspeople. Even people who are not Christians were heard saying, “This is out of our control and I’m going to try to pray. Why not?” Resident Esther Fleece told reporters: “I was packing and I realized that none of this matters. I just had to pause and say, ‘All of this could be replaced.’ What matters most is I have my family and my community and my faith, and we’re going to go through trials. They’re momentary.”

Local churches are coming together with food drives and prayer services for the victims. At one such prayer service, the pastor told those gathered, “Romans 8:35-38 reminds us that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Humanity is fragile by our very nature. We often put our identity and trust into our possessions and material goods. The events of this week provide to us how vulnerable we are. God knows suffering, hardship and trials. The life of Jesus reminds of this reality. You are not alone.”

It’s true. God does know suffering. Isaiah 53 is evidence of that. And this was a message that Paul preached to the Thessalonians. God wanted the people to see that the Messiah prophesied in Isaiah was the same One who suffered, died, and promised to return. And although Jesus’ first coming wasn’t kingly or powerful, it was a prelude to the second. Paul proclaimed to Jews, Greeks, and leading women: “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.” This truth was vital for the early church to understand, since it was needed to spread the Gospel of Jesus.

As we study the first and second letters to the Thessalonians this quarter, we’ll catch a glimpse of what challenges this early church faced. Perhaps we’ll recognize some of our own challenges. But for sure, we’ll see the reassuring fact that Jesus’ first coming guarantees our Lord’s second coming.

~ nc

Additional resource: You Tube

1. Yahoo
2. Religion
3. Chieftain
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