

Dear Friends,

I find it difficult to write because there is so much to say! Often, when I write, I struggle to know what to say but now it's more how to sort through all that has happened in 2020 and what the future holds so I may repeat myself some.

Alpha was sailing pleasantly along early in 2020 when Covid made it's ugly appearance and nothing has been the same! We saw about half as many people last year and many of them were new people who found us via our website or from referral by friends and family. Early in the pandemic I spent most of my time talking on the phone with people since I used call forwarding and all Alpha's calls went to my cell phone. Then I began to meet people on Zoom and that is actually better than the phone. It is surprising how much information you get by seeing a person. Body language and facial expressions tell you a lot about what a person means by what they are saying. We currently see many people in our office. Of course masks are required.

Then we add politics to the mix and a whole new complexity is added to our first problem, the disease. I'm a firm believer that we are "in the last days" described by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 3:1 **But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty.**

The word difficulty can also be translated— hard to bear, troublesome, dangerous, harsh, fierce, savage—all which describe what we watched in Washington D.C. on January 6th. Then you add that all 50 state capitals were threatened with similar dangers.

Part of our ministry at Alpha is to help people live VICTORIOUSLY during times like these! Christians are called to be shining lights when darkness is all around. First to be lovers of God and then to love even the unlovely. We can not do that in our own strength but are required and expected, by God, to follow His example.

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Php 2:14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing,

Php 2:15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. We must hold onto this promise as we move through 2021.

I had it in mind to retire soon but, with all the turmoil in our country and the world I'm going to stick around a little while longer to be of some small help to people in need. So far Debi and I are doing all right health wise but please pray us to stay healthy so we may keep serving Him and people in need also for courage to walk by faith in times of difficulty.

May God bless you and keep you healthy and close to Him!

Thank you for your prayers and support.

Richard.

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