

VALLEY OF FIERY FLAMES?

Matt 4:4- Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

*---now that's a mouth full
---those Words can be counted on!*

One of the great truths this simple verse whispers to me is that we humans won't really LIVE (life to its fullest) until we learn to live them according to GOD'S INSTRUCTION MANUAL.

The phrase "every word" tells me that I have a lot to learn but a lot to live for.

Jesus Café, as I read God's Word, one of the things that continually strikes me about Jesus teachings is His emphasis on our daily need to communicate with Father God.

PRAYER and BIBLE STUDY are a just for trust!

And after He returned home the rest of the New Testament writers continued to stress this very same thing.

With what all that is happening around us in the deceitfully evil world we live in, let's daily be motivated and encouraged to keep on...

Praying and Staying in FELLOWSHIP!

(We just can't afford to enter a single day not holding His Hand!)

In a minute I will share with you another reason why I KNOW that living without Him is very dangerous; but right now let's pray:

"Father God, we come to You confessing our sins: _____, _____, _____.

Father, we thank You for all You have already done for us through Your Holy Spirit and Word-Son, Jesus Christ---and for all that You will do for us---eternally! We are so blessed to be Your children!

We thank You for leaving us Your written Love Letter, the Bible, so that we can learn more about You and what we are supposed to be doing here in this brief but crucial Game called Life.

We ask that You help us to learn to discipline ourselves according to what You have said---not according to what the world says or how we feel.

Help us to enjoy this day that You have given us and put a smile on Your face with each choice we make, today.

And thanks for the mercy, grace, and forgiveness when we fail!

We pray in Jesus' Name!"

Let us make a deliberate choice right now to totally enjoy this beautiful Fall day---a day that our Father hand-painted for each one of us. In order to really do this (and not be religious about it) we must begin this day (and every day) by talking with Him, listening to Him and walking out into this day with Him---following Him throughout the entire day.

WE MUST TAKE HIM TO BED WITH US, TOO!

Jesus warned us about letting worries, fears and anxieties steal His JOY that He so desires that His children have and live in every moment of the day.

Johnny Lang calls these little enemies of God's Joy---"bumps in the road!" Johnny who? Hey, if you love music and don't know Johnny Lang, you have missed out on one of the world's greatest living musicians.

And very recently JL became ONE OF US! A born-again believer!

(Yall have got to go and listen to JL's first Christian CD---TURN AROUND! It's fantastic if you love and appreciate R&B soul and blues. One of my favorite songs on it is "BUMP IN THE ROAD!" My 3 year old grandson, Miles loves it, too. The words are strong as pot ash and his rendition is "off the charts!" His voice sounds like he is a 70 year old, 400 pound black man who

has smoked all his life, but JL is a skinny young white boy. And his guitar playing is unrivaled! Any kid who played with BB King at 14 is pretty good.

CHECK THIS OUT: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQ1UV9pG47c>

"Bumps in our road" (trials, tribulations, pain, stress, etc) all come as a result of man's fall back in the garden; but God can make a joy ride out of those bumps if we let Him. He allows each bump into our path to draw us closer to Him; so if we are in fellowship with Him no matter how bad it gets or hurts, know that God is...

bigger than our bumps---
and will outlast them!

God has already made His choice to help us!

Now we must decide to ride out the bumps with His view in primary focus and look with excitement to see what He is going to do with all our bumps. He changes "bumps into blessings" and helps us to overcome evil with His Divine Good.

According to God's Word, we all are going to ride some bumpy roads and we'll all hurt a little bit---or a lot---as we travel through this bumpy world.

I use the word "little bit" because no matter how bad we may have it, remember THE PERFECT PERSON---JESUS CHRIST---had it much worse!

AND HE DIDN'T DESERVE THE HELL HE ENDURED!

Let each one of us daily remember that we all deserve our bumps.

We all need an occasional whipping.

(Abe Lincoln put it like this when asked about what he thought about the death penalty! He said, " I don't really know how I feel about personally hanging anyone but I do know that we all could stand a little hanging!")

If you think you don't, right there is a neon sign that you do. And it seems I get like this when I am out of fellowship with my Father.

POINT: "WE ALL DESERVE ALL THE NEGATIVE THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO US" so let's make a deal! Y'all help me remember this by praying for me and I will help you do the same by both praying for you and preparing spiritual spinach here at the JESUS CAFÉ to help us become strong enough to battle and defeat the daily evil (bumps) we all encounter.

SomeOne just told me that one of you Jess Cafer's really needs to read and heed the following Scripture for RIGHT NOW in your life. Oh, we all do, but one of you for REAL! And I have no idea who! Seriously!

Rom 12:17- Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. "

(Please know that this wonderful spiritual truth applies to "one on one situations" but was not placed in Scripture to prohibit LAW ENFORCEMENT and or MILITARY from protecting their God-fearing populace!

And ya know what? We all fail in this area! It is obviously time for all Christians in the USA to go "back to spiritual boot camp" for a refresher course on LEARNING AND APPLYING THE WINNING CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR.

This "spiritual boot camp" needs to be attended first thing every day we are alive here in this evil world! If we daily choose to meet with our real Commander and Chief, listen to His plans for the day and go out and obey HIM, seeking to please and represent Him first, He probably will NOT have to bus us off to "Spiritual Reform School" to help us reform our attitudes.

Recently, I came very close to being loaded up on that bus, but thanks to prayer, some great spiritual buddies and a few quick, good choices (God choices), Father spared me that "big bump in the road" and I suddenly came back to my spiritual senses.

And speaking of prayer for me, let me tell yall what happened yesterday! I know several of you do pray for me daily and believe me I sure do need it and appreciate it!

Just after lunch yesterday, I was working on our farm tractor hauling limbs into our huge burn pile. We had a show-nuff hot fire going---the smoke could be seen for miles! The tractor's front end loader was piled high with limbs loaded down with autumn leaves so I could see real good (the smoke, etc!).

As my tractor eased up to the flames to dump my new load of limbs, the top of the tractor that was designed to protect me caught a smoking vine that had for years been wrapping itself around a big pecan tree that has been slowly dying.

Suddenly (I mean like in a half a instance), the power of the tractor snapped the giant limb off (it was about 8 feet long and at least 12 inches in diameter) and it came crashing down from about 10 to 12 feet up missing my nose by only an inch or two! Its bark actually scrapped my nose and left ants and bugs crawling all over me!

FOR A SECOND, I HONESTLY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED! IT HAPPENED SO QUICK AND IT WAS SO LOUD AND I WAS TOTALLY STUNNED! BUT I WASN'T SCARED!

The weight of that large limb crushed the tractor hood just in front of the steering wheel but NOT MY HEAD! With a sudden surge of super strength I shoved that huge log with its branches all over me off of my body and off of the tractor, and it was only then that I realized what God had just done for me.

When I saw the size of the log that now lay on the ground, the damage it did to the steel hood of our tractor and saw how close the tractor was to the leaping flames in that huge trash hole, I began to shake and pray, pray and shake!

After a moment, I looked up to see if anyone had seen this ACT OF GOD in delivering me. I betcha I was white as a ghost. It took me a minute or two before I could resume my work.

Thank yall for prayer---and thank God for CARE!
He really does CARE for his little ones!

For the rest of the day, every time I rode past that fire pit and saw the size of that log, I thanked God more and more. I realized that had the log fallen only about 2 inches closer to my head, it would have probably busted my head open---knocked me out---and the tractor would have kept going into the fire pit.

But, thanks to JESUS, my soul will NOT be going into THE FIERY PIT! (I can just see Deb when she got home seeing the tail end of a burning tractor sticking out of that pit. I reckon yall would be stuck with Mike doing the emeals too! Oh well! (Mike's edit: God definitely intervened! 😊

But listen to this: Yall, prayers work! Ever since Miles was born and I saw the dangers of his falling, I have been daily praying for God to protect me and my family (yall are in the family if you are a Christian) from "falls or falling objects."

Today I heard, saw and felt HIS HAND in this very specific prayer.
Guess what specific word in the following verse was hammered home?

1 Peter 4:12- Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

I had just been SUDDENLY SURPRISED and was about to enter a fiery pit--
-but our Father graciously delivered me. HIS CARE and your prayers delivered me.

This morning after my morning prayer, I walked back over to the scene of the "accident!" There is no way any of us just luck our way through these evil days. God's children are graciously guided!

I always end my morning prayer with the 23rd Psalms. Today, looking down into the valley of still-burning flames, it took an even deeper meaning.

Ps 23:4- Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Yall, we are blessed! Thank yall for blessing me!