
❖ Restoration Village ❖

December 2012

PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM: THEY SHALL PROSPER WHO LOVE THEE—PSALM 122:6

TWO MEN BORN ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINE YEARS APART – one was to die with the words on his lips about the city where the other died. Currently, the daily news of Israel and the city on a hill – Jerusalem - is uncertain as the scenario of events in the Middle East can only be conjecture. It is the story of the two men who have influenced history forever that I want you to know. Jerusalem is an important part of their history as it is yours.

One of these two men was born in a straw and dirt-covered-floor barn to a carpenter's wife. The other was born in a 16-by-18-foot dirt floor log cabin to a farmer and part-time carpenter's wife. Both men experienced little formal education, were mostly self taught, and learned their carpentry skills from their fathers. It has been said about them: "...scrawny seedlings, there was nothing attractive about, nothing to cause a second look." Of one it was written "He was looked down upon and passed over," and both men "...suffered and know pain first hand" (words used are from *The Message*). Both men in their adulthood were to face difficult days in their country of birth and congruent life purposes were to change destiny; one for his country, and the other for the world.

One of these men was born into a nation that was occupied and dominated by another nation. The other was born into nation that would eventually erupt into a war between its own people and thousands were to die in the ensuing future. Both of these men were assassinated on the day we named, "Good Friday."

One of these men was to write a fragment of thoughts that was revealed after his death by a secretary: "Perplexed and afflicted beyond the power of human help, by the disasters of war, the wrangling of parties,...he shut out the world one day, and tried to put into form his double sense of responsibility to human duty and Divine Power." The fragment reads: **The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, one must be, wrong, God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party – and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect His purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is probably true- that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. By his mere great power, on the minds of the now contestants, He could have saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And, having begun He could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds.** Those words were written three years before his death and entitled "Meditation on the Divine Will."

"...God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time."

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The other man was to question Divine Will on his day of solitude and "...agonizing sorrow, a sorrow that is crushing my life out" was to look to the heavens and ask God "...to get me out of this", which became a prayer of "...I'm ready. Do it your way" (words from *The Message*).

One of these men on the day of his death went on a carriage ride with his wife through the city and planned an evening at the theatre with her. His wife told the Rev. N.W. Miner who officiated at the burial that the last moments of his conscious life were spent in conversation with her about the future. That after his term of office expired he desired to see the city of Jerusalem and see those places hallowed by the footprints of the Savior. He would have been the first United States President to have ever visited the Middle East. Mrs. Lincoln said that the last word that came out of his mouth before the bullet of the assassin entered his brain was, "Jeru---."

The other was to say just a few days before his death in Jerusalem: "And when you see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is drawing near. And then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws near" (Luke 21: 20,27-28). This one that was born in a stable visited only by shepherds abiding in a field responded to the angel's announcement from the heavens: "Be not afraid, for unto you is born this day, a Savior and you will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger." This one told us that "He is coming back" to receive unto His own the redeemed.

One was called to lead his nation through turbulent times of a civil war and reunite the nation after the war. He was the man whose Emancipation Proclamation freed a race of people who were slaves. He led America through its darkest hour.

The famous existentialist Albert Camus realized that if a person really pondered the cross that they could no longer go through suffering the same way writing: "The God-man also suffers, and does so with patience...he too is shattered and dies. The night on Golgotha only has so much significance for man because in its darkness the Godhead, visibly renouncing all inherited privileges, endured to the end the anguish of death, including the depths of despair. "

The gospels' story illustrates victory coming from defeat, weakness becoming strength, life coming from death and rescue from our alienation. A true story that began on Christmas day of a little babe born in an obscure village to a peasant woman that gives us hope. He was the man whose Emancipation Proclamation freed a race of people from the slavery of sin.

A life anew in the resurrected life is one of: "...loosing the slavery of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, break every yoke, give our bread to the poor, bring the poor to our house, give them clothes, and then our light will break forth as the morning and the glory of the Lord will be our reward. And then you shall be called the repairer of the broken relationships and the restorer of paths to dwell in" (Isaiah 58: 6-12). This is the mission statement of Restoration Ministries and should be of every believer's life.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there no longer is any sea. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem coming down from heaven from God made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall be no more death; there shall be no more mourning, or crying or pain; the first things have passed away. It is done (Revelation 21:1, 24).

PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM; THEY SHALL PROSPER THAT LOVE THEE (Psalm 122:6).

From all of us at Restoration Village, Have a blessed Christmas season!

David Engle

If a person really ponders the cross they can no longer go through suffering the same way.

Village News

DURING THE MONTH OF DECEMBER MAKE SOME TIME TO GET OUT OF THE HOUSE and take some time for yourself. If you are a person who enjoys the movies (movie theatre popcorn is always yummy – to me anyway) then there are several worth seeing this month. *Lincoln* because it is good! I wrote the December newsletter prior to seeing the movie. *Life of Pi*, spiritual question, survival under the harshest of circumstances, the remarkable cinema photography, and I leave for you the ending of which is the real story. *The Hobbit* begins another trilogy series in the Lord of the Rings series and will be a blockbuster. And lastly a remake of one the most classic works of fiction, *Les Miserables*, which illustrates law and grace and the miraculous mercy of God.

A THANK YOU FROM THE VILLAGE: Last month we told you of our budget busting needs of repairs to the dishwasher and ice machine which are an important part of caring for all the mummies and babies of Restoration Village. The contributions paid off all the repairs and our budget to meet the needs of those we served was not hindered or hampered. We are grateful!



LOWE'S HOMETOWN HEROES FINISHED THEIR EIGHT DAY ENDEAVORS to upgrade and improve the playground area here at the main lodge of the Village. It's a beautiful work of craftsmanship by the Lowes' employees that invites the children to come and participate in the outdoor fun on the new and old toys.

There have been many individuals and groups who have already given of themselves collectively towards aiding us to provide a meaningful and memorable Christmas season for the residents and some former residents of Restoration Village. We will list these groups in the January newsletter.

To the pie brigade of Little Flock Primitive Baptist, we are already enjoying your forty desserts beginning on Thanksgiving Day.

LAST MONTH A SIX YEAR OLD GIRL WAS MURDERED IN OUR COUNTY. The death of this precious little girl deeply affected the staff and many others we are involved with here in the county. The relationship of staff and others to her began a year ago when the abuse she had received in her previous home ended with her father and stepmother being sent to prison. A year later she was dead at the hands of a next door neighbor. This is not the time to address the dynamics of such a tragic event and I would be naïve to attempt to console anyone with my words when silence is the better teacher. The "banality of evil" (Hannah Arendt's phrase) needs no explanation as we have observed this year in world history the startling news headlines of Middle East wars, starving children in Africa, the Sandusky case, Boy Scout cover up and continuing revelations of abuse to young children in churches and schools to ponder as the prophets of old did: "How long O Lord must these things be?"



My wife Beverly asked me to lead in prayer at a candle light vigil at Restoration Village's Memory Garden the night of the reporting of the murder. Although there was no time to announce the event, tweets, a quick press release, and some phone calls to appropriate people ended with an estimated gathering of approximately 150 citizens. In that prayer were petitions aimed at heaven and to the gathered people that "...death, evil and destruction serve as a reminder of a deep wrongness in the world and we gather with a desire for its opposite."

I shared with the gathering prior to praying the words of Nicholas Wolterstorff in his lamenting over the death of his son: *"The pain and fallenness of humanity have entered into God's heart. Through the prism of my tears I have seen a suffering God. It is said of God that no one can behold God's face and live. I always thought this meant that no one could see God's splendor and live. A friend said that perhaps it meant that no one could see Gods' sorrow and live. Or perhaps his sorrow is splendor... Instead of explaining our suffering, God shares it."*

In the prayer I thanked God for: policemen, social workers, counselors, school teachers, Children's Advocacy Center staff whom had a history with this child and then the news reporters and the citizens who came to the vigil for their endeavors to make the world safe for a child. Acts of kindness, goodness and generosity coupled with a desire to make a difference in her life and other people's lives that defines their being and their banality of goodness and compassion is making a difference even as we gathered to question the universe.

I think it appropriate at Christmas time to quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer who wrote on Christmas Eve, 1943 from his prison cell: *"...nothing can make up for the absence of someone whom we love, and it would be wrong to try to find a substitute; we must simply hold out and see it through. That sounds very hard at first, but at the same time it is a great consolation, for the gap, as long as it remains unfilled, preserves the bonds between us. It is nonsense to say that God fills the gap; he doesn't fill it, but on the contrary, he keeps it empty and so helps us to keep alive our former communion with each other, even at the cost of pain."*

May our mourning and our memories continue with the courage and strength from heaven to make the world safe for children. Human pain and loss create sacred ground.



Merry Christmas

From the staff
And residents
At
Restoration Village