

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Thanksgiving is over and as time goes so fast Christmas will be here before we know it with all the decorations.

We has a busy November starting on March 3rd we started a Mission Conference with Brother Scott Naill in Wesley Chapel, Florida. What a great meeting we had, well attended, with people forward each night. The four Missionary Families were interesting with good presentations and we met new friends. Brother Naill's church is growing and we sensed a great spirit in the church.

Then, as we told you in our last letter our kids sent us to Hawaii for our 50th anniversary. We left on November 11th and returned the 18th. They has us a hotel on Waikiki Beach, a convertible to drive around, a tour to Pearl Harbor, a Hawaiian Luau, dinner at Morton's Steak House, a tour to The Polynesian Cultural Center and to the Dole Pineapple Plantation. They really planned it well and we had a wonderful time.

We were at Calvary Baptist Church on the 28th. They had a candidate in on the 21st, so they hope to have a preacher soon.

We wish you a very Blessed Christmas and New Year in the Lord. Thank you for your prayers and support. They are very much appreciated.

Yours for Souls,
Glenn Stockton
The Pastor's Friend

Encouragement

December 2004

The hurricane season is over for this year! They brought great havoc on most of Florida and the damage was billions of dollars. There were some who escaped any damage at all, but they were in the minority. Isn't trouble often like that? We read of another's plight. We hear of someone else's accident, or heartache, or storm, or loss. Someone else's tragedy. Someone else's terrorism. The Bible tells of Job's loss, not my loss. It speaks of the fiery furnace of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, but again, it is their story not mine.

You and I have had some troubles. But often we are spared the greatest pain and the heaviest loss. Somehow the biggies don't come too close to where we live. At least we do not consistently experience them. We won't know until we get to heaven how many times we have been protected by guardian angels. God's providence and sovereignty has kept us from tangling with most of the heavy hardships along the way. There have been times when just inches kept us from a massive accident.

A CASE STUDY OF JOB. His losses are known to all of us. Yet his initial response was this: *The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.* (Job 1:21). Admittedly I prefer receiving positive blessings from the Lord. But when the opposite happens, it hurts. The stripping process is tough and we holler NO. But Job says that regardless what God is doing, whether giving or taking, it is always appropriate to bless the Lord. He remains worthy of our praise.

A CASE STUDY OF SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO. These three men chose obedience to God over obedience to King Nebuchadnezzar. The king was furious and had them thrown into a blazing furnace. Their response to the king was this... The God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king..... But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. (Dan 3:17,18) These three men had good, sound theology knowing that God was good, powerful, and sovereign. They knew that God would do whatever His wisdom dictated. They understood that He knew the big picture. And they entrusted themselves to the Lord, whatever might happen to them.

As I take another look at the outer beauty surrounding us, I say *thank you Lord*. I don't know what the future holds, but I want to face it as our four Old Testament friends did. How are you handling the storms that have come your way... or that might come your way?

Be Encouraged,
Glenn Stockton