

February 16, 2010

Greetings From President Walton....



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Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I write this I've just learned that the contract we had on our home in Marietta has fallen through due to a low appraisal value on our home. Disappointment is an understatement! All the way through we thought we saw God's hand guiding this process. It has been about a three week roller coaster ride, and in some ways it's good just to be off of it. Where do we go from here? That's a very good question. I made a commitment to serve the District as the District President, but the truth be told, several years before I was ordained I took an even more significant vow, and that was to my wife. The separation has become increasingly difficult and unfair to her especially. It's not because of my wit or charm or good looks, even though I'd like to think so. It's more about saddling her with the upkeep of our home all by herself, not only inside, but outside. Many of you can understand this dilemma, and possibly can relate. So what are we to do?

Throughout the past few weeks, as our emotions have been so topsy-turvy, my mantra to my dear wife has been, "We just have to trust God!" I truly believe that. We've had so many people praying about this on our behalf, and the appraisal came in so low that it really closed the door in a big way. Now we are left simply to trust. James writes, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." James 1:2-4

Here's what I'm learning: it's easy to trust God when things are going well. In fact, when everything seems to be going my way, I know that God is for me, and I haven't got a worry. But in the face of discouragement, when things aren't turning out the way I had hoped, does that mean that God has abandoned me? Certainly not! It means He has a plan that is infinitely better than I could imagine. It means that He is seeing things from such a different perspective, and I need to trust His judgment.

When I was a small child, I can remember being frustrated that my parents wouldn't let me do certain things that it seemed like everyone else could do. I didn't understand why they wanted to punish me or make me suffer, or do without. Only through the

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blessing of time and perspective do I see that my parents always had my best interests at heart. They knew things I didn't yet understand, and even though it may have been painful for them at times to have a whiny kid moping around because he didn't get what he wanted, it was for my own good.

In an infinitely greater way, our Heavenly Father cares for all our needs in ways beyond what we deserve, and certainly in ways beyond our comprehension—at least in the present. That doesn't necessarily lessen the immediate feelings of frustration or confusion, but somehow, it enables us to move forward, trusting the God who is trustworthy and true.

What is it in your life where God is calling you to a deeper level of trusting Him? Over and over the testimony of Scripture points us beyond the current circumstance to see the bigger picture of what God is doing. Remember Joseph, speaking to his cowering brothers? He said, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is NOW being done, the saving of many lives." Genesis 50:20 (emphasis added) Jesus said to a doubting Thomas, "...blessed are those who have NOT seen and yet have believed." John 20:29b (emphasis added) Add to that His promise, that He will never leave nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5b) and then, even in the midst of difficulties and disappointments, we can learn to trust our God.

As for me and my household, we will continue to serve the Lord. We will fix our eyes on Jesus, readjust and stay the course until God reveals His better plan. I wish I knew what the future holds, but I have confidence in the One who holds my future, and for now, that has to be enough. And so it goes, dear brothers and sister, we trust in a great God, even when we don't understand Him or His ways, knowing that He, who did not even spare His own Son for us, will take care of all our needs in ways that will someday make us marvel at His love. That is my confidence, and that is the confidence I hope He is building in each of you in the midst of challenges and changes. I can't wait to see His plan unfold; it's going to be awesome!

Peace in Jesus,

Greg

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"The love of Christ urges us on." 2 Corinthians 5:14

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